

**Northside Drive Corridor Study**  
**Final Report – DRAFT B**



**The City of Atlanta**



July 2005

# Northside Drive Corridor Study – Final Report

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The City of Atlanta



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**DRAFT B, July 2005**

## **About This Report and Other Products of the Study**

This document is the final report of the Northside Drive Corridor Study and contains a full description of each phase of the Study. The organization of the report matches the chronological execution of the study process: the first section describes the existing conditions, issues and opportunities of the corridor and study area, the second section describes the study methodology, the third describes the study recommendations, and the final section gives details of the recommended action plan. The Appendix contains detailed information which may be useful as a reference, but would not ordinarily be read as primary material of the study.

In addition to this report, several other documents are available:

**Northside Drive Plan Overview** – This is a 4-page color brochure that gives a general overview of the Plan and its recommendations. It is appropriate for a general audience as an introductory overview of the Plan and its recommendations.

**Northside Drive Corridor Study Recommended Projects** – This is a concise listing of recommended projects taken from the Implementation section of the full report.

### **Obtaining these Products**

All study documents and other materials are available on the Internet from the Bureau of Planning web site:

<http://www.AtlantaGA.gov/government/planning/burofplanning.aspx>

Look for the link to Northside Drive Corridor Study.

In addition, library copies are available at the Bureau of Planning, City Hall, 55 Trinity Ave. SW, Suite 3350, Atlanta, GA 30303. These copies can be reviewed at the Bureau of Planning and individual pages may be copied in black and white for a slight fee.

A small number of for-sale copies of the plan will be produced and made available through the Bureau of Planning after the plan has been approved by the Atlanta City Council and Mayor. These copies include all color maps.

### **For More Information**

For additional information on this study, contact the Bureau of Planning, City Hall, 55 Trinity Ave. SW, Suite 3350, Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 330-6145.

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Appendix B. Demographic Projections

Appendix C. Roadway Cost Estimates

Appendix D. Zoning Recommendations



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Northside Drive serves a diverse set of travel needs generated by a dynamic blend of urban land use contexts. It is both a regional travel route connecting residential North Atlanta to the heart of the City, and a local street connecting Atlanta University Center students to their residences. While it is home to the Georgia World Conference Center (GWCC), one of the largest convention complexes in the world, it is also surrounded by historic residential neighborhoods and small businesses. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges to developing a unified and powerful vision of future land use and transportation improvements in the corridor.

Today, Northside Drive is characterized by several different land use and urban design contexts. Near I-75, the corridor is dominated by low-rise office parks set far back from the street along with a hilly topography. Further south near 14th Street, the corridor context changes to small retail businesses located in strip commercial centers and single-family residential neighborhoods. South of Marietta Street, large amounts of vacant land and older industrial warehouse buildings define the corridor. At Simpson Street, the character of the corridor again changes, as large event facilities and multi-family affordable housing residents and apartment complexes that support the Atlanta University Center dominate it.

At the same time, Northside Drive serves many transportation needs that grow more demanding each day. Among the most pressing are serving the burgeoning development adjacent to the corridor including Atlantic Station, the Georgia Aquarium, several residential complexes that are under construction and Georgia Tech's expanding campus.

The diversity of land use contexts, and level of transportation need requires future transportation solutions that are multi-modal in nature, so that the unique travel demands of the corridor can be satisfied, without negatively impacting the quality of existing neighborhoods or reducing the potential for additional development activities. For these transportation solutions to be effective they must be linked to good urban design that will maximize corridor functionality, not just as a transportation facility, but also as a destination within the City of Atlanta.

Based on the variety of land uses, ongoing development activity, and increasing travel demand, the city of Atlanta has identified the Northside Drive corridor from I-75 North to I-20 West as a priority for meeting travel needs within the city and the region. Northside Drive is a major urban arterial and is also both a U.S. Highway and a Georgia State Route. In addition, the corridor is currently a focal point for redevelopment activity on the west side of the city. It is anticipated that major redevelopment projects will continue to take place in the corridor well into the future. A coordinated effort to accommodate and plan for future growth and its impact on the transportation system from a combined land-use and transportation planning perspective is critical.





## 1.1 Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the existing transportation infrastructure and develop alternative land-use and transportation scenarios for the corridor. Recommendations for future development and transportation scenarios will support the Regional Development Plan (RDP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), both of which are produced by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

## 1.2 Study Area

The study area runs along Northside Drive from I-75 at the north end to I-20 at the south end. The study area is illustrated in Figure 1-1.

### 1.2.1 Study Area Zones

Given its length and diversity of uses, the study area was divided into five zones for detailed analysis. The zones, which are shown on Figure 1-2, are as follows:

- **Deering Road Zone** is defined as the portion of Northside Drive from I-75 to 17<sup>th</sup> Street. It is characterized by three major office developments and a series of small retail and service-oriented business. Berkeley Heights, a mixed-use retail and apartment project is currently under construction at the entrance of the Corridor at I-75. The well-established Loring Heights and Berkeley Park neighborhoods are in this zone;
- **10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone** is defined as the portion of Northside Drive from 17<sup>th</sup> Street to Marietta Street. It is characterized by the Home Park neighborhood that abuts Northside Drive. This zone also serves as a major entrance into the Atlantic Station development at 17<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets. Prospective land uses in this zone are heavily influenced by Midtown, which lies to the east of the I-75/I-85 Connector. Georgia Tech is also a major influence in this zone;
- **North Avenue Zone** is defined as the portion of Northside Drive from Marietta Street to Simpson Street. It is in this Zone that Northside Drive jogs to the west and then to the east which is very confusing to first time travelers. It is characterized as an area of recent revitalization and will continue to attract future commercial and multi-family development. Northyards Business Park is a large development containing rehabbed office space. The Georgia Tech North Avenue Research Campus is also a major development in the Zone that continues to expand. Antioch Baptist Church North is engaged in a major redevelopment along Northside Drive with the Gateway apartments as a first phase in a larger mixed-use redevelopment by the Church. New residential and mixed-use development is occurring along the Marietta Street corridor in the zone. Large vacant parcels are available in this Zone which should attract additional major development;



**Figure 1-1: Study Area**

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- **Vine City MARTA Zone** is defined as the portion of Northside Drive from Simpson Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard (“MLK”). It includes the Vine City neighborhood to the west with substantial developable land currently being used as parking for Dome and Georgia World Congress Center (“GWCC”) events directly on Northside Drive. In addition, the GWCC is constructing a major surface parking facility at the northeast corner of the intersection of Simpson Avenue and Northside Drive and is seeking state funding for a new parking deck on land it owns at the southwest corner of the intersection. The recently expanded GWCC has a secondary entrance on Northside Drive as well as a number of surface parking lots. This zone also includes the Historic Westside Village which is about to begin a second major phase with a new development team working with the Atlanta Development Authority; and
- **McDaniel Street Zone** is defined as the portion of Northside Drive from Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Boulevard to I-20. It is characterized by the substantial renovations and new construction occurring in the Castleberry Hill area, major developments associated with the Atlanta University Center members—Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Morehouse College and School of Medicine, and Clark-Atlanta University, and the redevelopment of several public housing projects into the mixed-income communities of Castleberry Hill and College Town.

### 1.3 Study Process

The study process included extensive public and agency involvement and technical analysis as illustrated in Figure 1-3. Two steering committees were developed to guide the study. The Core Team was made up of stakeholders including neighborhood leaders and institutional representatives. The Agency Team was composed of all of the regional and local agencies with an interest in the corridor.

The study process progressed through three primary phases. The first phase involved establishing the study need and purpose statements based on an analysis of existing and future conditions. The second phase focused on the development of transportation and land use scenarios for consideration through the evaluation process. Last was the evaluation of the scenarios and the crafting of final recommendations. During this phase qualitative and quantitative data on the potential future impacts of the scenarios was generated and reviewed with the public and steering committees.

The public involvement process included five general public meetings at key study milestones. The public was also involved through presentations at neighborhood meetings, a traveling information booth and a study newsletter. The Core Team met four times and the Agency Team met three times.



**Figure 1-2: Study Area Zones**

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**Figure 1-3: Study Process**

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## 2.0 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and document existing issues and opportunities in the study area. The issues and opportunities are grouped into the following major topic areas:

- Real Estate Development;
- Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design;
- Transportation; and
- Previous Plans and Studies.

These topic areas are addressed in detail throughout the chapter, and major observations for each area are provided at the conclusion of the corresponding section. The review of current conditions results in a baseline for further analysis. Ultimately, the inventory culminates in the Need and Purpose section of this chapter, which identifies and documents unmet needs for the Northside Drive Corridor. Later in the study process, these needs will form the basis for the evaluation of alternatives.

### 2.1 Real Estate Development Trends

This section provides an overview of current real estate development trends in the study area. A discussion on demographics, as well as a review of future population and employment projections in the study area is included. The focus of this section is on trends in the residential, office, and retail sectors.

#### 2.1.1 Overview Of Current Development Conditions

The Deering Road Zone is characterized by three major office developments and a series of small retail and service-oriented business. Berkeley Heights, a mixed-use retail and apartment project is currently under construction at the entrance of the corridor at I-75. The well-established Loring Heights and Berkeley Park neighborhoods are also in this zone.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone is characterized by the Home Park neighborhood, which abuts Northside Drive and the Atlantic Station development. Midtown, to the east of the Downtown Connector, heavily influences prospective future uses in this zone. Georgia Tech is also a major influence on this zone.



*The Northside 75 office park Northside/Bellemeade*

The North Avenue Zone is characterized as an area of recent revitalization and will continue to attract future commercial and multi-family development. Northyards Business Park is a large



development containing rehabbed office space. The Georgia Tech North Avenue Research Campus is also a major development in the zone that continues to expand. Antioch Baptist Church North is engaged in a major redevelopment along Northside Drive with the Gateway apartments as a first phase in a larger mixed-use redevelopment. New residential and mixed-use development is occurring along the Marietta Street corridor in the zone. Large vacant parcels are available in this zone, which should attract additional major development.

The Vine City MARTA Station Zone includes the Vine City neighborhood to the west with substantial developable land currently being used as parking for Dome and Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) events directly on Northside Drive. In addition, the GWCC is constructing a major surface parking facility at the northeast corner of the intersection of Simpson Avenue and Northside Drive and is seeking state funding for a new parking deck on land it owns at the southwest corner of the intersection. The recently expanded GWCC has a secondary entrance on Northside Drive as well as a number of surface parking lots. This zone also includes the Historic Westside Village, which is about to begin a second major phase with a new development team working with the Atlanta Development Authority.

The McDaniel Street Zone is characterized by the substantial renovations and new construction occurring in the Castleberry Hill area, major developments associated with the Atlanta University Center members - Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Morehouse College and School of Medicine, and Clark-Atlanta University, and the redevelopment of several public housing projects into the mixed-income communities of Castleberry Hill and College Town.

### 2.1.2 Findings

Recent trends indicate a resurgence of development along Northside Drive and the western portion of the City of Atlanta. With increasing land costs in Midtown and Downtown, developers have been attracted to this corridor. In addition, the activity from large corporate and institutional entities such as Georgia Tech, as well as large scale developments including the Georgia Dome, GWCC, Northyards Business Park, and Atlantic Station have drawn attention to this corridor.



*The M Street Development at Marietta/Northside*

Simultaneously, the residents of the corridor have created detailed redevelopment plans for large areas including Vine City, English Avenue, Bankhead Highway and the Marietta Street Corridor. Major investments by the Atlanta Development Authority and the Atlanta Housing Authority with its development partners have begun the transformation of large areas of the corridor into new mixed-use developments. Major religious and educational institutions such as Antioch Baptist Church North and the Atlanta University Center have undertaken initiatives to attract new development into the area.





The H.J. Russell Company, with a long history in the neighborhood, and a new wave of developers and investors have made substantial investments in the corridor during the past decade and are poised to continue that investment in the near future.

Overall, the Northside Drive Corridor is experiencing an increase in office and business park demand stimulated by the significant new investment occurring along the corridor. This trend is expected to continue with the on-going development of Atlantic Station, and further development by Georgia Tech, the Atlanta University Center, and other major landowners.



*The GWCC is a major institution in the corridor*

Retail development is beginning to evolve with the addition of Atlantic Station, which will draw regional shopping as well as numerous residential projects creating demand for neighborhood shopping centers. The Atlantic Station development will bring 1.7 million square feet of new destination retail into the corridor, including the first IKEA home furnishings store in the southeast.

The Northside Drive Corridor is poised for the most significant period of new development in the past fifty years.

### **2.1.3 Demographics**

The demographic characteristics of the corridor reflect the diversity of the City of Atlanta and its recent growth trends. The population is rapidly growing and combines a preponderance of young, single, well educated but moderate income renters, with an established base of low income, older homeowners and renters who have lived in the area for a long time.

In 2004, 41,031 people lived in the study area, which represents approximately 10 percent of the population of the City of Atlanta. (See Appendix A, Exhibit 1.) Population growth in the corridor was slightly stronger than the City of Atlanta during the 1990s, but has substantially outpaced the City’s rate of gain since 2000. Both the City of Atlanta and the corridor are anticipated to grow at a significantly slower rate than the Atlanta MSA, which continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the nation.

The corridor is racially diverse, consistent with citywide trends. The majority of residents are African-American (53 percent), which is only slightly lower than the proportion of African-Americans in the city as a whole (58 percent). Whites account for 36 percent of the population in the corridor versus 35 percent citywide.





In 2004, 11,781 households were reported in the study area, which represents approximately 7 percent of the households in the City of Atlanta. (See Appendix A, Exhibit 1.) Household growth in the corridor was virtually non-existent during the 1990s, but has increased modestly since 2000, and is expected to grow at a similar rate as the city between 2004 and 2009. Household growth has been minimal in comparison to that experienced by the Atlanta MSA.

While the median age of the populations are fairly similar, the corridor has a large percentage of 18 to 24 year olds, 42 percent, compared to 12 percent in the City and 9 percent in the MSA. Nearly 60 percent of the population in the corridor is between 18 and 34 years of age. This is likely due in part, to the location of numerous higher educational institutions within the corridor.

Residents in the corridor combine a fairly high proportion of college graduates (20 percent) with a substantial number of residents who did not complete high school (26 percent). This reflects both the substantial poverty among a portion of the residents of the area combined with its proximity to some of the regions' major universities.

Occupationally, residents of the corridor reflect citywide trends, with a significant portion of residents in professional and management occupations, 39 percent, compared with 41 percent in the city and 38 percent for the MSA.

Average household size in the corridor, 2.2 persons per household, is slightly smaller than the 2.3 in the City and 2.7 in the MSA. This is due in part to the preponderance of one-person households - 43 percent in the corridor compared to 39 percent in the city and 23 percent in the MSA. The corridor reports a very low percentage of married persons, 15 percent compared to 24 percent in the City and 52 percent in the MSA.

Household incomes are significantly lower in the corridor in comparison to the City and MSA. The median household income in the corridor is \$24,618, compared to the City median of \$39,550 and the MSA's of \$58,250. The corridor's income represents 62 percent of the City's and 42 percent of the MSA's. Only 10 percent of corridor households have income over \$100,000, compared with 22 percent in the MSA and 18 percent in the City. Within the corridor 35 percent of households have incomes of less than \$15,000, compared to 23 percent in the City and 10 percent in the MSA.

A very high proportion of corridor households (78 percent) are renters compared to the City (56 percent) or the MSA (34 percent). This relates to the relatively fewer single-family housing units available in the corridor, 33 percent, compared to 47 percent in the city and 67 percent in the MSA.

### **2.1.3.1 Housing**

Housing units are relatively old, renter-occupied and consist primarily of multi-family units. While the median value of homes is substantially higher than the MSA, the corridor has more than twice the percentage of homes below \$80,000 as the MSA.



Multi-family housing dominates in the corridor with 63 percent of all units in structures with 3 units or more and 14 percent in structures with 50 or more units. This compares to only 47 percent for the city and 28 percent in the MSA.

Approximately 65 percent of corridor housing was built before 1970. This is comparable to the city at 66 percent but differs substantially from the MSA at 27 percent. As will be discussed shortly, the age of the corridor’s housing stock should decrease dramatically due to the high level of new residential development, which has and is planned to occur.

The value of owner-occupied homes in the corridor averages \$161,017, approximately 12 percent higher than the city at \$144,185, and 21 percent above the MSA at \$133,385. This higher median housing value masks the bifurcation of house values in the corridor. Among owner-occupied units 31 percent are valued under \$80,000 compared to 28 percent for the city and 15 percent in the MSA. Thus, a large percentage of homeowners in the corridor live in modestly priced units, with a few higher priced units, largely confined to the northern most portions of the corridor and the lofts in Castleberry Hill.



*The Gateway Apartments at Northside/Johns Street*



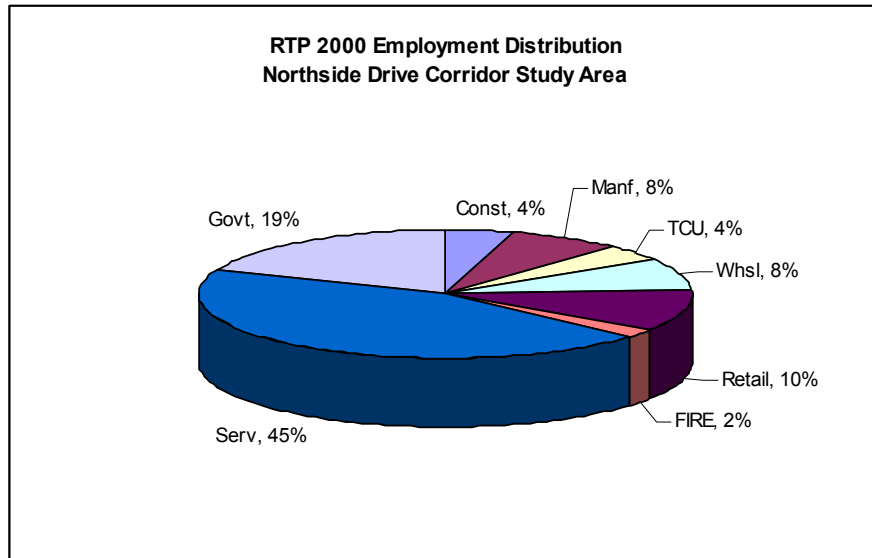
*The Intown Lofts at Northside/Nelson*

### 2.1.3.2 Employment

According to data compiled by the Atlanta Regional Commission, within the Northside Drive Corridor Study Area approximately 50,000 people were employed in 2000. Employment within the study area is heavily concentrated in the service sector (45 percent), followed by government (19 percent) and retail (10 percent).

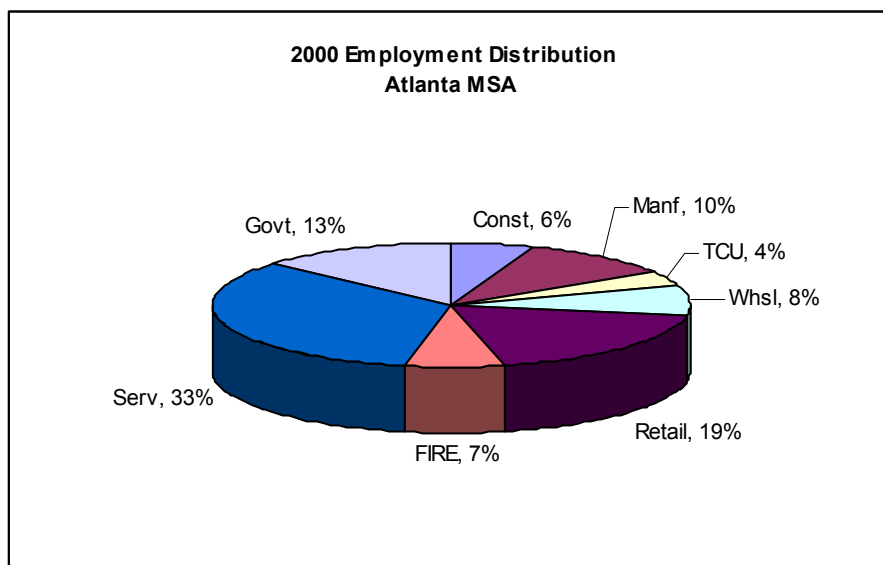


**Figure 2-1: Employment Distribution (Northside Drive Study Area)**



The service sector represented 22,200 jobs, government represented 9,400 jobs and retail represented 5,200 jobs in 2000. These trends are consistent with the character of retail and service development in the study area as well as the proximity to the large concentration of government jobs at the universities and local government facilities in the area including the Fulton County Jail and Sheriff’s facilities.

**Figure 2-2: 2000 Employment Distribution (Atlanta MSA)**





In comparison to the MSA, the corridor has a higher percentage of jobs in the retail and finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) sector, and a smaller percentage of jobs in government and services.

### 2.1.4 **Residential Sector**

The most dramatic development trend in the Northside Drive Corridor has been its renewed appeal as a residential location. This appeal is not confined to one or two zones but can generally be found throughout the corridor.

#### 2.1.4.1 **Rental Housing**

According to Dale Henson Associates, who tracks the performance of Atlanta’s apartment market, the Northside Drive Corridor is located in two major apartment submarkets—Midtown/Brookwood and South Atlanta/SW Fulton County. During the period from 2001-2004 the Midtown/Brookwood submarket, which includes the portion of the corridor north of Marietta Street, saw substantial new rental housing starts and deliveries of new units. Absorption remained strong in the submarket allowing overall occupancies to increase from 90.2 percent in 2003 to 92.3 percent by 2004, during a time when metro occupancy levels were declining. The South Atlanta submarket which includes the portion of the corridor from Marietta Street south, experienced slower growth in new inventory and a more moderate pace of absorption. As a result, occupancies in the submarket deteriorated from 89.6 percent in 2001 to 81.5 percent by 2004.

During the past four years the Northside Drive Corridor attracted ten new rental projects with a total of 1,678 housing units. They are detailed in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1: Northside Drive Corridor New Rental Projects 2001 – 2004**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Units</b>
2001	Peaks at West Atlanta	214
2002	Alta West	265
	Columbia Estates	124
2003	The Peaks at MLK	76
	Northside Village	261
	M Street	308
	Park District Atlanta Commons	250
2004	Berkeley Heights	180
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,678</b>

#### 2.1.4.2 **For-Sale Housing**

New for-sale housing within the corridor is priced significantly above the value of existing housing with average sales prices declining slightly from 2003 to 2004. Data on home sales within three zip code areas that include the Northside Drive Corridor are shown in Table 2-2. In 2003 the average value of an existing home sale was \$148,392 and a new unit \$180,996. The



257 new units sold represented only 15 percent of all home sales in the corridor in 2003. In the first half of 2004, the average value of existing homes sold was \$119,867, a decrease of 19.2 percent. The median price of new units was \$212,548, which was an increase of 15 percent in the average sales price since 2003. Overall, the median sales price of all units in the corridor decreased by 7 percent from \$153,255 in 2003 to \$142,432 in 2004.

**Table 2-2: Home Sales in the Northside Drive Corridor by Zip Code**

Home Sales Data for Northside Drive Corridor Zip Codes 2003-2004									
		30318		30314		30313		Total Sales	Weighted Average
2004	New	Sales	189	7	180	376			
		Median	\$ 180,000	\$ 205,450	\$ 247,000		\$ 212,548		
	Existing	Sales	1,044	623	66	1,733			
		Median	\$ 132,500	\$ 86,500	\$ 235,000		\$ 119,867		
	All	Sales	1,233	630	246	2,109			
		Median	\$ 150,000	\$ 88,000	\$ 243,900		\$ 142,432		
2003	New	Sales	170	7	80	257			
		Median	\$ 166,900	\$ 169,000	\$ 212,000		\$ 180,996		
	Existing	Sales	858	554	54	1,466			
		Median	\$ 184,000	\$ 88,200	\$ 200,150		\$ 148,392		
	All	Sales	1,028	561	134	1,723			
		Median	\$ 172,900	\$ 88,950	\$ 205,000		\$ 153,255		

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group, *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*

The pace of home sales activity increased in the corridor from 2003 to 2004. In 2003 there were a total of 1,723 home sales in the corridor. During 2004, there were 2,109 home sales, a 22 percent increase over 2003. Both new homes and existing homes exhibited significant increases in sales activity during 2004.

### 2.1.4.3 Residential Development Trends

The Northside Drive Corridor will see a significant further expansion of its residential base during the next five years with over 9,473 units either recently developed, under construction or planned for future development. The development is spread throughout the corridor, with the residential development activity by zone shown in Table 2-3.



**Table 2-3: New Residential Development by Zone**

Zone	Units
Deering Road Zone	465
10th Street Zone	5,639
North Avenue Zone	1,615
Vine City MARTA Station Zone	0
McDaniel Street Zone	1,754

In terms of the development status, a large majority of the units are either in construction or will be developed shortly as shown in Table 2-4.

**Table 2-4: Housing Units by Development Status**

Development Status	Units
Recently Developed	1,686
Under Construction	2,966
Planned Development (1-2 years)	1,271
Future Development (3+ years)	3,550

The corridor is attracting a strong mix of housing types as shown in Table 2-5.

**Table 2-5: Housing Units by Housing Type**

Housing Type	Units
Rental apartments	2,937
For-sale condominiums	1,837
For-sale town homes	375
To be determined	4,324

The creation of 9,473 new residential units in the corridor will increase the housing inventory from 13,255 in 2000 to 22,728 by 2010 - a 72 percent increase over the decade.

### **2.1.5 Office Sector**

The Northside Drive Corridor office sector represents a small component of the overall Atlanta office market. Along the corridor there is approximately 2.15 million square feet of multi-tenant office space. Most of the office space in the corridor was constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. However, there is renewed interest in the corridor as evidenced by the Northyards Business Park, Puritan Mill, and Atlantic Station developments. The inventory of space increased by approximately 25 percent in 2004 due to the addition of the SouthTrust Tower in the Atlantic Station development. While the majority of the space in the tower is leased to SouthTrust/Wachovia, the facility added significant new vacant space to the market, increasing overall market vacancy from 28 percent to 29 percent at the beginning of 2004 to 39 percent by the end of the second quarter.





There was net absorption during the 2nd quarter of 2004 of 280,000 square foot in the market area, which is the greatest amount during the past two years. Office lease rates in the market range from \$19.00 to \$23.50 per square foot for Class A space and \$15.00 to \$18.00 per square foot for Class B space. Lease rates have been essentially unchanged for the past two years. There is a total of 460,000 square feet of planned office development in the market area, the majority of which is within Atlantic Station.

Business Park and Flex Space represents an additional 2.2 million square feet within the study area. This space typically combines office with industrial uses and generally rents for lease rates substantially below the office sector. Vacancies in the market area's business parks are substantially less than in the office sector at 13 percent, with approximately 286,563 square feet available. Lease rates for space in business parks ranges from \$4.63 to \$5.09 per square foot.

The bulk of the existing office and building park inventory is located in the two northern segments of the corridor – the Deering Road Zone and the Tenth Street Zone. The existing office inventory is located in close proximity to Northside Drive and at Atlantic Station. The



*An office park near Northside/Deering*

business park and industrial inventory is located generally to the west of Northside Drive in the Chattahoochee Industrial Area along DeFoor and Chattahoochee Avenues. Significant additional office space is available in Northyards Business Park in the North Avenue Zone. Northyards Business Park was created from the renovation of 250,000+ square feet of former warehouse space. Georgia Tech has recently acquired significant additional land at its North Avenue Research Campus and in Northyards Business Park, which will be used to create additional research and incubator facilities.

New office development is dominated by the activities at Atlantic Station with the recently opened SouthTrust tower and an additional 460,000 square feet planned towards an ultimate build-out of approximately 6 million square feet of office space.

Overall, the Northside Drive Corridor is experiencing an increase in office and business park demand stimulated by the significant new investment occurring along the corridor. This trend is expected to continue with the on-going development of Atlantic Station, and further development by Georgia Tech and other major landowners.



### 2.1.6 Retail Sector

The Northside Corridor has not historically been a major retail corridor, with the bulk of its retailing occurring in small shops, restaurants, fast food/convenience outlets and local catering, the student market, home furnishing/home decorating sector, and services/retail related uses.

With the emergence of the area as a residential location, this pattern has begun to change from several dimensions. The renovation of former industrial space into the Bacchanalia/Taqueria Del Sol complex at the intersection of Howell Mill and Huff Roads signaled a significant retail revival occurring in the area. In the Vine City MARTA Station Zone, the arrival of a Publix grocery store as the anchor of the long hoped for creation of Historic Westside Village as a major commercial mixed-use area represented an important investment by a major retailer in the Northside Drive Corridor.



*Paschal's, a retail business at Northside/Fair*

In terms of future retail development, as with other land uses in the Northside Drive Corridor, Atlantic Station's planned major retail center will dominate future retail development, serving the needs of corridor residents, the broader in-town market and regional shoppers interested in the unique products of Atlanta's first IKEA home furnishings store and other distinct merchants. The incremental addition of modest amounts of ground floor retail in many of the residential and mixed-use projects will add significantly to the retail environment in the Northside Drive Corridor over the next several years, and represents an important addition of local service and convenience retail for new residents.

As a result of the influx of new residents the retail potential of the Northside Drive Corridor has an estimated retail potential of \$441 million. This represents approximately 6.5 percent of the \$6.8 billion overall retail potential of the City of Atlanta. Thus, there is a significant amount of potential retail demand already located in the corridor. As shown in Table 2-6, the largest segment of retail potential is for automotive purchases (23 percent) followed by eating and drinking establishments (17 percent) food stores (11 percent), general merchandise (11 percent) and other retailing (11 percent). As the residential base of the corridor grows significantly over the coming decades the retail potential of the area will grow significantly as well.





**Table 2-6: Northside Drive Corridor Retail Sales Potential**

<b>NORTHSIDE DRIVE CORRIDOR RETAIL SALES POTENTIAL 2004</b>		
<i>Major Retail Category</i>	<i>Sales Potential</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Apparel and Accessory Stores	\$ 26,688,993	6%
Automotive Dealers	\$ 100,747,014	23%
Automotive and Home Supply Stores	\$ 4,137,851	1%
Drug and Proprietary Stores	\$ 15,849,080	4%
Eating and Drinking Places	\$ 76,039,446	17%
Food Stores	\$ 50,312,245	11%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	\$ 12,767,748	3%
Home Appliance, Television Stores	\$ 8,825,186	2%
Gasoline Service Stations	\$ 26,300,792	6%
General Merchandise (including Department Stores)	\$ 48,045,654	11%
Hardware, Lumber and Garden Stores	\$ 22,580,919	5%
Other retail	\$ 49,150,349	11%
Total Retail Sales Potential	\$ 441,445,277	100%

*Source: Claritas, Bleakly Advisory Group*

To provide some context for considering the existing retail potential of the area, the retail sales potential minus automotive purchases is \$340.7 million per year. If 70 percent of that potential could be captured by retail establishments inside the corridor, this level of sales would be sufficient to support over 1.3 million square feet of retail space, assuming an average sales per square foot of \$180 for all retail space. Thus, the retail potential of the corridor is substantial and is likely to grow significantly.

In terms of new additions to the retail inventory, a number of major projects are either under development or planned for the future. In the Deering Road Zone, Selig Enterprises is redeveloping the former Castlegate hotel and conference center site, into a major mixed-use project with 290,000 square feet of new retail space, to be anchored by Wal-Mart. The Berkeley Heights mixed-use development is planned for 21,000 square feet of retail space.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone includes Atlantic Station, which has a significant amount of planned retail space. As noted earlier, Atlantic Station’s major retail center is under construction. IKEA will be 1.2 million square feet in size when construction of the major home furnishings facility is complete. IKEA is located proximate to the intersection of 16th Street and Northside Drive. An additional 500,000 square feet of retail space is planned for future development in Atlantic Station.

The North Avenue Zone includes the Bottleworks Phase II has the potential of adding 138,000 square feet of mixed-use development with a major retail component, to be anchored by a major



home furnishings store and restaurant space on Marietta Street. In contrast, there is no new retail planned for the Vine City MARTA Station Zone.

The McDaniel Street Zone includes H.J. Russell’s Legacy at Castleberry project, with Paschal’s restaurant as an anchor of its first phase and the potential of up to 50,000 square feet of additional retail in the later phases of this major mixed-use development. The College Town development includes plans for 30,000 square feet of retail as part of the residential mixed-use core of the project.

### 2.1.7 ARC Growth Projections

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) estimates for current and future population, employment and households for the corridor and the MSA are presented in Table 2-7.

**Table 2-7: ARC Population and Employment Projections**

Atlanta MSA				Northside Drive Study Area			
	Population	Employment	Households		Population	Employment	Households
2000	3,630,560	2,067,000	1,356,058	2000	37,589	49,830	17,392
2005	3,847,924	2,195,515	na	2005	38,155	52,550	17,654
2010	4,141,662	2,385,496	na	2010	41,282	51,742	19,101
2030	5,871,024	3,309,903	na	2030	60,083	61,326	27,168
CAGR 2000-2005	1.2%	1.2%	na	CAGR 2000-2005	0.3%	1.1%	0.3%
CAGR 2000-2030	1.6%	1.6%	na	CAGR 2000-2030	1.6%	0.7%	1.5%
CAGR 2005-2030	1.7%	1.7%	na	CAGR 2005-2030	1.8%	0.6%	1.7%

Note: CAGR stands for Compound Annual Growth Rate.

Between 2000 and 2005, the corridor experienced minimal growth in population compared to the MSA. However, between 2005 and 2030, the population growth in the corridor is anticipated to be slightly greater than that experienced by the MSA, 1.8 percent compared to 1.7 percent on a compound annual basis.

Between 2000 and 2005, growth in employment for the corridor was approximately equal to the MSA. However, between 2005 and 2030, employment growth in the corridor is anticipated to be significantly less than that experienced by the MSA, 0.6 percent compared to 1.7 percent on a compound annual basis. Household growth in the corridor approximates population growth estimates.

Table 2-8 illustrates the total change and the annual additions resulting from the ARC population, employment, and household projections.



**Table 2-8: Northside Drive Population, Employment, and Household Change**

Northside Drive Study Area			
Change from 2000	Population	Employment	Households
<b>Total Change</b>			
2000-2005	566	2,720	262
2000-2030	3,693	1,912	1,447
2005 - 2030	22,494	11,496	9,776
<b>Per Year Change</b>			
2000-2005	113	544	52
2000-2030	369	191	145
2005 - 2030	750	383	326

Between 2000 and 2005, the ARC data indicates an increase of approximately 566 residents, or 262 households and 2,720 jobs. On an annual basis, this equates to an increase of 113 persons or 52 households and 544 jobs per year in the corridor.

Between 2005 and 2030, the ARC data indicates population will increase by approximately 22,494 persons, or 9,776 households and jobs will increase by 11,496. On an annual basis, this equates to an increase of 750 persons, or 326 households and 383 jobs. As previously mentioned, new housing units currently slated for the corridor total 9,473 by 2010. These housing units roughly fulfill the household growth projection 20 years early. With a total build-out of 6 million square feet planned at Atlantic Station, that development alone would provide space for approximately 7,500 employees (based on 800 square feet per employee). This one development accounts for 65 percent of space needs for 2030.

In comparison to historical development trends, the ARC growth projections appear to be accurate. Looking towards 2005 through 2030, however, as the corridor’s appeal and development momentum continues to increase, the ARC growth estimates appear to be too low.

**2.1.8 Summary Observations**

The Northside Drive Corridor Study Area is currently one of the most dynamic development areas of the City of Atlanta. The corridor combines a diverse set of neighborhoods, each with its own development history, that are increasingly tied together by the growth concentrating along Northside Drive. Research on area development trends indicate the recent period of strong development will likely continue during at least the next five years as numerous projects come to fruition. Some key observations about the Northside Drive Corridor follow.

**2.1.8.1 *Demographics***

The corridor is home to over 41,000 residents and is projected to grow by an additional 3,085 by 2009. The current residents are racially diverse, young, with many college age residents, well educated and have modest incomes when compared to the city as a whole. Most of the residents are renters and work in service and governmental jobs. Given the great diversity of the corridor, there is also a significant population of older residents who rent or own modest homes in the area and live on limited incomes. Many of the residents of the area live in Atlanta Housing Authority developments.



### 2.1.8.2 Housing

The existing housing stock in the corridor tends to be old, in multifamily buildings with a substantial number of housing units of very modest value.

### 2.1.8.3 Employment

Approximately 50,000 people work in the corridor. The largest segment of jobs is in the service sector 45 percent, followed by government at 19 percent and retailing at 10 percent. The corridor is a major employment center within the city.

### 2.1.8.4 Residential Sector



*Atlantic Station will continue to bring new development to Northside*

The corridor is undergoing a period of rapid residential development. During the past decade the corridor attracted ten new rental housing projects with 1,678 units. During 2003-2004 more than 633 new for-sale units were sold in the corridor. While average home prices decreased by 7 percent over the 2003-2004 period, the total number of units sold increased by 22 percent. There is an estimated 9,473 units of new housing either recently delivered, under construction or planned for development in the corridor. These units are spread throughout the

corridor with the greatest concentration at Atlantic Station, along the Marietta Street Corridor and in the McDaniel Street Zone of the study area. Currently 2,966 units are under construction and an additional 4,821 are planned for future development. The creation of the 9,473 units will increase the existing housing inventory in the corridor by 72 percent.

### 2.1.8.5 Office Sector

The office sector is modest in size with 2.15 million square feet of office space and 2.2 million square feet of business park and flex space existing in the corridor. The bulk of that space is located in the Deering Road and 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zones. Atlantic Station will dominate the development of new office space in the corridor, with 517,000 square feet created in 2004, and an additional 460,000 square feet planned for development. At build-out, it will contain up to 6 million square feet of office space. The development of Northyards Business Park and Georgia Tech's North Avenue Research Campus is creating a second node of office activity in the North Avenue Zone.



### **2.1.8.6 Retail Sector**

Traditionally the corridor has been home to many small retail business, restaurants and service establishments. Atlantic Station will bring destination retailing to the corridor through the creation of 1.7 million square feet of retail including the creation of the southeast's first IKEA home furnishings store. In addition, the proposed redevelopment of the Castlegate Hotel site as a Wal-Mart anchored retail center will add significant retail space. Retail is also a significant component of the many mixed-use projects being proposed within the corridor.

Development trends within the Northside Drive Corridor Study area indicate that the next several years will be a period of intense development as the growth in the City and region, comparatively moderate land costs, available development sites with strong regional access combine to attract significant new development to the area.

## **2.2 LAND USE, ZONING, AND URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

This section of the chapter assesses existing land uses, reviews the current zoning, and examines the existing urban design characteristics within the corridor. From this data, potential development opportunities are identified. Finally, this section reviews the City of Atlanta future land use plan and provides some observations that are important to shaping the future vision for the corridor.

### **2.2.1 Land Use Assessment**

The existing land use assessment is a critical tool for understanding the best opportunities for preservation and redevelopment along the corridor. The assessment utilized a Geographic Information System (GIS) parcel database and land use categories derived from the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) SmartTrak Study, as well as information provided by field surveys. Parcels within a ¼ mile of Northside Drive were evaluated.

As shown in Table 2-9 and illustrated in Figures 2-1 thru 2-5, the study area contains roughly 3743 parcels covering approximately 1,767 acres representing 10 land use categories. The land use pattern fronting Northside Drive is diverse and ranges from sprawling low density commercial and office uses to single-family communities in various stages of stabilization and revitalization.



**Figure 2-3: Existing Land Use (Deering Road Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-4: Existing Land Use (10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-5: Existing Land Use (North Avenue Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)





**Figure 2-6: Existing Land Use (Vine City MARTA Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-7: Existing Land Use (McDaniel Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Table 2-9: Existing Land Use**

Land Use Category	# of Parcels	Acres	% of Land Area
Institutional	214	335	19%
Industrial	209	241	14%
Commercial	418	228	13%
Multi-Family Residential	394	213	12%
Vacant	902	214	12%
Single-Family Residential	1287	190	11%
Parking/Utilities	181	197	11%
Mixed Use	75	84	5%
Office	57	58	3%
Open Space	6	8	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3743</b>	<b>1767</b>	<b>100%</b>

Generally, the land uses along the east side of Northside Drive vary from those along the west side. Freight railroad lines connecting Atlanta to the Midsouth and Midwest structure much of the urban form of the west side. Heavy industrial uses are mostly concentrated along the rail lines with light industrial warehousing facilities (14%) immediately adjacent. Of the parking and utility parcels surveyed (11%), the most prominent facility is the Atlanta Waterworks facility. A significant stock of wholesale commercial enterprises and commercial districts are predominately located on the west side and have recently added business such as imports, catering, artists, graphic designers and architects that benefit from the proximity to downtown and intown neighborhoods.

Unlike the west side, the east side of Northside Drive is dominated by large-scale institutional uses (19%) represented by Georgia Tech and high profile downtown destinations including the GWCC and the Georgia Dome. Northside Drive is the major arterial used to access these major destinations and it is anticipated that the build out of the Atlantic Station mixed-use development with its new residential, office, retail and entertainment complex will also contribute to increased traffic along the corridor.

Five single-family neighborhoods (11%) have frontage along Northside Drive. These are dispersed throughout the corridor and over the past 10 to 15 years have experienced a strong surge of reinvestment. The individual land use assessments for each zone are described below.

The Deering Road Zone has a diversity of land uses. The Berkeley Park and Loring Heights neighborhoods flank either side of Northside Drive, which makes it the only zone containing two single-family communities. The Atlanta Waterworks water treatment facility also fronts Northside Drive. Lush landscaping that was once open for public use surrounds the site. The Berkeley Heights mixed-use complex is currently under construction at the intersection of Northside Drive and Bellemeade Street. The Atlantic Station mixed-use development is also under construction and will have a major impact on the corridor with its several hundred housing



units, commercial and entertainment district, and office towers upon completion. The Deering Road Zone also contains office uses that occur in two distinct forms - single story low-density professional office suites compared to mid-rise high-density buildings present at the Northside 75 office park. Commercial and warehouse facilities are concentrated along Bishop Street while conventional retail and conveniences such as grocery stores, banks, and fast food establishments are along Howell Mill Road.

The largest landowner in the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone is Georgia Tech. The campus is bounded by 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Northside Drive and Marietta Street. Like the other zones, there is at least one single-family neighborhood within the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone. The Home Park neighborhood, unlike the other single-family neighborhoods located along the Northside Drive corridor, spans both sides of Northside Drive and has two distinct characters. The east side is a single-family community, while the west side is a commercial and warehouse district adjacent to the CSX railroad corridor. This contains artist studios, graphic design businesses and printing shops located in adaptive reuse projects. In addition, there are a few fast food restaurants intermixed with gas stations, auto repair shops and specialty stores fronting the corridor. Near Marietta Street there are several recently constructed multi-family residential developments represented by loft-like Alta West apartments on Howell Mill and M Street apartments developed on the Central Metals site.

The North Avenue Zone is flanked by large-scale industrial properties surrounded by surface parking and commercial uses including underutilized strip centers and repair shops. The Northyards Business Park and Mean Street office development are adjacent to the CSX rail line that runs along this portion of the corridor. This zone has recently experienced new investment in the area consisting of the Georgia Tech North Avenue Research facility and the Antioch Baptist Church mixed-use development. The English Avenue neighborhood is the single-family community located in this zone and will likely benefit from the increased development interest along this section of the corridor. The Atlanta Housing Authority's Herndon Homes is immediately adjacent to surface parking for the GWCC, the Northyards Business Park and a site for a future Georgia Tech research facility.

The Vine City MARTA Zone is bounded by two regional attractions, the GWCC and the Georgia Dome, on the east and the Vine City single-family neighborhood to the west. Due to its proximity to downtown, the Vine City community fears the encroachment of the Central Business District into the neighborhood. In an effort to protect the community from development pressure and define a 20-year vision for future growth and development, the Vine City community completed a redevelopment and zoning plan in the summer of 2004, which has been adopted by Atlanta City Council. The frontage of Northside Drive consists of several surface parking lots that currently serve events scheduled at the GWCC and the Georgia Dome. The Vine City MARTA Zone is unlike the other zones in that it is the only one containing a MARTA rail station.



*The Georgia Dome is a major land use in the Vine City MARTA Zone*

The Atlanta University Center institutions to the west, and large multi-family housing developments and the Castleberry Hills neighborhood to the east characterize the McDaniel Street Zone. This zone has also seen major reinvestment in recent years including the Village at Castleberry Hill, which was developed on the site of the former John Hope Homes as a mixed-use community through the HOPE VI grant program. Additional multi-family residential development along the corridor includes University Homes, Northside Plaza apartments and Friendship Baptist Church Apartments. The HJ Russell & Company headquarters is located at the intersection of Fair Street and Northside Drive. This company was instrumental in developing a mixed-use development including a hotel and the new Pascal's Restaurant and several hundred housing units across Fair Street from the headquarters. Castleberry Hill, a turn of the century warehouse district, is an architecturally rich area that is becoming an urban residential neighborhood with shops, restaurants, galleries and street life. The Atlanta Baking Company is the major industrial use fronting Northside Drive.

### **2.2.2 Zoning**

The City of Atlanta regulates the development of all real property through the use of zoning, which legally controls height, density, setbacks, parking, etc. In general, there are four main zoning districts along the Northside Drive corridor including Residential (R), Commercial (C), Industrial (I), and Office /Institutional (OI), all at varying densities. The existing zoning is shown on Figures 2-8 thru 2-12.



**Figure 2-8: Existing Zoning (Deering Road Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-9: Existing Zoning (10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-10: Existing Zoning (North Avenue Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)





**Figure 2-11: Existing Zoning (Vine City MARTA Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-12: Existing Zoning (McDaniel Street Zone)**

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The existing zoning closely correlates with the existing land use of properties along the corridor. The industrial zoning districts mostly front Northside Drive and follow the railroad corridor. The commercial zoning is concentrated on Howell Mill and at key intersections that currently contain typical convenience retail, such as fast food establishments, personal services, and repair and specialty shops. Georgia Tech, the Atlanta University Center and the mid-rise office development near I-75 have institutional zoning classifications. The single-family residential zoning districts are within the Berkeley Park, Loring Heights, Home Park and English Avenue neighborhoods. The Vine City neighborhood is covered by Special Public Interest (SPI) Zoning District 11, which includes the following sub-areas:

- Single-family residential,
- Multi-family residential,
- University-related,
- Neighborhood commercial, and
- Mixed-use.

In addition, SPI 11 regulations provide a framework of urban design regulations for the neighborhood.

### 2.2.3 Urban Design Assessment

The urban design analysis documents the existing elements that contribute to the aesthetics, connectivity and pedestrian orientation along the corridor. This assessment yields several issues including the following:

- Connectivity breaks,
- Physical barriers,
- Potential greenway trails,
- Gateways,
- Neighborhood entrances,
- Landmarks,
- Corridor views, and
- Intersection issues.

The urban design assessment is shown on Figures 2-13 thru 2-17.



There are several locations identified to have a lack of access or connectivity breaks to and from Northside Drive. In most instances roadways once existed, but due to development along Northside Drive, they were terminated. This specifically occurs at the bridge that connects DL Hollowell Parkway to Marietta Street.

Physical barriers including large retaining walls, privacy walls and security fencing are noted along the corridor. The obstructions often deter pedestrian movements and lessen the aesthetics of the corridor.



**Figure 2-13: Urban Design Assessment (Deering Road Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-14: Urban Design Assessment (10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-15: Urban Design Assessment (North Avenue Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-16: Urban Design Assessment (Vine City MARTA Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-17: Urban Design Assessment (McDaniel Street Zone)**

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The PATH Foundation has an east west bike facility that currently runs along Carter Street in the Vine City community connecting west of Lowery Boulevard at Washington Park to Downtown Atlanta. The Vine City Redevelopment Plan recommends enhancements to this existing system to improve the visibility and encourage increased utilization. In addition, there are discussions to develop the abandoned railroad that runs through the heart of the English Avenue neighborhood into a greenway trail.

Currently along the corridor are significant intersections or structures that have a strong visual presence and could potentially serve as a gateway. Although it is often overlooked, the railroad overpass in the Deering Road Zone serves as a gateway for the corridor. Additional gateways on Northside Drive occur at the CSX crossings, Marietta Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and at McDaniel Street.

As previously mentioned, five single-family neighborhoods abut Northside Drive with major neighborhood entries off the corridor. In most cases these neighborhood entries are not marked with signage or identity markers and are along major arterials, which serve as east/west connectors.

Northside Drive serves several major landmarks west of downtown. These landmarks include Georgia Tech, the GWCC and the Georgia Dome, and the Atlanta University Center institutions and facilities to name a few. These, in addition to other key places of interest along the corridor are identified on the Urban Design Analysis maps.

The 4-mile corridor has diverse elevations that yield spectacular corridor views. The northern section, specifically in the Deering Road Zone is at the highest elevation thus resulting in impressive views of Downtown looking south and views of Buckhead looking north. In the North Avenue Zone, westward views overlooking Downtown are visible from the abandoned bridge at DL Hollowell Parkway/ Northside Drive. Similar views are also noted at the highpoint of Northside Drive at North Avenue. Additional skyline views of downtown are located on Northside Drive at Simpson Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in the Vine City MARTA Zone.

#### **2.2.4 Potential Development Opportunities**



*A redevelopment opportunity near Northside/North*

Identifying potential development opportunities is the first step to estimating physical growth potential along the Northside Drive corridor, which may include recommendations for façade improvements to existing structures, development of new open space, infill development on vacant lots or redevelopment of underutilized areas. These recommendations will be developed as a result of an interactive design charrette scheduled to occur later during the Northside Drive planning process. Figures 2-18 thru 2-22 show the potential development opportunities.



**Figure 2-18: Potential Development Opportunities (Deering Road Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-19: Potential Development Opportunities (10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-20: Potential Development Opportunities (North Avenue Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-21: Potential Development Opportunities (Vine City MARTA Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-22: Potential Development Opportunities (McDaniel Street Zone)**

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Recent development activity has occurred or is underway in each of the zones along the Northside Drive Corridor. Some of the larger developments include the Atlantic Station mixed use development, M Street Apartments at Marietta Street, Mean Street Lofts, Northyards, Historic Westside Village, and the Legacy Mixed-Use Project (containing Pascal's Restaurant).

Even though substantial development activity has recently occurred along the corridor, there are areas that have an opportunity for increased investment. Specifically, there is a significant amount of vacant and undeveloped land within each zone. Based on the physical surveys, there are properties identified that are not at their "highest and best use" either currently or assuming improvements to adjacent properties. In some cases properties identified as potential areas for change may be very large parcels with a structure surrounded by large surface parking lots. The existing developments and developments that are planned or underway along the Northside Drive corridor are identified on the series of Potential Development Opportunities maps.

### **2.2.5 Existing City Of Atlanta 15-Year Land Use Plan**

The 15-Year Land Use Map is used to guide development that meets with the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) goals and objects established for the City of Atlanta. In general, the future land use along the Northside Drive corridor as outlined in the current CDP concentrates industrial uses along the rail lines. Low Density Commercial districts are located in areas that currently contain retail/commercial and office uses. All of the single-family neighborhoods contain a Single Family Residential designation except for Home Park and Castleberry Hill, which are designated Low Density Residential and Low Density Commercial respectively. The Office/Institutional future land use designations are assigned to the major institutional uses along the corridor including Georgia Tech and the Atlanta University Center. The GWCC and the Georgia Dome have a High Density Commercial designation.

In order to ensure the implementation of future development proposed in this planning effort, it would be necessary to make recommendations for specific changes to the City of Atlanta's 15-Year Land Use Map, which is shown on Figures 2-23 thru 2-27.



**Figure 2-23: Future Land Use (Deering Road Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)





**Figure 2-24: Future Land Use (10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-25: Future Land Use (North Avenue Street Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-26: Future Land Use (Vine City MARTA Zone)**

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available as a separate file.)



**Figure 2-27: Future Land Use (McDaniel Street Zone)**

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### 2.2.6 Observations

Due to the diverse existing land use pattern, character and density along the corridor, the corridor is an ideal candidate for a live, work and play community. The existing single-family neighborhoods coupled with the new residential development, both under construction and proposed, will strengthen the residential fabric of the corridor. In addition, the viable existing industrial and commercial uses in conjunction with the new office and research facilities will contribute to the continued development of a major employment center within the City of Atlanta. Finally, new opportunities for passive and active public spaces along the corridor will provide needed recreational options for existing and future residents.

With new development occurring along Northside Drive, there are opportunities to enhance the livability along the corridor by strengthening land uses and urban design. This is particularly true for the development and redevelopment opportunities on vacant and underutilized properties, where there are few existing physical constraints.

## 2.3 Transportation

This section will assess existing transportation infrastructure and provide an overview of transit service in the study area. Traffic conditions and travel patterns in the study area will also be examined to include an analysis of safety and accidents data for the corridor. Finally, future projects programmed in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the RTP will be discussed.

### 2.3.1 Roadway Characteristics

Northside Drive is an urban principal arterial and is included on the U.S. Highway System, as well as the Georgia State Highway System as US 41 and SR 13, respectively. The speed limit throughout the corridor is 35 mph. Currently, Northside Drive consists of two to three travel lanes in each direction throughout the corridor. The Deering Road Zone has two travel lanes in each direction, with additional left turn lanes at key intersections, such as Bellemeade Avenue and Deering Road. The Deering Road Zone also includes an interchange at I-75 that provides both and SOV and HOV access.



*Northside at Nelson looking north*

This interchange is one of the few in the Atlanta Region to include metering on ramp access to the interstate. From 17<sup>th</sup> Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone has two travel lanes in each direction, with additional left turn lanes at 17<sup>th</sup> Street. South of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, The 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone has three travel lanes in each direction, as does the North Avenue Zone. Within the



Vine City MARTA Zone, the corridor is three travel lanes in each direction and includes a continuous left turn lane. The McDaniel Street Zone also has three travel lanes in each direction.

### **2.3.1.1 Signalized Intersections**

There are 19 signalized intersections in the corridor. There is an average of roughly 4 signals per mile, or approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile between each signal. This figure does not include the multiple signals at Northside Drive/Hemphill Avenue/14<sup>th</sup> Street or Northside Drive/North Avenue. Those complex intersections are considered one entity and the signals are controlled together.

### **2.3.1.2 Traffic Control Infrastructure**

The existing traffic signals in the corridor are coordinated with 170 type controllers installed in 336 controller cabinets; however, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is in the midst of upgrading controllers along all state routes to the 2070L model. These new controllers will be installed on Northside Drive at some point in the future; however, no schedule has been established at this time.

The controllers are interconnected with fiber optics to a central system in the Atlanta Traffic Control Center. This provides the capability to support signal coordination and other Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in the corridor.

All signals in the corridor are currently pre-timed; they are non-actuated. This means the signals are not traffic responsive. During the evening peak, each signal cycle is 110 seconds. During the morning peak, each signal cycle is 100 seconds. The evening peak period runs from 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm and the morning peak period begins at 6:45 am and ends at 9:30 am. The signal cycle during the off-peak periods is 90 seconds.

### **2.3.1.3 Access Management**

There is no access management plan in the corridor at this time. There are no shared driveways and each individual business has at least one curb cut. Several businesses within the corridor have two or more curb cuts. Medians are non-existent throughout the corridor, with the exception of the Vine City MARTA and McDaniel Street Zones, which include a center left turn lane.

### **2.3.1.4 Roadway Geometrics and Signage**

Several areas of the corridor have steep grades, especially the Deering Road Zone and the northern end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone. Additionally, there are sharp curves on Northside Drive in the North Avenue Zone where it crosses Marietta Street, DL Hollowell Parkway (formerly named Bankhead Highway), and North Avenue. There are also a number of intersections with obsolete geometric configuration and design (e.g., turning radii, sight-lines, etc.). Directional and wayfinding signage along the corridor is also limited. Taken together these existing features make the corridor very difficult to navigate for regular users and visitors alike. This issue is particularly important given the large number of institutions that generate event traffic in the corridor.



### 2.3.1.5 **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**



*Broken sidewalks at  
Northside/14th Street*

Bicycle infrastructure in the corridor is non-existent. There are no bicycle lanes, route signage, or wide curb lanes along Northside Drive.

In contrast to bicycle facilities sidewalks are present throughout most of the corridor; however, some of the sidewalk segments have deficiencies. These include not meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for handicap accessibility and poor pavement condition. Sidewalks are intermittent in the Deering Road Zone between I-75 and Deering Road. Moving south along the corridor through the Deering Road Zone, sidewalks are in good condition and wider than five feet until Hemphill Avenue, where the condition deteriorates slightly and the width reduces to approximately five feet. In the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone, sidewalks are not present along the northbound portion of Northside Drive between Marietta Street and Tech Parkway. This forces pedestrians traveling north to cross the street and use the southbound sidewalks.

The sidewalks in the worst condition are in the North Avenue Zone between Marietta Street and North Avenue. Sidewalks next to the northbound travel lanes are especially dilapidated. Pavement is cracked, no buffer exists between the sidewalk and the travel lanes, and a large fence with overgrown weeds dominates this section of the corridor. In contrast, sidewalks in the Vine City MARTA Zone that parallel the GWCC and the Georgia Dome are in excellent condition. In this section of the corridor the sidewalks are very well maintained. Additionally, the sidewalks adjacent to the northbound travel lanes are over 10 feet wide. Sidewalks in the McDaniel Street Zone are generally in suitable condition, with some areas including a small grass buffer between the road and sidewalk.

### 2.3.2 **Transit Services**

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) provides both rail and bus service in the study area at this time; however, there are some significant issues with the existing coverage from the point of view of serving transit trips in the corridor. One concern is that the rail line runs from east to west, while the corridor is oriented from north to south. Another concern is that bus service in the corridor, while quite robust, does not connect corridor destinations directly – no route provides continuous local bus service along the full length of the corridor. Figure 2-27-A shows the current bus service as described below.

Route #37 begins at Midtown MARTA Station and travels along on 10<sup>th</sup> Street to Hemphill Avenue. At the intersection of Hemphill Avenue and Northside Drive, it continues north onto Northside Drive. There is one stop on Northside Drive. Next, it makes a brief detour onto Bishop Street in order to make a stop on Mecaslin Street. Route #37 then travels westbound on Deering



Road and continues northbound upon returning to Northside Drive. After turning left onto Bellemeade Avenue, the route exits the corridor providing connections to several neighborhoods on the west side of I-75.

Route #51 is eastbound on Simpson Street as it enters the study area. It then turns right onto Northside Drive southbound and makes a stop at the Vine City MARTA Station. With the exception of Sundays, Route #51 continues its service onto Carter Street and then Northside Drive southbound. It makes a loop around Greensferry Avenue, with a stop at the intersection of Lawshe Street and Fair Street before returning to Northside Drive.

Route #11 begins at Garibaldi Street and travels northbound to McDaniel Street. It serves the Five Points MARTA Station and terminates at Bankhead MARTA Station. It briefly travels along Northside Drive between Simpson and Kennedy Streets. The route then leaves the corridor on Kennedy Street.

Route #1 begins at the Georgia State MARTA Station and travels westbound on Decatur Street, continuing on to Marietta Street. This route does not directly serve Northside Drive; however it traverses the intersection of Northside Drive and Howell Mill Road and makes a stop one block north at the intersection of Marietta Street and Howell Mill Road.

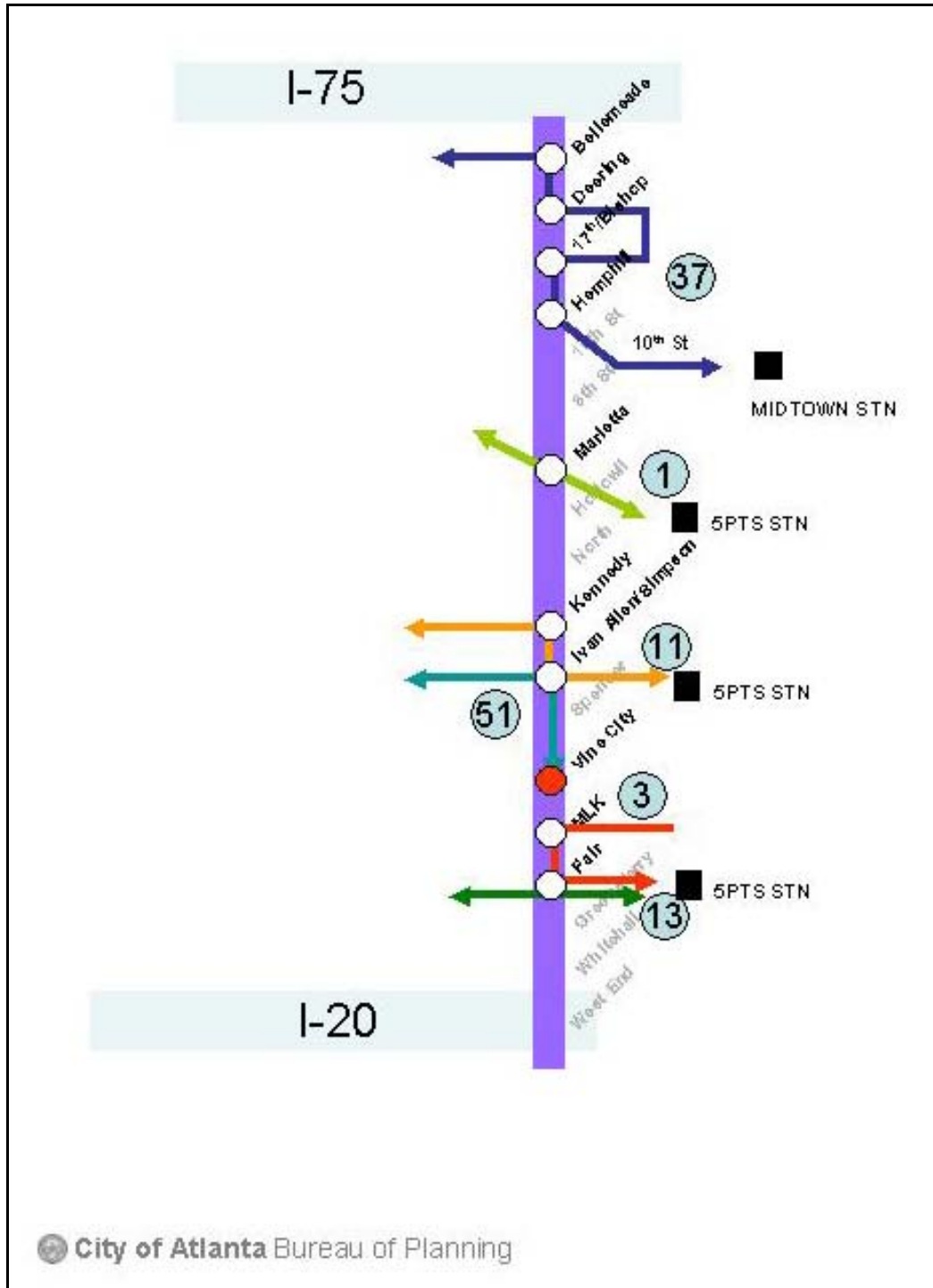
Route #3 traverses the southern portion of the study area near I-20. It begins at Hamilton E. Holmes Station and travels east on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive where it turns south onto Northside Drive. It follows Northside Drive to Fair Street where it turns east into Castleberry Hill and later connects to Peachtree Street.

Route #13 begins at the West Lake MARTA Station and eventually terminates at the North Avenue MARTA Station. This route is known to mainly serve the patrons of Atlanta University Center and Georgia Tech.





Figure 2-27-A: Existing Transit Service





### 2.3.2.1 Transit Ridership

Currently, there are a total of 16,877 average daily boardings on the bus routes that traverse the study area. The following table details the average daily boardings and headways for routes passing through the corridor.

**Table 2-10: Ridership and Operating Characteristics of MARTA Bus Routes**

Route Number	Average Weekday Boardings	Headways (in minutes)				
		Peak	Base	Evening	Saturday	Sunday
1	1,763	15	40	60	40	76
3	3,751	22	30	30	30	45
11	3,496	12	25	50	17	40-55
13	3,318	15	21	30	30	27
37	1,249	20	36	30	50	50
51	3,300	16	20	24	20	40

The Vine City MARTA station, which is on the West Line with proximity to the Georgia Dome and GWCC, is the only rail station in the corridor. Average weekday boardings at the station are 1,532 for the period of July 2003 to July 2004. In comparison to other MARTA stations, Vine City ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 38 stations in terms of patronage. Average daily boardings are forecast to increase to approximately 2,700 by 2030.

### 2.3.3 Freight and Passenger Rail

There are three active freight rail lines in the corridor, which are owned and operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. An active rail line is defined for this analysis as having volumes of more than 10 trains per day. In the Deering Road Zone, the CSX railroad crosses over Northside Drive on a bridge just south of Bellemeade Street (See Figure 2-3). The main Norfolk Southern railroad crossing is on a bridge just north of Hemphill Street in the 10th Street Zone (See Figure 2-4). In addition to freight traffic, two Amtrak passenger trains per day use this overpass and provide service to Charlotte and New Orleans. Further south in the North Avenue zone, Northside Drive bridges over another rail line that is shared by both railroad companies near Marietta Street (See Figure 2-5). In the McDaniel Street Zone, there is another shared rail line that crosses Northside Drive. The crossing is on a bridge just north of I-20 (See Figure 2-7).





There are also several inactive or abandoned railroads within the study area.

### 2.3.4 Traffic Conditions

In order to comprehensively evaluate traffic conditions in the corridor, two complementary approaches were used. The first approach used Synchro traffic modeling software and existing traffic counts to determine the level of service (LOS) for key intersections in the corridor. The second approach used data from Skycomp, Inc. produced for GDOT, along with the ARC travel demand model output to analyze traffic conditions between intersections.

#### 2.3.4.1 Assessment of Intersection Level of Service

In this study, the methodology used for evaluating traffic operations at each intersection is based on criteria set forth in the Transportation Research Board’s Highway Capacity Manual, 2000 Edition (HCM 2000). Synchro software, which emulates HCM 2000 methodology, was used for the analysis.

For signalized intersections, it is necessary to consider both capacity and LOS in order to evaluate the overall operation of the intersection. The capacity analysis of an intersection is performed by comparing the volume of traffic using the various lane groups at the intersection to the capacity of those lane groups. This results in a volume/capacity (v/c) ratio for each lane group. A v/c greater than 1.0 is an indication that the volume of traffic exceeds available capacity of the intersection and may result in temporary excesses in demand and delay. Although the capacity of the entire intersection is not defined, a composite v/c ratio for the sum of the critical lane groups within the intersection is computed. This composite v/c ratio is an indication of the overall intersection sufficiency.

LOS for a signalized intersection is defined in terms of average controlled delay per vehicle, which is composed of initial deceleration delay, queue move-up time, stopped delay, and final acceleration delay. Table 2-11 presents LOS criteria for signalized intersections as they are defined by average controlled delay. LOS A indicates operations with very low controlled delay, while LOS F describes operations with extremely high average controlled delay. LOS E is typically considered to be the limit of acceptable delay; however it should be noted that the acceptable level of LOS is a policy decision. In some urban areas lower LOS is considered acceptable.

**Table 2-11: Level of Service Criteria for Signalized Intersections**

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Controlled Delay Per Vehicle (sec)</u>
A	≤ 10.0
B	> 10.0 and ≤20.0
C	> 20.0 and ≤35.0
D	> 35.0 and ≤55.0
E	> 55.0 and ≤80.0
F	> 80.0

*Source: 2000 Highway Capacity Manual*



### Existing Traffic Operations

Existing turning movement counts were performed at the critical intersections located in the corridor. These intersections were identified based on existing traffic volumes, input from the stakeholders and field surveys. In addition to traffic counts, intersection geometric data and traffic signal phasing data were obtained. The intersections included in the study area are as follows:

- I-75 NB Exit Ramp;
- Deering Road;
- 17th Street;
- Hemphill Avenue;
- 14th Street;
- 10th Street;
- Marietta Street;
- DL Hollowell Parkway;
- Lambert Avenue;
- North Avenue;
- Simpson Street;
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive; and
- McDaniel Street.

Turning movement counts were performed between October 19, 2004 and October 26, 2004. All turning movement counts were recorded during the weekday morning and evening peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., respectively. The four consecutive 15-minute interval volumes that summed to produce the highest volume at each intersection were then determined.

Existing traffic operations were analyzed at the intersections in accordance with HCM methodology. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 2-12.

**Table 2-12: 2004 Intersection Level of Service**

Zone	Northside Drive at	2004 Level of Service	
		AM Peak	PM Peak
Deering Road	I-75 NB Exit Ramp	B	B
Deering Road	Deering Road	A	B
10th Street	17th Street	C	C
10th Street	Hemphill Avenue	C	C
10th Street	14th Street	C	C
10th Street	10th Street	B	C
North Avenue	Marietta Street	D	F
North Avenue	DL Hollowell Parkway	B	D
North Avenue	Lambert Avenue	C	D
North Avenue	North Avenue	B	C
Vine City MARTA	Simpson Street	C	D
McDaniel Street	Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive	C	C
McDaniel Street	McDaniel Street	C	B



Currently, the Deering Road Zone has the best intersection LOS in the corridor. It is anticipated that this will change in the future as Atlantic Station completes its build out. The North Avenue Zone is the only zone that contains an intersection with LOS F in the PM peak period. Due to its current failing status, this intersection may warrant special attention.

### 2.3.4.2 Existing Traffic Volumes Between Intersections

To better understand the issues related to travel demand, an analysis of traffic along the corridor is necessary. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts were collected for segments of the corridor beginning in 1997. These counts represent the number of vehicles passing a certain point of a given segment for an average weekday 24-hour period. The segments along the corridor were divided by GDOT based on the location of permanent count stations. Table 2-13 displays the AADT from 1997-2002.

**Table 2-13: Corridor AADT**

Segment		AADT Volumes						Avg Annual Change
From	To	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	
14th	I-75	--	24394	24182	25200	23657	24206	-0.1%
Marietta	Ethel	21548	23750	26995	26129	26614	27231	4.4%
@ DL Hollowell Pkwy.		17509	20557	25610	20493	21200	19470	1.8%
Lambert	Travis	18842	19887	24775	20520	23274	23403	4.0%
Simpson	North	26672	19608	32406	28114	28911	29582	1.8%
Markham	Thurmond	22570	21751	27097	22862	25904	26505	2.9%
Chapel	Peters	8635	7258	7614	8792	8268	8411	-0.4%

*Credit: Georgia Institute of Technology, City and Regional Planning Program*

Note the highest growth in traffic during the six-year period was between Ethel Street and Lambert Street, which experienced about a 4% average annual growth in traffic volume. Major thoroughfares that intersect this segment include North Avenue, DL Hollowell Parkway, Marietta Street, and 10th Street. DL Hollowell Parkway and Marietta Street are important connectors to the downtown and midtown major activity centers, while 10th Street and North Avenue represent the general north and south boundaries of Georgia Tech. Marietta Street is also the gateway for a large percentage of heavy truck traffic along the corridor. The segment including the Georgia Dome and GWCC experienced almost 3% annual growth in traffic volume, in part due to the expansion of GWCC facilities and an increased number of events and attendance at the Georgia Dome.

### 2.3.4.3 Future Traffic Conditions

Using the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) travel demand model volume to capacity (V/C) ratios, were determined for 2030. From the V/C ratio data, LOS for various segments of Northside Drive was determined. Traffic volumes, V/C ratios, and LOS are presented here for the evening peak period only, because traffic volumes are heaviest during this period.



In 2030, LOS in the corridor is acceptable in most zones. In the Deering Road Zone, LOS remain varies between D and E. At 4:00 pm the Deering Road Zone is at LOS D, which deteriorates to LOS E at 5:00 pm and goes back to LOS D at 6:00 pm. Of the five zones, the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone registers the worst LOS. At 4:00 pm, travel conditions are at LOS E. By 5:00 pm, travel conditions deteriorate to LOS F, and this continues through the 6:00 pm hour. Figure 2-28 on the next page provides a detailed overview of LOS in the corridor by time of day.

It should be noted that the consultant team concluded that the forecast conditions for 2030 presented in this section are underestimated. Future conditions will more likely be worse than forecast by the ARC travel demand model. This is based on the corridor demographic and redevelopment growth trends presented earlier in Section 2.1. As a result, city staff and the consultant team generated a refined set of 2030 demographic projections for use in the study analysis. These are discussed in Chapter 3.



**Figure 2-28: Northside Drive LOS by Time of Day**

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available as a separate file.)





### 2.3.5 Congestion Management System (CMS)

The primary function of the CMS is to monitor and identify congested locations within the region. ARC has developed a Congestion Monitoring Network (CMN) based on the V/C ratio. The CMN identifies all of the roadway facilities in the region that experience considerable levels of congestion currently or in the future.

The Northside Drive corridor is part of the 2004 Congestion Monitoring Network (CMN). Poor signal timing and poor intersection geometrics are listed as causes of congestion in the CMS. Additionally, Northside Drive ranks 71 out of 73 most congested facilities in the Atlanta region. As previously mentioned, the relatively low ranking for the corridor in the CMS is likely due to the underestimated future congestion using the travel demand model.

### 2.3.6 Safety and Accident Assessment

To assess the relative safety of Northside Drive, the accident rate per million vehicle miles traveled on Northside Drive will be compared with the rate of accidents per million vehicle miles for similar facility types statewide. First, the accident data for Northside Drive was acquired from GDOT. Next, the statewide accident data by facility type was also acquired. Table 2-14 shows the Northside Drive accident rates by segment compared to the statewide average.

**Table 2-14: 2002 Northside Drive Accident Rates by Segment**

Segment		2002 Accident Rate per Million VMT	
From	To	Northside Drive	State Average
I-75	14 <sup>th</sup> Street	10.76	4.19
Ethel Street	Marietta Street	37.68	4.19
DL Hollowell Parkway	Lambert Street	9.26	4.19
North Avenue	Simpson Street	11.22	4.19
Thurmond Street	Tatnall Street	21.31	4.19
Chapel Street	Peters Street	43.25	4.19

As illustrated in Table 2-15, the accident rate for all zones of Northside Drive is higher than the statewide average rate on urban principal arterials on the National Highway System. The Deering Road Zone had the second lowest accident rate of the corridor, but is still 2.6 times higher than the statewide rate. Moving south along the corridor, the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone had the second highest accident rate in the corridor, at 9.0 times the statewide rate. The north end of the North Avenue Zone had the lowest accident rate, at 2.2 times the state average. In comparison, the south end of the zone had an accident rate that was 2.7 times the state average. The Vine City Zone fell in the middle, with an accident rate 5.1 times the state average. In contrast, the McDaniel Street Zone had the highest accident rate of all the zones in the corridor at 10.3 times the statewide average.





In addition to an analysis of accident rates, locations along the corridor with a high number of accidents were examined. The following table ranks the top ten locations in the corridor by total number of accidents.

**Table 2-15: 2002 Northside Drive High Accident Locations**

Zone	Location	Crashes	
		2000-2003	Injuries
Vine City MARTA Station	@ Georgia Dome Entrance	208	86
10th Street Zone	Just North of Hemphill Street	146	56
10th Street Zone	Between 11th Street and Ethel Street	139	68
10th Street Zone	@ Hampton Street	125	57
McDaniel Street Zone	@ Trenholm Street	111	105
Vine City MARTA Station	North of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive	96	39
North Avenue Zone	@ Western Avenue	91	33
McDaniel Street Zone	@ Nelson Street	73	40
Deering Road Zone	@ Green Street	71	26
Deering Road Zone	Just North of the I-75 Southbound Exit Ramp	63	20

Leading the list of high accident locations is Northside Drive at the Georgia Dome entrance. This location has an elevated level of event traffic, thus the high number of crashes may be due to drivers and pedestrians unfamiliar with the area. The 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone had three high accident locations, which is expected because it had a high accident rate, as previously discussed. Rounding out the top five is Northside Drive at Trenholm Street. This intersection may warrant special attention, because an extraordinary 95 percent of crashes resulted in injuries.

### **2.3.7 Planned Improvements**

There are several projects within the study area that are included in the Mobility 2030 RTP and 2005 – 2010 TIP project list.. These projects are given in Table 2-16 below.



**Table 2-16: TIP and RTP Projects**

ARC Project ID	Status	Project Limits	Type of Improvement
AR-268B	Construction	Lovejoy to Atlanta	Commuter Rail
AR-269B	Construction	Athens to Downtown Atlanta	Commuter Rail
AR-438	Construction	I-75 (I-85 to Wade Green Rd)	Ramp Meters
AR-450D	Long Range	Inner Core Northwest Quadrant	Bicycle-Pedestrian Facility
AR-450D1	Long Range	Inner Core Northwest Quadrant	Fixed Guideway Transit - New Starts
AR-450D2	Long Range	Inner Core Northwest Quadrant	Fixed Guideway Transit - Bus
AR-909B	Programmed	Cumberland to Arts Center along US 41/Marietta Boulevard	Arterial Transit Service
AT-186	PE	Norfolk Southern Rail North of US 78/278	Bridge Upgrade
AT-187	Long Range	CSX Rail South of Bellemeade Ave	Bridge Upgrade
AT-188B	Construction	Marietta Street to Northside Drive	Roadway

### 2.3.8 Observations

Based on the previous description of transportation conditions, several opportunities exist for improving mobility and accessibility in the Northside Drive Corridor. These include low-cost enhancements that build upon existing and proposed corridor infrastructure including signal equipment, turn lanes and automated traveler information signs signs. Such improvements can be completed in the short-term. The corridor also warrants higher cost improvements that require longer times to implement. These may include the addition of travel lanes, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian elements.

Transportation System Management (TSM) strategies are ideal for short-term implementation. TSM strategies include signal timing and optimization, intersection improvements and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) enhancements. Both the existing 170 type controllers in the corridor and the 2070L controllers they are currently being upgraded to are compatible with several TSM strategies and offer options for integration with ITS. The fiber optic interconnect is also an important component to support TSM and ITS enhancements. TSM improvements can also address minor intersection geometrics, access management, and signage and wayfinding issues along the corridor.

The lack of bicycle infrastructure in the corridor, such as bicycle lanes, greenway trails and bicycle racks is an issue. An opportunity exists to create bicycle facilities in the corridor. These opportunities could be addressed in the short term, but are likely to require a more long-term approach. In contrast to bicycle conditions, pedestrian conditions are somewhat acceptable in



most areas; however, opportunities to add or enhance existing sidewalks to make them more handicap accessible are available throughout the entire corridor. Opportunities for improvement become even more viable as support infrastructure related to development and redevelopment projects occurs along the corridor.

Currently, existing transit services in the corridor are focused on providing feeder service for MARTA rail stations. There is an opportunity to provide enhanced local transit services that increase mobility within the corridor. These opportunities may involve a combination of short term strategies focused on the introduction of new routes, and longer-term strategies such as bus rapid transit and streetcar technologies.

High levels of freight rail activity in the Deering Road, 10<sup>th</sup> Street and McDaniel Street zones present a challenge with regard to rebuilding any of the rail overpasses to accommodate transportation improvements deemed necessary in this study.

In 2030, both the Deering Road and 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zones in the northern section of the corridor have an undesirable LOS according to the ARC travel demand model. In contrast, LOS in the southern portion of the corridor is acceptable. There is more opportunity for capacity enhancing projects in the northern end of the corridor. Capacity enhancing projects are generally long term.

Due to its presence on the CMN, additional SOV capacity on Northside Drive can be justified and added to the RTP as improvement projects along the corridor. Projects that increase SOV capacity are generally long term.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Street and McDaniel Street Zones had the highest accident rates in the corridor. Additionally, the McDaniel Street Zone featured the location with high number of injuries. Another location in the corridor with a high number of accidents is the Vine City MARTA Zone at Georgia Dome Entrance. Thus, there is an opportunity to increase safety in the corridor, as all zones had accident rates higher than the statewide average. Intersection projects can play a major role in improving corridor safety.

Finally, based on a review of the TIP and RTP, there are no significant projects planned for the corridor. This includes both roadway and transit projects. Therefore, there is an opportunity to coordinate the implementation of any project concepts arising from the Northside Drive Transportation Study. Coordination efforts will include GDOT and GRTA as part of the Governor's Fast Forward Initiative, as well as, ARC and other planning partners in the adoption of Mobility 2030, the continuation of the LCI program, and the ongoing regional planning process.



## 2.4 Previous Plans and Studies

The Northside Drive corridor encompasses numerous intown neighborhoods. Many of these communities have completed comprehensive community based plans in an effort to proactively define the vision for the future. To some degree, almost every plan anticipated and incorporated Northside Drive in to their vision that support and strengthen the development of the Northside Drive Study.

### 2.4.1 Blueprint for the Greater Atlanta University Center Community

In light of citywide neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment activity, the Blueprint for the Greater Atlanta University Center Community (GAUCC) details the results of a community development process conducted for a large, interdependent area in southwest Atlanta. The area consists of the Atlanta University Center institutions and seven surrounding, but integrally linked, neighborhoods. The Blueprint focused on the development desires of the community and the AUC institutions and identified housing, economic development and public improvement projects that the University Community Development Corporation (UCDC) would undertake in ten study areas including Ashby Street, West End, West End/ Holderness, University Homes, transitional growth zones for the AUC institutions, Carter Street, Ashby Street, Lawton Street and Langhorne St.

The Blueprint acknowledges Northside Drive as one of the major gateways into the Atlanta University Center and envisions increasing visibility for the institutions from the corridor. Spelman College has recently purchased property on Chapel Street to expand the campus for institutional/ student services.

### 2.4.2 Terminus (2004)

Terminus is the origin and historic heart of the City of Atlanta, and the location of the proposed Multimodal Passenger Terminal (MMPT). In March and April of 2004, Terminus was studied as one of five targeted focus areas included in the Imagine Downtown planning and visioning process. The MMPT is envisioned as a potential transportation hub that could transform the surrounding blocks into a city within a city. The advent of a centralized, landmark station that included commuter bus, intercity bus and intercity rail tied to the existing MARTA system would create one of the strongest commercial building sites in the region, as well as a complementary base of higher density residential development.

The plan calls for a new commercial core surrounding the MMPT and tied into the terminal by a below grade concourse system; in addition, a new urban retail village would be developed adjacent to the Georgia Dome fronting Northside Drive which would contain convenience retail, specialty shops, and restaurants.



### **2.4.3 Northwest Atlanta Framework Plan (2000)**

The Northwest Atlanta Framework Plan was completed in 2000 for the City of Atlanta and incorporated study areas including DL Hollowell Parkway, Bolton Road/Marietta Boulevard, Perry Boulevard/Hollywood Road, and Chattahoochee Avenue. The study area largely contains industrial uses and vacant/underutilized land, with several quickly growing neighborhoods interspersed throughout. The purposes of this study were to develop a vision for these corridors, establish a framework for guiding growth, improve corridor access, provide opportunities for retail, and stimulate development. The study designates 4,700 acres for residential use, and promotes smart growth and livable communities by creating 8 smart growth strategies. In addition, the plan recommends the creation of mixed-use development, as well as the preservation of the active industrial sites within the study area and the conversion of vacant or underutilized industrial land, where appropriate. Finally, the study advocates capitalizing on existing environmental assets such as the Chattahoochee River and Proctor Creek to create new parks, open-space linkages, and recreational facilities.

Transportation issues were also addressed by recommending various intersection and roadway improvements and the incorporation of new gateways throughout the study area. These recommendations include widening DL Hollowell Parkway from its current four-lane design between Harwell Road and Northside Drive.

### **2.4.4 English Avenue Redevelopment Plan (1998)**

The English Avenue Redevelopment Plan addresses the needs for the English Avenue neighborhood, an inner-city neighborhood that has seen a drop in population and an increase in vacant parcels and dilapidated structures over recent years. Located in the North Avenue Zone, the area has seen renewed development attention due to its adjacency to the Georgia Dome, GWCC, and the Atlanta University Center. The plan supports new community sponsored initiatives that address comprehensive approaches to land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and public safety improvements. The goals of the plan are to preserve residential integrity and stability, prevent intrusion of non-residential land uses and restrict those uses to appropriate areas. In particular, parking and circulation issues specific to the Georgia Dome and GWCC are of a major concern to the neighborhood. The plan looks to minimize those effects wherever possible through transportation improvements and parking regulations.

Recommendations pertaining to Northside Drive include:

- Widening Northside Drive to better accommodate Georgia Dome and GWCC traffic;
- Establishing a landscape buffer between GWCC parking and the neighborhood at Northside Drive and Simpson Road; and
- Developing low-density commercial frontage on Northside Drive that is compatible in character to the adjacent single-family residential community.



#### **2.4.5 Central Atlanta Action Plan (1999)**

The Central Atlanta Action Plan (CA2P) is a strategic, streamlined action plan created to spur economic investment and development in Downtown Atlanta. CA2P was prepared by Central Atlanta Progress in cooperation with the City of Atlanta and financed in part by a generous grant from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation. The plan goals are to build upon the downtown revitalization legacies of previous central area studies and the Centennial Olympic Games, and to capitalize on current favorable demographic and development trends. It calls for improving the pedestrian environment, urban design, and network of open and green-spaces in downtown. In addition, the plan recommends heightening the visibility of Downtown's heritage while also addressing transportation concerns, such as roadway and parking conditions, bicycle and pedestrian systems, and public transit issues.

The plan recommendations relative to Northside Drive include:

- Conduct a GDOT, City of Atlanta, MARTA and ARC sponsored study to identify Northside Drive improvements;
- Improve MARTA rail stations and bus stops including the Vine City MARTA Station;
- Maintain parks and plazas (Johnson Park on Northside Drive is included in the plan); and
- Support preservation efforts of businesses and neighborhood associations in Castleberry Hill.

##### **2.4.5.1 *Central Atlanta Transportation Study (1999)***

The Central Atlanta Transportation Study (CATS) – one element of the larger CA2P study – was conducted in 1999 by Central Atlanta Progress and is an update of a 1988 study to re-evaluate transportation strategies based on more recent development and travel trends. In particular, the imminent redevelopment activity on the western side of downtown required an assessment of current and planned transportation systems. The CATS mission is to support a balanced, complete and integrated transportation system that encourages sustainable development patterns in Downtown Atlanta. The CATS study assesses current transportation conditions and addresses anticipated future mobility needs within the areas of redevelopment and throughout the entire central Atlanta area. Recommendations included roadway and intersection improvements, interstate access enhancements, regulation of parking, and public transit improvements. In addition, the pedestrian environment was studied and streetscape and signage improvements were recommended, as well as increased pedestrian amenities including bike paths.

Recommendations related to the Northside Drive corridor include:

- Investigate the long-term needs of Northside Drive from I-75 to I-20;
- Reconstruct and improve the Alexander Street east-west corridor;
- Establish a shuttle from Atlantic Station to Arts Center; and
- Pursue a northwest rail line from Atlantic Station to Arts Center or the MMPT.





#### **2.4.6 Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Master Plan (2000)**

The Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Master Plan, completed in 2000, seeks to promote and preserve economic development and a variety of housing opportunities, and to encourage an economically and culturally diverse population in Castleberry Hill. Castleberry Hill is a unique and historic intown neighborhood that has seen an increase in development in recent years. The Castleberry Hill development plan consists of well-defined programs and projects including the formation of a community development corporation (CDC); the establishment of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes; strategies for addressing a variety of transportation and parking concerns; and the construction of a park, greenway and community center. No specific recommendations for Northside Drive were identified in this plan.

#### **2.4.7 Greater Home Park Master Plan (2002)**

The Greater Home Park Master Plan was completed in 2002 and is intended to serve as the vehicle for Home Park, in concert with its neighbors, to create a greater community of communities. The plan builds upon the theme of the contemporary urban village surrounded by, and strengthened by, the Georgia Tech campus, Midtown Atlanta, the emerging west side warehouse district, and Downtown Atlanta. Goals of the plan include encouraging development that enhances the multi-faceted character of Home Park; creating internal and external linkages that enable convenient but controlled access to amenities and services; and adding green space for public gathering and recreation.

The Greater Home Park Master Plan has several recommendations pertaining to Northside Drive, which include:

- Identifying redevelopment opportunities and refining the street grid in the existing warehouse district west of Northside Drive; and
- Implementing streetscape enhancements such as wider sidewalks, lighting and street furniture along Northside Drive to create a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

#### **2.4.8 Vine City Redevelopment Plan (2004)**

The Vine City Redevelopment Plan was completed in 2004. This plan was a joint effort of the Vine City Civic Association, community leaders, residents, and business and property owners. Over the past 30 years, Vine City, one of Atlanta's oldest inner-city neighborhoods, has experienced a loss of population, property disinvestment, and general economic decline. In addition, major flooding in 2003 destroyed many homes in the neighborhood and the area has since been designated as a Flood Recovery Area by the City of Atlanta. The plan calls for a large amount of single-family infill on existing vacant lots, as well as several new multi-family developments, including senior housing. New mixed-use projects were identified, mostly occurring on the edges on the neighborhood specifically on Northside Drive. In addition, the plan calls for a large amount of new open space and transportation improvements to several streets.

The plan addresses Northside Drive with recommendations for new mixed-use projects on existing surface parking lots. It also addresses parking issues generated by the neighborhood's



adjacency to the Georgia Dome and calls for a new parking deck with ground-floor retail space at the northeast corner of Vine City. Streetscape improvements along the western side of Northside Drive are recommended to enhance pedestrian safety and mobility. These improvements include wider sidewalks (minimum 15 feet), street trees, furniture, lighting, crosswalks and possibly a median.

#### **2.4.9 JSA-McGill LCI (2003)**

In 2003 CAP was the recipient of a planning grant through the ARC Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program. The LCI focused on long-term development strategies for the Jones-Simpson-Alexander-McGill Corridor (JSA-McGill). The JSA-McGill LCI study provides future land use, open space and transportation plans to enhance the livability, connectivity and mobility within the study area. Recommendations included developing new open space that serves to give the area an urban design focus and assure private investors of public commitment; implementing a live/work future land use classification for buildings with frontage on two streets; and targeted residential and retail mixed-use development with supportive transportation improvements.

The plan specifically recommended new streetscape improvements extending from Civic Center MARTA Station to the future World of Coca-Cola site along West Peachtree and Simpson Streets terminating at Northside Drive. ARC has funded these improvements.

#### **2.4.10 Upper Westside LCI (2005)**

The Upper Westside LCI was completed in February 2005. This study developed a set of improvements and strategies to create a more pedestrian oriented, livable area in the redeveloping industrial and neighborhood zone west of Northside Drive and north of Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway.

The plan recommends many improvements along Northside Drive between Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. These include pedestrian improvements at intersections, new roadway connections and streetscaping.

#### **2.4.11 Berkeley Park Blueprints Plan (2005)**

The Berkeley Park Blueprints Plan was completed in March 2005 with the assistance of the Georgia Conservancy. Although the plan has been reviewed by the planning team by the time of this writing, this neighborhood plan was completed too late to be fully integrated into this study. This plan, however, does attempt to capture many of the recommendations of the Berkeley Park plan with regard to Northside Drive.





## 2.5 Summary of Issues and Opportunities

Opportunities to implement transportation projects in the corridor exist. TSM projects, bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, enhancements to transit service, and safety improvements are specific examples of opportunities in the corridor. Transportation improvements must be coordinated with and supportive of real estate development trends and land-use recommendations.

Currently, the corridor is one of the most dynamic development areas in the City of Atlanta. As such, it is undergoing a rapid increase in residential development. Additionally, the corridor is also a major employment center within the City.

Atlantic Station, located in the northern portion of the corridor, will dominate office market in the corridor. In addition to Atlantic Station, an office node is emerging in the southern part of the corridor at North Avenue. This node includes Northyards Business Park and Georgia Tech North Avenue Research Campus.

Transportation and land use opportunities are presented by the real estate market conditions in the corridor. As development occurs in the corridor, transportation infrastructure will be necessary to support it. Additionally, land use regulations that reflect market conditions will be required.

Change in land use on the Atlantic Station site, from abandoned steel mill to massive mixed-use development affects transportation needs and the real estate market in the corridor. Simultaneously, other nearby development is taking place, notably the redevelopment of the former Castlegate Hotel site and a new residential development on the Northwest corner of the Northside Drive and Bellemeade Avenue. In the southern end of the corridor, development activity includes several mixed-use projects with large residential components, such as M Street and the Antioch Baptist Church mixed use development.

Land use in the corridor is responding to market pressures by becoming denser over time. An opportunity exists to integrate transportation and land use plans with market conditions.



## 2.6 Study Purpose and Need

Twelve proposed purpose and need statements for the study have been drafted based on thorough review and analysis of the data and information presented in the Issues and Opportunities chapter. Additionally, the Core Team provided input to the proposed purpose and need statements. These statements are divided into transportation and mobility, land use, and urban design categories. The statements are listed below:

### Transportation and Mobility:

1. To facilitate local trip-making there is a NEED to provide improved connections between activity centers within the corridor;
2. Due to the number of activity centers within the corridor there is a NEED to provide improved connections and access to the regional transportation system;
3. Given the increasing residential base in the corridor there is an NEED to provide access from the corridor to regional activity centers;
4. In order to support the number of large institutions and industrial land uses in the corridor, there is a NEED to efficiently move freight along Northside Drive; and
5. Given the high level of anticipated growth over the next decade there is a NEED to significantly increase the ability of the Northside Drive corridor to accommodate increased travel demand for all modes of transportation.

### Land Use:

6. There is a NEED to provide and preserve land uses that support and enhance existing neighborhoods including businesses, public parks and open space;
7. Due to the growth trends and proximity to the urban core of Atlanta there is a NEED to develop land along the corridor to higher and better uses;
8. There is a NEED to preserve, protect and strengthen existing neighborhoods, institutions and cultural resources;
9. To maintain the balance of jobs and housing in the corridor, there is a NEED to provide a range of housing options, specifically for low to moderate income populations; and
10. There is a NEED to diversify the employment base to provide an adequate match of jobs and housing.

### Urban Design:

11. Due to substandard roadway design and a lack of signage there is a NEED to make the corridor more user-friendly for commuters, residents and visitors; and
12. Given the trends towards mixed and higher intensity residential uses in the corridor there is a NEED to provide a lively, pedestrian-oriented, and aesthetically pleasing street environment.



### 3.0 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

This section highlights the scenario development approach utilized as part of the Northside Drive corridor planning process. Scenarios represent potential combinations of urban design, roadway, transit and pedestrian improvements. In addition to the “No-Build” scenario, which consisted of improvements for Northside Drive programmed in the Atlanta Regional Commission’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, the study process identified two other long-term scenarios, an “Urban Boulevard” scenario and a “Primary Thoroughfare” scenario. These are discussed later in this section.

Public involvement and input was a significant factor in the scenario development. A public workshop was held early on to seek input regarding the types of land use, urban design, and transportation strategies most acceptable to the residents and stakeholders along the corridor. The public workshop activities included a mapping exercise that allowed meeting participants to specify the types and location of improvements they would like to see implemented. Input from the workshop served as the starting point in developing the scenarios to be analyzed during the corridor planning process.

#### 3.1 Baseline Elements of the Model

##### 3.1.1 Year 2030 Population and Employment Projections

Year 2030 population projections were developed so that travel demand modeling could be performed. *It should be noted that these projections are significantly higher than the ARC projections for the 2030 RTP.* The market analysis that was executed as part of this study and is described in Chapter 2 showed *extremely strong development pressure* in the corridor over the next ten years, particularly around Atlantic Station in the 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Deering Street Zones. These projections and the methodology with which they were derived were reviewed with the ARC demographic analysis staff for technical merit. No problems with the technical approach that was used were found, and ARC staff indicated that it was highly likely that numbers developed specifically for this project were more reflective of development trends, particularly in areas undergoing infill and redevelopment activity.

Subsequently, the land use plan developed for the corridor reflects higher densities than shown in the ARC projections. Based on this analysis the demographic projections used for the long term scenarios were as shown in Table 3-1. For more information on the demographic projections, please see Appendix B.

**Table 3-1: 2030 Demographic Projections**

	Population	Employment	Households
<b>ARC</b>	60,080	61,326	29,889
<b>Northside Drive Corridor Study</b>	73,000	86,000	35,000
<b>Percentage Difference</b>	+21%	+40%	+17%



### **3.1.2 Land Use Plan**

The long-term future land use plan focused on increasing the intensity of land use in the Northside Drive Corridor in coordination with the corridor transportation packages. The same land use plan was used for both corridor transportation packages and is detailed in the Final Recommendation section.

### **3.1.3 Primary Activity Nodes**

Based on public involvement activities and a series of Core Team meetings, the following primary activity nodes were identified:

- Bellemeade Street
- 17<sup>th</sup> Street
- 14<sup>th</sup> Street
- Marietta Street
- Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway
- Simpson Road
- Vine City MARTA Station
- Fair Street
- McDaniel Street

### **3.1.4 Short Term Improvements**

The study process calls for the development of a set of short-term improvements that can be implemented quickly (i.e., by 2010) and at fairly low-cost. These projects are identified in Chapter 5, and cost estimates are given in the Implementation Plan in Chapter 6. The set of short-term improvements was included in all of the scenarios that were modeled.

## **3.2 Long Term Corridor Transportation Scenarios**

The primary emphasis of long-term scenarios is to provide a framework for testing future improvement visions for the corridor through the planning horizon 2030. The long-term scenarios also represent points of reference that can provide measurable variances in performance with respect to the study's purpose and need. Performance variance across the scenarios was used to inform decision-making as to which improvement strategies and policy suggestions move forward in the final corridor recommendations. Ultimately, improvements and policies that best met corridor travel and community development needs were recommended for implementation.

The corridor transportation scenarios are multi-modal transportation strategies that were tested for their ability to meet the study's goals, including serving the future travel needs through the year 2030. Each transportation scenario includes the short-term improvement recommendations discussed earlier in this section. Additionally, the scenarios reinforce livable corridor principals that focus on pedestrian-friendly corridor enhancements such as wider sidewalks, crosswalks, and improved streetscapes.



### 3.2.1 “Urban Boulevard” Scenario

This scenario brings together a vision of improved localized trip making with modest throughput capacity for regional vehicular movement. The scenario assumes a continuous six general purpose lane roadway throughout the corridor with intensive access management treatments centered on a controlled “green” landscaped median and shared driveway access to residential and commercial parcels along the corridor. Figure 3-1 presents an example of a typical section. The package does not assume new direct access or an interchange from Northside Drive to I-20. As mentioned, pedestrian components include wider sidewalks, pedestrian signalization, and other safety recommendations identified as part of the short-term improvement strategy.

The transit components of this scenario were centered on the introduction of local bus service along the length of the corridor. Transit was modeled in mixed traffic and transit vehicles would be accessible at stop location every 6-8 minutes. The scenario also assumes transit signal priority systems incorporated at major intersections to allow buses preferential movements at congested queues providing travel timesavings and operation efficiencies. Additionally, 18 station stops spaced approximately ¼-mile apart would traverse the length of the corridor. The station locations would include shelters, benches, and various other amenities. Bus routing would consist of new routes beyond the existing and planned transit service for the area. The routes that were modeled were:

- Bellemeade Avenue to West End MARTA station on 20 minute headways
- Northside Parkway/Paces Ferry to Northside Drive to West End MARTA station on 20 minute headways
- Northside Parkway to Howell Mill Road, across Bellemeade Avenue and down Northside Drive to West End on 20 minute headways
- Cobb County to Arts Center MARTA Station – I-75 to Northside Drive to 17<sup>th</sup> Street terminating at Arts Center Station on 15 minute headways (Cobb County #10 Express)



*BRT is a part of both scenarios*



### Figure 3-1: Urban Boulevard Typical Section

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available as a separate file.)



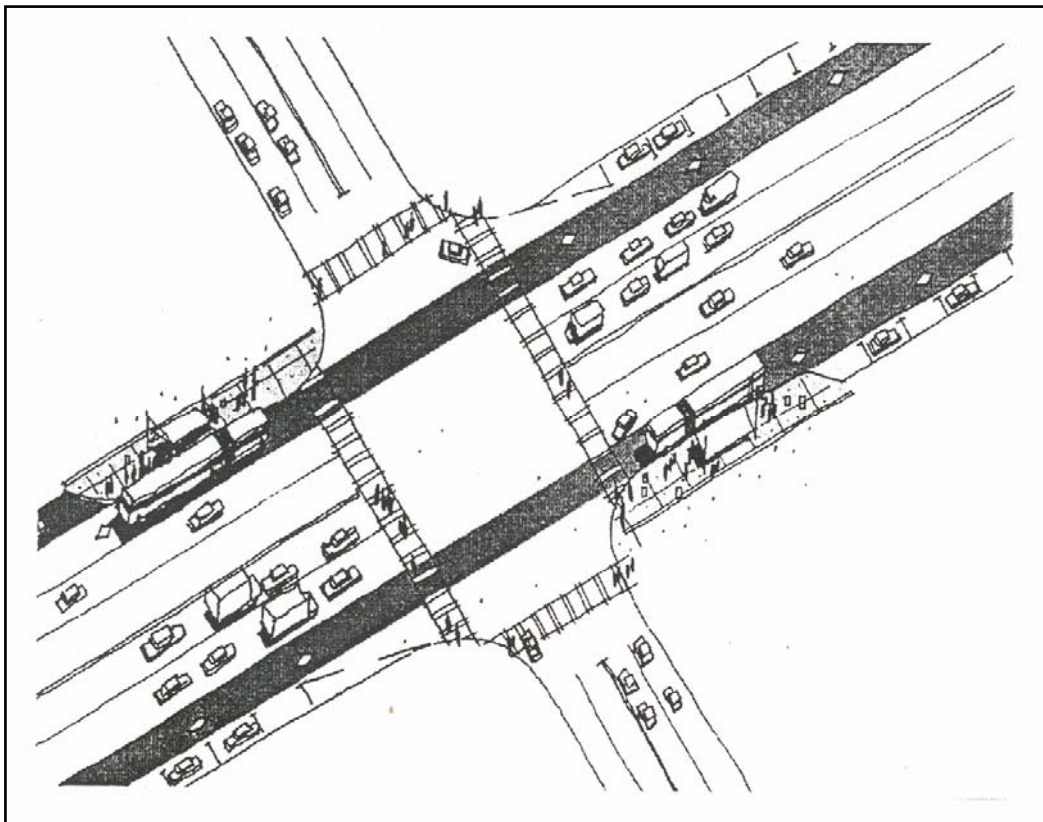


### 3.2.2 “Primary Thoroughfare” Scenario

The Primary Thoroughfare scenario focused more on regional movement and connectivity, coupled with improved localized mobility along the corridor. This scenario built upon the Urban Boulevard scenario to include an eight-lane roadway section (6 lanes general purpose, plus two dedicated transit lanes) with a new collector-distributor system at I-20.

Access management features including the “green” median and shared driveways would be a significant design element. Pedestrian components would include wider sidewalks, pedestrian signalization, and safety recommendations identified as part of the short-term improvement strategy. The actual physical lane configuration and layout could vary, but generally would include six lanes devoted to general purpose vehicular traffic, and two lanes dedicated for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and/or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) operations. Figure 3-2 presents an example of a potential typical section for this package.

The modelled collector-distributor system consisted of elevated access roads running parallel to I-20 that connected Northside Drive to the existing interchanges at Joseph E. Lowery Blvd., Lee Street and McDaniel Street. It did not include a new interchange on I-20 at Northside Drive. These connections would provide improved interstate access to and from Northside Drive.



*An example sketch of BRT in exclusive lanes. This example shows four general-purpose lanes, whereas the scenario modeled six general purpose lanes, plus two dedicated to transit.*



The transit components for this scenario included a higher capacity BRT system along the corridor. The BRT facility modeled was fully integrated into the Northwest Connectivity system as well as other planned regional express bus operations. Buses would be low floor vehicles to allow for level boarding from the busway median and/or curbside stations. These types of transit enhancements improve accessibility for the elderly and disabled. Station spacing was modeled at approximately every ¼-mile and included prepaid boarding, shelters, benches and other amenities. Local bus services shared travel lanes with regular cars, while regional transit utilized exclusive lanes. Park-and-ride stations were provided at either end of the corridor in proximity to the Interstate corridors I-20 and I-75.

The BRT facility concept included feeder bus services to provide access to major nodes such as Atlantic Station, MARTA rail, downtown/midtown, and adjacent neighborhoods. Headways ranged from 6 to 8 minutes during peak periods.

Transit was modeled to serve the regional areas connecting into downtown Atlanta running along Northside Drive. One-half of all express routes operated by GRTA traveling I-20 and I-75 were modeled as re-routed via Northside Drive into downtown and/or mid-town locations. The express routes along I-20 were modeled to travel Northside to Martin Luther King Drive and proceed into downtown. Express routes currently on I-75 were modeled to utilize Northside Drive to Jones/Simpson/Alexander into downtown. The Primary Thoroughfare scenario included new regional bus routes in addition to the local routing defined in the Urban Boulevard scenario.





**Figure 3-2: Primary Thoroughfare Typical Section**

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available as a separate file.)



### 3.2.3 **“No Build” Scenario**

The No Build scenario consisted only of improvements for Northside Drive programmed in the Atlanta Regional Commission’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, which are listed in this report in Section 2. It assumed no land use or urban design changes, and no change to the current pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure.



## 4.0 SCENARIO EVALUATION

This chapter details the tools and methodology used to evaluate the transportation scenarios detailed in Chapter 4, and documents the results of that evaluation.

### 4.1 Methodology

In order to assess the performance of each scenario with regard to the Study Purpose and Need (Section 2.6), a quantitative and qualitative approach was developed. An evaluation matrix was prepared to quantitatively compare the performance of each scenario. The qualitative approach compares the two scenarios against the City Development Policies included in the recently adopted *2004 – 2019 Comprehensive Development Plan* (CDP) to ascertain how well each scenario supports the CDP.

#### 4.1.1 Evaluation Matrix

Analysis areas of mobility, accessibility, land use, and cost are included in the evaluation matrix. For each analysis area, several performance measures have been selected as a means of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation and land use strategies incorporated in the scenarios.

Two key sources of data were used to evaluate scenarios. The ARC travel demand model provided performance data for the mobility and accessibility analysis areas. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were used to produce performance data for the accessibility and land use analysis areas. In addition to these sources, transit cost estimates were produced using the GRTA Transit Cost Estimation Methodology included in the *Regional Transit Action Plan*.

Within the evaluation matrix, an ordinal rating was assigned to each performance measure. Ratings across all performance measures in each analysis area were aggregated and a composite rating was determined for each scenario. Table 4-1 summarizes performance measures, descriptions, data sources, and methodology by evaluation area.



**Table 4-1: Evaluation Matrix - Methodology**



## Evaluation Matrix Methodology Page 2



### Evaluation Matrix Methodology Page 3



## Evaluation Matrix Methodology Page 4



## Evaluation Matrix Methodology Page 5





## Evaluation Matrix Methodology Page 6



#### **4.1.2 Comparison to the City Development Policies**

As part of the recently adopted *2004 – 2019 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)*, the City of Atlanta has enumerated several Development Policies. Each scenario was compared to these policies in order to determine how well it supported them. A qualitative rating of very supportive, supportive, or not supportive was assigned to each scenario.

### **4.2 Results**

This section presents the quantitative analysis in the evaluation matrix and the qualitative analysis in table format. Finally, implications of the results with regard to the formulation of a final recommendation are reviewed.

#### **4.2.1 Evaluation Matrix**

Results of both scenarios with regard to the previously described performance measures are summarized in the following table. Ratings of good, fair, or poor were assigned based on the previously discussed methodology. In addition, results for a No Build Scenario are included for comparison purposes. The No Build Scenario is simply the adopted ARC RTP projects. The evaluation matrix is shown in Table 4-2.



**Table 4-2: Evaluation Matrix – Results**



## Evaluation Matrix Results Page 2



### Evaluation Matrix Results Page 3



#### **4.2.2 Comparison With City Development Policies**

Table 4-3 compares the two scenarios against the City Development Policies. Each scenario is assigned a rating along with reasons for the assigned rating. Ratings of supportive or very supportive are more desirable.



**Table 4-3: Comparison With City Development Policies**



## Comparison With CDP Page 2





### **4.2.3 Implications Of Results**

Based on the evaluation matrix, both scenarios have similar results for 22 of the 30 performance measures. However, key differences between the facilities were evident with regard to impacts and cost. The Urban Boulevard Scenario will have a lower impact on neighborhoods and businesses. In contrast, impacts of the Primary Thoroughfare Scenario are higher due to the space required for the exclusive transit facility. In addition, costs are 3 to 4 times greater for the Primary Thoroughfare Scenario because of the exclusive transit facility and a new collector distributor facility connecting Northside Drive to I-20. Overall, the Urban Boulevard Scenario addresses many of the study goals by providing increased mobility through a multimodal transportation system that serves future travel demand with lower impacts and costs.

A key result of the travel demand modeling process that seems counterintuitive is the relatively minor benefits provided by a new collector distributor facility that increases access to I-20. In the travel demand model, access points to I-20 are within half a mile of Northside Drive via McDaniel Street and Joseph P. Lowery Boulevard. Currently, the routes to access I-20 from Northside Drive are not signed very well and are not intuitive to drivers unfamiliar with the area. However, the travel demand model assigns traffic to the network without regard to poor signage or other psychological conditions. Finally, due to numerous operational, engineering, right-of-way, and land access constraints, a new interchange or a collector distributor facility will be cost prohibitive.

With regard to City Development Policies, the Urban Boulevard Scenario was very supportive of 8 of the 13 policies. In comparison, the Primary Thoroughfare Scenario was very supportive of 7 policies. The Urban Boulevard Scenario was supportive of 3 policies, while the Primary Thoroughfare was supportive of 4 policies. Both scenarios were not supportive of 1 policy. Therefore, the Urban Boulevard Scenario is slightly more supportive of the City Development Policies.

## **4.3 Agency and Public Input**

Public and agency input were critical to the evaluation process. During the development of the evaluation process and the scenarios, the general public were involved through a series of meetings. These included a kickoff meeting and a public workshop held on December 7, 2004. The study was also guided by two steering committees. The Core Team, made up of stakeholders within the study area, met regularly to provide input and feedback to the City of Atlanta. The Agency Team, which consisted of affected agencies, also met and provided regular input.

After completing the evaluation matrix and the comparison with the CDP, the results were presented to the Core and Agency teams, as well as the public at the following meetings:

- Core Team meeting on March 1, 2005 at Atlanta City Hall;
- Public meetings on March 10 and 30, 2005 at the Senior Services Center; and
- Joint Core/Agency Team meeting on March 17, 2005 at Atlanta City Hall.



Through these meetings and other input efforts, such as comment forms, several areas of consensus were determined, which included:

- A dedicated transit facility serving the length of Northside Drive;
- Median and streetscape improvements; and
- Additional travel lanes to provide a continuous six-lane section on Northside Drive.

Transit improvements were envisioned as high frequency service with stops every quarter mile focused on the corridor and urban core markets. Median and streetscape improvements included a green median and wider sidewalks with streetscapes. Roadway improvements included six general purpose travel lanes throughout the corridor, with turn lanes at key intersections. These areas of consensus were used to craft a final recommendation.



## 5.0 FINAL RECOMMENDATION

This section details the major recommendations for the Northside Drive corridor over the next 25 years. As detailed in Chapter 4, these recommendations were developed through several avenues, including:

- Review of existing conditions and deficiencies;
- Input from citizens, stakeholders, and agencies;
- A comprehensive evaluation of potential impacts including estimates of future travel demand for all modes and environmental issues; and
- Consideration of land use policies and development goals in the corridor.

The needs of the corridor were discussed previously in Section 2.6, focusing on transportation, land use, and design. These recommendations meet those needs while adhering to the principles of the City's development policies as summarized below:

- Improve connections to retail, service, and other civic resources;
- Utilize existing infrastructure;
- Transform streets into attractive connections within and between neighborhoods; and
- Design safe and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

The final recommendations are organized into two major sections within this chapter and include the following land use and transportation elements:

### **Corridor Transportation System**

- Multimodal transportation system with Bus Rapid Transit service and six travel automobile travel lanes on Northside Drive;
- Pedestrian system along Northside Drive including minimum 15' foot sidewalks, safe pedestrian intersection crossings and improved connections into adjacent neighborhoods; and
- Access management featuring a green median and limited curb cuts.

### **Land Use and Urban Design**

- Increased land use intensities fronting Northside Drive up to 10 stories in height;
- Mixed land uses along the corridor;
- Major activity nodes at several existing intersections and transit stations; and
- New neighborhood gateways along Northside Drive.

For more detail on these and other recommendations please see the sections that follow.

In addition, a package of short-term improvements was developed, and is described in section 5.3.



## 5.1 Corridor Transportation System

A corridor transportation system comprised of multiple elements including streetscapes, safety enhancements, transit improvements, roadway capacity, and bridge improvements was developed as part of the final recommendation. These improvements were developed in tandem with the land use recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of the final recommendation with regard to both land use and transportation.

### 5.1.1 Typical Section

The recommended typical section is shown in Figure 3-1. As the figure indicates three general-purpose travel lanes are recommended in each direction. Minimum 15’ sidewalks are included on both sides of the road and a landscaped median is included in the middle. The median width will vary depending on the presence of turn lanes at key intersections. Overall the typical section will vary between 110 and 126 feet.

### 5.1.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

These recommendations directly support the transit functions of the corridor, because walking and bicycling are the primary means for accessing transit in the future.



*Streetscapes and wide sidewalks are recommended*

Through the development of the land use plan and urban design characteristics, two primary pedestrian zones were identified: in the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone between 14<sup>th</sup> and Marietta streets and the entire Vine City MARTA Zone. These zones are expected to have the heaviest pedestrian volumes due to the proposed residential and commercial mixed uses and proximity to major pedestrian generators such as the GWCC. In addition to the pedestrian zones there are also several critical pedestrian intersections along Northside Drive, where it would be important to emphasize pedestrian crossing features as the intersections are improved. The intersections and the

pedestrian zones are shown on Figure 5-1. The Upper Westside LCI has provided specific recommendations for pedestrian crossing improvements at a number of intersections along Northside Drive. Please refer to that plan for more detail.

It should be noted that other portions of the study area would also have significant pedestrian activity and so the recommended improvements address the entire corridor. Specific recommendations are detailed below.



**Figure 5-1: Pedestrian Functionality**



High automobile volume on Northside Drive, together with significant topographical changes throughout the corridor, unfortunately make the corridor much less suited for bicycle travel than others such as Marietta Street and Howell Mill Road. This was confirmed by representatives of bicycle advocacy groups throughout the study process. However, while dedicated facilities for bicycle travel are not recommended by this study, we must anticipate that a segment of the bicycling population will still want to travel on Northside Drive, and the on-road facilities should try to make that experience as accommodating as possible.

For these reasons, the recommendation for bicycles on Northside Drive is a simple one: provide a wider curb lane throughout the corridor. As the roadway is improved over time for the other improvements recommended in this plan, the curb lane dimension should be widened to 13 feet. This will accommodate commuter-type bicyclists and will also prove beneficial to transit and truck operations. Although it is not a recommendation at this time, it is possible that if increasing usage by bicyclists is observed due to a general slowing of traffic speeds and increasing urbanization of the surrounding land uses, there may be a possibility of restriping for dedicated bicycle lanes by reducing the width of existing lanes, including the wider 13-foot outer lanes.

A key component of the recommendations that will support the pedestrian improvements and land use plan is comprehensive streetscape upgrades. While the design of these streetscapes has not been identified, it is recommended that they provide a unifying theme for Northside Drive. The streetscape elements such as street furniture and plantings may vary within the corridor, but elements such as traffic signal poles, street lights and pavement treatments should be consistent through the corridor to provide a clear sense of continuity and assist with navigation for those unfamiliar with the areas.

### **5.1.3 Roadway Recommendations**

The roadway recommendations detailed below cover a wide range of improvements to the roadway portion of Northside Drive including its potential interface with I-20. Some of the short- term improvements are not discussed in detail in this section. For more information on those improvements, please see Chapter 6.

#### ***5.1.3.1 I-20 Access Improvements***

The information generated herein did not establish a clear cost benefit basis for recommending improved access. The benefits in terms of increased access, improved travel conditions on a regional or corridor basis were not apparent in the study analysis, while it appeared that the costs would be quite high. At the same time public and agency sentiment for improved access were mixed with some concerned that it would encourage pass through trips from I-20 to I-75 and others seeing redevelopment opportunities and better access to existing destinations such as the AUC.

As noted in Chapter 4, the travel demand model used to study travel impacts for this study is limited in its ability to measure the potential impact of the improvements to access, because it does not measure psychological factors that may influence a driver's decision to use a particular



facility. Another limitation of this study process, was that the cost estimates developed for the access improvements assumed a worst case scenario, because limitations in available information and budget prevented conceptual engineering on a range of alternative approaches to constructing the access. It is possible that alternatives developed for consideration in this study can be refined to further lower the project cost.

It is recommended that a detailed study of all potential access options be undertaken in the near future. This study would need to address several key issues including conceptual engineering sufficient to establish the costs of all feasible options, the potential for closing of adjacent interchanges at McDaniel and Lee Streets to facilitate a new interchange and the potential impacts to traffic operations and travel patterns in the area and on a regional level. Due to the potential for closing existing access points as a part of the final solution, public involvement in this study would need to be significant.

One potential approach to completing this analysis would be for the GDOT to undertake this effort as part of the upcoming HOV study of I-20 West inside I-285. This would have the advantage of considering the new access as it relates to all of the interchanges along the facility.

#### **5.1.3.2 New Travel Lanes**

To accommodate future travel demand and the proposed transit improvements, new travel lanes on Northside Drive should to be added to bring the entire corridor up to a six lane cross section. In the southern end of the corridor, one northbound lane should be added from Larkin Street to Simpson Street. One lane in each direction should be added from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to I-75 in the northern end of the corridor. The general locations of the lane additions is shown on Figure 5-2 on the following page.

It should be noted that detailed concept, design, and engineering work must be undertaken to determine the exact locations of any additional right-of-way that may be necessary. Reconfiguration of existing lanes and on-road facilities, narrowing of lanes, utilization of all existing but unused right-of-way, etc., might be used as tools to gain an additional lane, in lieu of having to purchase right-of-way from private landowners. All of these options will be explored fully during the roadway and right-of-way planning process that would come after this high-level study is concluded.

In many cases, the addition of new travel lanes may make the resulting pavement width quite wide, especially when possible turn lanes and/or median are included. In these cases, roadway design must either make specific considerations to provide for safe and comfortable pedestrian crossing facilities, or the operational benefits of turn lanes must be weighed against the need for pedestrian safety and accessibility

In addition, many locations along the corridor are home to mature shade trees located very near the current roadway (for example, both the southwest and northeast corners of Northside Drive and Bishop Street). Right-of-way acquisition plans should strongly consider the value of these





trees to the community and the pedestrian environment when making recommendations regarding land to be acquired.

### **5.1.3.3 Intersection Reconfiguration**

Early in the study process several intersections were identified as particularly difficult to navigate due to skewed angles or unusual configurations. It is recommended that these intersections be reconfigured to more traditional layouts. Specific intersections to be addressed are as follows:

- Consolidate Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14<sup>th</sup> Street into a single intersection;
- Remove Split on Northside Drive at Marietta Street; and
- Consolidate Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection.
- Prohibit northbound left turns onto Northside Drive from southbound Marietta Street (short term, signage only, see text below)

The skewed nature of the intersection of Marietta Street and Northside drive makes turning left from southbound Marietta Street to northbound Northside problematic. Although only a small percentage of cars make this turning movement, even this small number of such movements raises safety and congestion issues significantly. It is recommended that such left turns be prohibited via signage, and that additional signage be placed on southbound Marietta Street and Howell Mill Road to indicate that those wishing to travel northbound on Northside Drive should use Eighth Street, where a traffic signal is also recommended.

The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6.

### **5.1.3.4 New Roadways**

Through the study process a few opportunities were identified for improving connectivity by adding new roads or extending existing ones. The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6. In addition to the new roadways described below there are also several related projects in the Upper Westside LCI. Please see that document for more details.

#### **Ethel Street Extension**

To provide better access to Home Park it is recommended that Ethel Street be extended east to Hampton Street. This extension should relieve some pressure on Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14<sup>th</sup> Street and Northside Drive/10<sup>th</sup> Street. It will also facilitate potentially closing Hemphill Street/14<sup>th</sup> Street in the future, should this become desirable.





**Figure 5-2: New Travel Lanes**



## **Herndon Homes Connections**

In the event that Herndon Homes is redeveloped it is recommended that two north/south roadways be constructed from Johns Street to North Avenue. These roadways would allow for better internal access and reduce the demand on Northside Drive/North Avenue. If it would not interfere with the truck marshalling yard at the GWCC, it may be desirable to extend these roads as far south as the new Ivan Allen Boulevard, so that traffic can also be removed from Northside Drive/Simpson Street.

### **5.1.3.5 New Traffic Signals**

To provide more improved opportunities for east west travel across Northside Drive and maintain access to parcels along Northside Drive it is recommended that new traffic signals be placed at Ethel Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition to facilitating vehicle movements in the corridor, the traffic signals will also provide needed opportunities for pedestrian crossings in an area that is expected to have significant future pedestrian activity.

### **5.1.3.6 Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) and Signage Program at Dome and GWCC**

It is recommended that in the short term, an Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) –based plan be developed for special events at the Georgia Dome and the Georgia World Congress Center. This system should utilize ITS elements to direct traffic along the roadways with least congestion before and after special events. In addition, the program already planned for signage improvements for the GWCC, Georgia Dome, Phillips Arena, and Centennial Park should be implemented. Neither of these programs should direct traffic onto secondary streets such as Howell Mill Road and Marietta Street.

### **5.1.4 Median and Access Management**

Traffic flow and safety enhancements are a key component of the Corridor Transportation System. Access management including a median is recommended to help provide both smoother traffic flow and enhanced safety from fewer unanticipated turning movements across traffic in the corridor.

The major physical recommendation of the access management strategy is the construction of a median for the entire length of the corridor. Medians increase safety by reducing vehicle conflicts from left-turn movements and by providing refuge areas in the middle of the roadway for pedestrians crossing at intersections. In addition to safety benefits, medians play an important role in controlling access in a corridor. The median would have breaks at all signalized intersections to allow for turning movements. At critical pedestrian intersections, especially those with wider sections due to turn lanes it is recommended that the median be designed to provide a pedestrian refuge area.

In order to support the streetscape recommendations and beautify the corridor it is recommended that the median be landscaped and contain other visual enhancements as appropriate.



*As shown in this picture, it is recommended that medians provide pedestrian refuges at intersections*

Another important element of the access management strategy would be to sharply limit the number of curb cuts along Northside Drive as it redevelops. This is particularly critical in the vicinity of intersections, because there are already large numbers of turning movements, pedestrian activities in these locations. This will help improve traffic flow by reducing turning movements and will also contribute to transforming the corridor to a pedestrian-friendly environment. Transit operations will also benefit, because there will be fewer turn movements occurring in the travel lanes being used by transit vehicles. In order to maintain access to businesses and residences access points should be provided on side streets. There would also be a need for shared driveways, parking facilities and access roads. These access roads should be located within or behind developments, so that building fronts can abut the sidewalk.

A final component of the access management strategy will be to provide left-turn lanes at key intersections within the corridor. These left turn lanes will remove queued traffic from the flow of through traffic. It should be noted; however, that left-turn lanes should not necessarily be provided at all intersections. At some intersections, it may be desirable to prohibit left turns rather than widen the roadway section for turn lanes. This is particularly true in areas where heavy pedestrian and through traffic volumes are expected.

### **5.1.5 Transit**

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is currently no local bus service running along the entire length of the corridor. Therefore, a MARTA local bus route serving the extent of the corridor is recommended in the short term.



As mentioned previously, the transit component is essential for enhancing mobility in the corridor. Therefore, bus rapid transit (BRT) is recommended in the medium term.

The BRT recommendation is discussed in detail below. More information is presented on this recommendation than on the other recommendations discussed in this section, because stakeholders and the general public indicated in the study process that they were unfamiliar with BRT and would like additional information. The details are provided to help the community envision the recommendations more completely.

BRT is a flexible rubber-tired transit mode designed to replicate rail service that may be applied in a variety of operating environments to include mixed traffic, exclusive busways and HOV lanes. It combines stations, Intelligent Transportation Systems, vehicles and services into a permanent facility. BRT applications are tailored to the specific conditions and travel needs within a corridor, and the following combination of elements is recommended for the Northside Drive Corridor:

- Transit Priority — Since transit vehicles are recommended to generally travel in mixed-traffic along Northside Drive, it will be essential to find ways to give transit vehicles priority over general traffic when possible, and when it would not greatly reduce other primary transportation goals, such as pedestrian or motorist safety. Such priority treatments can dramatically improve transit service, and ensure that transit service remains a strong and competitive transportation mode choice.
  - Signalization (Signal Pre-emption) – Traffic signal systems that give priority treatment to on-road transit vehicles at intersections can greatly improve operating characteristics. A variety of techniques can be used to increase the priority of transit vehicles including: 1) extending the green phase, 2) inserting a green phase, and 3) reducing the red phase on the approach that the transit vehicle travels. The transit priority system could take advantage of the automatic vehicle location equipment already installed on some MARTA equipment.
  - Roadway – Roadway priority treatments can significantly improve the operating characteristics of transit. These treatments provide many of the benefits of dedicated right-of-way transit, at significantly less cost, and generally without having to acquire additional right-of-way. When planned well, they can also use existing right-of-way very efficiently.

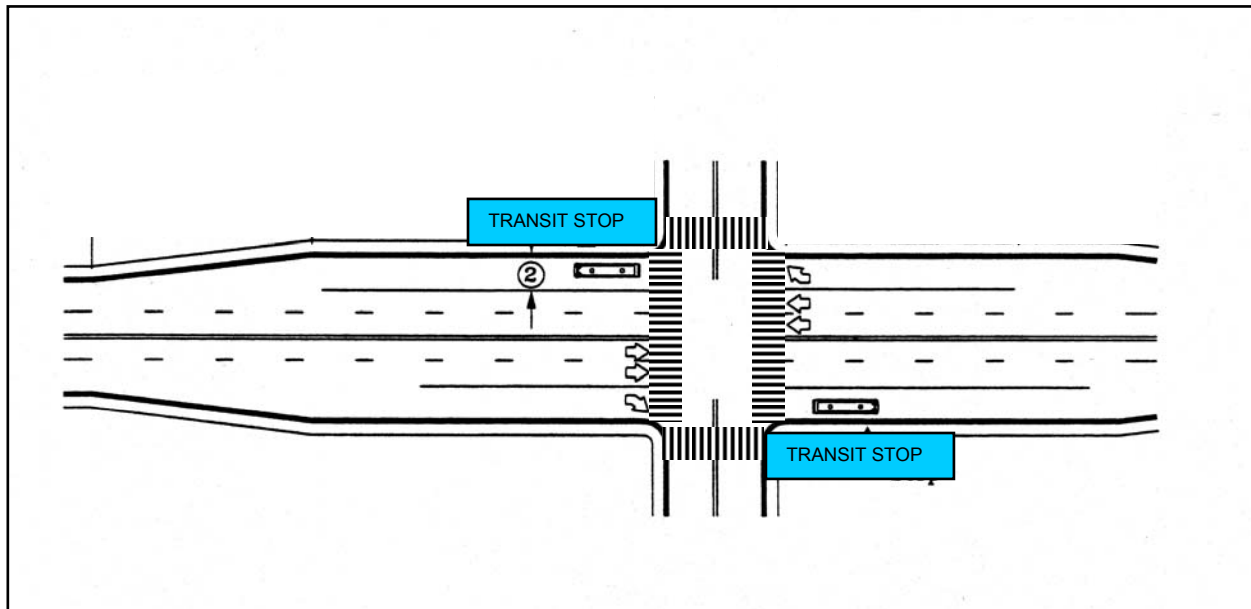
For example, such a treatment may involve using an existing turn lane or even reducing median width at selected locations on the corridor to provide an exclusive transit lane so that transit vehicles can bypass queued traffic. It is recommended to combine roadway treatments with signalization treatments and signage to further reduce delay, allow traffic to flow smoothly and safely, make sure pedestrians are clearly informed of locations with transit vehicle priority (for example, “Cross on Green Signal Only – Transit Vehicles May Continue When General Traffic is Stopped.”) and to ensure that drivers are similarly informed about transit vehicle priority. See Figure 5-3 for an illustration of a transit vehicle



priority concept using turn lanes to give transit vehicles priority without adding additional pavement width.

- Far Side of Intersection Stations – Location of BRT stations on the far side of the intersection relative to the direction of travel so that buses cross the intersection before stopping. This reduces the chance that a bus will be delayed an extra signal cycle due to dwell time at a near side station.
- Skip Stop and/or Express Service – Modification and/or addition of bus routes in the corridor that serve a limited number of stops. Skip Stop service typically stops every 0.75 to 1 miles as compared to local service, which may have stops every 0.25 miles. Express service stops even less frequently than Skip Stop service, perhaps at the endpoints of the corridor only. These services may take the place of existing local service or may be additive in nature.

**Figure 5-3: One Example of a Transit Priority Treatment using Existing Turn Lanes**





BRT Stations/Superstops – Station design is a critical factor in attracting transit riders, especially those who have other transportation modes at their disposal. At their best, BRT stations are designed to improve both bus operations and the customer experience. Bus operational enhancements are achieved through prepayment of fares and designs aimed at reducing boarding and alighting times such as raising the station a few feet above grade to match the bus boarding door level. Customer amenities should include:

- A sheltered area (covered waiting area);
- More seating;
- Climate control;
- Real-time next bus arrival information displayed on kiosks or variable message signs;
- Detailed schedule and route information;
- Newspaper racks;
- Trash receptacles; and
- Ticket vending machines.

Please see Figure 5-4 for some example pictures of BRT stations.

- Service Branding – Development of a distinctive identity for the BRT service including a unique paint scheme and logo for use on vehicles and bus stations/shelters, and a unique brand name for the service. In Los Angeles and Contra Costa County, California, BRT service is known as Rapid Bus. Marketing to establish the identity of the service within the community of potential users is also recommended.
- Specialized Vehicles – Bus Rapid Transit may be operated with a variety of bus vehicles tailored to the service needs, however, it is desirable to operate bus vehicles that provide a high-level of customer convenience and rapid loading. In many cases articulated vehicles are needed to provide adequate capacity. To speed loading of vehicles, bus floor heights are coordinated with station platforms to provide level floor boarding. Buses may also be equipped with automatic fare collection equipment, multiple boarding locations and wide aisles. Other enhancements may include onboard passenger information systems that provide real time travel information to customers.

The recommended BRT facility including conceptual station locations is shown in Figure 5-5.

#### **5.1.5.1 BRT Stations**

On Northside Drive it is recommended that the majority of stations be neighborhood-oriented, with 16 local stations or superstops and 2 transit transfer stations. In general, the local stations should be designed for walk-up access and require a minimal amount of right-of-way. At major cross streets, the local stations may need to accommodate some transfer activity, which would increase the size of the station at that location.





Figure 5-4: Example Neighborhood Type BRT Stations





Figure 5-4 continued:







**Figure 5-5: BRT Facility on Northside Drive**



## **17<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Transfer Station**

One station should be highlighted, because it should have a unique function within the corridor. The 17<sup>th</sup> Street station is recommended to serve as transit transfer station. This station could provide the opportunity for transfer between automobiles, passenger and commuter rail facilities, express bus services and the Bus Rapid Transit facility recommended on Northside Drive. The station location is adjacent to the existing Amtrak line, which is also the planned alignment for commuter rail from Athens into downtown Atlanta. Express bus services from Cobb County also could be routed down Northside Drive and then across 17<sup>th</sup> Street into midtown Atlanta. Given the potential interaction at this station, it is recommended that it be developed to facilitate these transfer activities and perhaps provide structured parking for long-term inter-city passengers if it is needed.

### **5.1.5.2 Long-term Transit Approach**

In the future, there may be the potential to convert or augment the recommended BRT facility with light rail transit (LRT) or other fixed guideway service as appropriate to serve future transit needs. At this time no recommendation is made in this area pending the outcome of the MARTA Inner Core Alternatives Analysis study. The long-term transit recommendation on Northside Drive should allow for seamless integration with the facilities recommended by the Inner Core Study.

### **5.1.6 Bridges**

In order to accommodate the proposed typical section, it is recommended that several railroad bridges be lengthened to provide additional width beneath them. Traveling north to south through the corridor these bridges are as follows:

- CSX railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of Bellemeade Street;
- Norfolk Southern railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street; and
- Norfolk Southern railroad overpass of Northside Drive south of Chappel Street.

In addition to the railroad bridge improvements, it is recommended that the deck of the bridge on Northside Drive over the Norfolk Southern railroad south of Marietta Street be widened. This should be completed as part of the bridge upgrade already programmed in the ARC 2005-2010 TIP. The location of these improvements is shown on Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 in Chapter 6.

### **5.1.7 On-street Parking**

Marketing experts agree that having some visible on-street parking is essential to support viable storefront retail. In addition, on-street parking dramatically increases the safety and the perception of a safety in the pedestrian environment. In support of the proposed pedestrian improvements and retail land use recommendations, on street parking should be added to the corridor where needed. This parking should be parallel to the curb and should occur in mid-block locations only. The parking should be provided by adding additional pavement width, so



that six travel lanes are maintained throughout the corridor. Finally, along Northside Drive, this parking should be permitted only during off peak times. Strict enforcement of this regulation is required to implement on-street parking. Wherever possible, cross streets should be used to provide on street parking because the spaces can remain available even during peak times. Much success has been achieved recently in urbanizing areas of the City of Atlanta such as Midtown and Buckhead with having major landowners donate the ROW for on-street parking purposes, in exchange for a commensurate increase in allowable development intensities equal to what was lost with the donated land.

## 5.2 Land Use and Urban Design Framework

Land use recommendations were developed for properties within the focus area along the Northside Drive corridor to illustrate the types and intensity of development appropriate for the corridor and surrounding communities. Land use recommendations were generated from input gathered at a series of open public forums, core team meetings, project management meetings. Additionally, land use recommendations were informed by the market demand analysis generated by the planning team.

Throughout this planning process, stakeholders emphasized the importance of developing the Northside Drive corridor with a diversity of uses and identified areas with a high level of activity at key intersections along the corridor. These key intersections will potentially serve as local and regional attractors by building off current development momentum in the area. Figure 5-6 shows these potential activity nodes. Activity nodes have an urban character that can accommodate higher density development and a mixture of uses including commercial and residential, support alternative transportation options and function as gateways and orientation points into adjacent neighborhoods.

These activity nodes and development opportunities identified in the Issues and Opportunities section of this report were used to formulate the land use character of the entire corridor. Like the Issues and Opportunities analysis, the land use recommendations are illustrated and described in the five zones. These illustrations are intended to be representative of the potential 25-year build-out. While the City of Atlanta land use categories are consistent within the five zones, each zone is designed and characterized differently based on the existing and surrounding urban context, development opportunities, and to support various market niches.

The recommended land use pattern for the entire corridor encourages increased density with various levels of intensity for properties fronting Northside Drive. With increased density recommended, it is important to protect the adjacent single-family neighborhoods by stepping down the building heights as development approaches the residential areas. This transitional strategy will preserve and protect existing stable residential communities adjacent to Northside Drive while offering land use options along the corridor that support the transportation scenarios recommended in this study.



In order to ensure the implementation of the future development, it is necessary to make changes to the City of Atlanta’s 15 Year Land Use Maps in the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The land use recommendations, overall character of the area, urban design strategies for each zone and descriptions of potential activity nodes are detailed on the following pages.

Updating the allowable future land uses is critical to the success of this plan. Transportation modeling was based on a consensus about future land uses that will accommodate impending growth, support mixed-use development, and strike a balance between absorbing future growth and minimizing strain on existing single-family neighborhoods.

Since the officially designated 15-year land uses strictly control the allowable zoning districts to which a property may be changed, the 15 Year Future Land Use Plan Map must be amended to support proposed zoning changes. Figures in the following sections (“Framework Plans”) give the recommended changes for each of the five corridor zones.

#### A Note on the Open Space Land Use Category

Areas identified by the “Open Space” (OS) future land use category indicate recommendations for either public acquisition or purchase of easements. Note that the Open Space future land use designation does not prohibit development on these parcels, and any zoning district is allowed. These areas are identified as having the potential for acquisition in the future – actual acquisition of such property depends upon many factors such as funding availability, cost, priority, availability of funds to maintain the site, etc., and may or may not actually occur.



**Figure 5-6: Potential Activity Nodes Summary**



### **5.2.1 Deering Road Zone**

Located in the northern portion of the Northside Drive corridor near I-75 and the 17<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to the Atlantic Station mixed-use development, the Deering Road zone is the ideal location for increased density and activity. Figure 5-7 shows the recommendations for this zone.

#### **5.2.1.1 *Land Use***

In the north portion of this zone the established single-family neighborhoods of Loring Heights and Berkeley Park, office parks, low density commercial, and low density industrial uses surround the corridor. Increased activity in this area due to Atlantic Station presents an opportunity to reinforce the office and commercial market with additional office parks that include ground floor neighborhood oriented retail fronting Northside Drive.

South of the railroad overpass, Northside Drive experiences a significant grade change with a number of warehousing and industrial facilities that front the City of Atlanta Waterworks facility on the west. This area is envisioned as a potential mixed-use development site with medium density residential and retail and commercial frontage along Northside Drive that complements the commercial services anticipated at Atlantic Station. Commercial and office development along the east would integrate additional activity in the area with an emphasis on enhancing the pedestrian environment.

The City of Atlanta Waterworks facility is potentially one of the greatest amenities in this area. There currently exists inaccessible open space that surrounds the facility. By relocating the protective fencing closer to the treatment facilities, the open space could be enjoyed by the surrounding communities as a passive park with trails, benches, and lighting to enhance pedestrian circulation and activity.

#### **5.2.1.2 *Urban Design***

The character of this zone emphasizes enhancing the pedestrian realm while considering vehicular traffic in this zone is bound to increase with the completion of Atlantic Station and its proximity to I-75. Therefore it is important to provide protection and buffering for pedestrians with streetscaping, wide sidewalks, and gateways at Bellemeade Street, Deering Road, and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The recommended building heights within this zone would average 8 to 10 stories on the west where there is opportunity to increase density with new mixed-use development. This mixed-use development should include inter-parcel connectivity and plazas. Low density commercial development of sites to the east with 4 to 6 story buildings close to the street with a gradual step down in building heights as development approaches adjacent single-family residential is also recommended.

#### **5.2.1.3 *Activity Nodes***

Within this zone two future activity nodes are recommended as described in the subsections below.



### **Bellemeade**

A mixed-use development site including retail and residential uses is currently under construction at the location of the former Castlegate Hotel in the Bellemeade activity node. This node will support the increased demand for retail services and contribute to the diversity of residential types to the area.

### **17<sup>th</sup> Street**

This node would support higher density, mixed-use activity. As a dominant entrance into the Atlantic Station development, this would serve as an anchor for a potential transit transfer station accessing Atlanta Station and other local and regional transit services. In addition, this node is potentially a signature public space for the corridor.



**Figure 5-7: Framework Plan – Deering Road Zone**





## **5.2.2 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone**

This area south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street extending to the intersection of Marietta Street and Northside Drive addresses the historic Home Park neighborhood, the distinctive Marietta Street corridor and Georgia Tech. Despite its surrounding context, orientation and industrial heritage, the land use and urban design fabric has glaring gaps and suffers from lack of investment, visual appeal and an unfriendly pedestrian environment. Figure 5-8 shows the recommendations for this zone.

### **5.2.2.1 Land Use**

The plan recommends a mixed-use district on the west within the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone that encourages higher density development with pedestrian-oriented retail, housing, live-work units and offices while encouraging adaptive reuse strategies for existing buildings when possible. Northside Drive between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Marietta Street presents an opportunity as a key gateway along the corridor that is perhaps the most visible section of the study area with a unique roadway configuration. This area is envisioned as high-density mixed-use activity to the west, as Georgia Tech plans a long term expansion to the east and has opportunities for long term development and open space preservation by reconfiguring the north and south bound lanes of Northside Drive.

### **5.2.2.2 Urban Design**

The urban design character of this area emphasizes building on the historic fabric of existing industrial structures by creating and expanding the emerging loft district and creating a high quality pedestrian environment with inter-parcel connectivity. These features and improvements emphasize streetscapes that would assist in transforming this auto-dominated section of the corridor into a street with pedestrian accessible public and private spaces and gateways at key intersections including 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Marietta Street. The plan recommends improvements to the east-west connectivity of this zone with new vehicular or pedestrian connections at Ethel and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. By reconfiguring Hemphill at 14<sup>th</sup> Street, an opportunity to create an urban village and major gateway into Home Park with 4 to 6 stories recommended building heights exists. Development on the west side of Northside Drive would have a higher intensity of mixed-use structures ranging from 8 to 10 stories.

### **5.2.2.3 Activity Nodes**

Two activity nodes are proposed within the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Zone. Both of these nodes already have existing development consistent with a central area.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Street**

This node is envisioned as a higher intensity of retail, office, multi-family residential and adaptive reuse that builds on the momentum of Atlantic Station while maintaining a neighborhood character.

#### **Marietta Street**

This activity node takes advantage of activity from Georgia Tech and Marietta Street and envisions eliminating the northbound split alignment in order to provide new development



opportunities. As illustrated in Figure 5-9, a higher intensity mixed-use district with an internal street network, expansion area for Georgia Tech, civic spaces and a monumental gateway in recognition of the surrender of Atlanta would activate this key intersection.

While there is a strong desire on the part of local stakeholders to envision the details of a redesign of the Northside Drive/Marietta Street intersection that are a potential outcome of an abandonment of Tech Parkway, such specifics are not within the scope of this study. However, since the intersection is a critical activity node and represents a significant opportunity for intersection, corridor, and community improvement, the planning study included a dedicated workshop to focus on this area.

While it is possible to sketch a desirable detailed plan from a purely urban design perspective, this study recognizes that significant and complex topographical, engineering, and cost analyses are required in order to do a thorough and pragmatic alternatives analysis. Results of these analyses may render an *a priori* design scheme unfeasible. Therefore, this study recommends executing such a study to yield a properly understood, feasible, and defensible master plan for the corridor from Marietta Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

In anticipation of such a study, this plan includes a sketch of a basic framework concept that meets stakeholder goals. It also identifies options and alternatives that can then be passed into a detailed analysis.

The detailed design should accommodate the following objectives:

- Provide significant park and plaza spaces accessible to all residents, workers, and visitors to the area. These public spaces do not necessarily have to be contiguous, and should serve a variety of active and passive uses and functions within the community.
- Provide a gateway to the northern section of Northside Drive.
- Allow for the possibility of Georgia Tech expansion of facilities.
- Increase east-west connectivity for walkers, bicyclists, and automobiles.
- Significantly improve safety at Marietta Street/Northside Drive intersection.
- Provide adequate automobile and transit throughput.
- Accommodate at-grade transit on both Northside Drive and Marietta Street.

Other observations are:

- Providing any developable land at all will require a very significant (and most likely expensive) land fill component -- essentially reversing the work that was done to carve out Tech Parkway.



- A Northside Drive realignment should reconsolidate the northbound and southbound legs of the roadway for consistency with the rest of the corridor segment and urban environment, and to provide for greatly enhanced safety for all transportation modes.
- Locating the realigned roadway in the area between the current northbound and southbound legs is advantageous because it provides the possibility for several stated goals: neighborhood commercial/residential expansion space, Georgia Tech facilities expansion, significant park/plaza space, visual opportunities such as gateways, and significantly increased safety at the Marietta St. intersection.
- A realigned Northside Drive should not be designed as a boundary for land uses/intensities/neighborhoods. It's design should be one that unites both sides of the urban boulevard. Georgia Tech expansion, while most likely to be focused on the east side of the boulevard, should be able to happen on the west side of the boulevard as well. The converse should also hold: the growing neighborhood, while focusing on opportunities on the west of the boulevard, should be able to expand on the east side.



**Figure 5-8: Framework Plan – 10<sup>th</sup> Street Road Zone**



**Figure 5-9: Concept Plan – Marietta Street Node**



### **5.2.3 North Avenue Zone**

The North Avenue Zone is a mixture of small industrial activities with low intensity commercial uses, low-income housing and surface parking from Marietta Street to Simpson Road. Adjacent to the area is the English Avenue neighborhood to the west, with the Northyards Business Park and Georgia Tech research facilities to the east. Both Northyards and Georgia Tech serve as key employment destinations in the area. Figure 5-10 shows the recommendations for this zone.

#### **5.2.3.1 *Land Use***

The land use strategy for this area encourages integration of dense housing and neighborhood-oriented commercial in key locations with street frontage. In addition, underutilized property north of Herndon Homes presents an opportunity for an expansion of the Northyards Business Park that would provide additional employment. With AHA's commitment to mixed-income communities, the redevelopment of Herndon Homes may be on the horizon and would create new housing options for the area as well.

#### **5.2.3.2 *Urban Design***

The urban design character for this zone encourages neighborhood and pedestrian friendly environment along Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway, North Avenue, Simpson Road and Northside Drive with sidewalk improvements, streetscapes, and gateways improving access into surrounding neighborhoods. The improved pedestrian environment suggested in the northern zones should continue in the North Avenue zone. The urban design fabric, particularly at the major east-west arterials that include Donald Lee Hollowell and Simpson Road, suggests buildings averaging 6 to 8 stories. The center of the zone surrounding North Avenue recommends building heights of 4 to 6 stories that step back in height as they approach single-family residential due to its proximity to the heart of the English Avenue community.

#### **5.2.3.3 *Activity Nodes***

As in the previously described zones, there are two activity nodes recommended in this area, as described below.

##### **Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway**

This area is envisioned as dense mixed-use development with neighborhood retail fronting Northside Drive and residential units above.

##### **Simpson Road**

The Simpson Road activity node is envisioned as new medium density residential fronting Northside Drive with ground floor retail. Development in this area should complement the character of the recently completed mixed-use development by Antioch Church.



**Figure 5-10: Framework Plan – North Avenue Zone**



#### **5.2.4 Vine City MARTA Zone**

This zone includes the GWCC, the Georgia Dome and the Vine City MARTA Station. The Vine City single-family neighborhood is adjacent to the west side of Northside Drive. Figure 5-11 shows the recommendations for this zone.

##### **5.2.4.1 *Land Use***

The Vine City MARTA zone is envisioned as a mixture of sports and convention activities on the east side of Northside Drive that is supported by residential, office and a retail district to the west. A variety of housing types are recommended that include the existing Vine City single-family neighborhood, proposed town homes and multi-story residential units. The land use recommendation for this zone is redevelopment of existing surface parking on the three blocks south of Spencer Street. Based on the previous Vine City Redevelopment Plan, this development opportunity promotes increased density surrounding the MARTA station with residential and office uses that include ground floor retail and internal parking decks. Centralized open space and plazas are planned on each of these development sites with minimal setbacks on Northside Drive, internal streets and pedestrian facilities to enhance the pedestrian environment.

To provide additional opportunities for conference, retail and parking for the Georgia World Congress Center, a mixed-use commercial and conference development is recommended on the east side of Northside Drive on existing surface parking. This development would complement and support the regional conference and sports destinations as well as the surrounding Vine City and Castleberry Hill neighborhoods.

##### **5.2.4.2 *Urban Design***

The Vine City MARTA zone calls for four new gateways to the area at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Carter Street, Magnolia Street and Simpson Road. Streetscape improvements including wide pedestrian sidewalks, lighting, benches and other elements would improve the pedestrian environment. To be compatible with adjacent single-family residential, the recommended building height for future development is 4 to 6 stories.

##### **5.2.4.3 *Vine City MARTA Station Activity Node***

The activity center envisioned for the Vine City MARTA Zone is concentrated around the Vine City MARTA station. This center possesses an excellent access to regional destinations including the Georgia World Congress Center and the Georgia Dome and would also serve as a potential regional transit transfer station to support increased density.





**Figure 5-11: Framework Plan – Vine City MARTA Zone**



### **5.2.5 McDaniel Street Zone**

With a mix of land uses that includes redevelopment mixed-use projects, vacant land, a public park and multifamily housing, this zone is quite diverse at this time. Figure 5-12 shows the recommendations for this zone.

#### **5.2.5.1 *Land Use***

The McDaniel Street zone is envisioned as a culmination of the corridor and would contain various land uses. Building off the momentum of the H.J. Russell Legacy mixed-use development, the eastern side of Northside Drive is envisioned as a mixed-used district that serves the Atlanta University Center (AUC) and Castleberry Hill as a residential, arts and academic village. To the west, medium and high density residential is recommended to provide additional housing options for the area. Surrounding the McDaniel Street intersection, the underutilized industrial properties could potentially serve as a major gateway to the Northside Drive corridor from the south with the adaptive reuse of industrial structures, expansion areas for the Atlanta University Center institutions and new mixed-use development.

#### **5.2.5.2 *Urban Design***

Serving as the gateway to the Northside Drive corridor from the south, the urban design character of this area should be reinforced with streetscape improvements that promote pedestrian movements. In addition, bringing buildings up to the street with an average height of 4 to 6 stories with parking in the rear will improve the pedestrian environment.

#### **5.2.5.3 *Activity Nodes***

The activity nodes in this area are not centered on Northside Drive, but are adjacent to it and within the more general corridor boundaries.

#### **Fair Street & Park**

This potential activity node in proximity to the Atlanta University Center and the new H.J. Russell Legacy mixed-use complex is envisioned as residential mixed-use with an arts and entertainment function. Along with improvements to an existing park, this area will address the needs of the AUC population and the Castleberry Hill neighborhood.

#### **McDaniel & Whitehall**

This node is a gateway into the Northside Drive corridor from the south and is intended to anchor pedestrian scale residential and commercial that serves the AUC and the Castleberry Hill neighborhood. Additionally, this area presents opportunities for future expansion of the AUC institutions.



**Figure 5-12: Framework Plan – McDaniel Street Zone**



### 5.3 Short-term Improvements

Development of a package of short-term (by 2010) improvements involved significant input received through agency coordination meetings with GDOT and other regional planning partners. The specific improvement strategies that are contained in this package are based on the identified corridor needs and baseline travel data presented earlier in the report. The study team performed detailed windshield surveys to identify deficient corridor conditions and opportunities to implement cost-effective improvement projects, and these projects were presented and reviewed at several public meetings. The following is a list of the recommended short-term improvements. See Figures 6-1 thru 6-5 for locations.

- Actuate and implement timing plans for all 18 traffic signals along Northside Drive.
- Upgrade all 18 traffic signal controllers along Northside Drive to the 2070 model.
- Develop an ITS (Intelligent Traffic Systems) special event plan for Georgia Dome and GWCC events.
- Implement existing signage improvement plan for the GWCC/Georgia Dome/Centennial Park/Philips Arena.
- Add local MARTA route running the length of the Northside Drive Corridor.
- Extend median on Northside Drive from CSX railroad bridge to Holmes Street.
- Extend sidewalks along both sides of Northside Drive from Trabert to Bellemeade.
- Add traffic signal at Northside Drive/8th Street.
- Add west and eastbound left turn lanes on 10th Street at Northside Drive.
- Remove northbound right turn channel on Northside Drive at 10th Street.
- Repair pedestrian signal button on NW corner of Northside Drive/10th Street.
- Repair pedestrian signal head on SE corner of Northside/10th Street.
- Add crosswalk across south leg of Northside Drive/10th Street.
- Repair pavement and sidewalk on eastbound approach of 10th Street at Northside Drive
- Remove Hemphill leg between 14th Street and Northside Drive
- Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street into single intersection.
- Make Hemphill Street right-in-right-out at 14th Street.
- Repair sidewalk on Northside Drive at the southeast corner of Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Add eastbound left turn lane on 14th Street at Northside Drive/14th Street.
- Signalize driveway that is the westbound leg of Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway
- Improve signage for turn only lane onto D.L. Hollowell Parkway.
- At Northside Drive/Marietta Street, replace striped out area of pavement adjacent to southbound leg of Northside Drive with a raised concrete median to guide drivers through the intersection.
- Prohibit eastbound left turn from Marietta Street to Northside Drive, in conjunction with additional signage on approaches as described elsewhere in this section.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/Marietta Street.
- Add new directional signage for Northside Drive on both approaches to Marietta Street.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/North Avenue.
- Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection including adding turning lanes as needed.
- Implement improved pedestrian barriers at Georgia Dome between MLK Jr Dr. and Simpson St. during events.
- Repaint crosswalks at Northside Drive/Simpson Street.
- Add directional signage to I-20 between Chapel St. and Fair St.
- Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/McDaniel Street.
- Remove traffic signal at Northside Drive/Mitchell Street.



## 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan identifies the major transit investments, new roadways, intersection upgrades, and pedestrian improvements by study zone, as listed in Table 6-1 and illustrated in Figures 6-1 thru 6-5. This plan will accommodate the anticipated growth in both population and travel demand by increasing the capacity and connectivity of the corridor. It will concurrently upgrade the human environment through the creation of parks, wider sidewalks, safer intersections, and pedestrian focuses at major nodes.

For the plan to succeed, several agencies must coordinate their efforts, such as GRTA, ARC, and GDOT, as well as the City. Costs for completing the plan are low, versus the benefits accrued, as many of the recommended projects are short term upgrades to existing infrastructure such as adding a crosswalk, repairing pedestrian signals, and re-timing intersections.

### 6.1 Approach

The development of the implementation plan was based on analysis of growth trends in the corridor and on an understanding of how projects should function, as well as a concern for efficiency in terms of cost and impact.

The first analysis involved assessing the growth trends in the corridor to establish when each zone was likely to need its transportation improvements. This was based on two factors: 1. When will the projected growth generate travel demands that might overburden the existing Northside Drive transportation system and 2. When would growth along the frontage of Northside Drive potentially make projects more difficult or costly to implement. For example, because the northern half of the corridor is currently undergoing a wave of residential, retail and office development, additional travel lanes, streetscape and median improvement projects were are programmed for implementation within the next ten years. In the southern portion of the corridor development activity is occurring at a slower pace, so the roadway capacity projects are programmed to occur beyond the ten year timeframe.

The second portion of the analysis considered the functionality of each project to make sure that projects had logical termini. For example, the recommended BRT project should to implemented in the entire corridor at one time, because the transit benefits and function cannot be provided for a limited segment of the corridor.

Dependencies between projects were also a point of consideration in the development of the implementation plan. Railroad infrastructure, particularly bridges, is a significant constraint to improvements along Northside Drive. The implementation plan addresses this issue by programming any improvements to railroad bridges prior to or in the same time period with improvements that would involve widening Northside Drive in the same area.

Finally, projects were scheduled to maximize the efficiency of implementation and minimize the impacts and disruption to neighborhoods and transportation function. The most significant



example of this approach is that the streetscaping, median and additional travel lanes along Northside Drive are programmed together, rather than as separate projects.

## 6.2 Construction Cost Estimating Methodology

A careful approach to cost estimates was used for the implementation plan. For the BRT projects the construction cost estimates were based on data developed as part of the MARTA Memorial Drive Arterial BRT Implementation Plan. That planning effort gathered cost information from similar projects that had been constructed or were under development in several cities in California. For local bus service the most current MARTA unit costs were used. For the transit transfer station at 17<sup>th</sup> Street, the GRTA Transit Cost Estimating Methodology was used.

For roadway type improvements including intersection improvements, pedestrian improvements, streetscapes, sidewalks, medians and adding travel lanes, construction cost estimates were generated by estimating the quantities of materials and/or equipment required for each improvement. Aerial photography and field surveys were used to identify the existing facilities in the corridor. Then, conceptual descriptions of improvements and/or the proposed typical section were applied to the existing facilities to determine the quantities needed for construction. These were then multiplied by a typical unit cost for the Atlanta urban area to determine the construction cost. The detailed cost estimate sheets for roadway projects are included as Appendix C of this document.

For railroad projects, a typical unit cost of \$3,000,000 per bridge widening was used, except where more detailed estimates were available.

Costs for other project types, such as signage improvements or pedestrian barriers were based on similar experiences with other projects and planning/engineering judgment.

The construction cost estimates do not include the cost of right-of-way or utilities, which will be significant along Northside Drive. These were not included, because conceptual engineering is needed on the projects proposed in the implementation plan in order to determine these types of costs.

## 6.3 Schedule

Projects were scheduled into three generalized timeframes within the 25-year planning horizon for the plan. These timeframes are as follows:

- Short-Term, 2005-2008;
- Medium-Term, 2008-2015; and
- Long-Term, 2015-2030

The projects listed in the short-term timeframe are more detailed and numerous than in the medium and long-term periods; however, on a cost basis, far more dollars are programmed in the medium and long-term periods. The short term project construction costs are estimated to be



\$2,200,000, while the medium and long-term project construction costs are estimated at \$58,000,000. These costs do not include right-of-way or utilities.

## 6.4 Responsible Party

The implementation plan also addresses which party should lead the development and implementation of projects. In general, roadway/streetscape and intersection projects are assigned to GDOT, since Northside Drive is both a state route and US highway. Transit projects are MARTA's responsibility, because Northside Drive is entirely within the MARTA service area.

## 6.5 Short-Term Improvements

As noted in Chapter 3, one of the major elements of the study is to develop a package of short-term, lower cost improvements for the corridor that would provide immediate benefits. The short-term improvements are integrated into the implementation plan given in Table 6-1. The package of short-term improvements is estimated to cost approximately \$2,200,000, not including any right-of-way or utilities costs.

Potential funding opportunities exist for these projects through Governor Purdue's Fast Forward Transportation Program. The Fast Forward Transportation Program emphasizes congestion reduction while improving mobility and promoting economic development. Projects recently implemented through the Fast Forward program are similar in scope and scale to the types of improvement projects envisioned in the short-term improvements identified in this plan. These include traffic signal timing and synchronization, intersection operational improvements, intelligent transportation systems, pedestrian/sidewalk projects, and safety-related enhancements.

## 6.6 Project Development

It should be noted that for the medium and long-term projects listed in the implementation plan there is significant additional work needed to develop them. The planning-level cost estimates are appropriate for corridor-wide planning, but should not be considered complete at this time. Additionally, there are six steps that will be required to implement most of these projects as described below:

1. Refine the concept for the project including project limits, typical section and cost including right-of-way and utilities;
2. Coordinate with regional agencies as necessary to ensure funding and compliance with regulations;
3. Conduct required environmental impact analyses;
4. Design the project including right-of-way plans, drainage and roadway; and
5. Construct the facility.

The securing of local funding for these projects will be an important step in project development. The City of Atlanta already has funding sources available that can be used towards



implementation. These include the Quality of Life bond funds and Livable Center Initiative (LCI) funds in the areas of the corridor that have been studied under the Upper West Side LCI.

## **6.7 Upper Westside Livable Center Initiative Projects**

The Upper Westside Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) was completed in February 2005 and recommended several projects along and intersecting Northside Drive. Although these projects are not included in the implementation plan, they are recommended for implementation. For more details on these projects, please see the Upper Westside LCI Final Report.





Table 6-1: Implementation Plan

ID	Zone	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Time Frame	Agency	Funding Source	Construction Cost*
1	All Zones	Actuate and implement timing plans for all 18 traffic signals along Northside Drive (Fast Forward Program)	I-75	I-20	intersection	short	GDOT	State Bonds	\$ 144,000
2	All Zones	Upgrade all 18 traffic signal controllers along Northside Drive to the 2070 model	I-75	I-20	intersection	short	GDOT	State	\$ 45,000
3	All Zones	Develop an ITS special event plan for Georgia Dome and GWCC events	I-75	I-20	miscellaneous	short	GDOT	State	\$ 220,000
4	All Zones	Implement existing short-term signage improvement plan for the GWCC/Georgia Dome/Centennial Park/Philips Arena	I-75	I-20	miscellaneous	short	GDOT	COA/ State	\$ 35,000
5		Add local MARTA route running the length of the Northside Drive Corridor	I-75	I-20	transit	short	MARTA	MARTA	\$ 920,000
6	All Zones	Add Bus Rapid Transit facility on Northside Drive. Project would include 18 stations, mixed traffic operations and frequent, all day service.	I-75	I-20	transit	medium	MARTA	MARTA/ Federal	\$ 14,950,000
7	Deering Rd	Create transit transfer hub with parking for Bus Rapid Transit and passenger rail at SRTA site north of 17th Street	17th St	Northside Dr	transit	medium	COA/ MARTA/ GDOT	MARTA/ State/ Federal	\$ 7,602,000
8	Deering Rd	Extend median on Northside Drive from CSX railroad bridge to Holmes Street	CSX Overpass	Holmes St	intersection	short	GDOT	State	\$ 35,000
9	Deering Rd	Widen road/streetscape to include six travel lanes, median and wider sidewalks throughout (see typical section)	I-75	Trabert St	widen road/ streetscape	medium	GDOT	COA/LCI/ State/ Federal	\$ 2,841,215
10	Deering Rd	Lengthen CSX railroad bridge south of Bellemeade Street to allow for additional roadway width and streetscape improvements**	Northside Dr/ Bellemeade St	Northside Dr/ Bellemeade St	railroad	medium	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 3,900,000
11	Deering Rd	Extend sidewalks along both sides of Northside Drive	Trabert St	Bellemeade St	intersection	short	COA	QOL/ COA	\$ 134,000
12	10th Street	Add traffic signal at Northside Drive/8th Street	8th St	8th St	intersection	short	COA	QOL/ COA/ State	\$ 80,000
13	10th Street	Extend Ethel Street east to Hampton Street and add traffic signal at Northside Drive/Ethel Street	Hampton St	Northside Dr	new road/ streetscape	long	COA	COA	\$ 300,000



Table 6-1: Implementation Plan

ID	Zone	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Time Frame	Agency	Funding Source	Construction Cost*
14a	10th Street	Add west and eastbound left turn lanes on 10th Street at Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 250,000
14b	10th Street	Remove northbound right turn channel on Northside Drive at 10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 75,000
14c	10th Street	Repair pedestrian signal button on NW corner of Northside Drive/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 1,000
14d	10th Street	Repair pedestrian signal head on SE corner of Northside/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 1,000
14e	10th Street	Add crosswalk across south leg of Northside Drive/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 800
14f	10th Street	Repair pavement and sidewalk on eastbound approach of 10th Street at Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 10,000
15a	10th Street	Remove Hemphill leg between 14th Street and Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 25,300
15b	10th Street	Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street into single intersection	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 190,000
15c	10th Street	Make Hemphill Street right-in-right-out at 14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 53,000
15d	10th Street	Sidewalk repair on Northside Drive at the southeast corner of Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 6,000
15e	10th Street	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 10,000
15f	10th Street	Add eastbound left turn lane on 14th Street at Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 175,000



Table 6-1: Implementation Plan

ID	Zone	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Time Frame	Agency	Funding Source	Construction Cost*
15g	10th Street	Address existing drainage issues on Northside Drive at Hemphill Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	miscellaneous	medium	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 45,000
16	10th Street	Lengthen Norfolk Southern railroad bridge north of 14th Street to allow for additional roadway width and streetscape improvements	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	railroad	medium	GDOT	State/ Federal	***
17	10th Street	Widen road/streetscape to include six travel lanes, median and wider sidewalks throughout (see typical section). Includes removal of one-way split at Marietta Street.	Trabert St	Marietta St	widen road/ streetscape	medium	GDOT	LCI/ State/ Federal	\$ 5,250,492
18	10th Street	Upgrade and widen bridge on Northside Drive over Norfolk Southern railroad south of Marietta Street****	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	railroad	medium	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 4,061,200
19	North Ave	In conjunction with future redevelopment activity, construct new north-south roadways through Herndon Homes site to provide better interparcel access	John St	North Ave	new road/ streetscape	long	COA	COA/ Federal	\$ 845,000
20	North Ave	Widen road/streetscape to include six travel lanes, median and wider sidewalks throughout (see typical section)	Marietta Street	Kennedy St	widen road/ streetscape	long	GDOT	COA/LCI/ State/ Federal	\$ 1,843,400
21a	North Ave	Signalize driveway that is the westbound leg of Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	intersection	short	COA/ GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 25,000
21b	North Ave	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	intersection	short	COA/ GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 10,000



Table 6-1: Implementation Plan

ID	Zone	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Time Frame	Agency	Funding Source	Construction Cost*
21c	North Ave	Remove right-turn channels on southbound and eastbound approaches of Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	intersection	medium	COA/ GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 195,000
21d	North Ave	Improved signage for turn only lane onto D.L. Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	streetscape	short	COA/ GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 800
22a	North Ave	At Northside Drive/Marietta Street, replace striped out area of pavement adjacent to southbound leg of Northside Drive with a raised concrete median to guide drivers through the intersection	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 45,000
22b	North Ave	Prohibit eastbound left turn from Marietta Street to Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 9,000
22c	North Ave	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/Marietta Street	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 10,000
23d	North Ave	Add westbound right turn lane on Marietta Street at Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	medium	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 60,000
24e	North Ave	New directional signage for Northside Drive on both approaches to Marietta Street	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	streetscape	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 20,000
25a	North Ave	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/North Avenue	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	short	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 10,000
25b	North Ave	Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection including adding turning lanes as needed	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	short	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 300,000
25c	North Ave	Remove northbound right turn channel on Northside Drive at North Avenue	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	medium	COA	State/ Federal	\$ 55,000



**Table 6-1: Implementation Plan**

ID	Zone	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Time Frame	Agency	Funding Source	Construction Cost*
25d	North Ave	Add additional turn lanes at North Avenue/Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	medium	State/ Federal	TIP/ GDOT	\$ 120,000
25e	North Ave	Remove leg of North Avenue that connects to Northside Drive northbound	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	long	State/ Federal	TIP/ GDOT	\$ 100,000
26	Vine City MARTA	Widen road/streetscape to include six travel lanes, median and wider sidewalks throughout (see typical section)	Kennedy St	Maple St	widen road/ streetscape	long	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 1,748,240
27	Vine City MARTA	Implement improved pedestrian barriers at Georgia Dome during events	MLK, Jr Dr	Simpson St	miscellaneous	short	COA	COA	\$ 20,000
28	Vine City MARTA	Repaint crosswalks at Northside Drive/Simpson Street	Northside Dr/ Simpson St	Northside Dr/ Simpson St	intersection	short	COA	COA	\$ 10,000
29	McDaniel St	Implement two-way road operations on MLK, Jr. Drive	Centennial Olympic Park Dr	Northside Dr	road improvement	medium	COA/ GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 93,000
30	McDaniel St	Add directional signage to I-20	Chapel St	Park St	streetscape	short	GDOT	State	\$ 7,500
31	McDaniel St	Add new two lane road through Cleopas R. Johnson Park	Larkin St	Fair St	new road/ streetscape	medium	COA	COA/ Federal	\$ 171,000
32	McDaniel St	Widen road/streetscape to include six travel lanes, median and wider sidewalks throughout (see typical section)	Maple Street	I-20	widen road/ streetscape	long	COA	COA/ Federal	\$ 2,345,512
33	McDaniel St	Add eastbound through lane on McDaniel Street at Peters Street	McDaniel St/ Peters St	McDaniel St/ Peters St	intersection	medium	COA	COA/ Federal	\$ 150,000
34	McDaniel St	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/McDaniel Street	Northside Dr/ McDaniel St	Northside Dr/ McDaniel St	intersection	short	COA	COA	\$ 10,000
35	McDaniel St	Remove traffic signal at Northside Drive/Mitchell Street	Northside Dr/ Mitchell St	Northside Dr/ Mitchell St	intersection	short	GDOT	State	\$ 5,000
36	McDaniel St	Lengthen Norfolk Southern railroad bridge north of Whitehall Street to allow for additional roadway width and streetscape improvements	Northside Dr/ Whitehall St	Northside Dr/ Whitehall St	railroad	long	GDOT	State/ Federal	\$ 3,900,000

\* Does not include utilities or right-of-way.

\*\* This project is in the Atlanta Regional Commission Regional Transportation Plan under ID # AT-187.

\*\*\* No cost provided, because conceptual engineering required to establish cost.

\*\*\*\* This project is in the Atlanta Regional Commission Regional Transportation Plan under ID # AT-186.



Table 6-2: Short Term Work Program

ID	Project Description	From	To	Project Type	Construction Cost*
1	Actuate and implement timing plans for all 18 traffic signals along Northside Drive (Fast Forward Program)	I-75	I-20	intersection	\$ 144,000
2	Upgrade all 18 traffic signal controllers along Northside Drive to the 2070 model	I-75	I-20	intersection	\$ 45,000
3	Develop an ITS special event plan for Georgia Dome and GWCC events	I-75	I-20	miscellaneous	\$ 220,000
4	Implement existing short-term signage improvement plan for the GWCC/Georgia Dome/Centennial Park/Philips Arena	I-75	I-20	miscellaneous	\$ 35,000
5	Add local MARTA route running the length of the Northside Drive Corridor	I-75	I-20	transit	\$ 920,000
8	Extend median on Northside Drive from CSX railroad bridge to Holmes Street	CSX Overpass	Holmes St	intersection	\$ 35,000
11	Extend sidewalks along both sides of Northside Drive	Trabert St	Bellemeade St	intersection	\$ 134,000
12	Add traffic signal at Northside Drive/8th Street	8th St	8th St	intersection	\$ 80,000
14a	Add west and eastbound left turn lanes on 10th Street at Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 250,000
14b	Remove northbound right turn channel on Northside Drive at 10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 75,000
14c	Repair pedestrian signal button on NW corner of Northside Drive/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 1,000
14d	Repair pedestrian signal head on SE corner of Northside/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 1,000
14e	Add crosswalk across south leg of Northside Drive/10th Street	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 800
14f	Repair pavement and sidewalk on eastbound approach of 10th Street at Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ 10th St	Northside Dr/ 10th St	intersection	\$ 10,000
15a	Remove Hemphill leg between 14th Street and Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 25,300
15b	Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/Hemphill Street/14th Street into single intersection	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 190,000
15c	Make Hemphill Street right-in-right-out at 14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 53,000
15d	Sidewalk repair on Northside Drive at the southeast corner of Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 6,000
15e	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 10,000
15f	Add eastbound left turn lane on 14th Street at Northside Drive/14th Street	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	Northside Dr/ Hemphill St/ 14th St	intersection	\$ 175,000
21a	Signalize driveway that is the westbound leg of Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	intersection	\$ 25,000
21b	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/DL Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	intersection	\$ 10,000
21d	Improved signage for turn only lane onto D.L. Hollowell Parkway	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	Northside Dr/ DL Hollowell Pkwy	streetscape	\$ 800
22a	At Northside Drive/Marietta Street, replace striped out area of pavement adjacent to southbound leg of Northside Drive with a raised concrete median to guide drivers through the intersection	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	\$ 45,000
22b	Prohibit eastbound left turn from Marietta Street to Northside Drive	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	\$ 9,000
22c	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/Marietta Street	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	intersection	\$ 10,000
24e	New directional signage for Northside Drive on both approaches to Marietta Street	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	Northside Dr/ Marietta St	streetscape	\$ 20,000
25a	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/North Avenue	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	\$ 10,000
25b	Consolidate intersection of Northside Drive/North Avenue/Lambert Street into a single intersection including adding turning lanes as needed	Northside Dr/ North Ave	Northside Dr/ North Ave	intersection	\$ 300,000
27	Implement improved pedestrian barriers at Georgia Dome during events	MLK, Jr Dr	Simpson St	miscellaneous	\$ 20,000
28	Repaint crosswalks at Northside Drive/Simpson Street	Northside Dr/ Simpson St	Northside Dr/ Simpson St	intersection	\$ 10,000
30	Add directional signage to I-20	Chapel St	Park St	streetscape	\$ 7,500
34	Upgrade crosswalks to current GDOT striping standard at Northside Drive/McDaniel Street	Northside Dr/ McDaniel St	Northside Dr/ McDaniel St	intersection	\$ 10,000
35	Remove traffic signal at Northside Drive/Mitchell Street	Northside Dr/ Mitchell St	Northside Dr/ Mitchell St	intersection	\$ 5,000

\* Does not include utilities or right-of-way.

Note: Please refer to Table 6-1 for full details on these projects.