

**Business Roundtable  
MEETING RESULTS****July 21, 2011  
8:00 AM – 10:00 AM****I. Meeting Summary**

On Tuesday morning, July 21<sup>st</sup> the Chamblee Business Association co-hosted an economic development roundtable with the City of Chamblee. Chamblee business leaders, city officials and community members met at the Chamblee Civic Center to hear about market trends and discuss the future of the City. Building on the Chamblee Comprehensive Plan prepared in 2006, the meeting was a continuation of the conversation started at the June 23, 2011 Community Meeting which focused on current issues and opportunities facing the City. Varying from the previous meeting, this group focused on economic and business related conditions with particular attention paid to the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) related to Chamblee's economic stability and growth. The 70+ person crowd also identified development asset and opportunity areas in addition to areas of concern for the business community. The dialogue among business leaders, elected officials and community members focused on balancing design standards, property improvements and current zoning ordinances with business desires for expanding or re-using existing industrial sites. The input gathered will inform recommendations to an amendment of the Chamblee Comprehensive Plan. As next step, the City will conduct a Council and Mayor workshop to discuss recommendations. The City anticipates a draft document at the end of August.

**II. Agenda Items**

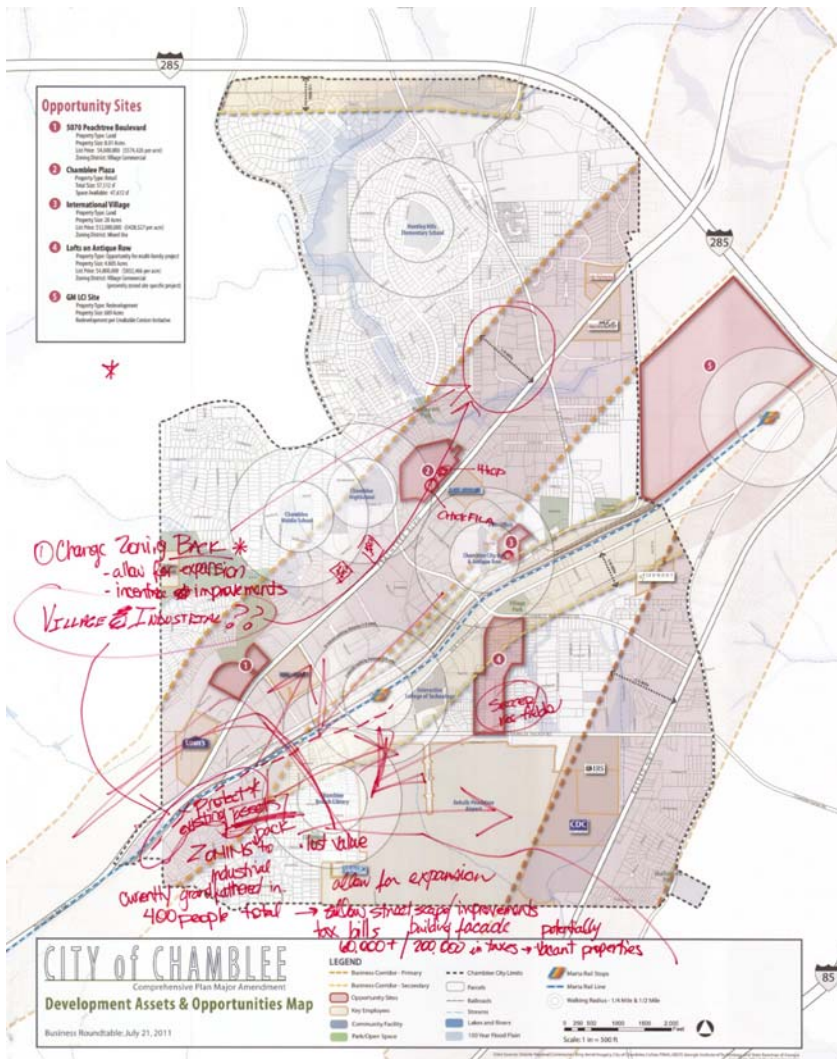
- Introductions and Welcome: Brent Morris, Chamblee Business Association, Mayor Eric Clarkston, City of Chamblee and Michelle Alexander, Pond and Company
- Presentation by Michelle Alexander
  - What is a Comprehensive Plan
  - Orientation to Chamblee's Comprehensive Plan
  - Economic Development Framework
  - Current and Projected Economic Conditions
- Participation Exercise and Discussion
  - Development Assets and Opportunities Map
  - SWOT Analysis

**III. Participation Exercise Results****A. Development and Assess Opportunities Map Exercise**

### Discussion Group 1

#### Map Comments

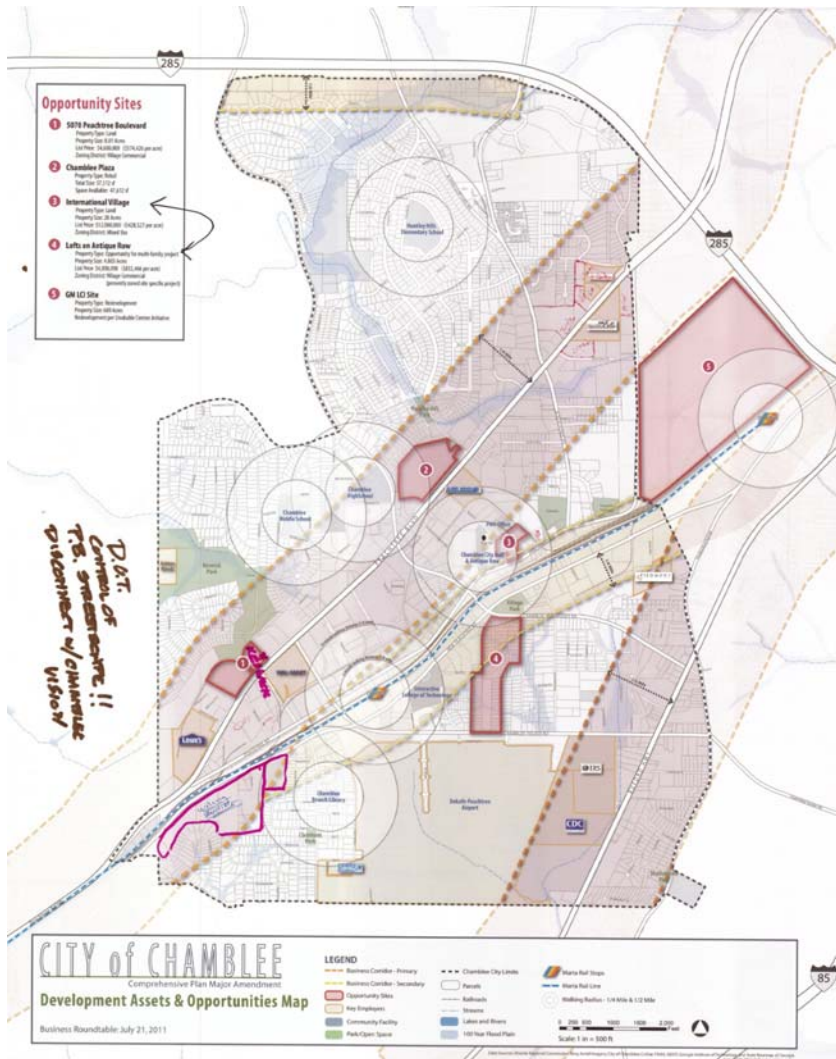
- City should protect its existing assets
  - 400 people are employed in the Industrial area at the southern end of New Peachtree Road
  - The City could lose \$60,000-\$200,000 in taxes if industrial properties become vacant.
- Zoning
  - Change zoning back to Industrial, currently zoned Village Residential
  - Allow for expansion
  - Incentivize improvements such as building façade and streetscape enhancement.
  - Properties currently grandfathered in but lose ability to continue business once property is vacant for more than 6 months.
  - Create Village Industrial Zoning District for properties at the southern end of New Peachtree Road and along Green Industrial Way.



### Discussion Group 2

#### Map Comments

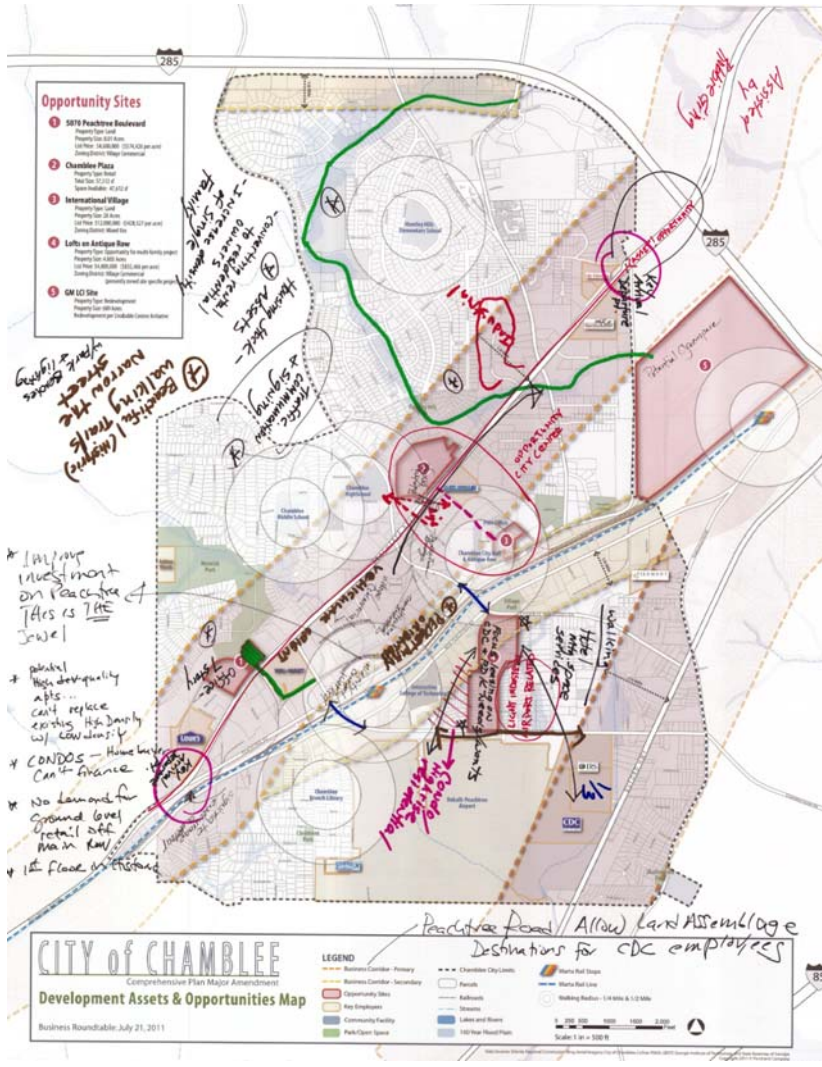
- Georgia DOT controls Peachtree Boulevard streetscape, creates a disconnect with Chamblee's vision



### Discussion Group 3

#### Map Comments

- Peachtree Boulevard
  - Allow for land assemblage
  - Both asset and opportunity
  - Improve traffic communication and signage along Peachtree Boulevard and through City
- Peachtree Road: Improve investment, the face/jewel of Chamblee
- Housing
  - Current single-family stock is an asset
  - Increase density of single family homes
  - Convert rental units to residential owners
  - Potential for high quality apartments; can't replace existing high density with low density
  - Condos – home buyer can't finance
- No demand for ground level retail, office remaining
- Beautiful, historic walking trails, narrow the street with park benches and lighting
- Create destinations for CDC employees



## Discussion Group 4

A participant apparently left with the Table 4 map and therefore results could not be recorded; pending recovery of map for accurate meeting record to be completed

### B. SWOT(Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

#### Strengths

- Access
  - Main thoroughfares:
    - Peachtree Boulevard (auto): Main thoroughfare for region that offers ease of access and minimal congestion for the City
    - Peachtree Road(pedestrian): Implement streetscape design and vision for road, including pedestrian-oriented improvements
  - Location and access to interstates and other regional destinations such as Pill Hill, Downtown Atlanta and Buckhead
  - Peachtree-Dekalb Airport: It will continue to grow and get busier
  - MARTA Station
  - Heavy Rail: Industry currently uses rail but use could be expanded
- Existing Business
  - "Auto-Row"
  - CDC
  - Industrial
- Population/Housing
  - Aging population growth: City offers amenities such as Senior Connections, medical services, access
  - Great, active neighborhoods
- Permitting service **was** friendly, and easier than Doraville, revert back to better system

#### Weaknesses

- Commercial
  - No grocery stores - attract Whole Foods
  - Need more restaurants
  - Access/circulation in and out of existing commercial outlets, i.e. Wal-Mart
- Vacancy
  - Residential - Develop strategy to use existing housing stock instead of building new
  - Industrial – Current code hinders re-leasing of industrial properties after short period of vacancy, definition of "abandoned" seems restrictive

- Policy/Code/Process
  - Plan has appeal, but practical details need refining
  - Reputation for NOT being business-friendly. Currently, there are numerous hurdles in the development, business process including tedious permitting, cost prohibitive design criteria and divergent zoning conditions. Examples:
    - Ground level retail requirements on streets not inclined for that type of activity/development
    - Concrete/steel construction requirements which lends to high-density, condo market, but participants say there is no market for condominiums now
  - Existing industry along New Peachtree Road recently rezoned from industrial to residential
  - Perception of how to get permits – lack of understanding of vision
  - **Zoning:** needs to match the Comprehensive Plan – don't try to be Buckhead, but needs to be Chamblee. Simply better zoning
  - **Design Requirements:**
    - Adaptive redevelopment: e.g. parking requirements today in front
    - Ceiling heights (first floor heights)
    - Loft building requirements
    - Historic architecture: Reference on Peachtree Road to be allowed to continue. Current requirements create barrier for development.
    - Tree requirements: Flexibility should be allowed for street trees, do not require large trees to be planted when they will interfere with power lines and other utilities
    - Building codes: Built condominiums are sub-standard
- Lack of organization in business community
- Perceived flexibility
- Need a planner on staff

### Opportunities

- Access
  - Heavy rail: Industry takes advantage of the rail, others could too
  - Peachtree-Dekalb Airport: Various businesses are attracted to airports, including light industrial
    - North side of Chamblee Tucker: Draw airport serving businesses to area
- Site Specific
  - GM Plant
    - New Peachtree Road leads right to the GM Plant redevelopment site
    - Potential opportunity **and** threat – we need to get ahead of it!
  - Chamblee Plaza for redevelopment
  - Chamblee-Tucker International Village development site
  - Chamblee-Tucker Road

- Concord Soccer seeking sites/locations for soccer facility
- Peachtree Street
  - Pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks, lights, benches, etc
- Community Involvement
  - Take advantage of today's meeting and
  - Continue community meetings
  - Encourage participation/increase attendance
  - Post signs at the end of Peachtree and Broad Streets to inform the community about meetings and increase exposure of community participation opportunities
- Industrial Sector
  - Improve management of industrial uses (create better balance)
  - Transition from industrial feel to new look/pedestrian oriented
  - Encourage light industrial
  - Better definition of uses in current zoning districts, e.g. a site where 38% not fit current zoning
- Employee base: Create/encourage additional ways for area employees to spend their money in the city
- Net positive gain in investment
- Existing infrastructure("bones"): Great start to generate a sustainable vision for the city
- Unincorporated DeKalb County annexation opportunities , especially given the new tax hike
- Make Chamblee the "best little city in Georgia"

### Threats

- Lack of identity; we're a little fractured; avoid getting lost
- Attract the wage-earning base the city wants, analyze and be aware of demographics and true demand –
- Weak community organizing – need greater participation
- Potential vacancies
- Perception that it is difficult to work with the city; don't let this grow
- Brookhaven is attracting more strongly than Chamblee – we need to hire consultant to attract, invite, and advertise what we have to offer
- Focus on existing assets – we cannot code our way to the vision.