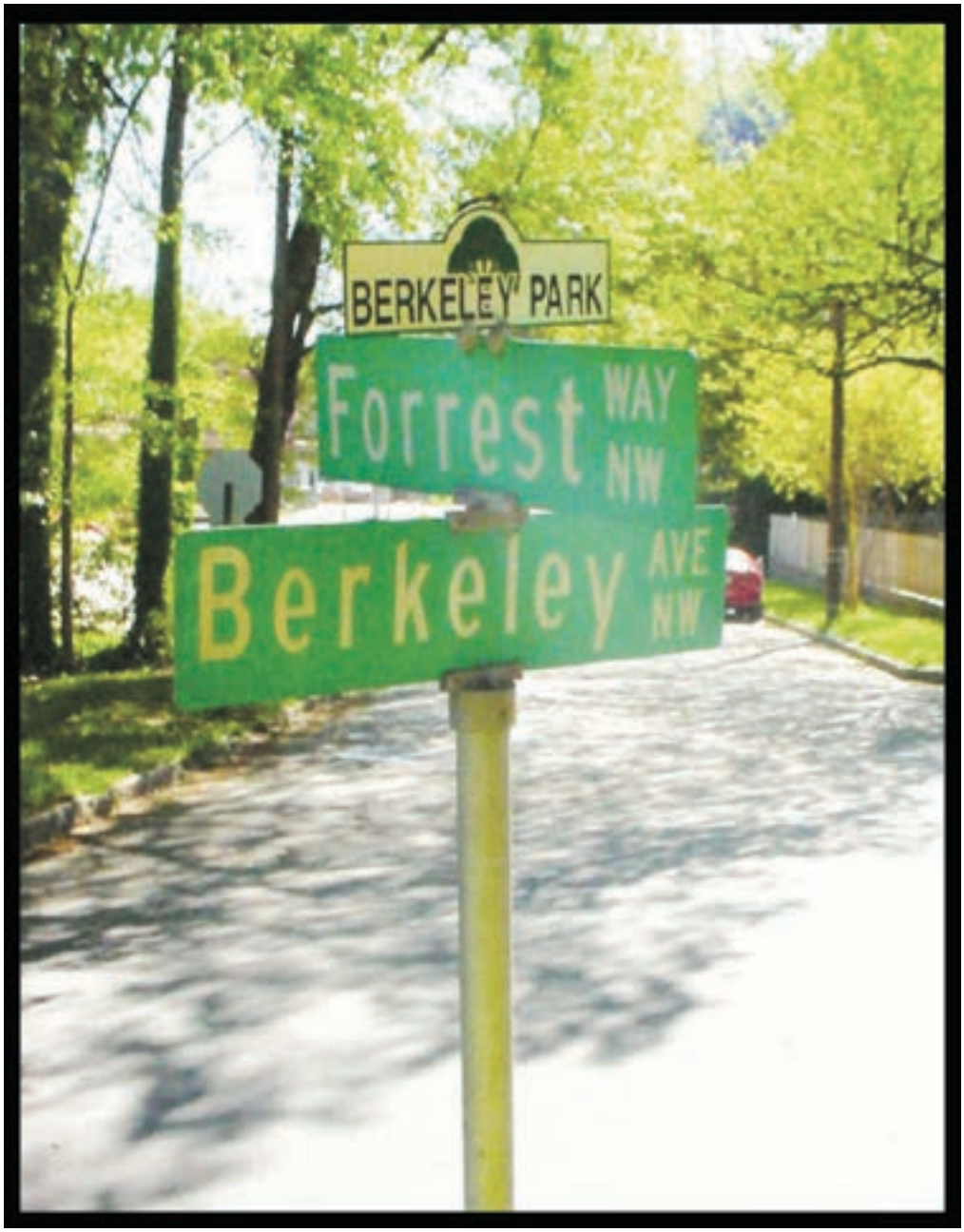
GEORGIA CONSERVANCY'S BLUEPRINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Berkeley Park:

A new beginning for an established neighborhood



Georgia CONSERVANCY

Blueprints for Successful Communities

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American Institute of Architects- Atlanta
American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia
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Association County Commissioners of Georgia
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Blueprints for Successful Communities

Blueprints is an education and technical assistance program of the Georgia Conservancy designed to facilitate community-based planning across the state. The program is committed to achieving successful communities by creating sound conservation and growth strategies, and building consensus for action.

Georgia is home to an abundance of natural and cultural resources. Our development patterns over the last 50 years present a very real threat to these resources and to quality of life as a whole. Sprawling, decentralized development, where people must depend on automobiles, is expensive for local governments to serve and has a staggering effect on the environment. Vehicle emissions create toxic air pollution. Stormwater runoff from asphalt poisons rivers and streams. Thousands of acres of farms, woodlands, and open space are lost to wasteful, non-sustainable forms of development.

Georgia Conservancy partnered with the Urban Land Institute and the Greater Atlanta Homebuilders in 1995 to host its first Blueprints for Successful Communities Symposium. Currently the Conservancy maintains an active partnership with 14 organizations. These diverse organizations and their members provide a great deal of understanding and expertise in the relationships that exist between land use, public infrastructure, economic growth, and environmental quality.

Prior to the Berkeley Park effort, Blueprints has addressed multi-jurisdictional watershed planning, heritage corridor preservation, location of commuter rail stations, inner city neighborhood issues, and other planning opportunities all through a collaborative planning process.

Blueprints Principles

- Maintain and enhance quality of life for residents of the community
- Employ regional strategies for transportation, land use, and economic growth
- Consider the effect of the built environment on the natural environment as well as history and culture
- Employ efficient land uses

Why Blueprints Berkeley Park?

Several residents of Berkeley Park contacted the Georgia Conservancy to assist the neighborhood as they were facing a number of critical planning issues, ranging from major transportation route changes to architectural design concerns. The residents realized they needed planning assistance if they were to maintain the neighborhood's best qualities and address environmental concerns.

After the initial agreement to partner with the neighborhood in the Blueprints process, the Conservancy contacted Georgia Tech and asked if an urban design studio might focus its attention on Berkeley Park in support of the process. Georgia Tech, which has provided this resource to Blueprints in the past because of its hands-on, real-time value, readily agreed. Eight students representing the planning, architecture, and civil engineering departments worked through the semester-long Blueprints process, and much of the text and graphics in this report reflect the students work product.

The area surrounding Berkeley Park, in fact all of Northwest Atlanta is experiencing a considerable amount of private development,

led by the reclamation and revitalization of Atlantic Steel into Atlantic Station. The 138-acre site will boost the region's economy with the mix of retail, service, entertainment, and housing opportunities. It will also bring heavy traffic volumes past Berkeley Park on Northside Drive and Howell Mill Road.

Other developments are also occurring near the neighborhood, feeding off of a demand for in-town housing and compact urban retail locations. The neighborhood has successfully worked with developers on the planning details of several projects. There are nearly 300,000 square feet of retail space and over 400 residential units planned or under construction between the Castlegate site being redeveloped by Selig Enterprises and Coro Realty's Berkeley Heights site at the corner of Bellemeade Avenue and Northside Drive.

In addition, numerous transportation studies are underway looking at future improvements for Northside Drive as well as future transit investments, including the Beltline. While the neighborhood has been working to influence individual private and public developments in the area, they also realized that a broader planning effort was needed to address the many issues the neighborhood was or will be facing. These transportation and land use issues led residents of Berkeley Park to invite the Conservancy to assist them in developing a vision for the neighborhood, as well as to identify potential strategies to mitigate the impacts of growth in the area while maximizing the benefits of private and public investment.

Berkeley Park in Context

Neighborhood History

The roots of the Berkeley Park neighborhood stretch back to the Civil War when area residents first constructed homes from reclaimed lumber, brought up from Macon from the barracks of the Confederate prison, Camp Oglethorpe. Along what had been the Confederate trench lines overlooking the city of Atlanta, Berkeley Park has remained a small, quaint community that now lies in the heart of the city and provides its residents convenient and affordable in-town living.

Prior to development the area was part of a farm that stretched from Peachtree Creek to the north, Atlanta Water Works to the south, Howell Mill Road to the west to and Spring Street to the east. The original owner of the farm was Jesse Wood. Mr. Wood divided the farm among his children. One of his sons, Elias Hinton (E.H.) Wood was given the land that is currently Berkeley Park. Elias was the first pastor at Peachtree Road Methodist Church in the early 1900s. He began development of Berkeley Park in 1921. The streets in the neighborhood were named after Wood's family members and friends. Tallulah was E.H.s' wife, Leona his oldest daughter, Verna his niece, and the Holmes and the Antones were fellow Methodist ministers and friends of the family.

The neighborhood started as a scattering of homes in the cow pastures bordering the stockyards on the outskirts of Atlanta. The Atlanta Water Works at 14th and Hemphill was constructed in 1892, and the reservoir gave the neighborhood a good fishing hole and picnic spot. In the early 1900s, Evan P. Howell Grammar School on Bowen Street and two nearby churches—Northside Park Baptist Church and Underwood Methodist Church—on Howell Mill Road served as the anchors for community life in Berkeley Park and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Berkeley Park began to be built up at a steady pace in the 1920s, as Atlanta realtor Eretus Rivers focused new development along the Howell Mill corridor from Chattahoochee Street to Collier Road. During this time until the late 1940s, Berkeley Park residents could catch the streetcar and ride into Atlanta for work or play. With the streetcar running all the way to Collier Road, the homes in the neighborhood provided affordable housing for those working in downtown Atlanta, the nearby railyards, and the Atlantic Steel plant. The grammar school was moved across Howell Mill to White Street in 1928 and a number of filling stations and

small businesses began popping up around its location during the 1930s. Community life was vibrant at the time, including soapbox derbies on Northside Drive and concerts at the Water Works bandstand. Fire Station No. 23 was built in 1948 and through the years since then Berkeley Park has remained a steady, working-class community.
[The information above is summarized from the National Register nomination.]

Past planning successes

The Berkeley Park neighborhood has a reputation as a proactive community that advocates for its future. Examples of past successes include:

- The Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association (BPNA) was established in 1995, in part to respond to the City of Atlanta's 1994 decision to close Fire Station No. 23, located at the corner of Howell Mill Road and Antone Street. The first BPNA president, Gwen Langston, was responsible for lobbying the city to reopen the station, which took place in 1997.

- In 1996, BPNA effectively lobbied the City's Department of Planning to recognize Berkeley Park as an official neighborhood. Prior to this Berkeley Park was part of the Underwood Hills Neighborhood.

- In 2001, BPNA successfully lobbied the City Council to adopt a Special Public Interest District (SPI) for the neighborhood. *SPI 14 – Berkeley Park District* acts as an overlay to existing zoning "to preserve and protect the Berkeley Park neighborhood from overcrowding with all of its accompanying negative impacts, such as excessive noise and traffic, due to the rental of housing units to large groups of unrelated individuals." The SPI was intended to halt the development of dormitory-style housing by changing the definition of "family" to preclude fraternity, sorority, club, student center, group care homes, foster homes, and similar uses.

- The Berkeley Park neighborhood's residential core was designated a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The map below shows the National Register historic district boundaries and identifies structures that contribute to the designated district.

- In recent years, Berkeley Park has continued its efforts to improve and promote the neighborhood. Such efforts include creating a logo, a website, and planting trees at key intersections in the neighborhood.

Berkeley Park Community Workshops

Assets and Challenges

On July 10, 2004 the Georgia Conservancy and the Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association hosted the first Steering Committee meeting for Blueprints Berkeley Park. The Steering Committee was an invited group of individuals that included neighborhood residents, local business owners, local institutions, City of Atlanta staff and elected officials, as well as representatives from adjacent neighborhoods. The meeting was well attended and included a walking tour of the neighborhood that focused on the residential core. The tour groups were provided cameras to document elements of the neighborhood, both things that should be protected, and areas that need improvement.

The Steering Committee had a lengthy discussion about what they saw on the tour and in response to a presentation about issues around the edges of the neighborhood. Then each committee member was given the opportunity to suggest what they saw as the neighborhood's greatest assets and also challenges.

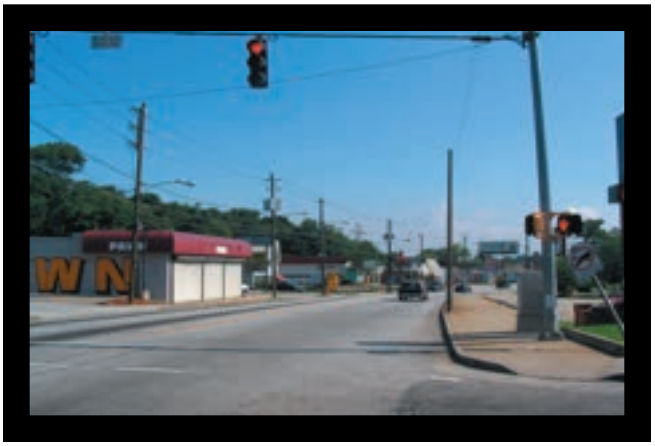
Neighborhood Assets

- Location:
  - Close to downtown, Midtown, I-75, etc.
  - On proposed Beltline (potential transit, greenway, pedestrian connections to other parts of the City)
- Compactness/density
- Diversity (age, race, profession, ethnic origin)
- Good schools
- Walkability (good access, but poor facilities)
- Good street network (for cars and pedestrians)
  - Protects from through-traffic
  - Good scale
  - Internal circulation and external access
- Underutilized land (particularly on edges – Howell Mill and Northside Drive)
- Mature trees
- Established neighborhood
- Documented historic architecture – National Register listing
- History of neighborhood in general
- Access to existing public transportation
- Fire Station No.23 –Building and services
- Senior Citizens Center
- Development restrictions not too strict
- Different types of housing
- Good lot sizes
- People who care represent the neighborhood
- Committed businesses
- Opportunities to impact future development
- Still can be protected
- Residential portion that is intact and intimate – pocket of residential
- Substantial economic activity in the area – allows leverage to make positive change happen
- Other plans – public attention and public investment
- Land use diversity
- Access to I-75
- Topography
- Tanyard Creek – Atlanta Water Works reservoir – greenspace
- Neighborhood on high ground
- Overall upswing of the area
- Potential for developers to assist neighborhood with projects
- Momentum
- Unique businesses
- Potential for new success

Existing residential street

Neighborhood Challenges

- Speed of traffic – interior and exterior
- Disrepair - Lack of up-keep on some properties
  - Absentee property owners
  - Lack of code enforcement
  - Could become a safe haven for non-compliance of code requirements
- Lack of a cohesive image – What do people think when they hear Berkeley Park?
- Howell Mill Road
  - Traffic (trucks)
  - Visually unattractive
  - Lack of quality pedestrian facilities
  - Safety
- Neighborhood turnover (loss of elderly, students, families)
- Preserving the residential core (vs. higher densities, rental, and commercial)
- Maintaining size and scale of the neighborhood in new development
- Bellemeade Avenue (traffic and appearance)
- Cut-through traffic
- Lack of greenspace/parks
- Sustained involvement of residents – better informed residents
- How to fit into an urban context - connect with other plans
- Creating a higher standard quality of development (need to develop models / building typologies)
- All the physical assets can also be challenges (street network can allow for dense development, but also encourages cut-throughs)
- Lack of central meeting place – place for community events
- Historic position and realities of the neighborhood will make for ongoing conflicts with future development
- Development is occurring very rapidly
- Lack of sidewalks
- Poor stormwater facilities
- Lack of curbing
- Need to maintain feel/character of neighborhood
- Interstate – business orientation toward I-75 rather than neighborhood
- Real estate speculation (lack of upkeep on speculative properties) and impacts on surrounding properties
- Georgia Tech is growing and will continue to grow (student population) – students will need nearby off-campus housing
- Economic realities of businesses today means most businesses must draw regionally, creating traffic
- Time sensitive process – many other plans going on
- Need effective community-wide communication
- Residential parking (on- and off-street) – lack of parking vs. run-off from parking
- Reality that the neighborhood is in the city – there will always be nuisances such as truck traffic
- Need to connect and present a unified voice with other neighborhoods – many challenges are truly city-wide and may require collaboration



Intersection of Howell Mill and Bellemeade

Blueprints Berkeley Park Planning Goals

The Blueprints Steering Committee, with the assistance of Georgia Conservancy staff, developed the following planning goals:

- Protect the history, character, scale, and intimacy of the residential core of Berkeley Park.
- Balance momentum and growth with a desire to protect existing neighborhood assets and quality of life.
- Seek continued neighborhood diversity – demographic, economic, housing type, and land use.
- Encourage informed and committed residents, businesses, and community service providers that contribute to the shared vision of the neighborhood, and implement programs and projects that support the vision.
- Advocate for community and public facilities that are safe, convenient, accessible, attractive, and well maintained.
- Be in partnership with initiatives outside the residential core which meet the needs and desires of Berkeley Park.

Community design workshop

Community Design Workshops

During the fall of 2004, the Berkeley Park Blueprints Steering Committee participated in two community design workshops to identify issues facing the community and desirable solutions.

Design workshops allowed the neighborhood to 'test' potential solutions to issues identified by the Steering Committee. The following list of resident preferences was developed during the community design workshops. Through the design workshops Georgia Tech provided technical analysis. In addition, the Urban Design Framework described in the subsequent pages of this report was developed.

- Preservation of residential core of Berkeley Park and opposition to commercial and high-density residential encroachment
  - Preserve and renovate existing single- family residences, especially those on the north side of Bellemeade Avenue
  - Place no excessive restrictions on remodeling or expansion of single-family homes
  - Keep setbacks consistent
  - Keep general architectural style ("bungalow," "Cape Cod")
  - Desire for a style guide, but no covenants
  - Desire for single-family infill housing with "neighborhood character" especially in the area south of Bellemeade between Northside Drive and Tallulah Street; housing like the "modernist boxes" on Antone Street is acceptable
  - Limit square footage per acre, floor area ratio (FAR), and height on new construction to control effects of "teardowns."
  - No apartment houses or "techatoria" because they are ill-maintained and lack code enforcement
  - Desire for environs of Kroger to become an urban center, starting with replacing little-used parking to the east of the strip commercial uses on Howell Mill
  - Desire for a neighborhood park of small size and simple design; trouble getting commitment from small land owners to donate land of potential

- If the Howell Mill Ridge Apartments site is redeveloped:
  - Desire not to have large numbers of new residents overwhelm neighborhood
  - Desire for same number of units as exists
  - Desire for better quality of units
  - Desire to prevent an increase in traffic, impervious surface, flooding, and loss of tree cover
  - Desire for new construction not to exceed four stories
  - Desire for new construction to better capitalize on the topography
  - Preference for condominiums or otherwise owner-occupied structures
  - Desire for all parking to be sequestered
  - Desire for open/green/park/public space on site (if one cannot be established elsewhere in the residential core), to be accessible to all Berkeley Park residents, not only residents of a new complex
  - Desire for setback from existing residences
  - Desire for townhouses
  - Openness to transferring development rights (TDR) program and establishing rail line area as receiving area
  - Desire for resolution of flooding issue

- Many commercial businesses on Howell Mill do not maintain their sites.

- Some residents dislike the commercial uses to the east of Northside and south of I-75 and are willing to see mixed uses with retail in the area.

- Many residents support the idea of an "urban village" along Howell Mill Road.
  - Tree-lined streetscape from Bellemeade to the rail line
  - Resident-oriented retail, with rear parking and offices and/or residences above, including artist studios
  - Courtyard housing, with the courtyards facing Howell Mill
  - Bike lane(s)
  - Gateway to travelers entering from I-75 or Collier Heights
  - Long-distance northbound traffic on Howell Mill uses Bishop Street to Northside as bypass from village

- Curiosity exists as to whether the fenced-in northern portion of the reservoir area is in fact wildlife habitat

- Frustration with Public Works for using the rear of its site (1540 Northside) as a dump, and a desire for the department to justify its current use of the site; desire for another use such as a park

- Desire to strengthen connection to park in Underwood Hills; possibly through "Moccasin Hollow", an overgrown area west of Howell Mill near I-75

- Regarding connectivity:
  - Install pedestrian lighting on Bellemeade
  - Reduce and consolidate the number of curb cuts (driveways)
  - Perhaps a sidewalk on the east side of Howell Mill north of Bishop
  - Fix motorist sight line at intersection of Howell Mill and Bishop
  - A "local traffic only" sign at Bellemeade for motorists thinking of detouring south along Talullah
  - Fix motorist sight line at intersection of Northside and Holmes Street
  - Anger with lack of municipal enforcement of trucks deviating from truck routes
  - Create a new east-west street beyond the residential core to induce traffic to bypass the streets of the core:
    - Widen Bishop
    - Create a new street through the waterworks area
    - Maintain I-75 access lane as a connector for west-to-east traffic

Existing duplex development

Berkeley Park Inventory

The research and analysis for this report was conducted at three geographic scales— the Berkeley Park neighborhood, the neighborhood study area, and the Northside Drive Corridor study area. The three scales are shown in the following map. All three scales influenced the analysis, findings, and recommendations of this report as it is critical that Berkeley Park residents attempt to influence activities both inside and outside the neighborhood.

Place & Form

As northwest Atlanta and the Northside Drive corridor are experiencing a new beginning, Berkeley Park, established in 1921, remains a quiet retreat in the midst of great change. Quaint homes, large trees, and rolling hills stand in stark contrast to the congestion of Howell Mill Road and the pace of Northside Drive.

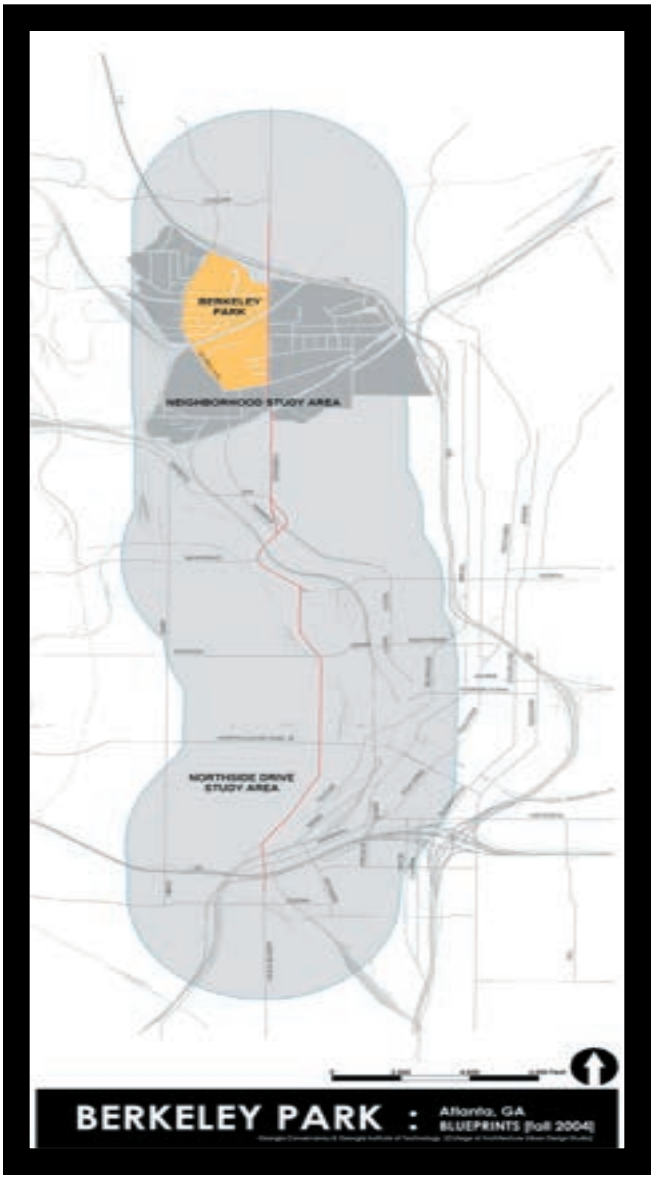
The neighborhood boundaries are composed of Interstate 75 to the north, Northside Drive to the east, Howell Mill Road to the west, and Bishop Street to the south. The neighborhood includes part of the Atlanta Water Works and is bisected by a CSX rail line, which remains active.

Single-family units, the predominant house type in Berkeley Park, are modest single-story homes built in the bungalow style. The single-family homes are situated on 50’ by 140’ lots (average) with setbacks of 20’ (average) on a relatively well-connected grid street system. One large multi-family apartment complex, Howell Mill Ridge Apartments, is located in the center of the neighborhood.

There are 446 housing units in Berkeley Park. More than 90% are occupied, 36.6% are owner occupied and 63.4% are renter occupied. Of the existing homes, the median year built is 1943. Most homes are in good repair.

The residential core is framed by industrial and commercial uses. The buildings used for industrial purposes along the railroad corridor appear to have been built between 1950 and 1975, according to Sanborn maps. Many of these buildings are of simple, yet solid single-story brick construction. The buildings along Howell Mill Road, mostly of a commercial nature, were built between 1920 and 1993 with the median year built of 1960. Only 16 of the 47 buildings were constructed before 1950.

The Berkeley Park neighborhood is also bordered by the Atlanta Water Works, which occupies the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood. The Waterworks includes two reservoirs, only one in Berkeley Park, several buildings, and large swaths of greenspace (both manicured and natural).



The People

The 2000 U.S. Census recorded 862 people living in Berkeley Park: 39.8% female and 60.2% male. The population was composed of 85.8% white, 7.8% black, 3.8% Asian, and 2.6% other, to include multiracial groups. Less than 4.0% of the population was Hispanic. These residents occupied 413 households with an average household size of 2.1 people. Only 22.2% of these residents lived in the same house in 1995.

The average age of residents was 30 years old and more than 68% of the population 25 years and older had earned a post-secondary degree. Of the working residents, 62.4% work in Atlanta, 34.7% work outside Atlanta but within the metropolitan area, and 2.9% leave the Metropolitan Statistical Area for employment. Over 79.4% of Berkeley Park residents drove to work alone (single occupancy vehicle) in 2000; 14.1% used public transportation; 1.7% biked or walked to work; and 4.7% worked at home.

Land Use

The Berkeley Park neighborhood and the adjacent areas include a diversity of land uses. The neighborhood is divided into five primary land use areas. Several of these areas are currently undergoing changes in uses, yet the existing zoning and future land use plan have not adjusted to these changes. The defined areas of Berkeley Park are described below:

The Residential Core is characterized by relatively small houses on small lots. There are several small multi-family units and one large apartment complex, Howell Mill Ridge Apartments, at the center of the neighborhood. A portion of the residential core was recently designated as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.
[Current Zoning: R4A, with RG3 at the center]

The Howell Mill Road Corridor has two land use "personalities". The northern portion is characterized by relatively shallow lots (ranging from 130' to 180' deep) of single-story light industrial, commercial, and residential (which have been converted to other uses) buildings. Current uses are predominantly auto-oriented, including mechanics, automotive repair and sales, and drive-through restaurants. The southern portion, between Trabert Avenue and Bishop Street, takes on the character of the Atlanta Water Works with the reservoirs and open spaces, mature trees, and expanses of lawn. This area is accented with a sweeping view of Midtown. Howell Mill Road merges with Marietta Boulevard to the south of the Berkeley Park neighborhood.
[Current Zoning: community business district (C1), commercial service district (C2), light industrial (I1)]

Typical single-family home

The Rail Corridor bisects the Berkeley Park neighborhood. This area is changing from light industrial and rail-oriented uses to a mix of commercial and light industrial businesses. The single- and two-story buildings are surrounded by large swaths of parking lots with unkempt vegetation behind the buildings, adjacent to the railroad.
[Current Zoning: light industrial and single family residential (R4A) to the north of the CSX rail line, heavy industrial (I2) to the south]

The Northside Drive Corridor has large, deep lots currently being used by office, retail, and light industrial businesses. Buildings are set back on the lot and are surrounded by vast amounts of parking. This high-capacity corridor

is often seen as an alternative route to the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector, a "backdoor" to and from the downtown and the emerging Atlantic Station site.
[Current Zoning: light industrial (I1) and heavy industrial (I2)]

The Interstate Interchange, of course, serves a larger, regional audience. The I-75 interchanges at Northside Drive and Howell Mill Road both host hotels and gas stations. The Wendy's on Howell Mill is rumored to be one of their most successful locations in Atlanta, if not the southeast. The accessibility of this location and the growing number of local residents has attracted new development of an even larger scale. Local real estate firms, CORO and Selig, are planning to open mixed-use projects over the next two years that will include over 400 new housing units, numerous stores, and a Super Wal-Mart.
[Current Zoning: C1, C2, office institutional (OI), planned development office commercial (PDOC)]

Existing land use

Rail corridor - potential Beltline alignment

Existing zoning

Existing Land Use Mix	parcels	% of total	acres	% of total	square feet	% of total
single family	656	59.91	140	17.41	791,681	15.55
multifamily	78	7.12	61	7.59	751,891	14.77
commercial	76	6.94	83	10.32	911,207	17.90
office	27	2.47	32	3.98	430,383	8.46
industrial	82	7.49	124	15.42	1,688,727	33.18
mixed use	6	0.55	141	17.54	422,658	8.30
institutional	17	1.55	147	18.28	35,708	0.70
recreational	1	0.09	9	1.12	0	0.00
cemetery/open space	0	0.00	4	0.50	0	0.00
parking/TCU	13	1.19	7	0.87	0	0.00
misc	34	3.11	9	1.12	52,435	1.03
vacant	103	9.41	46	5.72	0	0.00
unknown	2	0.18	1	0.12	5,100	0.10
TOTAL	**1,095**	**100.00**	**804**	**100.00**	**5,089,790**	**100.00**
Source: Smartraq and 2003 Fulton County tax data						

The above table breaks out the mix of existing land uses in the larger Berkeley Park area. Like the rest of the Northside Drive Corridor, Berkeley Park is dominated by an institutional land use. The Atlanta Water Works makes up over 18% of the overall acreage of the study area.

The City of Atlanta's future land use map shows the northern portion of the area and Howell Mill Road as low density commercial, the residential core is classified as single-family residential, and the southern half of the neighborhood, as well as part of Howell Mill Road, are industrial.

Existing residential land use is composed mostly of single-family dwellings. This is reflected in an existing density of only 5.5 dwelling units per acre, much less than the 10 dwelling units per acre at the Northside corridor scale. Multifamily developments in Berkeley Park are only moderately more dense than single family (7.6 units per acre vs. 4.7 units per acre).

Redevelopment Potential

The table on the following page describes a redevelopment scenario for the greater Berkeley Park area. Given the rate of change and investment in Northwest Atlanta it is important to understand the magnitude of potential change that continued investment could bring. While the neighborhood may appear to be built-out there is actually a significant amount of vacant land and land that may soon be targeted for redevelopment. The table calculates the amount of new development that could potentially be seen in Berkeley Park using the existing vacant land and 60% of the current industrial land, which is already undergoing some redevelopment.

The scenario assumes the existing land use mix will continue. Even at existing densities this area could easily accommodate 167 new dwelling units and over 200,000 new square feet of office and commercial space. The table also calculates potential new units and square feet of commercial space using increased densities that may be necessary given the cost of land in the area.

Redevelopment Potential (developing vacant land (46 acres) and 60% of industrial land using existing and proposed land use mix and densities)	newly developed/ redeveloped acres	new units	existing and new units	proposed density (DU/ residential acre)	new units with increased density	existing and new units	new square feet
single family	21	98	754	9	189	845	118,555
multifamily	9	69	531	15	137	599	112,597
commercial	12						136,454
office	5						64,450
industrial	0						0
mixed use	21			25	528	528	63,294
institutional	22						5,347
recreational	1						0
cemetery/open space	1						0
parking/TCU	1						0
misc	1						7,852
vacant	7						0
unknown	0						764
TOTAL	**102**	**167**	**1,285**		**854**	**1,972**	**509,313**

Transportation Network

The Berkeley Park neighborhood's transportation network consists of streets, transit routes, a truck route, and pedestrian facilities.

Streets: The defining roads are Northside Drive, an arterial connecting Buckhead to Downtown, and Howell Mill Road. The segment of Northside Drive adjacent to Berkeley Park has four to six lanes. It is characterized by rolling terrain with buildings set back from the road and a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count is 24,000 near the I-75 interchange.

Howell Mill Road is an arterial from Marietta Street north to Moores Mill Road. In the Berkeley Park area this road takes on several different characters—from six lanes near I-75, to three lanes between Bellemeade Drive and the CSX rail corridor, to four lanes from the railroad to Trabert Avenue, and finally three lanes until it reaches Huff Road, all with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The ADT count for Howell Mill between I-75 and Bellemeade is 29,400. South of Bellemeade the ADT is 21,000.

The roads within the residential core create a relatively well-connected grid pattern. They are typically 20' to 22' wide, with lanes going in both directions. Many residents take advantage of on-street parking, effectively narrowing the roads. Several stop signs have been installed to calm traffic. The street network in the area between the eastern reservoir and Northside Drive lacks connectivity. For example, Trabert Avenue, a potentially useful east/west route, prematurely dead-ends just a few hundred feet from Northside Drive. The primary local east/west connections are created by Bellemeade Avenue, Holmes Street, and Bishop Street. Bellemeade and Holmes are residential streets; therefore, the resulting cut-through traffic is a detriment to the neighborhood.

Truck Route: Chattahoochee Avenue and Howell Mill Road are currently part of the truck route serving the Chattahoochee Industrial District to the west of Berkeley Park. This situation has created truck/pedestrian and truck/automobile conflicts, most seriously at the intersections. In fact, Howell Mill Road at Chattahoochee Avenue and Bellemeade/Defoor

Avenue has been called "the worst traffic nightmare in metro Atlanta."

Transit Routes: Berkeley Park is served by two MARTA bus routes:

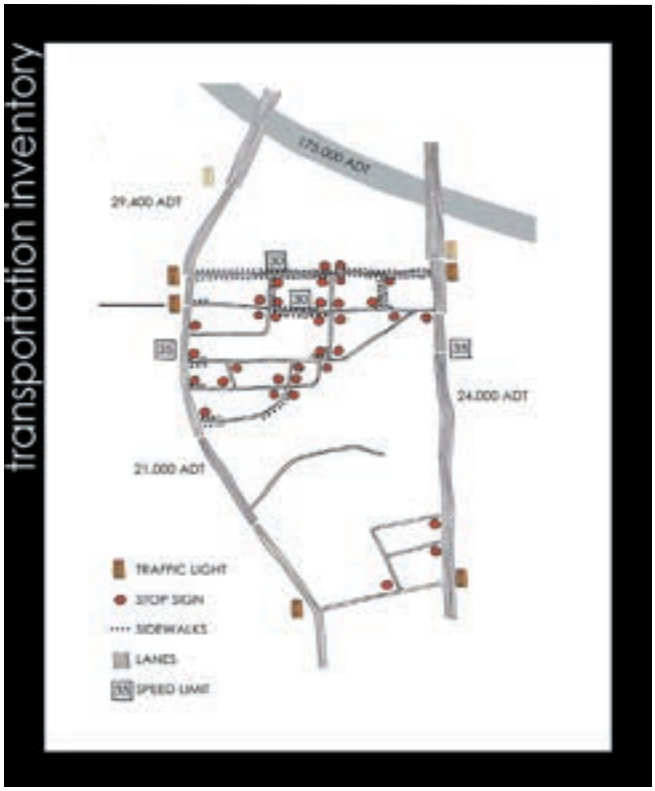
Route 12 (Howell Mill), which connects the IBM Complex north of West Paces Ferry Road to Georgia Tech and the Midtown MARTA train station.

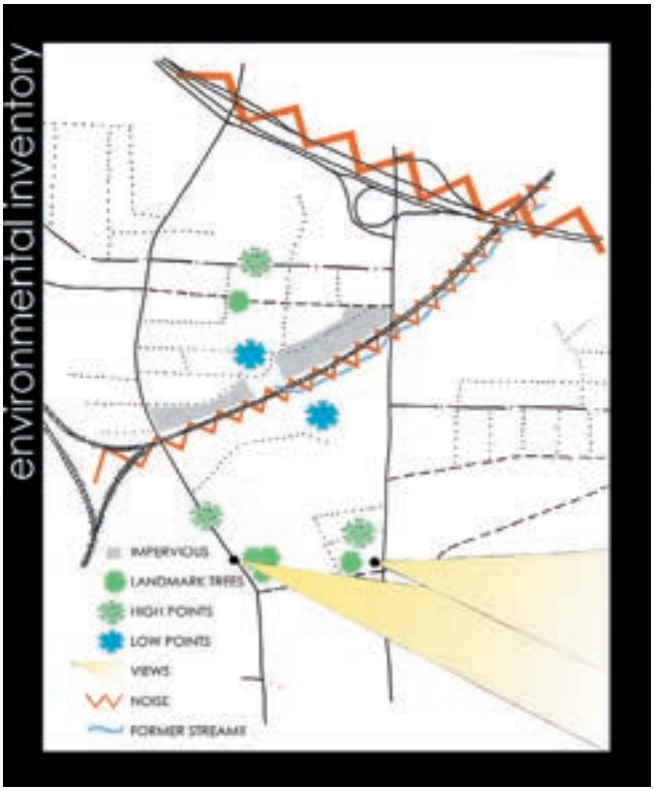
Route 37 (Loring Heights), which connects the Moores Mill Shopping Center with Underwood Hills, Berkeley Park, Loring Heights, Atlantic Station, Home Park, and the Midtown MARTA train station. The 37 bus cuts through the Berkeley Park residential core on Bellemeade Avenue.

Pedestrian Facilities: Sidewalks are of varying condition. The adjacent transportation inventory map shows the existing neighborhood sidewalks. Many are obstructed by both permanent (utility polls and mailboxes) and temporary (trash cans) obstructions. On Howell Mill Road, pedestrian facilities are hampered by numerous driveways, large trucks, and high traffic volume and speeds. Pedestrians on Northside Drive face high-speed traffic, hilly terrain, and occasional breaks in the sidewalk system.

Environment

The Berkeley Park neighborhood has large, mature trees scattered throughout the ridges and slopes of the landscape. Ridges in the neighborhood provide scenic views of both the Water Works and the Atlanta skyline. The tree canopy in the historic core of the neighborhood provides respite from the noise generated by the interstate. Tanyard Creek once flowed through the neighborhood, but has since been piped. The creek briefly emerges along the railroad. Residents are currently experiencing post-storm flooding in the central portion of the neighborhood. Invasive kudzu vines threaten other vegetation along the railroad and between parcels along Northside Drive. A significant piece of wooded property is located adjacent to the Water Works. This property is often populated with significant numbers of birds.





Urban Design Framework

An urban design framework was developed to capture the desires of the Steering Committee as expressed during the community design workshops. This framework was also informed by the inventory and analysis of the issues that face Berkeley Park. An urban design framework provides a focused interpretation of local vision and strategies. In Berkeley Park desired outcomes, and therefore the framework, are most concerned with transportation strategies, redevelopment opportunities, the need to protect areas of significant character, and a network of hubs and links.

Transportation Strategies

Based on the inventory and analysis of the existing transportation system and street network in and surrounding Berkeley Park two major challenges facing the mobility and accessibility of the neighborhood were identified:

Traffic circulation issues: Cut-through traffic, especially on Bellemeade and Holmes Streets, and truck traffic to and from the Chattahoochee industrial area are issues of primary concern for the neighbors. More development and increasing traffic volumes will only worsen the problem and impact the community more adversely.

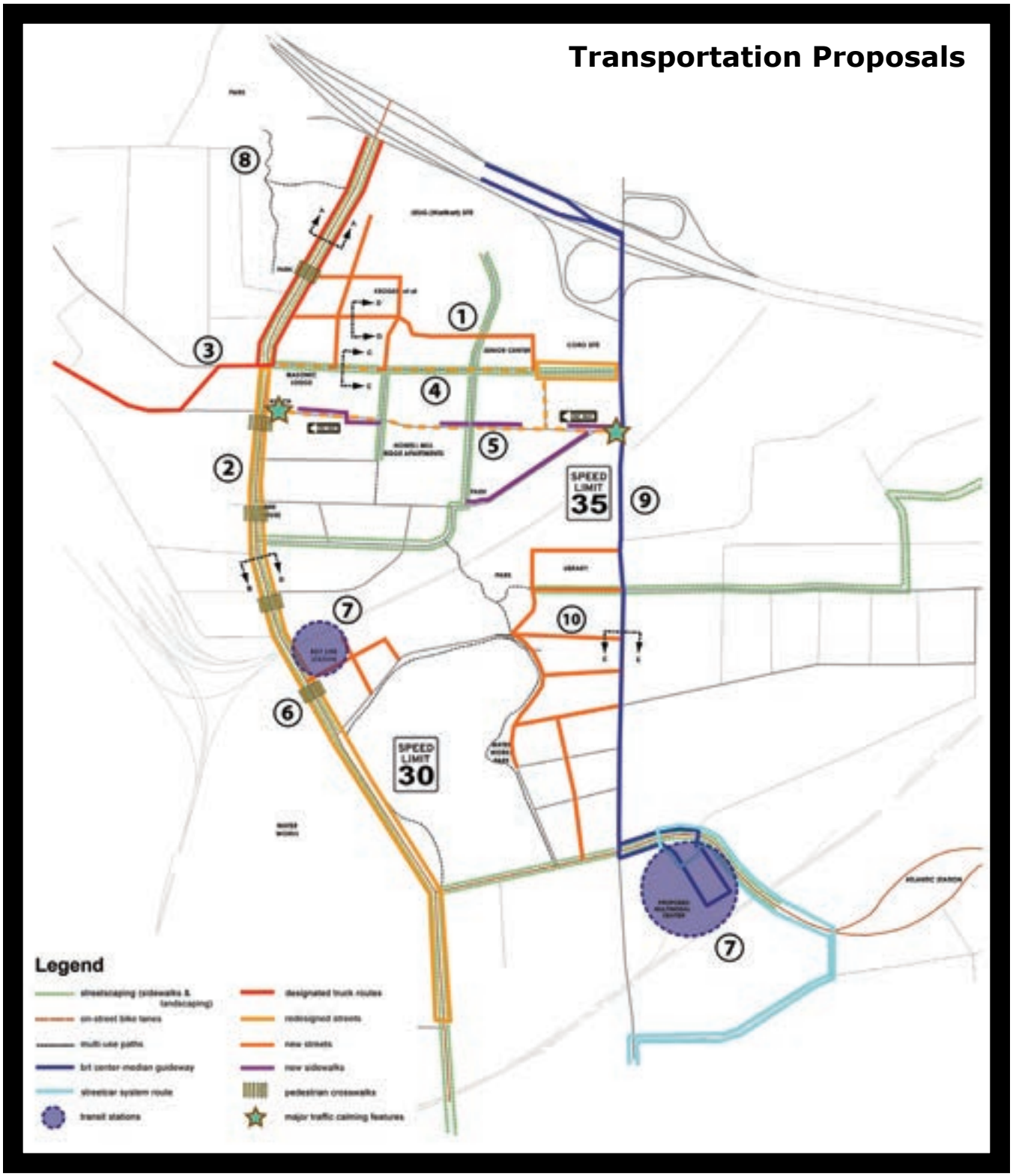
Lack of pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and safety: On the neighborhood streets and more so on streets around Berkeley Park, sidewalks and pedestrian facilities are disconnected, incomplete, and/or in disrepair if even existing. Traffic volumes and speeds on the streets bordering the neighborhood are not conducive to walking or biking to nearby activities and attractions.

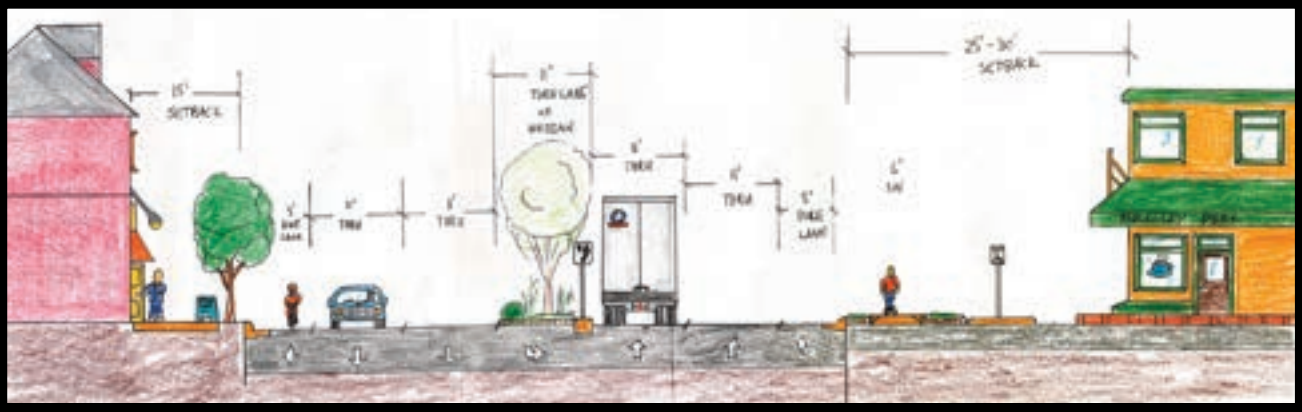
Following are some options for addressing these challenges. Each proposed solution seeks to address more than one area of concern. All options were reviewed by the Steering Committee and a panel of professionals convened by Professor Dobbins to assist students in developing appropriate design solutions.

The strategies are listed in priority order based on the feedback from the Berkeley Park community. Numbers correspond to the Transportation Proposals map on the following page.

❶ **Construction of a new east-west connector between Howell Mill Road and Northside Drive north of Berkeley Park:** The creation of this new link will reduce the impact of cut-through traffic on the residential core via Bellemeade Avenue while providing access and turn lanes into existing and new commercial development north of the neighborhood proper. Conceptually, the design is a three-lane section (cross section D-D) as an extension of White Street across Howell Mill Road; running through the existing or a redeveloped Howell Mill Station shopping center; continuing between the Castlegate redevelopment, the Sizemore Group office building, and the senior center; then turning south to connect to Bellemeade Avenue west of Leona Street. The connection to the eastern segment of Bellemeade Avenue allows for the improvement of that segment to three lanes along the Coro frontage with a westbound through-lane and eastbound left turn and through-right lanes, as well as signal timing improvements at Northside Drive and Bellemeade.

❷ **Prioritization of Howell Mill Road as an urban boulevard:** With the nature of the topography and activities along Howell Mill Road, the Berkeley Park residents see the corridor as the front door to the neighborhood. Howell Mill provides the best opportunities for commercial redevelopment and connections to neighboring communities, as well as being more topographically conducive to walking and cycling than Northside Drive. The design recommendation for Howell Mill Road north of Defoor Avenue is a four-lane section (cross-section A-A) with bike lanes, transitions between landscaped medians, left-turn lanes


Transportation Proposals
SPEED LIMIT 35
SPEED LIMIT 30
Legend
streetscaping (sidewalks & landscaping)
on-street bike lanes
multi-use paths
brt center-median guideway
streetcar system route
transit stations
designated truck routes
redesigned streets
new streets
new sidewalks
pedestrian crosswalks
major traffic calming features

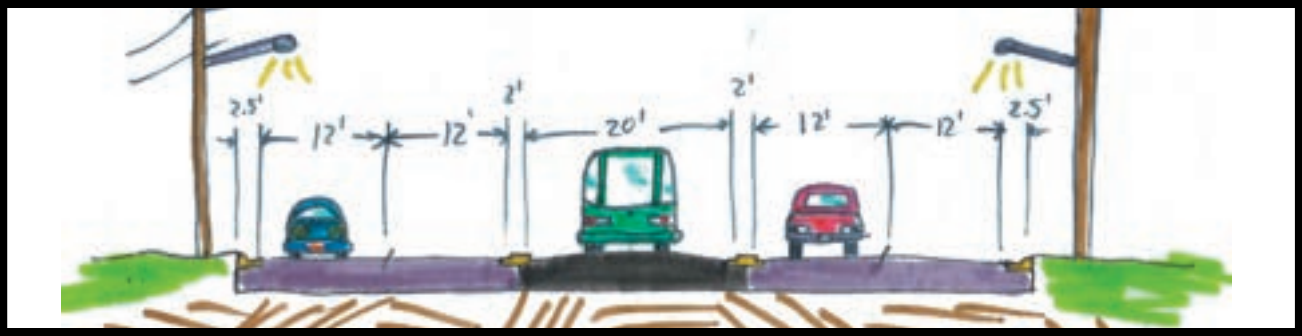


Cross-Section A-A: Howell Mill Road north of Defoor Avenue (looking north)

Cross-section B-B: Howell Mill Road south of Chattahoochee Avenue (looking south)

Cross-section C-C: Bellmeade Avenue (looking east)

Cross-section D-D: White Street Extension (facing east)



Cross-section E-E: Northside Drive

at appropriate locations, wide sidewalks, and streetscaping. South of Chattahoochee Avenue to Huff Road, a two-lane section with similar features (cross-section B-B) can be constructed within the existing right-of-way (right-of-way could be purchased in the future to expand the segment to four lanes.)

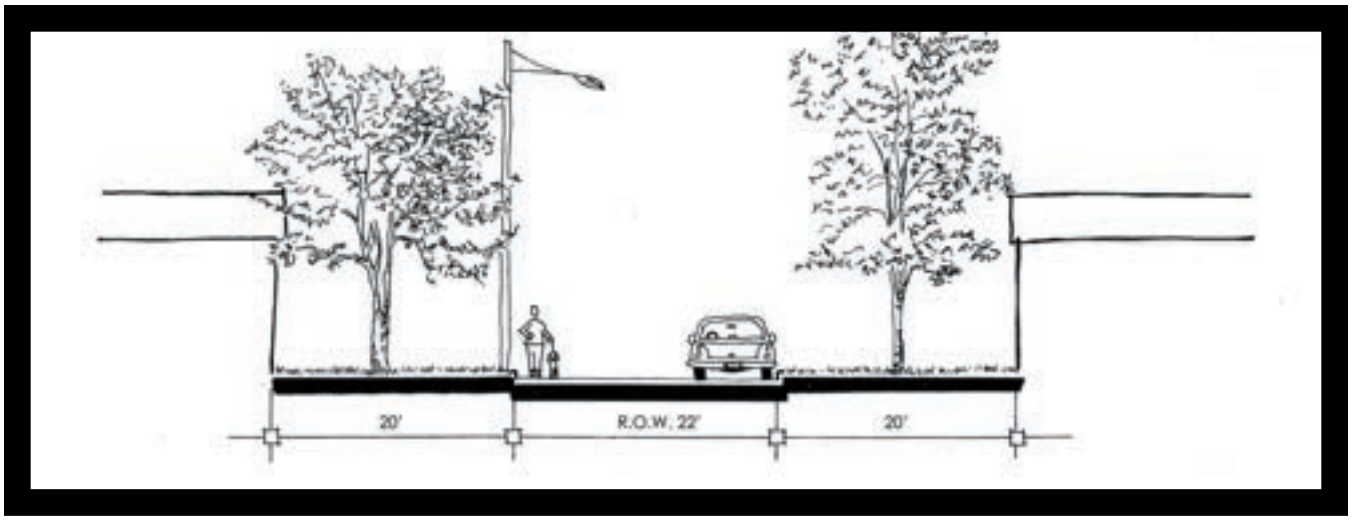
❸ **Designation and construction of an improved truck route for Chattahoochee and Defoor Avenues:** Addressing the truck traffic and congestion problems at Howell Mill Road and Chattahoochee Avenue involved the consideration and modeling of a number of truck routing options around and away from Berkeley Park. The models all showed the Howell Mill Road connection from the Chattahoochee industrial corridor to I-75 to be an important time-saving and pollution-reducing route for commercial heavy vehicles. A long-term solution that connects Chattahoochee Avenue to Defoor Avenue east of the Underwood Hills neighborhood to create a truck route more navigable for truck trailers and provide better turn radii at the Defoor-Howell Mill intersection would be preferable. The most appropriate short-term fix may be the rerouting of the heavy vehicles to the Marietta Boulevard corridor instead of redesigning the Chattahoochee-Howell Mill intersection. This option fared only marginally worse than redesign options in the models, with a 15% increase in travel time, 10% increase in fuel used, and modest increases in exhaust emissions for route changes between the northern I-75/I-285 interchange, the western I-20/I-285 interchange, and the central I-20/I-75/I-85 interchange.

❹ **Return of Bellemeade Avenue to a neighborhood street:** With the creation of the east-west collector street north of Berkeley Park, Bellemeade Avenue will be able to return to a cross-section (cross-section C-C) more like those of Holmes and Verner Streets within Berkeley Park. Features include limited on-street parking, narrow unstriped through lanes, and sidewalks. The speed limit can be reduced to 25 mph.

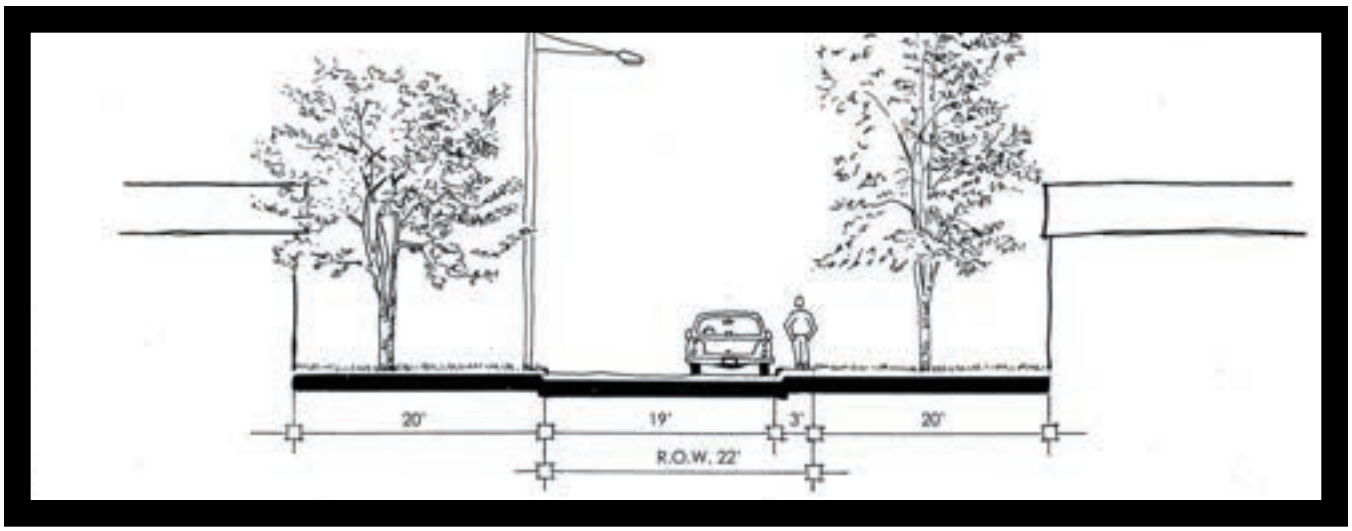
❺ **Traffic calming and sidewalk improvements on Holmes Street:** With the concerns of cut-through traffic and sight distance problems at Holmes Street and Northside Drive, it is recommended that bulb-outs be installed on the southern side of Holmes at the Northside Drive and Howell Mill intersections, restricting traffic flow to westbound movements alone between Northside Drive and Antone Street and Buchanan Street and Howell Mill Road. Two-way traffic would be maintained between Antone and Buchanan Streets. The speed limit can be reduced to a consistent 25 mph across the neighborhood. In addition, the construction of sidewalk segments between those existing near Howell Mill Road, Buchanan Street, the Howell Mill Ridge Apartments, Leona Street, and Antone Street would complete a pedestrian network along Holmes Street. See potential cross-sections for residential streets on the next page.

❻ **Creation of pedestrian crossings at key locations on Howell Mill Road**: Pedestrian crossings along Howell Mill Road are currently deficient, marked by warning sign but lacking any pavement markings or pedestrian push-buttons for crossing beyond the Chattahoochee and Defoor Avenue intersections. Pedestrian crossings with median refuges should be located at key locations near the railroad bridge, Antone Street, Holmes Street, Defoor Avenue, White Street, and the proposed Castlegate property entrances.

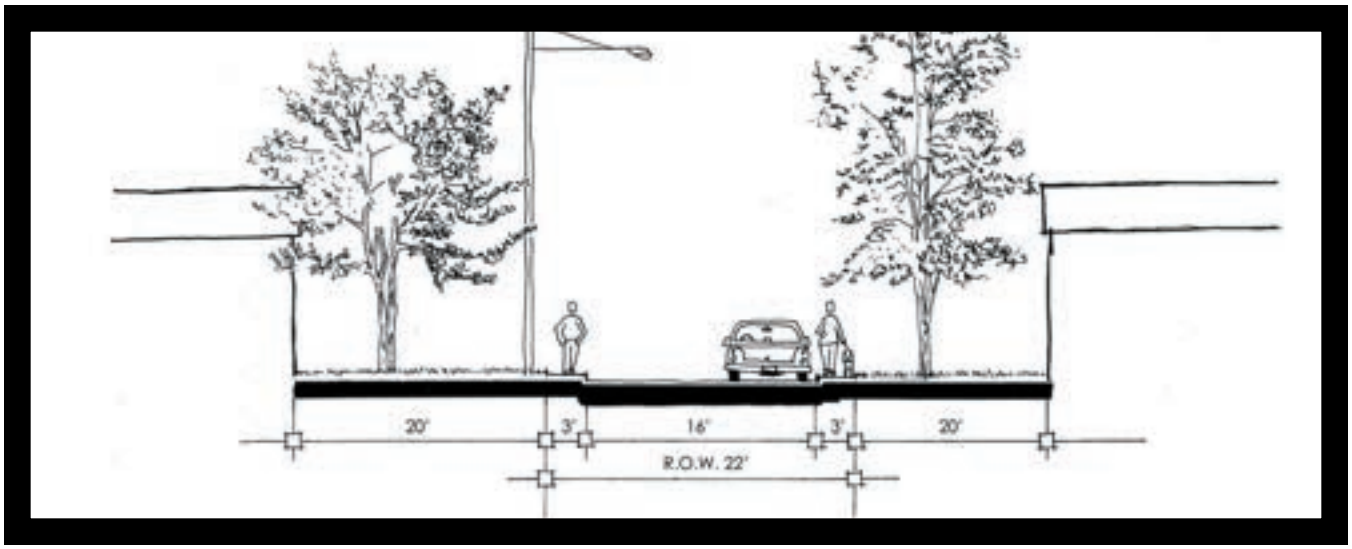
❼ **Development of a Howell Mill Beltline transit station and a Multimodal Passenger Terminal at Northside Drive and 17th Street:** The construction of a Beltline station near Howell Mill Road including mixed-use development and housing options will bolster the redevelopment opportunities in the area. Perhaps a more significant opportunity for the region is available on the State Road and Tollway Authority site near Atlantic Station. This property could be developed into a Multimodal Passenger Terminal to serve as a transfer facilities between Amtrak, Greyhound, commuter rail, high-speed rail, streetcar,



Residential Street (1 Sidewalk)



Residential Street (no sidewalk)



Residential Street (2 Sidewalks)

shuttle, bus and bus rapid transit services, all in one location with service, office, retail, and parking facilities.

❽ **Development of multi-use paths connecting Berkeley Park to area activity centers:** Pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the form of multi-use paths, wide sidewalks, wide shoulders on small neighborhood streets, and streetscaping for shading can create a network of off-street and small-street facilities connecting Berkeley Park to Underwood Hills, Atlanta Water Works, Westside and Huff Road, and Atlantic Station. Multi-use paths can run from Underwood Hills Park, through Moccasin Hollow, to wide sidewalks and walkways through the Howell Mill Station shopping area and Berkeley Park's residential core, through a pedestrian underpass of the rail line to new multi-use paths around the Water Works, connecting to Bishop Street and to Huff Road and Atlantic Station.

❾ **Prioritization of Northside Drive as a "workhorse street" with a peak-reversible bus rapid transit lane:** The hilly and auto-dominated nature of Northside Drive between 17th Street and I-75 make this corridor segment a prime candidate to serve as a "workhorse street," efficiently carrying automobile trips from the south and Atlantic Station to I-75 and destinations to the north and northwest. The establishment of a peak-reversible bus rapid transit lane in the center of the corridor meshes with the plans for BRT operations in the Northwest Connectivity Study, utilizes the HOV ramps available at the I-75/Northside Drive interchange, and bolsters the feasibility of the Multimodal Terminal at Atlantic Station.

❿ **Development of a street pattern west of Northside Drive between the northern railroad overpass and Bishop Street:** Creation of a street system along this section serves three purposes: to increase the east-west connections between Howell Mill Road and Northside Drive via Trabert Street; increase redevelopment opportunities; and extend accessibility for Berkeley Park residents across the railroad and to the southeast. Any design of these proposed streets should entail measures to help minimize increases to cut-through traffic into Loring Heights on Deering and Trabert Streets.

Desired Qualities of Redevelopment

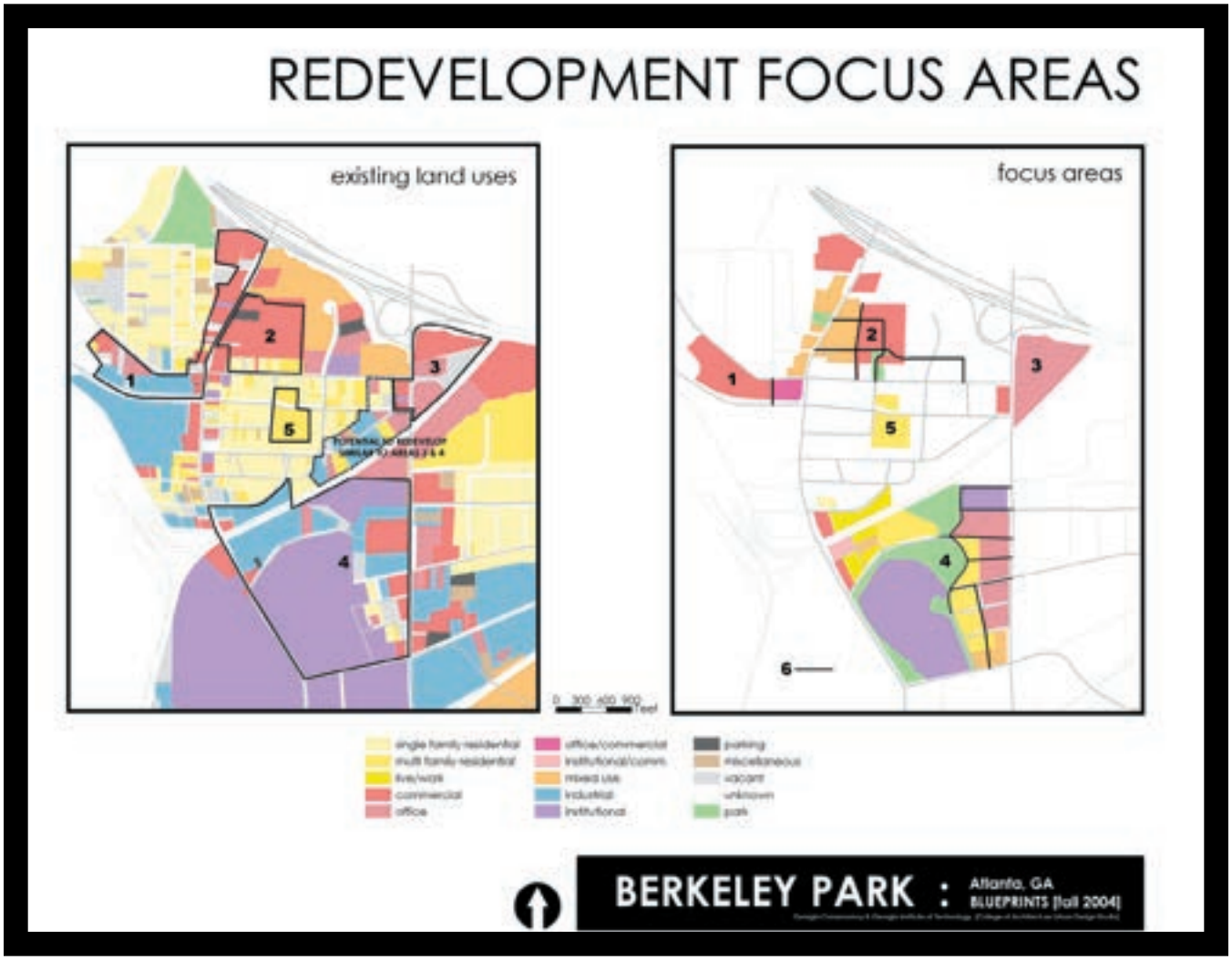
New development in and around Berkeley Park can enhance the neighborhood character and provide new amenities, but unintended impacts that threaten the history, scale, and intimacy of the residential core must be prevented. As northwest Atlanta becomes increasingly attractive for development, new opportunities to create public-private partnerships to enhance the community become realizable. New development and redevelopment can build on Berkeley Park's existing assets to help solve some of the challenges the neighborhood is facing.

The map on the following page shows the five primary focus areas for redevelopment overlaid upon existing and potential land use changes.

The five focus areas were selected because they represent specific opportunities and challenges for the neighborhood and capitalize on the assets that attract development.

Focus Area ❶ **BALANCING NEEDS:** The area around Chattahoochee Avenue and Howell Mill Road must achieve a difficult balance between motorized and non-motorized circulation. Existing use of this area places the needs of the auto over those of pedestrian. Through land use changes, better building-to-street orientation, streetscape improvements, and intersection changes, this area will better serve the entire community.

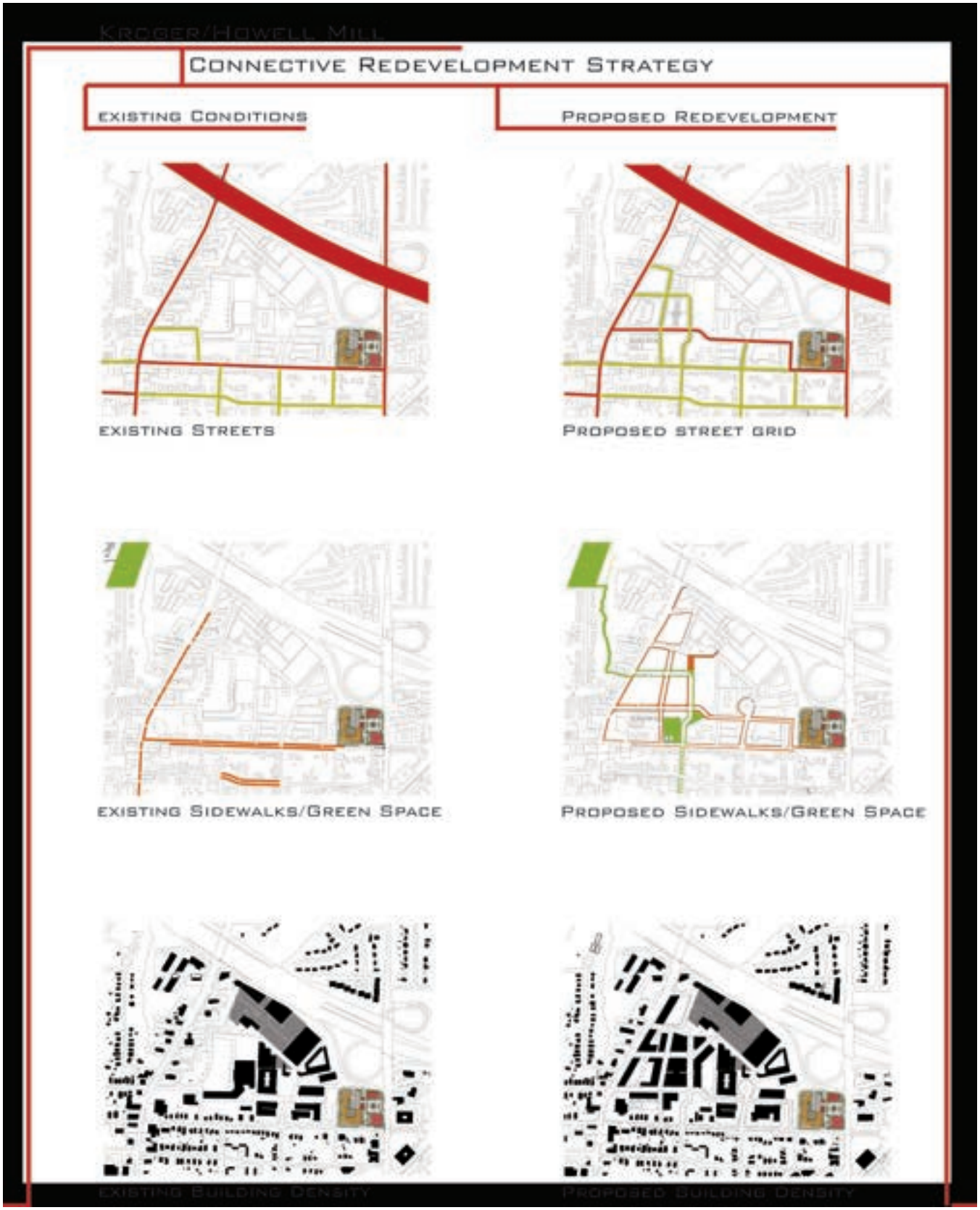
Focus Area ❷ **REPLACING STRIP-STYLE DEVELOPMENT:** Strip-style commercial development is a relatively low-intensity land use that is inconsistent with the urban environment. This scenario explores ways to expand Berkeley Park's smaller block patterns to create better mobility and access

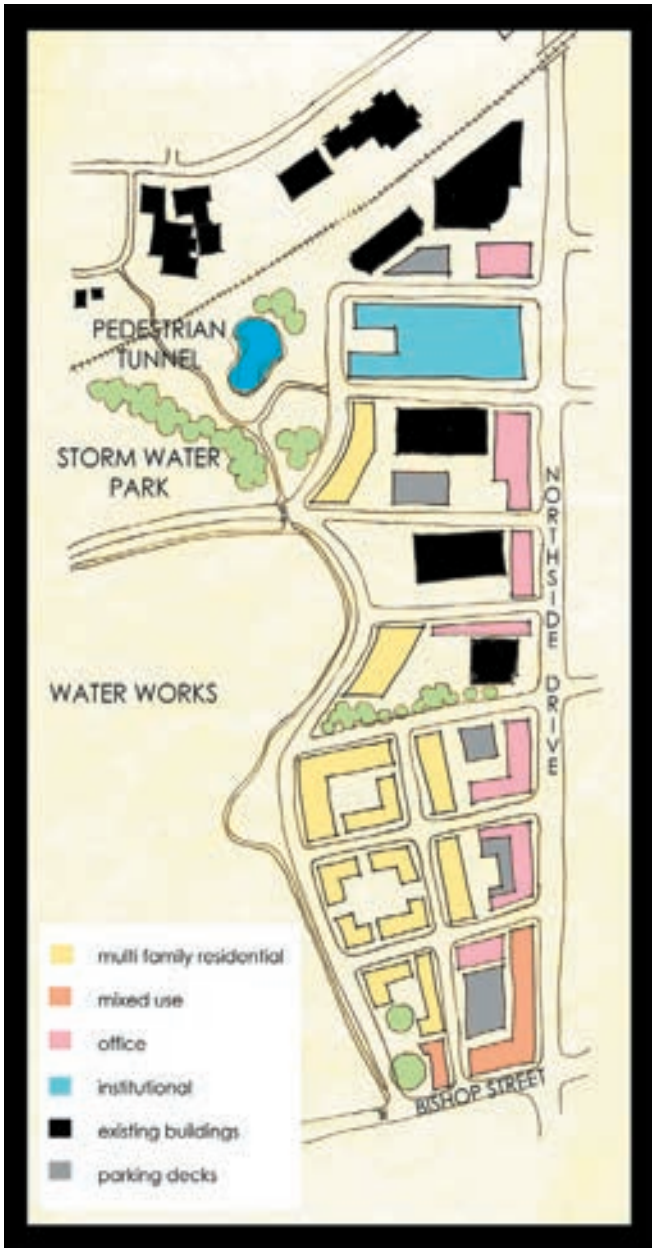


for both cars and pedestrians. The addition of new streets is intended to divert traffic from Bellemeade Avenue and protect the residential core. The Connective Redevelopment Strategy concept on the following page illustrates a transportation network and land use pattern that both reinforces the existing block pattern in the historic core of Berkeley Park, as well as provides east-west connections in the northern portion of the neighborhood in addition to Bellemeade Avenue. Subsequent illustrations and maps also detail potential vehicular and pedestrian connections in the southern portion of Berkeley Park (Concept Plan - Berkeley Park Southeast Quadrant).

Focus Area 3 **CREATING A GRAND ENTRANCE:** The northeast corner of Northside Drive and Interstate 75 could provide a memorable gateway to Atlanta's urban core. Signature office buildings and grand streetscapes would create a fitting entrance to the city.

Focus Area 4 **MAKING A SEAM:** The rail corridor that bisects Berkeley Park includes numerous light-industrial buildings that are slowly adapting to other uses, primarily office and commercial. As this area becomes increasingly attractive for redevelopment, Berkeley Park can take this opportunity to stitch the north and south sections of the neighborhood together through pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as new land uses—like restaurants and stores—that create destinations on both sides of the tracks. This area is also graced with one of the largest expanses of open space in the city, the Atlanta Water Works. The open views to the cityscape, and the potential for new recreational resources and residential uses, make this an exciting opportunity for the neighborhood. In addition, the presence of a Beltline station will help define this area.

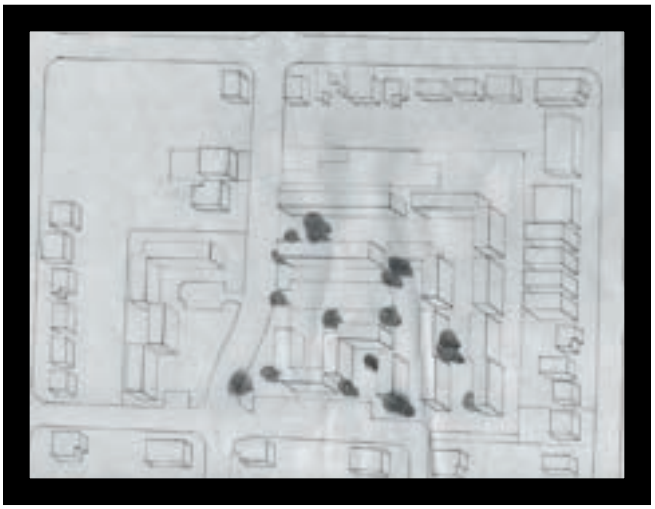

Kroger/Howell Mill
Connective Redevelopment Strategy
existing Conditions
Proposed Redevelopment
existing Streets
Proposed street grid
existing Sidewalks/Green Space
Proposed Sidewalks/Green Space
existing Building Density
Proposed Building Density



Concept Plan - Berkeley Park Southeast Quadrant

5 ENVISIONING HOWELL MILL RIDGE:

The Howell Mill Ridge Apartments currently works within the context of the residential core. That may no longer be true if the site is redeveloped following the restrictions of the current zoning designation. A vision for potential redevelopment of this site is necessary to preserve and enhance the character of Berkeley Park. The table on the following page summarizes the attributes of the Howell Mill Ridge Apartment complex and shows the implications of redevelopment at the existing zoning classification, RG3. This redevelopment scenario increases the number of units from 130 to over 220.



Existing - Howell Mill Ridge

Alternative Redevelopment

Land Use Characteristics (Based on 2003 Fulton County tax data)			
property	North	South	Both
owner	Randall-Williams Investments		
age and condition	Built 1948, last significantly remodeled in 1998		
rent	$500 to $940 monthly		
number of units	15 (estimated)	115 (estimated)	130
number of unit types	4	4	4
parking spaces	10	102	112
lot size (square feet)	44,800	183,872	228,672
lot size (acres)	1.03	4.22	5.25
appraised land value	$313,600	$1,287,100	$1,600,700
appraised building value	$639,200	$3,409,200	$4,048,400
assessed land value	$125,440	$514,840	$640,280
assessed building value	$255,680	$1,363,680	$1,619,360

Summary Table	Current Attributes	Redevelopment under Conventional Zoning
FAR (floor area ratio)	0.424	**0.696**
number of units	130	**227**
total unit square footage	96,915	**158,900**
parking spaces	112	**225**

OVERARCHING CONCERNS FOR ALL FOCUS AREAS

Revising Blocks & Streets

An important element to ensure the desirable redevelopment of the focus areas is a plan for blocks and streets that improves connectivity and protects the neighborhood's scale and character. The adjacent map illustrates potential new streets in areas of anticipated redevelopment. Density bonus and other incentives could entice developers to provide these streets in their plans for redevelopment through amendments to the existing SPI.

Hubs & Links Network

An interconnected network of hubs and links can define a neighborhood and connect it to its surroundings. Such a network not only makes multiple forms of transportation possible, but also creates an environment for informal encounters with neighbors and friends.

In Berkeley Park, the hubs are shopping areas, public facilities, and green space. The various hubs can also serve as opportunities to better manage storm water runoff, which creates flooding problems in parts of the neighborhood.

Hubs must be connected by links. Links can take the form of streetscapes (a combination of sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and sidewalk furniture), on-street bike lanes, multi-use paths, and other facilities that connect places. Examples of hubs and links in other areas are provided below.

Currently, the Berkeley Park neighborhood has many incomplete links. The map on the following page shows recommended links that can serve as primary connections to the numerous nearby destinations. This map also shows several possible locations for a future park that would eventually become a new hub.

Potential park sites include the existing Public Works and Water Works facilities and several smaller opportunities. Proposed links include streetscapes, on-street bike lanes, multi-use paths, and a proposed PATH route.

HUBS: parks, alleys, natural features, shopping centers

LINKS: sidewalks, multi-use trails, bike lanes

HUBS & LINKS
existing
future
potential
proposed Belt Line
streetscape
on-street bike lanes
multi-use path
proposed PATH
PARK
SELIG (WalMart) SITE
PARK?
KROGER, et al
LIBRARY?
PARK?
SENIOR CENTER
CORO SITE
to Tanyard Creek Park
MASONIC LODGE
CHURCH
HOWELL MILL RIDGE APARTMENTS
PARK?
BELT LINE STATION?
PARK
PARK?
FIRE HOUSE
PARK?
LIBRARY?
PROPOSED BELTLINE
BELT LINE STATION?
WATER WORKS
WATER WORKS PARK
WATER WORKS
PROPOSED MULTIMODAL STATION
ATLANTIC STATION
HUFF
RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT
BERKELEY PARK : Atlanta, GA
BLUEPRINTS [fall 2004]

Strategic Actions & Implementation

The Berkeley Park neighborhood can help guide its future by taking strategic actions to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the area. Specifically, the Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association can play a role in the redevelopment of the neighborhood and its surroundings, work to improve connectivity and traffic conditions, and identify and support the development of appropriate park space. Following are actions and implementation steps to help promote a desirable future for the neighborhood.

Short-Term Actions

➲ Participate in the **City of Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) update process**, currently underway, to seek changes to the future land use plan, as it affects Berkeley Park and the adjacent neighborhoods. Also, participate in the adoption of a vision, including transportation and environmental issues, for the entire city. The CDP provides guidance for consideration of future zoning change requests and it is intended to steer development. The update process is expected to be completed November 2005.

Specifically, Berkeley Park should consider seeking **new land use classification** for the areas around the reservoir and along the railroad. At present these areas are classified as industrial. Reclassification to mixed use on both sides of Northside Drive from I-75 to Bishop Street and medium-density residential along the railroad and adjacent to the reservoir is suggested. The neighborhood should also support transportation strategies that improve Howell Mill Road for automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle use.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning, 404.330.6145, http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citydir/DPCD/Bureau_of_Planning/BOP/Home/index.htm]

➲ Participate in the **Northside Drive Corridor Study**. Northside Drive is a key corridor within the City of Atlanta and plays a major role in the growth and development of the downtown area and adjacent areas, including Berkeley Park. The study will result in both short- and long-term transportation recommendations.

Explore the possibility of reducing the space necessary for the I-75 and Northside Drive interchange by "tightening" existing geometry. Saved space would then allow for a new signalized east-west connection to Northside Drive and provide a direct connection to patrons of the commercial developments without the use of Bellemeade.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning, Georgia Department of Transportation]

➲ Coordinate future **tree plantings** with the proposed greenspace network described in the "Hubs & Links" urban design framework. Planting trees along prioritized pedestrian routes makes a more comfortable, human-scaled environment and defines public and private space. The tree plantings conducted thus far by the BPNA have been very successful.

➲ Continue the use and exposure of the **Berkeley Park Neighborhood logo**. The logo increases neighborhood awareness, unity, and pride.

➲ Work with the City of Atlanta to **move the fences around the reservoir** to create pedestrian facilities along Howell Mill Road and to create publicly accessible green space around the Water Works property. Combining efforts with other neighborhoods, like Home Park which has also expressed a desire to move the fence, will improve the potential success of this endeavor.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Water, 404.330.6522; http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citydir/water/Index.htm]

➲ Continue to **participate in planning at the Selig and CORO sites** and become involved in the planning efforts of Atlantic Station and new developments along Chattahoochee Avenue. These redevelopment projects will significantly increase the residential, employment, shopping,

and entertainment activity in and around Berkeley Park and provide opportunities to enhance the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Association should review plans for appropriateness, connectivity, and traffic and storm water impacts. In particular, work toward a compromise regarding modifications to the intersection of Bellemeade Avenue and Northside Drive that reduces the projected queuing of eastbound traffic introduced by new development, without excessive loss of mature trees or an adverse impact on cut-through traffic within the residential core.

Mid-Term Actions

➲ The neighborhood should **continue targeted planning activities**. The Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association should confirm the findings and recommendations of this report and submit the report to the City of Atlanta. In addition, the Neighborhood Association should establish a planning committee to continue coordination of an inclusive process to define the neighborhood's needs for the future. This process should involve all stakeholders, including residents (both owners and renters), business owners, adjacent neighborhoods, city departments, and locally active developers. Berkeley Park should also continue coordination with the Northwest Community Alliance.

While the next step for the neighborhood could be an overall Master Plan for Berkeley Park, other more issue-specific plans and programs may be more beneficial, timely, and cost effective. Issues for possible detailed exploration and planning could include traffic calming, sidewalk construction plan, and a redevelopment plan for Howell Mill Road.

[**CONTACT:** The Home Park Community Improvement Association has successfully developed a master plan. Contact HPCIA to learn more about how they undertook the master planning process; http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homepark/]

➲ Develop a **residential design guide** that identifies desired architectural features and streetscape elements for residential districts.

[**CONTACT:** "Workbook for Successful Redevelopment", www.communityfirstinc.org]

➲ Consider seeking **rezoning of the Howell Mill Ridge Apartments** property from Residential General 3 (RG3) to Quality of Life Multi-Family Residential (MR) District. The central location of this relatively large apartment complex within the residential core elevates its role in preserving and enhancing the character of the neighborhood. The MR district regulations ensure that if the complex is redeveloped it will be done in a manner complementary to the character of the neighborhood by providing design standards for sidewalks, street trees, and parking. Discussions with the property owner will be necessary to implement this action. Further investigation is needed to ensure that rezoning would increase the value (and redevelopment potential) of the property.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning]

➲ In coordination with surrounding neighborhoods and the neighborhood planning unit, **explore alternative truck routes**. Even with the planned improvements of the Chattahoochee Avenue/Howell Mill Road intersection, truck traffic may create an undesirable pedestrian environment that effectively disconnects the Berkeley Park neighborhood from nearby destinations (parks, stores, jobs). The urban design framework plan identifies several alternatives.

➲ Explore responding to **flooding, water quality, and park issues** with an innovative stormwater management project. For example, a combination of the site of the Howell Mill Ridge Apartments and the Public Works facility on Northside Drive could serve double-duty as a water management (both flooding and quality) and passive green space facility, channeling water from the neighborhood to aesthetically pleasing detention and filtration ponds. Using native plant materials, the maintenance would

be minimal and could enhance water absorption and filtration of non-point source pollutants from yards, parking lots, and roadways. Such an effort could be enhanced with regulations (possibly through an amended SPI) that improve parking lot design through inclusion of stormwater swales and pervious paving materials.

An innovative stormwater project, the Candler Park Brook – Peavine Creek Watershed Restoration Project, is currently underway in the Candler Park neighborhood, where the stream is being daylighted and a water quality enhancing detention pond is being designed to manage non-point source contaminants and reduce flooding caused by a high percentage of impervious surfaces. The project received a grant from Georgia's Environmental Protection Division. This project could serve as an example of an effort needed to successfully develop the proposed sites in Berkeley Park.

[**CONTACT:** Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 404. 675.6240, http://www.ganet.org/dnr/environ/; Candler Park Creek Restoration Project Steering Committee, 404.687.3322]

Long-Term Actions

➲ Based on the future planning, review the existing **Special Public Interest (SPI) 14 – Berkeley Park District**. The existing SPI only prohibits the development of "dormitory-style" housing. An amended SPI can replace existing zoning regulations. The SPI could deal specifically with creating a sidewalk network, incentivizing new street construction with private investment, establishing off-street parking design standards, and minimizing impervious surface to reduce flooding. If, instead, the SPI is created to replace existing zoning, then the neighborhood master plan could establish subareas within Berkeley Park and dictate specific land uses, regulations, and design standards for their development.

Review SPI 18 – Mechanicsville Neighborhood District for an example of a district that overrides existing zoning.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning]

➲ Consider seeking **rezoning of the areas around the railroad and the reservoir** to live-work and mixed-use. Rezoning can help ensure that future redevelopment complements the character and responds to the needs of the Berkeley Park neighborhood. Creating a residential area to the south of the railroad can begin to physically unite the neighborhood and support the desire for pedestrian access under the railroad tracks.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning]

➲ Explore the construction of a **pedestrian tunnel under the CSX railroad**. This should be done as part of an overall effort to create a system of links between the hubs in and around the Berkeley Park neighborhood, as outlined in the urban design framework plan. The City of Atlanta and organizations like the PATH Foundation can play an important role in the development of a network of multi-use paths, sidewalks, and on-street bike lanes that connect destinations in the city.

[**CONTACT:** CSX Corporation, 1.877.744.7279, http://www.csx.com]

➲ Lobby the City of Atlanta to submit appropriate **streetscape improvements for Howell Mill Road** to improve pedestrian mobility, access, and safety to the Atlanta Regional Commission for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

➲ Pursue **Quality of Life Bonds**, which are leveraged against Department of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and private funding to provide many improvements to the City's greenspace and alternative transportation systems, including sidewalks, public plazas and greenspace, public streets and bridges, and traffic control devices. This funding source could be used to improve Howell Mill Road or create a park within the neighborhood. These funds can also be used to 'over-match' the local share of project costs for projects that may be eligible for federal funds.

[**CONTACT:** City of Atlanta Department of Public Works, 404.330.6739, http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/publicworks/dpw_qol_101903.aspx]

➲ Identify a **parcel for acquisition for park development**. The vacant parcel on the corner of Tallulah Street and Antone Street, all or a portion of the existing Public Works Department facility on Northside Drive, or other sites could be identified for redevelopment as a neighborhood or regional park.

Explore grant sources and grassroots fundraising to acquire and improve land for a neighborhood park. For example, the Cabbagetown neighborhood lobbied the Atlanta School Board to donate an abandoned school to the City of Atlanta to improve it as a neighborhood park. The property behind the City of Atlanta Public Works facility on Northside Drive could be converted in a similar fashion. Additional funding from entities like the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation can be used to finance the necessary improvements.

Another entity that could assist in development of existing green space is Park Pride, a nonprofit organization dedicated to involving the community in enhancing the quality of life through the protection and improvement of parks and green space. In addition, the nonprofit organization, KaBOOM, has previously worked with Atlanta neighborhoods like Cabbagetown and Kirkwood to arrange financial support for playgrounds. To be eligible for grant funding, the neighborhood must establish a non-profit entity.

[**CONTACT:** Park Pride, 404.853.7471, http://www.parkpride.org/; Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, 404.367.2100, http://www.blankfoundation.org/index.html; KaBOOM, http://www.kaboom.org/schedule.asp; Cabbagetown Community Development Corporation, http://www.dirgart.com/cabbagetown/ci/]

➲ Explore the **Livable Centers Initiative Program**, coordinated by the Atlanta Regional Commission. The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program provides funding for investment studies. The first five years of the program focused on activity and town centers. The program has been extended for five more years and has added corridor and emerging centers to its purview.
The LCI program also includes an implementation element to realize the most potentially rewarding transportation projects that have been outlined in LCI studies.
An LCI proposal could be formulated to study approximately two miles of the Howell Mill Road Corridor. Collaboration with other neighborhoods along the corridor would be necessary. The application deadline for planning studies is November of each year.

[**CONTACT:** Atlanta Regional Commission, 404.463.3100, http://www.atlantaregional.com]

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Georgia Institute of Technology Urban Design Studio, Fall 2004

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GEORGIA CONSERVANCY'S

BLUEPRINTS

FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Blueprints Principles

- Maintain and enhance quality of life for residents of the community
- Employ regional strategies for transportation, land use, and economic growth
- Consider the effect of the built environment on the natural environment as well as history and culture
- Employ efficient land uses

Georgia
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