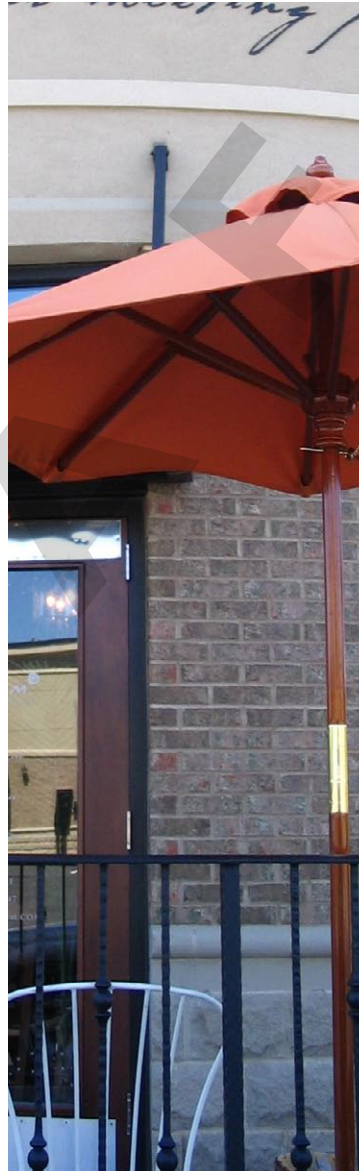


Jimmy Carter Boulevard / Buford Highway *Redevelopment Plan*

September 2007



Gwinnett Village
Community Improvement District

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District would like to thank the following key stakeholders for their efforts in completing this plan::

Shiv Aggarwal - *American Management Services, Gwinnett Village CID Board, Chair*

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Heidi Brau - *Courtyard by Marriot, Business Owner Representative*

Craig Briley – *Resident, Lake Windsor Heights*

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Lynnette Howard - *Gwinnett County Planning Commissioner*

Steve Logan (ex-officio member) - *Gwinnett County Department of Planning*

Eric Johansen - *Gwinnett County Planning Commissioner*

Jeff Lucas - *Prologis, Industrial Property Owner Representative*

Pedro Marin, *State of Georgia House Representative*

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Michael Sullivan - *Anderson, Tate & Carr, Independent Developer Representative*

Ansley Wood - *Waffle House Corporation, Business Owner Representative*

Steve & Lisa Young - *Accurate Printers, Inc., Business/Commercial Property Owners*

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

B a c k g r o u n d 1

R e d e v e l o p m e n t 3

P r o c e s s 7

E x i s t i n g C o n d i t i o n s 10

A n a l y s i s 16

I m p l e m e n t a t i o n 30



B A C K G R O U N D

The stretches of Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway that meet in southwest Gwinnett County are in the crosshairs of potential redevelopment. While they fit within the model of sprawling commercial highways - long segments of low-intensity retail centers, acres of parking, little to no interparcel access, and almost no consideration of the pedestrian - they also differ from many strip corridors in their relative vitality. Though many of the structures are showing the effects of an extended lifespan, the occupancy rate for these centers is relatively high. This paradox represents both the strength of opportunities and the nature of the challenges facing the future of these two corridors.



In the 1970s, Atlanta began an unprecedented period of growth and physical expansion, much of which overran the counties to the northeast and northwest of the downtown core. Gwinnett County, at the time a mix of predominately rural and suburban-style uses, was sited ideally for expansion. Straddling the major I-85 corridor, it provided huge tracts of land with relatively minor regulatory framework. Over the three decades that marked the end of the century, Gwinnett County was (indeed, it continues to be) one of the fastest growing municipalities in the nation.

Unfettered growth has consequences, however. The cheaply-built strip centers that were erected so quickly in the face of spreading demand began to age out. As they fell into disrepair, commercial tenants kept moving outward, leaving the old centers abandoned and decaying. At the same time, the concentration of strip commercial development, industrial land uses attracting heavy truck traffic, cul-de-sac style residential neighborhoods and large block sizes resulted in traffic congestion that had a real effect on the quality of life in the area. Eventually, as properties fell into neglect and traffic worsened, crime began to increase.



Fortunately, the people who make up the communities that line these two corridors decided to take matters into their own hands. In 2006, the Gwinnett Village CID was formed as a coalition of local business and property owners who set up a self-taxing district. These funds, along with State and Federal funds, are dedicated in an overall effort to increase property values, heighten security and improve the quality of life within the district.

In the short time since its inception, the GVCID has already helped guide Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) corridor studies of Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Indian Trail Road. In addition, the CID has lobbied for a wide range of infrastructure improvements and additions, and currently is either planning or has built streetscapes, sidewalks, bridges and landscape improvements throughout the district. A next logical step is to set up a framework for encouraging and ensuring quality redevelopment along the two signature corridors in the district.



R E D E V E L O P M E N T

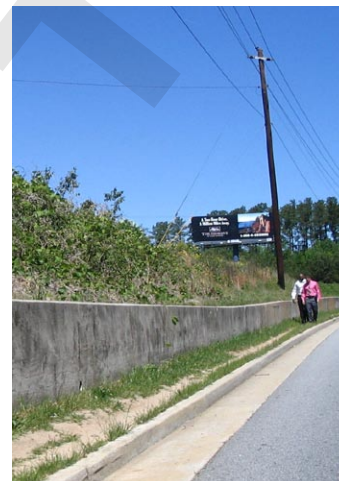
Why does a community elect to undertake a plan for redevelopment? In many cases, a community seeks simply to improve the collective “quality of life” by improving or upgrading the existing environment. Often, a neighborhood or district may experience a downturn, in both the economic and social sense, as buildings and infrastructure begin to age. This may discourage investment and result in a loss of property value or a loss of residents and businesses. When this sort of blight begins to occur, municipalities are empowered by law to look for remedies.



According to the State of Georgia “Redevelopment Powers Law” (OCGA 36-41-1), municipalities may undertake certain efforts to improve areas that are found to be “economically and socially depressed” when compared to accepted standards. Various criteria are used to judge the qualifications of a target area, and these criteria may be either parcel-specific or relevant across and throughout the area. These measurements are designed to assess the effects of upon the community’s growth, housing and employment opportunities, economic and/or social conditions, and the general public health and safety.

Among the criteria are included the following:

- The presence of a predominant number of structures that qualify as substandard, slum, deteriorated or dilapidated;
- A high density of population or over-crowding;
- Existence of conditions that endanger life or property, by fire or other causes;
- Infrastructure obsolescence or disrepair;
- Unsafe or unsanitary conditions;
- The predominance of a defective or inadequate street network;



- Parking, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities that are inadequate to the task of accommodating traffic volumes either current or after proposed redevelopment;
- An overall lot layout in which size, adequacy and/or accessibility affects use;
- Undeveloped parcels of land or a substantial number of buildings or structures that exceed 40 years of age;
- Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- Inadequate open or green space;
- The current condition is less desirable than potential redevelopment including new commercial, residential, open space, pedestrian or transit improvements;
- Any geographic area adversely affected by environmental degradation, contamination or similar factors.



If a community is found to have one or more of these conditions, it is understood that the community might wish to undertake efforts to redevelop. The goal being to improve the economic and social well-being of those who live and do business within the area.

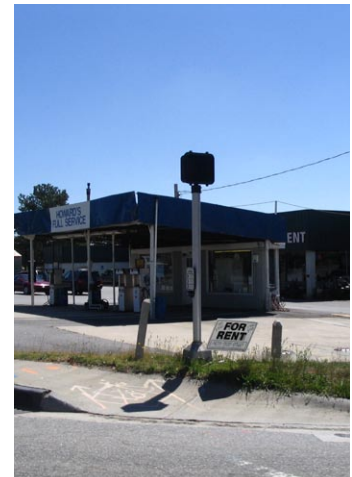
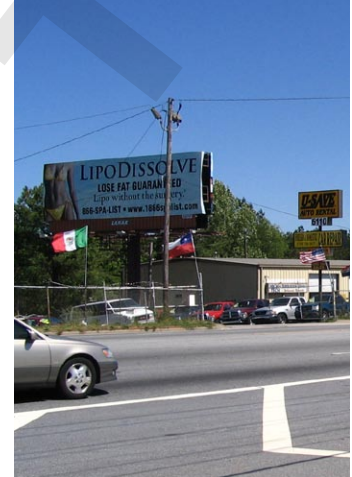


Among the previous criteria are several conditions applicable to the Jimmy Carter Boulevard / Buford Highway Study Area. Each is identified and addressed below:

- *The presence of a predominant number of structures that qualify as substandard, slum, deteriorated or dilapidated* - In number alone, there is not a technical majority of the buildings in disrepair, but there is in general the appearance that reinvestment is not being made into updating existing aged facilities in the area. The southern segment of Buford Highway has the most egregious examples, but prominent examples exist as well in the areas near the Norcross downtown and all along Jimmy Carter.
- *Infrastructure obsolescence or disrepair* - While not necessarily aged beyond its lifespan, local infrastructure has arguably been overtaxed by the demands made by past development. If the area is to continue to grow and flourish, infrastructure needs must be addressed.
- *Unsafe or unsanitary conditions* - Unsafe conditions in this area take two forms: Traffic and Crime. High volume traffic and a lack of meaningful pedestrian amenities result in an unacceptable level of incidents. According to a recent study by the *Atlanta Regional Commission*, the amount of vehicular crashes on Buford Highway is almost double the statewide average.¹ The intersection of Jimmy Carter boulevard is also the second highest in vehicular crashes among the entire Buford Highway Corridor.²

More noticeably, as some of the retail centers have deteriorated, and as some of the residential stock has flipped to transient tenants, the local crime rate has increased. Redevelopment with an eye on public safety and crime prevention is a potential remedy.

- *The predominance of a defective or inadequate street network* - A key issue in the Study Area. There is a distinct lack of a secondary street network, of alternative routes and of pedestrian accommodations. There are very few “cut-throughs”, and parallel alternatives to the major corridors are almost non-existent. The interstate bridge at Jimmy Carter is already planned for reconstruction and traffic along this section of Jimmy Carter Boulevard operates at a level of service “F” during peak hours.



1. Between 2002-2004, Buford Highway had a crash rate of 1,083 per 100 MVM (million vehicle miles traveled), while the 2004 statewide crash rate was 637 MVM (source: Buford Highway Multimodal Corridor Study, 2006)

2. Between 2002-2004, the intersection of Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Buford Highway had an average of 94 crashes annually, second only to the intersection of Lenox Road, which had 106 crashes annually. (source: Buford Highway Multimodal Corridor Study, 2006)

- *Parking, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities that are inadequate to the task of accommodating traffic volumes either current or after proposed redevelopment* - Related to the criteria above, the traffic in the study area is already problematic.
- *Undeveloped parcels of land or a substantial number of buildings or structures that exceed 40 years of age* - Though few structures in the area meet this standard directly, the intent of the criteria is appropriate at many points on the corridor. Much of the built stock of strip centers is neither designed nor constructed to last more than 20 years, a threshold that has been crossed by a majority of structures. The effect is apparent, as many of these structures appear in far worse condition than should be expected, a situation often exacerbated by poor maintenance practices.
- *Inadequate open or green space* - Also another fairly clear issue. Until the recent addition of the 43-acre Best Friend Park, there was no appreciable park space in the Study Area. The conversion of the three-acre Lillian Webb Field is the only other park currently being planned within the study area. Despite the additions to the inventory of active park space, there is minimal passive open space, and trail links to the parks are almost non-existent, reducing the Parks' usability. There are still portions of the Study Area underserved by open space, predominately at the southern end of Jimmy Carter Boulevard.
- *The current condition is less desirable than potential redevelopment including new commercial, residential, open space, pedestrian or transit improvements* - There are a noticeable number of under-utilized properties along both corridors. Based on recent market projections from the Jimmy Carter LCI study, the catalytic projects alone could create almost 1,500 units of housing, half a million square feet of retail and half a million square feet of office. Though occupancy rates are healthy (roughly 95% in the retail sector) the relative densities are far below what could be supported in the Study Area. This indicates that a healthy market is being underserved by existing development.



P R O C E S S

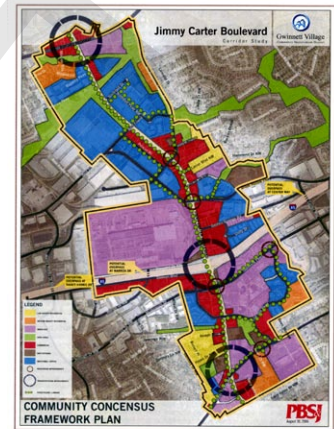
This Redevelopment Plan is neither the beginning nor the end of the efforts within the CID. This plan will build upon numerous precedents, including the Gwinnett County Revitalization Study, the Buford Highway Multi-Modal Corridor Study and the Jimmy Carter Corridor LCI, as well as ongoing studies of a potential transit options in the Study Area. Pending its completion, the Plan will feed into the creation of an innovative Overlay District for these two corridors, providing a regulatory framework for new growth in the study area.



As initially defined by the CID, the Study Area includes Jimmy Carter Boulevard from Singleton Road to Buford Highway; and Buford Highway from the County Line to Langford Road (just beyond Beaver Ruin Road). The Steering Committee decided on the boundary of the study area on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

The process for creating the plan began with the identification of a Steering Committee. Made up of local business owners, property owners, residents and officials from the City of Norcross, Gwinnett County and the State of Georgia, this Committee was tasked with providing input and feedback to the Planning Team throughout the process. The Planning Team's tasks broke down into several stages:

- *Inventory and Assessment* - This consisted of the collection of information through on-site assessments, policy review, and interviews with Steering Committee members and interested stakeholders. This information formed the basis of understanding for existing conditions like land use, building characteristics, sidewalk conditions, market conditions and traffic issues.



58



BUFORD HIGHWAY
MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STUDY
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS



Atlanta Regional Commission
Multimodal Corridor Planning Program



January 2007

Buford Highway Land Use Recommendations



- *Analysis* - Using the existing conditions as a baseline, the Planning Team shaped the draft document with input from the Steering Committee. An overview of development opportunities informed the Framework Plan - a general guideline for implementation. From that, recommendations were made regarding future land use, transportation improvements, public space, the pedestrian environment, and relative densities and setbacks, among other facets.

- *Implementation* - The final phase identified the key steps needed to put the Plan into action. The main goal was to lay the groundwork for the next step - the implementation of an Overlay District. This also included, per the guidance of the Steering Committee, a general outline of principles and strategies for redevelopment, as well as the identification of catalytic projects and potential funding sources.



Public Involvement

The Steering Committee met regularly throughout the study to review the process and provide comments and guidance. In addition, a separate public hearing was held, to provide a broad update on the project and to solicit comments. The public forum, held in the evening on July 27th at the Global Mall, was very well attended and it quickly became evident that there were many long-term residents eager for positive change in their community. Over 115 attendees at the forum reviewed the Analysis and Framework maps for the Study area, and got an overview on the study and its goals from the Executive Director of the CID. To insure that the widest possible net was cast, individual stakeholder interviews were also conducted, providing a one-on-one forum for people who lived or did business in the Study Area to share their concerns and aspirations for the future of Gwinnett Village.



Strip Recovery

At the public forum, there were boards describing the process for redeveloping strip corridors. The process describes a series of principles that provide strategic guidance to reclaiming dilapidated centers and fermenting redevelopment along aging corridors. These principles are outlined below, and give an overarching guide to the study approach:

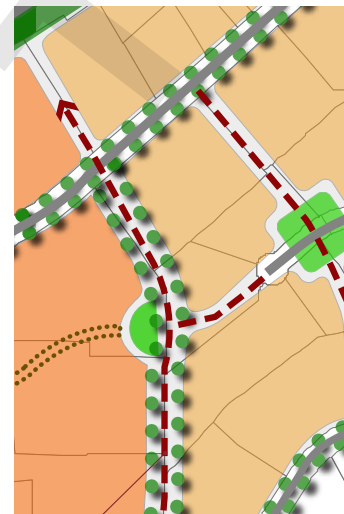
- **Know the Market** - One of the first steps is to understand what is happening in the market, and what is reasonable to expect in the future;
- **“Incentivize” Redevelopment** - Be prepared to provide some concessions to get the type of growth that is desired;
- **Focus on Development Nodes** - You don’t have to eliminate all the mid-corridor retail, but to create workable density, the plan should foster growth at key points on the corridors;
- **Create an Open Space Network** - Key to attracting and keeping quality residential development, the network, if it includes a trail system, can provide an opportunity for alternative modes of transportation, thus traffic relief;
- **“Prune” Retail** - The rule of thumb is that most strip corridors have too much retail square footage, spread out over too large an area. As properties redevelop, encourage alternate uses for struggling retail that is not within a Node;



- **Eradicate Ugliness** - Creating a pleasant and attractive aesthetic environment helps attract return customers but also sends a message that the area is healthy, interesting, and safe.
- **Improve Connectivity** - This applies on several scales. Within adjacent parcels, via shared drives, this can help reduce curb cuts and traffic on the main corridors. Within the Study Area, connectivity represents a range of travel options - cars, buses, bicycles and pedestrians - which can help reduce vehicular congestion. Beyond the study area, this is exemplified by providing numerous routes into and out of the community, so that no one path gets choked off;
- **Streamline Regulation** - Complex and bureaucratic processes and actually serve to discourage redevelopment. By being clear about what sort of projects are desired by the community, and fast-tracking those projects that meet this vision, it becomes easier to attract new, quality growth.

- **Implement!**

[Source: Urban Land Institute]



E X I S T I N G C O N D I T I O N S

The state of the corridors in the Study Area run the gamut from old and blighted to new and bustling. The adjacent residential neighborhoods reflect a similar dichotomy: There are older single-family neighborhoods that are healthy and stable, while others have been turned over en masse to rentals and transitory residents. New products have seen fewer detached units and more townhomes and flats. It is a widely-held belief among the stakeholders that crime is the single greatest deterrent to redevelopment in the area. The CID has already taken some steps, including the hiring of off-duty Gwinnett County Police Officers. A close second as far as concerns voiced by the community was the need for better transportation options and concern over traffic delays.



Demographics

Current numbers for the study area indicate a population that is younger, and more ethnically diverse than Gwinnett County as a whole. Earning power is distinctly “middle class”, with roughly 60% of the households earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 a year. Despite fears of increased crime and traffic, residential population is expected to grow by as much as 10% in the next five years. It is anticipated that the growth will remain ethnically diverse, but will likely get somewhat younger. Most of the anticipated growth should be in townhome or multi-family product, to the tune of roughly 200 ownership units and 100 rental units annually. This represents a healthy growth rate for the Study Area, and should present an attractive market to potential residential developers.



Building Condition & Occupancy

The state of the buildings in the Study Area vary greatly. There are a number of brand-new products, primarily small strip centers and small office buildings, but much of the stock is aging. The average age of the commercial properties in the Study Area is approximately 21 years, which is at the very end of a strip life-cycle. Some of the larger holdings are undergoing renovation, but at many points along the corridors, especially along the southern segment of Buford Highway, the dilapidation is apparent. Despite this, occupancy rates are relatively high. This represents a very strong market, especially for office and retail. Part of the strength lies in the location, but it is in part attributable to low rental rates as well.

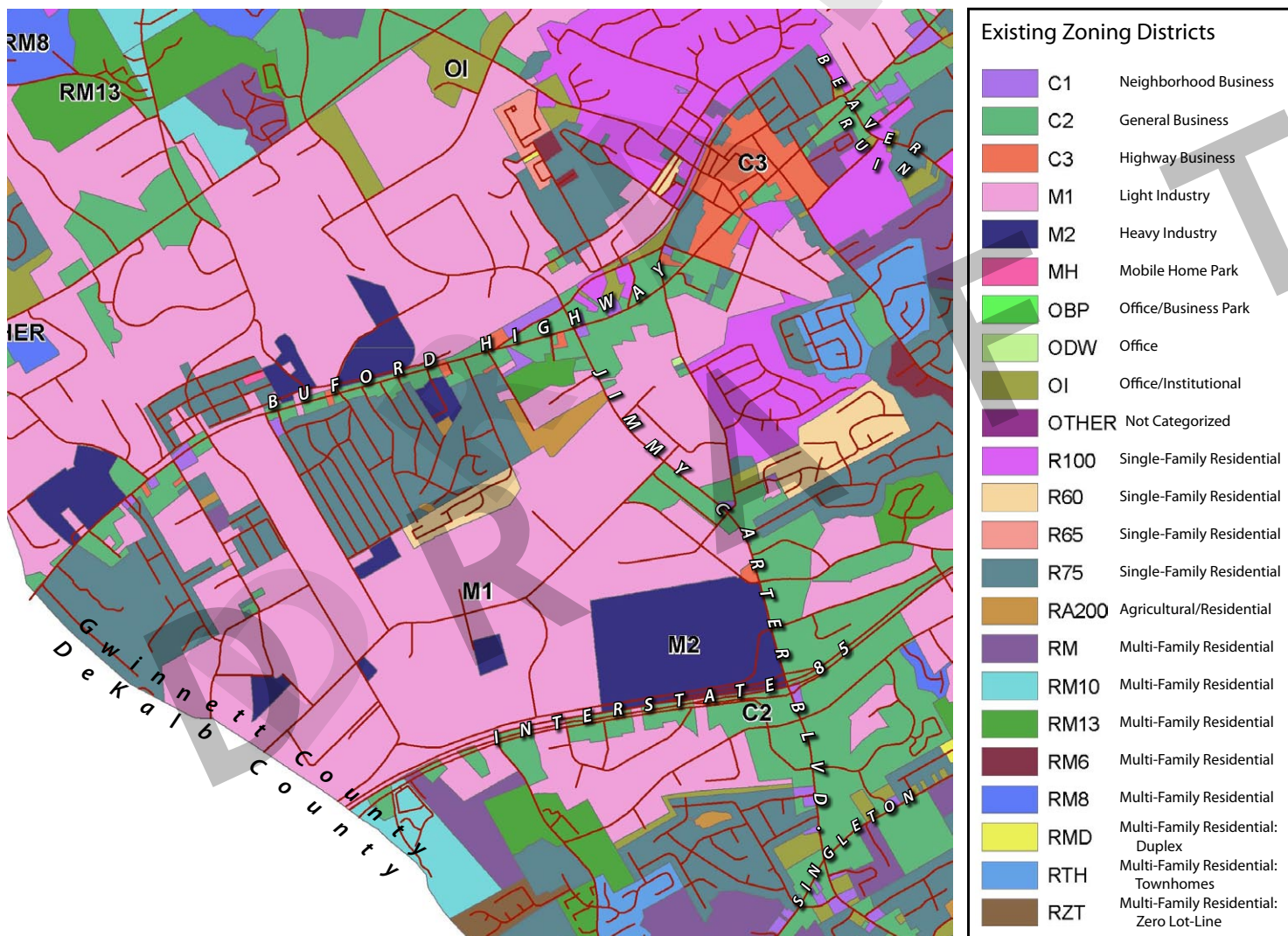
Market

Currently, the area is dominated by Commercial/Retail and Industrial. It is anticipated that the former will increase, while the latter declines, with an increase in office as well. Indeed, there are a notable number of office tenants already renting industrial spaces. The market study conducted during the Jimmy Carter Corridor LCI pointed to a shrinking market for the large-scale industrial uses, and an expanding one for office, retail and higher-density (beyond single-family detached) residential. There is long-term potential for the Study Area, particularly at the I-85 / Jimmy Carter Boulevard interchange, to become a regional destination, in a vein similar to Perimeter Center.



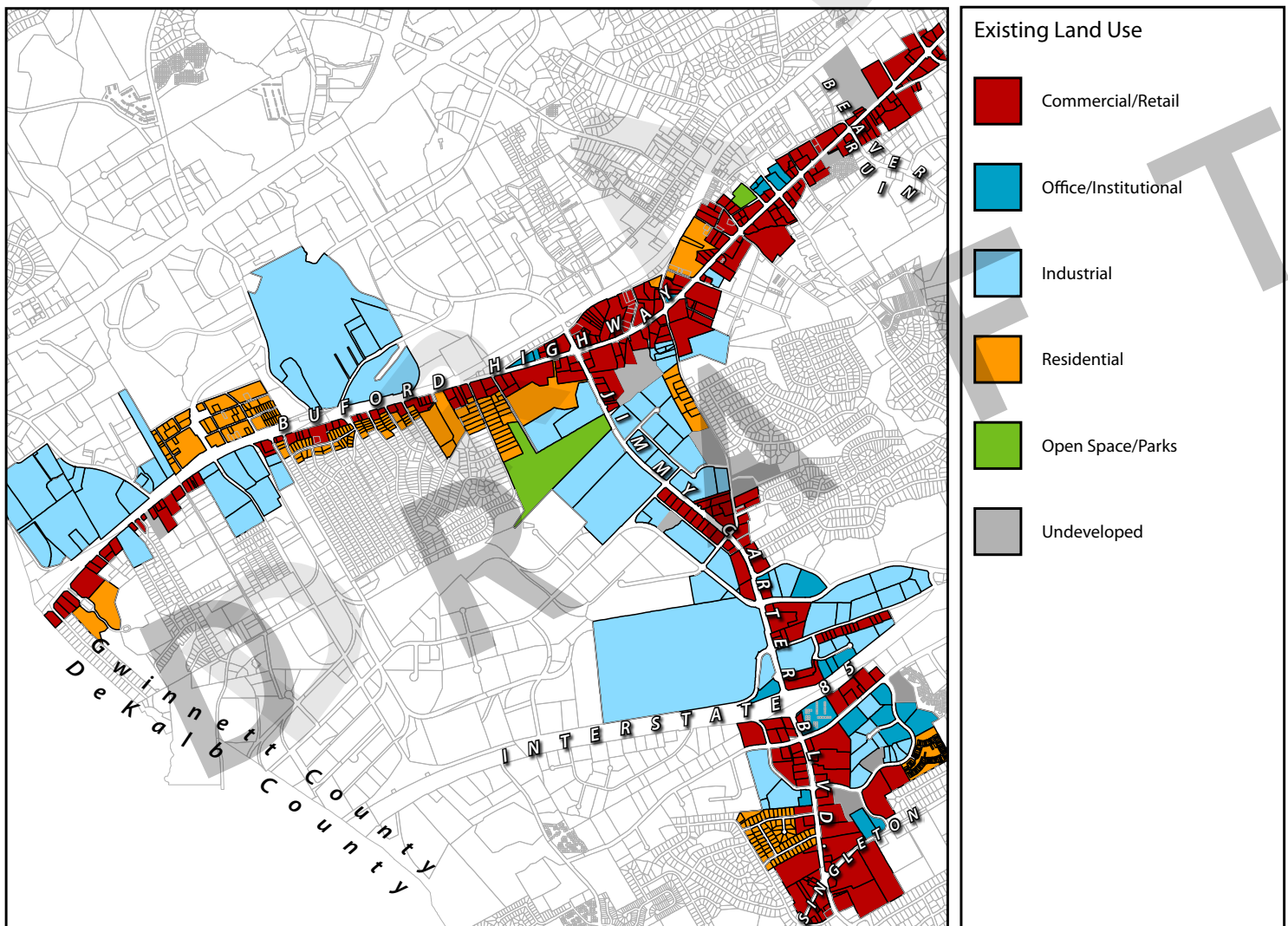
Zoning

As evidenced by the map below, there is a wide variety of zoning categories in the Study Area, but the bulk is made up of Light Industrial. An item of note is the proximity of much of the single family to the industrial uses. While it seems counter-intuitive, this is a situation that does have historical precedent. Indeed much of the local development was based on providing housing to workers in nearby facilities. The current trend towards “mixed-use” is actually a return to sensible land use policies of the past - providing a short commute between home, office and daily services. If properly buffered and designed, residential and industrial uses can peacefully and pleasantly coexist.



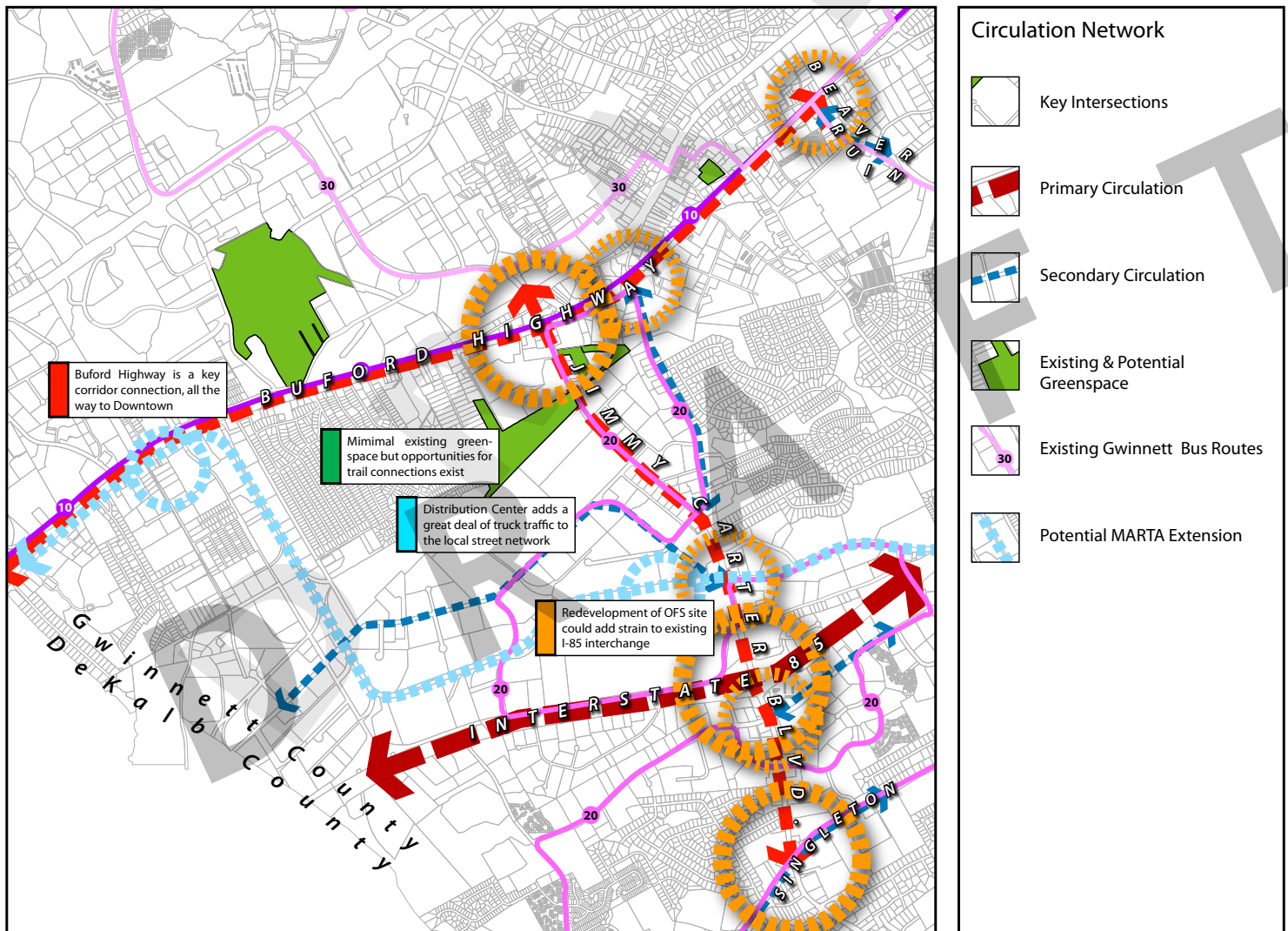
Land Use

Augmenting the zoning map, the land use on the corridor is still mostly industrial, but has competition from the sheer number of commercial/retail plots. Most of the industrial is concentrated in two areas - the southern leg of Buford Highway, and the intersection of Jimmy Carter and Interstate 85. Of note is the dearth of residential and the very real shortage of usable greenspace. The former is already beginning to shift, as residential fills in some of the gaps between larger commercial developments, but parks and open space exist in no meaningful form but for Best Friend Park. Note as well how few undeveloped properties are in the Study Area. For this reason, the Plan will focus most heavily on strategies for redevelopment.



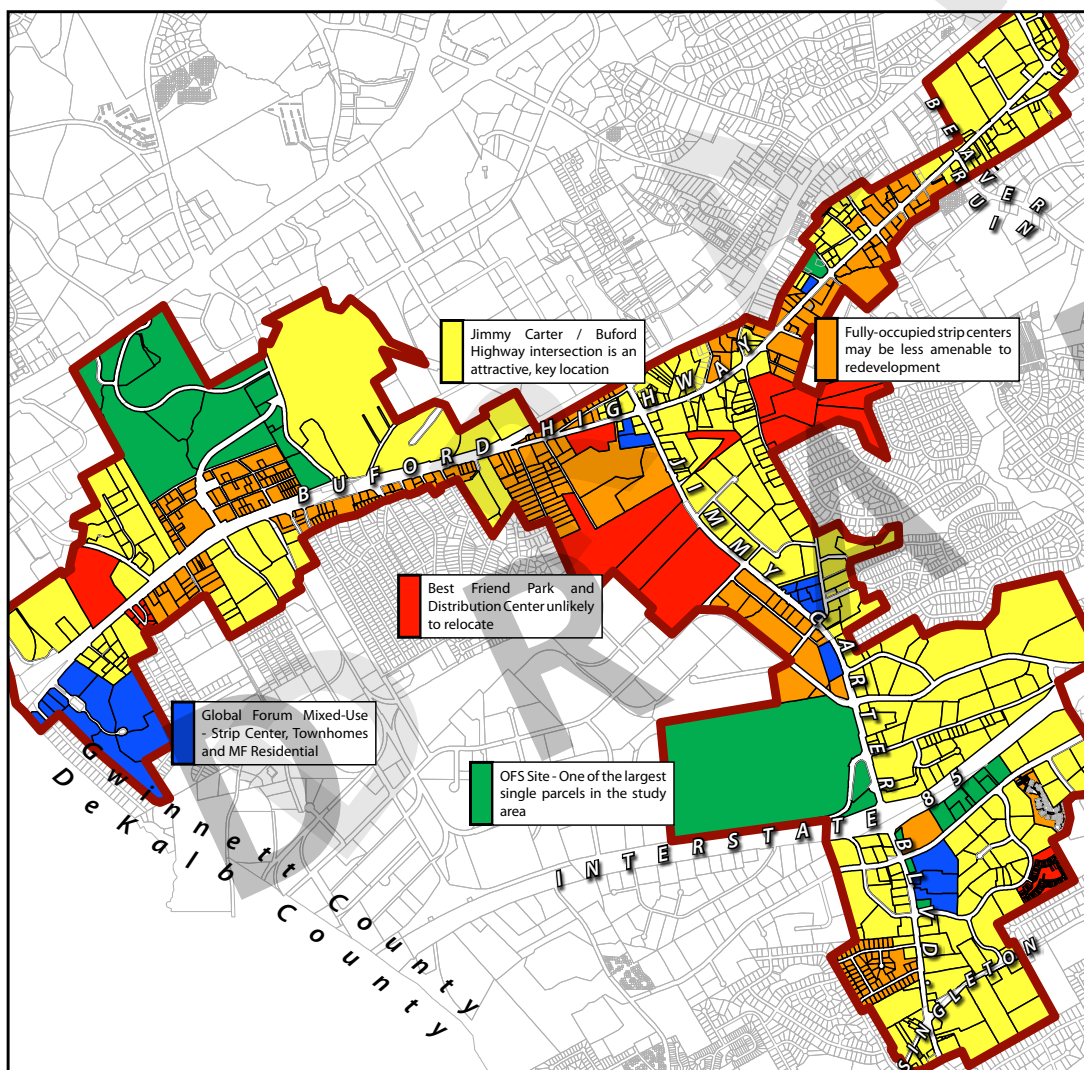
Circulation & Open Space

Like many strip corridors, those in the Study Area are plagued by a lack of connectivity. This is evinced in a number of ways, including minimal interparcel connectivity (and an overabundance of curb cuts); few if any cut-throughs or parallel access roads; sidewalks that are unpleasant, unsafe or non-existent; and few available modes of alternative transportation. The charge here is to look for ways to get additional vehicular paths through the Study Area, while also looking for potential routes for multi-use paths on and off the corridors. Another consideration is the potential for a rail extension running from Doraville and extending north along I-85. This would bring not only a great deal of carrying capacity to the area, but would also provide an excellent incentive for high-quality, high-density redevelopment. Good, sustainable, vertical development needs transit to be viable.








Development Opportunities

In analyzing the constraints and opportunities throughout the Study Area, we can begin to assess the relative potential for certain locations and parcels to redevelop. Much of this assessment is based on location (near a major intersection, or near other active redevelopment), size (larger parcels will be more attractive), current use (affecting needs for demo or remediation), and owner disposition. Some of the most favorable are the OFS site (large, relatively unbuilt, and actively seeking redevelopment), the area behind the Mechanicsville neighborhood (good access to both Buford Highway and Peachtree Industrial), select sites in Downtown Norcross (due to a very proactive DDA), and the Carter Oaks area (good highway access, large parcels, excellent visibility and an owner amenable to redevelopment).



Development Opportunities

-  **Excellent Current Opportunity**
Parcel or parcels are vacant or underutilized, are in a good location, or have owners who are actively seeking to redevelop.
-  **Good Opportunity**
Parcels do not have all the desirable attributes for redevelopment, but might benefit from nearby activity, or a favorable location.
-  **Extended Opportunity**
In most cases, these are parcels that would require some assemblage or some incentives to redevelop, or they are currently less likely to do so.
-  **Static Parcels**
These are properties that are highly unlikely to redevelop in the near or foreseeable future, due either to site constraints or an active usage that is unlikely to relocate.
-  **Active Redevelopment**
These are parcels that are currently undergoing renewal.

A N A L Y S I S

Based on physical surveys, stakeholder interviews, public comment and Steering Committee input, there are numerous challenges facing the Study Area. Crime appears to be foremost among them, especially in the minds of the residents. Traffic is also a huge concern (especially truck traffic). The large percentage of rental property has contributed to the destabilization of the housing market. Most stakeholders agree that the overall aesthetic of the Study Area is neither attractive nor representative of a cohesive district. And yet almost all of the people who were a part of the study were very optimistic about the future of Gwinnett Village.

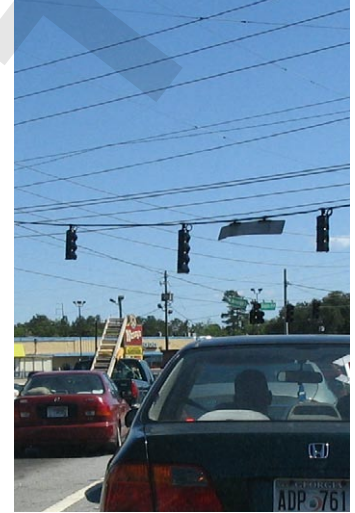


Location

While most stakeholders agree that traffic within the Study Area is problematic, they also feel like this area has an almost ideal location within the Atlanta Metro area. Its siting directly on I-85 provides quick and direct access to downtown Atlanta. Its proximity to I-285, via either Buford Highway or I-85, gives it excellent access to points all around the region. Areas with comparable interstate access (Cumberland at I-75 and I-285, and Perimeter at GA 400 and I-285) have developed to very high densities and are considered “edge cities” in their own right. If there is going to be a large-scale, vertical mixed-use center within Gwinnett County, this is the most logical location.

Redevelopment Potential

Location is often one of the prime drivers of interest in redevelopment, but the feasibility of a site is also an important consideration. There are a number of parcels along these corridors have one or more attributes that make them attractive to redevelopment: They are large enough to redevelop without having to assemble adjacent properties; they have aging or dilapidated structures which would probably be taken down in the near future regardless; the current owner is favorable towards redevelopment; and the requisite infrastructure is already in place.



Market

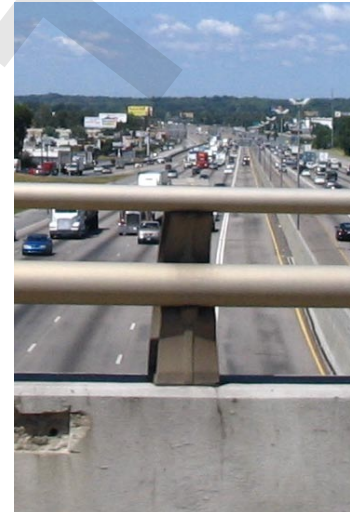
Other than in industrial uses (which are low-intensity regardless), the market is favorable to growth along the Jimmy Carter/Buford Highway corridors. The trend of turning back in towards the Downtown has made the inner ring of suburbs very attractive to redevelopment. Housing, retail and office all may potentially find opportunities within the Study Area. The market's strength lies not only in its great highway access and proximity to I-285, but to its very vibrant atmosphere and very diverse community. It is a scenario unique within the Atlanta metropolitan region.



Consensus Principles for Redevelopment

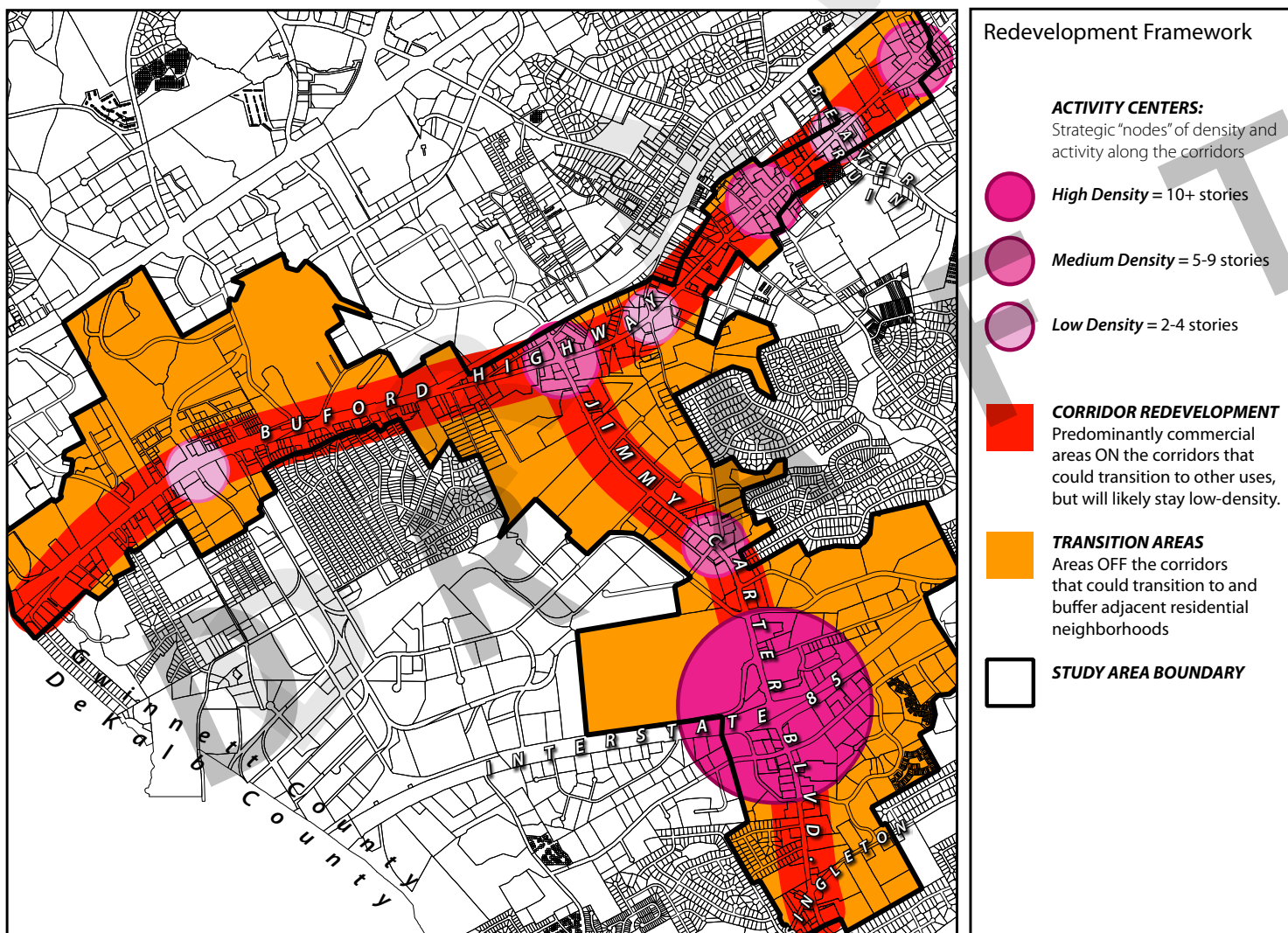
Based on much of the analysis described above, the Steering Committee crafted a series of principles to apply to redevelopment in the Study Area. These principles represent the core of what the Steering Committee and the Gwinnett Village residents and businesses see for the future of the area, and these principles will help guide the decision-making process in the implementation phase and beyond.

- **Encourage Quality Redevelopment**
- **Reduce Crime**
- **“Incentivize” Redevelopment**
- **Allow Higher Density At Key Intersections**
- **Improve Connectivity**
- **Provide Variety In Transportation Options**
- **Preserve Healthy Residential Neighborhoods**
- **Create an Open Space Network**



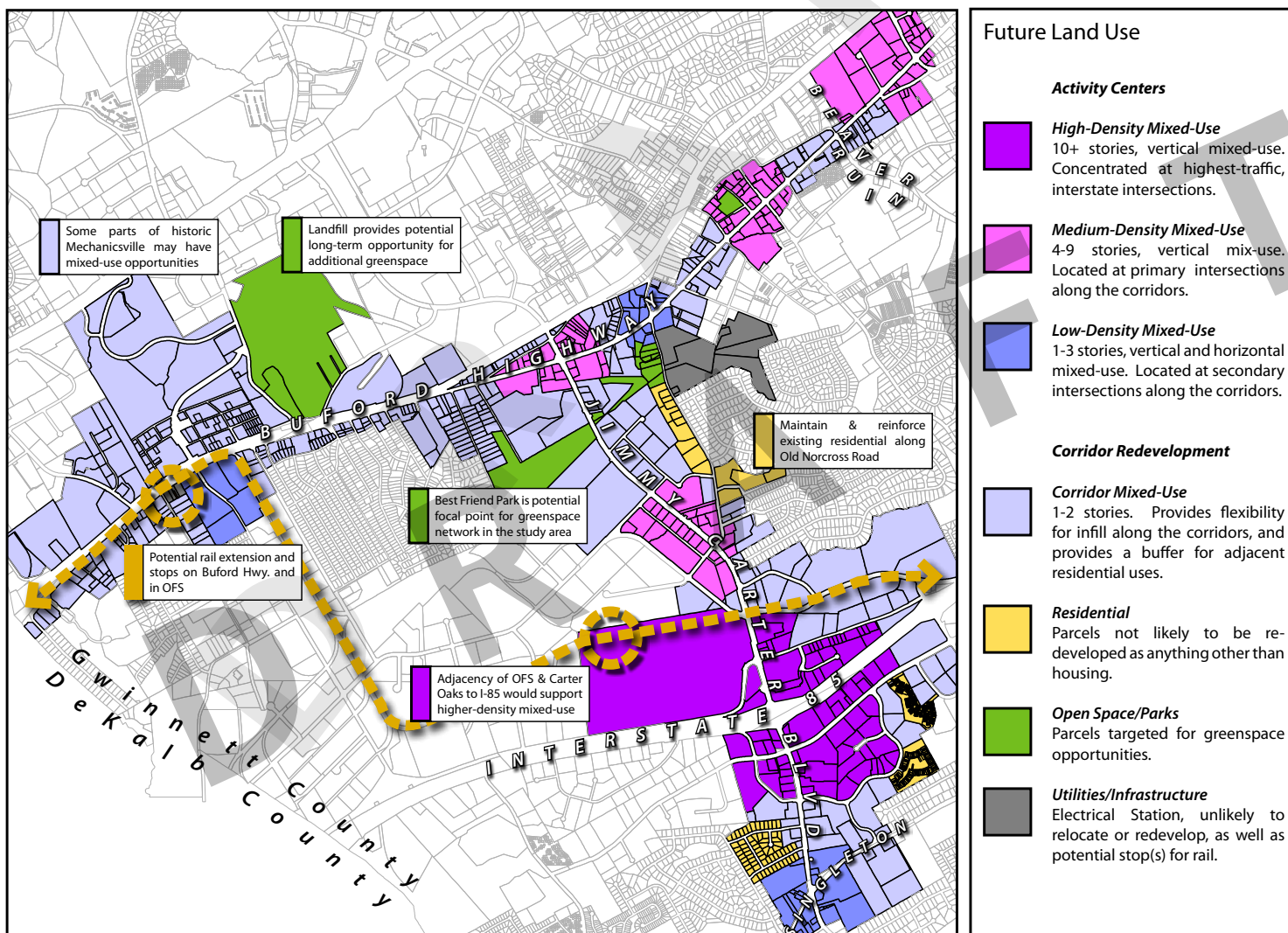
Framework Plan

This map represents the first iteration of the actual Redevelopment Plan. It delineates the general approach to redevelopment that will be taken within the Study Area. In the Framework Plan, the Study Area boundary has been fixed, and several different categories of redevelopment have been identified and located. The focal points, literally and practically, are the Activity Centers. Though they are all sited at higher traffic areas and intersections, there is a hierarchy among them, based on relative density. The highest is at the intersection of I-85, the medium density at large key intersections and the lowest density at secondary intersections. In between the nodes is the designation "Corridor Redevelopment" which allows for similar flexibility without quite as much density as the Nodes. The "Transition Areas" are designed to serve as height and density buffers for the existing uses beyond.



Future Land Use

Building upon the Framework and Development Opportunities Maps, the map below outlines how the corridor might reimagine in terms of land use. The primary strategy, as suggested in the Framework, is the focus of higher-density development at key intersections and on larger parcels. Thus, the most-intense development would be concentrated at the Jimmy Carter / I-85 interchange, with medium- and low-density nodes occurring at other key intersections on the two corridors. It also helps identify the areas in which assembly of parcels might be required to promote denser redevelopment. The potential rail extension is shown on this illustration as well, to help identify potential increases in development density that would logically occur around transit stations. "Corridor Mixed-Use" serves as a broad designation, allowing a range of lower-scale redevelopment options for parcels not located in "Nodes".



Site and Street Sections

The following graphics begin to lay out how redevelopment at key points, and at areas in between, might be laid out in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan. At a larger scale, the Site Sections represent potential for massing at the various nodes, as well as the relationship between new and existing construction. Zoomed in, the Street Sections more closely examine building setbacks and the pedestrian environment. The “before-and-after” format provides an easy opportunity for comparison. Both types of drawings show a more active ground-level environment, and a more standardized approach to fronting the buildings on the corridors.

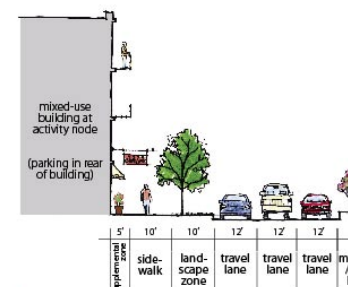
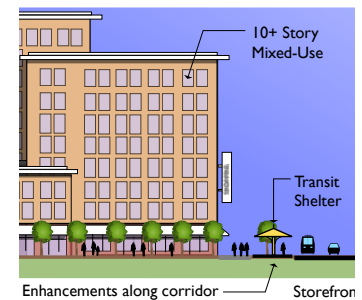


Site Sections

Three distinct illustrations show the difference between development at nodes of various designations. While there are obviously some variations among the node types, there are several consistent principles.

- Concentrate density closest to the corridor;
- Activate the street level with storefront retail;
- Use greenspace and connectivity not only as an amenity for community members, but also as a buffer between new, higher-density uses and existing, lower-density uses;
- Multi-use paths can occur on or off the corridors, and should be used to connect among the various uses, with particular attention paid to linking the residential neighborhoods with the commercial nodes;
- Screen parking from view, but provide clear access;
- Look for opportunities to insert secondary circulator roads, with special consideration for the borders between uses.

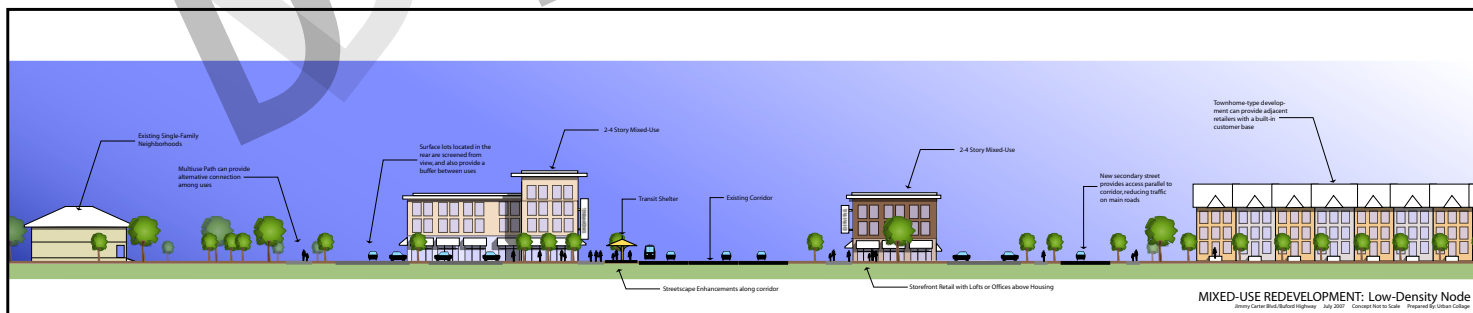
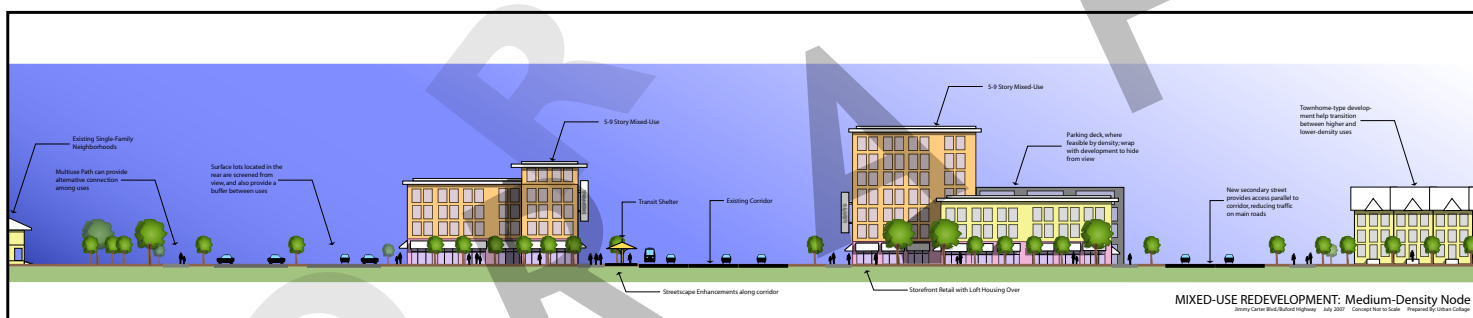
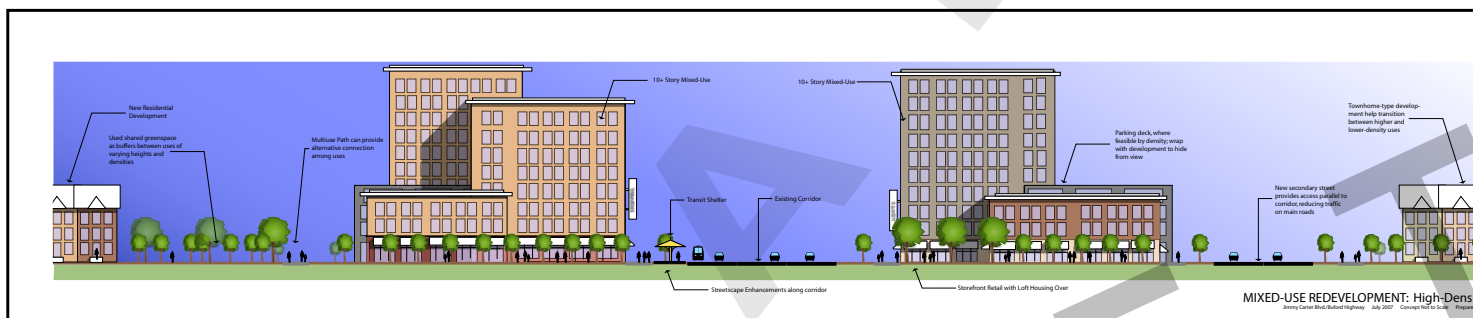
These diagrams illustrate the manner in which the various scales of redevelopment interact with the corridor context. Redevelopment of a variety of types, scales and uses is shown as it might occur per the Plan, and how this redevelopment would relate to the entire study area. New development is constructed closer to the street, providing greater visibility to the retail and commercial tenants. This also makes for a safer pedestrian environment. Foot traffic is buffered from automotive traffic, but is close enough that drivers can provide additional “eyes-on” the pedestrian realm.



SECTION DIAGRAM

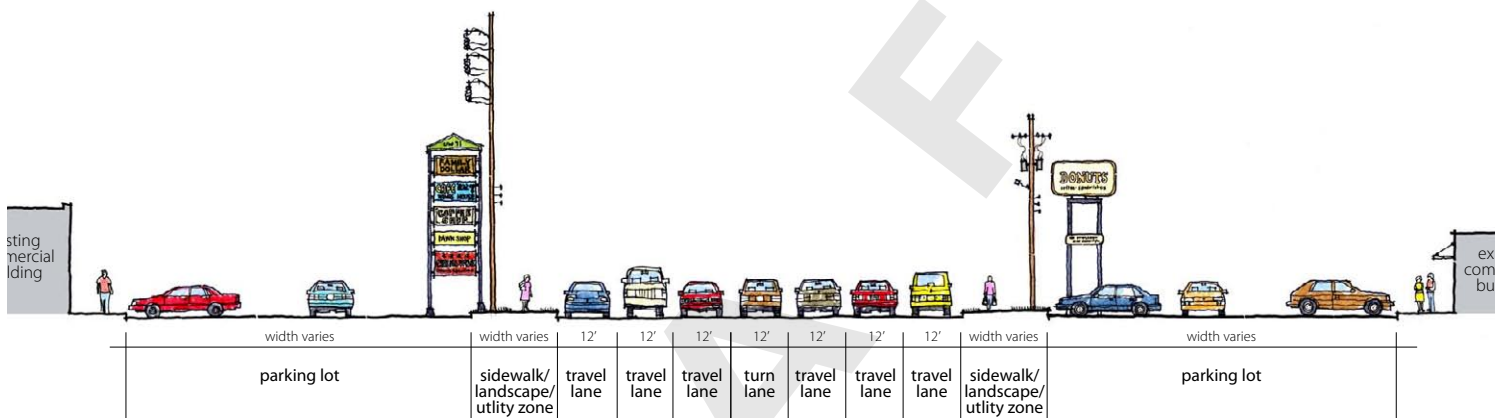
Parking is typically screened from view, whether surface lot or deck. Where density supports structured parking, those facilities should be wrapped by the development, so as to minimize the appearance of the deck. Surface lots, in contrast, can actually be used as buffers between taller structures near the corridor and shorter buildings beyond.

Transportation alternatives to the corridor can be accommodated in a number of formats. Primary is the provision of wider and improved sidewalks connecting various locations on the corridor. However, alternate routes, running parallel to, but separate from, the main road. These could take the form of secondary roads, potentially along rear property lines, or multi-use paths (bike and ped), which would connect to parks and neighborhoods as well as other commercial nodes.

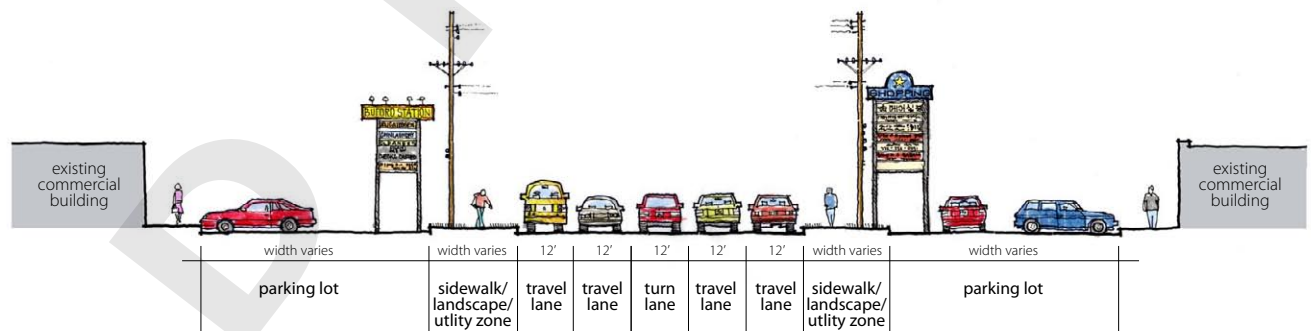


Street Section Diagrams

Though each set of sections is different, there are aspects that are common to all four. Developing a more attractive street environment is central to this effort, but an important consideration is ensuring that the streetscape improvements are consistent in appearance and alignment, even if the building facades beyond are not. The section diagrams below generally illustrate current conditions on the corridors.



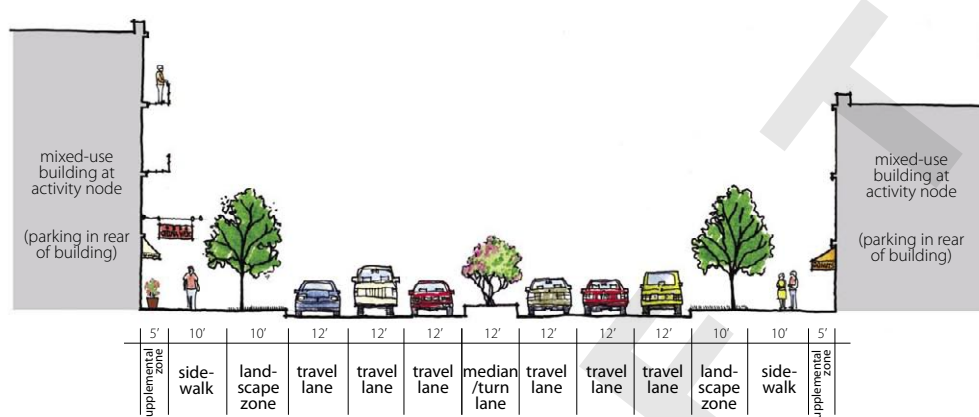
JIMMY CARTER BOULEVARD - EXISTING STREET SECTION



BUFORD HIGHWAY - EXISTING STREET SECTION

Jimmy Carter Section at Activity Centers

Working within the existing ROW profile, the new section assumes that the buildings are moved towards the street as they are redeveloped, creating a more comfortable pedestrian environment and increasing retail visibility without undue signage. Where feasible, relocate utility poles and lines to the rear of the site, to further reduce visual clutter.

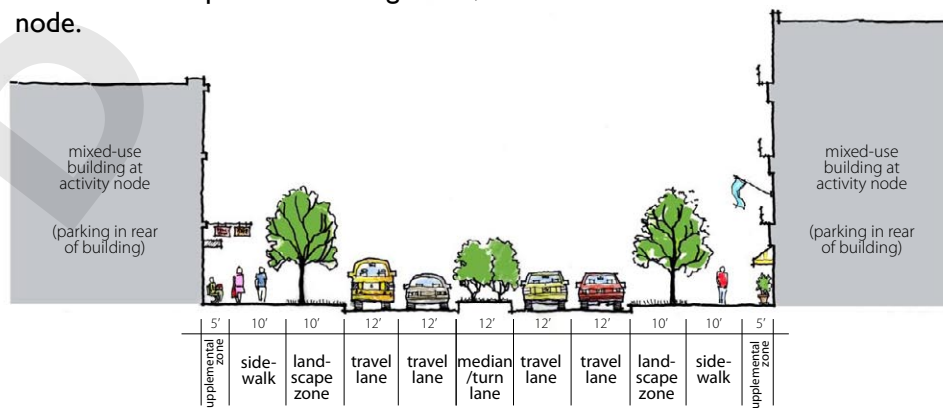


JIMMY CARTER BOULEVARD - POTENTIAL STREET SECTION AT ACTIVITY CENTERS

Buford Highway Section at Activity Centers

Similar to the Jimmy Carter section, this diagram assumes that the ROW will remain unchanged per the input of the Steering Committee. One item of consideration is that as redevelopment occurs and as building mass is sited closer to the street, opportunities to widen the street will be minimized. However, the improvement in traffic flow that is brought about by secondary access and shared parking should obviate the need for any additional lanes. The Steering Committee was wholeheartedly supportive of the notion of sacrificing future widening potential for a narrower, more pedestrian-friendly street section.

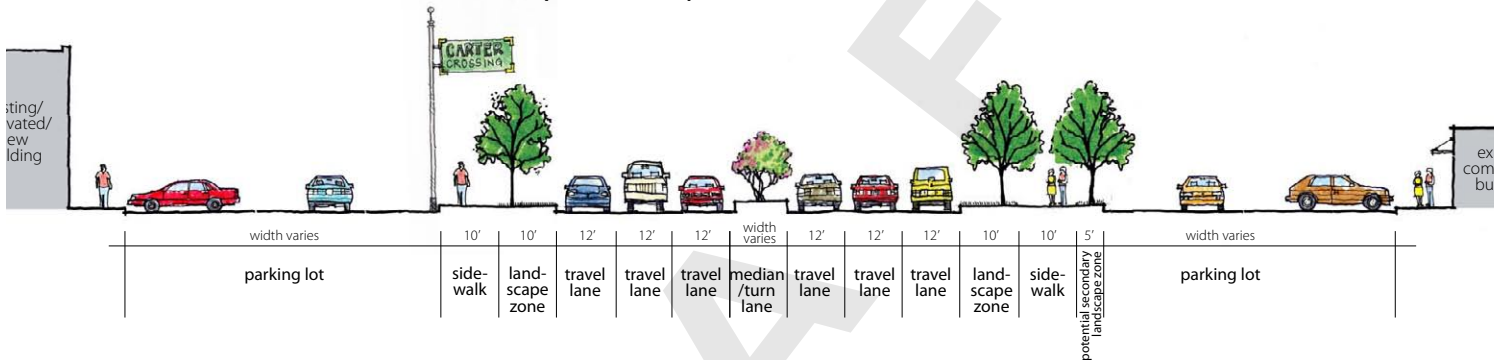
In contrast to “mid-corridor” redevelopment, node developments should encourage as much of a continuous building edge as possible. Some flexibility should be included, however, for the provision of selective increases in setbacks. These can accommodate conditions like plazas or dining areas, and can increase the visual interest of the node.



BUFORD HIGHWAY - POTENTIAL STREET SECTION AT ACTIVITY CENTERS

Jimmy Carter “Mid-Corridor” Section

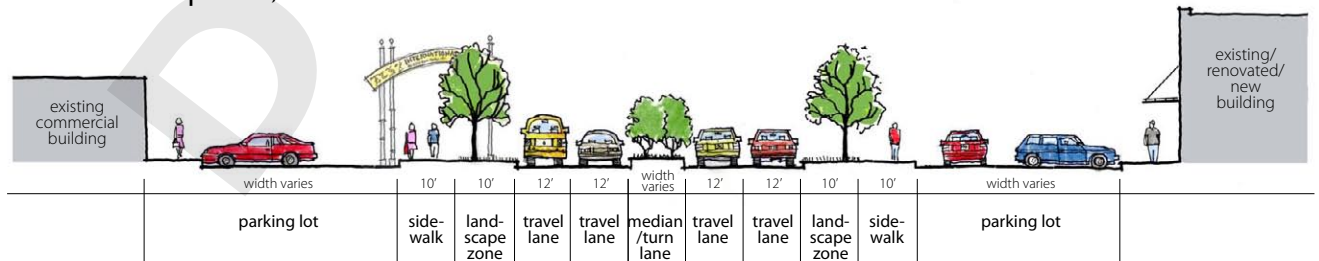
The Mid-Corridor sections differ from the Activity Center sections in that there is less of a requirement to push the full building edge to the street, as well as less of a requirement to have a solid street frontage. It is acknowledged that some of the more vehicular-oriented commercial uses are not conducive to a hard frontage, and that these uses should not be entirely precluded from the corridors. These types of uses would, ideally, occur in between activity centers, but they should be accommodated. It is important as well to note that though the Mid Corridor facades may not be set at the same build-to line as those in the activity centers, the buffers, sidewalks and supplemental zones *should be*. This is important to ensure a consistent and easily-traversed pedestrian environment.



JIMMY CARTER BOULEVARD - **POTENTIAL STREET SECTION “MID-CORRIDOR”**

Buford Highway “Mid-Corridor” Section

The in-between portions of the Buford Highway corridor will have more flexibility in site design, but at the price of less density. A mix of uses may still be accommodated, but at a lower scale than the activity centers. Additionally, efforts should be made to consolidate access among disparate parcels, and reduce the number of curb cuts onto the corridor.



BUFORD HIGHWAY - **POTENTIAL STREET SECTION “MID-CORRIDOR”**

Node Diagrams

In the illustrations that follow, potential redevelopment is laid out at three different scales. While each of these shows a graphic of a specific intersection within the corridor, it should be understood that they are intended as both hypothetical, and “typical” plans, and that they represent the various redevelopment strategies conceptually applied to targeted locations along the corridors.



Development Principles

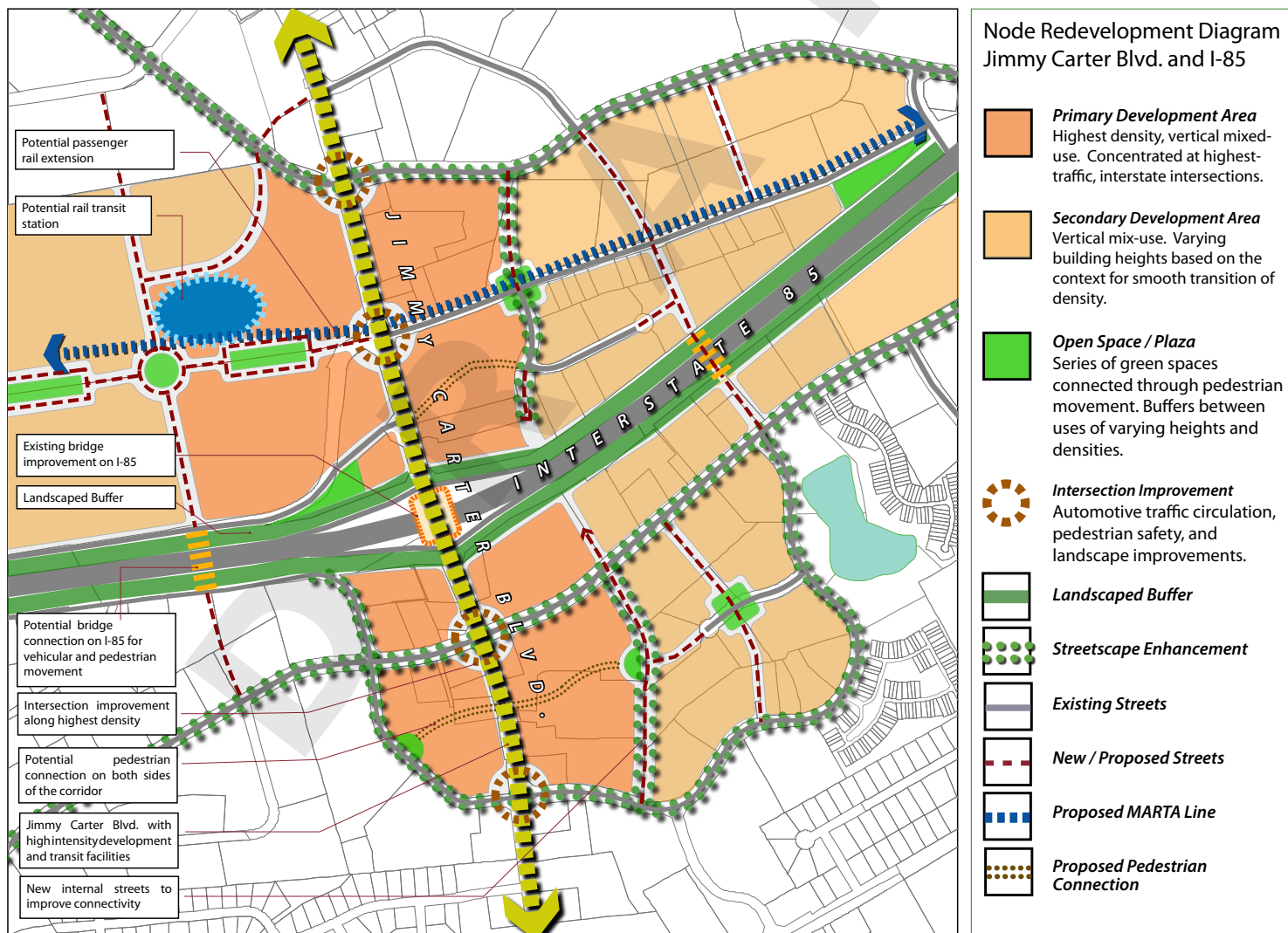
In constructing these diagrams, several overarching principles were applied. Though each of these plans varies in scale, they share numerous aspects of design intent.

- *Provide a mix of uses* - To serve not only as a focal point for development along the corridor, but in order to be somewhat self-sustaining as well, each node should provide a mix of uses. These can be varied among office, commercial, residential, and institutional, among others, depending on the direction of the market and desire of the land owner.
- *Develop housing* - Of the potential uses, residential is arguably one of the most pressing needs. The existing jobs/housing ratio of 2:1 is strong enough to support more housing (preferably owner-occupied), and the long-term sustainability of new commercial uses will be reinforced by having more neighbors to support the live/work/play environment targeted for the Study Area.
- *Create options for transportation* - Regardless of the scale, any development node should offer a variety of transportation options. Redevelopment should look for opportunities to create a secondary street network, and should encourage or accommodate transit wherever possible. Where larger development opportunities exist, a “grid” street network should be explored.
- *Provide usable open space* - A general “best practice” in any development, this is especially important in a study area already starved for greenspace opportunities. These can range from pedestrian-oriented multi-use trails to active parks to hardscape plazas - Anything that can provide for a gathering, and the creation of a sense of community.

Node Diagrams

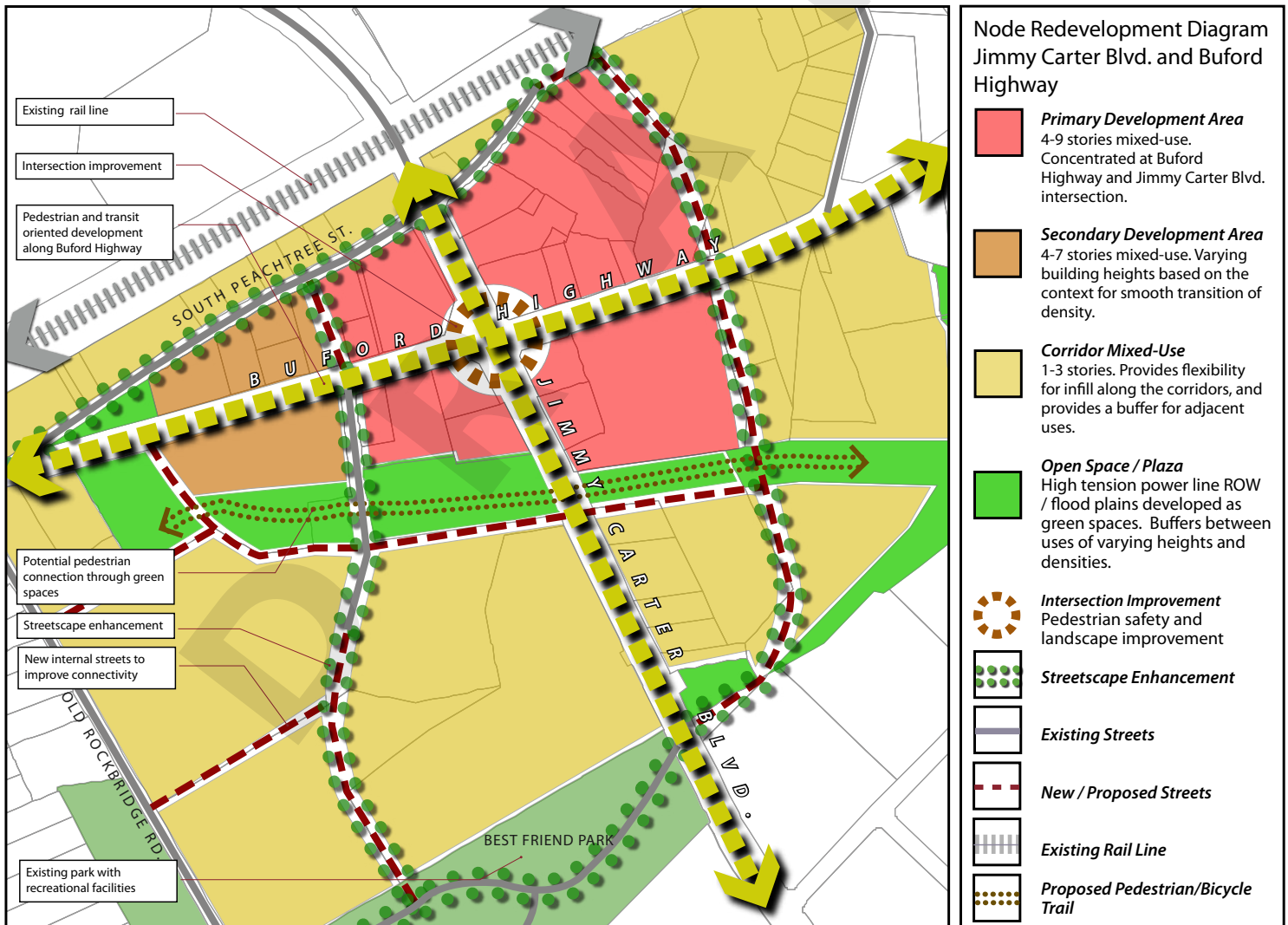
Jimmy Carter / I-85 High-Density Node

Envisioned as the likely location for some of the most dense development in Gwinnett County, let alone the Study Area, the node is served not only by the interstate but is located on a proposed path for a passenger rail extension. The existing and proposed transportation networks would support significant redevelopment at this particular node. However, to insure good flow within the node, it is suggested that an attempt be made to add secondary circulation, creating in essence a smaller street grid. This might even include additional bridges across I-85. Regarding density, the highest uses should be focused as close to Jimmy Carter and I-85, with the heights scaling down as they move away from the corridor.



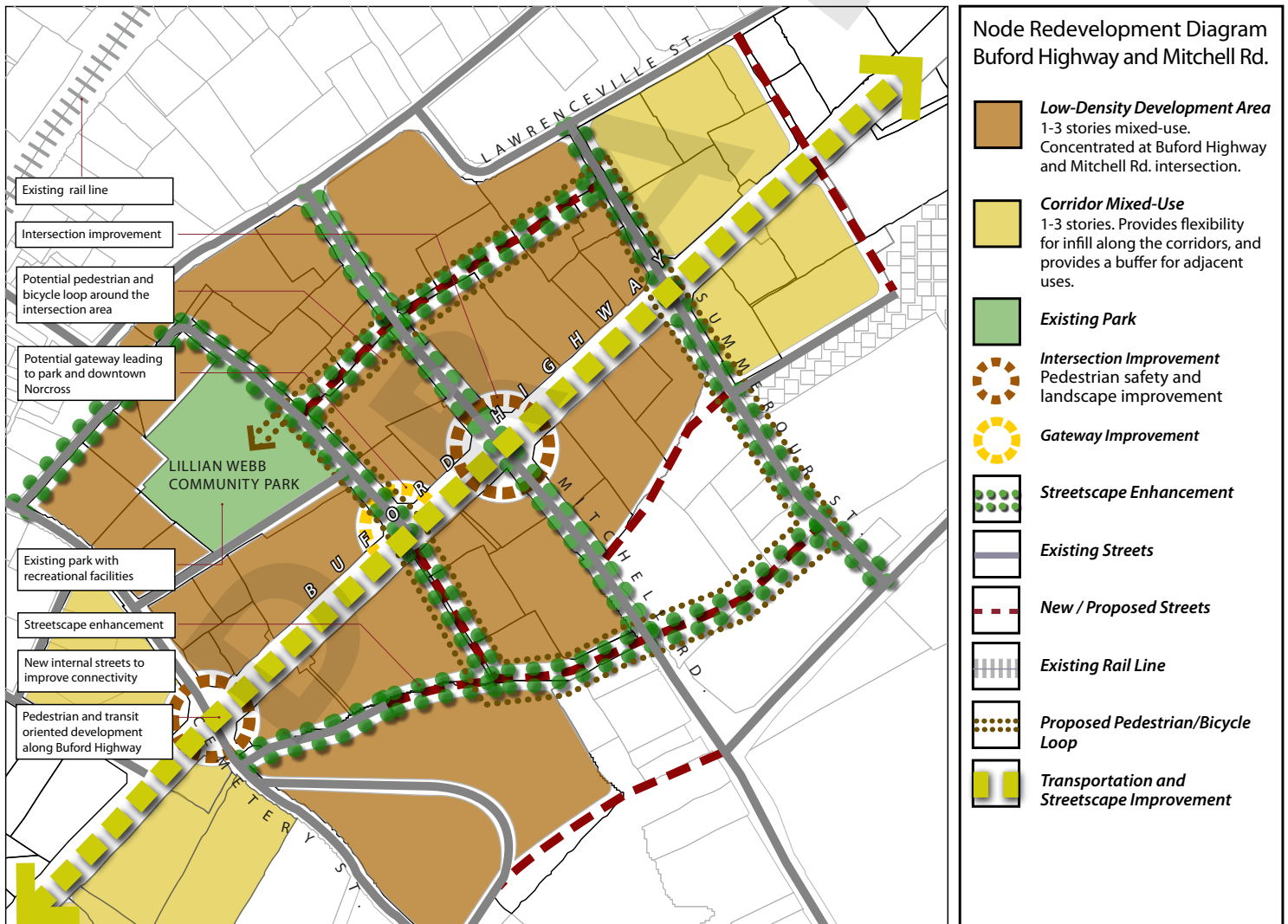
Jimmy Carter / Buford Highway Medium-Density Node

One of two Activity Centers designated for medium-density development, this node's location at the intersection of two major corridors is a benefit. Redevelopment in this area is somewhat constrained by the rail line to the northwest, but there are significant parcels to the south that would serve well. It would be important to create a secondary grid (or at least access roads) at this node, to make sure that the added density did not overwhelm the main intersection. Again in this case, density should be focused on the parcels closest to the center of the node, and stepped down as they approach the boundary of the Study Area. This node does have the advantage of adjacency to Best Friend Park (and excellent amenity for residential development), as well as undeveloped easements that might serve as additional greenspace or multi-use trail connections elsewhere in the community.



Jimmy Carter / Mitchell Street Low-Density Node

Located as part of the Norcross Downtown Development Plan, this stretch envisions low-density mixed-use, in keeping with the existing context. Most of the existing strip in the area is healthy, but may redevelop over the long term if provided with incentives, and to keep up with adjacent redevelopment. The Lillian Webb field is currently in construction documentation phase, but when completed should provide a much-needed amenity for this stretch of the corridor. This node has a bit of an advantage in that it already has the makings of a secondary street network, but opportunities could be taken to expand it, especially on the south side of Buford Highway and potentially connect with the existing subdivisions.



I M P L E M E N T A T I O N

Conclusions

Growth is coming to the Jimmy Carter and Buford Highway corridors. It is a trend across the region and it is even more applicable within communities close in to the Perimeter. The Gwinnett Village area has a unique position: An almost ideal location relative to metro transportation infrastructure, a development-friendly environment, and preponderance of large, underdeveloped/underutilized parcels.

The Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District (GVCID) will be an important force in implementing the recommendations in this plan. CIDs in the Atlanta area have a track record of fostering successful redevelopment - Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead, Cumberland and Perimeter all have active development environments in large part to their CIDs. It will be vital for the GVCID to create partnerships with local leadership, business owners and residents, to insure that as the plan is advanced it has the backing and consensus of the community.

Project Identification - Overlay Districts

The Primary Goal of the Redevelopment Plan, as identified by the Steering Committee, is to put into place a framework to enact an Overlay District for the Corridors. The institution of an Overlay District is the key main target of this Redevelopment Plan. It is intended that this would serve as a new parallel code for parcels within the study area, outlining a more streamlined and smart-growth approach to redeveloping those parcels. Elements will include:

- **Design Standards for the Public Realm** - Including street furniture, lighting, plantings and signage, these will help create a consistent street presence from parcel to parcel, improving the overall aesthetic of the corridors;



- **Site Design Standards** - Addressing the layout of new development, this will locate setback lines, outline principles for parking design, and provide for zero-lot line considerations where applicable;
- **Incentives** - These could come in a number of forms, pending additional discussion with the City of Norcross and Gwinnett County. They could include:
 - *Density Bonuses*: Allowing redevelopment of more square footage or more units that would be allowed under the base zoning;
 - *Parking Bonuses*: Reducing the required count to serve associated uses, and providing for shared parking arrangement between parcels and uses;
 - *Infrastructure Fees*: Reducing or eliminating fees associated with accessing or improving infrastructure required for redevelopment;
 - *Expedited Permitting*: Creating a streamlined process for applications that adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Overlay District.
- **Mixed-Use Provisions** - In concert with an increase in allowable density, more than one programmatic use will be allowed within one parcel. Depending on the size and specific location, this could be vertical or horizontal mixed-use, but the end result should be a vibrant and active development.

