The proposed Southside Industrial District consists of the existing Southside Industrial Park and an adjacent industrial area established along three (3) principal streets: Zip Industrial Boulevard SE, Browns Mill Road, and Empire Boulevard SW. The overall layout currently reflects a separation of uses according to intensity. The heaviest industrial and highest traffic-generating uses can be found along Browns Mill Road and Empire Boulevard. Zip Industrial Boulevard is lined with a mixture of offices and other smaller-scale businesses. The Southside Industrial Park is comprised of relatively newer and uniformly larger light industrial facilities. In contrast, the Zip/Browns Mill/Empire area is not formally planned or designed. The area is characterized by smaller lots and irregular development patterns and land uses. The streetscape is inconsistent and the streets are naturally sub-standard.

A diversity of users occupies the proposed District. Industrial uses range from construction contractors to food suppliers and heaier industrial users such as Gardner Chemical Research. Nurtural tenants include two recycling operations and a Coca-Cola equipment manufacturer. Distribution and logistics are major users in the area because of the excellent highway access and close proximity to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Norfolk Southern’s forest Park Yard is also within 2 miles of the area.

There are large industrial buildings that are available, some of which are relatively new. There are also vacant lots scattered throughout Southside Industrial Park. These lots and vacant areas adjacent to the industrial park provide ample opportunity to expand industrial development in the District.

SOUTHSIDE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The U.S. Postal Service operates Atlanta’s main post office and its only 24-hour facility at 3000 Gwinnett in the Southside Industrial Park area. This service is an extremely attractive benefit for locations in the area.

Potential expansion of industrial uses adjacent to Southside Industrial Park is available because of the recent removal of the former Gilbarb Gardens, Atlanta housing authority development. Of the former Gilbarb Gardens were acquired by the City of Atlanta in 2006 using federal airport improvement funds. All housing stock has been demolished. There are also approximately 11 acres of vacant land across the street, portions of which are owned by the City. The area also affords the opportunity to expand the existing industrial area to the south.

The Industrial land surrounding Zip Boulevard and Browns Mill Road is characterized by smaller parcels (2-5 acres) and higher FARs (40-50%) than the established Southside Industrial Trade Area. The proposed Southside Industrial District is within the area of the proposed Southside Industrial District. Businesses involved in the storage and distribution of produce and other perishable goods are particularly common. Foodservice service and from are two of the District’s top employers. There are other food distributors and wholesaler in the area, such as Georgia International Foods, Boost Foods and, and 53 Companies, which service a variety of other food products. Along with active businesses, there are several large vacant and underutilized manufacturing buildings. The two pictured below are actively being marketed for new uses.

The existence of industrial characteristics from Hartsfield Park is visible through the embankment on top of the fence, just adjacent to MARTA’s maintenance facility on Browns Mill Road. There is a potential for nuisance claims given the close proximity of the new, partially built-out subdivision.

Sustainable urban design requires that cities rethink their approach to land use. It is important to think more critically about how complementary uses might be used to promote access and efficiency while protecting vulnerable, but essential, industrial and commercial uses.

Currently lacking in convenience and other small-scale commercial establishments, the proposed Southside Industrial District land use plan incorporates space for neighborhood-scale businesses. The businesses will provide food and other services to residents as well as those employed within the District. With placement along Ruby Hagar Boulevard, this may reduce private automobile presence on Zip Industrial Boulevard. Browns Mill Road, and Empire Boulevard, leaving these routes for larger commercial vehicles.