PROJECT GREENSPACE

embrace your space

October 2009

Technical Report

Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

with:

ETC Institute

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Atlanta Downtown Improvement District
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Buckhead Baseball Inc.
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Special thanks to the members of the Greenspace Advisory Task Force.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Atlanta's greenspaces – its parks and natural areas, greenways and tree-lined streets, urban plazas, and outdoor gathering places – are critically important to its quality of life, economy, environment, and sense of community. Over the years Atlantans have consistently expressed the desire for high-quality, accessible, safe, and well-maintained greenspaces throughout the City. City leaders have responded through bold initiatives such as the BeltLine trails and the $105 million Park Opportunity Bond. However, much more needs to be done if Atlanta is to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system.

Atlanta is at a crossroads as the 21st century unfolds. The City's population is projected to greatly increase over the coming decades as new residents are drawn to its urban lifestyle. Existing and new residents alike will demand access to quality parks and greenspaces while pressures to develop our remaining open spaces intensify. The needs go beyond issues of recreation or quality of life to the very foundation of Atlanta's health, prosperity, and viability as a city. Greenspaces cleanse our water, cool our air and remove pollutants, maintain natural habitat, spur economic activity, increase property values, and improve the health of citizens. The choice is clear: we can act now to secure the greenspace system that present and future generations of Atlantans need and deserve or the opportunity will be lost forever.

The Greenspace System

Looking forward to the year 2030, Project Greenspace establishes a framework for action to create a world-class greenspace system. The major components of this system include:

- **Existing Greenspace:** Parks and recreational facilities owned and managed by the City and other providers; Consent Decree Greenways; Cemeteries and Golf Courses; Institutional Open Space
- **Undeveloped Lands:** Environmentally sensitive areas such as streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and woodlands; Lands of Low to Moderate Environmental Value
- **Existing and Potential Greenspace Connections**: including greenway corridors along rivers and streams; the BeltLine and other multi-use trails; and complete streets with safe and attractive pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access.

Guiding Principles

Project Greenspace ties these diverse components together into an integrated system that performs many essential services for the Atlanta community. Twelve guiding principles express the primary role that greenspace plays in supporting Atlanta's livability, economy, and the quality of life of its citizens:

- **Connectivity:** Greenspaces should be connected to each other and to people.
- **Equity:** The greenspace system should be distributed throughout Atlanta and be readily available to persons of all social and economic backgrounds and abilities.
- **Accessibility:** Greenspaces should be located within a pleasant 1/2 mile walk from home or work.
- **Economic Development:** The greenspace system should promote economic development and development should incorporate greenspaces.
- **Sustainability**: The greenspace system should integrate sustainable planning and design practices, including the conservation of resources for future generations of Atlantans.
- **Multi-Functionality:** The greenspace system should provide multiple environmental, recreation and health, community-building, and economic functions and benefits.
- **Community:** As Atlanta's "front yard," the greenspace system should promote the City's shared identity and sense of community by providing places to gather and participate in outdoor activities.
- **Biodiversity:** The greenspace system should maintain the health and diversity of natural communities within the developed fabric of the City, including a healthy and robust tree canopy.
- **History, Culture, and Public Art:** The greenspace system should incorporate history, culture, and public art and connect Atlanta's rich heritage to the present and the future.
- **Public Health:** The greenspace system should promote the health of Atlantans, for example by providing attractive routes and destinations for walking and biking.
- **Design Excellence:** The greenspace system should integrate innovative design as a core value.
- **Image:** The greenspace system should make a key contribution to Atlanta's image as a "world-class" city.

Greenspace Goals

Project Greenspace establishes a series of goals or targets to be used to guide greenspace system planning and to measure progress in implementing the plan. Key goals include:

- **Protect a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace.** This target was adopted by the City as an overall goal in response to the 2001 Georgia Community Greenspace Program. It is to be met with greenspace protected as public parks, multi-use trails, greenways, and other natural areas, either through ownership by the City, other governmental agencies, or nonprofit organizations, or by conservation easement.
- **Provide a minimum of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents**. Atlanta has approximately 7.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, a figure that ranks low compared to other cities and will decrease as the City's population grows unless a concerted effort is made to acquire additional parkland. As of 2008, approximately 3,784 acres of additional public parkland is needed to meet this goal for Atlanta's projected 2030 population. The BeltLine Trail System will add 1,200 Acres, bringing the total amount needed to 2,584 acres by 2030. Public parkland includes city, county, state, and National Park Service parks.
- **Provide publicly accessible greenspace within a ½ mile walk of every resident**. Analysis has shown that a large proportion of Atlanta's population live more than ½ mile from a public park and that many people who live within ½ mile do not have convenient walking access to the park via the street network. This goal can be met by establishing parks and other publicly accessible greenspaces in neighborhoods that are not currently served, improving walking access to existing parks, and developing greenways and multi-use trails that expand effective access to the greenspace system.
- **Protect at least 75% of Atlanta's environmentally sensitive lands via ownership and/or development regulations**. Protection of environmental resources and the essential "life-support" services they provide – natural stormwater management, air and water quality improvement, etc. – is a critical function performed by the greenspace system. Included are resources such as stream corridors and floodplains that have regulatory protection, as well as vacant lands with resources such as steep slopes and woodlands that are unprotected. Because regulations do not guarantee permanent protection, as much land as possible should be protected through acquisition, easements, or dedication in development projects.
- **Provide recreational facilities and programs to meet citizen needs based on level of service standards**. A needs assessment including a citizen survey was conducted to determine community needs for parks and recreational facilities. Based on this assessment, Project Greenspace identifies level of service standards to guide the provision of different facility types to meet the needs of Atlanta's current and future population. These needs are to be met not only by the City, but also through partnerships with public and private sector recreational providers.

Achieving the Vision: A 12-Point Program for Action

The City of Atlanta must address three fundamental needs in order to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system:

1). **Grow the Greenspace System:** Atlanta needs more greenspace to serve its existing and future population.

2). **Manage the Greenspace System:** Atlanta needs to manage existing and new greenspaces to the highest standards of quality.

3) **Build Capacity**: Atlanta needs to significantly enhance resources, coordination, and partnerships inside and outside of city government and build community support for the greenspace system.

Project Greenspace recommends numerous strategies and actions to create Atlanta's future greenspace system. Twelve major initiatives proposed to grow, manage, and build capacity for greenspace are listed on the following page. These recommendations are described in much more detail in Chapter 3, 4, 5, and 6 - including additional initiatives and specific steps required to implement each initiative. While the agenda is an ambitious one, it is essential to ensure the quality of life of citizens and Atlanta's growth and prosperity as a 21st century city.

Project Greenspace has been produced over a number of years and the acreage figures collected for this effort are constantly changing. This following table represents the most recent figures when this plan was completed in 2009. It is important to note that the acreage figures used throughout this report were collected in 2007-2008 and are no longer current.

Greenspace Acreage in Atlanta

	Acres/Miles		Source	Date
Total Protected Park Acreage	**3754.7**	**Acres**	**City of Atlanta**	**Dec-08**
Non-BeltLine Park Acreage	3713.3	Acres	City of Atlanta	Dec-08
BeltLine Acres in Atlanta	41.4	Acres	City of Atlanta	Dec-08
Total DWM Protected Greenway Acres in Atlanta	699.5	Acres	City of Atlanta	Dec-08
DWM & Parks Joint Acres in Atlanta (Westside Park)	138.0	Acres	City of Atlanta	Dec-08
Total Protected Parks and Greenway Acres in Atlanta	**4592.2**	**Acres**	**City of Atlanta**	**Dec-08**
Multi-use Trails	3.4	Miles	Atlanta BeltLine Inc.	Oct-09
Undeveloped Parks	233.3	Acres	Atlanta BeltLine Inc.	Oct-09

Twelve major initiatives proposed to grow, manage, and build capacity for greenspace are listed on the following page. These recommendations are described in much more detail in Chapter 3, 4, 5, and 6 - including additional initiatives and specific steps required to implement each initiative. While the agenda is an ambitious one, it is essential to ensure the quality of life of citizens and Atlanta's growth and prosperity as a 21st century city.

GROW THE GREENSPACE SYSTEM

1). Develop a citywide greenway network.

2). Establish new greenspaces to meet priority needs.

3). Create a citywide trail system incorporating the BeltLine Loop Trail.

4). Revise Atlanta's development regulations to promote greenspace dedication in new developments.

MANAGE THE GREENSPACE SYSTEM

5). Implement a phased program to meet citizens' needs for recreation facilities and programs over time.

6). Continue to improve parks maintenance and security to "best-in-class" standards.

7). Integrate stormwater and greenspace management through the use of natural, multi-functional stormwater solutions.

8). Increase Atlanta's tree canopy to meet the goal of 40% coverage through a "Green City" initiative.

Priority Greenspace Needs

Greenspaces

- A major outdoor special events venue
- Chatahoochee River Greenway (citywide park)
- Community parks in northwestern and eastern Atlanta
- Neighborhood parks or other greenspaces to serve neighborhoods more than 1/2-mile from publicly accessible greenspaces
- Centrally located athletic complexes
- Recreation centers in underserved areas

Greenspace Connections

- Greenways
- Multi-use trails

BUILD CAPACITY

9). Identify a sustainable greenspace funding program, including funding sources dedicated to growing and managing the greenspace system.

10). Increase city resources devoted to greenspace planning, design, and implementation.

11). Build public and private partnerships to grow and manage the greenspace system.

12). Initiate a communications and outreach program to inform and involve the Atlanta community in implementing Project Greenspace.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF PROJECT GREENSPACE

Project Greenspace is an initiative to develop a world-class open space system in Atlanta that connects people to parks, recreational facilities, plazas, streetscapes, greenways, and environmentally sensitive lands.

Atlanta's Project Greenspace establishes a framework for a citywide system of high quality open spaces consisting of parks, natural areas, outdoor gathering spaces, and connecting greenways, streetscapes, and trails. This system is essential to Atlanta's quality of life, economy, environment, and sense of community. There is broad consensus among Atlanta's residents regarding the importance of greenspace resources. As a vital and integral part of the City's fabric, greenspace must be accessible to all citizens, provide a focus for community life, and perform vital environmental (e.g., natural resource habitat) and social (e.g., recreation and gathering places) functions.

Greenspace is also critically important to the City's economy. For example, in the 10 years following development of Centennial Park adjacent land values soared from $2 to nearly $200 per square foot – close to a one hundred fold increase. These increased land values are reflected in the City's tax digest.

Project Greenspace is an element of the *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan* (CDP). The CDP establishes the official vision for the future physical, social, and economic growth and development of Atlanta. As part of the CDP, Project Greenspace updates the 1993 *Parks, Open Space, and Greenways Plan*, which identified policies and actions to guide the preservation, management, and use of the City's greenspace over a 15-year period. Many of the recommendations of the 1993 Plan have been implemented and new initiatives demonstrate the continuing importance of greenspace to Atlanta's future.

New initiatives such as the BeltLine demonstrate the continuing importance of greenspace to Atlanta's future. The BeltLine will transform a 22-mile rail corridor loop around the heart of Atlanta into a continuous trail system with over 1,200 acres of new greenspace, improvements to approximately 700 acres of existing greenspace, quality mixed-use development, and transit service. This initiative highlights the role that greenspace can play in sustaining quality of life and economic development.

While the BeltLine is an exciting, visionary project that has received national recognition, it will not by itself meet Atlanta's future needs for greenspace. Project Greenspace builds on the BeltLine and other initiatives by articulating a vision, strategic framework, and action agenda to create a world-class greenspace system to serve the needs of the Atlanta community through the year 2030 and beyond.

1.2 WHAT IS GREENSPACE?

Many different resources – parks, gardens, environmentally sensitive lands, urban greenspaces (e.g., streetscapes and plazas), and recreational facilities such as athletic fields and recreation centers – are existing or potential components of Atlanta's greenspace system. A common characteristic of these resources is the presence of vegetation, ranging from wooded natural habitats to urban street trees. Greenspace is defined as outdoor spaces that provide the environmental, community, and economic benefits identified in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. Greenspace Functions and Benefits

Environmental Quality
• Preserves natural resources and native habitats
• Reduces flooding by absorbing stormwater
• Improves water quality by filtering pollutants
• Cleans air by filtering pollution and producing oxygen
• Cools the urban landscape, reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
Community Health
• Promotes recreation, exercise, and physical activity
• Reduces incidence of chronic diseases such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, and obesity
• Brings people into contact with nature
• Provides places for people to meet others
• Provides a respite from urban congestion
A Sustainable Economy
• Improves quality of life, thus attracting businesses and increasing economic activity
• Generates revenues from tourism and events
• Provides access to local retail areas via walking and biking
• Increases property values
• Lowers costs of energy, healthcare, and "gray infrastructure" (e.g., engineered stormwater systems)

Types of greenspace can be divided into three general categories, with the understanding that these categories may in some circumstances overlap:

- Parks and recreational facilities
- Natural resource areas
- Urban greenspace

At the core of the greenspace system are the parks and recreational facilities that are so highly valued by Atlanta's residents. Project Greenspace sets the direction for the continued improvement of existing **parks and recreational facilities** and for meeting the needs of future generations of Atlantans. This category includes not only city parkland, but also parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities owned and managed by other entities.

Atlanta's **natural resource areas** – river and stream corridors, floodplains, woodlands, and the like – are a second vital component of greenspace. Some of these areas are permanently preserved as open space (e.g., greenway properties acquired under the Combined Sewer Overflow Consent Decree), others are protected by environmental regulations (e.g., the City's floodplain ordinance), while still others are in private ownership and potentially subject to development. Project Greenspace defines strategies designed to strengthen protection of these environmentally sensitive resources as part of the greenspace system.

Urban greenspace refers to the "green" elements of the City's developed fabric that perform the vital environmental, community, and economic functions and benefits listed in Figure 1.1. Examples include urban streetscapes, parks and plazas associated with corporate and institutional campuses, and – at a broader scale – Atlanta's urban tree canopy. Project Greenspace defines strategies to integrate these elements into the citywide greenspace system. Examples include creation of well-designed urban parks and plazas as nodes and community gathering places and "complete streets" as pedestrian and bicycle connections with canopy trees and landscaping that provide shade, improve air quality, and reduce stormwater runoff.

Over the years Atlantans have articulated the clear message that they highly value parks and greenspace. This message has been confirmed by citizen input received during the Project Greenspace planning process (see Section 1.3 below). The City has made significant progress in recent years, as demonstrated by the following:

- The $105 million Opportunity Bond for Parks and Greenspace approved in 2006 is being used for citywide renovations and improvements to parks and recreational facilities and to fund targeted park acquisitions.
- Prior to the recent recession, significant increases in the annual parks budget enabled the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA) to devote more resources to park maintenance and to achieve improved maintenance standards. However, the City's current fiscal situation has been severely impacted DPRCA's annual budget.
- Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. is moving forward with implementation of the BeltLine through the use of a Tax Allocation District.
- Other initiatives such as the Park Pride 2005 Atlanta Park System Agenda have focused attention and resources on greenspace issues.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

Project Greenspace is an initiative led by the City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning in partnership with the Departments of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, Public Works, and Watershed Management. The Project Greenspace planning process consisting of five phases:

- **Phase 1:** Project Initiation and Community Outreach Plan
- **Phase 2:** Data Collection / Inventory and Analysis
- **Phase 3:** Plan Development
- **Phase 4:** Strategic Implementation Program
- **Phase 5:** Draft and Final Plan Preparation

An Advisory Task Force comprised of 23 key city and community leaders met regularly to provide input and direction to the planning process. The process included an extensive community involvement program to solicit the input of Atlantans into development of the plan vision, goals, and action strategies. Elements of this program included:

- Interviews with over 80 persons with particular backgrounds or interests in Atlanta's greenspace
- Focus group meetings with key stakeholder groups (e.g., nonprofit land conservation organizations, private recreational providers, and developer interests)
- Public meetings at key junctures in the planning process
- A random, statistically valid survey administered by a combination of mail and phone to determine citizens' expressed needs for future parks, greenspace, recreation facilities, and programs
- Public comments solicited via a project website (www.atlantagreenspace.com)

The results of the community involvement program indicate strong support for significantly enhancing Atlanta's parks and greenspace. Public meeting attendees endorsed a series of goals that range from increasing the amount of greenspace to developing greenways with multi-use trails along stream corridors and improving recreational facilities, programs, and park maintenance and security. The citizen survey revealed that, compared to national averages for other communities surveyed throughout the nation, Atlantans heavily utilize the City's parks, have strong needs for parks and recreational facilities, and support increased funding for parks and greenspace.

Project Greenspace Background Reports

Several background reports were prepared as part of the planning process and have been published as separate documents. These reports are available on the Project Greenspace website and include:

- *Project Greenspace Summary Report*
- *State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report*
- *Park Accessibility Study*
- *Citizen Survey Findings Report*
- *Needs Assessment Report*
- *Benchmark Analysis Findings Report*

These reports provide technical background and support for the recommendations contained in the *Project Greenspace Technical Report*. The *Project Greenspace Summary Report* is a concise, reader-friendly version of the *Technical Report.*

State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report: This report describes existing conditions and trends relative to greenspace in the City, including:

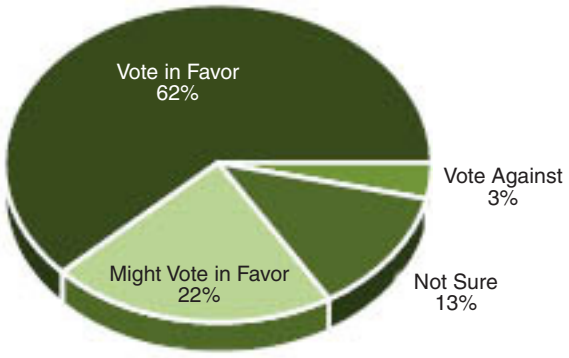
- Past greenspace plans and initiatives (e.g., the 1993 *Parks, Open Space and Greenways Plan*, Georgia Community Greenspace Program, Park Pride 2005 Atlanta Park System Agenda, BeltLine initiative, etc.) and City regulations affecting greenspace resources
- Population trends that will impact the City's greenspace in the future
- Common themes and issues related to Atlanta's greenspace based on input received through key person interviews, focus groups, public meetings, and the citizen survey
- Mapping and description of the existing and potential components of the greenspace system, including:
    - » Types, acreage, distribution, and walking accessibility of existing city parks
    - » Other types of existing parks and greenspaces (National Park Service sites, state and county parks, golf courses, cemeteries, public and private schools, colleges, and universities, etc.)
    - » Environmentally sensitive lands (floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes, etc.)
    - » Existing and potential greenspace connections (multi-use trails, bike lanes, utility corridors, etc.)
    - » Other greenspace opportunities (high points/scenic vistas, cultural and historic resources, etc.)

Park Accessibility Study: Conducted by the Georgia Institute of Technology Center for Geographic Information Systems (GIS), this study evaluated walking access via streets to City of Atlanta parks over one acre in size and with at least one amenity. The study followed the street network outward from park entrances for a distance of ¼ and ½-mile to establish service areas for surrounding neighborhoods. The results of this study are incorporated into the State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report. The study found that 19% of the City's population lived within ¼ mile of parks via the street network and 51% lived within ½ mile of parks via the street network in 2005. In 2030, it is projected that the figures will be 19% and 50%, respectively. The findings indicate that a large proportion of the City's population do not live within easy walking distance of parks.

Citizen Survey Findings Report: A Community Attitude and Interest Survey was conducted during February and March of 2007 to determine citizens' expressed needs for future parks, greenspace, recreation facilities, programs, and services in Atlanta. Administered by a combination of mail and phone, the survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Atlanta and the seven areas into which the City is divided for planning purposes. Major survey findings include:

- 49% of respondents indicated that there are sufficient parks and greenspaces within walking distance of their residences, 43% that there are not sufficient greenspaces within walking distance, and 8% were "not sure."
- 81% of respondents indicated that it is very important to use greenways for environmental protection, 75% that it is very important to use greenways for walking/biking/nature trails, and 63% that it is very important to use greenways for playgrounds and picnic areas.
- From a list of 25 types of parks and recreational facilities, respondents ranked walking and biking trails (49%), small neighborhood parks (35%), large community parks (33%), and nature centers and trails (22%) as the most important.
- From a list of 21 types of recreation programs, respondents ranked special events/festivals (64%), adult fitness and wellness programs (55%), nature programs (47%), and education/life skills programs (43%) as the most important.
- 83% of respondents were either very supportive (61%) or somewhat supportive (22%) of creating a dedicated funding source for parks, recreation, and greenspace in the City of Atlanta. Only 4% of respondents were not supportive of a dedicated funding source (13% were "not sure.").

Percentage of Households that Might Vote for a Bond Referendum



Needs Assessment Report: This report analyzes the existing and future needs of Atlanta's citizens for parks, greenspace, and recreational facilities. The analysis is based on the citizen survey and comparative benchmarking against other communities. Residents defined their **expressed** greenspace needs based on a list of 25 types of parks and recreational facilities, as well needs not being met because a facility is not available (i.e., **latent** needs).

The *Needs Assessment Report* prioritized parks and recreational facilities, both to inform the development of population-based standards and to guide the City and other recreational providers in planning for these facilities. The result is a prioritization of parks and facility development based on the greatest needs and the values of Atlanta's residents. Benchmarking research to inform the development of park and recreational facility standards included:

- Comparison of the current provision of parkland and selected recreational facilities by Atlanta and seven peer cities
- Identification of population-based standards used by other communities around the country to guide the provision of parks and recreational facilities (comparative standards)
- Identification of population-based standards recommended by leading national organizations engaged in park and recreation issues (normative standards)

Recommended population-based standards for both parkland and recreational facilities were then developed based on the findings of the needs analysis; the benchmarking research; and the facility prioritization process. The *Needs Assessment Report* calculated deficiencies by applying the recommended standards to 2005 and 2030 population projections. The standards are summarized in Section 4.1 of this Project Greenspace Technical Report.

Benchmark Analysis Findings Report: This report compares operating metrics for the City of Atlanta parks against five "benchmark" cities across the country. Attributes considered include:

- Total parks and recreation budget
- Proportional spending on maintenance, programs, aquatics, and marketing and administration
- Cost recovery (revenues generated by user fees and charges)
- Major recreational facilities provided in relation to population
- Parks, park acreage, and staff in relation to population

The results of the analysis indicate that – while spending on aquatic facilities ranks high – Atlanta ranks behind some of the benchmark cities in other categories, such as spending on maintenance and marketing the parks system.

1.4 CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

This report lays out policies, strategies, and actions proposed to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system for the City of Atlanta. It contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 2.0 establishes an overall policy framework for Project Greenspace. This framework consists of principles to guide greenspace planning and design, goals, a citywide concept for the physical form of the greenspace system, and three focuses for implementation: Growing the Greenspace System, Managing the Greenspace System, and Building Capacity.
- Chapter 3.0 outlines a multi-faceted approach to "growing" or increasing the amount of dedicated greenspace in Atlanta. It establishes goals (numeric targets) for the overall provision of greenspace in the City; describes different components or types of greenspaces and connections within the greenspace system; identifies priorities; and proposes a range of strategies and actions to grow the greenspace system.
- Chapter 4.0 addresses how greenspaces should be managed to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system. Topics covered include providing recreational facilities and programs to meet citizens' needs; maintenance and security; cultural and natural resources, including stormwater management and the City's tree canopy; and greenspace planning and design.
- Chapter 5.0 outlines steps that the City and its partners can take to build capacity to effectively grow and manage the greenspace system. It identifies changes within city government to better coordinate and focus resources on greenspace; communications and outreach strategies to build support for greenspace in the larger Atlanta community; and sources of funding and other resources that could be used to grow and manage greenspace.
- Chapter 6.0 synthesizes the policies, strategies, and actions contained in Chapters 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 into an action plan for implementing Project Greenspace. It also identifies order-of-magnitude cost estimates and potential funding sources for major recommendations, considers implications for city staff resources, and provides guidance for monitoring implementation progress over time.

2. PLAN FRAMEWORK

Today Atlanta has an opportunity like no other to create a legacy of great public spaces connected to communities through a robust greenspace system. Like the symbol of our great city, the phoenix, Atlanta is experiencing a rebirth. Its population is increasing at a dramatic pace. If we are to maintain a healthy lifestyle, we must plan for places to walk and play. We must leverage the City's phenomenal economic growth to create a connected system of parks, nature preserves, plazas, and streetscapes. We must create regulatory incentives that protect and expand the urban tree canopy. We must act now to harness this energy to create a city of thriving and connected greenspaces that serve all our citizens.

> You have been clear, Atlanta. You want a world-class greenspace system. You want a community where walking is easy. You want an enjoyable urban lifestyle with access to parks. You want unique greenspaces throughout the City that are diverse, safe, and accessible.

The citizen mandate is clear: Atlantans want to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system. Greenspace is essential to Atlanta's quality of life, environment, economy, and its very ability to survive and prosper as a city in the 21st century. What is less clear is how this vision is to be achieved given the pressures of population growth, the scarcity and high cost of land in a predominantly developed city, and limited fiscal resources. Nevertheless, the potential is vast if the community and its leaders come together in a steadfast commitment to creating the greenspace system. This major challenge will not be met overnight. Rather, it will require a myriad of actions by many participants inside and outside of city government, carried out over a period of years. This chapter establishes a framework for these actions consisting of:

- Planning and design principles
- Greenspace goals
- An overall concept for the physical form of the system
- A strategic framework for implementation

Subsequent chapters explore in more detail the specific strategies and actions that will need to be taken to create the system.

2.1 PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These twelve guiding principles express the primary role that greenspace plays in supporting Atlanta's livability, economy, and the quality of life of its citizens. They are:

- **Connectivity:** Greenspaces should be connected to each other and to people.
- **Equity:** The greenspace system should be distributed throughout Atlanta and be readily available to persons of all social and economic backgrounds and abilities.
- **Accessibility:** Greenspaces should be located within a pleasant 1/2-mile walk from home or work.
- **Economic Development:** The greenspace system should promote economic development and development should incorporate greenspaces.
- **Sustainability:** The greenspace system should integrate sustainable planning and design practices, including the conservation of resources for future generations of Atlantans.
- **Multi-Functionality:** The greenspace system should provide multiple environmental, recreation and health, community-building, and economic functions and benefits. Stormwater management areas that conserve natural resources and processes, encourage people to walk, provide places to meet, and reduce the costs of engineered infrastructure are an example of the multi-functionality principle at work.
- **Community:** As Atlanta's "front yard," the greenspace system should promote the City's shared identity and sense of community by providing places to gather and participate in outdoor activities.
- **Biodiversity:** The greenspace system should maintain the health and diversity of natural communities within the developed fabric of the City, including a healthy and robust tree canopy.
- **History, Culture, and Public Art:** The greenspace system should incorporate history, culture, and public art and connect Atlanta's rich heritage to the present and the future.
- **Public Health:** The greenspace system should promote the health of Atlantans, for example by providing attractive routes and destinations for walking and biking.
- **Design Excellence:** The greenspace system should integrate innovative design as a core value.
- **Image:** The greenspace system should make a key contribution to Atlanta's image as a "world-class" city.

2.2 GREENSPACE GOALS

A series of overarching goals to guide development and management of the greenspace system has been defined. These goals are introduced below and described in more detail in Chapter 3,4, and 5. They address five general topics:

- Greenspace System
- Parks and Recreation
- Natural Resources
- Community
- Implementation

John Howell Park; Photo Source: City of Atlanta

Greenspace Goals: Greenspace System

Goal 1: Significantly increase the acreage of greenspace with a goal of equal distribution throughout Atlanta:

- Protect a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace.
- Provide a minimum of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Provide publicly accessible greenspace within a ½-mile walk of every resident.

According to research by the Trust for Public Land, in 2006 parkland comprised 4.5% of Atlanta's land area and amounted to 7.9 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on more recent population estimates and parkland acreage figures (2008), Atlanta has 7.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This compares to averages for 60 cities surveyed of 9.8% of total land area and 18.8 acres per 1,000 residents. Goal 1 establishes targets for increasing the supply of dedicated greenspace in Atlanta over time. The 20% target is to be met with greenspace permanently protected as public parks, greenways, and natural areas, etc., either through ownership by the City, other governmental entities, or nonprofit organizations, or by conservation easement. To reach the 20% target, greenspace acreage and population must be tracked over time. Of the City's overall greenspace supply, a minimum of 10 acres of public parkland—land managed for park purposes by city, county, state, or federal government—should be provided for every 1,000 residents of Atlanta. To ensure equitable access to the greenspace system, every resident should be located within a ½-mile walk of a park or other greenspace that is open to the public.

See Sections 3.1, 3.2

Goal 2: Establish connections between greenspaces as part of the greenspace system, including greenway corridors, multi-use trails, and complete streets.

To function as a system and maximize its benefits for the community, Atlanta's greenspace must be interconnected. Respondents to the Community Survey ranked walking and biking trails as their number one recreational facility need. The effectiveness and impact of Atlanta's greenspace system can be dramatically increased by incorporating greenways, multi-use trails and complete streets that accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists.

Healthy river and stream corridors absorb and cleanse stormwater runoff and provide natural habitat. They can also provide opportunities for walking, biking, and passive recreation through sensitive development of trails and related facilities. There are numerous models across the country of complete streets with street tree and landscape plantings, vegetation used for stormwater treatment, and well-designed pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. Recommended by the City's Connect Atlanta Plan, a complete street network can link major greenspaces and extend the greenspace system into neighborhoods, office/retail areas, etc.

See Sections 3.3.3, 3.5.8

Greenspace Goals: Parks and Recreation

Goal 3: Provide the highest quality of recreational facilities and programs within the greenspace system to meet citizens' needs.

Atlantans expressed strong needs for recreational facilities and programs in the Community Survey compared to other cities. DPRCA provides a range of facilities and programs in the City's parks and is actively improving them to meet customers' needs. In addition, offerings are available to the public from providers such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and youth and athletic leagues. The Needs Assessment Report identifies level of service standards for recreational facilities as a guide for planning and programming to meet the needs of Atlanta's current and future population. It is not intended that all needs for recreational facilities and programs be met by the City. Rather, Project Greenspace recommends that the City continue to build and strengthen partnerships with a variety of public and private sector providers.

See Section 4.1

Goal 4: Maintain parks and recreational facilities to "best-in-class" standards and ensure that parks and other greenspaces are safe and secure.

DPRCA has established more rigorous operations and maintenance standards and has made significant improvements to maintenance quality and facility conditions. Well-maintained parks are safer, and DPRCA has installed structural safety equipment (improved lighting and surveillance cameras) and taken other steps to increase safety in selected parks. However, this progress is threatened by recent budget cuts. ASAP (Act to Save Atlanta's Parks), the 2009 initiative of PARC (Parks Atlanta Rescue Coalition), calls on the City to ensure the quality of its parks by committing dedicated property tax funding to operations and maintenance. ASAP also proposes actions such as a visible security presence (e.g., "park rangers"), additional structural safety equipment, and increased activity programming to make the parks safer.

See Sections 4.2 and 4.3

Greenspace Goals: Natural Resources

Goal 5: Protect environmentally sensitive lands as part of the greenspace system, with a goal to:

- Protect at least 75% of sensitive lands via ownership and/or development regulations.
- Manage sensitive lands to maintain their environmental values.

Protection of environmental resources such as waterways, floodplains, and wetlands—and the essential "life-support" services they provide—is a key function performed by the greenspace system.

City regulations prohibit construction within the 100-year floodplain and (unless a variance is granted) within the 75-foot stream buffer. Other environmentally sensitive lands are preserved within parks and other protected greenspaces. However, sensitive lands that are privately owned and lack regulatory protection can be developed. Also, present regulations do not necessarily guarantee that sensitive lands will be protected. Goal 5 promotes sensitive land protection using techniques such as conservation (cluster) subdivisions, conservation easements or donations, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), strengthened environmental regulations, and acquisition.

See Section 4.4.1

Regulatory protection or ownership alone is not sufficient to maintain environmental quality. Environmentally sensitive lands must be managed to maintain their integrity through approaches such as habitat restoration, invasive species control, and limiting the impacts of engineered infrastructure. Outreach to private landowners to encourage land preservation and provide technical support and oversight for land management is essential.

See Section 4.4.3

Goal 6: Protect and restore Atlanta's tree canopy.

Atlanta's lush tree canopy contributes to quality of life, is a source of community pride and identity, and provides environmental and economic services such as air quality improvement, lower energy consumption, reduced stormwater runoff, and increased property values. While Atlanta has long been considered a "City in a Forest," Trees Atlanta estimates that over 60% of the City's tree canopy has been lost since the 1970s due to factors such as attrition and development. In 2005, the City's tree canopy coverage was estimated at 26%, a figure that is higher than other major U.S. cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York, but falls behind Boston (29%) and Washington, DC (39%). The 2005 Atlanta Parks System Agenda set a goal to increase the City's overall tree canopy coverage from 26% to 40%, which is consistent with targets set by other U.S. cities. While Atlanta has a strong tree protection ordinance in place that has stemmed the loss of trees, additional replanting efforts—and a commitment to improving the maintenance and care of both new trees and the existing urban forest—will be needed to realize the goal.

Greenspace Goals: Community

Goal 7: Promote the use of greenspaces as community gathering places, including a major outdoor events site.

Greenspaces provide places of "coming together" that reinforce Atlantans' shared identity and sense of community. The Community Survey identified special events/festivals as the highest priority recreational program need. Piedmont Park, the primary current site and home of the Dogwood Festival and Atlanta Jazz Festival, has reached its capacity for hosting large events. Over 13 proposals for significant events were turned down or truncated in 2006 because of the lack of a suitable site.

See Section 3.5.4

In addition to one or more large outdoor event sites, there is a need for a variety of smaller scale community gathering places to accommodate local events, group and family gatherings, and informal social interaction. These functions can be accommodated in community and neighborhood parks, as well as outdoor spaces in commercial districts.

Goal 8: Integrate Atlanta's history, cultural heritage, and the arts into the greenspace system to express community identity.

Atlanta has a rich historic and cultural heritage, a lively visual and performing arts community, and an active public art program. Examples of historic resources that could be incorporated into the greenspace system include Native American sites, frontier sites, Civil War battle sites, historic transportation corridors, and sites representing the development of the African-American community and the pivotal role Atlanta played in the Civil Rights movement. Utilizing the 1.5% set-aside for public art is one way to integrate art into greenspace. Visitors and residents alike have a great interest in Atlanta's history, and historic resources both promote economic activity through heritage tourism and are a source of community pride and identity. The greenspace system can also incorporate the visual arts through public art installations and performing arts through performances in community gathering places.

See Section 4.4.4

Greenspace Goals: Implementation

Goal 9: Establish sustainable sources of funding for greenspace acquisition, development, and management.

Atlanta has historically ranked low compared to other major cities in per capita expenditures on parks, a situation reflected in the relatively low amount of city parkland and which has been magnified by recent budget cuts. Increased funding is needed to acquire the additional greenspace and develop the recreational facilities and programs needed to serve Atlanta's growing population, as well as to maintain existing and new greenspaces

to the quality standards required of a world-class system. The citizen survey results indicate strong support for a greenspace bond referendum and for a dedicated greenspace funding source. The 2009 PARC ASAP initiative identifies dedicated funding for land acquisition, park development, and operations and maintenance as the key priorities (along with improved safety) for city parks.

See Section 5.3

Goal 10: Promote public and private partnerships to grow and manage the greenspace system.

While the City of Atlanta will take the lead in creating the greenspace system, individual system components will be established and managed through action by a wide variety of participants (governmental agencies, nonprofits, institutions, foundations, developers, landowners, etc.). Project Greenspace provides a framework for the City to work with and leverage the resources of potential partners including the Atlanta Housing Authority, Boy's and Girl's Club, and YMCA. Although there are management issues to address, open space and recreational facilities on school grounds are an important community resource and could be incorporated into the greenspace system through a collaborative partnership with Atlanta Public Schools. Stormwater management and water quality initiatives provide opportunities for partnerships to achieve Project Greenspace goals such as establishing greenways along stream corridors

See Section 3.4.3

Goal 11: Promote and coordinate the dedication of greenspace within new development and redevelopment projects.

Development and redevelopment generated by the City's population growth offer a tremendous opportunity to establish greenspace through regulations and incentives. Public open spaces (e.g., well-designed community commons and urban plazas) have been shown to improve the profitability of development projects, a "win-win" scenario that creates value for developers while providing the environmental, community, and economic benefits of greenspace. The City's existing development regulations include provisions for dedicated open space; however, as presently constituted these provisions do not promote well-designed, functional greenspace. In addition to private developments, city-sponsored development and redevelopment projects should incorporate greenspace as a basic infrastructure need equivalent to roads and utilities.

Development regulations and incentives should be designed to implement the Project Greenspace targets of protecting 20% of the land area and providing 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Given Atlanta's average household size of 2.3 persons, the latter target translates to .023 acres per residential unit. Provision of publicly accessible greenspace becomes increasingly critical as residential densities exceed four units per acre.

See Section 3.4.2

2.3 GREENSPACE SYSTEM CONCEPT

SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCKS

The physical expression of the greenspace system in Atlanta's landscape will be complex, encompassing elements ranging from large parks, natural areas, and greenway corridors to community gardens, urban streetscapes, and plazas. The system can broadly be characterized as consisting of greenspaces and connections. Greenspaces are outdoor spaces that provide the environmental, community, and economic benefits identified in Chapter 1. Connections are linear corridors that connect people to greenspaces and greenspaces to each other.

To provide a starting point for defining what this system might be, the Project Greenspace planning process included an inventory and analysis of existing and potential greenspace resources in the City that can be mapped at a citywide scale. These resources include:

Greenspace System Concept

Existing Greenspaces (Figure 2.1)

- Atlanta City Parks
- Other Public Parks
- Consent Decree Greenways
- Cemeteries and Golf Courses
- Institutional Open Space

Undeveloped Lands (Figure 2.2)

- Lands of High Environmental Value
- Lands of Low to Moderate Environmental Value

Existing and Potential Greenspace Connections (Figure 2.3)

- Multi-Use Trails
- Arterial Streets
- Bike Lanes
- Electric Utility Corridors

The *State of the Atlanta's Greenspace Report* provides a detailed analysis of these different types of greenspace. The following provides an overview of each type.

Existing Greenspaces

Atlanta City Parks. Managed by DPRCA, the city parks inventory includes seven different types of parks. Citywide parks (typically 100 acres or more in size) draw users from a wide area inside and outside city limits; examples include Chastain and Piedmont Parks. Community parks support organized programming and facilities such as recreation centers, pools, and athletic complexes that serve residents within about a two-mile radius. The recommended minimum size is 35 acres, although only nine of 38 existing community parks meet or exceed this standard. Serving local informal recreational needs, neighborhood parks have a recommended minimum size of 10 acres and a service area radius of ½ mile to provide walking access for nearby residents. Again, many existing neighborhood parks do not meet the minimum size standard. Moreover, approximately 59% of Atlanta's residents do not live within a ½ mile distance of a neighborhood or other type of park via sidewalks.

Other park types in the City of Atlanta parks inventory include special facilities, garden spots, and nature preserves. The different park types are described in detail in the Project Greenspace Technical Report. In 2007, the City's parkland totaled 4,046 acres or about 7.5 acres per 1,000 residents. *Note: 2007 figures are not current and should be updated when more recent data is available.*

Other Public Parks. In addition to the city parks, public parkland in Atlanta includes federal, state, and county parks. Centennial Olympic Park is a highly visible example in downtown Atlanta managed by the State of Georgia. Several National Park Service sites (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area) are located within or just outside of Atlanta's boundaries.

Photos: City of Atlanta

Consent Decree Greenways. Totaling approximately 688 acres (end of year 2007), these properties include land and conservation easements along river and stream corridors acquired by the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management per the 1998 Combined Sewer Overflow Consent Decree. Together with city and other public parks located along waterways, these properties provide the beginnings of greenway corridors. Typically, up to 10% of the site may be developed for public access.

Institutional Open Space. Non-city owned properties such as golf courses, cemeteries, public school sites, and institutional campuses provide both existing and potential greenspace benefits. As examples, existing outdoor spaces on campuses can function as valuable greenspace in developed parts of the City while joint planning for schools and parks could provide opportunities to utilize surplus lands for public recreation. However, permanent protection of properties such as private golf courses and institutional open spaces is not assured.

Undeveloped Lands

Undeveloped lands mapped for Project Greenspace include lands classified as having high environmental value and lands classified as having low to moderate environmental value. Such lands could function as greenspaces or greenspace connections if incorporated into the greenspace system.

Lands of High Environmental Value. Examples of lands of high environmental value include rivers and streams plus the 75-foot buffer required by city regulations; floodplains; wetlands; and steep slope areas. Based on available GIS data and excluding overlapping features, 21% of the City's land area (about 18,500 acres) is considered environmentally sensitive land. Of this total, 47% is permanently protected or protected by regulation (i.e., floodplain, 75-buffer, and wetlands) and 53% is privately owned and can be developed. Permanent protection of such lands provides a significant opportunity to expand the City's greenspace system.

Lands of Low to Moderate Environmental Value. Based on GIS analysis by the Georgia Institute of Technology, lands in this category have comparatively lower value than lands in the first category when measured by factors related to water quality, forest cover, and connectivity. Nevertheless, they could offer strategic opportunities to augment Atlanta's greenspace system (e.g., by filling a gap in a greenspace connection or expanding an existing park). Undeveloped lands classified as having low to moderate environmental value total approximately 1,700 acres.

Existing and Potential Greenspace Connections

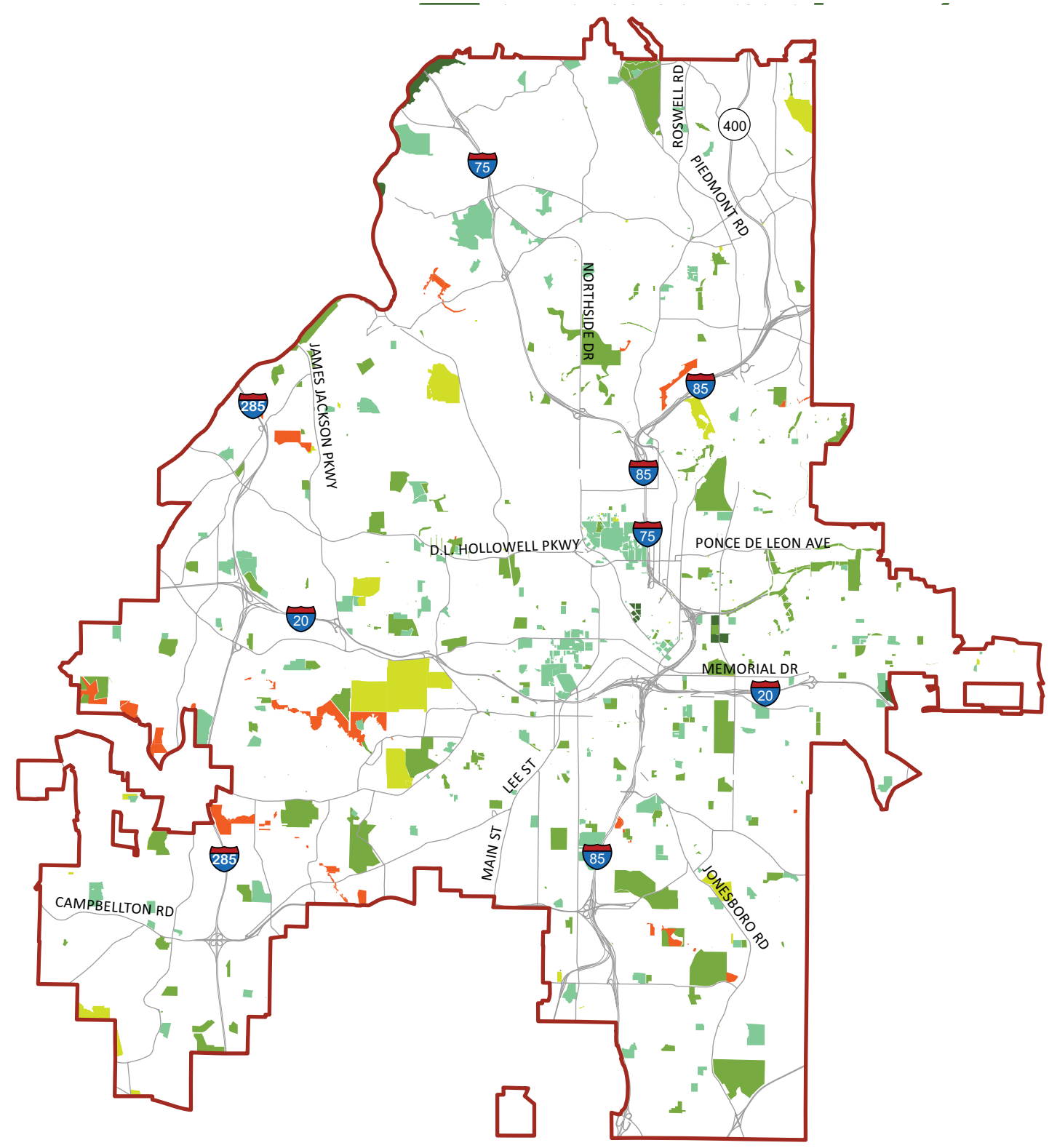
Greenspace connections are vital components of the greenspace system that can extend its effective coverage while providing opportunities for environmental protection, recreation, and transportation. Existing and potential greenspace connections shown on Figure 3.3 include multi-use trails, arterial streets, bike lanes, and utility corridors.

- **Multi-use trails** are designed for use by a wide range of users (e.g., walkers, runners, bikers, roller bladers, people with strollers, handicapped scooters, etc). Atlanta is developing a citywide network of multi-use trails in partnership with the PATH Foundation. Figure 3.3 shows trails that are either existing, under development, or planned in the future. The network includes the BeltLine loop trail system under development by Atlanta BeltLine Inc.
- **Arterial streets** in Atlanta are designed primarily for vehicular movement and are typically not safe or pleasant for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. However, they have the potential to function as connections within the greenspace system if provisions are made for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, particularly if "green" features such as street tree plantings are included. The *Connect Atlanta Plan* recommends priority corridors for such Complete Street improvements.
- **Bike lanes** are a type of Complete Street improvement that can be provided on existing streets through pavement marking and signage. Figure 3.3 shows Atlanta's potential bike lane network comprised of short-term and long-term priorities.
- **Utility corridors** have the potential to be valuable connections in Atlanta's greenspace system. Several of the longest utility corridors (e.g., high-tension electric lines) cross the entire city and contain significant amounts of open space.

Future BeltLine Trail; Photo Source: Karen Clark, TPL

Bike Lane/Streetscape; Photo Source: Dee Merriam

Figure 2.1 - Existing Greenspaces



Existing Greenspaces

- Atlanta City Parks
- Other Public Parks
- Cemeteries and Golf Courses
- Institutional Open Spaces
- Consent Decree Greenways

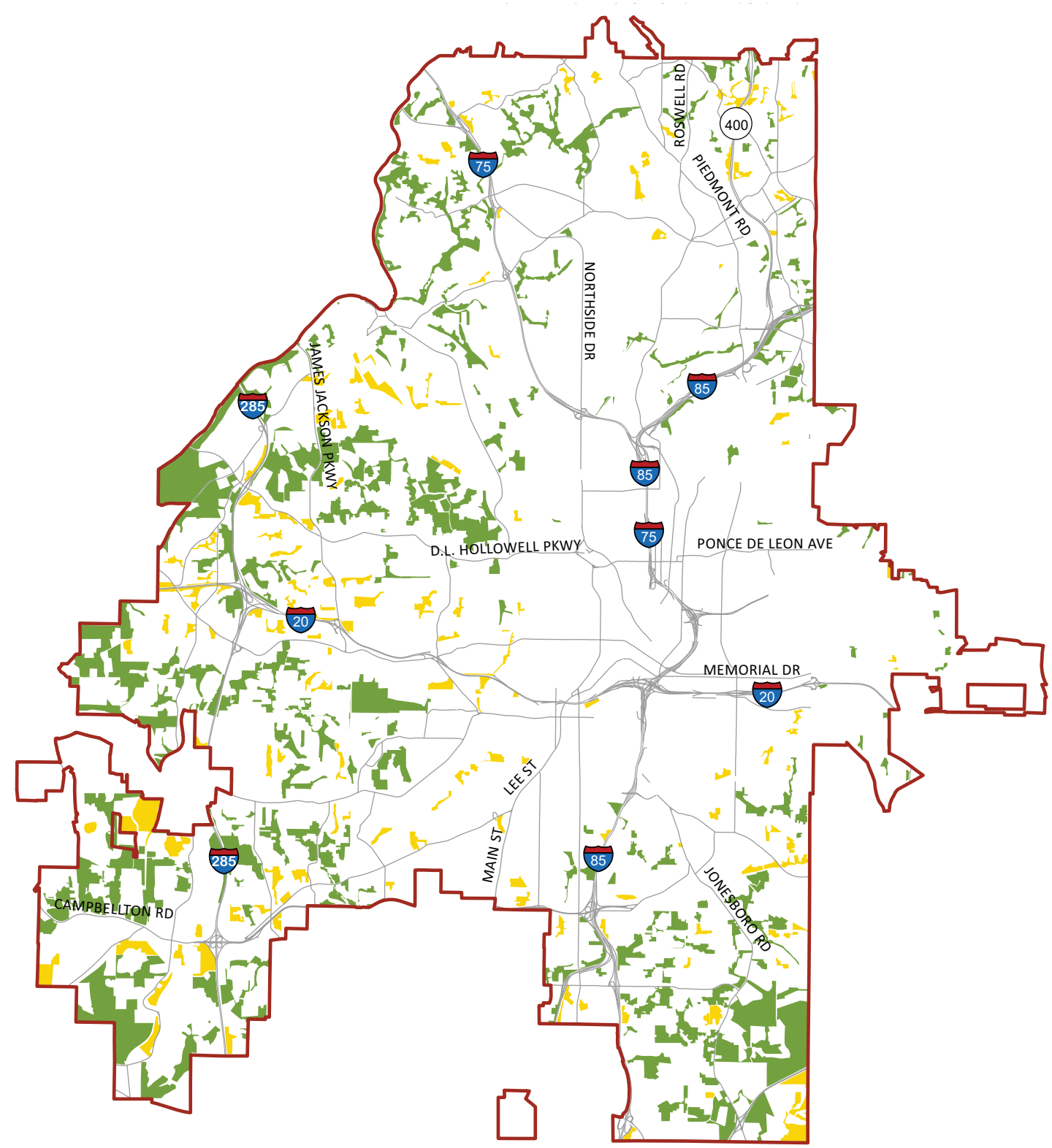
Data Source: 2008

Data Source: City of Atlanta

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N

Figure 2.2: Undeveloped Lands



Undeveloped Lands

High Environmental Value

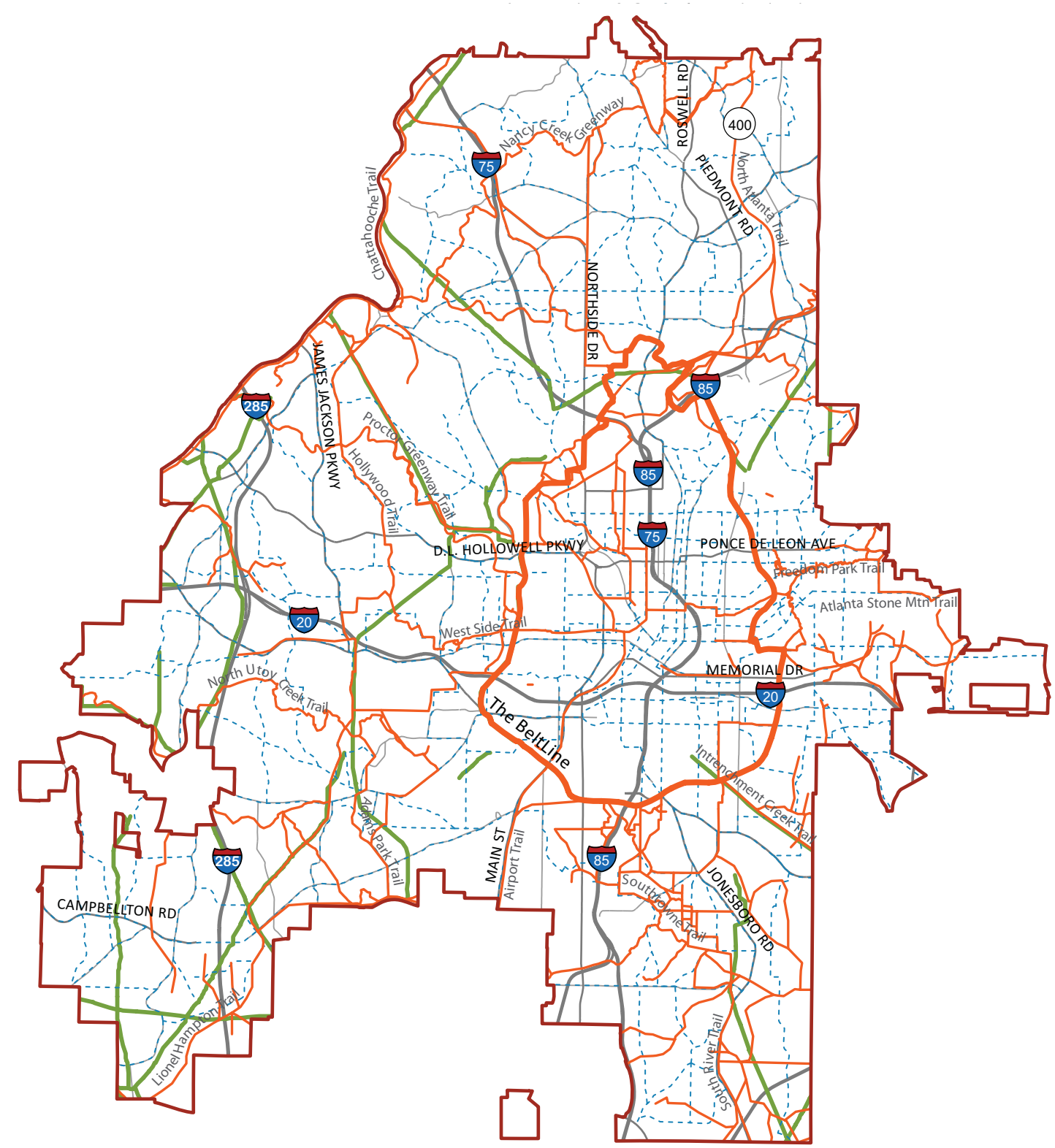
Low to Moderate Environmental Value

Data Source: 2008

Data Source: City of Atlanta

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Figure 2-3: Existing and Potential Greenspace Connections



Existing and Potential Greenspace Connections

- Multi-Use Trails (Existing and Planned)
- Bike Lanes/Arterial Streets
- Other Arterial Streets (not classified as Bike Lanes)
- Electric Utility Corridors

Data Source: 2008

Data Source: City of Atlanta

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N

Figure 2.4 illustrates a "macro-level" physical framework for the greenspace system based on the above conclusions. It superimposes the following elements on the existing and potential greenspace building blocks:

Greenspace Focus Areas

Urban Core

- Integrate greenspaces into existing and new development (pocket parks, public squares, plazas, etc.)
- Link greenspaces via greenspace connections (complete streets, streetscapes, sidewalks, bikeways, etc.)
- Connect to the BeltLine

Lower Density Area

- Acquire / preserve land along greenways
- Establish new parks in underserved communities
- Connect to the BeltLine

The BeltLine

- Develop multi-use trail system that connects improved existing and new greenspaces
- Encourage quality, mixed-use development
- Provide transit service
- Connect to neighborhoods and commercial centers in the Urban Core and Lower Density Area

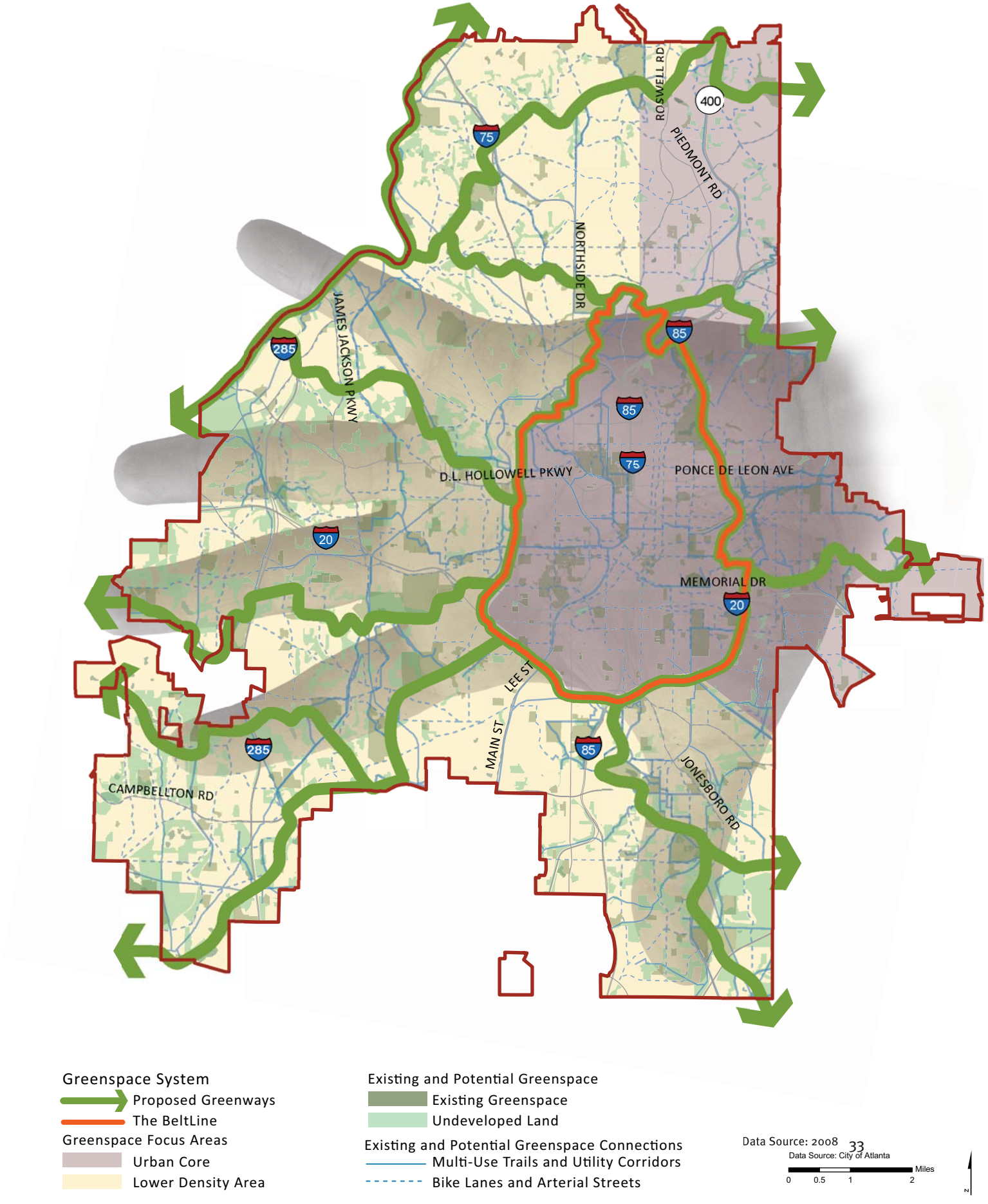
GREENSPACE SYSTEM CONCEPT

The overall concept for Atlanta's future greenspace system derives from several key conclusions from the analysis of existing and potential greenspace building blocks:

- The BeltLine loop trail and associated parkland currently under development will be a key element in the system. Not only does the BeltLine link many neighborhoods, it also has the potential to "join" Atlanta's urban core (located primarily inside its loop) to the rest of the City.
- Atlanta's urban core (located inside and to the east and north of the BeltLine) has comparatively dense development with "grid" street patterns and generally lacks larger greenspaces and natural features. Here the primary greenspace opportunities include small parks, public squares, plazas, etc. integrated into the urban pattern and streetscape, bikeway, and sidewalk connections.
- The remainder of Atlanta has a less dense development pattern containing larger greenspaces, including the City's citywide and community parks and significant natural areas. While many of these greenspaces are isolated from each other, stream corridors that generally run from the BeltLine to the periphery of the City (including the Chattahoochee River and National Recreation Area) provide a significant opportunity for connectivity.

Early in the process, the greenspace system concept began to resemble a person's hand, with five major waterbodies/greenways (fingers) connected to and flowing from the BeltLine Loop Trail (palm). Figure 6 illustrates this concept.

Figure 2-4: Greenspace System Concept



2.4 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The remainder of this document defines specific strategies and actions to implement the greenspace system described in this chapter. The implementation recommendations are organized into three categories that are essential to achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system:

1. **Grow the Greenspace System**: Atlanta needs more greenspace to serve its existing and future population.

2. **Manage the Greenspace System**: Atlanta needs to manage existing and new greenspaces to attain the highest standards of quality.

3. **Build Capacity**: Atlanta needs to significantly enhance greenspace resources, coordination, and partnerships inside and outside of city government while building community support for the greenspace system.

Strategies and actions to grow, manage, and build capacity for a world-class greenspace system are presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

3. GROW THE GREENSPACE SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research conducted by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) on the park systems of major U.S. cities reveals that Atlanta ranks low compared to other cities in the amount of parkland, both as a percentage of total land area and in acreage per 1,000 residents (a standard commonly used to measure parkland provision). Figure 3.1 below compares the amount of city parkland in Atlanta with seven "peer cities" used by the City for benchmarking purposes, as well as with the average of all 60 cities surveyed by TPL.

Figure 3.1. Park Acreage Comparison (Source: TPL, 2006)

Benchmark City	Park Acreage as % of Land Area	Park Acreage/1,000 Residents
Atlanta	4.5	7.5 (7.9)*
Charlotte/Mecklenburg County	5.2	22.0
Cleveland	6.3	6.9
Denver	8.2	14.5
Kansas City	8.6	38.6
Miami	6.0	3.5
St. Louis	8.5	9.6
Seattle	11.3	10.5
Average, all cities	9.8	18.8

Source: Trust for Public Land, 2006; * When the TPL study was completed, Atlanta had 7.9 acres of parkland/1,000 residents. Based on more recent population estimates and parkland acreage figures, Atlanta currently has 7.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Double the number of park acres and ensure that every Atlanta resident ideally lives within a 10-minute walk of a park, trail or accessible natural area…(2005 Atlanta Park System Agenda).

Protect a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace, provide a minimum of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents, and provide publicly accessible greenspace within a ½ mile walk of every resident…(Project Greenspace targets).

This situation will be magnified by the projected growth in population of the City from 416,474 in 2000 to approximately 783,000 in 2030. This growth will increase the need for greenspaces to serve a larger, denser population at the same time that development pressures cause land to become less available, more fragmented, and more expensive. This chapter outlines a multi-faceted approach to "growing" the greenspace system to meet this challenge.

- Section 3.2 establishes goals and targets for the overall provision of greenspace within Atlanta.
- Section 3.3 describes the "building blocks" of the system: different types of greenspaces and connections.
- Section 3.4 lays out strategies that will be pursued to grow the greenspace system (e.g., land acquisition; development regulations and incentives; partnerships with public, nonprofit, and private sector partners; and establishment of physical connections)
- Section 3.5 identifies priorities for the provision of the different greenspace types described in Section 3.3

3.2 GREENSPACE SYSTEM TARGETS

Project Greenspace sets targets to effectively grow Atlanta's greenspace system, meet resident's greenspace needs, and provide measures to monitor long-term success. These targets (introduced in Chapter 2), provide **guidelines** for the overall amount of greenspace in the City, the provision of public parkland, and the protection of environmentally sensitive resources in the future. To reach these future greenspace targets (summarized in Figure 3.2 and described in the following sections), the City should track annual acreage figures by greenspace type and adjust future need based on population projections. It should be noted that there is overlap between targets because they measure different aspects of greenspace.

Figure 3.2. Greenspace System Targets Summary (2008)

Greenspace Type	Future Target (based on 2030 Population Estimate)	Existing Condition (2008)	Future Target	Deficit (Approx.)	Acres/Year (2010-2030) Approx.
Greenspace[3]	Protect minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace	Approx. 13% (6,390 Acres)	20% (17,077 acres)	10,709 Acres	535 Acres
Publicly Accessible Parkland[4]	Provide a minimum of 10 Acres/1,000 Residents	7.5 Acres/ 1,000 Residents (4,046 Acres)	10 Acres/ 1,000 Residents (7,830 Acres)	3,784 Acres	189 Acres
Environmentally Sensitive Land[5]	Protect at least 75% through ownership and/or development regulations	47% (8,677 Acres)	75% (13,876 Acres)	5,199 Acres	260 Acres

[3] State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report, GIS Data, 2008. Existing greenspaces include: city, state, and federal parks, cemeteries, golf courses, public and private schools, and consent decree greenways.

[4] State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report, GIS Data, 2008. Publicly accessible parkland includes city, state, and federal parks.

[5] State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report, GIS Data, 2008. Environmentally sensitive land includes permanently protected land and land protected by regulations and ordinances.

3.2.1 Total Greenspace Target

The City has an established goal to protect 20% of the City's total land area as greenspace. This goal was adopted by City Council in 2001 as a requirement of the Georgia Community Greenspaces Program. This 20% target can include greenspace protected as parks (city and other governmental entities) and multi-use trails; greenways, conservation easements, and other natural areas; and public squares, plazas, and other mechanisms that permanently protect land as greenspace.

3.2.2 Public Parkland Target

Public parkland is publicly accessible parkland owned by city, county, state, or federal government. City parkland includes the following greenspace types currently included in the DPRCA's parkland inventory (see Section 3.3 below):

- Citywide Parks
- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Nature Preserves
- Special Facilities
- Garden Spots

Public parkland can also include squares, plazas, multi-use trails, and publicly accessible greenway corridors, none of which are currently in the inventory. The recommended target for the provision of public parkland is a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Public parkland or other greenspace open to the public should be accessible within a walking distance of ½ mile from all Atlanta residents. Atlanta's projected 2030 population is approximately 783,000 people, requiring 7,830 acres of public parkland to meet the target. The existing inventory of city, county, state, and federal parkland is approximately 4,046 acres (GIS Data, 2008).

3.2.3 Environmentally Sensitive Lands Target

Environmentally sensitive areas include the 100-year floodplain, the 75-foot buffer required around rivers and streams, steep slopes, wetlands, and vacant land of high environmental quality (see Figure 3.4). Figure 3.3 provides the following information based on the City's GIS data (as of early 2008) and excluding overlapping features:

- Total land acreage for each resource type
- Permanently protected acreage for each resource type (within city parks, within Consent Decree Greenway lands owned by the Department of Watershed Management, protected by conservation easement) and the total of all three
- Additional acreage for each resource type that has regulatory restrictions but is not permanently protected
- Environmentally sensitive land that is not protected from development

Based on the available GIS data and excluding overlapping features, environmentally sensitive lands total 18,501 acres or 21.6% of the city's land area. As of January 2007 approximately 1,884 acres were permanently protected. Regulations and ordinances protect another 6,793 acres of the 100-year floodplain, the 75-foot buffer, and wetlands. Therefore, to achieve the 75% target an additional 5,199 acres (28%) of environmentally sensitive land must be protected through acquisition, conservation easements, incentives, or additional regulations (e.g., to protect steep slopes).

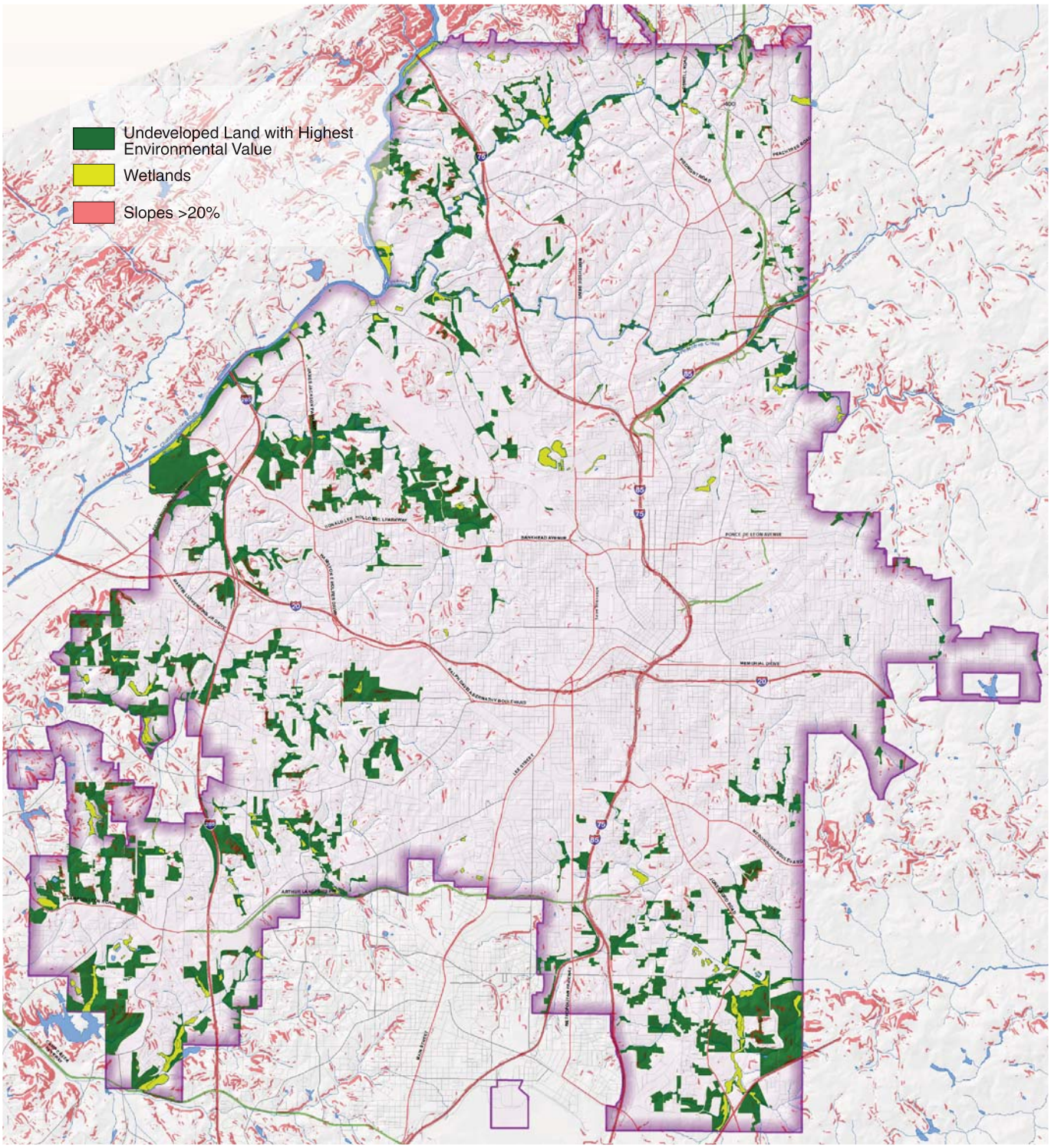
Figure 3.3. Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acreage, (GIS Data, 2008)

Environmentally Sensitive Resources	Total Acres Permanently Protected	Additional Acres Protected by Regulation	Total Acres
A. 100-year Floodplain	1,234	4,311	5,545
B. 75-foot Buffer (excludes A)	271	2,421	2,692
C. Wetlands (excludes A and B)	10	61	71
D. Steep Slopes 20% and over (excludes A, B, C)	361	n/a	4,838
E. Vacant Land of High Environmental Quality	8	n/a	5,355
TOTAL	1,884	6,792	18,501

*Note: Values are current as of 2007 and should be updated as data is available. Values area rounded to the nearest decimal,

Source: GIS Data & *State of the City's Greenspace,* 2007-2008

Figure 3-4: Environmentally Sensitive Lands



Data Source: City of Atlanta

Data Source: 2007-2008

3.3 GREENSPACE SYSTEM COMPONENTS

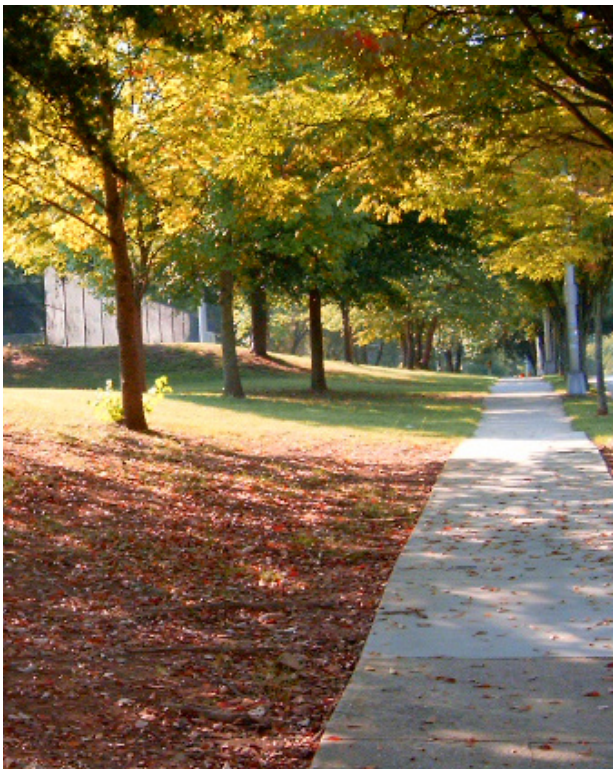
A classification system has been developed to provide a standard vocabulary for the provision and distribution of different components or types of greenspace. This system builds on the existing city inventory of parkland managed by the DPRCA and is based on the function, resources, and facilities that should be provided within each type. The classification system is divided into five categories:

- **Core Parkland**
- **Civic Spaces**
- **Connections**
- **Natural Areas**
- **Privately-Owned Greenspace**

Functional definitions of the greenspace types within each category are provided below, along with the recommended size and service area where appropriate. Appendix A describes standards for these types in more detail.

While the different components are addressed individually in the text below, it is important to consider how they contribute to a logical and legible functional hierarchy of greenspaces throughout the City of Atlanta. For example, larger (citywide and community) parks can fulfill the functions of smaller types (community and neighborhood parks in the case of citywide parks and neighborhood parks in the case of community parks) for surrounding neighborhoods.

View from Park; Photo Source: Piedmont Park Conservancy



Central Park; Photo Source: City of Atlanta

3.3.1 Core Parkland

Core parkland includes parks, nature preserves, civic spaces, and other greenspaces that have been developed to support active and passive outdoor recreation activities. The greenspace types described below constitute the core of the City's greenspace system and provide most of the public recreational opportunities for residents.

Citywide Parks

- ***Recommended Size:*** 100 acres or greater
- ***Service Area (Drive-to)***: Entire city

Formerly referred to as regional parks in the City's parkland inventory, citywide parks are major park sites that draw users from throughout the City. Citywide parks contain a combination of passive and active recreational facilities and natural features. They are often based on a specific scenic or recreational opportunity. Major facilities such as a large arts center, amphitheater, major festival site, 18-hole golf course, or a significant natural or cultural resource could be located in a citywide park. Where access to surrounding residential areas is adequate, citywide parks may also function as community and neighborhood parks (see below). Citywide parks can and should promote tourism and economic development, while enhancing the economic vitality and identity of Atlanta and the region. Fees for the use of some of the facilities provided in citywide parks can be charged to partially offset operating costs.

Community Parks

- ***Recommended Size:*** 35 acres minimum; 65 acres recommended minimum for sites with athletic complexes
- ***Service Area (Drive-to):*** 2 miles

Community parks are accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes, natural and cultural resources, and open spaces. Providing recreational opportunities for the entire family, community parks contain staffed facilities for specific recreational purposes. Typical amenities might include athletic complexes; swimming pools or splash pads; tennis, basketball, and recreation centers; trails; rentable picnic shelters; large turf and landscaped areas; playgrounds; and/or golfing facilities. Community parks should be large enough to provide for both active and passive recreation. Where athletic complexes are present, community parks need to be significantly larger than parks with a recreation center as a primary facility. Like citywide parks, fees for the use of some of these facilities can be charged to partially offset operating costs. Where convenient pedestrian access is adequate, community parks may also function as neighborhood parks (see below) for nearby residential areas.

Neighborhood Parks

- ***Recommended Size:*** 10 acres recommended minimum; 5 acres in constrained locations
- ***Service Area (Walk-to or Bike-to):*** ½ mile (a 10-minute walk) via the street network

Neighborhood parks serve local informal recreational needs. They also create a sense of neighborhood identity and provide a focus of social activity for the adjoining neighborhood. Amenities could include picnic shelters (small to medium for family gatherings), open fields for informal sports and recreation activities, play grounds/tot lots, basketball and tennis courts (available for informal, pick-up games), or wooded natural areas. Neighborhood parks typically do not have facilities that support regular league sports play, nor do they have staff overseeing programs on a regular basis. To ensure maximum accessibility for surrounding residents, neighborhood parks should be conveniently reached by pedestrians and bikes via the street network.

Special Facilities

- ***Recommended Size:*** Variable; based on facilities present
- ***Service Area:*** Variable; based on facilities present

Special facilities are park sites that contain amenities and facilities not typically associated with parks, such as historic cemeteries. They can also include stand-alone athletic complexes, recreation centers, large event venues, and community gardens. Existing special facilities include Oakland Cemetery, Roseland Cemetery, the City's emergency shelter, Adamsville Recreation Center, Avery Park, and the Inman Park Trolley Barn.

Nature Preserves

- ***Recommended Size:*** Variable, based on resources
- ***Service Area:*** Not applicable

The function of nature preserves is to protect and interpret significant natural resources. Therefore, they may contain amenities that facilitate environmental education and interpretation, including nature centers, nature-based recreational opportunities such as trails, and supporting facilities. Nature preserves should be maintained in a predominantly natural condition to protect environmentally sensitive resources and support interpretive facilities and programs.

3.3.2 Civic Spaces

Civic spaces are areas within the City's fabric that help to define Atlanta's community identity and visual image. They provide places for public gatherings, accommodate pedestrian activity, and/or beautify the City through the provision of landscaping or public art. Civic spaces include squares, garden spots, and streetscapes.

Squares

- ***Recommended Size:*** Variable; typically 1 city block
- ***Service Area:*** Neighborhood to city-wide; specific function of the square will determine appropriate service area

Squares are public gathering spaces that function as a focus of community activity and civic identity. As such, they should be strategically located and designed to facilitate programmed festivals and events. The design of squares, therefore, should incorporate open lawn areas and/or open paved areas to accommodate these events. Squares should be located within the commercial and/or hotel/conference districts, mixed-use centers, or residential communities of Atlanta's denser areas, such as Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead. The functions of squares vary according to the context. For example, in commercial and mixed-use settings (where land availability is restricted), squares can support larger events while providing much-needed greenspace for surrounding residents and employees. In residential neighborhoods squares provide informal greenspace for surrounding residents while accommodating smaller scale, more neighborhood-oriented activities and events. Squares should be programmed to include amenities that attract multiple age and demographic groups and create activity throughout the day and seasons. They could also be located at street level above underground parking decks.

Garden Spots

- ***Recommended Size:*** Variable
- ***Service Area:*** Not applicable

Garden spots are very small landscaped areas – typically traffic islands or medians – that generally do not contain amenities. Typically maintained as drive-by landscaped gateways to Atlanta's neighborhoods and commercial districts, garden spots contribute to the overall beauty of the City and are important to its image. Garden spots are also suitable locations for memorials, fountains, or public art.

Streetscapes

- ***Recommended Size:*** Not applicable
- ***Service Area:*** Not applicable

Streetscapes are the non-vehicular spaces within and adjacent to the rights-of-way of public roadways. They include canopy tree and landscape plantings, sidewalks, and street furniture such as benches, bike racks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. In retail areas they may also accommodate sidewalk cafes. Streetscapes are highly visible and their character has a major impact upon the City's image. They are how people move about the city when not in vehicles. They are where people meet and make eye contact with others. They provide significant opportunities to maintain and increase the coverage of the City's tree canopy and to improve environmental and visual quality. Streetscapes with sufficient tree plantings increase Atlanta's tree canopy coverage and reduce the negative effects of radiant heat from paved surfaces (the "urban heat island"). They can also integrate innovative, sustainable stormwater management techniques.

Streetscapes vary in design and character according to their context (e.g., neighborhood vs. commercial district), size, and function (e.g., major arterial roadway vs. neighborhood or collector street). Streetscape classifications and design standards are needed for different types of streets, including complete streets, a new type proposed by Project Greenspace to provide key connections in the greenspace system (see Section 3.3.3 below).

3.3.3 Connections

Connections include greenway corridors, multi-use trails, and complete streets that link Atlanta's parks and other greenspace resources together. They provide the "connective tissue" that integrates Atlanta's disparate greenspaces into a comprehensive, interconnected, and accessible network.

Greenway

Greenways are a type of greenspace connection sufficiently wide to provide multiple benefits, such as environmental resource protection (e.g., river and stream corridors, stormwater management, and/or recreation (e.g., multi-use trails). Greenway lands and easements acquired by the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management under the Consent Decree are also included in this definition. Where greenway corridors contain vegetated buffers adjacent to streams, they help reduce flooding and improve water quality by slowing down, filtering, and absorbing stormwater runoff. Wider buffers are more effective in this regard. Greenway corridors may or may not include multi-use trails. Neighborhood parks spaced one-half mile apart along greenways are appropriate.

Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are paved pathways wide enough (12' minimum, 20' for the BeltLine trail system) to accommodate a variety of recreational activities (e.g., walking, jogging, biking, in-line skating). Multi-use trails connect neighborhoods, parks and recreation, and other destinations and may be located within greenway corridors, parks, and private developments, or along streets, rail lines, and within utility right-of-ways. They provide opportunities for people to walk or bike to destinations, reducing traffic congestion and promoting public health. It is strongly recommended that they be placed within corridors that can support the growth of mature canopy trees; to accomplish this, a 45' corridor width should be standard and a 60' foot width is desirable.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are designated streets located and designed to serve as connections in the greenspace system. They combine the environmental, stormwater management, visual, and "place-making" functions described above for streetscapes with safe and attractive multi-modal access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit service, as well as vehicular traffic. Features such as sidewalks, street trees, bike lanes, street lights, wayfinding signage, benches, and bike racks create a comfortable and attractive experience for pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles alike. Complete streets increase accessibility to destinations such as commercial areas, libraries, schools, parks, and other greenspace resources. Separate bike lanes are a critical component. To maximize visibility and connectivity, arterial and collector roadways that cross Atlanta are priorities for development as complete streets.

3.3.4 Natural Areas

Natural Areas: are properties maintained in a natural condition to protect environmentally sensitive land and/or resources (e.g., wildlife habitat, forest cover, water quality, wetlands). Natural areas may be either publically owned in fee simple or protected through a conservation easement.

Conservation easements limit the type or extent of development on the property while allowing the landowner to retain ownership of the land; they may provide for public access. Significant natural resource areas should be surrounded by a protective buffer; a minimum width of 100' is recommended.

3.3.5 Privately-Owned Greenspace

Privately-owned greenspace refers to greenspaces that are typically not owned or managed by the City or other public entity. Rather, they occur within private residential, retail, office, or mixed-use development projects. Such greenspaces significantly supplement and expand the environmental, community, and economic functions and benefits of the more traditional greenspace components described above. Wherever possible they should be accessible to the public. Specific types of privately-owned greenspace include community commons and private parks, plazas, and green roofs.

In high-rise buildings outdoor space is created by the inclusion of balconies. These features are structural elements that are typically small in size, rarely provide for public access, and have a very limited impact on the greenspace system. Similarly, interior courtyards can provide open space for residents of a development but have little effect on the larger greenspace system.

Community Commons and Private Parks

Community commons and private parks are open lawn, wooded, or landscaped areas established and managed as part of a private development. They should be located, sized, and designed to create usable, highly visible, and attractive open spaces. In developments with densities greater than four units per acre, community commons and private parks perform the critical function of a "yard", providing residents with a nearby place to meet their neighbors and enjoy the outdoors. These spaces are particularly important for children, whose opportunities to exercise are increasingly limited.

Plazas

Plazas are typically associated with commercial retail and office developments or high-rise residential buildings. They often have a significant amount of pavement in order to accommodate high levels of traffic. They create space within dense developments for shade trees, sitting areas, fountains, and public art, making these areas more human in their scale. Plazas must be located at exterior edges of property and adjacent to the right-of-way, rather then at the rear of a building. The spaces in front of or between high-rise buildings in Atlanta's most urban areas, such as Downtown, Midtown, or Buckhead, may incorporate plaza spaces that are accessible to office workers, people who live in nearby residential towers, and the public at large.

Green Roofs

Building roofs that are partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil (or a growing medium) on top of a waterproofing membrane are known as green roofs. Green roofs provide a variety of benefits, including moderation of the urban heat island effect, improved stormwater management, water and air purification, reduced energy consumption, and the aesthetic and psychological effects of a garden-like setting. In 2003, the City of Atlanta installed a 3,000 square foot green roof (2,000 square feet of plantings and 1,000 square feet of pavers) on the fifth floor of City Hall adjacent to the cafeteria.

3.4 GREENSPACE SYSTEM GROWTH STRATEGIES

This section describes strategies that can be undertaken by the City and its partners to "grow" Atlanta's greenspace system by providing the greenspace components and meeting the priorities described below in Section 3.5. These strategies are grouped into four broad categories: growing greenspace by acquiring land (Section 3.4.1), growing greenspace by regulating land development (Section 3.4.2), growing greenspace by working with partners (Section 3.4.3), and growing greenspace by establishing physical connections (Section 3.4.4).

3.4.1 Land Acquisition

Strategy: Grow greenspace through acquisition of core city parkland by the City.

Recommendations:

- Identify priority lands for acquisition using specific criteria
- Identify funding sources for the acquisition of priority lands
- Pursue methods other than fee simple purchase to acquire city parkland for the greenspace system, e.g.:
  - » Dedicated greenspace in city-sponsored development projects
  - » Dedication of suitable city-owned properties that are not currently designated as greenspace
  - » Acquisition of tax-delinquent and foreclosed properties, especially in under-populated or distressed areas

Acquisition of land by Atlanta to grow the greenspace system is made difficult by the scarcity and high cost of open land. Nevertheless, it is clear that the City needs to add to the existing parkland inventory in order to meet the needs of its citizens and achieve the vision of a world-class greenspace system. An additional 3,784 acres (approx.) is needed to attain the target of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents for the City's projected 2030 population (based on 2008 data). Not including the 1,200 acres of parkland planned to be acquired for the BeltLine, this amounts to approximately 130 acres per year over the plan horizon (from 2010 to 2030).

Achieving the target will require a proactive land acquisition program that is implemented over a period of years. This program should begin with identification and prioritization of land for acquisition using criteria that are tied to the goals and principles of Project Greenspace. The City has in place a "Property Identification Questionnaire" that citizens submitted to identify candidate greenspace properties. This questionnaire identified the following criteria for potential greenspace:

- Supported by plans and policies
- Environmentally sensitive area
- Reclamation potential
- Cultural site
- Connectivity potential
- Located in a community underserved by parks and greenspace
- Addition to an existing park

A similar set of objective criteria should be used to identify and prioritize lands for inclusion in a city greenspace acquisition program. The following list of attributes integrates the Property Identification Questionnaire criteria with the direction set by Project Greenspace:

- Provides for the equitable distribution of the different greenspace types (neighborhood parks, community parks, citywide parks, etc.) throughout Atlanta
- Provides access to parkland in an area that is underserved using the "½ mile walk" standard
- Provides usable land configured to meet criteria (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, accessibility standards, etc.)
- Meets identified recreational needs (e.g., trail, special event/community gathering place, sports field)
- Improves the accessibility, safety/visibility, and/or usability of an existing greenspace component; e.g.:
    - » Establishes road frontage access for a park
    - » Provides an opportunity to increase handicapped accessibility
    - » Increases the size of an existing park to meet the greenspace classification size standard
    - » Expands access to an existing park
    - » Provides a buffer for a greenway or multi-use trail
- Expands or augments an existing undersized park that does not meet minimum classification standards
- Provides a connection in the greenspace system
- Preserves natural, scenic, cultural, and/or historic resources, e.g.:
    - » High water resource value (groundwater recharge area, floodplain, stream buffer, provides stormwater management services, etc.)
    - » High ecological value (intact natural community, provides rare species habitat, connects or buffers existing natural areas, etc.)
    - » Environmentally sensitive resources (steep slopes, granite outcrops, etc.)
    - » Scenic viewsheds
    - » High cultural/historic resource value[9]
- Implements greenspace recommendations of neighborhood or other area plans adopted in the *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan*

9 Eligible for listing on the National Register, associated with important historic personages and events, contains historic landscape features such as Civil War earthworks and historic transportation corridors, etc.

These same criteria should be used to identify proposed greenspace in neighborhood and area planning initiatives. Factors related to property ownership, including development pressure, willingness of the owner to sell the land, and asking price, need to be taken into consideration in identifying land for acquisition. The ultimate management responsibility for the property is another important issue that needs to be resolved.

Given the magnitude of the challenge, a multi-faceted strategy is needed to acquire the priority lands. A variety of funding sources are potentially available. Bond referendums have been successfully used by jurisdictions throughout the country to fund major greenspace acquisition programs. The results of the citizen survey conducted for Project Greenspace indicate potentially strong citizen support for such a bond. Examples of other funding sources include development fees (impact fees or a cash-in-lieu of open space provision – see Section 3.4.2), Tax Allocation District (TAD) funding, government and nonprofit sector matching grants, a real estate transfer fee (if authorized by the state legislature), and park benefit districts. One or more funding sources could be used to support a revolving fund dedicated to greenspace acquisition (e.g., a greenspace bond paid off by a source such as development fees). Funding is addressed more fully in Sections 5.3 and 6.2 of the report.

A portion of the core city parkland need can be met by methods other than fee simple purchase by the City of Atlanta. Given the demonstrated role of greenspace in promoting economic development, a significant amount of greenspace should be integrated into all city-sponsored development projects (e.g., the Fort McPherson redevelopment) and dedicated as city parkland. As a general rule, benchmarks for greenspace dedication should be established for all

Best Practice: Open Space Bond Referendums

During the November 2006 election, voters in 23 states approved 104 ballot measures totaling $6.4 billion in new funding for greenspace-related acquisition and development with an average 80% approval rate (source: Trust for Public Land). This eclipses the previous record of $5.68 billion set in 1998, as well the 75 percent approval rate that has been typical over the past decade. Two examples from the 2006 election are:

Portland Metro, OR

Portland-area voters approved a $227 million bond issue authorizing Metro government to purchase between 3,500 and 4,500 acres of land around local rivers and streams in order to preserve significant fish and wildlife habitat, enhance trails and wildlife corridors, and connect urban areas with nature. An additional $44 million will be spent on local park, stormwater, and access projects and another $15 million on projects that enhance natural features and improve their ecological function on public lands.

Dallas, TX

Dallas residents passed Proposition 3, a $343 million parks bond package, with an 81% approval rate. This bond measure will fund new parkland acquisition, trail construction, facility repairs, zoo renovation, and general public space maintenance. Nearly $37 million of the bond will be committed to open space and parkland acquisition.

projects receiving public sector financial support or incentives, including Tax Allocation District projects. (The City's adopted target of protecting a minimum of 20% of Atlanta's land area as greenspace could be used as a benchmark.) Other possibilities include:

- Suitable city-owned properties (e.g., the former prison farm site located adjacent to Atlanta's southeast boundary) could be earmarked for development as city parkland.
- The City could extend funding for the Greenways Acquisition Project under the 1998 Combined Sewer Overflow Consent Decree, which expired in March 2007, through a mechanism such as earmarking a percent of watershed management fees.
- A process to identify and secure tax delinquent properties that meet the greenspace criteria could be established through coordination with the Fulton County Land Bank Authority.
- County, state, and/or federal government could acquire additional public parkland in Atlanta.

In addition to meeting needs for public parkland acreage, city-sponsored development projects and city-owned properties could contribute to meeting recreational facility needs identified by Project Greenspace (see Section 4.1). It should also be noted that providing compatible greenspace functions such as trails on lands used for purposes such as stormwater management or sewer easements would add value to the City's investment while meeting citizens' needs for greenspace. For example, streamside buffers acquired by the City of Atlanta through the Greenways Acquisition Project allow limited public access. This access could include multi-use trails as part of the citywide greenway trail system provided that the bulk of the property is maintained in a natural, undisturbed state. Similarly, trails could be installed along sewer or other utility easements or rights-of-way.

3.4.2 Regulations and Incentives

Strategy: Grow greenspace through improved regulations and incentives that promote greenspace in new developments.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen the existing open space requirements for new residential developments to promote the dedication of usable, accessible greenspace
- Establish open space requirements and standards to promote dedication of usable outdoor spaces in commercial and mixed-use developments
- Revise the Impact Fee Ordinance to set fee levels that offset the impacts of new developments

- Strengthen the conservation subdivision ordinance regulations and incentives to protect greenspace by clustering residential development on more suitable portions of the property
- Utilize the City's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance to protect properties with special environmental, scenic, recreational, and/or historic value as greenspace

The City of Atlanta has a number of existing codes and regulations in place that affect greenspace.[10] Major opportunities exist to secure dedicated greenspace through the development process by strengthening the existing regulations and adopting new provisions. These new provisions can incorporate flexibility and incentives, thus promoting "win-win" scenarios that yield community greenspace benefits while meeting developers' objectives. For example, density incentives could be provided for developments that dedicate land for public access as part of the City's greenspace system. Any such greenspace incentives need to be evaluated in relation to the City's overall incentive program (e.g., for affordable housing).

Open Space Requirements: The City's existing open space requirements for new residential developments and the residential component of mixed-use developments (Total Open Space Ratio or TOSR and Usable Open Space Ratio or USOR) are based on arbitrary calculations and do not include standards to ensure that the designated area functions as meaningful greenspace. Balconies and rooftop terraces can be counted as open space, meaning that a significant portion of the requirement can be taken up by private open space above ground level that provides minimal greenspace benefits. Specific standards should be established to ensure that the requirement results in usable, ground level open space (see Appendix A, Community Commons and Private Parks; Plazas). Standards should be implemented for commercial and mixed-use as well as residential properties. In urban contexts, transfer of a portion of the required open space off-site to create a consolidated, usable park serving multiple developments as opposed to small, marginal open space areas on several parcels should be encouraged. Appropriate sites for such parks should be identified in small area plans.. This approach is permitted in certain Quality of Life and SPI districts, but no mechanisms are in place to implement it. The mechanisms could include a "cash-in-lieu-of greenspace" provision in cases where the requirement cannot be met on-site or a cash payment to help establish a park off-site that serves the development makes more sense. The funds received should be placed into a dedicated greenspace fund.

The City currently has limited open space provisions for new commercial developments other than the requirement that nonresidential developments greater than one acre in size in Quality of Life districts provide a minimum five percent of the lot area as "public space." The existing regulations should be strengthened to require the provision of publicly accessible plazas, squares, and other forms of publicly accessible open space in all commercial developments to serve the needs of office workers, shoppers, and other users. A minimum requirement of 10 to 20% should be considered depending on context, with the provision that a portion of the requirement could be met off-site similar to the recommendation for residential development above.

10 Existing city regulations and codes pertaining to greenspace are more fully discussed in the *State of the Atlanta's Greenspace Repor*t.

Best Practice

Commercial Open Space Requirement
Seattle, WA

Section 23.71.014 of the Seattle Municipal Code requires that a minimum of 10% of lot area (or proposed gross floor area) in commercial zones with a permitted height limit of 40 feet or less and 20% of lot area (or proposed gross floor area) in commercial zones with a permitted height limit greater than 40 feet be provided as landscaped or usable open space. The Code establishes standards for the provision of the open space, including conditions under which a portion of the requirement can be provided as a publicly accessible above-ground terrace or usable interior space consisting of an atrium/ greenhouse, galleria, or public meeting space.

Heard Museum, AZ; Photo Source: Dee Meriam

Impact Fees: The City of Atlanta has procured the services of a Consultant to undertake a study of the existing City of Atlanta Development Impact Fee Ordinance and the current and future land use plans within the City and produce a written report including recommended amendments to the City's Impact Fee Ordinance. The Study has five primary goals: 1) update the data used in the development of the initial version of the Ordinance including any areas annexed since the original study and recommend revisions to its text: 2) gather and compile the data in order to ensure compliance with the state requirements for Comprehensive Development Plans; 3) link the application of the new Ordinance more closely to the funding set forth in the Capital Improvement Element of the CDP; 4) Examine the relationship of proposed major transit initiatives, the Beltline Project and the Atlanta Streetcar to the transportation impact fee analysis; and 5) provide a policy regarding exemptions for economic development, affordable housing and specific types of development in the Beltline right-of-way. At the completion of the study, the City should have information that describes the cost of parks and recreation to serve new growth and development in a manner that complies with the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act. This will allow for the reevaluation of levels of service standards for parks and recreation in relation to Project Greenspace targets.

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance: A conservation subdivision is a residential development designed to preserve or create valuable greenspace by concentrating homes on a portion of the property while maintaining the remainder as open space in perpetuity. The greenspace may be owned and maintained by a homeowners' association, held by a private nonprofit organization (e.g., a land conservation trust), or dedicated for public ownership and access. In cases where the land is to remain in private ownership, a permanent conservation easement is required that must be accepted by the City or other qualified organization (e.g., a new Atlanta land trust established for this purpose). Conservation subdivisions can either be required for new developments or provided as an alternative

to conventional subdivisions, often through the use of incentives. The City adopted a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance in 2009.

Conservation subdivisions have great potential to provide greenspace in areas of Atlanta zoned for single-family residential uses that are experiencing pressures for infill and new development. Building on the acquisition criteria identified above, a new conservation subdivision ordinance should include definitions and standards to ensure the dedication of meaningful greenspace, including the environmentally sensitive lands covered by the 75% target defined in Section 3.2. In more urban contexts, access to and visibility of common open space are important considerations. Incentives could be provided to encourage public access to dedicated greenspace that fulfills important greenspace system needs (e.g., greenway trails and neighborhood parks).

Transfer of Development Rights: The City of Atlanta Code of Ordinances authorizes the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) from a "sending" property to a "receiving" property in order to preserve land with natural, environmental, historic, and/or cultural value as greenspace. The ordinance provides broad latitude in the definition of the sending property from which the development rights are transferred but so far has only been used in Atlanta to protect historic properties. TDRs have great potential to preserve valuable greenspace. To realize this potential, the City should develop a program that specifies standards and procedures for application of the TDR provisions. The program should identify appropriate sending areas based on the greenspace criteria and needs established by Project Greenspace and appropriate receiv-

Best Practices

Open Space Impact Fee, Chicago, IL

Open space impact fees are earmarked for open space acquisition and capital improvements which provide a direct and material benefit to the new development from which the fees are collected. http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/pilot/chic_activities.html#6

Parkland Dedication Ordinance, Austin, TX

Austin has had considerable success with its Parkland Dedication Ordinance. However, in the past it was only applicable to new subdivisions located primarily on the urban fringe. The city's downtown and central city housing markets have been strong, yet none of the new condo and townhouse development generates dedicated parkland funding. In 2007 the Austin City Council approved amendments to the ordinance requiring that all new market rate housing units dedicate parkland or pay a flat in-lieu fee of $650. http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A471783

Park System Development Charge, Portland, OR

In 1998, Portland City Council approved a Park System Development Charge (SDC) that partially offsets the costs for needed services associated with residential housing development. At the current rate of $3,053 per single family unit, Park SDCs generate about $1.5 million per year for park and facility capital improvements. In particular, Park SDCs have funded several major acquisitions in east Portland during the last few years – an area experiencing much new growth. http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=difbg

ing areas based on the *Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan*. Sending properties could be permanently dedicated, privately owned greenspace that protects valuable resources (e.g., are located within designated greenway corridors). Where appropriate, they could be incorporated into the publicly accessible greenspace system. Organizational capacity needs to be established within city government to manage a TDR program.

Strategy: Strengthen regulations to protect and maintain environmentally sensitive resources as greenspace.

Recommendations:

- Identify opportunities in the City's ordinances to strengthen protection of environmentally sensitive resources
- Consider incentives to promote the dedication of designated greenways/trails in new developments
- Improve the subdivision regulations to more effectively address preservation of greenspace resources
- Adopt and implementing the Mandatory Management Measures in the *Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning Districts' Watershed Management Plan*
- Adopt and implement a Green Infrastructure Program (required under the City's 2009-2014 MS4 Permit) which would include techniques for improving stormwater and wastewater management, mitigating impacts from natural hazards, providing ecological/recreational benefits, and helping to restore native plant species, etc.

The City of Atlanta has a number of existing ordinances that address protection of environmentally sensitive resources, including:

- Chapter 158 (Vegetation/Tree Protection)
- Article II (Soil Erosion)/Article X (Post Development Stormwater Management)
- Article VI (Flood Area Regulations)
- Article VII (Riparian Buffer Requirements)
- Article VIII (Wetland Protection Regulations)
- Green Building/Sustainable Development Ordinance

Photo Source: City of Atlanta

While these ordinances collectively provide an excellent foundation for protecting Atlanta's environmentally sensitive resources, they should be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement. For example, they do not address protection of steep slopes or protection of wetlands beyond federal legislation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In addition, requirements such as the 75-foot riparian buffer should be enforced to maximize protection of the core resource while allowing for some degree of flexibility for design solutions that enhance greenspace functions without impacting the resource. New regulatory provisions could be established to promote the dedication of greenway corridors proposed by Project Greenspace in new developments, perhaps through an incentive-based approach. Scenic vistas could also be protected through an overlay district or districts. Finally, the subdivision regulations could be strengthened by incorporating more specific requirements for the delineation and protection of environmentally sensitive resources. As noted, a conservation subdivision option would also promote preservation of these resources.

3.4.3 Partnerships

Strategy: Grow greenspace by working with partners.

Recommendations:

- Create a database of all existing greenspace and future targets and work with partners to track progress
- Work with governmental and institutional landowners to preserve and create greenspace
  - » Identify governmental and institutional landowners with existing or potential greenspace holdings

Best Practices

Nashville Greenway Overlay District

Nashville's Greenway Overlay District was established for the purpose of identifying on the official zoning map those properties that an adopted greenway master plan has determined to be appropriate for inclusion in a communitywide greenway system. The provisions of the greenway overlay district are intended to facilitate the implementation and ongoing utilization of a countywide greenway system through appropriate design and development of properties within the district, and to encourage active participation in the implementation of an adopted greenway plan through the use of development incentives. The Greenway Overlay District may be applied to any property included within a greenway master plan adopted by the metropolitan greenways commission. http://www.nashville.gov/greenways/

Portland Greenway Overlay Zone

The purpose of the greenway overlay zones is to implement the land use pattern identified in the Willamette Greenway Plan and the water quality requirements of Metro Code. There are five greenway overlay zones, each with its own focus and purpose. http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=53351

    - » Initiate discussions with landowners on ways to integrate holdings into a citywide greenspace system
- Work with private organizations to preserve and create greenspace
    - » Continue and expand partnerships with conservation land trusts to preserve greenspace
    - » Continue and expand partnerships with other nonprofit organizations and institutions to preserve greenspace
    - » Explore establishment of a new conservation land trust to focus on greenspace preservation within the City of Atlanta
- Work with neighborhoods to preserve and create greenspace
    - » Work with NPU's to identify opportunities for greenspace preservation that meet the Project Greenspace acquisition criteria
    - » Incorporate the identified opportunities into neighborhood/small area plans and implementation programs
    - » Give priority to greenspace recommendations cited in adopted Redevelopment, LCI, and Neighborhood Plans
- Work with private landowners and businesses to preserve and create greenspace
    - » Identify privately owned lands with high greenspace value
    - » Work with property owners on ways to preserve identified lands
    - » Initiate targeted outreach to owners of properties with identified greenspace value
    - » Consider creating a new conservation land trust as a vehicle for implementing this strategy
    - » Work with corporations and businesses on ways to preserve and create greenspace
- Improve internal city capabilities to work with partners

The City has an established track record of working with partners to preserve greenspace within Atlanta. The City can build on existing partnerships and initiate new ones to help meet greenspace needs. For example, a number of governmental agencies and institutions manage land that functions as or has the potential to function as greenspace. The National Park Service, State of Georgia, and DeKalb County own dedicated park sites that total 322 acres within the City (GIS Data, 2008). According to a GIS analysis conducted for Project Greenspace, Atlanta Public Schools manage over 910 acres of outdoor recreation and undeveloped land that functions as greenspace and could help meet community needs for recreation facilities. (This figure excludes schools that are located in parks.) Private (K-12) schools own approximately 400 acres of usable open space. Examples of other governmental and institutional entities with land that could function as part of the green-

space system include colleges and universities, libraries, healthcare institutions, and utility companies.

The City should initiate a process of working with government agencies and private institutions on the existing and potential functions of their lands as part of the citywide greenspace system. This process should begin with the identification of potential greenspace lands. Discussions can then be initiated with representatives of the governmental and institutional property owners regarding the value of the land and how it might contribute to the City's greenspace system consistent with their missions. At a minimum, this process will provide education and outreach regarding Project Greenspace as well as information to the City regarding the status of greenspace properties in Atlanta. In addition, it could lead to informal or formal (written) agreements regarding the preservation and use of specific properties for greenspace purposes. This may include making land available to accommodate recreational facility needs (see Section 4.1).

The City and the Atlanta Development Authority have worked closely with several land conservation organizations to preserve greenspace within Atlanta. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL), PATH Foundation, and The Conservation Fund assist in facilitating greenspace real estate transactions, with TPL having a particular focus on the BeltLine, the PATH Foundation focusing on trail development, and The Conservation Fund working at a citywide level. The City should continue to build on these established relationships and draw on the resources and expertise of other land conservation organizations. Partnerships should be continued and expanded with other nonprofit organizations and institutions. Park Pride is an effective greenspace advocacy organization that has led initiatives such as the Atlanta

Best Practices: Campus Parks Program, Chicago, IL

Chicago's Campus Park Program is a joint effort by the Public Building Commission, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, and the City of Chicago to build 100 new parks. The goal of the program is to replace concrete school yards with green open spaces. http://www.pbcchicago.com/subhtml/campark.asp

Best Practices: Floyds Fork, Louisville, KY

Floyds Fork is a major initiative to establish 4,000 to 5,000 acres of park and greenway land along a stream corridor in an urbanizing part of the Louisville metropolitan area. The Floyds Fork park project is being led by three partner entities. 21st Century Parks is a private nonprofit organization that is coordinating funding, Future Fund is a local land trust working to secure properties along the park corridor, and Louisville MetroParks will ultimately operate and maintain the park. http://www.louisvilleky.gov/MetroParks/cityofparks/floyds_fork.htm

Photo Source: City of Atlanta

2005 Park System Agenda, which advocated doubling Atlanta's existing park acreage. The Parks Alliance Rescue Coalition (PARC) is a broad coalition of greenspace advocates, community leaders, and environmental groups. PARC recently initiated a new campaign to lobby for increased funding for operation and maintenance of Atlanta's parks. The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation and other private foundations have been involved in greenspace issues in Atlanta and could provide additional support for growing the greenspace system.

A significant lack in the current network of nonprofit organizations is a land trust that actively acquires and manages greenspace within the City of Atlanta. TPL, The Conservation Fund, and PATH do not hold land on a permanent basis. An Atlanta-based land trust could work with landowners who prefer not to become involved with government and would provide an alternative to city ownership of land or easements. For example, the DPRCA has a policy of not accepting donations of land less than two acres in size because of the costs of maintaining small properties. A land trust would provide a vehicle for holding such lands if they have demonstrated greenspace value or have the potential to be assembled into tracts of interest.

Project Greenspace provides a citywide framework for action at the community and neighborhood level to grow the greenspace system. As such it should be used by the City in working with NPU's and other community and neighborhood groups to identify site-specific opportunities to grow the greenspace system. These opportunities should be evaluated in the context of the Project Greenspace acquisition criteria (provides a neighborhood park within a ½ mile walk, provides a greenway trail connection, etc.) for incorporation into neighborhood and area plans and implementation programs.

Finally, great potential exists to preserve and create greenspace by working with private landowners and businesses. A variety of approaches other than full development are available to property owners to maintain the greenspace values of lands with greenspace value (e.g., environmentally sensitive lands) while meeting financial objectives through tax benefits and/or targeted development. These approaches include donation of land or easements and conservation (cluster) or limited development options. As an example, a landowner could donate land or an easement on a floodplain/stream buffer for incorporation into a larger greenway corridor. As noted above, a private land trust would be best suited to working with private landowners on these approaches. To provide a starting point for working with private landowners, the City should undertake a GIS parcel analysis that identifies properties with high greenspace value. This analysis can then be used in targeted outreach to property owners.

Corporations and businesses are logical candidates to help build the greenspace system given the proven role of greenspace in promoting increased economic activity. Potential contributions include financial support for greenspace initiatives, provision of publicly accessible park and plaza areas, and use of "green" site and building techniques (e.g., green roofs or vegetated stormwater management areas) that promote urban greenspace.

Building the internal capacity of city government is a key to effectively working the range of partners identified above to grow the greenspace system. Recommendations for building capacity and improving coordination within city government related to greenspace issues are provided in Section 5.1.

3.4.4 Connections

Strategy: Grow greenspace by establishing physical connections.

Recommendations:

- Develop off-street, multi-use trails as connections in the greenspace system
- Create greenway corridors that connect Atlanta's urban core and the BeltLine to the rest of the City and the larger metropolitan region
- Establish complete streets (also recommended in the *Connect Atlanta Plan*) with canopy trees and safe and attractive accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit service as connections in the greenspace system
- Implement streetscape improvements throughout the City as part of Atlanta's urban greenspace
- Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections from parks and greenspaces to surrounding neighborhoods

Connectivity is a key guiding principle for creating Atlanta's greenspace system. The effectiveness and benefits of the system will be exponentially increased to the extent that greenspaces are linked to each other and to the citizens of Atlanta by physical connections. These connections can take several forms (see Section 3.3.3) and be implemented in various ways.

Multi-Use Trails: In the citizen survey conducted for Project Greenspace, Atlantans ranked walking and biking trails as the highest priority recreational facility need. The City has an existing trails plan that was prepared and is updated regularly in conjunction with the PATH Foundation. This plan should be updated to incorporate the direction set by Project Greenspace. Figure 3.9 at the end of this section shows recommended trail development priorities, including multi-use trails both inside and outside of proposed greenway corridors (see below). Land for multi-use trails can be secured through development requirements or incentives; agreements to use rail, sewer, electric, or other utility rights-of-way; and acquisition of land or easements. Developments next to designated multi-use trails should provide greenspace buffers between the development and the trail to improve the user experience, enhance the effectiveness of the trail as a greenspace component, and provide separation for adjacent residents. This is particularly important for the BeltLine trail, which is planned to have long segments with narrow rights-of-way.

Greenway Corridors: Greenway corridors generally follow Atlanta's river and stream corridors, which have the City's greatest concentrations of environmentally sensitive resources, such as floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes, and significant forested areas. Similar to multi-use trails, a variety of means can be used to secure land for greenway corridors, including development requirements or incentives, use of land or easements acquired for stormwater purposes, and acquisition of land or easements. Greenway corridors designated as key linkages

Best Practices

The Greenways Foundation, Indianapolis, IN

Indy Parks Greenways operates and maintains the city's 39 miles of trails and a variety of conservation corridors. The Greenways system encompasses streams, old railroad and utility corridors, and will eventually contain more than 150 miles of interconnected trails. http://www.indygreenways.org/

Nashville Greenways Commission, Nashville-Davidson County, TN

Nashville's greenways run primarily along major rivers and creek and include about 36.5 miles of trails. The system features several large nature parks and passive recreation areas. The future network is planned to include 210 miles of trails and has the potential to link Nashville with the greenway system of the nearby city of Murfreesboro.

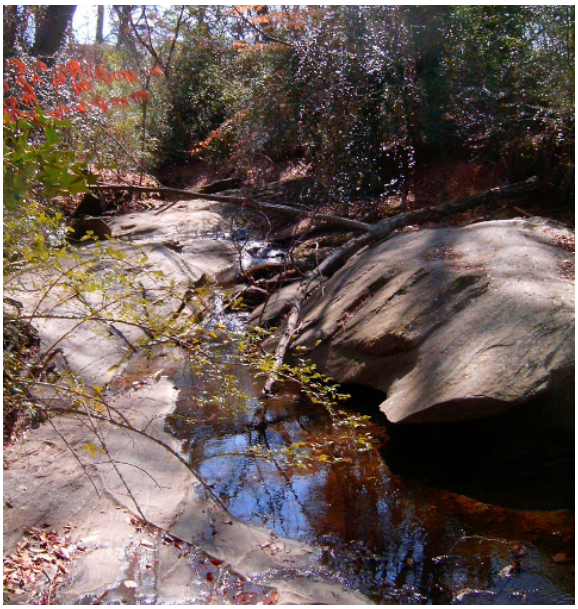


Photo Source: City of Atlanta

in the greenspace system should accommodate multi-use trails and other passive recreational uses compatible with environmental resource protection. Together, greenway corridors and multi-use trails can extend the effective coverage of Atlanta's greenspace system by providing needed outdoor recreation opportunities within walking distance of citizens who may not have pedestrian access to parks.

Complete Streets: Typical of many cities in the nation, Atlanta's road system is designed primarily to move automobile traffic with limited consideration of other potential functions. Complete streets combine connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit with features such as canopy trees and sustainable stormwater management practices (see Section 3.3.3). To function as connections in Atlanta's greenspace system, complete streets should be developed along selected roadway corridors to provide safe and attractive accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists in the form of sidewalks, bike lanes, and/or adjacent multi-use trails. As Atlanta's most important existing connectors, arterial roadways are identified as initial candidates for development as complete streets. These improvements should be implemented in a coordinated manner that establishes meaningful connections. Priority complete street projects identified by Project Greenspace include the MLK/Decatur/Dekalb Corridor, Peachtree Corridor, and Lee Street. The *Connect Atlanta Plan* identifies six candidate projects for implementation, located in the Westside and Southeast Atlanta areas:

- CS-1: Fairburn Rd. (streetscape and pedestrian enhancements).
- CS-2: Lynhurst Dr. (streetscape enhancements and the addition of a secondary bicycle connection through restriping existing travel lanes).
- CS-3: Childress Dr. (streetscape enhancements and the addition of a secondary bicycle connection through restriping existing travel lanes).

- CS-4: Venetian Dr. (streetscape enhancements and the addition of a secondary bicycle connection through restriping existing travel lanes).
- CS-5: Jonesboro Rd. (enhances streetscape and pedestrian area in a neighborhood business district).
- CS-6: Lakewood Avenue

The *Connect Atlanta* complete street projects were selected based on location and potential to build a better street network. The Westside projects will introduce complete street principles to several connector streets (currently dominated by vehicular travel) through improvements to pedestrian facilities, safe crossings, and linkages to surrounding neighborhoods. The two projects in the Lakewood Fairgrounds and Southeast Atlanta are located in areas with a limited street network and are deficient in bicycle and pedestrian connections.

Streetscapes: In addition to the citywide connections in the greenspace system provided by complete streets, streetscape improvements should be implemented throughout the City to promote pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, sustainable stormwater management, and other greenspace objectives. Streetscape classifications and standards should be established as guides for improvements in different contexts. Fifth Street at the Georgia Institute of Technology campus is an example of an existing streetscape that can be used as one model. Cities such as Portland and Seattle have developed models for retrofitting streets with vegetated stormwater management features.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections: Connections should be developed at the community and neighborhood levels to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to safely access greenspaces, schools, and other destinations from their homes. These connections can be identified through neighborhood and small area plans developed with NPUs. "Safe Routes to Schools" are a potential funding source. The national SRTS Program is federally funded, but managed and administered by each State Department of Transportation (DOT).

Best Practices

Complete Streets, Louisville, KY

Louisville, KY's Complete Streets Policy calls for routinely accommodating ALL users – bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, transit users, and persons with disabilities – on all new and reconstructed roadways. This is achieved through integrated design of the roadway and roadside (the land from the roadway curb or pavement edge to the face of adjacent buildings). http://www.louisvilleky.gov/BikeLouisville/Complete+Streets/Complete+Streets.htm

Green Streets, Portland, OR

Portland, OR has completed a number of Green Street pilot projects. Green streets are existing city streets that are retrofitted with vegetated facilities to manage stormwater on site. http://www.metroregion.org/article.cfm?articleID=262

Street Edge Alternatives, Seattle/King County, WA

Seattle's Street Edge Alternatives (SEA) project replaces curbs and gutters with landscaping and swales for surface detention. Impervious surfaces are reduced by 11% over traditional streets. SEA Streets reduce the total volume of stormwater leaving the street by 98% in a 2-year storm event. http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/Natural_Drainage_Systems/Street_Edge_Alternatives/index.asp

Best Practice

Logan Square Open Space Plan, Chicago, IL

Chicago planners attempt to link parks and open spaces with improved bicycle and pedestrian connections. Neighborhood plans consider the location of existing and proposed parks when planning bike lanes and pedestrian connections. http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_ATTACH/Logan_Recommendation_5.pdf

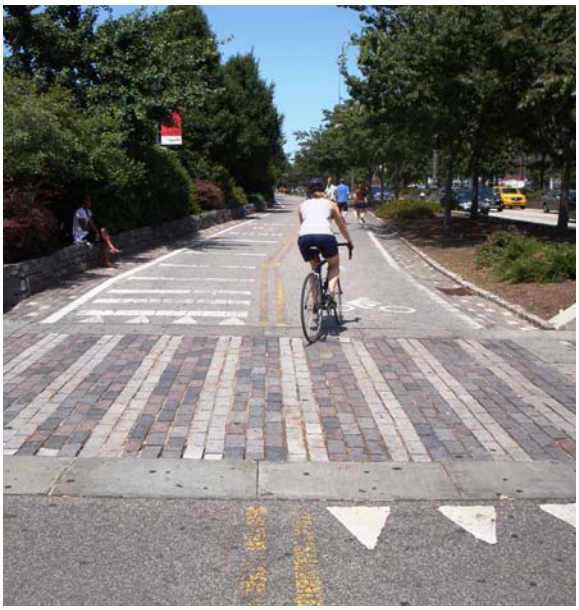


Photo Source: WRT

3.5 GREENSPACE SYSTEM PRIORITIES

This section identifies recommendations for the different greenspace types described in Section 3.2. These priorities are designed to leverage existing opportunities and meet key greenspace needs, such as:

- Increasing the amount of greenspace and improving its distribution throughout the City
- Improving accessibility to greenspace
- Providing places for special events and festivals
- Protecting environmentally sensitive lands
- Reducing Atlanta's carbon footprint

3.5.1 Citywide Parks

Recommendations:

- Develop a greenway along the Chattahoochee River as a new citywide park

Existing citywide parks are located east of Interstate 75 and south of Interstate 20, leaving underserved pockets in the west-central area of Atlanta, as well as along the City's western edge. Existing parks in these areas are small and not suitable to perform citywide functions. The 1993 *Parks, Open Space, and Greenways Plan* proposed a regional park along the Chattahoochee River as an extension of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. This proposal should be revisited to meet the identified need for a citywide park along Atlanta's western edge. Specifically, this need could be met through development of a greenway along the Chattahoochee River combined with new parks located where the proposed Nancy and Proctor Greenways join the river. In addition, Project Greenspace proposes an expansion to the North Camp Creek Nature Preserve at Camp Creek, another proposed greenway. This new park and greenspace network can collectively meet the citywide park need in western Atlanta (see Figure 3.7).

3.5.2 Community Parks

Recommendations:

- Conduct a comprehensive service area/distribution analysis of existing community parks
- Establish new community parks in the northwest and along the City's eastern border in Council District 6

Of the 38 community parks in Atlanta, only nine meet or exceed the recommended minimum size of 35 acres, potentially creating functional gaps in the distribution of this greenspace type in the City. These gaps can be partially filled by citywide parks that provide existing facilities and amenities associated with community parks as well as land needed to develop any additional facilities required to serve residents of the surrounding service area. In addition community park needs could be met by strategically linking smaller parks within a defined service area to provide the full complement of required facilities.

The City should conduct an analysis of existing community parks and the distribution of facilities within them to determine the feasibility of consolidating or redistributing park facilities, "pairing" undersized community parks, or expanding existing park sites where needed to meet the recommended community park standards. For example, one or more existing parks could be developed to provide community park facilities and amenities within a certain service area while the management of smaller, presently designated community parks within the area could emphasis more local, neighborhood-park functions.

Figure 3.5 shows the locations and two-mile service areas (buffer zones) of citywide parks and community parks that generally meet the 35-acre minimum size standard. Specific areas outside of these buffer zones are located along the City's western boundary and in the extreme northeastern and southwestern portions of Atlanta. In addition, the northern part of the City lacks community parks. While two citywide parks (Chastain Park and Atlanta Memorial Park/Bobby Jones Golf Course) are located in this area, the lack of community parks will become more problematic as large single-family lots and other lands are converted to multi-story, mixed-use developments. The Chattahoochee greenway/park network proposed in Section 3.5.1 above could also fulfill the need for community parkland along the western edge of the City provided that adequate developable land is acquired. Similarly, a new community park or parks could be located as nodes along the proposed Nancy Creek Greenway in northern Atlanta as well as along Peachtree Creek at the cities eastern edge. There also may be potential to expand Ben Hill park or acquire land in Southwestern Atlanta to meet the need for community parks. Figure 3.7 illustrates the general areas where existing parks could be expanded or new community parks provided to meet needs for this greenspace type.

3.5.3 Neighborhood Parks

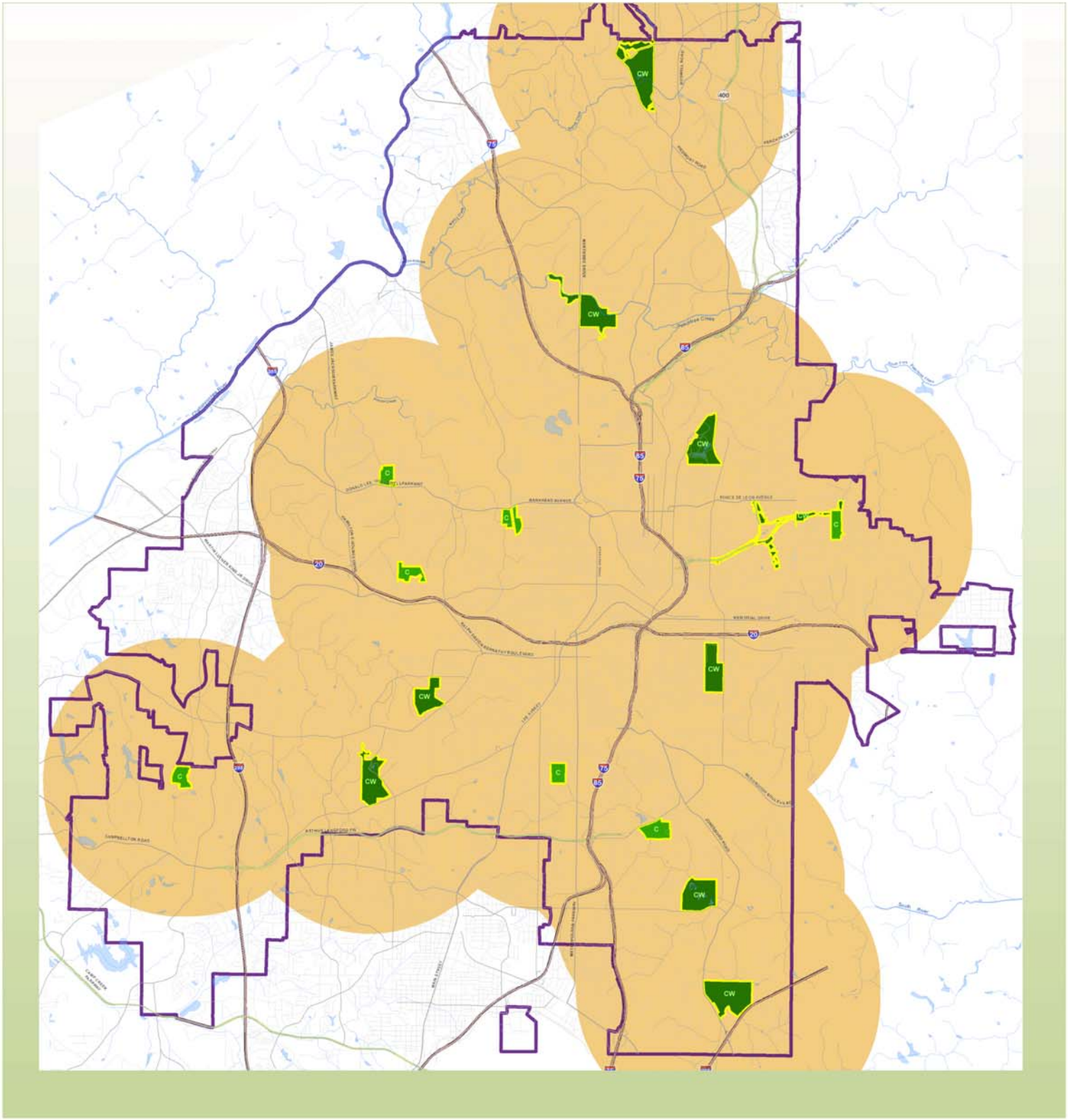
Recommendations:

- Provide new greenspaces such as neighborhood parks in areas located more than 1/2-mile from existing publicly accessible greenspaces
- Improve walking access to existing publicly accessible parks

Large areas within Atlanta are not served by parks located within a 1/2-mile distance. In addition, a significant number of Atlanta's residents live within one-half mile of parks but lack convenient access to them. Therefore, efforts to meet neighborhood park needs should have a dual focus:

- Establish neighborhood parks and other publicly accessible greenspaces in areas not currently served.
- Improve walking access between existing parks and surrounding neighborhoods.

Figure 3-5: Community Parks Proximity Analysis



Two mile buffer area around Atlanta Citywide parks and large Community parks greater than 43 acres.

Data Source: 2008

Legend:

- CW — Citywide Park
- C — Large Community Park (> 43 acres)
- Two Mile Buffer zone around Citywide and Large Community Parks

Figure 3.6 shows areas of the City that are located 1) more than 1/2-mile from city park entrances via the street network and 2) more than 1/2-straight line distance from city park boundaries based on a study performed by the Georgia Institute of Technology Center for GIS. The difference in population served by these two definitions of service area is significant. Based on the study, it is estimated that in 2005 358,090 persons or 74% of Atlanta's population lived within a 1/2-mile straight line distance of city parks while only 197,546 persons or 41% of the population lived within 1/2-mile of city park access points via the street network. Thus approximately 160,000 Atlantans who live within a 1/2-straight line distance from existing parks do not have walkable access to parks due to the way streets relate to park sites.

New neighborhood parks should be strategically located to provide walkable access to areas located more than one-half mile from existing publicly accessible parks or other form of greenspace, with an emphasis on serving higher density areas with limited private backyard space. Pedestrian access to areas located within a one-half mile straight line distance from existing parks but not a one-half mile distance via the street network can be improved by increasing park frontage on streets through the strategic acquisition of adjacent parcels, providing new streets where feasible, and improving the general pedestrian environment with sidewalks, shade trees, and wayfinding signage. As shown, many greenspace types would benefit from improved pedestrian access. Because neighborhood parks are primarily walk-to facilities (see Section 3.2.1) and provide local recreational facilities for many Atlanta neighborhoods, access improvements to them should be a specific priority.

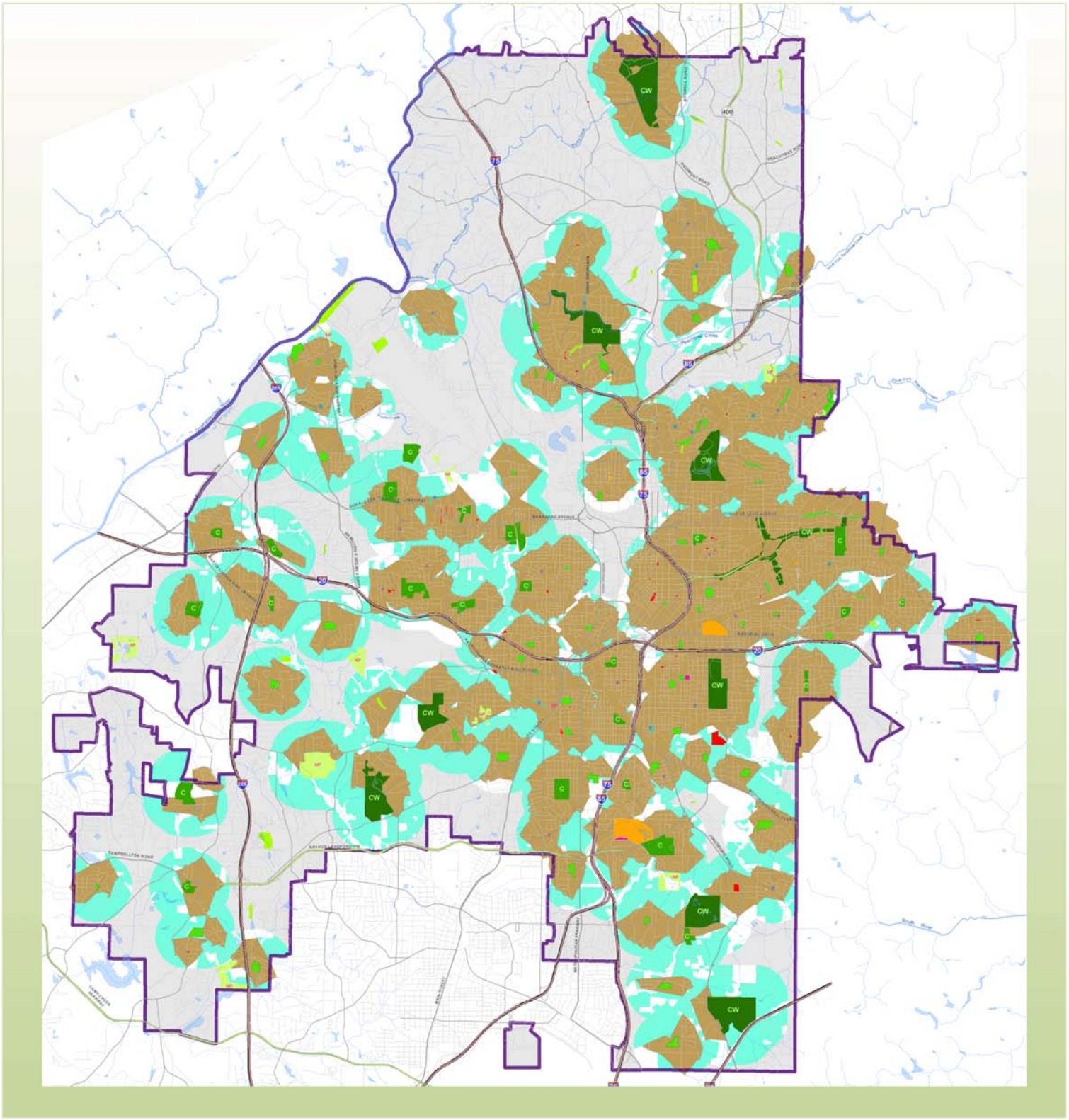
3.5.4 Special Facilities

Recommendations

- Develop a large events venue to accommodate citywide concerts, festivals, etc.
- Develop athletic complex facilities for youth baseball and softball; adult softball; and combined facilities for football, soccer, and track within or adjacent to the BeltLine. Develop athletic complexes in the programming of future BeltLine Parks.
- Consolidate smaller recreation centers in order to develop larger recreation centers to the recommended 30,000 square foot minimum size. Distribute recreation centers in underserved communities.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the potential locations of battlefield parks.

In earlier studies and the citizen survey conducted for Project Greenspace, residents expressed a strong need for a large events venue or special events site to accommodate concerts and festivals that are too large for existing park facilities. In addition to accommodating special events, this type of special facility would provide

Figure 3-6: Neighborhood Park Accessibility Analysis and Priorities



Neighborhood access to selected Atlanta parks (with developed facilities) was studied by Georgia Tech in 2005. This study derived areas accessible to parks by walking or driving 1/2 mile along the street network. These areas are displayed alongside 1/2 mile straight line radial buffer zones, and areas of the Atlanta more than 1/2 mile from developed parks.

Areas within 1/2 mile walking distance of developed City Parks

Inhabited areas within 1/2 mile straight line distance of developed City Parks

Areas more than 1/2 mile from developed City Parks

Atlanta City Parks Classifications

- CW Citywide Park
- C Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Center
- Block Park
- Beauty Spot
- Conservation Park
- NP Nature Preserve
- Special Facility

Data Source: 2008

for year-round recreational and leisure activities. Therefore, establishment of a large events venue capable of accommodating 50,000 to 100,000 people is recommended as the priority special facilities need. The planned redevelopment of Fort McPherson could accommodate such a facility (see Figure 3.7). The existing Lakewood Park is also a suitable location for a large events venue.

Anecdotal evidence suggests a strong need for athletic complexes in the City of Atlanta. Developed indoors or outdoors, and accommodating both youth and adult facilities, athletic complexes are large single or multi-sport facilities with numerous athletic fields or courts designed for league and tournament play. Attracting organized sports-specific user groups from throughout the entire Atlanta region and beyond, larger athletic complexes can promote tourism and economic development, while enhancing the economic vitality and identity of the entire City. Though athletic complexes can be developed for a wide variety of sports; Atlanta's priorities should focus on developing facilities for youth baseball and softball; adult softball; and combined facilities for football, soccer, and track. Priority sites for athletic complexes should be centrally located within the City's urban core to leverage visibility and access (Figure 3.7). Within this zone, the City should evaluate existing sites with three or more fields for expansion as sports complexes within or adjacent to the future BeltLine. Furthermore, athletic complexes should be considered when programming future BeltLine parks. Appendix A defines specific siting and design criteria for developing athletic complexes.

Similar to athletic complexes, anecdotal evidence suggests a need for recreation centers. Though 31 recreation centers exist within the City, these facilities are typically much smaller than the recommended 30,000 square foot minimum size. Only four centers exceed this minimum size: Adamsville (107,000 sf), Rosel Fann (75,000 sf), Ben Hill (35,808 sf), and Dunbar (40,000 sf). The City should study the feasibility of consolidating smaller facilities in order to develop larger recreation centers to the recommended size and to better distribute in underserved communities (see Figure 3.7). Due to the high cost of land and of developing these faculties in general, the City should partner with private recreational service providers such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, or colleges and universities as a priority. Strategies such as the provision of City owned land or buildings to private recreation providers or the direct sharing of land acquisition and facility development costs should be developed.

According to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, four of the 384 most important battles of the Civil War occurred within today's boundary of the City of Atlanta, including Peachtree Creek, Ezra Church, Utoy Creek, and the Battle of Atlanta. Covering more than 23 square miles of the City's land area, these battlefield sites represent a significant opportunity to develop special greenspace facilities that interpret the events that occurred there. In conjunction with the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, the City should conduct a feasibility analysis to determine the potential locations of battlefield parks. If feasible, these parks should be located adjacent to or within close proximity to the proposed greenway corridor network.

3.5.5 Squares

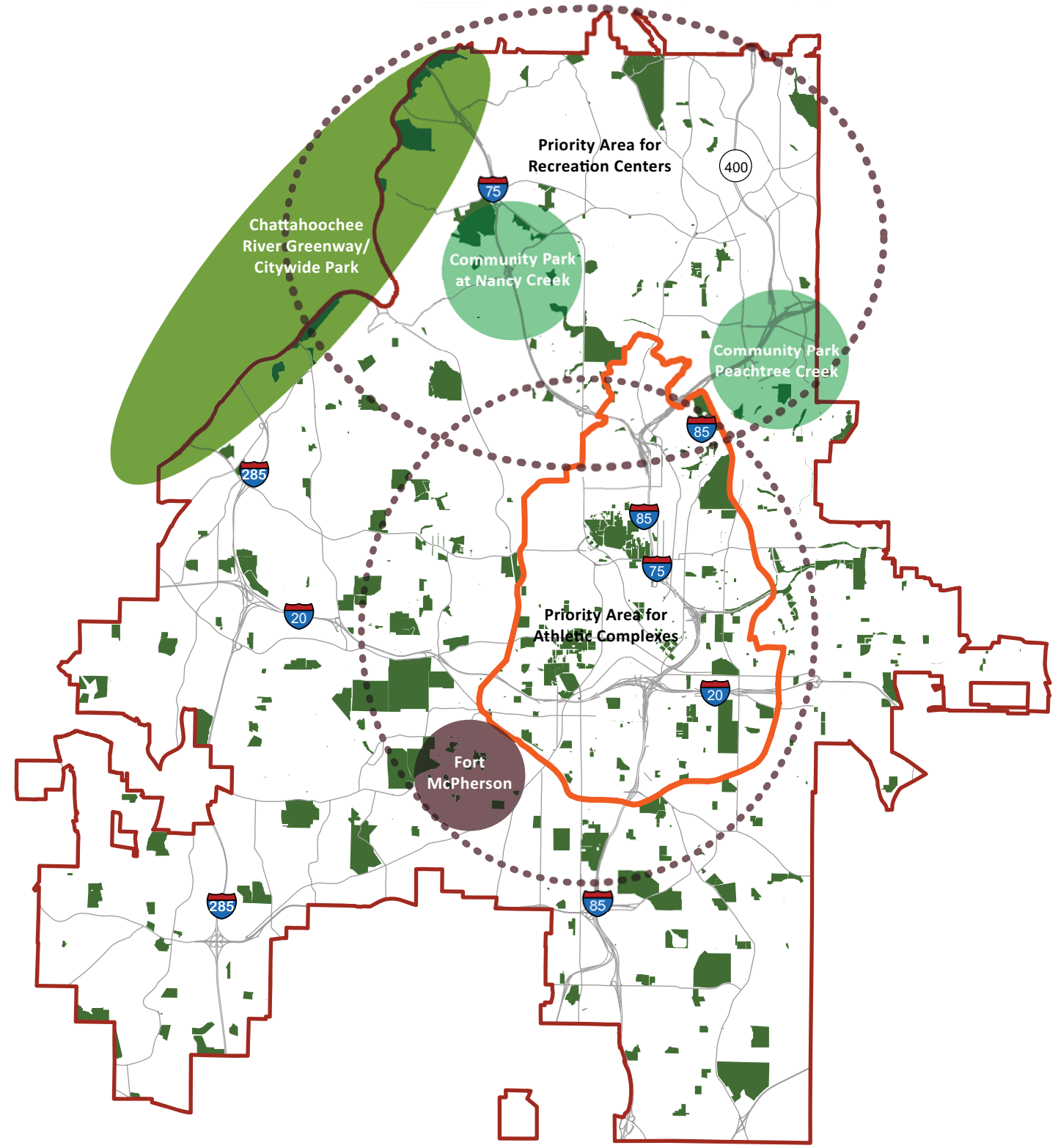
Recommendations:

- Develop and implement plans to establish squares as needed to serve densely developed areas of Atlanta, including Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead
- Develop a centrally located square in Buckhead as a priority

Development pressures and the scarcity of available land have made the provision of contiguous greenspace in the Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead areas extremely costly. However, if these areas are to be attractive places for people to live and work new greenspaces are needed. Specific studies to identify blocks within these districts that can be acquired as urban squares will be necessary. (One possibility is to develop the street level roof of underground parking structures as greenspace.) The Community Improvement Districts could manage these efforts; Central Atlanta Progress has developed an *Open Space Framework Plan* (part of the *Imagine Downtown Vision Plan*) that identifies proposed greenspace locations. At least two levels of funding will be required. First, "seed money" will be needed for advance planning and to secure options on the acquisition of identified priorities. Second, funds will be needed to secure and develop the squares. Squares can also be established through the redevelopment and development processes (e.g., through use of Tax Allocation Districts or off-site transfer of open space requirements). Real estate studies have repeatedly demonstrated that greenspaces generate significant dollar returns to nearby property owners, local tax rolls, and the economic climate of the community.

Buckhead in particular needs a centrally located square to provide a focus of civic identity. This square would fit with Buckhead's urban character, establish much needed open space, and provide a place for community gathering and special events. The character and size of this square could be similar to the plaza spaces of the Centennial Olympic Park in Downtown Atlanta (+/- 1 acre).

Figure 3-7: City Parks and Special Facility Priorities



City Parks and Special Facility Priorities

- Citywide Park Priorities
- Community Park Priorities
- Special Event Venue
- The BeltLine
- Existing Greenspace

Data Source: 2008

Data Source: City of Atlanta

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N

3.5.6 Streetscapes

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement streetscape classifications and design standards

Streetscapes provide a significant opportunity to achieve multiple greenspace objectives such as encouraging alternative transportation modes (walking, biking, and transit), expanding the City's tree canopy coverage, promoting sustainable stormwater management practices, and improving visual character. The City should develop and implement streetscape classifications and design standards to address these different objectives in an integrated manner. Implementation efforts should begin with selected streetscape projects to serve as demonstrations or models for more widespread application of the standards throughout Atlanta's street network. These efforts should address the long-term provision and maintenance of canopy street trees throughout Atlanta as a priority in conjunction with Trees Atlanta and other public and private sector partners.

3.5.7 Multi-Use Trails

Recommendations:

- Complete the BeltLine loop trail
- Continue to work with the PATH Foundation on the phased implementation of a citywide trail system

Completion of the BeltLine loop trail is the priority recommendation for multi-use trails. In addition, the City should continue to work with the PATH Foundation on the phased implementation of a citywide trail system. Figure 3.9 identifies recommended trail development priorities based on the greenspace system concept described in Section 2.2 (structured around the BeltLine and primary greenway corridors). This figure re-prioritizes the alignments developed in the city's master plan for trails (see Section 2.1.5 of the State of Atlanta's Greenspace Report). The biggest barrier to multi-use trail development is right-of-way acquisition. The City needs designated staff to coordinate these efforts.

3.5.8 Greenway Corridors

Recommendations:

- Prepare action plans to implement greenway corridors, focusing on Peachtree Creek, North Utoy Creek, South River, and the Chattahoochee River as priorities

Greenway corridors provide multiple benefits, including protecting environmentally sensitive areas, maintaining ecological functions, connecting parks and other greenspaces, and providing for recreation needs. Therefore, establishing the greenway corridors designated in the greenspace system concept (see Section 2.2) is an important priority. Several proposed greenways already have significant land assembled in the form of existing parks and Consent Decree greenway acquisitions. These include the Peachtree Creek, North Utoy Creek, and South River Greenways. Priority should be given to completing these greenways and ensuring connections to the BeltLine (Figure 3.7). As noted in Section 3.3.1 development of a greenway is also recommended along the Chattahoochee River in conjunction with establishment of a new citywide park. Staff and funding resources are needed both to coordinate outreach to property owners and developers and to target acquisition opportunities in a systematic fashion.

3.5.9 Complete Streets

Recommendations:

- Identify a network of roadway corridors to be retrofitted as multi-modal complete streets that provide connections in the greenspace system
- Consider Peachtree Corridor (north-south), Martin Luther King Drive/Decatur Street/Dekalb Avenue (east-west), and *Connect Atlanta Plan* complete street projects as priorities

In addition to the priority projects identified by the *Connect Atlanta Plan* (see Section 4.4.4), two prime candidates for future consideration are the Peachtree Corridor (north-south connector) and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive/Decatur Street/Dekalb Avenue (east-west connector) (Figure 3.9). The Peachtree Corridor connects Buckhead, Midtown, Downtown, and the BeltLine, terminating at the Fort McPherson redevelopment (proposed to incorporate a major greenspace/special events component). The March 2007 Peachtree Corridor Task Force report recommends an integrated transportation plan for the length of the corridor that provides for streetcar, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular movement. If developed as complete streets in coordination with the Peachtree improvements, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive/Decatur Street/Dekalb Avenue would provide a continuous east-west corridor connecting resources such as Adamsville Recreation Center, Lionel Hampton Trail, Westview Cemetery, Mozley Park, the BeltLine, the Georgia Dome, Woodruff Park, Georgia State University, and several MARTA rail stations.

Figure 3-8: Greenway Corridor Priorities

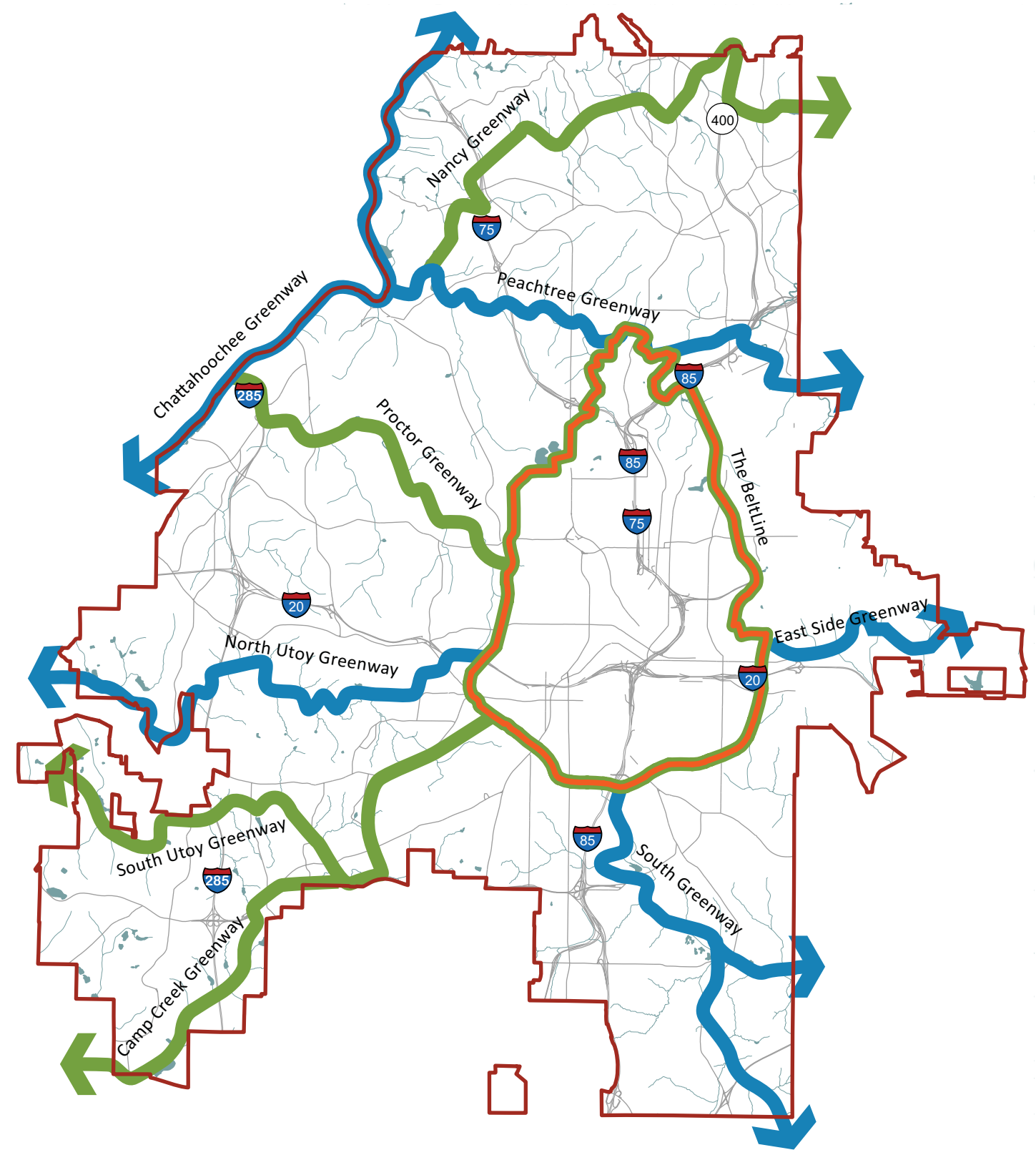
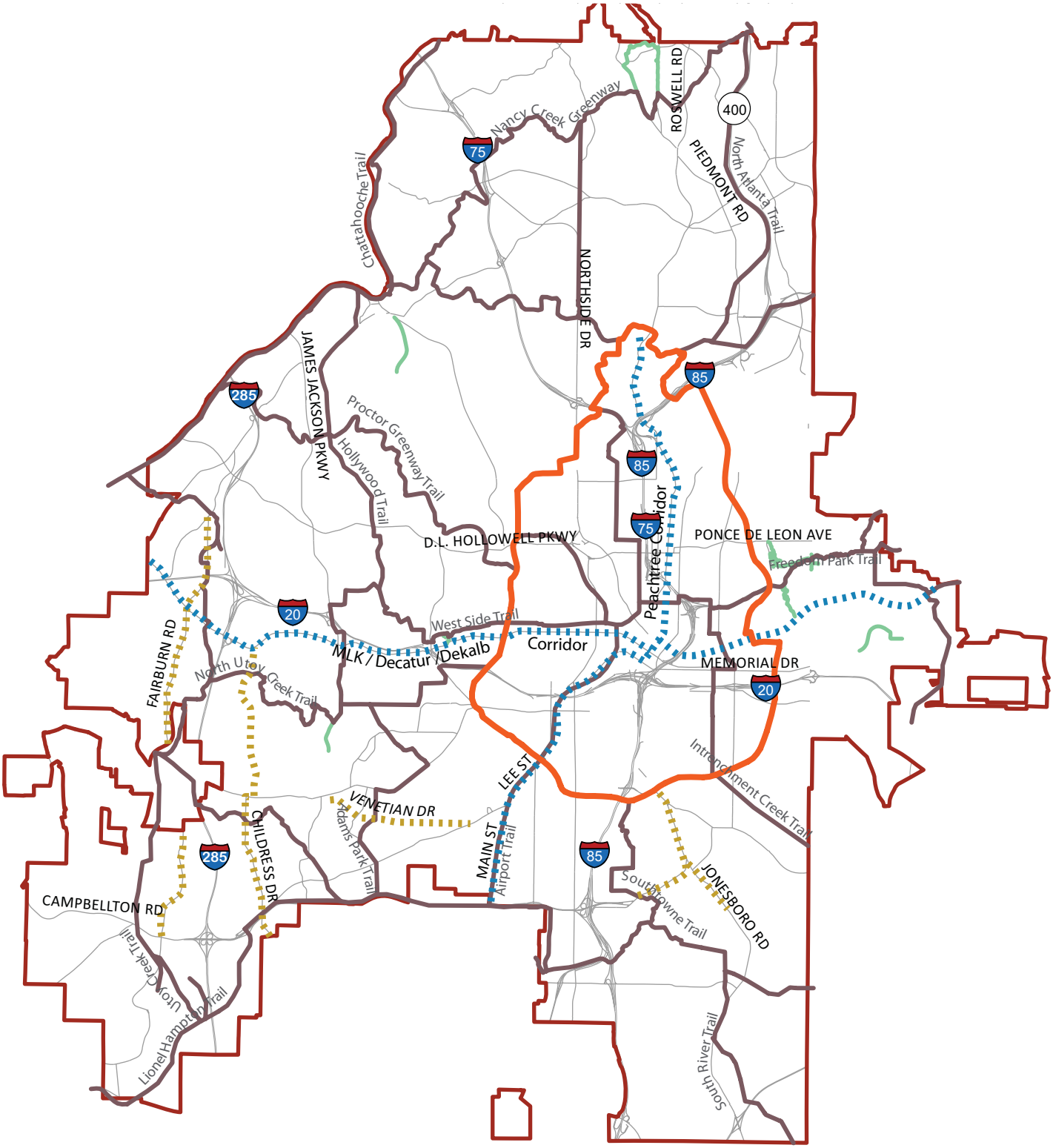


Figure 3-9: Multi-use Trails and Complete Street Priorities



Multi-use Trails
- Proposed Multi-use Trail Priorities
- Existing Multi-use Trails
- The BeltLine

Complete Streets
- *Project Greenspace* Complete Street Priorities
- *Connect Atlanta Plan* Complete Street Priorities (South and West Atlanta)

Data Source: 2008
Data Source: City of Atlanta

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

N

4. MANAGE THE GREENSPACE SYSTEM

Achieving the vision of a world-class greenspace system depends not only on growing the system to meet citizens' needs, as described in Chapter 3, but also on managing existing and new greenspaces to achieve consistent standards of excellence. Greenspace management covers a broad spectrum of issues, including:

- Meeting citizens' needs for parks and recreation
- Addressing maintenance and security
- Preserving and restoring natural and cultural resources
- Promoting sustainable stormwater management
- Reinforcing Atlanta's tree canopy
- Adhering to high standards of quality in the planning, design, and management of parks and other components of the greenspace system

> Vision: To enhance the quality of life for all through nationally acclaimed excellence in Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs.
>
> Mission: To provide all citizens with the highest quality parks, facilities, recreational programs, and cultural experiences.
> (City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Strategic Plan, November 2005)

These issues begin with management of the City's park system by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA). DPRCA has a *Strategic Plan* in place that it is following to improve the quality of the parks and recreational facilities available to citizens, assisted by an increased annual budget and the $105 million Opportunity Bond for Parks and Greenspace passed in 2005. However, DPRCA's progress has been threatened by subsequent budget cutbacks. Sections 4.1 to 4.3 identify strategies for the provision of recreational facilities and programs, park maintenance, and security that build on the progress made by DPRCA. Section 4.4 addresses management of greenspace resources more broadly, including strategies for natural resources, stormwater management, the City's tree canopy, and historic and cultural resources. Other city departments, such as Public Works and the Department of Watershed Management, as well as other public and private organizations and landowners that manage greenspace within the City, are involved in these issues. Section 4.5 addresses planning and design excellence as an underlying principle for the greenspace system and outlines standards for different types of greenspace.

The City also needs to improve capacity and coordination related to management of city-owned greenspaces and conservation easements held by the City. This need is addressed in Section 5.1 (Capacity Building – City Government).

4.1 RECREATION

Providing recreational facilities and programs for citizens is the primary mission of DPRCA and a core function of the greenspace system. Section 4.1.1 defines level of service standards for key types of recreational facilities and recommends strategies to achieve the standards over time. Section 4.1.2 addresses the provision of recreational programs. The strategies for both facilities and programs include partnerships with other public and private recreational providers to meet citizens' needs. The key for the City is to define and focus on the core facilities and programs it will provide.

4.1.1 Recreational Facilities

Strategy: Establish level of service standards to guide the overall provision of recreational facilities to meet the needs of Atlanta's citizens.

Level of service standards need to be established to guide long-range planning for the provision of selected recreational facilities by the City and other public and private providers. Example level of service standards were developed through analysis of the following factors:

- The current provision of selected park and recreational facilities by peer cities in comparison to Atlanta
- Park and recreational facility standards used by other communities
- Park and recreational facility standards published by leading national organizations engaged in open space resource issues
- A statistically valid survey of citizens' expressed needs for park and recreation facilities

The example standards listed in Figure 4.1 are tailored to the City of Atlanta based on a review of peer cities and national standards. They are fully documented in the Needs Assessment Report, published separately for Project Greenspace.

Recommendations regarding the provision of specific facilities Atlanta needs to develop level of service standards for are provided below. Recommended facilities could be implemented in partnership with other public or private sector providers (see discussion below). The City would need to conduct a thorough feasibility analysis to identify suitable sites and economic viability before committing to specific site locations.

- **Walking/Biking Trails**: The City should continue to work with the PATH Foundation to implement the priority network of trails identified in Figure 3.9. The network should include hard-surfaced, multi-use paths to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. The network should encompass trail systems within parks, trails along future greenways, and connections to streets, sidewalks, and on-street bike lanes.

- **Park Shelters and Picnic Areas**: A standard hierarchy of picnic pavilions (i.e., small to large) that accommodate small family gatherings to large corporate picnicking events should be established. New picnic pavilions should be consolidated or created in appropriate parks consistent with this hierarchy. Large picnic pavilions should be developed in parks near or adjacent to hotel districts to accommodate picnicking events for corporations and conventions.
- **Outdoor Swimming Pools/Spray Grounds**: Spray grounds should be provided at strategic locations to offset the perceived need for outdoor swimming pools.
- **Indoor Swimming Pools:** These facilities should be provided at a regional level based on defined service areas. Feasibility analyses should be conducted for all proposed indoor swimming pool facilities and citizen groups engaged in the process. Partnerships with local YMCA's and Boys and Girls Clubs can help meet needs for indoor swimming pools.
- **Youth/Teen Football Fields**: A football athletic complex should be established to accommodate league play for adults and youth.
- **Playgrounds:** "Boundless" playgrounds should be developed in citywide parks to provide adequate facilities for children with disabilities.
- **Outdoor Basketball Courts**: A basketball athletic complex should be provided to accommodate league play. Covered pavilions should be provided for smaller court facilities where possible.
- **Off-Leash Dog Parks:** Suitable locations for off-leash dog parks should be identified within the greenspace system. Off-leash dog park sites should be strategically located in relation to potential user groups, including denser residential developments that lack private yard space. Irregular or marginal sites may be appropriate for off-leash areas. Off-leash dog parks must be divided into large and small dog areas, be handicapped accessible, and conducive to regular maintenance and trash pick-up.
- **Baseball/Softball Fields**: A baseball/softball athletic complex should be established to accommodate tournament or league play for adults and youth. This complex should be located as close to the urban core as possible to accommodate leagues that organize after business hours.
- **Soccer Fields**: A soccer athletic complex should be established to accommodate tournament or league play for adults and youth.
- **Outdoor Tennis Courts**: Additional courts should be provided or courts relocated from neighborhoods with an identified surplus to serve underserved communities in the northwestern part of the City. A tennis athletic complex is needed to accommodate tennis tournaments.
- **Special Events/Festival Site**: A large events venue capable of accommodating 50,000 to 100,000 people should be established within the Fort McPherson redevelopment or on another suitable site (see Section 3.3).

Figure 4.1 Example of Level of Service Standards

Facility	Example Standard
Walking/Biking Trails	One linear mile per 3,000 residents
Playgrounds	One site per 4,000 residents
Outdoor Basketball Courts	One court per 7,500 residents
Off-Leash Dog Parks	One site per 50,000 residents (min. 2 acre site)
Tennis Courts	One center per 100,000 residents
Special Events/Festival Site	50-acre (min.) site

Note: Level of Service standards need to be established for the following facilities: soccer fields, skate parks, lacrosse fields, volleyball courts, picnic pavilions, outdoor pools, nanatoriums, spray grounds, softball/baseball fields, recreation centers, cultural centers, golf courses, running tracks, etc.

Sources: standards are based on a review of peer cities and national NRPA and ULI standards. They are intended as guides in developing future level of service standards for planning parks and recreational facilities by the City and other recreational providers.

Strategy: Develop and implement a phased program to meet the identified recreational facility needs over time.

Recommendations:

- Develop and maintain an accurate, complete, and up-to-date inventory of recreational facilities provided by the DPRCA and other public and private sector entities
- Using the level of service standards as a guide, conduct a distribution and gap analysis of existing facilities to identify unmet community and neighborhood-level needs
- Develop and implement a program to address the identified needs for recreational facilities over time, including:
  - » Core recreational facilities to be provided by the City
  - » Partnerships with other recreational providers to meet parts of the identified needs
- Secure sustainable funding to support development of core recreational facilities to be provided by the City
- Conduct market analyses and feasibility studies for new facilities and programs

A complete inventory of recreational facilities provided by the City and other recreation service providers in Atlanta is not currently available. Developing and maintaining such an inventory would allow the DPRCA to identify the markets it serves and those served by other providers, providing a basis for eliminating duplication and identifying where gaps exist. With the inventory in place, the City can work towards implementing the level of service standards for recreation facilities identified above in phases over a period of ten or more years. A phased program to meet community needs for recreation facilities and to address gaps will include two major components:

1). The DPRCA should continue to identify core recreation facilities and how they will be developed around core programs, both to support recreation program needs and to identify needed increases in facility capacity. This approach should address programs on a system-wide rather than a site-specific basis.

2). The DPRCA should establish a task force with key recreational providers in the City, such as Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta Housing Authority, Boys and Girls Clubs, Police Athletic League, YMCA's, fitness centers, colleges and universities, and religious organizations. The task force should meet regularly (e.g., on a quarterly basis) to develop inventories and joint service provision strategies. In this way, the recreation facility and recreation program needs of residents can be met without unnecessary duplication of services.

Partnerships to address the types of facilities identified in the level of service standards begin with recognizing the current levels of commitment of each service provider. The City should review the Project Greenspace recommendations with the providers and seek support for either increasing their level of contribution to help meet identified gaps in recreational facilities and programs or continuing their current contributions as Atlanta's population grows. Once contribution levels are agreed to, partnership agreements can be developed with the service providers to establish accountability and create trust. An example could be contributions by Atlanta Public Schools to providing outdoor basketball courts and indoor aquatic facilities since they are a major user of these facilities. Suitable school lands could also be designated as "school park" sites to allow for greater use by residents and support the City's greenspace goals. Similarly, YMCA's, colleges and universities, and churches often have land holdings that could be used for outdoor facilities such as soccer and baseball fields, which would help provide for community needs while supporting the needs of their members.

Sustainable funding will be key to the City's ability to develop the core recreational facilities. A combination of funding sources could be used, such as a bond issue, park impact fees, a park improvement district, dedicated sales tax, etc. Having dedicated funding sources for recreational facility development in place will allow DPRCA to address the facility needs in coordination with other actions to implement Project Greenspace, including land acquisition and renovation of existing parks. Market studies and cost/benefit analyses should be conducted to test the feasibility of proposed major investments. Funding is addressed more fully in Section 5.3 of the plan.

4.1.2 Recreational Programs

Strategy: Develop and implement a recreation program management plan to meet citizens' needs for recreation programs over time.

Recommendations:

- Maintain a citywide inventory of recreational programs offered by the DPRCA and partner agencies
- Apply standards for DPRCA's core recreational programs and their supporting facilities consistently across the system
- Secure sustainable funding to support the core recreational programs provided by the City

A number of programs are provided within Atlanta's park and recreation system, either by DPRCA or in some cases by partner agencies. The DPRCA *Strategic Plan* identifies after school, athletics, aquatics, Camp Best Friends, teens, therapeutics, and seniors as its core programs and establishes participation targets for these programs. Examples of programs that could be considered non-core programs include special events, facility rentals, cooking, fitness/wellness, arts and crafts, dance, and outdoor adventure/environmental education.

The key to making any recreational program system successful is to integrate core programs with core facilities on a system-wide basis, thus assuring that the facilities support the identified core programs. At present, many of DPRCA's recreational facilities provide insufficient support for defined core programs. In addition, they sometimes operate as sites for programs of other recreation providers with limited control by the City or for programs that are provided on a site-specific basis rather than in relation to system-wide goals. Standards have been developed for these programs and for the facilities that support them. These standards can be applied consistently across all areas of the City, for example:

- Appropriate instructor to participant ratios
- Appropriate facility space standards to accommodate programs
- Appropriate program lengths based on the attention span of the users
- Adequate explanation and consistent application of program policies to participants, including pricing of services in relation to true costs

Consistently applying standards for core recreational programs will allow DPRCA to assess facility and staff capacity and develop strategies to address deficiencies. These strategies can include user fees, increased resource commitments by the City, and enhanced partnerships with other providers. Existing partnership agreements should be evaluated in terms of costs, benefits, and the degree of subsidy provided by the City. Opportunities should be sought to secure agreements with other providers who currently make informal use of park facilities.

Sustainable funding sources to support the costs of operating core recreational programs should be developed in coordination with funding for core recreational facilities. A variety of sources can be used, including user fees and partnership agreements that balance social objectives with consideration of the true costs of providing services.

Currently DPRCA tracks the true costs (both direct and indirect) of recreational services. While it is not suggested that user fees should reflect the full cost of services provided, steps can be taken to establish a more objective foundation for the pricing of recreational facilities and programs consistent with the mission to meet the recreational needs of Atlanta's citizens.

Strategy: Improve the administrative and management capabilities of DPRCA to provide recreational programs to meet citizens' needs.

Recommendations

- Establish a citywide vision for recreational programs and facilities
    - » Establish training programs designed to develop an understanding of overall goals and the tasks required to achieve them
    - » Establish performance measures to track progress
- Establish business plans for core programs and facilities that incorporate efficiency and outcome based performance measures
- Improve tracking of programs and supporting facilities
    - » Collect program and facility data consistently and track results
    - » Coordinate and integrate data with human resource and marketing systems to more effectively manage key issues (e.g., maintenance standards and customer satisfaction measures)
    - » Determine the true cost of services of all programs, including direct and indirect costs
    - » Track facility program usage in relation to capacity
    - » Tie to marketing, promotional, and communication efforts and track results
- Consider reorganizing the Recreation Division to improve effectiveness of facility and program management, including:
    - » Establishment of Facility Managers and Core Program Managers
    - » Zone management of recreation services coordinated with park maintenance zones to maximize staff resources and promote more uniform and cohesive service delivery
- Train staff on all business and programming elements of the services they provide

The 2005 DPRCA *Strategic Plan* sets an overall vision and mission for the delivery of recreational programs and services. DPRCA as a whole should build on the foundation established by the *Strategic Plan* by moving towards more of a business (as opposed to a social) management model. A social management model is heavily subsidized to achieve the organization's vision and mission with limited consideration of other factors (e.g., cost) while a business management model is designed to achieve the vision and mission based on defined outcomes and performance standards. A model should be developed to achieve set levels of program productivity and accountability while addressing key issues such as program/facility standards and capacity; effective pricing of services based on costs to provide them, the level of exclusivity a user receives compared to a general taxpayer, ability to pay, etc.; and limits on entitlement of users and staff. With the overall vision and performance measures in place, "business plans" can be established for core programs and facilities to be implemented by individual managers.

Current measures of program performance are based on the number of participants rather than on efficiency and outcomes such as customer satisfaction. Outcome-based measures would help demonstrate the costs/benefits of providing the program or service and provide a basis for evaluating the performance of facility and program managers. Each recreation facility has a certain level of capacity tied to the spaces it contains that are utilized for programs. The Department does not track capacity in relation to use to demonstrate the level of productivity that the facilities are providing to the community.

The DPRCA should consider reorganizing the Recreation Division, which has direct responsibility for facilities and programs, to support improved productivity and accountability. This reorganization could include establishment of Facility Manager and Core Program Managers with more of a system-wide than an individual facility focus. Aquatic program specialists, for example, could focus on increasing the level of aquatic programming, both improving the recreational opportunities available to residents and generating increased revenues. The reorganization could be coordinated with the existing park maintenance districts to improve overall service delivery. For example, program staff could work closely with district maintenance staff from that region in implementing ballfield maintenance standards that support the level of play for leagues and tournaments.

4.2 MAINTENANCE

Strategy: Improve the maintenance of city parks to consistently achieve a Mode II level of maintenance as defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Recommendations

- Address aging park infrastructure to support an improved recreation experience
  - » Develop a comprehensive inventory and database of existing facility and infrastructure conditions
  - » Use the inventory to develop and implement a phased program of repairs and renovations to facilities and infrastructure based on condition assessment and lifecycle analysis
  - » Establish consistent design standards for park components (facilities, landscaping, etc.) to guide infrastructure improvements
- Continue to improve ongoing maintenance and management
  - » Continue to define and follow standards for all aspects of facility and landscape maintenance
  - » Maintain access at all facilities (follow code standards, reduce broken pavement, and maintain handicapped ramps)
  - » Integrate management practices for natural resources into maintenance activities as defined by park resource management plans
  - » Provide ongoing training for DPRCA employees in maintenance standards and practices
  - » Enhance the maintenance management work order system integrating lifecycle maintenance with routine maintenance
  - » Implement a regional maintenance structure based on strategically located maintenance facilities to decrease drive times and otherwise increase efficiency
  - » Consider putting managers in place for large community and citywide parks to promote more cohesive and coordinated management
- Establish the true costs of all maintenance tasks and functions
- Secure sustainable funding to support the required levels of infrastructure improvements and maintenance (see Section 5.3)
- Partner with nonprofit organizations, citizens, and businesses to help meet the maintenance needs of specific parks and greenspaces

Well-maintained parks are critical to the quality of the user experience, a sense of security, and to the overall

image of Atlanta's park system. DPRCA has made great strides in improving maintenance practices in the City's parks over the last several years. The 2005 *Strategic Plan* identifies maintenance standards for park landscapes that have been adhered to by staff with demonstrable results. Subsequently, the DPRCA developed additional standards covering various types of amenities, facilities, and infrastructure in addition to landscape elements. A quality assurance program with regular inspections is being established to implement the standards.

As an overall goal, the DPRCA should strive to consistently achieve at least a Mode II level of maintenance for developed (maintained) portions of the park system as defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA's maintenance modes focus on frequency of managing tasks such as mowing, trimming, trash pick up, graffiti removal, signage management, and cleaning of restrooms and hard surfaces. Mode II is typically associated with well developed park areas with reasonably high visitation. Examples of Mode II standards include mowing of maintained lawn areas every seven days; litter control once a day and twice a day on weekends; hard services cleaned daily around picnic areas, restrooms, and play areas; and restrooms cleaned daily during the week and twice to three times a day during weekends depending on the use of the site.

Improving aging park infrastructure such as restrooms, park shelters, trails, pavement, playgrounds, courts, and ball fields is a key to achieving high levels of maintenance. Addressing these deferred maintenance needs will enhance the presentation and quality of experiences available to users and reduce costs associated with repairing deteriorated facilities. The DPRCA used the Opportunity Bond for Parks and Greenspace to make infrastructure improvements to parks throughout the City. The database of park facilities and infrastructure should be expanded to comprehensively document facility condition and lifecycle status, thus providing a systematic basis for continuing this improvement program and projecting needed repairs and improvements over time. Consistent design standards for park components such as facilities, landscaping, accessibility, trails, and vehicular circulation and trails are needed to guide improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure and development of new ones (see Section 4.5).

Ongoing (routine) maintenance can build on the recent strides made by DPRCA. Maintenance standards for facilities (e.g., custodial standards) should continue to be defined and followed similar to what has been done for park landscapes. Appropriate maintenance practices should also be defined for natural areas within the parks based on resource management plans developed for each park. All maintenance personnel should be trained in the standards and practices.

As part of an initiative utilizing increased funding for parks maintenance allocated by the City, DPRCA selected five "pilot parks" to demonstrate to the community and staff what the standards are intended to accomplish. These parks are Adams, Chastain, Freedom, Grant, and Oakland Cemetery. Other existing parks can be scheduled for improvement over time until all have achieved the standards.

Enhanced use of the work order system would result in more efficient scheduling of maintenance activities. Tied to the facility and infrastructure database, this system should track the lifecycles of all amenities (including trees) and integrate preventive maintenance and replacement schedules. The information should be

maintained in GIS format and updated yearly to assist in budgeting infrastructure maintenance costs. Regional maintenance facilities strategically located to reduce drive times for maintenance staff would also increase efficiency and reduce maintenance costs on a per unit basis. The DPRCA has attempted to move in this direction but has not had sufficient resources to secure the necessary land and facilities. Project Greenspace provides the opportunity to accommodate regional maintenance facilities in the future expansion and development of the greenspace system. Another factor that reduces efficiency and increases maintenance costs is the large number of existing parks and facilities that are undersized. Planning for the future should seek to consolidate undersized parks, greenspaces, and facilities where possible to meet park and facility classification standards and reduce the need to maintain isolated sites. Partnerships should be pursued with citizens' groups and businesses to provide for the maintenance of smaller sites that are difficult for DPRCA to maintain but meet local needs (see below). Conversely, a single manager of large community and citywide parks would promote more effective and cohesive management of all park activities (maintenance, programs, events, etc.) within the park. This system is in place for Chastain and Piedmont Parks through the nonprofit conservancies that manage these parks but not for parks managed by DPRCA.

Sufficient staff resources and sustainable funding are needed to support both maintenance of parks and recreational facilities to the established standards and facility/infrastructure improvements to address deferred maintenance. A maintenance funding program should incorporate tracking of the true (direct and indirect) costs of park maintenance activities. In addition to providing a basis for realistic projections of maintenance costs for budgeting purposes (e.g., per acre costs to operate new parks), this will enable DPRCA to estimate the costs of work activities more accurately and price services provided to special interest groups on a more objective basis.

A variety of sources in addition to general funds can be used to fund maintenance activities, for example:

- Bond proceeds (for improvements to address deferred maintenance)
- Dedicated funding sources such as a portion of the sales tax or a real estate transfer fee
- Park maintenance districts (see Section 5.3)

One or more of these sources could be used to support a "parks maintenance trust fund" specifically dedicated for this purpose.

Partnerships with nonprofit organizations, citizens groups, and businesses can make significant contributions to meeting park maintenance needs. DPRCA currently has partnership agreements in place with a variety of entities. Examples include Park Pride; Chastain, Freedom, Grant, and Piedmont Park Conservancies; the Historic Oakland Cemetery Foundation; universities; "friends" groups; and businesses that have "adopted" small parks. Additional partnerships should be developed with citizen groups and businesses, particularly to address maintenance of smaller parks which are more difficult for DPRCA to maintain. As an example, businesses can establish maintenance endowments for "garden spots" and in turn be acknowledged through signage. Written

agreements should be executed to specify outcomes to be achieved by the partners and the City, tied to the system-wide maintenance standards. These agreements should be monitored for effectiveness. Neighborhood and local business involvement in park maintenance can also be promoted through activities such as annual cleanups, "fix up" and painting days, etc.

4.3 SECURITY

Strategy: Ensure the safety and security of Atlanta's parks and greenspaces.

Recommendations:

- Coordinate with the Atlanta Police to track crime incidents and trends in the City's parks and identify security "hot spots" for targeted action
- Work with Atlanta Police to establish a prevalent security presence in the parks, focusing on the identified hot spots
- Dedicate a number or percentage of all members of new Atlanta Police Department classes to parks
- Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to the design and use of parks and greenspaces
- Design and program sites to promote continual activity
- Adhere to high standards of maintenance and promptly address property deterioration and vandalism
- Involve neighborhood groups in park safety and security

Safety and security in Atlanta's parks are an issue of concern for residents. DPRCA is addressing this issue through the installation of improved security and sports lighting and (under a pilot program with the Atlanta Police Department) surveillance cameras in selected parks. DPRCA should continue to work with the Police to identify crime and vandalism "hot spots" on which to focus deterrents such as more frequent patrols, lighting, and security cameras.

Establishment of a Park Ranger Program has been discussed for many years and should be pursued as a joint program with the Atlanta Police. Numerous cities across the country have established successful park ranger programs that could be looked to as models; examples include Boston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and New York City. Park rangers provide a uniformed presence in the parks, assist the public, enforce park rules, and support law enforcement agencies. In some jurisdictions they also lead interpretive programs. Park rangers can significantly enhance safety and security in locations such as heavily used park areas, trails, and identified hot spots.

Best Practices

Indianapolis, IN Park Ranger Program

The Indianapolis Park Ranger Program was established by Indy Parks in partnership with the Sheriffs Department. Since its inception crime and vandalism have decreased substantially in the parks, visitation has grown, and neighborhood support has increased through an allied Park Crimewatch Program. The Park Ranger Program has also resulted in significant savings on park maintenance. Currently the City has 22 full-time and additional part-time park rangers actively patrolling properties throughout the park system. http://www.indygov.org/eGov/City/DPR/Admin/Rangers/home.htm

The ways in which parks and greenspaces are designed, programmed, and maintained can greatly enhance safety and security. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is an multidisciplinary approach to designing the physical environment that has proven to be effective in helping to deter criminal behavior. Key CPTED principles include:

- **Natural Surveillance:** Increase visibility and the ability of neighbors to observe the space (e.g., a park that fronts on a street with homes on the other side rather than back yards).
- **Territorial Reinforcement:** Define public and private spaces to create a sense of ownership.
- **Natural Access Control:** Limit opportunity for crime through the selective placement of entrances and exits, lighting, and landscaping to limit access or control flow.

Active programming involving a variety of user groups is another effective way to deter crime in greenspaces. Examples include recreational sites with multiple programs that appeal to a variety of interests and age groups and urban plazas offering food services, varied activities, and strong relationships to surrounding retail uses. High levels of ongoing maintenance and prompt action to address deterioration and vandalism (e.g., a "Graffiti Busters" program) are important to convey a sense of ownership and control. Finally, local groups can make a key contribution to safety and security through programs such as "eyes on the park" and neighborhood crime watch. Outreach and communications involving DPRCA staff, Atlanta Police, and neighborhood groups should be ongoing to promote safety and security. Similar to CPTED, "Eyes on the park"/crime watch type programs are most effective for parks that are visible and accessible from nearby homes and businesses. Generally these programs include:

- **Safe and Clean:** volunteers interested in "adopting" a park or other greenspace may be involved in routine maintenance, gardening, clean-ups, in addition to monitoring and reporting suspicious activity and illegal dumping to the APD.

- **Volunteer Activities:** working together the volunteer group can help to create a sense of ownership and community around the park. Many neighborhood watch type groups or programs hold regular activities (e.g., picnics, fund-raisers, sports events) to increase the community presence and social activity that occurs at the park.

Additional standards to improve security and neighborhood stability in relation to greenspaces are provided in Section 4.5.1.

4.4 NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Atlanta contains a rich diversity of natural, cultural, and historic resources that make vital contributions to the City's environmental quality, quality of life, and community identity. Natural resources include environmentally sensitive lands such as rivers and streams, floodplains and wetlands, forested areas, and steep slopes, as well as the citywide tree canopy. Cultural and historic resources include archeological sites, historic structures, sites of historic events, and historic transportation corridors. Examples include Civil War battle sites, Cherokee Indian sites, sites of frontier developments, and specific sites such as the MLK, Jr. National Historic Site and Margaret Mitchell House. Scenic vistas are another resource that relates to both natural and cultural features. Natural and cultural resources have been extensively altered over time by the City's development and related impacts such as urban stormwater runoff and invasive plant species. Many of the best remaining examples exist within parks and dedicated greenspaces and there is great potential to further integrate natural and cultural resources into the citywide greenspace system.

This section addresses the management of natural and cultural resources within the greenspace system. It should also be noted that the presence of significant natural and cultural resources is a key measure to be used in evaluating lands for addition to the greenspace system. Specific criteria to be used in prioritizing land for acquisition are provided in Section 3.4.1 and again in Section 4.5 below (Greenspace Site Selection Standards).

4.4.1 Natural Resources

Strategy: Preserve natural resources, restore native habitats, and control invasive species within city parks and other greenspaces throughout Atlanta.

Recommendations:

- Establish guidelines for the management of parks and greenspaces to protect and restore natural values and functions
- Inventory and evaluate natural resource conditions on all greenspace acquisitions, including environmentally sensitive features, plant communities, habitat quality, degree of disturbance, presence of invasive species, etc.
- Develop resource management plans for parks and other greenspaces with significant natural resources
- Train park and greenspace management and maintenance personnel in the use of the guidelines
- Encourage conservation organizations and volunteer groups to adopt natural areas and assist in natural habitat restoration
- Increase citizen awareness of natural resource issues through environmental education and interpretation in parks and greenspaces

City parks and other existing greenspaces contain some of Atlanta's best remaining natural resource areas. In addition, Project Greenspace calls for the acquisition of additional natural resource lands as part of "growing" the City's greenspace system. Guidelines for managing natural resources within existing and new greenspaces should be developed and integrated with the DPRCA's overall maintenance standards and practices (see Section 4.2), for example:

- Use of native vegetation
- Invasive species (e.g., Kudzo) abatement on city-owned properties
- Erosion and sedimentation control certification for DPRCA staff
- Maintenance or establishment of vegetated buffers along watercourses
- Adjustments to mowing and trimming regimes as appropriate to different habitat types
- Protocols for invasive species control
- Low-impact construction practices for all infrastructure projects (including those that must be located within natural resource areas)

Resource management plans should be developed to apply and refine the guidelines on a site-specific basis. These plans should inventory existing natural resource areas and their condition, designate resource conservation areas as special use zones within the context of an overall park master plan (see Section 4.5), and specify actions to preserve, restore, and maintain resource values and functions. The management plans should identify the degree of public use appropriate for identified natural resource areas, including minimal access to the most fragile ecosystems. The plans should also specify appropriate maintenance levels ranging from the most intensive maintenance in heavily used areas, lesser amounts of maintenance in moderately used areas, and maintenance practices that sustain and restore natural resources in designated resource conservation areas. Rehabilitation of degraded resource areas should be a priority through actions such as stream bank stabilization, control of erosion and stormwater runoff, removal of invasive plant species, and habitat enhancement plantings.

DPRCA management and maintenance personnel should receive training to become conversant with the resource management plans and guidelines (e.g., Erosion and Sedimentation Control certification). This training should extend to other agency personnel (e.g., Public Works) involved in projects affecting natural resources. Conservation organizations with specific expertise and volunteer groups can also play a role in helping to maintain natural resources within parks and greenspaces, both on an ongoing basis ("adopt-a-natural-area") and through specific projects to remove invasive species or restore a natural habitat area. Partnerships with appropriate conservation organizations could also be used for outreach to private landowners on natural resource best management practices.

Natural resource protection and restoration efforts should be accompanied by environmental education and interpretation wherever possible. Cultivating environmental awareness and concern for natural systems in citizens is one of the strongest tools available to promote natural resource conservation.

Additional guidance regarding natural resource management is provided in Section 4.5 (Greenspace Planning and Design) below.

4.4.2 Stormwater Management

Strategy: Promote natural, multi-functional stormwater management solutions.

Recommendations

- Identify greenspace opportunities to achieve multiple objectives such as flood control, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, passive recreation, and connectivity
- Utilize the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Post Development Management Ordinances to promote natural stormwater solutions (e.g., low-impact detention within commonly-owned lands)

Best Practices

Volunteer Stewards Program, King County, WA

The Surface Water Management Fee is collected from residential ($102 annual flat rate) and commercial properties in King County and used to pay for stormwater management services, including county "stewards" who work with landowners to protect water and land resources. The county encourages property owners to undertake stormwater control projects through a variety of incentives. http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/surface-water-mgt-fee

Denver, CO Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD)

The UDFCD was established by state legislation to assist municipalities in the metropolitan Denver area with multi-jurisdictional and flood control problems. The enabling legislation mandates UDFCD to incorporation recreation into flood control projects wherever possible. Since the early 1970s, UDFCD drainage-way projects have included access routes that double as private trails. http://www.udfcd.org

Eugene, OR Stormwater Basin Master Plans

Eugene's Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (CSWMP) forms the local policy framework for addressing both federal mandates under the Clean Water Act and community values such as protection of wetlands and other natural resources that provide important stormwater functions. The CSWMP is divided into Stormwater Basin Master Plans, which define strategies to fulfill the multiple objectives defined in the CSWMP for each of eight major watersheds within the City. http://www.eugene-or.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=670&PageID=0&cached=true&mode=2&userID=2

- Consider use of a dedicated percentage of a Stormwater Utility Fee or Surface Water Management Fee to support integrated stormwater management/greenspace solutions
- Promote integrated stormwater management/greenspace planning
  - » Watershed protection plans
  - » Watershed improvement projects
  - » Greenway corridor action plans
  - » Development and redevelopment plans

Effectively managing the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff is a critical natural resource issue that also affects Atlanta's economy. The quantity of stormwater runoff has increased over the years as the amount of impervious surfacing has grown due to development. Water quality is impacted by combined stormwater and sewer overflow (CSO) facilities and by non-point pollution sources such as runoff from roads and parking lots. The economic costs of these impacts is reflected in the 1998 CSO Consent Decree Agreement, under which the City is implementing Clean Water Atlanta program, involving $3.9 billion in improvements to Atlanta's drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater systems. The Consent Decree Agreement included a $25 million greenway acquisition program to aquire and maintain land in a natural condition along streams in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Greenspaces provide a natural, low-cost means of stormwater management. Trees that intercept runoff and vegetated surfaces that absorb it reduce the amount of water entering engineered stormwater facilities. Floodplains and low-lying areas adjacent

to rivers and streams serve to absorb floodwaters and protect adjacent properties from flooding. Vegetated buffers along rivers and streams function as filters that remove pollutants before they enter the watercourse. In addition to providing critical environmental services, integration of stormwater management systems with greenspace can provide benefits such as compatible recreation and connectivity. The importance of greenspace to stormwater management has been recognized at the national level by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and at the state level by the Governor's Environmental Advisory Council.[9]

Wherever possible, the design and management of greenspaces should be integrated with the planning and design of stormwater management systems to promote multi-functional solutions. Examples include regional detention facilities designed to manage stormwater at the watershed-wide rather than site level while providing compatible recreational opportunities, trails within sewer easements, and (organic) community gardens or recreational facilities that can withstand occasional inundation within flood-prone areas. The City's stormwater ordinances should be used to promote nonstructural stormwater practices in private developments that blend with existing topography and vegetation, reduce impacts on greenspace resources, and serve multiple uses. Wider buffers along streams and creeks should be encouraged.

The City is currently developing a stormwater utility fee to help defray the costs of managing stormwater runoff. Consideration should be given to using this fee to fund not only conventional engineered stormwater facilities, but also stormwater management projects that integrate greenspace values and functions. Jurisdictions such as King County, WA and Gwinnett and Clayton Counties in Georgia have used a Surface Water Management Fee to support the sustainable use of greenspace for stormwater management.

Integrated stormwater/greenspace planning should be conducted at several scales. At the largest scale management plans should be developed to address flood control, water quality enhancement, and stormwater-related greenspace preservation within Atlanta's ten watersheds. Action plans based on parcel level analysis should be developed for proposed greenway corridors to achieve multiple objectives such as stormwater management, greenspace protection, and compatible recreation. Wherever possible, development and redevelopment site plans should incorporate integrated stormwater/greenspace solutions. For example, community stormwater detention facilities could be provided on commonly owned land rather than on individual lots.

9 A memo dated 3.5.07 from Assistant Administrator Benjamin H. Grumbles to EPA Regional Admistrators states that "green infrastructure can be both a cost effective and an environmentally preferable approach to reduce stormwater and other excess flows entering combined or separate sewer systems in combination with, or in lieu of, centralized hard infrastructure systems." A report by the Georgia Environmental Advisory Council dated 7.30.07 advocates approaches to reducing non-point source pollution such as regional watershed planning, land acquisition, and Transfer of Development Rights to preserve natural greenspace.

Best Practices

Million Trees LA

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has launched an effort to plant one million trees in the City of Los Angeles with the help of community groups, schools, businesses, and individuals. A partnership between the LA Department of Recreation and Parks and TreePeople, an environmental nonprofit organization serving the Los Angeles area, has been established to help carry out this bold initiative. Begun in the fall of 2006, this initiative involves volunteers helping to plant 300,000 trees on nearly 16,000 acres of parklands and other lands in Los Angeles. These plantings will take place over the next several years. www.treepeople.org

Home Depot Carbon Emissions Offset Agreement

The Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer, entered into an agreement with The Conservation Fund to offset all carbon emissions created in 2006 by the company's Atlanta headquarters and a portion of emissions created by employee travel to work and on business. The company is planting thousands of trees on nearly 130 acres across metro Atlanta to offset these emissions. http://ir.homedepot.com/releasedetail.cfm?releaseid=216098

4.4.3 Tree Canopy

Strategy: Increase Atlanta's tree canopy coverage 40% through a "Green City" initiative to promote benefits such as reduced stormwater runoff, improved air quality, and reduced energy consumption.

Recommendations

- Expand existing tree planting programs through partnerships and volunteer programs.
- Implement planting and maintenance standards to ensure long-term tree survival and health (e.g., use of appropriate species, sufficient space for root zone and canopy development).
- Ensure that adequate resources are committed to tree maintenance and care.
- Identify ways to improve the tree protection ordinance (e.g., by strengthening requirements for large developments and equitably increasing tree removal fees and fines).
- Make the tree protection ordinance easier to understand and use and increase outreach to help the public understand its importance.
- Improve information on Atlanta's existing tree canopy, including aerial photography that can be used to track conditions over time and an inventory of canopy trees on public properties to inform maintenance and planting needs.

Atlanta's tree canopy performs essential environmental services and is central to its identity as a "green" city. However, this resource has been declining due to the attrition of older trees and the impacts of development; the nonprofit organization Trees Atlanta estimates that 60% of the City's tree canopy has been lost since the 1970s. According to Trees Atlanta, the City's current tree cover is 26% compared to a recommended target of 40% (the equivalent of 20 large trees per acre) to ensure ecological, economic, and social sustainability. A multi-faceted strategy is

recommended to maintain and grow Atlanta's tree canopy. Regulatory approaches include use of the tree conservation ordinance to mitigate significant impacts to existing trees; use of techniques such as conservation subdivisions and transfer of development rights to preserve areas with significant tree cover as permanently dedicated greenspace; and improved tree planting requirements for new developments, including parking lots.

The City has an ongoing canopy tree planting program through a partnership with Trees Atlanta. Following the example of other cities such as Los Angeles, it is proposed that this program be taken to the next level though an expanded citywide tree planting initiative. In addition to commitments by the City and Trees Atlanta, institutions, corporations, and property owners can be recruited for this effort. The Home Depot's Carbon Emissions Offset Agreement is a good model for corporate or institutional involvement.

Healthy trees require adequate planting conditions, including suitable soils with sufficient space to accommodate root system development and water infiltration as well as sufficient overhead room to allow for proper canopy development. Planting standards to promote long-term tree survival and health should be developed and incorporated into site and streetscape development projects by the City and private developers. These standards should also identify appropriate tree species for different conditions and should be made available to property owners throughout the City as part of outreach for the Green Atlanta program. Proper maintenance is another key to the health of Atlanta's tree canopy. Greenspace resource management plans and standards for canopy trees should specify proper maintenance techniques. Like the planting standards, these techniques can be disseminated as part of outreach for Green Atlanta. Sufficient resources should be committed to maintenance of public trees, including development of a GIS inventory of street canopy trees, adequate staff, equipment, and a replacement program for trees removed.

4.4.4 Cultural Resources

Strategy: Preserve and restore historic and cultural resources.

Recommendations:

- Develop an inventory (database and mapping) of historic resources related to Atlanta's greenspace system
- Preserve, restore, interpret, and link historic resources in parks and greenspaces
- Address the preservation and restoration of historic resources in park and greenspace master plans
- Promote awareness of historic resources within the greenspace system through interpretation, education, and outreach

Figure 4.2 – Atlanta Parks with Major Historic Importance

Parks with Major Historic Importance	
Atlanta Memorial Park	Candler Park
Tanyard Creek Park	Druid Hills Parkway
Piedmont Park	The Three Parks in Inman Park
The Five Parks in Ansley	Oakland City Park
Mozley Park	John A. White Park
Anderson Park	Grant Park
Maddox Park	Perkerson Park
Washington Park	Avery Park (Gilbert House)
Cascade Springs Nature Preserve	Oakland Cemetery
Southside Park	

Atlanta's existing parks and greenspaces contain many significant historic sites and resources and tremendous potential exists to integrate additional historic and cultural resources into the greenspace system. The Atlanta Urban Design Commission is responsible for the protection of Atlanta's historic resources through the Historic Preservation Ordinance and for most other historic resource/preservation issues in which the City is involved. The Urban Design Commission's official inventory of historic resources, Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks, was published in 1987. This inventory identifies buildings, sites, and districts that meet minimum criteria for consideration for historic designation. However, it does not identify sites of important historic events (e.g., associated with the Civil Rights Movement) or of archeological resources (e.g., Civil War trenches, Native American sites, and remnants of the City's industrial and rural past). In 2000, the Urban Design Commission initiated a *Comprehensive Historic Resource Survey* for the entire City to update and expand *Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks*. However, staff time originally allocated for this effort was shifted to the BeltLine project and its potential impacts on historic resources. The citywide survey should be completed.

Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks identifies 19 City of Atlanta parks with major historic importance (Figure 4.2) and there are other historically significant parks that have not been similarly recognized.

In most cases, minimal information is available regarding the archeological resources potentially contained in the parks. A comprehensive inventory of historic resources in existing parks should be developed as part of the Comprehensive Historic Resource Survey. In addition to providing more complete information on historic resources within existing parks, the completion of the citywide survey will identify additional opportunities to integrate historic and cultural resources into the greenspace system. For example, the 1993 *Parks, Open Space and Greenways Plan* recommended that historic transportation corridors, such as railroad and abandoned trolley corridors, be developed as heritage corridor greenways. Developed during the period from 1871 to 1905 as a railroad bypass around the City that had a major influence on Atlanta's later development, the BeltLine can implement this recommendation through the incorporation of historic preservation and interpretive elements. Additional opportunities should be sought to establish historic transportation corridors as connections in the greenspace system.

Similar to resource management plans to protect natural resources (see Section 4.4.1 above), management plans are needed to define strategies and actions to preserve, restore, and interpret historic resources within parks and greenspaces. Capacity will need to be established to develop and implement these plans, which should adhere to the Department of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. In addition to preserving and restoring identified historic resources, design of greenspaces can incorporate elements evoking the historical and cultural context of the site.

Visitors and residents alike have a great interest in Atlanta's history, particularly as it relates to the Civil War, the development of the City's African-American community, and the pivotal role that the City played in the Civil Rights Movement. Schools also have an interest in historic sites for educational purposes. These groups can be reached through elements that catalog, promote, interpret, and link historic resources inside and outside of parks. Examples include interpretive displays and brochures; linkages to Atlanta visitor marketing and promotion websites; and physical and programmatic connections between sites, such as walking and driving tours or "cultural trails" that link destinations and attractions. These and similar approaches can raise the awareness of residents regarding Atlanta's heritage and the importance of historic resources while leveraging economic development potential through heritage tourism.

4.5 GREENSPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Strategy: Achieve excellence in the planning and design of components of the greenspace system.

Recommendations:

- Establish consistent, quality planning and design standards for greenspace components
- Develop master plans for individual park sites that apply the standards and maximize their functionality and use for greenspace purposes
- Reinforce Atlanta's shared community identity through the greenspace system, including:
  - » Community gathering spaces
  - » Integration of public art, culture, and elements of Atlanta's history and heritage into the greenspace system

Achieving the vision of a world-class greenspace system will require high levels of planning and design excellence. A comprehensive set of standards, organized by park or other greenspace type, is needed to promote quality and consistency across the system. This section provides a framework for developing these standards, including general planning and design guidelines for the greenspace system as a whole. Recommended stan-

Best Practices: Public Spaces

Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

Millennium Park is a new public gathering space filled with projects from some of the greatest living artists and architects. Built on top of rail yards and parking garages, the park is considered a green roof and represents the final piece of Daniel Burnham's magnificent plan for Grant Park. http://www.millenniumpark.org/

Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland, OR

Often called "Portland's Living Room", Pioneer Courthouse Square is one of the most successful public plazas in the United States. Professionally managed by a non-profit organization, the square plays host to over 300 events each year, generating a significant amount of funding for maintenance. http://www.pioneercourthousesquare.org/

Community Gardens, New York, NY

Currently, about 1,000 of the roughly 10,000 vacant lots in New York City have been leased by residents' groups and converted into close to 700 community gardens that also serve as children's play areas and community gathering places. The gardens attract new residents, restore neighborhood stability, vitality, and pride, and help reduce crime. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has permanently protected 64 of these properties that were to be sold at auction. TPL established three nonprofit organizations to own and manage the gardens. http://www.tpl.org/content_documents/nyc_community_gardens.pdf

dards for specific components or types of greenspace, such as citywide, community, and neighborhood parks, are provided in Appendix A.

Master plans for individual parks that apply the planning and design standards on a site-specific basis while addressing service area needs and circumstances should be developed in partnership with citizens. Plans should be developed with community input in the conceptual and design phases. These plans should enhance greenspace functions by defining use or management "zones" appropriate for different purposes based on evaluation of site conditions. Examples of these zones include active recreational areas, community gathering places, passive or informal recreation areas, and resource conservation areas. In addition to the planning and design standards, the master plans should apply other Project Greenspace implementation strategies, for example:

- **Recreation**:
  - » Remove unproductive or substandard facilities and amenities that are not used or are in poor condition and replace with more appropriate amenities that support the needs of the surrounding community
  - » Seek opportunities to pair parks that are currently undersized and do not meet minimum standards for their classifications within a defined service area
- **Natural and Cultural Resources**: Incorporate interpretation, protection, and restoration of significant natural and cultural resources
- **Connectivity:** Identify opportunities to enhance accessibility through improved or new connections

As a general principle, greenspace planning and design should reinforce the functions of parks and greenspaces as expressions of the City's shared identity. A hierarchy of community gathering spaces should be provided throughout the greenspace system to accommodate formal events and more infor-

mal social interaction. At the largest scale, a major special events venue (as recommended in Section 3.3) could be developed as Atlanta's primary "place of coming together." Other system components, such as citywide, community, and neighborhood parks, squares, and plazas, should include appropriately sized and designed places of gathering. Community gardens can also be incorporated into existing greenspaces or developed as special facilities (e.g., on vacant lots) to promote a sense of community.

Public art, culture, and historic heritage are all integral to Atlanta's community identity and should find expression in the greenspace system. The City's *Public Art Master Plan* should be used to guide public art installations in greenspaces. Many opportunities exist to incorporate, preserve, and interpret historic sites and resources in the greenspace system (see Section 4.4.4). Programming of community gathering spaces should include concerts and other performances by Atlanta's cultural arts community.

The following are standards recommended for use in greenspace system planning.

Design Excellence Standards

- Integrate design excellence for Atlanta's greenspace as a core value at all levels of city government and partnerships in order to realize a world class park system for Atlanta.
- Retain experienced Landscape Architects in-house to develop and design park master plans for both new and existing parks as a part of a design excellence strategy.
- Develop park master plans in conjunction with the appropriate Neighborhood Planning Unit(s). Engage Atlanta's residents at every step in the master planning process.
- Address pertinent programming, resource management, and maintenance issues in park master planning.
- Institutionalize the periodic review and revision of existing master plans as necessary to keep them current and relevant, for example to address site, user, and programming changes or new opportunities
- Select and implement high-quality, durable materials in the design and construction of all park amenities and facilities.
- Develop greenspaces in a sustainable manner. Incorporate sustainable ("green") building and site design techniques and best practices, including:
    - » Energy conservation techniques
    - » Water conservation techniques
    - » Stormwater management practices that mimic and maintain natural processes
    - » Use of native and naturalized species as appropriate
    - » Use of natural, renewable, and recycled materials

- » Practices that reduce waste generated during construction and operation
- » Practices that minimize required maintenance inputs

- Preserve natural and cultural resources in coordination with development of resource management plans.
- Develop and adhere to design guidelines for parks and greenspaces. Establish legible identity for park signage, furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, etc.), and other facilities. Apply design guidelines consistently across Atlanta's greenspace system. Guidelines should address:
  - » Pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems (paths/trails, roads, parking areas, etc.)
  - » Recreational buildings, facilities, and equipment
  - » Landscape elements (plant materials, lighting, fencing, site furnishings, etc.)
  - » Signage
  - » Infrastructure elements

Guidelines for plant materials should address species selection, planting conditions (including adequate soil conditions and space for above-ground and below-ground development of canopy trees), and maintenance.

- Incorporate public art into the greenspace system consistent with the City's *Public Art Master Plan*.

Greenspace Site Selection Standards

- Select park and other greenspace sites that meet the following criteria defined in Section 3.4.1:
  - » Provides for the equitable distribution of the different greenspace types (neighborhood parks, community parks, citywide parks, etc.) throughout Atlanta
  - » Provides access to parkland in an area that is underserved using the "½ mile walk" standard
  - » Meets identified recreational needs (e.g., trail, special event/community gathering place, sports field, etc.)
  - » Improves the accessibility, safety/visibility, and/or usability of an existing greenspace component; e.g.:
    - Establishes road frontage access for a park
    - Increases the size of an existing park to meet the greenspace classification size standard
    - Expands access to an existing park

        - Provides a buffer for a greenway or multi-use trail
    - » Expands or augments an existing park that is undersized and does not meet the minimum standard for its classification
    - » Provides a connection in the greenspace system
    - » Preserves natural, scenic, cultural, and/or historic resources, e.g.:
        - High water resource value (groundwater recharge area, floodplain, stream buffer, provides stormwater management services, etc.)
        - High ecological value (intact natural community, provides rare species habitat, connects or buffers existing natural areas, etc.)
        - Environmentally sensitive resources (steep slopes, granite outcrops, etc.)
        - Scenic viewsheds
        - High cultural/historic resource value (eligible for listing on the National Register, associated with important historic personages and events, contains historic landscape features such as Civil War earthworks and historic transportation corridors, etc.)
    - » Implements greenspace recommendations of neighborhood or other area plans adopted in the Atlanta *Comprehensive Development Plan*
- Do not locate city facilities that are incompatible with recreation, conservation, and other greenspace functions within parks.
- Evaluate park expansion opportunities to identify those that could accommodate athletic complexes.
- Security and Neighborhood Stability Standards
- Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in existing and future parks, recreational facilities, and cultural facilities.
- Choose park sites with significant street frontage. Structures or other features around edges should provide for natural observation of park activities and should not block visibility into the park.
- Ensure visibility into the park from surrounding homes and streets.
- Provide adjacent streets along a minimum of 20 percent (and optimally 100%) of the park's perimeter, to increase visibility into the park and facilitate police patrol and emergency vehicle access.
- Locate residential, commercial, or other land uses across the street from the park to increase natural surveillance.

- Avoid residential or commercial "backyards" adjacent to park boundaries that limit visibility and access to the park.
- Locate community parks, neighborhood parks, and squares in areas that are accessible to the surrounding community and are not exclusive to one neighborhood within the intended service area.
- Cluster community facilities in community parks. Facilities are easier to secure when they are clustered together, thereby requiring fewer security personnel and less police patrol time.
- Provide multiple reasons for different age groups to be in a park.
- Maximize appeal to potential legitimate users for the ongoing use of the park during all operating hours.

Accessibility Standards

- Provide easy walking access to a publicly accessible greenspace within one-half mile along the street network via sidewalks with street trees.
- Expand existing parks where possible to increase accessibility and meet the one-half mile standard (e.g., by establishing new street frontage).
- Ensure that sidewalks are provided on all streets adjacent to park borders. Address pedestrian safety to and from park entrances, including the provision of crosswalks at street intersections.
- Ensure accessibility to the park by bicycle. Connect parks to the on-street bike lane network, including bike lanes on roads that have design speeds exceeding 25 miles per hour.
- Locate citywide and community parks to be easily accessible from MARTA bus routes and rail stations.
- Ensure adequate wayfinding signage to guide vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles to the park.
- Avoid park locations near interstate highways, railroads, or obstructive terrain that limit safe pedestrian and bicycle access to parks.

Natural Resource Management Standards

- Develop and adhere to natural resource management guidelines for parks and greenspaces. Guidelines should address:
    - » Appropriate levels of maintenance for natural resource areas (mowing, tree and limb removal, etc.)
    - » Use of native plant materials
    - » Establishment of natural vegetation buffers adjacent to environmentally sensitive features such as streams and wetlands (75' minimum recommended)

    - » Minimal use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, especially near water resources
    - » Stormwater management practices that promote the infiltration of runoff from impervious surfaces on-site. Reduce impervious surfaces where possible.
    - » Monitoring and control of invasive plant species
    - » Protection of high quality natural communities
    - » Rehabilitation of degraded natural communities
    - » Low-impact construction practices for infrastructure projects that must be located within natural resource areas because there are no feasible alternatives
- Inventory natural resource conditions in existing and new greenspaces, including:
    - » Natural habitat and vegetative cover types
    - » Environmentally sensitive resources (surface water, floodplains, steep slopes, etc.)
    - » Degree of disturbance /presence of invasive species
- Develop resource management plans for existing and new greenspaces with significant natural resources.
- Identify appropriate levels of public access and use in greenspaces based on the presence and sensitivity of natural resources. Designate environmentally sensitive areas as resource conservation zones with minimal levels of use.
- Evaluate greenspaces for the level of resource disturbance and potential for rehabilitation and restoration of natural functions.
- Use the evaluation to establish priorities for the rehabilitation of natural resources based on disturbance levels and restoration potential. Develop a schedule of projects to be undertaken to address identified priorities (stream bank stabilization, control of erosion and stormwater runoff, removal of invasive plant species, habitat enhancement plantings, etc.).

5. BUILD CAPACITY

Building capacity to grow and manage greenspace is essential to achieving the vision of a world-class greenspace system for the City of Atlanta. Partnerships with governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, institutions, businesses, citizens groups, and others are one approach to building capacity and are addressed in Chapters 3 and 4 in the contexts of growing and managing greenspace, respectively. This chapter outlines steps that the City of Atlanta can take to build the capacity needed to implement Project Greenspace. Section 5.1 identifies internal changes within city government to better focus resources on greenspace as a core part of the City's mission. Section 5.2 addresses external communications and outreach to the larger Atlanta community to build support for greenspace. Section 5.3 describes sources of funding and other resources that are potentially available to grow and manage greenspace.

"Building capacity" means leveraging human and fiscal resources, processes, procedures, communications, and mind-sets to focus in a coordinated manner on creating the greenspace system.

5.1 CITY GOVERNMENT

Strategy: Build capacity and improve coordination within city government to grow and manage greenspace.

Recommendations:

- Address greenspace as a fundamental consideration in city operations, management, and planning
  - » Initiate an effort to improve internal and external departmental coordination relative to greenspace
- Improve city capabilities to grow and manage the greenspace system
  - » Increase staff resources devoted to greenspace functions, including:
    - Greenspace and trail system planning, implementation, and acquisition
    - Partnerships and public outreach, including a point of contact on greenspace issues
  - » Building on the Green Team, enhance the organizational focus on greenspace acquisition
  - » Streamline city procedures related to greenspace acquisition
  - » Prioritize the acquisition of greenspace based on the potential impact of the parcel rather than on acreage opportunities and focus on quality vs. quantity (e.g., a small parcel that could be easily developed as ballfield over a large parcels with significant constraints)

    - » Improve GIS capabilities to inventory and monitor different types of greenspace and greenspace resources (e.g., parks and recreational facilities, environmentally sensitive lands, lands dedicated through city-sponsored incentives, etc.)
- Clarify city roles and responsibilities in managing city-owned greenspaces and conservation easements held by the City
- Address greenspace issues in all stages of the development review and approval process

The decisions and actions of many departments and functions within city government affect Atlanta's greenspace resources. The Mayor's office sets the overall policy direction for city government, and parks and greenspace are an established priority of the administration as part of the Sustainable Atlanta Initiatives and the *New Century Economic Development Plan*. The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA) is responsible for managing city parks and public trees. The Department of Planning and Community Development addresses long-range planning for Atlanta's greenspace resources in the context of its comprehensive planning program and also administers the development review and approval process, which is a vehicle to secure dedicated greenspace. The Department of Watershed Management is responsible for stormwater management within Atlanta, including administration of the Greenway Acquisition Program required by the 1998 CSO Consent Decree Agreement. The Atlanta Development Authority, the City's designated economic development agency, addresses greenspace in the context of land acquisition, development, and redevelopment projects. The functions of other city departments and agencies, such as the Office of Enterprise Assets Management (OEAM), Public Works, Police, Law, and Finance, also affect greenspace. The "Green Team," comprised of representatives of departments, agencies, and organizations inside and outside of city government, meets on a regular basis to coordinate the City's greenspace acquisition efforts.

A coordinated commitment to implementing Project Greenspace is needed across all city departments and agencies whose mission or functions affect greenspace. Obtaining this commitment can start with outreach regarding the importance of Project Greenspace and what it will accomplish for Atlanta. Internal and external departmental processes, procedures, and relationships should be reviewed for opportunities to more effectively address issues, leverage opportunities, and improve coordination relative to greenspace. As part of this review, approaches to managing city-owned greenspaces and conservation easements should be clarified, including departmental roles, land management objectives, and levels of management appropriate for different types of greenspace. The goal should be to transcend individual departmental focuses to identify opportunities for complementary and synergistic approaches (e.g., managing greenways to achieve stormwater, environmental, and recreational objectives). The Green Team is the logical entity to lead this effort, with the participation of representatives of departments such as DPRCA, Planning, the Mayor's Office, Public Works, Watershed Management, OEAM, law, finance, and the Atlanta Development Authority.

The internal capabilities of city government to grow and manage greenspace should be significantly strengthened as part of the increased institutional focus on greenspace. This should begin with increasing the re-

sources dedicated to greenspace planning and implementation. Planning capabilities should be improved by increasing staff resources to address two major areas:

- Ongoing greenspace and trail system planning, implementation, and monitoring within the framework established by Project Greenspace
- Planning and design of individual city parks and greenspaces to implement system goals and standards

Greenspace system monitoring should include annual reports to highlight progress made and set goals for the upcoming year.

Increased resources are also needed to pursue partnerships with a variety of entities outside of city government – other governmental agencies, institutions, businesses, foundations, private landowners, etc. – to grow and manage greenspace. These resources should include a designated staff contact for the public on greenspace issues such as land acquisition and management. Additional information on greenspace functions for which increased staff resources are needed is provided in Section 6.2.

As part of an increased focus on implementation, the role of the Green Team in evaluating, leveraging, and facilitating greenspace acquisition opportunities should be strengthened with the support of dedicated greenspace staff. Examples of its expanded responsibilities could include:

- Bridging the gaps between greenspace opportunities and the availability of resources for greenspace acquisition (e.g., though management of a revolving fund for greenspace)
- Managing greenspace regulatory mechanisms such as off-site transfers of open space requirements and Transfer of Development Rights
- Prioritizing greenspace recommendations made in neighborhood and small area studies for implementation
- Reviewing and accepting proposed land donations, potentially in partnership with a new Atlanta land conservation trust (see Section 3.4.3)

Significantly increasing the City's amount of greenspace and improving existing parkland are top priorities for acquisition. These two priorities, however, can be at odds with each other. The time and resources required to assemble and acquire small parcels, which can dramatically enhance the accessibility and safety of an existing park, can be equal to or greater than for a single large acquisition. Streamlining existing cumbersome and time-consuming procedures will increase efficiency and allow the City to increase total greenspace and to improve the quality of parks.

All stages of the acquisition process should be reviewed and improved where possible. Processes for review could include:

- An evaluation of the existing real estate code
- Streamlining the legislative process for real estate acquisitions, including consideration of City Council executive sessions
- Financial accounting of funding sources, expense tracking, and the funding process
- Coordination between Procurement, Office of Enterprise Management, consultants, and records management
- Coordination between the Atlanta Development Authority, Atlanta BeltLine Inc., and City Departments

The City's GIS capabilities related to greenspace need to be significantly improved, ideally as part of an improved management system for all city properties. This will involve expanding the current DPRCA parkland inventory into a comprehensive, accurate GIS database of all designated greenspaces and the facilities they contain. In addition to city parks, the expanded database should address:

- Permanently protected greenspace owned by all City departments
- Environmentally sensitive lands
- Privately-owned greenspaces (e.g., conservation easements, dedicated open space in development projects)
- Other miscellaneous forms of greenspace, such as detention basins

The database should be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis and linked to a monitoring system for use in various contexts, for example:

- Monitoring greenspace system goals (provide a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace, protect at least 75% of environmentally sensitive lands, etc.)
- Identifying opportunities to preserve environmentally sensitive lands in proposed developments
- Tracking the status of properties dedicated through the development review and approval process
- Providing a "registry" of protected lands with conservation easements as a requirement for favorable tax treatment
- Verifying greenspace boundaries and encroachments by adjacent property owners through field surveys
- Managing recreational facilities and programs

Park and recreational facilities managed by other public and private sector providers should also be inventoried to assist in planning to meet level of service standards (see Section 4.1.1).

The City's capacity to grow greenspace through the regulatory process needs to be strengthened. Section 3.4.2 recommends regulatory changes to promote the dedication of greenspace in new developments. These changes should be coupled with evaluation of existing development review and approval procedures to identify opportunities to improve the focus on greenspace. For example, greenspace acquisition and multi-use trail opportunities should be identified as a key issue to be addressed in checklists for applicants and reviewers. Informational materials on the importance of greenspace and the City's requirements and incentives should be prepared for distribution to developers and property owners. Development review staff should be briefed on Project Greenspace and the City's greenspace policies, and input should be solicited from the City's greenspace planners in the review of development applications. Informal/concept plan reviews should be encouraged to allow for discussion of approaches to preserving greenspace prior to submission of engineered plans. Where possible, the review and approval process for projects that meet the City's greenspace goals should be streamlined as an incentive over projects that do not preserve greenspace. Other necessary improvements include:

- Tracking of approved developments during and after construction to ensure compliance with greenspace commitments
- Stricter regulations and control on conservation of greenspace and natural resources before, during, and after development
- Monitoring of "as-built" mapping requirements, tracking of the status of dedicated greenspaces, and periodic management reports

5.2 COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Strategy: Promote and grow community support for creation of a world-class greenspace system.

Recommendations

- Implement a public education and outreach program on Project Greenspace and the importance of greenspace to Atlanta's future
- Increase resources available to market and provide the public with information on city parks
- Enhance existing grassroots support for the greenspace system
- Encourage creation of a non-profit entity to purchase, invest, maintain, and manage small parks (less

than 2 acres) and community gardens

- Build political consensus to create and manage the greenspace system

Based on the public outreach conducted for Project Greenspace, including a statistically valid citizen survey, there is strong public support for greenspace. This support needs to be mobilized at all levels of the community, including citizens, neighborhoods, political leaders, businesses, and institutions, if Project Greenspace is to be successful. Towards this end, the City – in association with Park Pride and other appropriate partners – should initiate an ongoing outreach, education, and communications program to raise public awareness of Project Greenspace and its importance to Atlanta's future. This program should highlight that greenspace is not just an amenity, but a necessity to ensure Atlanta's future quality of life, community well-being, and economic prosperity. The program can take a variety of forms, for example:

- Educational materials in a variety of formats (brochures, articles, video)
- Events/lectures featuring experts in various aspects of greenspace (e.g., the economic benefits of greenspace)
- Publicity regarding greenspace success stories and progress in implementing Project Greenspace
- Technical support to groups and individuals involved in managing greenspaces

Marketing the City's parks and what they offer to citizens is another way to build public support for greenspace. The Citizen Survey identified "not knowing what is being offered" as the number one reason preventing more frequent use of parks. While DPRCA has a good marketing direction in place, its budget for marketing the parks is extremely low. Increasing resources available for this purpose will help increase awareness of the parks, increase their utilization by residents, and, as a side benefit, increase revenues generated by user fees. Components of an enhanced marketing program could include:

- Informational brochures and other materials describing what is available within the park system as a whole, within subareas of the City (building on the 2006 Council District Park Profiles), and within individual parks
- A quarterly Activity Guide listing all programs and events available in the parks, with information about their content, admission criteria, fees, etc.
- Use of media outlets such as newspaper, radio, and TV advertising and direct mailed circulars and flyers
- Posting of comprehensive information on parks, facilities, programs, and events on the City's website

Outreach should also be conducted at the grassroots level to reach local neighborhoods and citizen groups. This outreach should include communication with NPU's on Project Greenspace and what it means for Atlanta

and Atlanta's neighborhoods. The outreach should be ongoing, including contact on at least an annual basis regarding the status of Project Greenspace, local greenspace initiatives, and progress towards implementation. Citizens should continue to be involved in local greenspace initiatives, such as neighborhood greenspace plans, park master plans, and park maintenance and clean-up activities.

The community support needed to ensure the success of Project Greenspace includes consensus among political, civic, and corporate leaders that greenspace is a priority for Atlanta's future. Grassroots citizen support will help build this consensus as political leaders respond to constituents' concerns. Again, a key message is that greenspace is not a luxury but a necessity – equivalent in importance to conventional "gray" infrastructure such as roads and sewers. The links between greenspace and economic development on the one hand (higher property values, greater economic activity, increased municipal revenues, etc.) and environmental quality on the other (improved water and air quality, reduced energy consumption, lower costs for engineered infrastructure, etc.) should be emphasized as they relate to two core priorities of city government. Greenspace "champions" are needed from among Atlanta's leaders as spokespersons to help move Project Greenspace forward and build support at all levels.

5.3 RESOURCES

Sustainable sources of funding and other resources are essential to implement Project Greenspace. The City has relied to a disproportionate level on general funds to fund its parks compared to "best-in-class" park systems around the country. The key for the future of Atlanta's greenspace system is to diversify sources of funding and other resources to accomplish the initiatives identified in this plan. These sources need to be committed on a long-term basis to assure a continuing income stream to grow and manage the system.

As an example, user fees and other earned income derived from city parks are relatively low at approximately 11% of the DPRCA's operating budget, which compares to a typical range of 25% to 40% for urban park systems. There is significant potential to increase these revenues to recoup more of the operating costs while still meeting the objective of providing low-cost services for those who cannot afford to pay. For example, the City could allow variable pricing of selected programs based on income levels in different parts of Atlanta as opposed to the present policy of setting one fixed price throughout Atlanta. Discounts can be provided to those who are unable to afford higher rates. To address this issue, a formal cost recovery policy should be developed that sets objective standards for balancing revenue generation with the City's other objectives. Additional revenue sources include vendors, permit performers, and mini-events.

At the present time revenue generated by city parks is returned to the general fund rather than invested back into the parks system. This serves as a disincentive to a more entrepreneurial approach to managing facilities and programs by DPRCA managers. As an alternative, user fees and other earned income could be directed to a dedicated fund, for example a maintenance endowment fund used for parks maintenance.

The following text describes a wide variety of sources of funding and other resources that can be used for

greenspace acquisition, development, and/or maintenance. Figure 5.1 at the end of the text provides the following information regarding these sources:

- Whether they are currently used in Atlanta or would be a new approach (existing vs. new)
- Whether they can be applied towards greenspace acquisition and development and/or maintenance
- General revenue potential classified as high, medium, or low
- Examples of where the sources are being used

The revenue potential of specific funding sources can vary widely based on local circumstances. The general parameters for the three categories shown on Figure 5.1 are:

- High: 15% or more of the total operating budget could be derived from this source.
- Medium: 7-15% of the total operating budget could be derived from this source.
- Low: 3-7% of the total operating budget could be derived from this source.

More detailed analysis will be required to define the specific levels of funding that would be generated by individual sources for greenspace purposes in Atlanta. As a next step, the City should review the list in relation to its financial value system and other considerations to identify the best potential candidates. Those sources can then be evaluated in more detail to determine the level of funding they would yield in Atlanta if pursued aggressively. The goal is to develop a "package" of diversified funding sources to support greenspace acquisition, development, and maintenance.

General Funding Sources

General Fund: General funds derived from property taxes and other municipal income sources are a normal way to support park system operations but are limited in their ability to fund significant land acquisition or capital development. As noted, Atlanta currently has a high level of dependence on general funds to operate its parks system and needs to diversify its resources to implement Project Greenspace.

General Obligation Bond: A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by the taxing and borrowing power of the municipality issuing it. Atlanta used the $105 million Opportunity Bond for Parks and Greenspace for citywide renovations and improvements to parks and recreational facilities and to fund greenspace acquisitions.

Governmental Funding Programs: A variety of funding sources are available from federal and state government for greenspace-related projects. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funds to state

and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas. Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are used by the City of Atlanta in part to support greenspace related improvements. Enhancement funds available through federal transportation funding programs can be used for trail and related greenspace development. Americorps grants can be used to fund support for park maintenance.

Bond Referendum: This funding approach involves submission of a bond measure to be used to finance greenspace acquisition, development, and/or maintenance to a direct popular vote. According to the Trust for Public Land, voters in 23 states approved 104 ballot measures in November 2006, providing $6.4 billion in funding for greenspace-related acquisition and development.

Dedicated Funding Sources

Park Impact Fees: These fees are attached to the cost of new residential development based on the square footage or number of bedrooms per unit to generate funds for park acquisition and development. Impact fees typically range from a low of $500 dollars per unit to a high of $9,000 dollars per unit and should be periodically updated to address market rates and land values. The City of Atlanta is currently using this revenue source.

Park Improvement Fund: This existing funding source is a percentage of overall city property taxes dedicated for DPRCA's Park Design Division. This source totaled approximately $7 million in 2004 and 2005 but was reduced to approximately $4.6 million in 2006 due to tax collections and the availability of bond funding.

Tax Allocation District: Commonly used to finance redevelopment projects in Atlanta, a Tax Allocation District (TAD) involves the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to pay front-end infrastructure and eligible development costs in partnership with private developers. As redevelopment occurs in the district, the "tax increment" resulting from redevelopment projects is used to retire the debt issued to fund the eligible redevelopment costs. The public portion of the redevelopment project funds itself using the additional taxes generated by the project. TADs can be used to fund greenspace acquisition and development as an essential infrastructure cost.

Boulevard Tax: This funding source has been used by Kansas City, MO to develop and maintain its nationally known parkways and boulevard system. Residents who live along these corridors pay a charge based on a lineal foot that is added to their property tax bill. This approach has proven to be very beneficial to owners when selling their homes because of the added value to their properties.

Cash-in-Lieu of Open Space Requirement: Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing a cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement. The proceeds can be applied to a park off-site that serves the needs of the development.

Dedicated Sales Tax: A dedicated sales tax has been used by many cities as a funding tool for capital improvements. The City of Lawrence, KS passed a one-cent sales tax for parks that has generated over $50 million in

park improvements over the last seven years. The City of Phoenix receives sales tax revenue from car rentals to support capital needs of parks and recreation services.

Facility Authority: A Facility Authority is sometime used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from sales taxes. The City of Indianapolis has created several recreational facilities to meet local needs and national competition venues as an economic development tool. The Facility Authority is responsible for managing the sites and operating them in a self-supporting manner.

FEMA Grants: FEMA provides grants to local governments to fund 75% of the cost of acquiring and demolishing houses on properties that have repetitive claims against the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for losses due to flooding. The funding would only be available to a discreet class of properties that must remain vacant and in natural condition in perpetuity.

Improvement District/Park Maintenance District: An improvement district allows for special assessments on property owners to support acquisition, development, and/or maintenance costs. There are various types of parks and greenspace improvement districts. Landscape and Lighting Districts are used by California communities to fund park development and ongoing maintenance. Park Benefit Districts establish assessments on properties (based on the benefits and costs of acquisition/development associated with a parkland improvement). Benefit Districts are typically applied to regional parks, large community parks, event plazas, signature parks, and attractions located in downtown areas or areas slated for redevelopment. In Park Maintenance Districts, the assessments are earmarked to fund park maintenance within a designated area (similar to Landscape and Lighting Districts).

Real Estate Transfer Fee: This relatively new form of funding is being used by a number of agencies and states to acquire and develop parkland. The money is generated by the transfer of real estate from one owner to another owner, with the municipality retaining a percentage of the value of the property (typically one-half percent) at the time of sale. The proceeds can be dedicated to acquiring land or for other greenspace purposes. Use of this approach in Atlanta would require state authorization.

Revolving Fund: This is a dedicated fund to be used for greenspace purposes that is replenished on an ongoing basis from various funding sources. The City of Atlanta could establish a revolving fund supported by one or more sources identified in this section.

Stormwater Utility Fee (also Surface Water Management Fee): This funding source is derived from fees on property owners based on measures such as the amount of impervious surfacing. It is used by many cities to acquire and develop greenways and other greenspace resources that provide for stormwater management. Improvements can include trails, drainage areas, and retention ponds that serve multiple purposes such as recreation, environmental protection, and stormwater management. The City of Houston is using this source to preserve and maintain bayous and to improve their access and use for flood control and recreation.

Transient Occupancy Tax: This source is used by many cities to fund improvements to parks to improve the image of an urban area, to enhance parks surrounded by hotels and businesses, to support the development of a park-related improvement, or to build an attraction. Transient occupancy taxes are typically set at 5 to 10% on the value of a hotel room and can be dedicated for parkland improvement purposes.

Wheel Tax: A Wheel Tax is a method of taxation commonly used by cities or counties to generate revenue. The tax is charged to motorists based upon the number of wheels their vehicles have, often collected at the time of vehicle registration or tag renewals. Wheel taxes can be used to fund management and maintenance of park roads and parking lots.

Revenue Capture

Land Leases/Concessions: Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from vending machines to food service operations to golf courses.

User Fees: User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by the municipality. The fees are set by the municipality based on cost recovery goals and the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer.

Capital Improvement Fee: A capital improvement fee can be added to the admission fee to a recreation facility to help pay back the cost of developing the facility. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, ice rinks, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used either to pay back the cost of the capital improvement or the revenue bond that was used to develop the facility.

Corporate Naming Rights: In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a parks system in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a ten-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from the newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors or users. Naming rights for park facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events.

Corporate Sponsorships: Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many cities seek corporate support for these types of activities.

Maintenance Endowment Fund: This is a fund dedicated exclusively for parks maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals.

Private Funding Sources

Business/Citizen Donations: Individual donations from corporations and citizens can be sought to support parks and greenspaces. As an example, the Naperville, IL Park District has an ongoing program soliciting tax deductible contributions from individuals, community organizations, and businesses to enhance park and recreational services.

Private Foundation Funds: Nonprofit community foundations can be strong sources of support for parks and greenspace. The City of Indianapolis has received over $100 million in grants from the Lily Endowment for park-related improvements.

Nonprofit Organizations: Nonprofit organizations can provide support for greenspace and parks in various ways. Examples include:

- ***Conservancy or Friends Organization:*** This type of nonprofit is devoted to supporting a specific park (e.g., the Piedmont Park, Freedom Park, and Grant Park Conservancies).
- ***Land Trust:*** Land trusts are nonprofits focused on greenspace preservation. In Atlanta, the Trust for Public Land and The Conservation Fund help to facilitate greenspace acquisition by the City but do not own land and easements outright. Project Greenspace proposes establishment of a new land trust dedicated to acquiring and managing greenspace in Atlanta.
- ***Conservation District:*** Conservation Districts operate like a land trust but are set up to protect specific properties areas with high greenspace value, such as watersheds or sensitive natural areas. The conservation district role is to provide landowners with tax benefits to allow their properties to be preserved as part of the district.
- ***Parks Foundation:*** Established to support system-wide parks and recreation needs, park foundations have helped many cities across the nation to acquire land and develop parks. For example, the Parks Foundation of Houston raises $5 million annually on average for land acquisition and park improvements.
- ***Greenway Foundation:*** Greenway foundations focus on developing and maintaining trails and green corridors on a citywide basis. The City of Indianapolis Greenway Foundation develops and maintains greenways throughout the city and seeks land leases along the trails as one funding source, in addition to selling miles of trails to community corporations and nonprofits. The development rights along the trails can also be sold to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per mile basis to support development and management of these corridors. King County in the Seattle area has done a very good job in accessing this funding source for greenway development.
- ***Gifts to Share:*** This approach is used in Sacramento, CA in the form of a nonprofit that solicits donations for park improvement projects.

Homeowner Association Fees: Homeowner association fees are typically used to maintain dedicated green-space areas within private residential developments. They could be applied to maintaining privately owned greenspace that is publicly accessible through an agreement between the developer and the City.

Lease Back: Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private sector entity such as a development company buys the land; develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex; and leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 30 to 40 year period. This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds.

Volunteer Sources

Adopt-a-Park: In this approach local neighborhood groups or businesses make a volunteer commitment to maintaining a specific park. Adopt-a-Park arrangements are particularly well-suited for smaller parks which are less efficient for a parks department to maintain. DPRCA has many Adopt-a-Park agreements in place.

Neighborhood Park Initiatives: These are formal or informal initiatives by local groups to address the needs of an individual park. Examples include park watch programs and "clean up/fix up" days.

Adopt-a-Trail: This is similar to Adopt-a-Park but involves sponsorship of a segment of a trail (e.g., one mile) for maintenance purposes.

Community Service Workers: Community service workers are assigned by the court to pay off some of their sentence through maintenance activities in parks, such as picking up litter, removing graffiti, and assisting in painting or fix up activities. Most workers are assigned 30 to 60 hours of work.

Figure 5.1 – Potential Resources for Greenspace Acquisition, Development, and Maintenance

Source	Status		Availability			
	Existing	New	Acq./Dev	Maint.	Revenue Potential*	Example
General Funding Sources						
General Fund	X		X	X	High	widespread
General Obligation Bond	X		X	X	High	widespread
Governmental Funding						
- CDBG Funds	X		X		High	
- Land and Water Cons. Fund	X		X		Low	widespread
- Federal Transportation Funding	X		X		High	
- Americorps Grants		X		X	Med	
Bond Referendum		X	X	X	High	Dallas, TX
Dedicated Funding Sources						
Park Impact Fees	X		X	X	High	Sacramento, CA
Park Improvement Fund	X		X	X	High	Denver, CO
Tax Allocation District	X		X		High	Illinois Forest Preserves
Boulevard Tax		X	X	X	Med	Kansas City, MO
Cash-in-Lieu of Open Space Req.		X	X	X	High	Olathe, KA
Dedicated Sales Tax		X	X	X	High	Phoenix, AZ
Facility Authority		X	X	X	High	Martinsville/Henry County, VA
FEMA Grants		X	X	X	Low	Hillsborough County, FL
Improvement Districts:						
- Landscape and Lighting District		X	X	X	High	California Cities
- Park Benefit District		X		X	High	Central Park, NY
- Park Maintenance District		X		X	High	Philadelphia, PA
Real Estate Transfer Fee		X	X	X	High	California Cities
Revolving Fund		X	X		High	Johnson County Park District, KS
Storm water Utility / Surface Water Management Fee		X	X	X	High	Houston, TX
Transient Occupancy Tax		X	X	X	High	Healdsburg, CA
Wheel Tax		X	X	X	Med	Indianapolis, IN

*Note: High: 15% of the total operating budget could be derived from this source. Medium: 7-15% of the total operating budget could be derived from this source. Low: 3-7% of the total operating budget could be derived from this source.

Figure 5.1 – Potential Resources for Greenspace Acquisition, Development and Maintenance (CONT.)

Revenue Capture						
Land Leases/Concessions	X			X	High	Indianapolis, IN
User Fees	X		X	X	High	widespread
Capital Improvement Fee		X			Med	
Corporate Naming Rights		X			Med	
Corporate Sponsorships		X			High	
Maintenance Endowment		X			Med	
Private Funding Sources						
Corporate / Individual Donations	X				Med	Naperville, IL
Private Foundation Funds	X				High	Indianapolis, IN
Nonprofit Organization:						
- Conservancy/Friends Org.	X		X	X	Med	Piedmont Park
- Land Trust	X		X		Med	Ohio Park Districts
- Conservation District		X	X		Med	**Calgary, Alberta**
- Parks Foundation		X	X	X	High	Houston, Texas
- Greenway Foundation		X	X	X	Med	Indianapolis, IN
- "Gifts to Share"		X	X	X	Med	Sacramento, CA
Homeowner Association Fees		X		X	Med	California, Arizona Cities
Lease Back		X	X		High	Indianapolis, IN
Volunteer Sources						
Adopt-a-Park	X			X	Med	Dallas, TX
Neighborhood Initiatives	X			X	Low	Tacoma, WA
Adopt-a-Trail		X		X	Low	Indianapolis, IN
Community Service Workers		X		X	Med	Oakland County Parks, MI

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Plans are turned into reality by taking action. Realizing the vision of a world-class greenspace system for Atlanta will require concerted, consistent attention to implementation by the City and its partners in the public and private sectors over a period of years.

Project Greenspace is an ambitious, far-reaching initiative whose success is critical to Atlanta's future health and prosperity. Chapters 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 identify numerous actions that need to be taken and policies that need to be followed in order to create a world-class greenspace system. This chapter synthesizes these actions and policies into a comprehensive implementation program. Section 6.1 and the accompanying figures at the end of the chapter establish an action plan framework for implementing Project Greenspace consisting of new initiatives and ongoing policies and partnerships. Section 6.2 provides an overview of the implications of these initiatives, policies, and partnerships for city staffing. Section 6.3 provides order-of-magnitude cost estimates and potential funding sources for major components of the action plan, with the understanding that a detailed funding program needs to be developed as an early implementation action. Section 6.4 provides guidance for monitoring progress made in implementing the initiatives, actions, and policies over time.

6.1 ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan laid out in Figures 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 (at the end of this chapter) is intended as a framework or roadmap for achieving the goals and strategies of Project Greenspace. Figure 6.1 identifies four types of new initiatives to be carried out by the City and its partners to implement Project Greenspace:

A. **Planning and development** initiatives involve more detailed inventory and analysis, planning, and/or capital development related to aspects of the greenspace system.

B. **Regulatory initiatives** consist of changes to City codes, regulations, and incentives to promote dedication of greenspace and to better protect greenspace resources.

C. **Management initiatives** address park and greenspace management, operations, and maintenance.

D. **Capacity-building** initiatives are designed to increase and leverage resources available for greenspace initiatives, focusing on internal city capabilities, public outreach, and funding.

The following information is provided for each initiative:

- Reference to the section(s) in the Project Greenspace Plan that pertains to the initiative
- Lead or coordinating and supporting partners involved in implementing the initiative
- Critical steps and required resources involved in implementing the initiative
- General timeframe for implementation (short-term = 0-5 years, mid-term = 5-15 years, long-term = 15+ years). In general and for planning purposes, regulatory changes and updates, planning and design, and acquisition-related tasks are assigned to the short and mid terms. New park and facility development is generally assigned to the long-term timeframe, although it is assumed that regulatory updates, planning, design, and acquisition will extend to the long term as well.

The list of initiatives is a comprehensive and ambitious one that will require the commitment of significant staff resources to carry out (see Section 6.2 below). It is intended as a framework for development by the City of a more detailed work program that further prioritizes and phases the initiatives commensurate with available resources.

Figure 6.2 provides a list of policies to be followed and partnerships to be maintained and strengthened by the City of Atlanta as it works over time to implement Project Greenspace. The policies include specific greenspace targets, standards, and criteria, as well as more general guidance for use in planning and decision-making for the greenspace system. Figure 6.3 provides a list of partnerships for growing and managing greenspace. The partnerships generally exist in some form at the present time but should be enhanced to support implementation of Project Greenspace. Lead or coordinating partners, supporting partners, and references to the relevant section(s) of the Project Greenspace Plan are provided for each policy and partnership.

6.2 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

If the initiatives, policies, and partnerships laid out in Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 are to be successfully implemented, the capabilities of city government related to greenspace will need to be significantly strengthened and additional staff will be needed in two major areas:

- Greenspace planning and implementation
- Park and recreation management, operations, and maintenance

Greenspace planning and implementation affects several city departments involved in greenspace issues, most notably Planning and Community Development (DPCD); Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA); and Watershed Management. Park and recreation management, operations, and maintenance primarily impacts

DPRCA, which is responsible for managing the City's parks and recreational facilities and programs.

This section considers the implications of building capacity in greenspace planning and implementation for city staffing. Additional analysis is needed to evaluate the staffing implications of Project Greenspace recommendations for DPRCA management, operations, and maintenance. An initial assessment indicates that an increase somewhere in the range of 10 to 15% in DPRCA maintenance staff (prior to any cutbacks due to recent budget reductions) may be needed to raise maintenance of existing parks to levels commensurate with a "best-of-class" system as described in Section 4.2. Additional staff will be needed to maintain these levels as new parks are added to the system per the recommendations of Chapter 3.0, "Growing the Greenspace System."

Greenspace planning and implementation encompasses four broad functions that will require that existing staff levels be augmented:

- System planning and implementation
- GIS database development and management
- Park and greenspace master planning
- Public communications and outreach

Initial projections are that somewhere in the range of 8-12 staff will be needed to address these enhanced functions. Specific staff requirements can be determined as part of Initiative D1b (Build capacity within city government to grow and manage greenspace: increase staff resources for greenspace planning, design, and implementation).

System Planning and Implementation

This function covers a broad range of activities related to implementation of Project Greenspace strategies and actions. Examples of these activities include:

- Participate in development project and subdivision reviews (provide recommendations early in the review and approval process as part of a formalized system for addressing greenspace issues)
- Support the Green Team in managing city greenspace acquisitions (establish acquisition priorities based on Project Greenspace criteria, conduct outreach to property owners, review properties offered to the City, coordinate due diligence, manage regulatory mechanisms such as off-site transfers of open space requirements and Transfer of Development Rights, etc.)
- Manage implementation of the City's trails master plan (review development proposals and work with developers to establish easements early in the process, identify properties for acquisition, coordinate with the PATH Foundation, manage federal grants for trail development, etc.)

- Provide input to neighborhood and small area plans on greenspace issues and prioritize recommendations made in these plans for implementation
- Conduct cross-departmental coordination on greenspace acquisition, development, and management issues
- Prepare and execute yearly work programs, project plans, and budgets
- Identify and pursue grants and other funding sources
- Monitor implementation progress, compare against Project Greenspace system goals, and prepare progress reports (including "State of the City's Greenspace" reports – see Section 6.4 below)

It is expected that DPCD will assume the primary responsibility for greenspace planning and implementation, although DPRCA, Watershed Management, and other departments will also be involved. Specific staff required and breakdown by department can be determined as part of Initiative D1b.

GIS Database Development and Management

This function is closely related to – and a prerequisite for effective – system planning and implementation. It involves developing and maintaining complete inventories of greenspace resources, as well as improving capabilities to use GIS as an analytical tool for planning and implementation purposes such as monitoring progress in meeting system goals. Examples of specific needs include:

- Develop and maintain a complete, up-to-date inventory of core city parkland and recreational facilities (for use in needs analysis, asset management and lifecycle maintenance, etc.)
- Develop and maintain an inventory of recreational facilities managed by other public and private sector providers (for use in conjunction with the core city parkland inventory to develop strategies to meet level of service standards for different types of recreational facilities)
- Develop and maintain an inventory of greenspace not included in the core city parkland inventory (e.g., dedicated open space in new developments, conservation easements, other privately owned greenspace)
- Develop existing GIS information, including the sensitive lands analysis completed by the Georgia Tech Center for GIS, into an inventory of environmentally sensitive lands (for use in greenspace planning, in the review of proposed development projects, and in tracking compliance with the Project Greenspace goal of protecting at least 75% of environmentally sensitive lands)
- Develop and maintain an inventory of public canopy trees for use in tree canopy management

Both DPCD and DPRCA need enhanced GIS staff capabilities related to greenspace, ideally as part of an initiative to improve GIS across city government.

Park and Greenspace Master Planning

This function focuses on developing and implementing master plans for individual city parks and greenspaces in order to realize system goals. Examples of specific activities include:

- Develop an ongoing work program to prepare and update city park master plans
- Conduct or manage individual park master planning projects
- Ensure citizen and stakeholder participation in park master planning processes
- Develop park operational plans and resource management plans in conjunction with master plans
- Maintain communication with stakeholders following completion/adoption of master plans
- Oversee implementation of park master plans and improvement projects

DPRCA will require additional planning and design staff to take on an enhanced park master planning function. Specific staff needs can be determined as part of Initiative D1b.

Public Communications and Outreach

This function involves promoting Project Greenspace to the Atlanta community and working with external partners on implementation actions and projects. Examples of specific activities include:

- Provide a city point of contact to the public on greenspace issues
- Educate the public on Project Greenspace and the critical importance of greenspace to Atlanta's future (develop informational materials, sponsor educational events, maintain an ongoing Project Greenspace website, etc.)
- Provide technical support to individuals and groups involved in managing greenspaces
- "Market" city parks and what they have to offer to residents
- Pursue partnerships with a variety of entities outside of city government (other governmental agencies, nonprofits, institutions, businesses, foundations, developers, private landowners, etc.) on greenspace projects and initiatives

As with the other functions, specific staff requirements and their breakdown by department can be determined as part of Initiative D1b. It is expected that DPCD will assume much of the responsibility in conjunction with its enhanced system planning and coordination function. DPRCA would address marketing of city parks to the public.

6.3 COST ESTIMATES AND FUNDING SOURCES

Growing and managing the City of Atlanta's greenspace system through the year 2030 will require significant levels of investment. This section presents an overview of the cost implications of and potential funding sources for the major recommendations of Project Greenspace related to acquisition, development, and maintenance of core parkland and multi-use trails.

Order-of-magnitude estimates of the costs (in 2008 dollars) of major categories of expenditure to meet identified needs through the year 2030 are provided in Figure 6.4 below. These estimates are based on general assumptions for system planning purposes and more detailed estimates will need to be developed during Project Greenspace implementation to determine actual costs. Sections 6.3.1 to 6.3.4 provide information on the assumptions used to develop the estimates for each category. It must be noted that the figures shown in Figure 6.4 do not necessarily represent costs that will be borne directly by the City of Atlanta, but rather an estimate of the total expenditures that could be required to adequately develop and maintain Atlanta's existing and future greenspaces. Much of the funding should come from sources outside of the City's governmental structure. Local governments around the country are finding new ways to meet public service commitments, often through creative public-private partnerships. Section 5.3 describes in detail a variety of funding sources and other mechanisms to accomplish greenspace goals, including leveraging the services of volunteers and the contributions of private non-profit organizations. Though the City should rely on a number of these sources, several are critical in assuring a reliable funding stream. These funding sources have the most potential to generate significant sums of capital. The most relevant of these is summarized for each section below and are described in greater detail in Section 5.3.

Figure 6.1: Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

Item (Section Reference)	Annual Expenditure
Acquisition and Facility Development	
Acquisition (6.3.1)	$91 million
Park and Facility Development: Existing Parkland (6.3.2)	$13.5 million
Park and Facility Development: Future Parkland (6.3.2)	$22 million
Natatoria and Recreation/Cultural Centers (6.3.3)	$5.5 million
Multi-Use Trail Development (6.3.4)	$8 million
Maintenance	
Lifecycle Management and Replacement (6.3.5)	$10 million
Existing Parkland (6.3.5)	$12 million
Future Parkland (6.3.5)	$12 million
Future Multi-Use Trails (6.3.5)	$3.7 million

6.3.1 Acquisition

Implementing Project Greenspace will require the acquisition of approximately 3,783 acres of additional greenspace by the year 2030 to achieve the recommended target of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents (based on existing city, county, state, and federal parkland acreage of approximately 4,046 acres and a projected 2030 population of 783,000). Of this total, approximately 1,200 acres of new

parkland associated with the BeltLine have been targeted for acquisition through the BeltLine Tax Allocation District and capital campaign. The order-of-magnitude cost to acquire the remaining 2,583 acres of public parkland required to meet the standard has been estimated at approximately $91 million per year through the year 2030 if all the acreage were to be acquired through fee simple purchase.[9] However, a significant portion of this land could be dedicated as parkland through other mechanisms such as dedication, incentives, partnerships (e.g., with the State of Georgia or other levels of government), and the actions of non-profit organizations.

Four key actions should be pursued to support the land acquisition effort:

- Short-term acquisition expenditures should focus on acquiring the land to implement the plan's recommended parks and greenways, generally deferring land improvements until later. The City will thereby secure the maximum benefit before land values increase further as Atlanta continues to grow. This issue is particularly pronounced in Atlanta's urban core where land costs are at a premium.
- To offset the high costs associated with fee-simple land acquisition, the City should move quickly to enact regulations and incentives ensuring that all future development contributes to meeting the new population's parks and recreation needs. With a particular focus on new subdivisions in Atlanta's urbanizing areas, these regulations should address issues such as dedication of parkland and open space; use of impact fees; use of flexible development controls such as clustering and conservation easements; and the protection of sensitive environmental resources (see Section 3.4, Greenspace System Growth Strategies for specific recommendations).
- The City should continue to build partnerships with governmental, institutional, and private landowners, land conservation organizations, private landowners, and others to secure permanent dedication of greenspace.
- The City should increase staff capacity to:

  1). Build partnerships and provide technical support to promote greenspace dedication by others; and

  2). Administer, through the development review process, development incentives and regulations that encourage greenspace.

Potential funding sources for land acquisition include:

- General fund
- General obligation bond
- Bond referendum
- Dedicated sales tax
- Tax allocation district
- Stormwater utility fee
- Governmental funding programs (e.g. Federal Transportation Funding)

9 This estimate assumes that 70% of the required acreage would be acquired at $250,000 per acres and 30% at $2million per acre.

- Real estate transfer fee (if authorized by the State of Georgia)
- Cash-in-lieu of open space requirement

6.3.2 Park and Facility Development

As described above, an additional 3,783 acres of core city parkland is needed to meet the standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents based on the City's population projections for 2030. To develop this additional park acreage with the recreational facilities and other improvements recommended by Project Greenspace, an expenditure of $490 million or approximately $22 million per year could be required. Excluding large facilities such as natatoria and recreation and cultural centers (costs associated with these facilities are described in Section 6.3.3 below), this figure assumes an average $350,000 per acre improvement cost and that 37% of total park acreage will be improved and maintained with recreational facilities based on the percentage of existing city parkland acreage that has been developed and improved. It should be noted that a portion of the improvements could be provided on parkland developed by other public entities, thus reducing costs for the City of Atlanta.

Existing parkland will also need to be upgraded or retrofitted with recreational facilities to meet the demands of Atlanta's growing population. Approximately $13.5 million per year or $276 million in total could be required to retrofit existing city parkland to meet this demand. This figure assumes that (like new parks) 37% of total park acreage will be retrofitted or improved at an average $200,000 per acre cost. Like future parkland and facility development, this cost excludes costs associated with large recreation facilities like natatoria and recreation and cultural centers (see Section 6.3.3).

Potential funding sources for park and facility development include:

- General fund
- General obligation bond
- Bond referendum
- Dedicated sales tax
- Tax allocation district
- Park impact fees
- Park improv. fund
- Park improvement district
- Transient occupancy tax
- Capital improv. fee
- Corporate naming rights

6.3.3 Natatoria and Recreation/Cultural Centers

The anticipated cost to develop new natatoria and recreation and cultural centers is estimated to be approximately $121 million or $5.5 million per year. This is based on the projected need through the year 2030 for 50,000 square feet of additional natatoria space (two facilities) at an estimated cost of $350 per square foot; and for an additional 344,000 square feet of recreation/cultural centers (eleven facilities) at an estimated cost

of $300 per square foot. It should be noted that a portion of the need for new natatoria and recreation centers could be met through partnerships with other recreation providers.

Potential funding sources for natatoria and recreation/cultural centers are similar to those for park and facility development:

- General fund
- General obligation bond
- Bond referendum
- Dedicated sales tax
- Park impact fees
- Park improvement fund
- Park improv. district
- Transient occupancy tax
- Capital improvement fee
- Corporate naming rights

6.3.4 Multi-Use Trail Development

As confirmed by results of the Project Greenspace citizen survey, access to multi-use trails is highly desired by Atlanta residents. Therefore, an additional 246 miles of multi-use trails is needed through the year 2030 (based on the standard of 1 mile per 3,000 residents established in Section 4.1.1). The cost of providing these trails is estimated to be approximately $184.5 million or $8 million per year (based on an average per mile cost of $750,000). Developed in conjunction with the PATH Foundation, a standard cast-in-place concrete construction has been used for all multi-use trails implemented throughout the City. Though cast-in-place concrete is a superior material for long-term durability and certainly suitable for the most intensively used trails such as the BeltLine, alternative paving methods such as asphalt or graded aggregate should be explored in other contexts in order to meet the City's need for trails through 2030 in a cost efficient manner.

Potential funding sources for the development of multi-use trails include:

- General fund
- General obligation bond
- Bond referendum
- Dedicated sales tax
- Stormwater utility fees
- Governmental funding programs (e.g. Federal Transportation Funding)
- Stormwater utility fees used to acquire land in watershed areas for use in trail development

6.3.5 Maintenance

Lifecycle Management and Replacement

Deferred maintenance (i.e., the postponement of upkeep required to maintain park facilities in good condition due to budget constraints) has resulted in the need to improve, upgrade, or replace many existing facilities to an appropriate level. This cost is estimated to be approximately **$10 million per year** and is based on an annual

expenditure of 6% of the total net asset value of existing park facilities.[10] The City's Department of Finance estimates the net asset value of Atlanta's existing park facilities at about $167 million ($144.36 million in building value and $22.69 million in contents).

As a step in achieving this $10 million target, the approved 2007 Capital Budget included a $1.9 million allocation for deferred maintenance and replacement costs. No budget allocation for this specific purpose existed prior to 2007.

Though Atlanta's parks and facilities will increase in number and value as Project Greenspace goals are realized through the year 2030, the $10 million annual expenditure required for lifecycle management and replacement is likely to remain constant or decrease as deferred maintenance needs are addressed, new facilities come on line, and enhanced maintenance standards and expenditures (see below) take effect. In the long term, lifecycle management and replacement costs could be reduced to as low as 3% of the total net asset value of the City's future park facilities.

Existing Parkland

Existing parks and recreation facilities should be maintained to high quality standards appropriate to a world-class greenspace system. Based on per-acre maintenance cost standards for existing parks developed by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (DPRCA), the City's current annual expenditure on park maintenance is approximately $8.15 million or roughly $6,118 per acre (assumes 37% of the City's existing 3,724 acres is maintained, see section 6.3.2).

The City has made great strides in increasing its maintenance budget in recent years and has made a commitment to increasing this budget further to an average of $7,700 per acre annually by 2010. However, this program has been affected by recent budget cutbacks. Based on comparison with the budgets of other cities across the country, $8,000 per acre is a typical average expenditure for well-maintained park systems. Many cities also manage undeveloped parkland to cover costs such as tree or invasive species removal at an approximate cost of $400 per acre per year. Based on these recommended national benchmarks, the City's annual maintenance costs for its existing parkland should be **approximately $12 million**.[11] Of this cost, it is anticipated that 60% would be devoted to maintenance staff and the remaining 40% would be devoted to other maintenance costs such as equipment and supplies. It should be noted, however, that the larger the acreage maintained, the greater the ability to distribute maintenance costs more efficiently. In theory, therefore, the per-acre maintenance cost should decrease as Atlanta's greenspace system grows.

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10 Six percent of net asset value is a typical figure recommended for park systems with significant deferred maintenance needs.

11 Assumes that of the City's 3,724 acres of existing parkland, 1,378 acres (37%) would be maintained at $8,000 per acre per year and 2,346 acres (63%) would be minimally maintained at $400 per acre per year. Costs associated with maintaining existing multi-use trails ($225,000 based on an annual per-mile maintenance cost of $15,000 for 15 miles of trails) are assumed to be covered by the overall estimate.

Future Parkland

As described in Section 6.3.1, an additional 3,724 acres of core parkland is required to provide the recommended 10 acres per 1,000 residents through the year 2030. The potential cost to maintain this additional acreage is estimated at **approximately $12 million**,[12] based on annual per-acre expenditures of $8,000 for developed parkland and $400 for minimally maintained undeveloped parkland (see Existing Parkland). Like the maintenance costs associated with existing parkland described above, it is anticipated that 60% would be devoted to maintenance staff and the remaining 40% would be devoted to other maintenance costs such as equipment and supplies.

While the cost estimate for existing parkland provided above applies to land owned and managed by the City of Atlanta, it should be noted that a portion of future parkland needs could be provided and maintained by other public entities, thus reducing maintenance costs to the City. Also, as described above, the per-acre maintenance cost should decrease as Atlanta's greenspace system grows.

Future Multi-Use Trails

A significant increase in the linear miles of multi-use trails is proposed for Atlanta's future greenspace system. To maintain the additional 246 miles of trails, **an annual expenditure of $3.7 million** would be required (based on a per-mile maintenance cost of $15,000). Costs associated with maintaining multi-use trails include general sweeping, security, and police patrol.

Potential funding sources for maintenance include:

- General fund
- General obligation bond
- Bond referendum
- Dedicated sales tax
- Park maintenance district
- Maintenance endowment fund
- Revenue capture (land leases/concessions, user fees)

6.4 PLAN MONITORING

Project Greenspace should not be thought of as a static plan but rather as a continuing process to create and maintain a world-class greenspace system. Preparation of this document is the first step in this process and is intended as the foundation and framework for ongoing, more detailed planning and implementation efforts. Thus it is important to establish a system to monitor progress in achieving the Action Plan initiatives, measure success in growing and managing the greenspace system, and make adjustments as circumstances change.

12 Assumes that of the additional 3,783 acres required, 1,400 acres (37%) will be maintained at $8,000 per acre per year and 2,383 acres (63%) will be minimally maintained at $400 per acre per year.

Components of this monitoring system include:

- **Measures of Progress:** The quantitative targets established for Project Greenspace (see Table 6.2) should be used as indicators to track progress related to growing the greenspace system, preserving greenspace resources, and providing recreational facilities to meet citizens' needs. This will require:
  - » Upfront work to complete inventories of greenspace resources (e.g., environmentally sensitive lands and recreational facilities) in a digital format usable for monitoring purposes
  - » Updates to these inventories on an ongoing basis
- **Action Plan**: The City should maintain a schedule of actions to be taken to implement the initiatives laid out in Table 6.1 over a five-year period. The most detail should be provided for the first year so as to define the greenspace-related work program for the upcoming year for city departments engaged in greenspace issues. Actions for the subsequent four years can be more generally defined to provide guidance for planning purposes.
- **Annual Monitoring:** Progress in creating the greenspace system should be assessed on an annual basis. This assessment should:
  - » Identify the previous year's accomplishments and obstacles encountered
  - » Measure system-wide progress using the quantitative targets
  - » Update the five-year action schedule, including the Project Greenspace priorities and work program for the upcoming year

  The results of the annual assessment should be published in a "State of the City's Greenspace Report."
- **Plan Updates:** More extensive updates to the Project Greenspace Plan should be conducted at five-year intervals. The updates should include:
  - » Review of progress made in growing, managing, and building capacity for the greenspace system during the previous five years in relation to the Project Greenspace goals, strategies, and targets
  - » Public input to determine current needs and perspectives regarding greenspace issues
  - » Revisions to the goals, strategies, and targets based on the progress review and public input
  - » Formulation of a new action plan and schedule for the upcoming five years

As called for in Section 6.2 and in Chapter 5.0 as part of capacity building for Project Greenspace, additional city staff resources will be required to carry out the monitoring program. Currently, greenspace responsibilities are divided among several departments. The Green Team brings together representatives of departments and agencies from inside and outside city government who are involved in greenspace issues but its mission is currently focused on acquisition. It is proposed that the Green Team's mission be expanded with increased staff support to take on a broader role in coordinating implementation of Project Greenspace, including managing

the monitoring program. In this scenario the dedicated greenspace staff would be responsible for preparing the annual reports and updates to the action schedule. The actual tasks defined in the work program can be carried out by staff within various departments as appropriate under the coordinating umbrella of the Green Team.

Figure 6.2: Action Plan - Initiatives

*Note: This figure contains a comprehensive listing of planning and development, regulatory, management, and capacity-building initiatives recommended by Project Greenspace. It is intended as a framework for development of a more detailed work program that further prioritizes and phases the initiatives commensurate with available resources. *[Required Resources / Related Initiative(s)]*

A: Planning and Development Initiatives

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A1a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Improve city capabilities to inventory and monitor greenspace (5.1)	Bureau of Planning	Various, based on data needs, may include: DWM, DPW, OEAM	• **Step 1:** Develop listing and schedule of greenspace data to be inventoried and monitored on a periodic basis; • **Step 2:** Retain/commit additional staff as needed to coordinate or conduct periodic updates of greenspace data	Steps 1 and 2	N/A	N/A
A1b. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Environmentally sensitive lands and privately owned parcels with high greenspace value (3.1.3, 3.4.3)	DWM	BOP	• **Step 1:** Develop the 2002 Greenspace Acquisition Support System by GIT Center for GIS into a definitive inventory of environmentally sensitive lands; • **Step 2:** Retain GIT Center for GIS or develop internal capabilities to update the inventory on an annual basis for parcels protected or lost to development	Steps 1 and 2	Step 2 (on-going)	Step 2 (on-going)
A1c. Maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Recreational facilities and programs provided by the City and other public and private sector entities (4.1.1, 4.1.2)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning, OEAM, private recreation providers (e.g. YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)	• **Step 1:** Continue to assemble existing data on recreation facilities and programs from all City agencies; • **Step 2:** Identify all private recreation providers and collect data on existing facilities in their respective systems (if reliable data is not available, provide city staff to inventory existing facilities); **Step 3:** Field verify all recreational facilities, locate using GPS system; **Step 4:** Update database on an annual basis *[Dependent on established partnerships with private recreation providers (see Partnership No. F6)]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Step 4 (on-going)	Step 4 (on-going)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A1d. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Facility and infrastructure conditions in city parks and greenspaces (4.2)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning, DWM	• **Step 1:** Develop qualitative system to measure the condition of facilities; • **Step 2**: Conduct assessment of all facilities; • **Step 3:** update database on an annual basis	Steps 1 and 2	Step 3 (on-going)	Step 3 (on-going)
A1e. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Canopy trees within public rights-of-way and on public properties (4.4.3)	DPRCA, Trees Atlanta	Bureau of Planning, DPW	• **Step 1:** Field locate trees within public rights-of way and on public properties using GPS, note species and general condition of each tree; • **Step 2:** Update database on an annual basis or after known tree removal (i.e. storm events, disease control, etc.)	Step 1	Step 2 (on-going)	Step 2 (on-going)
A1f. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources: Historic resources related to the greenspace system as part of completion of the Comprehensive Historic Resource Survey (4.4.4)	Urban Design Commission	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA, Atlanta Battlefield Com., Atlanta Convention/ Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Atlanta History Center	• **Step 1:** Develop a work program to inventory greenspace-related historic resources as a part of the Comprehensive Historic Resource Survey; • **Step 2**: Complete inventory; • **Step 3:** Maintain inventory on an ongoing basis as part of GIS database	Steps 1 and 2	Step 3 (on-going)	Step 3 (on-going)
A1g. Create a permanent staff position for a Greenspace Coordinator to manage the coordination between Lead and Supporting Partners and to implement the goals and priorities of Project Greenspace	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA	• **Step 1:** Define job description and hire a qualified staff person	Step 1		

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A2. Prepare action plans to implement the greenway corridors identified by Project Greenspace. Begin with the Peachtree, North Utoy, and South River Greenways as priorities; address greenspace preservation, stormwater management, and compatible recreation as integrated objectives (3.3, 3.4.3, 4.4.2)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA,	DWM, Green Team, BeltLine, Inc. (as appropriate)	• **Step 1**: Select one greenway described in Project Greenspace to develop as a model; • **Step 2:** Identify suitable land to complete greenway; • **Step 3:** Acquire and/or work with land owners to secure land for greenway; • **Step 4:** Prepare a phased master plan for the implementation of greenway improvements; • **Step 5:** Implement plan; • **Step 6**: Repeat steps 2 through 5 for remaining identified greenways *[Dependent upon established partnerships with land conservation groups (Partnership No. F1) and land owners (Partnership No. F3), Assumes expanded function of Green Team with dedicated staff (see Section 5.1)]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Steps 3 (cont.), 4, and 5	Steps 5 (cont.) and 6
A3. Implement master plan for the Chattahoochee greenway/ citywide park (3.3)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, DWM	• **Step 1**: Acquire and/or work with land owners to secure land for greenway/citywide park; • **Step 2:** Secure funding to conduct detailed design and construct park; • **Step 3**: Retain consultant to develop detailed design and contract documents; • **Step 4:** Implement plan *[Dependent upon established partnerships with land conservation groups (Partnership No. F1) and land owners (Partnership No. F3), Assumes expanded function of Green Team with dedicated staff (see Section 5.1)]*	Step 1	Steps 2, 3, 4, and 5	Step 5 (cont.)
A4. Conduct a comprehensive service area/distribution analysis of community parks to eliminate duplication, improve existing parks that are undersized and/or contain undersized facilities, and provide new parks in underserved areas (3.3)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA	• **Step 1:** Retain in-house staff or park planning consultant to prepare plan; • **Step 2:** Conduct service area/distribution analysis; • **Step 3:** Develop phased program for upgrading/ consolidating/expanding community parks; • **Step 4:** Prepare capital improvements budget to implement the plan's recommendations; • **Step 5:** Implement plan	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Step 5 (cont.)	Step 5 (cont.)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A5. Develop a major special events venue as Atlanta's citywide gathering place at Fort McPherson (3.3)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, McPherson Redevt. Authority, Bureau of Planning, DPRCA, Atlanta Convention/ Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce	• **Step 1:** Identify suitable site based on criteria established by Project Greenspace (Fort McPherson preferred) and undertake a feasibility study; • **Step 2**: Acquire land as necessary; • **Step 3:** Retain consultant to develop master plan or continue to work with existing Fort McPherson consultant as applicable; • **Step 4:** Implement plan	Step 1, 2, and 3	Step 4	N/A
A6. Develop a public square to function as Buckhead's central community gathering space. Evaluate the suitability of Lenox Road at Lenox Square as a potential site for square and/or expanded streetscape (3.3)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA,	Green Team, Atlanta Convention/ Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, CID, DPW	• **Step 1:** Identify suitable site based on criteria established by Project Greenspace; • **Step 2:** Acquire land as necessary; • **Step 3**: Retain consultant to develop master plan; • **Step 4:** Implement plan *[Assumes expanded function of Green Team (see Section 5.1); Coordination with relevant CID required]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Step 4	
A7. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing Civil War battlefield parks (3.3)	Georgia Civil War Commission	Atlanta Battlefields Commission, Bureau of Planning	• **Step 1:** Retain historic resources consultant or in-house staff to prepare feasibility study; • **Step 2:** Evaluate sites of most historic value in relationship to available land; • **Step 3:** Develop action plan for the phased implementation of battlefield parks	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
A8. Continue implementation of a citywide trail system based on Project Greenspace priorities. Define a phased program for trail construction and complete the BeltLine trail system and implement other trail priorities identified in Project Greenspace (3.3, 3.4.3, 4.1.1)	DPRCA	PATH Foundation, DCPD	• **Step 1:** Work with the PATH Foundation to prioritize and finalize proposed trail alignments defined by Project Greenspace; • **Step 2**: Secure funding to implement trails based on priorities identified in Step 1; • **Step 3:** Retain consultant if necessary to conduct engineering feasibility and prepare contract documents; • **Step 4**: Construct trails in identified phases	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Steps 1 and 2 (cont.), 3, and 4	Steps 1 and 2 (cont.), 3 (cont.), and 4 (cont.)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A9. Develop a network of Complete Streets as part of the greenspace system. Identify priority network of Complete Streets. Evaluate the Peachtree corridor as a north-south green connector street and Martin Luther King Jr. Dr./Decatur St/DeKalb Ave. as an east-west green connector (3.3, 3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning	DPW	• **Step 1:** Identify priority network of complete streets in conjunction with the *Connect Atlanta Plan*; • **Step 2**: Develop plans for each identified complete street; • Step 3: Identify suitable locations for and test feasibility of alternative storm water management techniques as described in Project Greenspace; • Step 4: Implement plan	Step 1	Steps 2, 3, and 4	Steps 2 (cont.), 3 (cont.), and 4 (cont.)
A10. Establish a process to secure tax delinquent properties suitable as greenspace (3.4.1)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, Bureau of Planning, Fulton County Land Bank Authority	• **Step 1:** Partner with Fulton County Land Bank Authority and similar Authority in DeKalb County; • **Step 2**: Evaluate tax delinquent properties suitable for greenspace based on the criteria set forth in Project Greenspace; • **Step 3:** Review tax delinquent land availability on an annual basis	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Step 3 (on-going)	Step 3 (on-going)
A11. Implement a program to meet citizens' needs for recreational facilities over time. Conduct a distribution/gap analysis of recreational facilities to identify and address unmet needs, including recommendations for the following specific facilities: picnic pavilions, indoor swimming pools, athletic complexes (youth/teen football, basketball, baseball/softball, soccer, tennis), rugby and lacrosse fields, boundless playgrounds, off-leash dog parks, skate parks (4.1.1)	DPRCA, private recreation providers (e.g. YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)	Bureau of Planning	• **Step 1**: Ensure recreational facilities inventory and population projections are current; • **Step 2**: Update distribution/gap analysis using current GIS data compiled from Initiative No. A1c and the established level of service standards; **Step 3:** Update priorities for the provision of recreational facilities based on the results of the analysis; • **Step 4**: Work with private recreation providers to fill gaps; • **Step 5**: Develop plans for needed recreational facilities, retain consultants or develop in-house; • **Step 6**: Develop cost estimates; • **Step 7:** Prepare capital improvements budget or secure funding to implement prioritized recreational facilities; • **Step 8:** Implement recreational facilities; • **Step 9**: Repeat steps 1 through 8 on an annual basis *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1c); Dependent on established partnerships with private recreation providers (see Partnership No. F6)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7	Steps 8 and 9 (on-going)	Steps 8 and 9 (on-going)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A12. Implement a phased program of repairs and lifecycle replacements to park facilities and infrastructure (4.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Establish life cycle replacement standards for all facilities and park furnishings; • **Step 2**: Evaluate repairs/lifecycle replacement needs based on data compiled form Initiative No. A1d; • **Step 3:** Set priorities and establish capital improvements budget to meet/implement standards; • **Step 4**: Identify and retain additional staff needed to meet/implement standards; • **Step 5:** Implement life cycle replacement standards; • **Step 6**: Repeat steps 2 through 5 on an annual basis *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1d), integrate with development of maintenance management work order system (see Initiative C2c)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Step 6 (on-going)	Step 6 (on-going)
A13a. Prepare resource management plans for parks and greenspaces: Natural resource management plans (4.4.1)	DPRCA	DWM	• **Step 1:** Retain consultants or develop in-house capabilities to prepare natural resources management plan(s); • **Step 2:** Select one or more greenspaces to prepare model natural resource management plan(s)• **Step 3:** Inventory natural resources, use current GIS data compiled from Initiative Nos. A1b and A1e and other field surveys; • **Step 4:** Develop strategies, guidelines, and standards to preserve and enhance identified natural resources; • **Step 5:** Implement plan recommendations [Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources *(see Initiative Nos. A1b, and A1e)][Coordinate preparation of resource management plans with preparation of park master plans where possible (see Initiative A.16)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4	Step 5; repeat Steps 1-4 for other greenspaces	Step 5 (cont.)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A13b. Prepare resource management plans for parks and greenspaces: Cultural resource management plans (4.4.4)	Urban Design Commission	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	• **Step 1:** Retain consultants or develop in-house staff capabilities to prepare cultural resources management plan(s); • **Step 2:** Select one or more greenspaces to prepare model cultural resource management plan(s)• **Step 3:** Inventory cultural resources, use current GIS data compiled from Initiative No. A1f and other field surveys; • **Step 4**: Develop strategies, guidelines, and standards to preserve and enhance identified cultural resources; • **Step 5:** Implement the plan's recommendations *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1f)] [Coordinate preparation of resource management plans with preparation of park master plans where possible (see Initiative A.16)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4	Step 5; repeat Steps 1-4 for other greenspaces	Step 5 (cont.)
A13c. Prepare resource management plans for parks and greenspaces: Watershed Improvement Plans (4.4.2)	DWM	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	• **Step 1:** Retain consultants or develop in-house staff capabilities to prepare watershed management plans; • **Step 2:** Inventory and analyze the watershed's existing conditions, use current GIS data compiled from Initiative No. A1b and other field surveys; • **Step 3:** Develop strategies, guidelines, and standards to preserve and enhance the watershed; • **Step 4:** Implement the plan's recommendations *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1b)*]	Steps 1, 2, and 3	Step 4	Step 4 (cont.)
A13d. Prepare resource management plans for parks and greenspaces: park management plans to inform capital improvement budget requests (n/a)	DRPCA	Bureau of Planning	• **Step 1**: Conduct tour of park with park friends groups, park maintenance, and park design to identify near-term tasks to be accomplished and long-term needs; • **Step 2**: Prepare report that summarizes the group's findings; • **Step 3**: Repeat steps 1 through 3 on an annual basis as needed Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources *(see Initiative Nos. A1a, A1b, A1c, A1d, and A1e), integrate with development of maintenance management work order system (see Initiative C2c)]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3 as needed	Steps 1, 2, and 3 as needed	Steps 1, 2, and 3 as needed

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
A14. Initiate a "Green Atlanta" canopy tree planting program (4.4.3)	City Arborist	DPRCA, Trees Atlanta, Bureau of Planning, City Arborist, DWM	• **Step 1:** Ensure GIS canopy tree inventory in public rights-of-way/property is up to date; • **Step 2**: Coordinate with Trees Atlanta to develop tree planting program and annual goals for the provision of trees based on the inventory; • **Step 3:** Establish capital improvements budget for the operation of the program and provision of trees; • **Step 4**: Develop opportunities for Atlanta's residents and school children to participate; • **Step 5:** Publicize the program; • **Step 6:** Repeat steps 1 through 3 on an annual basis *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1e), Integrate with the development of planting and maintenance standards for canopy trees (see Initiative No. C5)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Step 6 (on-going)	Step 6 (on-going)
A15. Prepare and implement streetscape classifications and a variety of standards (3.3)	DPCD	Bureau of Planning, DPW, DWM, DPRCA, Trees Atlanta	• **Step 1:** Develop a streetscape classifications and standards plan; • **Step 2:** Develop capital improvements budget for streetscape improvements based on the plan's recommendations; • **Step 3**: Work with Trees Atlanta to implement the plan *[Integrate with the development of planting and maintenance standards for canopy trees (see Initiative No. C5)]*	Steps 1 and 2	Step 3	Step 3 (cont.)
A16. Prepare and implement master plans for Atlanta's parks over time (4.5)	DPRCA	NPUs, Bureau of Planning	• **Step 1**: Prioritize parks for master planning on an annual basis; • **Step 2:** Coordinate with NPU's as relevant; • **Step 3:** Develop in-house staff capabilities supplemented by consultants as necessary to prepare phased master plan for park improvements; • **Step 4**: Secure funding to implement the master plan's recommendations over time; • **Step 5:** Implement plan; • **Step 6:** Repeat steps 1 through 5 as necessary to complete park master plans	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4	Steps 5 and 6 (on-going)	Step 6 (on-going)

B: Regulatory Initiatives

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
B1. Revise the existing open space requirements for residential, commercial, and mixed-use development (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	Mayor/City Council, Zoning Review Board, Urban Design Commission, NPUs	• **Step 1:** Define standards for usable, ground-level open space in new development projects; • **Step 2**: Develop draft revisions; • **Step 3:** Take draft revisions through the adoption process *[Prepare in conjunction with Initiative D4b]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
B2. Revise the Impact Fee Ordinance based on the park and recreation provision goals established by Project Greenspace (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	Mayor/City Council, Zoning Review Board, Urban Design Commission, NPUs	• **Step 1:** Evaluate existing impact fee ordinance based on Project Greenspace guidance; • **Step 2:** Develop draft revisions to ordinance addressing both residential and commercial development; • **Step 3:** Take draft revisions through the adoption process; • **Step 4:** Generate ordinance awareness for developers; • **Step 5:** On an annual basis, assess the need to revise the ordinance based on the findings of Initiative Nos. A1c and A1d *[Dependent on annual updates of provision and condition of recreation resources (see Initiative Nos. A1c and A1d)]* *[Prepare in conjunction with Initiative D4c]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4	Step 5 (on-going)	Step 5 (on-going)
B3. Promote the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance to emphasize greater public access and outdoor recreational uses (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	Mayor/City Council, Zoning Review Board, Urban Design Commission, DWM, NPUs	• **Step 1:** Establish model conservation easement; • **Step 2:** Establish management endowment to provide management and technical assistance; • **Step 3:** Develop draft Conservation Subdivision ordinance; • **Step 4:** Take draft revisions through the adoption process	Steps 1 and 2	Step 3 and 4	N/A
B4. Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to preserve greenspace and to increase the Citywide inventory (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	Mayor/City Council, Urban Design Commission, DWM NPUs	• **Step 1**: Develop draft TDR program including sending and receiving areas; • **Step 2:** Take draft TDR program through the adoption process; • **Step 3:** Generate program awareness for developers	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A

NOTE: Action Plan initiatives are recommendations and will not become policy until City Council approves specific ordinances

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
B5. Review and strengthen regulations where appropriate to protect sensitive environmental resources: *Chapter 158 (Vegetation/Tree Protection), Article II (Soil Erosion)/Article X (Post Development Stormwater Management), Article VI (Flood Area Regulations), Article VII (Riparian Buffer Requirements), Article VIII (Wetland Protection Regulations)* (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning, DWM , Bureau of Buildings	Mayor/City Council, Zoning Review Board, Urban Design Commission, NPUs	• **Step 1:** Conduct internal review of relevant environmental regulations to identify areas for improvement based on Project Greenspace goals; • **Step 2:** Develop draft revisions to regulations; • **Step 3:** Take draft regulations through adoption process	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
B6. Strengthen tree planting requirements for new developments (4.4.3)	DPCD	Mayor/City Council, Zoning Review Board, Urban Design Commission, Arborist Division	• **Step 1**: Conduct internal review of relevant tree planting ordinances to identify areas for improvement based on Project Greenspace goals; • **Step 2:** Develop draft revisions to regulations; • **Step 3:** Take revised ordinances through adoption process	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
B7. Increase the focus on greenspace opportunities in the development review and approval process (5.1)	Bureau of Planning	Urban Design Commission, DPRCA Park Design	• **Step 1:** Assess limitations in the existing development review and approval process; • **Step 2:** Identify opportunities to integrate Project Greenspace recommendations into the development review and approval process; • **Step 3:** Adopt revisions to the process; • **Step 4:** Generate awareness among the development community	Steps 1, 2, and 3	4 (on-going)	4 (on-going)

C: Management Initiatives

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
C1a. Evaluate park management and operations for opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery: Develop recreation program management plan, including standards for core programs offered by the City (4.1.2)	DPCRA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Prepare comprehensive inventory of recreational programs provided by the City and other recreational providers; • **Step 2:** Confirm core recreational programs offered by the City; • **Step 3:** Establish standards for the management of core recreational programs; • **Step 4:** Establish budget to meet/implement standards; • **Step 5:** Identify and retain additional staff needed to meet/implement standards; • **Step 6:** Implement standards; • **Step 7**: Repeat steps 1 through 5 on an annual basis *[Dependent upon data provided by private recreation providers (see Initiative A1c); Dependent on established partnerships with private recreation providers (see Partnership No. F6); Prepare in conjunction with Initiative Nos. C1b and C1c]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7	Step 6 (on-going)	*Step 6 (on-going)*
C1b. Evaluate park management and operations for opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery: Prepare and implement business plans for core recreational programs and facilities (4.1.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1**: Confirm core programs for which business plans are to be provided; • **Step 2:** Prepare business plan and outcome-based performance measures for each core program; • **Step 3:** Implement business plan; • **Step 4**: Monitor the progress and success of each program; • **Step 5:** Repeat steps 1 through 3 every five years, implement step 4 on an on-going basis *[Prepare in conjunction with Initiative Nos. C1a and C1c]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Steps 4 (on-going) and 5	Step 5 (on-going)
C1c. Evaluate park management and operations for opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery: Improve tracking of recreational programs and facilities, including the true costs of providing services and performing maintenance tasks and functions (4.1.2, 4.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Develop listing and schedule of recreation programs and facilities to be inventoried and monitored on a periodic basis; • **Step 2:** Retain/commit additional staff as needed to coordinate or conduct periodic updates of data; • **Step 3:** Evaluate provision/maintenance costs as part of business plans to be prepared in Initiative No. C1b *[Prepare in conjunction with Initiative Nos. C1a and C1b, Integrate with maintenance management work order system (see Initiative No. C2c)]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
C1d. Evaluate park management and operations for opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery: Consider reorganizing the Recreation Division to improve effectiveness of facility program and management (4.1.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Based on the outcome of Initiative Nos. C1a, C1b, and C1c, evaluate existing staff capacity and organizational structure to effectively implement/manage recreation programs and facilities; • **Step 2:** Reorganize Recreation Division as needed *[Dependent upon successful completion of Initiative Nos. C1a, C1b, and C1c; Prepare in conjunction with Initiative No. C2d]*	Steps 1 and 2	N/A	N/A
C2a. Identify opportunities for continued improvement of park maintenance: Continue to develop and implement recreational facility maintenance standards (4.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Continue to establish maintenance standards for all facilities and park furnishings using data compiled form Initiative No. A1d; • **Step 2:** Evaluate condition of facilities and park furnishings; • **Step 3:** Establish capital improvements budget to meet/implement standards; • **Step 4:** Identify and retain additional staff needed to meet/implement standards; • **Step 5**: Implement maintenance standards; • **Step 6:** Repeat steps 2 through 5 on an annual basis *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1d), integrate with development of maintenance management work order system (see Initiative No. C2c)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	Step 6 (on-going)	Step 6 (on-going)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
C2b. Identify opportunities for continued improvement of park maintenance: Develop training program for DPRCA employees in maintenance/ resource management standards (4.2, 4.4.1)	DPRCA	DWM	• **Step 1:** Prepare comprehensive training program based on the established maintenance standards prepared in Initiative No. C2a, the lifecycle replacement standards developed in Initiative A12, and the canopy tree planting and maintenance standards developed in Initiative No. C5; • **Step 2**: Allocate staff time to participate in training program; • **Step 3:** Initiate training program; • Step 4: Repeat training as standards change/evolve; • **Step 5:** Conduct training for all new employees *[Dependent upon the completion of the lifecycle standards developed in Initiative No. A12, the canopy tree planting and maintenance standards developed in Initiative No. C5, and the maintenance standards developed in Initiative No. C2a]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Steps 4 (on-going) and 5 (on-going)	Steps 4 (on-going) and 5 (on-going)
C2c. Identify opportunities for continued improvement of park maintenance: Implement maintenance management work order system (4.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Implement computerized work order system for park maintenance; • **Step 2:** Integrate work order system with established maintenance and lifecycle standards *(see Initiative Nos. A12 and C2a)*; • **Step 3:** Integrate with GIS data and regular monitoring of facility and infrastructure conditions in city parks and greenspaces *(see Initiative No. A12)*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
C2d. Identify opportunities for continued improvement of park maintenance: Identify possible organizational changes to improve maintenance efficiency (regional maintenance structure, managers for large parks) (4.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Based on the outcome of Initiative Nos. C1a, C1b, and C1c, evaluate existing staff capacity and organizational structure to effectively implement/manage recreation programs and facilities; • **Step 2:** Reorganize Recreation Division as needed *[Dependent upon completion of Initiatives C1a, C1b, and C1c; Integrate with reorganization of Recreation Division developed in Initiative No. C1d]*	Steps 1 and 2	N/A	N/A

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
C3. Develop park ranger program to enhance park security (4.3)	DPRCA	Atlanta Police Department	• **Step 1:** Establish feasibility of park ranger program; • **Step 2:** Identify costs for the provision of program; • **Step 3:** Retain/acquire additional staff/equipment resources or re-assign existing to park ranger program; • **Step 4:** Implement park ranger program *[Dependent on established partnership with Atlanta Police Department (see Initiative No. F7)]*	Steps 1 and 2	Steps 3 and 4	N/A
C4. Develop and implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and standards (4.3)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Develop CPTED principles/standards; • **Step 2:** Incorporate established CPTED principles/standards into park master plans (see Initiative No. A16); • **Step 3:** Evaluate existing parks and facilities for needed improvements to meet the established standards; • **Step 4:** Develop capital improvements budget to implement standards; • **Step 5:** Implement standards	Steps 1, 2, 3 (as applies), 4, and 5	Steps 3 (as applies) and 4	Steps 3 (as applies) and 4
C5. Develop canopy tree species, planting, and maintenance standards (4.4.3)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning, Urban Design Commission, DPW, CID as relevant, city arborist, Trees Atlanta	• **Step 1:** Develop canopy tree planting and maintenance standards; • **Step 2:** Evaluate condition of existing canopy trees based on GIS data collected as part of Initiative No. A1e; • **Step 3:** Establish capital improvements budget to meet/implement standards; • **Step 4:** Identify and retain additional staff (e.g. arborists) as needed to meet/implement standards; • **Step 5:** Work with Trees Atlanta to meet/implement standards as needed; • **Step 6:** Lead partner and supporting partners meet quarterly to review standards and issues *[Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1e); Dependent on established partnerships with non-profit organizations and conservation groups (see Partnership Nos. F1 and F6)]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	Steps 4 (on-going), 5 (on-going), and 6 (on-going)	Steps 4 (on-going), 5 (on-going), and 6 (on-going)

D: Capacity Building Initiatives

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
D1a. Build capacity within city government to grow and manage greenspace: Improve city coordination/ organizational structure to focus on greenspace issues/ hire a Greenspace Coordinator and Staff (5.1)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, DWM, DPW, Green Team, ADA, ABI, OEAM	• **Step 1:** Evaluate existing coordination/organizational structure to effectively implement/ manage Project Greenspace recommendations; • **Step 2:** Develop reorganization plan to address identified needs [Assumes expanded function of Green Team with dedicated staff (see Section 5.1)]	Steps 1 and 2	N/A	*N/A*
D1b. Build capacity within city government to grow and manage greenspace: Increase staff resources for greenspace planning, design, and implementation (5.1)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	DPRCA, DWM, DPW, Green Team, ADA, ABI	• **Step 1:** Develop budget to implement changes as identified in Initiative No. D1a; • **Step 2:** Retain or re-assign staff as necessary; • **Step 3:** Implement new coordination/organizational structure *[Assumes completion of Initiative No. D1a]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D1c. Build capacity within city government to grow and manage greenspace: Improve city procedures related to greenspace acquisition (5.1)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, Fulton County Land Bank Authority, ADA, ABI, OEAM	• **Step 1:** Evaluate existing greenspace acquisition procedures to effectively implement Project Greenspace recommendations; • **Step 2:** Develop new procedures to address identified needs *[Prepare in coordination with Initiative No. D1a as relevant]*	Steps 1 and 2	N/A	N/A
D2a. Initiate an ongoing greenspace public outreach program: Develop a public outreach program for Project Greenspace and increase resources for greenspace marketing and outreach (5.2)	Office of the Mayor	Bureau of Planning, DRPCA	• **Step 1:** Assign Public Information Managers from relevant agencies to develop outreach/ marketing program; • **Step 2:** Prepare capital improvements budget to implement/manage the plan; • **Step 3:** Implement the marketing/outreach plan *[Requires strong support from the Office of the Mayor; implement in coordination with Initiative No. D2b]*	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D2b. Initiate an ongoing greenspace public outreach program: Retain and empower greenspace "champions"(5.2)	Office of the Mayor	Various	• **Step 1:** Brief the Mayor and City Council of Project Greenspace goals and objectives; • **Step 2:** Identify appropriate "champions" (preferably recognized by the general public - corporate leaders, local celebrities, etc.) relative to the goals and objectives; • **Step 3:** Develop specific roles and responsibilities of the selected "champions" based on the public outreach plan developed in Initiative No. D1a; • **Step 4:** Retain/empower selected "champions" *[Requires strong support from the Office of the Mayor and City Council; implement in coordination with Initiative No. D2a]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4	N/A	N/A

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
D3a. Establish an Atlanta-based private land conservation trust (3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning	TPL, Georgia Land Trust Service Center, The Conservation Fund (TCF)	• **Step 1:** Work with TPL, the Georgia Land Trust Service Center, The Conservation Fund, and others as appropriate to test feasibility of an Atlanta-based land trust; • Step 2: Establish mission and incorporate as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; • **Step 3:** Retain volunteers/staff; • **Step 4**: Initiate land trust *[Dependent on established partnerships with non-profit organizations and conservation groups (see Partnership No. F1)]*	Steps 1 and 2	Steps 3 and 4	N/A
D3b. Encourage creation of a non-profit entity to purchase, invest in, maintain, and manage smaller parks and community gardens (3.4.3)	DRPCA	Bureau of Planning, Park Pride, NPUs	• **Step 1:** Park Pride and interested NPUs to determine feasibility of establishing a non-profit that maintains and manages small parks and community gardens; • Step 2: Establish mission and incorporate as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; • **Step 3:** Retain volunteers/staff	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D4a. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Greenspace Acquisition Revolving Fund replenished by dedicated funding (3.4.1)	DRPCA	Bureau of Planning, Finance Department	• **Step 1:** Develop draft Acquisition Revolving Fund program; • **Step 2:** Identify appropriate funding sources; • **Step 3:** Take draft program through the legislative adoption process	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D4b. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: "Cash-in-lieu of" dedicated on-site open space provision (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	Finance Department	• **Step 1:** Develop draft "cash-in-lieu of" program; • **Step 2**: Take draft program through the legislative adoption process in conjunction with Initiative B.1; • **Step 3:** Generate program awareness for developers	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D4c. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Park impact fees to offset new development costs in the context of Project Greenspace goals and targets (3.4.2)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, Finance Department	• **Step 1:** Establish impact fee schedule for residential (per residential unit) and commercial (per square foot) development in conjunction with preparation of a revised Impact Fee Ordinance (Initiative B2); • **Step 2:** Based on level-of-service recommendations established by Project Greenspace, identify specific actions for how the collected impact fees are to be used; • **Step 3:** On an annual basis, reassess use of impact fees based on the findings of Initiative Nos. A1c and A1d and revise fee schedule as necessary *[Dependent on annual updates of provision and condition of recreation resources (see Initiative Nos. A1c and A1d)] / [Prepare in conjunction with Initiative B2]*	Steps 1 and 2	Step 3 (on-going)	Step 3 (on-going)

Initiative (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Critical Steps*	Time Frame (YRS)		
				Short-Term 0-5	Mid-Term 5-15	Long-Term 15+
D4d. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Sustainable funding program to support phased development and operations of city-provided recreational facilities and programs (4.1.1, 4.1.2)	Bureau of Planning	Finance Department	• **Step 1:** Develop draft program; • **Step 2:** Identify specific actions for how the program's funds are to be used; • **Step 3:** Identify appropriate funding sources; • **Step 4:** Take draft program through the legislative adoption process	Steps 1, 2, and 3	N/A	N/A
D4e. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Consistent pricing policy for programs and facility use based on cost recovery goals (4.1.2)	DPRCA	N/A	• **Step 1:** Based on the business plans prepared as part of Initiative C1b, establish consistent pricing policy for programs and facilities; • **Step 2:** Reassess pricing policies in conjunction with the 5-year updates of business plans *[Coordinate with the development and regular updates of program and facility business plans (see Initiative C1b)]*	Steps 1 and 2	Step 2	Step 2 (on-going)
D4f. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Greenspace Maintenance Trust Fund supported by dedicated funding (4.2, 4.4.3)	DPRCA	Finance Department, DWM	• **Step 1**: Develop draft program; • **Step 2:** Identify specific actions for how the program's funds are to be used; • **Step 3:** Identify appropriate funding sources; • **Step 4:** Take draft program through the legislative adoption process *[One use of this funding source should be to support the maintenance of public canopy trees]*	Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4	N/A	N/A
D4g. Identify a Comprehensive greenspace funding program: Possible use of a percentage of a new Stormwater Utility Fee to support integrated stormwater management/greenspace solutions (4.4.2)	DWM	Finance Department	• **Step 1:** Assess feasibility of using a percentage of Stormwater Utility Fees to fund Project Greenspace goals; • **Step 2:** Develop draft ordinance; • **Step 3:** Take draft ordinance through the legislative adoption process *(Assumes that Stormwater Utility Fee is enacted into law)*	Steps 1, 2, and 31	N/A	N/A

Figure 6.3: Action Plan - Policies

Policy (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Required Resources/Related Initiatives and Policies
E1. Protect a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace and develop a process to expedite land purchases when meeting the top priority goals of Project Greenspace (3.1.1)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, Green Team, DWM, ABI, ADA, ABI	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1)*; Corresponds to all Planning and Development Initiatives *(see Initiatives A1 to A16)* and Regulatory Initiatives (see Initiatives B1 to B7); Dependent upon successful partnerships *(see Partnerships F1 to F9)*
E2. Provide a minimum of 10 acres of core city parkland per 1,000 residents (3.1.2)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, Green Team, DWM, ABI, ADA, ABI	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1)*; Corresponds to all Planning and Development Initiatives *(see Initiatives A1 to A16)* and Regulatory Initiatives *(see Initiatives B1 to B7)*; Related to Policies E3, E7, E9, and E13; Dependent upon successful partnerships *(see Partnerships F1 to F9)*
E3. Provide publicly accessible parkland within a one-half mile walking distance of all residents (3.1.2)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, Green Team, DWM, ABI, ADA, ABI	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1)*; Provision of new streets that provide access to existing and proposed parks may be required; Related to Initiative A9 (provision of Complete Streets), and A15 (development of streetscape classifications and standards); The development of greenways and greenspace in private development can provide greenspace park needs within the 1/2-mile threshold *(see Initiatives A2, A3, and B1)*; Related to Policy E9; Dependent upon successful partnerships *(see Partnerships F1 to F9)*
E4. Protect at least 75% of environmentally sensitive lands (3.1.3)	Bureau of Planning	DPRCA, Green Team, DWM, ABI, ADA, ABI	Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1 as relevant); Dependent upon completion of natural resource management lands *(see Initiatives A13a and A13c)*; Coordinate with the development of greenway corridor action plans *(see Initiatives A2 and A3);* Dependent upon successful partnerships *(see Partnerships F1 to F9)*
E5. Achieve 40% tree canopy coverage (4.4.3)	DPRCA	Trees Atlanta, Bureau of Planning, Arborist, DWM	Dependent upon completion and regular update of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of canopy trees *(see Initiatives A1a and A1e)* and successful implementation of tree planting program *(see Initiative A14)*; related to Initiatives A15, B6, and C5
E6. Use the greenspace classification system established by Project Greenspace to guide the provision and distribution of different types of greenspace (3.2)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning	Corresponds to all Planning and Development Initiatives *(see Initiatives A1 to A16)*

Policy (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Required Resources/Related Initiatives and Policies
E7. Provide neighborhood parks in areas located more than one-half mile from an existing park (3.3.3)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning, Green Team	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1)*, Greenways and greenspace in private development can provide neighborhood park needs within the 1/2-mile threshold (*see Initiatives A2, A3, and B1)*; Related to Policy E9
E8. Improve access to parks in areas located within a one-half mile radius but not within a one-half mile walking distance from an existing park (3.3.3)	DPW	DPRCA	Provision of new streets that provide access to existing and proposed parks may be required; Related to Initiative A9 (provision of Complete Streets), and A15 (development of streetscape classifications and standards)
E9. Identify and prioritize land for acquisition using Project Greenspace criteria (3.4.1)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, Bureau of Planning, DPRCA, ADA, ABI	Assumes expanded function of Green Team (*see Section 5.1);* Dependent upon completion of comprehensive inventory and GIS database of greenspace resources (see Initiative No. A1 as relevant); Identify tax delinquent properties for greenspace acquisition *(see Initiative A10)*
E10. Create incentives for greenspace dedication based on defined benchmarks in all city-sponsored development projects and projects receiving city financial support or incentives (3.4.1)	Bureau of Planning	Mayor/City Council, Green Team	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1);* See Initiatives B3, B4, and B7; Related to Initiatives B1, B2 and B5
E11. Use level of service standards to guide the provision and distribution of different types of recreational facilities (4.1.1)	DPRCA	N/A	See Initiatives A4 and A11
E12. Establish greenspace planning and design standards (4.5)	DPRCA	Bureau of Planning, Green Team	See Initiatives A15 and C4
E13. Identify greenspace opportunities on other city lands (3.4.1)	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Green Team, Bureau of Planning	Assumes expanded function of Green Team *(see Section 5.1);* Dependent upon completion of Initiative A1
E14. Conduct market analyses and feasibility studies for proposed new facilities and programs (4.1.1)	DPRCA	N/A	See Initiative C1b
E15. Identify greenspace opportunities to promote natural, multifunctional stormwater management (4.4.2)	DWM	Bureau of Planning, DPW	Coordinate with the development of watershed management plans *(see Initiative A13C)*; Support with funds from Stormwater Utility fee (*see Initiative D4g)*

Policy (Section Reference)	Lead/Co-ordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)	Required Resources/Related Initiatives and Policies
E16. Utilize the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Post Development Management Ordinances to promote natural stormwater solutions (4.4.2)	DWM	Bureau of Planning	Coordinate with the development of watershed management plans *(see Initiative A13C)*
E17. Promote integrated stormwater/greenspace solutions in development/redevelopment plans (4.4.2)	DWM	Bureau of Planning	Coordinate with the development of watershed management plans *(see Initiative A13C)*
E18. Promote awareness of historic resources within the greenspace system through interpretation, education, and outreach (4.4.4)	Urban Design Commission	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Coordinate with Initiatives A1f, A7, and A13b
E19. Integrate public art, culture, and heritage into the greenspace system (4.5)	Urban Design Commission	Bureau of Planning, DPRCA	Consider the recommendations of the City's Public Art Master Plan; Coordinate with Initiatives A5, A6, and A13b

Figure 6.4: Action Plan - Partnerships

Policy (Section Reference)	Lead/Coordinating Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)
F1. Continue to work with TPL, PATH Foundation, the Conservation Fund, Park Pride, and other land conservation organizations to preserve greenspace (3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning, DRPCA	TPL, PATH Foundation, Conservation Fund, Park Pride, others as appropriate
F2. Work with community and neighborhood groups to identify site-specific greenspace opportunities in neighborhood and area plans and implementation programs (3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning, DRPCA	NPUs, others as appropriate
F3. Work with private landowners and businesses to preserve greenspace (3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning	Central Atlanta Progress, Midtown Community Improvement District, Buckhead Improvement District
F4. Work with community and neighborhood groups to identify opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle connections in neighborhood and area plans/implementation programs (3.4.3)	Bureau of Planning, DPW	NPUs
F5. Establish partnership agreements with recreational interest groups who use city-owned facilities (4.1.2)	DPRCA	Various (as needed)
F6. Increase partnerships with non-profit organizations, citizen groups, and businesses to address greenspace maintenance (4.2)	DPRCA	Various (as needed)
F7. Continue to work with Atlanta Police to address security in parks (4.3)	DPRCA	Atlanta Police Department
F8. Involve neighborhood groups in park safety and security (4.3)	DPRCA	Atlanta Police Department, NPUs
F9. Increase partnerships with nonprofit organizations and citizen groups to address natural resource management and restoration (4.4.1)	Bureau of Planning, DRPCA, DWM (as relevant)	Various (as needed)

Civic Spaces: areas within the City's fabric that help to define Atlanta's community identity and visual image (e.g., squares, garden spots, and streetscapes). They provide places for public gatherings, accommodate pedestrian activity, and/or beautify the City through the provision of landscaping or public art.

Complete Streets: streets designed to provide safe and attractive multi-modal access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. The Connect Atlanta Plan recommends priorities for the development of complete street improvements.

Conservation Easement: a restriction placed on a piece of property to protect its associated natural resources and limit its development potential. A conservation easement limits the type or extent of development on the property while allowing the landowner to retain ownership of the land; they may or may not provide for public access. Conservation easements are either voluntarily donated or sold by the landowner to an organization (e.g., a land trust).

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): a multi-disciplinary approach to designing the physical environment that has proven to be effective in helping to deter criminal behavior. Key CPTED principles include:

- Natural Surveillance: Increase visibility and the ability of neighbors to observe the space (e.g., a park that fronts a street rather than being hidden behind back yards).
- Territorial Reinforcement: Define public and private spaces to create a sense of ownership.
- Natural Access Control: Limit opportunity for crime through the selective placement of entrances and exits, lighting, and landscaping to limit access or control flow.

Garden Spots: very small landscaped areas (e.g., traffic islands or medians) that generally do not contain amenities. Garden spots are typically maintained as drive-by landscaped gateways to Atlanta's neighborhoods and commercial districts and contribute to the City's image. Garden spots are suitable locations for memorials, fountains, or public art. The recommended size for garden spots varies, and there is no applicable service area recommendation.

Green Roof: a building roof partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil (or a growing medium) on top of a waterproofing membrane. Benefits provided by green roofs include: moderation of the urban heat island effect, improved stormwater management, water and air purification, reduced energy consumption, and the aesthetic and psychological effects of a garden-like setting.

Greenspace: outdoor spaces that provide specified environmental, community, and economic benefits. Examples include parks, environmentally sensitive lands, and urban greenspace (e.g., streetscapes and plazas). Includes recreational facilities such as athletic fields and recreational centers.

Greenspace, Privately-Owned: greenspaces that are typically not owned or managed by the City or other public entity. Instead they occur within private residential, retail, office, or mixed-use development projects. Privately-owned greenspace includes community commons and private parks (open lawns, wooded or landscape areas managed as part of a private development), plazas, and green roofs.

Greenspace, Urban: "green" elements of the City's developed fabric that perform vital environmental, community, and economic functions and benefits. Examples include urban streetscapes, parks and plazas associated with corporate and institutional campuses, and Atlanta's urban tree canopy.

Greenspace Connections: linear corridors that connect people to greenspaces and greenspace to each other. Examples include: greenways, man-made corridors (e.g., rail and utility rights-of-way), trails, bike lanes, and complete streets.

Greenspace System: a citywide network of greenspaces and connections comprised of three general categories of resources that may sometimes overlap: parks and recreational facilities, natural resource areas, and urban greenspace.

Greenways: a type of greenspace connection sufficiently wide to provide multiple benefits, such as environmental resource protection along river and stream corridors, stormwater management, and/or recreation (e.g., multi-use trails). Includes greenway lands and easements acquired by the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management under the Consent Decree.

Natural Areas: properties maintained in a natural condition to protect environmentally sensitive land and/or resources (e.g., wildlife habitat, forest cover, water quality, wetlands). Natural areas may be either publicly owned in fee simple or

protected through a conservation easement. Significant natural areas should be surrounded by a protective buffer (a minimum width of 100' is recommended).

Nature Preserves: areas that protect and interpret significant natural resources and may contain amenities facilitating environmental education and interpretation (e.g., nature centers, trails, and supporting facilities). The recommended size of nature preserves varies depending on the type(s) of facilities present.

Parks and Recreational Facilities: city parkland and parks, open space, and recreational facilities owned and managed by other entities.

Parks, Citywide: major park sites that draw users from around the City. Citywide parks contain a combination of passive and active recreational facilities and natural features and are often based on a specific scenic or recreational opportunity (e.g., major festival site, arts center). Citywide parks are recommended to be a minimum of 100 acres and serve the entire City.

Parks, Community: Parks that meet the community-based recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods, including athletic complexes, trails, playgrounds, etc. Community parks may also preserve unique landscapes, natural features, and open space. Community parks are recommended to be a minimum of 35 acres (65 acres for sites with athletic complexes) and serve a 2-mile area.

Parks, Neighborhood: areas that serve local informal recreation needs and create a sense of neighborhood identity. Amenities may include picnic shelters, open fields, play grounds, basketball and tennis courts, or wooded natural areas. Neighborhood parks are recommended to be 5–10 acres in size and be accessible for pedestrians and bikers within a ½ mile (10 minute walk) service area.

Parks, Special Facilities: park sites containing amenities and facilities not typically associated with parks (e.g., historic cemeteries). They can also include standalone athletic complexes, recreation centers, large event venues, and community gardens. Existing special facilities include Oakland Cemetery, Roseland Cemetery, the City's emergency shelter, Adamsville Recreation Center, Avery Park, and the Inman Park Trolley Barn.

Plazas: outdoor spaces typically associated with commercial retail and office developments or high-rise residential buildings. Plazas create space within dense developments for shade trees, sitting areas, fountains, and public art.

Squares: public gathering spaces that function as a focus of community activity and civic identity. The function of squares can vary according to the context (e.g., support larger events in commercial and mixed-use areas and provide informal greenspace in residential neighborhoods). The recommended size for squares varies but is typically one city block; specific functions determine the appropriate service area.

Streetscapes: the non-vehicular spaces within and adjacent to the rights-of-way of public roadways. They include canopy tree and landscape plantings, sidewalks, and street furniture such as benches, bike racks, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Streetscapes vary in design and character according to their context (e.g., neighborhood, commercial district) and function.

Trails, Multi-Use: paved pathways wide enough (12–20') to accommodate a variety of recreational activities (e.g., walking, jogging, biking, in-line skating). Multi-use trails connect neighborhoods, parks and recreation, and other destinations. Multi-use trails may be located within greenway corridors, parks, and private developments, or along streets, rail lines, and within utility right-of-ways.

Urban Heat Island: an area where buildings, roads, and other impervious surfaces create an "island" of higher temperatures when compared with less developed surrounding areas. Heat islands can threaten public health and the environment by amplifying extreme hot weather events, increasing air-conditioning demand, and expanding ground-level ozone formation. Project ATLANTA is a multi-year project led by researchers from the Global Hydrology and Climate Center, and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center to improve air quality and reduce the heat island effect.

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