

# Meeting Summary

## Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2

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### Overview

The second Stakeholder Committee meeting for the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study took place on Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 9:00 AM. The meeting was held virtually, through an online teleconference, with interactive digital polling.

The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Tracy Rathbone Styf, Executive Director of Town Center Community Improvement District (TCCID). A brief summary of the meeting and discussion among attendees is provided below. A copy of the slide presentation is attached.

#### Attendees – Committee Members

- Bobby Clark – Embassy Suites Atlanta Kennesaw
- Chris Martin – Kaiser Permanente (TCCA Board Member)
- Kimberly Owen – KSU
- Drew Raessler – Cobb County DOT
- Thomas Sherrer – Mellow Mushroom
- Joe Skopitz – KSU Stadium Operations and Event
- Craig Van Devere – KSU Campus Planning

#### Attendees – TCCID Board Members

- Dan Buyers – McWhirter Realty Partners
- Britt Fleck – Georgia Power
- Marie Moore – Town Center at Cobb

#### Attendees – Project Management Team

- TCCID + Town Center Community Alliance (TCCA):
  - Alisha Smith, Project Manager
  - Tracy Rathbone Styf
  - Luci Morgan
  - Kathy Sommerfeldt
  - Jennifer Hogan (TCCA)
- Gresham Smith
  - Erin Thoresen, Project Manager
  - Nithin Gomez
  - Megha Young
- SB Friedman Development Advisors
  - Fran Lefor Rood
  - Caitlin Johnson
  - Terry Hogan

The following stakeholder committee members were invited to the meeting but unable to attend:

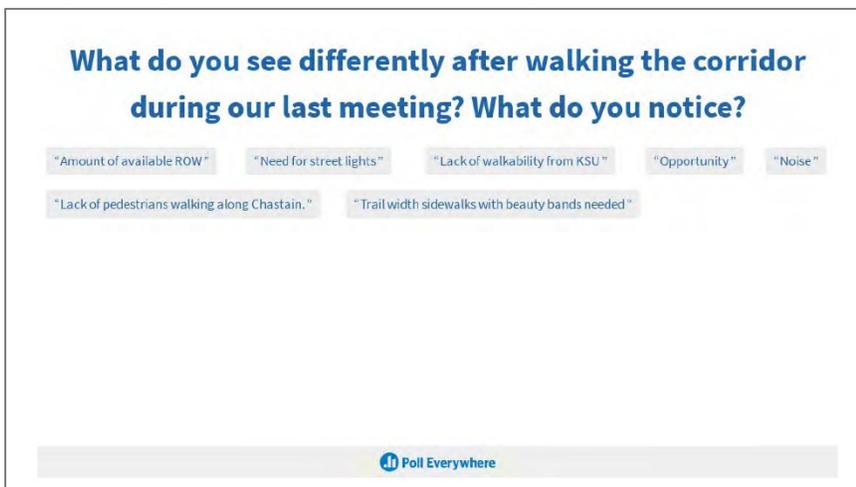
- Mary-Kate Billings – Kennesaw State University Student Government
- JoAnn Chitty – Selig Enterprises, TCCID Board Member
- Andrea Foard – Cobb County Transit
- Amanda Forist – The Mill at Chastain Apartments
- Tom Gay – Vulcan
- JJ Lopez – KSU Student Government
- Coleman Morris – Village at Town Park
- Deby Overby – Hilton Garden Inn
- Magan Rainwater – TownPark Commons
- Deena Snipes – Glenfield Capital
- Jennifer Toles – Milstead Village Apartments
- Lee White – KSU Parking and Transportation
- Frank Wigington – Wigington Landscape Company

# Presentation



The presentation began with a recap of the first Stakeholder Committee meeting and walkshop on February 14, 2020. Erin Thoresen, with Gresham Smith, summarized the meeting activities, including the walking workshop, or “walkshop,” where participants had the opportunity to experience the corridor as pedestrians. Erin shared observations made by the walkshop participants as well as from a field visit conducted by the

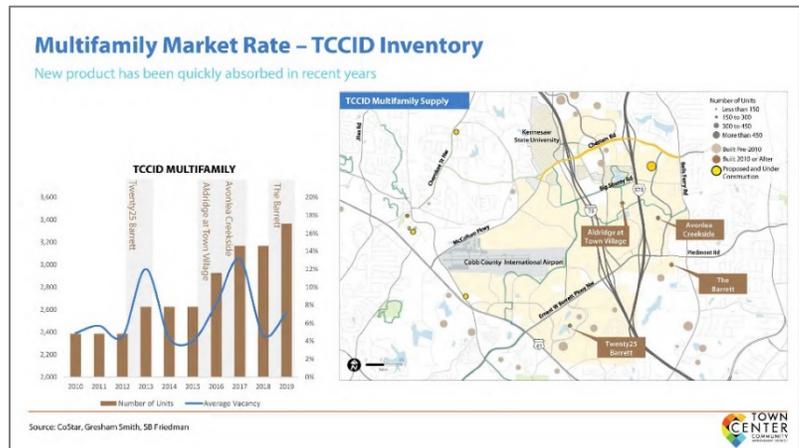
consultant team on February 25, 2020. These included the prevalence of car-oriented development along Chastain Road, or development that is set back from the roadway and more easily accessed by vehicles rather than pedestrians; overgrown vegetation and lack of landscaping in some areas along the corridor; and how participants felt vulnerable as pedestrians due to factors such as narrow sidewalks and heavy traffic along Chastain Road. Erin also shared the results of a digital poll that were conducted during the first Stakeholder Meeting. Participants stated that traffic, sidewalks, landscaping, and art were among the main priorities for improvement. They also shared that Chastain Road has good coverage of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage, but that the traffic volume is a challenge to pedestrians. Through a digital poll, Erin asked the Stakeholder Committee if they had any additional observations to share since the walkshop, and if there were additional thoughts they would like to share with the group. Responses received included a need for more street lights; a



need for a safer way to cross Chastain Road; and the lack of connectivity to the KSU Campus. Alisha Smith, Project Manager with TCCID, added that as a pedestrian, she realized how much traffic there is and how loud it is for people walking along the corridor. She also observed opportunities to create greenspace and pocket parks, and other spaces to draw people to the corridor.

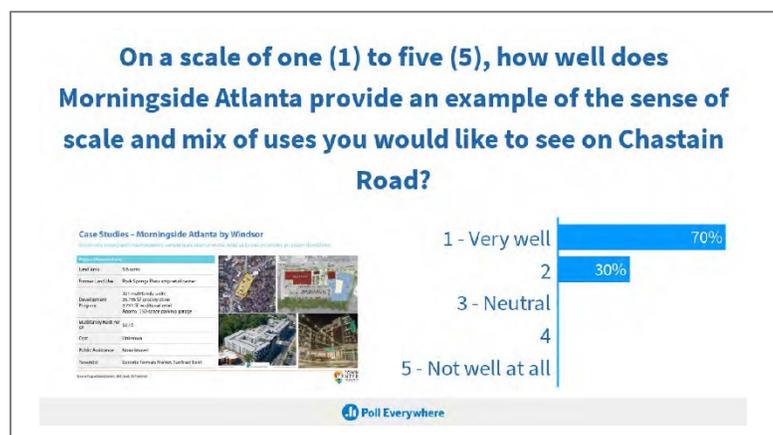
In the next part of the presentation, Nithin Gomez, with Gresham Smith, presented a summary of current traffic infrastructure and operations. He shared that there are 14 signalized intersections and 13 unsignalized intersections along the 2.3-mile study corridor, and that the close proximity of the signalized intersections contributes to traffic congestion on Chastain Road. Drew Raessler with Cobb DOT offered to share information

on planned upgrades to traffic signals on Chastain Road. Nithin also summarized major turning movements during peak periods, which occur primarily between I-575, Townpark Drive, and George Busbee Parkway. In addition, Nithin presented key safety statistics; Chastain Road has experienced, on average, over 450 crashes per year between 2013 and 2018, which is three times more than the statewide average for similar roadway facilities. The majority (60%) of these are rear-end crashes, indicating that traffic congestion is a primary contributor. Following the presentation of this information, participants were asked, via a digital poll, which intersections and segments present the greatest traffic challenges. The most popular responses included “between I-75 and Busbee Drive,” “Big Shanty” [Road], and “interchanges” with I-575 and I-75. Participants were also asked about their top priorities for improving traffic. The responses received included a wide range of ideas, such as signal timing, traffic calming, and multimodal mobility.



For the next part of the presentation, Fran Lefor Rood, with SB Friedman, presented findings from the market analysis from Chastain Road. The first portion of her presentation included a review of case studies, which examined three developments in metro Atlanta: Kennesaw Marketplace, Morningside Atlanta, and Halcyon. Each of these developments vary in context and scale and offer different elements that may be desirable for Chastain Road. Fran presented photos, site plans, and characteristics for each development such as cost, land area, major uses, and tenants. She shared that each development has similar contributors to their success, such as mixed uses, experiential tenants, and walkable urban design.

Participants were asked, via digital poll, which of these developments best exhibit the sense of scale and mix of uses that would be desirable for Chastain Road. Responses indicated that developments like Morningside Atlanta and Halcyon would be a better fit than a development like Kennesaw Marketplace because of their scale, the amount of multifamily development, and their more compact configuration compared to Kennesaw Marketplace. Participants were also asked what retail or entertainment options are missing along Chastain Road; a variety of responses were received, ranging from grocery and drugstore to town square and open air dining.



The next portion of Fran’s presentation shared findings on the multifamily housing market, office, and retail sectors along Chastain Road. Based on factors such as projected growth in population and employment,

proximity to interstate highways, and low vacancy rates for multifamily housing and office inventory, the analysis indicates that the market would support the addition of each these types of uses along Chastain Road.

Participants shared feedback during the presentation on the market study; these are summarized below.

### *Multifamily Housing*

- Tracy Rathbone Styf, Director of TCCID, asked Fran to research the rental rate for multifamily housing surrounding each of the case study locations, to determine how the amenities within each case study development impact the rental rates.
- Tracy also shared that while purpose-built student housing is beneficial for the community, the properties, by law, are not permitted to pay into the CID, presenting a missed opportunity for funding.

### *Comparison of Case Studies*

- Chris Martin with Kaiser Permanente stated that a development with a more vertical footprint would be more appropriate for Chastain Road.
- Tracy stated that a major new development along Chastain Road should be denser and more walkable than Kennesaw Marketplace.

Finally, the group discussed the potential vision and goals for the study. For those who were not at the first Stakeholder Committee meeting, Erin asked, via digital poll, what works well along Chastain Road and their top priorities for improvement. Participants were also asked to prioritize specific objectives for the corridor. Top priority was given to walkability and multimodal access; entertainment, attractions, and retail; and reduction of traffic congestion. Participants also expressed that future redevelopment should focus more on larger opportunities instead of smaller infill sites, and that they would like better multimodal access (walking, biking, etc.) to shops, restaurants, and other businesses along Chastain Road. A summary of additional comments is presented below.



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### *Priorities for Improvement*

- Chris stated that developments on Chastain Road should have better ingress and egress for both vehicles and pedestrian.
- Tracy shared that although "office space" was not indicated as a priority for improvements to Chastain Road, having thriving, attractive office spaces is critical to maintaining a viable commercial district.

## Next Steps

Following this Stakeholder Meeting, the project team will proceed with the following activities for the Chastain Road LCI Corridor Study:

- Prepare the draft market analysis briefing book for review by TCCID.
- Prepare an online survey to engage the KSU community (Kennesaw campus), and coordinate to distribute the survey to KSU students, faculty, and staff.
- Assemble the draft summary of existing corridor characteristics, which will include elements of the traffic study.
- Discuss potential ideas with TCCID to collect feedback from the public at the (postponed) Big Shanty Festival.
- Develop a draft matrix of preliminary options for “smart” technology for consideration by TCCID.
- Proceed with the development of potential solutions/ideas for improvements to the corridor.

The next stakeholder committee meeting will tentatively be held in June 2020.