Piedmont Heights

Blueprints for Successful Communities

Spring 2007

Georgia CONSERVANCY

Georgia Conservancy -- Blueprints Partners 2007

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Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership

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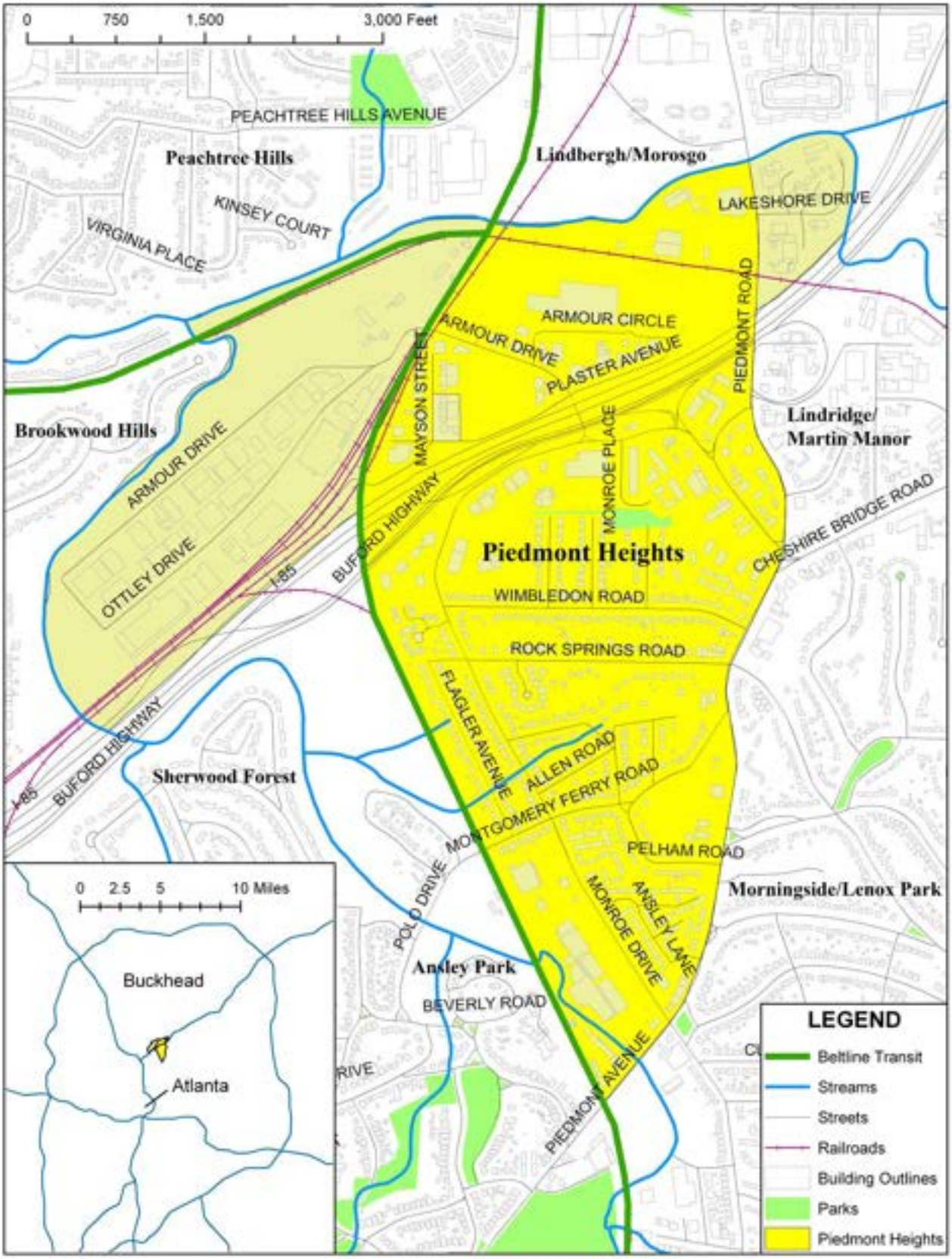


Piedmont Heights (in yellow) within the context of the larger study area and surrounding neighborhoods

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Blueprints Process**
- **Comprehensive Vision**
- **Comprehensive Greenspace Vision**
- **Major Themes & Policy Considerations**

Between January and May 2007, The Georgia Conservancy and a Georgia Tech architecture and city planning studio worked with the Piedmont Heights Civic Association, neighborhood stakeholders, and abutting neighborhood associations to create a *Blueprint* for quality growth. Although small in size, Piedmont Heights is confronting many of the same opportunities and challenges faced by the City of Atlanta as a whole. This *Blueprints for Successful Communities* planning program was undertaken to ensure that Piedmont Heights is guided by quality growth principles, holistic planning, and strong community involvement.

As is often the case with neighborhoods that approach the Georgia Conservancy to conduct a *Blueprints* planning process, there is the recognition of neighborhood change and an understanding of the instigator of that change. Anticipating BeltLine master planning initiatives, the Piedmont Heights Civic Association (PHCA) contacted the Georgia Conservancy for assistance as the neighborhood prepared to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a neighborhood master plan.

Piedmont Heights is an intown neighborhood located halfway between bustling Downtown Atlanta and Buckhead. As intown living has become more popular due to proximity of employment centers, vibrant arts and cultural activities, and reduced traffic woes, many close-in Atlanta neighborhoods are experiencing redevelopment pressure. The recently passed BeltLine Tax Allocation District has increased these redevelopment pressures on neighborhoods such as Piedmont Heights.

The quickened pace of potential change in the Piedmont Heights neighborhood poses both threats and opportunities. Premature and haphazard construction may negatively impact what quality of life the neighborhood wishes to preserve, while thoughtful, guided development may prove to be a boon.

To assist Piedmont Heights in creating a balanced and consensus-driven vision for their future during this period of change, PHCA and the Georgia Conservancy partnered with the city and regional planning and architecture program at the Georgia Institute of Technology to create a *Blueprint* for positive change. Led by professor Michael Dobbins, 17 graduate students were involved in the spring 2007 urban design studio focusing on Piedmont Heights.

The goal of this *Blueprints* process was to comprehensively evaluate the challenges facing Piedmont Heights and devise alternative solutions to identify the best courses of action for the community, both near term and in the future. The following document contains the results and recommendations of the *Blueprints* Piedmont Heights process.

The Blueprints Process

The Georgia Conservancy's *Blueprints for Successful Communities* planning process included four neighborhood meetings which were designed to frame the issues of concern for the community both in the short and long term. See Appendix A for the *Blueprints* Piedmont Heights timeline. These meetings provided the forum for community members to articulate their concerns, priorities, assets, and challenges to the Georgia Tech students. See Appendix B for a complete list of assets and challenges.

The planning studio utilized three points of analysis to understand the issues affecting Piedmont Heights: 1) topic areas; 2) space; 3) and time. Topic areas included a documentation of existing conditions in terms of demographics, the natural environment, the built environment, and transportation. Spatially, the neighborhood was examined both as a whole, and as three distinct sub-areas. Finally, the students developed a

short-term and long-term implementation plan with accompanying resources.

The demographic profile for Piedmont Heights shows a neighborhood that has undergone steady population growth. It is highly educated, relatively wealthy, and largely employed. In addition, it is becoming increasingly diverse. It contains a large number of jobs, shopping amenities, and a variety of housing options available to a wide range of income levels.

Transportation is an overarching concern for Piedmont Heights. It is bordered by two main arterial roads – Monroe Drive and Piedmont Avenue. It has immediate freeway access to I-85, two MARTA bus routes, and is intersected by three rail lines. The future potential for alternative transit developments is crucial for the neighborhood. Opportunities include a multi-modal station, the BeltLine, and possible commuter rail lines. In addition, the neighborhood has an opportunity to increase its pedestrian connectivity through improved sidewalk accessibility and new bike/pedestrian paths.

In addition to transportation, there are many greenspace challenges and opportunities in Piedmont Heights. Clear Creek and Peachtree Creek frame the neighborhood. Piedmont Park is expanding to the southern edge of the neighborhood, and the BeltLine trails system will run along the western edge. Although current plans are underway to provide resident access and protection of existing greenspace, there are significant opportunities to improve the connectivity of the existing and future greenspace network.

The Piedmont Heights neighborhood is defined by three geographic areas deemed susceptible to change: Ansley Mall, Monroe Crescent, and Armour-Ottley. A number of public policy issues are paramount to the future of Piedmont Heights, including concerns around land use and zoning, transportation, the natural environment, economic development, and affordable housing. The studio examined each sub-area and identified short and long term visions, recommended solutions, and implementation plans that reflect the character and needs of each subarea.

This *Blueprints* report is a distillation of the work produced by the students in the Georgia Tech studio. In some cases the students explored more alternative solutions than were included in the final report, in other cases additional explanatory information accompanied the text. The student report in its entirety is housed both with the PHCA and at the Georgia Conservancy.

Comprehensive Vision

The comprehensive vision lays out the redevelopment strategy over the short (3 – 10 years) and long term (> 10 years). Here, these redevelopment strategies are combined on single maps, one short term and one long term, to show how various enhancements taken incrementally can begin to make the neighborhood more cohesive, maximizing the benefits of redevelopment while minimizing potential negative outcomes. In each map, realistic opportunities for redevelopment are shown, along with the multi-modal infrastructure improvements necessary to support them.

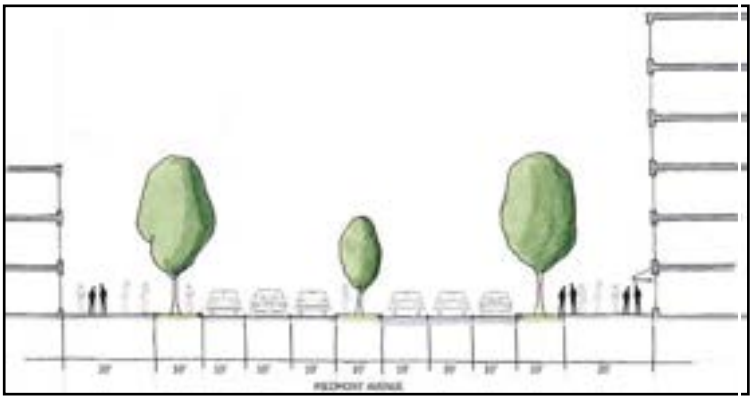
The Ansley Mall subarea is included in the Beltline Tax Allocation District and is ripe for redevelopment. Its short-term vision is one of incremental change, and aims to improve pedestrian conditions, public space, and connectivity for the area. It calls for streetscape improvements to Monroe Drive and Piedmont Avenue, new trail connections, updated MARTA routes, and sets out a plan for the redevelopment of Ansley Mall. The long-term vision calls for implementing a new block structure within Ansley Mall that will redefine the site's connection to Monroe Drive, the Beltline and Clear Creek. In addition, the long term vision calls for several new streets both within Ansley Mall and the adjacent multi-family residential areas. It also calls for increased density on the Ansley Mall property that is mindful of the surrounding residential development by stepping down in intensity. Additionally, there is an emphasis on greenspace connectivity both in terms of the BeltLine trail and the Piedmont Park expansion.

The Monroe Crescent subarea spans from Monroe Drive to Piedmont Avenue. The most significant recommendation in the short term vision is the addition of a two-lane road running east-west through the middle of the subarea that connects Monroe Drive to Piedmont Avenue. Gotham Way Park and a new trail system connecting to the BeltLine are also focal points of the short term plan.

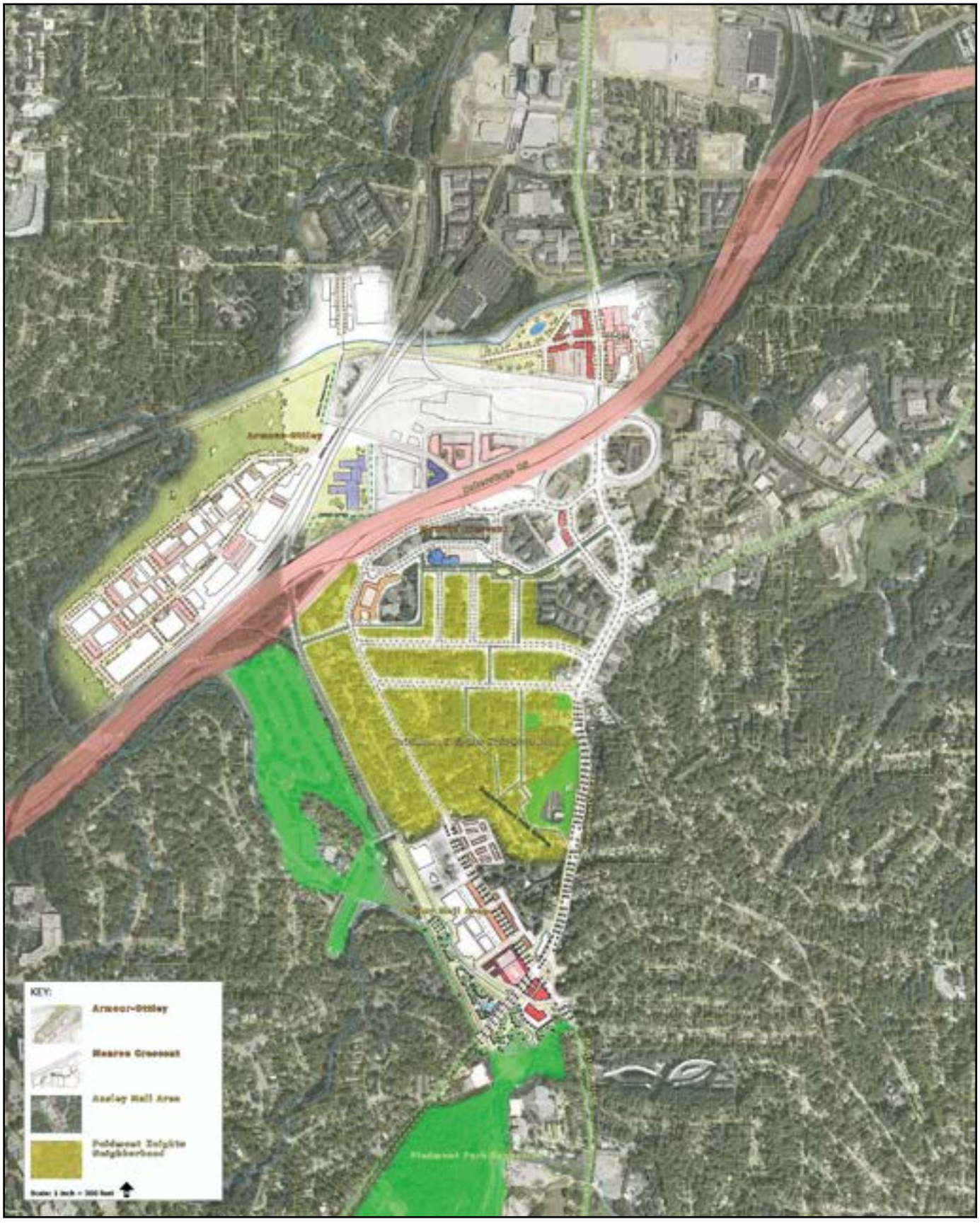
The long term redevelopment vision for Monroe Crescent is to have two concentrated areas of development, one residential/retail and the other office. The long term vision for transportation includes significant changes to the access and exit ramps to and from Buford Highway, as well as intersection improvements at Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, and Cheshire Bridge Road.

The Armour-Ottley subarea's short-term vision calls for increasing pedestrian and vehicular connectivity to and within the sub-area, increasing greenspace, encouraging concurrent transit-oriented development, and providing a more consistent pedestrian-friendly character for major streets. Specific development and design guidelines are laid out for both the short and long-term visions for the Rollins/Orkin property, Ottley Circle, and the Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle areas. Recommendations include creating a new block structure, addressing brownfield concerns, and siting a new school.

Recommended corridor improvements to Piedmont Road do not fall within a particular subarea plan but do have an effect on the overall redevelopment vision for Piedmont Heights. It is recommended that Piedmont Avenue become more boulevard-like with six lanes of traffic plus a 10 foot median, occasional left turn lanes, 10 foot planting strips and 20 foot sidewalks running the length.



Example Cross-Section for Piedmont Avenue



Comprehensive Short Term Vision for Piedmont Heights

Comprehensive Long Term Vision for Piedmont Heights

Comprehensive Greenspace Vision

Piedmont Heights is fortunate to be surrounded by numerous proposed greenspace projects, including the Piedmont Park North Woods expansion, architect John Wyle's Peachtree Creek Greenway plan, and the BeltLine trail. Each specific subarea plan addresses some potential for greenspace preservation, acquisition, expansion, or improvement and the comprehensive vision shows how all of these disparate plans work together as a whole.

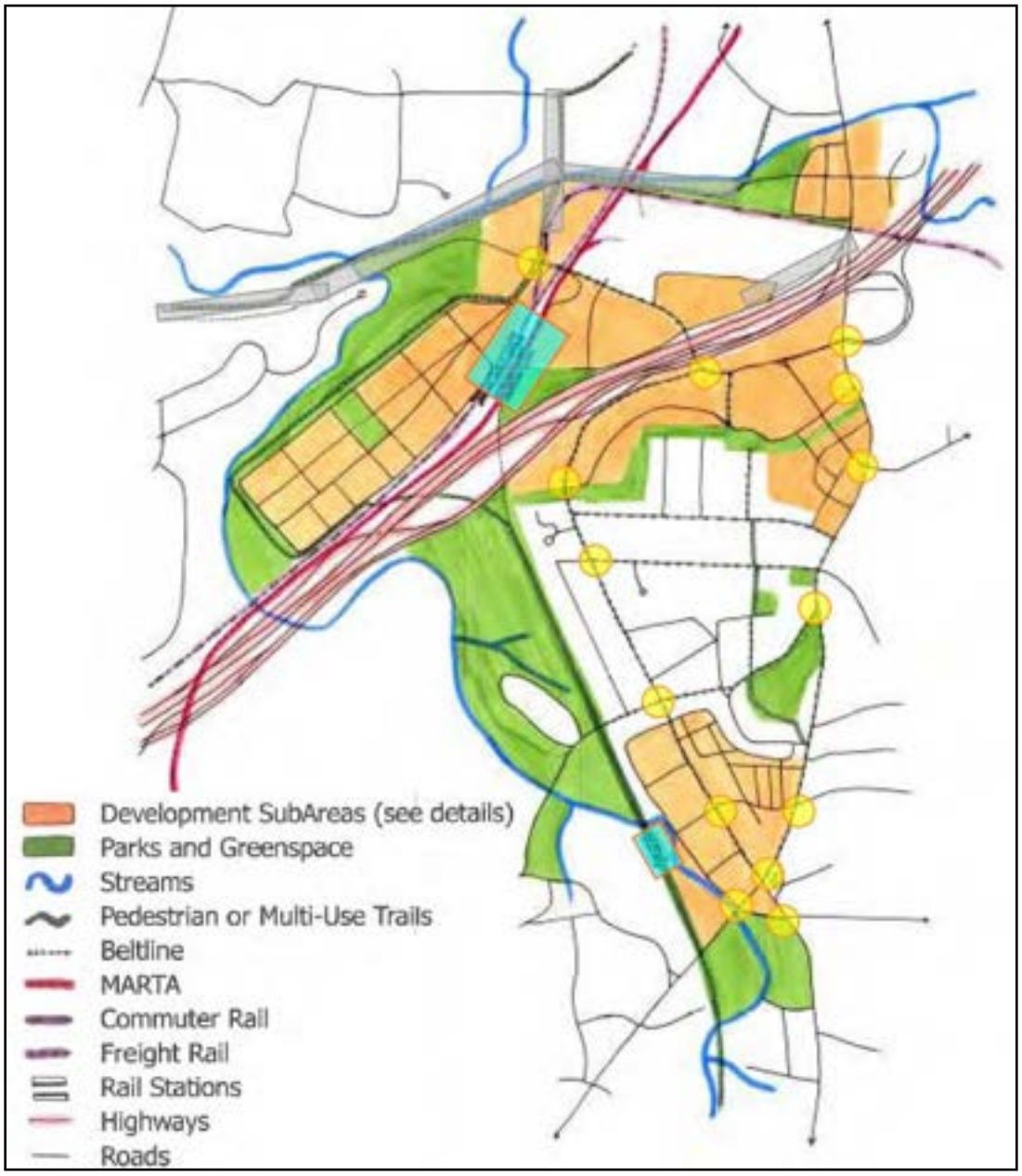
Building off of the Piedmont Park expansion, the southern tip of the Ansley Mall area along Clear Creek could be redeveloped into a greenspace that complements the Piedmont Park North Woods expansion directly across Piedmont Avenue.

Gotham Way Park, in the Monroe Crescent subarea, could be expanded westward into a greenway that crosses Monroe and connects to the BeltLine, and eastward to a revitalized Piedmont Circle area. A neighborhood path network that stems from Gotham Way Park and travels north through the Armour – Ottley area to the potential Peachtree Creek Greenway, south to the Morningside Baptist Church greenspace, and west to the Ansley Mall area, could be created by improving existing streetscapes and using historic easements.

Upper Section of the Piedmont Park North Woods

Eastern Section of John Wyle's Vision for a Peachtree Creek Greenway

The ultimate goal of the greenspace vision is to add additional greenspace to the Piedmont Heights neighborhood by expanding upon the limited existing park space, creating greenways to connect new and existing parks to the BeltLine, and by setting aside land to become greenspace as development intensifies. To be successful, the neighborhood will need to be in close communication with the leaders of these other projects and with developers as areas of interest come up for redevelopment.



Potential Transportation and Greenspace Improvements

Major Themes and Policy Considerations

Several major themes or policy considerations emerged during the *Blueprints* planning process. These included: concurrency, preservation of affordable housing, pedestrian and transit-friendly urban design standards, development guidelines, greenspace optimization, and neighborhood-guided development. These major themes are included in the implementation checklist as overarching implementation strategies that should be employed by the neighborhood to ensure beneficial development.

Concurrency addresses community concerns about the neighborhood being overwhelmed by development. The premise behind concurrency is that appropriate development is approved contingent upon the addition of necessary infrastructure improvements. It also means development that overwhelms existing infrastructure without mitigating the impact should not be allowed.

Preservation of housing affordability is an issue citywide. The Piedmont Heights neighborhood expressed an overall desire to preserve the affordability of the existing housing stock in the neighborhood. While the neighborhood overall does not appear to be affordable, Piedmont Heights is affordable relative to the surrounding neighborhoods.

When it comes to housing affordability, the neighborhood can either choose to rehabilitate and preserve existing affordable housing or it can redevelop the housing in such a manner that there is no net loss in affordability. Preservation of existing affordable housing stock is probably the most viable option due to redevelopment pressures. The implementation checklist provides resources for both preservation options.

Pedestrian and transit-friendly urban design standards such as the addition or improvement of sidewalks, traffic control measures (crosswalks, speed bumps, parking meters), parking requirements (shared, on-street, minimums and maximums), and streetscape improvements (medians, streets trees, benches, lighting) can be achieved through a variety of means. Funding sources and their regulating organizations are found in the implementation plan.

Development Guidelines are important to be aware of as they determine what can be built and how it should look. The Beltline overlay district is a zoning district created by the city to facilitate the creation of the BeltLine. The BeltLine Overlay District's design requirements were created to provide guidance to developers planning development in BeltLine subareas. Rezoning within Piedmont Heights is restricted by the Beltline overlay district.

The Overlay District outlines requirements for: building heights, yards, and screening; connectivity and parking requirements; buffers and trails; sidewalks, street trees, street lights, and visibility; landscaping of surface parking lots, curb cuts, bicycle parking; restrictions for on-site surface parking.

In addition, Quality of Life zoning districts can be employed by the neighborhood to achieve the desired design and redevelopment suggested for each of the Piedmont Heights subareas that are not specifically imposed by the BeltLine overlay district. Quality of Life zoning allows for a greater mixing of uses which helps facilitate a neighborhood feel.

Greenspace optimization includes the preservation and improvement of existing greenspace and the acquisition of new greenspace. Under the City of Atlanta Comprehensive Plan, "greenspace" is defined as permanently protected land and water that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with community goals concerning natural resource protection. It is important that greenspace connects into the larger

transportation network to increase pedestrian options within the community.

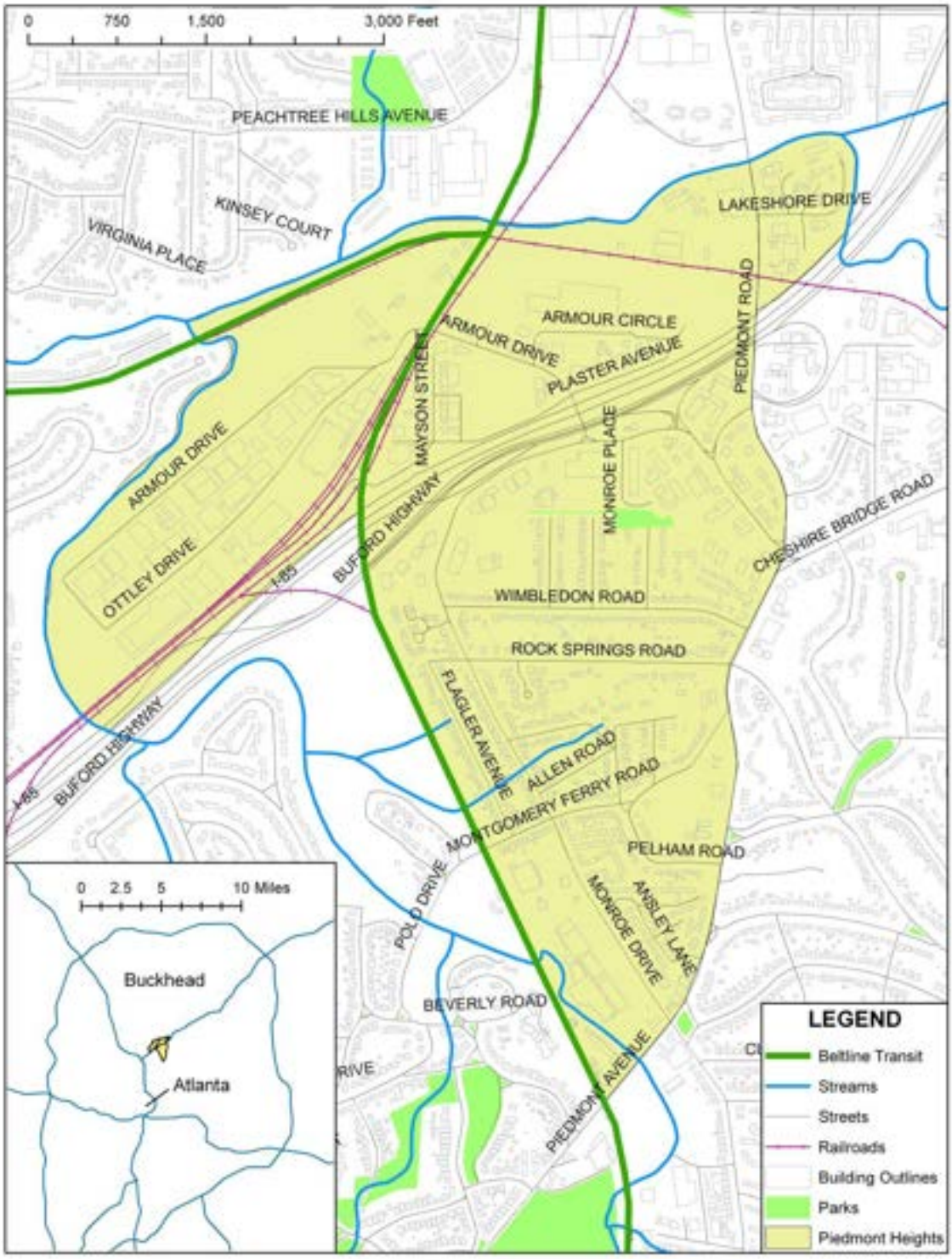
To acquire new greenspace, the community will need to either purchase the land outright or obtain a conservation easement from property owners. The major issue in acquiring new greenspace is obtaining the funding to purchase it. Funding will also be crucial in improving existing green areas. There are many possible sources of funding for conservation easements and land purchases some of which have been outlined in the implementation plan.

Brownfield remediation is an important aspect of environmental optimization. Given the number of light industrial uses in the area, environmental assessment should be mandated to determine what level of contamination exists on specific sites prior to redevelopment. Having a clear understanding of the type and scope of environmental hazard will expedite the redevelopment process.

Neighborhood-guided development speaks to the interest that the residents of Piedmont Heights have in being a part of the neighborhood change process that is occurring. The *Blueprints* project raised the level of community awareness regarding planning needs and initiatives. It also facilitated communication across neighborhood boundaries. It is important to build upon that communication by reaching out to neighboring communities during the public participation process around any redevelopment proposal affecting the Greater Piedmont Heights area. Strong community involvement ensures that planning policy goals that have been agreed upon by the neighborhood are not overlooked or ignored.

Piedmont Heights is at an important crossroads. The neighborhood has great potential for change over the next 20 years due to redevelopment forces, including the BeltLine and the neighborhood's prime location in terms of transportation access. The ability of the neighborhood to preserve its existing affordable housing, single family core, and adequate transportation infrastructure is at stake. There is also the opportunity to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood with increased greenspace, pedestrian connectivity and neighborhood-oriented development.

The question is who will guide the direction and vision of the new development. This plan is the first step for the neighborhood in determining the character and vision they want. It provides potential alternatives for the community members to consider. Next the residents of Piedmont Heights must remain involved in the BeltLine subarea master planning process and similar efforts by the City of Atlanta to ensure their vision is implemented. Funding from the BeltLine TAD and other sources should be secured quickly for small short term improvements, like sidewalks and streetscaping. This step will demonstrate the possibility for improvements and the effectiveness of neighborhood participation. The new neighborhood energy generated from this victory should be directed toward the remaining short and long term improvements.



Piedmont Heights Planning Area

Piedmont Heights in Context

Neighborhood Boundaries

The Piedmont Heights neighborhood has an irregular T-shape that is defined by clear, man-made and natural boundaries. The southeastern edge is formed by the abandoned rail line that makes up the proposed BeltLine. Ansley Mall and the Piedmont Park expansion define the southern tip of the neighborhood. Piedmont Avenue runs along the south and eastern edges of Piedmont Heights.

Peachtree and Clear Creeks form the northern and northeast and northwest boundaries of the neighborhood (the top of the T). I-85 and the Buford Highway Connector form the bottom of the T, running through the top half of the neighborhood. MARTA, Amtrak, CSX, and Norfolk Southern rail lines run through the northern portion of Piedmont Heights, paralleling I-85 for part of the way.

Monroe Drive is the primary north-south corridor running parallel to the BeltLine and crossing Piedmont Road forming a major intersection at the southern edge of the neighborhood. Wimbledon, Rock Springs, and Montgomery Ferry Roads constitute the only east-west connections through Piedmont Heights.

Neighborhood History

The Piedmont Heights area, like most of the land around Atlanta, was once woodlands inhabited by Cherokee Indians. When the Cherokees were removed in the 1820's, the land parcel that included Piedmont Heights was given to Benjamin Plaster for his service during the War of 1812. In 1836, he still owned 1,316 acres on either side of Plaster's Bridge Road, now Piedmont Avenue. The Plasters were able to hold on to their land during the Civil War, and in 1893 still owned most of the Piedmont Heights area. By then, a few other families had gained footholds in this rural farming and dairy district. The Liddells owned 40 acres, including a two-story frame house on Montgomery Ferry Road built circa 1860, which is now one of the oldest houses in the metro area. The Monroe family also owned 15 acres, where the Ansley-Monroe Villas and the American Red Cross now stand.

The history of Rock Spring Church began about the same time as the surrounding Piedmont Heights area. In 1835, settlers built a one-room log cabin school on the site where the Rock Spring Church now sits. The name was taken from a clear spring located across the dirt road from the school. This building remained in use until the Civil War. A new building was erected on East Rock Spring Road in 1868, at the intersection with Montgomery Ferry Road. The Rock Spring Presbyterian Church was formally organized on November 3, 1870. After using the building for 50 years, the congregation decided to rebuild. The architect of the present structure, Charles Henry Hopson, was a native of Reading, England, and designed several other well-known local churches including the Peachtree Christian Church and the Ponce de Leon Methodist Church, which now houses the Abbey restaurant. On May 24, 1990, the Church and the adjoining manse were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The neighborhood known as "Piedmont Heights" first appeared on Fulton County tax maps in 1912. When Ansley Park opened in 1920, the reputation of the area grew. It was at this time that the name "Piedmont Heights" was first used. The City of Atlanta began to annex Piedmont Heights in 1928, continuing through the 1940's. The Rock Springs and Wimbledon Road areas were developed through the 1940's and 1950's.

When I-85 was built in the 1950's, the neighborhood first experienced encroaching

development. It was at this time that considerable re-zonings took place and many businesses were established. As a result, the neighborhood association known as the "Piedmont Heights Civic Club" was established in 1956. The Club created what became known as Gotham Way Park in 1961 and has since worked to ensure that Piedmont Heights remains a livable and desirable community.

Existing Conditions

The data collected for the existing conditions inventory is based upon 2000 U.S. Census information. As such the data is seven years old and many of the stakeholder steering committee members feel that because the neighborhood is changing so rapidly, the data no longer accurately reflects existing conditions. However, the 2000 Census data was used to establish a baseline of existing conditions for the neighborhood.

Population
Between the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Piedmont Heights experienced nearly a 40% increase in population. As of the year 2000, approximately 2,737 people resided in the area.

Race
According to the 2000 Census, approximately 85% of Piedmont Heights is White. Black residents make up about 10% of the population while Asians represent over 2%. Between 1990 and 2000, the White population decreased by 7%.

Sex and Age
Sixty percent of the population of Piedmont Heights is male. Most of the population is aged 25 to 39 years. Eleven percent of the total population, as of the 2000 Census, is of grade-school age.

Household Composition
According to the 2000 Census, Piedmont Heights is fairly evenly divided at 53% non-family and 47% family households. The number of young, married households is contributing to the growing number of children in the area.

Educational Attainment
The Piedmont Heights neighborhood is highly educated compared to the Atlanta Metropolitan area. Over 96% of residents have a high school diploma and over 66% of residents 25 years and older have at least a Bachelor's degree.

Income
The overall median household income is $55,000. Almost half of the family households have incomes over $100,000 while one third of all households earn less than $40,000. Just under 1% of the households are on public assistance.

Employment
Piedmont Heights has an unemployment rate of 2%, lower than the City of Atlanta's at 14%. Residents are primarily employed in professional, services, and sales-related occupations. The Piedmont Heights area maintains over 6,000 jobs with less than 3,000 residents, indicating that many people commute into the area to work.

Business
There are approximately 350 businesses in Piedmont Heights most of which are scattered along the Piedmont and Monroe corridors. Industrial businesses are mainly located in the Armour-Ottley subarea. The diversity of businesses in the area demonstrates economic stability.

Housing
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 1,777 housing units in Piedmont Heights. Fifty-nine percent of the housing units are renter-occupied, 41% are owner-occupied. The neighborhood contains a diversity of housing types at a variety of price points including units that qualify as affordable.

Land Use
Despite its small neighborhood size, Piedmont Heights has a wide variety of zoning designations including: commercial, residential, industrial, office, institutional, and mixed use.

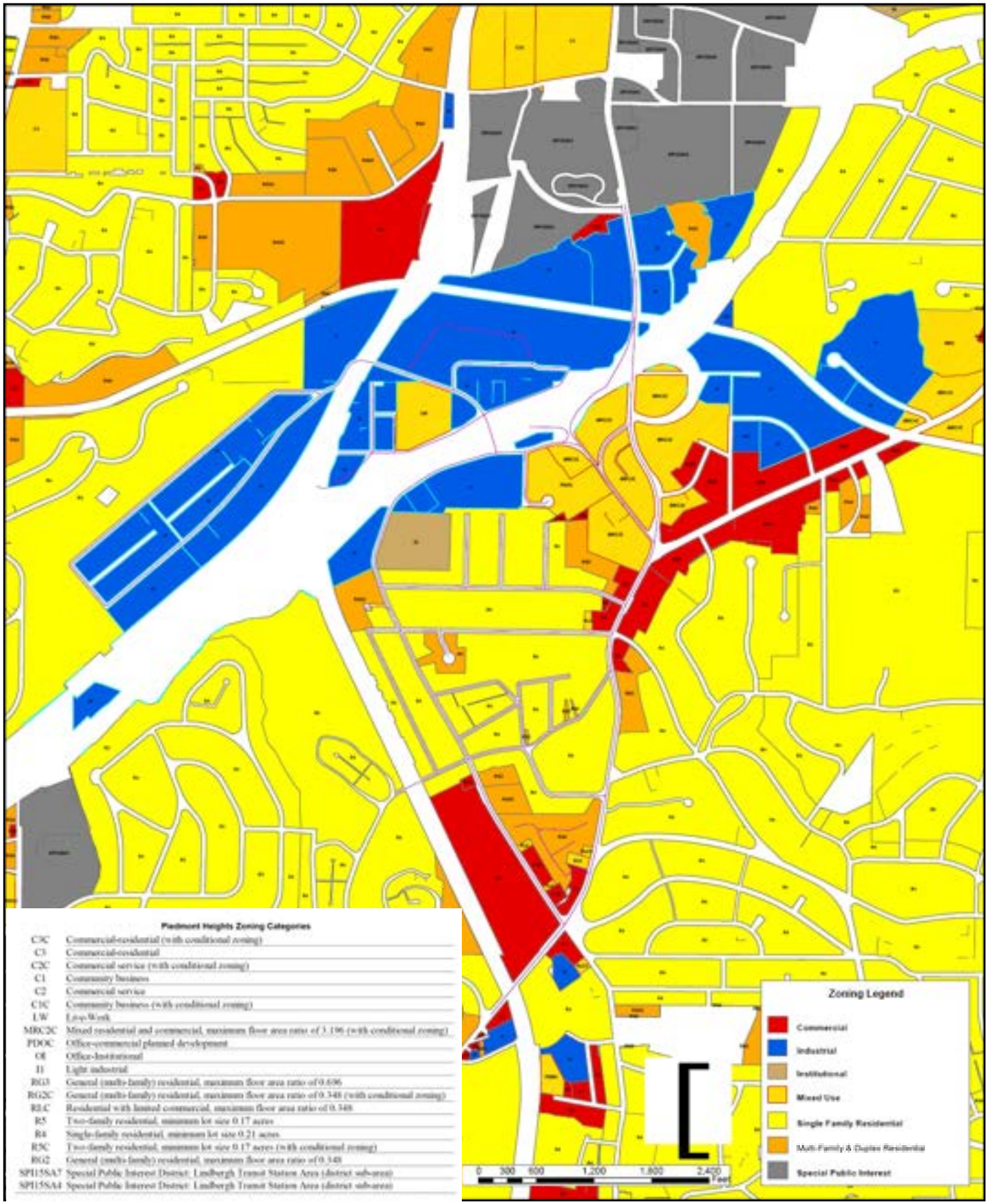
Similar land uses are predominately clustered. The majority of the area is zoned residential and is located south of I-85. Industrial land uses are found within the Armour-Ottley subarea, north of I-85 and along Cheshire Bridge Road. Commercial uses are concentrated along the Piedmont and Monroe corridors. Mixed use zoning is concentrated south of I-85 between the industrial and commercial uses.

Natural Environment
Piedmont Heights has several greenspace and water amenities including: the future expansion of Piedmont Park; Clear Creek and Peachtree Creek, their accompanying 100-year flood plains and conservation easement, the BeltLine, and Gotham Way Park.

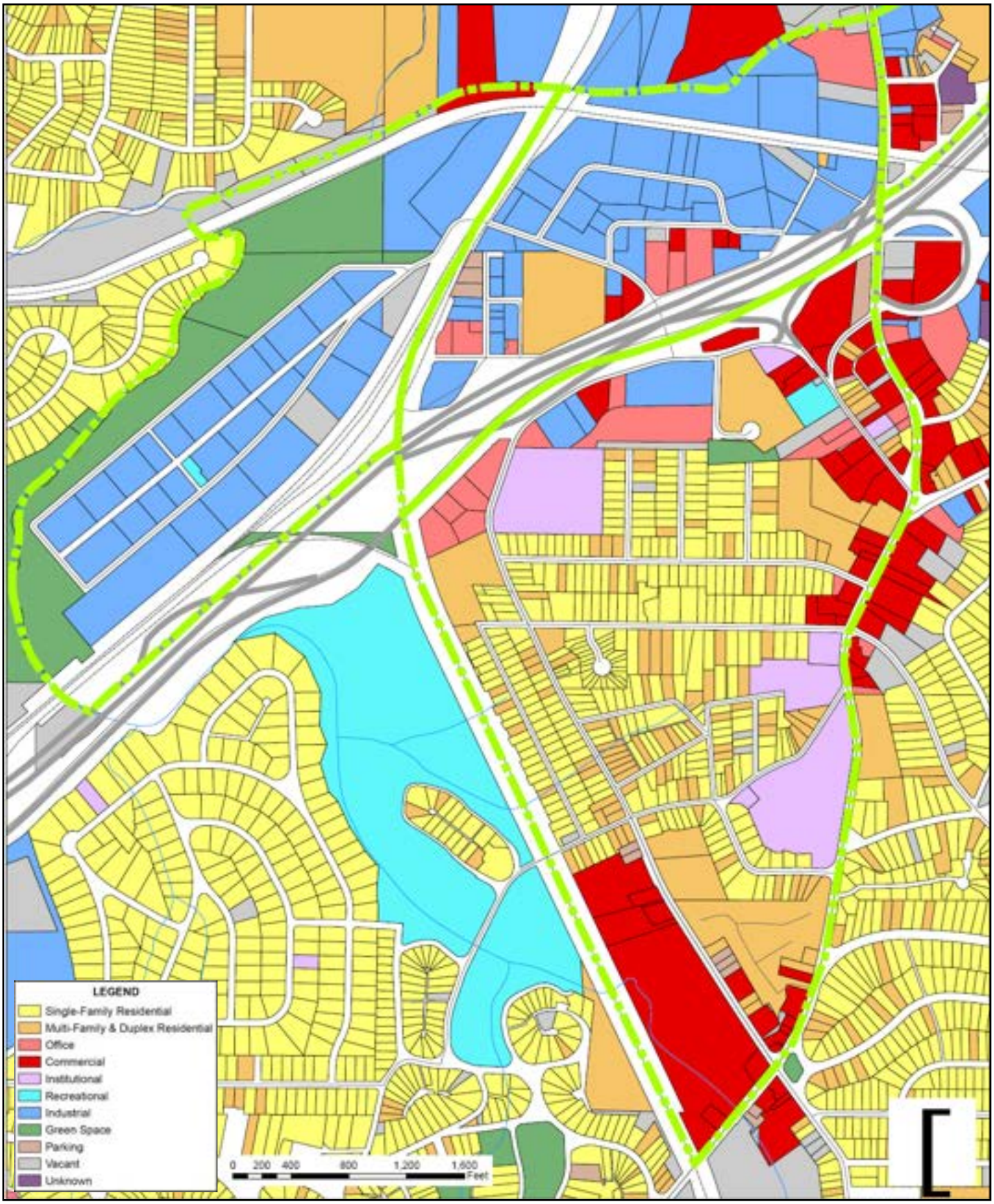
Transportation
Piedmont Heights perches atop a nexus of transportation activity and potential. Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive form the skeletal frame of Piedmont Heights. The main east-west interior streets that service the neighborhoods are: Wimbledon Road, Rock Springs Road, Montgomery Ferry Drive, and Pelham Road. Dominating the street hierarchy are I-85 and the Buford Highway Connector which serves as the main collector and distributor road for I-85 servicing Piedmont, Monroe, and Armour Drive.

Two MARTA bus routes service Piedmont Heights. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are limited. Sidewalks exist on some streets but exclusive bicycle facilities (e.g. marked shoulders) do not exist.

Piedmont Heights has a significant amount of freight rail that runs through the neighborhood including: CSX Seaboard Belt, Norfolk Southern Piedmont Division, and Decatur Street Belt. In addition, Amtrak runs along the Norfolk Southern rail line.



Piedmont Heights Zoning



Piedmont Heights Existing Land Use

Susceptibility to Change

Piedmont Heights can be sub-divided into four areas based on their susceptibility to change over time. Areas are found to be susceptible to change based on their amount of vacant or underutilized land, the condition of buildings, the presence of outdated or marginal land uses, and the existence of historic resources, among other factors.

The Piedmont Heights neighborhood (in green) was determined to have little to no susceptibility to change. Stakeholders indicated a strong desire to maintain their single-family neighborhood core both in terms of density and house size. The housing stock within the area is diverse, inhabited, in good condition, and for the most part of high value, all indicators of stability.

Three areas of Piedmont Heights were identified for detailed study due to their high susceptibility to change in the short and long term. These subareas include the northern section (in orange) called "Armour-Ottley," the middle section (in peach) referred to as "Monroe Crescent", and the southern section (in yellow), which includes "Ansley Mall".

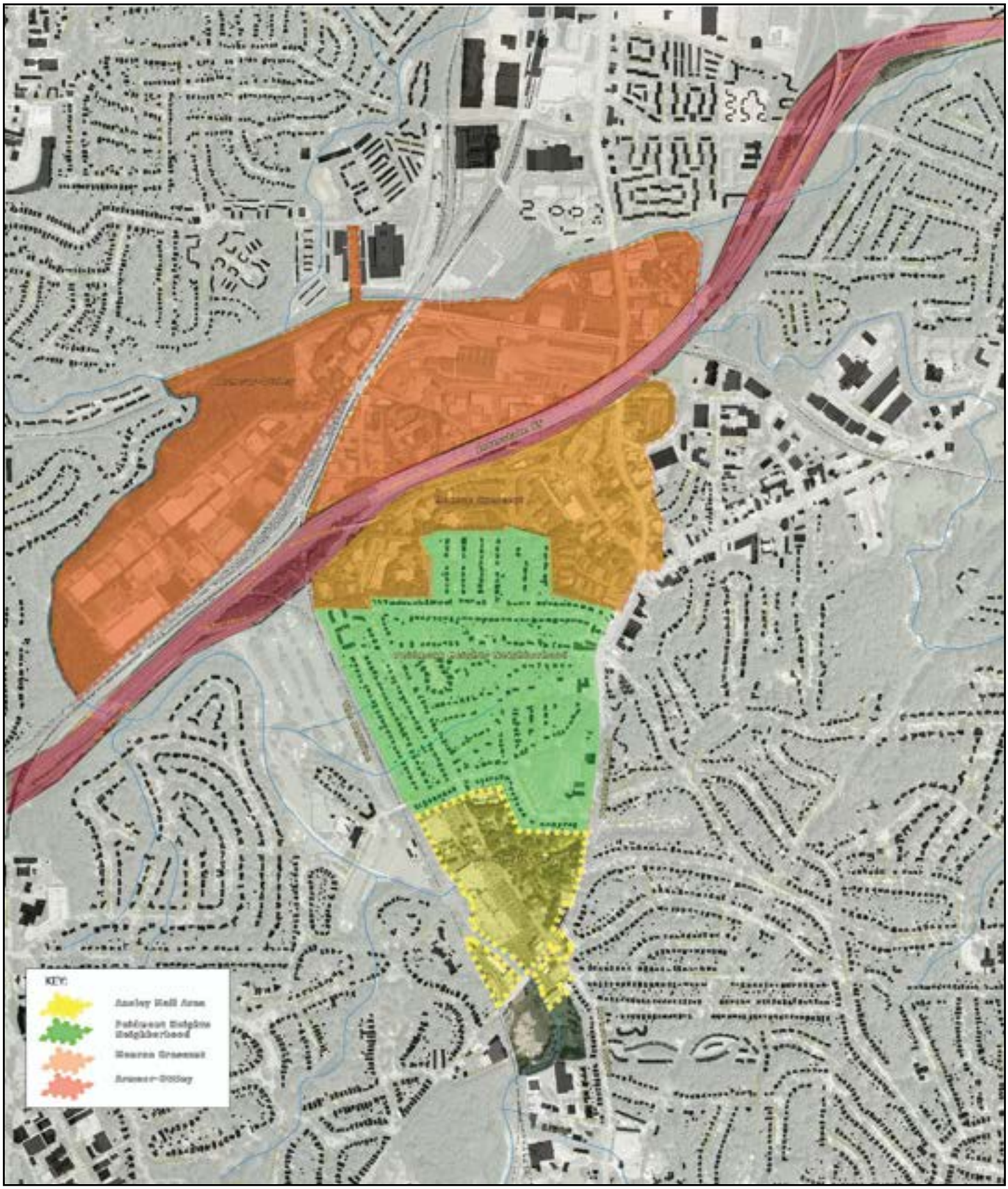
All three subareas have land that is underdeveloped and underutilized. Each subarea faces both similar and unique development challenges especially in terms of transportation infrastructure. Both the Monroe Crescent and Ansley Mall areas benefit from being located along Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive, major arterials. Armour-Ottley currently has major transportation-related challenges but could be made more accessible both via transit and corridor improvements.

The Ansley Mall area is experiencing redevelopment pressure from its proximity to the proposed BeltLine, the Piedmont Park expansion, its prime location at the intersection of Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive, and the redevelopment potential of the mall itself which is currently a collection of low-density, single-use structures surrounded by surface parking causing poor car and pedestrian circulation.

The Monroe Crescent area currently has some challenges to redevelopment such as a lack of connectivity both for automobiles and pedestrians, scattered land uses, and undesirable businesses as defined by the neighborhood. However, assets that make the area highly susceptible to change include existing park space, underutilized properties, easy access to the BeltLine, and opportunities for commercial and office development.

The Armour-Ottley area was newly annexed by Piedmont Heights. An industrial area, it has existed over the years as a no-man's land and has had little redevelopment potential. However, the area's susceptibility to change is high because it has underdeveloped and underutilized land, greenspace via a large conservation easement, and tremendous transit potential including a possible multi-modal facility. However, the area also possesses transportation challenges with limited vehicular access points and lack of internal connectivity due to a large and irregular block structure.

Although these areas are highly susceptible to change, it is not guaranteed that redevelopment will occur at the same time or even at all. To ensure that redevelopment occurs in a way that is beneficial to the neighborhood, there must be an overall plan for redevelopment. This *Blueprints* report sets out short and long term redevelopment visions for the three subareas within the context of an overall comprehensive vision for Piedmont Heights.



Geographic Subareas Susceptible to Change

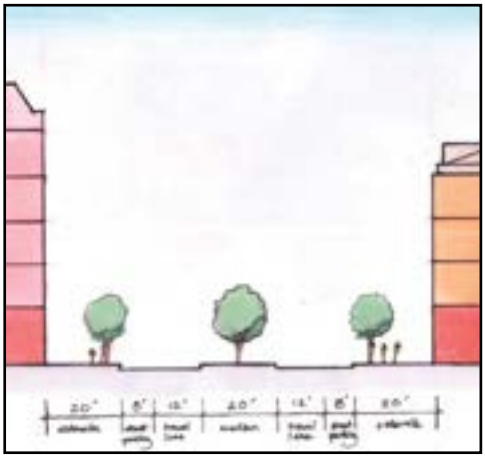
ANSLEY MALL VISION

Existing Conditions

The Ansley Mall area of Piedmont Heights is significant for its key location at the intersection of Monroe Drive and Piedmont Road. It is adjacent to the planned Piedmont Park expansion and the proposed BeltLine runs along Clear Creek on the western edge of the neighborhood. The area contains Ansley Mall, a 200,000 square foot shopping center serving the neighborhood and the larger midtown area.

The Ansley Mall area has great high density redevelopment potential due to its prime location near Midtown, inclusion in the BeltLine TAD, and nearby interstate access. However, this area has numerous transportation challenges that need to be addressed first in order to handle the increased density. These challenges include: traffic congestion, limited transit connectivity, and lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

The redevelopment potential poses a threat to the affordability of the existing rental housing, primarily occupied by long term residents. For example, Ansley Forest, across from Ansley Mall, provides 269 units of affordable housing, with rents ranging from $750 for a one bedroom to $950 for a two bedroom.



Example Cross-Section for Monroe Drive

Short Term Vision

The short term vision for the area around Ansley Mall provides a realistic strategy for incremental changes that are possible within the next three to ten years including: streetscaping and pedestrian improvements; the creation of new trails and greenspace; improved transit access; preservation of affordable housing; and new development.

The quality of life urban design standards required by the BeltLine Overlay District should be implemented throughout the Ansley Mall area and Piedmont Heights as a whole. This would include the creation of ADA accessible sidewalks, greenspace, trails, on-street parking, shared parking, and a mixing of uses whenever feasible.

Streetscaping:
Streetscape improvements to Monroe Drive would re-shape the street into a pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-boulevard. A median around 10 to 20 feet wide should be built down the length of Monroe Drive from Montgomery Ferry to the intersection of Piedmont Road and Monroe. The median should include left turn lanes at key intersections along Monroe. These intersections should be aligned to follow the future proposed grid pattern of streets outlined in the long term vision.

On-street parking should be available on both sides of Monroe Drive. Street trees, benches, street furniture, and other amenities should be located along the boulevard to create a more inviting space for pedestrians.

In addition to the improvements along Monroe, there also should be streetscape improvements made to Piedmont Road. The small park at the intersection of Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive provides an opportunity to add sidewalk space in front of Smith's Old Bar. By using some of the right-of-way from the park, the sidewalk in front of

this historic block could be expanded. A median could also be added to Piedmont Road, including two left turn lanes for access onto Monroe, to aid pedestrian movement from the historic block to the park by providing a pedestrian refuge when crossing the busy intersection.

Piedmont & Monroe Street Improvements

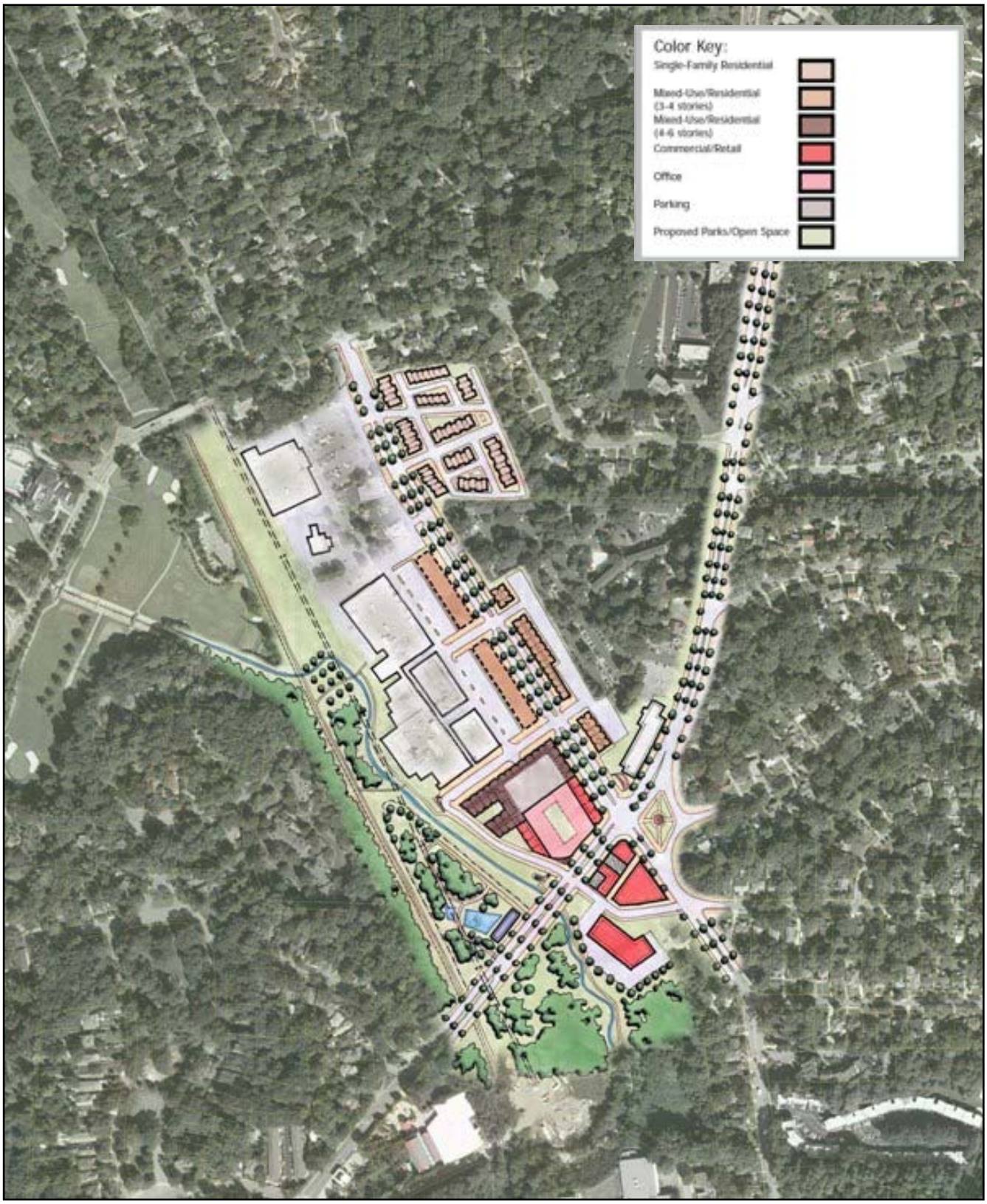
Trails and Greenspace:
In addition to improved pedestrian access created by the recommended streetscape improvements along Monroe Drive and Piedmont Road, new trails should also be constructed to provide access to the Piedmont Park expansion and the BeltLine. Paths may follow existing streets or may be created through existing open space.

Transit:
New and updated MARTA routes will help residents use existing transit in a more efficient manner. Express bus routes from Ansley Mall to the Lindbergh Center Station could facilitate easier access to MARTA rail. Bus routes could also be altered to connect Ansley Mall to the Midtown Station.

New Development:
Development in the Ansley Mall area is projected to occur in discrete phases. Phasing should begin with streetscape improvements consistent with local developer interests. Development should not outpace the neighborhood's ability to provide infrastructure and allow for traffic congestion mitigation. New development should appropriately respect the boundaries and intersections as laid out by the long term vision. New building should be mixed-use in nature when appropriate. New buildings along Monroe Drive should have frontages along the street, allowing easy pedestrian access and contributing to the neighborhood boulevard character. A grid block system could be developed incrementally to both facilitate a pedestrian-friendly environment and improve automobile flow.

Parking
Parking either should be located behind buildings or should be wrapped to create an improved pedestrian environment. Concerns about traffic congestion and parking caused by increased densities can be addressed in a neighborhood-friendly manner. Community benefits agreements enable neighborhood residents to forge a partnership with commercial developers to enable shared parking where feasible. Additionally, fee-based parking can be a powerful incentive to utilize alternative forms of transit and on-street parking should run down both sides of Monroe Drive. This will help calm traffic creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The BeltLine Overlay District sets guidelines for on-street parking.

Affordable Housing:
The Ansley Mall area has a large portion of Piedmont Heights' affordable housing stock, particularly in the Ansley Forest apartment complex. Future redevelopment should be implemented so as to ensure no net loss in overall affordability for the area. In the short term, Ansley Forest should be preserved as affordable housing. These affordable units provide homes for people who work at Ansley Mall and other businesses in the Midtown area. Losing the affordability of Ansley Forest could push local residents who contribute to the vitality of the area further outside Atlanta's core.



Ansley Mall Short Term Vision

Long Term Vision

The long term vision for the area around Ansley Mall builds upon improvements begun during the short term phase. The long term vision carries the streetscape, pedestrian, transit, and other improvements to the built environment to the next level.

Building upon the streetscape improvements discussed in the short term vision, a new block structure should be implemented throughout Ansley Mall. This new grid pattern will create connectivity while providing a circular flow for vehicles and pedestrians.

Ansley Mall Long Term Block Structure

Ansley Mall Redevelopment: Looking North at Monroe and Piedmont

Existing Conditions ***Short Term (3 – 10 years)*** ***Long Term (10+ years)***

Ansley Mall Redevelopment: Looking West on Monroe

In order to relieve pressure on the Piedmont Avenue/Monroe Drive intersection, two new streets should be added to the street system. The first would run through Ansley Forest and connect to Morningside Drive. The second, would run behind the Caribou Coffee location and connect to Cumberland Drive. These streets should meet Monroe and Piedmont at signalized intersections. The creation of Piedmont as the area's main thoroughfare and the changing of Monroe Drive into a neighborhood boulevard will also help to take traffic off Monroe and put it on a better-flowing Piedmont Avenue.

A new street should be established that runs behind the Ansley mall property, paralleling Clear Creek and the BeltLine, to create a public front to this area. Residential units could look out onto this street, the Creek, the BeltLine, and the Midtown skyline.

New buildings within this block structure should be constructed from four to six stories high. This increased density will help maximize the use of the land in the event that BeltLine transit arrives. The buildings should be mixed-use in character and wrap around structured parking.

The new, denser development around the Ansley Mall subarea could create one of the most beautiful public spaces in Atlanta – with relationships between a walkable, urban area, single-family neighborhoods and the natural spaces of the BeltLine, Clear Creek, and Piedmont Park. In order to accomplish this, new development in the Mall area should be mixed-use in character, create a block structure and provide for public spaces along Monroe and the BeltLine. New development should also adjust in character as it moves towards the single family neighborhoods. Building heights should step down from the higher density, multi-story Ansley Mall redevelopment to the single-family neighborhoods.

Ansley Mall Long Term Vision

MONROE CRESCENT VISION

Existing Conditions

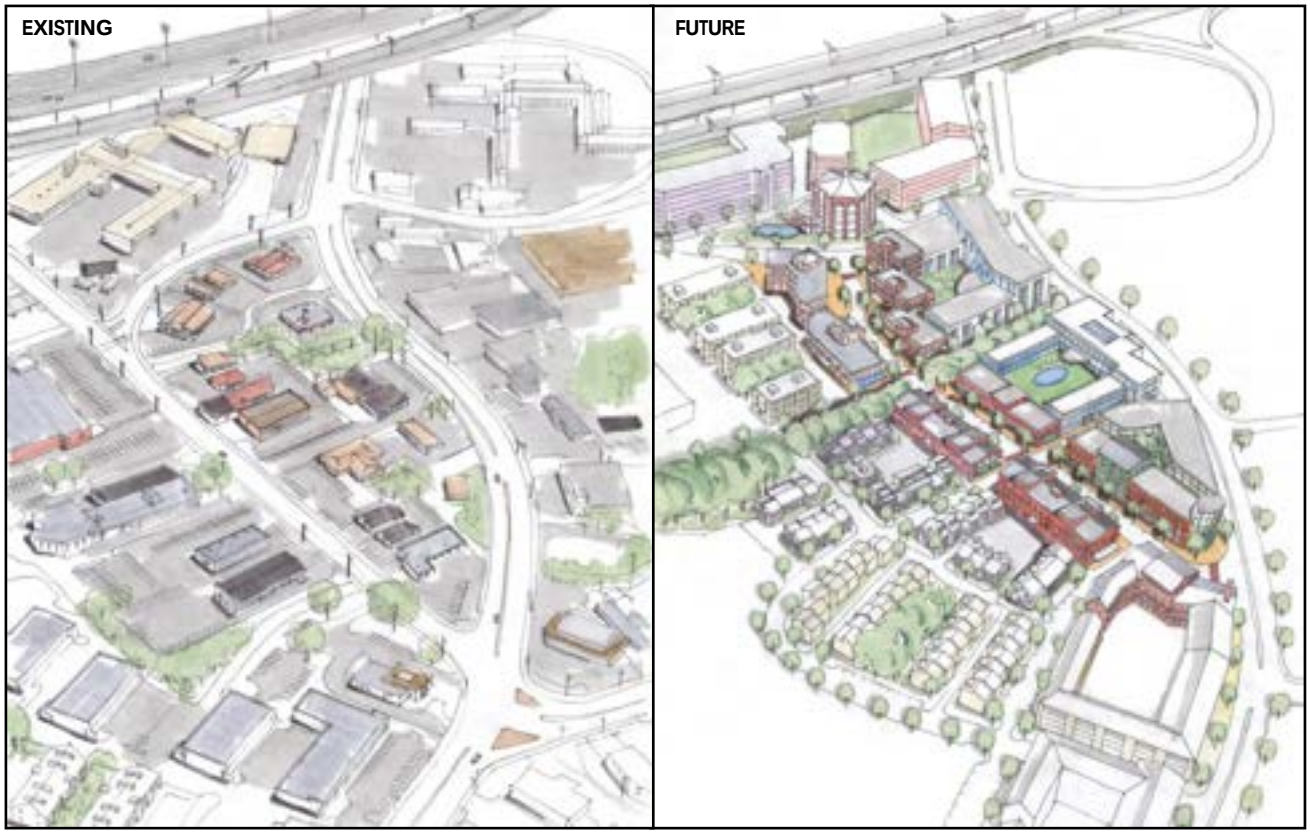
The Monroe Crescent is an overlooked nook of Piedmont Heights that holds much redevelopment potential. This area could support a greater density and mix of retail, office, and residential uses since it is located contiguous to major transportation networks: Buford Highway, I-85, Piedmont Avenue, and the proposed BeltLine.

The Monroe Crescent sub-area lies between Monroe Drive to the west and Piedmont Avenue to the east, capping single-family residential streets extending just north of Wimbledon Road. Currently, the area includes office, retail, and residential although these are scattered, single-uses. Offices tend to be located on the western side along Monroe Drive and retail is found on the eastern edge, along Piedmont Avenue and Piedmont Circle.

Residential is found further in from the neighborhood boundaries. There is a mixture of single family homes and apartment complexes within this area. This area tends to rent out at a higher rate than the southern portion of Piedmont Heights.

The subarea has a number of assets that make it highly susceptible to change. These assets can be utilized to develop a more defined community. Assets include underutilized properties with redevelopment potential, proximity to the BeltLine, and access to BeltLine funding opportunities.

Despite the number of assets that make redevelopment desirable, there are a number of challenges that must be addressed or redevelopment and increased density will put a strain on existing infrastructure. A lack of connectivity via the street network is one concern. However, the greatest challenge is the need for concurrency so that redevelopment and increased densities do



Monroe Crescent – Existing and Future Conditions

not outpace infrastructure exacerbating already existing traffic woes.

Over time the Monroe Crescent area is envisioned to have two activity corridors. The first, along Piedmont Circle, would have more of a retail focus, with office behind and above, and residential throughout. The second, located in the northwest corner of Monroe Drive, would also have an office focus, but would include smaller retail and residential components. Changes recommended in the short term vision for the area will provide the framework for incremental improvements toward the long term vision of two neighborhood-sensitive activity corridors.

Short Term Vision

The Monroe Crescent area is highly susceptible to change. Redevelopment could transform the character of this area from a scattered, haphazard collection of uses to a more cohesive neighborhood/small business feel. The short term vision for the area addresses specific challenges to redevelopment and includes recommendations and policy considerations that address issues pertaining to redevelopment practices, traffic management, pedestrian infrastructure, and greenspace.

Redevelopment

Residents of Piedmont Heights envisioned the Monroe Crescent area as having neighborhood-friendly businesses, a mix of uses, and housing at price points that make them available to the city's workforce even as the area continues to redevelop. Additionally, the residents felt that development should be woven into the neighborhood fabric along the edges to create areas of transition.

Density should be sympathetic to single family homes with densities stepping down as development approaches single family residential. In addition, graduating densities can be an effective buffer between higher intensity, non-neighborhood friendly uses and single family homes.

With its proposed mix of uses, the Monroe Crescent area offers an opportunity to place jobs and services near homes. Such a jobs-housing balance should be considered in a plan to preserve affordable housing within the Piedmont Heights neighborhood as a whole.

Monroe Crescent Street Vision

Traffic Management

Traffic problems in the Monroe Crescent can be attributed to the following challenges: a lack of east-west connectivity, intersection alignments that encourage cut-through traffic, streets that encourage speeding, a lack of wayfinding signage, a lack of turn bays causing long traffic queues, and poor signalization timing. Problem roads in the area include: Piedmont Avenue, Wimbledon Road, Rock Springs Road, Montgomery Ferry Drive, and Monroe Drive. Problem intersections include: the Monroe Drive and Northbound Buford Highway intersection and the Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, and Cheshire Bridge Road intersection

Added Roadway

The most significant project suggested in the short term vision is to add a two lane road parallel and to the south of Monroe Drive creating another east-west through street for the Piedmont Heights neighborhood. This proposed road, Gotham Park Drive, would proceed east off of Monroe Drive, pass by the existing WXIA TV station entrance, travel

south of Monroe Place Apartments to Piedmont Circle, and finally connect to Piedmont Avenue. The road would reduce the volume of traffic along Monroe Drive by providing an alternative route and additional access points for local properties. In addition, the increased connectivity would open up possibilities for more office space within the Monroe Crescent area and further catalyze future development.

Intersection Realignment

In addition to the creation of Gotham Park Drive as a possible traffic management solution, the realignment of several key intersections could address unsafe and inefficient intersection conditions while also solving cut-through traffic challenges. Recommendations include:

- Realigning the Montgomery Ferry Drive and Piedmont Avenue intersection into a traditional T-intersection. The redesign would require vehicles traveling south on Piedmont Avenue to slow to turn onto Montgomery Ferry discouraging cut-through traffic.
- Realigning the Monroe Drive and Armour Drive intersection. Monroe Drive would be eliminated from Armour Drive to Piedmont Circle and Armour Drive would be extended in its place. This realignment would discourage motorists from using Monroe Drive as a cut-through street.
- Realigning the exit lanes onto Monroe Drive from northbound Buford Highway into two left turn lanes while simultaneously eliminating the right turn lane would force traffic turning right to stack behind left-turning traffic. This stacking effect would reduce the incentive to turn right and travel south on Monroe Drive. The added left turn land would also increase the capacity of the left turn toward Piedmont Avenue, reducing backups onto Buford Highway.

Traffic Calming

Creating an improved pedestrian environment is an overall goal for Piedmont Heights. To this effect, the installation of traffic calming devices along neighborhood streets will serve to slow traffic, discourage cut-through traffic, and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Traffic calming measures can be used in various combinations and include: speed humps, rumble strips, street trees, on-street parking, lane realignment, increasing the number of signalized intersections, and adding traffic circles. Streetscaping is an important component of both traffic calming and a pedestrian-friendly environment. Therefore streetscaping to varying degrees along all roads throughout Piedmont Heights is recommended.

Signage

The addition of appropriate signage, in terms of size, number, placement, and consistency, at a couple of key decision points for motorists would have a positive effect on both traffic flow and cut-through traffic.

- Signage that directs motorists exiting Buford Highway onto either Monroe Drive or Piedmont Avenue should be added in the short term. Placement of signs is key so that motorists have enough time to position themselves in the correct lane.
- Signage should also be added to direct motorists through the Piedmont Avenue, Piedmont Circle, and Cheshire Bridge Road intersection. A complete system of larger signs would prepare motorists to efficiently navigate the intersection allowing traffic to flow smoothly.

Additional Improvements

Additional street improvements include the creation of turn bays to mitigate long queues and signal timing to improve traffic flow.

- The addition of turn bays for southbound traffic from Piedmont Avenue onto Cheshire Bridge road as well as northbound traffic from Piedmont Avenue onto Piedmont Circle will allow traffic to move more efficiently through the intersection. Current conditions do not include dedicated turn bays which obstructs through traffic.
- Signalization at the Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, Cheshire Bridge Road intersection can be improved by reducing

the number of signal phases. Simultaneously adjusting the signalization of the Piedmont Avenue and Rock Springs Road intersection further south will create an offset between signals allowing southbound traffic to cross both intersections in the same light cycle.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The whole of Piedmont Heights lacks sufficient pedestrian infrastructure and much of the existing infrastructure is in disrepair. BeltLine TAD money and other funds can be used to improve the conditions of pedestrian infrastructure. Much of the Monroe Crescent area lies within the BeltLine TAD and therefore qualifies to use TAD funds for capital improvements. Recommended improvements to pedestrian infrastructure include:

- Installing streetscaping where appropriate to create a buffer between pedestrians and traffic along roadways. In addition, streetscaping improves the pedestrian environment by making the corridor more attractive.
- Adding sidewalks along all street frontages throughout the neighborhood. In the short term, sidewalk additions should be targeted to neighborhood street frontages that do not currently have a sidewalk.
- Adding crosswalks where pedestrians naturally cross streets especially at mid block.
- Adding raised crosswalks at high volume intersections.
- Widening and improving existing sidewalks in key areas.

The addition of a greenway trail connecting Gotham Way Park, through the neighborhood, to the BeltLine should be created as an alternative pedestrian or bike corridor and neighborhood amenity. In order to create the greenway, the neighborhood needs to obtain conservation easements from WXIA and the American Red Cross. With the impending expansion of the WXIA TV station, the neighborhood is in position to negotiate additional conservation easements to add to their existing easement. The Red Cross owns a large portion of the proposed greenway and the neighborhood will need to negotiate obtaining an easement from them.

Greenspace

In addition to creating a greenway trail for improved pedestrian and bike access, the neighborhood should consider relinquishing ownership of Gotham Way Park to the city. Relinquishing ownership to the city benefits both Gotham Way Park and the neighborhood. By becoming a public park all ADA requirements for accessibility must be met, the number of users increases creating a safer environment, and the neighborhood would no longer need to raise funds for park maintenance.

Monroe Crescent Short Term Vision

Long Term Vision

Example of Mixed Office/Residential Along Monroe Drive

The short term vision provided recommended solutions to challenges that could hinder redevelopment within the Monroe Crescent. The long term vision supposes that the short term solutions have been implemented and builds upon those improvements. As stated earlier, the Monroe Crescent area is envisioned to have two activity corridors. The first, along Piedmont Circle, would have a retail focus, with office behind and above and residential throughout. The second, located in the northwest corner of Monroe Drive, would also have an office focus, but would include a smaller retail and residential aspect.

Piedmont Circle

With the goal of creating a well-connected, pedestrian-oriented village area, Piedmont Circle should have wide sidewalks, street furniture, decorative lighting and signage, and on-street parking. It could be a small-scale bustling village for office workers during the day and a nice place for residents to relax in the evenings.

Two to four story buildings, containing retail on the ground level and residential and office space on the upper floors, should line Piedmont Circle. Townhomes, condos, and apartment units should be built throughout the area, with most located behind the retail and office buildings lining Piedmont Circle.

Monroe Drive

The northwest section of Monroe Crescent should be more office oriented. The Gotham greenway will extend through it, travel northward and connect to Armour Drive. It is suggested that office complexes have wrapped parking decks. The proposed roadway south of Monroe Drive, as mentioned in the short term vision, should have on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and a walkable atmosphere.

In order to create these walkable, village-type settings, significant traffic and pedestrian challenges must be addressed such as diverting traffic off of Monroe Drive and repurposing it from a major transportation corridor into a neighborhood street. Also, several intersections within the subarea could be realigned to make them safer and more efficient for motorists and pedestrians. All of the following recommendations are illustrated on the following page.

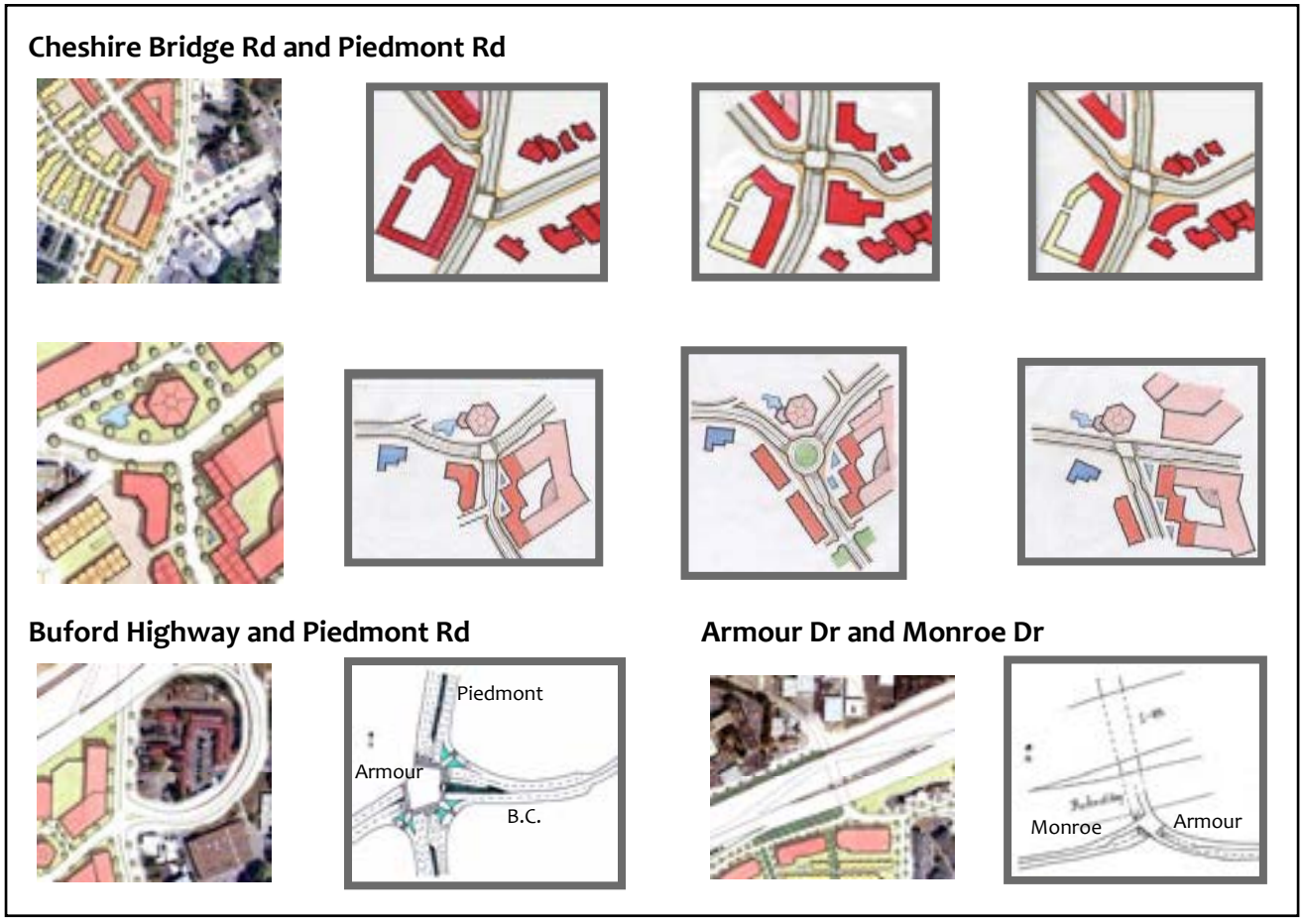
The long-term vision for Monroe Drive is for it to become a neighborhood street with slower speeds. To realize this vision, traffic must be redirected onto Piedmont Avenue. The existing 1960's style looped entry and exit ramps at northbound Buford Highway and Monroe Drive should be closed. A new northbound access ramp at Piedmont Avenue should be built. The existing exit ramp from Buford Highway to northbound Piedmont Avenue could be expanded and realigned to handle a higher volume of traffic and used as the new exit ramp from northbound Buford Highway to Piedmont Avenue. This would allow traffic to continue straight across onto Armour Drive and traffic to turn left onto Piedmont Avenue.

The Lambert Drive right-of-way could be used for the new access ramp from Piedmont Avenue to northbound Buford Highway. Moving the ramps will improve the safety of the interchange by increasing the length of acceleration and deceleration lanes,

increasing the capacity for queuing, and moving all traffic to one interchange designed to handle high traffic flows.

In terms of rectifying unsafe and inefficient intersections, several solutions are possible.

- Piedmont Circle's southern intersection with Piedmont Avenue could be realigned to intersect north of the current Cheshire Bridge Road and Piedmont Avenue intersection. This alternative for Piedmont Circle would not have a traffic signal nor access to or from northbound Piedmont Avenue. The Cheshire Bridge and Piedmont Avenue intersection would remain but with improved signalization, pedestrian infrastructure, and alignment. Also the turn bay from southbound Piedmont Avenue onto Cheshire Bridge Road that was installed during the short term would remain. This project is dependent on the Armour Drive extension.
- Piedmont Circle and Cheshire Bridge could be realigned directly across from each other, crossing Piedmont Avenue at a slight diagonal, so that through-traffic will have a straight path through the intersection. This alternative would require Cheshire Bridge Road to be shifted slightly northward and Piedmont Circle shifted south.
- Piedmont Circle and Cheshire Bridge Road could both be realigned so they are crossing Piedmont Avenue in a completely perpendicular nature. Cheshire Bridge Road and Piedmont Circle would both need to be realigned northward.



Alternative Intersection Geometries for Monroe Crescent

Monroe Crescent Long Term Vision

ARMOUR – OTTLEY VISION

Existing Conditions

The Armour-Ottley subarea (AOSA) is located in the newly annexed section of Piedmont Heights north of I-85 and the Buford Highway Connector. The western and northern boundaries of the subarea are Clear and Peachtree Creeks, and I-85 serves as the southern and eastern boundary. Several parcels on the east side of Piedmont Avenue, bordering Lakeshore Drive, also are considered in the study area analysis. Significant streets within AOSA include Piedmont Avenue, Ottley Drive, and Armour Drive, currently the only means of vehicular entry to the majority of the area.

The primary land use of AOSA is light industrial, though a residential apartment complex is under construction on Armour Drive. The MARTA rail maintenance yard occupies a significant portion of the eastern side of AOSA, and the adjacent Piedmont Avenue parcels include another apartment complex and modest retail strip development. The Rollins/Orkin headquarters is located north of the MARTA rail yard, and contains several 1960's era buildings and warehouses.

The light industrial properties in AOSA are mostly active, and include businesses such as a brewery, package distributor, charity, concrete factory, recording studio, sewing machine company, home furnishings retailer, design center, and various other small firms or warehouses. The Georgia DOT stores HERO vehicles beneath I-85 at the southeastern edge of the sub-area.

No formal parkland currently exists in AOSA, but a large tree-filled conservation easement was recently created, functioning as a buffer between the area and Brookwood Hills, a neighborhood due west across Clear Creek. This parcel was identified as a "jewel" of the Beltline park system in Alexander Garvin's 2004 *BeltLine Emerald Necklace* plan. As per conservation easement restrictions, this parcel will remain in a natural state, with a maximum of 10% developable land for any use, at the discretion of Brookwood Hills. The floodplain is extensive in places and also will preclude development as Clear Creek typically floods during heavy storms.

The Beltline Tax Allocation District includes a substantial portion of AOSA. However, land parcels in the AOSA are not in the TAD. Since the total amount of all taxable value of all included properties in all TADs in a jurisdiction must not exceed 10% of the total tax digest in said jurisdiction by law, it is possible that this section of AOSA was left out because it contains many active businesses that add significantly to the tax base. However, the conservation easement and the MARTA maintenance yard were included in the TAD, which is odd given that they will likely not be redeveloped within the 25 year time frame. It may be possible for the TAD boundaries/parcels to be swapped in this subarea in order to facilitate redevelopment.

More than any other area within Piedmont Heights, AOSA is defined by its transportation assets and challenges. With several freight and passenger railroad tracks in varying states of operation running through and around the subarea, AOSA has an overabundance of rail infrastructure. With the exception of the planned location of the multi-modal transfer station in Downtown's railroad "gulch", no other place in the city acts as a potential hub to so many forms of rail transportation.

However, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to AOSA is limited. The sole point of vehicular entry to the majority of the subarea is along Armour Drive from the Monroe Crescent area, underneath both the Buford Connector and I-85. Four lanes lead in quickly diminishing to two after emerging from beneath the interstate. Sidewalk and bicycle lane facilities range from limited to non-existent in the sub-area.

Transportation Focus: Rail
CSX and Norfolk Southern currently operate active freight lines in AOSA. The CSX line

travels parallel to Peachtree Creek near the northern boundary of the subarea. From the east, the line is single tracked and becomes double tracked for a section that continues just west of the Lafarge concrete plant. The Norfolk-Southern line runs north-south across the middle of Armour-Ottley. From the north, the line is double tracked until it expands to eight lines in Armour Yard. The line exits the area traveling south triple tracked. There are three spurs that branch off the line, with one serving the Lafarge plant and the other two connected with the Decatur Belt formerly owned by Wayne Mason.

Both the CSX and Norfolk Southern lines are active and handle a fair amount of freight traffic – between 15 to 34 trains each per weekday. These lines are comparable to other freight lines in the Atlanta region with regards to their activity.

The MARTA north-south heavy rail line that runs between the Arts Center and Lindbergh Stations bisects the subarea. As of spring 2007, a comprehensive infill station study was underway to examine potential new station sites along the existing heavy rail lines; an infill station near the MARTA Armour Yard maintenance facility is under serious consideration.

Piedmont Heights Current and Potential Rail Infrastructure

Amtrak currently operates once-daily national rail service on the Norfolk-Southern tracks parallel to MARTA in the sub-area. Their "Crescent" route runs from New Orleans to New York, stopping in Atlanta at the Brookwood Amtrak station at Peachtree Street and Deering Road, 1.5 miles southwest of AOSA. There are no plans for Amtrak to stop at the future Downtown multi-modal station as an additional 30 minutes would be required to visit the station and backtrack to the current alignment.

Amtrak's Southern Crescent Train in Atlanta

Seven regional commuter rail lines extending radially from Atlanta have been proposed. Two of these lines, from Gainesville and from Athens, would travel through AOSA. The Atlanta-Gainesville route follows Norfolk Southern freight lines into the city, whereas the Atlanta-Athens route (aka the "Brain Train") would run along CSX tracks and transfer onto the Norfolk Southern line via a new loop near where the current Lafarge

concrete plant spur is located. An environmental assessment already has been undertaken for the latter route. While operating characteristics are unknown, it can be expected that there will be a minimum of several trips during weekday peak hours. Additional shuttle service between Emory University and Downtown via the "Brain Train" alignment is also under consideration.

The fourth type of passenger rail in the subarea is the BeltLine, though the actual transit technology to be implemented – either light rail or streetcar – is still under evaluation. As of spring 2007, the MARTA board had voted on a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) rail alignment as part of the federal funding application process. The alignment is optimized for a streetcar (smaller turning radii, steeper allowable grades, etc) and travels north and then west through AOSA.

To enter the subarea from the south, the BeltLine LPA route would bridge over the Buford Highway Connector and then tunnel under I-85 using a spur from the Decatur Belt to emerge in Norfolk-Southern's Armour rail yard. From the yard, the LPA would veer east and travel along Mayson Street before doubling back under the MARTA and freight/Amtrak rail line via Armour Drive. A new BeltLine spur is currently planned to connect to MARTA's Lindbergh station, though the main route follows Peachtree Creek westward.

Of the aforementioned passenger rail services, only MARTA has its own exclusive right-of-way, though the BeltLine will be at least partially exclusive within the subarea. Overall, the proximity of these services to each other creates great opportunity to construct a new multi-modal transfer station within the Armour-Ottley subarea. This area is the only location in Atlanta where the BeltLine is easily accessible to regional commuter rail and Amtrak, and is a prime site for MARTA rail to connect with Amtrak, a feat it could not otherwise accomplish given Amtrak's reticence to alter the alignment of their low-volume Crescent route.

An infill station at Armour could eliminate the need for the BeltLine to connect to the Lindbergh MARTA Station. In addition, it could connect with future commuter rail from Athens and Gainesville. Ideally, an infill station could be constructed without having to build new track. There appears to be enough straight-track just south of a bend at the Armour Drive bridge crossing such that an infill station could be cost-effective to build. However, because of the lack of street infrastructure and space, adding a bus terminal to the rail transfer station would be problematic.

Transportation Focus: Streets

Interstate 85 and the Buford Highway Connector form the southern border of AOSA. The original I-85 cut off the Armour-Ottley area from the rest of Piedmont Heights in 1956. In the mid 1980's, a new elevated section of I-85 was built parallel to the existing highway, which then became Buford Highway (GA-13). At that time the formerly residential Mayson Street was completely severed from the rest of Piedmont Heights.

The lack of vehicle access and other barriers such as the rail lines and Peachtree Creek led to AOSA becoming industrial by the 1960's. The current street network in AOSA is non cohesive. Odd block lengths and street typology are present throughout AOSA, though the most extreme example is Ottley Circle, surrounding a single block of 3,000 ft by 600 ft.

Transportation Focus: Pedestrians, Bicycles, and Buses

Current pedestrian facilities in the Armour-Ottley area are limited and inconsistent. There are sidewalks on both sides of Armour Drive that connect with Monroe Drive to the south. The eastern section of Armour-Ottley has sidewalks along portions of Armour Drive, Plasamour Drive, Plasters Avenue, and Mayson Street. Besides a short length of sidewalk in front of one building, there are no sidewalks along Ottley Circle. Bicycle facilities are nonexistent in the subarea.

MARTA currently provides limited bus service in AOSA for shift workers. Route 27 makes two trips in the morning and two trips in the evening, entering and exiting via Armour Drive and looping Ottley Circle.

Short Term Vision

The Armour-Ottley subarea is itself made up of three subareas: the Rollins/Orkin property, Ottley Circle, and Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle. Each subarea has its own assets and challenges and the short and long term visions for the areas treat each discretely while recognizing the subareas are part of a whole.

The short term vision for the Armour-Ottley subarea sets the groundwork for eventual implementation of the long-range vision, particularly with regards to infrastructure improvements. While buildings can and do change over time, infrastructure typically remains stable and is the foundation of versatile and successful development.

The primary purpose of the short term vision is to increase pedestrian and vehicular connectivity to and within the subarea, create accessible parkland, encourage concurrent transit-oriented development, and provide more consistent and pedestrian-friendly character for major streets. The short term vision also identifies a site within the Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle subarea for a school. In addition, the same subarea will likely be the future site for the BeltLine Trail and some alternative routes are offered here.

Rollins/Orkin

Located in the northeast section of the subarea, the Rollins/Orkin property and several parcels across Piedmont Avenue provide a near-term opportunity for redevelopment. Infill development within the area should be oriented to Piedmont Avenue and applying consistent architectural features to building on both side of the street will create a sense of place.

The extensive floodplain of Peachtree Creek on the northern and western side of this area provides the most obvious boundaries for redevelopment, and forms an ideal location for new public parkland.

In the short term, the Rollins/Orkin area should be redeveloped with mixed-use facilities outside of the floodplain and a public park created on land within the floodplain. A pedestrian-friendly block structure and streetscape should be created in conjunction with redevelopment.

Rollins/Orkin is a key point of entry for vehicular access to Ottley Circle and Peachtree Hills Avenue from Piedmont Avenue. To provide better access to the AOSA in the short term, a new one-way access road to Armour Drive from Piedmont Avenue via a ramp connection to Plaster Bridge Road and a new elevated road and bridge over Peachtree Creek via the Design Center should be built in order to increase connectivity within and outside the area.

Rollins – Orkin Property

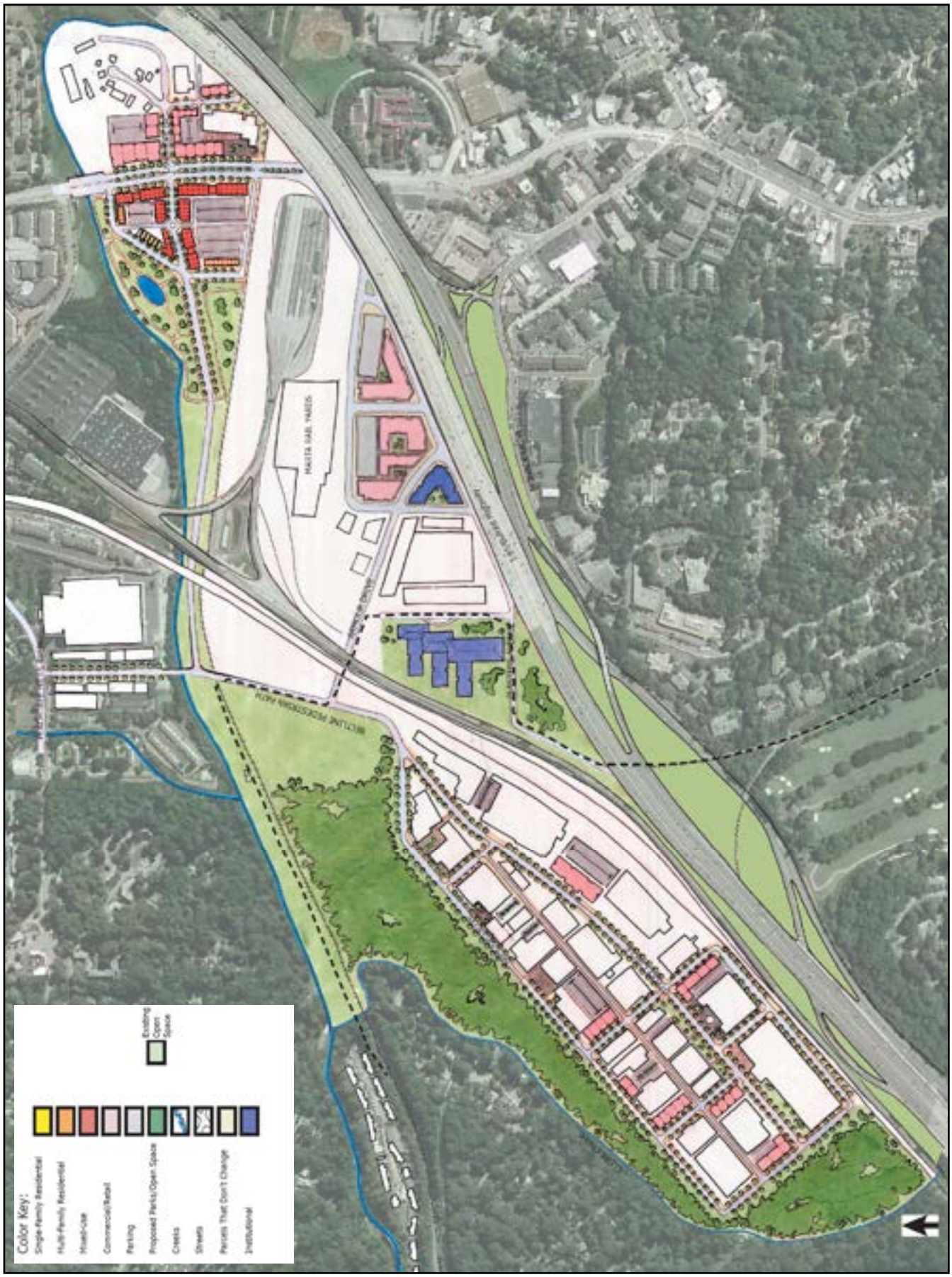
Ottley Circle

Ottley Circle refers to the entire western side of AOSA and is bounded to the east by MARTA and railroad tracks. Currently light industrial, this area has the potential to support transit-oriented development once a multi-modal transfer station is built and additional roadway access to the area is created. This area should not be redeveloped to more intensive uses prior to increasing both vehicular and rail transit access. The congestion that will result from limited-access, car-dependent development will impinge on the quality of life for residents, and may hamper future redevelopment efforts.

In light of the necessity of infrastructure concurrency with redevelopment, interim and likely piecemeal, changes can be made to the block structure to set the stage for future development while also increasing the types of land uses and densities that can be supported by the area.

New blocks should be designed to encourage walkability (e.g. 250 ft (ideal) x 500 ft. (max)). Parcels that lie within ¼ mile of the transit station should be designed as high density and transit-oriented. Streetscaping should be undertaken to create a pedestrian-friendly environment where one currently does not exist.

Recommended improvements to the Ottley Circle area include: the creation of a new block structure by building small roads in existing spaces between buildings; renovating buildings to accommodate new uses; creating infill buildings; transitioning to rear parking and garages from front and side parking; preparing for a multi-modal facility by building higher capacity parking near the proposed future site; and creating new, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.



Armour – Ottley Short Term Vision

Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle

This area is located in the southern section of AOSA, and is bordered by I-85, railroad tracks, and MARTA's maintenance yard. Mayson Street was formerly residential and is now home to a hodgepodge of small commercial facilities. Plasamour Triangle is bounded to the north by Plasamour Drive and the MARTA maintenance yard, to the west by Armour Drive, and to the south by Plaster Bridge Road.

A large apartment complex is under construction on the site of a former hotel on Armour Drive, and has jumpstarted the redevelopment of this area. However, given the high level of noise and air pollution from surrounding high-intensity transportation facilities, visions for Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle do not include much, if any, additional residential development. The MARTA maintenance yard, in particular, is highly active and noisy during the night and would impede the quality of life of nearby residents. Air pollution resulting from proximity to adjacent highways also gives reason for concern about the health of nearby residents.

School Facility

Having identified the need for additional education facilities within northeast Atlanta due to the rapidly growing in-town population, the construction of a new school has been proposed for this subarea. Because of smaller land requirements, the proposed school would serve elementary or middle school-aged children. It is recommended that the school be part of the Atlanta Public School System given its beneficial location within the BeltLine TAD both in terms of funding and eventual access to the BeltLine.

A five-acre site design for a facility accommodating 750 children is shown below, but other sites within the subarea are possible candidates as well. The land containing the LaFarge concrete factory is a particularly appealing site as it abuts the Creek, conservation easement, and BeltLine. A possible downside for this particular site is its proximity to several air and noise polluters – the rail yard and I-85 in particular. However, good construction techniques could mitigate poor air quality.

Illustrative School Site

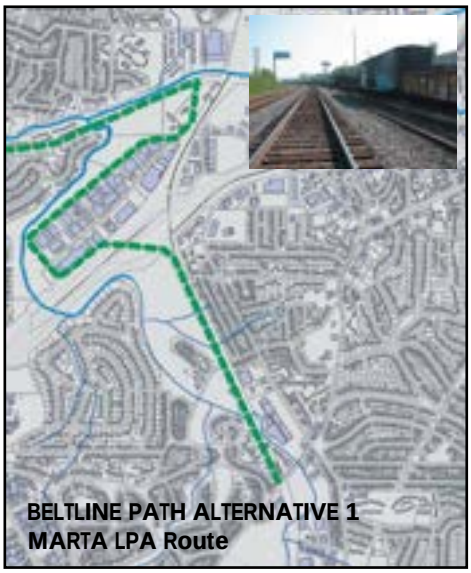
Current and Future Perspectives of the Proposed School Site

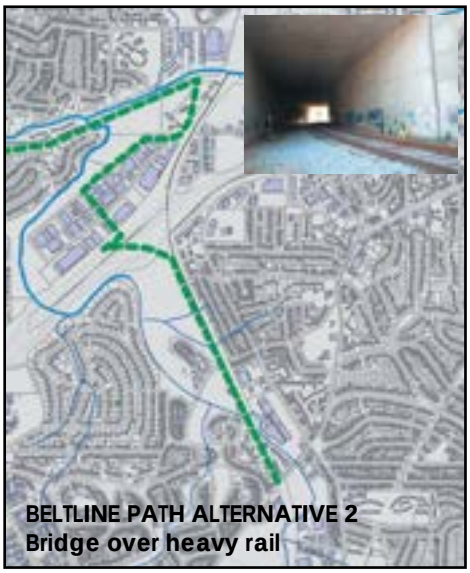
BeltLine Trail

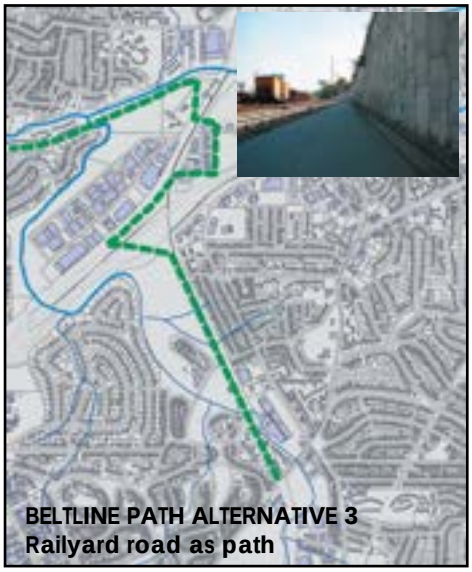
A major component of the short term vision for this area is the construction of the BeltLine pedestrian and bicycle trail. The MARTA Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) plan depicts the trail entering AOSA via a railroad spur above Ansley Golf Course and following a path network around the far western edge of the sub-area (Alternative 1). The proposed LPA alignment is perceived as unsafe and undesirable due to the length of the western entry tunnel, visually obscured rail yard, topography, ADA-related engineering challenges, and the industrial nature of Ottley Circle in the immediate future.

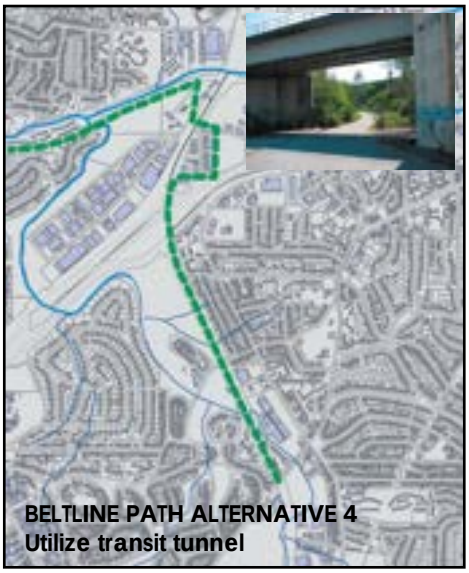
One possible alternative is for the BeltLine trail alignment to follow the actual BeltLine LPA transit route and surface streets within the sub-area (Alternative 4). Utilizing the transit alignment initially as a multi-purpose path here will provide safety and visibility for users, and buy time to overcome the challenges that come with constructing a workable, safe, ADA-compliant path in the subarea, which may ultimately follow a different route from the LPA or what is depicted here.

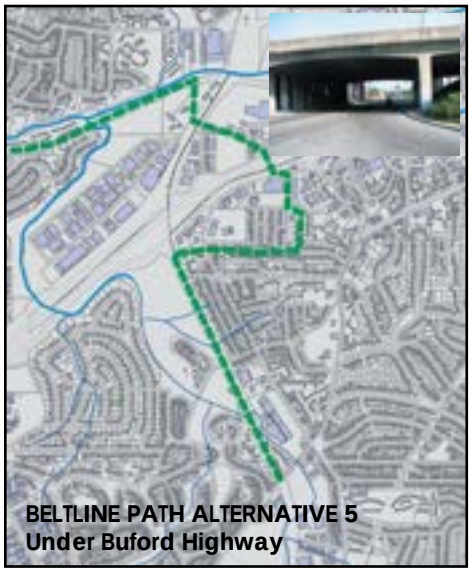
Regardless, the path alignment proposed in the diagram reflects the initial desire for the path to be adjacent to transit; they were separated in the alternative selection process because the existing eastern tunnel is too











Alternative Alignments for the BeltLine Path in Piedmont Heights

narrow to accommodate both side-by-side. An alternative to side-by-side trails and transit in the eastern tunnel would be to create a gantlet (small section of merged single track) that allows trains to alternately enter and exit the tunnel from each direction. Given the generous proposed 8-minute headway between vehicles, a gantlet may prove to be the most cost-effective solution to providing safe and adjacent passage beneath the highway system in this area. Another way to ensure the proximity of trails and transit would be to double-stack them through the tunnel, which would require lowering the tunnel approximately 20 feet and providing a pedestrian and bike platform in the upper half, above the BeltLine tracks.

Other alignment alternatives include routing the trail to avoid the need to build a pedestrian bridge over the rail yard (Alternative 3), running the trail through the greenspace envisioned in the long term Armour-Ottley plan (Alternative 2), or through the greenspace envisioned in the long term Monroe Crescent plan (Alternative 5). More expensive solutions might entail widening existing tunnels or building new ones from Monroe Drive to the desired entry/exit point in AOSA.

Other Recommendations

To attract development in the short term, it is necessary to rework Armour Drive to accommodate four lanes of traffic, as it will remain the primary point of access and egress to AOSA. Adding streetscaping and geometric modifications will make the entrance more avenue-like. In addition, Plasamour Triangle has the potential to be redeveloped as mid-to-high density office or institutional. In order to facilitate this redevelopment, it may be necessary to subdivide the block to increase access to the new buildings.

Long Term Vision

The long range vision for the Armour-Ottley subarea builds upon the improvements undertaken during the 3 – 10 year short term vision. It provides a more complete picture of potential development opportunities afforded by greater multi-modal connectivity and accessibility. It also includes more contiguous and formal park areas.

Because the MARTA maintenance yard was recently completed and the Rollins/Orkin area has strong short term development potential, these sections of the subarea are not expected to change greatly in the long term vision. The future of the remainder of AOSA is somewhat more complex, and depends greatly on multi-modal transportation infrastructure improvements. As in any master plan, the no-change alternative is an option, and applies especially to the Ottley Circle area. Without additional capacity, both vehicular and transit, the light industrial and semi-commercial nature of Ottley Circle is probably the highest and best use of that area in the long term.

Mayson Street and Plasamour Triangle could handle more intensive uses if the Armour Drive and Piedmont Access Road improvements in the short term vision are undertaken, though an infill transit station must be built for the sub-area to realize its full potential. In addition to the aforementioned improvements, vehicular access to Ottley Circle from Peachtree Hills Avenue and/or Peachtree Street is almost as important to its redevelopment success as transit.

The Armour – Ottley subarea can be densely developed once infrastructure is in place to accommodate single family, multifamily, mixed use, office, and institutional uses. Creating an appropriate block structure is the key to the development and it should build off of the short-term block design. New blocks can be created in the spaces between existing buildings and as parcels become

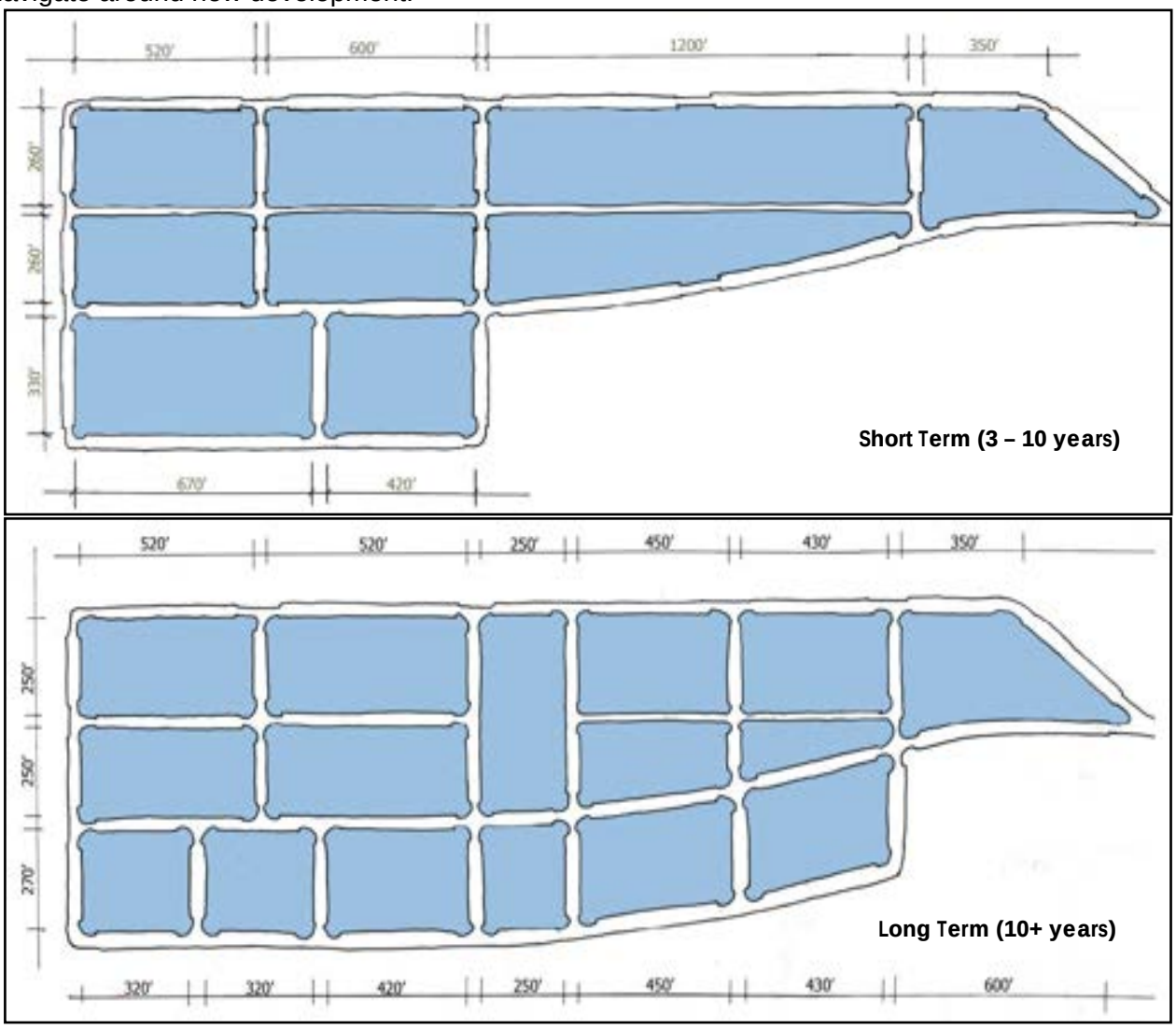
available, there may be an opportunity to secure new right-of-way.

Residential facilities should be focused on the western side of the subarea, with density tapering off towards the conservation easement. This will allow a smoother transition from the existing single-family housing across the creek in Brookwood Hills. An additional community park is envisioned within the Ottley Circle subarea. This park would provide a connection between the suggested lower density residential and high density mixed use development. The park location is due north of the BeltLine path and allows a more direct route through Ottley Circle rather than having to circuitously navigate around new development.

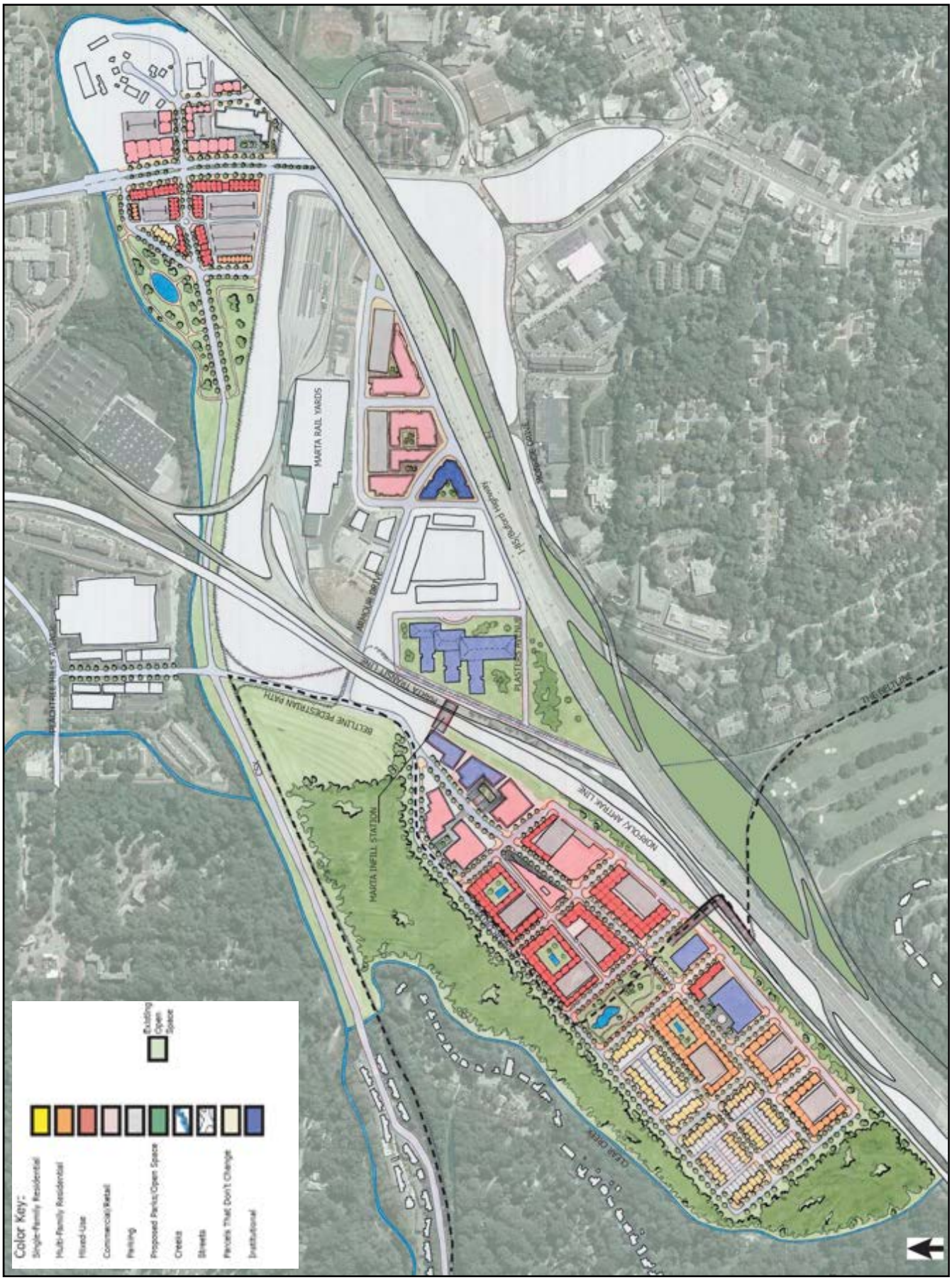
The primary physical issues to consider with respect to redevelopment of the Armour-Ottley subarea are:

- concurrency of development with infrastructure including construction of a multi-modal transfer station,
- re-alignment of the BeltLine Trail and Transit LPA to meet ADA requirements and provide a safe mode of transportation,
- the addition of vehicular access roads, new block design,
- brownfield cleanup concerns, and
- placement of a new school within the site.

The extent and character of continuing redevelopment will be dependent upon solving the above issues first.



Proposed Block Structure Changes for the Ottley Circle Subarea



Armour – Ottley Long Term Vision

Implementation Checklist

The Piedmont Heights neighborhood can help guide its future by taking strategic actions to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the area. Specifically, the Piedmont Heights Civic 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 greenspace. Following are actions and implementation steps to help promote a desirable future for the Piedmont Heights community.

Overarching Implementation Strategies		
1	**Neighborhood-Guided Development**	Neighborhood-guided development speaks to the interest that the residents of Piedmont Heights have in being a part of the neighborhood change process that is occurring. The Blueprints project raised the level of community awareness regarding planning needs and initiatives and the importance of getting involved. It also facilitated communication across neighborhood boundaries. It is important to build upon that communication by reaching out to neighboring communities during the public participation process around any redevelopment proposal affecting the Greater Piedmont Heights area.

Project	**Description**	**Resources**
Master Plan	Consider hiring a consultant to conduct a detailed master plan for the neighborhood that builds on the Blueprints process and report. Or seek Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) funding.	Various consultants
ASAP	Participate in the Atlanta Strategic Action Plan (ASAP) process currently underway. It is intended that the ASAP will reflect "your city, your vision, and your plan." Therefore PHCA should recommend incorporating strategies from this report into the ASAP. The Blueprints report should be viewed as a starting point for interacting with the ASAP rather than as a final plan for the neighborhood.	*City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning* http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/asap.aspx *NPU-F* http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/npu_system.aspx Dianne Olansky, Chair 404-885-9846 olansky@bellsouth.net Doug Young, Planner 404-330-6702 (office) dyoung@atlantaga.gov Conne Ward Cameron, Zoning 404-876-0813 connew@bellsouth.net

Utilize Community Benefits Agreements		Utilize community benefits agreements, as outlined by Georgia Stand-Up, to ensure that infrastructure, design, and additional planning guidelines meet neighborhood specifications. The Piedmont Heights community, and PHCA in particular, should be involved through public participation with any redevelopment proposal, either lot-by-lot, or for entire sub-areas, from the beginning of such a process.	Georgia Stand-Up 404.581.0061 www.georgiastandup.org
2	**Concurrency**	Concurrency addresses community concerns about the neighborhood being overwhelmed by development. The premise behind concurrency is that appropriate development is approved concurrent with the addition of necessary infrastructure improvements. It also means development that overwhelms existing infrastructure without mitigating the impact will not be allowed. Ensure that development does not overwhelm infrastructure capacity by integrating the idea of concurrency into the ASAP.	
3	**Preserve Housing Affordability**	When it comes to housing affordability, the neighborhood should choose to rehabilitate and preserve existing affordable housing while redeveloping housing in such a manner that there is no net loss in affordability. Preservation of existing affordable housing stock is the most viable option due to redevelopment pressures. Preserve affordable housing through the use of inclusionary zoning requirements and/or request BeltLine TAD funds be used to renovate existing affordable housing, build new affordable housing, or subsidize new housing developments where the market price points are above an affordable level.	*Atlanta Development Authority* - Affordable Workforce Housing Builders/Developers: http://www.atlantada.com/buildDev/HousingOppBonds.jsp Owners/Renters: http://www.atlantada.com/buildDev/HomebuyersRenters.jsp Urban Residential Financial Authority (URFA) http://www.atlantada.com/buildDev/residentialPrograms.jsp *Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership* (ANDP) 404.522.2637 www.andpi.org *BeltLine Partnership* – http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/AffordableWorkforceHousing/tabid/1742/Default.aspx *BeltLine TAD* – http://beltline.objectwareinc.com/BeltLineBasics/TaxAllocationDistrict/tabid/1731/Default.aspx *City of Atlanta Bureau of Housing*

			404.330.6390 http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/housingcodecompliance091503.aspx Urban Enterprise Zone Program http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/uez.aspx Multi-Family Housing Program http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/multifamilyhousing_051305.aspx City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning Development Incentives http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/development_incentives.aspx *Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit* http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/toolkit.asp Accessory Housing Units http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=60 Community Benefits Agreements http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=150 Home Loan Assistance – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=155 Inclusionary Zoning – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=62 Incentive Zoning – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=55 Mixed-Income Housing – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=171 Workforce Housing – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=176

4	Pedestrian and Transit-Friendly Urban Design Standards	Piedmont Heights should take advantage of existing urban design guidelines to help achieve the desired pedestrian and transit-friendly neighborhood.

Project	Description	Resources
Quality of Life urban design standards	Implement the quality of life urban design standards required by the BeltLine Overlay District. This would include the creation of ADA accessible sidewalks, greenspace, trails, on-street parking, shared parking, and a mixing of uses whenever feasible.	*City of Atlanta Quality of Life Bond Program* http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/publicworks/dpw_qol_101903.aspx Sandra D. Jennings, P.E. Program Manager Tel: 404.330.6739 publicworks@atlantaga.gov
BeltLine Overlay District	The BeltLine Overlay District is a zoning district created by the City to facilitate the creation of the BeltLine. It strengthens the city's regulatory framework to ensure that the BeltLine vision can be carried out. Rezoning with Piedmont Heights is restricted by the Overlay District. The Overlay District outlines requirements for: building heights, yards, and screening; connectivity and parking requirements; buffers and trails; sidewalks, street trees, street lights, and visibility; landscaping of surface parking lots, curb cuts, bicycle parking; restrictions for on-site surface parking.	*City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning* BeltLine Overlay District Fact Sheet http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/beltline/legislation_fact_sheet.pdf BeltLine Overlay District Ordinance http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/beltline/overlay_amendment.pdf *Atlanta Development Authority* BeltLine Redevelopment Plan http://beltline.objectwareinc.com/Portals/26/Media/PDF/FinalBeltLineRedevelopmentPlan.pdf
MARTA	Contact MARTA to request they update and add MARTA routes to help residents use existing transit options in a more efficient manner.	*MARTA* 404.848.5000
Streetscape Improvements	Plan and implement streetscape improvements throughout Piedmont Heights to make streets pedestrian-friendly and neighborhood in feel. Advoate strenuously for TAD funding for improvements on TAD streets and quality of life funding for sidewalks everywhere.	*City of Atlanta* BeltLine Overlay District Ordinance http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/beltline/overlay_amendment.pdf Quality of Life Bond Program

	Improvements include adding: • Medians • Street trees & planting strips • Benches and other amenities • On-street parking • Sidewalks o Add sidewalks to all neighborhood street frontages that do not currently have a sidewalk. o Require sidewalks along all new street frontages throughout the neighborhood. o Widen and improve sidewalks in key areas. • Crosswalks as needed. o Consider installing mid-block crosswalks at places where pedestrians are naturally	http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/publicworks/dpw_gol_101903.aspx Sandra D. Jennings, P.E. Program Manager Tel: 404.330.6739 publicworks@atlantaga.gov *Atlanta Regional Commission* Livable Centers Initiative http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/308_ENU_HTML.htm *Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit* www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit Flexible Street Design Standards http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=28
Traffic Calming Measures	Implement traffic calming measures where needed and appropriate. Incorporating traffic calming devices along neighborhood streets can enhance the pedestrian environment and prevent cut-through traffic. Traffic Calming Devices include: • Speed humps • Rumble strips • Street trees • On-street parking • Realignment of street lanes • Increasing the number of signalized intersections • Traffic circles	*City of Atlanta* Quality of Life Bond Program http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/publicworks/dpw_gol_101903.aspx Sandra D. Jennings, P.E. Program Manager Tel: 404.330.6739 publicworks@atlantaga.gov *Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit* www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit Increasing Use of On-Street Parking http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/IncreaseOnStpkng.pdf Traffic Calming http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/TrfcCalmng.pdf

		Flexible Street Design Standards http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/FlexStDsgnStnds.pdf
Develop a Parking Plan	An overall parking policy or plan should be created for Piedmont Heights while taking into account the needs and characteristics of the specific subareas. It is important not to encourage and facilitate car-dependent urban design in this subarea when the potential for alternate mode use is so great. • Parking options include: fee-based parking, shared parking, on-street parking, hidden parking (behind buildings), and wrapped and stacked parking (disguised parking garages). • Maximum parking requirements should be limited and good parking demand management techniques should be employed. • Build higher capacity parking near transit-oriented development. • Community Benefits Agreements are a tool for implementing a parking plan.	*Atlanta Regional Commission* Transit Oriented Development Implementation http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xbcr/arc/TOD_TOOL.pdf *City of Atlanta* BeltLine Overlay District Ordinance http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/beltline/overlay_amendment.pdf *Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit* www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit Increasing Use of On-Street Parking http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/IncreaseOnStpkng.pdf Redesigning Off-Street Parking Facilities http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/ReDsgnOffStPkng.pdf Flexible Parking Standards http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/FlexPkngStnds.pdf Shared Parking http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/SharePrkng.pdf TOD Small Area Plans http://www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/Toolkit/Guides/TODSmAreaPlns.pdf
Develop Design Standards and Guidelines	Develop design standards for new development that are consistent with and respectful of existing neighborhood development. • Place density appropriately – place lower density near single-family homes and use moderate	*Workbook for Successful Redevelopment*, www.communityfirstinc.org *Georgia Quality Growth Toolkit* www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit

		density as a buffer between low and high density. • Preserve space for density – identify places where higher densities make sense and preserve those properties. • Require new building to be mixed use in nature where appropriate. • Require a reduction in block size and increase in the number of neighborhood streets (where feasible) as redevelopment occurs to create better connectivity and walkability.	Creative Design for Higher Density – http://www.dca.state.ga.us/toolkit/ToolDetail.asp?GetTool=59
5	**Greenspace Optimization**	Greenspace optimization includes the preservation and improvement of existing greenspace and the acquisition of new greenspace. Under the City of Atlanta Comprehensive Plan, "greenspace" is defined as permanently protected land and water that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with community goals concerning natural resource protection. It is important that greenspace connects into the larger transportation network to increase pedestrian options within the community. To acquire new greenspace, the community will need to either purchase the land outright or obtain a conservation easement from property owners. The major issue in acquiring new greenspace is obtaining the funding to purchase it. Funding will also be crucial in improving existing green areas. Obtain funding to fully implement the Gotham Park Master Plan.	*Atlanta Regional Commission* Green Infrastructure Toolkit http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/arc/hs.xsl/259_ENU_HTML.htm *City of Atlanta* Quality of Life Bond Program http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/publicworks/dpw_qol_101903.aspx Sandra D. Jennings, P.E. Program Manager Tel: 404.330.6739 publicworks@atlantaga.gov *Atlanta Development Authority* Parks & Greenspace http://www.atlantada.com/adaInitiatives/parksGreenSpace.jsp BeltLine TAD http://beltline.objectwareinc.com/Implementation/ParksandGreenspace/tabid/1736/Default.aspx *Georgia Land Conservation Program* http://glcp.georgia.gov/00/channel_title/0,2094,82613131_82969891,00.html
Project		**Description**	**Resources**
Brownfield Remediation		The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines a brownfield as "real property, the expansion,	*Atlanta Development Authority* BeltLine – Brownfield Remediation

	redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Given the number of industrial uses and light industrial uses in the area, including cement plants, rail yards, gas stations, etc., an environmental assessment should be mandated to determine what level of contamination exists on specific sites.	http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/BrownfieldRemediation/tabid/1801/Default.aspx *City of Atlanta Sustainable Brownfield Redevelopment Program* http://www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/brownfields.aspx Planners: Garnett Brown Tel: 404.330.6724 gbrown@atlantaga.gov Michele McIntosh Ross Tel: 404.330.6786 mmcintosh@atlantaga.gov *EPA's Brownfields Tax Incentive Program* http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/html-doc/btaxguid.htm *Georgia EPD's Brownfields Program* http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/brownfields.html

Ansley Mall Subarea

Page Number	Project	Description	Type	Timeframe
21	**Preserve Ansley Forest**	Preserve Ansley Forest as affordable housing.	Housing	Short
20	**Make Streetscape improvements**	Make streetscape improvements to Monroe Drive to make the street a pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood boulevard.	Corridor	Short
20	**Add a median and left turn lanes to Monroe Drive**	Add a median (10-15 feet wide) down the length of Monroe Drive from Montgomery Ferry to the intersection with Piedmont Road. Also add left turn lanes at key intersections along Monroe that are aligned to follow the future proposed grid pattern outlined in the long term vision.	Corridor	Short
20-21	**Pedestrian Improvements**	Implement pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Monroe Drive & Piedmont Road • Add a median and two left turn lanes to Monroe Drive at the intersection with	Pedestrian	Short

		Piedmont Road to aid pedestrian movement. • Use some of the right-of-way from the park across from Smith's Old Bar to widen the sidewalk in front of the block of historic buildings. • Add a median to Piedmont Road		
21	**Construct new trails**	Construct new trails for access to the expanded Piedmont Park and BeltLine. Paths may follow existing streets or they may be created via existing open space.	Ped/Bike	Short
21	**Building frontages**	Insist that new buildings along Monroe Drive have frontages along the street allowing easy pedestrian access and contributing to the neighborhood boulevard character.	Development	Ongoing
23	**Create a block structure for Ansley Mall**	Three new east-west streets should be added during the redevelopment of Ansley Mall to create a new block structure. This grid pattern creates connectivity where it does not currently exist and will mitigate traffic congestion and improve pedestrian access.	New roadway	Long
24	**Create a street behind Ansley Mall**	Create a street behind Ansley Mall that runs parallel to Clear Creek to create a public front to the area as it faces onto the BeltLine. This street will also provide additional congestion relief.	New roadway	Long
24	**Add additional new streets**	Add two streets through Ansley Forest connecting to Morningside Drive. Add a street south of the Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive intersection that runs behind Caribou Coffee connecting to Cumberland Drive.	New roadway	Long
24	**Signalized Intersections**	Investigate the appropriate addition of signalized intersections where the above new streets intersect with existing roadways.	New roadway	Long
Monroe Crescent Subarea				
Page Number	**Project**	**Description**	**Type**	**Timeframe**
27	**Preserve affordable housing**	Develop a strategy to retain Monroe Place and Morningside Courts Apartment complexes.	Housing	Short
29	**Obtain conservation easements**	Obtain conservation easements from WXIA and the American Red Cross to create greenway system throughout Piedmont Heights.	Greenspace	Short
29	**Relinquish ownership**	Relinquish ownership of Gotham Way Park to the City and open it for public	Greenspace	Short

	of Gotham Way Park	access.		
28	**Streetscaping**	Install streetscaping to create a buffer for pedestrians and improve the appearance of the corridor. Short Term: • Gotham Park Drive • Piedmont Circle Long Term: • Along all new roads in the subarea • Armour Drive • Piedmont Avenue	Corridor	Short & Long
28	**Require On-Street Parking**	Require on-street parking: Short Term: • On Gotham Park Drive Long Term: • Along all new roads in the subarea • Armour Drive • Piedmont Avenue	Corridor	Short & Long
28	**Implement Traffic Calming Measures**	Implement traffic calming measures along: • Monroe Drive Install speed humps along: • Rock Springs Road • Wimbledon Drive • Montgomery Ferry Drive	Corridor	Short
27	**Construct Gotham Park Drive**	Build a parallel road south of Monroe Drive that would run from the new residential development on the current Red Cross site, eastward to Piedmont Avenue.	New roadway	Short
28	**Realign Intersections**	• Realign the Montgomery Ferry Drive and Piedmont Avenue intersection into a traditional T-intersection. • Realign the Monroe Drive and Armour Drive Intersection.	Intersection	Short
28	**Add Signage**	• Add signage to direct motorists exiting Buford Highway onto Monroe Drive and Piedmont Avenue. • Add signage to direct motorists through the Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, Cheshire Bridge Road intersection.	Traffic patterns	Short

28	**Realign Exit Lanes**	Realign exit lanes to Monroe Drive from northbound Buford Highway to create two left turn lanes and eliminate the right turn lane from the northbound exit to Monroe Drive.	Realignment	Short
28	**Add Turn Bays**	Add turn bays for motorists turning from southbound Piedmont Avenue to Cheshire Bridge Road and northbound Piedmont Avenue to Piedmont Circle.	New roadway	Short
28	**Improve Signalization**	Improve signalization at the piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, Cheshire Bridge Road intersection and at Rock Springs Road, just south of this intersection.	Traffic patterns	Short
31	**Construct a Median**	Construct a median along Piedmont Avenue with access points at Montgomery Ferry Drive, Rock Springs Road, a future road located just north of Wimbledon Road, Gotham Park Drive, and Armour Drive.	Corridor	Long
31	**Relocate Access Ramps**	Relocate the northbound Buford Highway access ramps to Piedmont Road.	New roadway	Long
31	**Close Exit Ramps**	Close the existing 1960's-style looped entry and exit ramps at northbound Buford Highway and Monroe Drive and build a new northbound access ramp at Piedmont Avenue.	New roadway	Long
32	**Realign Intersection**	Realign the Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue, Cheshire Bridge Road intersection.	Realingment	Long
Armour-Ottley Subarea				
Page Number	**Project**	**Description**	**Type**	**Timeframe**
37	**Create a One-way Access Road**	Create a new one-way access road to Armour Drive from Piedmont Road via a ramp connection to Plaster Bridge Road.	New roadway	Short
37	**Create an Elevated Road and Bridge**	Create a new elevated road and bridge over Peachtree Creek to provide connections with Peachtree Hills via the design center and with Ottley Circle.	New roadway	Short
37-38	**Create New Block Structure**	Create new blocks by building new (small) road in existing spaces between existing buildings.	New roadway	Short
37	**Rework Armour Drive**	Rework Armour Drive to accommodate four lanes of traffic from start to end and add streetscaping and geometric modifications to make it more avenue-like, as it will remain the primary point of access and egress.	Corridor	Short
37	**Encourage**	Encourage the redevelopment of the Rollins/Orkin property with mixed-use	Development	Short

	Redevelopment of Rollins/Orkin	facilities outside the floodplain. Orient infill development along Piedmont Avenue and apply consistent architectural features. Create a public park out of the undevelopable land in the floodplain.		
34	**Swap TAD Parcels**	Consider switching out non-developable BeltLine TAD parcels for developable parcels.	Development	Short
40	**Add a School**	Consider petitioning for a new elementary or middle-school.	Development	Long
41	**Change BeltLine Transit Alignment**	Change the BeltLine transit alignment to run parallel to MARTA before crossing under the bridge at Armour Drive, to ease construction of a multi-modal transfer station, and create more flexibility for adjacent development.	Ped/Bike	Long
41	**Modify the BeltLine Trail Route**	Consider modifying the BeltLine trail route to the alignment depicted in the long term vision, or to travel along Monroe and Armour Drives to enter the subarea.	Ped/Bike	Long
42	**Construct a Multi-Modal Transfer Stations**	Construct a multi-modal transfer station to take advantage of the railroad nexus and increase the carrying capacity of the subarea.	Transit	Long
43	**Create New Blocks**	Divide Plasamour Triangle into two new blocks to break up the current size and irregularity of the block and provide better access to new buildings.	New roadway	Long
43	**Construct a Park**	Construct a park in the middle of Ottley Circle to provide a connection between the suggested lower density residential and higher density mixed-use development.	Greenspace	Long

Appendix A: Community Design Workshops

During the spring of 2007, the Piedmont Heights Steering Committee participated in meetings and a design workshop to identify issues facing the community and desirable solutions. The design workshop allowed participants to 'test' potential solutions to issues identified by the Steering Committee. Georgia Tech provided technical analysis and design and policy recommendations based upon feedback over the course of the steering committee meetings.

Steering Committee Meeting

Blueprints Piedmont Heights
Steering Committee Timeline

December 2006

- Presentation about the Blueprints process to the Piedmont Heights Civic Association board
- Board invites the Georgia Conservancy to bring its Blueprints program to the neighborhood
- Neighborhood residents, area businesses, local developers, civic institutions, city and regional government staff, etc. are invited to participate on the steering committee

January 2007

- First steering committee meeting (1.9.07)
  - Overview of Blueprints
  - Introduction of Georgia Conservancy staff and the Georgia Tech graduate planning and architecture studio students
  - Identification of neighborhood assets and challenges
- Graduate planning studio begins data gathering and initial analysis

February 2007

- Second steering committee meeting (2.13.07)
  - Review and revision of assets and challenges
  - Table discussions of Demographics & Economic Development, Natural Environment, Built Environment, and Transportation data
  - Prioritization of challenges
- Graduate planning studio begins initial policy analysis and urban design conceptualization

March 2007

- Third steering committee meeting (3.1.07)
  - Table discussions of geographic subareas – Armour-Ottley, Monroe Crescent, Ansley Mall Area, and Greater Piedmont Heights
- Graduate planning studio revises policy analysis and urban design conceptualization
- Community-wide design workshop (3.31.07)
  - Presentations of short and long term recommendations for geographic subareas
  - Table discussions and revision of geographic subarea recommendations

April 2007

- Fourth steering committee meeting (4.26.07)
  - Final Georgia Tech studio presentation of short and long term recommendations for geographic subareas

November 2007

- Blueprints Piedmont Heights report release
  - Official release of the Blueprints Piedmont Heights report to the greater community

Appendix B: Assets and Challenges

On January 9, 2007, the Georgia Conservancy and the Piedmont Heights Civic Association hosted the first Steering Committee meeting for *Blueprints* Piedmont Heights. The Steering Committee was an invited group of individuals that included neighborhood residents, local business owners, local institutions, the City of Atlanta, and other government agency staff and elected officials. Much of the meeting was spent in a facilitated discussion of the study area's assets and challenges listed below.

PIEDMONT HEIGHTS AREA ASSETS

People

• Historic resources • 50-year neighborhood history • Diversity of population • Diversity of businesses, • Ansley Mall • Good community meeting facilities and churches • Active civic association – PHCA • Strong NPU • Located next to other strong neighborhoods • Sense of community and neighborhood events • Security patrol • Good workforce housing inventory • Diversity of housing stock

Natural Environment

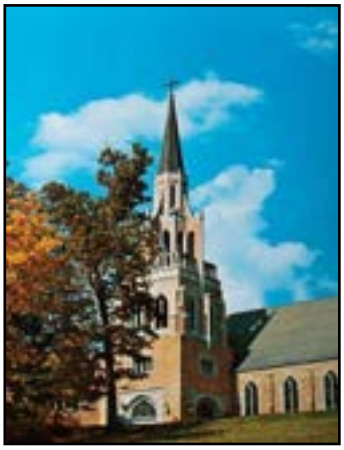
• Gotham Way Park • Creeks and waterways • Large conservation easement in Brookwood Hills • Attractive neighborhood with good tree canopy

Built Environment

• Desirable location – walking distance to amenities • Close to Downtown/Midtown/Buckhead, access to highways • Strong neighborhood public schools within walking distance • Convergence around Ansley Mall and Ansley Square • Underutilized properties offer redevelopment and development opportunities • Large properties with redevelopment potential • Virtually all of the neighborhood falls within BeltLine overlay • Neighborhood perimeter streets and residential cross corridors are eligible for BeltLine TAD funds

Transportation

• Direct access to I-75/85 and GA 400 • MARTA • BeltLine goes under freeway providing connection to Brookwood Hills • BeltLine route runs along neighborhood boundary • Easy access to the BeltLine



Morningside Baptist Church

PIEDMONT HEIGHTS AREA CHALLENGES

People

• Preserving workforce housing • Some non-maintained housing • Not every house is clearly and logically numbered • Affordability of housing is decreasing, currently owner-occupied is unaffordable and rental rates are rising • Undesirable businesses along Cheshire Bridge and Piedmont • Need to strengthen relationship with other neighborhoods • Shortage of police and fire/rescue coverage, especially with increase in density • Lack good name recognition • Need to increase participation in PHCA • Growing problem with transients and associated trash, liquor bottles, etc.

Natural Environment

• Condition of creeks and waterways • Maintaining Gotham Way Park

Built Environment

• Condition of existing sidewalks and lack of sidewalks • Traffic and speeding

• Pedestrian safety • Cut-through traffic • Must do overall planning for neighborhood, especially since residential is not included in TAD • Getting cross-corridor transportation

improvements linked to BeltLine TAD funding • Need streetscapes for cut-through streets to reduce traffic, create identity, and improve walkability • Appropriate integration of development into neighborhood • Need mixed-use to address mobility • Huge billboards • Lack of mixed use developments • Preserving affordable housing • Condition or lack of pedestrian infrastructure

Transportation

• BeltLine – timing of transit and transportation improvements prior to new residential development, how to keep mix of shopping, determining appropriate density • Lack of infrastructure needed to support higher density development • Need for concurrency before higher density development occurs • Need better transportation and transit planning • Need connectivity to all of the resources • Inefficient and unsafe intersection at Piedmont Circle, Piedmont Avenue/Road, and Cheshire Bridge Road • Unsafe access to businesses and neighborhood streets along Piedmont Avenue • Connecting the BeltLine effectively with the neighborhood • Safety along Monroe curve • Safety and access of the Monroe Drive ramps to and from northbound Buford Highway

Piedmont Circle Sidewalk Conditions

PARTICIPANTS

Coordinators

Crystal Jackson Budd, *Georgia Conservancy*
Saskia Benjamin, *Georgia Conservancy*
Debbie Miness, *Georgia Conservancy*
Professor Michael Dobbins, *Georgia Tech*

Blueprints Professional Panel

Georgia Planning Association
Laura Beall, *GRTA*

American Council of Engineering Companies – Georgia
Mark Kilby, *Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.*

American Institute of Architects – Atlanta
Eric Anderson, *Facility Design Group, Inc.*

Blueprints Piedmont Heights Steering Committee

Piedmont Heights Civic Association Board
Rogers Barry
Shay Burdette
Jennifer Cowhig
Jane Gole
Jean Johnson
Baron Jordan
Susan Kanellos
Marty Kleinman
Tom Loveless, Jr.
Joy Morissey
Elaine Murphy
Keely Muse
Sandra Robertson
Bill Seay
Sybil Smith
Diane Weber
Linda Wiant

Neighborhood Residents
Janice Brewer
Barbara Condrey
Rob Cowhig
Jennifer DelBagno
Kim Ellington
Morris Godfrey
Nelida Godfrey
Ril Guptil
Wayne Hoffman
Charlie Jeffries
Alex King
Ross King
Cay Lane
Laughlin McDonald
Patty McDonald
Bryan McGarry
Patty McGin
Kathleen Merten
Irene Seay
Sybil Shier
Patricia Thobe
David Todd
Robert Wanderman
John Warchol
Gloria Linda Wates
George Westinghouse
Barry Wright

Area Neighborhoods
Rod Cook, *Brookwood Hills*
Esther Stokes, *Brookwood Hills*
Alex Summers, *Brookwood Hills*
Sue Olszewski, *Ansley Park*
Julia Emmons, *Morningside Lenox Park*
Kevin Lyman, *Morningside Lenox Park*
Kathie McClellan, *Sherwood Forest*
Corey Richardson, *Peachtree Hills*
Brent Darnell, *Lindridge Martin Manor*
Jane Rawlings, Lindridge Martin Manor
Dan Wintermeyer, *Lindridge Martin Manor*
Diane Olansky, *NPU-F*
Conne Ward-Cameron, *NPU-F*
John Wyle, *Peachtree Creek Greenway Initiative*

Community Businesses & Institutions
Charles Brown, *CRB Realty Associates/Rollins*
Scott Brown, *CRB Realty Associates/Rollins*
Barbara Cheshire, *Rock Springs Presbyterian*
Joseph Cheshire, *Rock Springs Presbyterian*
JoAnn Chitty, *Selig Enterprises*
Brett Duke, *Perennial Properties*
Woody Faulk, *Heritage Preparatory School*
Lee Freeman, *Watkins Associated Industries*
Mary Anne Frolik, *Re/Max Greater Atlanta*
Aaron Goldman, *Perennial Properties*
Merritt Huber, *Carolina Lumber & Supply Co.*
Louis King, *Area Property Owner*
John Ladson, *Gables Residential*
Jeff Landau, *Cowtippers*
Jack McDonough, *Auto Europe*
Davies Owens, *Heritage Preparatory School*
Joel Sasser, *Worthing Southeast*
Bob Walker, *WXIA-TV*
Joe Ward, *Rollins*
Will Ward, *Intown Suites*
Mike Weinstein, *Intown Suites*

Nongovernmental Organizations
Melissa Conrad, *Georgia Stand-Up*
Elizabeth Coyle, *BeltLine Neighbors Coalition*
Chris Nelson, *Piedmont Park Conservancy*
Deborah Scott, *Georgia Stand-Up*

Elected Officials and Agency Staff
Anne Fauver, *District 6 Councilmember*
Gale Walldorff, *District 2 Commissioner*

David Emory, *Atlanta Regional Commission*
Michael Fleming, *Atlanta Bureau of Planning*
Dee Merriam, *Atlanta Bureau of Planning*
Capt. Michael Rogers, *Atlanta Fire & Rescue*
Julie Todd, *Atlanta Dept. of Watershed Mgmt.*
Susan Rutherford, *Dept. of Watershed Mgmt.*

Georgia Institute of Technology

Urban Design Studio, Spring 2007

Jason Chernock
Stephen Conschafter
Dana Habeeb
Jennifer Harper
Kyu Hwang
Xandon Keating
Young Kim
Steve Lewandowski
Jennifer Indech Nelson
Melanie Nelson
Jerry Page
Laurel Paget-Seekins
Sharon Qin
Alexa Stephens
Ada Sung
Talya Trudell
Kai Zuehlke

Blueprints for Successful Communities 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.

The 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 fourteen 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 Piedmont Heights 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.

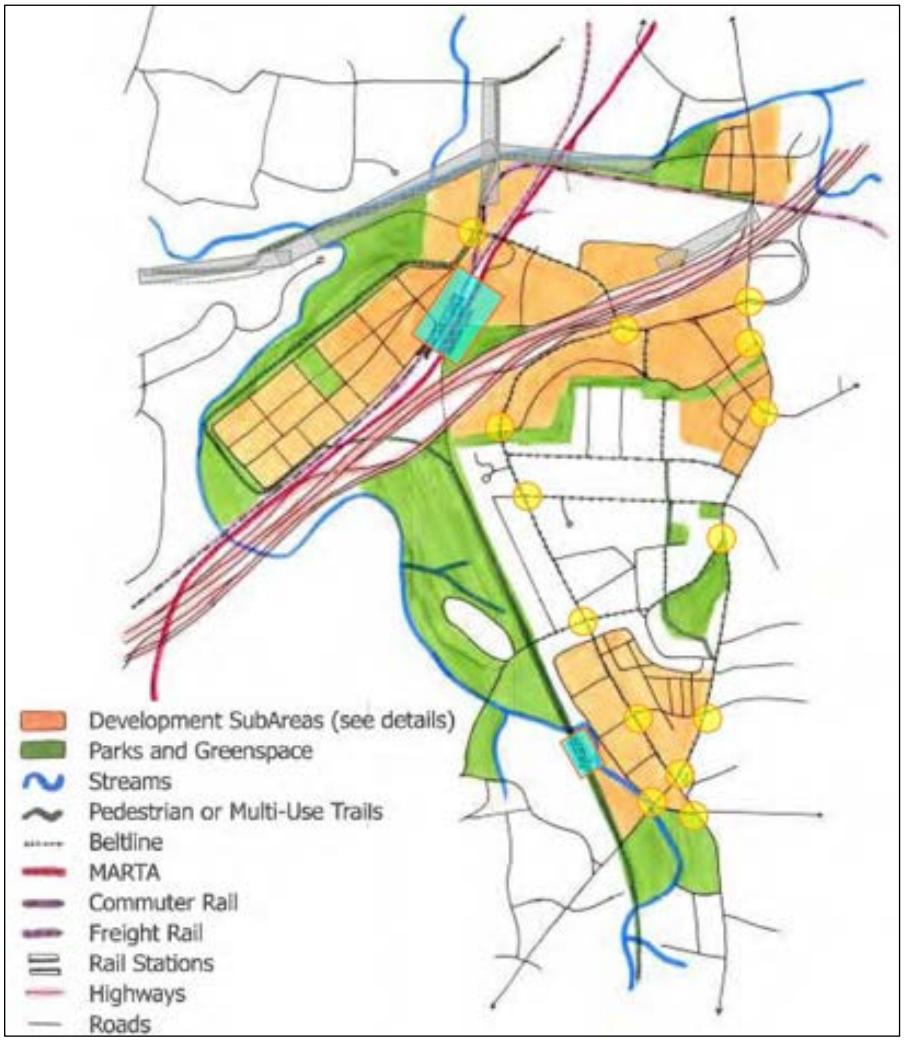
BLUEPRINTS PRINCIPLES

- *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*

GEORGIA CONSERVANCY'S

BLUEPRINTS

FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES



Georgia
CONSERVANCY

Georgia Conservancy
817 West Peachtree Street
Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
404.876.2900