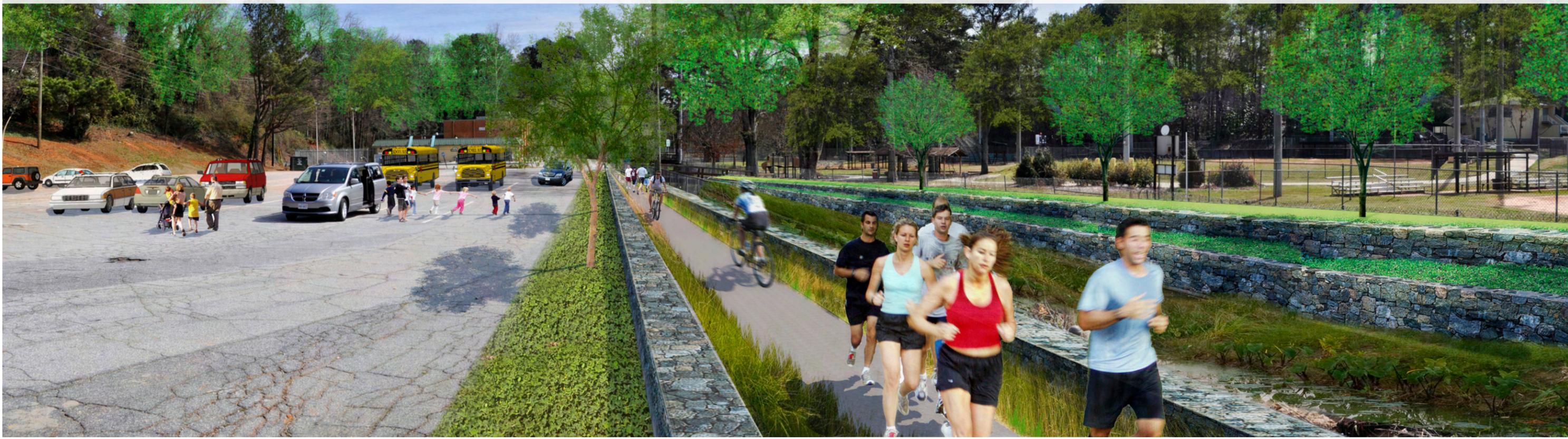




DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
Master Active Living Plan



BELVEDERE STUDY AREA

DeKalb County, Georgia | 2013



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Executive Summary

What is Active Living?

Active living is a growing concept that recognizes the important connection between physical activity and the built environment. It seeks ways to make physical activity safe, convenient, and pleasant by creating a community where people will want to walk, bike, and become more active.

Participating in regular physical activity reduces the risks of chronic diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers. According to the DeKalb County Board of Health's "2010 Status of Health in DeKalb," the top three leading causes of death in the county are cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory diseases. Among adults in DeKalb County, approximately 35 percent were considered overweight and 24 percent were obese from 2005 to 2007. In 2009, approximately 19 percent of DeKalb County high school students were overweight, and 13 percent were obese.

Although there are many factors that contribute to community health in DeKalb County, the physical environment can have a major impact on lifestyle choices. Creating opportunities and enhancing existing community structures to support physical activity help us all—from children who need safe routes for walking and biking to school, to active seniors who would choose to walk if they had pathways to local destinations.

Purpose of Study

The goal of the Master Active Living Plan (MALP) process is to improve the integration of physical activity into the daily routines of DeKalb County residents. Rather than one county-wide plan, MALP is comprised of multiple small area plans that focus on specific places of need. These plans will guide future redevelopment and transportation improvements by identifying opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections between activity centers and nearby neighborhoods, parks, schools and other public facilities. These plans will also emphasize mixed-use, compact development, interconnected streets, multi-modal accessibility and increased public space. The Belvedere Active Living Plan is one of eight plans created in 2013 under MALP.

The Ashford Dunwoody Study Area

Located in southern DeKalb County, the Belvedere Study Area is focused on the intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive. According to U.S. Census 2011 population estimates, the study area population is 14,565. Compared to the rest of county, the study area has fewer residents under the age of 18 and more residents of working age (18 to 64 years-old). Its ethnic composition is similar to DeKalb County overall, but the median household income is lower.

Physically, the Belvedere Study Area is characterized by older, strip commercial uses and single-family residential neighborhoods. The study area is one of 29 Neighborhood Centers, defined by DeKalb County as "a neighborhood focal point with a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and public and open space." Commercial uses in the study area are primarily located in older strip malls such as Belvedere Plaza, with the exception of the relatively new Walmart Supercenter. Other destinations of note include the DeKalb School of the Arts, Knollwood Elementary School, Midway Park and Recreation Center, and Shoal Creek.

Along the Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive corridors, there is potential for redevelopment. Many of these parcels are older, strip commercial properties that could transition into denser uses in the future. This is particularly the case for Belvedere Plaza and Avondale Square, which present significant opportunities for mixed-use development. In addition to the commercial land uses that could transition, there are multi-family residential areas that will likely redevelop. The areas that are most likely to change in the study area are currently zoned C-1 (Local Commercial), C-2 (General Commercial), OCR (Office Commercial Residential), OI (Office Industrial), RM-75 (Multi-Family Residential), or RM-85 (Multi-Family Residential).

The real estate market will likely support a modest amount of redevelopment in the coming years. The presence of the Walmart Supercenter and Kroger are strong retail anchors, and residential areas north of the study area have been growing in popularity and value. However, the study area is no longer a regional retail node and faces competition from nearby high-end retail centers, such as Edgewood Retail Center. Additionally, residential areas to the south of the study area have been declining and are currently not as attractive for development. In order to ensure the viability of the local-serving, convenience retail, some of the older and largely vacant shopping centers will likely have to be demolished and the land redeveloped for other uses.

To become more attractive to new development, the Belvedere Study Area's pedestrian and bicycle networks will also need to improve. In general, sidewalks are only present along the major arterials, but there are significant gaps on Memorial Drive southwest of Columbia Drive. There are currently no bicycle facilities and the study area's street network is characterized by few major arterials and collectors with limited connectivity between local streets.

Public Involvement

On the evening of Tuesday, March 12, 2013, a public meeting was held at Peace Lutheran Church on Columbia Drive. A total of five members of the public attended the meeting and provided input. In general, the attendees were supportive of projects that would improve opportunities for active living and were particularly interested in improvements to Midway Park.

Recommendations

This plan identifies 17 projects that can help the community overcome physical barriers and encourage active lifestyles. Three major initiatives can guide the way: the creation of a multi-use trail connecting the study area's parks, improvements to the walkability of Columbia Drive, and the redevelopment of Belvedere Plaza. By creating a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment, DeKalb County can position the Belvedere Study Area for desirable future redevelopment.

Implementation

The projects identified in this plan can be implemented over the short-, mid- and longer term. Some projects are "easy wins" and can be accomplished relatively quickly, such as building trails in existing parks. Other projects, such as the redevelopment of commercial areas and future open spaces, are longer term. Funding for these projects can come from a variety of sources, but the best approach is to program them into the DeKalb County Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Other agencies and programs, such as the Path Foundation and Kaiser Permanente Community Health Initiatives, may also act as resources to help Belvedere grow into a healthy, active community.



1.0 Study Area Overview

1.1 The Study Area

Located in southern DeKalb County, the Belvedere Study Area is focused on the intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive. The core of the study area is characterized by older, strip commercial uses and single-family residential neighborhoods.

This overview provides a summary of key components of the study area's demographics, land use and zoning, real estate market, and mobility. It also details the public engagement process and shares key findings that set the stage for active living recommendations.

Past Studies

There have been no comprehensive studies focusing on the study area, but there are some recent smaller-scale initiatives. In 2009, DeKalb County completed a preliminary master plan for Delano-Line Park that established active park space and a new trail system.





Photograph of Ballfield at Midway Park



Warehouse Space in Avondale Square



North Villages Townhomes along Memorial Drive



Fastfood Retail along Memorial Drive



Belvedere Plaza South of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive

1.2 Community Context: Demographics

Population Characteristics

The total study area population, according to U.S. Census 2011 population estimates, is 14,565. The Belvedere area is comparable to DeKalb County on many variables. The breakdown of female and male populations in the study area is similar to that of the county. Approximately 7 percent of the population is under five years of age. Youth ages five to 17 years old make up 15.2 percent of the population in the Belvedere area; this population is 8 percentage points lower than DeKalb and 10 percentage points lower than Georgia. Most residents are of working age, 18 to 64 years old. This age group outweighs the county and state estimates by 8 and 10 percentage points, respectively. A little more than 10 percent are adults 65 years of age and older, which is consistent with DeKalb and Georgia.

Figure 1: Study Area Population Characteristics

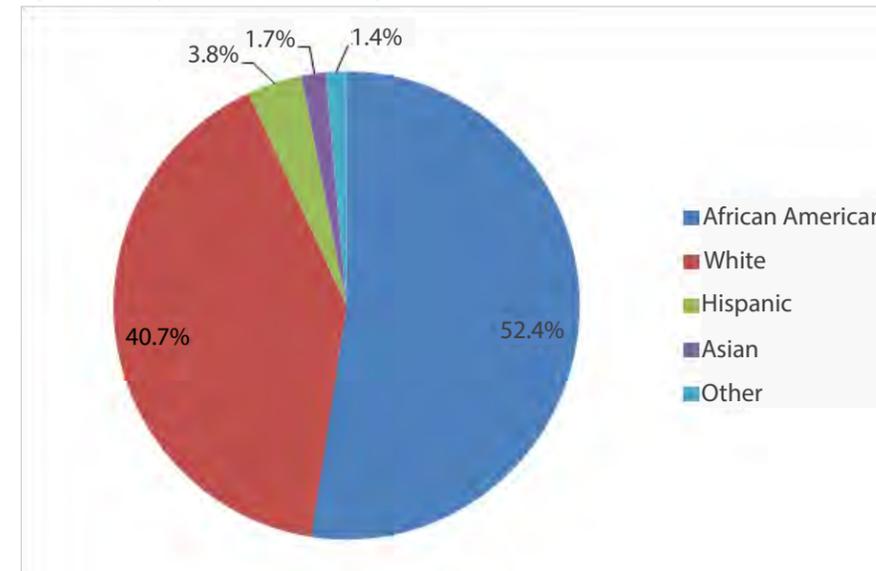
Population Characteristic	Study Area	DeKalb	Georgia
Total Population	14,565	699,893	9,919,954
Female Population	50.4%	51.9%	51.1%
Male Population	49.6%	48.1%	48.9%
Age under 5	6.9%	7.4%	7.0%
Ages 5 - 17	15.2%	23.9%	25.4%
Ages 18 - 64	67.4%	59.3%	56.6%
Ages 65+	10.5%	9.4%	11.0%

More than half of study area residents (52.4 percent) are African American and white residents make up nearly 41 percent of the population. The Hispanic population in the Belvedere area (3.8 percent) is almost a third smaller when compared to U.S. Census 2011 estimates for DeKalb (9.8 percent) and Georgia (9.1 percent). Other races and ethnicities, including Asian residents, make up approximately 3 percent of the remaining populations.

Figure 2: Study Area Race & Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Study Area	DeKalb	Georgia
African American	52.4%	54.4%	31.0%
White	40.7%	37.8%	63.2%
Hispanic	3.8%	9.8%	9.1%
Asian	1.7%	5.2%	3.4%
Other	1.4%	2.7%	2.4%

Figure 3: Study Area Race & Ethnicity



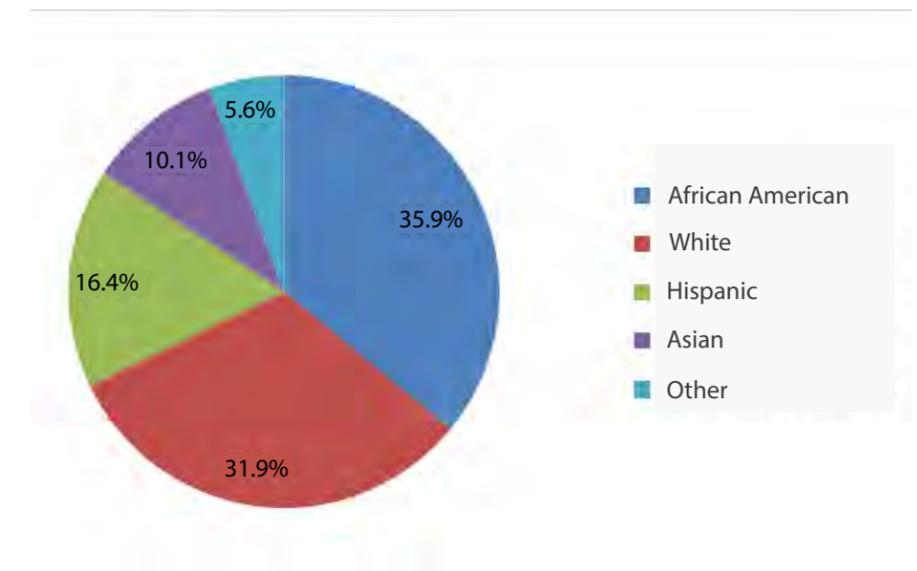
Household Characteristics

There are 6,159 housing units in the study area. Among them, more than 60 percent are owner-occupied units. The majority of occupied households in the study area are families, with 32 percent being two person households and another 32 percent with household sizes of three persons or greater. The median household income in the study area is lower than that of the county and state.

Figure 4: Study Area Household Characteristics

Variable	Study Area	DeKalb	Georgia
Owner Occupied	61.7%	58.2%	66.8%
Renter Occupied	38.3%	41.8%	33.2%
Median Household Income	\$39,958	\$51,712	\$49,736

Figure 5: Study Area Household Size



Mobility Characteristics

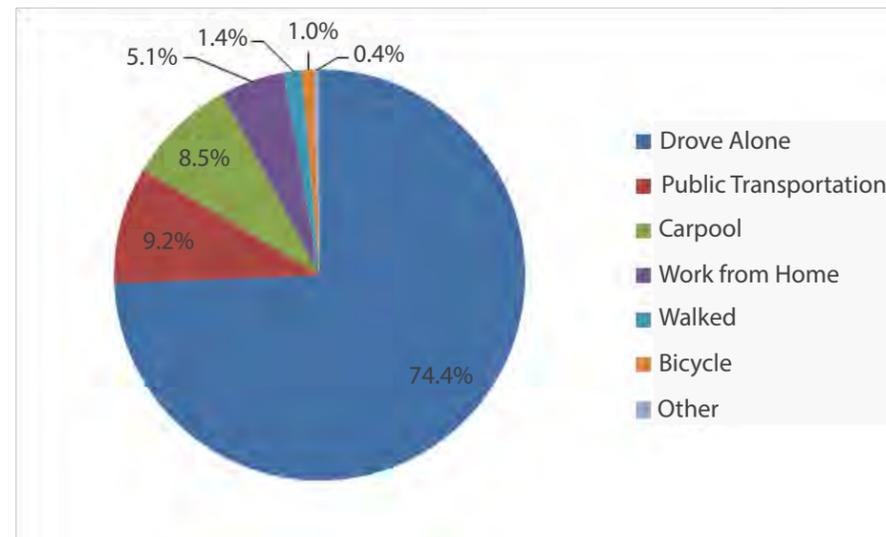
The U.S. Census estimates that 6,658 individuals from the study area were employed in 2011. Mobility characteristics in Belvedere are similar to those in the county and state. The majority of working residents (74.3 percent) travel to and from work alone and 8.5 percent carpool. More than 9 percent of working individuals rely upon public transportation as a primary means of transportation to work. When compared to the county and the state, a similar number of working individuals walk to work and less than 2 percent use some other means of transportation, including bicycling. The number of zero-car households is slightly higher when compared to the DeKalb county (10.3 percent versus 9.4 percent) and is 4 percentage points higher than that of the state.

Figure 6: Study Area Mobility Characteristics

Means of Transportation to Work	Study Area	DeKalb	Georgia
Drove Alone	74.3%	72.6%	78.8%
*Public Transportation	9.2%	8.5%	2.4%
Carpool	8.5%	10.4%	11.1%
Worked from Home	5.1%	4.8%	4.6%
Walked	1.4%	1.8%	1.6%
Bicycle	1.0%	0.3%	0.2%
Other	0.4%	1.6%	1.4%
Zero-car Households	10.3%	9.4%	6.7%

Public transportation includes bus, rail/subway, and taxi

Figure 7: Study Area Means of Transportation to Work



¹CHAAs conform to census tract boundaries that are the 'best fit' to the high school districts. There are 13 CHAAs within the County used to define geographic areas for the purposes of assessing and reporting health data between Status of Health in DeKalb reports over time. Data source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Miner, Georgia Department of Public Health, Office of Health Indicators for Planning (OHIP).

Health & Wellness Characteristics

Chronic diseases like heart disease, some cancers, and diabetes account for seven out of every 10 U.S. deaths annually – approximately 1.7 million deaths each year. According to the Board of Health’s “2010 Status of Health in DeKalb” report, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory diseases are the top three leading causes of death in DeKalb County. Between 2002 and 2007, cardiovascular diseases were the second leading cause of premature death, second only to injuries (homicide and motor vehicle crashes). When examining cause of death by race and ethnicity, cardiovascular diseases and cancers were the first and second leading causes of death, (respectively) for African American, Asian, Hispanic, and white populations. The highest rates of cardiovascular diseases and cancers occur among African American residents.

Young people are especially at risk. In 2009, approximately 19 percent of DeKalb County high school students were overweight, and 13 percent were obese. Between 2002 and 2007, African American youth under the age of 12 years old were three times more likely to have asthma than white youth of the same age. In 2009, only 35 percent of DeKalb County high school students participated in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on five or more days per week.

In the study area, the rates of cancer illnesses and heart disease were among the highest in DeKalb County. The rates of diabetes and asthma are among the highest in the County. When examining hospital discharges within the defined Avondale-Towers-Columbia Community Health Assessment Area (CHAA), the highest percentage of hospital discharges are due to cardiovascular diseases at approximately 13.6 percent¹. The second highest percentage of hospital discharges within this CHAA for the years 2006 – 2010 is for cancer (2.7 percent), followed closely by discharges for diabetes related issues (2.2 percent). Hospital discharges during this same timeframe due to asthma number 1.8 percent.

1.3 Community Context: Land Use and Zoning

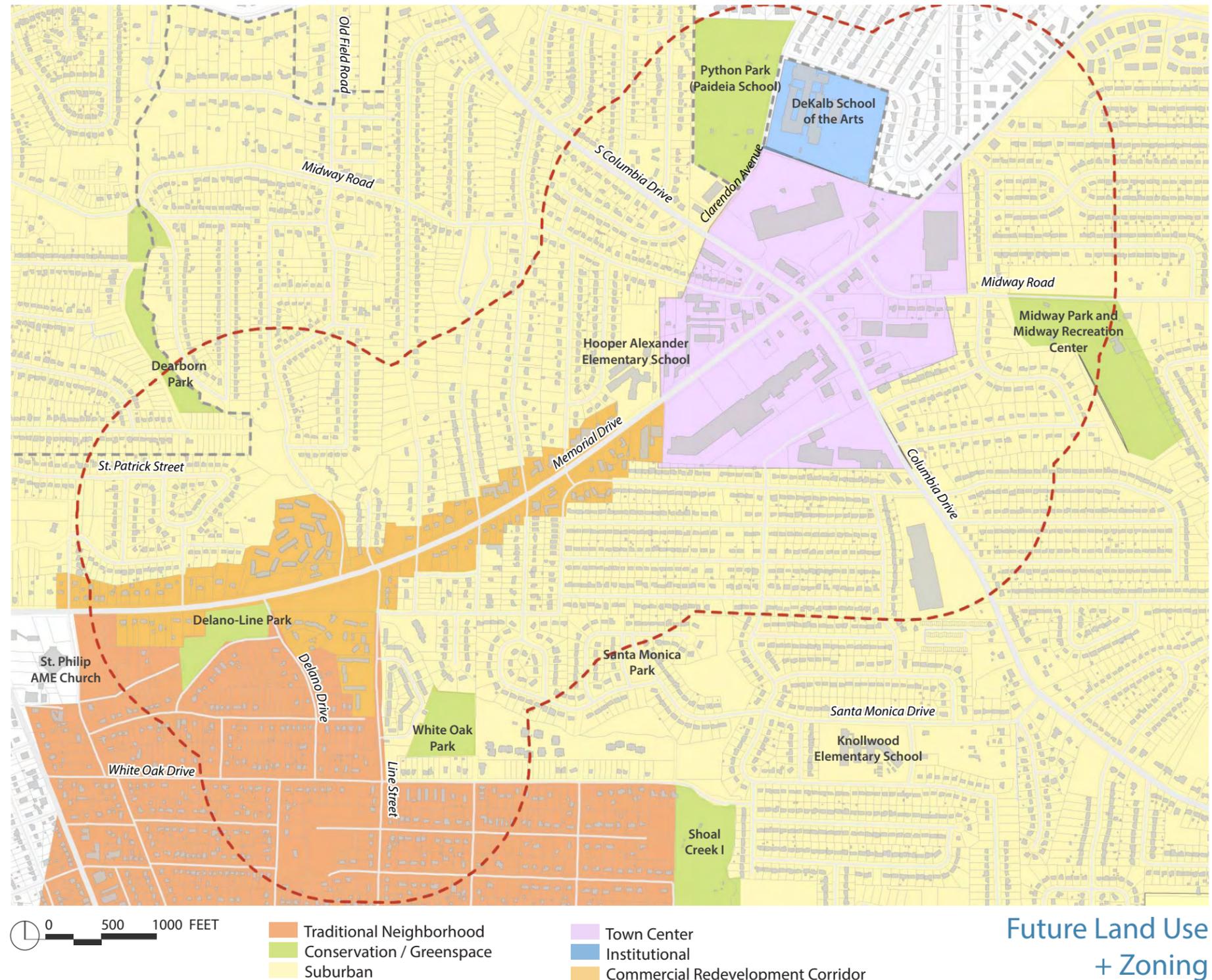
Future Land Use

In its Comprehensive Plan, DeKalb County created a streamlined approach to future land use based on broad categories. Within the study area, the county has identified five major future land uses: Suburban, Traditional Neighborhood, Neighborhood Center, Conservation and Open Space, and Institutional.

- **Suburban.** Areas where typical suburban residential subdivision development has occurred and where pressures for suburban residential subdivision development are greatest. The only applicable land use is Low-Medium Density Residential.
- **Traditional Neighborhood.** Residential areas in older parts of a community typically developed prior to WWII. The only applicable land use is Medium Density Residential.
- **Town Center.** A focal point for several neighborhoods with a concentration of activities such as retail, service commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and open space. Applicable land uses include High Density Residential and High Intensity Commercial.
- **Conservation and Open Space.** Primarily undeveloped and environmentally sensitive lands not suitable for development and areas of protected open space that follow linear features for recreation, and conservation. It also includes lands used for active recreational purposes that provide a wide range of activities. The only applicable land use is Public and Private Parks and Open Space.
- **Institutional.** Large areas used for religious, civic, educational and governmental purposes. The only applicable land use is Institutional.
- **Commercial Redevelopment Corridor.** Declining, unattractive vacant or underutilized strip shopping center; with high vehicular traffic and transit if applicable; onsite parking; low degree of open space; moderate floor to area ratio; large tracks of land and campus or unified development. The only applicable land use is Low Intensity Commercial.

Origins-Housing

In transportation planning, the starting point of a trip is called its origin. Typically, most origins are people's homes. While the core of the study area consists mostly of commercial properties, its immediate surroundings contain a great deal of housing. This residential development is largely in the form of single-family homes and garden-style apartments, with most of these homes and apartments being at least 40 years old. To the north of the study area, there has been a great deal of redevelopment and gentrification, and housing values and income levels have seen steady increases. The areas to the south have not seen significant infill development or gentrification.



Future Land Use + Zoning

While there is not a great deal of new housing development in the area, there is an apartment complex for senior adults under construction on Columbia Drive, just north of the study area. The new Columbia Forrest Heights senior apartments will replace the aging Forrest Heights Apartments. This new development will have 80 units and will include a mix of subsidized and market-rate apartments.

Destinations

The destinations of local trips are typically places with civic functions, such as a school or library, parks, or commercial areas. Within the study area, there are multiple destinations within each of these categories.

Civic Destinations

- **DeKalb School of the Arts.** Founded in 1999, DeKalb School of the Arts is a former magnet program that evolved into its own school. It currently uses the former Avondale High School campus and serves 340 students in grades 8 to 12.
- **Hooper Alexander Elementary School.** Now closed, the Hooper Alexander School was an elementary school in the DeKalb County School System. The building is currently vacant, and the School District intends to sell the property.
- **Knollwood Elementary School.** Located within a residential area, Knollwood Elementary School is a DeKalb County Public School of 269 students grades Pre-K to 5.

Parks and Open Space Destinations

- **Dearborn Park.** Dearborn Park is a seven-acre DeKalb County park located to the northwest of the study area. Currently it is mostly undeveloped park land, but there is a basketball court, a multi-use play court, a playground and a picnic area.
- **Delano-Line Park.** Recently master planned, Delano-Line Park is a linear park that is oriented around Shoal Creek. If the plan is implemented, the park will contain an active recreation area with a playground but will remain largely passive in terms of recreation amenities.
- **Midway Park and Midway Recreation Center.** Midway Park and Recreation Center is a 22-acre facility owned and managed by DeKalb County. Facilities include a baseball/softball field, football and multi-use fields, tennis courts, a swimming pool, a recreation center, playgrounds, picnic areas, and trails.
- **Shoal Creek 1.** Located directly south of the study area, Shoal Creek I Park is a 16-acre facility with baseball fields, a multi-use field, a basketball court, a multi-use play court, a playground, picnic areas and trails. Across Glenwood Road to the south of the study area is Shoal Creek II, a 23-acre park facility.

- **Python Park.** Located across from the DeKalb School of the Arts, Python Park is used by the Paideia School’s athletic teams.

Commercial Destinations

- **Avondale Square.** Located in the eastern part of the study area, Avondale Square is an older commercial shopping center that is largely vacant.
- **Belvedere Plaza.** The largest commercial land use within the study area is Belvedere Plaza, located on the southwest corner of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive. Anchored by a Kroger grocery store, the shopping center is a traditionally-designed strip mall with a large parking lot. Most businesses within the shopping center focus on local services. There are three outparcels fronting Memorial Drive, all of which contain fast food restaurants.
- **Walmart Supercenter.** At the northwest corner of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive, a new Wal-Mart Shopping Center was recently constructed. A number of outparcels front both Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive, providing local services such as banks and fast food restaurants.
- **Unnamed Shopping Centers.** The rest of the commercial uses within the study area are part of smaller-scale developments that are unnamed. These storefronts primarily provide neighborhood-level services.



Homes on Conway Road



Belvedere Shopping Center

Zoning

Most communities in the United States use zoning to regulate how land is used and guide what characteristics a structure can have within these zones.

Currently, DeKalb County is in the process of updating its Zoning Code. The most predominate zoning designation in the Belvedere Study Area is R-75, which is consistent with the future land use of Suburban and Traditional Neighborhoods. Other zoning designations in the study area include R100, R60, RM-100, RM-85, RM-75, O-1, C-1 and C-2. Figure 8 contains the basic regulations for zoning districts present in the study area.

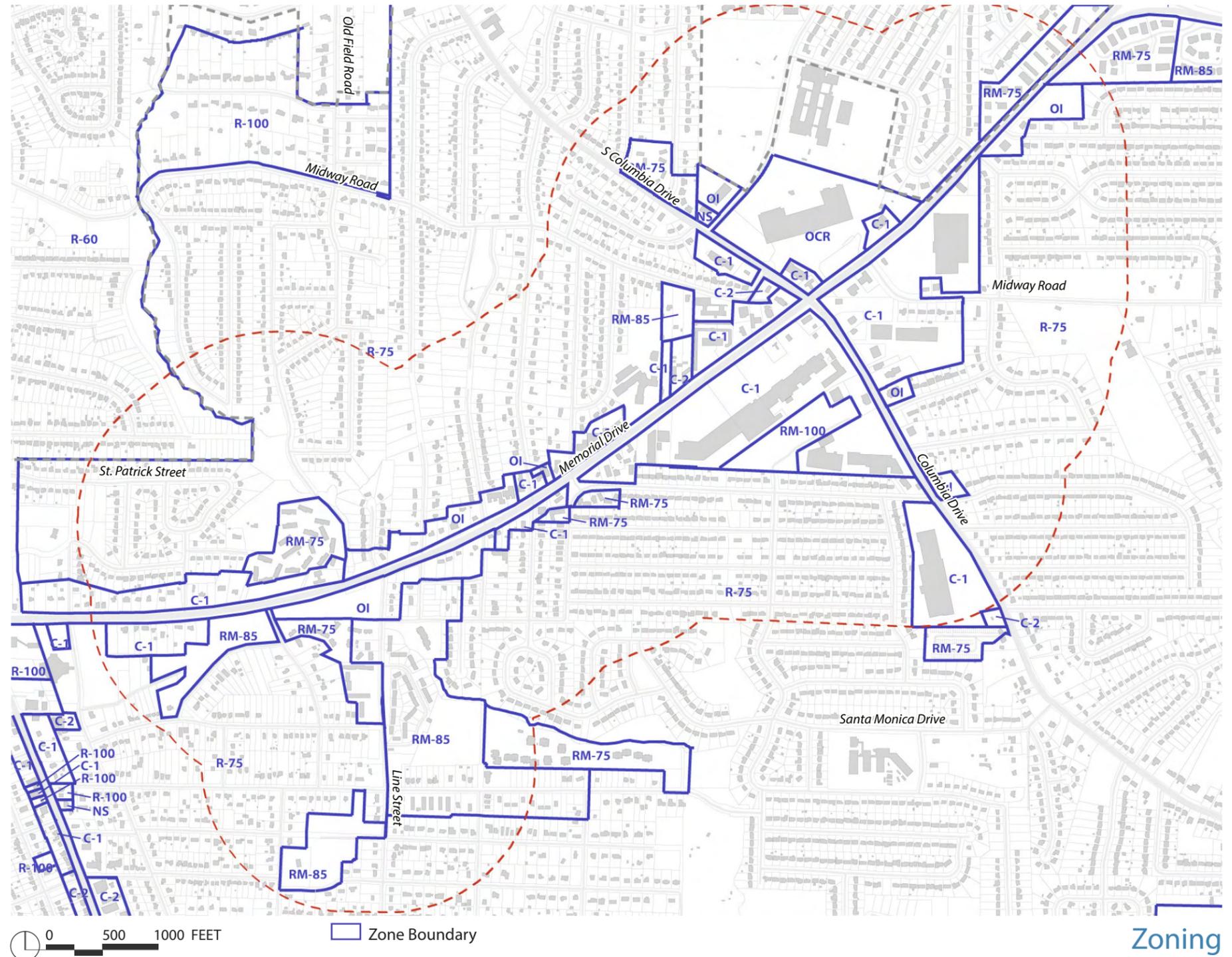
Zoning can have a significant impact on a community’s ability to enable active living. To understand the relationship between DeKalb County’s current zoning regulations and active living, the project team analyzed each zone’s regulation of the following:

Active Uses. Typically, the higher the density and variety of uses, the more conducive the regulations are to active living. By increasing density in land use and moving away from low-density uses such as surface parking lots, this concentration of uses encourages active modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling. Other ways that zoning can influence active uses are encouraging or requiring street-level uses such as storefronts; limiting or prohibiting drive-through uses; limiting or prohibiting chain restaurants; and allowing farming, greenhouse and nursery uses.

Connectivity and Accessibility. Connectivity and accessibility can be greatly influenced by zoning regulations that are related to mobility and walkability. Examples of this include regulations that limit the length of blocks, thereby improving the number of route options for both pedestrians and vehicles; placing utilities underground; requiring landscape zones along streets that contain trees, lighting and benches; limiting or prohibiting cul-de-sacs; and requiring the construction of sidewalks and convenient pedestrian systems.

Open Space. Zoning regulations sometimes contain requirements for open spaces and environmental features. Accessible, usable open spaces can provide opportunities for active recreation and enhance the pedestrian and bicycling environment. Regulations that require functional greenspace and/or provide density bonuses for increasing green space are typically supportive of active living goals.

Building Design. The way buildings are designed and placed on lots can have a major impact on an area’s ability to support active living. For example, buildings that are close to the street and have many windows and doors create a more attractive environment for walking than buildings that are set back on their lots and lack doors



and windows. Some communities are also requiring that office buildings over a certain size provide shower facilities for employees to encourage active modes of commuting.

Parking. Zoning regulations typically contain requirements for parking. In general, the less off-street parking that a zoning regulation requires, the more conducive to creating active communities. This is because off-street parking can often take the form of surface lots, which make communities less friendly to walking and bicycling. Additionally, the easier it is to park a vehicle, the more likely people are to use vehicles as their primary mode of travel. Regulations can support active living by not requiring offstreet parking, limiting or prohibiting surface parking lots, and requiring the provision of bicycle parking.

As part of the planning process, the current zoning regulations within the Belvedere study area were analyzed for their alignment with these active living components. None of the current zoning regulations within the Belvedere Study Area support active living.

Figure 8: Zoning in the Belvedere Study Area

ZONING DISTRICT	LOT WIDTH (min)	LOT AREA (min)	FRONT YARD (min)	SIDE YARD (min)	REAR YARD (min)	HEIGHT (max)	FLOOR AREA (min)	LOT COVERAGE (max)
R-100	100'	15,000 sf	30-45'	10'	40'	35'	2,000 sf	35%
R-75	100'	6,000 sf	30-35'	15-20'	30-40'	4 floors	300-1,000 sf	35%
R-60	60'	8,000 sf	30-45'	30-45'	40'	35'	1,200 sf	35%
RM-100	60-100'	6,000 sf - 2 acres	30-35'	15-20'	30-40'	4 floors	300-1,000 sf	35%
RM-85	60-100'	6,000 sf - 2 acres	20-35'	15-20'	30-40'	4 floors	300-1,000 sf	35%
RM-75	75'	10,000 sf	30-45'	30-45'	40'	35'	1,600 sf	35%
O-1	100'	20,000 sf	50'	20'	30'	70'	650-1,000 sf	80%
C-1	100'	20,000 sf	75'	20'	30'	35'	-	80%
C-2	100'	30,000 sf	75'	20'	30'	35'	-	80%

This chart illustrates the land use typology and specific code section for the four Study Area zoning districts. It also delineates pertinent development standards associated with each of the individual zoning districts in the study areas.

Areas of Change

Over time, the study area can evolve into a more active community through thoughtful redevelopment. Along the Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive corridors, there is potential for a change in land use. Many of these parcels are older, strip commercial properties that could redevelop into denser uses in the future. This is particularly the case for Belvedere Plaza and Avondale Square, which present significant opportunities for mixed-use development. In addition to the commercial land uses that could transition, there are multi-family residential areas that will likely redevelop. For example, DeKalb County is currently exploring options to purchase and redevelop the Blue Sky Condominium Complex. On Line Street, there are two older multi-family residential communities with the potential to redevelop. Additionally, the selling of the Hooper Alexander Elementary School site could spur additional redevelopment in the corridor.

Currently, zoning designations within these areas are C-1, C-2, OCR, OI, RM-75, and RM-85. The following charts provide greater detail on what land uses and structures are allowed in each of these zones.

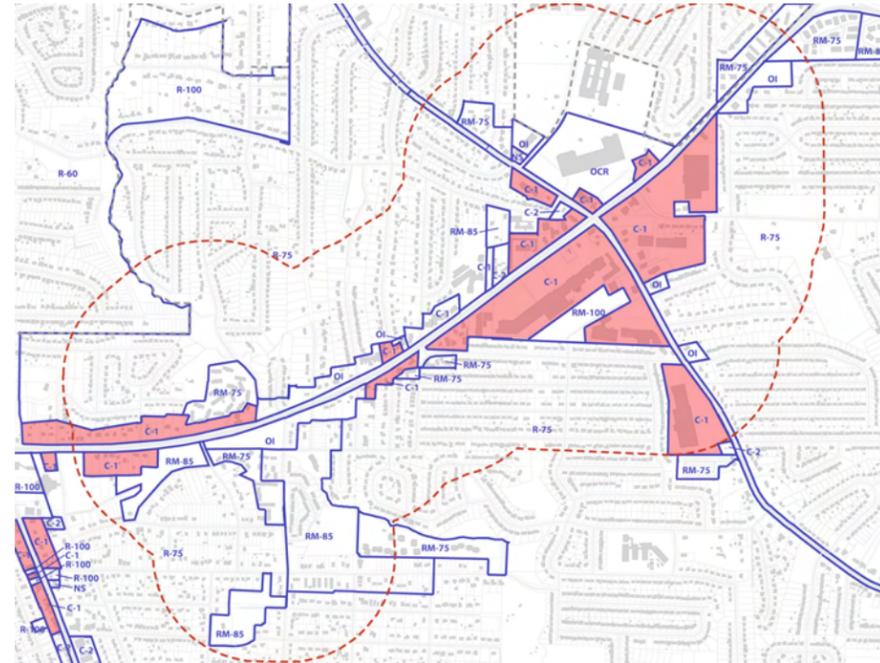


Figure 9: C-1 - Local Commercial District

PURPOSE	Provide convenient, close-to-home shopping and services
USES ALLOWED	A diverse variety of commercial uses, and some community facilities. No residential uses are allowed.
FORM	Low-density, suburban-style development with significant space between the street and the front of buildings and substantial requirements for providing off-street parking.
Setbacks from Street	Minimum 75 feet from public street for a front yard, minimum of 50 feet for a side yard
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet along a public street
Lot Area	Minimum of 20,000 square feet
Height	Maximum of 2 stories (35 feet)
Parking	Offstreet parking required, varies by use type and size of building's floor area.
Lot Coverage	Structures can cover up to a maximum of 80% of the lot

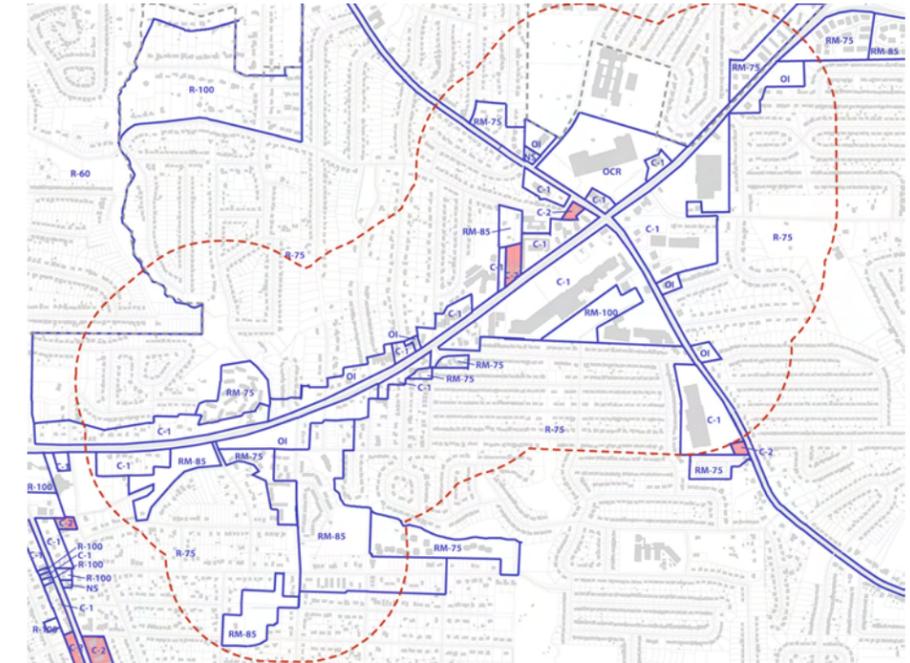


Figure 10: C-2 - Local Commercial District

PURPOSE	Provide general, convenient business and commercial services
USES ALLOWED	A variety of commercial services, retail, offices, and community facilities but no residential uses.
FORM	Low-density, suburban-style development with significant space between the street and the front of buildings and substantial requirements for providing off-street parking.
Setbacks from Street	Minimum of 75 feet from a public street for a front yard, 20 feet for side yard, 30 feet for a rear yard
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet along a public street
Lot Area	Minimum of 30,000 square feet
Density	Maximum of 2 stories (35 feet)
Parking	Offstreet parking required, varies by use type and size of building's floor area.
Lot Coverage	Structures can cover up to a maximum of 80% of the lot.

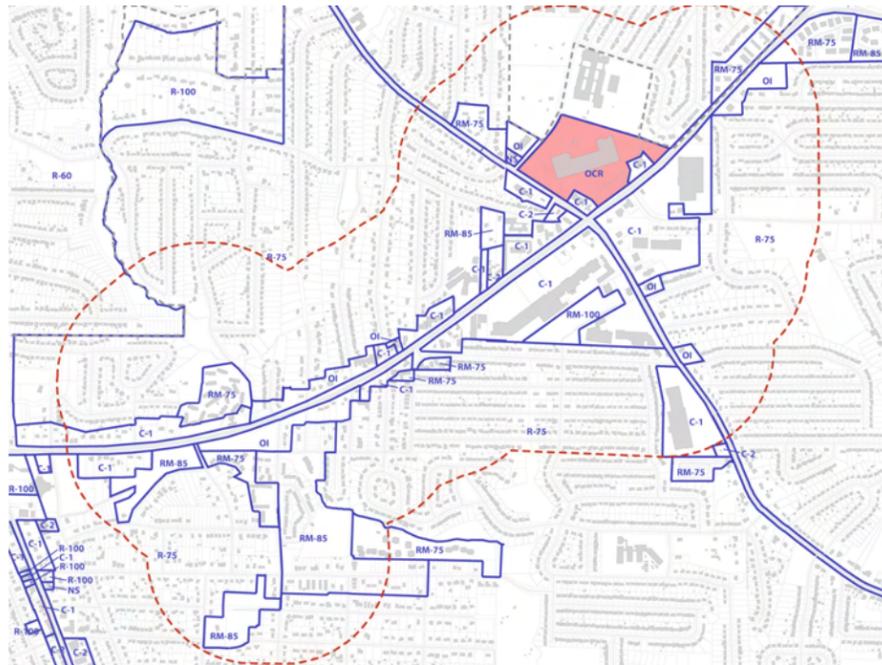


Figure 11: OCR - Office Commercial Residential

PURPOSE	To provide redevelopment opportunities for medium intensity, pedestrian-oriented mixed uses of office, commercial and residential development.
USES ALLOWED	Services, community facilities, professional offices, restaurants, and retail; residential uses are allowed as accessory uses and structures. Maximum density for multi-family dwellings is 30 units/acre.
FORM	A hybrid of traditional suburban-style development and more urban forms: mixed uses and smaller setback minimums (but no maximums), and off-street parking required.
Setbacks from Street	Minimum of 50 feet from public street in the front yard, 20 feet for the side yard, and 40 feet for the rear yard.
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet along a public street
Lot Area	Minimum of 2 acres
Height	2 stories (35 feet)
Parking	Offstreet parking required, varies by use type and size of building's floor area.

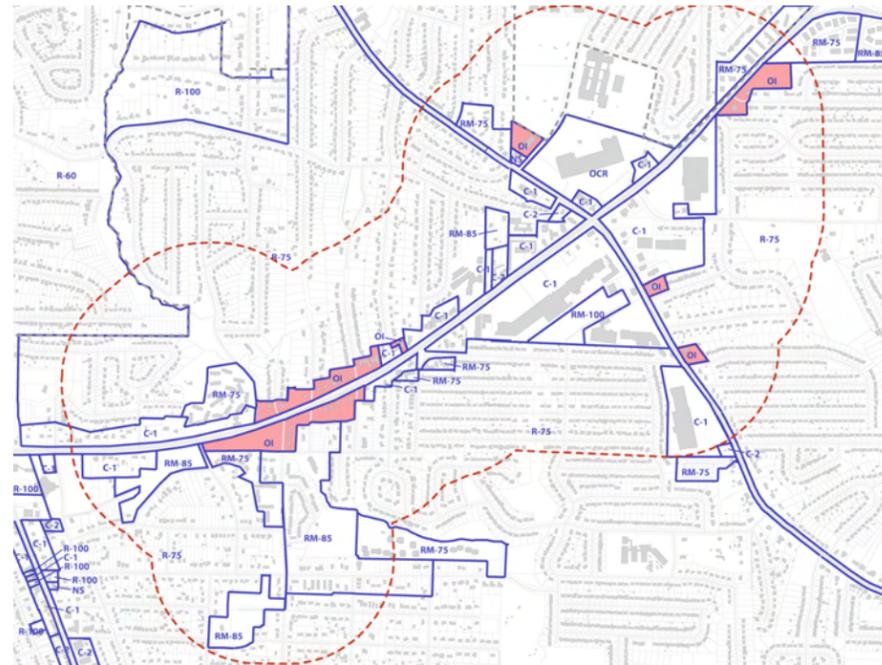


Figure 12: O-1 - Office Institution District

PURPOSE	To provide convenient areas for offices and institutions
USES ALLOWED	Community facilities, hotels/motels, offices, health and medical services, and personal assistance services
FORM	Low to medium density development with comparatively smaller setbacks, and significant offstreet parking requirements.
Setbacks from Street	Minimum of 50 feet from public street for a front yard, 20 feet for a side yard, and 30 feet for a rear yard
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet along a public street
Lot Area	Minimum of 20,000 square feet
Height	5 stories (70 feet)
Parking	Offstreet parking required, varies by use type and size of building's floor area.
Lot Coverage	Structures can cover up to a maximum of 80% of the lot.

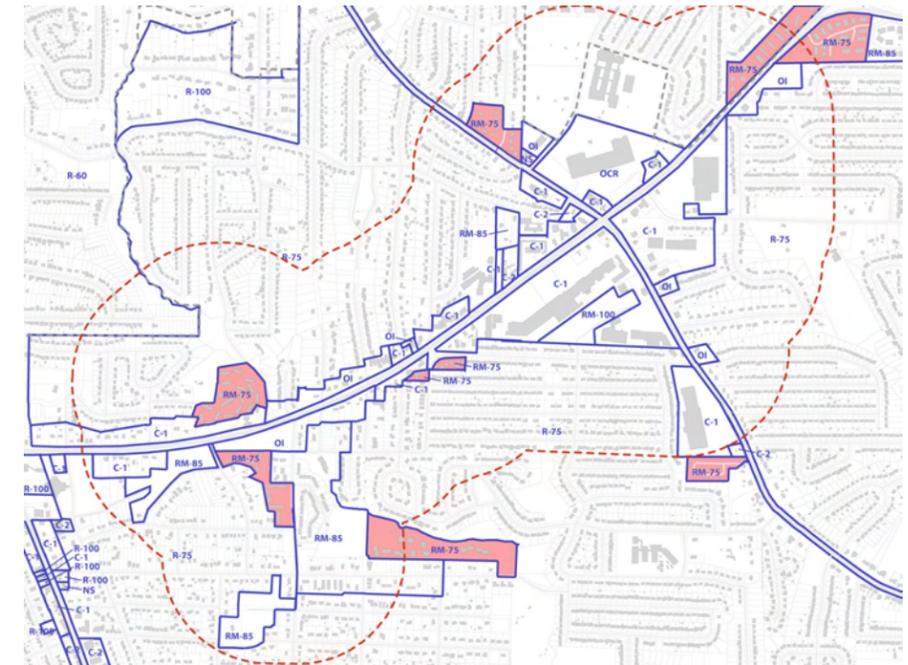


Figure 13: RM-75 Multi-Family Residential District

PURPOSE	To provide for development of multi-family neighborhoods (18 units/acre) and compatible infill
USES ALLOWED	Range of residential uses, lodging, and personal services
FORM	Medium-density suburban-style residences
Setbacks from Street	Minimum of 35 feet in front and 40 feet in rear (multi-family dwellings); minimum of 30 feet in front and rear (single-family detached)
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet
Lot Area	Minimum 2 acres
Density	Maximum of 18 dwelling units/acre
Parking	1.75 - 4 off-street spaces required for residences depending on density; varies for other uses
Lot Coverage	Maximum of 35 percent coverage

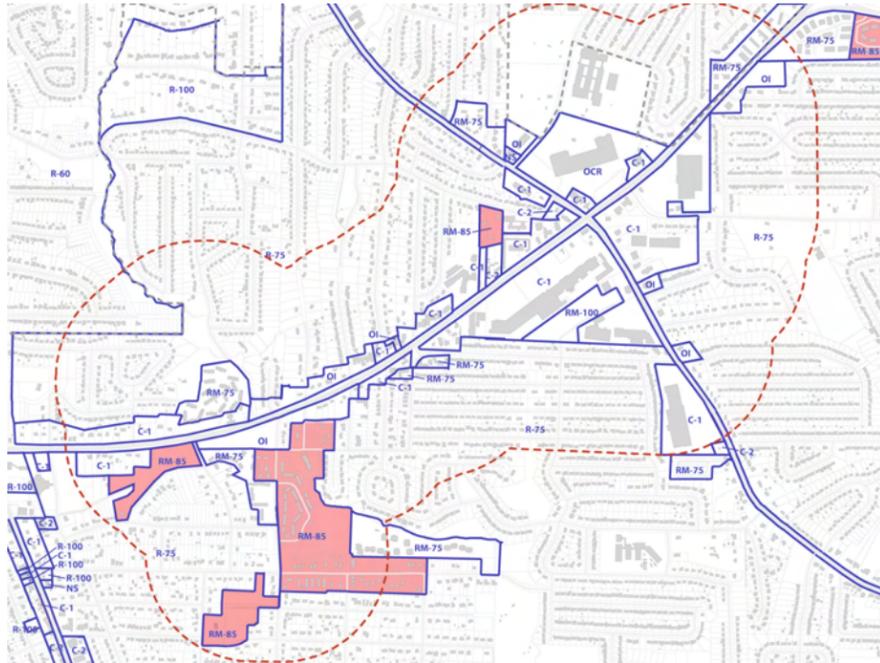


Figure 14: RM-85 Multi-Family Residential District

PURPOSE	To provide for development of multi-family neighborhoods (14 units/acre) and compatible infill
USES ALLOWED	Range of residential uses, lodging, and personal services
FORM	Medium density suburban-style residences
Setbacks from Street	Minimum of 35 feet in front and 40 feet in rear (multi-family dwellings); minimum of 20 feet in front and 30 feet in rear (single-family detached)
Lot Width	Minimum of 100 feet
Lot Area	Minimum 2 acres
Density	Maximum of 14 dwelling units/acre
Height	3 stories (4 with approval from Fire and Rescue Services)
Parking	1.75 - 4 off-street spaces required for residences depending on density; varies for other uses

1.4 Community Context: Real Estate Market

The purpose of this overview is to briefly review socioeconomic and real estate market trends that affect the Belvedere Study Area. This information will help to determine how these trends may impact the potential for improvement and redevelopment.

Socioeconomic Trends

When considering what developers, builders, and retailers are looking for when they make decisions to invest in a community, there are several important factors. Among the key determinants are growth rates, age structure, income levels, and daytime population.

Growth Rates

Growth is a key factor in what developers, builders, and retailers consider. Communities with higher growth rates are typically more attractive to developers. However, the overall composition of the market is critical, and the primary factor they are looking for is a stable population base. Key growth trends in the Belvedere Study Area include:

- There was a loss of population (-17.0 percent) between 2000 and 2010, but the area's population stabilized between 2010 and 2013 (0.5 percent). The current population base is still less than its level in 2000.
- Over the next five years, a slight population growth is expected, which is especially notable given the marked loss over the past decade. However, this rate of growth is still below DeKalb County, the Atlanta MSA, and national averages.

Age Structure

Most developers, builders, and retailers desire age diversity. They also tend to favor areas with strong youth populations, as it is many times an indicator of families in the area. Workforce-aged residents of 25 to 35 years usually represent young professionals and those starting families and they indicate a potential diversification in the marketplace. Age structure in the study area can be summarized as follows:

- The study area is on par with the DeKalb County and national averages, and below the Atlanta MSA proportion for residents aged under 18.
- The study area is on par with the county average, and above the MSA and national proportions for residents aged between 25 and 35.
- The study area is above the county and Atlanta MSA, and just below the national proportions for residents aged over 65.

Income Levels

Most developers, builders, and retailers believe that the higher the income level of an area, the better from a development perspective. But, what is also important is the breakdown within the income levels, particularly in terms of informing diversity of product in the marketplace. In the Belvedere Study Area:

- The average household income is \$39,557. This household income is well below the county, metro area, and national averages. The study area's average household income is 57 percent of the national average.
- The average household income has decreased since 2000 at a rate slightly faster than the county average. While the study area has experienced a decline in average household income since 2000, gains were made in the metro and national averages.
- The proportion of households earning less than \$15,000 in the study area is well above the county, metro Atlanta, and national proportions. The study area's proportion of households earning less than \$15,000 is twice the proportion for both the Atlanta MSA and the nation.
- At the other end of the spectrum are the households earning over \$100,000; the study area's proportion of these households is well under the county, the metro area, and the nation's proportions. The study area's proportion of households earning over \$100,000 is one-quarter of the proportion for both the Atlanta MSA and the nation.

Daytime Population

The daytime population is another important component for development decisions made by developers, builders, and retailers. Businesses desire customers during both daytime and evening hours, so residents and employees are both important.

- The daytime population (employees) for the study area is 4,154. This accounts for a very small proportion of the county's employment, with just over one percent of total employees for DeKalb County.
- There are a total of 350 businesses in the study area.

Real Estate Market: Retail

Submarket

In terms of submarket performance, the Belvedere Study Area is located within the Decatur/East Atlanta retail submarket.

The Decatur/East Atlanta retail submarket has a total of 706 retail buildings, reflecting approximately 8.0 million square feet of retail space. The vacancy rate is 9.8 percent, which is on par with the metro average. The average rental rate is below the metro average, at \$11.55 per square foot. The net absorption for 2012 was positive for the Decatur/East Atlanta retail submarket, at 229,120 square feet, according to CoStar.²

Study Area

The only significant retail space in the study area is a large Walmart Supercenter located just north of Interstate 20 (I-20). It is approximately 215,000 square feet and opened in 2006, which made it the first Walmart Supercenter inside I-285 in Atlanta. Often the opening of a Walmart leads to the construction of smaller, shadow shopping centers nearby. However, up to this point, this Walmart has not brought significant retail development to the area. There is one fairly new commercial building located directly across the street from the Walmart. It is an 8,000 square foot, two-story building with retail space on the first floor and office space on the second floor. The building has been successful, with only 1,000 square feet currently available, according to the leasing agent.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive served as a regional retail center. In 1955, Belvedere Plaza opened to serve this rapidly growing suburban community and, in 1959, a Rich's department store was added to the center. In 1964, Columbia Mall (later Avondale Mall) opened across the street and featured Sears and Davison's (later Macy's) as anchor stores. As larger and more modern shopping alternatives became available, the importance of the study area as a regional retail center began to diminish. Rich's closed their store in 1986. Sears left Avondale Mall in 1984 and Macy's closed in 1995. The mall closed completely in 2001, and was eventually demolished in 2007.

Even though the study area is no longer a regional destination for retail, it is still a very active retail node with a variety of businesses serving the immediate area. The Walmart Supercenter is located on the site of the former Avondale Mall and Belvedere Plaza is now anchored by a large Kroger grocery store. Belvedere Plaza has been successful in adapting to the changing market conditions. The center has a vacancy rate of just 6.0 percent and, according to the leasing agent, the owners are in talks with several national tenants who are interested in the center. Unfortunately, other shopping centers in the area have not fared as well. The Avondale Square shopping center has approximately 145,000 square feet of space, and almost 120,000 square feet is vacant.

Real Estate Market: Residential

Submarket

Since 2009, the number of home sales has decreased, but the sales prices have been steadily decreasing since 2005 in the zip code the Belvedere Study Area is located in. The amount of home sales has declined approximately 30 percent between 2009 and 2011, and the sales prices have declined almost 80 percent between 2005 and 2011.

The median sales price the 30032 zip code in 2011 was \$27,000.³ There were a total of 579 homes sold in 2011, a continued decrease over the previous six years. All the sales were resales in the Study Area. There were less than 10 new sales in 2010, but the new sales prices (\$149,000) are markedly higher than the resale prices (\$27,000). The 2011 sales prices were lower than previous years.

Study Area

While the study area consists mostly of commercial properties, the surrounding areas include a great deal of housing. This residential development is largely in the form of single-family homes and garden-style apartments, and most of these homes and apartments are at least 40 years old. To the north of the study area, there has been a great deal of redevelopment and gentrification, and housing values and income levels have seen steady increases. The areas to the south have not seen significant infill development or gentrification.

While there is not a great deal of new housing development in the area, there is an apartment complex for senior adults under construction on Columbia Drive, just north of the study area. The new Columbia Forrest Heights senior apartments will replace the aging Forrest Heights Apartments. This new development will have 80 units, and include a mix of subsidized and market-rate apartments.

Real Estate Market: Office

Submarket

In terms of submarket performance, the Belvedere Study Area is located within two office submarkets, Decatur and I-20 East/Conyers. The Decatur office submarket has a total of 416 office buildings, reflecting approximately 7.5 million square feet of office space. The vacancy rate is 5.8 percent, which is below the metro average. The average rental rate is above the metro average, at \$19.38 per square foot. The net absorption for 2012 was positive for the Decatur office submarket, at 134,320 square feet, according to CoStar.⁴ The I-20 East/Conyers office submarket has a total of 578 office buildings, reflecting approximately 4.0 million square feet of office space. The vacancy rate is 12.0 percent, which is below the metro average. The average rental rate is on par with the metro average, at \$18.77 per square foot. The net absorption for 2012 was positive for the I-20 East/Conyers office submarket, at 40,760 square feet, according to CoStar.⁵

Study Area

The study area does not include a significant amount of office space. However, there are a variety of local-serving office tenants located in the retail shopping centers. In addition, Goodwill Industries has a sizeable office component in their Career Services Center, which utilizes 24,000 square feet of space in the Avondale Crossing shopping center.

Real Estate Market: Industrial

Submarket

In terms of submarket performance, the Belvedere Study Area is located within the Snapfinger industrial submarket. The Snapfinger industrial submarket has a total of 413 industrial buildings, reflecting approximately 15.8 million square feet of industrial space. The vacancy rate is 6.4 percent, which is below the metro average. The average rental rate is below the metro average, at \$3.43 per square foot. The net absorption for 2012 was positive for the Snapfinger industrial submarket, at 401,580 square feet, according to CoStar.⁶

Study Area

There is no significant industrial use within the study area.

²Source: The Retail Report: Atlanta Retail Market, CoStar Group, Fourth Quarter 2012.

³Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution Home Sales Report and Market Data Center.

⁴Source: The Office Report: Atlanta Office Market, CoStar Group, Fourth Quarter 2012.

⁵Source: The Office Report: Atlanta Office Market, CoStar Group, Fourth Quarter 2012.

⁶Source: The Industrial Report: Atlanta Industrial Market, CoStar Group, Fourth Quarter 2012.

Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities

- The Walmart and Kroger stores serve as strong retail anchors for the study area.
- The surrounding area has a large number of households to support the local retail.
- The viability of commercial property in the study area is improved by the heavy traffic on both Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive.
- The residential areas to the north of the study area have grown in popularity and value.

Challenges

- The study area is no longer a regional retail node, and there is excess retail space for strictly local-serving retail tenants.
- Competition from newer, more high-end retail at Edgewood and north of Decatur could continue to further erode the retail trade area.
- The housing market to the south of the study area has been much weaker than in the area to the north.

Future Development Trends

The study area sits along a dividing line between two very different residential markets. The neighborhoods directly to the north have become sought-after residential. This has resulted in a great deal of redevelopment and infill construction. While there has been some redevelopment south of the study area, these neighborhoods still struggle against disinvestment and decline. The future health and viability of the commercial uses on the Memorial Drive corridor will most likely have little effect on the residential areas to the north, but a revitalized commercial corridor could dramatically improve the prospects for investment in the neighborhoods to the south.

Improving the commercial areas along Memorial Drive will require the removal of retail space from the area. Many of the aging shopping centers were built when the area was a regional shopping destination, drawing customers from many miles around. Today, retail in the area serves mostly local customers, and new retail development to the north and west have effectively limited any chance for growing the trade area. To ensure the viability of the successful local-serving, convenience retail, some of the older and largely vacant shopping centers will likely have to be demolished and the land redeveloped for other uses, such as fairly dense housing or mixed-use development.



Newer residences in the study area



Entry into Midway Park Recreation Center

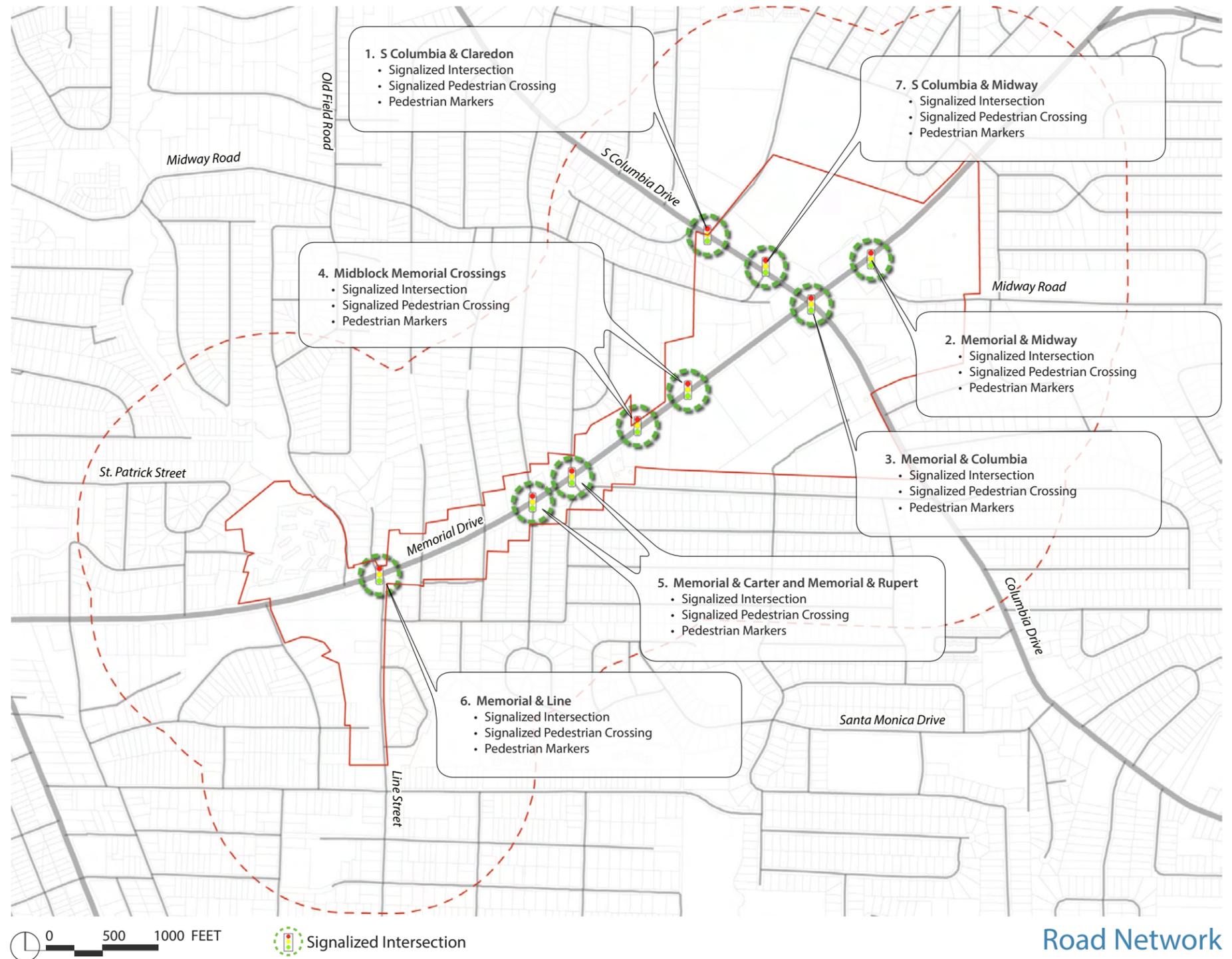
1.5 Community Context: Mobility

Street Network and Connectivity

Most of the study area was developed in the middle of the twentieth century, which has resulted in a street network of a few major arterial and collector streets, and limited connectivity between local streets. Most trips within the study area are taken along Memorial Drive, Columbia Drive, Midway Road and Glenwood Road. Beyond these arterials and collectors, there are some alternative routes on local streets but these are limited and mostly indirect routes.

Many of the major intersections within the study area have been recently upgraded with pedestrian crosswalks and signals. There are eight intersections of note:

- **Memorial Drive and Line Street.** Line Street provides access to some of the densest housing in the study area. At this intersection, there is a traffic signal, pedestrian signals, and recently updated/added crosswalks.
- **Memorial Drive and Carter Road.** Carter Road, while not a major thoroughfare, connects Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive via the Midway Woods neighborhood. The intersection is signalized and was recently upgraded to provide crosswalks at all points and pedestrian signals.
- **Memorial Drive and Rupert Road.** Less than 0.1 mile northeast of the intersection with Carter Road, Memorial Drive and Rupert Road is also a signalized intersection. Like other intersections in the study area, it was recently upgraded to provide crosswalks at all points and pedestrian signals.
- **Mid-block Memorial Drive Crossings.** Between Rupert Road and Columbia Drive there are two traffic signals to help facilitate movement to and from the shopping centers. These two mid-block signals both have new pedestrian crosswalks and signals.



- *Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive.* The intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Drive is the largest in the study area, with six lanes of traffic from Memorial meeting five lanes from Columbia. This intersection was recently upgraded and has new crosswalks, curb ramps and pedestrian signals.
- *Memorial Drive and Midway Road.* Also recently upgraded, this intersection is the primary entrance into the new Wal-Mart Supercenter. It is signalized and has pedestrian signals and crosswalks.
- *S Columbia Drive and Midway Road.* This intersection also provides access to the new Wal-Mart Supercenter. It has a traffic signal, pedestrian signals and crosswalks.
- *S Columbia Drive and Clarendon Ave.* Clarendon Avenue provides access to the DeKalb School of the Arts. At its intersection with S. Columbia Drive, there is a traffic signal, pedestrian signals and three crosswalks, but a pedestrian connection across Columbia Drive is missing on the northwest side.



Intersection of Rupert Road and Memorial Drive



View Southwest on Memorial Drive



Intersection of Hooper Alexander and Memorial Drive



Photograph Looking West on Memorial Drive from Line Street

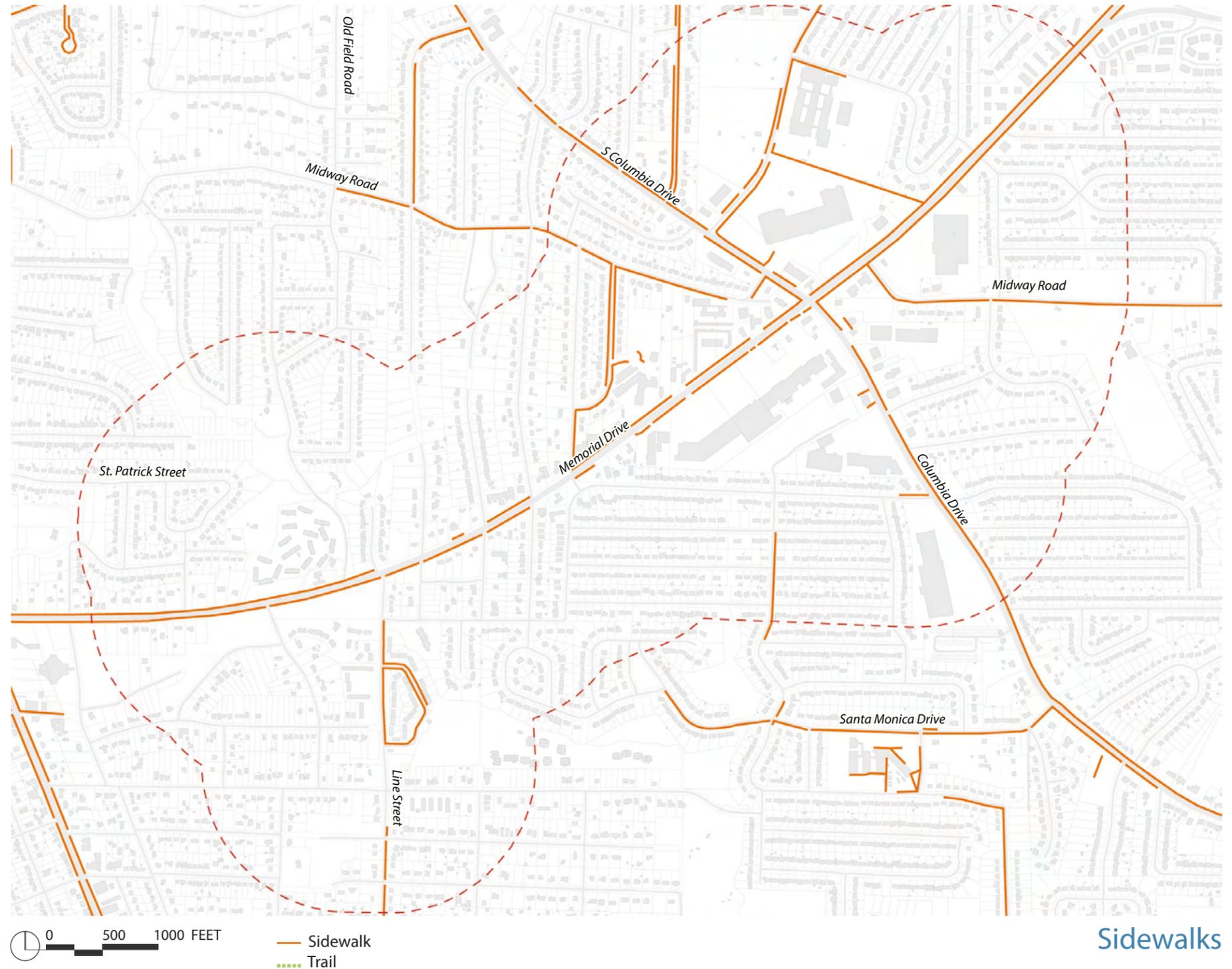
1.5 Community Context: Mobility

Sidewalks and Trails

Sidewalk coverage is weak throughout the study area. In general, sidewalks are only present along the major arterials, but there are significant gaps on Memorial Drive southwest of Columbia Drive. Within the study area, only about half of Columbia Drive has sidewalks. Very few residential streets have sidewalks on either side of the roadway.

There are currently no trails within the study area, but a master plan for Delano-Line park includes plans for an unpaved trail network.

There are no dedicated bicycle facilities within the study area.





Sidewalk along Memorial Drive and Path to Belvedere Shopping Center



Pedestrian Walking along Memorial Drive



Handicapped Ramp and Drainage Structure on Midway Road near Memorial Drive



Pedestrians without a Sidewalk



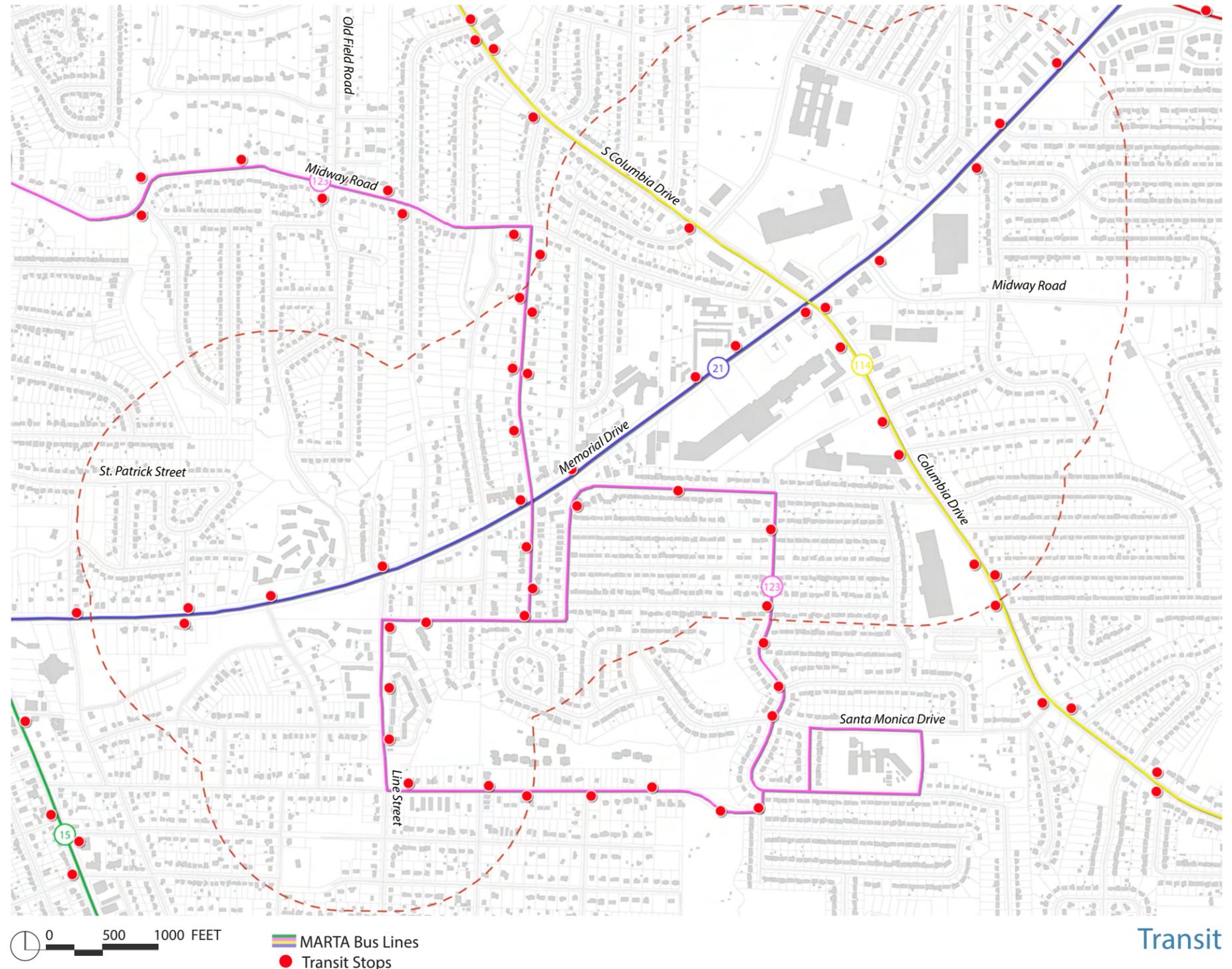
Crosswalk and Ramps on North Side of Memorial Drive

1.5 Community Context: Mobility

Transit

There are four MARTA bus lines that currently serve the study area:

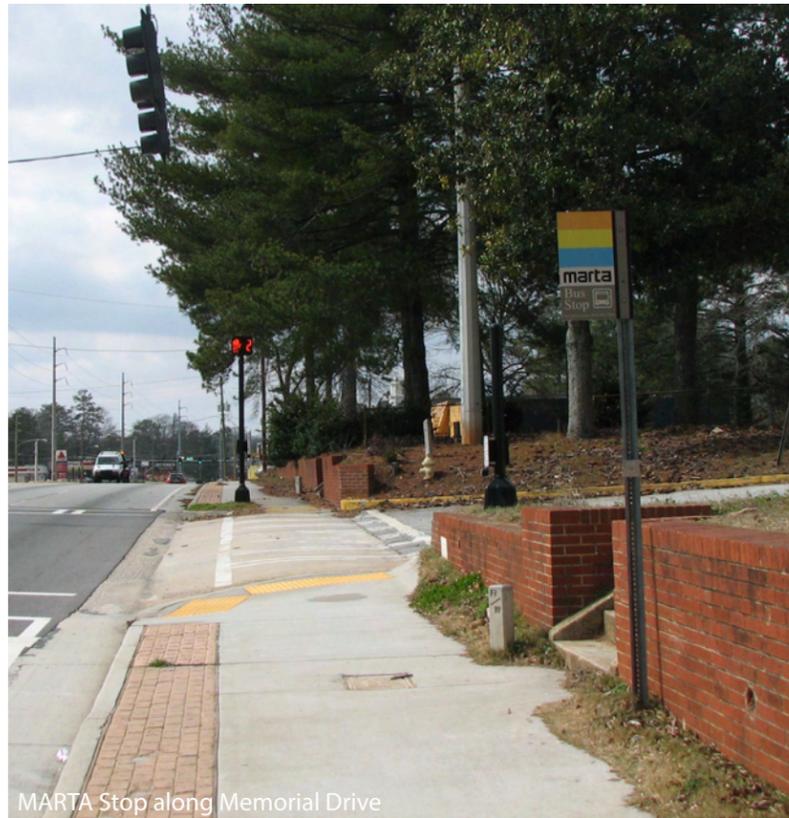
- MARTA Bus Route 15: Candler Road/South DeKalb.** Route 15 travels primarily north-south through southern DeKalb County, and touches the study area for only a short period. Its northern point of origin is at Decatur Station, where it connects to the Blue Rail Line. From there it travels west on Swanton Way, south on Commerce, southeast on E. Trinity Place, then south on Candler Road. The route makes a stop at South DeKalb Mall before continuing south on Panthersville Road. It also has a selective trip that makes a loop using River Road, Ridgetop Drive, Linecrest Road, Lincondale Drive, Clevefont Court, and Clevefont Road. Other major destinations along Route 15 include Georgia Perimeter College South Campus, Agnes Scott College, and the DeKalb County Library.
- MARTA Bus Route 21: Memorial Drive.** Route 21 travels primarily east-west through southern DeKalb County. Its eastern terminus is Kensington Station on the Blue Rail Line. From there, it travels briefly on Kensington Road before turning southwest onto Memorial Drive, where it travels into Fulton County. The western terminus is Georgia State Station in downtown Atlanta. Major destinations along the route include Avondale Mall, Belvedere Plaza, Alonzo Crim High School, Oakland Cemetery, and King Memorial Station. There are 14 stops for Route 21 within the Study Area.
- MARTA Bus Route 114: Columbia Drive.** Route 114 primarily travels north-south through DeKalb County. Its northern terminus is at Avondale Station, where it connects to the Blue Rail Line. From Avondale Station, the route briefly travels west on E College Avenue then turns southeast onto S. Columbia Drive. It terminates at Clifton Springs Health Center. Major destinations along the route include Columbia Middle School, Eastgate Shopping Center, Columbia Elementary School, Columbia High School, and Snapfinger Elementary School. Within the study area, there are 16 stops for this route.
- MARTA Bus Route 123: North DeKalb Mall/Belvedere.** Route 123 is an unusual bus route due to its “out and back” nature. It starts at Decatur Station, where it provides access to the Blue Rail Line. From there, it travels north via Commerce and Church Street, then diverts to Bill Thrasher Drive and Rufus Evans Drive via Sycamore Drive. It rejoins the route at N. Decatur Road, then goes northwest via DeKalb Industrial Way and Lawrenceville Highway. The route cuts west to North DeKalb Mall where it turns around and retraces its route back past Decatur Station. From there it travels south via S. McDonough Street and E. Lake Drive. At Hosea Williams Drive it heads east, travels along S. Candler Street and Midway Road, then south again on Carter Road. It then terminates in a loop along Fairlee Drive, Rupert Road, Belvedere Lane, San Gabriel Avenue, White Oak Drive and Line Street. Other than Decatur Station and the North DeKalb Mall, the other major destination served by Route 123 is the DeKalb Medical Center. There are a total of 34 stops for this route within the study area.



Transit



Updated MARTA Shelter



MARTA Stop along Memorial Drive



Bus Shelter along Memorial Drive



Bus Stop and Crosswalk Across Memorial Drive



MARTA Shelter along Memorial Drive

1.5 Community Context: Mobility

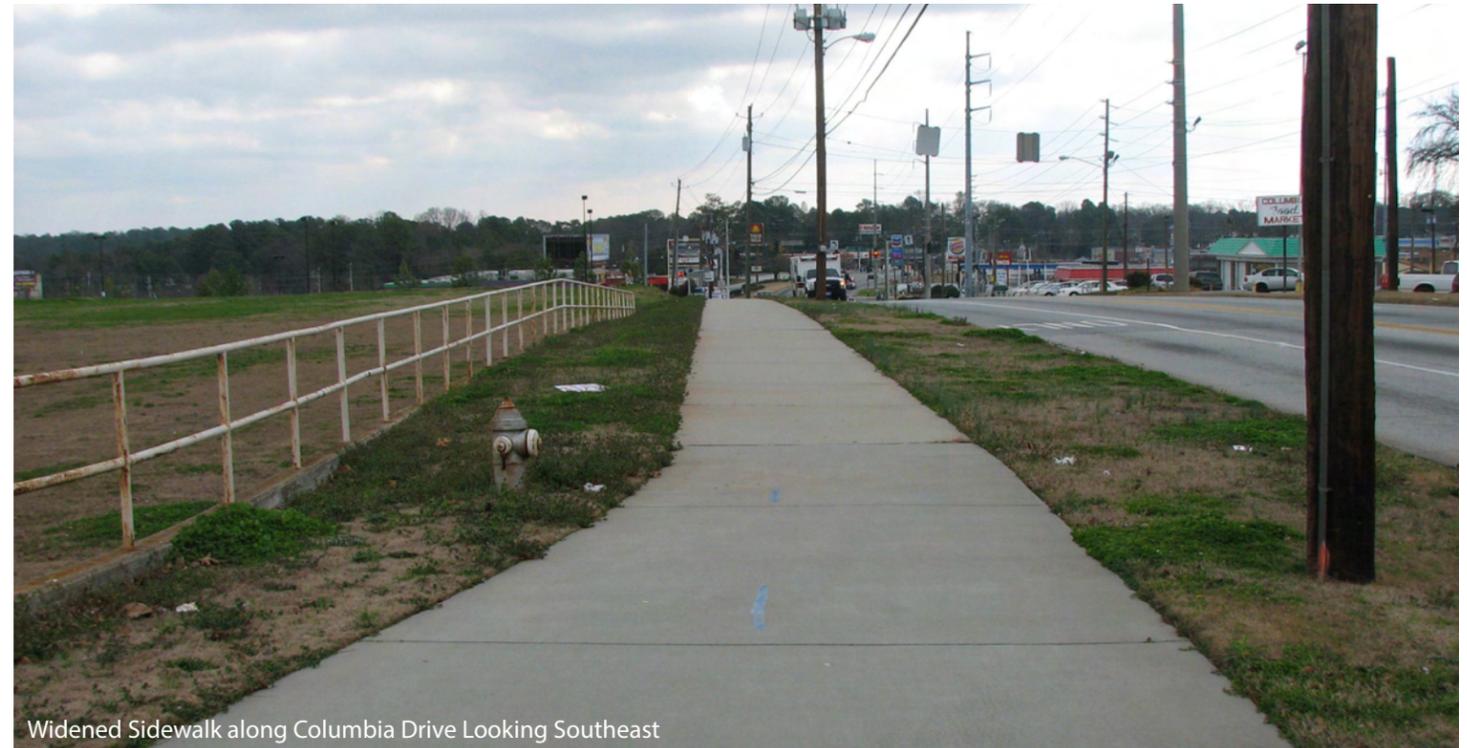
Programmed Transportation Projects

There are two programmed transportation projects within the study area.

- *Columbia Drive from US 78 (College Avenue) to I-20 East Corridor Improvements (TIA-DK-023)*. The project's purpose is to relieve congestion at key intersections, add sidewalks, upgrade traffic signals, and resurface.
- *Enhanced MARTA Arterial Bus Service Program (Candler Road) (TIA-M-031)*. The project identified a network of enhanced bus lines that would provide more frequent service on high ridership bus corridors throughout the metropolitan area.



Bicyclist in Crosswalk at Beech Drive



Widened Sidewalk along Columbia Drive Looking Southeast



Widened Sidewalk along Columbia Drive Looking Northwest



Delano Line Park

1.6 Public Engagement

Public Meetings

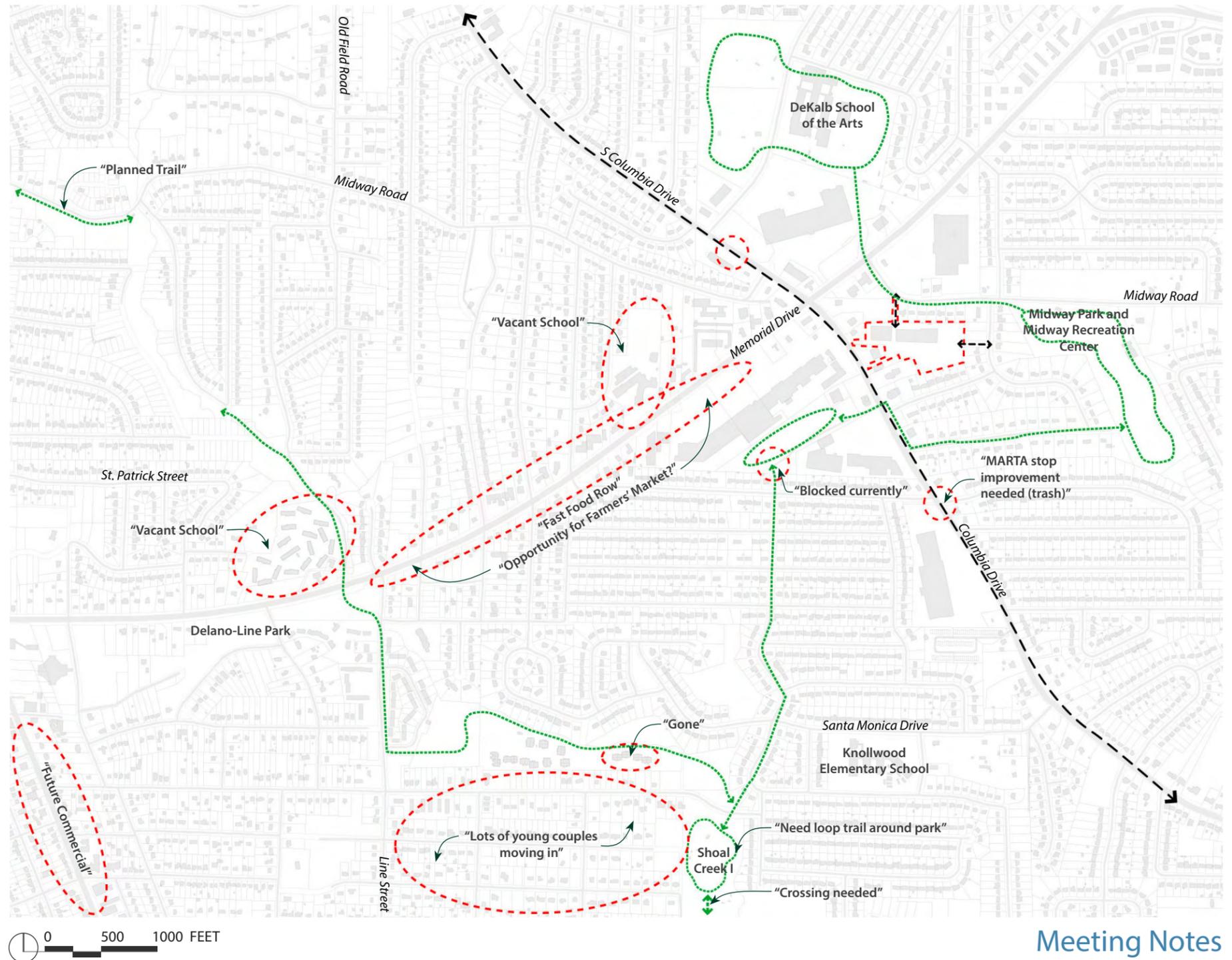
The goal of the public engagement process was to develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders in the DeKalb County Board of Health Master Active Living Plan study areas, including low to moderate income, minority, and elderly or disabled citizens. The public involvement program included several strategies to solicit participation and feedback. Several advocacy groups focused on healthy living practices were also engaged during the process and assisted with outreach to their constituents for participation, including the following:

- Healthy Belvedere
- Belvedere Civic Association
- Live Healthy DeKalb
- Hispanic Health Coalition of Georgia
- DeKalb NAACP
- Senior Connections
- Atlanta Bicycle Coalition
- Southern Bicycle League
- DeKalb County School System

On the evening of Tuesday, March 12, 2013, a public meeting was held at Peace Lutheran Church on Columbia Drive. An announcement was hand distributed to a broad list of public locations within each study area, including the following:

- Covington Library
- The Friends School
- Avondale City Hall
- Career Services
- Scott Candler Library

A total of eight members of the public attended the meeting and provided input. In general, the attendees were supportive of projects that would improve opportunities for active living and were particularly interested in improvements to Midway Park. The map at right documents participants' ideas and concerns expressed at the meeting.



Meeting Notes

