

## Goals, Policies, and Key Actions

While Mableton is performing relatively well economically, key investments and action items can significantly enhance the economic vitality of the city--many of which directly tie into Land Use goals, policies, and key actions. This is particularly true for items that both create opportunities to expand the city’s economy and enhance its perception in the larger Atlanta market.

### I Create a New Downtown and Walkable Cores

As noted in the Land Use Element as well, Mableton lacks a true downtown and more walkable cores, tempering not only the quality of life in the city, but also diminishing opportunities for smaller office users (maybe some larger ones as well) that are more lifestyle-driven than purely convenience-driven.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY I.A: Prioritize investment in a new downtown for Mableton that includes green space, a civic anchor, and opportunities for private development.</i></b>	
Identify civic needs and opportunities to anchor this downtown area	N2, O1
Identify resources, funding mechanisms, site acquisition strategies, etc.	N2, O1
<b><i>POLICY I.B: Create smaller opportunities for mixed-use development in a more walkable format.</i></b>	
Update the zoning code with a new district aligned with the guidance for Mixed-Use Villages (see Land Use Element)	N2, O2
Identify strategies to fund and develop small parks, greenway connections, river trails to create value to support more walkable development.	N2, O2

**2** *Bolster the Entertainment Node at Six Flags*

The Six Flags amusement park is a major draw for Mableton, yet represents somewhat of an island, with many supporting functions and land uses being captured in nearby Douglas County. Mableton needs to bolster this core to capture lost dollars and create a stronger entertainment district on I-20.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 2.A: Create opportunities for new lodging, dining and other supportive retail uses.</i></b>	
Work with area property owners to facilitate opportunities for lodging, dining, and retail uses in the Riverside Parkway corridor.	N6, O4, O5
Identify targeted incentives and investments Mableton could make to enhance these opportunities along this corridor.	N6, O4, O5
<b><i>POLICY 2.B: Pursue development of some type of regional-serving outlet center to bolster the sense of destination in this core and to bring more outside dollars into Mableton.</i></b>	
Identify opportunities to assemble property, possibly utilizing some Six Flags property as a joint development strategy.	N6, O4,
Approach key outlet operators nationally and gauge their interest in this location and how that interest can be improved.	N6, O4,
<b><i>POLICY 2.C: Stabilize Six Flags as an entertainment anchor.</i></b>	
Identify means by which perceptions and realities of crime and safety can be better addressed.	N6, O5
Identify additional investments that can be provided to enhance Six Flags’ access, visibility, perception, etc.	N6, O5

**3** Bolster Key Employment Cores

Mableton has a significant base of employment along not only I-20 and Riverside Parkway but also along Veterans Memorial and the East-West Connector. Making investments to further the “livability” of these cores and keep these areas vibrant will be important in the long-term.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 3.A: Invest in the quality of life in targeted areas within Mableton</b>	
Identify opportunities for new sidewalks, parks and greenway connections to soften existing employment cores.	N4, O3
Create targeted opportunities for retail and business services uses in these cores to create greater convenience for area tenants and employers.	N4, O3
Identify needed infrastructure improvements (streets, traffic signals, water/sewer, etc.) that can address potential challenges in these areas.	N4, O3
<b>POLICY 3.B: Pursue a corridor redevelopment strategy for Veterans Memorial Parkway.</b>	
Create a plan for the Veterans Memorial Highway that addresses zoning, driveways, parking, and land uses.	N3, N7, O5
Invest in greenspace and greenways crossing the corridor and focus improvements on targeted intersections where more commercial development works best.	N3, N7, O5

**4** *Enhance Mableton’s Image*

Parts of Mableton, particularly the Veterans Memorial Corridor and areas along Riverside Parkway suffer from fairly significant negative perceptions due to a mix of unappealing visuals and the realities of crime and disinvestment. Cleaning up these areas will go a long ways toward enhancing Mableton’s image in the market.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 4.A: Enhance the image of Riverside Parkway.</i></b>	
Work with law enforcement to focus on areas of Riverside Parkway, particularly north of I-20 to crack down on personal and property crime.	N7, O5
Work with Cobb County to target properties along Riverside Parkway and cross streets to ensure code enforcement, particularly on rental apartments in the corridor.	N7, O5
Identify potential funding mechanisms to help property owners clean up and address deferred maintenance in the corridor.	N7, O5
<b><i>POLICY 4.B: Target key intersections along Veterans Memorial for enhancement and beautification.</i></b>	
Identify key intersections where the City and State can invest funds for streetscaping, new sidewalks, cleanups and other beautification efforts in the corridor.	N7, O5
Create small parks and connect greenway trails in the corridor to break up the concrete and commercial feel that dominates much of the corridor.	N7, O5

**5** *Maximize Convenience*

Among Mableton’s greatest inherent strengths is its regional centrality and its convenience to Atlanta’s major employment, entertainment, and shopping cores. Maintaining and maximizing that high level of convenience is important to maintain in tandem with efforts to bolster the city’s lifestyle.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 4.A: Invest in regional corridors and access points to maintain strong regional access.</i></b>	
Via the Transportation component of this plan, identify key investments in regional thoroughfares and intersections by which capacity can be maintained while improving quality of life.	NI, O4
Target improvements on intersections and locations where traffic accidents, particularly involving pedestrians, are lessened.	NI, O4
<b><i>POLICY 4.B: Broaden shopping and services offerings within Mableton</i></b>	
Focus on the creation of a downtown and smaller mixed-use cores to enhance access to small office users such as insurance agents, financial entities, medical offices, attorneys, etc.—uses that serve the local population—as well as sit-down dining uses.	NI, O4
Pursue opportunities for development of regional (potential outlet retail) as well as neighborhood-serving retail closer to Riverside Parkway and I-20.	NI, O4

## Create Greater Flexibility in Zoning Codes

*Houston, Texas*

In the late 1990s Houston realized significant challenges to housing affordability in its core neighborhoods. To battle this, the city reduced minimum lot sizes from 5,000 SF all the way down to as low as 1,400 SF. In 2013 this policy was extended to the entire city, creating greater opportunities for missing middle housing. As a result, duplex, triplex, and quadruplex construction increased from around 75 units in 2013 to more than 700 units in 2022, a nearly 10-fold increase in the delivery of these more affordable unit types.



In addition this ordinance allows smaller single-family detached homes to be built, with the homes below being 1,445 SF and selling for \$245,000.

Provision of such ordinances in Mableton could create greater opportunities for more moderately-priced housing that could penetrate that missing middle market (households earning between 60% and 120% of Area Median Income—AMI) and help address significant challenges of affordability that are present not only in Mableton but throughout the Atlanta Metro and US overall.



# CHAPTER 4



## Housing Element

### Introduction

Housing is becoming an increasingly challenging issue in Mableton, throughout Metro Atlanta, and throughout the US, as higher costs of construction, challenges in supply (particularly on the for-sale side), and long-term demographic challenges significantly impact product affordability and availability.

These challenges are further exacerbated by near-term Federal policies, which may lead to fewer support resources at the state and national levels, and will keep housing challenging in the coming decade and potentially beyond.



*Credit: Apartments.com*

### Housing Demographics

Home ownership in Mableton is quite high today, with around 72% of all households owning their homes, with only 28% of households being renters. This is higher than that of the Atlanta Metro overall (65.8% owners) and Cobb County (67%) and reflects a lack of rental apartment development in the city over the past decade. The US Census shows that Mableton’s stock of multifamily rental housing decreased slightly from 2012 to 2023, although its count of single-family rentals increased by nearly 300 units during the period. Overall, roughly 78% of the growth in housing in the city occurred in for-sale product.

Among homeowners in Mableton, 70% are 45 years of age and older, with only 30% being under 45 (**Figure 4-1**). These households are primarily couples (60.8%), with around 19% being single, and 17% being non-traditional families (single-parent or multi-generational households). Roughly 45% of Mableton’s current homeowners earn above \$100,000 annually (**Figure 4-2**), a minimum mark now needed to afford new for-sale housing product in the city and only 25% of renters can afford to purchase new for-sale product.

Figure 4-1. Target Market Age Distribution, Ownership

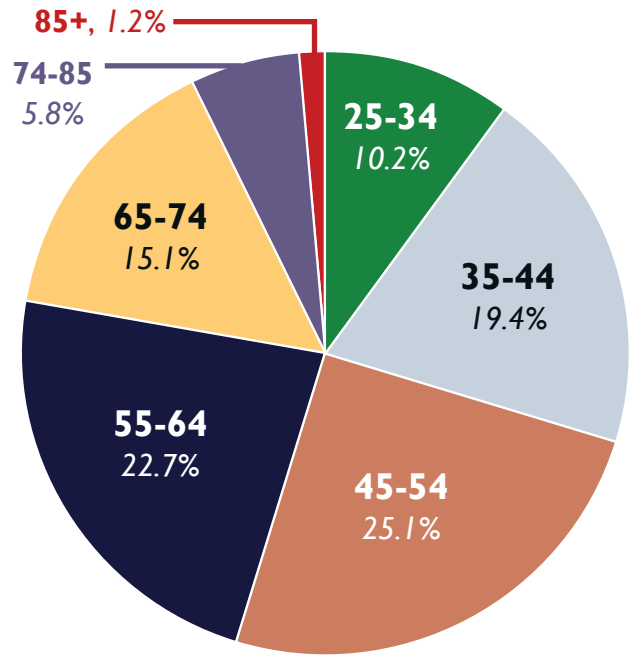
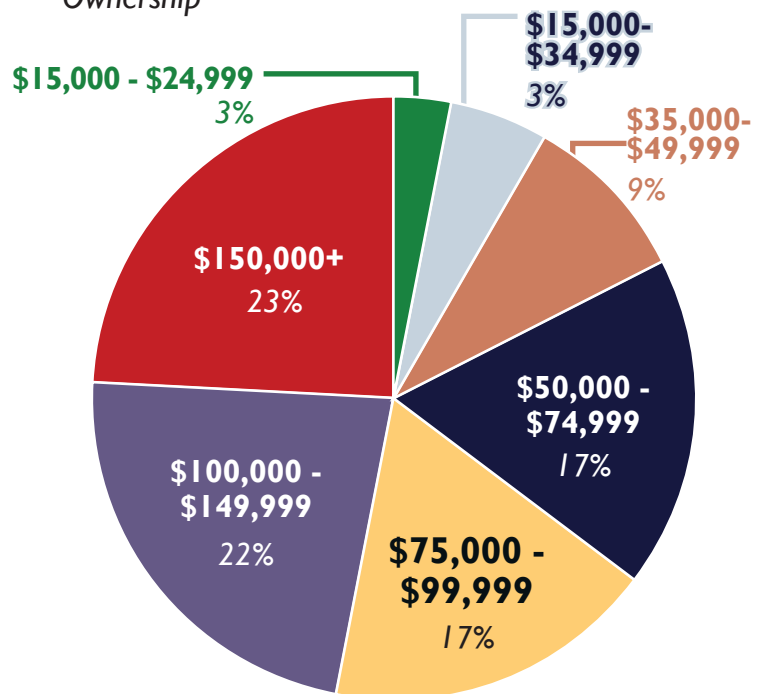


Figure 4-2. Target Market Income Distribution, Ownership



## HOUSING ELEMENT

Renter demographics are more modest than homeowner demographics, with 30% of renters being married couples, 27% being singles, and a significant 34% being other families, many of whom are likely economically-distressed. Indeed, an estimated 56% of Mableton renters are paying more than 30% of their income on rent, a level HUD defines as being economically-distressed.

Renters in Mableton trend relatively young (**Figure 4-3**), particularly relative to homeowners, with 54% being under the age of 45 (compared to only 30% of owners) and 80% having incomes under \$100,000 annually (**Figure 4-4**), an income level currently needed to afford new for-sale residential product. Fully one-third of renters cannot afford new rental product (around a \$50,000 minimum income generally needed to afford new product).

This continued growth, however is being challenged by rising home prices which, coupled with housing

### For-Sale Housing

For-sale housing in Mableton, the greater Atlanta Metro, and throughout the United States, has been highly challenged by a combination of rising construction costs and higher mortgage rates which, combined with the lingering fallout of the Great Recession of the late 2000s and households left with poor credit ratings and bankruptcies on their record. This has greatly constrained the potential depth and support for new housing, a long-term challenge to neighborhood stability and to the traditional American Dream of homeownership.

Figure 4-3. Target Market Age Distribution, Renters

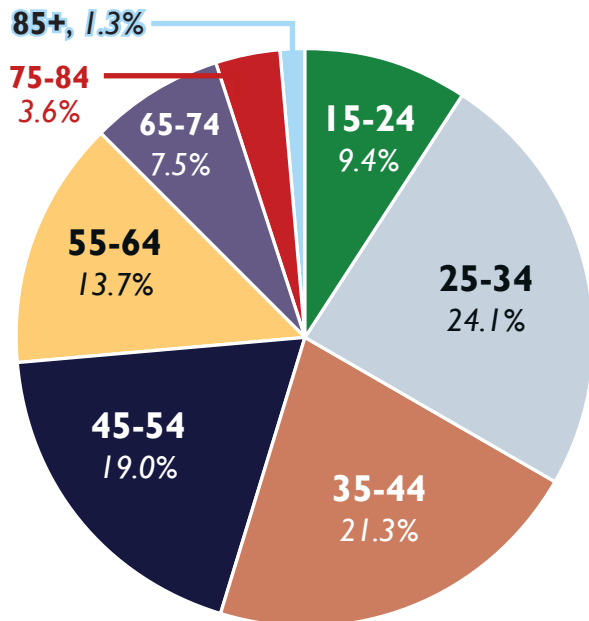
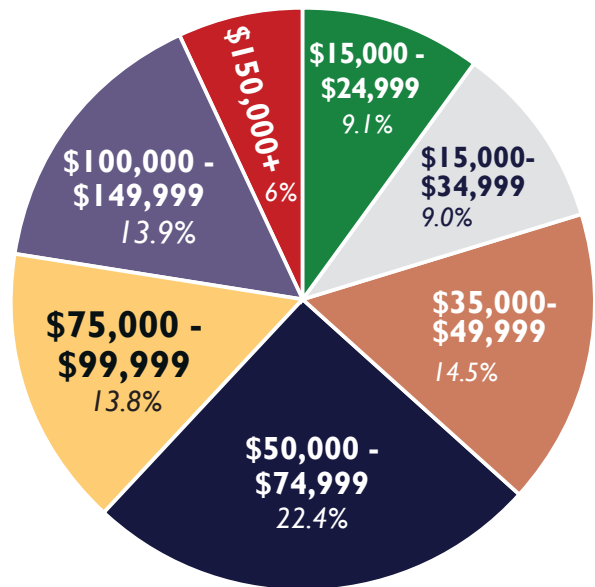


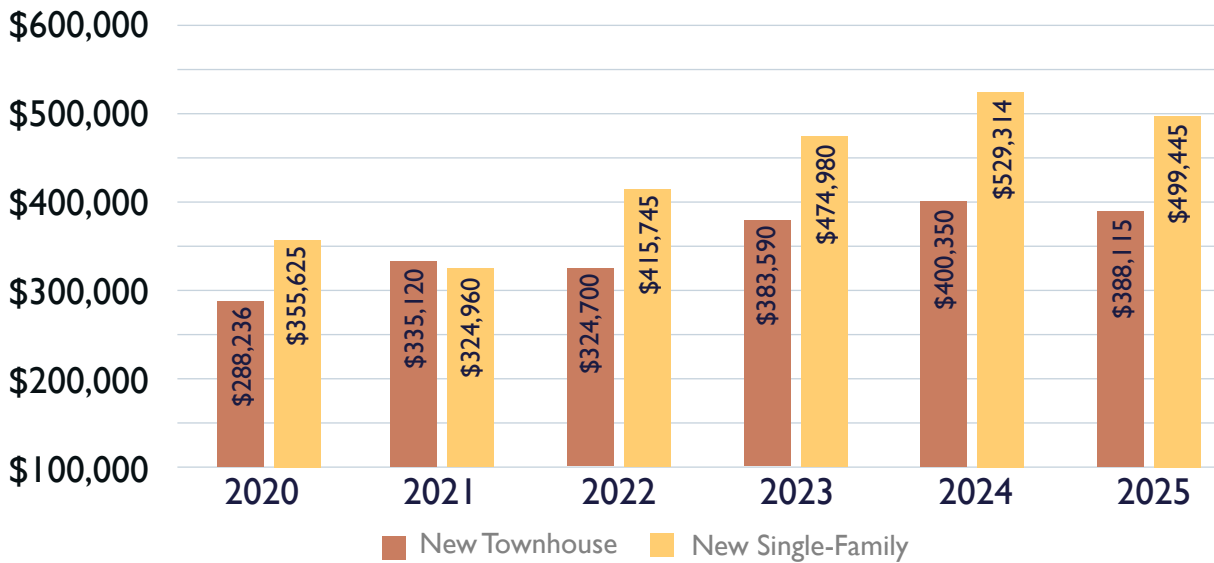
Figure 4-4. Renter Income Distribution



## HOUSING ELEMENT

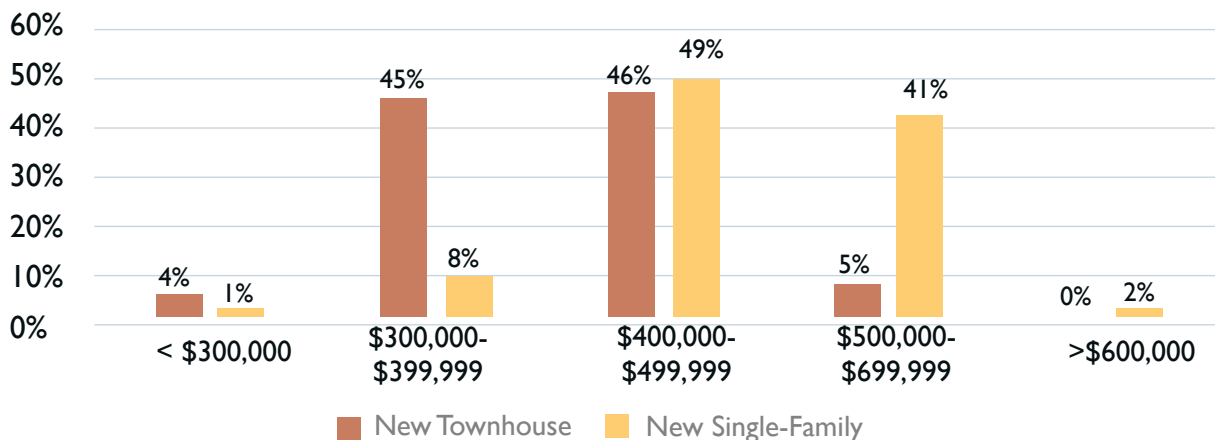
New home prices in Mableton have risen dramatically over the last six years (**Figure 4-5**), with median new single-family home prices now averaging or exceeding \$500,000 and new median attached townhouse prices approaching \$400,000. These median prices require incomes of more than \$165,000 to reasonably afford the new median detached home in Mableton, and \$133,000 to afford the median new attached townhouse in the city.

Figure 4-5. Median New Home Price in Mableton



When breaking out new townhouse and single-family detached by price in Mableton, most single-family home sales start at around \$400,000 or so, with townhouses largely being priced above \$300,000 (**Figure 4-6**).

Figure 4-6. Price Distribution of New Home Sales in Mableton, 2024 - 2025 YTD



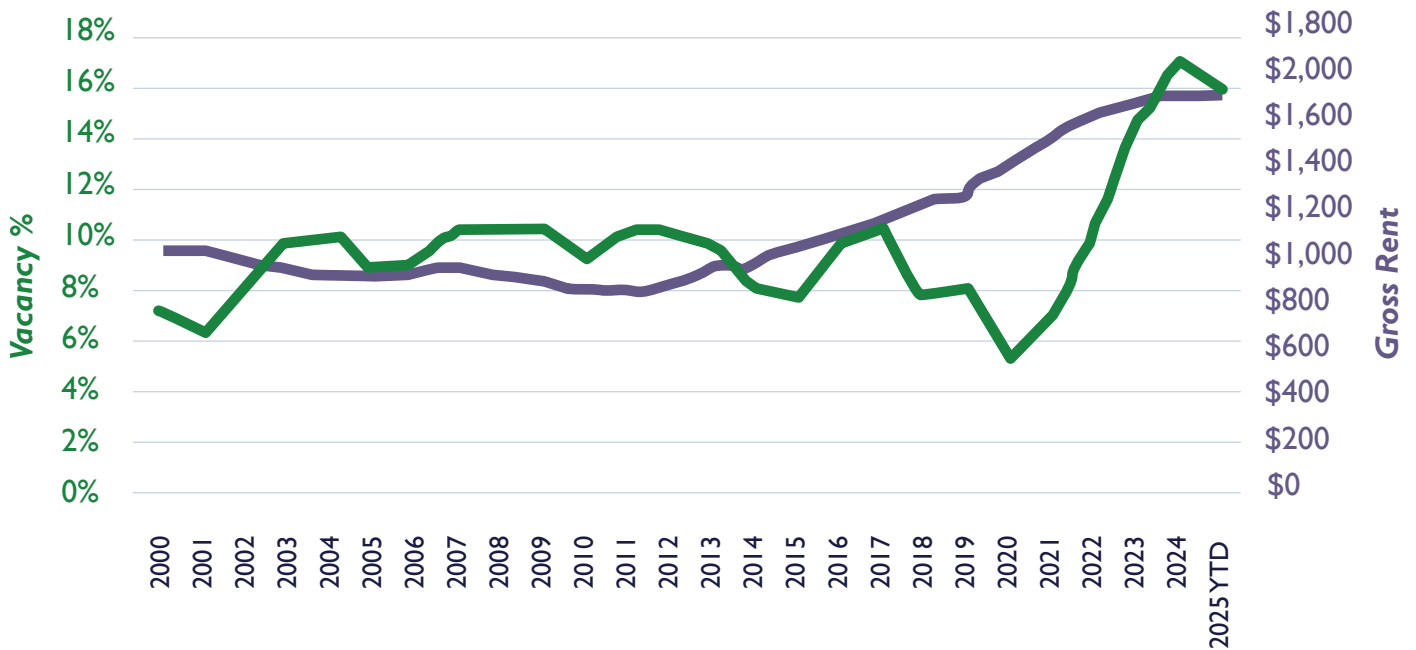
# HOUSING ELEMENT

This affordability challenge has resulted in the overwhelming share of new homes in Mableton occurring in attached townhouses, which now account for between 70% and 80% of new home sales. This contrasts sharply with surveys conducted in Lawrenceville in 2020, which found that only around 20% to 30% of respondents earning \$100,000 or more had an interest in buying a townhouse. In general, people buy attached product for one of two reasons: either they can't afford single-family product in the area or the townhouse product offers them a sense of lifestyle they cannot find in single-family homes. This latter factor could be related to reduced home maintenance found in attached product but also could be found in the provision of attached product in more lifestyle locations, such as in more walkable town center locations.

## Rental Housing

As referenced earlier, Mableton has not seen a significant amount of multifamily over the past decade and beyond, even as the costs of for-sale housing have continued to push northward. Indeed, more than 83% of Mableton's rental apartment stock was built before 2000 and only 14% of Mableton's rental apartments have been built since 2015, as compared to 31% of Metro Atlanta apartments.

Figure 4-7. Mableton Rental Multifamily, Gross Rent and Vacancy



## HOUSING ELEMENT

With nearly 925 units delivering in 2023 and 2024 vacancy rates among rental apartments in Mableton has increased to around 16% today (Q2 2025), up from lows of around 5.2% in 2020. This higher vacancy isn't just related to new deliveries in Mableton but is found throughout Metro Atlanta and the Southeast overall, where record deliveries have been occurring in 2024 and 2025. Among Class A/B+ product in Mableton, rents have grown by roughly 26% from 2020 through 2025 (year-to-date), a rate exceeding that of Atlanta overall (17.6%).

New market-rate rental product in Mableton is achieving rents of around \$1.80/SF up to \$2.10/SF, with the highest being seen at The Millery Mableton on Floyd Road. These rents, while strong and significantly higher than those seen a decade ago, are too low to support denser product with decked parking; thus, any new multifamily product developed in Mableton will need to be surface-parked true garden product or urban garden product such as The Millery Mableton.



*Credit: Apartment Guide*

## Recent Development

Mableton has remained a strong housing development market over the past decade or more, adding more than 1,600 new for-sale units since 2020 and more than 1,060 rental apartments as well (**Table 4-8**). As noted earlier, the strong performance of attached product, both for-sale and rental, is related both to the lack of land supply and Mableton's position as a closer-in suburb. Affordability challenges also impact the ability of the city to continue gaining strong detached new home construction.

*Table 4-8. Recent Development*

<b>Land Use (units added)</b>	<b>New Units, 2010-2019</b>	<b>New Units, 2020-2025</b>
<b>Single-Family</b>	907	605
<b>Townhouse</b>	591	1,060
<b>Rental Apartments</b>	104	1,066

## Previous Plans

As noted in the previous land use section, while Mableton is a new city, a number of previous planning documents do provide recommendations relative to housing in Mableton. These plans include:

- Mableton LCI Update (2009)
- Cobb County Strategic Plan (2023)

### *Mableton LCI Update (2009)*

True to ARC’s Livable Communities Initiative (LCI), this plan promoted creation of locations that are less auto-dependent and more sustainable over time. Focusing on the Historic Mableton area, recommendations coming from this document include:

*Encourage a diversity of housing types in mixed-use development.*

*Study possibility of locating a Naturally-Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) based on provision of appropriate services for seniors.*

### *Cobb County Strategic Plan (2023)*

This higher-level plan provided for broad goals that relate to both economic development and housing. They include:

*Adapt land use policies that promote exclusionary zoning and inhibit a variety of housing options (assuming this relates to protection of established single-family neighborhoods).*

*Encourage mixed-income housing developments to create well-rounded housing communities.*

*Plan for senior housing options to accommodate an aging population.*

*Consider rent stabilization efforts to protect Cobb County tenants.*

## Needs and Opportunities

Mableton’s growth has been driven by a blend of regional accessibility and relative affordability, with housing largely creating demand for commercial uses in the city and driving growth forward. Housing, however, is increasingly challenged by local, regional, and national forces that could temper this growth going forward.

### Needs

#### **N1 BROADEN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN MABLETON**

Create potential for housing that appeals to a broader array of market audiences, from families to matures, singles, and childless couples via more lifestyle-driven locations and more walkable settings.

#### **N2 CREATE GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF HOUSING**

Creating more flexibility in development, including tempering restrictions on home and lot sizes, allowing zero-lot development and duplex/triplex units in single-family communities, as well as the allowance of ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) in targeted locations can provide a greater array of housing opportunities and potentially enhance affordability challenges in the city.

#### **N3 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS TO AGE WITHIN MABLETON**

The population of Mableton, a more established suburb in Atlanta, and that of the region and nation alike, is growing older, with many Eisenhowers and Baby Boomers (and, in the future, Gen-X) aging out of conventional single-family homes. Provision of more independent and assisted living locations in targeted areas, as well as provision of seniors-targeted homes (rental and for-sale) in more walkable/mixed-use locations

#### **N4 PROVIDE HOUSING IN MORE MIXED-USE AND WALKABLE FORMATS**

Mableton today is overwhelmingly comprised of subdivisions, townhome communities, and rental apartment communities that offer little in terms of walkability to parks, greenways, stores, and employment cores. Fostering the development of more walkable cores with connectivity to these other uses will be attractive to many uninterested in Mableton’s housing offerings today.

*Opportunities*

**01 FOCUS ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Identify opportunities to allow for more affordable housing throughout Mableton, including more attached and small-lot product, ADUs, and other housing units that create opportunities for independent rental and for-sale units.

**02 PROVIDE MORE LIFESTYLE-DRIVEN OPTIONS**

While Mableton offers a strong lifestyle proposition for those seeking a suburban setting, it offers more limited options for those seeking more walkable, small-town housing opportunities, such as small-lot and attached product in more mixed-use cores and walkable settings, and those along greenways, around parks, and along the river.

**03 FURTHER ATTRACTION TO FAMILIES**

Families are a natural audience for Mableton, so creating opportunities to enhance the area's attraction to this key group is important for Mableton. Focus on opportunities to improve area schools and to extend parks and greenways into neighborhood areas.

**04 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS HOUSING**

Mableton's residents are aging and will need to focus on more mature/seniors-friendly products, from single-story living to independent and assisted living, to more walkable areas where auto transport isn't as necessary. Creating opportunities for seniors housing will be a growing challenge for Mableton in the coming decades.

## Goals, Policies, and Key Actions

Mableton’s housing market is transitioning from one of greenfield development (developing vacant sites—usually much cheaper and allowing of more affordable development) to one of redevelopment, which is often more complicated and expensive to undertake. Broadening housing offerings in this environment will be important to providing a healthy and balanced housing market for all residents in Mableton, both existing and future.

### **I** *Create Greater Flexibility in Zoning Codes*

Provision of more affordable and more dense housing, housing that can appeal to all types of audiences, in a variety of settings.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY I.A: Create more flexibility in single-family neighborhoods.</i></b>	
Create opportunities for attached product, such as duplexes and triplexes in single-family neighborhoods.	N1, N2
Create opportunities for reducing minimum home sizes in targeted areas to lower total home construction costs and sales prices.	N1, N2, O1
Create opportunities for zero-lot development that can benefit mature markets and singles not wanting to deal with market.	N1, N2
<b><i>POLICY I.B: Increase housing flexibility in mixed-use cores.</i></b>	
Create greater flexibility in zoning within targeted mixed-use cores and along greenways and the River Line district to encourage delivery of more diverse housing products like including ADUs, attached product, and smaller-lot homes	N1, N2, N4

**2** Further the family market

The family market is a key audience for residential products in Mableton, and keeping that family market vital will position Mableton to remain a thriving area in the coming decades.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 2.A: Support school quality in Mableton</b>	
Work with Cobb County to invest in Mableton’s public schools and facilitate opportunities with private schools and charter schools to locate and upgrade facilities in Mableton.	O3
Invest in parks, greenways and other connections with schools that facilitate both learning and non-road access to area schools and better tie schools to the community.	O3
<b>POLICY 2.B: Encourage the development of schools in more walkable areas to further connections to more dense residential areas.</b>	
Pursue strategies to facilitate the location of schools in or adjacent to mixed-use cores, where students can walk to school, to grab after-school food or to parks, without needing rides or walking in the streets.	N4, O3
Consider policies such as density trade-offs to secure sites or proactively buying sites for future schools in these cores.	O3
Provide opportunities for ADUs in single-family neighborhoods to better allow for multigenerational families to live together.	O3

**3** *Enable Seniors to Age in Place*

One of the biggest trends occurring in the US, the metro, and in Mableton is the aging of our society. Creating greater opportunities for maturing singles and households to stay in Mableton, close to family, houses of worship, social networks, etc., should be a priority for Mableton.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 3.A: Encourage the development of a mix of housing types in mixed-use cores.</i></b>	
Provide zoning flexibility to allow for smaller-lot and zero-lot housing, as well as attached and semi-attached housing in mixed-use cores.	N3, O4
Create policies that provide for independent, assisted, and memory care housing in targeted areas, including areas proximate to hospitals.	N3, O4
Pursue opportunities for senior-targeted or housing on City property near the core of Mableton, including along Veterans Memorial Highway.	N3, O4
<b><i>POLICY 3.B: Create greater flexibility to allow for seniors to stay with extended families.</i></b>	
Pursue changes in zoning codes to facilitate and encourage development of ADUs in single-family zones.	N3, O4

# HOUSING ELEMENT

## 4 Create Lifestyle Opportunities

Mableton offers strong opportunities for those valuing more suburban locations in which to live, but opportunities exist to pursue housing in more lifestyle-driven locations.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 4.A: Support school quality in Mableton</i></b>	
Plan for the creation of more dense, mixed-use cores that provide for a variety of housing opportunities, including attached and higher-density housing.	N4, O2
Program parks, greenways, and open space in these cores to create open space and park orientations.	N4, O2
Provide zoning and planning to allow and encourage housing with ground floor offices or stores and/or adjacency to these uses.	N4, O2



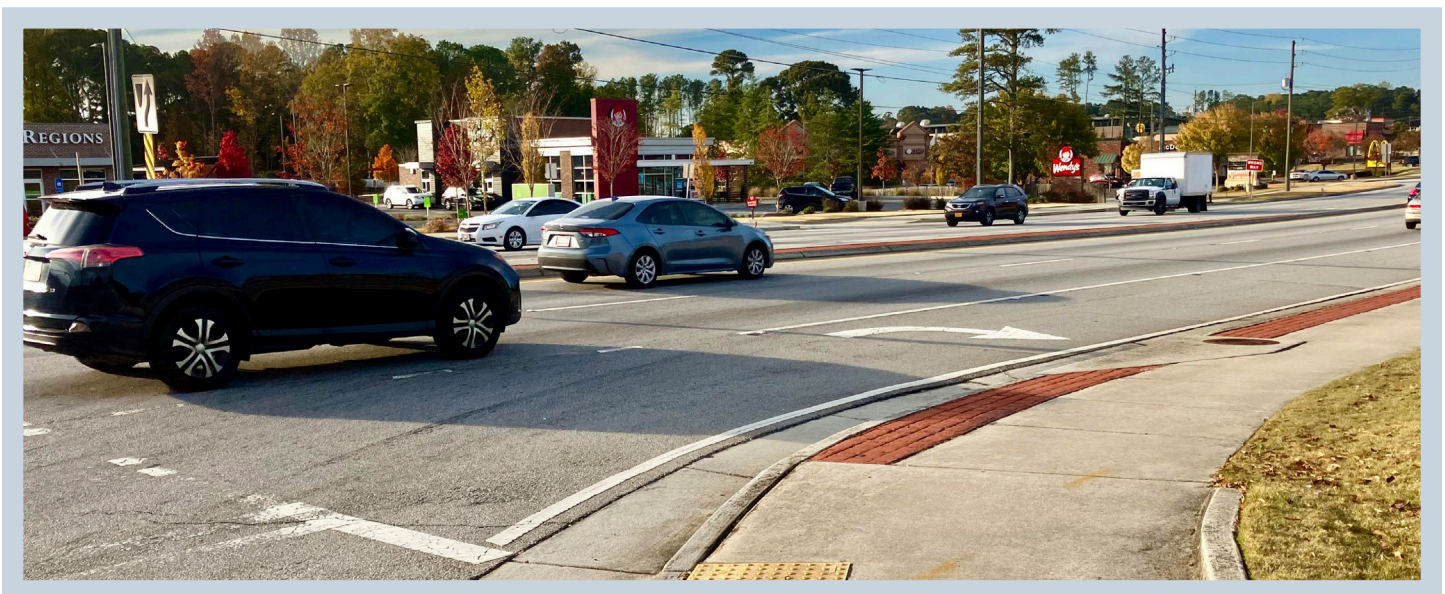
# CHAPTER 5



## Transportation Element

### Introduction

Transportation is a vital component of daily life in Mableton, Georgia, facilitating the movement of residents, businesses, and visitors throughout the community. As the largest city in Cobb County, Mableton is committed to enhancing mobility, safety, and connectivity through strategic planning and collaboration. Since its incorporation in November 2022, Mableton has been working closely with the Cobb County Department of Transportation (Cobb DOT) to manage and improve transportation infrastructure. This partnership ensures the maintenance and development of roads, sidewalks, and transit systems that serve the city's nearly 80,000 residents. Public transportation in Mableton is primarily provided by CobbLinc, the bus transit system operated by Cobb County. CobbLinc offers local and express bus routes connecting Mableton to key destinations within Cobb County and the greater Atlanta metropolitan area. Mableton is served by several significant transportation corridors, including Georgia State Route 139 (Martin Luther King Jr. Drive), which connects the city to Atlanta and other neighboring communities. The city is actively engaged in planning and development initiatives aimed at improving transportation infrastructure. These efforts include enhancing pedestrian and bicycle pathways, expanding public transit options, and upgrading roadways to accommodate increasing traffic demands.



*Credit: Atlanta News First*

## Transportation Focus Areas

### *Active Transportation*

Active transportation is a growing priority for the City of Mableton, GA, particularly as the community looks to build a more walkable and accessible environment. However, much of Mableton’s existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure was developed under Cobb County jurisdiction and remains limited or disconnected. Sidewalk coverage is inconsistent, and safe crossings—especially along major roads like Veterans Memorial Highway and Floyd Road—are often lacking. As Mableton develops its own identity and long-term transportation strategy, integrating active modes with land use planning, local amenities, and transit access will be essential for improving safety, equity, and quality of life.

### *Surface Transportation*

Mableton’s roadway system must serve a wide range of users, including personal vehicles, delivery trucks, public transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. At present, the majority of infrastructure in the city favors automobile travel, reflecting a legacy of car-centric suburban development. This has created challenges for residents who rely on alternative modes or who live in areas where local roads lack sidewalks, bike lanes, or traffic calming. In order to create a safer and more balanced transportation system, the City of Mableton will need to prioritize multimodal improvements, retrofit existing corridors, and partner with Cobb County DOT on strategic upgrades to key routes such as Mableton Parkway and Factory Shoals Road.

### *Public Transportation*

Public transit service in Mableton is primarily provided by **CobbLinc**, offering limited routes that connect residents to nearby hubs like Smyrna, Austell, and downtown Atlanta. While these services are vital for many, gaps remain in both frequency and coverage, particularly in neighborhoods farther from major corridors. First- and last-mile connectivity is also an issue, as sidewalks and bike routes to transit stops are often missing or inadequate. As a newly incorporated city, Mableton has the opportunity to advocate for expanded service, improved stops, and better integration of transit planning with future development. Coordinated investments and partnerships with regional agencies will be key to making public transit a more viable option for a broader share of the population.

## Existing Conditions

### Commuting Patterns

In 2023, the majority of workers in Mableton, GA (68.3%) drove alone to work (**Figure 5-1**), making it the most common mode of commuting. This was followed by 17.4% of the workforce who worked from home and 11.6% who carpooled. Other modes, such as public transit, walking, and biking, comprised a much smaller share.

Vehicle ownership data further reflects a car-dependent community, with the largest share of households owning two cars. Commute times also highlight this dependency: employees in Mableton face an average commute of 30.6 minutes—longer than the national average of 26.6 minutes. Notably, 1.48% of the workforce are “super commuters,” traveling more than 90 minutes one way.

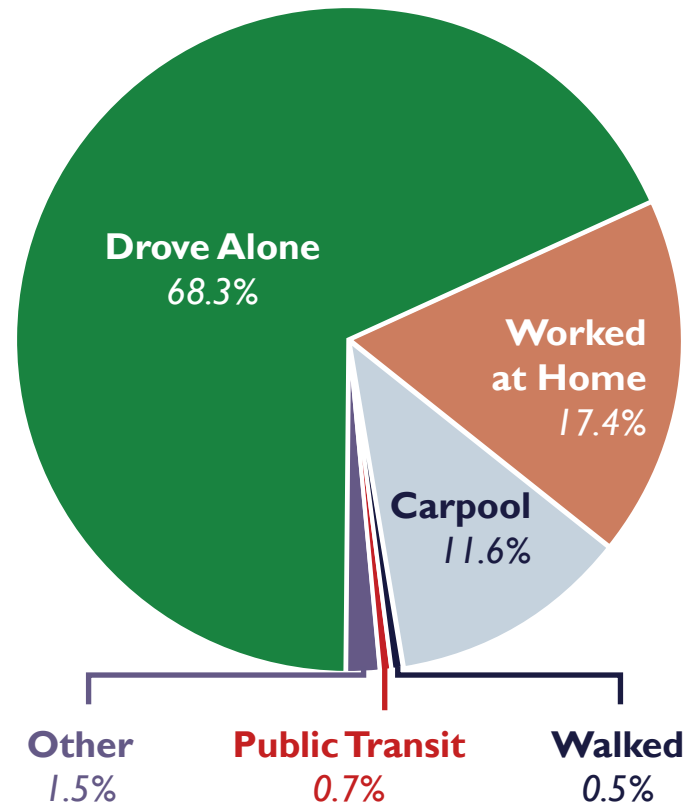
### Active Transportation

#### Sidewalks

Since becoming an incorporated city in 2022, Mableton has placed a strong focus on upgrading its infrastructure—particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Many areas of the community were developed without sidewalks or sufficient public amenities, creating challenges for walkability, safety, and accessibility.

To overcome these gaps, Mableton is using **Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)** funds to support key infrastructure projects. One notable example is the Mableton

Figure 5-1. Trips to Work by Type



Parkway Pedestrian Improvements project. This effort involves constructing a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail on the west side and a 5-foot sidewalk on the east side of Mableton Parkway. The improvements stretch approximately 2.4 miles from Discovery Boulevard to Factory Shoals Road, creating safer, more connected routes for pedestrians and cyclists alike ([Cobb County SPLOST Update, 2017](#)). Few of the major pedestrian improvement projects include: Austell Road Sidewalk (estimated completion date Spring 2024), Mableton Parkway Pedestrian Improvements, Phase I (estimated completion October 2023), Old Alabama Road Sidewalks (estimated completion Summer 2024). ([Cobb County Construction](#))

### *Trail Development and Connectivity*

Mableton’s trail development strategy focuses on both recreational and transportation purposes, aiming to link neighborhoods with regional trail systems (**Figure 5-2, pg. 60**).

Notable projects include:

- **Floyd Road Trail Enhancements:** The Georgia Department of Transportation allocated \$500,000 for bicycle and pedestrian improvements on the second phase of the Floyd Road Trail. This includes constructing a 10-foot-wide trail on the west side of Floyd Road, connecting Hicks Road to the Silver Comet Trailhead near Bates.
- **Chattahoochee RiverLands Project:** The Trust for Public Land acquired a 9-acre parcel at the corner of Mableton Parkway and Discovery Boulevard to serve as the first regional trailhead for the Chattahoochee RiverLands, a planned 100-mile linear park along the Chattahoochee River. This trailhead will connect Mableton to Smyrna and link the under-construction Mableton Parkway Trail to the Silver Comet Trail.

These upgrades will also link Mableton to larger regional networks, including the Chattahoochee River Trail and Silver Comet Trail, providing both recreational and commuting options. Further efforts are outlined in the city’s 2024 Urban Redevelopment Plan, which identifies infrastructure deficiencies such as outdated road designs and limited pedestrian access as key redevelopment priorities ([Mableton Urban Redevelopment Plan, 2024](#)).

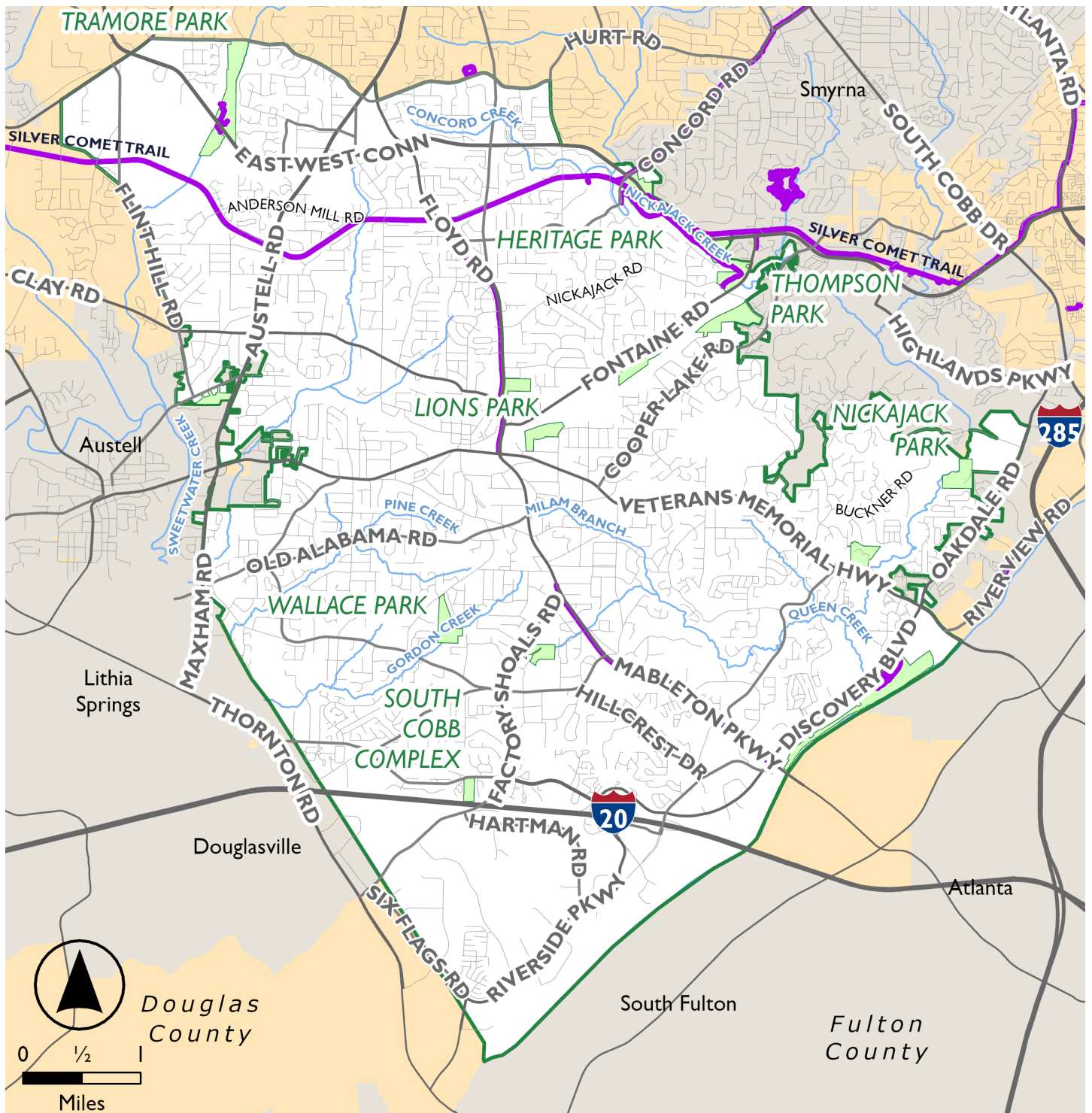
In support of these initiatives, the city has also established the Mableton Development Authority, which works to attract investment and coordinate redevelopment efforts that address infrastructure, transportation, and land use challenges ([Cobb County Government – Mableton Development Authority](#)).

Through targeted investments, partnerships, and community planning, Mableton is laying the foundation for a more walkable, accessible, and sustainable future.



*Floyd Road Trail, Credit: Trail Link*

Figure 5-2. Mableton Trails



**LEGEND**

Parks	Interstates	Existing Trails
Mableton City Limits	Arterials	Chattahoochee River
Surrounding Cities	Other Roads	
Surrounding Counties		

### Surface Transportation

#### Traffic Condition

Mableton, officially incorporated in late 2022, is the newest and largest city in Cobb County, Georgia, with an estimated population of nearly 80,000. As a newly formed municipality within the Atlanta metropolitan area, Mableton is gradually shaping its transportation infrastructure to support residential and economic growth.

#### Roadway Network

Mableton's road system consists of a mix of local residential streets and higher-capacity routes such as Mableton Parkway, Floyd Road, and Veterans Memorial Highway (U.S. Route 78). These roads play a vital role in connecting residents to downtown Atlanta, nearby suburbs, and regional amenities.

#### Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Based on ADT counts obtained from Cobb County data, Austell Road and Veterans Memorial Highway are the primary corridors in the Mableton area, each carrying over 30,000 vehicles per day. These high-volume routes serve as critical east-west and north-south connections. They are followed by East-West Connector, and South Gordon Road, which carry between 20,000 and 30,000 vehicles daily (**Figure 5-3, pg. 62**). These corridors also play a significant role in regional connectivity and daily commuting patterns.

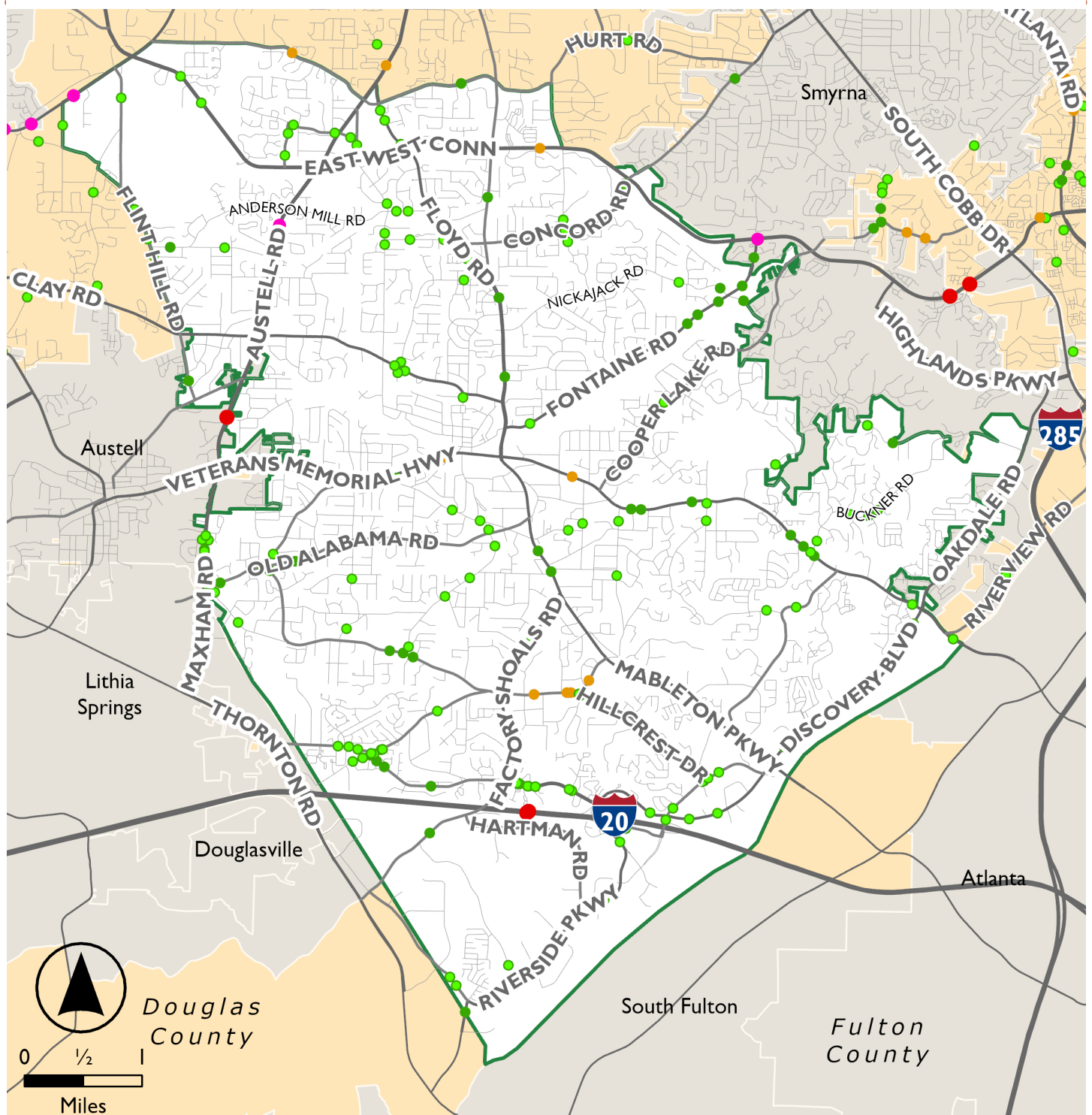
### Bridges in Mableton: Supporting Mobility and Preserving History

In Mableton, bridges serve not only as critical infrastructure for local travel but also as enduring symbols of the community's historical roots. A key example is the Concord Covered Bridge, situated along Concord Road near the boundary with Smyrna. This bridge spans Nickajack Creek and stands at the heart of Cobb County's first designated historic district, established in 1986 and it is one of the 13 covered bridges remaining in the state.

Constructed in the mid-19th century, the bridge is still operational and serves as a rare surviving example of historic wooden bridge design. Beyond its practical function, it represents the legacy of Mableton's early milling communities and has become a meaningful landmark for area residents. In 2017, major preservation work was carried out, including the addition of protective beams designed to shield the structure from damage by over-height vehicles. Despite these measures and the presence of multiple warning signs and a designated vehicle turnaround, the bridge continues to be impacted by vehicles exceeding the posted 7-foot clearance limit.

This recurring issue illustrates the ongoing challenge of preserving historic infrastructure while accommodating the realities of modern transportation. As Mableton looks ahead to 2041, sustaining the bridge's historical integrity while improving safety will be a priority. Potential approaches may include enhanced traffic enforcement, upgraded signage, and roadway improvements that better serve pedestrians and cyclists while respecting the character of this unique corridor.

Figure 5-3. ADT Counts



**LEGEND**

Mableton City Limits	Interstates	<b>ADT Counts</b>	30,001 - 40,000
Surrounding Cities	Arterials	<= 10,000	>= 40,000
Surrounding Counties	Other Roads	10,001 - 20,000	
		20,001 - 30,000	

# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## Level of Service (LOS)

According to the Atlanta Regional Metropolitan Transportation Model, the following maps show roadway levels of service (LOS) during the 2020 AM and PM peak periods. LOS E and F, shown in pink and red on the maps (**Figures 5-4 and 5-5**), indicate corridors operating at or above capacity. These congested corridors include the I-20 and Thornton Road interchange, Austell Road and East-West Connector, and sections of Floyd Road SW and U.S. Highway 278.

Within the vicinity of Mableton, the following sections are notable:

- **Interstate 285 (I-285):** This beltway around Atlanta is one of the busiest highways in the U.S., with some segments handling up to 250,000 vehicles daily. The interchange at I-285 and I-20 near Mableton is particularly congested and is ranked among the top truck bottlenecks nationally (GDOT).
- **Interstate 20 (I-20):** Running east-west through Mableton, I-20 experiences heavy traffic volumes, especially near its junctions with I-285 and I-75/I-85.

Although the city government is now responsible for managing local streets, it works closely with Cobb County and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the maintenance of major corridors and state highways. For issues such as potholes or road damage, residents can contact Mableton's local authorities or report concerns via Cobb County's transportation services (Cobb DOT).

Figure 5-4. 2020 Morning LOS

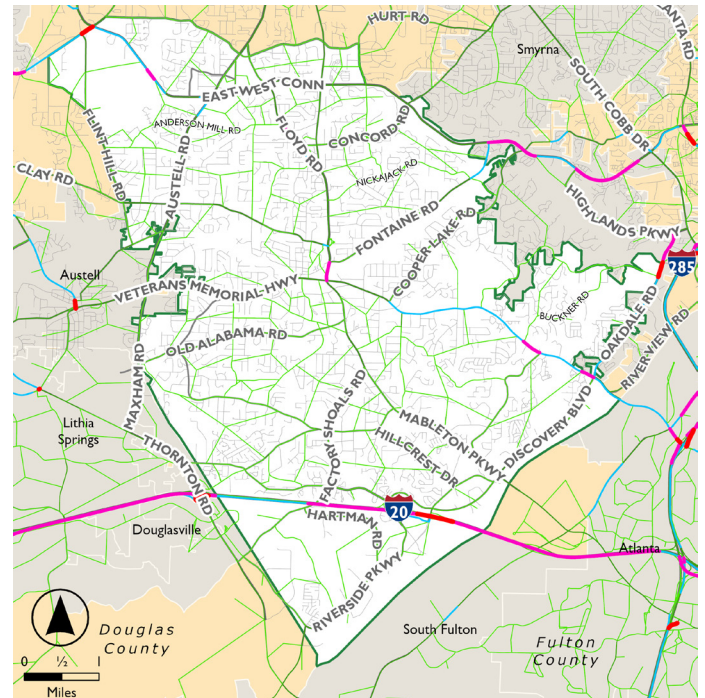
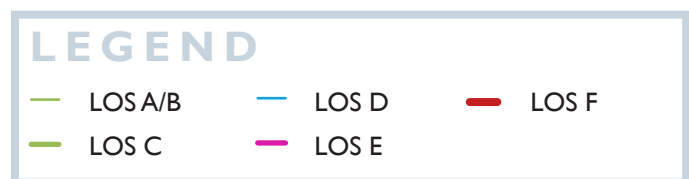
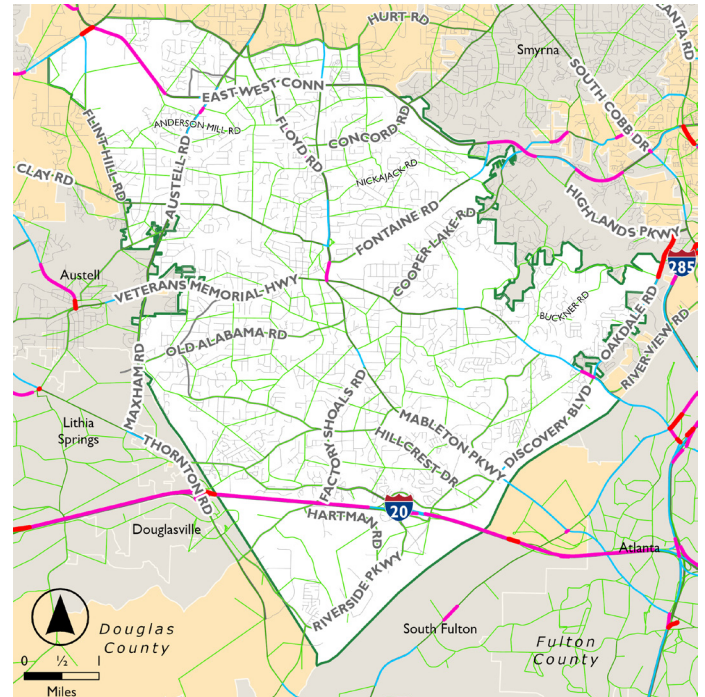


Figure 5-5. 2020 Evening LOS



## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

### Traffic Safety: Crash Trends

In Mableton, concerns about roadway safety are becoming increasingly prominent alongside persistent traffic congestion. Heavily traveled corridors such as Veterans Memorial Highway (US 278), Mableton Parkway (SR 139), and Floyd Road consistently experience high vehicle volumes, contributing to elevated risks of crashes. These routes serve as key connectors to major regional highways like I-285 and the East-West Connector, making them particularly susceptible to traffic-related incidents.

According to data available through the Georgia Department of Transportation’s Crash Data Dashboard, many of Mableton’s most serious crashes occur at intersections or along segments with high conflict points and limited pedestrian infrastructure ([Georgia DOT Crash Reporting](#)). These patterns reinforce the importance of targeted improvements in roadway design, signal timing, and pedestrian safety measures.

Between 2022 and 2024, Mableton experienced a gradual decline in the total number of reported crashes—from 3,043 in 2022 to 2,990 in 2023, and further to 2,707 in 2024 (**Figure 5-6**). This downward trend indicates progress; however, safety concerns persist, particularly regarding crash severity.

Over the past three years, Mableton recorded a total of 25 crash-related fatalities, of which 12 involved pedestrians. **Figure 5-7** illustrates the total number of fatalities, while **Figure 5-8** shows the number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists from 2022 to 2024. The high proportion of pedestrian fatalities is a significant concern, especially given that

most occurred under low or adverse lighting conditions—underscoring the need for improved nighttime visibility and pedestrian safety measures.

Figure 5-6. Year-wise Total Road Crashes (2022-2024)

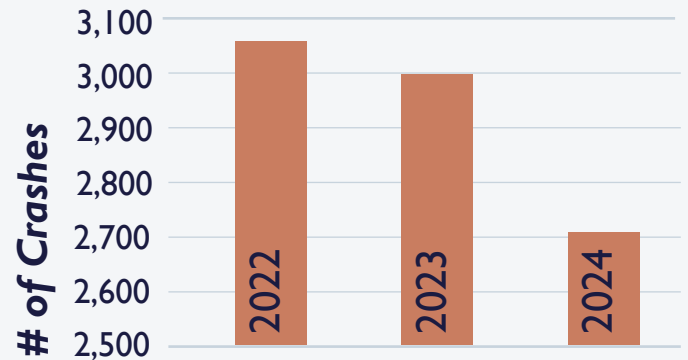


Figure 5-7. Year-wise Total Road Crash Fatalities (2022-2024)

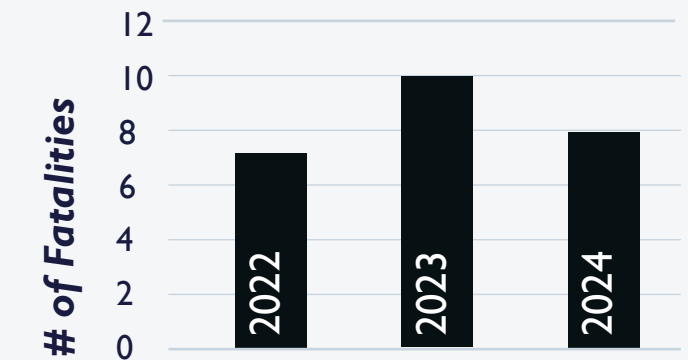
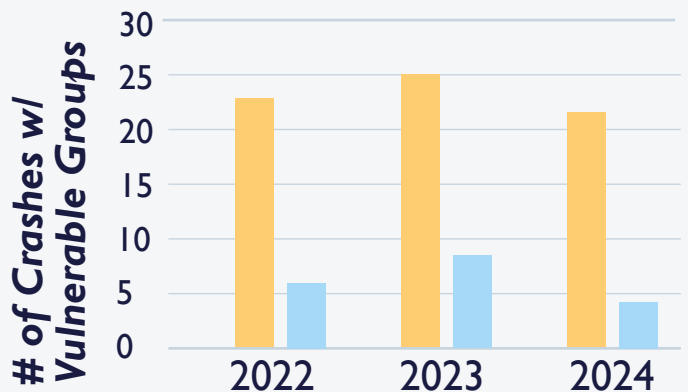


Figure 5-8. Year-wise Total Road Crashes Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists (2022-2024)



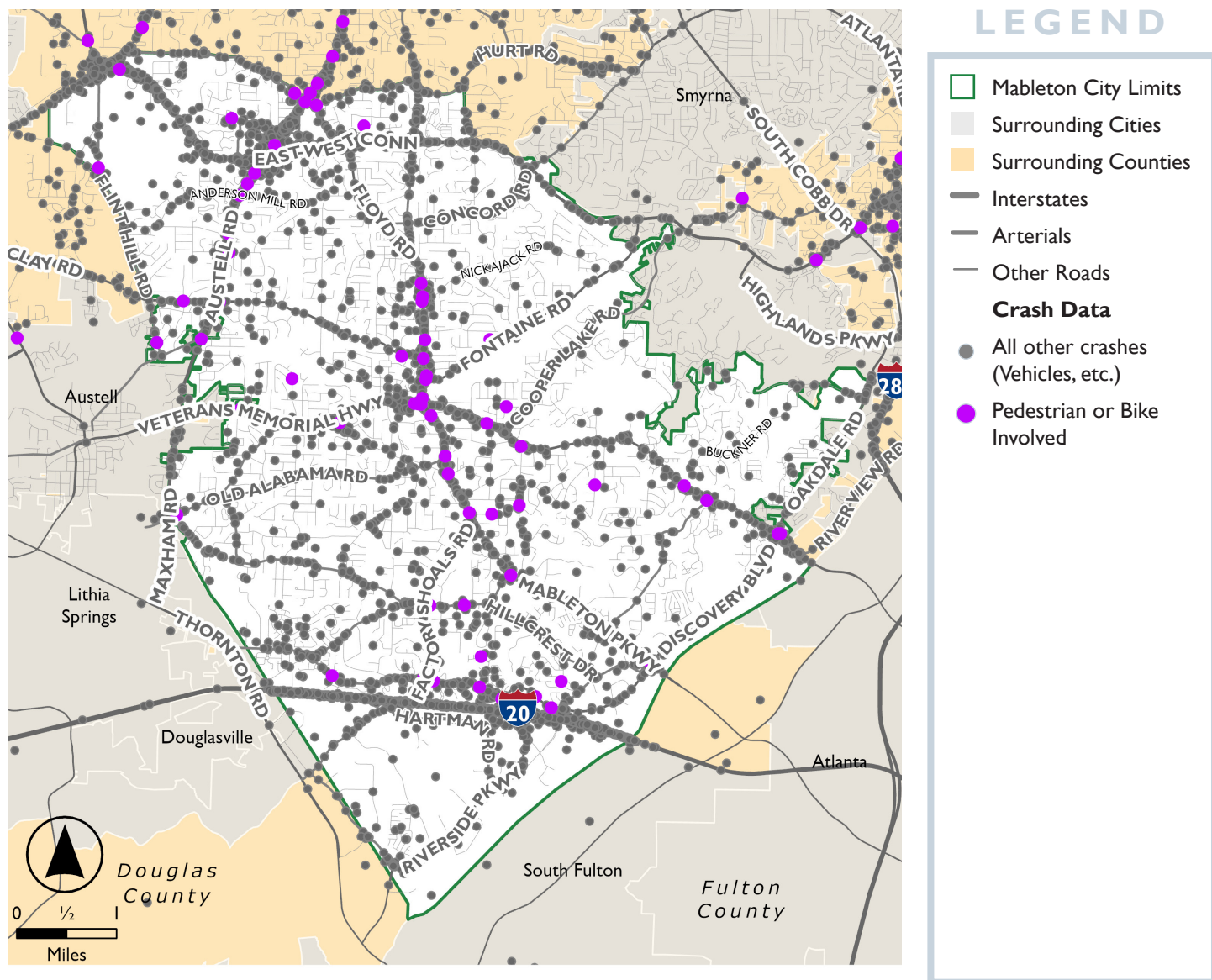
## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

**Figure 5-9** shows the spatial distribution of crashes within the city of Mableton. Spatial analysis also highlights two high-risk areas:

1. The intersection of Austell Road and the East-West Connector.
2. A 0.8-mile segment between the Clay Road–Floyd Road SW intersection and the US 78–Floyd Road intersection, including the Fontaine Road SW corridor.

One positive aspect is Cobb County’s rapid emergency response, with an average arrival time of approximately 3.5 minutes, which is faster than the county average. This likely contributes to improved survival rates in severe crashes.

Figure 5-9. Crash Data, 2022 - 2024



### Traffic Conditions and Management Strategies

Due to its proximity to Atlanta, Mableton is affected by regional congestion—particularly during morning and evening commute hours. The city and surrounding jurisdictions apply several tools to manage traffic flow and improve mobility:

- **Signal Timing Improvements:** Mableton benefits from GDOT’s Regional Traffic Operations Program (RTOP), which fine-tunes traffic signals to reduce delays and enhance corridor performance across multiple cities in metro Atlanta (GDOT).
- **Smart Transportation Systems:** Cobb County has deployed technologies like traffic cameras and dynamic message boards to monitor roadway conditions and keep drivers informed. These intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are designed to increase safety and reduce traffic disruptions across key travel routes (Cobb ITS Report).

On a broader level, the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan (ARC MTP) outlines funding priorities and transportation strategies for metro Atlanta. As part of this network, Mableton is set to benefit from regional investments in mobility, safety, and infrastructure expansion.

### Public Transportation

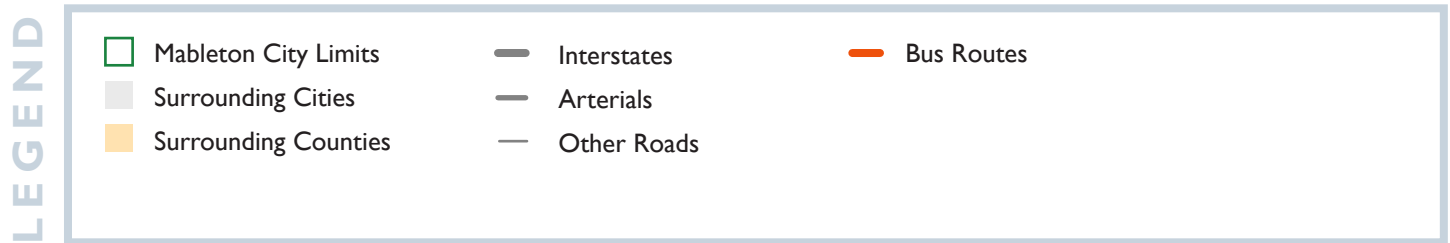
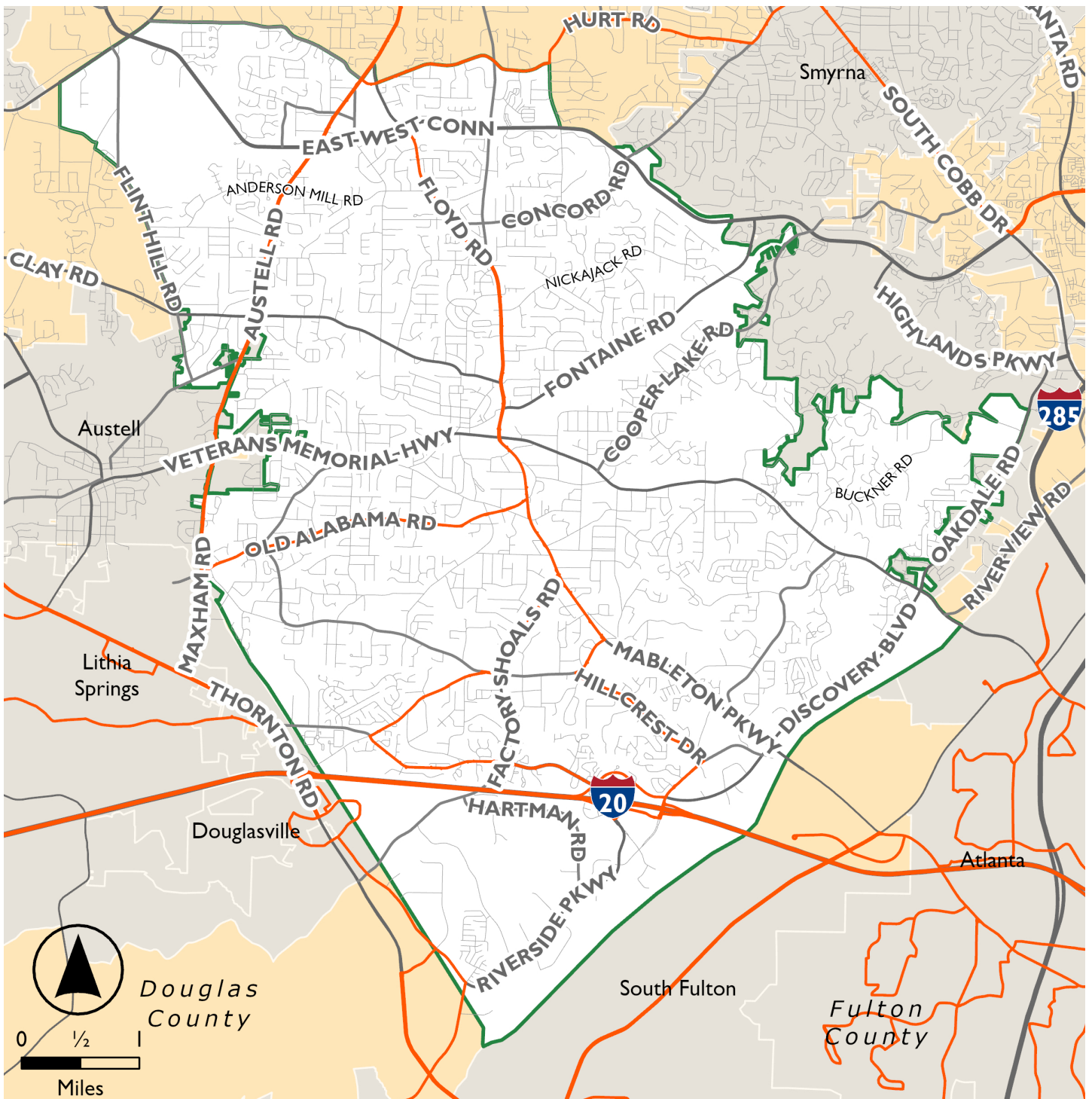
The City of Mableton is also participating in long-term transit planning led by Cobb County. In early 2024, the Cobb DOT Director addressed Mableton’s City Council regarding a proposed transit referendum that could bring expanded public transportation options to the area. Although it was not approved in the November election, the proposed enhancements included new bus routes or connections to regional transit systems (Cobb Courier).

Mableton, recently incorporated as a city, currently lacks its own municipal transit system.

**Figure 5-10** illustrates bus routes operated within the city limits. However, residents have access to regional transit services:

- **CobbLinc:** Operated by Cobb County, CobbLinc provides bus services that connect Mableton to other parts of Cobb County and the Atlanta metropolitan area. As of 2023, CobbLinc reported an annual ridership of approximately 854,074 unlinked passenger trips, with average weekday ridership around 2,760 trips. [transit.dot.gov](https://transit.dot.gov). Routes such as 25 and 30 connect Mableton to key destinations, including the MARTA H.E. Holmes station, facilitating regional connectivity.
- **MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority):** Although MARTA’s heavy rail does not extend to Mableton, bus routes and nearby stations provide connectivity to the broader Atlanta region.

Figure 5-10. Bus Routes



## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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Efforts are underway to improve non-motorized transportation options:

- **Mableton Parkway Pedestrian Improvements Phase 2:** This project includes constructing a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail on the west side of Mableton Parkway, from Veterans Memorial Highway to Factory Shoals Road. It aims to provide a continuous connection from just north of the Chattahoochee River to the Silver Comet Trail.
- **Chattahoochee River Lands Greenway Trail:** Mableton has been selected as a pilot site for this regional trail project, enhancing access to the Chattahoochee River and promoting recreational opportunities.

## Upcoming Initiatives and Projects

### 1 *Regional Transit Collaborations*

Mableton is participating in regional efforts to improve transit services:

**I-285 Express Lanes Transit Study:** This study explores the potential for transit services along the I-285 corridor, with Mableton being one of the partner cities. The goal is to identify solutions that reduce congestion and improve mobility across the region.

### 2 *Establishment of the Mableton Development Authority*

In May 2024, the South Cobb Redevelopment Authority was officially amended to become the Mableton Development Authority. This body aims to facilitate economic development, which includes improving transportation infrastructure to attract and retain businesses.

## Needs and Opportunities

Mableton 2045 outlines several objectives to enhance Mableton’s transportation network:

### Needs

#### **N1 EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS**

Collaboration with regional partners to increase transit routes and frequencies will be key for Mableton, especially as a strategy to reduce reliance on personal vehicles and improve accessibility.

#### **N2 ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

A network of sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use trails to promote active transportation and ensure safe routes for all users.

#### **N3 IMPROVE ROADWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY**

Several types of roadway improvements, including traffic calming measures, intersection upgrades, and optimized traffic signal timings can enhance safety and reduce congestion.

#### **N4 PROMOTE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)**

Encourage mixed-use developments near transit hubs to create walkable communities and stimulate economic growth.

### *Opportunities*

The plan identifies key corridors and districts for targeted transportation improvements:

#### **O1 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY CORRIDOR**

Veterans Memorial Highway is a significant east-west corridor in Mableton, Georgia, and a key artery connecting the area to both Atlanta and other western cities. Aims to revitalize this major thoroughfare with enhanced transit services and pedestrian-friendly designs.

#### **O2 CITY CENTER AND HISTORIC MAIN STREET**

Mableton's historic downtown would be an ideal place for the City to focus on creating a vibrant, walkable district with improved connectivity and access to transit.

#### **O3 RIVERSIDE PARKWAY AND SIX FLAGS DISTRICT**

Six Flags and Riverside Parkway are two key destinations for many residents and commuters. The City should explore plans to address traffic congestion and improve multimodal access in these high-traffic areas.

#### **O4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION**

The planning process emphasizes robust community involvement, including workshops, surveys, and public meetings, to gather input and ensure the transportation strategies align with residents' needs.

Implementation of the transportation initiatives will be phased over the plan's 20-year horizon, with regular assessments and adjustments based on progress and evolving community dynamics.

#### **O5 INVEST IN SMART, SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY**

Mableton has an opportunity to leverage new technologies that can improve mobility across multiple modes. Additionally, the City should consider long-term impacts of transportation on the environment.

## Goals and Strategies

### 1 Improve Mobility and Accessibility for All Users

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>Ensure that residents, workers, and visitors can conveniently reach jobs, services, and amenities.</b>	
Expand multimodal networks to connect residential areas with employment centers, schools, and public services.	N1, N2
Prioritize “Complete Streets” design standards that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and vehicles.	N2, O1, O2, O3
Improve accessibility for persons with disabilities through ADA-compliant infrastructure and technology.	N1
Promote first/last-mile connections through micromobility options (e.g., micro transit)	N1
Enhance wayfinding systems for multimodal travelers.	N1

### 2 Improve Public Transit

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>Enhance transit service.</b>	
Expand high-frequency transit corridors and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems in high-demand areas	N1, O1, O3
Improve bus stop and amenities (shelters, lighting, real-time information).	N1
Coordinate enhanced transit schedules and fare systems across agencies	N1
Introduce dynamic routing or on-demand shuttles in low-density areas.	N1
Develop transit-oriented development (TOD) zones near key stations to integrate land use and transit	N4, O2, O3

## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

### 3 Promote Safety for All Transportation Modes

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>Eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on the transportation network.</b>	
Implement a Vision Zero policy framework for roadway design and enforcement	N3
Identify and redesign high-crash corridors using traffic calming, protected intersections, and improved crossings.	N3, O1
Increase public education and enforcement of traffic laws related to speeding, impaired driving, and distracted driving.	O4
Expand safe routes to school and senior mobility programs	N2, N3

### 4 Support Sustainable and Resilient Transportation Systems

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>Reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate impacts.</b>	
Promote electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and fleet conversion (municipal and public transit).	O4
Encourage active transportation (walking, cycling) through connected trail networks.	N2, N4
Integrate green infrastructure in street design (bioswales, tree canopies).	O1, O2, O3
Support mixed-use, compact development to reduce trip lengths.	N4
Conduct climate vulnerability assessments for transportation assets	O5

**5** *Improve Transportation Equity and Affordability*

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<i>Ensure that transportation investments and benefits are distributed fairly across all communities</i>	
Conduct equity impact assessments for major transportation projects	O4
Expand affordable transit fare programs for low-income residents	NI
Improve connectivity to underserved neighborhoods through targeted investments	NI
Engage underrepresented communities in transportation planning and decision-making	O4
Support workforce development in the transportation sector	O4

**6** *Maintain and Modernize Transportation Infrastructure*

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<i>Ensure long-term system performance through proactive maintenance and smart technologies</i>	
Prioritize maintenance and rehabilitation of existing roads and bridges	N3, O1, O2, O3
Implement asset management systems for data-driven maintenance scheduling	O5
Deploy intelligent transportation systems (ITS) for traffic management and real-time data collection	O5
Integrate smart sensors to monitor pavement conditions and safety performance	O5
Seek innovative funding sources (e.g., public-private partnerships).	O4

**7** *Strengthen North–South and East–West Transportation Connectivity*

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<i>Develop a well-connected, multimodal network that provides efficient, safe, and direct travel options across the city in all directions</i>	
<b>Network Planning and Expansion</b>	
Identify and prioritize key north–south and east–west corridors for improvement based on current travel demand and projected growth	O2, N4
Extend existing roadways to close gaps in the urban grid, reducing circuitous travel.	N4
Plan and construct new multimodal corridors (road, bus, bike, pedestrian) to link major activity centers across the city	N1, N2, O1, O2, O3
<b>Transit System Enhancements</b>	
Introduce bus routes and rapid transit lines that provide continuous north–south and east–west coverage	N1
Introduce transit connections between major hubs, including downtown, employment districts, and residential neighborhoods	N1, N4
Coordinate with regional transit agencies to ensure cross-boundary service integration and fare compatibility.	N1
<b>Multimodal Connectivity</b>	
Develop parallel bikeway and pedestrian corridors along key arterial routes to support non-motorized travel in all directions	N2
Improve intersections and crossings to ensure seamless transitions between modes (e.g., transit to bike/pedestrian).	N3
Implement “Complete Streets” standards on connecting corridors to balance access for all users and fare compatibility.	N2, O1, O2, O3

**8** *Foster Regional Connectivity and Economic Competitiveness*

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>Strengthen transportation links within the region to support commerce and tourism</i></b>	
Improve freight corridors and intermodal facilities to enhance logistics efficiency	O3
Coordinate regional transportation investments with economic development strategies.	O4
Encourage regional cooperation through joint planning among adjacent municipalities and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).	O4

# CHAPTER 6



## Environment and Sustainability Element

### Introduction

Mableton is rich with natural resources that set it apart from other cities. Between its lush tree canopy, access to the Chattahoochee River and other waterways, connectivity to major outdoor recreation resources like the Silver Comet Trail and the future Chattahoochee RiverLands project, and its incredible views of downtown Atlanta, the city has all the ingredients to be a sustainable destination for outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship.

That potential, however, is currently impeded by some strong barriers, including a lack of access to some of these resources and a widespread challenge of littering and dumping on private property. The good news is that Mableton's other priorities dovetail nicely with the city's environmental and sustainability needs and opportunities. Redevelopment in key areas can reduce the environmental impact throughout other parts of the city and introduce new greenery. Transportation improvements will not only make the city safer, but cleaner, to traverse. Lastly, there are several cultural and historic preservation opportunities near Mableton's natural resources, like Nickajack Creek and the Chattahoochee River. All of these interconnected opportunities can help Mableton's approach to sustainability be smooth and straightforward as the city grows and changes.



*Credit: Find A Grave*

## Existing Conditions

### Natural Resources

#### Elevation and Viewsheds

One of the City’s major points of pride is its proximity to Atlanta. While Mableton’s location is advantageous for access to jobs and entertainment destinations in the metro area, it also provides one of its most majestic attractions: its views of downtown Atlanta. The city’s rolling topography provides stunning views of the downtown skyline, especially at sites along Mableton’s major thoroughfares as they descend toward the Chattahoochee River basin. The view from Mt. Harmony Memorial Gardens, along Veterans Memorial Highway, is often cited as the place to witness the best view of downtown Atlanta. Factory Shoals Road, which sits on a high ridge above Mableton’s industrial district, also provides wide views of Mableton’s industrial district and the landscape west of the city.

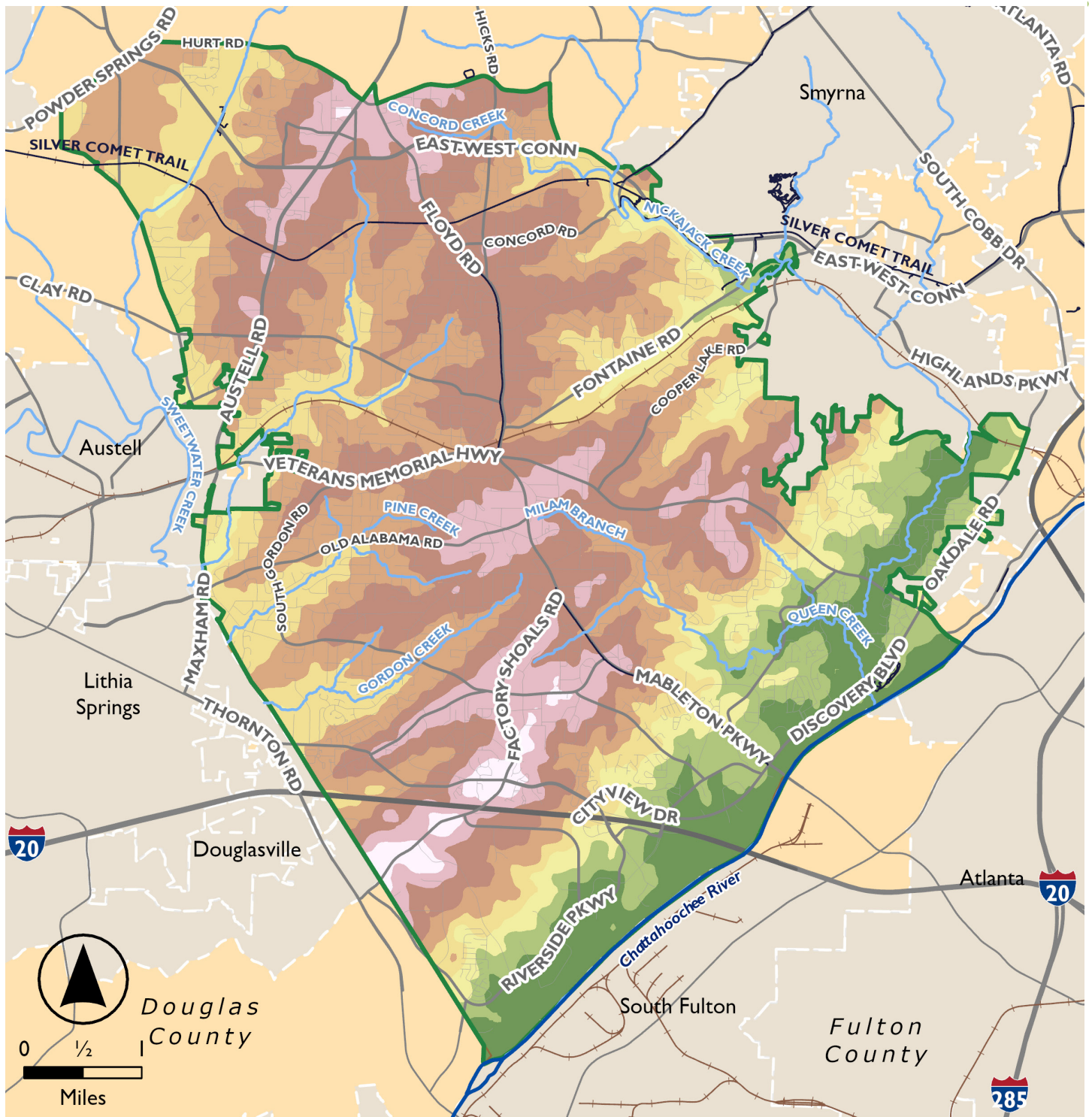
These views are a result of Mableton’s highly variable topography (**Figure 6-1, pg. 74**). Major transportation corridors like the railway that eventually became the Silver Comet Trail, as well as the main rail line that served historic downtown Mableton, were built along ridge lines. Later, Veterans Memorial Highway and Mableton Parkway followed suit along trickier, but still elevated, paths. As a result, the center of Mableton sits higher than the rest of the city, lending areas closer to downtown with great views of the surrounding area – and fewer challenges related to flooding and drainage.

### Waterways

Mableton is home to several notable creeks and streams (**Figure 6-2, pg. 75**), which feed into the two main waterways that “frame” the city’s borders: Sweetwater Creek to the west, and the Chattahoochee River to the south and east. Thanks to the city’s two intersecting ridge lines, these creeks’ headwaters are mostly located in central Mableton and flow into their respective watersheds (**Figure 6-3, pg. 76**). The Nickajack Creek and Wilson Creek subwatersheds drain to the Chattahoochee River, while the Lower Sweetwater Creek subwatershed drains to the creek for which its named.

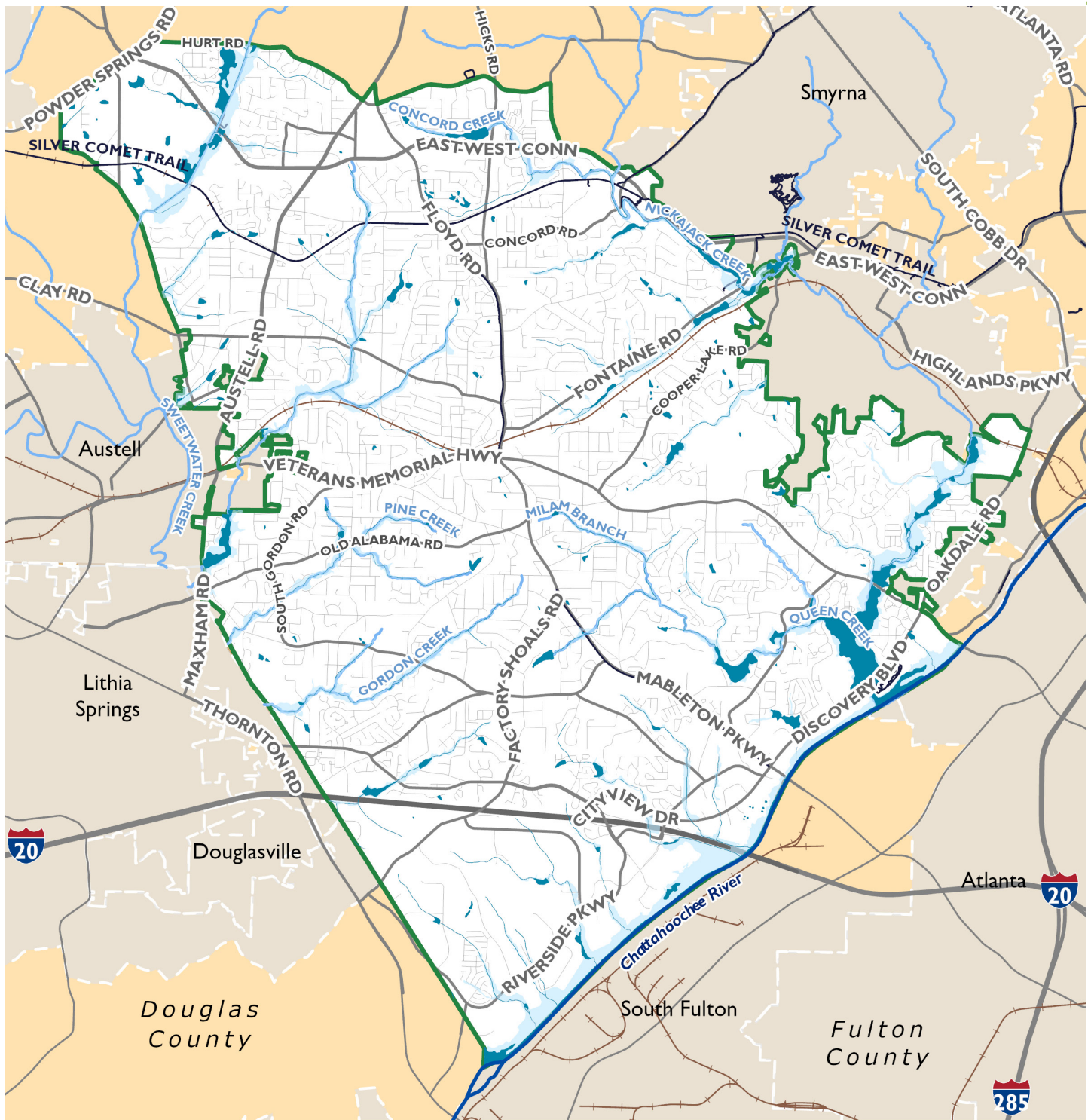
Apart from the city’s connection to the Chattahoochee, a major resource for its natural beauty and potential connectivity to the metro area at large through the RiverLands project (see page ##), Mableton’s other main waterway of significance is Nickajack Creek, which holds historical and cultural value for the city and its residents. During the initial settlement of Mableton by European settlers, the creek provided power to several mills, one of which still stands within the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District. Nickajack Creek was also the site of civil war skirmishes, which left behind historic artifacts closer to the Chattahoochee River.

Figure 6-1: Elevation



LEGEND			
Elevation (ft.)			
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#006400;"></span> <800	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#8B4513;"></span> 951-1000	<span style="display:inline-block; border:1px solid green; width:15px; height:15px;"></span> Mableton City Limits	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px solid red;"></span> Interstates
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#3CB371;"></span> 801-850	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#4682B4;"></span> 1001-1050	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#D3D3D3;"></span> Surrounding Cities	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px solid orange;"></span> Arterials
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#9ACD32;"></span> 851-900	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#800080;"></span> 1051-1100	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFDAB9;"></span> Surrounding Counties	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:1px solid black;"></span> Other Roads
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFD700;"></span> 901-950	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#FFB6C1;"></span> >1150		<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:1px dashed black;"></span> Railroads

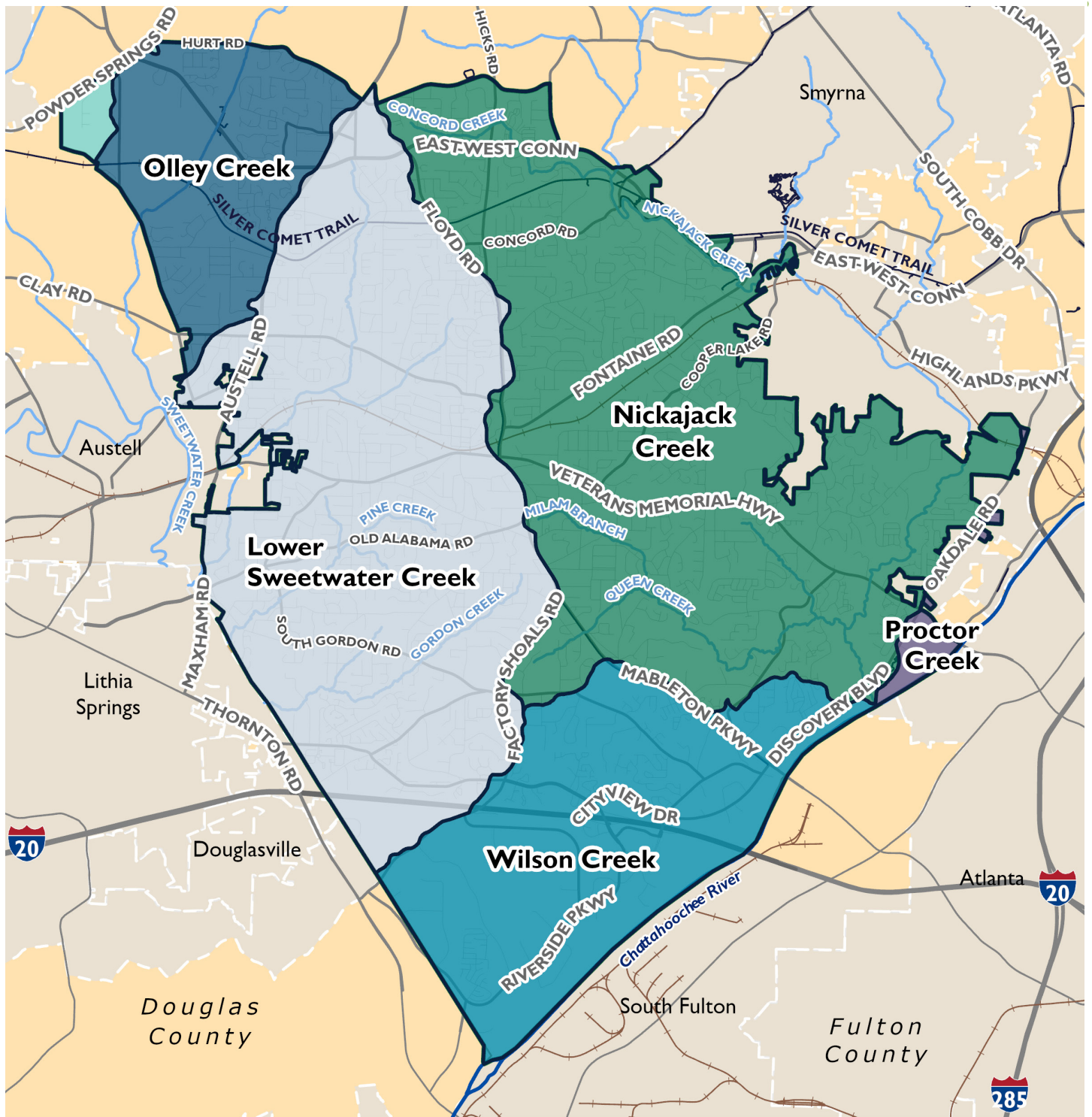
Figure 6-2: Waterways, Wetlands, and Flood Zones



LEGEND

- Rivers
- Streams
- Flood Zones
- Wetlands
- Mableton City Limits
- Surrounding Cities
- Surrounding Counties
- Interstates
- Arterials
- Other Roads
- + Railroads

Figure 6-3: Watersheds



**LEGEND**

Mableton City Limits	Interstates
Surrounding Cities	Arterials
Surrounding Counties	Other Roads
	Railroads

*Tree Canopy*

Mableton boasts a lush tree canopy, especially within its residential neighborhoods. Tree canopy extends over approximately 45% of the city, with most of it found in private backyards, undeveloped land, Mableton’s parks, and the stormwater management areas of single-family and multifamily subdivisions (**Figure 6-4, pg. 78**).

The areas of Mableton with the least tree canopy coverage are its industrial areas—including along the Chattahoochee and Colonial Pipeline’s facility in the city’s northwest corner—and along its major corridors, especially Veterans Memorial Highway, Floyd Road, and the East-West Connector where it crosses Floyd Road. This trend is not uncommon among Georgia cities and is most often remedied through streetscape improvements and growth of new trees planted through redevelopment.

*Conserved Lands*

In Georgia, approximately 93% of all land holdings are privately owned. Outside of governmental processes, private land conservation policies and programs allow property owners to pursue long-term conservation of their land’s natural resources. In Georgia, three methods of conservation are the most common: conservation easements, the Conservation Use Value Assessment (CUVA) program, and fee-simple purchases by nonprofit land trusts.

There are few conservation easements registered on properties within Mableton; most of the city’s conserved lands are held under conservation by Cobb County or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, according to tax records, several properties are listed as participating in CUVA (**Figure 6-5, pg. 79**). These are mostly clustered in the northeastern corner of Mableton, close to the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District and the city’s boundary with Smyrna.

**CONSERVATION EASEMENTS VS. CUVA: WHAT DO EACH OF THESE MECHANISMS DO?**

**Conservation easements** allow a property owner to relinquish certain rights to their property—the right to develop it, for example—in exchange for a property tax reduction. Conservation easements are permanent, and the rights relinquished by the property owner to alter it remain with the property regardless if it changes ownership. Conservation easements are one of the best tools for long-term conservation of property.

**CUVA**, on the other hand, is not permanent. Property owners interested in conserving their property can enroll in CUVA, which allows a property to be valued based on its current use (agriculture, forestry, wetlands, etc.) rather than its potential value. This tax assessment only remains in effect if the current use continues. The new assessed value remains in effect for 10 years, after which it is eligible for reconsideration.

Figure 6-4: Tree Canopy

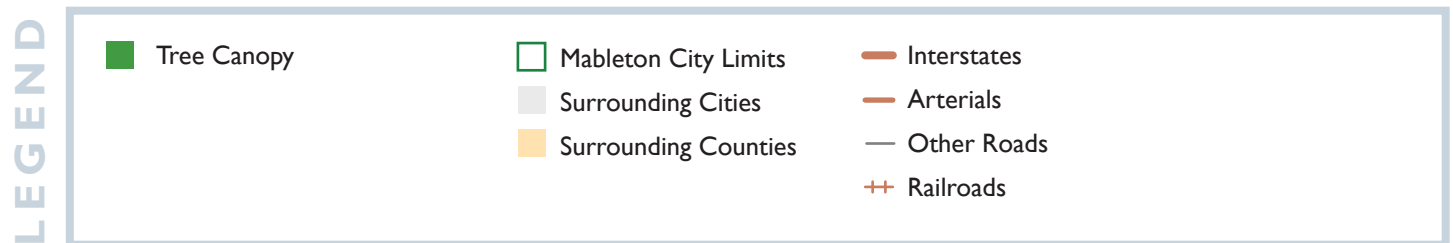
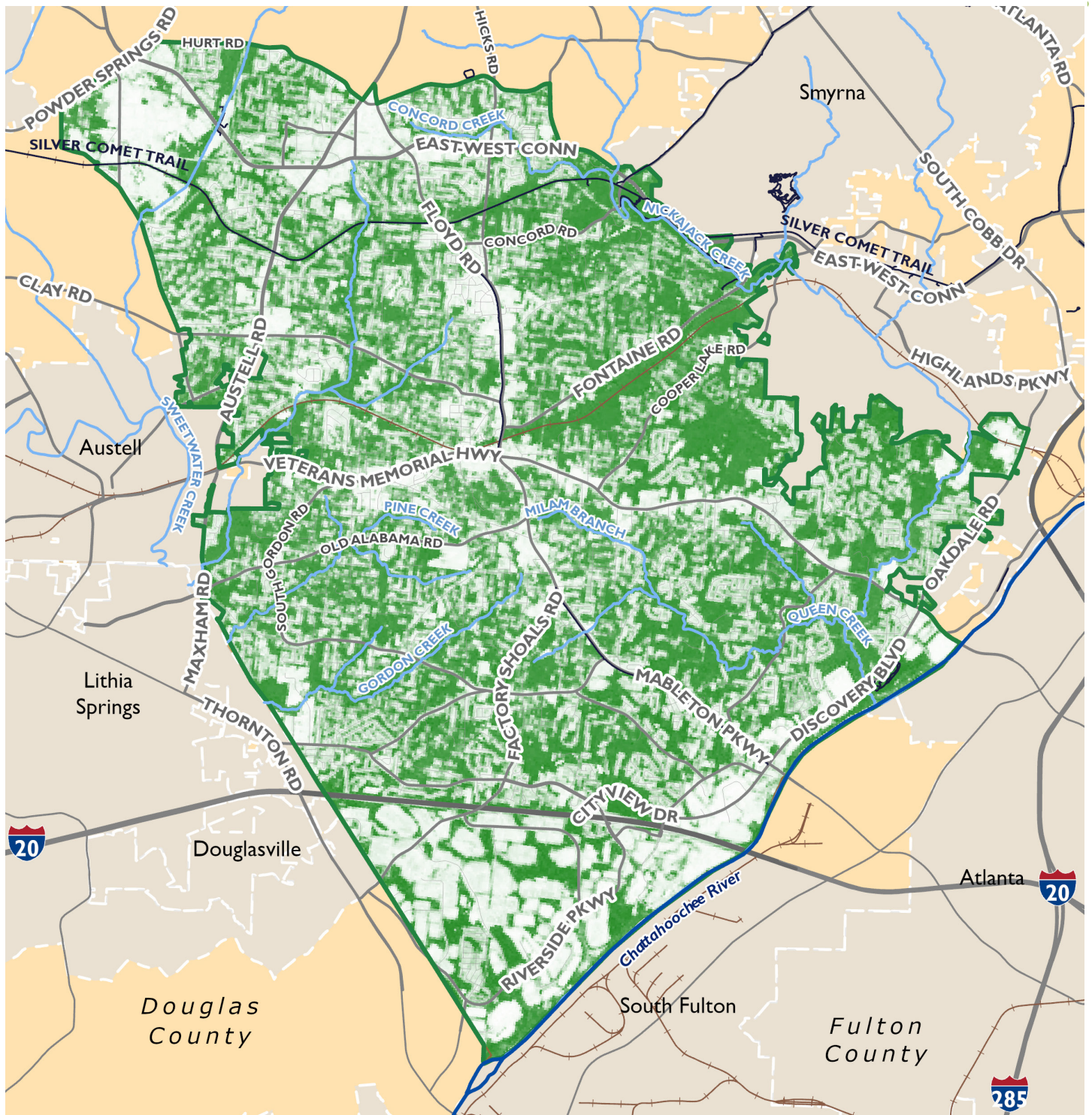
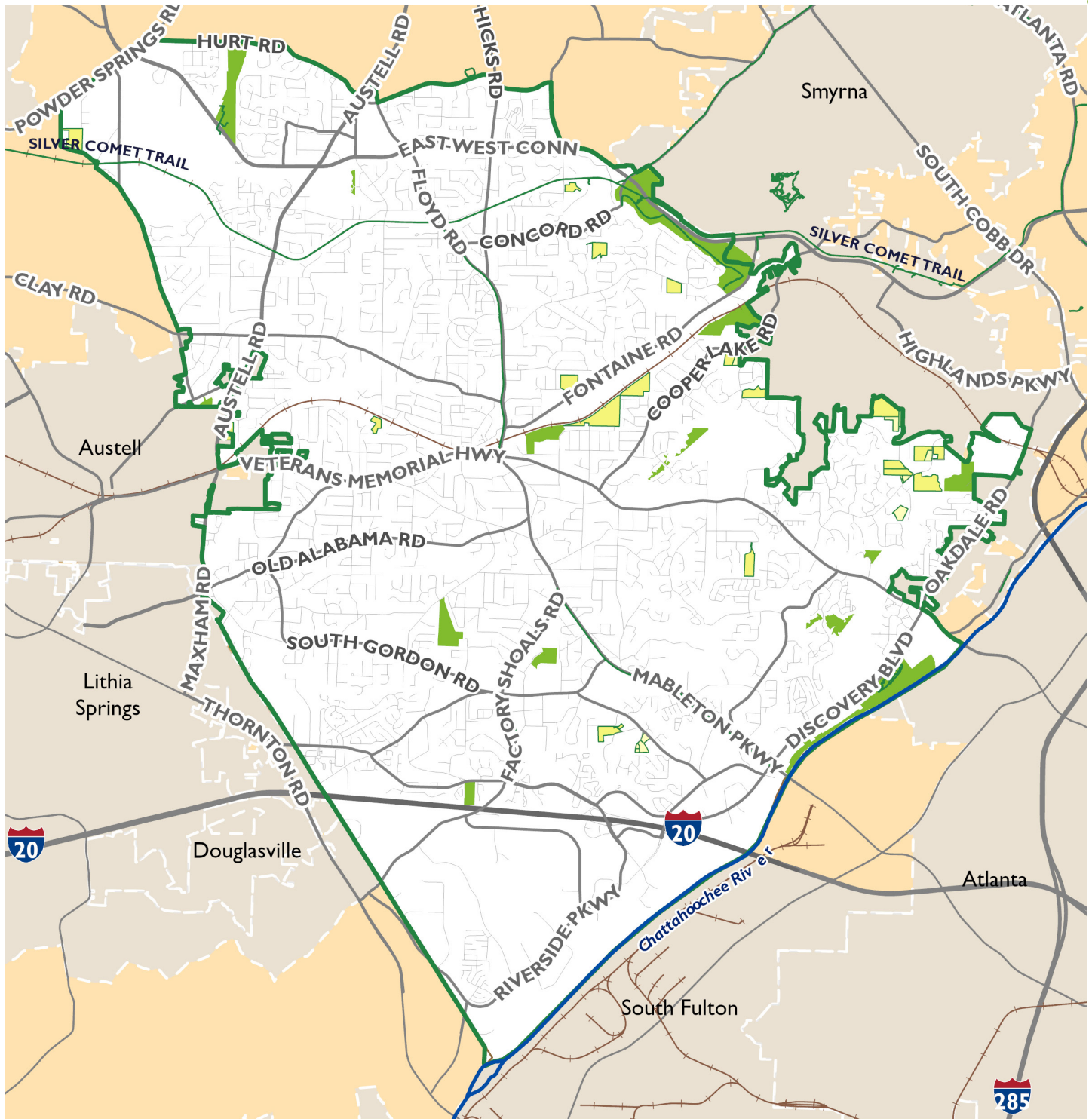


Figure 6-5: Conserved Lands



LEGEND

- Publicly Conserved Lands
- Mableton City Limits
- CUYA Properties
- Surrounding Cities
- Surrounding Counties
- Interstates
- Arterials
- Other Roads
- Railroads

## Environmental Challenges

### Flood Zones

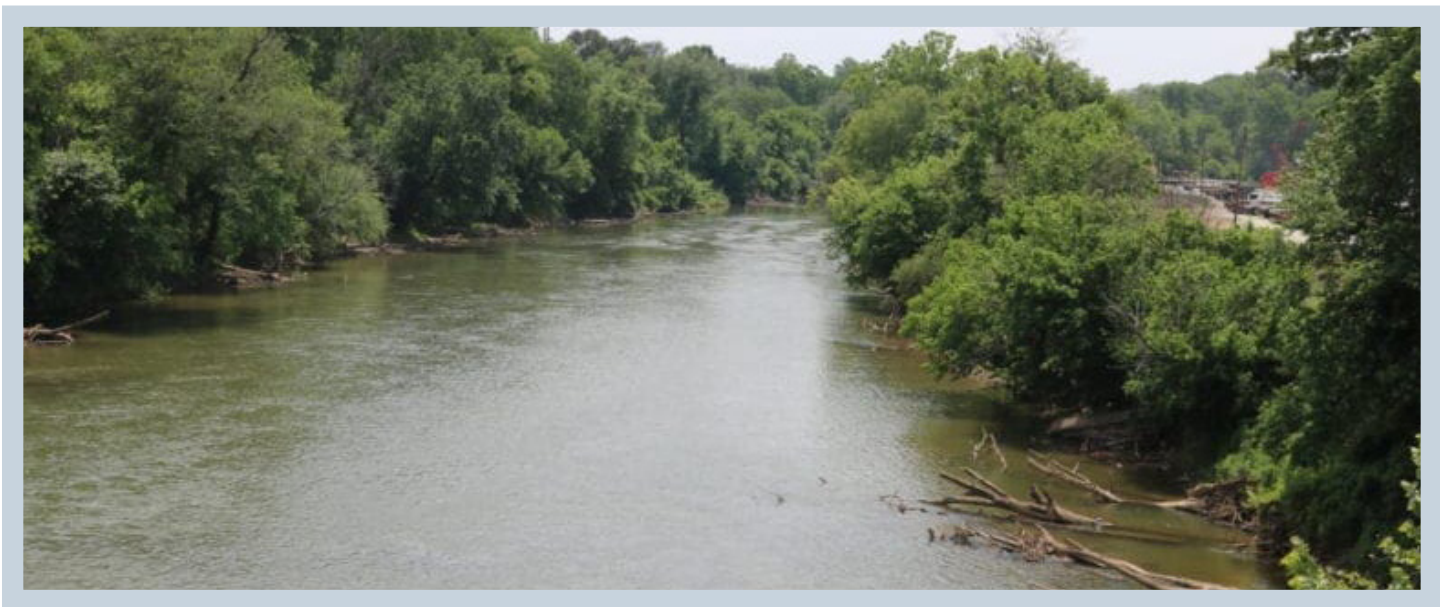
Perhaps due to its rolling topography, the extent of flood hazard areas within the city is limited (**Figure 6-6, pg. 81**). Only 8.4% of Mableton is impacted by 100-year flood zones. The largest flood zones are located along the low-lying portion of Nickajack Creek, near its confluence with the Chattahoochee River, and along the northwest bank of the Chattahoochee as well. Today, access to the Chattahoochee River's northern bank is limited by industrial development and industrial buildings are, for the most part, not infringing on the flood plain. The land around Nickajack Creek in the flood zones is also mostly undeveloped.

Citywide, the greatest area of flooding concern is where Nickajack Creek crosses Veterans Memorial Highway; in storm events,

this part of the roadway can wash out easily. In terms of private property, the property most affected by potential flood hazards along the Chattahoochee River is actually Six Flags, whose eastern parking lot is almost entirely within the river's flood zone.

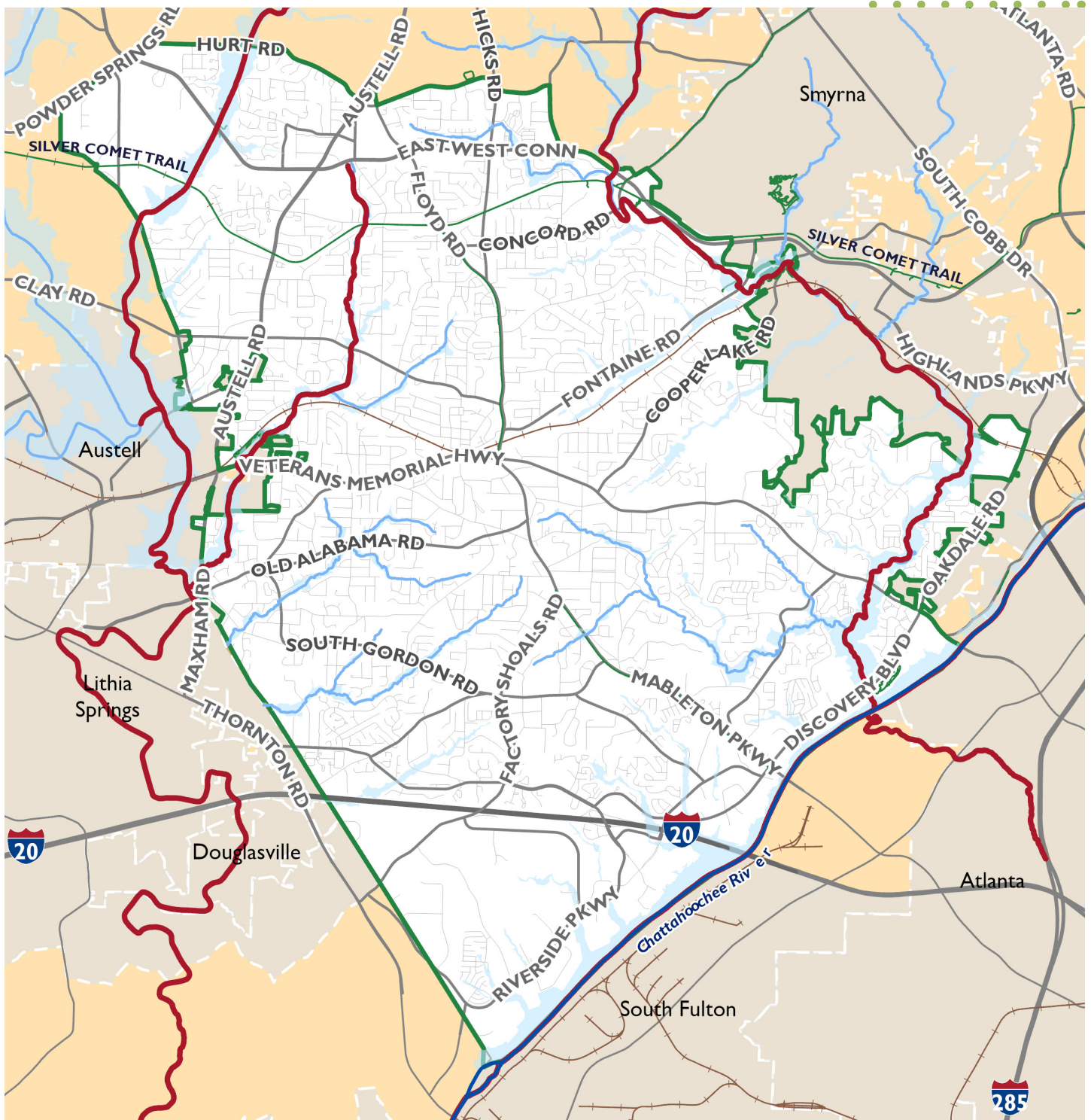
### Impaired Streams

Of Mableton's many streams, only three are listed as impaired by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division: Nickajack Creek, Sweetwater Creek, and Buttermilk Creek which is a tributary of Sweetwater Creek. The Chattahoochee is also listed as impaired. Streams are designated as impaired if their water quality is not considered safe for specific uses, such as drinking water, fishing, or recreation. All of Mableton's impaired streams are considered below the appropriate quality threshold for fishing, while Sweetwater Creek's water quality is below the threshold for both fishing and drinking water.



Credit: Cobb County Courier

Figure 6-6: Flood Zones and Impaired Streams



LEGEND

- Rivers
- Creeks
- Impaired Streams
- Flood Zones
- Mableton City Limits
- Surrounding Cities
- Surrounding Counties
- Interstates
- Arterials
- Other Roads
- + Railroads

### *Environmental Challenges (continued)*

#### *Waste and Littering*

Throughout the project team’s meetings with stakeholders, City staff, and residents, one environmental problem has come up in almost every conversation: littering. Although there are few data sources on improper waste disposal and littering, it is an incredibly widespread concern of residents. Mableton Improvement Coalition (MIC) regularly organized litter cleanups throughout the community. Combined with the aesthetic challenges of streetscapes in Mableton, this is an issue that the city should consider addressing quickly.



*Credit: Cobb County Courier*

## **Previous Plans**

Planning for Mableton’s natural resources and environmental sustainability has largely been incorporated into other planning processes, either led by Cobb County or other regional governments or planning organizations. While Mableton and properties within the city are included in the plans’ overall strategy, the city is not the primary focus of these plans. The following plans recommend policies or programs that could affect Mableton’s environmental resources and long-term sustainability.

### *Cobb County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2018)*

Developed in 2018, Cobb County’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan focuses on two

main aspects of the park system: access and maintenance. The plan attempts to balance the desire for more park facilities and programming with the constraint of funding, staff, and maintenance needs. The plan’s goals are ambitious in volume—the Department’s target is to provide 9.6 acres of parks for every 1,000 residents—and in coverage. The plan notes that greater access to parks is needed in South Cobb County and identifies two potential projects in Mableton: the Collins property, 29 acres of potential park land along Veterans Memorial Highway between Lions Park and Thompson Park, and another 15-acre property along Veterans Memorial Highway near Buckner Road. The plan also includes recommendation for expanded programming at some of its existing facilities, such as Mable House Amphitheater.

### Cobb County 2040 Comprehensive Plan 5-Year Update (2022)

Cobb County’s Comprehensive Plan does not include a strong focus on natural resources and sustainability, focusing instead on land use and deferring to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for most of its recommendations in this area. The plan does mention two capital improvement projects, one at Mable House Amphitheater to construct new restrooms and one for facility improvements at Heritage Park.

### Chattahoochee RiverLands (2022)

As explored earlier in Chapter 2, Land Use (pg. 25), the Chattahoochee RiverLands is a regional planning effort to create an extensive network of greenways and other active modes

of transportation along the Chattahoochee River throughout the metro region. Mableton’s frontage on the Chattahoochee is a critical component of this effort; Discovery Park at the RiverLine was selected as a pilot project for this regional initiative.

Aside from physical projects within the City’s boundaries, the plan does recommend two general policies to create a continuous public realm along the river and plan for accessibility. Mableton is located within Subarea 2 of the plan, which notes that Mableton and other neighboring jurisdictions are challenged by the high amount of industrial uses that border the river. The plan recommends tactics to avoid further environmental damage when constructing the trail network.

Figure 6-7: Conceptual Rendering of Discovery Park Design from Chattahoochee RiverLands



Credit: Chattahoochee RiverLands

# Needs and Opportunities

## Needs

### **N1 GREATER CONTROL OVER LITTERING AND DUMPING**

By far the greatest need from the perspective of residents and other stakeholders, Mableton needs to address the issue of excessive littering and dumping. This need is felt both in public space (e.g., along rights-of-way) and on highly visible undeveloped land, as well as private property where dealing with the consequences of littering becomes the responsibility of individual property owners. Addressing this problem could have positive spillover effects; not only would it beautify the city, but it could also lead to more stable property values and a sense of community pride.

### **N2 CITY-WIDE RECYCLING INITIATIVES**

The City currently does not have its own recycling program, nor are there active campaigns or promotional measures to promote proper disposal of recyclable waste. Initiatives such as these could be an appropriate first strategy toward addressing litter.

### **N3 GREATER ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES, ESPECIALLY WATERWAYS**

Mableton has plentiful natural resources, but most of those resources are not available to the public—especially its major aquatic assets like Nickajack Creek or the Chattahoochee River. Expanding access to these resources could improve environmental education and stewardship (perhaps providing another strategy toward tamping down littering) as well as economic opportunity in the form of eco-tourism and outdoor recreation.

### **N4 INFRASTRUCTURE THAT INCORPORATES GREENERY AND IMPROVED LANDSCAPING**

Aside from Floyd Road, Mableton’s major thoroughfares need a visual refresh. Residents often cite certain commercial uses (like tire shops and auto repair establishments) as a visual detractor, but the streetscape itself could also be improved by incorporating more trees, landscaping, and other aesthetically pleasing elements.

### **N5 INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY**

Mableton’s stakeholders are interested in new development, especially environmentally conscious development. As the city grows and adds new amenities, the City could consider programs to incentivize sustainable technology, in the form of green buildings, EV charging stations, rooftop solar, and other clean energy projects.

*Opportunities*

**01 GREATER CONTROL OVER CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Being a new city, Mableton can focus its code enforcement efforts on its specific needs. From an environmental perspective, that includes addressing littering, dumping, and other waste disposal measures—but also new approaches to natural resource conservation, management, and stewardship.

**02 HIGH CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Mableton’s residents are engaged and eager to make their community better, greener, and more beautiful. Leveraging this energy through new community groups, nonprofits, and even city agencies if appropriate, could help ease the burden on Mableton staff while still addressing the city’s major environmental and sustainability issues.

**03 WETLANDS AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES ALONG NICKAJACK CREEK**

Although they pose environmental challenges, the wetlands and flood zones along Nickajack Creek have enormous potential as an outdoor recreation destination. Between the natural resources and historic legacy of the area, the city should consider celebrating it and telling its story more actively.

**04 REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES THAT EMPHASIZE SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mableton’s active involvement with the Chattahoochee RiverLands helped lead to the construction and opening of Discovery Park, which has proven to be a big success. Exploring other regional partnerships with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metro North Georgia Water District, and other agencies could lead to additional successes.

**05 CONCENTRATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN KEY AREAS**

Crafting a land use strategy that clusters development in specific areas has a triple bottom line. Economically, it allows for a greater return on investment. It benefits the community by creating more connected destinations, improving social well-being. Lastly, it reduces the negative impact on natural resources by leaving forests, waterways, and other environmental assets undisturbed and uncompromised. Mableton’s land use priorities, of creating a new downtown and investing in mixed-use development, have environmental benefits too.

## Goals, Policies, and Key Actions

Mableton’s natural resources are valuable assets for the city and its residents, improving health, community aesthetics, and quality of life. The protection of these natural resources—especially the city’s tree canopy, waterways, and scenic viewsheds—is a cornerstone of the community’s vision for how Mableton should grow over the next 20 years.

The following goals, policies, and key actions describe the main priorities the City should focus on as it grows. These goals tie into recommendations for each other element, most notably the Future Development Strategy (pages ###-###) which concentrates new development into several districts and villages of greater intensity, relieving development pressure from areas where natural resources are more plentiful and less disturbed.

### I Clean Up Mableton!

Mableton residents have reiterated the need for greater control over littering, dumping, and beautification efforts. Many community members already organizing community clean-ups regularly, especially to remove trash along major roads and scenic waterways. The City’s strategy should be two-fold: increase enforcement and offer alternative opportunities for proper waste disposal. While capitalizing on the strong volunteer spirit from the community to ramp up clean-up efforts, the City can work to attract recycling and solid waste disposal partners to build a culture of cleanliness.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY I.A: Focus enforcement/clean-up in places that are highly visible or environmentally sensitive.</i></b>	
Identify and map target clean-up areas.	N1, O1
Establish partnerships with local organizations for clean-ups.	N1, N2, O2
<b><i>POLICY I.B: Evaluate options for expanding recycling opportunities.</i></b>	
Identify residential recycling pick-up opportunities for residents.	N2, O2
Explore how to bring a facility such as the Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) to Mableton to provide a viable alternative to illicit dumping. (See Case Study on page ## for more information.)	N2, N5

## Case Study: Live Thrive’s The Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM)

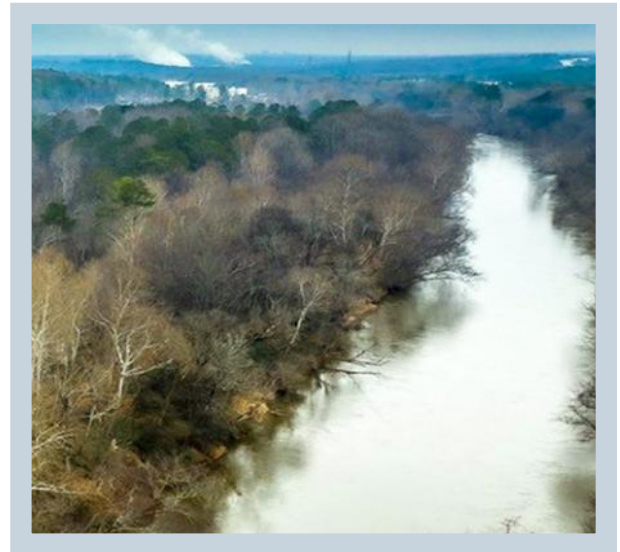
CHaRM has been providing solid waste disposal and recycling services to residents of Atlanta for over 10 years. The Center originally started as a program of Atlanta-based nonprofit organization, Live Thrive, which began organizing volunteer-led community cleanups and hazardous waste collections in 2010. Due to the popularity of the event, Live Thrive determined that a permanent facility that could accept hard-to-recycle materials was essential for keeping the community clean. Today, CHaRM has two drop-off locations, one in Atlanta and one in DeKalb County, and accepts a wide range of products—everything from common household items like paper and plastic to tires, mattresses, electronics, and chemicals. CHaRM works with an extensive network of partners and vendors to make sure items are recycled or re-purposed, or that their components are re-used in some way. In addition to its dedicated facilities, CHaRM also organizes home pick-ups for residents who cannot travel to their locations.

CHaRM’s origins resemble Mableton’s volunteer-led clean-up events, and a centralized drop-off location would fit nicely within a character area that supports craft industrial uses (such as the Workplace District, Medical Center, or River Line District). Whether through CHaRM or another organization, establishing a dedicated facility for waste disposal would provide the Mableton community with a consistent option to reduce illegal dumping and begin to build a culture of solid waste stewardship.



**2** *Expand Access to Nature*

Mableton is home to several parks facilities managed by Cobb County, along with a few properties targeted for new parks. However, there are several areas of the city—most notably around Nickjack Creek and near the Concord Bridge Historic District—that are rich in natural resources and history that could benefit from plans for preservation and public access strategies. The area near Discovery Park is also regionally significant, given its connectivity to the future Chattahoochee RiverLands trail and greenspace network. Mableton can work with Cobb County to further its greenspace goals, and should also consider strategies the City can lead to expand access to nature.



Credit: Cobb County

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 2.A: Invest in a comprehensive system of parks and open spaces.</b>	
Create an inventory of current parks and recreation facilities in Mableton (including private recreation facilities).	N3
Create an inventory of undeveloped or natural land.	N3, O3
Develop a parks and open space master plan for Mableton.	N3, O3
Modify the development code to require that new development provide usable park space and incentivize providing public access.	N3, O3, O5
<b>POLICY 2.B: Conserve and improve access to natural features.</b>	
Create an inventory of priority natural features and develop plans for their preservation.	N3, O3
Work with Cobb County and Trust for Public Land to implement the Chattahoochee RiverLands project and expand access to the river.	O4
Work with Cobb County to develop accessible public space along Nickajack Creek.	O3, O4

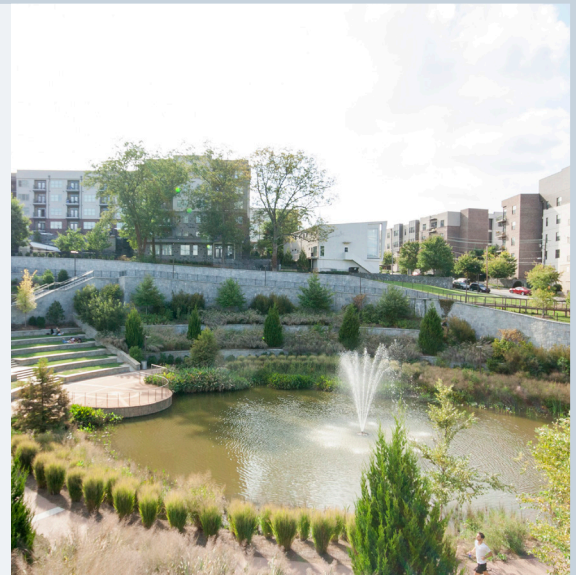
**3** *Improve Stormwater Management*

Although Mableton does not experience extreme flooding throughout most of the City, other aspects of stormwater management could be improved to produce multiple benefits: community beautification, community greenspace, and improved water quality. Wetlands along important waterways, such as Nickajack Creek, are critical resources for flood mitigation. Green infrastructure can also be engineered, especially along major roads like Veterans Memorial Highway.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 3.A: Protect wetlands and floodplains.</i></b>	
Develop a plan for addressing flooding where Veterans Memorial Highway and Nickajack Creek intersect.	N3, O3
Work with Cobb County Stormwater Management to update basin plan (last completed in 1996).	O4
<b><i>POLICY 3.B: Expand green infrastructure.</i></b>	
Evaluate opportunities for mixing green infrastructure that performs stormwater management functions but also provides aesthetic improvements and provides opportunities for recreation.	N4

**Case Study: Stormwater Parks**

In recent years, it has become more common to incorporate stormwater management into the design of parks and recreation facilities. In Atlanta, Rodney Cook Park (pictured) provides shared detention in a low-lying area of the Vine City neighborhood, while Old Fourth Ward Historic Park does the same for that neighborhood. Treating stormwater detention as a common amenity not only beautifies a typical detention pond, bringing people closer to water and creating a valuable asset for the city.



**4** *Protect and Expand Tree Canopy*

Mableton’s extensive tree canopy is lush, especially in suburban neighborhoods where the trees have matured. Along its major corridors, however, there is a clear need for shade trees, both for comfort and for beautification. The City should focus on new plantings along major roads, while working with property owners to ensure trees on private property remain healthy.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 4.A: Invest in street trees.</b>	
Identify priority corridors for street trees and improved landscaping.	N4
<b>POLICY 4.B: Improve requirements for trees and landscaping in new development.</b>	
Evaluate the current tree ordinance and landscaping requirements and identify areas for improvement.	O1
<b>POLICY 4.C: Incentivize best practices for trees on private property.</b>	
Advertise Mableton’s participation in Trees Atlanta’s Front Yard Tree Program.	O2, O4
Provide resources and education on removing invasive species that are harmful to the tree canopy.	N4, O2

**5** *Protect Scenic Viewsheds*

Mableton’s rolling topography is a truly unique resources that can be harnessed for environmental, recreation, economic, and quality of life benefits for the city. Mapping and officially designating these viewsheds is the first step toward ensuring their long-term protection.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 5.A: Protect exceptional viewsheds.</b>	
Map key viewsheds, such as those along Veterans Memorial Highway and Factory Shoals Road.	N4
Evaluate the possibility of adding a viewshed overlay.	O1

# ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT



# CHAPTER 7



## Cultural Resources Element

### Introduction

Through its newfound cityhood, Mableton has an opportunity to enhance and affirm its strong community identity. Building a strong cultural presence is key to fostering a vibrant, connected community and distinguishing Mableton from its neighbors. By evaluating and expanding its cultural resources, Mableton can build a sense of pride and unity among residents.

Mableton is home to a small number of cultural facilities and opportunities for entertainment, such as South Cobb Regional Library, Riverside EpiCenter, and Six Flags Over Georgia. However, when it comes to what makes Mableton Mableton, residents have noted a lack of cohesion in the city's identity. This lack of cohesion is felt geographically—given the large distance between some of these cultural hubs—as well as culturally, with residents feeling disconnected from parts of Mableton that are farther from their home. Still, some facilities, such as the Mable House Complex, serve as strong cultural anchors for the community.

There is a clear need for community spaces with active programming. Residents have expressed the desire for a well-defined city center, along with expanded arts and culture programming for everyone, especially youth and seniors. Additionally, the lack of publicly accessible art is apparent in the community and visually represents Mableton's potential for arts and cultural growth.



*Credit: Teotl Foundation / AJC*

# Existing Conditions

## Cultural Facilities

Mableton’s existing cultural facilities are few and far between (**Figure 7-2, pg. 88**), but beloved by community members for their arts offerings and performance spaces. The Mable House Complex is home to the Barnes Amphitheater, an outdoor venue that seats approximately 2,500 people. Performances at the Barnes Amphitheater are scheduled year-round. Other performance spaces include the Performing Arts Center at South Cobb High School and the Cobb County Performing Arts Center at Pebblebrook High School, which both primarily support school productions. The Riverside EpiCenter, a privately owned facility, includes the Bronner Soundstage Theatre and other event rooms.

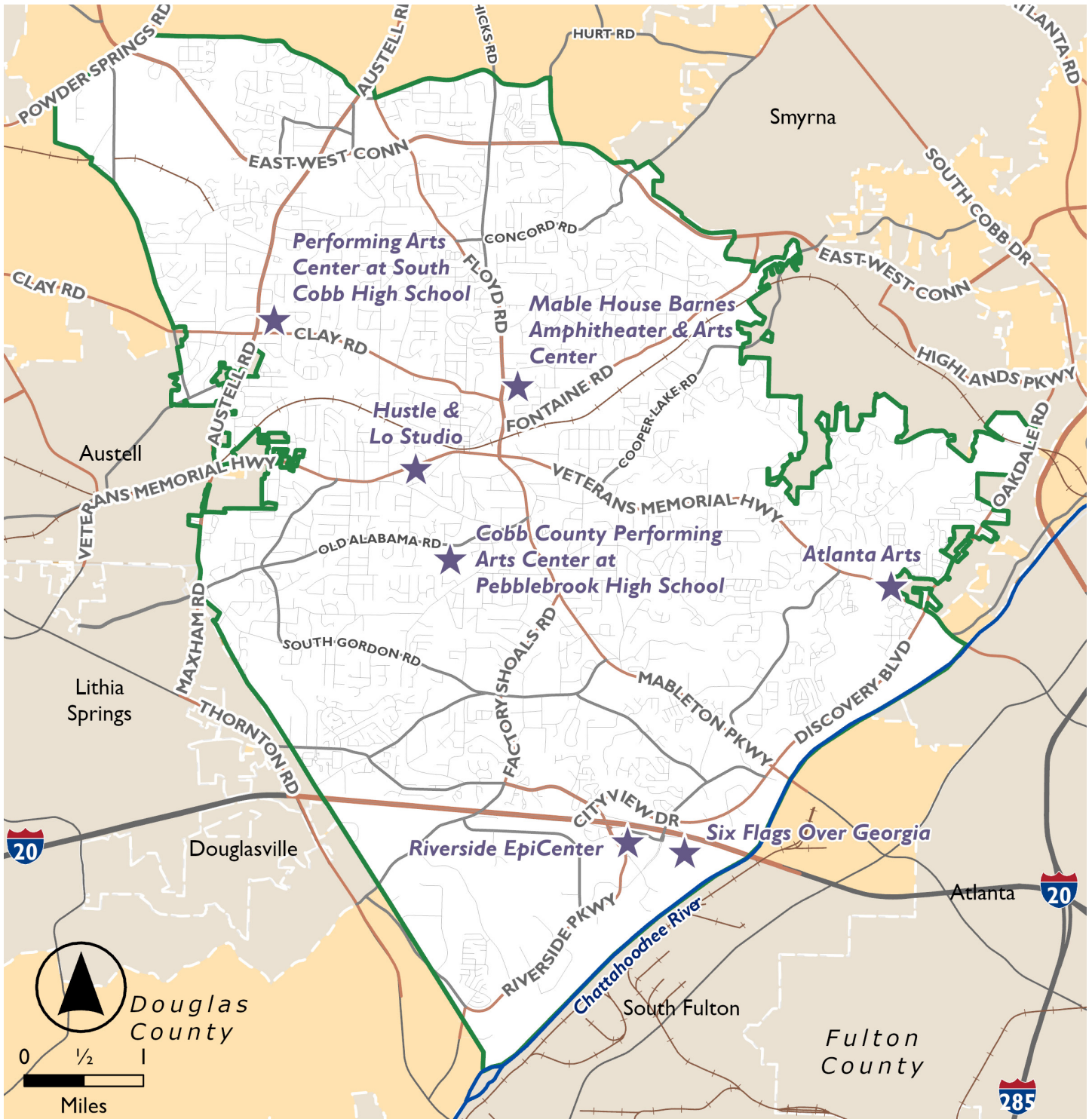
Access to visual arts facilities in Mableton is limited. The Mable Art Center at the Mable House Complex is the primary public space for visual arts, featuring an art gallery with rotating exhibits showcasing local and national artists. Beyond this, there are two privately owned facilities that provide additional options for visual arts, but they are not easily accessible to the public. A challenge for Mableton is the lack of cultural facilities in the northern part of the city. This gap highlights the need for more accessible cultural spaces throughout Mableton so that all residents have opportunities to engage with the arts.

Mableton’s most unique cultural destination is Six Flags Over Georgia, an amusement park in southeast Mableton that draws visitors from all over the Atlanta metro region and the state. Six Flags features rides, shops, and other entertainment, along with special events throughout the year.

Table 7-1: Arts Institutions in Mableton

Type	Institution	Ownership
<b>Music, Theater, and Other Performance</b>	Mable House Barnes Amphitheater	Public - Cobb County
	Performing Arts Center at South Cobb High School	Public - Cobb County
	Cobb County Center for Excellence in the Performing Arts at Pebblebrook High School	Public - Cobb County
	Teotl Foundation	Nonprofit
<b>Visual Arts</b>	Mable House Arts Center	Public - Cobb County
	Atlanta Arts	Private
	Hustle & Lo Studio	Private
<b>Entertainment</b>	Six Flags Over Georgia	Private
	Riverside EpiCenter	Private

Figure 7-2: Arts and Cultural Institutions



<b>LEGEND</b>	★ Arts and Cultural Institutions	□ Mableton City Limits	— Interstates
	□ Surrounding Cities	— Arterials	— Other Roads
	□ Surrounding Counties	— Railroads	

## CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

### Events and Programming

Mableton hosts a few public events throughout the year, offering opportunities for residents to come together and celebrate the community’s culture and heritage. The Harvest Festival at the Mable House Complex invites attendees to step back in time and experience 19th-century farm life. The Tree Jubilee at the Mable House celebrates the holiday season with a Christmas tree lighting. The Taste of Mableton highlights local food, music, and handmade goods.

Some community institutions have regular cultural programming throughout the year, including South Cobb Regional Library, which provides free programs ranging from book readings and craft workshops; The Mable Art Center, which offers a variety of art classes for adults and youth, including camps and home-school art sessions; and private enterprises such as Atlanta Arts and Hustle & Lo Studios.

Table 7-3: Events and Celebrations

Name	Location	Description
<b>Harvest Festival</b>	Mable House Arts Center	Annual fall event where attendees experience 19th century farm life—including butter churning, pottery, weaving, and other homestead activities
<b>Tree Jubilee</b>	Mable House Complex	Annual Christmas tree lighting event
<b>Taste of Mableton</b>	Mable House Complex	Spring food festival featuring live music and local handmade goods, organized by the Mableton Improvement Coalition

Table 7-4: Programming

Venue	Programs
<b>South Cobb Regional Library</b>	Free events/classes, ranging from book readings and crafts to theater and performance
<b>Mable House Arts Center</b>	Art classes and camps for youth
	Meeting space for non-profit arts organizations
	Visual art class sessions for home-schooled students
	Art exhibitions throughout the year featuring local and national artists

### *Arts Sponsors and Organizations*

There are a few organizations that support arts, culture, and programming in Mableton. The Cobb County PARKS Department Cultural Affairs Division and Friends of the Mable House are integral to programming and event planning. The Mableton Improvement Coalition (MIC) plays a role in community development and organizes the Taste of Mableton. For high school students, the Cobb County Center for Excellence in the Performing Arts (CCCEPA)

offers a tuition-free program in dance, drama, musical theatre, technical theatre, and vocal music. Despite these efforts, there is an opportunity to expand programming and strengthen partnerships with organizations to meet the growing needs of Mableton.

These community events, programming, and cultural organizations are beloved by Mableton residents—and they have an appetite for even more. Residents have noted gaps in programming for youth, especially related to arts, recreation, and skills training for future employment opportunities.

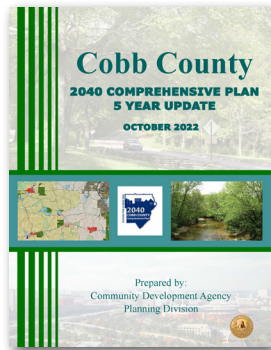


*Credit: Event Tickets Center*

## Previous Plans

### *Cobb County 2040 Comprehensive Plan 5-Year Update (2022)*

This plan embeds its cultural resource recommendations into its overall goals for Parks and Recreation, highlighting the potential for those facilities to host arts and cultural activities. The Mable House Complex, which is a Cobb County Parks and Recreation site, serves as one example of how parks, recreation, arts, and cultural programming can fit together. Key policy recommendations include:



- Strategically targeting areas where facilities and services are lacking or do not exist;
- Maximizing the use of public land and facilities for recreation and cultural activities;
- Developing diverse arts programming to meet the various needs of the community;
- Coordinating with community groups, local schools, and other appropriate organizations to promote the arts;
- Providing venues, and when feasible, financial support for performing and visual arts and music events; and
- Supporting existing community gardens through public/private partnerships.

### *Cobb County Cultural Resources Summary*

This document serves as a comprehensive list of non-profit organizations in Cobb County that support arts and cultural activities. Unfortunately, the majority of organizations listed which are located in Mableton are inactive.

### *Cobb County Parks and Recreation Plan*

Cobb County’s master plan document for its parks and recreation facilities and programming offers insight into community opinion on arts and culture on County park sites. When asked about involvement in current programming, 52 percent never participate in classes and programming. About 42 percent of respondents said they occasionally partake in cultural events.



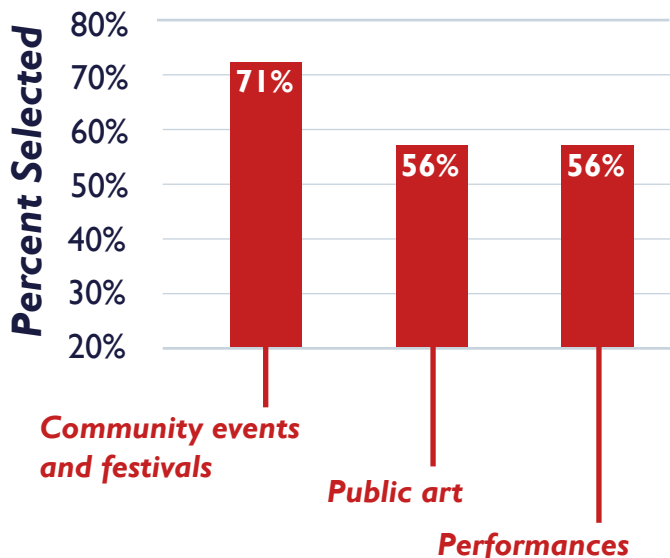
# Needs and Opportunities

## Needs

### N1 MORE ARTS, CULTURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT OFFERINGS

Feedback from residents about Mableton’s cultural resources has coalesced around a single word: **more**. Residents desire more performances, more public art, and especially more community events and festivals (**Figure 7-5**). Festivals like Taste of Mableton have been incredibly successful, showing that there is an appetite for additional opportunities to showcase Mableton’s homegrown talents.

Figure 7-5: Top Preferences for Arts and Culture Offerings, Mableton 2045 Survey



### N2 MORE SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE STUDIOS, THEATERS, AND PERFORMING ARTS COLLABORATIVES

Although Mableton is home to a few private businesses focused on arts, culture, and entertainment, expanding the City’s support for artists and creators could help increase the amount of cultural offerings organically throughout the city. This support could come via grant-making and funding support, education on the permitting process for building or renovating studio space, or other methods.

### N3 GREATER VISIBILITY OF THE ARTS ACROSS THE CITY

Marketing and publicity, both in person and online, is the best way to make sure residents are aware of and connected with arts and cultural offerings. Mableton would benefit from greater arts visibility in its built environment—from public art to flyers and advertisements—but also digitally, where a consolidated list of arts institutions and their programming would go a long way toward spreading the word about festivals and performances.

### N4 ADDITIONAL SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

Mableton’s festivals are clearly popular and beloved. Tapping into residents’ desire for more special events and programming can provide not just an economic boost to Mableton, but a quality of life boost as well.

*Opportunities*

**01 STRONG EXISTING INSTITUTIONS**

Mableton’s greatest opportunity for expanding the presence of its cultural resources lies in its existing institutions, such as the Mable House Arts Center and Riverside EpiCenter. These institutions have tremendous potential for expanding arts and cultural programming, as well as amplifying the offerings of other private studios and nonprofits. The City could contemplate how best to support a coalition of these groups to strengthen arts offerings city-wide.

**02 LEGACY OF PERFORMING ARTS INTEGRATION WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

In a similar vein, the performing arts centers housed at South Cobb High School and Pebblebrook High School could also serve as a critical resource for providing more arts and culture opportunities. While these performing arts facilities typically host school productions, they could be opened for other groups during the summer. Similarly, pursuing partnerships with Cobb County Schools or these schools individually could provide high school students with greater access to other arts and culture offerings and institutions in greater Mableton.

**03 PLACEMAKING IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND THROUGH PRIVATE REDEVELOPMENT**

Residents have stated that Mableton’s main thoroughfares could use some aesthetic improvements, especially improvements that showcase what makes Mableton special. Adding public art within rights-of-way, as well as in highly visible locations through redevelopment, would go a long way toward making Mableton’s physical buildings and infrastructure reflect the vibrancy of the city and its residents.

**04 SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM AMONG CITIZENS**

Mableton’s residents are ready for more art, more performances, and more things to do. The City has an excellent opportunity to harness this energy by encouraging and supporting citizens’ groups that could organize and host more cultural events. Taste of Mableton and the Harvest Festival serve as proof that citizens will fill those gaps, but it is always easier to start something new with a little institutional support. Mableton should invest in empowering its citizens to express their creativity and invite others to enjoy it.

## Goals, Policies, and Key Actions

While Mableton’s cultural resources are beloved by many, there is a strong appetite for more of them. From events to performing arts institutions and public art, residents believe that there is untapped potential for boosting arts and culture activities and visibility city-wide. Not only would strengthening cultural resources provide more opportunities for leisure and a higher quality of life, it can also cement and reinforce a distinct identity for the City.

The following goals and policies focus on supporting the momentum the Mableton community has started to build. City-led actions can remove barriers for residents, from procedural steps to opening a private studio to boosting awareness of Mableton as a sought-after arts and culture destination. The City can also facilitate new placemaking and public art opportunities along major roads and through development regulations, so when properites redevelop they help establish Mableton’s sense of place.



*Credit: Cobb County Center for Excellence in the Performing Arts*

**I** *Support the Growing Arts Community of Mableton*

Mableton is home to a range of public, private, and nonprofit arts establishments, but these are concentrated near the Mable House Amphitheater and in south Mableton near Six Flags. Despite their limited number, these institutions’ popularity suggests that the community is growing. The City should support this growth through policies that make it easier to open studios, put on performances, and hold events, while promoting artists’ endeavors.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY I.A: Proactively build and strengthen partnerships with arts and cultural organizations.</i></b>	
Inventory existing arts and culture organizations in Mableton and host a focus group to understand their needs.	N2, O4
Identify arts and culture organizations in Cobb County and other nearby jurisdictions that may be interested in expanding their services to Mableton and create promotional materials to advertise local opportunities.	N1, N3, N4, O2
Investigate opportunities to expand the partnership with CCCEPA and other programming focused on bringing arts opportunities to youth.	O1, O2
<b><i>POLICY I.B: Support the development of arts- and culture-based spaces.</i></b>	
Plan for a central public space in downtown Mableton that can accommodate a broad variety of events and entertainment.	N1, N4
Analyze the zoning code to identify potential barriers for arts and culture venues.	N2
Create an inventory of existing and potential venues that can host arts and culture events.	N2, N4
Evaluate opportunities to expand access to arts and culture in the north side of Mableton.	N2, N4
<b><i>POLICY I.C: Elevate and celebrate local artists.</i></b>	
Identify local artists/arts leaders and encourage/invite them to participate in City commissions and Steering Committees.	N1, N2, O4
Continue to partner with and support the Mable House Arts Center.	O2

**2** *Integrate Placemaking and Public Art into New Development*

Residents of Mableton take a lot of pride in their community, and they want that pride to be expressed visually throughout the city. Placemaking and public art is the most visible—and often the most immediate—way for a community to define its own cultural identity, whether that be through traditional public art like murals and sculptures or more “hidden” placemaking like banners or visual motifs on public infrastructure. Mableton can support this through a more dedicated placemaking plan, standardizing a list of approved placemaking types, and working with private developers and citizen groups (like the Mableton Improvement Coalition) to add art throughout the city.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b>POLICY 2.A: Prioritize public art and placemaking at activity centers, such as the Entertainment District, New City Center, and Mixed-Use Villages (pages ##-##).</b>	
Ensure new development abides by design guidelines and incentivize public art and placemaking as part of development projects.	N3, O3
<b>POLICY 2.B: Invest in placemaking in public rights-of-way.</b>	
Identify priority corridors for placemaking.	N3, O3
Develop a city-wide placemaking and public art plan.	N3, O3

**Case Study: Gwinnett County Daily Community Placemaking**

Following its recent 2045 Unified Plan, which imagines Gwinnett County as a collection of over 80 distinct geographic communities, the County’s Planning and Development Department decided to redouble its efforts to help plan for each community individually through placemaking and other improvements. They began engaging residents to determine their preferred color palette, landscaping types, and placemaking interventions to help reinforce how residents imagine their community to look and feel.



**3** *Explore Opportunities for More Events and Festivals Rooted in the City’s Diversity*

While festivals like Taste of Mableton are incredibly popular, residents have noted the lack of events that capture and celebrate the unique cultural backgrounds of the city’s residents. The City can support the development of a more comprehensive set of events and programming, both through official City events as well as by streamlining the process for other organizations to host their own.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 3.A: Represent the city’s diversity through programs and events.</i></b>	
Identify major cultural groups in Mableton and potential community leaders for building stronger relationships.	O4
Through the placemaking public art plan, conduct a survey that explores what types of events are most appealing to city residents and business owners.	N1, N4, O4
Work with Cobb County to ensure recreation and other programming is inclusive and meets the community’s cultural needs	O2
<b><i>POLICY 3.B: Streamline the process for organizations to host events and festivals.</i></b>	
Create an event-hosting guide that clearly outlines the process for hosting events in Mableton.	N3, O4

# CHAPTER 8



## Historic Preservation Element

### Introduction

Historic preservation is the practice of protecting resources that are important to a community's heritage. Traditionally, historic preservation focuses on saving physical resources like buildings and other structures. In more recent years, the field has expanded to include celebrating and protecting non-physical aspects of history as well, such as cultural practices, events, and stories.

Although many people think “historic” as dating far back in time, the standard definition includes anything that is 50 years of age or older. This definition comes into play with multiple types of historic designations. The two most common historic designations are listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or listing as part of a local district or protected site. It should be noted that listing in the NRHP does not provide any protection for a property, it is a recognition only; only local designations and districts can offer regulatory protection for historic resources.



## Existing Conditions

### *A Brief History of Mableton*

The area currently in the City of Mableton has been occupied by people for many hundreds of years. Along Nickajack Creek near the Chattahoochee River, there are at least two known Native American sites: one dating from the Archaic period (circa 3000 BC) and another during the late Mississippi period (1500-1600 AD). The area was part of the Cherokee and Muscogee nations until it was forcibly taken by the State of Georgia in the 1830s.

In the 1840s, a Scottish immigrant named Robert Mable purchased 300 acres of land in the area. He became a prominent member of the then-rural community, and his home—the Mable House—remains today as a historical site and cultural center. By the middle of the 19th century farms dotted the landscape, as well as a series of mills powered by the waters of Nickajack Creek.

Mableton played a role in the Civil War; the Union Army used it as a supply and medical station during the Battle of Atlanta. The Confederates were also in the area, and built a remarkable 6-mile-long set of fortifications and trenches along the Chattahoochee River in an effort to halt General Sherman’s attack on Atlanta.

Another important point in history was the arrival of the Georgia Pacific Railway in 1881. The railroad spurred the growth of the small town known as Mableton, which served as a trading post for cotton for a number of decades.

#### **Pre-1830s**

The area known as Mableton was part of the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations. Two villages, known as Sweet Water Town and Nickajack, were the center of social life.

#### **1840s**

Scottish immigrant Robert Mable purchased 300 acres of land in the area.

#### **1848-1850**

An initial bridge, which would become the Concord Covered Bridge, was constructed across Nickajack Creek.

#### **1864**

During the Battle of Atlanta of the Civil War, several fortifications were built by both Union and Confederate troops along what was known as Johnston’s River Line.

#### **1881**

The Georgia Pacific Railway opened a station in Mableton, connecting downtown Mableton to Atlanta.

#### **1912-1916**

Mableton incorporated in 1912, but disincorporated in 1916 after major flooding caused financial hardship for the city.

#### **1950s-1960s**

Mableton grew significantly as new industries came to Cobb County.

#### **1967**

Six Flags Over Georgia opened.

#### **2022**

The City of Mableton was approved by referendum during the general election of November 2022.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

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### *A Brief History of Mableton (continued)*

In 1912, Mableton became a city but disbanded just four years later because of financial issues caused by massive flooding.

The area today known as Mableton remained largely rural until the 1950s. Like much of south and western Cobb, the area grew remarkably in the 1950s and 1960s in response to employment opportunities like those at the nearby Bell Bomber Plant in Marietta. Much of Mableton developed as single-family neighborhoods, as people were attracted to the small-town lifestyle with proximity to Atlanta and the airport. Six Flags Over Georgia was built in 1967, and industrial growth of I-20 began in earnest in the 1990s.

In 2022, residents voted in a referendum to reincorporate as the City of Mableton, the only one of four cityhood movements in Cobb County to succeed.

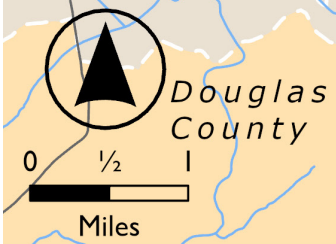
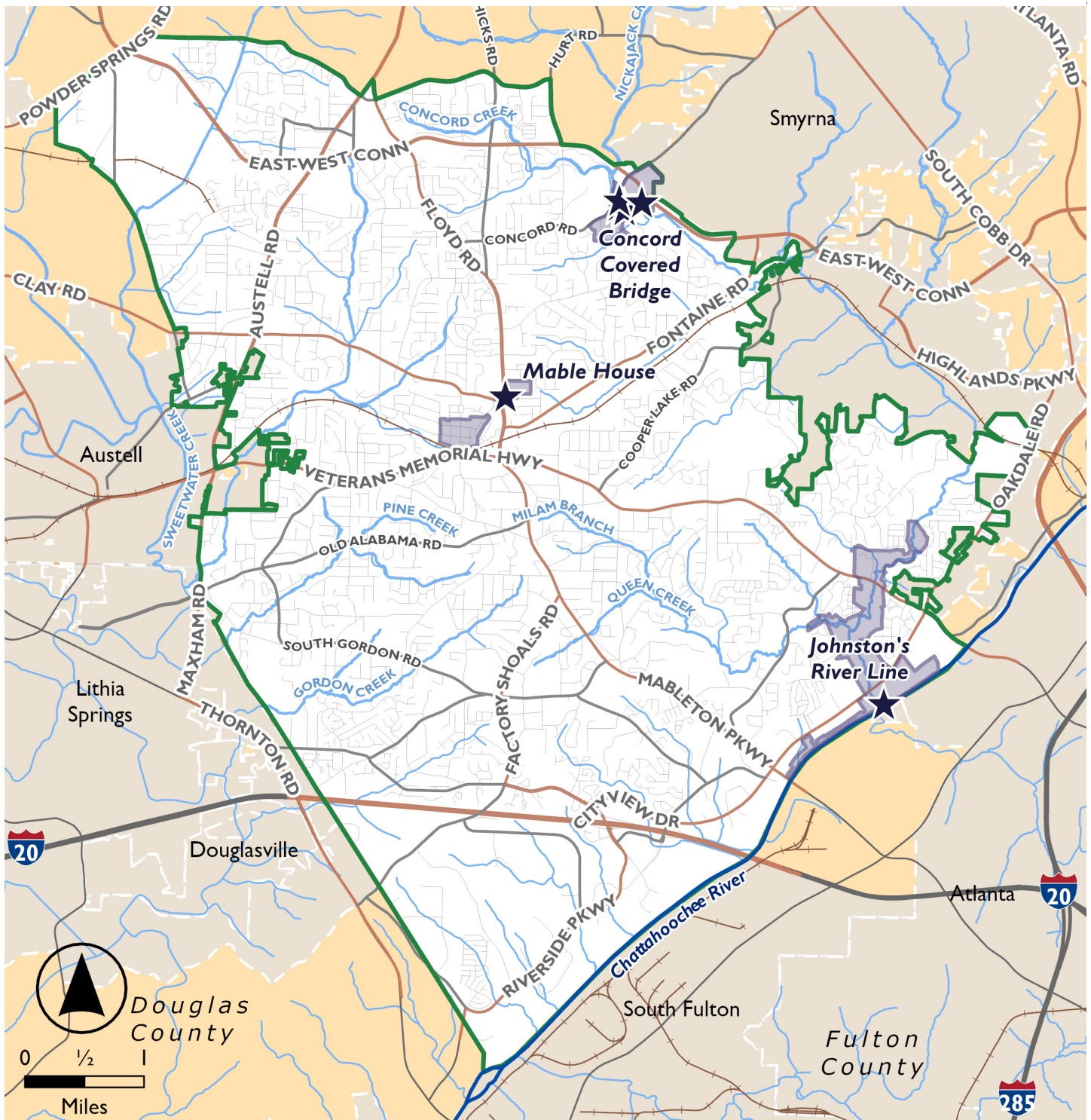
### *Historic Areas*

Mableton has three areas with a concentration of notable historic resources, shown in **Figure 8-1, pg. 97**:

- Concord Covered Bridge Historic District
- Johnston's River Line
- Downtown Mableton and Mable House



Figure 9-1: Historic Areas



<b>LEGEND</b>	Historic Resources	Mableton City Limits	Interstates
	Historic Areas	Surrounding Cities	Arterials
	Surrounding Counties	Other Roads	Railroads

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

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### *Concord Covered Bridge District*

The Concord Covered Bridge Historic District is a rural mill complex along the banks of Nickajack Creek. Primary buildings include a grist mill (Ruff's Mill), the miller's house, and the Concord Covered Bridge, all built just prior to the Civil War. These three structures are joined by the historic Concord Woolen Mill ruins, and three historic homes: the John Gann House, the John W Rice House, and the Martin L Ruff House (**Figure 8-2, pg. 99**).

In 1986, Cobb County designated the area as a historic district. It was the first one in the county and was overseen by the Cobb County Historical Commission. There are currently three main challenges associated with the district:

- The covered bridge is one of only a small number of covered bridges in Georgia that still operates as part of the roadway network. Although many cherish its unique character, the bridge's limited space causes a mobility pinch point. It is also common for large vehicles to get stuck and block the passage for hours, despite the many warning signs.
- With the incorporation of the district parcels into the City of Mableton, it is unclear how the district will be regulated in the future since it is no longer part of unincorporated Cobb County.
- Ruff's Mill is privately owned and in need of a costly rehabilitation. There is a desire to preserve the building, but there is no funding.



*Concord Covered Bridge*  
(Photo c/o ConcordCoveredBridge.org)



*Ruff's Grist Mill*  
(Photo c/o ConcordCoveredBridge.org)

Figure 8-2: Concord Covered Bridge Historic District



LEGEND

- ★ Historic Resources
- ▨ Concord Covered Bridge Historic District
- Flood Zones
- Creeks
- ▭ Mableton City Limits
- ▭ Surrounding Cities
- ▭ Surrounding Counties

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

### *Johnston's River Line*

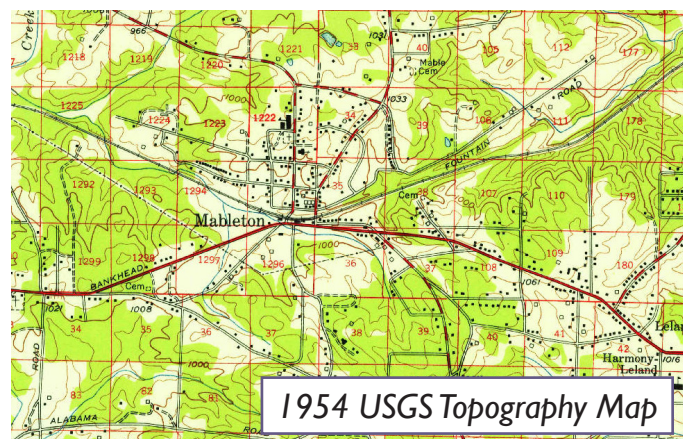
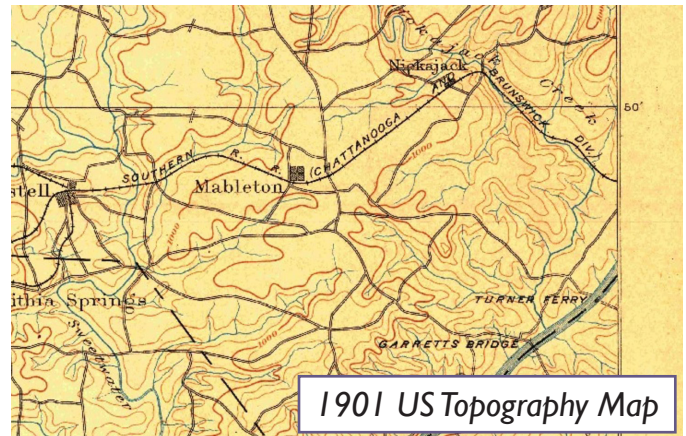
Johnston's River Line is a collection of civil war resources along the Chattahoochee River near the mouth of Nickajack Creek. Nominated to the NRHP in 1973, the area includes both Union and Confederate fortifications dating from the 1864 Battle of Atlanta.

Originally stretching almost six miles, the River Line was a connected series of trenches and field fortifications built the Confederate and forced African American labor. The most unique aspect of these is the "shoupades," which are diamond-shaped forts named after Confederate officer Francis Shoup. Today, only a fraction of the original shoupades and trench still exist. Union fortifications are generally further west of the river line near today's Providence neighborhood. The best place to experience these resources is Discovery Park, a relatively new park developed by Cobb County in 2021; 83 acres of the park are part of the NRHP. The River Line Historic Area, Inc, is a local organization that advocates for these resources, as well as those that extend past Mableton into Smyrna and Vinings.

Because of its Civil War connections, the River Line is a high-profile, well-known historic resource in Mableton. However, there are aspects of the area's history that are not currently shared and celebrated widely, such as stories related to Union troops, the enslaved laborers, historic cemeteries, and the Native American communities that lived along Nickajack prior to the nineteenth century.

### *Downtown Mableton*

The original core of Mableton grew up around the Southern Railroad line that came through the area in the early 1880s. It was centered along Church Street, with its original four blocks bounded by Peak Street, Center Street, and Mitchell Street.



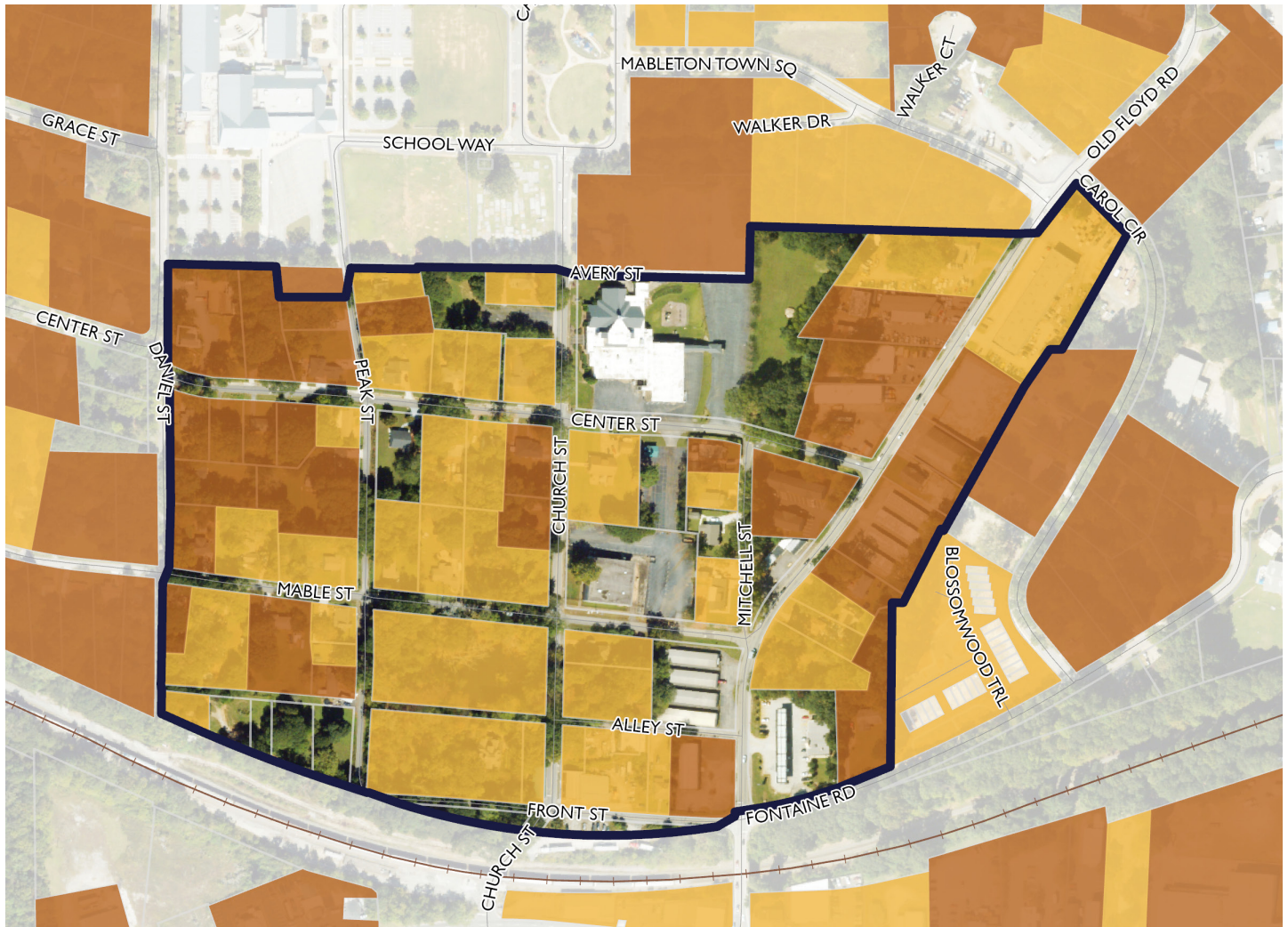
Downtown grew modestly over the first half of the 20th century, expanding to the north and west by a few blocks. However, most of this area was residential, and Mableton did not develop a strong center of commercial buildings. Instead, a modest cluster of commercial buildings lined Front Street and areas adjacent to the railroad tracks, where Barnes Hardware today sits.

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

Today, there are about 35 parcels in the old downtown area with buildings dating from 1950 or earlier (**Figure 8-3**). These are predominantly small bungalow homes, but notable structures include 966 Front Street (large house built in 1912) and several homes along Mable Street.

With strong desire in the city to develop a true downtown, these modest historic structures will be very vulnerable to demolition if not documented and protected.

Figure 8-3: Parcels by Year Built in Mableton's Historic Town Center



**LEGEND**

- Built 1841-1949
- Built 1950-1989
- Historic Town Center
- Railroads

*Other Areas*

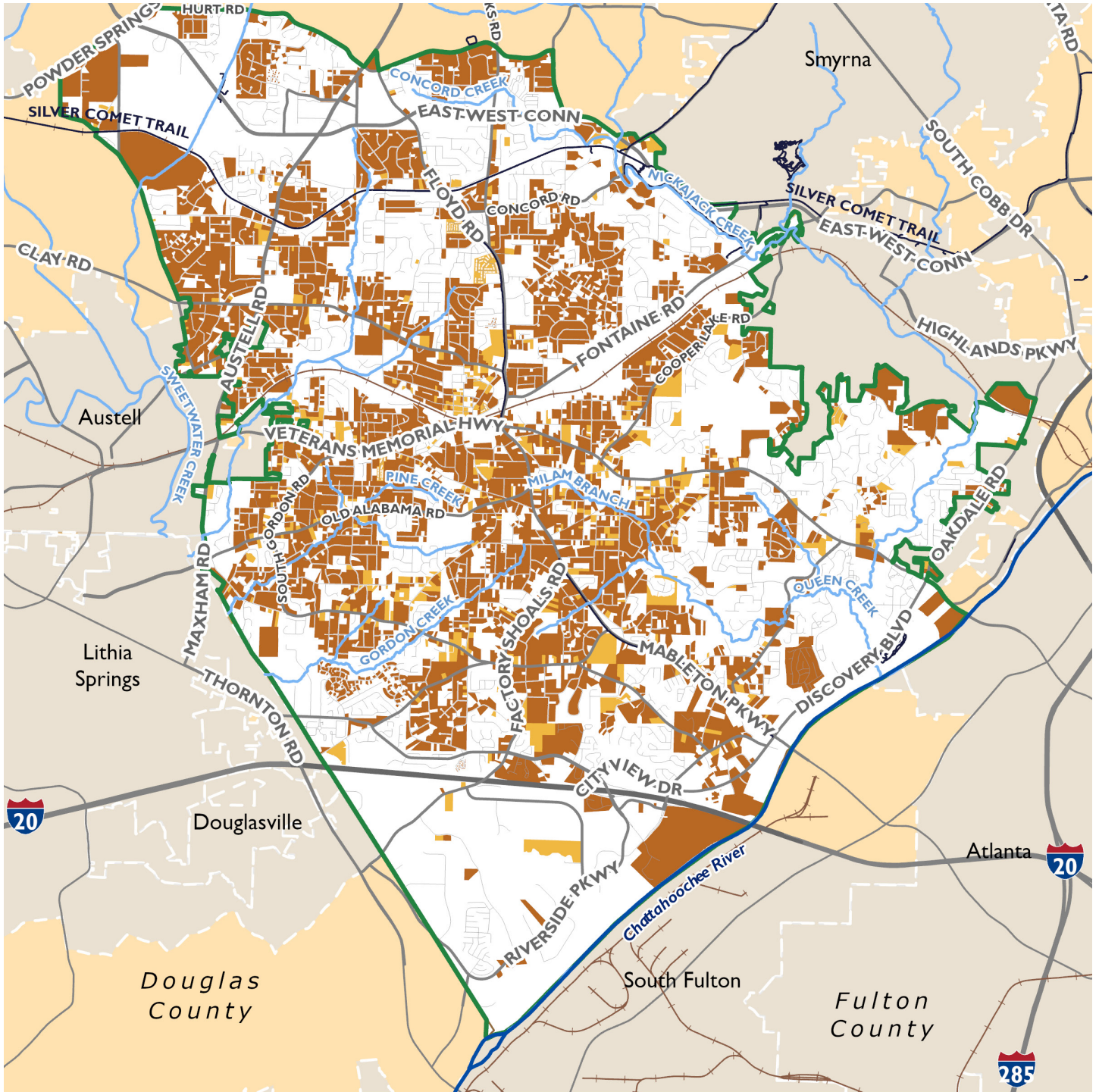
These three areas—the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District, Johnston’s River Line, and Downtown Mableton—are important but only represent resources that are formally recognized. According to parcel data, there are 547 parcels in Mableton with main structures built in 1949 or earlier. Perhaps more notably, there are over 8,800 parcels with structures built between 1951 and 1980 (**Figure 8-4, pg. 103**). Though these might not seem “historic” yet, they are over 50 years old and represent the bulk of Mableton’s residential character. In the near future, they may attain some significance as mid-century neighborhoods. Because of this, there is a need to study these other areas to identify potential resources for recognition and potential preservation moving forward.

**Previous Plans**

There are no recent plans that focus specifically on Mableton’s historic resources. However, the RiverLands Master Plan(2020), includes the River Line, and builds on the older River Line Historic Area Master Plan (2009), The South Cobb Town Center Plan (2010) contains an extensive development vision in and around historic resources downtown. There are no plans from the past 15 years that address the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District.

*Chattahoochee RiverLands (2020)*

The Trust for Public Land, in partnership with Cobb County and the Atlanta Regional Commission, invested in an ambitious master plan for the Chattahoochee River called the RiverLands. This massive project spans from Lake Lanier to the north to Chattahoochee Bend to the south. It proposes a continuous, 100-mile greenway corridor that connects the river’s natural, historic, and cultural resources together. The very first phase of the project was a 0.6-mile trail built along the Chattahoochee’s shoreline in Mableton, directly behind Discovery Park, elevating the River Line resources to a wider audience.



**LEGEND**

- Built 1841-1949
- Built 1950-1989

- Mableton City Limits
- Surrounding Cities
- Surrounding Counties

- Interstates
- Arterials
- Other Roads
- Railroads

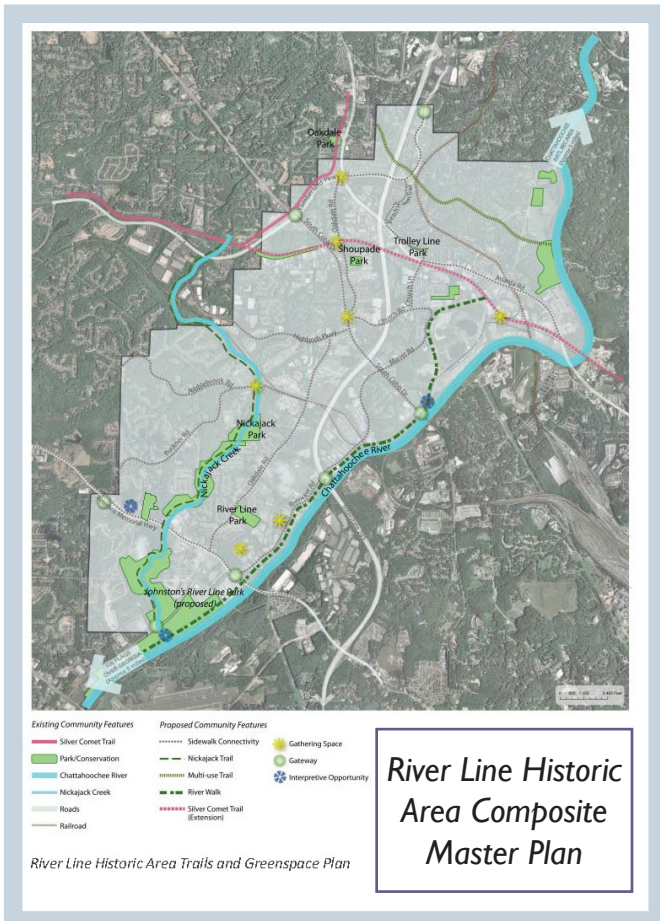
## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

### *River Line Historic Area Master Plan (2009)*

In 2009, the Mableton Improvement Coalition hired a firm to develop the River Line Historic Area Master Plan. Covered an area much larger than Mableton’s portion, which is primarily focused along Johnston’s River Line. The plan envisioned a cohesive river corridor where the historic and natural resources were preserved; specifically in Mableton, the plan proposed a significant green space at today’s Discovery Park and stretching up Nickajack Creek.

### *South Cobb Town Center – Mableton Lifelong Communities Study (2010)*

Developed in 2010 by design firm Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (DPZ), the South Cobb Town Center created an ambitious vision for redevelopment in downtown Mableton. The plan envisioned extensive development of neighborhood-scaled, mixed-use buildings around an interconnected network of roadways and green spaces. Implementation of the plan has progress on the public side, with the adoption of a form-based code and several infrastructure investments. Though the plan was not a historic preservation plan, its vision complemented the historic scale and community character of downtown Mableton’s existing older structures.



# Needs and Opportunities

## Needs

### **NI PROTECTION OF REMAINING HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Some officially recognized resources are vulnerable, either because their physical condition is deteriorating and/or because of potential redevelopment pressure. These include:

- Ruff’s Mill – privately owned and currently in a state of disrepair.
- The Covered Bridge – Although its condition is generally good, the bridge is frequently damaged by oversized vehicles attempting to pass through it. While many treasure its unique character, it does pose real challenges to mobility in the area and is a consistent source of congestion and stuck trucks.
- Union fortifications – Confederate fortifications associated with the River Line are protected in Discovery Park, but Union structures to the west remain unprotected.
- Downtown bungalows – Downtown’s small footprint bungalows may come under pressure for redevelopment if the City’s vision for a vibrant downtown comes to fruition.

Resources beyond Concord Covered Bridge District, the River Line, and Downtown are not well documented. Without further study, it is difficult to know if there are other important structures and sites in Mableton that should be protected.

### **N2 REGULATORY STRUCTURE TO MANAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT FORMERLY MANAGED BY COBB COUNTY**

Prior to Mableton’s incorporation, Cobb County’s Historical Commission oversaw development in the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District. With the City of Mableton now having jurisdiction, it is important to establish an appropriate regulatory body to manage these important resources. The District’s listing on the NRHP does not provide any protection.

### **N3 MORE WAYS TO TELL THE STORY OF MABLETON**

Opportunities to learn about the history of Mableton are limited. Currently there are only a few places that actively tell the story of Mableton: the Mable House, Heritage Park, and Discovery Park being the most prominent. In a city as large as Mableton, this small handful of locations is limiting in terms of accessibility.

Additionally, there are many parts of the community’s story that are not well told. For example, there are many more stories related the enslaved people who lived in the community, the Union army activity during the Civil War, and Native American communities.

*Opportunities*

**01 INTEGRATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES INTO FUTURE PLANS FOR DOWNTOWN**

One of the major areas of consensus in the planning process is a desire for a “true” downtown, which is also where a sizable number of Mableton’s remaining historic structures exist. As plans develop for this downtown, there is an opportunity to:

- Identify existing historic structures and show them remaining in place
- Promote development policies that reflect existing historic scale and character

**02 CELEBRATION OF THE NICKAJACK CREEK CORRIDOR**

The Nickajack Creek corridor is rich in heritage resources, but these are not yet connected into a cohesive story—nor are they all accessible. There’s an opportunity to study this resource more closely, and ultimately integrate the following elements together:

- Native American communities that settled near the creek over several periods
- The role of the creek in supporting various mill structures and the rural economy
- Union fortifications from the Civil War that relate to Johnston’s River Line
- Other communities and stories uncovered through additional study

**03 PRESERVATION OF CONCORD COVERED BRIDGE STRUCTURES**

Ruff’s Mill—one of the foundational resources of the Historic District—is in need of investment. Short term, there is an opportunity to stabilize the structure to protect against further deterioration; longer term, a plan is needed for its preservation and potentially access for the community.

The Covered Bridge is under constant threat of damage and is a sore point in the mobility network. The ongoing damage to the bridge from oversized vehicles and the congestion it causes is not sustainable long term. However, it is essential that the covered bridge remains an active part of the community. Mableton should commit to a plan that better protects the bridge, while still maintaining its appropriate context.

**04 SHARING THE HISTORY OF MABLETON THROUGH ART, EVENTS, AND PARKS**

There is an opportunity to expand how historic preservation is explored in Mableton. Although historic markers and exhibits have value, there are many other ways to celebrate the community’s heritage through public art, more festivals and events, and interactive features in public spaces and parks.

## Goals, Policies, and Key Actions

Like many Georgia municipalities, Mableton is home to several prominent historic resources and community landmarks, as well as a multitude of untold or under-told histories that deserve to be shared widely and prominently. The goals, policies, and actions in this section provide the City with strategies for the protection of existing resources and the creation of new resources that paint a more complete picture of Mableton’s diverse history and communities.

### I *Tell the Story of Mableton’s History and Communities through Art, Events, and Parks*

History can be incorporated into many different media: public art, public spaces, events, and even online resources managed by the city. Other goals related to public art, placemaking, and greenspace protection are fantastic opportunities to highlight components of Mableton’s under-explored history.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY I.A: Create and share a thorough, inclusive understanding of Mableton’s history.</i></b>	
Conduct a historic sites and structures inventory.	N1, O1, O3
To augment the inventory, invest in a public historian to study the area’s history and conduct oral history interviews.	N3, O4
Establish an online platform for sharing Mableton’s many stories from a broad variety of communities, especially those are typically overlooked such as the enslaved population, Native Americans, and other minority groups.	N3, O4
Integrate these themes into the recommended placemaking and public art plan.	N3, O4
Investigate the culture and stories associated with Nickajack Creek and include interpretation/ways to celebrate them in future green space planning.	N3, O2, O4
<b><i>POLICY I.B: Support and promote overlooked aspects of Mableton’s history.</i></b>	
Identify a group of artists to work with historians in creating a public art piece/exhibit that tells the stories of a variety of Mableton’s under-recognized communities.	N3, O1, O4
Connect members of these underserved communities to potential partners and funding sources for creating new events and celebrations.	N3, O4

## Case Study: Oral History Projects in Carrboro, NC and Thomasville, GA

Oral histories are a valuable and democratic method for collecting, interpreting, and sharing stories from diverse communities, especially those communities whose histories have not been recorded in text, images, or other traditional primary sources. Oral history collections are often focused on specific neighborhoods, demographic groups, or people connected to specific events. Two examples of oral history programs—one from Durham, North Carolina and another from Thomasville, Georgia—offer examples for how Mableton could establish and support a program that dives deep into the history of its diverse communities.

The Carrboro Oral History Project is a collaboration between the Town of Carrboro and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which hosts the Southern Oral History Program (SOHP). The project started in 2015 and collected interviews over the next several years. These interviews were focused on stories from Carrboro’s oldest residents. Although new interviews have stopped, the SOHP has continued cross-referencing its archives for histories that are related to Carrboro or given by Carrboro residents. Mableton could explore a similar partnership structure through the South Cobb Regional Library or Georgia State University, which has strong programming related to historic preservation.

Similarly, the City of Thomasville, Georgia, began an oral history project in 2022 focused on capturing perspectives of African-American residents with connections to the Bottom neighborhood in Thomasville. This program is jointly managed by the Jack Hadley Black History Museum, Thomasville History Center, and the City. The program is grant-funded, which Mableton could pursue in partnership with an institution like the Mable House Arts Center.



Credit: City of Thomasville, Oral History Project

**2** *Invest in the Protection of Remaining Historic Resources*

Protection of historic resources can look different based on the nature of the resource and how it is currently managed. Mableton’s main three resources—the Concord Covered Bridge District, Johnston’s River Line, and historic downtown Mableton—are very distinct and, as such, require nuanced approaches to ensure their longevity. These can range from considering a local historic district to ensuring development regulations allow existing historic structures, such as houses and storefronts, to be used and maintained. The City should consider how these resources can tie into other City initiatives as well, such as placemaking and economic development.

Action	Needs and Opportunities Met
<b><i>POLICY 2.A: Proactively support the preservation of the Concord Covered Bridge District.</i></b>	
Explore options for a local historic district, including meeting with the community to determine their level of support.	N2, O3
Identify potential ownership arrangements, grants and partnerships to support restoration of key structures.	N1, O3
Develop a plan to comprehensively address ongoing conflicts at the Concord Covered Bridge, including multiple alternatives and order-of-magnitude costs.	N1, O3
<b><i>POLICY 2.B: Support and celebrate River Line resources.</i></b>	
Continue to coordinate and collaborate with the River Line Historic Area organization.	N3, O2
Analyze the existing zoning code for opportunities to better support the sensitive resources and unique aesthetic of the River Line, balancing those resources with redevelopment at areas that are already developed.	O2
<b><i>POLICY 2.C: Integrate historic structures into downtown Mableton’s redevelopment.</i></b>	
Evaluate the current zoning code to ensure that design standards for downtown Mableton are effective but not overly cumbersome for new development to meet.	N1, O1

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT



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# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Land Use &amp; Development</b>							
LU.1	Create a Mableton-specific zoning code that aligns with the Comprehensive Plan	X	X	X			Community Development
LU.2	Corridor/land use study for Veterans Memorial Highway, include special area studies/designs for mixed-use village locations, streetscaoe design	X	X				Community Development
LU.3	Corridor land/use study for Floyd Road, including enhanced connections to Mable House and the library			X	X		Community Development
LU.4	Begin implementation of Special Area Studies	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.5	Lead an educational campaign about land use decision-making processes		X	X			Community Development
LU.6	Convene and support citizen advocacy groups that can serve as ambassadors for Mableton Planning intitatives		X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.7	Coordinate with key partners to understand long-term goals near destinations	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.8	Create a master development plan for the area under jursdiction of the Urban Redevelopment Authority	X					Community Development
LU.9	Expand the jurisdiction of the URA as appropriate	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.10	Coordinate with property owners of existing businesses to build support for potential redevelopment projects	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.11	Create and implement a system of metrics to measure success towards reaching community goals	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
LU.12	Partner with Cobb County and to conduct a East-West ConnectorJoint Plan		x	x	x		Community Development

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
Consultant	\$300,000-\$500,000	General Fund
Atlanta Regional Commission	\$200,000	General Fund or ARC's LCI Program
Atlanta Regional Commission	\$150,000	General Fund and/or ARC's LCI Program
Economic Development, City Council, property owners	varies	General Fund, private funds
City Council	staff time	n/a
City Council	staff time	n/a
Six Flags, Trust for Public Land, Cobb County Parks and Recreation	staff time	n/a
Community Development, consultant	\$15,000	n/a
Community Development	staff time	n/a
Property owners	staff time	n/a
City Council	staff time	n/a
Cobb County, City of Smyrna	\$50,000 (City portion)	General Fund

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Lead
<b><i>Land Use &amp; Development - Longer Term</i></b>		
LU.2.1	Create a marquee public space within a master planned development that can serve as a central gathering space for cultural events and programming	
LU.2.2	Land use/transportation corridor studies for Austell Road, East-West Connector, Factory Shoals Road, Floyd Road, Mableton Parkway, Powder Springs Road; include special area studies/designs for mixed-use village areas	

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM



Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Economic Development</b>							
ED.1	<b>Create a New Downtown and Walkable Cores</b> Identify a targeted location for a new downtown for Mableton that includes green spaces, a civic anchor, and opportunities for private development	X	X				Economic Dev.
ED.2	Create smaller opportunities for mixed-use development in a more walkable format		X	X			Economic Dev.
ED.3	<b>Bolster the Entertainment Node on I-20</b> Create opportunities for new lodging, dining, and other supportive retail in the I-20 entertainment core.	X	X				Economic Dev., Planning
ED.4	Pursue opportunities to secure a lifestyle retail center in the I-20 entertainment core.	X					Economic Dev.
ED.5	Stabilize Six Flags as an entertainment anchor on I-20	X					Economic Dev.
ED.6	<b>Bolster Key Employment Cores</b> Invest in the quality of life in targeted cores w/in Mableton via sidewalks, streetscapes, etc.			X	X		Public Works
ED.7	Pursue a corridor redevelopment strategy for Veterans Memorial Highway		X	X			Economic Dev., Planning

**COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
ARC, Cobb County Economic Development	n/a	ARC Livable Cities Initiative	Staff-lead initiative, possibly with consulting assistance
ARC, Cobb County Economic Development	n/a	n/a	Internally-lead initiative focused on near- and long-term efforts to create framework for more dense development.
n/a	n/a	n/a	Investigate zoning opportunities, potential to work with existing property owners, incentives to encourage supportive land uses.
n/a	n/a	n/a	Initiate conversations w/ major outlet owners/ operators to gauge potential interest in an intown Atlanta location, site/ funding needs, etc.
n/a	n/a	n/a	In the very near-term, initiate conversations w/ Six Flags ownership to understand plans, potential issues impacting the park, etc.
Cobb County, Ga. Dept of Transportation, ARC	n/a	n/a	Creation of a more inviting environment to attract new private-sector investment
ARC, Ga. Dept of Transportation	\$150,000	ARC Livable Centers Initiative	Veterans Memorial is the most significant thoroughfare in the city--addressing perceptions of disinvestment is critical to encouraging private investment in the corridor.

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Economic Development</b>							
ED.8	<b>Enhance Mableton's Image</b> Enhance the image of Riverside Parkway	X	X	X			Police, Economic Development, Bldg Inspection
ED.9	Target key intersections along Veterans Memorial for enhancement and beautification			X	X		Economic Development, Planning
ED.10	<b>Maximize Mableton's Convenience</b> Invest in regional corridors and access points to maintain strong regional access		X	X	X		Mableton DOT
ED.11	Broaden shopping and services offerings in Mableton	X	X	X			Mableton Econ Dev. And planning

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Mableton Econ Dev, Police, Bldg Services	n/a	n/a	Crime and disinvestment perceptions along Riverside Parkway are impacting opportunities for enhancing the I-20 entertainment core
Georgia DOT, Cobb County Econ Dev.	n/a	n/a	Follow-on to the broader strategy for enhancing Veterans Memorial Highway.
Georgia DOT, Cobb County DOT	n/a	n/a	Identify intersections and corridors where congestion and other factors limit access and convenience for Mableton's residents and businesses.
ARC	n/a	n/a	Creation of locations, walkable areas within Mableton can help attract new dining, retail, and services opportunities.

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Housing</b>							
H.1	<b>Create greater flexibility in zoning codes</b> Create more flexibility in single-family neighborhoods	X	X				Mableton Planning
H.2	Increase housing flexibility in mixed-use cores	X	X				Mableton Planning
H.3	<b>Further the Family Market</b> Support school quality in Mableton		X	X			Mableton Planning
H.4	<b>Encourage the Development of more schools in walkable areas</b> Encourage the development of schools in walkable, mixed-use cores		X	X			Mableton Planning
H.5	<b>Allow your seniors to age in place</b> Encourage the development of a mix of housing types in mixed-use cores	X	X				Mableton Planning
H.6	Create greater flexibility to allow for seniors to stay with extended families	X	X				Mableton Planning & Zoning

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Cobb County Planning	n/a	n/a	Examine opportunities to allow duplex and triplex units in single-family neighborhoods to further opportunities for more attached product.
Cobb County Planning	n/a	n/a	Examine zoning codes and opportunities for creating greater flexibility for development of more dense housing in mixed-use cores.
Cobb County Planning	n/a	n/a	Work with Cobb County to pursue strategies to invest in existing and new schools to enhance school quality.
Cobb County Planning	n/a	n/a	Create opportunities and incentives to secure sites in key walkable cores.
Mableton Zoning & Planning	n/a	n/a	Create flexibility in mixed-use cores to ease and allow the development of zero-lot, patio home, independent & assisted living communities to accommodate more mature residents seeking a lower cost of living.
Cobb County Planning & Zoning	n/a	n/a	Create flexibility in the zoning codes to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in single-family zones.

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Housing</b>							
H.7	Explore funding opportunities to help homeowners make improvements or renovations to their homes	X	X				Community Development
H.8	<b>Create lifestyle opportunities</b> Focus on creating opportunities for walkable settings	X	X				Mableton Planning & Zoning

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Cobb County Community Development	n/a	n/a	Pursue funding sources and opportunities that allow residents to improve their homes and remain in place.
City & County Parks & Recreation	n/a	n/a	Examine opportunities to extend greenways, secure parks, and provide flexibility to encourage more housing in mixed-use cores.

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Transportation</b>							
T.1	Develop a Mableton Comprehensive Transportation Plan	X					City of Mableton
T.2	Develop a Citywide Mobility Safety Plan		X				City of Mableton
T.3	Install Citywide Streetname Signage with City Logo			X			City of Mableton
T.4	Austell Road Corridor Study		X				City of Mableton
T.5	East-West Connector Corridor Study		X				City of Mableton
T.6	Thorton Road Corridor Study			X			City of Mableton
T.7	Floyd Road Corridor Study			X			City of Mableton
T.8	Veterans Memorial Highway (US 278) Corridor Study	X					City of Mableton
T.9	Mableton Parkway (SR 139) Corridor Study	X					City of Mableton
T.10	Lee Industrial Boulevard Corridor Study				X		City of Mableton
T.11	Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Plan		X				City of Mableton
T.12	East-West Connector at Austell Road Intersection Improvements		X				City of Mableton

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Notes
ARC	\$300,000.00	SPLOST	
	\$200,000.00	SPLOST, HSIP	
	\$250,000.00	SPLOST	Estimated at \$125 per sign - 2000 signs - Manufactured and Installed
	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
GDOT, CobbCO	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
GDOT	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
GDOT	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
	\$120,000.00	SPLOST	Include corridor analysis (Roadway and 4-6 Intersections Improvement Concepts)
GDOT, USDOT	\$250,000.00	SPLOST	
GDOT, CobbCO	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Transportation</b>							
T.13	Veterans Memorial Highway (US 278) at Floyd Road Intersection Improvements		X				City of Mableton
T.14	East-West Connector at Powder Springs Road Intersection Improvements			X			City of Mableton
T.15	Austell Road at Hurt Road Intersection Improvements			X			City of Mableton
T.16	East-West Connector at Floyd Road Intersection Improvements				X		City of Mableton
T.17	Veteran Memorial Highway at Discovery / Oakdale Road Intersection Impr.				X		City of Mableton
T.18	East-West Connector at Hicks Road Intersection Improvements					X	City of Mableton
T.19	Clay Road at Austell Road Intersection Improvements					X	City of Mableton
T.20	Riverside Parkway at Factory Shoals Road Intersection Improvements	X					City of Mableton
T.21	Mableton Parkway at Discovery / Lee Industrial Boulevard Int. Improv,		X				City of Mableton
T.22	Floyd Road at Hicks Road Intersection Improvements			X			City of Mableton
T.23	Veterans Memorial Parkeay (US 278) at Church Street At-Grade Crossing Study				X		City of Mableton
T.24	Intelligent Transportation Systems Master Plan		X				City of Mableton

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Notes
GDOT	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
GDOT	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
	\$550,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$400,000 (ROW Not Included)
GDOT	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
GDOT	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
GDOT	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
	\$550,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$400,000 (ROW Not Included)
	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
	\$650,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$550,000 (ROW Not Included)
	\$550,000.00	SPLOST	PE - \$150,000 / Construction - \$400,000 (ROW Not Included)
CSX/NS, GDOT	\$150,000.00	SPLOST, HSIP	One of two of the highest at grade crash location in Cobb County
GDOT, Cobb County	\$175,000.00	SPLOST, CMAQ, TEA	

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Transportation</b>							
T.25	Citywide Traffic Signal Modernization and Upgrade			X			City of Mableton
T.26	Citywide Traffic Signal Timing Project			X			City of Mableton
T.27	New North-South and East-West Alignment and Connection Study	X					City of Mableton
T.28	Complete Phase II of the Mableton Parkway pedestrian improvements	X	X				Cobb County
T.29	Develop a plan to comprehensively address ongoing conflicts at the Concord Covered Bridge, including multiple alternatives and order-of-magnitude costs		X	X			City of Mableton
T.30	Study need/feasibility for a local shuttle that offers transit service throughout the Medical Center and across Austell Road and East-West Connector to existing commercial centers				X	X	City of Mableton
T.31	Enhance the pedestrian experience along Discovery Boulevard, either through improved sidewalks and landscaping or a multi-use trail				X	X	City of Mableton

#	Action	Lead
<b>Transportation - Long term</b>		
T.1.1	Study need/feasibility for a local shuttle that operates separately from MARTA/ CobbLinc, expanding transit service throughout Mableton Entertainment District and adjacent workplace district	City of Mableton

**COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	
GDOT	\$5,000,000.00	SPLOST, CMAQ, TEA	Upgrade Twenty-five signalized intersections to install Mast Arms (ROW and Utility Relocation NOT included.)
GDOT	\$480,000.00	SPLOST, CMAQ, TEA	
	\$350,000.00	SPLOST	Include preliminary Environmental Assessment
	\$1,000,000	SPLOST	
Cobb County,	\$70,000	General Fund	Engage Friends of the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District
Cobb County, Wellstar	\$50,000	General Fund	
Cobb County	TBD	General Fund	Cost to be determined once specific improvements identified

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
	\$50,000	General Fund, potential future TAD

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Enviromental Sustainability</b>							
ES.1	Implement River Line Historic Area Master Plan’s recommendations for trails and greenspace along Nickajack Creek						Community Development
ES.2	Implement recommendations for the Chattahoochee RiverLands initiative and identify opportunities for new access points to the river						Community Development
ES.3	Identify and map target clean-up areas, and develop partnerships for clean ups	x	x	x	x	x	Community Development
ES.4	Identify residential recycling pick-up opportunities for residents.	x					Public Works?
ES.5	Explore how to bring a facility such as the Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) to Mableton to provide a viable alternative to illicit dumping.	x					Economic Development
ES.6	Develop a parks and recreation master plan, including an inventory of current parks and recreation facilities in Mableton (including private recreation facilities); include plan for improved access to and interpretation of history/culture of the Chattahoochee River and Nickajack Creek			x	x		Community Development
ES.7	Create an inventory of undeveloped or natural land.	x					Community Development
ES.8	Create an inventory of priority natural features and viewsheds, and develop plans for their preservation.		x	x	x	x	Community Development

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
River Line			
Trust for Public Land, ARC, River Line, consultant			
HOAs, local community groups	Staff Time	N/A	
Private recycling companies	Staff Time	N/A	
CHaRM (or similar)	Staff Time	N/A	
Cobb County Parks, consultant	\$50,000 (City share)	N/A	Would need to be part of broader Cobb County Parks and Recreation plan
	Staff Time	N/A	
Trust for Public Land, Georgia Conservancy	\$25,000	General Fund	

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Enviromental Sustainability</b>							
ES.9	Develop a plan for addressing flooding where Veterans Memorial Highway and Nickajack Creek intersect."		x	x			Public Works?
ES.10	Work with Cobb County Stormwater Management to update basin plan				x	x	Public Works?
ES.11	Through corridor studies (see Items XX and XX), Identify priority corridors for street trees and improved landscaping.	x	x	x	x	x	Community Development
ES.12	Advertise Mableton's participation in Trees Atlanta's Front Yard Tree Program.	x	x	x	x	x	
ES.13	Provide resources and education on removing invasive species that are harmful to the tree canopy.	x	x	x	x	x	Community Development

#	Action	Lead
<b>Enviromental Sustainability - Longer Term</b>		
ES.1.1	Install green infrastructure in floodplains and low-lying areas near River Line	

**COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**



Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Consultant	\$75,000	General Fund	
Cobb County Stormwater Management	Staff Time	N/A	
Trees Atlanta	Staff Time	N/A	
	Staff Time	N/A	

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Natural &amp; Cultural Resources</b>							
NC.1	Conduct an Arts & Culture Study that identifies arts and culture organizations in Mableton; identifies local arts and cultural leaders; inventories potential arts/culture venues; identifies other Cobb-base arts and culture groups with needs/desires to expand; studies how to expand access to the arts citywide; explores partnerships; and determines a citywide plan for art and placemaking			X	X		Community Development
NC.2	Create an event-hosting guide for groups looking for space in Mableton					X	Community Development
NC.3	Connect members of under-represented communities to potential partners and funding sources for creating new events and celebrations.	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development
NC.4	Continue to coordinate and collaborate with the River Line Historic Area organization	X	X	X	X	X	Community Development

#	Action	Lead
<b>Natural &amp; Cultural Resources - Long Term</b>		
NC.1.1	Identify a group of artists to work with historians in creating a public art piece/ exhibit that tells the stories of a variety of Mableton's under-recognized communities	

**COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM**

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Mable House, Consultant, ARC	\$70,000	General Fund, grants	Consolidates several actions from Cultural Resources Element into a single planning task
	Staff Time	n/a	
River Line Historic Area	Staff Time	n/a	

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

#	Action	Timeline					Lead
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
<b>Historical Resources</b>							
HR.1	Conduct a historic sites and structures inventory.			X			Community Development
HR.2	Conduct a Special Resource Study for the Covered Bridge area that inventories historic sties/structures and their preservation needs; identifies potential ownership arrangements; recommends regulatory protections; and recommends projects/ initiatives for interpretation		X				Community Development
HR.3	For the old Downtown, develop an incentive program for façade improvements and other home renovation and rehabilitation projects		X	X	X	X	Community Development
HR.4	Invest in the services of a public historian to develop a history of Mableton and conduct oral history interviews			X	X		Community Development
HR.5	Establish an online platform for sharing Mableton’s many stories from a broad variety of communities, especially those are typically overlooked such as the enslaved population, Native Americans, and other minority groups.					X	Community Development

## COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source	Notes
Consultant	\$20,000	General Fund, grants	
Consultant	\$50,000	General Fund, grants	Consolidates several actions in Land Use and Historic Resources Element into a single study
Economic Development	staff time, plus \$50,000/year for incentives	General Fund, TBD	
Consultant	\$30,000	General Fund, Tgrants	
Consultant	\$25,000	General Fund, Tgrants	