

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY
CITY OF CLARKSTON, GA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM DEFINED

“Community Participation Program” means the portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government’s program for insuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

THE LCI PARTICIPATION AND VISIONING COMPONENTS (2004)

Clarkston engaged in an LCI planning process very recently, during 2004. During that process, Clarkston developed a vision with extensive public participation. That effort was so recent, and thorough, that it serves as an adequate public participation element preceding plan development. The City of Clarkston LCI study and plan was comprehensive, in that it dealt with population, housing, economic development, redevelopment, land use, and improvement of the public realm.

The visioning and public participation processes followed by the City of Clarkston and its consultants during the LCI planning process meet almost precisely the suggestions of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in its new administrative rules for local planning, even though such standards were not adopted until May 1, 2005 (well after Clarkston’s LCI planning process was completed. Geographically, the LCI planning effort used the entire city limits as the study area, the same as required for comprehensive plans (the local government’s entire jurisdiction). Substantively, the public participation effort encompassed several of the techniques suggested in the Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ state planning recommendations for community involvement and visioning.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE LCI PARTICIPATION PROCESS FOLLOWED IN 2004

The Vision for Clarkston began with and was largely influenced by public participation that included a series of meetings with community residents, where participants engaged in visioning exercises, public discussion and a design charette. In addition to the public input, the consulting team interviewed civic, community, business and government leaders which included the following: study area (city) residents, property owners, business operators, real estate developers, financial lenders and prospective investors, as well as elected officials and administrators of Clarkston and Dekalb County.

- Core Team Committee
- Discussions and interviews with stakeholders
- Six public meetings including Public Kick-Off
- Brochures, flyers, and interactive website for communication
- One full day design charette
- Specific outreach efforts to the international community of Clarkston
- Coverage (News) in *The Story Community Review* (attached)

At the beginning of the project, a Core Team Committee was assembled by local government officials to assist with the planning effort. The Core Team Committee contributed to the inventory efforts, assisted in identifying issues, anticipated challenges and suggested potential solutions.

Beyond the Core Team Committee, the Consulting Team sought the participation of a wide range of local stakeholders, including neighborhood representatives, property owners, business leaders, local developers and a cross-section of residents. Announcements about meetings and project status were reported via email, brochures and flyers, open house, community groups, and an interactive website.

Six public meetings and a one-day Design Charette were held at various locations within the Study Area to enable the Consulting Team to extract, refine, and assemble the public's ideas for the future of the study area (city limits).

The public kick-off meeting took place on May 8, 2004 to bring public support and participation for the Clarkston LCI. The following meeting held on June 16th was used by the Consulting Team to present an overview of the study area, an explanation of what the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) planning study is and objectives and methodology for the project. Participants were then engaged in an exercise to begin to articulate their vision, goals and objectives. This process helped to report, record and synthesize the opinions and attitudes of resident participants.

DESIGN CHARETTE DEFINED

From a creative standpoint a design charette is an intense effort to solve any architectural problem within a limited time. The term charette initially appeared in the early part of the late 1800's. Architecture students in Paris who needed to rush their drawings to the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts placed them on a cart which was called a charette. Later the word broadened its meaning and came to describe any intense, short-term student design project. Today the word is used by the Architectural community at large to describe any intense, on-the-spot effort.

THE CHARETTE CONDUCTED IN 2004

After the earlier meetings that were held discussing existing conditions, stakeholder interviews, and the preliminary analysis a design charette for the Clarkston community was held on Saturday September 18, 2004 at First Baptist Church in Clarkston. This workshop was held in order to provide a hands-on opportunity for the participants to develop a community-driven vision for the Study Area (Clarkston City Limits).

The charette started with a brief overview of the team's initial findings and the market analysis for the area to further assist in directing the participants with their planning. Two teams were organized to develop redevelopment plans for the City. One Group concentrated on the City as a whole while the second group focused in more detail on the Village Center Area along Market Street, East Ponce De Leon and N. Indian Creek. Working with a series of scaled maps of the Study Area, the groups proceeded to organize the future vision of their community. The resulting community designs identified areas needing improvement, preservation of stable communities, areas appropriate for redevelopment, and the types of land uses appropriate for these areas .

Following the charette, the team took the drawings and conclusions from the participants and further refined these ideas into a plan reflecting the citizen, business owners, and city input that had been discussed. These ideas were presented in the next and fifth public meeting on October 13th at the Woman's Club in Clarkston. The purpose of that meeting was to present preliminary recommendations based on the previous community input, analysis by the consultants, and ideas generated from the charette. Comments from the community were recorded and used to help further refine the vision for the final public meeting on November 10, 2004. The final plan provided an overview of the key development, redevelopment, and transportation projects required to actualize the vision for the future of the City. The general feeling of the community for the Vision created by the LCI Planning process was both positive and energetic inspiring the participants.

TIMELINE OF PARTICIPATION PROCESS (2004)

April 25, 2004	Maclaren Homeowners Assoc. – Joyce Wade and Chris Abernathy attended and discussed the LCI Process – distributed Flyers (many attendees were Vietnamese Refugees who are now US Citizens). Public was invited to attend meetings.
April 27, 2004	Clarkston Health Collaborative Meeting Minutes – Joyce Wade attended – provided information pertaining to the Clarkston LCI Grant – provided notice that Public Meeting schedule would be announced in the coming weeks.
May 8, 2004	LCI Kickoff Campaign at Milam Park – Advertised on website and Clarkston City Hall Reader board – 150 persons attended – 2 Flyers for LCI Grant and Core Team list were circulated at the Kickoff.
May 22, 2004	Clarkston International Bible Church Inaugural Celebration – Mayor and Joyce Wade attended and spoke with reference to the LCI Study.
May 26, 2004	Tentative Meeting Schedule posted on Altamira website (linked to Clarkston website).
June 16, 2004	LCI Core Team Meeting – Flyer and website notification – Public invited to attend. 1st Core

	Team Meeting (announced in emails and on City website). Core Team list was circulated (21 attended).
June 24, 2004	Newspaper article from www.storygroup.com website detailing the Clarkston LCI Grant and land use (attached).
July 7, 2004	Project management tour – Georgia Power members toured City/visited with Clarkston Business owners for shopping center
July 9, 2004	Multiple Email – advertising Downloadable Flyer available on Website – Flyer also available at City Hall.
July 10, 2004	Clarkston Community Center Open House – Mayor and Joyce Wade Attended – spoke on LCI Study and asked for Public participation in the process.
July 13, 2004	Memorandum from Mayor to: Sen. Gloria Butler, Rep. Karla Drenner, Comm. Burrell Ellis, CEO Vernon Jones, Dennis Harkins PhD. And Ed McBayer inviting their attendance at July 28, 2004, LCI Core Team Meeting.
July 15, 2004	Image Clarkston Meeting covering development issues in Clarkston relating to LCI Study.
July 21, 2004	Interfaith Refugee/Immigrant Services – Joyce Wade attended and announced LCI Grant Information
July 28, 2004	LCI Core Team Meeting – flyer – Website Notification – Public invited to attend (approx. 35 attended including Jan Gardner).
August 4, 2004	Multiple Email Advertising September 18 th LCI Charette – also flyer handed out to citizens by Joyce Wade, Lassie Stevens & Jan Gardner.
August 9, 2004	Facsimile transmitted to Refuge Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta & International Rescue Committee providing invitation to attend September 18, 2004, LCI Charette.
August 12, 2004	Multiple Email – Flyer – Website notification for September 18 th . LCI Charette (Nancy Quan-Sellers – member of the Asian American Commission for a New Georgia emailed RSVP to attend).
August 24, 2004	Clarkston Health Collaborative meeting minutes – Discussion of Changing term “Gentrification” to “Community Revitalization” with regards to Clarkston’s new developments and suggestion for Community representative involvement with LCI Study as LCI Meetings are open to the public (Mayor and Mike Shipman in attendance).
September 18, 2004	LCI Meeting – Flyer/Email/Website – Public invited to attend
September 28, 2004	Clarkston Health Collaborative Meeting minutes – (Person not identified – information incorrect) Issue raised of LCI meetings not well publicized/attended. Update was given for LCI study, notification given for LCI Public Meeting for October 13, 2004. Public encouraged to attend.
September 28, 2004	Clarkston Health Collaborative Flyer – Agenda refers to LCI update.
October 1, 2004	Press release by Altamira Design for Clarkston Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study
October 13, 2004	LCI Public Meeting to hear preliminary recommendations – flyers and website advertisement of event.
October 13, 2004	Meeting Attendance Roster – Jan Gardner & Chris Holiday in attendance (approx. 37 in attendance).
October 26, 2004	Clarkston Health Collaborative Meeting Flyer with update on LCI Study on agenda.
November 9, 2004	Multiple Email reminder of LCI Public Meeting for November 10 th (including Chris Holiday as email recipient).
November 10, 2004	LCI Public Meeting – Flyer and website advertisement of event.
November 18, 2004	GA Perimeter College Charette – Mayor, Joyce Wade and Chris Abernathy attended and discussed LCI.
November 19, 2004	Multiple address email and flyer to inform on LCI Draft.
December 1 – December 8, 2004	Plan was available for public review

December 21, 2004	Additional LCI Public Meeting – Flyer and website advertisement of event. Several Newsletters posted to website and distributed at City hall regarding LCI Study. Rosemarie Nelson, Chris Abernathy and Harry Housen attended various meetings discussing the LCI Grant. Joyce Wade met with Market Commons Association regarding LCI Grant. Joyce Wade contacted many businesses and Ken Greenwood to request that he activate the Clarkston Business Assoc. to further promote the LCI Study and its impact on the community. Mailed flyers for viewing Draft Plans. Mayor, Council, Core Team members calling and visiting residences and businesses.
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REASONS FOR AN ABBREVIATED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Clarkston’s elected officials find that the 2004 community participation and visioning efforts were unprecedented in terms of detail and effort for comparable cities of its size, except perhaps for other LCI recipients. The fact that the participation process concluded only some seven months ago attests to the freshness and continued relevance of the participation. The process followed, including visioning and a design charette, is substantially similar to recommendations of the Department of Community Affairs for community participation strategies for comprehensive planning.

In some ways, conducting another extensive public participation process for the comprehensive plan might be counterproductive. It might suggest to community leaders that their investment in the LCI visioning and planning efforts were inadequate, which they certainly were not.

THE PARTICIPATION STRATEGY FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In light of the extensive participation process completed in 2004, Clarkston has prepared a strategy that recognizes (and does not repeat) those efforts but which builds on the prior efforts where necessary and appropriate. The table below provides Clarkston’s review of the 2004 participation program and proposes which components should be repeated or extended in the comprehensive planning process.

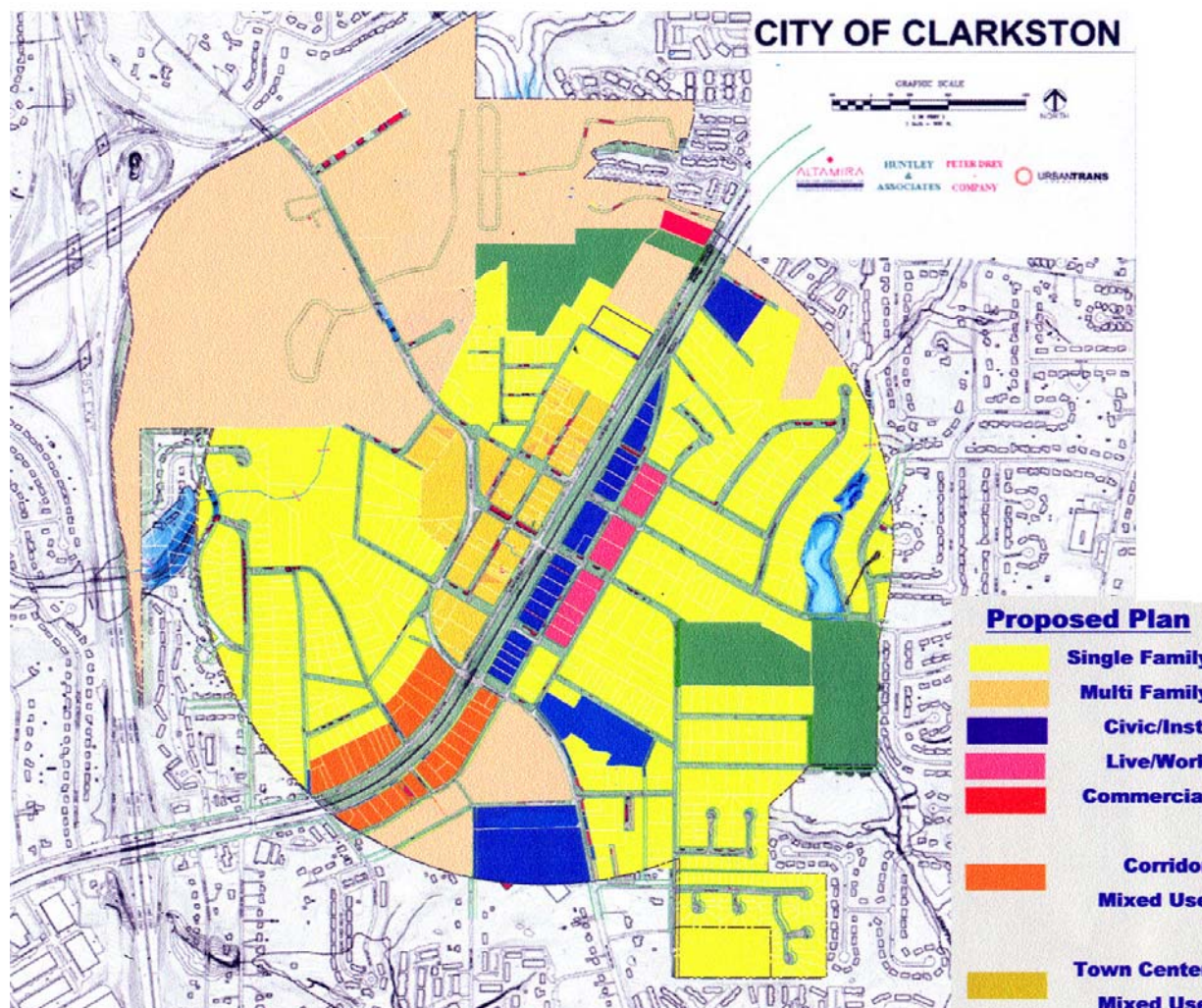
Participation Technique	Included in the 2004 LCI Participation Program?	Proposed in the 2025 Comprehensive Planning Program?	Explanation
Stakeholder interviews	Yes	Some (recontact)	Consultant will interview
Kiosk/Lobby displays	Yes	Yes	City staff to arrange
Technical advisory committee	Yes	No	Consultant has completed technical data inventories.
Steering committee	No	No	
Visioning workshops	Yes	(one refinement mtg.)	
Intergovernmental partnerships	Yes	No	Address as appropriate, esp. w/ DeKalb County, during process.
Kick-off information meeting	Yes	No	Not budgeted
Printed public information	Yes	Yes	As appropriate
Direct mail surveys	No	No	Not budgeted
Media press releases	Yes	Yes	Consultant will prepare
Website – information only	Yes	Yes	City staff to arrange
Website – interactive	Yes	No	
E-mail “blast” database	Yes	Yes	Consultant will transmit
Cable TV information	No	No	Not considered necessary
Speaker’s bureau	No	No	Not needed (small town)

1. Objective: Contact, Inform, and Consult with Previously Identified Stakeholders.

Defined broadly, a stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in an outcome of the comprehensive planning process. The public participation program contemplates contacting again certain stakeholders identified in the 2004 LCI study and planning process.

2. Objective: Conduct a workshop to reconsider and refine the community vision.

The City's planning consultants will schedule and conduct one workshop to reconsider and refine the LCI-generated vision for the community. Emphasis will be placed on the summary of issues and opportunities that have been discovered in the community assessment but which were not a part of the LCI Study. The visioning refinement workshop will emphasize specific issues, opportunities, and implementation strategies for "character areas" previously designated in the LCI process (see map below).



3. Objective: Prepare and distribute media press releases.

Consultant will prepare press releases at strategic intervals for distribution by the City.

4. Objective: Distribute drafts and available information through multiple means.

The consultant and the City will make available information about the comprehensive plan in the form of kiosk displays, the City's website, printed information, and electronic mail.

The objectives described above are in addition to the two public hearings which are specified by the state's administrative rules for local comprehensive planning, effective May 1, 2005. One of those hearings is scheduled after completion of the community assessment and community participation program (this document) and after that information has been available for review and comment. The second required public hearing is scheduled after completion of the community agenda (i.e., the portion of the comprehensive plan containing programs, goals, etc.)

SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCEDURES

Review Process

The community participation program is submitted along with the Community Assessment to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) (considered a Regional Development Center) for review, after holding a first public hearing and after the Mayor and City Council pass a resolution authorizing the transmittal of these documents for review. Within seven (7) days of receipt, ARC will determine whether the Community Participation Program meets or does not meet the standard of completeness as determined by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Upon determination of completeness, ARC transmits the participation program to DCA. DCA will review the program for its adequacy in identifying specific mechanisms to ensure meaningful involvement of the community in the development of the Community Agenda. DCA will transmit a complete report of its findings and recommendations for addressing such findings to ARC for inclusion in its Report of Findings and Recommendations.

Publication of the Approved Program and Community Assessment

Once reviewed, the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment must be publicized by the local government for public information. This requirement may be met by providing notice in a local newspaper of general circulation identifying where complete copies of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program may be reviewed.

Subsequent Steps

Though not covered in detail here, after the community assessment and community participation strategy are completed and reviewed by the region and state, the City and its consultants will implement the participation strategy and complete the "community agenda" which is the plan portion of the comprehensive plan. Following completion of that draft, the state administrative rules require another public hearing by the City, approval of a transmittal resolution, review by the region and state, and adoption after considering the comments of the region and state. An anticipated schedule is provided below for the entire planning process.

ANTICIPATED PROJECT MILESTONES (TENTATIVE)

June-Aug. 15, 2005	Prepare community assessment and community participation strategy
Aug. 15 – Sept. 1, 2005	Public review period (assessment and participation)
Nov. 2005	Mayor and City Council hold public hearing
	Authorize transmittal of assessment and participation strategy for review
Dec. – Jan. 2006	Conduct visioning refinement workshop
Jan. 2006	Consultant completes community agenda
February 2006	Public review period (agenda)
March 2006	Mayor and City Council hold public hearing (agenda)
	Authorize transmittal of agenda for review
May 2006	Adopt community agenda
May 2006	Print and publish adopted plan

APPENDIX: 2004 PARTICIPATION PROCESS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDY

Clarkston, Georgia

Please Plan to Attend!!

Help make a difference in your Community

Wednesday July 28, 2004 6:30pm

Location: Clarkston Woman's Club

Clarkston, Georgia

The City of Clarkston is conducting an Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative Study. This Study will impact future Land Use Development, Transportation Improvements, and Commercial Development for your City. Your input is important to the future of Clarkston.

Please Attend!!

For more information please visit our website at www.clarkstonlci.com

Or contact Chris Abernathy at 404.688.4454 ext. 23 or email:

chrisa@altamiradesign.com





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JUNE 24, 2004

Clarkston Reviews Land Use and Transportation Needs With LCI Grant

BY [MARY SWINT](#)

The City of Clarkston has instituted a six-month moratorium on new applications for zoning changes in the downtown area, while it conducts a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study.

At their May 4 meeting, the Clarkston City Council decided they would not accept applications for variances or changes of zoning until Nov. 4 and said the moratorium would have no effect on pending applications. City attorney Jack Rhodes said at the meeting the city planned to change the land use ordinance and adopt a land use map as part of the LCI study.

A few days later, on May 8, about 150 people attended the LCI kickoff picnic at Milam Park, according to City Council member Joyce Wade. The LCI study of the downtown area will cost \$81,250. Most of the cost will be covered by a \$65,000 study grant the Atlanta Regional Commission awarded Clarkston in February. The city will provide the remaining \$16,250 for the study. The LCI study will result in a long term land use plan, a five-year capitol improvement plan, and a Town Center Master Plan, Wade said, adding that it will also help make the city, which contains 1.1 square miles, more pedestrian friendly.

“We are looking for what our city can look like and then (we’ll) try to get the people in to do these things,” Mayor Lee Swaney said. “I have been really impressed with changes made in Kennesaw, where my son lives, as a result of an LCI grant....We are trying to get everyone involved.”



Desaray Ross, a student a Georgia Perimeter College, studies on her lunch break at Dolcé Ice Café & Pub in downtown Clarkston. The city of Clarkston has received a Livable Centers Initiative study grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission, which will allow the city to study how it can improve its infrastructure, land use policies and transportation options, including making the city more pedestrian friendly.



The first in a series of public meetings for the LCI study was held June 16 at the Clarkston Woman's Club. About 20 to 30 people attended, according to project manager Chris Abernathy of Altamira Design and Common Sense Inc.

"One of the challenges in the public input process is trying to get participation by the refugee population," said Abernathy, a Clarkston resident. "We need to see what their needs are."

"One of the things that came out of the first public meeting was that many refugees on Montreal Road have to wait 30 to 45 minutes for a bus but on Ponce buses are running every 10 minutes," Abernathy added. The study, which will cover transportation needs, may include recommendations for sidewalks, traffic signals and rerouting buses that don't meet the needs of MARTA's target market.

Wade added that the city is also in dire need of sidewalks. "Clarkston has lots of 'pig trails' that cut across yards and railroad tracks," he said.

Improving transportation options will not be the only focus of the study. "We will look at ways to reorganize land use to promote mixed use developments," Abernathy said. The study will also point out opportunities for commercial development in the small city of about 7,200, which has one of the highest population densities in the state and about 50 nationalities. According to the 2000 census, three-quarters of the housing units in the city are renter occupied, compared to one-third of the homes in the Atlanta metro area.

"Town Center is one to two blocks wide and three to four blocks long," Abernathy said. "It is hard to tell where it ends because some houses have been converted into businesses." The downtown area is between Ponce and N. Indian Creek with Market St. in the center.

The next public meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clarkston Woman's Club. Consultants will present their transportation and economic analyses. A charette workshop is expected to follow on Sept. 18 and two more public meetings will be held on Oct. 13 and Nov. 10.

Altamira, which is the prime consultant for the LCI project, worked on Smyrna LCI study and helped redevelop the East Lake area. They will be involved with land use and urban design issues along with Peter Drey and Company. Walt Huntley and Associates will do the market analysis and will be involved in economic development and housing issues. Transportation planning will be provided by UrbanTrans.

Since 1999, 51 communities in the Atlanta region have received LCI grants to develop quality growth plans. The nine new LCI study grants announced in February ranged from \$65,000 to \$80,000. ARC has also provided grants for the implementation of plans that result from these studies.



DECEMBER 23, 2004

New Parks And Streets Plus Higher Density Included in Clarkston LCI Plan

BY [MARY SWINT](#)

Clarkston residents and business people met this Tuesday to learn more about the city's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan before it is submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) by year's end. In the short term, the concept plan, drawn up by Altamira Design of Atlanta, calls for a condensed walkable shopping, office and residential town center focused around Market Street, which would be widened to include two through lanes of traffic, a center turn lane and parallel parking on each side. Sidewalks at least 17 feet wide would be built on either side of the street, also.

On Vaughan Street from Market Street north to Montreal Road, there would be ground floor retail shops with residential or office space above. Shared parking spaces would be located in the interior of the city blocks. A "life-long learning center" is envisioned between Ponce de Leon Ave. and Vaughan for local educational outreach programs.

The most important new element proposed in the plan is a new park located on Vaughan south of Market Street. It would have fountains, sculptures and walks and would stretch from Market Street to a new cross street, which would shorten the walk from Market to Hill Street and allow easier traffic circulation.

The existing Market Center west of Indian Creek Drive on Market Street would continue to operate for the foreseeable future but its owners may want to rebuild the retail and service buildings with parking located underneath, extend Market Street into the property's interior, and build residential or office spaces above the shops later as the town center between Ponce and Indian Creek grows, according to the draft LCI plan.



Downtown Clarkston is the focus of the recently completed LCI study.

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The plan calls for a new grassy park and pond at Indian Creek and Boulevard to serve as a transition area to the traditional single-family homes along Hill Street. On Market Street, Vaughan, Hill and the new cross street, pedestrians would have priority over cars. At least eight-foot wide sidewalks are proposed for Ponce de Leon and Indian Creek with light fixtures for safety and tall trees for shade. The town center would have seven blocks of walkable streets.

For medium-term projects, the draft plan identifies two areas in Clarkston that could be developed for higher density single-family homes. One plan would make West Smith Street, which is a dead end, loop around a new .75 acre park and replace older homes on that street with 23 new homes on 7500 square foot lots. It would also include a mixed use, multifamily or commercial use fronting on East Ponce de Leon. Ten structures on seven acres would be involved. Gross density would increase from 1.4 per acre to 5.3 per acre.

Another proposal would replace 35 small older homes and two commercial structures on 16 acres along East Ponce de Leon with 80 residential lots 50 feet wide and 100 feet deep built on six new streets about 200 feet long and near a two acre park. Overall density would go up from two units per acre to five.

The LCI study, which was launched in May, was funded in part by the city and in part by a \$65,000 grant from the ARC. A draft of the plan was on display at the City Hall, Clarkston Library and the Clarkston Community Center from Dec. 7 to the 13th.

“We are not trying to run anyone away from the city,” Mayor Lee Swaney said. “We want to make it enticing to get people to stop in at the city and spend their money.”