

Inventory & Analysis

Overview

The Plan's recommendations will transform the Howard Property from a residential lot into a passive green neighborhood park. The plan provides for quiet, safe woodland setting with carefully renewed native plantings with an internal trail system that connects to the larger Beltline trail that connects to surrounding neighborhoods.



Upper Lawn in 2007

Park Description and Context

Comprising approximately five acres at 471 Collier Road, the Howard Property is a significant new passive park bounded by Tanyard Creek, Overbrook Drive and Collier Road. Acquired in 2006 to provide the “missing link” for the BeltLine Trail between Tanyard Creek Park and the City of Atlanta’s Bobby Jones Golf Course, the site offers passive opportunities at a neighborhood scale. Trail design by the PATH Foundation, under the auspices of Atlanta BeltLine inc. and the City of Atlanta’s Department of Parks Recreation & Cultural Affairs, was under way spring of 2008.

With the assistance of the Trust for Public Land the land assemblage was completed in 2006. Residential structures on the site were demolished in 2007. This Master Plan is to identify and plan for various landscape works to further clean up the site and make it more useable and maintainable. Members of the community expressed a desire to undertake a master planning exercise to identify opportunities for amenities (seating, secondary pathways, plantings, etc.) and management zones (areas for naturalization, passive open lawn space, garden development, etc.)

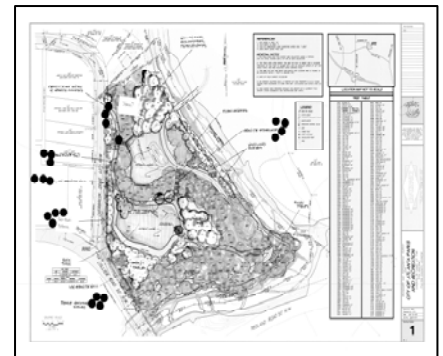
Master Planning Process

The Howard Property Master Plan was announced at the BeltLine Subarea Study Group Meeting of May 5, 2008. After outlining the planning process described below, interested citizens and neighbors were invited to sign up for the Steering Committee. Through emails and telephone conversations and word of mouth, fifteen neighbors representing a range of interests agreed to meet to study the park's future. The set of meetings built on four phases:

1. Program Development The first meeting on May 29, 2008 was convened to review the planning process and to develop a goal statement. The meeting included a first hand site visit as a group.
2. Conceptual Development June 19, 2008, the Steering Committee met for a brainstorming session of concepts. Everyone listed their favorite wants and concerns for the park separately then compiled them into one list as a group. As a concluding exercise, the members tried fitting their favorites onto maps of the site.
3. Preliminary Plan was presented to the committee on July 17, 2008. Each member indicated by placing dots on the preliminary plan, which items were their top two priorities for future implementation.
4. Final Plan was presented and rankings reassessed based on estimated costs.



Group Site Visit along Creek



5. Presentation to NPU C. A display of the draft plan is presented in September and October, 2008 to the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) which represents the larger community.

Meeting minutes are attached in Appendix **cc**

Development of the new park master plan for the Howard Property ran concurrently with the design of the BeltLine Trail. As a result, the plans complement each other.

Existing Conditions

The following conditions at the site were examined:

- Miscellaneous plantings and retaining walls leftover from demolition of the former residence
- Natural systems, including hydrology, forest cover/vegetation, and topographical characteristics;
- Vehicular and non-vehicular circulation, parking, access, walking distances, traffic, connectivity;
- Land use, zoning;
- Potential areas of environmental concern;
- Development and commercial concerns;
- Other recreation, park and trail facilities in the City of Atlanta

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) purchased the approximately five acres from the Howard Family in 2006 as permanent greenspace. At the request by the family and the community, TPL demolished the residence, parking areas, pool, tennis court, guest house and filled a deep well prior to releasing the property to the City of Atlanta. The asphalt driveway, a small patterned concrete pad, a granite retaining wall and a crumbling brick wall remain.



Photo of Howard Family



Flood Plain – January 2008



Asphalt Drive in 2007

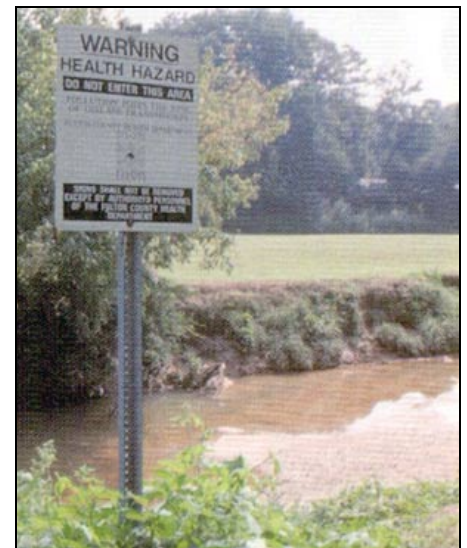
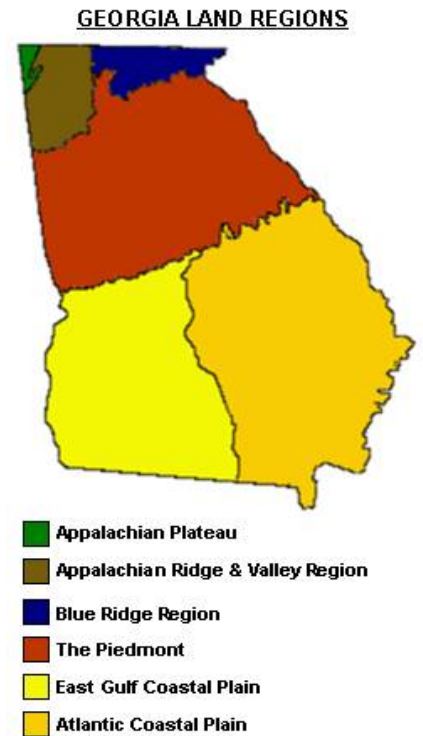
Natural Systems

Physiography

This region of Georgia is known as the Piedmont, which takes its name from Italian *Piedmonte* for foothills. Lying between the southwestern end of the Appalachian mountain chain and the Sandy Coastal Plan, the Piedmont region is recognizable by its rolling hilltops, highly eroded steep slopes and twisting, narrow flood plains. The hill top is relatively flat before falling steeply to the shelf-like floodplain of Tanyard Creek. The crown of the hill lies fifty feet above the creek's northern exit point. The creek enters the site over exposed granite shoals and exists over a sandy gravel bed.

Hydrology

The waters of Tanyard Creek being part of the Chattahoochee River Basin eventually drain to the Gulf of Mexico. Signs warn that it is highly polluted although brim and mallards have been seen in and along the waters. Here the creek plays a major character in the park's appeal, wrapping around the southern and eastern borders of the park. The Creek emerges from under Collier Road Bridge at the southwest corner, flows over granite shoals, makes an acute angle turn and widens and slows over gravelly sand bars as it exits the northwest corner. Its steep banks have been made steeper along the eastern side with broken concrete, rubble granite to prohibit the creek from eroding further. It will be difficult if not impossible to plant among the rocks. The rubble and the pollution markers prohibit entering the waters, so encouraging access to the



Warning of Polluted Creek Water

stream bed by regrading for pedestrian access is not proposed.



Public sewer lines do not exist along the shoulder of the creek. There do not appear to be any wetlands other than a low spot on the hilltop where the back fill of the pool demolition has settled allowing extended ponding to occur. There is no other active water on site other than drain pipes installed by the Howards to collect surface water runoff. The creek floods regularly. Neighbors report that it churns over the shoals, crests the banks and slows as the floodplain widens after the sharp bend. Here the creek has deposited sand and silt over the years. The hundred year floodplain hugs the steep banks until it breaks off to cross this wide area.

Wildlife

This wooded site has been home to ponies and peacocks and various pets of the previous owners. Now native species seen across the creek are beginning to make themselves at home in the restored habitat. Mammals such as fox, raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks have been seen across the creek as well as the occasionally reported coyote. Red tailed hawks and vultures circle above the trees while amphibians like snakes and turtles shift under the leafy forest floor. Mallards have been seen raising their young on the creek waters while fingerling brim wriggle over the sandy shoals. By connecting the existing parkland, this property provides an enriched forest corridor for both human and wildlife communities not usually found within an urban environment.



Photo courtesy of Howard Family



Eastern Box Turtle (Terrapene Carolina)



Toad

Wildlife in the Tanyard Creek Parks' Corridor

(Collier Hills)

Birds

American Goldfinch	Dark-eyed Junco	Red-bellied Woodpecker
American Redstart	Downy Woodpecker	Red-eyed Vireo
American Robin	Eastern Bluebird	Red-headed Woodpecker
Barred Owl	Eastern Phoebe	Redtail Hawk
Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Wood Pewee	Red-winged Blackbird
Black Capped Chickadee	Gray Catbird	Rock Dove(pigeon)
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Great Blue Heron	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak	Great Horned Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Bluejay	Hairy Woodpecker	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Bobwhite	Hooded Warbler	Rufous-sided Towhee
Brown Creeper	House Finch	Savannah Sparrow
Brown Thrasher	House Sparrow	Scarlet Tanager
Brown-headed Cowbird	House Wren	Screech Owl
Brown-headed Nuthatch	Indigo Bunting	Song Sparrow
Cardinal	Kentucky Warbler	Starling
Carolina Chickadee	Kildeer	Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren	Least Bittern	Whip-poor-will
Carolina Wren	Mallard	White Breasted Nuthatch
Cedar Waxwing	Mockingbird	White Eyed Vireo
Chimney Swift	Mourning Dove	WhiteThroated Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow	Piliated Woodpecker	Wood Thrush
Common Crow	Prairie Warbler	Yellow Warbler
Common Flicker	Prothonotary Warbler	Yellow Warbler
Common Grackle	Purple Finch	Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker
Common Nighthawk	Purple Martin	Yellow-Rumped Warbler
Coopers Hawk		

Other Wildlife

American Toad	Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	Red Fox
Beaver	Eastern Newt	River Otter
Black Lizard	Fowler's Toad	Short-tailed Shrew
Brim	Garter Snake	Snapping Turtle
Broad headed Skink	Gray Squirrel	Southern Flying Squirrel
Brown Water Snake	Ground Skink	Southern Leonard Frog
Chameleon	King Turtle	Virginia Opossum
Copperhead	Mole	White-footed Mouse
Coyote	Muskrat	Woodland Vole
Crayfish	Painted Turtle	
Eastern Chipmunk	Raccoon	

Data from Katharine C. Montgomery

Vegetation

Howard Property is heavily forested on its steep slopes with hardwoods. Loblolly pines (*Pinus taeda*) dominate the flatter hilltop areas where farming once occurred. On the lower area grow plants adaptable to the flood plain. The hardwoods which hug the steep slopes are characteristic of the tree canopy of the Piedmont Forests. They consist of oaks (*Quercus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus americana*), tulip poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and sweet gums (*Styracifolia*). A specimen ash (48" in diameter at chest height) stands at the foot of the hill where the asphalt drive dwindles to gravel road accessing the lower areas. Underbrush is a mixture of cultivated species and native plants. Mr. Howard, Sr. was an avid gardener and the hillsides are sprinkled with Hydrangeas, Azaleas, Roses and Daylilies. A specimen Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) in the former lawn commemorates the birth of his daughter.

The Piedmont soils were not very rich and eroded quickly once the forest cover was removed for farming. Before the Civil War, most of the trees had been stripped. The Collier Mill was a landmark in a treeless landscape, observable in contemporary photographs. After the war, as these fields went unplowed, the slow process of reforestation began. Broom sedge reigns in the first five years until seedling pines assume height in the full sunshine. Between ten and thirty years, the pines form a dense mass, but as they age, they drop their lower branches in their pursuit of sunshine. This creates a shady nursery for hardwoods to germinate. Being a tree of a shorter life expectancy, the pines succumb to maladies of old age like insects or storms between fifty and seventy years. Where a pine falls, a hole opens in the canopy for the young hardwoods to take over. The entire process takes about 120 to 150 years.



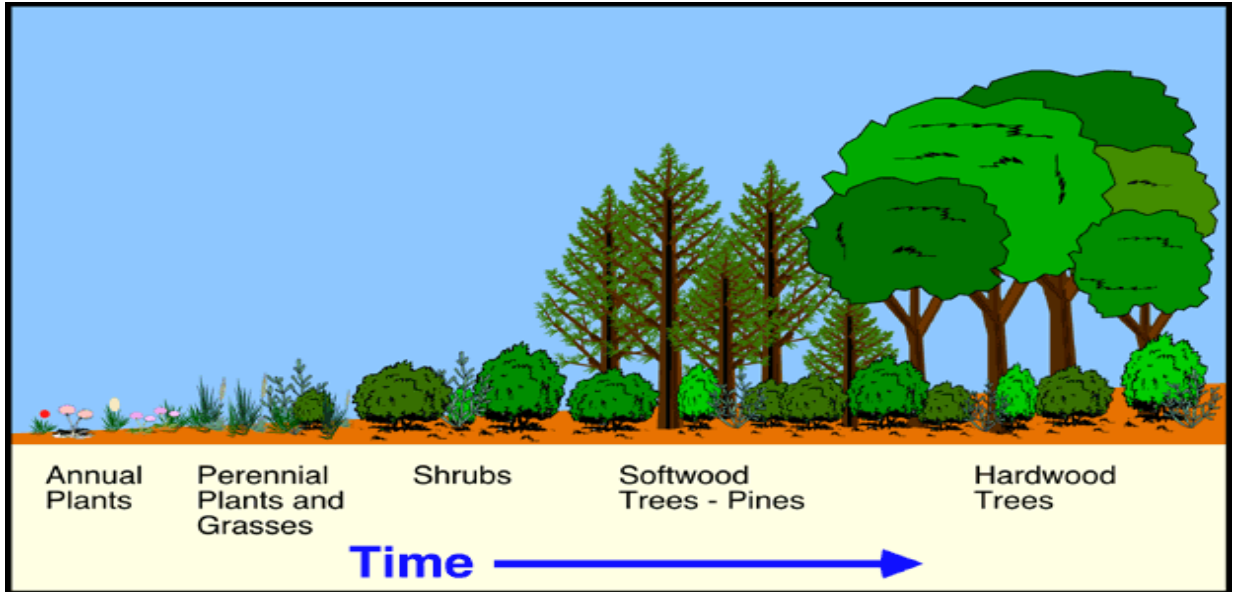
Gravel Driveway along Stream Bank in 2008



Atlanta's landscape circa the Civil War



Hardwood trees growing up under maturing Pines



The story of Succession: How farm land returns to a mature forest

Threatening this story of succession are more aggressive introductions like English ivy and privet which behaving rudely, climb trees and crowd out the native flora underneath. This reduces plant diversity and the growth of hardwood seedlings and saplings, thereby threatening future succession. Kudzu is invading from the north along the creek bank. These interlopers will need to be vigilantly eradicated in order to maintain the woodland character desired by the neighborhood.



English Ivy climbing unchecked

Historical land use

Indians

At the time of contact, the Cherokee were a settled, agricultural people living in approximately 200 fairly, large villages. The typical Cherokee town consisted of 30 to 60 houses and a large council house. Homes were usually wattle and daub, a circular framework interwoven with branches (like an upside-down basket) and plastered with mud. The entire structure was partially sunken into ground. In later periods, log cabins (one door with smoke hole in the bark-covered roof) became the general rule. With a unity made possible by the departure of the more traditional Cherokee to Arkansas, in less than 30 years the Cherokee underwent the most remarkable adaptation to white culture of any Native American people. By 1817 the clan system of government had been replaced by an elected tribal council. A new capital was established at New Echota in 1825, and a written constitution modeled after that of the United States was added two years later.

Many Cherokee became prosperous farmers with comfortable houses, beautiful cultivated fields, and large herds of livestock. Christian missionaries arrived by invitation, and Sequoia invented an alphabet that gave them a written language and overnight made most of the Cherokee literate. They published a newspaper, established a court system, and built schools.

Although the poor Cherokee still lived in simple log cabins,



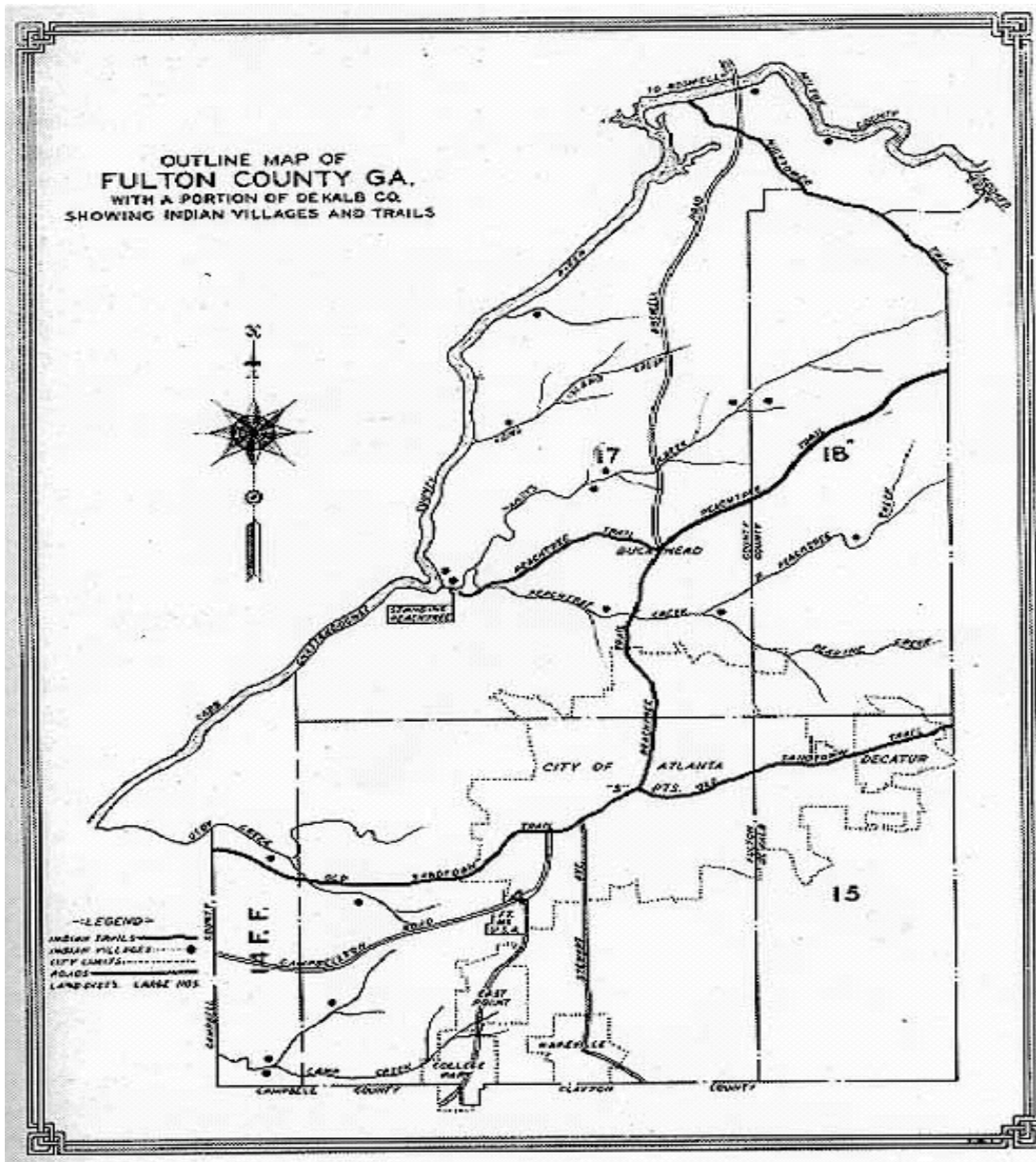
Wattle and Daub Home



Cherokee Woman and Child

Chief John Ross had a \$10,000 house designed by a Philadelphia architect. In fact, many Cherokee were more prosperous and 'civilized' than their increasingly envious white neighbors.

With the election of Jackson as president in 1828, the Cherokee were in serious trouble. Gold was discovered that year on Cherokee land in northern Georgia, and miners swarmed in. By 1838, the last of the Cherokee who did not escape into the mountains or mixed marriage, left for Oklahoma in the Trail of Tears. (www.tolatsga.org/Cherokee)

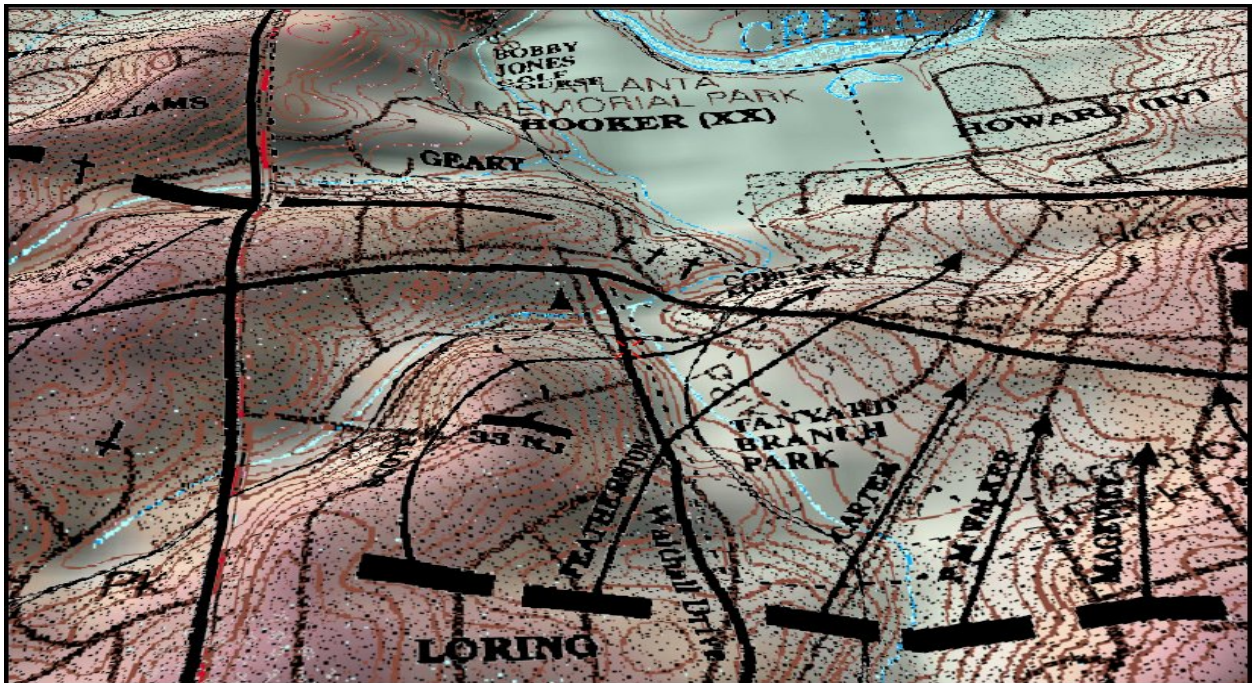


Collier Mill

An antebellum grist mill built by Andrew Jackson Collier (1827-1887) stood on the east bank of Tanyard creek, across from the end of the gravel drive, 150 down hill from the marker at the corner of Redland Road and Collier Road. A grist mill usually had two mill stones, one stationary and one grooved, moving stone attached to the turning axel. Water contained by a dam straddling the creek just below today's concrete bridge turned the wheels to grind wheat or corn into flour. Mills were often a focus of social activity as the Collier family allowed their farming neighbors to use the grist mill in return for a portion of the flour, known as a "miller's toll". The mill was a local landmark. On the sultry afternoon of July 20, 1864, the Battle of Peachtree Creek raged around it.



A typical wooden mill



Civil War

The Confederate General planned to attack the Union army as it crossed Peachtree Creek, when it would be split by the swollen creek, but his timing was late. When the southern army arrived two hours later than planned, the Union army was already across and entrenched on the high ground. General Hood still chose to fling his army into battle and the casualties were cruel. By sunset over 6,000 bodies littered the hillsides as the rebels retreated to resume fighting in two days to save the city of Atlanta, several miles to the south.

Across Collier Road in the Tanyard Creek Park Parking lot, five brass plaques describe the battle's terrible desecration.



Wooden grave markers

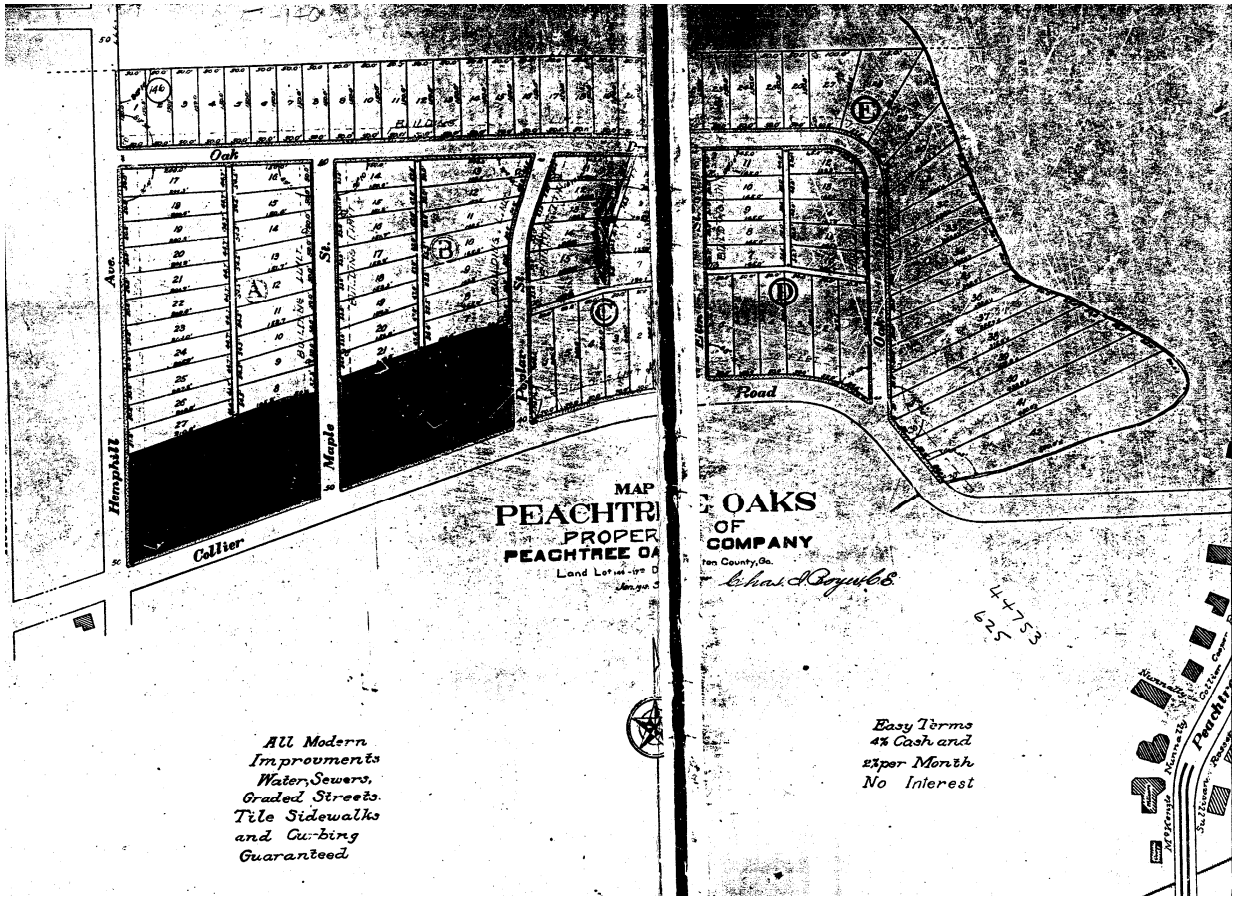
Collier Hills Development

Thirty-five years after the 1864 battle, a federal bill proposed turning a huge area, from Peachtree Street and Collier Road to Chattahoochee Boulevard and West Wesley, into a national park. The bill passed through the U.S House of Representatives but was eventually defeated. Kennesaw Battle Field was selected instead. A few years later, Mayor Isaac Ragsdale reported to the Atlanta City Council the need for moving the Peachtree Creek sewage system to a more remote location as it was no longer remote and "quite offensive."

At the time, the sewage plant was located just south of Peachtree Creek and east of Northside Drive on what is now Bobby Jones Golf Course. Fortunately for Collier Hills, the sewage plant was moved to its current location at Bolton Road in the 1930s. (Haynes Manor website).



The former Howard Family home at 471 Collier Road



The property was originally platted as lots 35-42 in the Peachtree Oaks Subdivision. Overbrook Drive is shown as "Oak Drive". Although the lots had been combined into a single family residence for over eighty years, a new owner could legally subdivide the land into over ten lots for new homes. Louise Howard choose to avoid this by turning her homestead into a public greenspace.

Howard Family

In the 1920's, a doctor built the Georgian brick home with Spanish tile roof and a network of goldfish ponds, complete with cascading water pumped from Tanyard Creek. Vestiges of the ponds and stone trails still tumble down the steep slope below the patio. For a brief period in the 1950's, the home was a boarding house, renowned for the largest moonshine bust in the city. In 1963, James W. Howard, Sr. purchased the home for his growing family.

The eldest son, Jim, has fond memories of growing up at 471 Collier Road. He says it was a wonderful place to be a kid. He, his sister Anne and younger brother, John, roamed the neighborhood. A doll house sat on the concrete square behind the main house and a huge tree house beyond that. The guest house expanded over the years, changing architectural styles with the times. For over 50 years, an original boarder, Fae Allen, stayed with the Howard family in the basement of the guest house until the late 1990's. When the kids were not swimming in the pool or playing tennis, they were fishing in the creek or riding their ponies. During high school, Jim remembers early mornings corralling their flighty peacocks, feeding the ponies and the family goat.

Howard, Sr. worked for several years for the Georgia-Pacific Company before starting the Howard Lumber Company in 1952. In the 1960's, the Atlanta Hardwood Company became the sales arm for the Howard Company. He opened a second plant in Huntersville, North Carolina in 1966 and, today, the Howard family still runs the family business with ten facilities specializing in Appalachian hardwoods. Jim Sr. expressed his love for trees and nature by planting many azaleas, hydrangeas and trees on his property. Flower beds and a rose garden flanked the pool behind the main house and mountain laurel surrounded a rustic gazebo near the creek below the



The Howard family at home at 471 Collier Road



Doll House



Tree house and doll house beyond Anne Howard on the patio.

bridge. His wife, Louise, shared his passion for trees and the love of the outdoors. She and her family were averse to subdividing their property. Instead, they chose to preserve the family home place perpetually as a park. In memory of their idyllic childhood, engaging personalities of their parents, and Atlanta's increasing need for green space, the Howard family trusts you will enjoy a little peaceful respite in the midst of a bustling city.

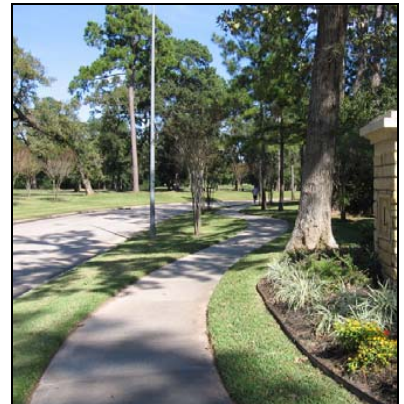
Transportation and Circulation

The park is bounded on two sides by residential, two-lane roads with granite curbs. Collier Road is a collector road which connects Peachtree Road and Northside Drive. Overbrook Drive is a shortcut between Collier Road and Northside Drive, especially used during rush hours when traffic congestion is a notable issue on Collier Road when vehicles stack up to the park bridge from the traffic light at Northside Drive. MARTA does not provide bus service along Collier Road on Peachtree and Howell Mill Roads. No MARTA rail stations are within walking distance.



Collier Road seen from Property

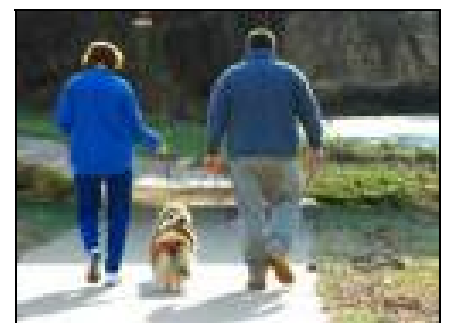
Pedestrian access is via sidewalks and the trail. Concrete sidewalks are flush to the street with curb cuts and colored texture patterns at the corners to meet ADA code. On Collier Road, the sidewalk runs from the Bridge, crosses Overbrook Drive and continues toward Northside Drive. On Overbrook Drive the sidewalk is across from the park. Bicycle access will be primarily along the BeltLine trail although commuting cyclists may continue to brave the faster vehicles on the roads. The PATH Foundation, under the auspices of Atlanta Beltline Inc., and the City of Atlanta's Department of Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs is implementing this multi-use trail. The trail joins Tanyard Creek Park with Bobby Jones Golf Course in Atlanta Memorial Park.



Sidewalks

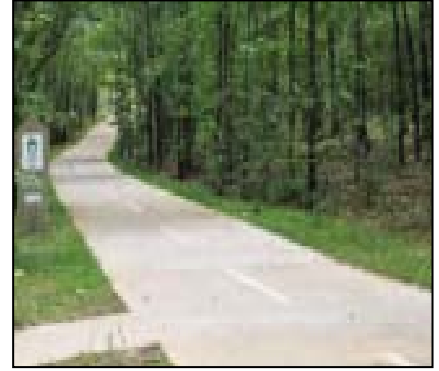
Circulation and the Larger Community

This property was acquired to provide a connection between Atlanta Memorial Park to Tanyard Creek Park and Ardmore Park and the proposed BeltLine. The civic associations for both Collier Hills and



Multi-use Trail

Collier Hills North voted in favor of the acquisition with the understanding that the property would be preserved for passive use only, but including trail connectivity for the Beltline. The Master Plan process was intended to coordinate improvements in the park in a timely manner with construction of the BeltLine trail which was already funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and under design. As a multi-use recreational trail, the pathway itself was designed as a concrete surface. At a twelve foot width, it was a reduction from the standard BeltLine Trail width of fifteen feet due to the need to minimize tree impacts.



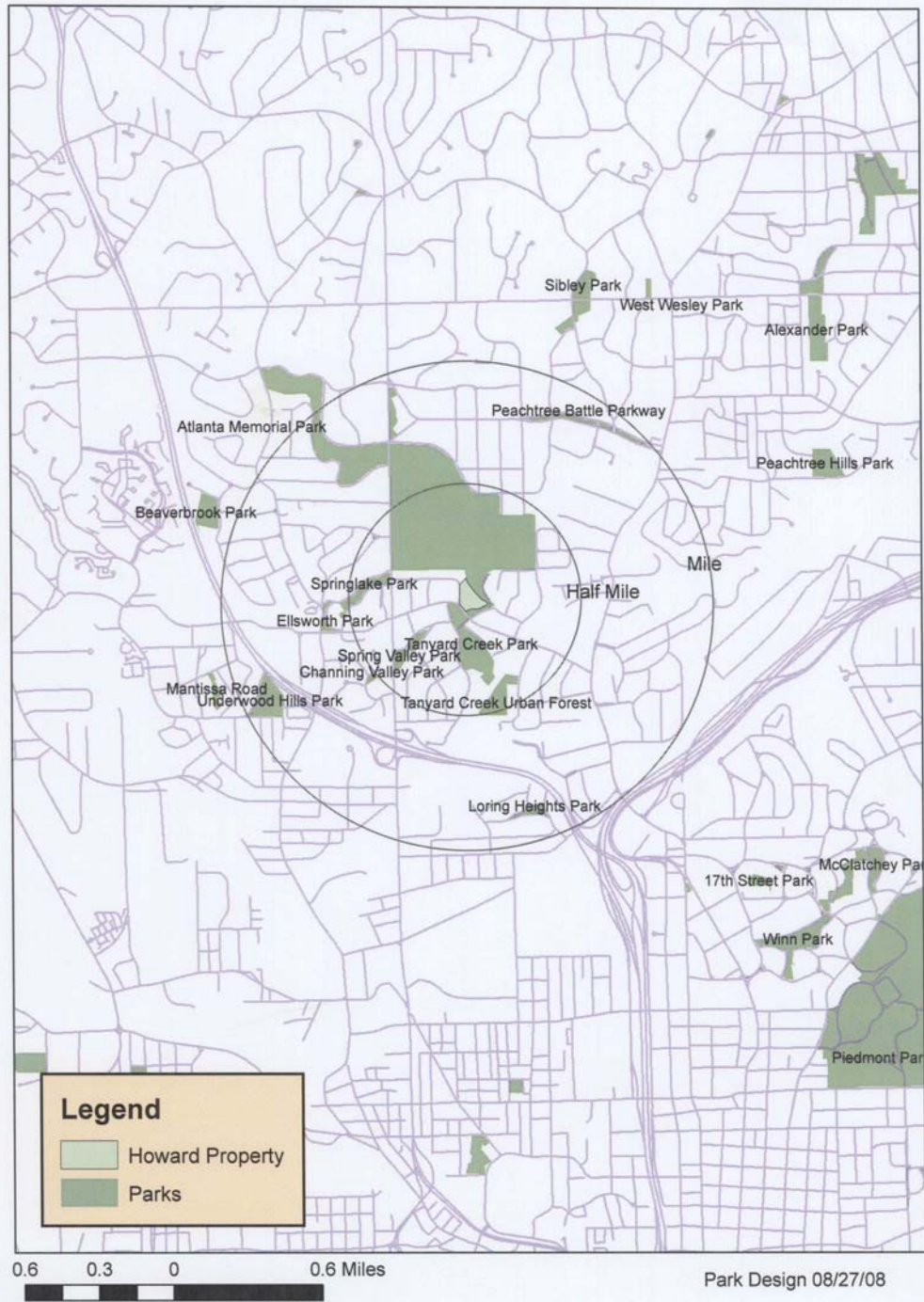
Typical 12 foot wide concrete multi-use trail

Traffic calming was discussed as a safety issue concerning residents. Overbrook Drive is a neighborhood street between Collier Road and Northside Drive. Speeding traffic has an effect on pedestrian access to the park. Therefore, the primary entrance was located near the corner of Overbrook Drive and Collier Road where there are sidewalks and a cross walk. A secondary entrance further along Overbrook Drive will mean a Mid-Block crossing which is not usually marked and would be for the convenience of the nearby neighbors.



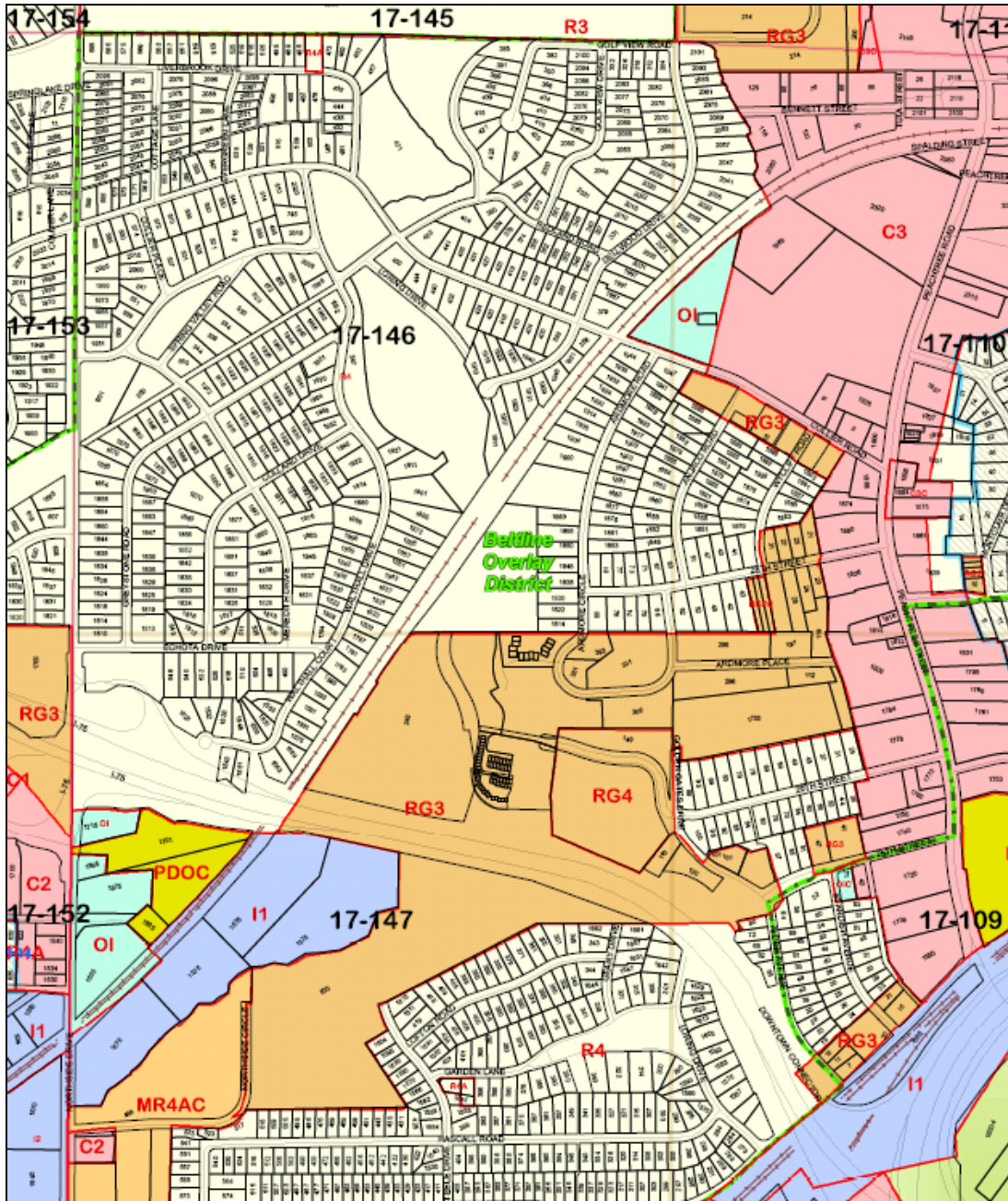
Traffic on Collier Road, looking south.

Howard Property Area



Nearby Parks

Adjacent Land Use and Zoning



- Yellow = Single Family Residential
- Orange = Multi Family Residential
- Blue = Industrial
- Aqua = office
- Puce = Planned Development

Adjacent land uses:

The land uses around the Howard Property are primarily single-family residential and park use. The residential is a single-use zone typical of a suburban land use pattern and lacking a street grid. Multifamily developments are located on nearby Peachtree Road, including Colonial Homes Apartments. This is a stable residential area that experiences changes in increments of one lot at a time. Primary development is expected when the active railroad line in the Northeast quadrant of the BeltLine is rerouted.



Piedmont Hospital

Civic Land Use

Civic land uses near this park include Piedmont Hospital and other park lands. Atlanta Memorial Park, a regional park of 199 acres, includes Bobby Jones Golf Course and Bitsy Grant Tennis Centers.

Civic land uses do not include any public schools within walking distance.



Bobby Jones Golf Course

Community Demographics

The surrounding neighborhoods, according to City of Atlanta NPU data based on 2000 Census, is a homogenous, stable community of young adults without children. The majority have attained at least a college degree if not higher. Over three-quarters of its residents are between the ages of 25 to 44 and are white. Over 90% of the homes are occupied and have one or two person households. Young families seem to move out of the neighborhood seeking larger houses, usually around the birth of the second child. This especially seems to apply more to the older cottage style homes.

PARK NAME	ACREAGE
Ardmore	1.74
Atlanta Memorial	199
Howard	5
Tanyard	14.5
TOTAL	220.24

One census map from the City's Planning Department predicts that this census tract will grow by 500 to 2,000 persons by the year 2030. This is a slow rate compared to the rest of Atlanta.

Nearby Parks

City of Atlanta Recreational Facilities Proximate to Howard Property			
<i>Within .5 mile</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Ardmore	Block	Ardmore Rd NW	6.8
Atlanta Memorial (Bobby Jones Golf, Bitsy Grant Tennis)	Regional	384 Woodward Way NW	199
Springlake	Conservation	Norfleet & Springlake Rd.	5.2
Tanyard Creek	Neighborhood	Walthall	14.5
Spring Valley	Conservation	Spring Valley Rd & Meridith Dr. NW	3.55
<i>Within 1 Mile</i>			
Atlanta Memorial (Playground)	Regional	384 Woodward Way NW	199
Beaverbrook	Neighborhood	Beaverbrook Dr.	6.8
Channing Valley	Block	Channing Dr. & Sunbury Pl. NW	0.58
Ellsworth	Garden	Howell Mill Rd and Collier Rd.	1.27
Loring Heights	Block	Loring Dr.	1.9
Peachtree Battle	Garden	Peachtree Battle Ave.	4.22
Underwood	Neighborhood	1845 Harper St. NW	10.7