

...will be on out-
 ...tree houses,
 ...eable gar-
 ...pools, and f

...with a
 ...the garden through
 ...from the demolition
 ...little maintenance.

...Randy and Tom Brown, front
 ...is challenged by the heavy roots of a water oak.
 ...Focuarini added a Japanese maple to eventually
 ...these pressure Japanese plum trees for a drought-tolerant
 ...crates, half-burned aluminum trays for a drought-tolerant
 ...Helleborus and pots of arvoxia.

IVE GARDENS
 ...and Scott, front
 ...is an early-shaped lot. The broad front sun garden,
 ...side garden room with a fountain, is a sprawling pink
 ...the season.

VENUE GARDENS
 ...de and Sandy Magarry, back only
 ...back garden has a terrace with brick seating
 ...a cool evening party under the towering oaks.
 ...to a fern paradise, a hidden shade and native
 ...into the backlot!

ENS
 ...and Saunderson EK, front
 ...is growing against the house since before
 ...in 2000. They know they once a year and
 ...movers hybrid, so it takes hard work and
 ...some, fragrant sedulites at their best.

...with a Zen inspiration gives a differ-
 ...If I can't grow grass?
 ...of Leslie Zaehner, front
 ...table provides not only food but inter-
 ...wise small space.

...Ron Fisher, back
 ...for people and birds with a pond and
 ...sty shade forms and shrubs.

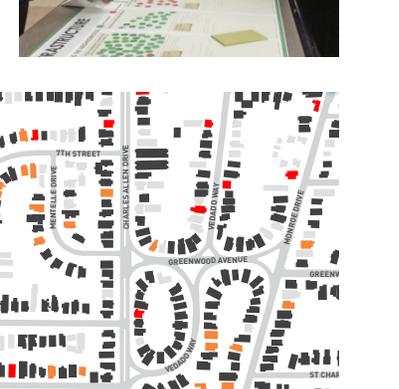
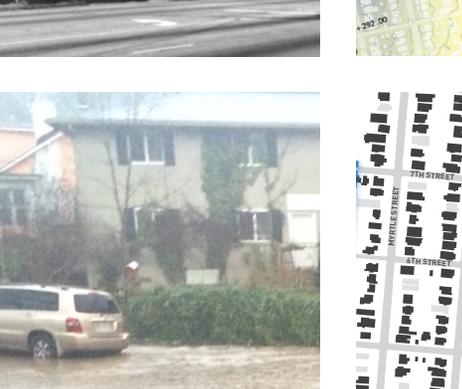
...Dipace



Midtown Garden District

Neighborhood Master Plan

For Midtown Neighbors Association and The City of Atlanta
 Prepared by Lord Aeck Sargent
 Updated October 2017



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Acknowledgments

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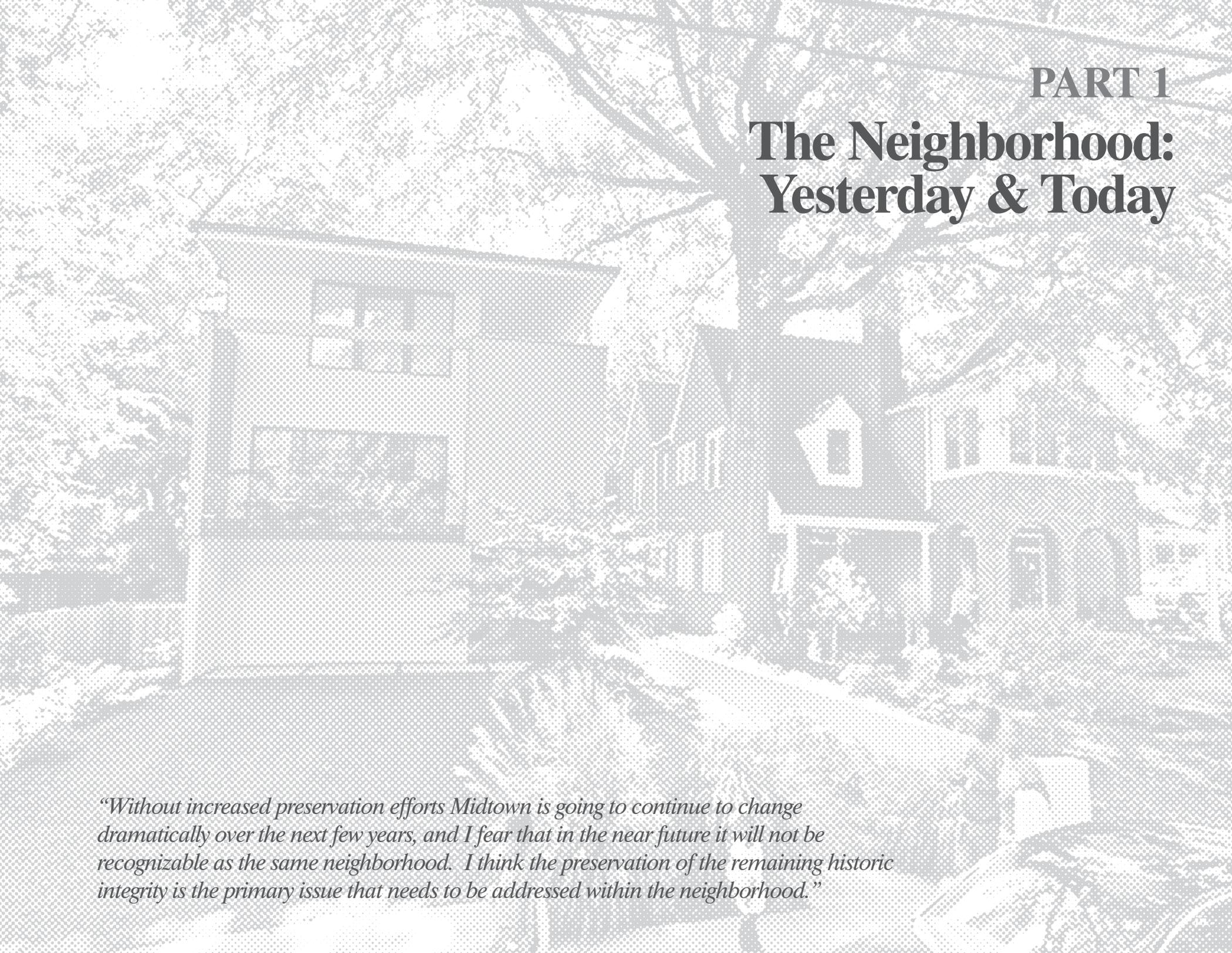
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PART 1

The Neighborhood: Yesterday & Today

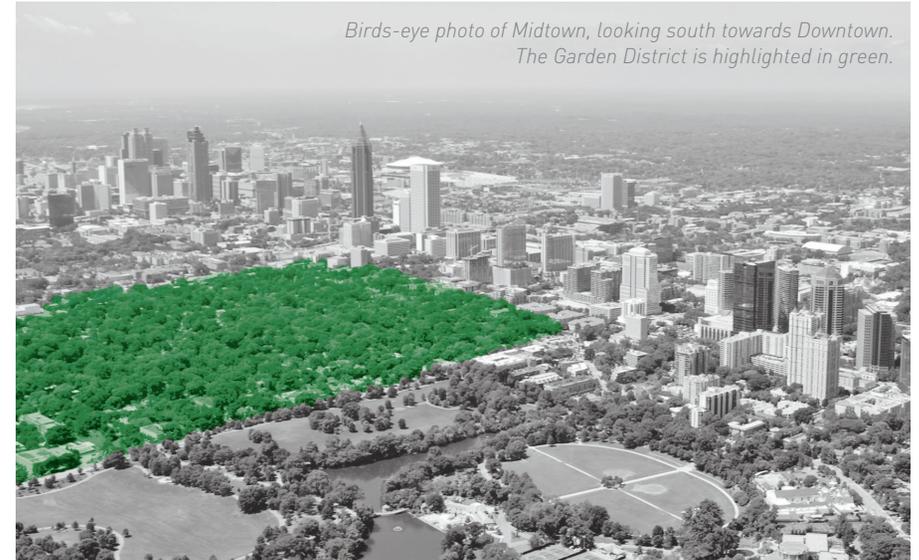
“Without increased preservation efforts Midtown is going to continue to change dramatically over the next few years, and I fear that in the near future it will not be recognizable as the same neighborhood. I think the preservation of the remaining historic integrity is the primary issue that needs to be addressed within the neighborhood.”

1.1 Introduction

The “Midtown Garden District” (MGD) is a predominantly residential in-town Atlanta neighborhood located immediately east of the rapidly-densifying Midtown Improvement District (MID). The neighborhood is characterized by early 20th Century historic homes, mid-century apartment buildings, a compact grid of streets, rolling topography and extensive mature tree canopy. The area benefits greatly from its central urban location, with restaurants, entertainment and MARTA rail transit immediately to the west, amenities such as Piedmont Park to the north and the Atlanta BeltLine trail to the east. The neighborhood is also a National Register Historic District, which was established in 1999.

Today the name “Midtown” is most often associated with the nearby Midtown Improvement District (MID) due to the unprecedented growth, development and densification it has seen over the past several decades. The “Midtown Garden District” is a relatively recent name that evolved out of the neighborhood’s annual and increasingly prominent Midtown Garden Tour, which showcases the abundance of private gardens throughout the neighborhood.

The Midtown Garden District planning focus area (represented in Fig 1.1 to the right) can be described as following 10th Street to the North, Ponce de Leon Avenue to the South, the BeltLine corridor to the east and Juniper Street to the west. It is in Council Districts 2 and 6 and in Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) E.



*Birds-eye photo of Midtown, looking south towards Downtown.
The Garden District is highlighted in green.*

WHY DO A MASTERPLAN?

A 2015 Creative Loafing article entitled *Cranes are Seriously Dominating Midtown’s Skyline* pretty much sums it up. In-town Atlanta continues to see an unprecedented amount of growth and densification with Midtown at its center. Mixed-use high-rises now dominate the skyline immediately to the west of the Midtown Garden District. The BeltLine Eastside Trail has similarly catalyzed dozens of mid-rise apartment buildings, mixed-use developments and new entertainment areas to the east. To the north, Piedmont Park plays host to over 150 annual festivals, bringing millions of visitors to the neighborhood each year. The Midtown Garden District continues (and will continue to) see increased development pressures, traffic impacts and aging infrastructure issues. The masterplan helps ensure that FUTURE neighborhood growth meets the vision of TODAY’s neighbors.

The masterplanning PROCESS was about building consensus around what the neighborhood wants to see in the future. This masterplan DOCUMENT summarizes that process and findings in order to guide future decisions on development and investments. This plan is also intended to be flexible enough to embrace inevitable change in and around the neighborhood, and serve as a living breathing document which could be expanded and modified in the coming years.

The Midtown Garden District Masterplan was initiated through a joint effort by Midtown Neighbor’s Association and City of Atlanta Councilmember Kwanza Hall’s office. The year-long planning process occurred throughout 2016 and involved thousands of neighborhood residents and stakeholders. This document represents a summary of neighborhood collaboration, dozens of public workshops, and focus group meetings, two-month online survey, as well as countless front porch conversations and backyard socials.

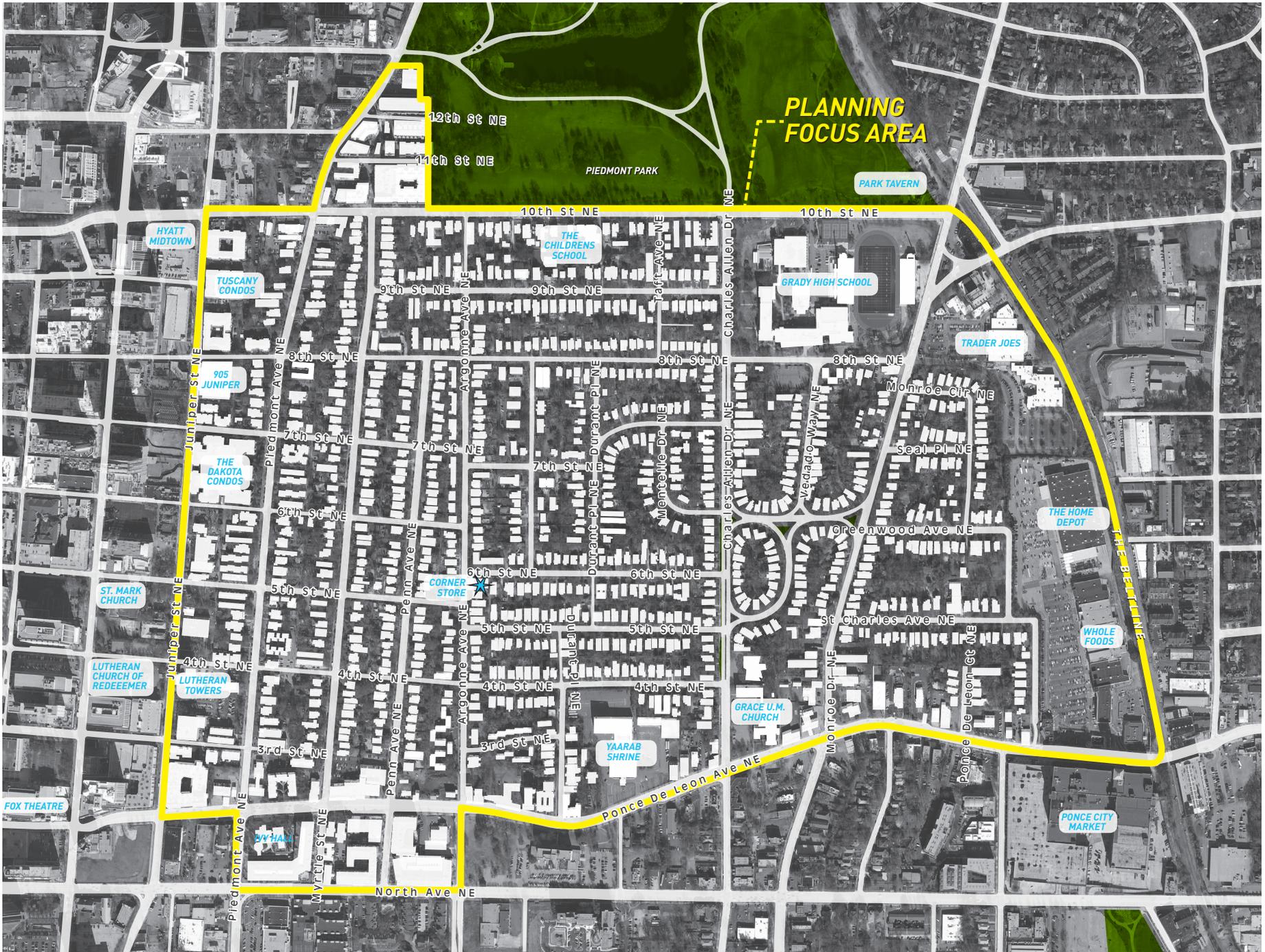


FIG. 1.1 MIDTOWN GARDEN DISTRICT - PLANNING FOCUS AREA MAP

1.2 Neighborhood History

NEIGHBORHOOD BEGINNINGS: 1800-1900

Prior to the Civil War, what is now the Midtown Garden District was a rural landscape. Peachtree Street began as a small country road along a ridge in the early 1800s and land east of it descended down to Clear Creek (a waterway that runs today in culverts underneath Piedmont Park, Grady High School and Ponce City Market). By the mid-1800s, three families - the Walkers, the Medlocks, and the Todds - owned all of the land in today's Midtown east of Penn Avenue, while west of Penn were several hundred acres owned by Richard Peters, a railroad entrepreneur. By the time of the Civil War, railroad lines were expanding throughout Atlanta as the city became an important junction at the center of the Confederacy's main food-producing region.

Streetcar lines began in Atlanta in 1871 and became a major catalyst for the city's rapid growth. In 1874 a line along Peachtree was expanded eastward along Ponce de Leon Avenue. By 1894 all of the city's streetcars were electric powered and the system had significantly expanded, with routes along West Peachtree, Peachtree, Piedmont, 8th and North Boulevard (now Monroe Drive). The various streetcar lines provided an impetus for Atlanta to grow steadily northward. The original city limit (the one mile radius from the Zero Milepost) ran between Third and Fourth Streets, but by 1897, the city limits had been moved north to Sixth Street and were expanded again in 1904 to include all of Midtown as well as Piedmont Park. By the end of the 19th Century, what is now Midtown included mostly wealthy families living on suburban estates occupying large tracts of land (sometimes entire blocks) along Peachtree and West Peachtree Streets.



One of the first major developments in the neighborhood was Ivy Hall, built by Edward C. Peters in 1883. Source: SCAD.edu



Detail from Kock's 1892 bird's eye view map of Atlanta showing Ponce de Leon Springs near lower right corner, the buildings and race track from the 1887 Piedmont Exposition at Piedmont Park at top right, and, at center, left, the residences along Peachtree, Juniper and Piedmont. Source: Atlanta History Center

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPANSION: 1900-1950

By the turn of the Century, there were larger homes lining streets such as Penn and Myrtle, but not much development existed east of what is now Argonne. For example, there were only about nine houses along St. Charles Avenue before 1900. However, by 1910 the street was filled with large homes. By the late 1920's, much of the neighborhood had filled-in and included a variety of single-family home types and styles.

Atlanta saw a building boom during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The city's population grew from 90,000 in 1900 to 200,000 in 1920. By then, building activity was at a feverish pace and the major influence of the automobile had taken hold. Atlanta became an attractive location for corporations, creating a large housing demand for the influx of office workers. This workforce wanted well-designed in-town living spaces close to streetcar lines, giving way to construction of apartments throughout the neighborhood - a relatively new type of housing for Atlanta at the time. In 1917, a large fire destroyed large portions of neighborhoods along Boulevard and Jackson Streets as far north as Vedado Way and Greenwood Avenue. Approximately 2,000 homes were destroyed in the fire, leaving over 10,000 people homeless and camping out in Piedmont Park for months. New apartments filled this demand while replacing many of the single-family residences destroyed in the fire. The housing demand during this time was also often met by subdividing single-family residences, especially the older, nineteenth-century buildings.

Examples of apartment buildings existing today include the Massellton Apartments (on the national register, located on Ponce de Leon Avenue), 907 Piedmont Avenue, 691 Juniper Street (formerly Juniper Terrace Apartments) and The Tyree on Durant Place (also on the National Register).



Photo taken around 1943 of a single-family house at 818 Juniper Street. The house was demolished and redeveloped sometime in the 1970s or 1980s. Source: GA State Archives.

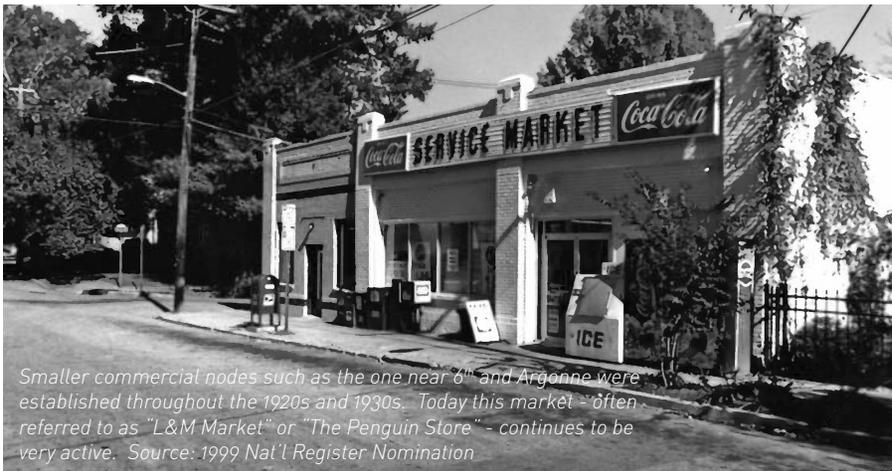


332 Ponce de Leon Avenue (which still exists today) is a great example of apartments built around the neighborhood throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Source: GA State Archives.



A snapshot of Peachtree Street from around 1923. The role of streetcars as part of the neighborhood's initial growth cannot be overstated. Source: Atlanta Historical Society.

Commercial development was also prominent throughout Midtown by the 1920s and 1930s. Within two blocks of the intersection of Peachtree and 10th Streets there was a post office, a dentist, lawyer offices, a dance studio, a theater, Kress's "dime store," Cooledge Paints, C&S bank, two garages, two plumbers, two electrical companies, two barbers, two hairdressers, two hardware stores, three bakeries, Franco's delicatessen and no fewer than twelve grocery stores, four drug stores, two fish markets, a meat market and a dairy. During the 1920's Ponce de Leon Avenue was characterized by low-scale automobile service stations, the oldest of which still exists (built in 1939) near the corner of Ponce de Leon and Argonne. While corridors such as 10th Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue drew citywide clientele, smaller commercial nodes had become established within the center of the neighborhood, including one at Argonne at 6th Street, which still exists today (now L&M convenience store).



Smaller commercial nodes such as the one near 6th and Argonne were established throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Today this market - often referred to as "L&M Market" or "The Penguin Store" - continues to be very active. Source: 1999 Nat'l Register Nomination



1953 photo looking west along Ponce de Leon Avenue. Spiller Field, home to the Atlanta Crackers baseball team is shown at right. The Sears & Roebuck building (now Ponce City Market) is on the left. Source: GA State Archives



A view of 10th Street from 1954 looking west. Piedmont Park is to the right. Source: GA State Archives



Birds-eye view looking NE from 1948 showing early construction of the North Expressway (now known as the I-75/85 Connector). GA Tech is in foreground to left and The Billmore in the background to right. Source: GA State Archives

NEIGHBORHOOD EVOLUTION: 1950-1970

Following a period of stalled development during the 1940s, due to World War II, the early 1950s began to see new construction activity. Several apartment buildings were built on some of the last vacant land in the interior of the District as the northern part of the Glendale Terrace subdivision was finally developed. In 1947, the city's last streetcars were replaced by 'trackless trolleys' that ran on overhead wires but had rubber wheels instead of tracks in the streets. By the end of the 1950s, these would give way to gasoline-powered buses.

In 1949, construction began on the city's system of "expressways," later incorporated into the Federal system of interstate highways. One of the first segments constructed was the North Expressway, which was completed through the valley of Tanyard Creek a few blocks west of the District in the early 1950s. Automobiles facilitated suburban development further and further away from the center city during the 1950s, and by the end of that decade there would be a five-county metropolitan population of 1,000,000 people.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood saw rooming houses and rental property increase dramatically as disinvestment by absentee landowners allowed many of the oldest houses in the District to deteriorate. By the 1960s, many of the houses on Juniper and Piedmont were beginning to disappear, several by fire, and by the late 1970s, entire



Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Piedmont Park was the center of Atlanta's "counter-culture," often hosting loosely-organized outdoor concerts. Source: GA State Archives

blocks had been cleared. Elsewhere in the District, scattered demolition and redevelopment, mostly with apartment buildings, continued to occur.

1967 brought the "summer of love" to the District as the changing business district became "The Strip," and Midtown became a center of the "counter-culture" of the 1960s and early 1970s. Although Midtown escaped the turmoil of white flight that plagued neighborhoods like West End and Edgewood, the drugs and prostitution that replaced the hippies on "The Strip" brought its own kind of turmoil to the District. By the end of the 1960s, the middle class population had left Midtown and the neighborhood suffered economic decline. Atlanta's population and tax base had shrunk as white flight to the suburbs began.



A scene of 10th Street from around 1966. Source: GA State Archives

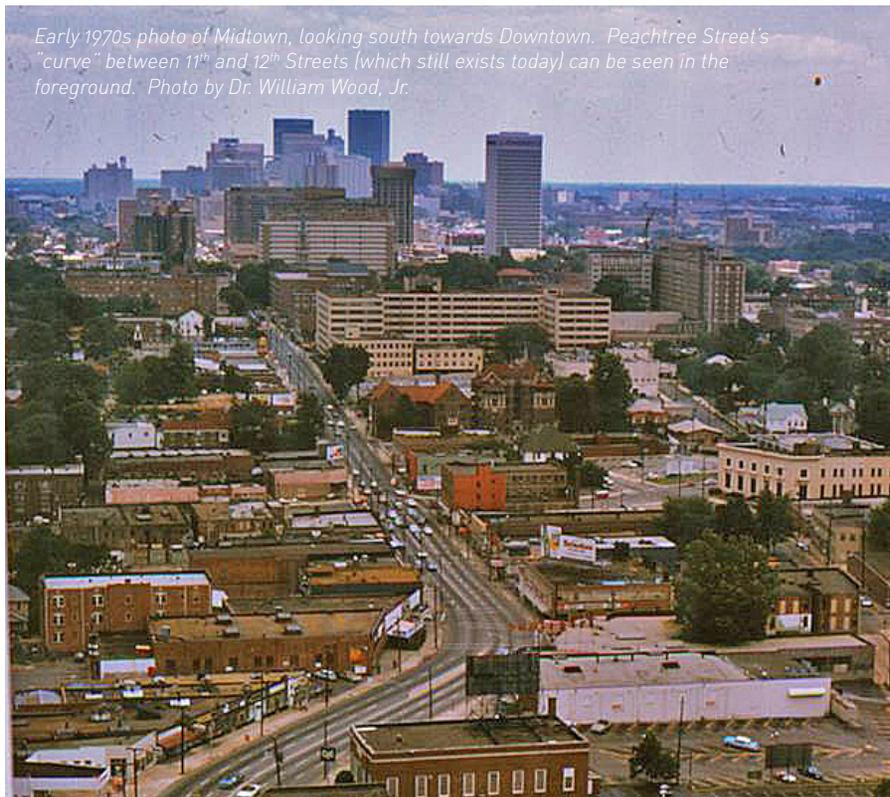
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION: 1970-2000

By the late 1960's few of the old businesses remained on the western side of the District, although a laundry, Sig Samuel's, and a diner on Monroe Drive continued to thrive. Up until this time the District had been referred to by many names with none carrying from one decade to the next. Peachtree at Tenth was often referred to as simply 'Tenth Street' and briefly as 'Uptown', until Buckhead began to establish itself as Atlanta's true uptown area. In 1969 construction began on Colony Square at Peachtree and 14th Street. That same year the Midtown Neighbor's Association was formed, one of the first of its kind in the city, and a slow period of revitalization began. Property values began to stabilize during this time and remained high relative to the Old Forth Ward, Inman Park and some other areas of the city. Rehabilitation of some of the decaying mansions on Piedmont began in the 1970s and there was increased interest by owners and residents in revitalization of the entire area.

In the mid-1970s, while the Midtown Neighbor's Association was focusing on revitalization within the mostly-residential portion of Midtown, a related movement had begun to "clean up" the commercial portion of the neighborhood to the west. The Alliance focused



Midtown Neighborhood Festival in the late 1970s. Source: Atlanta History Center



Early 1970s photo of Midtown, looking south towards Downtown. Peachtree Street's "curve" between 11th and 12th Streets (which still exists today) can be seen in the foreground. Photo by Dr. William Wood, Jr.

on neighborhood safety, commercial redevelopment, cultivating arts and education programs, and building community leaders. By 1980, the Midtown Neighbor's Association had spearheaded land-use policies that would help preserve the neighborhood's historic character. As a result, city zoning laws were crafted limiting density within portions of the neighborhood east of Piedmont Avenue.

The gay community in Midtown played a large role in the revitalization of the neighborhood, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s with the corner of 10th and Piedmont being its symbolic center and the many businesses there serving them. Around this same time period the MNA and the Midtown Alliance also worked together to improve both the neighborhood and the commercial district along Peachtree Street.

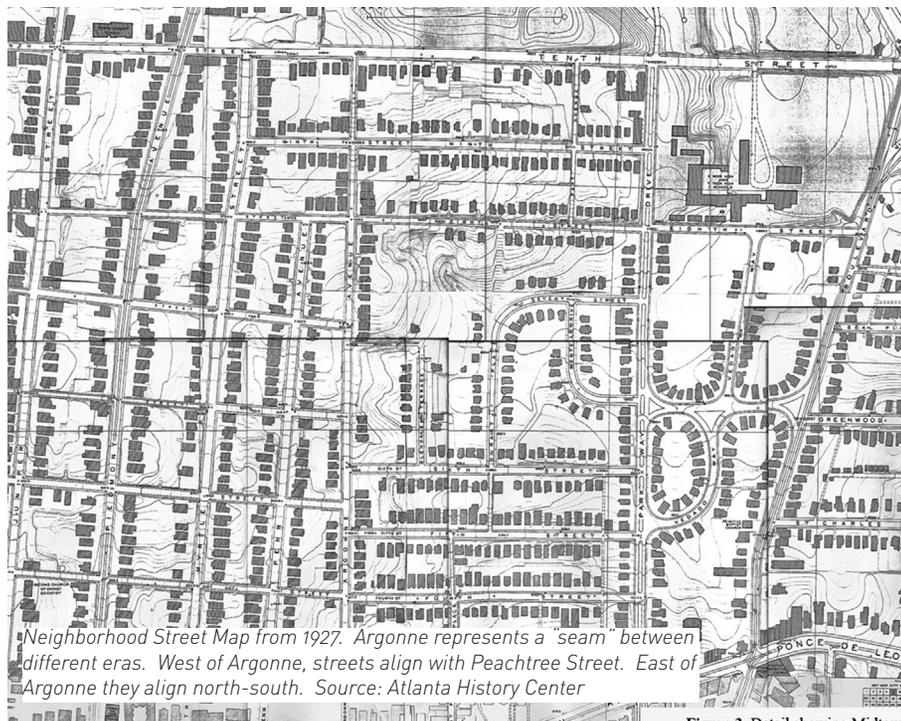
Urban planning in Atlanta gained a lot of traction following the 1996 Olympic Games. In the late 1990s the Midtown Alliance led an extensive community planning process called Blueprint Midtown. In 2000, as an outgrowth of the masterplan, the Midtown Improvement District (MID) was formalized as city development policy and its own overlay zoning district. At the same time, the MID became a self-taxing district by Midtown commercial property owners that would augment public resources and catalyze economic growth.

In 1999, what is now the Midtown Garden District became a National Register Historic District (approx. 360 acres). At the time of nomination, the historic district included 723 historically contributing, 168 non-historically contributing properties, and 4 individually listed historic buildings.

THE EVOLUTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

The District includes a well-connected street network composed of uniquely-abstracted sections of street grids. Much like the District's eclectic array of building types and architectural styles, its arrangement of streets reflects the fact that the neighborhood was initially developed by many different people over the course of many decades. For example, west of Argonne (developed in the 1870s by Richard Peters) the grid is aligned with Peachtree Street, which is skewed from true north by roughly 6 degrees. Streets east of Argonne, by contrast, were built after 1900 and were aligned to surveyed land-lots (oriented to compass points). Straight versus curved streets throughout the District also reflect the preferences of individual developers. For instance, "The Vedado" (est. 1906) and "Glendale Terrace" (est. 1925) were built as subdivisions and feature varied types of curvilinear streets. This evolution explains the different street character between areas such as Penn and Myrtle (very wide streets with larger front lawns) and areas like 8th and 9th Streets (more narrow streets with smaller building setbacks).

Although most of the neighborhood's sidewalks have been replaced since initially developed, some original sidewalk materials can still be found in portions of the neighborhood. Notable areas include exposed aggregate near 8th/Charles Allen, red brick (from late 1800s) along Piedmont and Myrtle and hex pavers (pre-WWII) along Greenwood and Vedado. Other unique street features include a planted center median along Charles Allen Drive.



Neighborhood Street Map from 1927. Argonne represents a "seam" between different eras. West of Argonne, streets align with Peachtree Street. East of Argonne they align north-south. Source: Atlanta History Center

Figure 3. Detail showing Midtown

HOUSING TYPES & ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The majority of the District's historic structures date from the 1890s to about 1930, representing a wide variety of housing types built during this period, including American four-squares, duplexes and bungalows. Most of the houses within the district are wood framed and exhibits the eclecticism of housing in Georgia and throughout the Southeast from 1885 to 1930. The Midtown Garden District retains house types built during this period, including American foursquares (photo B below) and bungalows (photo A). Stylistic influences that can be found on these housing types include Queen Anne (Ivy Hall), Craftsman (photo A), Italianate, Classical Revival (photo D), Shingle Style, Gothic Revival, Mediterranean Revival (photo C), Colonial Revival (photo B), Jacobethan Revival and Renaissance Revival.

Two prominent "eras" of apartment buildings exist within the district. The first era includes apartments built from 1915-1930 include subdivided houses, garden-style apartments, and hotel-style apartments (photos C and D below). The second era includes post World War II housing generally built between the late 1940s through the late 1960s. Even today these lower-scale two-story flat apartments can be found within the neighborhood and represent much of the District's more affordable housing types.



1.3 Current Neighborhood Conditions

EXISTING LAND USE

The focus area boundary of the Midtown Garden District master plan is east of Piedmont Avenue. As such, it is not surprising that over 90% of the area's parcels are residential in use, typically less than ¼ of an acre. While this area was once almost exclusively single-family in character and use and occupied by large in-town estate homes, the Midtown Garden District has dramatically evolved and diversified in recent decades. Due to dynamic market forces, many older single-family homes were demolished with new small-scale multifamily apartments developed in their place. In addition, many of the single-family structures that have remained have been converted into multiple units in order to take advantage of the in-town rental market.

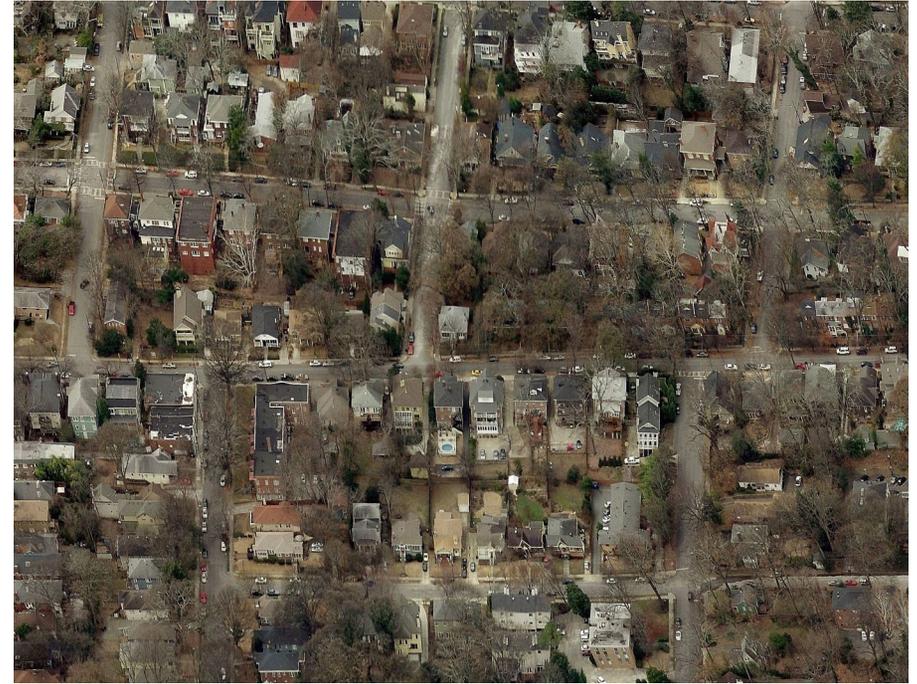
Currently, the neighborhood interior consists mostly of single family homes (many restored), duplexes, and small-scale apartment buildings. The periphery of the neighborhood tends to be slightly more dense, including larger mixed-use developments along Juniper Street and Ponce De Leon Avenue. As noted in Fig. 1.2, while the Midtown Garden District today is largely residential in *land use*, only 38% of the actual *buildings* are conventional single-family homes (i.e. occupied by a single "family"). By contrast, over 52% of the total parcels are dedicated to two-family, multifamily or mixed-use development. Therefore, from a purely building use standpoint, the neighborhood today contains more multifamily than any other use. This wide cross section of housing types, sizes and tenures is one of the key reasons Midtown benefits from a diverse array of age groups and household types.

Commercial and office uses in the Midtown Garden District tend to be clustered along Ponce De Leon (in smaller configurations) and along the BeltLine to the east in larger, big box / strip retail configurations. Of note, while directly adjacent to the BeltLine, the larger format retail sites were developed prior to the BeltLine's inception and therefore

Existing Building Use	# Buildings	% of Overall
Single-Family	447	38%
Two-Family	208	18%
Multi-Family	386	33%
Institution	38	3%
Commercial	72	6%
Office	6	1%
Mixed-Use	19	2%
TOTALS	1176	100%

FIG. 1.2 MIDTOWN GARDEN DISTRICT - BUILDING USE SNAPSHOT

Source: Data from GIS analysis illustrated in Figure 1.3



tend to have no physical relationship or connection to the rapidly-evolving BeltLine Eastside Trail. Other commercial and office concentrations include a major retail node at Piedmont and 10th, within mixed-use developments along Juniper and scattered among a few "nodes" within the neighborhood core (6th/Argonne, 5th/Durant are examples).

While institutions represent 3% of buildings within the neighborhood, those uses have large physical, social and transportation impacts on the community including Grady High School, The Children's School, Grace United Methodist Church and the Yaarab Temple in particular.

While Piedmont Park is undeniably a unique and large open space amenity for the Midtown Garden District, there are no other parcels in the community dedicated exclusively as public greenspace. This is a particular challenge for residents living within the southern portion of the district that are beyond a 10-minute walk to Piedmont Park.

In terms of zoning, most of the Garden District is zoned R-5 with small areas of RG-3 (multifamily) interspersed. The western portion of the neighborhood includes Special Public Interest (SPI) 16 and 17 Zoning Overlay Districts. A current zoning map is included in the Appendix.

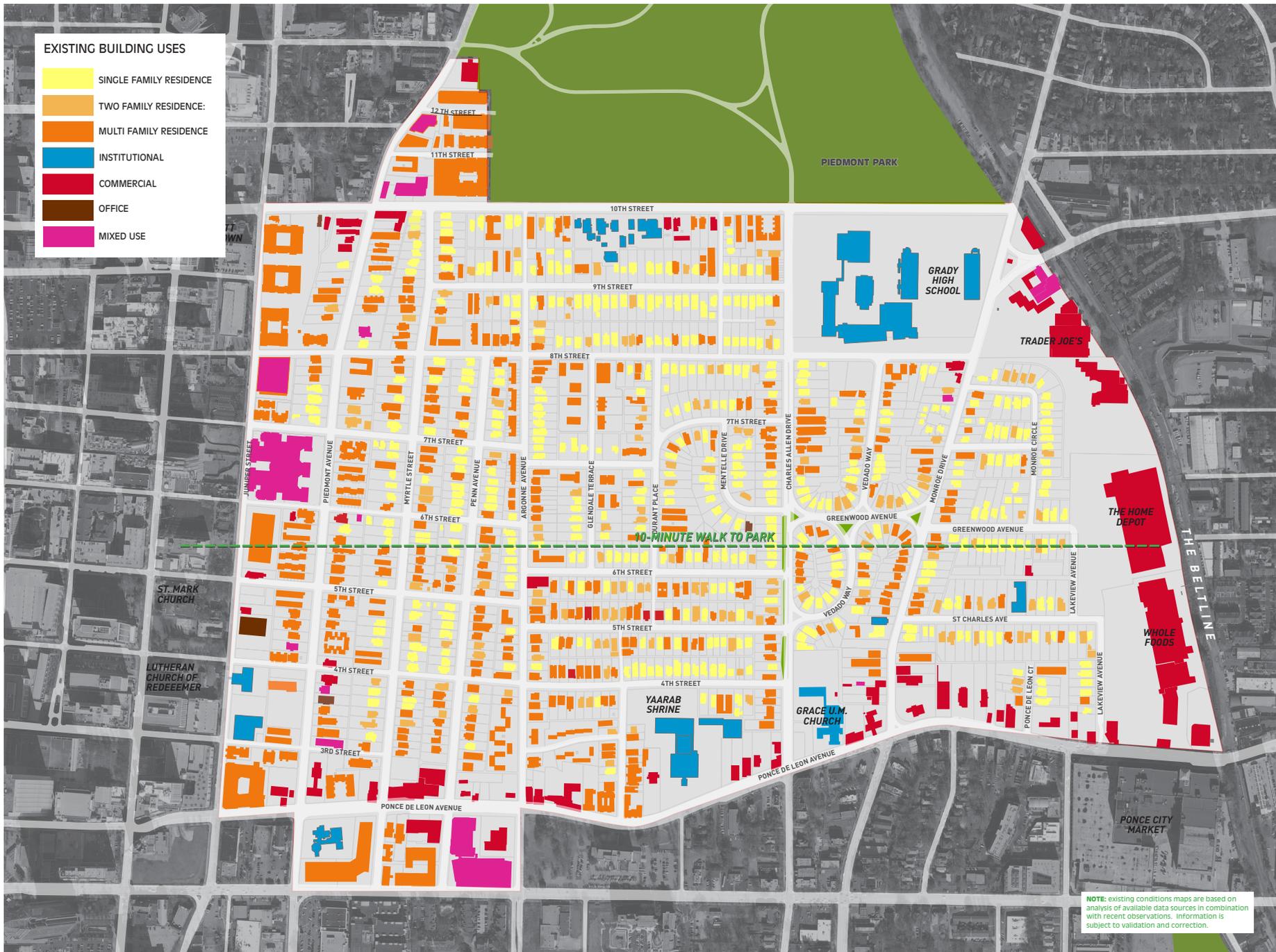


FIG. 1.3 MAP OF EXISTING BUILDING USES

Source: Windshield Survey and Ownership Data from City of Atlanta GIS Database

TOPOGRAPHY & STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Given that Atlanta was generally settled along the “Peachtree Ridge” it is not surprising that the Midtown Garden District includes widely varied topography, which in general falls in elevation from west to east. The highest points within the neighborhood are generally along Piedmont and Juniper (between Ponce De Leon Avenue and 7th Street), sloping downhill dramatically (40 -50 feet lower in some cases) around Grady High School. The shaded topography map to the right illustrates this dynamic terrain - blue areas are high points whereas red areas are low points.

It is not hugely surprising that this northeast portion of the of the Garden District suffers from fairly severe flooding conditions during heavier rain events. A cursory review of the location of subsurface stormwater lines shows that while there is a network of facilities, their widths (and presumably ages) vary greatly. The stormwater system appears to include several “dead-end” flows and/or locations with large gaps in coverage. In the area of the most severe flooding, the problem is so acute that standing water regularly flows above sidewalk curb level. Throughout the planning process, the team heard many complaints about persistent flooding on private property. The severity of the issue implies that the problem goes beyond clogged inlets and will require significant effort by the Department of Watershed Management to understand and mitigate the issue. Potential strategies related to stormwater infrastructure are included in Part 4 of this document.

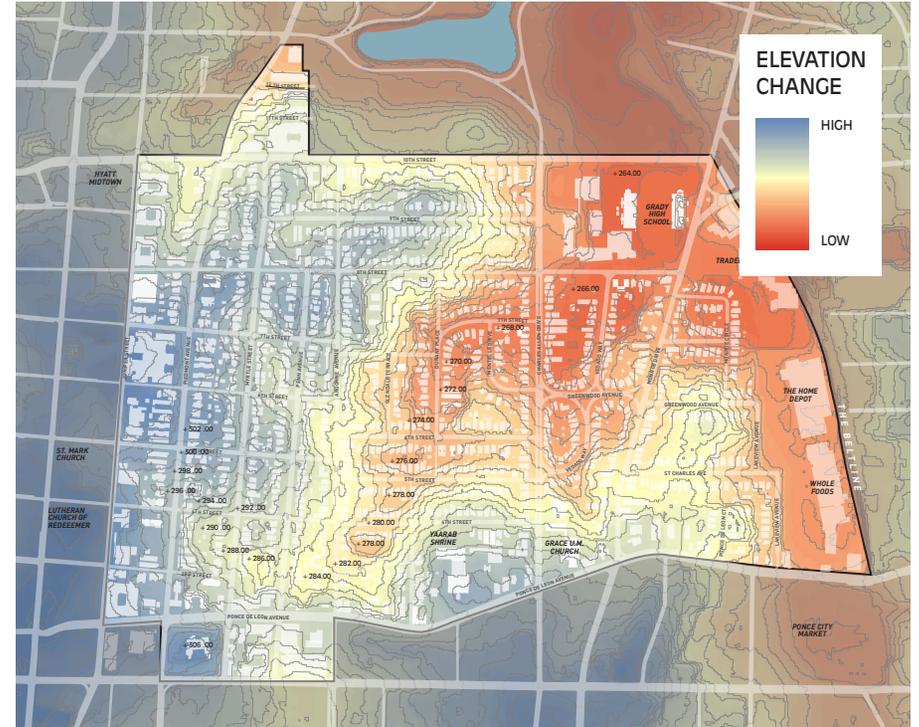
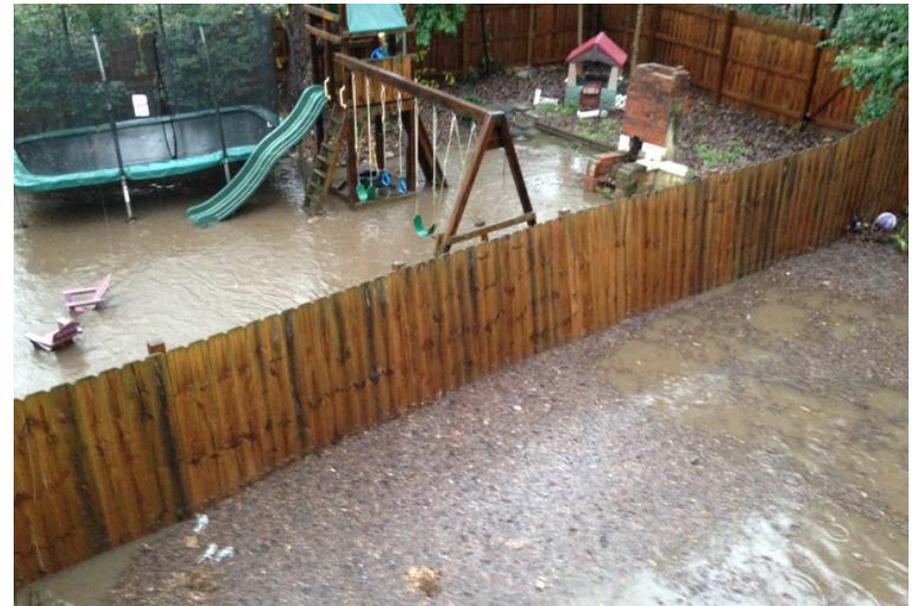


FIG. 1.4 TOPOGRAPHY MAP Source: City of Atlanta GIS Database



Flooding at 811 Vedado Way, 2016



Flooding at 833 Charles Allen Drive, 2016

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

The Midtown Garden District benefits from a tight urban grid of streets and blocks (a total of 61 individual blocks in the planning focus area) that provide numerous mobility options for pedestrians and vehicles, helping to distribute traffic. Bike facilities along 10th Street and along Ponce De Leon Avenue provide east-west bicycle connections to the BeltLine (east) and to the MID (west). Charles Allen Drive and the BeltLine also provide north-south bike connections to Piedmont Park and Ponce de Leon Avenue. However, despite these advantages, the Midtown Garden District includes widespread issues related to sidewalks and accessibility. Based on a recent site inventory of sidewalk conditions (see map to right), 16 neighborhood blocks do not include sidewalks at all with dozens more exhibiting significant issues including broken, missing or misaligned sidewalks.

The west side of the district includes a series of one-way streets, including the Piedmont Avenue / Juniper Street pair and seven other neighborhood streets. The roadway width of interior streets is inconsistent including many narrow sections of “yield streets” (i.e. no striped travel lanes). Pedestrian visibility issues at intersections are also prevalent throughout the area. These conditions are particularly dangerous on streets crossing Piedmont Avenue, Monroe Drive and 10th Street due to higher traffic volumes and speeds.

In terms of transit, the neighborhood is well-served by MARTA bus routes, including Route 102 along Ponce de Leon Avenue, Route 109 along Monroe Drive, 8th Street, Charles Allen Drive and 10th Street, and Route 36 along 8th Street, Charles Allen Drive and 10th Street. Both the Midtown and North Avenue MARTA Rail Stations are within a 10-15 minute walk from the district as well.

On-street parallel parking in the Midtown Garden District is allowed on one or both sides of most internal streets and is generally considered a community asset. It helps calm traffic, creates a physical buffer for pedestrians, and provides guest parking for visitors. However, as previously mentioned, on-street parking in the neighborhood is most often unstriped/unsigned, which exacerbates already-challenged visibility issues at intersections.

Part 4 of this document includes more detail on transportation and safety issues existing

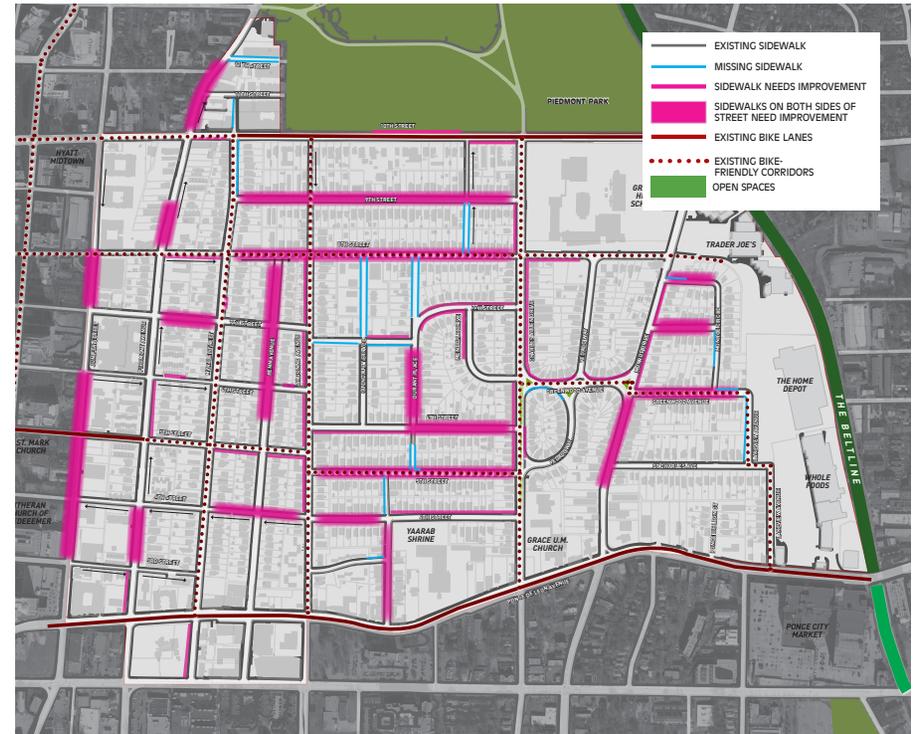


FIG. 1.5 MAP OF EXISTING SIDEWALK CONDITIONS

Sources: City of Atlanta GIS Database, Windshield Survey



10th Street includes a dedicated and protected two-way bike facility (i.e. “cycle track” connecting the BeltLine Eastside Trail to the Midtown Commercial District. Source: Stantec.com

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Midtown Ponce Security Alliance (MPSA) has served the neighborhood since 2003 as a non-profit task force to coordinate neighborhood response to public safety. The MPSA operates a neighborhood security patrol funded by its resident & business members, and community sponsors.

Public safety has been of particular concern for Midtown Garden District residents in recent years. In 2015 alone, almost 700 incidents of crime were officially reported within the neighborhood (including both violent and non-violent crimes). As part of this planning effort, the consultant team gathered and analyzed recent Atlanta Police Department data (roughly January 2015 through March 2016) to map crime “hot spots” throughout the district. Figure 1.6 illustrates crimes against property (car/home break-ins, theft, etc.). “Hot spots” in this case seem to be mostly car break-ins occurring near active retail/restaurant areas such as Mary Mac’s Restaurant (at Ponce/Myrtle), as well as the Midtown Place/Ponce City Market area (at Ponce/BeltLine). Figure 1.7 illustrates crimes against people (i.e. violent crimes). It is not totally surprising that notable hot spots occur around more pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial nodes such as the market at Argonne at 6th Street, as well as at restaurants on North Avenue between Parkway Drive and Boulevard.

While there are several elements factoring into neighborhood crime, perhaps one of the biggest (and easiest to address) is the inconsistency of neighborhood lighting. The planning team surveyed the location of every street light in the community and found

several gaping holes that lead to severe dark spots at night. In some cases lighting deficiencies are exacerbated by inoperable fixtures, poor placement (e.g., lighting roadways and not sidewalks) and overgrown trees which block lighting patterns. Figure 1.9 shows existing street light locations overlaid with violent crime hot spots. Interestingly, the prominent hot spot along Argonne Avenue also seems to lack lighting in several key areas, especially near the market at 6th Street.

The planning team also analyzed incidents of crime over a five-year period from 2010-2016 (Fig. 1.8). While crime varies from year to year and from season to season, crime tended to be lowest in winter months. In addition, while not the case in every year, crime tends to spike in parallel with larger-scale events in Piedmont Park.

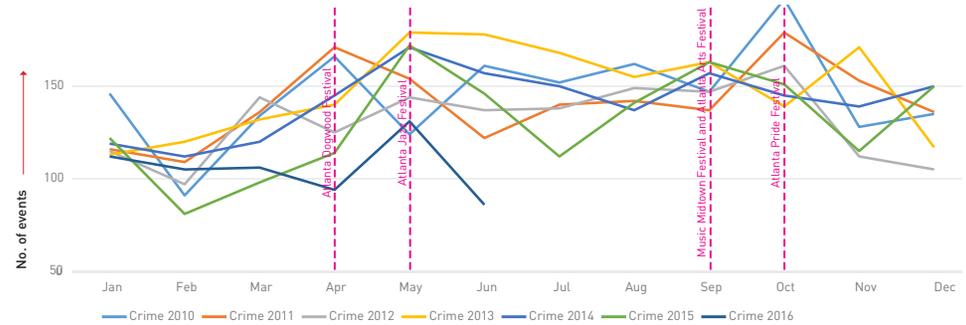


FIG. 1.8 SEASONAL PATTERNS OF CRIME INCIDENTS, 2010-2016

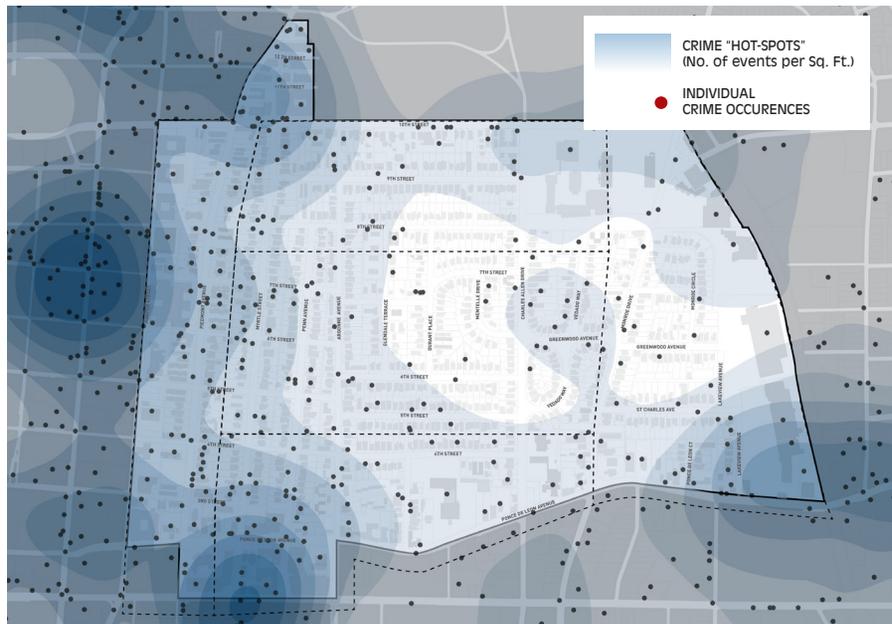


FIG. 1.6 CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY



FIG. 1.7 CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE *All Crime Data Sourced from Atlanta Police Department*

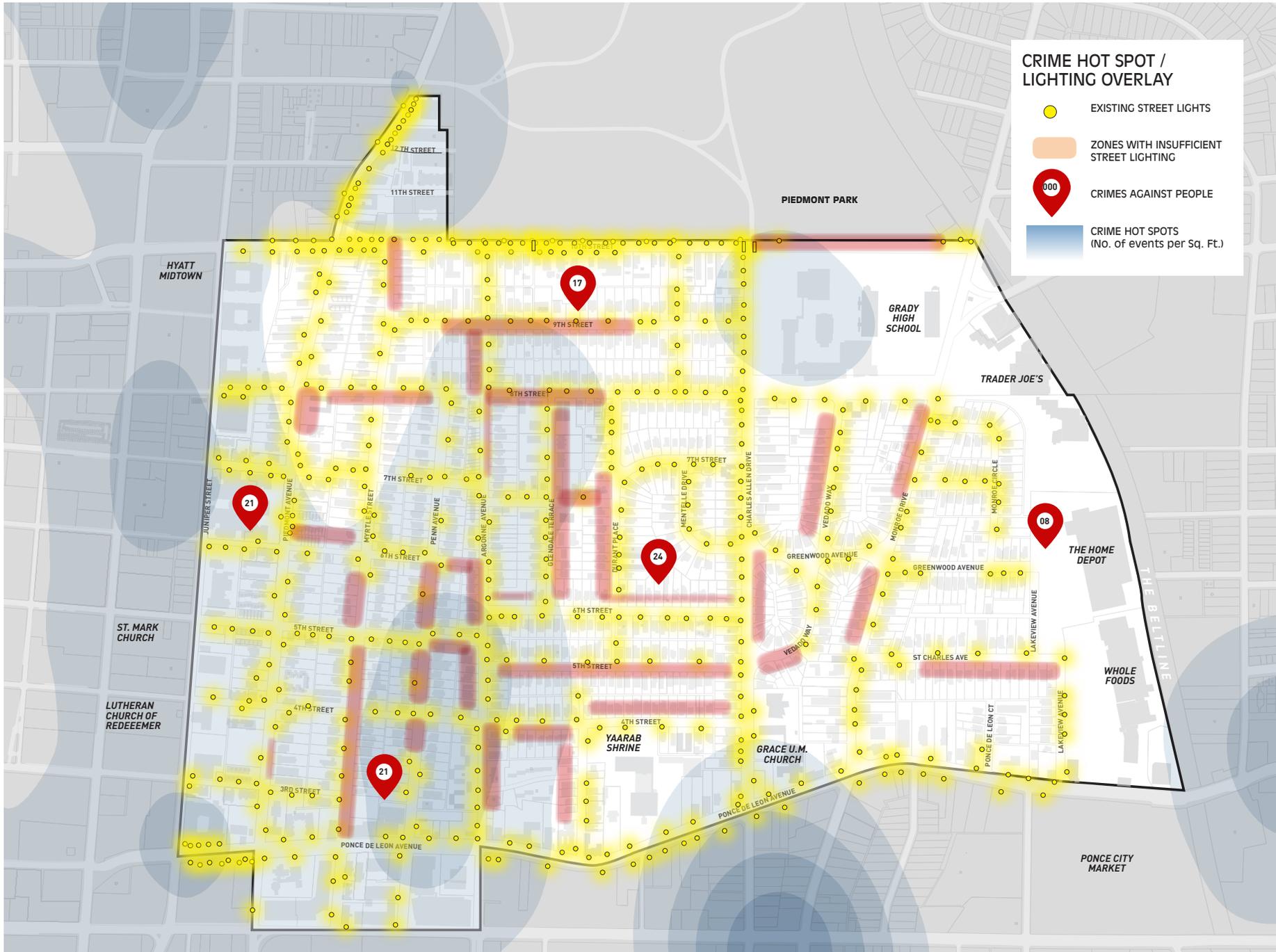


FIG. 1.9 MAP OF CRIME “HOT SPOTS” OVERLAID WITH EXISTING STREETLIGHT LOCATIONS

Sources: Windshield Survey, City of Atlanta GIS Database, Atlanta Police Department

OPEN SPACE

The Midtown Garden District benefits greatly from its close proximity to Piedmont Park, As Atlanta's largest public park (185 acres), it is rich with a variety of passive and active recreational attributes including walking paths, playgrounds, open lawns, recreational fields, a public pool and many natural water features. Despite the advantages the park's adjacency to the district, however, its popularity as festival venue has increased in recent years, adding tension between visitors and residents. Specific recent issues heard repeatedly throughout the planning process relate to neighborhood on-street parking, bike/vehicular lane closures (festival staging) and noise. Today over 120 "class A" (i.e. large) festivals are held annually in Piedmont Park - more than any other park or open space in the entire city.

Although Piedmont Park is a major contributor to a high quality of life in Midtown, fundamentally it is a regional park serving visitors throughout the city, state and beyond. As illustrated on the Open Space Framework Map (Fig. 1.10), the neighborhood actually lacks any alternatives to Piedmont. In other words, there are no other small green spaces within the interior of the neighborhood. Furthermore, residents in the district living south of 6th Street are beyond a 10-minute walk from Piedmont Park, suggesting a dramatically higher likelihood of simply driving to another adjacent park.

As part of this planning effort, the district's deficiency of neighborhood-scaled "pocket parks" became a reoccurring discussion and a Greenspace Focus Group was created shortly thereafter. A major part of the group's focus was identifying potential "underutilized" spaces - however small - that could potentially be improved or programmed to enhance public access and use. As illustrated in Figure 1.10, potential spaces identified included the front lawn of Grady High School (Charles Allen frontage), planted medians, the "traffic islands" in and around Vedado Way and Greenwood Avenue and a large portion of underused surface parking on a portion of the Yaraab Temple property.

Additionally, the BeltLine Eastside Trail - which hugs the eastern border of the Midtown Garden District - is a more recently-implemented amenity for the neighborhood through its extended trail connections to shopping, entertainment, office space, lofts and community park space outside of Midtown. However, direct access to the BeltLine is extremely limited due to topographic conditions and the arrangement of big-box shopping centers along the neighborhood's eastern edge.



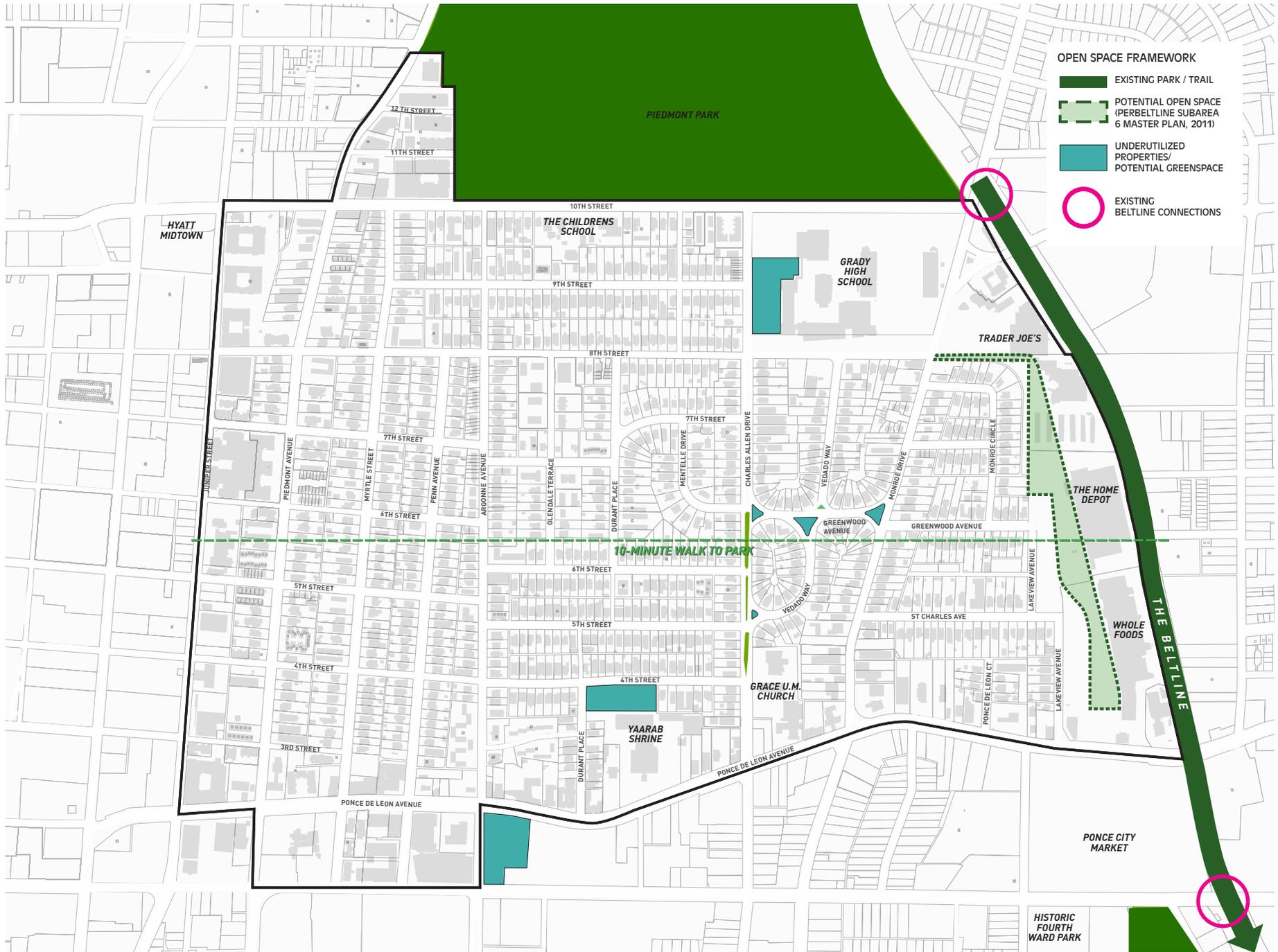
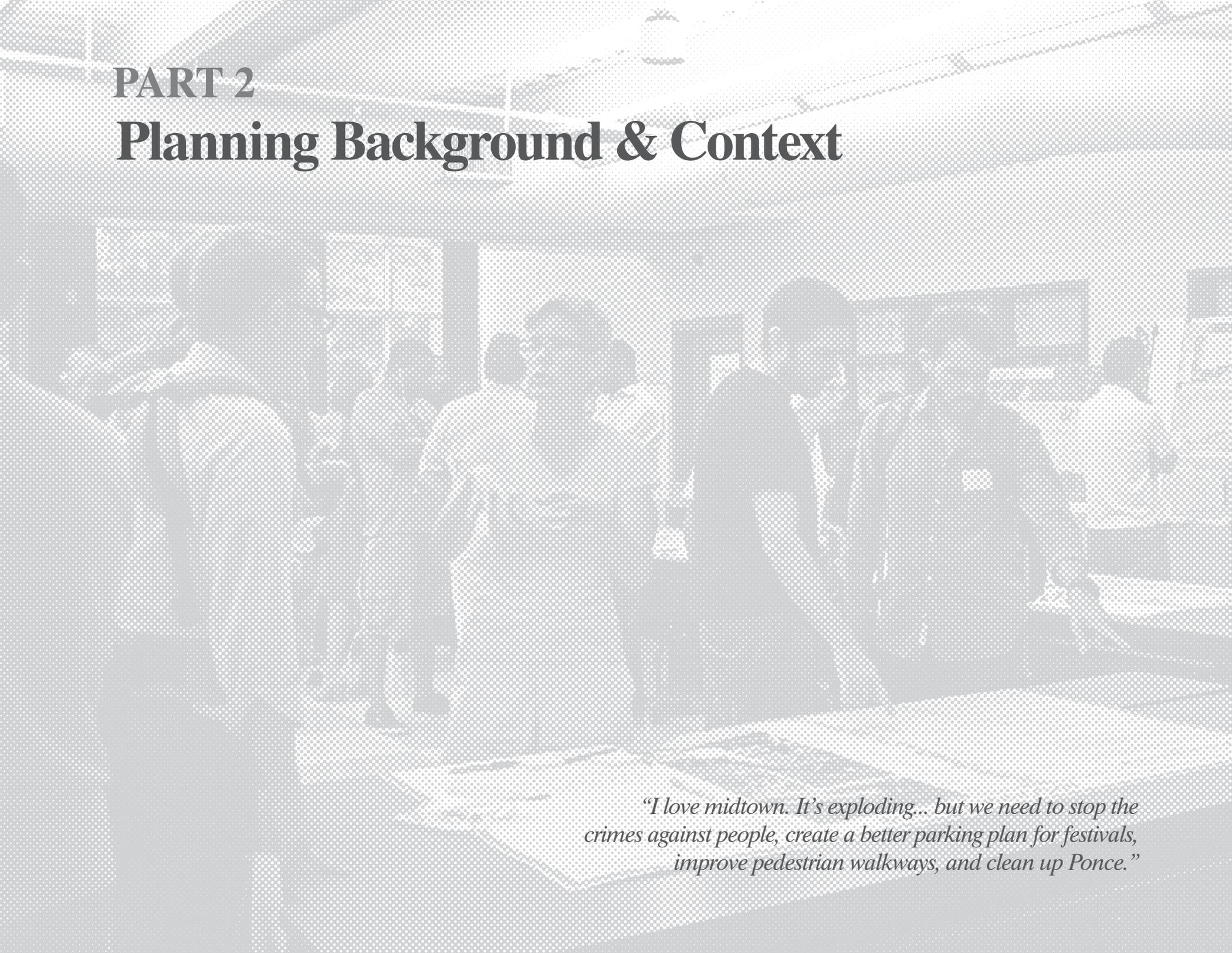


FIG. 1.10 OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK MAP

Sources: Windshield Survey, City of Atlanta GIS Database, Atlanta Police Department

PART 2

Planning Background & Context



“I love midtown. It’s exploding.. but we need to stop the crimes against people, create a better parking plan for festivals, improve pedestrian walkways, and clean up Ponce.”

2.1 Recent & Related Planning Efforts

This plan builds upon many other related planning efforts - citywide and within adjacent neighborhoods. A key part of this planning process was researching other recent plans and understanding how their findings and recommendations relate to the Garden District. The following pages include high-level summary of other relevant planning efforts.

BLUEPRINT MIDTOWN 3.0 (2016) & MIDTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2016)

Since the late 1990s, the Midtown Alliance has spearheaded planning throughout the MID. Throughout 2016, the Alliance pursued two parallel planning efforts. *Blueprint Midtown 3.0* builds on its previous iterations by further reinforcing the continued growth of an active, pedestrian-oriented, and economically diverse district. The plan focuses on Land Use & Development, Urban Design and Public Spaces. *The Midtown Transportation Plan* includes a detailed and holistic study of transportation and circulation patterns, current trends and future forecasts. The overarching goal of the plan was to better-balance mobility choices throughout the MID.

Collectively, the key findings and projects related to the Garden District include the following.

Land Use & Development

- Revisit the existing density bonus for affordable housing in the zoning code in order to facilitate its development
- Adapt the current zoning code to incentivize or require the principles set forth in the Midtown Owner’s Manual development guide
- Continue to require that buildings graduate in height along Juniper Street and Piedmont Avenue into the Garden district
- Encourage compatible ground-floor uses along and adjacent to Juniper Street

Transportation

- Explore the implementation of Complete Streets throughout the district, including Juniper Street, Piedmont Avenue, 10th Street, and North Avenue.
- Improve walkability by slowing vehicle speeds and enhancing the pedestrian environment, including the implementation of a district-wide 25-mph speed limit
- Added pedestrian signal crossing at Piedmont and 6th, Piedmont and 4th, Juniper St, and 4th street
- Transit - MARTA Bus Route 110 enhanced service along Peachtree Street

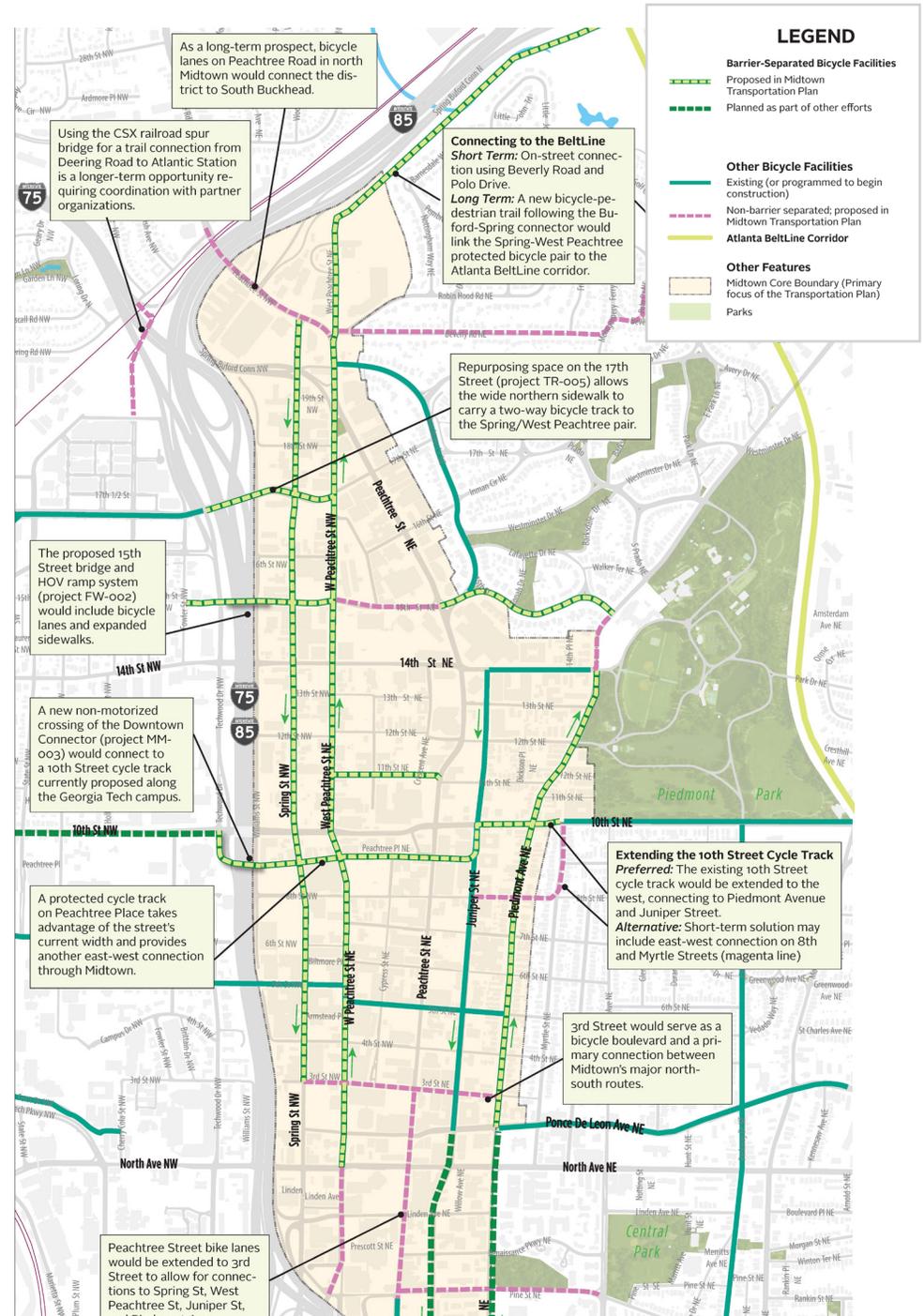


FIG. 2.1 PLANNED BICYCLE NETWORK, 2016 MIDTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Source: Midtown Alliance

- Transit - East-west Midtown shuttle service along 10th street from Piedmont going west
- Extension of protected 2-way bicycle facility along 10th street from Myrtle going west
- Bike facility along Myrtle Street from 10th street to 8th street, and along 8th street from Myrtle Street to Juniper Street
- Proposed protected bicycle facility along Piedmont Avenue
- One way to two way street conversion along 4th street from Spring street to Myrtle street

Public Spaces

- Utilize tools such as transfer of development rights, zoning incentives, use of impact fees, and financial incentives to secure a signature park site within Midtown.
- Repurpose excess right-of-way and work with property owners to create and expand publicly accessible pocket parks.
- Explore longer-term opportunities to create open space by capping the interstate.
- Continue to employ round the clock public safety patrols and strengthen collaboration with the Atlanta Police Department Video Integration Center.

CITY OF ATLANTA COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2016)

The following initiatives and projects are highlights from the 2016 update of Atlanta's Citywide Comprehensive Development Plan. Many of these reinforce some of the initiatives set forth at the neighborhood level within the Garden District plan.

Open Space

- Update Park Impact Fees and associated ordinance for parkland acquisition and development funding reflective of current costs
- Creation of an Open Space incentives program.
- Protect a minimum of 20% of the City's land area as greenspace
- Provide a minimum of 10 acres of public parkland for every 1,000 residents
- Provide publicly-accessible greenspace within 1/2 mile walk of every City of Atlanta resident
- Protect at least 75% of sensitive lands via ownership and/or development regulations.

- Protect and restore Atlanta's tree canopy in order to meet a target of 40% coverage
- Integrate Atlanta's history, cultural heritage, and the arts into the greenspace system to express community identity

Transportation

- Expand the City's network of high-quality bicycle facilities
- Connect bicyclists to transit
- Connect people to and from the Atlanta BeltLine
- Create a supportive cycling environment for a bike share system

Urban Design

- **Tree Canopy:** The maintenance and expansion of the tree canopy enhances Atlanta's image, ameliorates the climate, and mitigates environmental problems in the City.
- **Neighborhood Identity:** A strong sense of neighborhood identity exists in Atlanta and should be capitalized on in any urban design plans. Many of the most successful residential neighborhoods are focused around parks and small historic retail centers with street connectivity and sidewalk infrastructure.
- **Usable Public Space:** Zoning and Land Subdivision ordinances allow the creation of parks adjacent to streets flanked by low-density residential uses. Amendments should be made to the usable open space requirements in the zoning ordinance to establish minimum criteria for usable green space in new multi-family residential development.
- **Public Space and Public Art:** New public spaces and the redesign of existing underutilized spaces provide opportunities for usable community gathering spaces that serve as the backdrop for unique public art in the form of murals, sculptures, lighting, water features, landscaping, etc.
- **Historic Districts:** Existing historic districts provide a continuity with Atlanta's past that contributes to the image, unique character, and architectural heritage of Atlanta. Policies and incentives to encourage the preservation of buildings in designated historic districts and those eligible sites and districts but not locally designated should be promoted.
- **Preserve the boundaries and architectural character of Atlanta's existing neighborhoods and their buffers between neighborhoods and commercial areas.**
- **Create stable neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing their historic character and enhancing neighborhood parks, schools and commercial areas.**
- **Integrate new developments into the existing urban fabric, providing connectivity into and expansion of the existing street grid system.**

- Preserve and protect the city’s historic buildings and sites.
- Discourage land speculation and disinvestment that lead to neighborhood buy-outs, demolition of significant buildings (historic or otherwise) or land vacancy (including surface parking lots).
- Encourage mixed-use developments with residential uses to promote walkable communities.
- Preserve opportunities for connecting trails that reach out beyond the BeltLine to create a broad network of trails throughout the City.
- Encourage a grid of smaller blocks and connected streets to improve access to the BeltLine, reduce congestion, and further the urban character of the area.

VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND MASTER PLAN (2014)

The Virginia- Highland (VaHi) Master Plan was adopted in 2014. Given VaHi’s location as the Garden District’s eastern neighbor, the plan includes specific recommendations for areas such as Monroe Drive, 10th Street, and the BeltLine Corridor. The VaHi Master Plan highlights related to the Garden District include the following.

- Work with Midtown Alliance and the City of Atlanta to study the feasibility of making Piedmont Avenue 2-way from 14th Street to 10th Street.
- Install pedestrian gates/bollards at the BeltLine and Monroe Drive intersection.



FIG. 2.2 COMMUNITY MOBILITY NETWORK, VAHI MASTER PLAN (2014)

Source: VaHi Master Plan

- Implement the BeltLine Subarea 6 Master Plan for the Virginia/Monroe/Kanuga intersection complete with pedestrian-only crossing sequences.
- Retrofit intersection curbs so that they meet at ADA laws
- Install curb extensions to better protect pedestrians at the crosswalks of intersections on major thoroughfares (Virginia Avenue, North Highland Avenue, Barnett Street, Monroe Drive, Ponce de Leon Avenue, Briarcliff Road, Amsterdam Avenue, Lanier Boulevard, Ponce de Leon Place, St. Charles Avenue).
- Add pedestrian crossing signage at the intersections along all major thoroughfares in the neighborhood (Virginia Avenue, North Highland Avenue, Barnett Street, Monroe Drive, Ponce de Leon Avenue, Briarcliff Road, Amsterdam Avenue, Lanier Boulevard, Ponce de Leon Place, St. Charles Avenue).
- Establish a new BeltLine connection at Ponce de Leon Avenue between the CVS and the BeltLine embankment to provide direct access from the BeltLine to the Midtown Place shopping center and Ponce de Leon Avenue.
- Create a new BeltLine connection from the existing BeltLine trail to the Midtown Promenade shopping center. A dedicated connection point can easily be made at the area of the BeltLine that is adjacent to the shopping center driveway that accesses Virginia Avenue.
- Encourage new development along the BeltLine to access funding for affordable housing units that are made available through Invest Atlanta.
- Install additional pedestrian lighting on streets that have none, focusing on the neighborhood’s primary thoroughfares (Virginia Avenue, North Highland Avenue, Barnett Street, Monroe Drive, Ponce de Leon Avenue, Briarcliff Road, Amsterdam Avenue, Lanier Boulevard, Ponce de Leon Place, St. Charles Avenue).



FIG. 2.3 POTENTIAL MONROE DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS (NORTH OF 10TH STREET), VAHI MASTER PLAN (2014)

Source: VaHi Master Plan

CYCLE ATLANTA: PHASE 1.0 STUDY (2013)

Cycle Atlanta Phase 1.0 is an Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) funded study focused on developing dedicated, high-quality bikeways in the core of the City. The recommendations specific to Midtown Garden District include:

- **10th Street from Piedmont Road to Monroe Drive:** two-way “cycle track” along 10th Street from Piedmont Road to Monroe Drive. *NOTE: as of 2016, both phases have been constructed*
- **8th Street from Piedmont Ave to Myrtle Street:** 1 travel lane + Shared lane marking and contra flow bike lane
- **Myrtle Street from 8th street to Piedmont Avenue:** 2 travel lanes + Shared lane markings
- **Kanuga Street from Virginia Avenue to Monroe Drive:** 2 travel lanes. On-street parking is removed to create space for bike lanes. A new traffic signal at Virginia Avenue and Kanuga Street may be needed to help cyclist and vehicles make a left turn from Kanuga Street on to Virginia Avenue

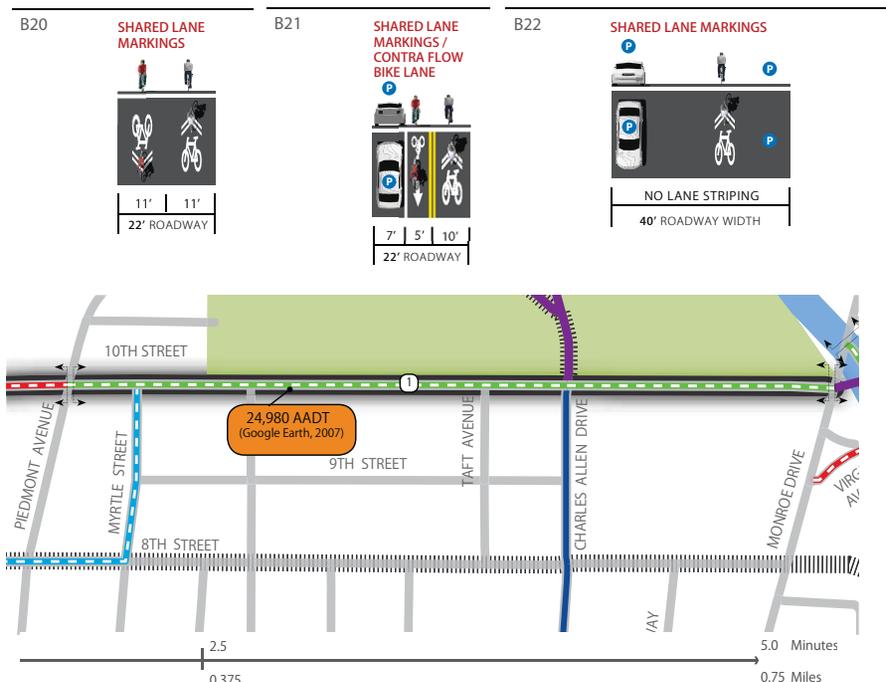


FIG. 2.4 CYCLE ATLANTA 1.0 STUDY: GARDEN DISTRICT AREA PROJECTS

Source: City of Atlanta

ATLANTA BELTLINE SUBAREA 6 MASTER PLAN (2011)

The study area of Atlanta BeltLine’s Subarea 6 plan overlaps the eastern edge of the Midtown Garden District focus area. As show on the associated Future Land Use Diagram below, the majority of 2011 plan recommendations relate to future redevelopment of the lower-density retail areas immediately adjacent to the BeltLine corridor. A summary of plan highlights is as follows.

Future Land Use: Monroe and Crescent

- Low density commercial with limited medium to low density residential

Future Land Use: Midtown Promenade / Home Depot

- 5 to 9 story mixed use development along Atlanta BeltLine
- Eastside of building have immediate access to the transit and trail
- Westside of block would front main street and the proposed linear park
- Westside of the site will be low density (1-4 story) residential scale to complement the scale of the adjacent [Garden District]
- North of the development will ultimately connect to Monroe Drive and 8th street

Future Land Use: 10th Street

- The land on Eastside of BeltLine right-of-way is zoned for low density commercial to maintain the existing condition while creating a more pedestrian friendly environment with more public space

Public Art

- Midtown Place/Midtown Promenade: Sculpture or Installation
- 10th Street and Monroe Drive: Civic Sculpture

Circulation and Transportation

- New N-S street connection between Ponce-De-Leon and 8th Street is proposed
- Ponce- De-Leon Terrace is also planned to connect to the new N-S street
- St Charles Ave. will also connect E-W to the New N-S street
- A majority of community participants desired a reduction in vehicular capacity along Monroe Drive.
- Monroe Drive improvements include a “road diet” from 4 lanes to 3 lanes.

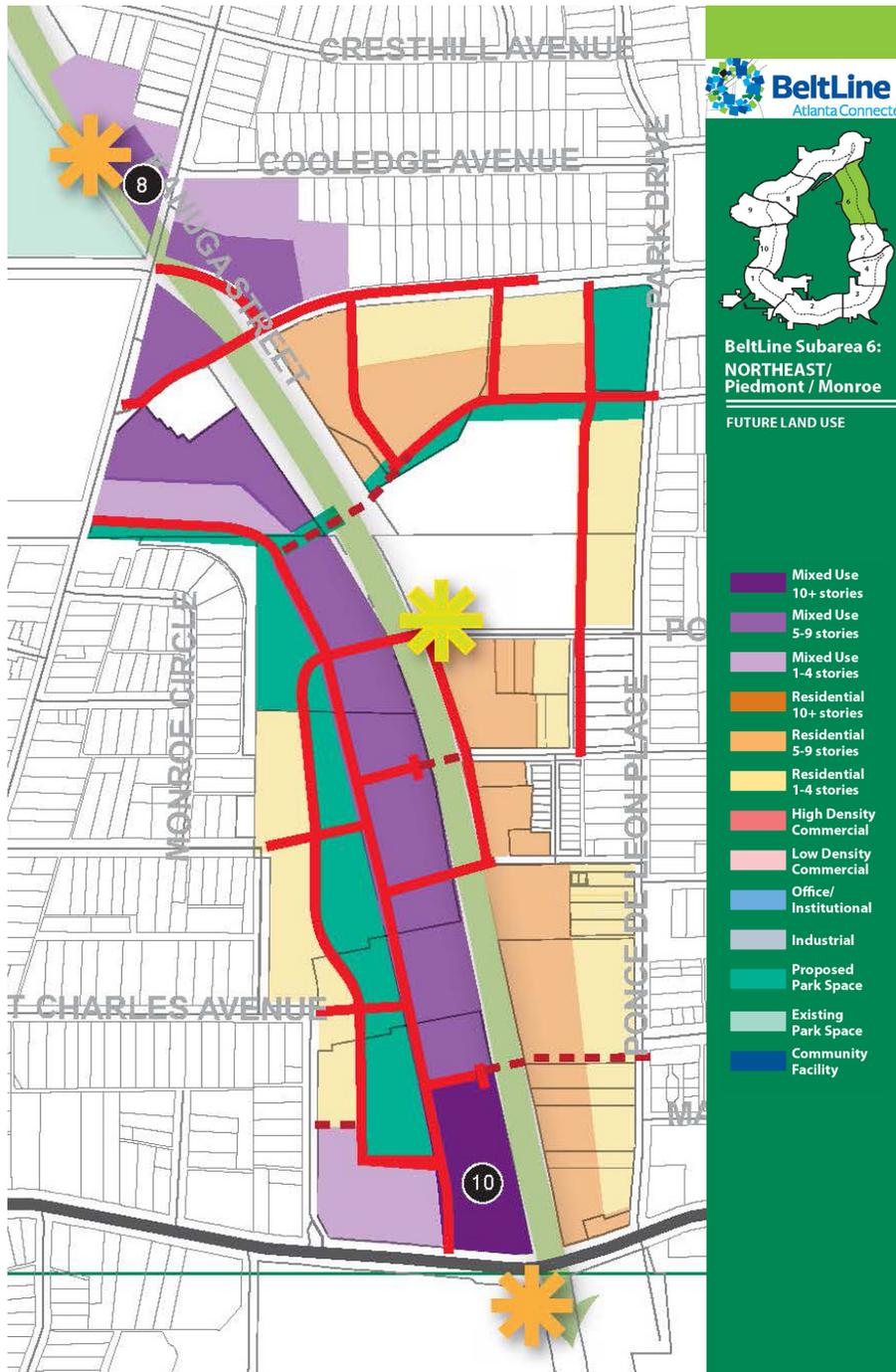


FIG. 2.5 FUTURE LAND USE, PER BELTLINE SUBAREA 6 PLAN (2011)

Source: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

The “road diet” would accommodate one vehicle travel lane in either direction with a center median and turn-lane. This concept utilizes the additional right-of-way for wider sidewalks on the west side of Monroe.

- At Monroe Drive and 10th Street, 10th Street should be moved further north so that the trail and transit cross Monroe Drive through the middle of the intersection. This will improve pedestrian safety at the intersection, and have little effect on vehicular operations. Realigning the Virginia Avenue intersection with Monroe Drive, including consolidating the two slip lanes into one perpendicular intersection, will improve both pedestrian safety and vehicular operations.
- Monroe Drive is a barrier within the community and additional pedestrian improvements at key intersections are recommended, such as potentially narrowing the travel lanes on the northern and eastern edges of the park.
- Connect Greenwood Avenue between Midtown and Virginia Highland Neighborhood

CONNECT ATLANTA PLAN (2008)

Connect Atlanta, the city’s first comprehensive transportation plan, was adopted by City Council in 2008 and updated again in 2013. This plan sets the vision and framework for major public investment in transportation improvement for next 25 years. The improvement projects identified in the plan that affect the Midtown Garden District area are highlighted as follows.

- Virginia Ave-10th Street Realignment - Realign 10th Street to the south to cross Monroe Drive and connect to Virginia Drive in a single point
- Piedmont & Juniper - Complete street retrofits of both corridors (as one-way pairs)
- 8th St Extension - New Street connecting Ponce De Leon Ave and Monroe Dr. along the BeltLine through the commercial property. Anticipated as private initiative as a part of the redevelopment of the commercial property.
- Beltline Transit - 22-miles of new alignment Light Rail Transit / Streetcar around the core of the City (see BeltLine plans for more info)
- Ponce De Leon Traffic Calming - Traffic calming measures potentially including bulbouts and chicanes

Note: several Connect Atlanta projects which have been completed and/or superseded by more recent planning efforts were excluded from above.

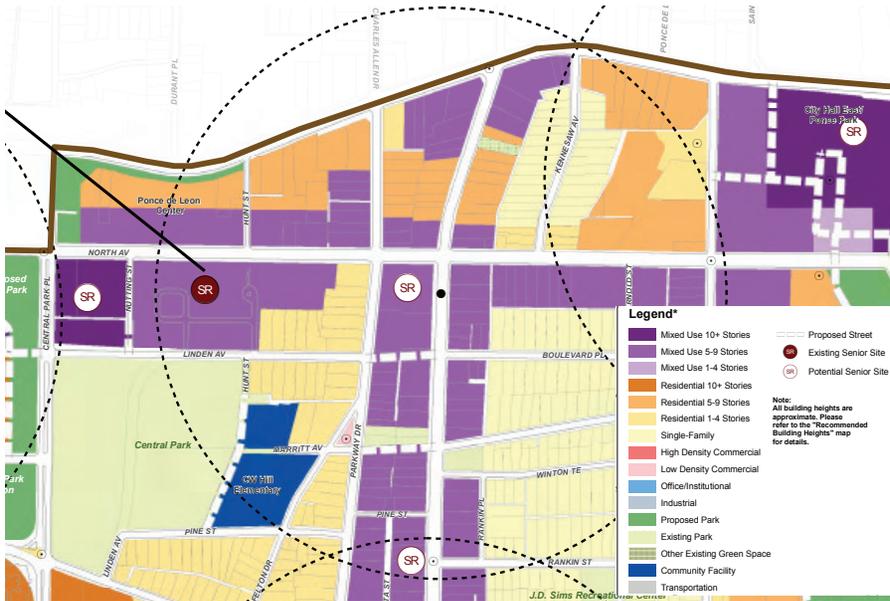


FIG. 2.6 FUTURE LAND USE: OLD FOURTH WARD NEIGHBORHOOD

Source: City of Atlanta

OLD FOURTH WARD MASTER PLAN (2008)

The Old Fourth Ward Neighborhood abuts the Garden District to the south, sharing a common “boundary” along Ponce de Leon Avenue. The following are highlights from the Old Fourth Ward Master Plan (adopted 2008) related to Midtown Garden District planning efforts.

Land Use

- Encourage mixed land use and focus growth along corridors and around existing/future transit stops
- Vary maximum building height in response to context
- Support pedestrian oriented retail nodes at Boulevard at North Avenue and along Ponce de Leon Avenue
- Boulevard corridor between Ponce de Leon Avenue and Freedom Parkway should become a true urban boulevard lined with five to nine story buildings featuring a mix of uses, housing unit sizes, and housing prices. Churches and other notable historic structures should be preserved. New east-west streets should be built between Boulevard and Parkway Drive to improve access. Small pocket parks should be provided throughout.

Infrastructure & Facility

- Relocate overhead utility lines when feasible.
- Continue efforts to identify storm water detention sites.
- Improve street lighting.
- Support the Sewer Evaluation and Rehabilitation Project.
- Increase the number and visibility of public safety officers.
- Hold property owners accountable.
- Include public safety criteria in the annual review process for business licenses.
- Create incentives for homeowner associations and building management companies to provide security officers.
- Enforce existing codes vigorously; reduce time from citation to prosecution to forfeiture, especially for absentee landlords and abandoned buildings.

Urban Design

- Provide pedestrian-oriented supplemental sidewalk zones.
- Parking located behind buildings
- No gated streets
- Buildings in mixed-use areas that form a continuous street wall
- Doors accessible from the sidewalk
- Active ground floor uses
- Storefronts, stoops, porches, or forecourts along the sidewalk
- Pedestrian-scaled signage
- Transparent ground floor glass

Housing and Economic Development

- Prevent the involuntary displacement of existing neighborhood residents.
- Encourage a mix of housing price points.
- Strive for a diverse mix of multifamily unit sizes, including three-bedroom units.
- Strive for 20 percent of new housing units to be affordable.

- Support recommendations of the BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board.
- Encourage the creation of temporary business innovation zones on vacant lots.

Transportation

- More frequent service along bus routes with the most ridership (such as routes 27 and 16) to make bus travel more convenient and potentially attract new riders

PONCE-MORELAND CORRIDORS STUDY (2005)

The Ponce De Leon and Moreland Avenue Corridors Study was conducted in 2005 focusing on transportation and redevelopment visioning. Key recommendations from the study related to the Midtown Garden District include the following.

Street and Block Pattern Policies

- Prohibit street abandonments or closures as part of new development, unless new streets are created with equal or greater connectivity to the existing street grid.
- Utilize traffic calming to minimize the impacts of cut through traffic on neighborhoods, rather than street closures.
- Support new streets across the BeltLine at such time as it is developed into a transit greenway.

- Support long-term development a street connecting Monroe Drive to Ponce de Leon Avenue, through the current Midtown Place and Midtown Promenade shopping centers.

Vehicular Circulation

- Amend Public Works standards to permit new multifamily and commercial uses to use existing alleys.
- Amend Public Works standards to remove the requirement for alleys and driveways to be set 7 feet from side property lines, even if zoning permits it.
- Create enhanced bus service along the corridors.
- Implement a bus signal prioritization program as part of signal upgrades.

Pedestrian Recommendations

- Provide a protected pedestrian walk phase or leading phase at signalized intersections.
- Require all portions of public street-serving sidewalks, even when their width extends onto private property, to be held to the same design and accessibility standards as the portion within the public right-of-way.
- Open a bicycle and pedestrian connection from Midtown Place shopping center to Midtown Promenade.
- Open a pedestrian connection from Midtown Place shopping center to Lakeview Street.



FIG. 2.7 "WEST SECTOR" RECOMMENDED LAND USE MAP - PER 2005 PONCE-MORELAND CORRIDORS STUDY

Source: City of Atlanta

Bicycle Recommendations

- Install bike lanes on North Avenue. by narrowing North Avenue from six to four lanes with a center turn lane/median and bike lanes between Piedmont Street and the Belt Line rail bridge. Under the bridge a bikeable outside lane could be provided, while east of there a bikeable shoulder could be used.
- Provide bike lockers at the North Avenue MARTA station.

Land Use Recommendations

- Preserve civic, religious and residential land uses.
- Recognize that some auto-oriented uses are appropriate for the corridors, but their form must be pedestrian-oriented.
- Require new development, regardless of use, to be pedestrian-oriented.
- Reinforce mixed-use nodes at Peachtree Street Boulevard/ Monroe Drive and Penn Avenue
- Encourage property owners to establish new parks or publicly accessible open spaces the western half of the Peters Mansion, in front of Y'arab Temple and near Argonne Avenue
- Preserve the Krispy Kreme building and use.
- Limit buildings to 7 stories (or 85 feet west of Belt Line and in mixed-use areas, with the exception of [Ponce City Market]. Limit building heights to 3 to 4 stories or 52 feet in other areas.
- Support private efforts to establish parks at the Peters Mansion, Argonne Avenue, the Y'arab Shrine Temple, North Avenue Park and the BeltLine.



FIG. 2.8 MONROE TO PONCE STREET CONNECTION - PER 2005 PONCE-MORELAND CORRIDORS STUDY

Source: City of Atlanta

2.2 Garden District Planning Timeline

Development activity around Midtown picked up substantially within just a few years following the Great Recession. Between 2013-2014, the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail and Ponce City Market had opened. The Garden District was seeing significant development pressure on all sides, yet had no neighborhood-specific masterplan to help guide land use decisions. In this context, the Midtown Neighbors' Association (MNA) partnered with Councilmember Kwanza Hall's office to seek out a consultant team, eventually selecting Lord Aeck Sargent, a Midtown-based planning and architecture firm, to lead the effort. The nearly year-long planning process, which lasted most of 2016, was organized around three sequential phases, described briefly as follows.

PHASE 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS & ISSUES ASSESSMENT (JAN-APR 2016)

The first several months of the planning process focused around inventory of existing conditions and identification of key issues and opportunities. In addition to organizing stakeholder meetings and groups (see Section 2.3 for details), the planning team walked, biked and drove the neighborhood to document aspects such as sidewalk conditions, accessibility issues, housing types, building uses and street lighting. The team also gathered Geographic Information System (GIS) data from a variety of sources in order to map and analyze trends related to public safety and infrastructure. These first few months also focused on neighborhood outreach as a way to document a wide range of initial neighborhood issues, complaints, suggestions, opportunities and ideas. Detailed maps and documentation from Phase 1 can be found in Section 1.3 and the Appendix.

PHASE 2: NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONING (MAY-AUG 2016)

With existing conditions, assessment and analysis complete, the planning team led the neighborhood through a series of highly-interactive public input sessions. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2016, focus group meetings and public design workshops were held as a way for neighbors to collectively develop neighborhood strategies and design concepts. Using this input, Lord Aeck Sargent then developed concepts, illustrations, draft strategies and framework plans for focus group feedback and public discussion. This phase of the plan focused heavily on visioning for the future of the neighborhood, including both short- and long-term strategies.

PHASE 3: MASTER PLAN (SEPT-NOV 2016)

By Fall 2016, hundreds of neighbors had vetted design concepts, offered suggestions, voted on alternatives and, in some cases, even drawn their own design ideas for consideration. Based on stakeholder feedback the planning team then edited potential designs, developed additional concepts, drafted recommendations and put together a detailed list of short-term and long-term projects. A final public presentation was held to present the overall draft master plan to neighbors and gather additional feedback. This report serves as a document of events leading up to the plan's creation, the process involved and explanation of recommendations, future projects and next steps. This document was subsequently adopted by Atlanta City Council in late 2017 and shall be used as a guide and decision-making tool for future neighborhood growth.

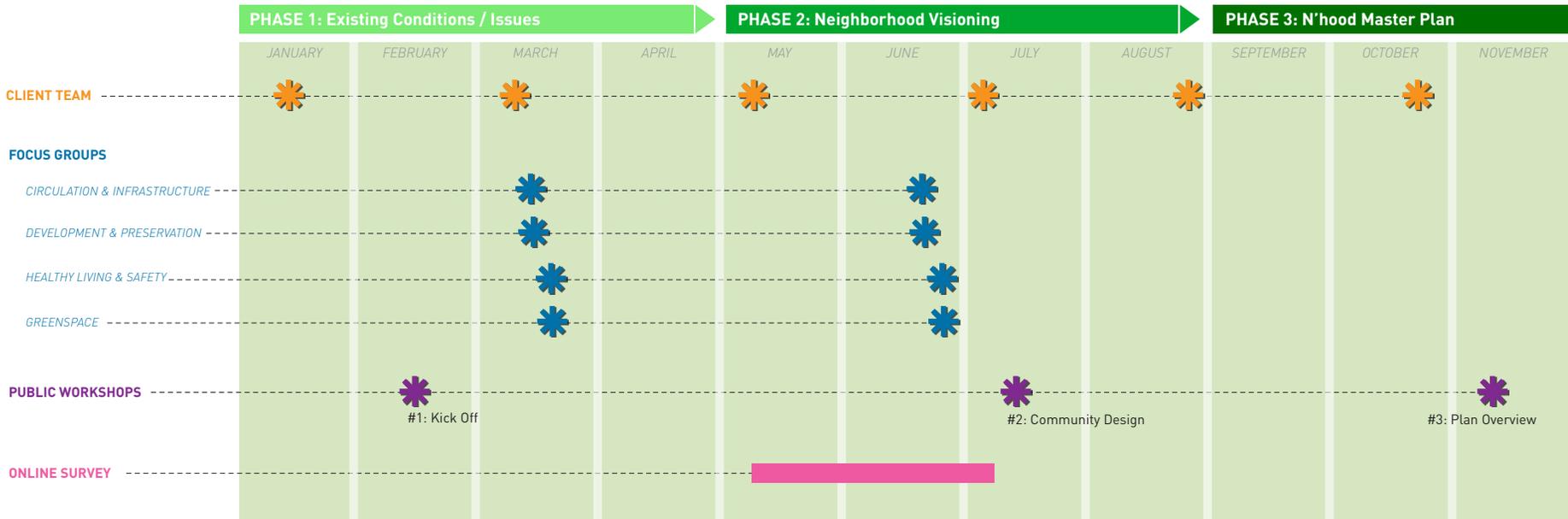


FIG. 2.9 MIDTOWN GARDEN DISTRICT PLANNING PROCESS

2.3 Neighborhood Engagement Process & Milestones

The Garden District planning process utilized a wide range of neighborhood outreach and input tools in order to gather insight from hundreds of neighborhood residents over a roughly 10-month period. Described briefly as follows are the key planning groups, events and milestones that occurred throughout the process.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee for the plan consisted of a small group of neighborhood and city leaders including MNA officers and Council staff. The Lord Aeck Sargent consultant team met with the steering committee on a bi-monthly basis to discuss project management, schedule, and plan progress.

FOCUS GROUPS

Early in the process, four (4) different focus groups were formed, as follows:

- Development & Preservation
- Circulation & Infrastructure
- Healthy Living & Safety
- Greenspace



Focus Group meetings included a smaller group of neighbors and were targeted to specific issues

The focus groups were a way for stakeholders strategize around key issues and opportunities facing the neighborhood. MNA and Council staff encouraged neighbors to sign-up for one or more focus groups (advertised at public workshops, on social media, email blasts, MNA website) in order to hone in on specific themes. Eight (8) focus group meetings were held during Phases 1 and 2 of the process.



Garden District residents participate in a greenspace issues ranking exercise

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Three interactive Public Workshops were held throughout the planning process:

Public Kickoff Workshop (February 10, 2016) - With over 100 participants in attendance, this first public event was held at the Grady High School cafeteria. The meeting included a short project overview/introduction by city leaders and the planning consultant team. The bulk of the workshop included a series of interactive planning stations allowing participants to identify in the neighborhood they lived, note major issues on neighborhood maps and document comments/suggestions. Lord Aeck Sargent staff were on-hand at each station to answer questions and help forward the discussion.

Second Public Workshop (August 10, 2016) - Held again at the Grady High School cafeteria, this second public event was organized as an open house, including nine planning stations. Each station centered around specific project ideas and framework diagrams that grew out of focus group discussions. Project concepts included corridor /streetscape improvements, ped/bike infrastructure/types/routes and greenspace character examples. Larger-scaled framework diagrams related to future land use, susceptibility to change, potential transportation improvements and potential open space expansion were also displayed for feedback. The series of supporting existing conditions maps and data were also presented to participants through the stations. The workshop was facilitated by consultant staff with roughly 80 participants in attendance.



Final Public Workshop (November 10, 2016) - The final public event was held in the Grady High School Auditorium focused on highlights of the draft masterplan. The bulk of the event included a presentation/discussion by Lord Aeck Sargent staff and MNA outlining land use strategies, potential capital projects and possible neighborhood initiatives. A portion of the workshop included planning stations allowing participants to further weigh-in on plan elements, concepts, illustrations and strategies presented. Over 50 people attended this final workshop.

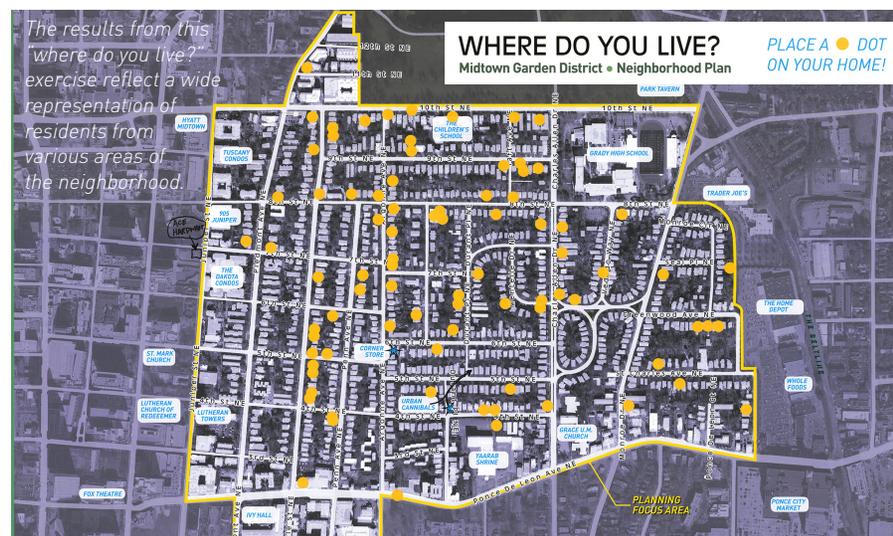
ONLINE SURVEY

An interactive online survey was launched midway through the planning process as both a way to reach a broader audience and gather more detailed feedback from stakeholders. The survey included 25 carefully-crafted questions relating to specific neighborhood issues heard during Phase 1. Question formats included both multiple choice and character image rankings. Respondents were also asked questions about themselves such as their tenure in the neighborhood, their age, housing type, household and which area within the neighborhood they lived. In some cases, this allowed the planning team to analyze particular question responses based on neighborhood "area" in order to find out whether some perceived issues were neighborhood-wide or more location/street-specific.

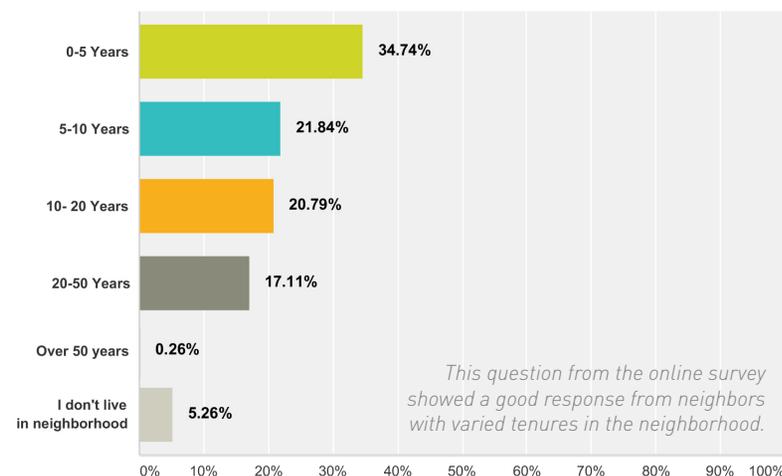
The online survey, which was taken by almost 400 people, was available online for about 2 months and advertised through a wide range of social media platforms and websites.

Detailed documentation of Focus Group Meetings, Public Workshops and Online Survey Results are included in the Appendix.

The masterplan webpage can be accessed at midtownatlanta.org/master-plan.



Q5 How long have you lived in the neighborhood?



2.4 Consensus Highlights

Roughly ten months of survey input, focus group discussions, public workshop exercises and detailed conversations with many community stakeholders yielded a series of key drivers of the masterplan. The following include the major consensus highlights.

WALKABILITY

- **Sidewalk conditions were one of the most widely-recurring complaints from residents.** The online survey showed a desired focus on ADA and pedestrian “functionality” (83%) over aesthetic improvements (17%)
- Many expressed the need to create guidelines for preferred sidewalk/street design
- Better/additional pedestrian connections to the BeltLine were a persistent discussion topic and major desire for residents

INTERNAL STREETS

- Online survey respondents and workshop participants repeatedly stated that **vehicular speeding is a major issue along Argonne Avenue**
- Speeding and cut-through traffic on 8th Street is a concern for many as it has become an increasingly significant east-west connector through the neighborhood

PERIPHERAL STREETS

- **Pedestrian safety along Monroe drive should be a major area of focus.** Connection to the BeltLine across Monroe needs to be improved and additional pedestrian crossings need to be added.
- Pedestrian safety along 10th Street (especially crossing 10th to the Park) remains a major concern.
- Piedmont Avenue is underutilized as a corridor. “Off peak parking” along east side is probably not the best long-term use of the roadway space.

ON-STREET PARKING

- Parking is not a neighborhood-wide issue; rather, the issue is very localized (closer to Piedmont Park and near Mary Mac’s, for instance).
- **“Add more permit-only parking...” ranked lowest as effective parking strategy.** The online survey yielded widespread comments/complaints about permit-only parking. Those directly affected said it was hard to have visitors. Those indirectly affected said it’s spilling parking onto adjacent streets.

PIEDMONT PARK FESTIVALS

- Opinions over the negative impacts of Piedmont Park festivals varied widely. Based on the online survey, an astounding 88% of residents either “love them” or “like them” whereas only 9% said they were a “major nuisance.”
- Although there was no overall neighborhood consensus on the degree of negative festival impacts, **almost all residents agreed that the amount of festivals in Piedmont Park should be limited and that better controls for them need to be instituted.**
- Unsurprisingly, Piedmont park events were particularly favorable with newer and younger residents

HOUSING DIVERSITY

- Affordability seemed to be a prominent concern for many people in the online survey (many added specific comments). **Most people expressed strong support to develop a strategy to continue the neighborhood’s history of diverse housing types and tenures.**
- Many stakeholders suggested that future growth of affordable housing (flats) would make sense along the “periphery” of the neighborhood – Juniper Street, Ponce de Leon Avenue and along BeltLine corridor.

CRIME & LIGHTING

- 83% think that “lighting is a major issue to be addressed”. Furthermore, Phase 1 findings seemed to reveal correlations between lack of street lighting and crimes against people (Argonne between 6th and Ponce, for instance)
- The neighborhood was generally supportive of any strategies that increased camera surveillance in public rights-of-way (86% per online survey said cameras in ROW should be either an “aggressive” or “strategic” approach)

STORMWATER

- Flooding during major rain events is a very localized issue (like many issues in the neighborhood). Phase 1 findings seem to indicate deficiencies in the aging infrastructure.

2.5 Guiding Principles

The consensus points yielded a series of Guiding Principles that were used in the development of the overall masterplan. Specific initiatives and projects that are detailed later in this document are designed with these Guiding Principles in mind.

Manage & Calm Traffic: Establish strategies that slow and calm traffic on neighborhood streets, particularly as it relates to cut-through traffic and improving the experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

Alleviate Stormwater Management Issues: Professionally assess the Garden District's ability to manage stormwater and mitigate flooding. Establish a holistic approach to stormwater management through a variety of measures including infrastructure/inlet maintenance, system repairs and upgrades and environmentally friendly enhancements such as rain gardens.

Preserve Historic Character: Identify strategies and mechanisms to better preserve existing historic resources where feasible including considerations for a neighborhood review process for demolitions.

Encourage Compatible Mixed-Use Development Along Peripheral Corridors: Ensure new mixed-use development along Ponce De Leon Avenue, Juniper Street and the BeltLine in ways that transition to and are compatible with the character of the interior of the Garden District. Provide opportunities for new pedestrian-oriented goods, services, shopping and entertainment. Avoid out-parcel vehicular oriented development.

Promote the Neighborhood's "Garden" Character: Enhance the existing "Garden" character of the community by defining neighborhood street design and planting guidelines, preserving and pruning healthy old growth trees, improving medians and landscape triangles and creating new streetscapes on key streets.

Enhance & Expand Open Spaces: Identify strategic locations for new public or private open space within the neighborhood interior. Encourage new open space in any larger-scale mixed use developments.

Improve Operations & Impacts of Piedmont Park Events: Identify strategies to help mitigate the impacts of events at Piedmont Park for neighborhood residents including improving public safety, planning for traffic and parking, formalizing funding partnerships and considering a dedicated neighborhood festival.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Based on the survey, 60% of neighborhood in favor of "Requiring a more rigorous city and neighborhood review process for demolition of historic structures." Furthermore, almost 75% of the neighborhood in favor of "stronger development regulations as long as they don't discourage new development."
- **Neighborhood consensus is not about regulating architectural STYLE. It's about needing a better PROCESS for reviewing demolitions.**

GREENSPACE

- Households with children have been increasing in the neighborhood, creating increased desire for neighborhood park spaces (lacking today), even if small.
- Given growing prominence of the Midtown Garden Tour, a set of street design & planting guidelines (with focus on right-of-way) should be created

3.1 Susceptibility to Change

The majority of redevelopment and future growth over the next decade is likely to occur along the periphery of the Garden District. To the west, the Juniper Street corridor is currently seeing perhaps the most rapid change with at least four redevelopment projects under construction. Over the next 5-10 years, the Ponce de Leon corridor - a key link between the MID and the BeltLine - will likely see increased redevelopment. The map below illustrates land parcels susceptible to change based on recent development trends, level of property investment, current property density/building conditions, highest and best use of land, ease of parcel assembly, tenure and size of parcels.

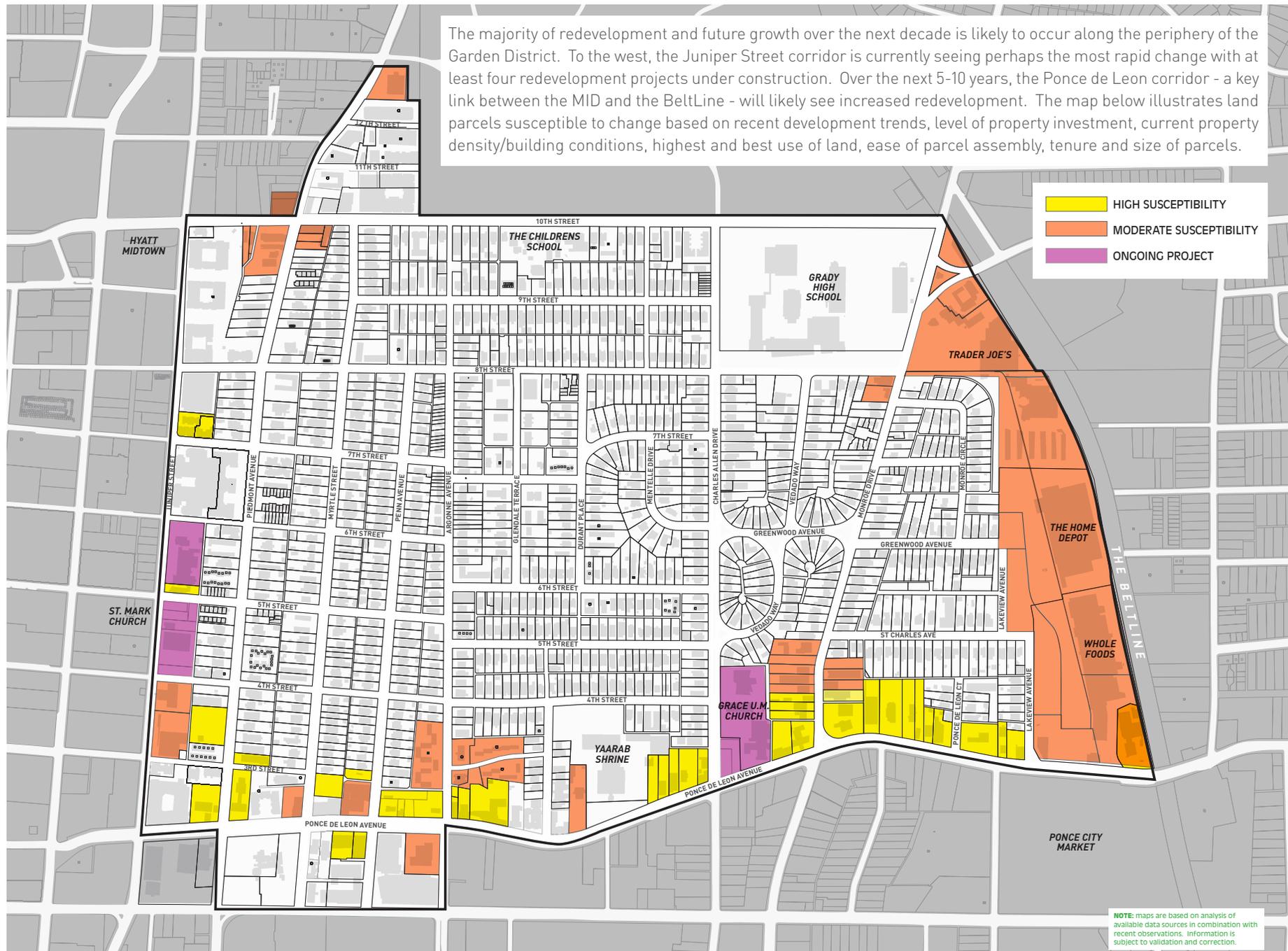


FIG. 3.1 SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE (BASED ON PLANNING OVERLAYS OF BELTLINE SUBAREA 6, PONCE-MORELAND STUDY, AND SPI-16 IN COMBINATION WITH CURRENT ONGOING PROJECTS)

3.2 Future Land Use

The Proposed Land Use Map (Fig 3.2) on the next page illustrates general recommendations for future land use patterns within the Midtown Garden District. The land use strategies proposed here represent refinements of previous plan recommendations from the BeltLine Subarea 6 Master Plan (2011) and the Ponce-Moreland Corridors Study (2005). Versions of this map were reviewed and discussed exhaustively through multiple public forums throughout the Midtown Garden District Master Planning process. The methodology of combining land use with implied density (in number of stories) is derived from the process used during the 2011 BeltLine Master Planning process (although not all categories match precisely). The highlights of Proposed Land Use for the Midtown Garden District are outlined as following along any potential zoning implications.

Preservation of Residential Neighborhood Core (1-3 story) – The historic core of the neighborhood will continue to be mostly residential with a mix of single-family homes, small scale multi-family apartments and condos, townhomes, duplexes and multi-plexes.

Zoning Recommendations: No changes recommended. The primary existing zoning category (R-5) is compatible with the masterplan, allowing for single-family and two-family dwellings and a maximum building height of 35'. The few RG-3 areas in the neighborhood allow slightly higher densities but require transitional height planes to adjacent R-5 zones.



Existing residences within the historic core of neighborhood

Medium Density (4-6 story) Mixed-Use along the Ponce Corridor – The City's 2016 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) update does reflect Ponce as a mixed-use corridor. However, current City zoning maps still reflect most of the corridor as C-2. Aside from a few key "historic storefront" areas (i.e. Myrtle/Ponce), low-density commercial is not the "highest and best use" of land along Ponce. The Ponce de Leon corridor offers the opportunity for additional affordable housing and neighborhood commercial through mixed-use development. As a key link between the MID and the BeltLine corridor, it is critical that future redevelopment projects along Ponce de Leon embrace a mix of uses with residential and ground floor retail. Future development along Ponce should allow increased density overall (4-6 stories), utilizing transitional height planes currently required by adjacent residential zoning districts.

Zoning Recommendations: Change relevant properties from C-2 to MRC-2 to allow mixed use development at higher densities (see graphic to right)

Medium/High-Density Mixed-Use along the BeltLine (5-9 stories, 10+ stories) - This master plan defers to the BeltLine Subarea 6 recommended Land Use for areas directly abutting the BeltLine corridor. Subarea 6 plans show 5-9 story mixed-use as part of any longer-term redevelopment of the Midtown Promenade and/or Midtown Place (Home Depot, Whole Foods) parcels. Slightly higher densities of 10+ stories is encouraged at the Ponce de Leon Avenue frontage.

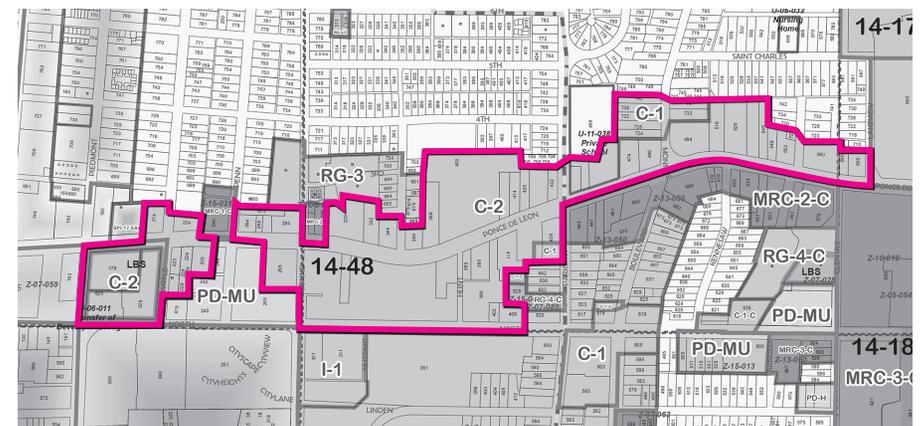
Zoning Recommendations: No changes recommended in this area. This area is part of the BeltLine Overlay Zoning District, which includes specific requirements related to density, open space, pedestrian/bike amenities, streetscape, etc.

Medium-Density Mixed-Use along Juniper Street (5-9 stories) at MID Edge – In many ways, Juniper acts as a "seam" between the high-density Midtown Improvement District and the lower-density Garden District. As such, future redevelopment (much of which is already occurring) should continue to move forward at 5-9 stories, utilizing transitional height planes currently required by adjacent underlying zoning districts. Ground floor retail along Juniper Street should be encouraged in order to maximize neighborhood options for nearby goods and services.

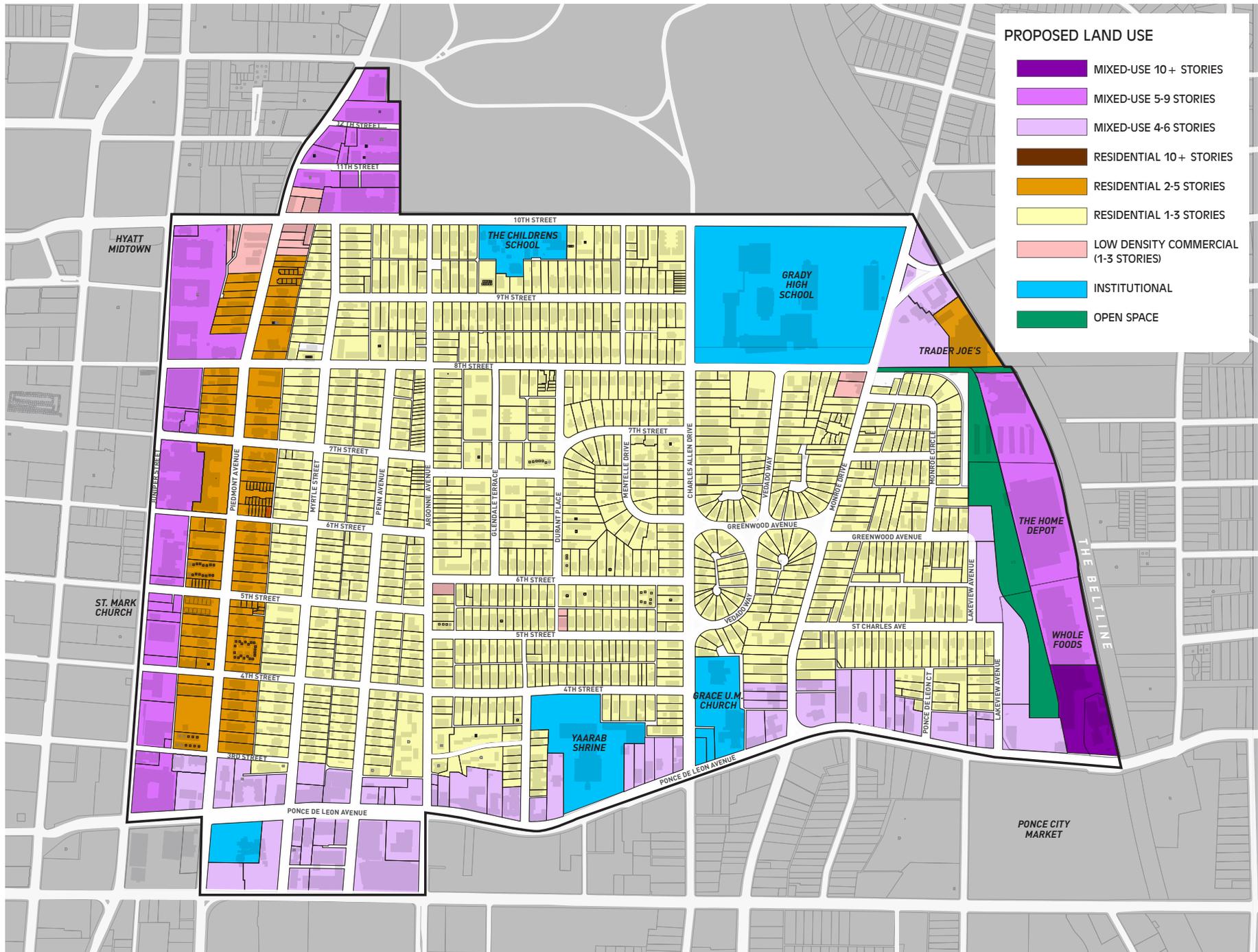
Zoning Recommendations: No changes recommended. As part of the Midtown Alliance-administrated SPI-17 zoning overlay district, future development should continue to include all density, massing, streetscape and parking required by the overlay.

Medium-Density Residential along Piedmont Avenue (2-5 stories) – Current building character and densities along Piedmont Avenue should continue to be preserved in the future. Any future redevelopment of key commercial "nodes" at 10th and at Ponce should utilize mixed-use strategies including ground floor retail. The section of Piedmont between 10th and Ponce should continue as a predominantly 2-5 story residential corridor.

Zoning Recommendations: No changes recommended in this area.



The magenta boundary above includes the area recommended to be changed from C-2 to MRC-2.



PROPOSED LAND USE

- MIXED-USE 10+ STORIES
- MIXED-USE 5-9 STORIES
- MIXED-USE 4-6 STORIES
- RESIDENTIAL 10+ STORIES
- RESIDENTIAL 2-5 STORIES
- RESIDENTIAL 1-3 STORIES
- LOW DENSITY COMMERCIAL (1-3 STORIES)
- INSTITUTIONAL
- OPEN SPACE

FIG. 3.2 PROPOSED LAND USE MAP (BASED ON LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS IN BELTLINE SUBAREA 6, PONCE-MORELAND STUDY, AND SPI-16 IN COMBINATION WITH CITY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP)

3.3 Historic Resources Strategy

As highlighted in Part 1 of this report, the Midtown Garden District has a rich and long history dating back to before 1900. Originally populated with a wide variety of large estate homes, the area diversified over the early decades of the 20th Century to include some of Atlanta's first garden apartments. Ongoing market forces have continued to create pressure for additions, subdivisions, alterations, demolition and redevelopment thus raising concerns among some stakeholders that Midtown's historic character is being lost.

In 1999, the Midtown Garden District was designated as a National Historic District, which creates a significant honor but does not include enforceable protections against the loss of historic resources. In just under two decades since the 1999 designation, approximately 75 of the original 723 contributing structures have been either fundamentally altered or lost to demolition. In response, various community efforts over the past 10-15 years have attempted to create a local Landmark District, which would create a much higher level of protection. However, past and recent planning efforts did not result in a strong community consensus for a conventional locally-administered historic district.

This current master planning effort reengaged the conversation around historic resources in an effort to better understand a potential consensual path forward to provide some level of additional protections, particularly from demolitions. This planning effort incorporated a number of public input mechanisms including one-on-one stakeholder interviews,

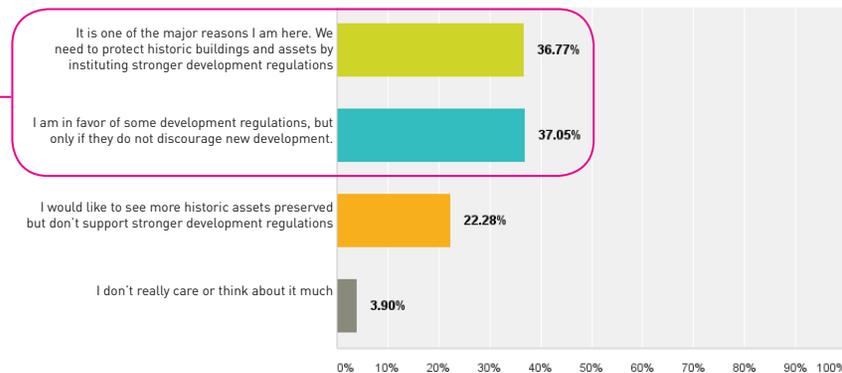
conversations with key community leaders, a series of focus group discussions, three public workshops and an on-line survey that had extensive participation. The results of these stakeholder input mechanisms led to several conclusions:

- There is clear and overwhelming concern among Midtown Garden District stakeholders about the potential continued loss of historic resources. Only 4% of on-line survey responses were not concerned at all. Almost 75% of survey respondents were in favor of some form of increased regulations.
- There is no clear consensus around instituting guidelines or regulations that would dictate architectural style, additions, and alterations particularly if they would discourage new development.
- There is more concern about demolition and the loss of historic resources and somewhat less concern about alterations and additions to existing historic resources.
- Therefore, there is no clear mandate to create a formal local Landmark District through the Atlanta Urban Design Commission that would create strict regulations on demolitions, alterations and character of new development. However, there appears to be strong consensus for creating a formal process by which proposed demolitions of historic resources can be reviewed in advance in a public forum.

Based on the survey, almost 75% of the neighborhood in favor of “stronger development regulations ...as long as they don't discourage new development.”

Q10 Which of the following best describes your attitude towards historic preservation in the neighborhood? Select only one

Answered: 359 Skipped: 22



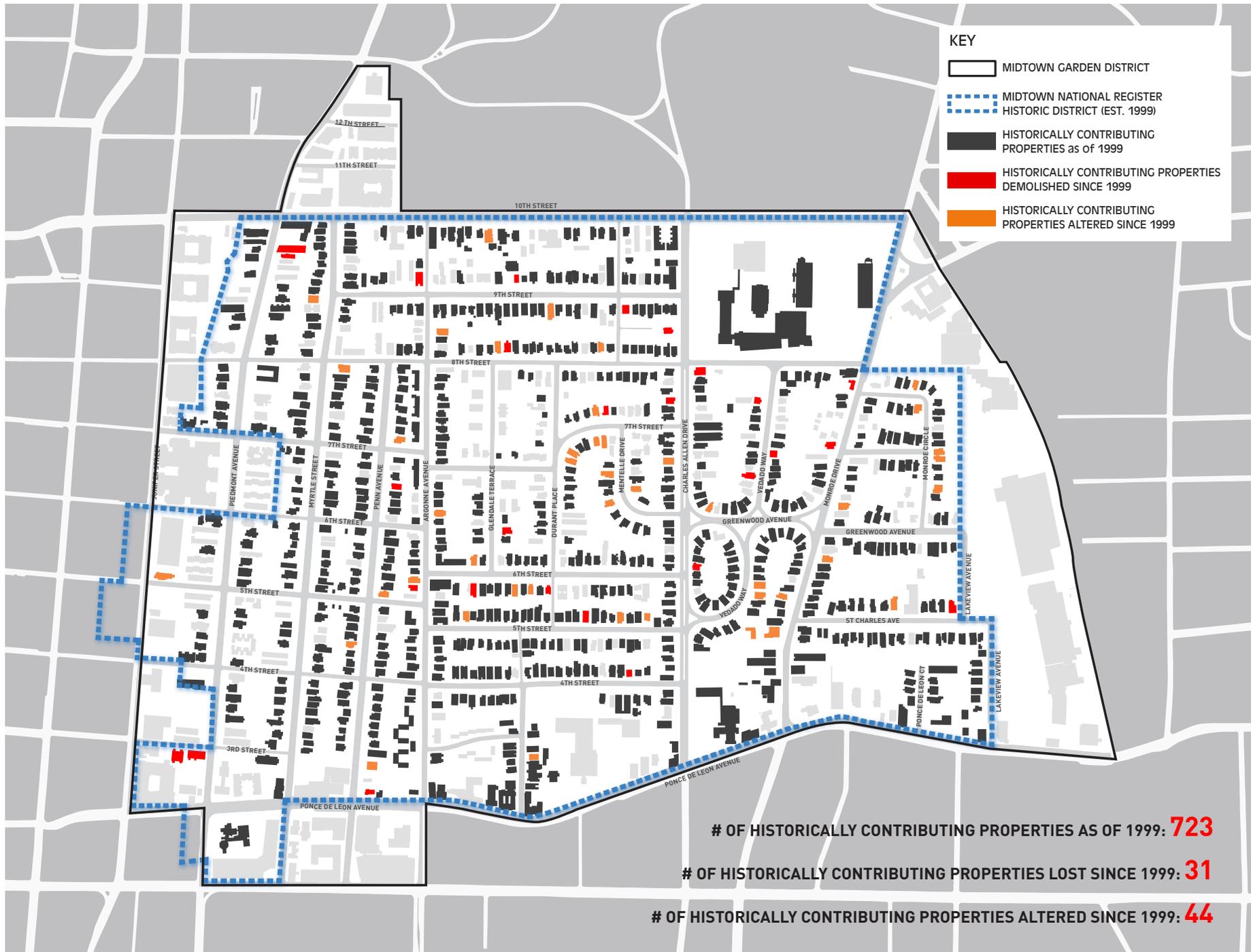


FIG. 3.3 HISTORICALLY CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES AT MIDTOWN GARDEN DISTRICT
 Source: National Register of Historic Places, 1999



The neighborhood consensus is not about regulating architectural STYLE...



It's about needing a better PROCESS for reviewing demolitions.

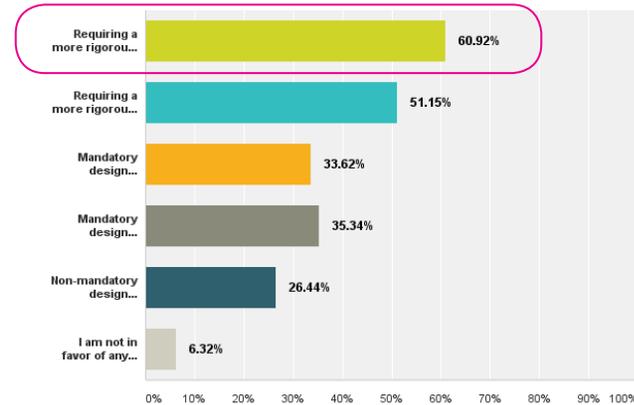
HISTORIC PRESERVATION: ACTION ITEMS

Explore the creation of a formal review process in which applicants must go through a public review process before getting a by-right demolition permit for any “contributing” structures in the National Register District. This will likely require a number of steps including:

- Regularized updates to the original 1999 historic resources survey which originally defined which structures are “contributing.”
- Agreeing on the proper “public forum” in which reviews would take place (e.g., NPU? AUDC? MNA? specially created review body?).
- Agreeing on the regulatory mechanism which forces the review and the degree to which review comments have teeth.
- Agreeing on the information that is required to be presented (eg., economic justifications? plans for what gets built back?).
- Agreeing on reasonable timeframes for the reviews so as not to overly burden opportunities for new development.

Q11 If you are in favor of some level of regulatory control over historic resources, which items do you think could be included? Select all that apply

Answered: 348 Skipped: 33



Based on the survey, 60% of neighborhood in favor of “Requiring a more rigorous city and neighborhood review process for demolition of historic structures.”

3.4 Open Space

As described in Part 1 of this report, the Midtown Garden District's system of open spaces is a story of extremes. On the one hand, residents and visitors benefit from close proximity to both Piedmont Park and the BeltLine Eastside Trail - both of which include a wide variety of spaces, amenities and trails appealing to a broad range of demographics. On the other hand, outside of those two regional destinations the Midtown Garden District contains almost no other usable open spaces that operate at a neighborhood scale. While both Piedmont Park and the Atlanta BeltLine are tremendous amenities, they are not easily accessible to residents on the south and west side of the district (i.e., are more than a 10-minute walk away). Although land values within the neighborhood remain comparatively high and open space opportunities are scarce, the Open Space Framework Map (Fig. 1.10) does illustrate ideas for expanding access to usable open space across the District. Key strategies include:

ENHANCE EXISTING OPEN SPACES

- Improve existing landscape "islands" along Greenwood Avenue between Charles Allen Drive and Monroe Drive. These islands are currently maintained by nearby property owners and are a great source of pride. However, many existing residents suggested that their usability could be further enhanced by providing more landscaping, adding seating, installing a few sidewalks and improving ADA.
- Find opportunities to improve public access to existing underutilized institutional open space such as the Grady High School front lawn along Charles Allen Drive. A partnership with the Atlanta Public Schools could be explored to make this area more usable for neighborhood residents. Small and strategic interventions - like providing a few additional pedestrian access points - could make a big difference.
- As further described in Section 3.5, provide more connections to the BeltLine. These better connections make extended access to destinations like the Old Fourth Ward Park more feasible.



example of neighborhood pocket park



Prior to the parcel's redevelopment, the Midtown Alliance worked with a land owner to implement a temporary pocket park through a five-year land lease.

CREATE NEW OPEN SPACES

- As noted in BeltLine Subarea 6 Master Plan, the most significant opportunity to create new open space within the Garden District would occur in tandem with redevelopment of two existing retail parcels adjacent to the BeltLine.
- While they are rare, there are a few opportunities - such as the rear of the Yaarab Shrine property along 4th Street - to work with existing private property owners to convert underdeveloped portions of property into ad-hoc usable open space. Other opportunities could include finding a few small vacant lots (or lots that could become vacant in the future) and turning them into small neighborhood pocket parks. These types of private property strategies can be temporary as holding actions or more permanent depending on individual circumstances.

ADDING MORE GARDEN TO THE GARDEN DISTRICT

- Work with City leadership to develop and promote alternate venues for large festivals as a way to alleviate some of the over-use and stress to both the Piedmont Park grounds and negative impacts on the neighborhood. Potential alternative venues might include Central Park, Grant Park, Chastain Park and the (future) Westside Quarry Park.

PROMOTE AND SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE VENUES FOR LARGE FESTIVALS

- As further described in Section 4.5, improving the garden character through design consistency within the public right-of-way can have a beneficial impact and function as a neighborhood open space of sorts

Where the Open Space Framework Diagram broadly illustrates the neighborhood's vision the accompanying Capital Projects Diagram (Fig. 3.5) illustrates specific short- and long-term projects that grew out of that overall vision. Both diagrams are meant to be used hand-in-hand for future planning purposes.

3.5 Transportation & Circulation Framework

As mentioned in Section 1.3, the Midtown Garden District benefits from an urban street grid of approximately 61 individual blocks. As such, the neighborhood today includes a variety of mobility options for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike. However, issues such as poor sidewalk conditions, the need for safer pedestrian crossings, the need to address pervasive vehicular speeding and the need to better-connect to the BeltLine were major topics of conversation throughout the planning process. The Transportation & Circulation Framework Map (Fig.3.4) was developed through neighborhood input forums as a way to illustrating the overall vision for future mobility throughout the District. Key points include the following.

EXPAND THE INTERIOR BICYCLE NETWORK

- Better-connect the neighborhood to the City’s rapidly-expanding network of high-quality bicycle facilities. Key neighborhood greenways (i.e. bicycle boulevards) should be formalized and enhanced along interior streets such as Myrtle, 8th, 5th, 4th and Greenwood. These minor bicycle connections should connect safely to major bike routes along Juniper, Piedmont, 10th, Ponce and the BeltLine.
- Priority north-south bike routes should be Charles Allen Drive and the BeltLine. Given these nearby bike routes and limited space on Monroe Drive, the main focuses of Monroe Drive improvements should be pedestrians and vehicles.

ADD PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ACROSS MAJOR STREETS

- Along 10th Street, create a more repetitive pattern of pedestrian crossings to increase pedestrian safety, driver awareness and reduce conflicts with bicycles.
- Along Monroe Drive, establish new “mid-block” pedestrian crossings allowing more direct access to the BeltLine, Midtown Promenade and Midtown Place



Example of signalized mid-block pedestrian crossing

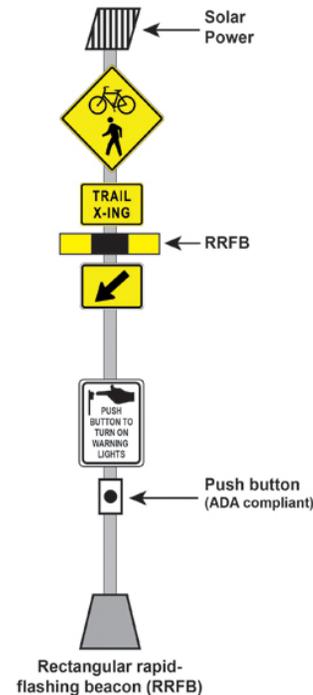
- Along Piedmont and Ponce de Leon Avenues, add signals to existing unsignalized intersections. Also implement “leading pedestrian intervals” at existing signalized intersections.

ADDITIONAL BELTLINE CONNECTIONS

- Although the BeltLine Subarea 6 plan is still reflective of the neighborhood’s long-term vision of future BeltLine connectivity, it hinges on redevelopment of the large commercial parcels which are also likely longer-term given current market conditions. As such, the neighborhood should prioritize creation of formalized short-term connection(s) to the BeltLine, even if temporary.
- Forthcoming Monroe Drive improvements should focus on major pedestrian safety upgrades to the BeltLine trailhead at 10th and Monroe

TRAFFIC CALMING

- Both Monroe Drive and Argonne Avenue are major priority corridors for short-term traffic-calming measures



Example of high-visibility crosswalk



High quality bike infrastructure

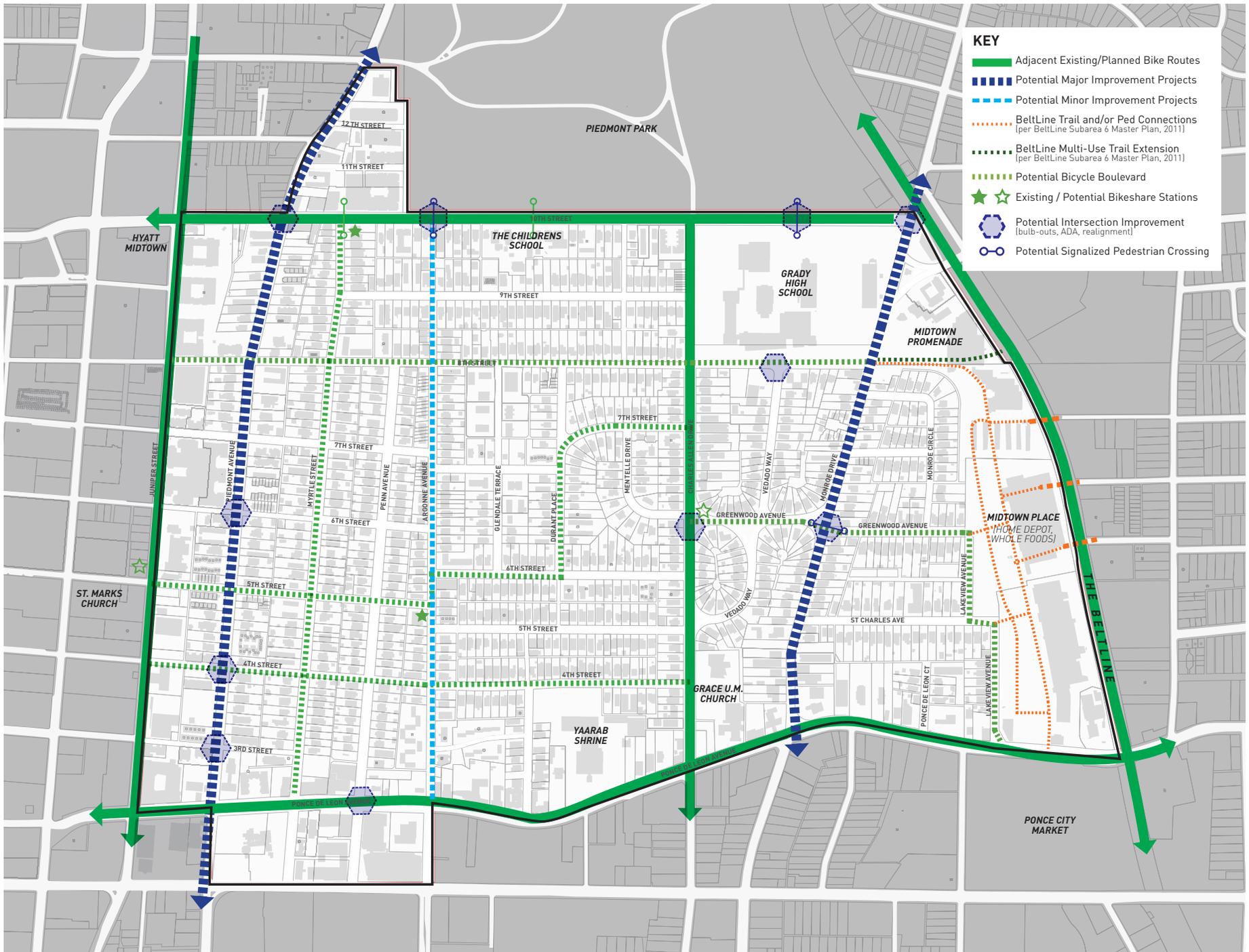
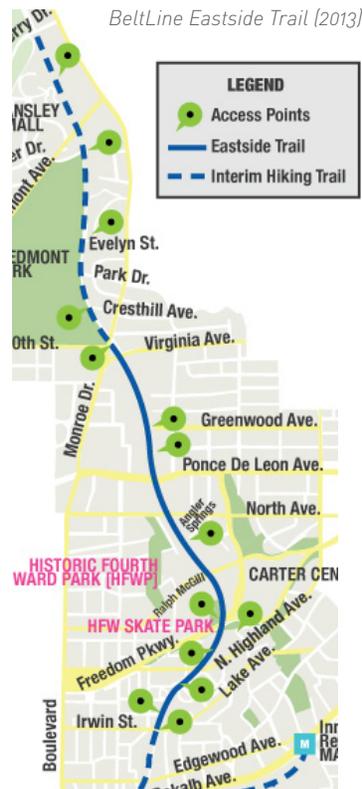


FIG. 3.4 LOCATION OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

3.6 Capital Projects Overview

PROJECTS RECENTLY-COMPLETED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- C.1 *BeltLine Eastside Trail (2013)* - The first trail phase constructed of the 22-mile Beltline project
- C.2 *Ponce de Leon Bike/Ped Improvements (2012)* - This GDOT-led project included installation of buffered bicycle lanes
- C.3 *10th Cycle Track (2013) + Resurfacing (2016)* - Implemented over several phases, 10th Street now includes a two-way "cycle track" connecting the MID to the BeltLine. The corridor was recently repaved through the Renew Atlanta Bond program.
- C.4 *Juniper Complete Street (2017-2018)* - This \$5.5 million project being led by the Midtown Alliance includes a complete street "transformation" including protected bicycle lane, pedestrian upgrades, LED lighting and bioswales.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

- S.1 *Argonne Avenue Traffic-Calming* - This potential neighborhood-led project would include new stop signs, new/refreshed crosswalks and on-street parking upgrades
- S.2 *10th Street Pedestrian Signals (MNA + Grady HS)* - Added RRFP and Hybrid Beacon pedestrian signals augmenting existing signals
- S.3 *ADA & Sidewalks at Greenwood/Charles Allen* - Creation of ADA connection along this corridor where no sidewalk exists today. The improvements would also seek to better-activate the adjacent passive green space.
- S.4 *Intersection Improvements at 8th / Grady HS* - Improved student crossings and stormwater mitigation at this active pedestrian intersection
- S.5 *Ped Signal (RRFB) at Monroe/Greenwood* - Addition of new pedestrian crossing in within zone between 8th and Ponce
- S.6 *Ped/Bike Connection to BeltLine* - Creation of a short-term (possibly temporary) bicycle/pedestrian/ADA connection to the BeltLine Eastside Trail
- S.7 *Monroe Drive / Boulevard Complete Street* - This Renew Atlanta-led project includes "Complete Street" upgrades for 5 miles of the corridor between Piedmont Circle and Woodward Avenue
- S.8 *Piedmont Avenue Complete Street* - As the northbound counterpart to Juniper Street, this Midtown Alliance-led project is envisioned to include permanent on-street parking, a protected bicycle lane and ADA/pedestrian upgrades
- S.9 *BeltLine Connection at Ponce* - planned bike/pedestrian connection to Eastside Trail via Ponce de Leon Avenue near Ponce City Market (per Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.)

LONGER-TERM PROJECTS

- L.1 *Stormwater Infrastructure Upgrades* - This effort could include a combination of small elements such as bioretention rain gardens and clearing of grates up to large-scale improvements such as full subsurface system analysis and reconstruction/up sizing
- L.2 *BeltLine Trail Northern Extension* - Continuation of the highly successful Eastside Trail, this project would enhance connectivity to the recent northern additions of the Piedmont Park extending to the Lindbergh MARTA station.
- L.3 *Monroe/10th/Virginia Realignment* - This current intersection creates severe alignment issues with a convergence of vehicular, rail, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Potential realignment and re-signalization could greatly improve operations and safety.
- L.4 *Interparcel Connectivity* - As outlined within the BeltLine Subarea 6 Plan, the eventual redevelopment of these strategic parcels would create the opportunity to improve connectivity to Midtown Promenade and Monroe Drive. Although topographic challenges exist related to the BeltLine connection, future redevelopment should investigate opportunities for connections at multiple levels.

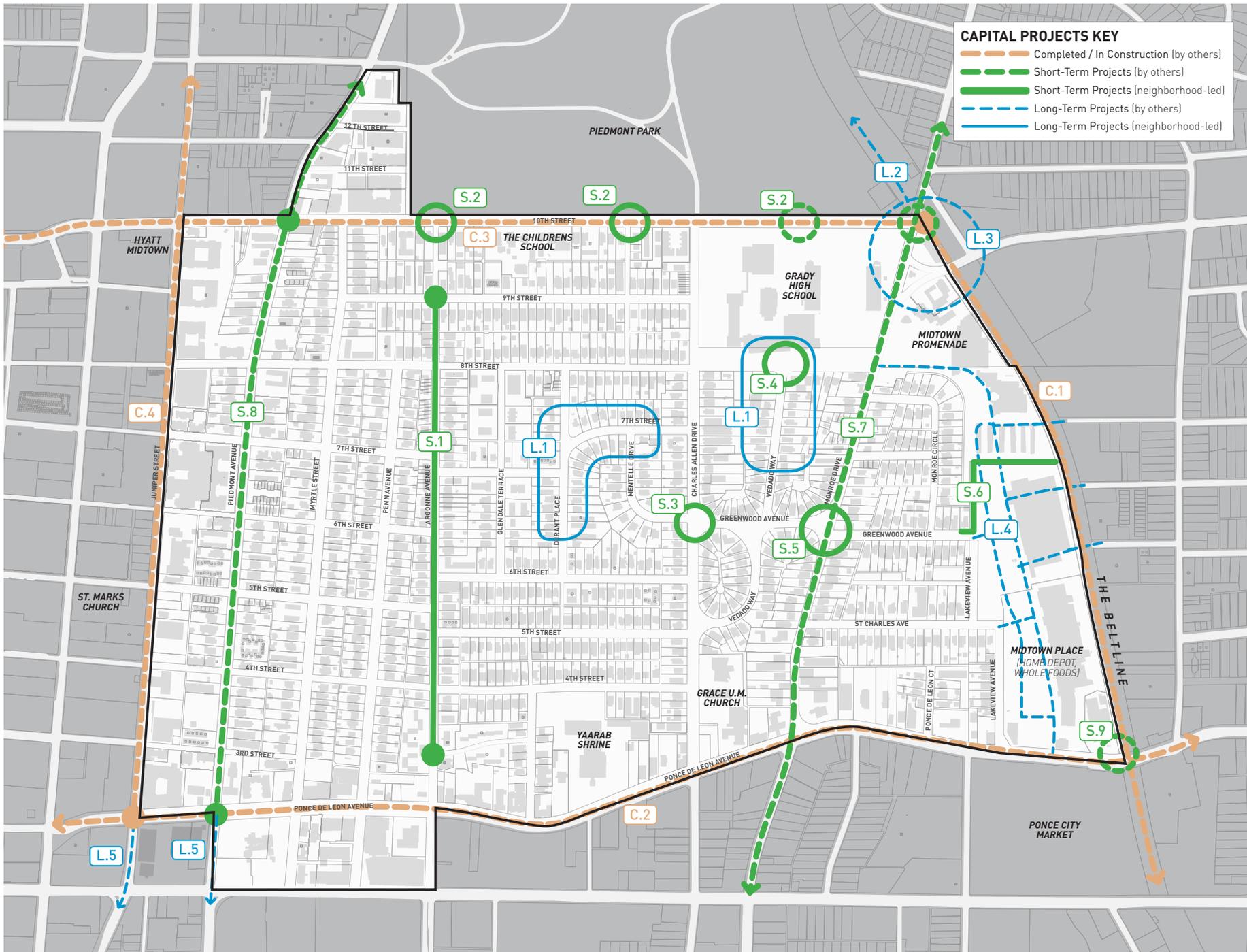
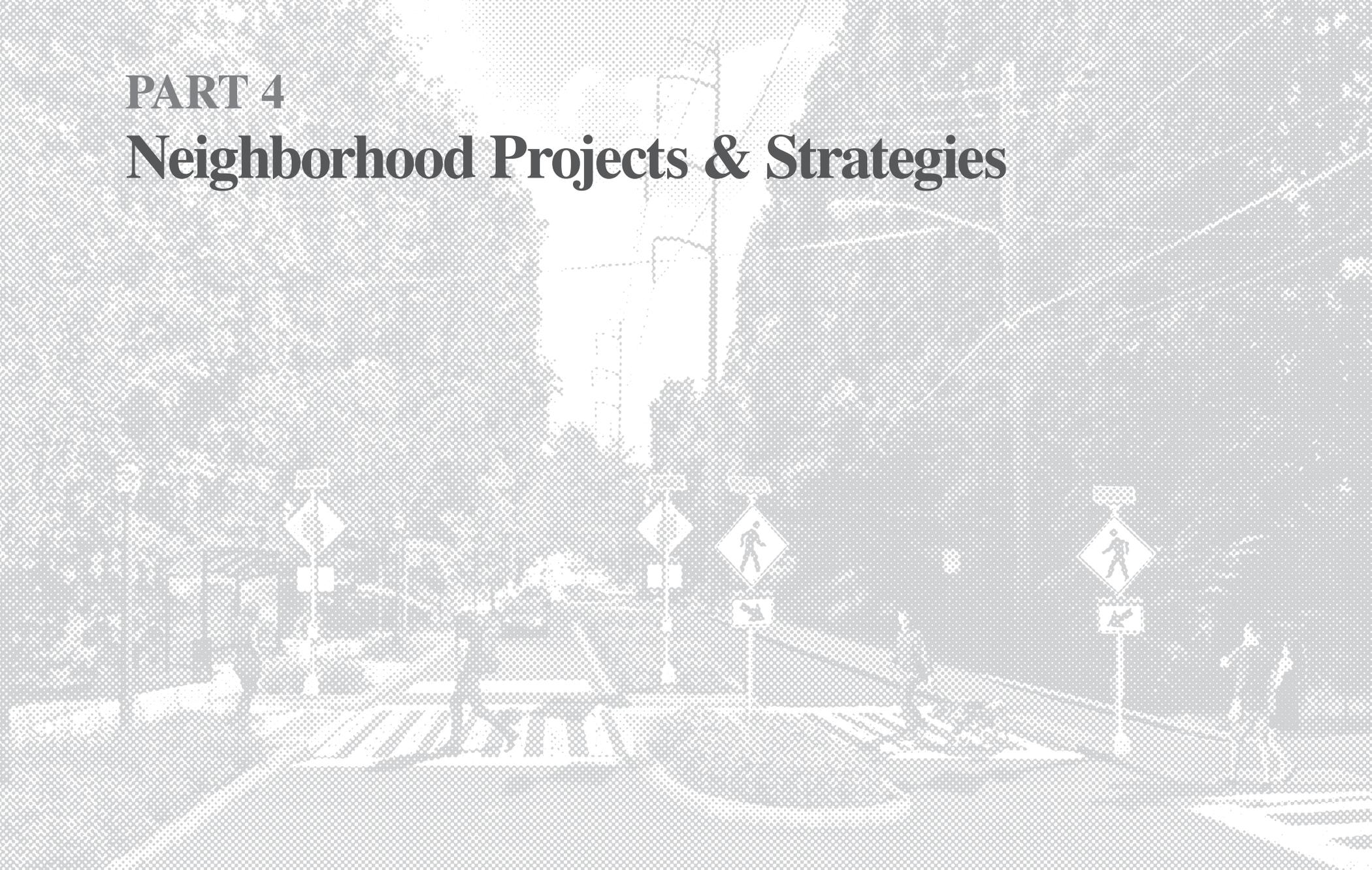


FIG. 3.5 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS DIAGRAM

PART 4

Neighborhood Projects & Strategies



“I’d love to see some focus on bike and pedestrian safety. A lot of people use our neighborhood to race home to and from work. We should add more stop signs, speed humps and build out curb corners to discourage this and create a safer environment for the people that bike and walk in our neighborhood... especially for the kids that live here.”

4.1 Piedmont Avenue Complete Street Improvements

The future of Piedmont Avenue was a main topic of conversation throughout the Garden District planning process. Currently, Piedmont Avenue between 14th Street and Downtown is one-way northbound, serving in Midtown as a one-way “pair” with Juniper Street (one-way southbound to its west). At 14th Street near Piedmont Park, Piedmont Avenue transitions from one-way to two-way. Throughout the planning process, many key issues along Piedmont were identified:

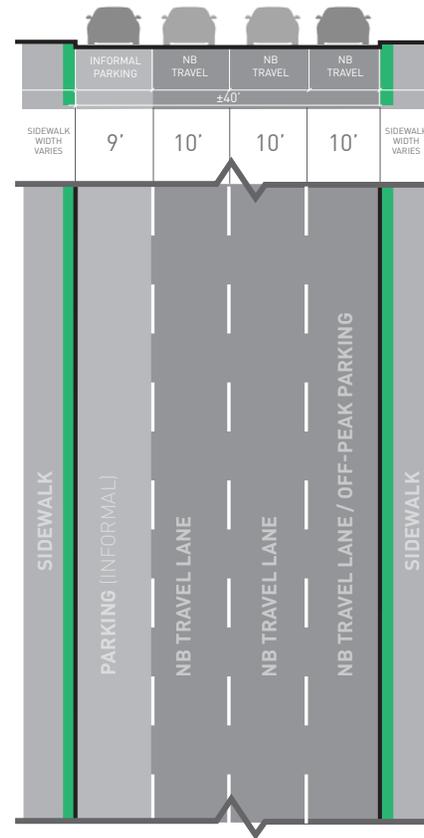
- Difficulty safely crossing Piedmont as a pedestrian
- Excessive vehicular speeding
- Low utilization of “off peak” parking along east side
- Maximization of permanent parking along west side is critical for many residential properties with limited off-street parking
- Lack of safe north-south bike route along west side of neighborhood

Several planned and/or funded initiatives are currently moving forward affecting this important corridor. In mid-2016, almost \$2 million in funding was allocated towards Piedmont Avenue between 10th Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue to be used for “complete street” improvements as part of the City’s Renew Atlanta Bond Program. The Juniper Complete Street Project is also approaching construction with a target start date of mid-2017. This \$5.5 million federally-funded project led by the Midtown Alliance includes a high-quality one-way protected bike lane, LED pedestrian lighting, conversion of off-peak parking to permanent parking, sidewalk/ADA upgrades and a network of stormwater planters. It was often discussed that Juniper and Piedmont should be planned holistically in order to work together as one-way pairs.

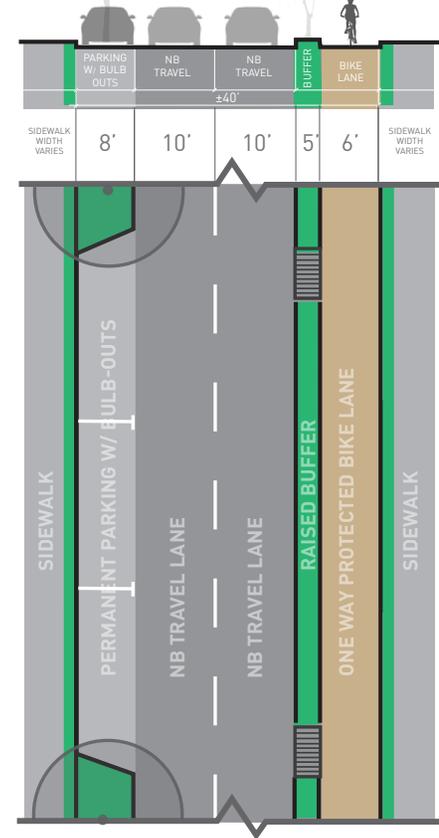
Based on the issues identified as well as related project information, the planning team developed a series of conceptual options for Piedmont Avenue between 14th Street and Ponce de Leon for consideration by neighborhood focus groups and in public workshops. These concepts included one-way bike facilities, two-way bike facilities, two-way conversion options and pedestrian improvement options. The preferred future configuration (as shown this page upper-right) includes a one-way northbound protected bike lane (with raised buffer), two northbound travel lanes and institutionalizing permanent parking on the west side.

The neighborhood should work with the Midtown Alliance and Renew Atlanta in the short-term to ensure that improvements for Piedmont Avenue include these preferred elements.

Piedmont Avenue: Current Typical Configuration (10th to Ponce)



Piedmont Avenue: Preferred Future Configuration (10th to Ponce)



Typical current condition along Piedmont Avenue within the Garden District

4.2 Monroe Drive Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Dramatic changes over the last several years along the BeltLine have elevated Monroe Drive's role to perhaps *the* major north-south circulation route through the neighborhood and beyond. Destinations such as Ponce City Market and Trader Joe's have increased vehicular congestion simultaneous with increased pedestrian/cyclist use of the BeltLine Eastside Trail and 10th Street. The BeltLine trailhead at the 10th / Monroe has become a major conflict point for all users and in early 2016 a Grady High School student was struck and killed by a vehicle at the intersection. In the year since the incident, a series of City and neighborhood-led efforts to improve the corridor have come into focus. In late 2016, the Renew Atlanta Bond program began a design/planning process for the combined Monroe Drive/ Boulevard corridor spanning between Memorial Drive to the south and Armour Yard to the north.

Recommended improvements to Monroe Drive have been included as part of many recent planning efforts, including the BeltLine Subarea 6 masterplan, which recommended reconfiguring lanes from four (existing) to three (potential) travel lanes, including a center turn lane, which many studies show as safer and more efficient for both pedestrians and turning vehicles. However, the segment of Monroe Drive through the Garden District is unique from much of the rest of the corridor in that it currently includes only three travel lanes instead of four.

Monroe Drive was, without a doubt, the most-discussed corridor throughout the entire Garden District planning process. As such, many conceptual design options were explored for this segment of Monroe through a series of Transportation & Circulation Focus Group Meetings and Public Workshops. Options considered included reductions to two travel lanes, addition of bike lanes, traffic-calming, sidewalk expansion areas and potential new pedestrian crossings. A key consideration for this segment of Monroe was to what extent to incorporate dedicated bicycle facilities in the future street cross-section. When considering the larger bike network (Fig. 3.4), including nearby north-south routes along Charles Allen and the BeltLine, there was consensus that vehicular and pedestrian safety were more critical components to this section of Monroe than dedicated bike facilities given limited space within the right-of-way.

Figure 4.1 and the section diagram on the following page illustrate the preferred concept for this segment of Monroe. Key components include:

- conversion of one travel lane into center turn lane with opportunities for planted medians and pedestrian refuges where left-turns were less critical
- where existing right-of-way allows, widen sidewalks, improve ADA, add pedestrian lighting and vertical buffers between sidewalks and travel lanes
- pedestrian upgrades and pedestrian-activated crossing across Monroe at Greenwood Avenue

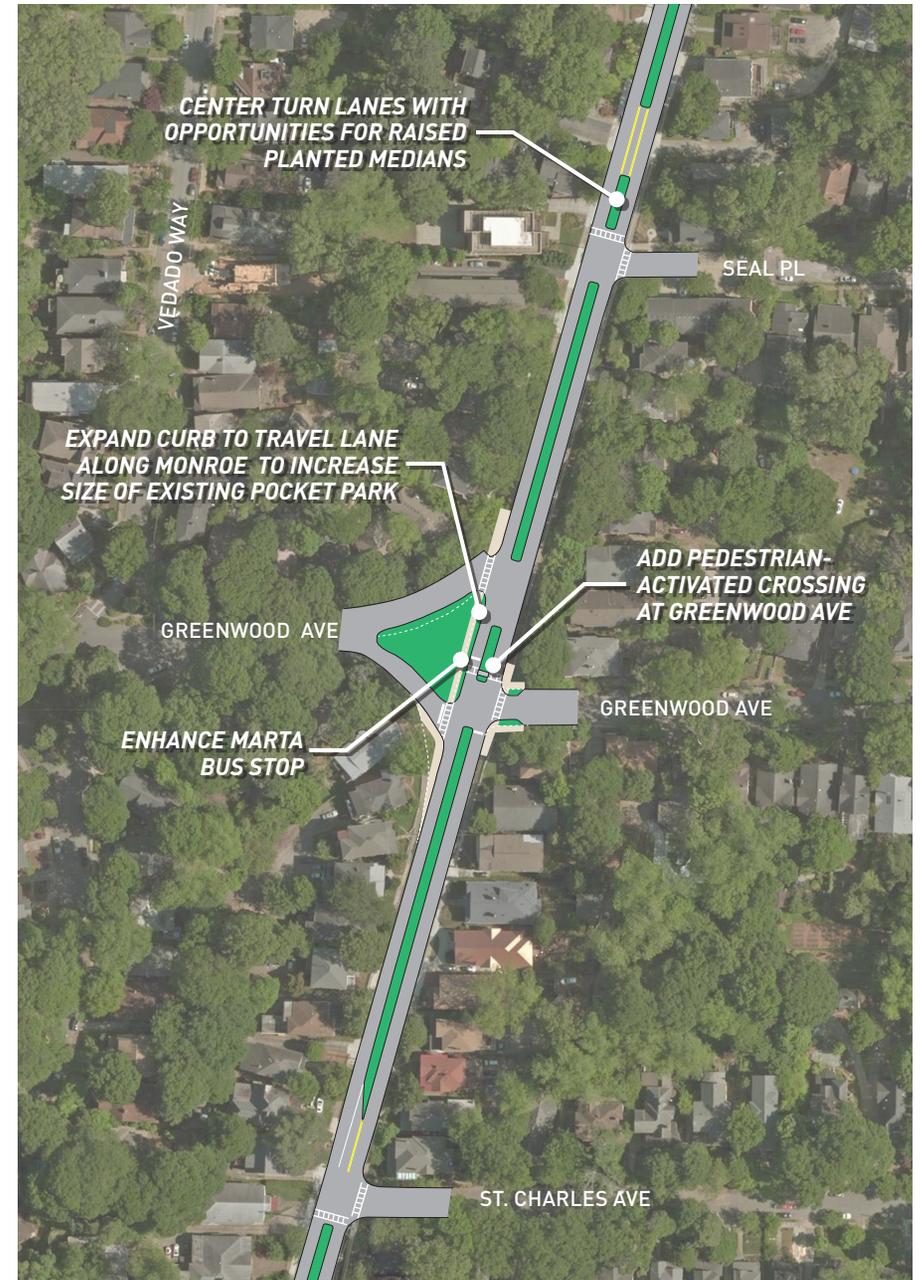
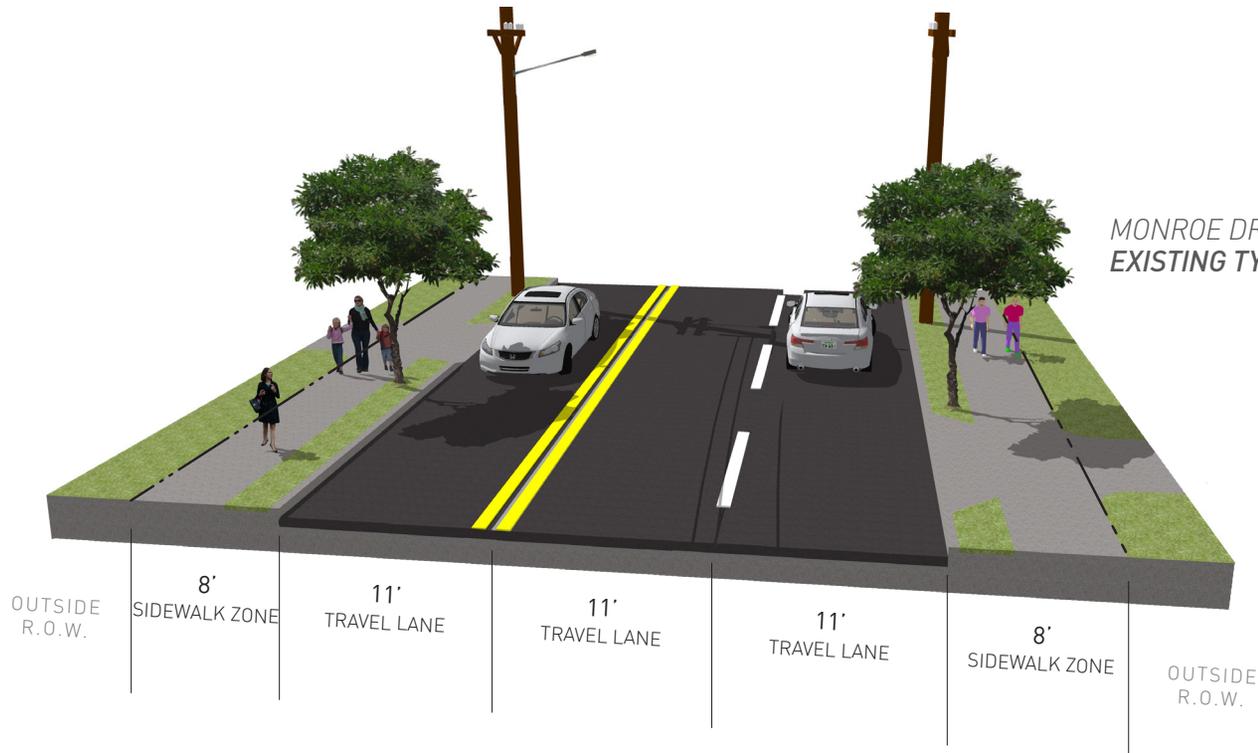


FIG. 4.1 MONROE DRIVE - POTENTIAL COMPLETE STREET IMPROVEMENTS

MONROE DRIVE:
EXISTING TYPICAL CONFIGURATION



MONROE DRIVE:
PREFERRED FUTURE CONFIGURATION

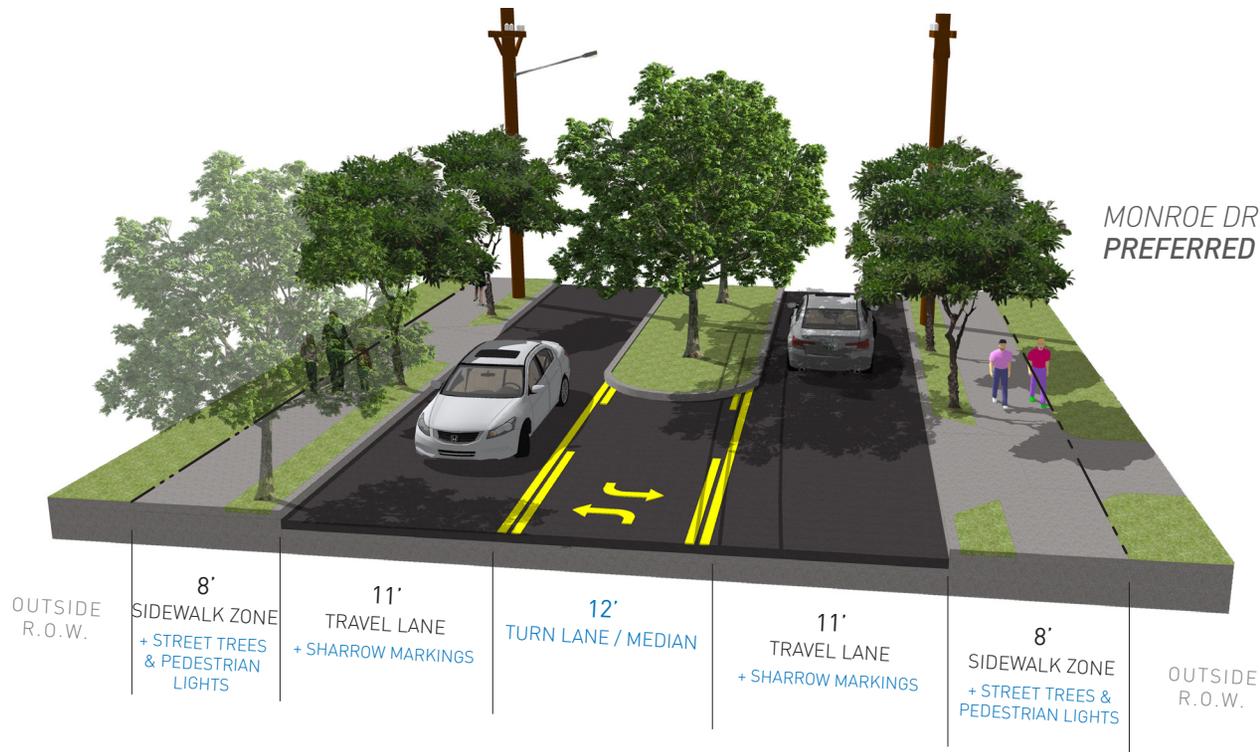




FIG. 4.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS VS. POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS AT MONROE/GREENWOOD INTERSECTION



**MONROE DRIVE AT VIRGINIA AVE:
EXISTING ALIGNMENT**

- Excessive roadway surface / inadequate layout
- Dangerous Pedestrian Environment
- Too many curb cuts (4)
- Restaurant parcel is isolated & difficult to access
- major vehicular queuing issues from Virginia to 10th eastbound via Monroe



**MONROE DRIVE AT VIRGINIA AVE:
POTENTIAL ALIGNMENT**

- Normalized intersection with improved circulation
- Reduced pedestrian/vehicular conflicts and crossing distances
- Formalized parking and access for restaurant with proper streetfront connectivity
- Existing buildings remain as-is, potential land-swap to create better parking for restaurant
- Longer queuing area and more efficient turns from Virginia to 10th via Monroe

FIG. 4.3 POTENTIAL RECONFIGURATION AT INTERSECTION OF MONROE DRIVE AT VIRGINIA AVENUE

4.3 Argonne Avenue Traffic Calming

ARGONNE AVENUE: CURRENT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

Argonne Avenue exists today as an important north-south travel route through the neighborhood, connecting Ponce de Leon to the south with 10th Street to the north. However, unlike other north-south corridors in the neighborhood (such as Charles Allen Drive and Monroe Drive), it is a much narrower street with many offset intersections and low overall driver visibility. Throughout the planning process neighbors increasingly voiced concerns over excessive vehicular speeding, lack of safe pedestrian crossings and low lighting levels along the corridor. Argonne Avenue's significance as perhaps THE main short-term mobility improvement project for the neighborhood quickly became apparent.

To fully understand the root of issues along Argonne Avenue, one has to go back to how it was originally developed (see neighborhood history section for more detail). Areas west of Argonne were built prior to 1900, with blocks laid out aligning with Peachtree Street (at a slight angle), including wider streets (Penn, Myrtle, etc.) and larger front yards. Areas east of Argonne were built after 1900 and laid out according to north, south, east and west compass points (based on surveyed land lots) with more narrow streets and smaller building setbacks. Argonne can therefore be seen as a "seam" between these different eras of the neighborhood's initial development.

These differing street geometries converge along Argonne, creating a number of "jogs" and three-point intersections. Because stop signs are not typical for three-point intersections the way they are for four-point intersections, there are extended stretches of Argonne where vehicles are not required to stop. When motorists don't have to stop, they tend to speed up. Low visibility along Argonne further exacerbates these issues given narrow street widths (typically 30 feet curb to curb, including parking on either side), highly-utilized on-street parking and low lighting levels. As a whole, these safety issues create a dangerous environment along Argonne, particularly for crossing pedestrians and turning vehicles.

While conventional four-way stop sign-controlled intersections (with full stop signs and crosswalks) exist at 4th Street and at 8th Street, the segment between them includes six three-way intersections with no north/south stop signs. In other words, **drivers traveling along Argonne are not required to stop for four entire blocks** despite that segment including one of the neighborhood's major commercial nodes (SE corner Argonne/6th).

ARGONNE AVENUE: TRAFFIC-CALMING & PEDESTRIAN UPGRADES

As illustrated in the adjacent photos and diagram, potential remedies to Argonne's safety issues are comparatively simple. Specific lower-cost short-term recommendations include:

1. **ADD STOP SIGNS** for north- and south-bound vehicles along Argonne at intersections with 5th Street (north/western intersection), 6th Street and 7th Street (north/western intersection).
2. **PAINT CURBS YELLOW** within 30' of Argonne intersections with 5th, 6th and 7th Streets (both eastern and western intersections where streets are offset). Restricting on-street parking from corners will increase visibility both for vehicles turning onto Argonne and for pedestrians crossing Argonne.
3. **ADD / REFRESH CROSSWALK STRIPING** at all intersections along Argonne, including 3rd (new eastern leg), 4th (refresh all legs), 5th (new north and south legs, refresh east and west legs), 6th (new north leg, refreshed east and west legs), 7th (new north leg, refreshed east and west legs), 8th (refresh all legs) and 9th (refresh all legs).

Depending on availability of funding, additional (potentially longer-term) opportunities for major safety upgrades along Argonne could include:

1. **ADD CURB EXTENSIONS** (i.e. "bulb-outs") at key intersections (some in lieu of yellow-painted curbs) to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, restrict parking at corners and create opportunities for additional on-street plantings.
2. **ADD "YOUR SPEED" SIGNS** (electronic, radar controlled) in order to heighten driver awareness of speeding.
3. **ADD PEDESTRIAN-ACTIVATED AT 10TH/ARGONNE** – As noted in more detail within the 10th Street portion of this document, the addition of a RRFB (Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon) across 10th Street should be investigated at this active pedestrian intersection.

It should be noted that while plans for other major improvements (detailed elsewhere in this document) are moving forward for corridors such as Piedmont Avenue and Monroe Drive, other related organizations (Midtown Alliance, Renew Atlanta) are leading those efforts. Given the minimal cost of short-term improvements to Argonne, they could potentially be implemented by the City. However, further design and City coordination efforts for Argonne will likely need to be led by the neighborhood itself.

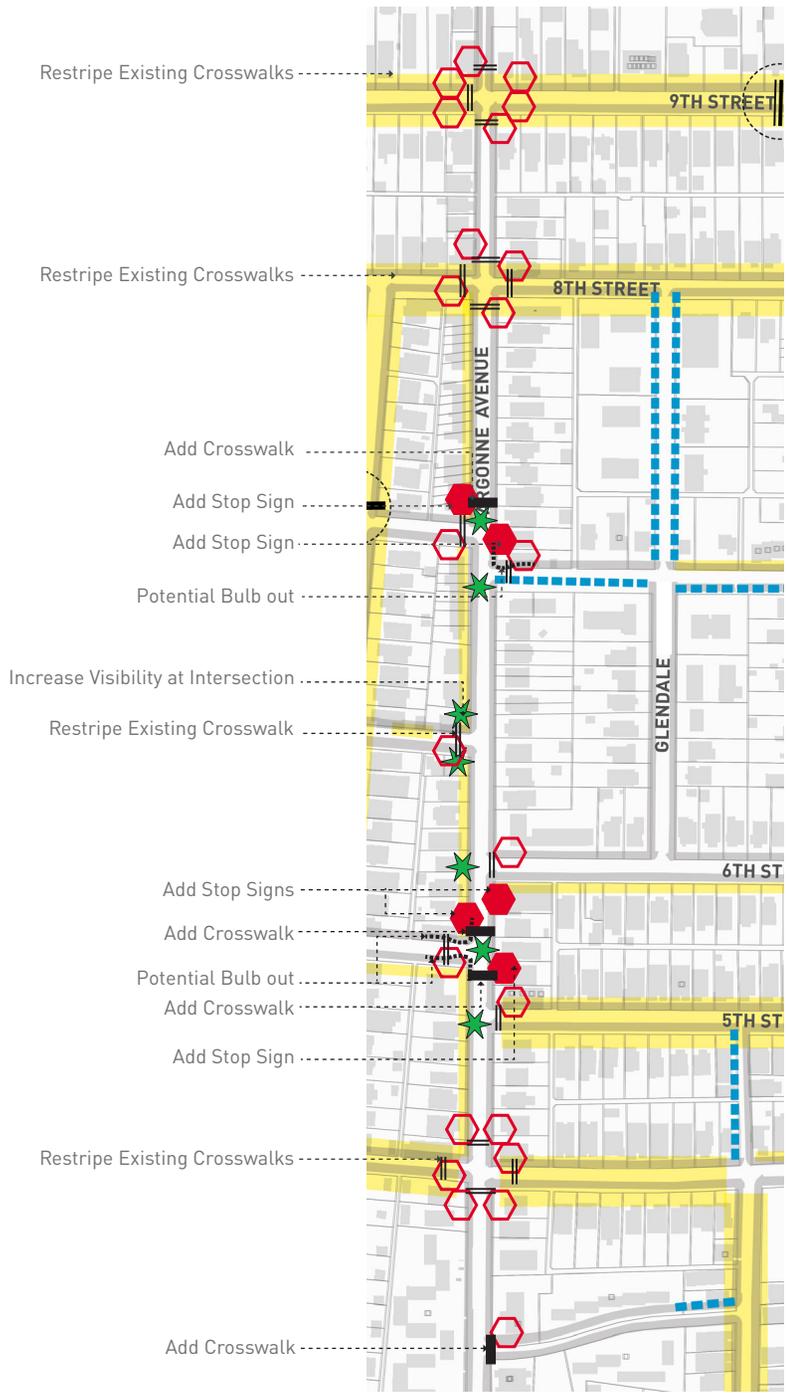
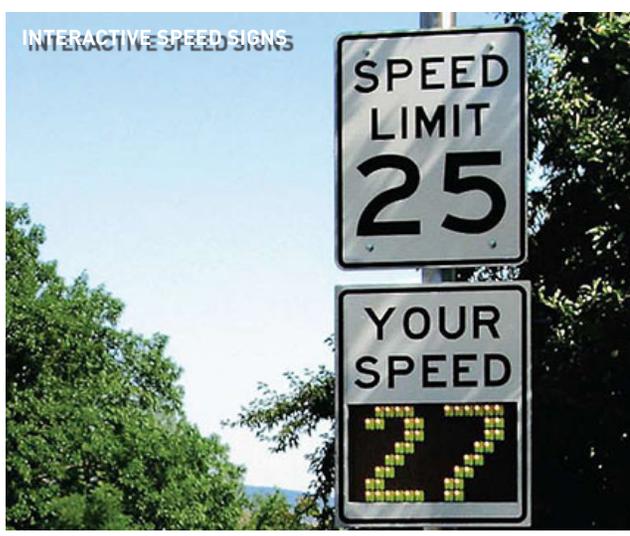
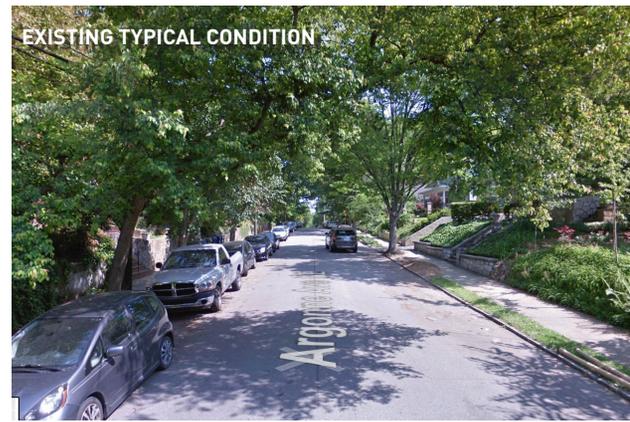


FIG. 4.4 RECOMMENDED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ALONG ARGONNE AVENUE BETWEEN 4TH AND 8TH STREETS



MAP LEGEND

- SIDEWALK NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
- MISSING SIDEWALK
- ADD YELLOW CURB TO INCREASE INTERSECTION VISIBILITY
- RESTRIPE EXISTING CROSSWALK
- ADD NEW CROSSWALK
- EXISTING STOP SIGN
- ADD STOP SIGN
- POTENTIAL BULB OUT



4.4 10th Street Pedestrian Crossings

10TH STREET – CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Over just the last few years 10th Street has been transformed from a mostly vehicle-oriented thoroughfare into a multi-modal complete street balancing the circulation and safety needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles alike. The 2012 completion of the BeltLine Eastside Trail significantly increased the amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity at the 10th/Monroe trailhead, necessitating creation of a safe bicycle route connection along 10th Street to the business district as well as planned routes on Juniper and on Piedmont. Shortly thereafter The City of Atlanta, Midtown Alliance and the PATH Foundation collaborated to convert one westbound travel lane into a two-way protected bike route (i.e. the 10th Street “cycle track”). Within just months of the Eastside Trail opening, the amount of pedestrians crossing Monroe skyrocketed. Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. and the City then spearheaded upgrades to the 10th/Monroe intersection, including wider crosswalks, new signal phasing and dedicated pedestrian crossing phases. In 2015 and 2016, two different types of pedestrian crossings were also installed at Myrtle (RRFB)

and at the Children’s School (HAWK Signal). In 2016, the Renew Atlanta Bond Program repaved and restriped the entire corridor. Grady High School also has short-term plans for installation of a HAWK signal near their main 10th Street entrance.

The growing pains of 10th Street’s transformation have proven to be a challenge for many users. Creating better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists has inevitably contributed to vehicular delay. In early 2016, a Grady High School student was struck and killed by a motorist at the Monroe intersection. Countless other major pedestrian and bicycle injuries due to vehicle conflicts have also been reported, most recently at the 10th/Argonne intersection where a crossing pedestrian was hospitalized after being struck by a vehicle. Recent changes to 10th Street have contributed to increased conflicts related to curbside pickup/dropoff at the Children’s School. The increased popularity of the annual Music Midtown festival necessitates sidewalk closures, closure of the cycle track and temporary travel lane shifts for several weeks every summer - all of which increase safety issues for all users.



Intersection of 10th street and Myrtle Street



Intersection of 10th street and Argonne Avenue



10th Street in front of The Childrens School



Intersection of 10th Street and Charles Allen Drive

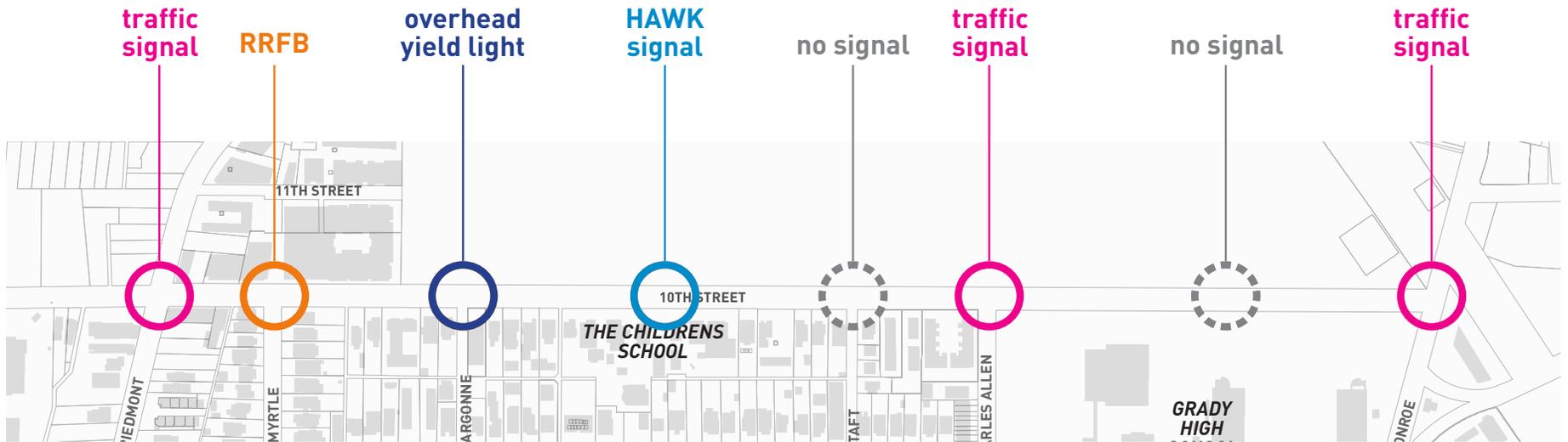


FIG. 4.5 EXISTING INCONSISTENT TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ALONG 10TH STREET

10TH STREET – PLANNING PROCESS & ANALYSIS

The future of 10th Street was a common topic of debate throughout the year-long planning process. The planning team along with transportation professionals and neighborhood stakeholders worked through a multitude of potential concepts involving lane shifts, parking removal and bike re-routing. Ultimately, however, each potential concept had a major negative effect on some other aspect of the corridor. For example, converting on-street parking to a travel lane would have a devastating impact on Children’s School pick-up/drop-off, as well as residential along 10th with limited or no off-street parking. Similarly, pushing the bike lane into the park would only be possible for a portion of the corridor, but even then it only works with major overhead utility burial (cost-prohibitive) and removal of dozens of large mature trees.

The fundamental issue leading to vehicle conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists on 10th Street is a lack of consistent types in traffic control. Figures 4.4 illustrates this issue, with each color representing a different type of pedestrian crossing treatment or traffic control device. Currently, a motorist traveling east or west must see, interpret and react to at least six different types of signals or beacons, each with different types of signage and lighting – some overhead, some to the side, some flashing and some solid. This lack of rhythm or pattern along the corridor leads to driver confusion, which is exacerbated by the fact that both Piedmont Park and the BeltLine attract regional visitors not always accustomed to driving on urban streets.

10TH STREET – POTENTIAL SAFETY UPGRADES

While the many improvements by multiple parties in recent years have allowed better pedestrian and bicycle mobility, these were ultimately piecemeal projects reacting to specific conflicts or deficiencies. The corridor has not been studied and addressed holistically in the context of ALL users, most especially pedestrians. The master plan therefore recommends a traffic/mobility study of 10th Street from Monroe Drive to Piedmont Avenue. The study should focus on consistency of traffic control devices, including:

- Removal of single overhead flashing light at Argonne and potential replacement with Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
- Potential addition of new mid-block pedestrian crossing and RRFB between Taft Avenue and the Park (including new ADA ramp at park and appropriate bike signage/stripping)
- Potential addition of new RRFB at Grady High School 10th Street entrance (including new ADA ramp at park and appropriate bike signage/stripping)

As illustrated below in Figure 4.6, the potential future condition would simplify the corridor using three consistent traffic control devices (RRFBs, HAWK signals and conventional traffic signals) while adding two new crossings at Taft and at Grady High School.

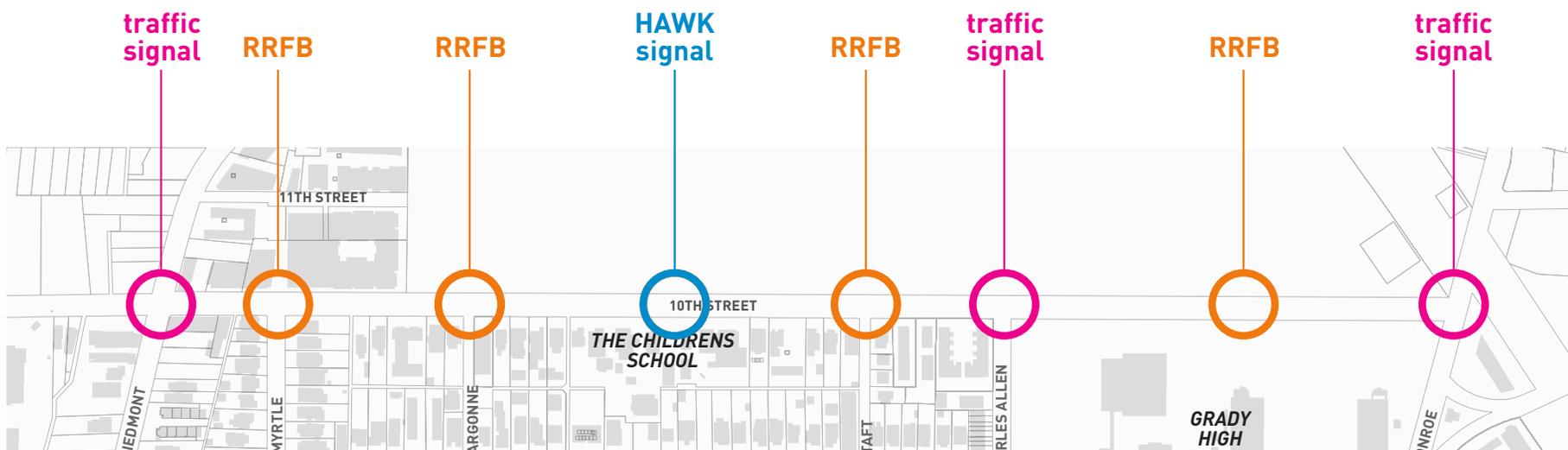


FIG. 4.6 POTENTIAL CONSISTENT TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ALONG 10TH STREET

4.5 Neighborhood-Wide Sidewalk & Accessibility Upgrades

As noted in Part 1 of this document, the Midtown Garden District exhibits widespread issues related to sidewalks and accessibility. As part of issues identification in the first and second Public Workshops, the poor condition of neighborhood sidewalks was perhaps THE most commonly agreed-upon issue among participants. Almost all agreed that fixing sidewalks is a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed through this Master Plan.

A map showing potential sidewalk areas of improvement was created based on the planning team's assessment of existing sidewalk conditions (Figure 4.9, using data collected mid-2016). As part of the assessment, sixteen neighborhood blocks were identified that lack sidewalks at all with dozens more exhibiting significant issues including broken, missing or misaligned sidewalk areas. As part of the online survey, the majority of respondents preferred that the neighborhood focus sidewalk improvement funding to "Fill-in sidewalk gaps across the entire neighborhood. Spread funds equally in order to get a more basic functional pedestrian network" (Fig. 4.7 below).

Figure 4.8 to right also illustrates one of several more strategic potential pedestrian improvement areas. In this case, no ADA route (or even basic sidewalk) exists along the west side of Charles Allen Drive at Greenwood Ave. This area could be a priority given its adjacency to a small passive green space. Various small grant funding opportunities are regularly available for areas such as this through City of Atlanta NPU's, as well as organizations such as Park Pride.

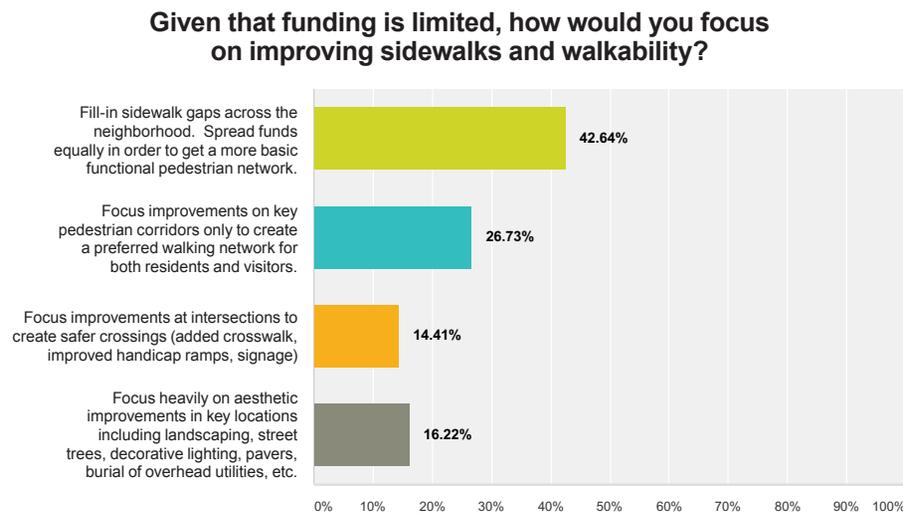


FIG. 4.7 SURVEY RESULTS FOR SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIZATION

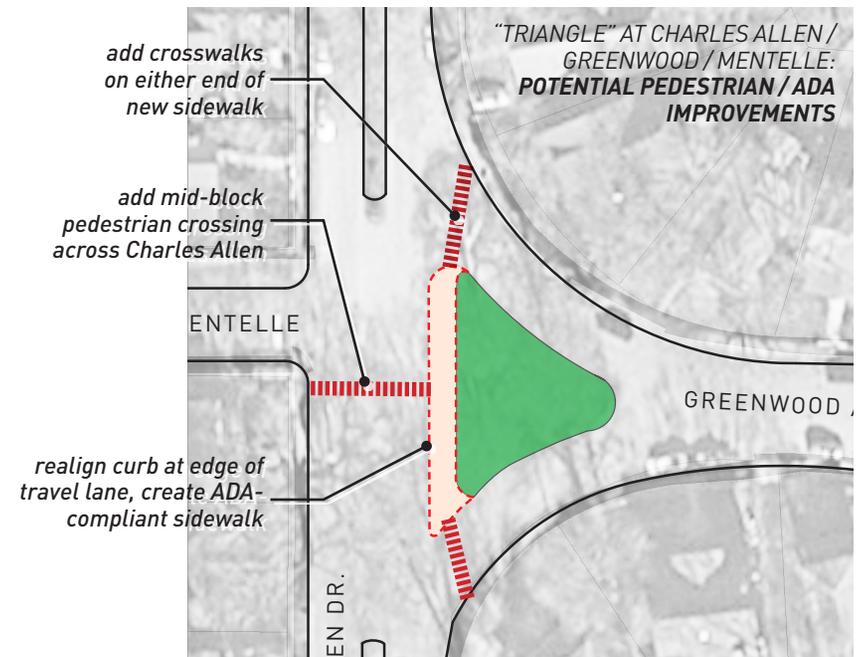
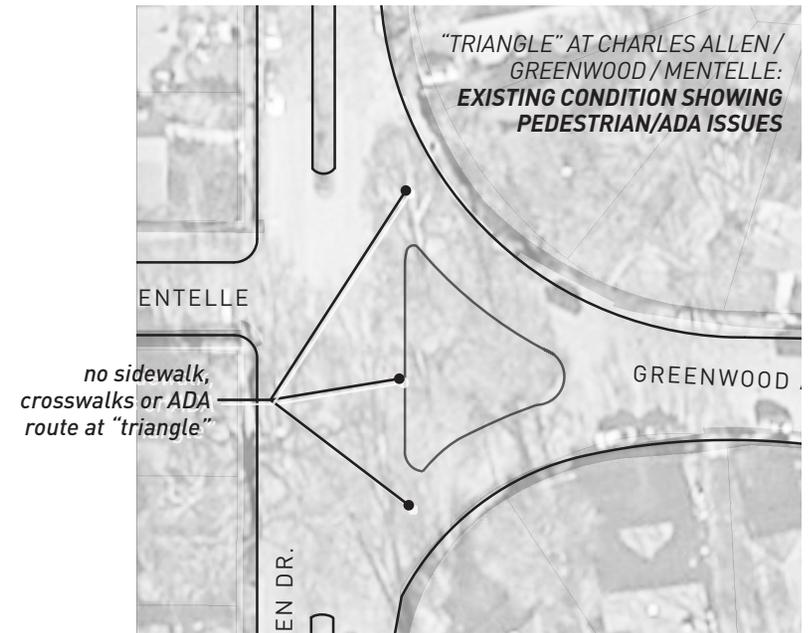


FIG. 4.8 ONE EXAMPLE OF INCREMENTAL SIDEWALK / ADA IMPROVEMENTS

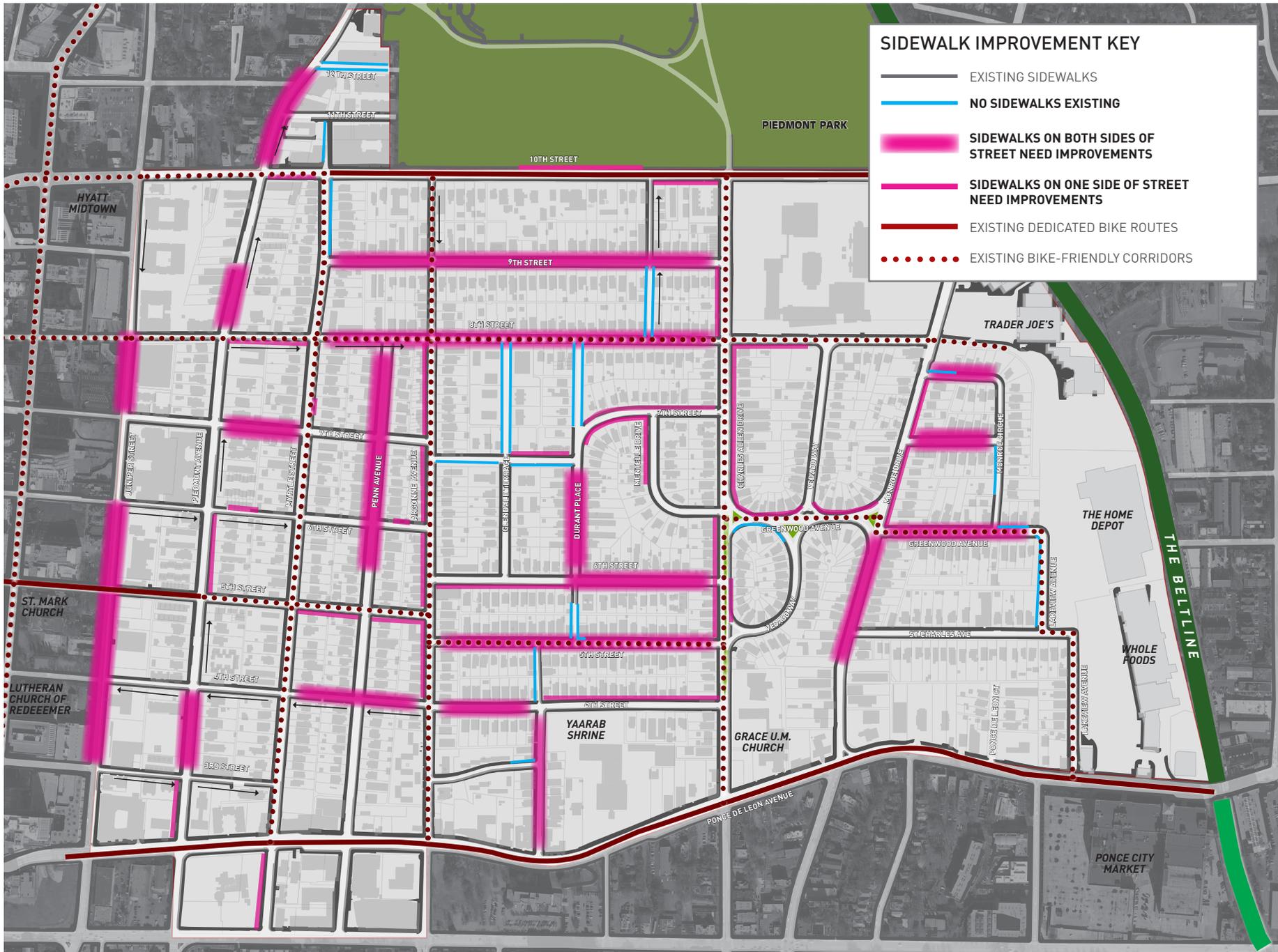


FIG. 4.9 POTENTIAL SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT AREAS
 Based on Windshield Survey of Existing Sidewalk Conditions conducted mid-2016

4.6 Garden District Street Design Guidelines

Now in its fifth year, the neighborhood's annual "Open Garden Stroll" offers both residents and visitors the opportunity to tour the wide array of residential gardens that are prevalent throughout the area. The mid-May event has gained much momentum recently, with more gardens being added to the tour each year. Eventually the idea of "Midtown Gardens" evolved into the term "Midtown Garden District" as a way to pay homage to these unique features, as well as a way to distinguish the neighborhood from the rapidly-densifying MID to the west.

An important strategy towards furthering the idea of the Garden District is to think more broadly about how it can apply to more than just private spaces. As outlined in section 4.5 on previous pages, neighborhood-wide sidewalk, pedestrian and accessibility upgrades are a key component of this planning process. This masterplan takes that idea one step further by expanding the idea of the "garden" into public spaces and right-of-way throughout the neighborhood. As illustrated on the following page, The Garden District Street Design Guidelines outline methods for selecting and planting appropriate tree species in various spatially-constrained areas. Tree types shown are a mix of Georgia native, natively-adapted and urban-tolerant species utilizing similar tree lists developed by the City of Atlanta Arborist Division and Midtown Alliance's Street Tree standards.

Both maintaining and restoring the neighborhood's tree canopy are key components of the Garden District moving forward. Other strategies developed during the planning process related to tree canopy maintenance include:

- hire private arborist to maintain trees in public areas (including pruning, stump removal and filling stump voids)
- establish "adopt a street" or "adopt a block" program
- identify unused property for expanded neighborhood greenspace
- continue to partner with Trees Atlanta to plant and replace street trees



SMALLER STREET TREES

For areas with overhead utility lines or narrow (24"-36" wide) planting strips, use more compact trees with smaller crowns.



SMALLER STREET TREES: RECOMMENDED SPECIES

- Chinese Fringe Tree
- Chinese Pistache
- Fringe Tree*
- American Hornbeam
- Amur Maple
- Chalk Maple*
- Trident Maple
- Georgia Oak*
- Eastern Redbud*
- Serviceberry*

LARGER STREET TREES: RECOMMENDED SPECIES

- American Elm*
- Bald Cypress
- Blackgum
- Chinese Elm
- Siberian Elm
- Winged Elm*
- Ginkgo (male only)
- Red Maple*
- Southern Sugar Maple*
- Nuttal Oak*
- Overcup Oak*
- Schumard Oak
- Willow Oak
- Pond Cypress
- Sugarberry*



LARGER STREET TREES

For areas with no overhead utility lines and/or wider (36" width or greater) planting strips, taller trees with larger crowns can be used.

"YARD" TREES

For open areas on private property, there is a large range of full-sized trees that can be used.

YARD TREES: RECOMMENDED SPECIES

- American Beech*
- American Chestnut*
- American Elm*
- Slippery Elm*
- Ginkgo (male only)
- Hackberry*
- Bitternut Hickory*
- Mockernut Hickory*
- Pignut Hickory*
- Sand Hickory*
- Shagbark Hickory*
- Southern Shagbark Hickory*
- Black Oak*
- Chestnut Oak*
- Northern Red Oak*
- Nuttal Oak*
- Oglethorpe Oak*
- Overcup Oak*
- Pin Oak*
- Post Oak*
- Scarlet Oak*
- Schumard Oak*
- Southern Red Oak*
- Swamp Chestnut Oak*
- Swamp White Oak*
- White Oak*
- Willow Oak*
- Pecan
- Tulip Poplar*
- Sugarberry*
- Sweetgum (fruitless)*
- Sycamore*

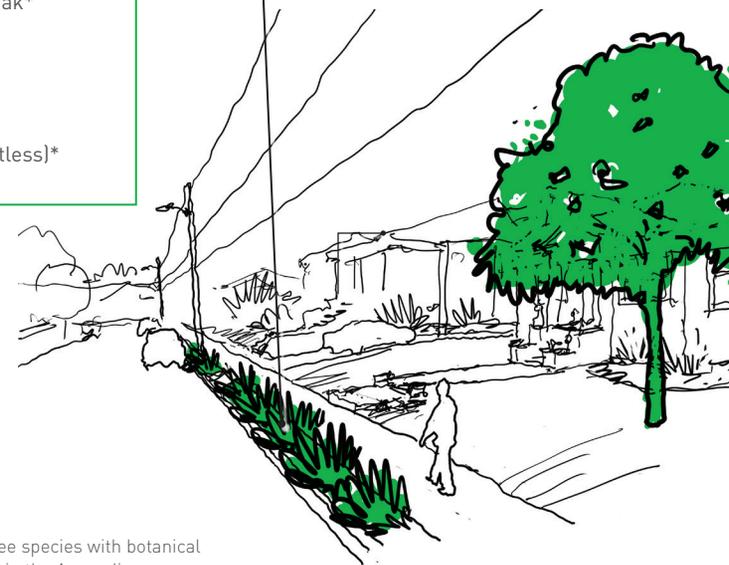
SIDEWALKS: MINIMUM 4' WIDE

as mandated by ADA laws



WHAT IF THE PLANTING STRIP IS LESS THAN 30" WIDE?

consider shrubs, ornamental grasses



*an expanded list of tree species with botanical names is included within the Appendix

4.7 Garden District - BeltLine Connections

THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S SEVERED EASTERN EDGE: A HISTORY

Despite the importance and popularity of the 2.5-mile-long BeltLine Eastside Trail, no formal connection to it exists from the Midtown Garden District aside from the busy and problematic 10th/Monroe intersection. In fact, aside from one ad hoc “dirt path” behind Trader Joes, the nearest other connection to Midtown is almost a mile south near Old 4th Ward Park.

Limited BeltLine connections existing today are actually just one aspect of a larger neighborhood connectivity issue dating back over a century. The eastern edge of the Garden District has been disconnected from its neighbors since the opening of Spiller Park way back in 1907 (historic baseball park and home to the Atlanta Crackers team). The park was redeveloped in the late-1960s into a strip retail shopping center, which was later dubbed “the Great Mall of China”. In 1998, the property was again redeveloped following a lengthy legal battle between neighborhood leaders and the developer that centered around concerns over “water issues, traffic, noise, lighting and impact” (article link).

The resulting “Midtown Place” development (now almost two decades old) exists today as a major retail destination for dozens of surrounding intown neighborhoods. It is, however, buffered from the Garden District via steep hills, retaining walls, opaque privacy fences and evergreen trees with no visual or physical connection. Despite directly abutting Midtown Promenade (Movie Theatre, restaurants) to the north, the BeltLine trail to the east and the Garden District to the west, the sole access for Midtown Place is via just two curb cuts along Ponce De Leon to its south. As a result, severe circulation and congestion issues have been prevalent along the large retail hub’s Ponce de Leon “front door”. The 2015 opening of Ponce City Market (across the street) exacerbated these issues even further.

BELTLINE INTERPARCEL CONNECTIVITY: RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS

These connectivity issues were studied extensively as part of several recent planning efforts such as Connect Atlanta and The BeltLine Subarea 6 Masterplan (2009). The latter study, in particular, outlines several key connections between the Garden District and areas to the east, including:

- A ped/bike-oriented multi-use trail connecting 8th Street through Midtown Promenade to the BeltLine and extending through the GA Power property (VA Highlands area) to provide access to Inman Middle School
- Long-term street connections from Greenwood Avenue and St Charles Avenue to a future redeveloped and densified Midtown Place

It is important to acknowledge that these prior planning efforts occurred years before the implementation of the BeltLine Eastside Trail or Ponce City Market. Furthermore, improvements related to improved circulation and pedestrian connectivity were contingent only upon (and likely only possible through) redevelopment of both the Midtown Place and Midtown Promenade sites. However, recent research pointing to profitable retail performance and long-term tenant leases in these retail areas suggests they may not see redevelopment for a quite some time (article link). In other words, the Garden District is unlikely to see circulation improvements to its east unless a short-term “temporary” solution is explored.

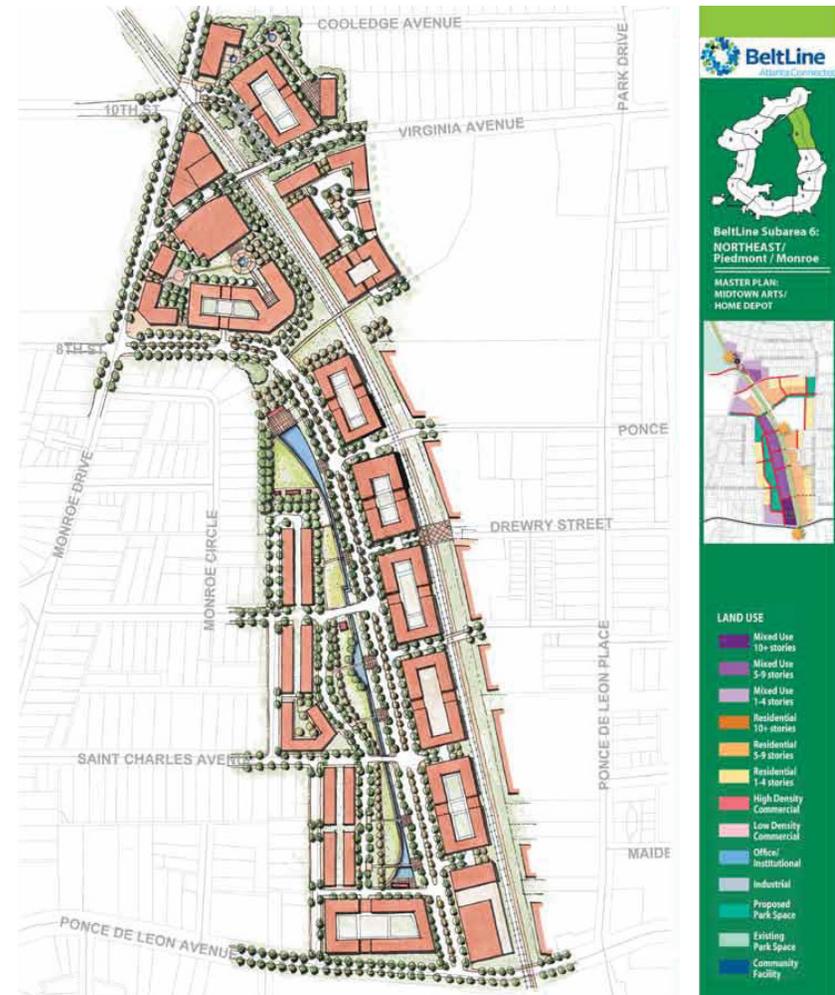


FIG. 4.10 2009 MASTERPLAN SHOWING REDEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE CONNECTIVITY OF MIDTOWN PROMENADE / MIDTOWN PLACE

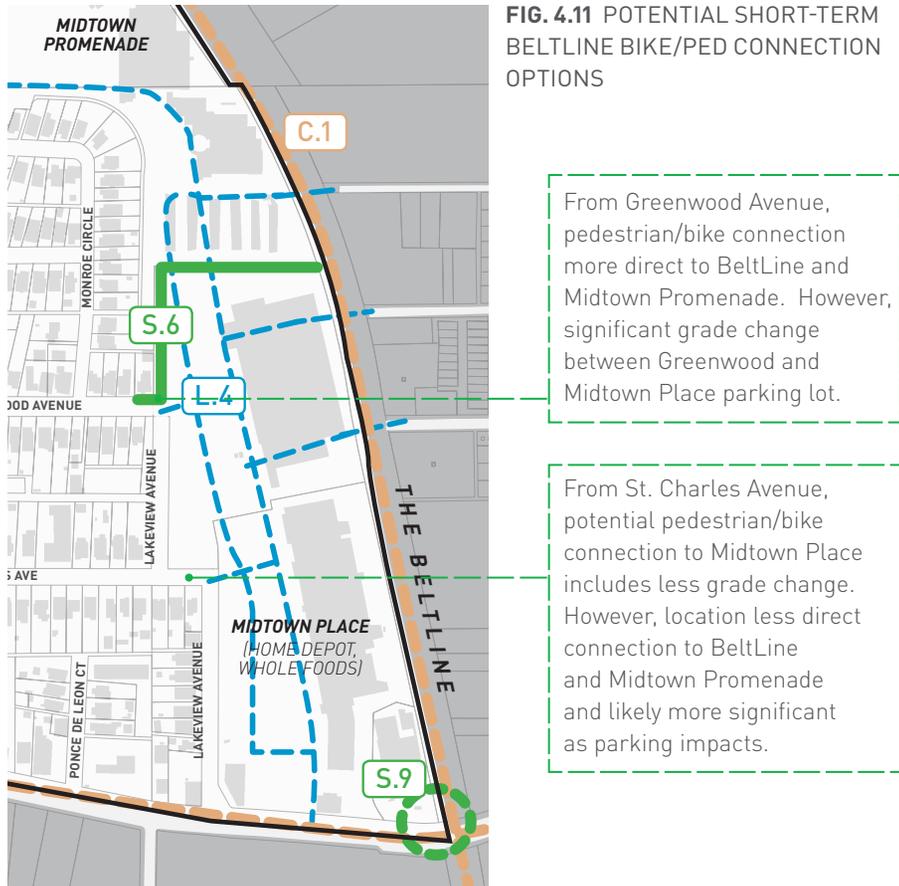
Source: Atlanta BeltLine Sub Area 6 Masterplan

CONNECTING THE GARDEN DISTRICT TO THE BELTLINE AND RETAIL IN THE SHORT-TERM

There are *three short-term pedestrian/bicycle connections* that would significantly improve quality of life through improved neighborhood access:

1. Garden District to Midtown Place/Midtown Promenade
2. Garden District to the BeltLine Eastside Trail
3. Midtown Place to Midtown Promenade

The master plan recommends exploration of short-term ped/bike connection(s) between these three areas, even if temporary prior to parcel redevelopment. Shown conceptually as Project S.6 on the Capital Projects Map, it might be possible to connect the neighborhood with retail and BeltLine as part of one singular ADA-compliant bike/ped path.



4.8 Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements

Persistent flooding on private property was one of the main issues discussed throughout the planning process. As a follow-up to the general assessment of topography and stormwater flow (described in Section 1.3) during early phases of the effort, the planning team gathered 2016 stormwater and sewer GIS data from the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management. Figure 4.12 displays the locations of stormwater lines, inlets, catch basins and manholes within the Garden District. Although a hydrology study was not conducted as part of this planning process, a cursory review of the map data points to several fundamental stormwater infrastructure issues:

- overall storm line sizes (diameters, and presumably ages) vary greatly overall and likely do not correspond to sizes needed to handle major rain events
- several locations indicate storm lines that seemingly “dead-end” (near Argonne/6th and Argonne/5th, for instance)
- much of the neighborhood includes combined stormwater/ sewer lines (confirming the many complaints from residents about sanitary issues, fumes, etc.)
- a severe lack of stormwater infrastructure around the most persistently-flooding area along Vedado Way near Grady High School area

Overall, the data seems to confirm many of the complaints heard through the planning process. The severity of the issue seems to go beyond clogged inlets, requiring a more holistic approach that includes a thorough study, analysis and plan for improving the neighborhood’s aging infrastructure.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the neighborhood pursue several strategies related to stormwater infrastructure improvements over the next 5-10 years:

- engage a professional civil engineer to thoroughly study existing stormwater systems and hydrological patterns in order to more specifically identify deficiencies and problem areas
- once a detailed stormwater assessment is complete, work with the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management to develop both short-term and long-term stormwater improvement projects
- require more localized (parcel/block-specific) stormwater infrastructure improvements such as stormwater planters (i.e. bioswales) on both private properties and within the ROW



Flooding near the intersection of Greenwood Avenue & Vedado Way, 2016



Stormwater planters recently-installed at 5th and Juniper Streets catch surface runoff prior to entering stormwater lines, reducing impacts on individual properties as well burden on storm lines

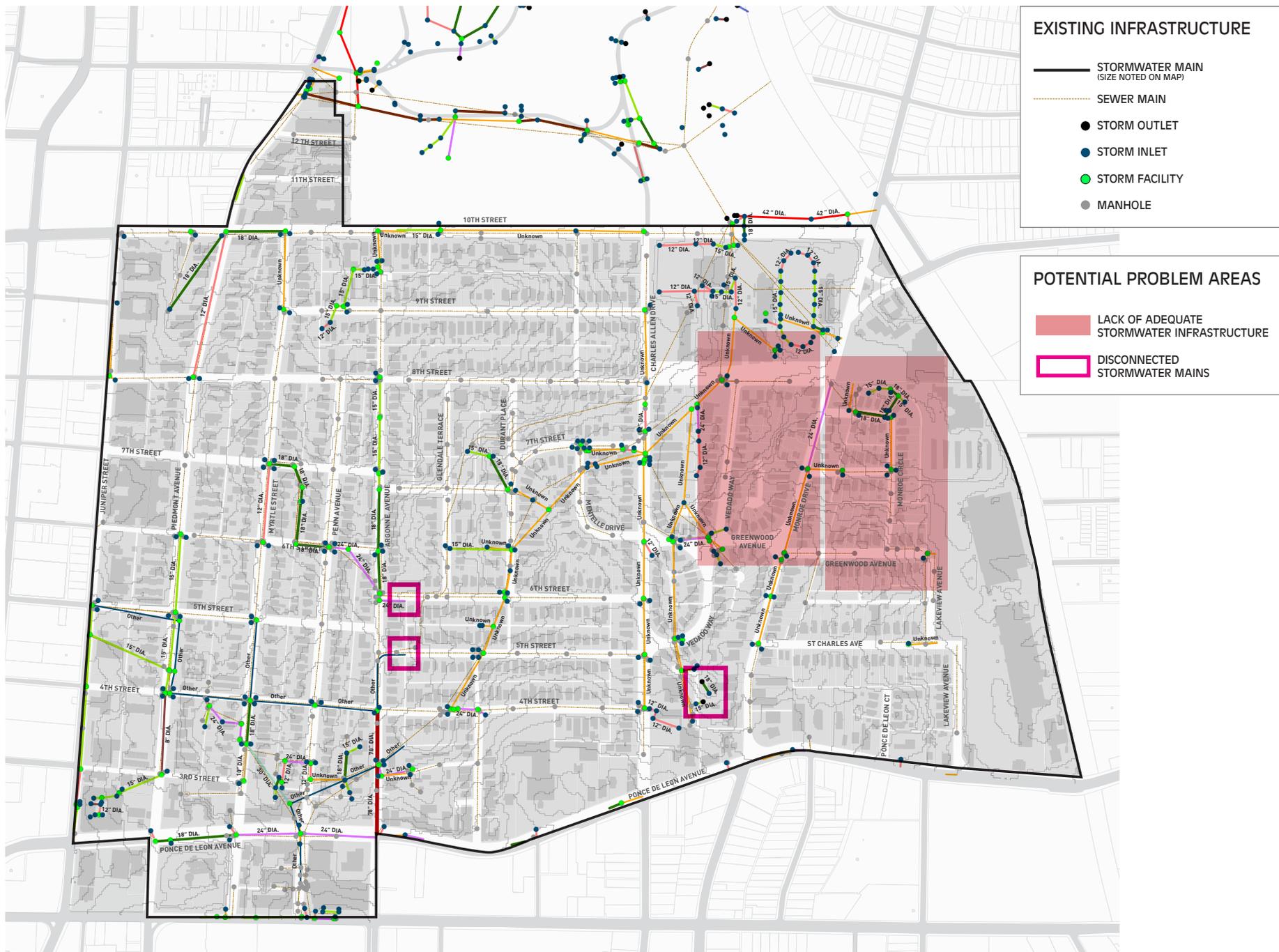


FIG. 4.12 2016 EXISTING STORMWATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

Source: City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management GIS data

4.9 Greenspace Expansion

While the Garden District benefits greatly from its close proximity to Piedmont Park, the park hosts hundreds of major festivals annually and serves visitors throughout the city, state and region. The neighborhood lacks alternatives to Piedmont Park with virtually no other public park spaces within the interior of the neighborhood. For example, residents in the district living south of 6th Street are beyond a 10-minute walk from Piedmont Park, suggesting a dramatically higher likelihood of simply driving to another adjacent park. While greenspace creation is envisioned as part of longer-term redevelopment of Midtown Promenade and/or Midtown Place (Home Depot, Whole Foods, etc.), limited opportunities exist for shorter-term neighborhood greenspace expansion.

Part of the master planning process included identifying potentially-underutilized spaces (even if small) that could be improved, expanded and/or programmed to allow use from a wider wide range of neighborhood residents. As illustrated in Figure 1.10 (located in Part One), potential spaces identified included the front “lawn” of Grady High School (Charles Allen frontage), the “traffic islands” along Vedado Way and Greenwood Avenue as well as, a large portion of underused surface parking on a portion of the Yaraab Temple property. The neighborhood should continue to look for opportunities to create new common areas within the neighborhood (potentially through partnerships with neighboring commercial or institutional parcels), as well as pursue volunteer efforts, grants or other opportunities to better-program underused passive green spaces.



Great open spaces don't have to be permanent: a pocket park near 18th and West Peachtree Streets was implemented as a temporary amenity space through a 5-year lease of a vacant property



Less is more: a “parklette” installed within just a 500 square-foot space in Atlanta’s Castleberry Hill neighborhood has become a key neighborhood meeting/social space

4.10 Implementation Matrix

Updated 10.25.17

Proj #	Category	Project/Initiative Name & Description	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source(s)
SHORT-TERM PROJECTS				
S.1	Trans/Circ	Argonne Avenue Traffic-Calming - pedestrian safety project potentially including new stop signs, new/refreshed crosswalks and on-street parking upgrades	MNA, Renew Atlanta	T-SPLIST
S.2	Trans/Circ	10th Street Pedestrian Signals - Added RRFB and Hybrid Beacon pedestrian signals augmenting existing signals	Midtown Alliance, Renew Atlanta, MNA	MID, Renew Atlanta
S.3	Trans/Circ	ADA & Sidewalks at Greenwood/Charles Allen - creation of ADA connection along the corridor where no sidewalk exists today. Improvements would also seek to better-activate adjacent passive green space(s)	MNA	NPU Grant
S.4	Trans/Circ	Intersection Improvements at 8th/Grady HS - improved student crossings and stormwater mitigation at this active pedestrian intersection	APS	Safe Routes to School
S.5	Trans/Circ	Pedestrian Signal (RRFB) at Monroe Greenwood - addition of new pedestrian crossing within zone between 8 th and Ponce	Renew Atlanta, DPW	Infrastructure Bond (Renew Atlanta)
S.6	Trans/Circ	Pedestrian/Bike Connection to BeltLine - Creation of a more direct short-term (possibly temporary) bicycle/pedestrian/ADA connection to the BeltLine Eastside Trail	MNA, ABI, Private	TBD
S.7	Trans/Circ	Monroe Drive / Boulevard Complete Street - This Renew Atlanta-led project includes "complete street" upgrades for five miles of the corridor between Piedmont Circle and Woodward Avenue.	Renew Atlanta	Infrastructure Bond (Renew Atlanta)
S.8	Trans/Circ	Piedmont Avenue Complete Street - As the northbound counterpart to Juniper Street, this Midtown Alliance-led project is envisioned to include permanent on-street parking, a protected bicycle lane and ADA/pedestrian upgrades. The MNA should continue to work with Midtown Alliance and Renew Atlanta to ensure that the project meets neighborhood needs.	Midtown Alliance, Renew Atlanta	T-SPLIST w/ MID Match
S.9	Trans/Circ	BeltLine Connection at Ponce - Planned bike/pedestrian connection to the BeltLine Eastside Trail via Ponce de Leon Avenue near Ponce City Market (per Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.)	ABI	ABI TAD Funding

S.10	Trans/Circ	Neighborhood-Wide Sidewalk & Accessibility Upgrades - Neighborhood-led effort to identify specific zones/corridors for strategic pedestrian and accessibility upgrades (using T-SPLOST funding). See Report Sec 4.5 for more info.	MNA, Renew Atlanta	T-SPLOST
S.11	LU/Zoning	Ponce Corridor Zoning Updates - change relevant properties from C-2 to MRC-2 to allow mixed-use development “by right” as a way to ensure more affordable housing and neighborhood commercial opportunities.	MNA, Department of Planning	No cost except staff/volunteer time
S.12	Hist Pres	Building Demolition Review Process - Develop a formal neighborhood review process for those seeking demolition permits in the Garden District. (see pg 37 in Masterplan document for steps needed to support this effort)	MNA, Urban Design Commission, Department of Planning	No cost except staff/volunteer time
S.13	Brand/Ident	Promote “Garden District” Branding & Identity - Increase public awareness of the “Garden District” as a neighborhood through online presence, email blasts, social media, newsletters, street sign-toppers and similar. Circulate Garden District Design Guidelines (Sec 4.6 of Masterplan Document) within the neighborhood to establish a more coherent “garden” character within the public realm. Also consider creating a new logo encapsulating the Garden District identity.	MNA	No cost except staff/volunteer time
LONG-TERM PROJECTS				
L.1	Infrastructure	Stormwater Infrastructure Assessment - A detailed study of neighborhood-wide aging stormwater infrastructure assessing existing hydrological patterns, catch basin/inlet locations, storm line locations and capacity, and remaining combined sewer/storm areas. This study would be led by a civil and/or environmental engineer working for the neighborhood and coordinating with the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management. Results of the study would help establish a holistic approach to stormwater management through a variety of measures from small/incremental (bioretention, rain gardens) to large/strategic (storm line upsizing). See Sec 4.8 of Masterplan Document for more detailed recommendations.	MNA	MNA and/or volunteer effort
L.2	Trans/Circ	BeltLine Trail Northern Extension - This continuation of the highly-successful BeltLine Eastside Trail would enhance connectivity to the recent northern additions of Piedmont Park and extend to the Lindbergh MARTA Station.	ABI	BeltLine TAD. TBD

L.3	Trans/Circ	Monroe/10th/Virginia Realignment - This current intersection creates severe alignment issues with a convergence of vehicular, rail, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Potential realignment, new signalization and reconfiguration of lanes could greatly improve long-term operations and safety for all users.	ABI, Renew Atlanta, City of Atlanta	N/A
L.4	LU/Zoning	Interparcel Connectivity to the BeltLine - As outlined within the BeltLine Subarea 6 Masterplan, the eventual redevelopment of these strategic parcels would create the opportunity to improve connectivity to Midtown Promenade and Monroe Drive. Although topographic challenges exist related to the BeltLine connection, future redevelopment should investigate opportunities for connections at multiple elevation levels.	Private Development	N/A
L.5	Open Space	Enhance Small Neighborhood Open Spaces - Pursue Opportunities for using and activating underutilized open space. See pg. 38 of Masterplan document for more detailed recommendations.	MNA	Park Pride or NPU Grants

end of document