

PART 3

Neighborhood Growth, Development & Preservation Vision

"I'm really hoping we can avoid becoming a precious, guarded area in a rapidly overdeveloped part of town. Midtown is at its best when it's funky, blended, accepting, and interesting."

3.1 Susceptibility to Change

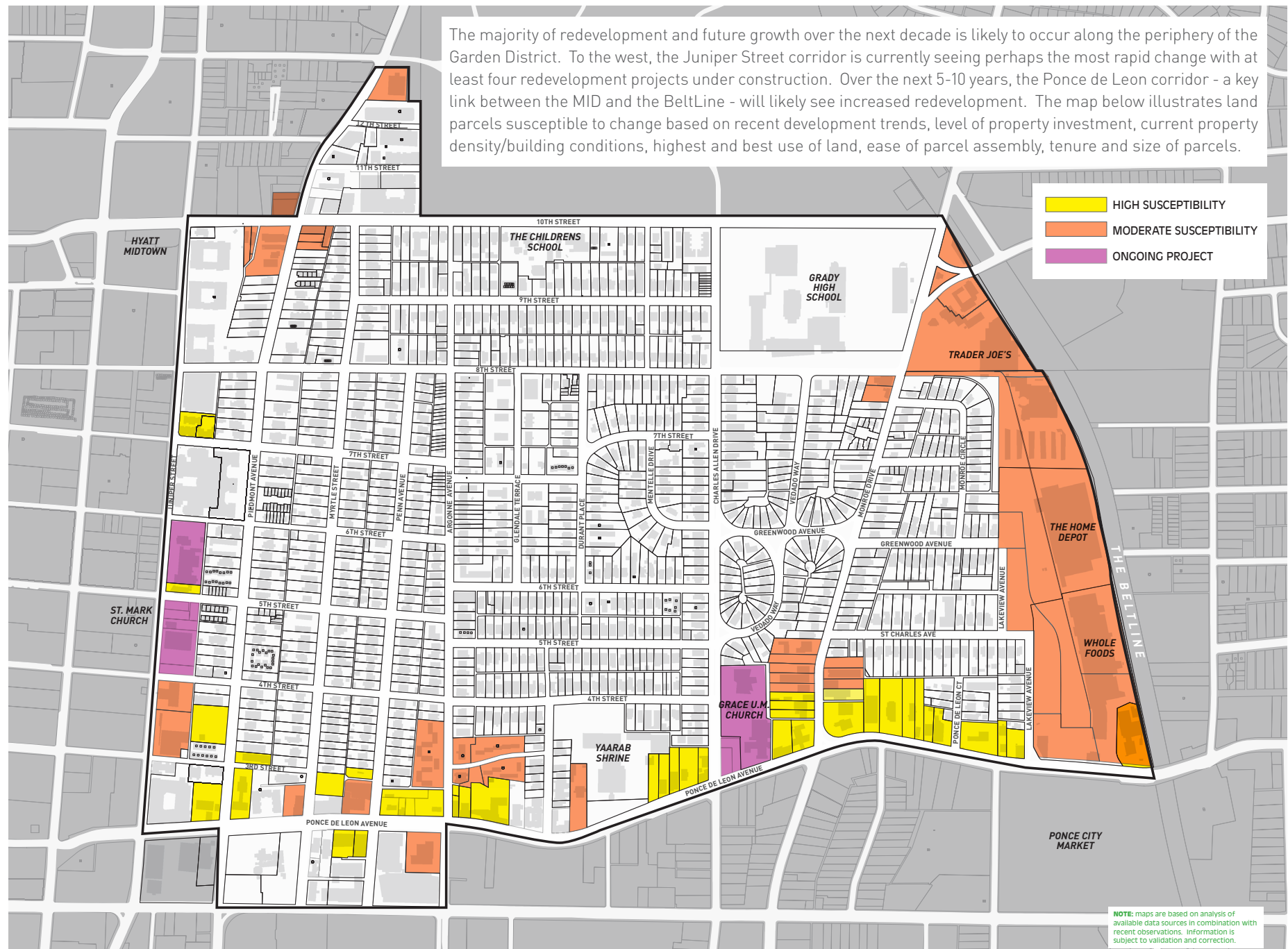


FIG. 3.1 SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE (BASED ON PLANNING OVERLAYS OF BELTLINE SUBAREA 6, PONCE-MORELAND STUDY, AND SPI-16 IN COMBINATION WITH CURRENT ONGOING PROJECTS)

3.2 Future Land Use

The Proposed Land Use Map (Fig 3.2) on the next page illustrates generalized 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 workshops and focus group sessions and stakeholder meetings 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 Implications: 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 – This is the major overall land use change recommended by this masterplan. Past plans and policies show low to medium commercial land uses along the Ponce corridor. 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.

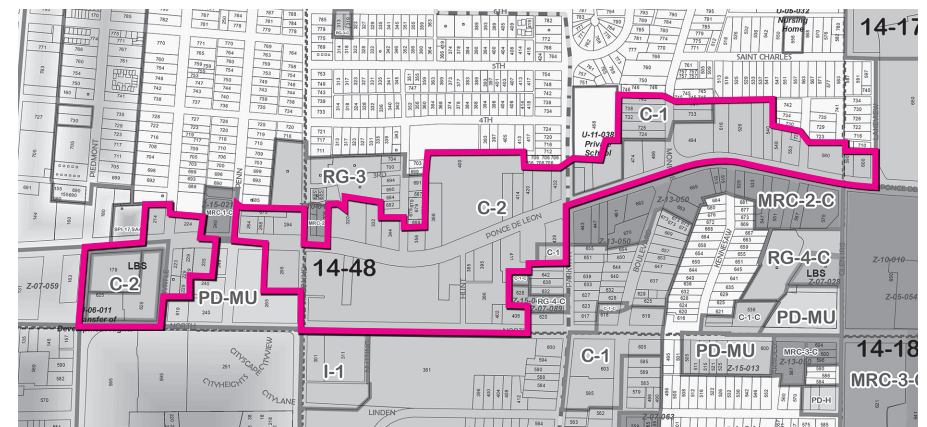
Zoning Recommendations: No changes recommended in this area. This area is part of the BeltLine Overlay Zoning District, which includes specific requirements related to density, open space, pedestrian/bike amenities, streetscape, etc.

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.

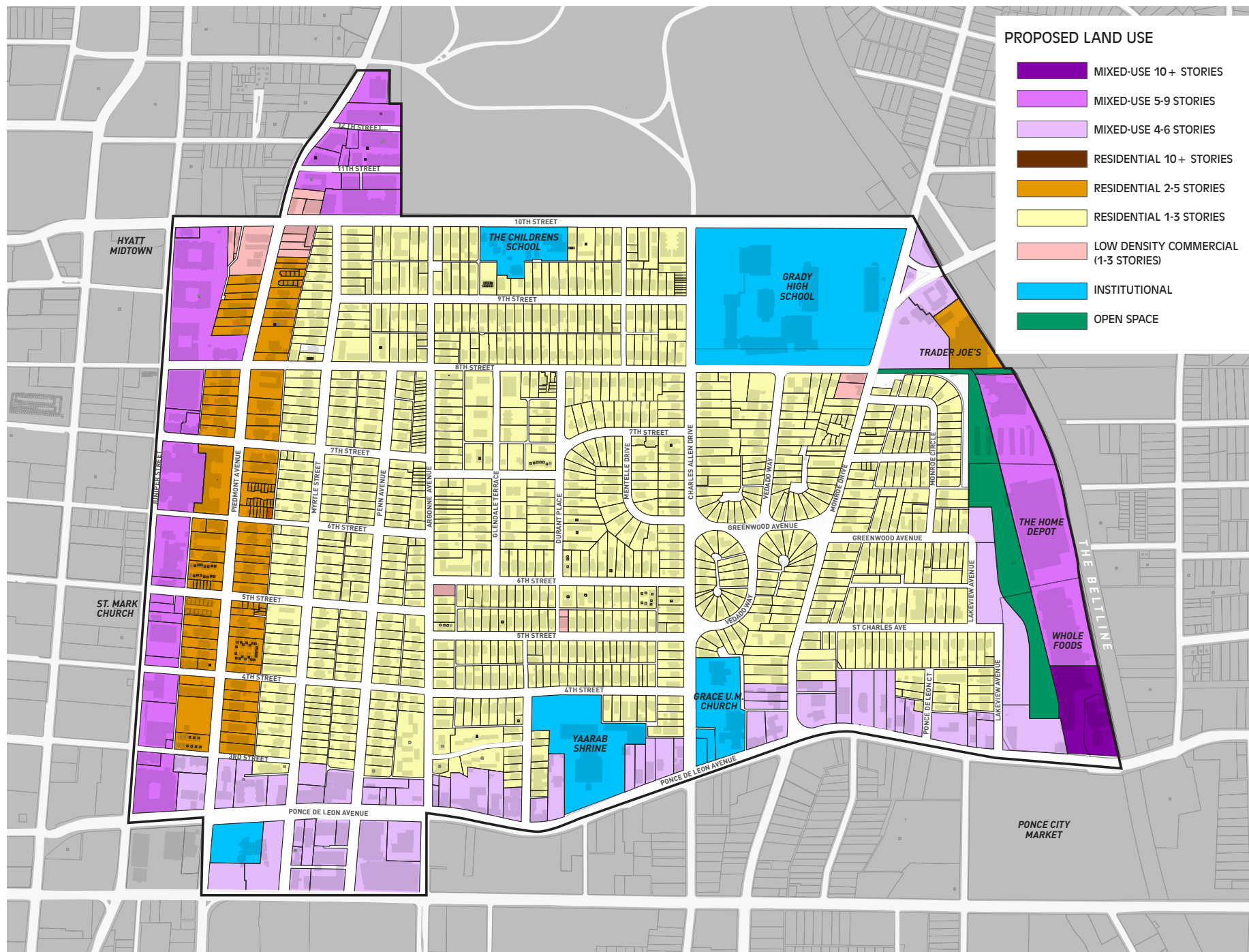


FIG. 3.2 PROPOSED LAND USE MAP (BASED ON LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS IN BELTLINE SUBAREA 6, PONCE-MORELAND STUDY, AND SPI-16 IN COMBINATION WITH CITY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP)

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, these efforts have all failed due to lack of strong community consensus and concerns over private property rights.

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,

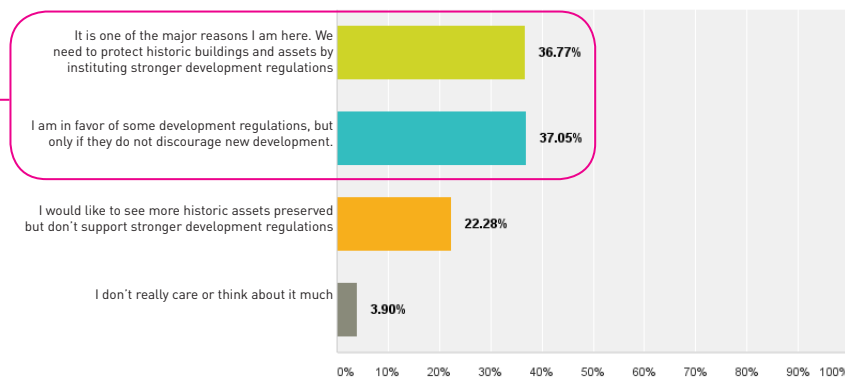
conversations with key community leaders, a series of focus group discussions, three public workshops and an on-line survey that had extensive participation. The results of these stakeholder input mechanisms led to several conclusions:

- 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



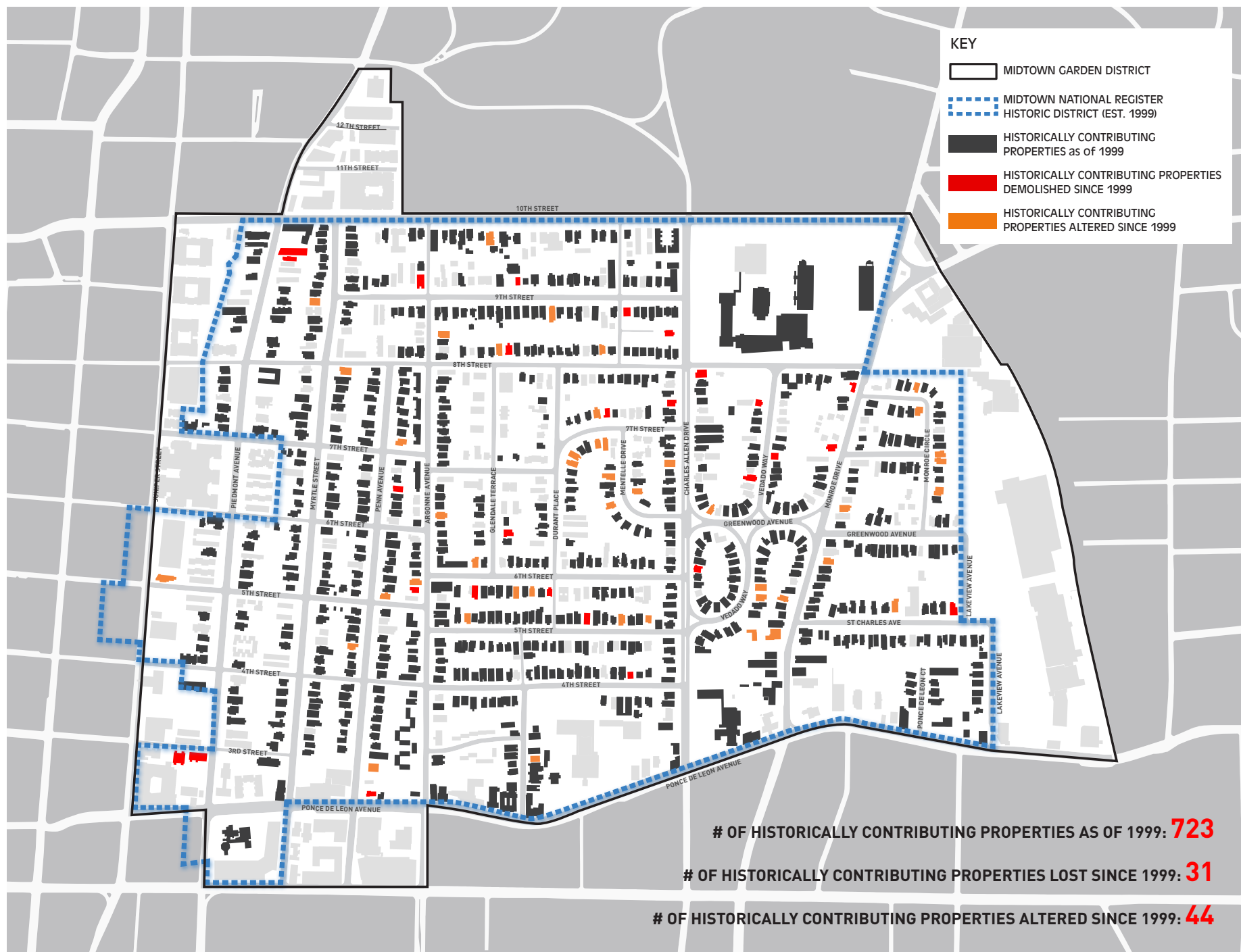


FIG. 3.3 HISTORICALLY CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES AT MIDTOWN GARDEN DISTRICT

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 1999



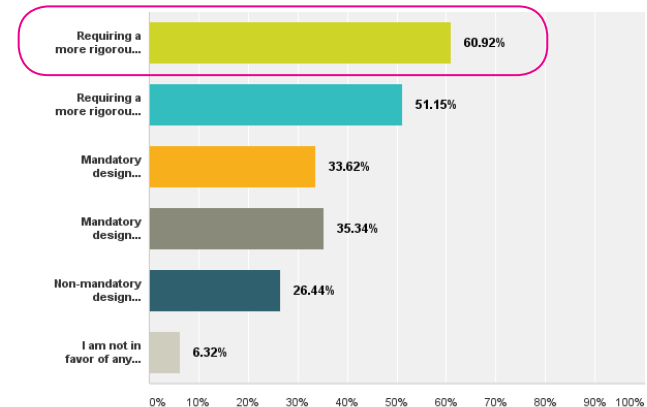
HISTORIC PRESERVATION: ACTION ITEMS

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 (e.g., 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 metro Atlanta's premier urban park (Piedmont Park), which includes a wide variety of spaces, amenities, programs and events appealing to a broad range of demographics. In addition, the east side of the neighborhood is bounded by the Atlanta BeltLine, which provides ped and bike connectivity to an even broader system of parks and open spaces including nearby Old Fourth Ward Park. 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. In addition, Piedmont Park and the Atlanta BeltLine – while tremendous amenities – 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). While opportunities are limited, the Open Space Framework Map (Fig. 1.10) illustrates the neighborhood's vision 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 and used by nearby property owners and are a great source of pride. However, working on a detailed plan with existing residents, their usability could be further enhanced by providing more landscaping, adding seating, installing a few sidewalks and improving ADA access.
- 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.



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.

- 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.

CREATE NEW OPEN SPACES

- As contained in the BeltLine Master Plan for SubArea 6, the best opportunity to create significant new open space within the Garden District is associated with full-scale redevelopment of the two existing retail developments 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

- 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



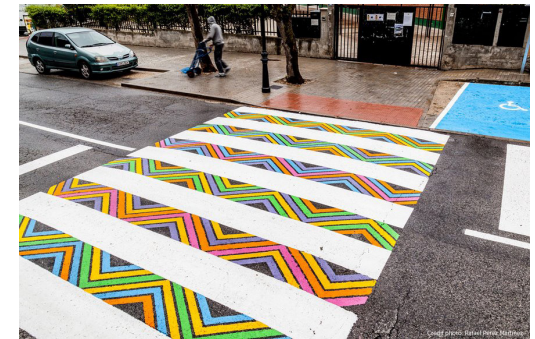
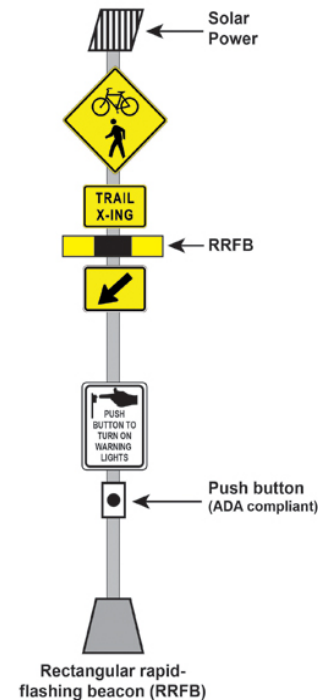
- Along Piedmont and Ponce de Leon Avenues, add signals to existing unsignalized intersections. Also implement "leading pedestrian intervals" at existing signalized intersections.

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



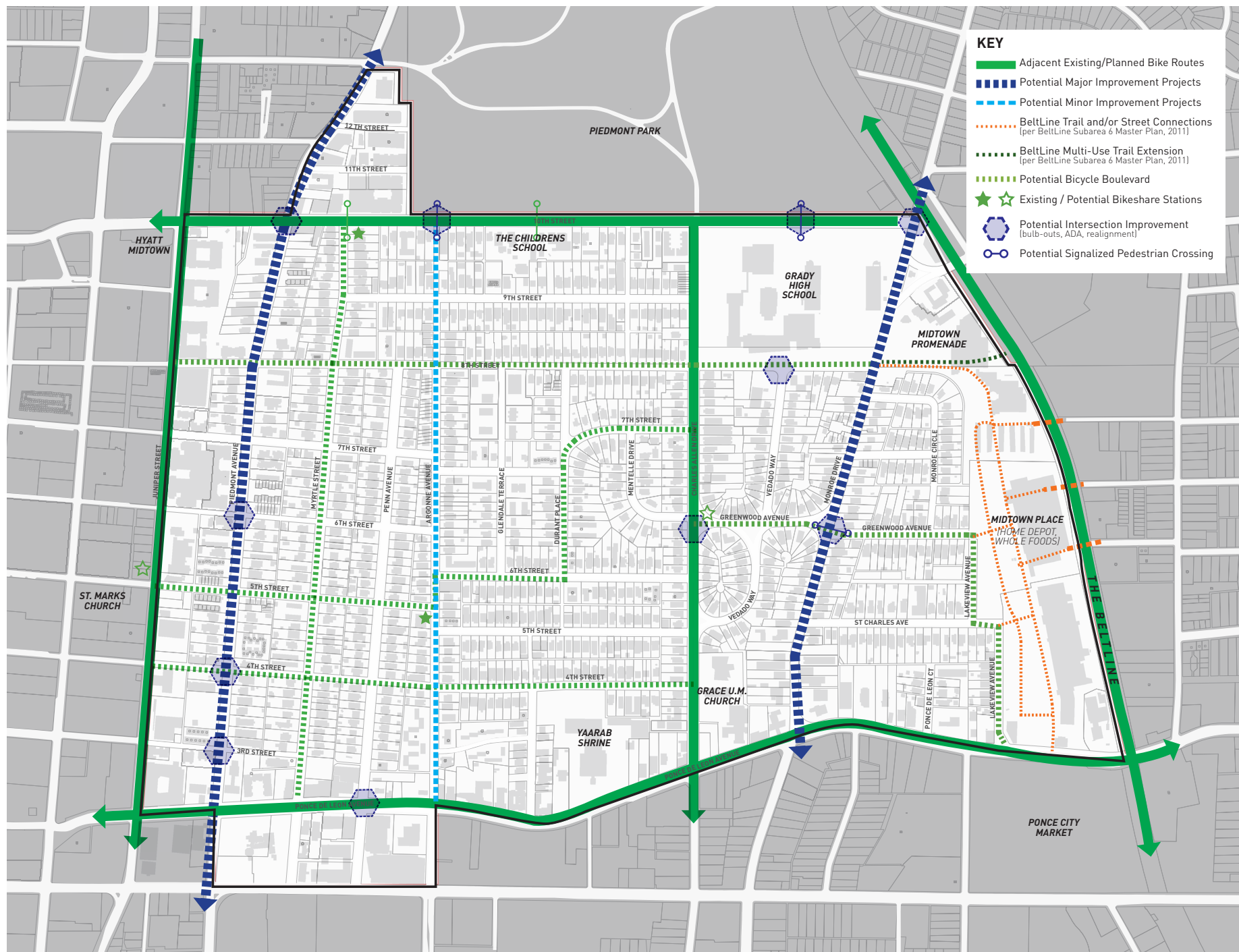
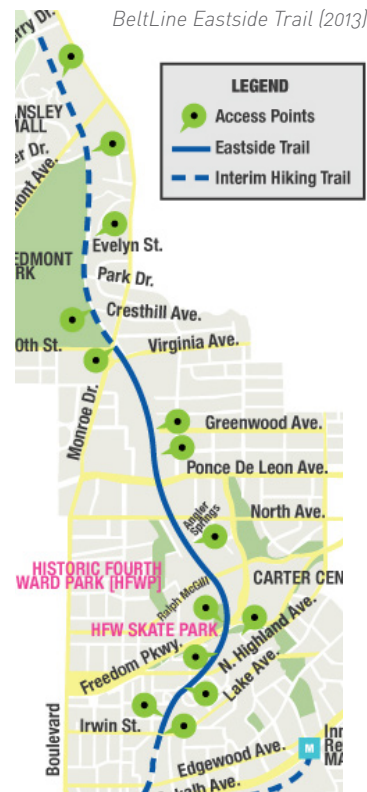


FIG. 3.4 LOCATION OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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/upsizing
- 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.

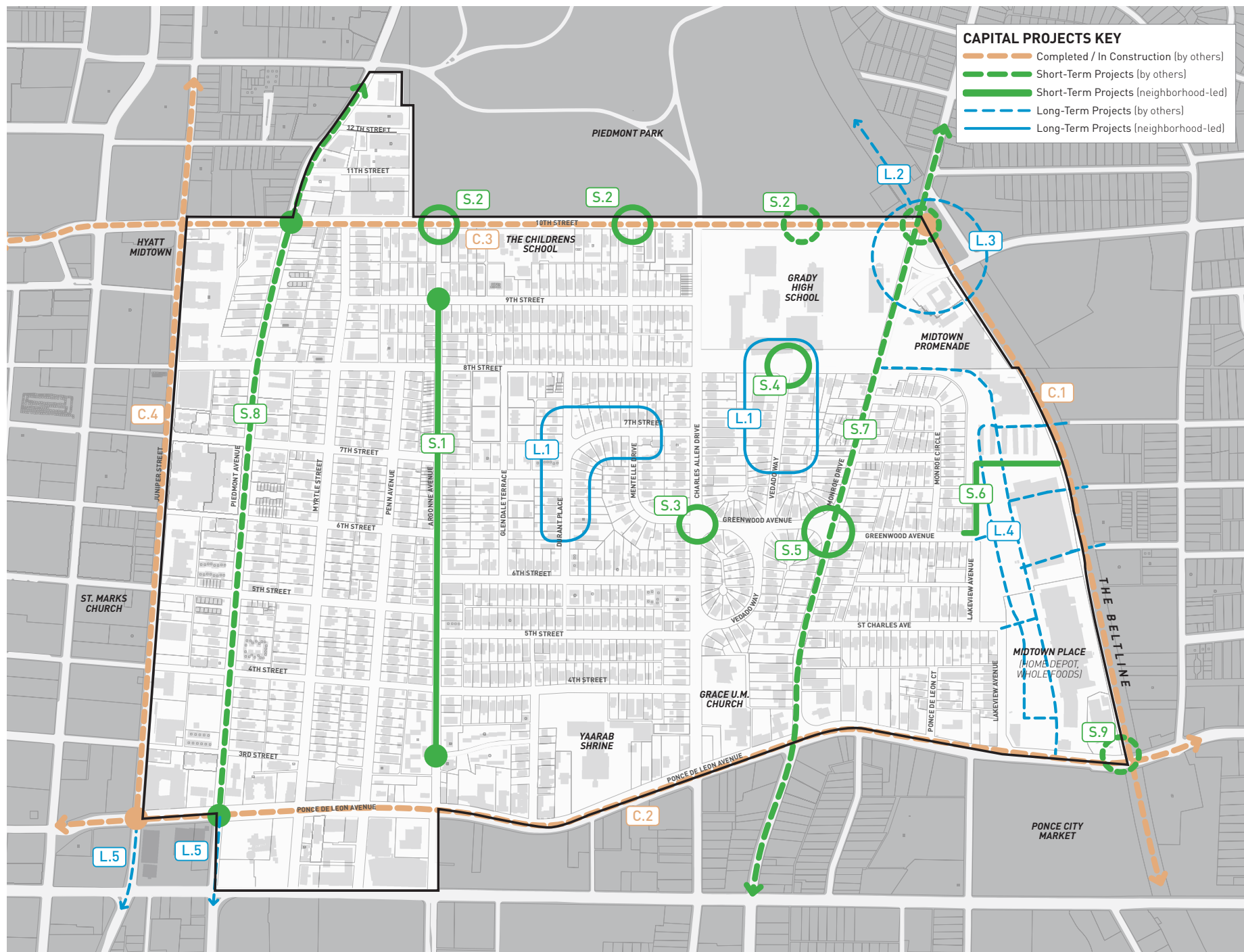


FIG. 3.5 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS DIAGRAM

A black and white photograph of a city street intersection. In the foreground, there are crosswalks with white stripes. Several traffic signs are visible: diamond-shaped pedestrian crossing signs and rectangular signs with a person walking. A few people are walking across the street. In the background, there are trees and a tall building. The image has a halftone or dithered texture.

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:

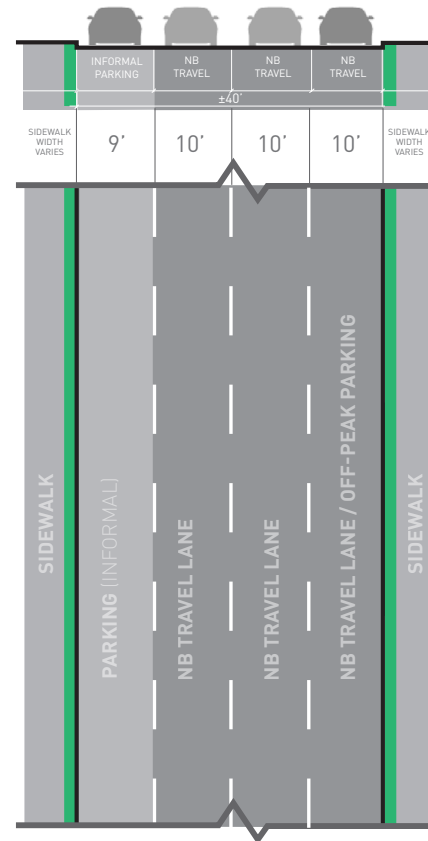
- Difficulty safely crossing Piedmont as a pedestrian
- Excessive vehicular speeding
- Low utilization of “off peak” parking along east side
- Maximization of permanent parking along west side is critical for many residential properties with limited off-street parking
- Lack of safe north-south bike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

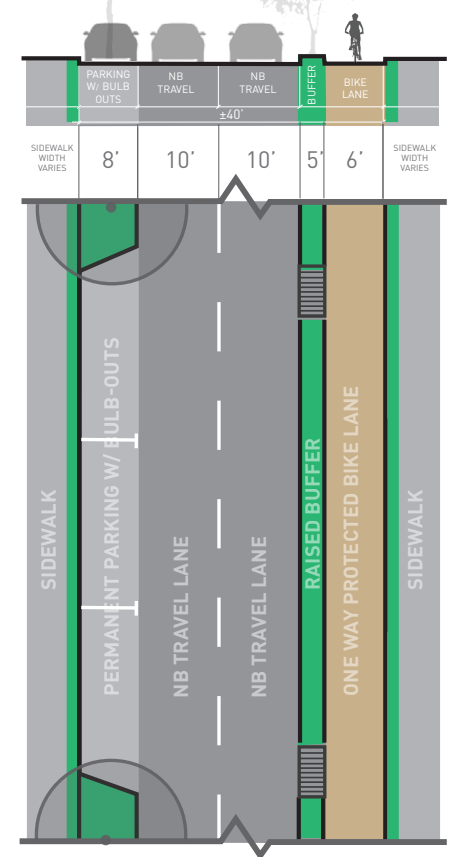
Based on the issues identified as well as related project information, the planning team developed a series of conceptual options for Piedmont Avenue between 14th Street and Ponce de Leon for consideration by neighborhood focus groups and in public workshops. These concepts included one-way bike facilities, 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

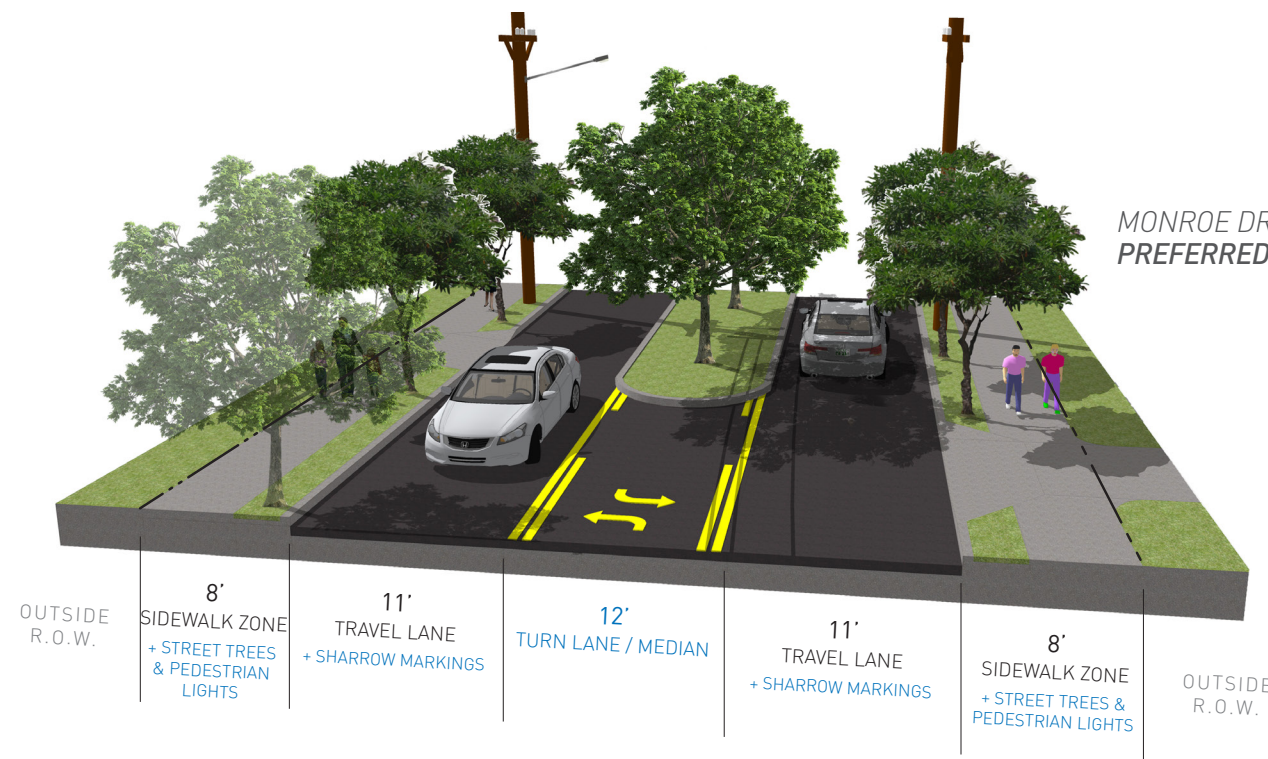
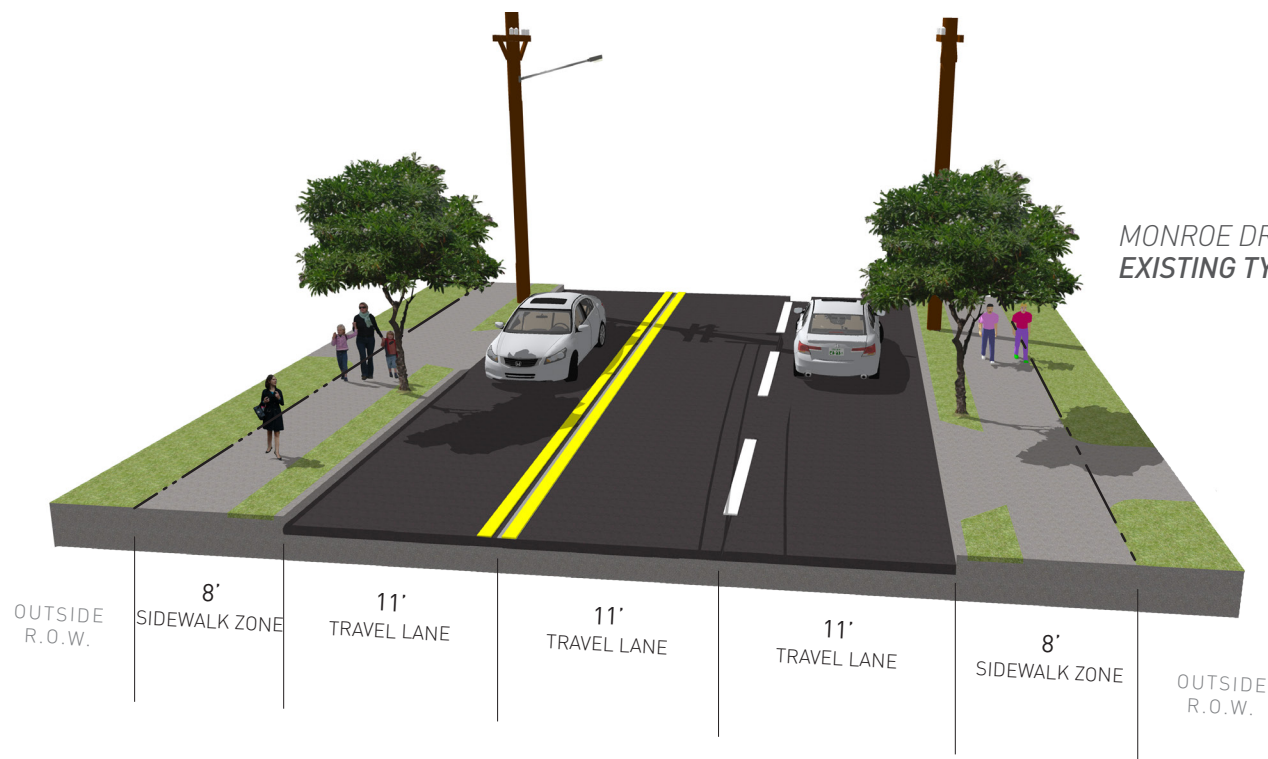




FIG. 4.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS VS. POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS AT MONROE/GREENWOOD INTERSECTION



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 neighborhoods 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.

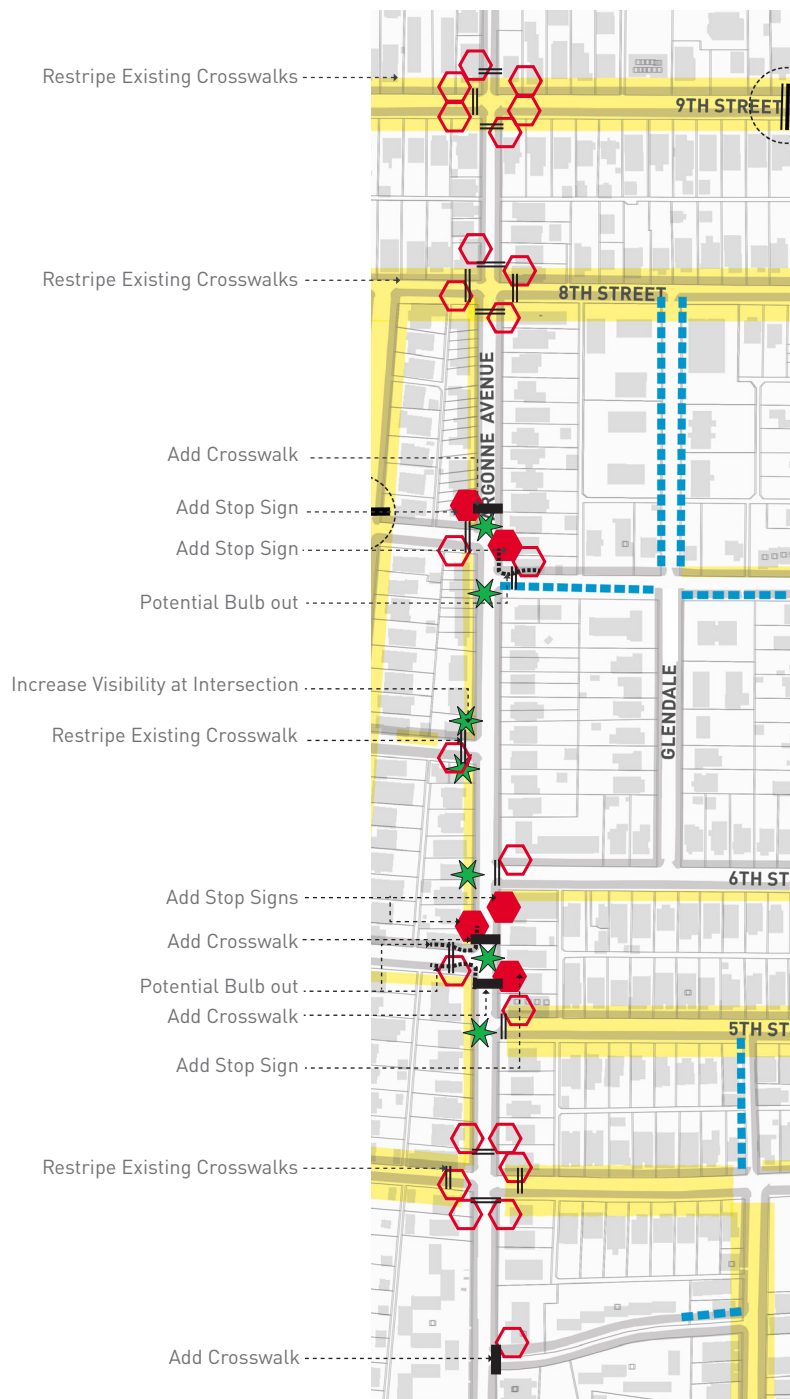
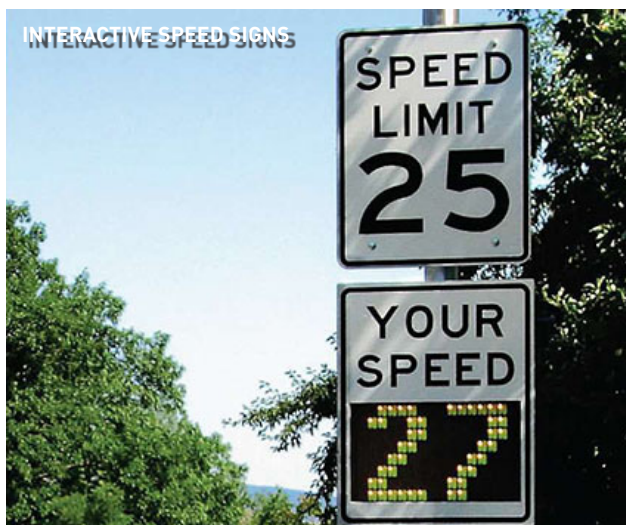
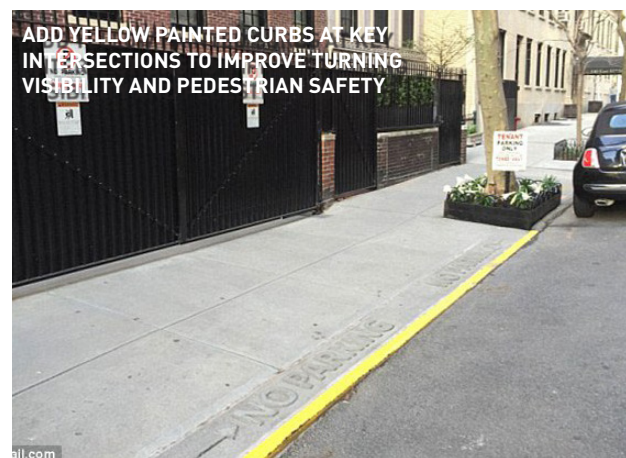
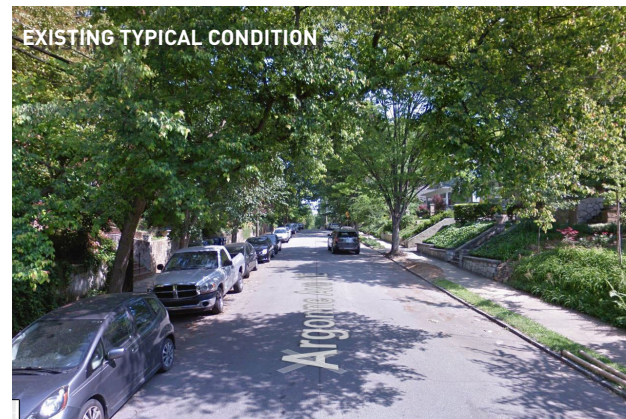


FIG. 4.4 RECOMMENDED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ALONG ARGONNE AVENUE BETWEEN 4TH AND 8TH STREETS



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, which in many cases has led to less driver awareness. 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 has also exacerbated safety issues for several weeks every summer.



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

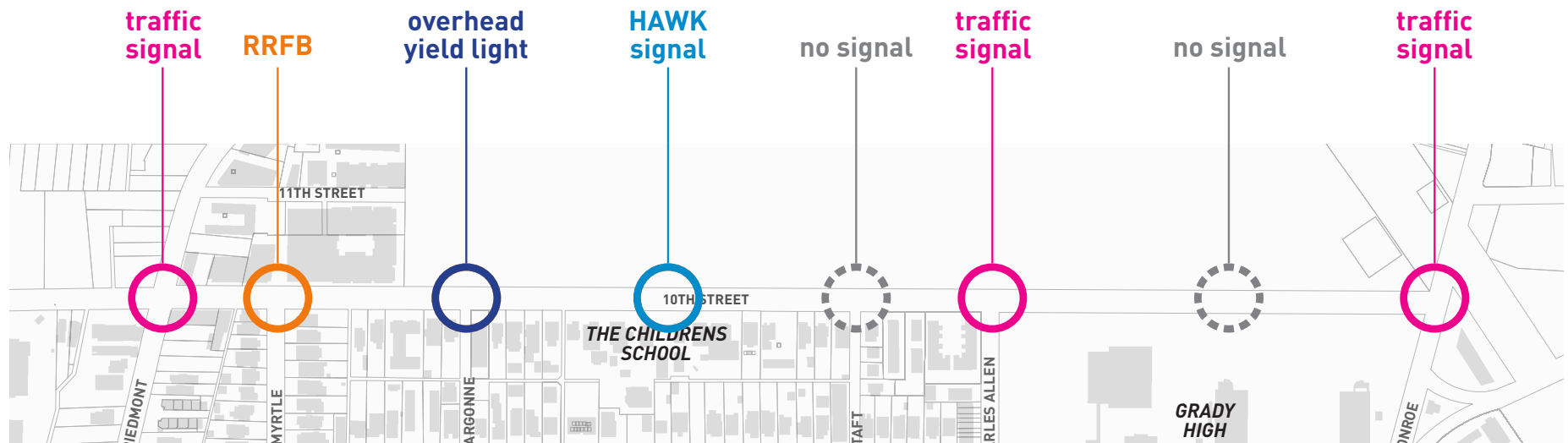


FIG. 4.5 EXISTING INCONSISTENT TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ALONG 10TH STREET

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.

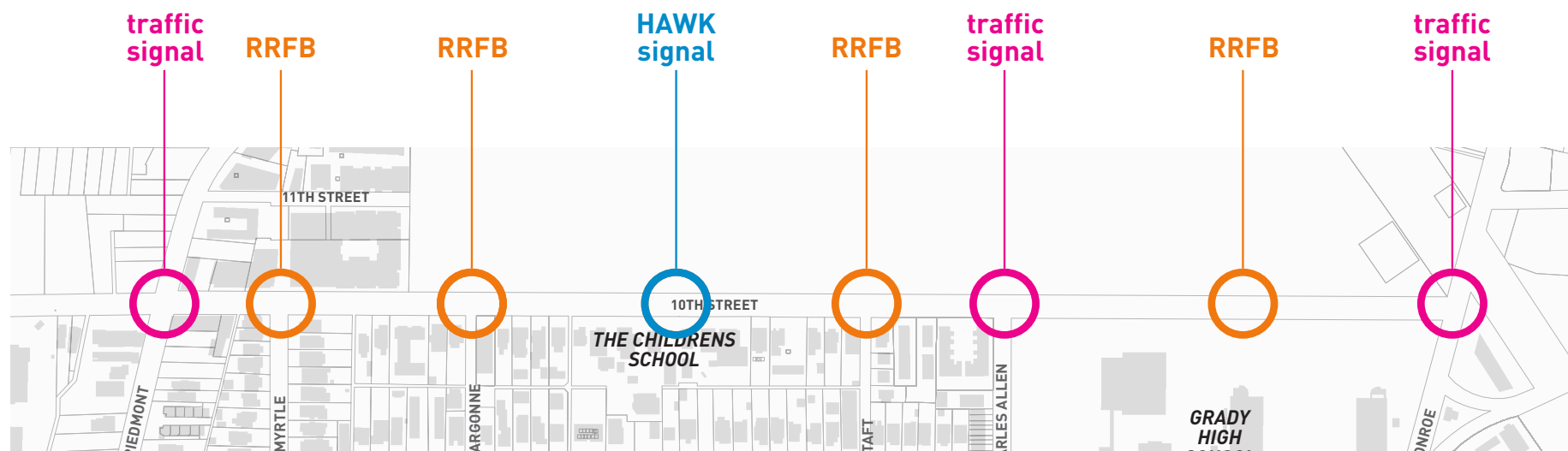


FIG. 4.6 POTENTIAL CONSISTENT TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ALONG 10TH STREET

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.

Given that funding is limited, how would you focus on improving sidewalks and walkability?

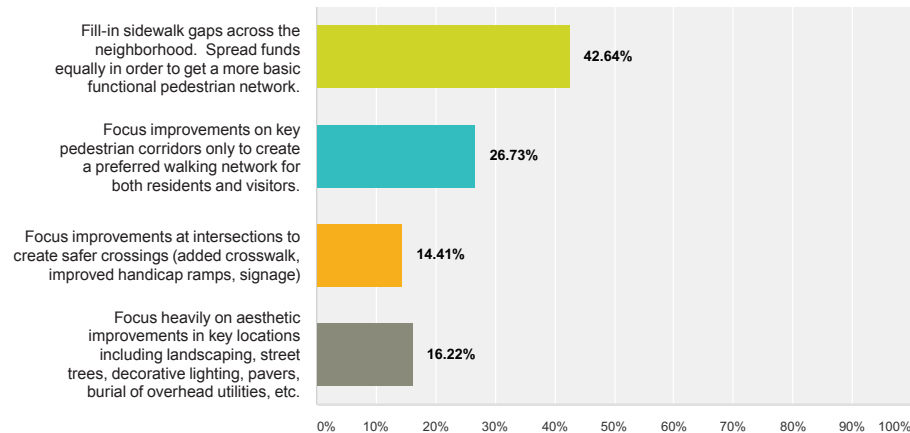


FIG. 4.7 SURVEY RESULTS FOR SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIZATION

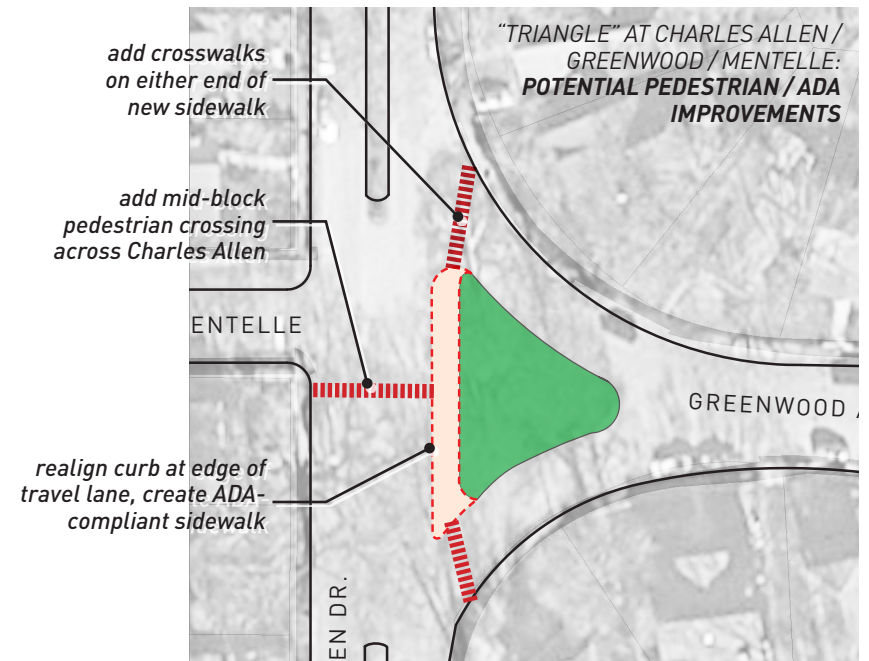
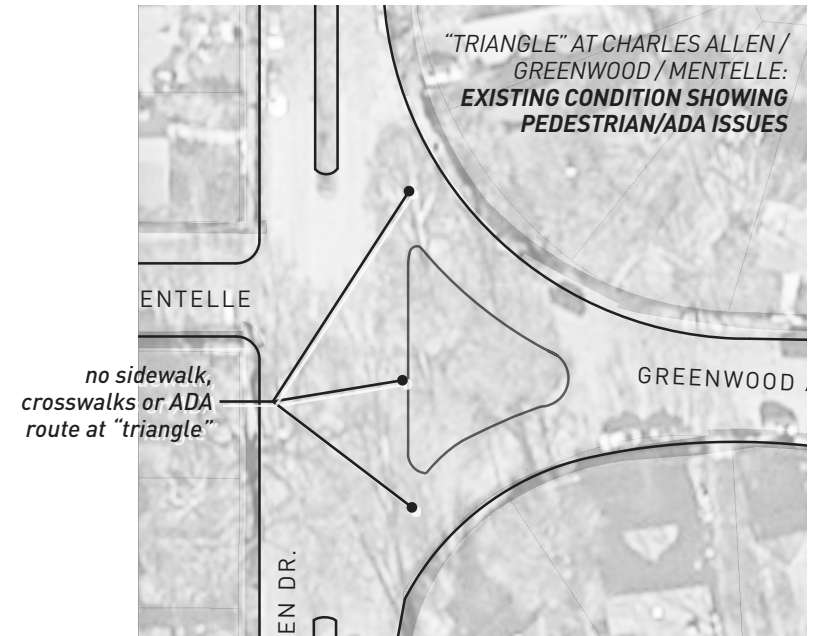


FIG. 4.8 ONE EXAMPLE OF INCREMENTAL SIDEWALK / ADA IMPROVEMENTS

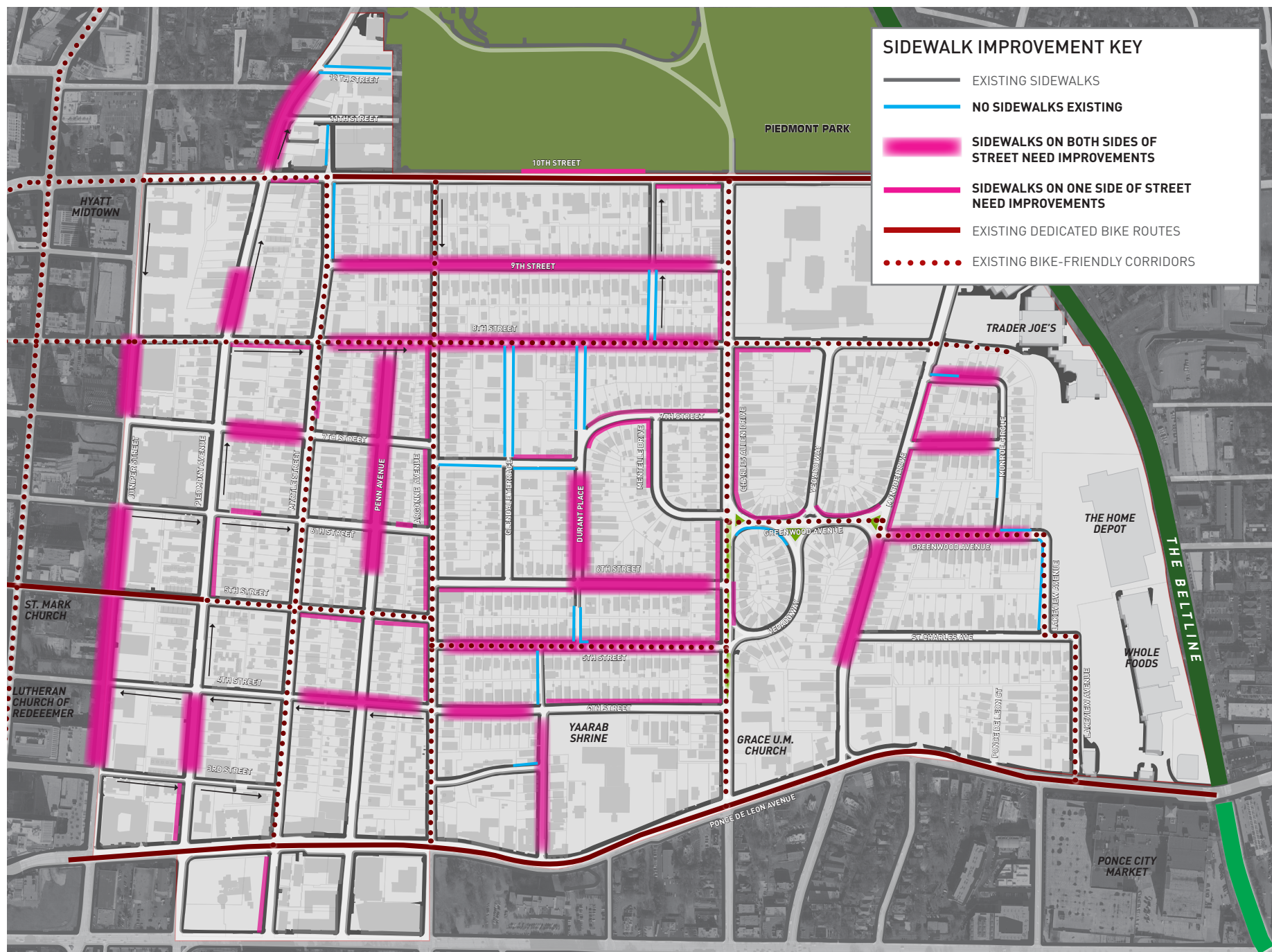


FIG. 4.9 POTENTIAL SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Based on Windshield Survey of Existing Sidewalk Conditions conducted mid-2016

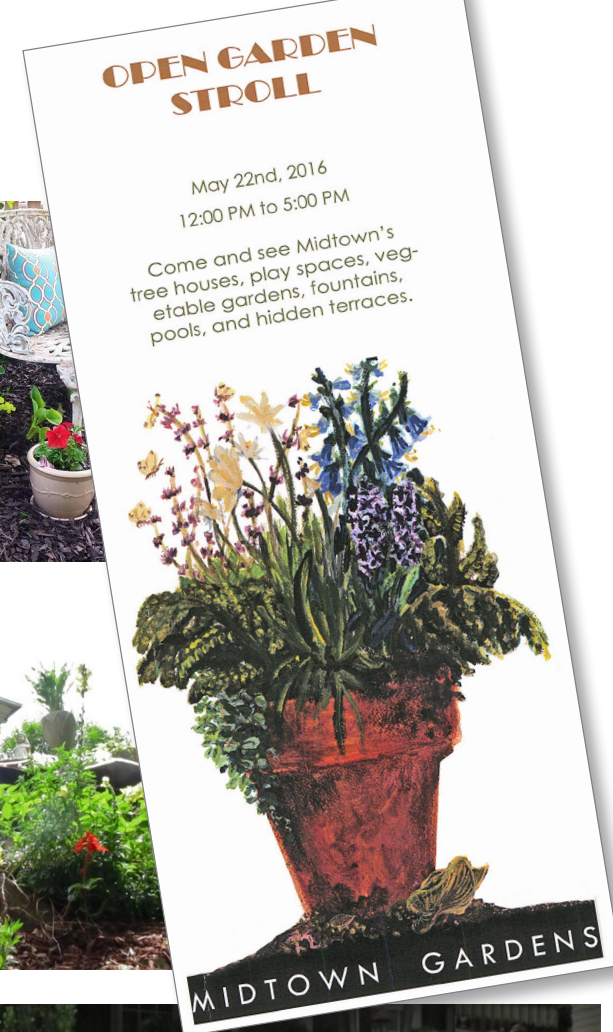
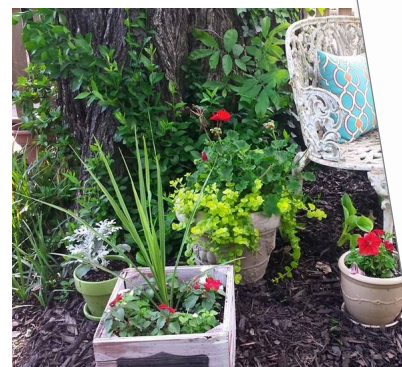
4.6 Garden District Street Design Guidelines

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



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*
Nuttall Oak*
Overcup Oak*
Schumard Oak
Willow Oak
Pond Cypress
Sugarberry*

"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*
Nuttall 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*

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.

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.

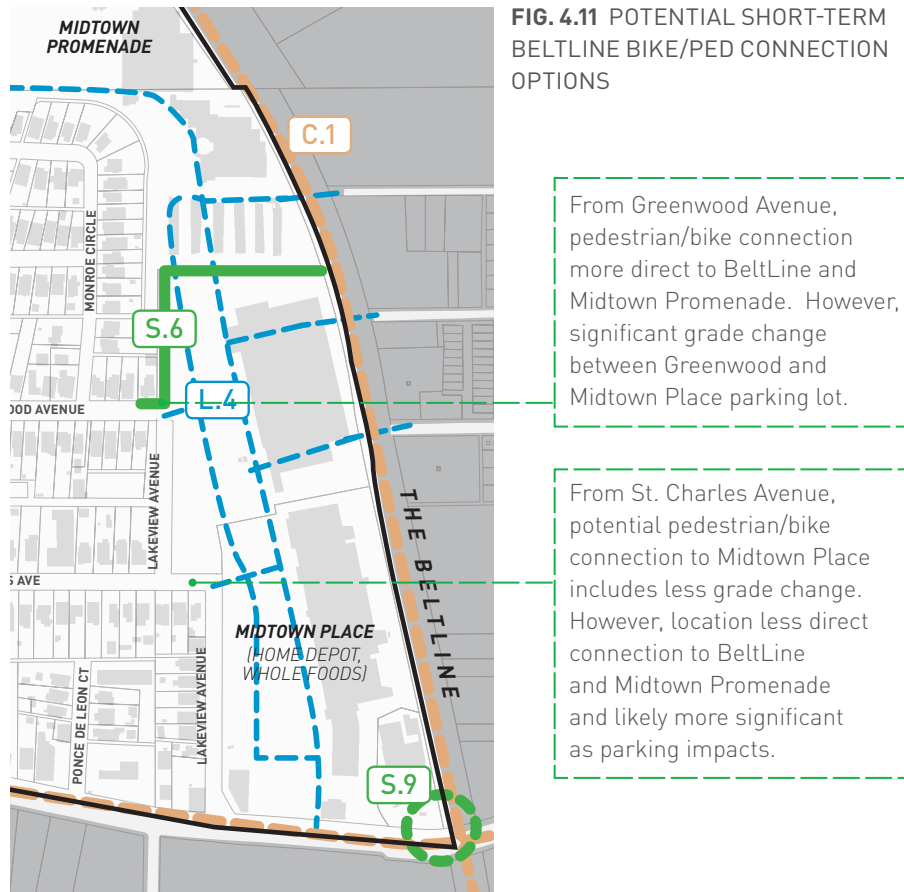


FIG. 4.11 POTENTIAL SHORT-TERM BELTLINE BIKE/PED CONNECTION OPTIONS

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

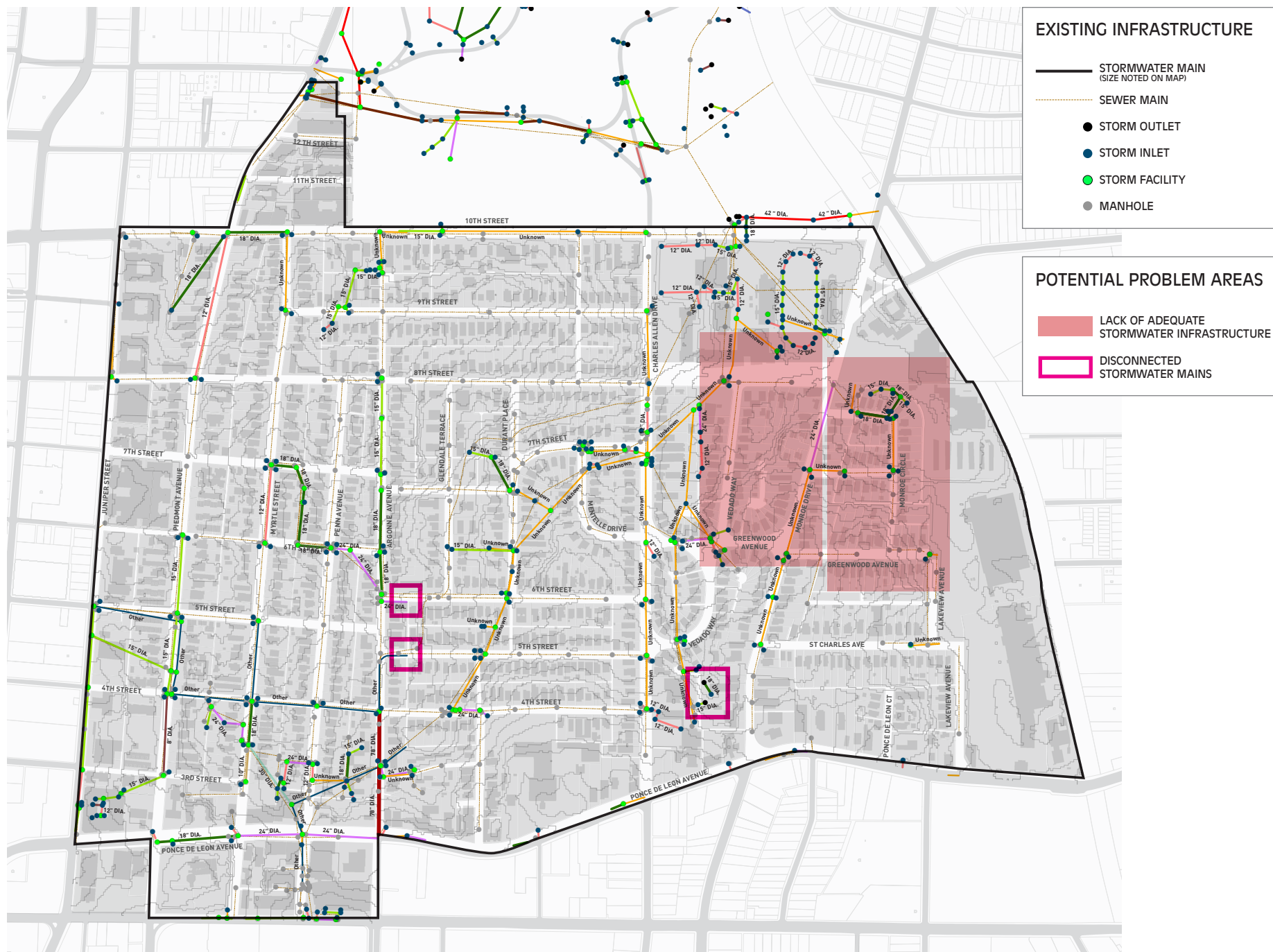


FIG. 4.12 2016 EXISTING STORMWATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

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

