

**A New
Public
Realm for
DeKalb
County**



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Alex Garvin & Associates, Inc.

Alex Garvin & Associates is a planning and real estate consulting firm that specializes in the development of the public realm. Operating internationally from New York City, AGA works at every scale – from small communities to metropolitan regions – to produce physically, financially, and politically feasible plans that generate support from local residents, business leaders, developers, architects, and public officials. Alex Garvin & Associates works to improve the quality of the built environment, and thus the quality of life for communities' current and future citizens.

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Alex Garvin & Associates, Inc.
public realm strategists

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Dear Jim:

You asked Alex Garvin & Associates to devise a plan that can help a section of DeKalb County as it navigates major changes that are already underway. In response, we have produced a vision for what this area could become as well as a methodology for discovering its potential, making decisions collaboratively, and adapting to the inevitable fluctuations in market demand. The vision focuses on the public realm, that portion of DeKalb that is shared by everybody: its network of streets, sidewalks, and parks. We are confident that this plan will reverse the decline in the area's quality of life.

Our recommendations are also a response to the twentieth century legacy, commonly called "sprawl," currently experienced by DeKalb County and nearly all 21st century suburbs. Recent attempts to deal with sprawl further regulate what property owners can build or assess an impact fee but leave in place traffic congestion, degraded air quality, unnecessary water consumption, and a deficient public realm in which the most basic daily activities – walking, driving, cycling, shopping, and even going to the park – are unpleasant and difficult.

The plan calls for a *public realm framework* that shapes future development through improvements to the streets and parks that support the activities central to public life. By expanding the park system, improving existing roads, and creating a network of streets – replete with generous sidewalks and bike lanes – the plan provides residents and visitors additional opportunities for recreation and alternatives to using their cars.

All the proposals set forth in this plan have been tested by community officials, developers, and residents. These proposals will result in a clean the environment, an enhanced quality of life, and a great public realm – all of which can be paid for without further taxes on area residents. We believe this plan will help the citizens of DeKalb County and the County Commission to make some intelligent choices that not only will solve problems but also will create a healthier and much pleasanter place for everybody.

Acknowledgements

All the people who worked on this project owe a special debt to Commissioners Jeff Rader and Kathie Cannon, who were determined to reverse years of helter-skelter development in DeKalb County, and had the foresight to initiate this innovative planning process. Similar thanks are due to Jim Durrett and the Livable Communities Coalition, which managed the process and raised the funds to pay for it. Finally, we would like to thank Debbie Schneider, whose invaluable guidance kept all of us focused on achieving workable proposals for the County.

01

Executive Summary

THIS IS A BLUEPRINT for the future of a 688-acre section of DeKalb County, Georgia – an area called, for the purposes of this report, Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. The blueprint is the culmination of an iterative, six-month planning process unique for its openness and its level of public participation and collaborative spirit. The process has involved civic leaders, property owners, elected officials, public servants, and the general public. The results reflect the input of everyone involved.

Alex Garvin & Associates (AGA) has taken a Public Realm Approach, focusing on how to improve the public realm – that is, the streets, parks, and other public spaces. It is here that the people of DeKalb County encounter one another, shop, do business, walk, and play. AGA has focused on the public realm because it is the fundamental element in any community – it is the skeleton around which everything else grows – and therefore provides the most leverage to capture and guide private investment in the public interest.

Alex Garvin & Associates (AGA) has taken a *public realm approach*, focusing on how to improve the parks, streets, sidewalks, and other public places.

AGA approached this challenge opportunistically – that is, it did not limit itself to what DeKalb County *ought* to do, but instead considered all of what the County *can* do. AGA looked for opportunities that can be financed and implemented within a reasonable period of time. The test of planning must be the real result on the landscape and the quality of people’s experience of that landscape. There is no point in making theoretical recommendations that can never happen. And by the same token, there is no sense passing up a good opportunity in favor of something that, while perhaps desirable, has little chance of happening.



FIGURE 1.1 The new public realm for Briarcliff-North Druid Hills.

Actions

- 1 A 63% expansion of Kittredge Park – from 32.6 acres to 52.9 acres
- 2 Improved public access to the park and opportunities for desirable activities within it
- 3 The conversion of two major urban arterials – Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads – into boulevards lined with 900 new trees
- 4 The conversion of the intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into a roundabout to improve traffic flow and to create a new, central public space
- 5 A new network of streets to provide motorists with more routes throughout the area, thereby easing the traffic load on Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads
- 6 A new, complete sidewalk and bike lane network as part of the new road network
- 7 Four new street types designed with an emphasis on meeting the needs of multiple user groups (motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists):
 - + Retail Street
 - + Park Drive
 - + Residential Street
 - + Boulevard
- 8 New exit lanes from I-85
- 9 Regulations governing various aspects of large properties in the interest of a high-quality public realm:
 - + Building heights
 - + The spacing of tall buildings
 - + Setbacks of new buildings from existing residential properties
 - + Drainage and landscaping for new parking lots
 - + The preservation of existing trees
 - + The spacing of trees

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Implementation

- 1 The creation of a Tax Allocation District (TAD) to finance new public improvements
- 2 The establishment of a redevelopment authority to oversee design and construction of the new public realm
- 3 The creation of a new Community Improvement District (CID) to maintain and operate the new public realm



FIGURE 1.2 The proposed intersection at the center of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills.

02

Public Realm Framework

Introduction

THE PUBLIC REALM COMPRISES those areas of cities, suburbs, and towns that are open and accessible to the public. These areas include not only a community's parks, squares, and public buildings, but also its streets. The public realm is in essence a city's "living room." It lends character to a community and is often what we remember most about a city after having visited there. How would we remember London without its bustling streets, full of tourists and businesspeople alike? How would we remember San Francisco without its sidewalks climbing up steep hills?

The public realm works best when it provides for diverse uses and activities. For example, streets are conduits for movement and circulation, but the best streets in the world are also pleasant places along which to walk and to socialize. A great public realm can also bolster the local economy by providing a setting for a variety of activities from concerts to commerce.

By contrast, roads in most dispersed areas generally only carry automobiles. Bicycling and walking are not taken seriously, partly because they are not viable ways of getting around - everything is too far apart. It is nearly impossible to shop on foot along a suburban road because the stores are set back too far from the road's edge and placed too far from each other.

Most planning in the past 70 years has not recognized the importance of the public realm or even understood how it functions. Instead, many communities are planned so that all of their uses are set apart from each other: there are separate areas for stores, offices, homes, recreation, and industry. So if you work in an office park, you cannot walk to a local sandwich shop to buy lunch - you must drive to the nearest shop because it is either too far, too unpleasant, or too inconvenient to walk.



FIGURE 2.1 A well functioning public realm comfortably accommodates many uses: cycling, walking, and even socializing.

The public realm is more than just a physical layout of sidewalks and parks. It works best when it interacts with the different uses and destinations around it – the homes, shops, offices, schools, etc. A great public realm supports and is supported by complex combinations of different uses and destinations in close proximity. A sandwich shop close to the office, a drug store close to homes, a public park close to a school, and a movie theater close to restaurants are examples of interdependent proximities contributing to a great public realm. They generate the surefire ingredients of a successful public realm: people and combinations of different destinations.

A successful shopping mall is analogous to a successful public realm. Mall developers can be quite creative when it comes to deciding store locations, choreographing shoppers’ experiences from store to store, and choosing activities to host. Malls are prime examples of how multiple uses can coexist and depend on each other for an attractive experience. Many people go there to shop, eat, catch a movie, see friends, and even listen to a band.

Malls are a major facet of suburban life that have, in a sense, taken the pressure off town and city officials from thinking creatively about how to make their *streets* more interesting for people to live on and to visit. What results are streets that are only for automobiles and neighborhoods that are isolated from everything around them by long distances and big roads.

Planning and the Public Realm

AGA EMPHASIZED THE PUBLIC REALM above all else in its work in DeKalb. This is not the standard practice in planning today. It is far more common for planners to focus on regulating private development, attempting to impose conditions on the level of density allowed, the uses that developers can build, or the design and materials of buildings. Instead, the recommendations in this report begin with public realm improvements and regulate private property only insofar as those regulations enhance the public realm and prevent any negative impact on it.

16 Changing the function and character of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads will change the nature of the development along them and provide the setting for community life.

The framework for all private development is the public realm. Private development responds to the public realm and builds around it: fine houses line leafy drives; retail stores lie along well-traveled arteries; warehouses are located by highways; small shops serve walkable pedestrian neighborhoods. The development along North Druid Hills Road near I-85 is what it is – strip retail fronted by parking lots – because of what North Druid Hills Road is: a regional traffic artery with lots of cars and very few pedestrians, rather than a neighborhood asset.



FIGURE 2.2 An active street is for more than just circulation – it also supports social and economic activity. First Avenue, Seattle, WA.

Wise investments of both time and money in the public realm by local governments are generally far more efficient than the workings of the private market. Developers can demolish and rebuild their properties based on their own priorities, but the public controls public land. The public realm remains in place much longer than private properties, which are often redeveloped every couple of decades. Thus, repeated waves of development are shaped by public realm decisions made decades before.

Too often, planners apply formulas to work out how things *ought* to be – a technique commonly known as “needs analysis” – and then shake their heads in dismay when, invariably, the world doesn’t behave as it *ought* to. But planners are most effective when they find things that *can* happen; and in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills, as in many places, this means seizing on opportunities that can improve the quality of life. Consequently, AGA examined the existing conditions of the public realm in search of such opportunities.

03

The Planning Process

Background

THE IMPETUS FOR THIS STUDY came from three large property owners in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills expressing interest in redeveloping their sites. The Sembler Company, a Florida-based retail developer, optioned the 79-acre Park at Briarcliff housing development and inquired about purchasing the adjacent 30-acre County Board of Education property. Its plan was to build a 109-acre, mixed-use development, replete with over one million square feet of new retail and 3,700 new apartments and townhouses. HRPT, the owner of Executive Park, had also expressed interest in redeveloping its property. Later, the Pattni Lodging Group announced plans to transform the BellSouth Tower at the North Druid Hills Road exit from I-85 into a hotel.

In response to this series of impending redevelopments, County Commissioners Jeff Rader and Kathie Cannon wanted to ensure that any independent plans would actually progress as part of a coherent whole, rather than as isolated, unrelated pieces. The Commissioners were also determined that the planning process be collaborative rather than confrontational and that the general public and community leaders would remain involved throughout. They therefore asked the Livable Communities Coalition – a non-profit, member organization whose mission is to promote quality growth in the metropolitan Atlanta region – to hire Alex Garvin & Associates (AGA) to lead a six-month public planning process that could result in a master plan for these properties and the area around them.

Charting the Course

AGA WORKED WITH the Commissioners and the Livable Communities Coalition to develop a proactive process that provided for genuine public input while also capturing the value of private development and shaping that development for the public good.



The public meetings were opportunities for AGA to engage local residents directly.

FIGURE 3.1 (TOP) Jim Durrett, Commissioner Rader, Commissioner Gannon, and Alex Garvin (from left to right) take turns answering questions written on note cards by participants at a public meeting.

FIGURE 3.2 (BOTTOM) A local resident asks Mr. Garvin a question.

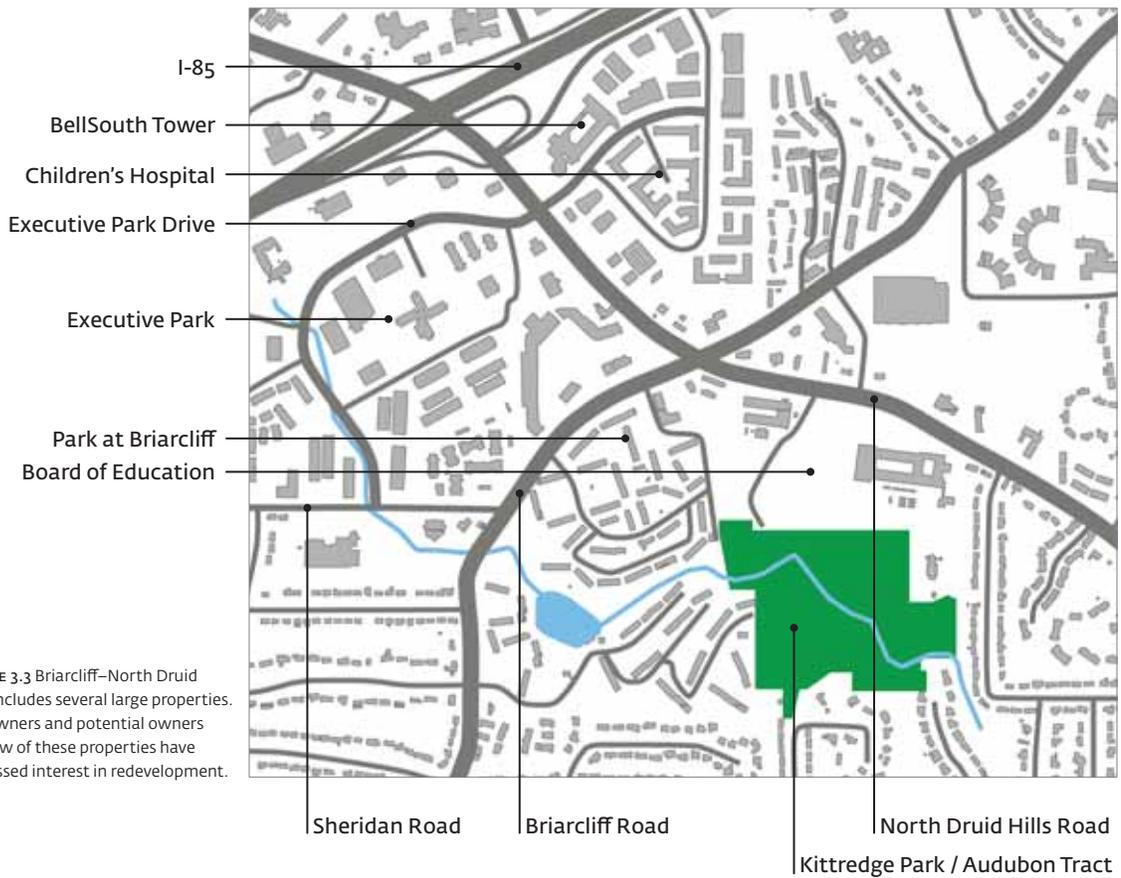


FIGURE 3.3 Briarcliff–North Druid Hills includes several large properties. The owners and potential owners of a few of these properties have expressed interest in redevelopment.

AGA worked with Commissioners Rader and Gannon and the Livable Communities Coalition to develop a proactive process that provided for genuine public input while also capturing and shaping private development.

Charting the course for this process involved identifying all parties with vested interests and inviting their participation.

Because of the Commissioners' desires to proceed as openly and inclusively as possible, it became clear that for such a process to succeed, AGA and the Commissioners would have to consider input from as many parties as possible who had a vested interest in the development. The opinions and knowledge

required for the proposals came from three major sources: AGA's analysis of existing conditions; input from three stakeholder groups – major property owners in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills, public officials, and local community leaders¹; and input from the public. About midway through the process, the Commissioners also established a technical advisory committee, described below.

AGA and the Commissioners also codified three fundamental rules to guide the process in order to establish the atmosphere and course of fairness and openness. First, everyone would know where things stood at any point during the proceedings, so that in the end, there would be

¹ See Appendix A for a list of participants in each group.

no surprises for anyone. Second, no single interest group would have veto power. And third, no decisions would be final without serious consideration of input from both the general public and the stakeholders.

THROUGHOUT AGA'S SIX-MONTH ENGAGEMENT IN DEKALB, the input from the stakeholder groups and the public established the course of each phase of its work. The topics studied in any given phase sometimes spilled over into the following phase, but the process generally occurred as follows:

- 1 Conduct background research; develop *guiding principles*
- 2 Conduct site inventory and analysis; begin design process for public realm
- 3 Establish *public realm framework*
- 4 Establish *guiding principles* for property development
- 5 Create a vision for the future of the area
- 6 Make recommendations for public action

In its work, AGA aimed to resolve differences among multiple interests. The resulting proposals had to be both politically and financially feasible, reconciling the large-property owners' financial targets with the need for any redevelopment to result in a great public realm.

AT THE VERY FIRST MEETING, Alex Garvin explained that AGA would first and foremost consider the public interest in the form of the public realm. The local resident's reactions immediately showed the affinity between this approach and what they had come prepared to discuss. Individual after individual rose to say that the sidewalks, transit, and recreation opportunities were inadequate; vehicular traffic was congested; the environment degraded. Four months focused on the public realm before large property owners spoke about plans for redevelopment. Throughout the six-month process, two principles emerged that defined public objectives:

- 1 Creating a public realm that meets the requirements of a 21st century community
 - + streets safe for pedestrians at all hours of the day
 - + universal pedestrian access
 - + recreation opportunities for all ages
 - + mass transit and bicycle alternatives to private motor vehicles
 - + easy access to and from regional transportation routes, namely I-85
 - + circulation alternatives for each transportation mode
- 2 Ameliorating the environment
 - + clean air
 - + clean water
 - + natural drainage
 - + adequate tree cover

Scope of Work

Guiding Principles

Analysis and Proposals

²The County owns two contiguous properties: Kittredge Park (2.6 acres) and the Audubon Tract (30 acres). For the sake of brevity, this document will refer to both pieces of property as the single whole of Kittredge Park.

AGA COMPILED a complete Geographic Information System (GIS) database and map of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and the surrounding territory for the purposes of examining and analyzing demographic data. The GIS database aided AGA in researching and designing street configurations and examining possible build-out scenarios under current zoning. Other tasks included examining property ownership records, reviewing deed restrictions on Kittredge Park², researching soil types and soil drainage properties, and studying the legal requirements for Community Improvement Districts and Tax Allocation Districts.

But AGA’s work, as comprehensive as it was, could not supplant the guidance of experienced professionals representing relevant County and State agencies. AGA therefore collaborated with officials from the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), the Transportation Division of DeKalb County’s Public Works Department, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the DeKalb County Planning Department, and other agencies to discuss technical issues and to seek their advice. Various local residents also provided invaluable assistance; for instance, a professor at Emory University pointed out that a rare plant native to the area, the “bay star-vine” (*Schisandra glabra*), thrives in a ravine in Kittredge Park. This professor offered expert guidance on how to protect this species while also ensuring public access to this green open space.

An Informed Public Process

EVERY MONTH, Jim Durrett, the executive director of the Livable Communities Coalition, and Commissioners Jeff Rader and Kathie Gannon ran a large meeting at the Kittredge Magnet School open to all who wished to attend. Alex Garvin would present AGA’s most recent work to date, and once he had finished, the Commissioners and Mr. Durrett would open the floor to questions and comments. Mr. Garvin, the Commissioners, and Mr. Durrett would respond to the questions and comments that followed.

The people who spoke at the meetings and who wrote emails to AGA and the Livable Communities Coalition expressed a wide variety of views. Not surprisingly, some of these people opposed any significant development on the grounds that it would bring more traffic and pollution to their neighborhood, thus changing its character and degrading its quality of life. Others objected to the School Board’s willingness to sell school property for development. Some even suggested that the planning process itself was a fraud, meant to pave the way for unbridled development that was already a “done deal” and would ignore the public interest. At the very least, this report will refute the last suggestion.

During the monthly public meetings, it was difficult for participants to respond thoroughly and completely to the new information presented due to several reasons: the number of participants, the stamina of all

involved, and the time constraints of the meetings. Thus it was crucial for residents to be able to take time to ponder AGA's presentations and related issues between meetings. (The typical public planning exercise – the *charrette* – purports to promote public participation, but runs roughshod over the necessity for sustained, careful, and informed consideration by the public over a long period of time.) This provided local residents with the opportunity to respond more thoughtfully at the next meeting and to present even greater insight to guide AGA during the following iteration of its work.

AGA performed studies and other preparatory work between meetings to address the multitude of concerns and to solve technical issues, so it could then provide meaningful information to the public. This is the only way the community could stay well informed and respond with relevant concerns. Even so, definitive answers often did not emerge from these meetings, but more often a series of questions and recommendations arose that AGA would then investigate as part of the following month of work. AGA could then return with answers and changes that addressed those questions and recommendations, and the process would repeat itself.

Another mechanism used to keep the process open and continuous was a project website (<http://www.briarcliffnorthdruidhills.org>). After every public meeting, AGA posted the slideshow it had presented at the

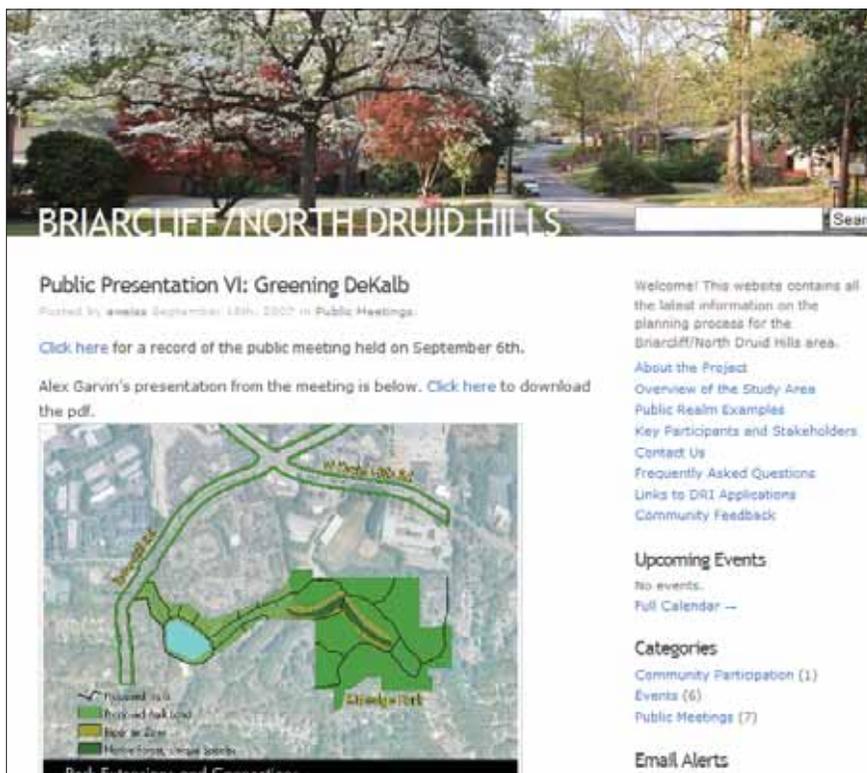


FIGURE 3.4 The homepage of the Briarcliff–North Druid Hills website.



FIGURE 3.5 AGA met regularly with community leaders because they could identify ways for the plan to fit in with the quality of life that residents want to achieve for themselves and their neighbors.

public meeting on the website along with a full record of the meeting, which included answers to any written questions that had been submitted. The website also included a calendar of public meetings, a web-only presentation about the public realm, and a section for citizens to express their thoughts and concerns and to ask questions. AGA compiled these questions and comments – and those from the meetings and in emails – along with AGA’s responses and posted them on the website.

Stakeholder Participation

BEFORE EACH PUBLIC MEETING, AGA usually met with three stakeholder groups: community leaders, property owners, and County agency officials. (The meetings with the agency officials were less regular than the other two sets of meetings but were nevertheless critical to the process.) These stakeholders were essential to ensuring that anything that AGA proposed could happen: the property owners because they control their land and thus much of what can be done on it; the community leaders because they are participants in the political process and can work to stymie or to support and inform the proposals; and the agency officials because they could make AGA aware of all related initiatives – past, present, and planned – they could guide AGA through the local agency cultures, and they could provide technical feedback.

These three groups represented different, though not necessarily contradictory, points of view. The property owners spoke from an economic perspective – the plan must be financially feasible for them, or else they would not support it. The community leaders spoke from a political

perspective – the plan must fit in with the quality of life that residents want to achieve for themselves and their neighbors. And the agency officials provided a technical viewpoint – they would not support a functionally deficient plan.

About midway through the six-month planning process, Commissioners Rader and Gannon created a technical advisory committee comprised of people from the area who had professional experience with planning and development – architects, landscape architects, and planners. The purpose of the committee was to provide an intermediary body for the community that could clarify complex issues and in turn bring any still unaddressed community concerns into the process.

Meeting with and presenting ideas and proposals to these groups enabled AGA to hear opinions and to catch mistakes before the public presentations. It also made possible more substantive conversations than would be possible in a large public setting.

AGA’s proposals for Briarcliff–North Druid Hills evolved and changed a great deal over the entire course of the process, sometimes as a result of ongoing analytic work, sometimes as a result of suggestions from the public, and sometimes in response to stakeholder observations. AGA also worked with the major property owners as they developed their plans for their respective properties, but with two in particular: HRPT, owners of Executive Park, and the Sembler Company. Their plans

FIGURE 3.6 AGA also met regularly with major property owners in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills to ensure that the plan would be financially feasible, and therefore doable.



evolved significantly over the course of this period as well, demonstrating the collaborative nature of the process.

In the opinion of HRPT, Executive Park, the first suburban office park in metro Atlanta, is outmoded. Office demand has been declining; the buildings are old and need expensive repairs; and the property does not provide the lively, mixed-use environment sought by many prospective tenants. To that end, HRPT proposed to redevelop the property. The initial design proposal they shared with AGA showed a relatively typical suburban shopping center – “big-box” retail, a large open parking lot, and apartment buildings to the side. Over the following few months, AGA worked with HRPT and their architects to examine a number of different site configurations. HRPT wanted a plan that would attract tenants to a new Executive Park. AGA was determined to create an exceptional public realm.

What emerged met everyone’s requirements – a network of walkable streets; integrated office, housing, and retail; enough parking for the tenants; and a new park. Getting to this result required compromises on all sides, but all the participants believed it will greatly improve the current situation by providing a *public realm framework* to accommodate future changing tastes and markets.

Early Sembler proposals integrated retail, office, and apartment buildings into a street system for the northern portion of the site. This area

was separated by a narrow linear open space containing an existing creek from a residential enclave planned for the southern portion of the site.

During the public meeting at which the Sembler Company presented its initial designs, an audience member complained that the proposed buildings appeared to turn their backs on Briarcliff and

North Druid Hills Roads by placing entrances to retail and offices only on the interior of the site. The Sembler Company then adjusted its plan so that stores would face the proposed boulevards on Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads. Sembler also agreed to accept the more modest street widths that had already been discussed at several of the public meetings.

From the start, the Sembler Company had also incorporated the existing creek and lake into its proposed development. Discussions with civic leaders led AGA to propose extending Kittredge Park along the creek, thereby expanding the role of the creek from what Sembler had first presented. Consistent with County and State regulations, 75 feet on each side of the creek will be set aside to filter run-off and absorb temporary water overflow while simultaneously serving as usable

What emerged met everyone’s requirements – a network of walkable streets; integrated office, housing, and retail; enough parking for the tenants; and a new park.

parkland. AGA also advocated maximizing public access to the expanded park by requiring a 60-foot-wide Park Drive – replete with sidewalks and bike lanes – bordering Kittredge Park and on each side of the creek and new parkland to connect the residential enclave to the south with the mixed-use development to the north. When the Gables Company and HRPT suggested installing sidewalks along the extension of the creek, AGA proposed purchasing additional property to accommodate the *park drives* and connect the new parkland all the way to Kittredge Park.³

³ See pgs 56-61.

The Evolving Planning Process

AS A RESULT OF THE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESS, this document presents proposals that can be implemented. It may not be what any individual participant expected when the process began, but it includes choices upon which the participants agreed. More important, it has initiated a planning process that will continue long after these recommendations are adopted. As President Dwight D. Eisenhower once put it, “Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” Likewise, it is important to realize that the planning for Briarcliff–North Druid Hills will continue.

The planning process for Briarcliff–North Druid Hills that has started is a more open, collaborative, and thoughtful approach to development than the erratic Second Growth that has heretofore characterized the neighborhood. This new process has focused on creating the *public realm framework* that will reverse the relentless deterioration of the environment and the quality of life in the area.

04 Existing Conditions

Introduction

THE ATLANTA METROPOLITAN REGION has been growing rapidly and has become steadily more prosperous, and DeKalb County is no exception. According to Census Bureau estimates, the population of DeKalb County grew from 665,000 in 2000 to 723,000 in 2006.

This growth has shown no signs of slowing. Recent studies indicate that the population within a five-minute drive of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is projected to increase from 60,946 in 2006 to 64,951 in 2011, and the median household income is projected to increase from \$67,836 to \$86,285.

The market conditions at play in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills have created demand for additional housing and office space, which will result in an increase in density. Development has surprisingly kept pace.

Developers have been acquiring land and demolishing old houses, run-down residential complexes, and office buildings, replacing them with bigger and more modern office buildings and higher-density housing – apartment buildings, single- and multi-family townhouses, and detached, single-family houses on small lots. There has been a similar boom in retail development, with new shopping centers appearing

everywhere. And in order to respond to these foreseen changes and to help maintain and even improve this area’s high quality of life, DeKalb County Commissioners Rader and Cannon, the Livable Communities

DeKalb County can either allow the greater congestion – or it can take the steps that will take advantage of the positive potential of population growth.



FIGURE 4.1 (TOP) Drive-In retailing along Briarcliff Road.

FIGURE 4.2 Loehmann's Shopping Center.

FIGURE 4.3 Office buildings at Executive Park.

FIGURE 4.4 (BOTTOM) Drive-in retailing on North Druid Hills Road.



FIGURE 4.5 The Atlanta metropolitan region is an economic powerhouse, marked by rapid population growth and a steady rise in prosperity.

Coalition, and Alex Garvin & Associates (AGA) wanted to give people a new conception about how growth and development in cities can be planned.

Suburban development is “First Growth” urban development. Just as vegetation takes over a cleared area over a long period of time in successive, unique waves, so too have the fringes of cities changed over time – starting with farms or unused land turning into suburban communities (First Growth). Several years after an area experiences First Growth, market forces may provide an impetus for more development, and what was once cheap land becomes increasingly desirable to more people. Thus, it becomes less cost-effective to build small buildings on relatively large lots. Many suburban areas in the United States are now experiencing such a wave of development. It is “Second Growth.”

30

It is quite feasible for the problems of Second Growth to become the basis for a new public realm.

The changes that come with Second Growth bring growing pains. New traffic begins to overwhelm roads, and the landscape typically includes little infrastructure that allows residents to choose modes of transportation, like walking, bicycling, or public transportation, as alternatives to driving. Areas experiencing Second Growth can become, in essence, overgrown suburbs – they no longer are quiet, convenient, peaceful places to live. Instead, these areas become noisy, congested, busy places ill-equipped to carry the new automobiles and people that are part of such sudden growth. The things that once made suburban life so attrac-



FIGURE 4.6 Multiple dwellings and town homes are the Second Growth that is replacing the tree cover and single-family houses that characterized First Growth development in DeKalb County.

tive are then gone, and a different lifestyle in a more city-like environment emerges.

These problems are inherent to Second Growth. If a local government (or members of the community it serves) attempts to ignore an inevitable population increase – thereby failing to implement a strategy for solving the problems that come with it – the growth will proceed unchecked and will certainly result in an inharmonious place to live.

As in all suburban areas experiencing Second Growth, DeKalb residents are beginning to worry about what will happen to their homes and quality of life. The County can either allow the usual results – greater congestion accompanied by a deterioration of a fine neighborhood’s quality of life – or it can take the steps that will take advantage of the positive potential of population growth to produce an improved environment with more choices among residential, recreation, transportation, shopping, and employment opportunities. Second Growth represents a great opportunity to change the landscape in ways that can lead to a quality of life even better than what existed before. For this to occur, the problems that Second Growth poses must be identified early on, and the development must be carefully guided to create a better community. The best way to guide Second Growth is to focus on the quality of the public realm, which enjoys a complex, symbiotic relationship with private development.

Increased density is more people per unit area, resulting in a greater



FIGURE 4.7 Multi-story residential complexes throughout DeKalb County are replacing one-family homes with big yards, and paved parking areas are replacing dense tree cover.

number of houses and businesses required to accommodate the population. If there are more grocery stores, offices, retail, and housing (and different kinds of housing) in an area, they will naturally be closer to one another than before, and this in turn implies that walking and bicycling can become more attractive ways for residents to get around the area. If the infrastructures for walking and bicycling are carefully designed and completely constructed, no longer will every resident need to drive a car to get a carton of milk, buy a toothbrush, get a haircut, or visit a neighbor. If this is developed hand in hand with a new public transportation network, then the options for residents increase even more and the traffic pressure has yet another safety valve.

Too often, Second Growth proceeds without any larger vision of the public interest. But Second Growth in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills must be thought of differently: not as an inevitable deterioration in the community's quality of life, but as an opportunity for improving that quality of life. This project's objective has been to devise a strategy that will lead to that improvement. This cannot be done through minimal, superficial actions. Briarcliff-North Druid Hills must be retrofitted with a Public Realm Framework that will transform inevitable growth into an asset rather than a liability.

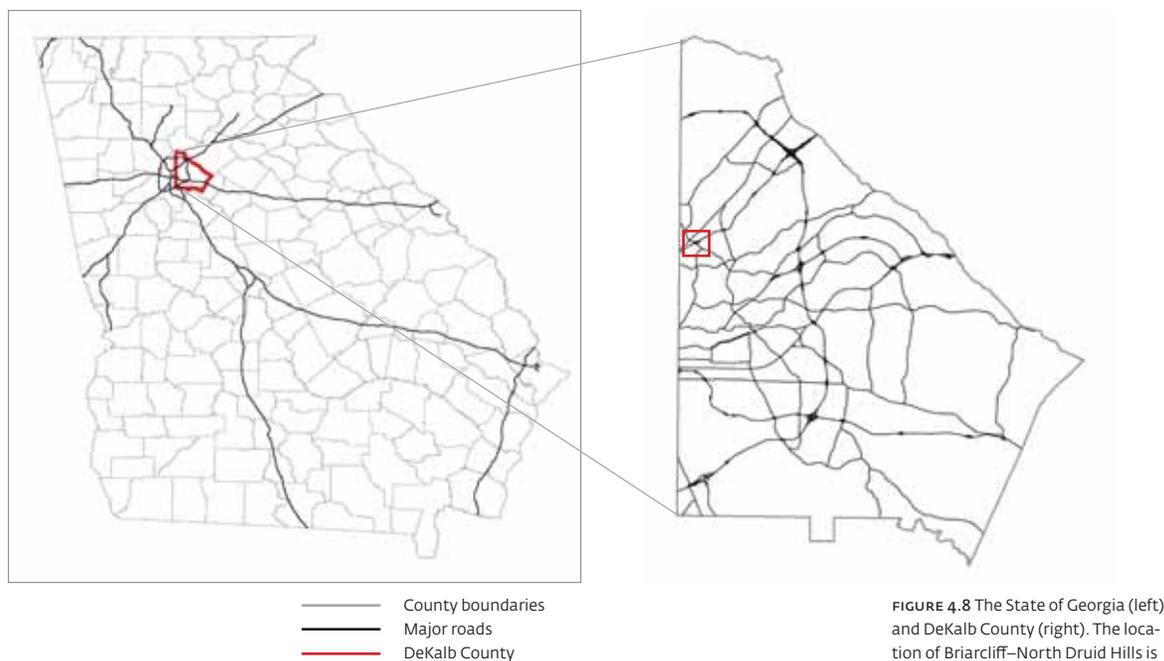


FIGURE 4.8 The State of Georgia (left) and DeKalb County (right). The location of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is marked in red on the right.

BRIARCLIFF–NORTH DRUID HILLS lies in the northwestern part of the county, just northeast of Atlanta. It consists of approximately 688 acres surrounding the intersection of North Druid Hills Road and Briarcliff Road, both significant arteries serving the surrounding area. The roads intersect each other obliquely, creating four uneven quadrants.

One of the primary assets of this part of DeKalb County is its set of convenient connections to nearby major destinations. Running along the northern boundary of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is I-85, which connects to Midtown Atlanta about six miles away. The area is about three miles via North Druid Hills and Roxboro Roads from Buckhead, a regional sub-center with millions of square feet of office and retail space. Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is also about three miles via Briarcliff Road and Clifton Road from Emory University and the national headquarters of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both major employment centers.

The center of the area addressed by ACA’s proposals includes a neighborhood shopping complex anchored by Loehmann’s, a large, free-standing Target store, and automobile-oriented retail serving traffic on North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads. There is a substantial amount of office space at Executive Park and in the one-story buildings along Tullie Road and Tullie Circle, many of which are part of the Children’s Healthcare System. To the south is the Park at Briarcliff, a 1017-unit apartment complex owned by the DeKalb County Housing Authority

Briarcliff–North Druid Hills: Background



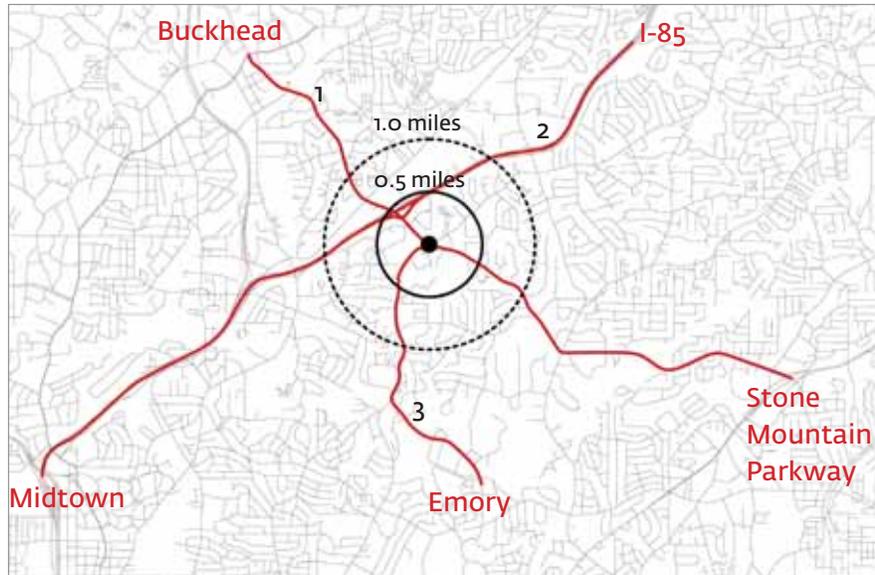
FIGURE 4.9 Aerial photograph of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills.



FIGURE 4.10 Study map of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills used in this report.

FIGURE 4.11 Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is centrally located among major regional destinations.

- Intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads
 - 0.5 mile buffer
 - 1.0 mile buffer
 - Regional destination routes
 - Roadways
- 1 North Druid Hills Road
 - 2 Interstate 85
 - 3 Briarcliff Road



under the terms of a ground lease. To the east of those apartments are three schools and a football stadium owned by the DeKalb Board of Education. The three schools are all County-wide specialty schools. The Board of Education has announced its intention to move them.

South of the schools and east of the Park at Briarcliff lies Kittredge Park, a 2.6-acre county park consisting of two baseball fields, a public swimming pool, a parking lot, and a 30-acre natural area.

Detached, single-family houses, townhouses, and apartment complexes dominate the outskirts of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and the surrounding territory (especially to the east, south, and west).

The Public Realm

THE PUBLIC REALM IN THIS PART OF DEKALB COUNTY currently exists for the convenience of people passing through the area, not for its residents or visitors. It accommodates motor vehicles first and everything else afterwards, if at all; in many places, there are no sidewalks, and with the exception of a tiny stretch of Briarcliff Road, there is no space allocated for bicycles. Many people who participated in the planning process demanded action to improve this situation.

On the other hand, residents of other metropolitan Atlanta neighborhoods, like Druid Hills, are pleased enough with their respective environments that they demand only minor improvements. In these cases, the public realm serves everybody: dog walkers and delivery truck drivers, bicyclists and bus commuters, elderly couples out for a stroll in



FIGURE 4.12 As North Druid Hills Road demonstrates, the new traffic that comes with Second Growth overwhelms suburban roads.

the park and young married couples out jogging, regional motorists on their way downtown, and teenagers on their way to school. The opportunities exist to bring this kind of public realm to Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and all other areas like it.

The arteries in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills exhibit several of the characteristics typical of suburban sprawl. The few major roads that carry the vast majority of automobile traffic are lined with parking lots, prominent retail signage geared toward passing motorists, and buildings set far back from the street edge; landscaping varies from grass to sculpted collections of plants; power lines and telephone cables hang above; and other miscellaneous signs and structures are scattered throughout. Neighborhood streets wend their way past houses with varying densities of trees. Sidewalks sometimes appear (and then disappear) along both the arterials and the neighborhood streets, but in most places they are absent.

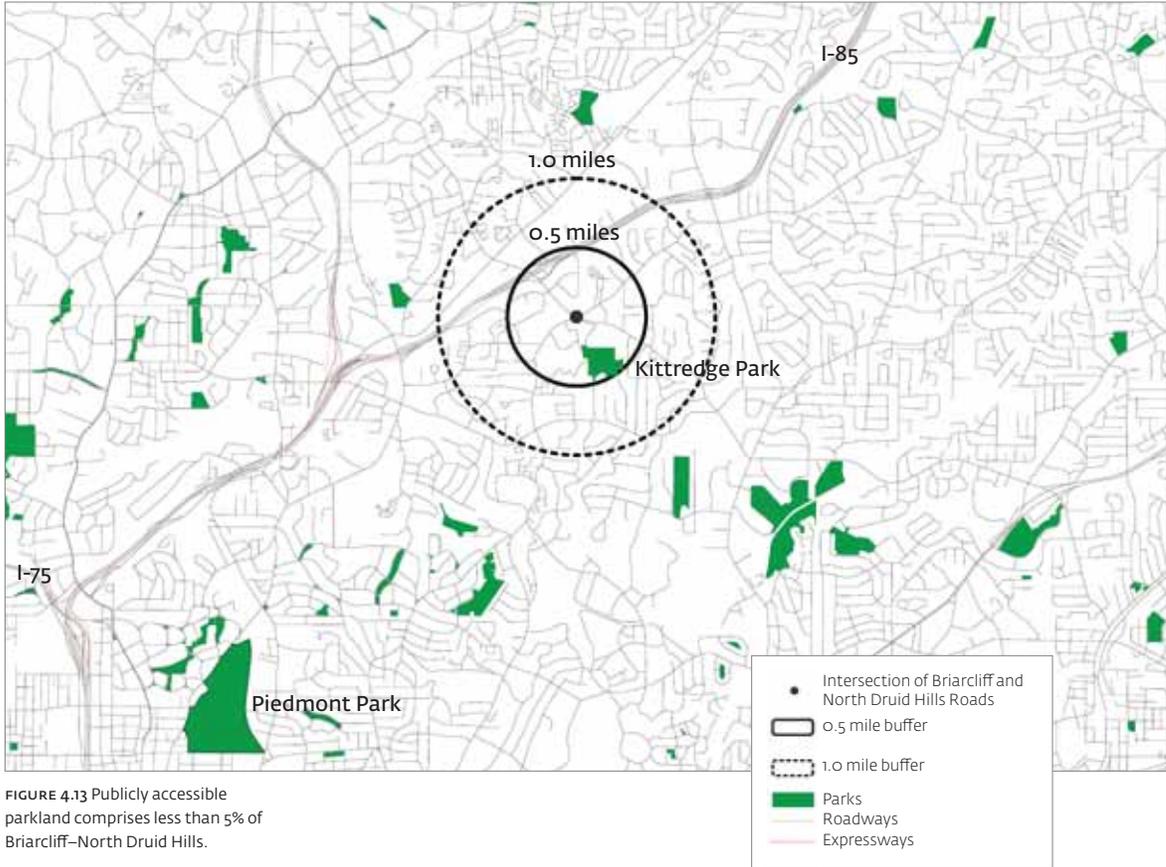


FIGURE 4.13 Publicly accessible parkland comprises less than 5% of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

LIKE MOST OF METROPOLITAN ATLANTA, this section of DeKalb County devotes a tiny portion of its territory to public parkland – less than 5%. By contrast, 20% of the land surface of San Francisco, 18% of Boston, and 16% of Minneapolis comprise publicly owned parkland. In 2005, the City of Atlanta decided to remedy the situation. It approved the creation of a 23-mile Beltline Emerald Necklace encircling the central portion of the city and has already acquired two major new parks at the Bellwood Quarry and Boulevard Crossing.

In 2005, DeKalb County acquired an additional 30 acres of land, known as the Audubon Tract, adjacent to Kittedredge Park, using funds provided by DeKalb’s 2001 Parks Bond Issue, the Georgia Greenspace Program,¹ and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation. The seller of the land placed a series of deed restrictions on it that limit the amount of parkland that can be developed with auxiliary buildings and prevent the park’s use for “active recreation” – this bars such facilities as formal ball fields and swimming pools.

Since its acquisition, nothing has been done to the Audubon Tract. There are currently two access points – one from Kittedredge Park (formerly the driveway of a demolished day care center), and one in the Merry

¹ Rules of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Administration, Chapter 391-1-4: “Georgia Greenspace Program.”



FIGURE 4.14 Most people are unaware that Kittredge Park, the only park within a mile of the intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads, is available for their use.

Hills neighborhood. Set in the middle of a quiet residential street, the latter access point lacks sufficient parking. The Audubon Tract is invisible from all major roads and entirely unadvertised aside from a small sign on North Druid Hills Road. As a result, it is underused and unkempt.

Too much of this part of DeKalb County is developed and privately owned to acquire as parkland easily and inexpensively. Thus the goal should be to improve existing parkland, provide greater and more open access to it, and make sure it is preserved and maintained environmentally and as a recreational facility for all ages.

Unfortunately, most of the existing parkland in the area is inaccessible. The main part of the park is tucked behind the three schools and a football stadium, making it virtually invisible to passersby. In public meetings, some local residents were surprised to learn that such a park even existed despite the fact that they were standing in the auditorium of Kittredge Magnet School, which is about 1,000 feet away from the park itself. Despite the large size of the greenspace, only the two baseball diamonds, a public swimming pool, and a parking lot behind the school are used heavily.



FIGURE 4.15 The dense tree cover of Kittredge Park is not visible from North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads.

Kittredge Park once held a house and a day-care center, both were recently demolished. The rest of the area remains largely covered with forest, some of which is old growth. Although these woods include a habitat for a rare, endangered plant species called the bay star-vine, they are overgrown with aggressive invasive species such as privet, kudzu, and wisteria.

The creek that runs through Kittredge Park – a tributary to South Peachtree Creek – also flows alongside Executive Park Drive. It passes through a wooded area within the Park at Briarcliff residential community, but is inaccessible to all but the highly intrepid until it reaches a spot where it flows into a small lake. The lake is surrounded by a pathway and is flanked by a health club on one side and an open stretch of grass with picnic tables on the other. This area is well used by the residents of the apartment complex, but the lake is a private facility – anybody who wants to visit must come through the gates to the Park at Briarcliff.

Beyond the lake, the creek flows out to Briarcliff Road, where it is particularly overgrown with kudzu and other invasive vegetation. From there it passes under Briarcliff Road through a culvert, runs between an

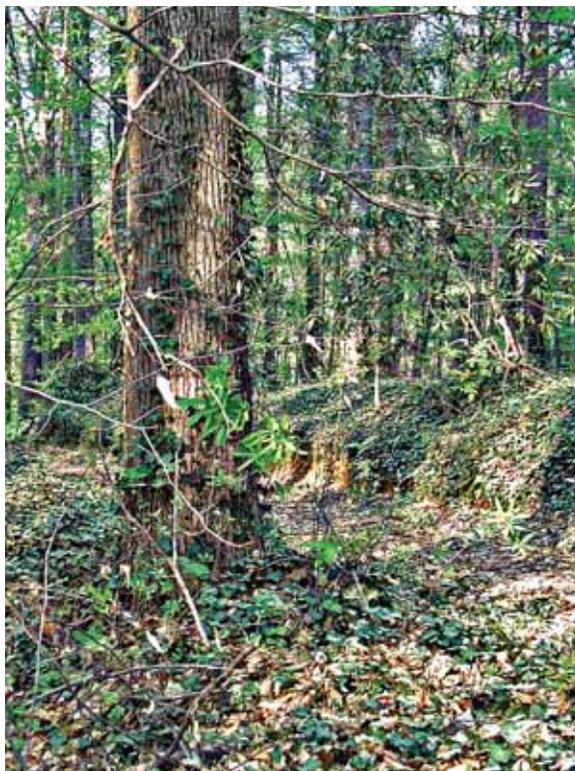


FIGURE 4.16 The old paths in Kittredge Park are slowly disappearing under new growth.



FIGURE 4.17 The creek running through Kittredge Park is eroded and overgrown with invasive species, and shows signs of neglect.

underused parking lot and an office building, and continues between relatively steep banks to Sheridan Road where, strewn with trash, it continues along Executive Park Drive, and then disappears into another culvert, which takes it across to the other side of I-85.

IN MANY COMMUNITIES, we have come to equate the movement of automobiles with the movement of people. But the residents of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills want other options: they want to walk, ride bicycles, and use convenient mass transit, whether for commuting or running errands, or for exercise or religious reasons. At the same time, vehicular traffic in the area is also a concern for people in the neighborhood.

The collection of sidewalks in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is nothing close to a network – sidewalks are scattered in random fragments all over the area. Consequently, residents cannot easily or safely walk anywhere; the automobile is accommodated above any other form of transportation. This is a particular problem for the large Orthodox Jewish population that lives in and around the area who are precluded by their faith from operating motor vehicles on the Sabbath. The many exposed strips of earth in the grass alongside the roads – the “desire lines” – reveal local demand for sidewalks. Also, the area’s blocks are quite long

CIRCULATION

Sidewalks



FIGURE 4.18 A well trodden footpath in the grass along Executive Park Drive – a “desire line” – is representative of a common sight in the area and signals an unmet demand for a proper sidewalk.

between intersections – too long for pedestrians to cross safely – and crosswalks are not adequately marked. But if a safe, pleasant walking infrastructure were available, people would feel less hindered to walk, and perhaps even encouraged. As a result, the demand for good walking infrastructure would in turn grow further and may help take some cars off of local routes.

Bicycle Lanes

The difficulties pedestrians face are nothing compared to the plight of cyclists. Cycling in a suburban area such as this is a particularly dangerous endeavor. If there is no space allotted exclusively for bicycles, cyclists have the choice of either the roadway or the sidewalk. The scarcity of sidewalks, the poor access they provide, the presence of pedestrians, and the presence of obstacles such as newspaper dispensers, power poles, and street signs make them an unviable and sometimes dangerous option. The roadways’ inadequate shoulders and parked cars force cyclists into vehicular traffic; this then forces cars either to slow down or drive in the next lane, which may contain oncoming traffic. This situation tends to annoy motorists, to slow traffic, and to endanger the cyclist.

In DeKalb County, as in much of the United States, a bicycle lane is a five-foot-wide strip of asphalt roadway that has been delineated with white paint as being reserved for bicycles. In theory, these bicycle lanes are supposed to provide a safe space for people to ride without worrying about being struck by a car. In practice, however, cyclists who entrust



FIGURE 4.19 As demonstrated by the red lines, the area's sidewalks do not comprise a fully interconnected network.



FIGURE 4.20 The lone bike lane – shown here as an orange line – is only a quarter of a mile long. There is no comprehensive network that safely accommodates cyclists.

their safety to the protection offered by bicycle lanes are taking notable risks – most motorists treat these bicycle lanes as extensions of driving lanes or as extra parking spaces. Cyclists are often not respected as fellow occupants of the road and are considered interlopers. The result can be extreme peril for cyclists.

In all of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills, there is just a single, quarter-mile stretch of Briarcliff Road equipped to accommodate bicycles. But it leads from nothing to nowhere. Even worse, it is completely ignored by the cars, trucks, and buses that treat the space as an extension of their motorway.

Even before detailed analysis began, it became clear from residents' complaints that traffic was a major and immediate problem in the area. When the effects of Second Growth become more prominent in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills, the traffic problems will only worsen if the area does not adapt its development strategy to accommodate the coming changes. The problems stem from two causes: the volume of traffic (caused primarily by the combination of two types: regional and local) and the nature of the road connectivity in the area, which concentrates most traffic onto Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads, the area's two main arterials.

I-85 is the most dominant element of the transportation system in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills and provides access to a large portion of

Concentration of Vehicular Traffic



FIGURE 4.21 Traffic on North Druid Hills Road coming from and going to I-85. Since most streets terminate at either Briarcliff or North Druid Hills Road, the vehicular traffic they carry has no alternative but to exacerbate congestion on these already crowded arteries.

the area’s residents and visitors. By extension, the highway’s exit and entrance ramps are destinations, drawing regional traffic through the area via Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads, resulting in conflicts between regional and local traffic, and thereby clogging these arterials.

The intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads serves as a regional traffic hub. It connects shopping and workplaces in Buckhead and areas along I-85 (such as Midtown) to the west with Stone Mountain Parkway to the east, and with Emory University and the CDC to the south. Thus, drivers going to and from any of these major destinations must pass through this intersection.

The traffic counts collected by the Georgia Department of Transportation confirm that traffic is by far the most concentrated at the intersection of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads.² Most of the other roads in the area are short streets leading to dead ends. The result of this is anybody within Briarcliff–North Druid Hills who wants to travel elsewhere – or even to most of the destinations within the area – must use either North Druid Hills Road or Briarcliff Road. In other words, there is little connectivity. Thus, the two roads must accommodate regional through-traffic as well as almost all local traffic. Moreover, virtually all recent development has continued this pattern of dead-end streets that force their occupants onto these two same roads, further increasing the load.

This arterial system provides no flexibility. There are no simple alternate routes for detours when traffic is heavy or when there is an accident.

² See Figure 4.22.



FIGURES 4.22 (A-C) The sizes of the arrows show the distributions of traffic turning left, going straight, and turning right from each direction. The numeric figures alongside each diagram are the total numbers of vehicles that pass through the intersection during the hours shown. (Source: Georgia Traffic, Inc.)

Traffic can build up easily during rush hour, weekends, or heavy shopping periods because there is no outlet.

Atlanta’s urban-style Midtown/Ansley Park provides a telling counterpoint to the lack of connectivity in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills: it boasts a more finely articulated and complete, connective network of roads. Traffic flows more easily through this neighborhood because drivers have more options from which to choose their routes and thus can avoid traffic jams. Also, the vehicles are dispersed throughout the network rather than concentrated on two main arteries, as happens in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills.

Other differences between the road network of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and that of Midtown/Ansley Park are also demonstrative. Along Midtown/Ansley Park, five roads cross I-75–I-85 in a 7420-foot (1.4-mile) stretch, all within 1855 feet (.35 miles) from one another, on average. Another way to look at it: there are 2.85 crossings per mile. By contrast, the three roads that cross I-85 near Briarcliff–North Druid Hills are 8,005 feet (1.5 miles) from each other on average, making for .66 crossings per mile.

³ Distances are measured in feet, rounded to the nearest 10 feet.

Comparison of Midtown/Ansley Park and Briarcliff–North Druid Hills³

Stretch of I-75–I-85 in Midtown/Ansley Park	
17th Street NW to 14th Street NW	1,790
14th Street NW to 10th Street NW	1,880
10th Street NW to Ferst Drive NW	1,680
Ferst Drive NW to North Avenue	2,070
Total	7,420
Average Distance Between Crossings	1,855
Number of Crossings Per Mile	2.85

Stretch of I-85 along Briarcliff–North Druid Hills	
Lenox Road to North Druid Hills Road	8,590
North Druid Hills Road to Clairmont Road	7,420
Total	16,010
Average Distance Between Crossings	8,005
Number of Crossings Per Mile	0.66

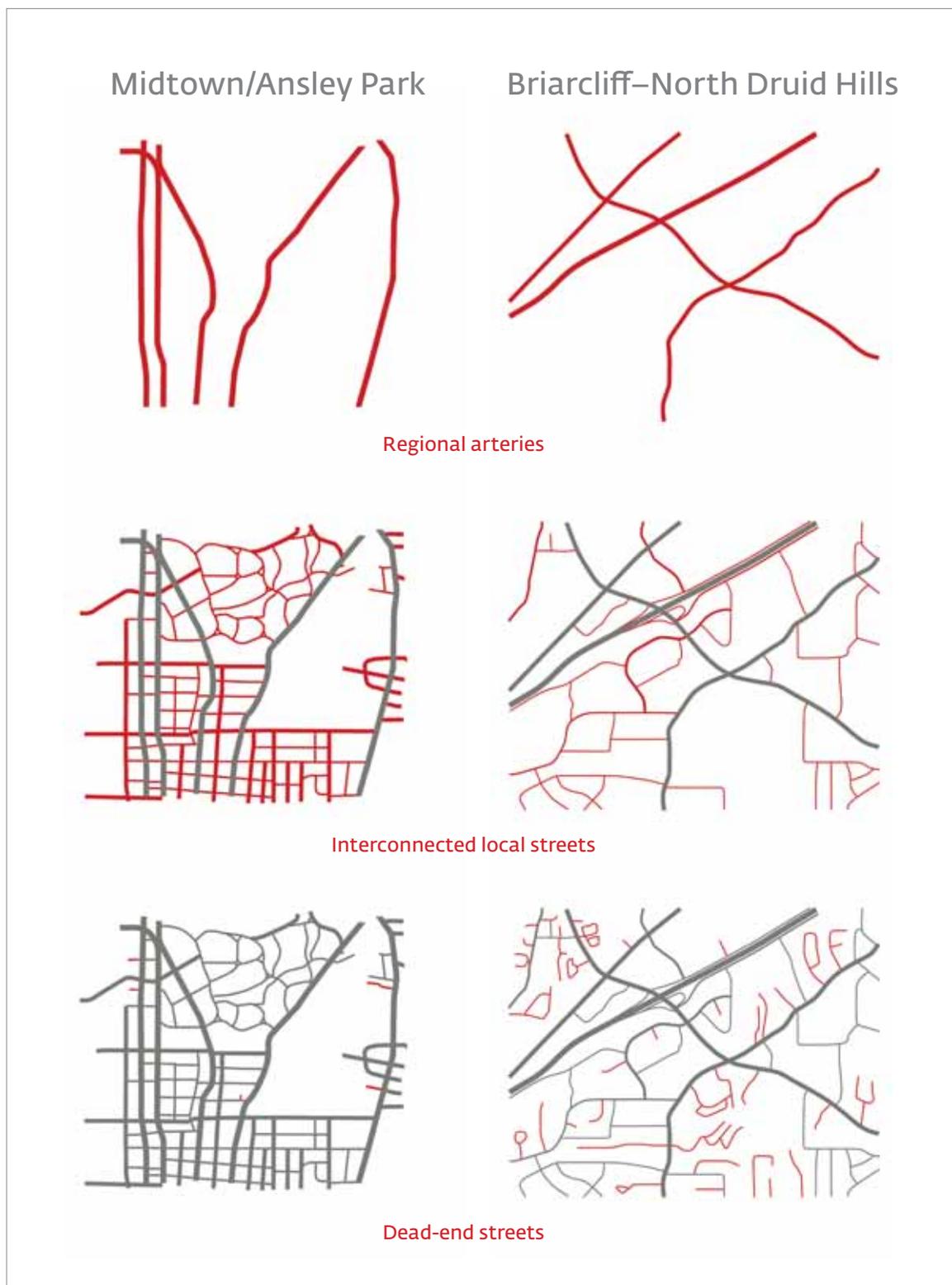
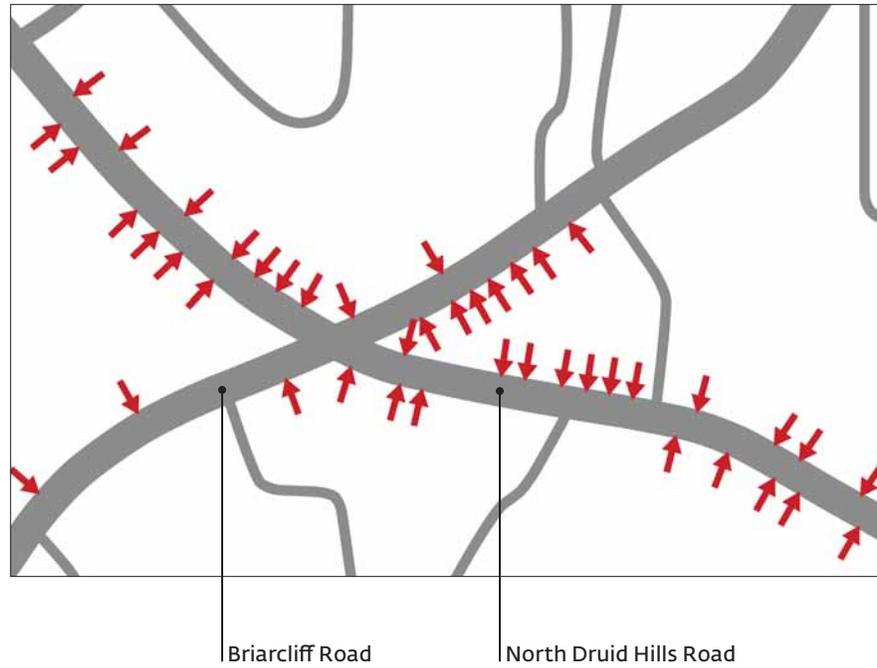


FIGURE 4.23 Traffic flows more easily through Midtown/Ansley Park than Briarcliff-North Druid Hills because vehicles are dispersed throughout a street network that offers drivers a variety of alternative routes for avoiding traffic jams.

FIGURE 4.24 The curb cuts on Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads lead to conflicts between local and regional traffic.

 Curb cut



Curb Cuts

The situation is exacerbated by curb cuts for all the automobile-dependent businesses that line Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads. Vehicles constantly use these access points to turn into, turn out of, and across traffic to get to local stores and offices, blocking other vehicles, and severely increasing the risk of accidents.

Inappropriate Road Design

Worse yet, the traffic lights along North Druid Hills Road are timed for posted speeds rather than actually prevailing speeds. Modern roads are typically designed to accommodate traffic that moves faster than the posted speed limit. This is done in the interest of safety – the thinking is that this buffer gives motorists room for error. But motorists, seeing this room for error, react by increasing their speeds. Because traffic signals are timed for the posted speed limit rather than the prevailing speed, the traffic moves in quick spurts punctuated by enervating pauses rather than a little more slowly and more smoothly. Further, the distances between fast-moving vehicles are greater than those between slow-moving vehicles: therefore, ironically, the faster the individual vehicles, the slower the traffic and the less efficient the road.

Public Transit

Current development patterns in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills are not dense enough to support frequent, convenient transit service. The nearest MARTA train stops are at Lindbergh Station and at Lenox Station in Buckhead – 2.5 miles away. The bus routes that run through the area do not provide frequent service to these stations or convenient connections



FIGURE 4.25 Vehicles using the curb cuts conflict with the moving traffic on North Druid Hills Road.

to nearby destinations, and the buses face the same traffic congestion that cars do.

There are currently four bus routes that run through Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. Of these, only one, Route 16, runs as often as every 15 minutes at peak times. Routes 8 and 47 run no more often than every 30 minutes (except for when Route 8 provides extra service for students on school days), and Route 33, the only direct connection to the shopping and transit at Lindbergh Station, runs every 40 minutes. Route 47 is the only bus that provides access to Buckhead, and that bus runs for most of its length along the I-85 access road. There are two problems with this route: it is lined with stores and small businesses, not residences; and it is on the opposite side of I-85 from Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. These two factors make the route incredibly inconvenient to local residents.

MARTA runs no direct bus route from the Briarcliff–North Druid Hills area to Emory and the CDC. Until recently, Emory ran a shuttle called the “Cliff Bus” to the area.

Also, the bus stops in the area provide little to no route or schedule information, discouraging use by everyone except those who have no other choice. Travel by bus is currently not a very viable or attractive transit option.

Environmental Issues

THE ATLANTA METRO AREA GENERALLY ENJOYS a wonderfully extensive tree cover, and this part of DeKalb is no exception – at least in the single-family housing areas. Trees are beneficial for many reasons: they provide shade, lower the ambient temperature (thereby reducing the use of electricity for air-conditioning), absorb stormwater, make the area visually appealing and generally more attractive, provide habitats for birds and other small animals, absorb carbon dioxide, and trap dust and particulate matter.

Unfortunately, the commercial core of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills – approximately 254 acres – not only has very few trees, but is also comprised of 111 acres of parking lots, 52 acres of buildings, and 42 acres of roads. This equates to 81% coverage of the total land area in impervious surfaces. Parking lots alone make up 139 of the total 688 acres – or 20% – of the area and 44% of the western portion of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. (By contrast, Kittredge Park and the Audubon Tract add up to 32.6 acres, or 4.7% of the area.)

Consequently, very little water filters into the groundwater, an important natural process for maintaining groundwater supplies. The rest of the rainwater courses off the impervious surfaces – typically loaded with pollutants such as tire residue and oil – and drains into the storm sewer system. After large storms, the results are worse – large amounts of water may dump directly into local waterways unfiltered and at high rates. The results are polluted, eroded waterways and generally poor ecological health.

The impact is very visible in the creek that runs through the Park at Briarcliff and Executive Park. In an undeveloped setting, water volumes in a creek fluctuate relatively little between dry and rainy periods because most of the rain is absorbed into the ground, and what rain does flow into the creek does so slowly and gradually. Furthermore, the level of the creek is higher because it is steadily fed by groundwater. Instead, the banks of the creek are eroded and deteriorating. (They are also littered by trash and debris in many parts.)

There are less visible issues as well – this creek is a tributary of North Peachtree Creek, which is listed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a creek that is polluted due to urban run-off, as classified by section 303D of the Federal Clean Water Act. In fact, all the creeks in this part of the metropolitan region are classified as 303D creeks.

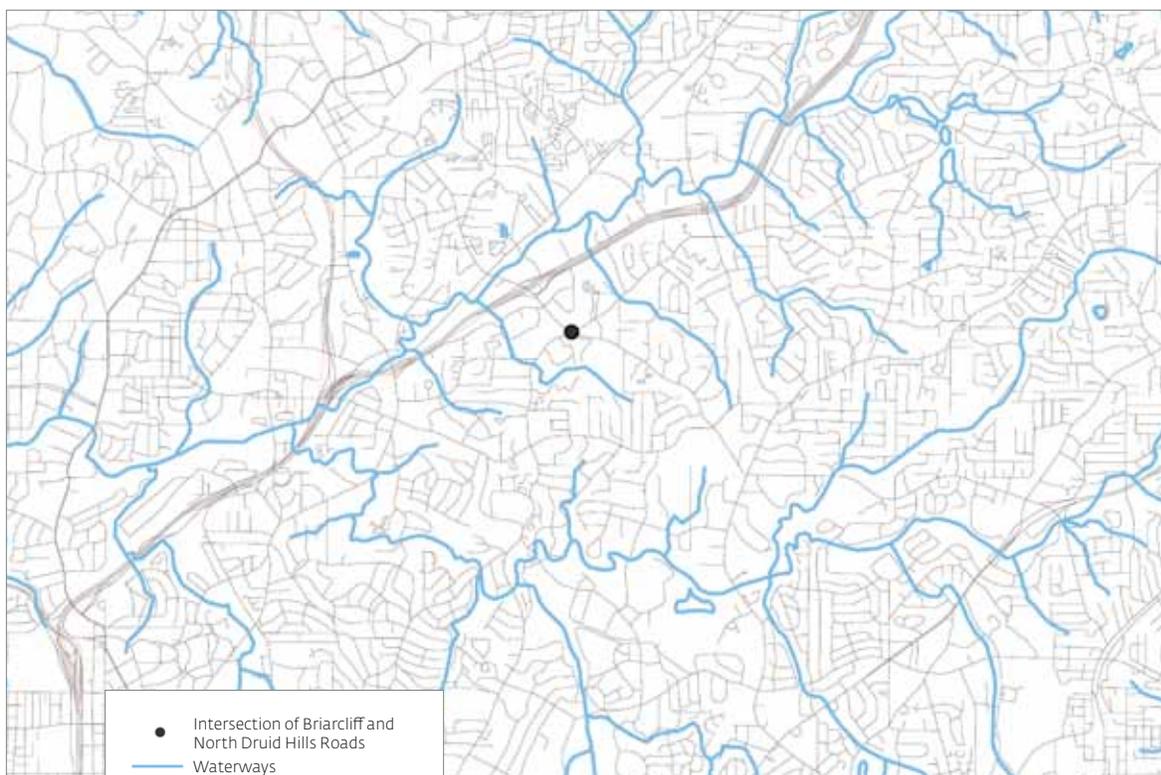


FIGURE 4.26 (TOP) The impervious surfaces in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills, shown here in red, account for 81% of the total area.

FIGURE 4.27 (BOTTOM) The extensive network of creeks DeKalb County is polluted and serves largely as a receptacle for garbage. If it were cleaned up, it could be a healthy component of DeKalb’s ecosystems, while simultaneously providing a wonderful setting for passive recreation.

Conclusions

The prospect of new development is unsettling to some residents in and around this part of DeKalb County because the area already experiences problems: the lack of a true road network makes the roads insufficient to handle the traffic fluctuations, leading to frequent traffic jams; there is no adequate infrastructure to handle pedestrians and cyclists, thereby putting them in danger; there is not enough accessible, high-quality park space; and the amount of paved surfaces, combined with an insufficient number of trees, creates environmental hazards. These characteristics all point to a deficient public realm.

Addressing these problems means identifying ways to retrofit the area with a new public realm: improvements to the park system; standards for drainage, permeability, and tree cover; and a real network of streets that provides alternate routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. It means finding ways to create a better functioning and more attractive public realm – a place in which people enjoy spending time, rather than a just place to pass through on the way to another destination.

This public realm and any new development must be created in concert – any new building must contribute to the public realm and give it definition, rather than intruding upon it. Just as important, there must be a way of paying for the new public realm and a way to ensure it is always well maintained. The next two chapters address these issues.



FIGURE 4.28 The public realm of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills consists of traffic arteries and parking lots that accommodate trucks and automobiles headed to such drive-in retailers as MacDonald’s, Chick-fil-A, and Target. It accommodates regional traffic, rather than provides a place community residents can enjoy.

05

The Plan

Introduction

THE ORIGINAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES that AGA laid out at the first public meeting – creating a public realm that meets the requirements of a twenty-first century community; and ameliorating the environment – are reflected in the proposals described in this chapter. These proposals are varied, and, taken together, will dramatically transform the area and introduce a whole new quality of life. They are as follows:

- 1 Major improvements to Kittredge Park, including a large extension, better public access, and remediation
- 2 An entirely new, interconnected circulation network to provide more options for local trips. This circulation network includes:
 - + A new, complete sidewalk network
 - + A new, complete bicycle network
 - + Four new types of roads, all of which emphasize shared use among motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles
 - + The transformation of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into boulevards lined with 900 new trees
 - + The conversion of the intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into a roundabout
 - + New exit lanes from I-85
 - + New express and local bus routes
- 3 Workforce housing
- 4 Regulations governing large properties

As explained more fully in the following chapter, DeKalb County will create a redevelopment authority whose sole purpose is to implement these changes. This redevelopment authority, equipped with the necessary powers, will be financed by a Tax Allocation District (TAD). Also, a Community Improvement District (CID) will maintain and operate the public realm amenities – it will carry out all aspects of day-to-day main-

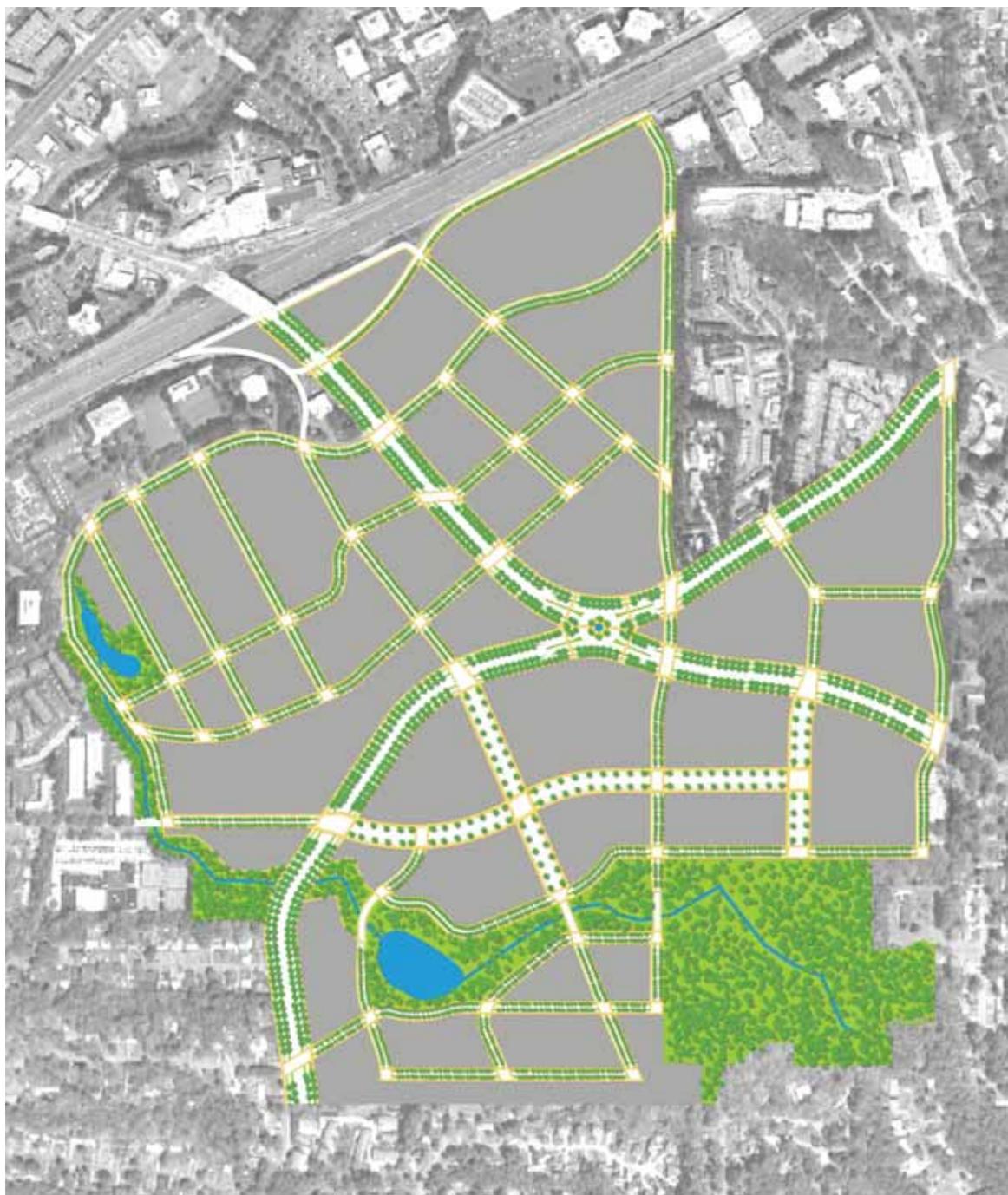


FIGURE 5.1 The new public realm of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills.

A Better Park

NEW PARKLAND

tenance, such as tree-pruning and litter pick-up. Finally, a new set of regulations of private development will ensure that the public realm remains a convenient, healthy, safe, and attractive environment for the residents of the area.

KITTREDGE PARK (considered here to include the Audubon Tract described in the previous chapter) is an under-utilized asset to the community. AGA recommends extending the park along the creek, as well as restoring the land and improving access to it.

AN EXTENSION OF KITTREDGE PARK will run along the length of the creek. West of Briarcliff Road new parkland will replace an underused parking lot, and extend up the side of Executive Park Drive to terminate at a new, publicly accessible pond in Executive Park. The new parkland represents a 20.3-acre expansion of the existing 32.6-acre park – an increase of 62%.

If the southeastern quadrant of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is acquired for redevelopment, the barbed wire fence that currently separates Kittredge Park from the Park at Briarcliff should be removed. Since County and State regulations require a 75-foot buffer on each side of waterways, Kittredge Park can be extended at very little cost along the current buffer adjacent to the creek all the way to Briarcliff Road. To make this happen, developers will be asked to donate the portions of their properties within this buffer zone to the redevelopment authority,

FIGURE 5.2 The 20.3-acre extension of Kittredge Park along the creek will terminate in a new pond at Executive Park.





FIGURE 5.3 On the Avenue Foche in Paris, as in almost every city around the world, the most fashionable residences are found facing premiere parkland.

which will be responsible for commissioning its design and supervising its construction. The expanded park should either include the existing pool and ball field or provide sites for their relocation. After construction, the redevelopment authority will transfer management responsibility for the new park over to the CID. The large-property owners will continue to fund operations through the CID levy.

Kittredge Park will grow by 62 percent.

The boundaries of the park's extension should roughly correspond to the boundaries of the tree cover alongside the creek. This natural buffer should be accessible to people where appropriate. There will be opportunities within the buffer for pedestrian walks, bicycle paths, picnic tables, and a variety of recreational features. In other places where the creek currently flows through pipes, such as at the entrance to the park, an alternative approach to the landscape – one that makes use of best practices in natural water filtration through vegetation and soils – will be appropriate.

The redevelopment authority will have to purchase the parking lot across Briarcliff Road to allow the park to continue to Sheridan Road. Also, the County should ask HRPT Properties and Gables Residential to donate land along Executive Park Drive that is adjacent to the creek for the purpose of creating a walkway. The creek will terminate at a new pond that HRPT expects to create as part of its redevelopment.



FIGURE 5.4 The creek is in need of proper restoration and management.

PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

IN IMPROVING AND EXTENDING THE PARK, the first priority will be to preserve the land’s currently existing assets, particularly the native forest and such unique features as the bay star-vine habitat. The new redevelopment authority will also have to undertake remediation efforts, such as restoring the damage wrought by erosion along the creek; reconfiguring and restoring the lake in what is currently the Park at Briarcliff residential community; and replanting all areas overgrown by aggressive invasive plant species with appropriate native (or sympathetic non-local) species.

58

These restoration efforts will become opportunities to improve the park, whether by creating additional open fields, opening up the underbrush to create views, or planting new trees, shrubs, and flowers. The remediation of the existing parkland and of the extension will also provide wonderful volunteer and educational opportunities for local residents. There are several potential partners in the region that can help guide the process – Emory University is the most obvious such possibility.

ATTRACTING PARK VISITORS

KITTREDGE PARK IS AN UNDER-UTILIZED and practically invisible asset in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills. It should, instead, be the pride of the



FIGURE 5.5 Public access to the creek should be restored.

neighborhood. Community ownership of parks is a crucial ingredient of their preservation and success. Kittredge Park should therefore attract more use. At the same time, the redevelopment authority will have to adhere to the word and the spirit of the Audubon Tract’s deed restrictions, and should focus on guiding and minimizing the impact of new visitors.

There are many improvements the redevelopment authority can make to the park to attract visitors. The authority should restore the existing clearings in the park as open fields for public use; build new walking and biking trails to allow access throughout; add new signage in and near the park that will inform users how to find the park and how to get around it; and provide lighting that will make the park safer at night.

Good management and maintenance of the park will be crucial to ensure its continued success. The CID will perform these functions. Also, an active community-based group – a “Friends of Kittredge Park” – could further increase this tremendous asset’s value to the residents of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills.



FIGURE 5.6 The drives bordering on two edges of the park will attract development and activity, thereby improving safety and creating a sense of place.

IMPROVED ACCESS

KITTREDGE PARK WILL ONLY SUCCEED if it is visible from the surrounding streets and be easily accessible on foot, by bicycle, and by car. If people come by car, they will need places to park – but building parking lots solely to serve the park would be counter-productive, since a decrease in the amount of impervious surface will help improve environmental conditions in the area. Instead, one of the new road types – the Park Drive – can provide both parking and access along two sides of the park.

The park drives are designed to create a publicly accessible border for the park – quiet, attractively planted, suited to walking and cycling. Since these drives will border two sides of the existing park and most of the park extension, the parking will be much more flexible – visitors arriving by car will have many more options from which to choose than if there were a designated parking lot. The drives will also provide access for maintenance personnel and their vehicles.¹

AGA assumes that buildings will eventually line the side of the park drives opposite the park, because they will become extremely desirable and valuable addresses. The park drives, in combination with these new

¹ For more information about the characteristics of these roads, please see pg 68, "Park Drives."



FIGURE 5.7 Improved access to Kittredge Park, combined with appropriate activities, will make the park safe and enjoyable.

buildings and the improvements to the interior of the park, will add more people looking into the park, thereby making it safer.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to line all of Kittredge Park and its extensions with a park drive. Kittredge Park is bordered on the eastern and southern edges by single-family residential neighborhoods, so it is not feasible to provide major additional access on those sides without disrupting the existing neighborhoods. However, pedestrian entrances from Nantahalla Court and Biltmore Drive will allow residents from those neighborhoods to access the park directly.

The new park drives will be inappropriate on two other edges of the park. Steep slopes preclude motor traffic along a short section of the western edge of the Kittredge Park. Between the lake and Briarcliff Road, additional street intersections would impede the flow of traffic. Everywhere else, the redevelopment authority will build a park drive.

People walking, on bicycles, and driving along the park will increase safety within the park. The park drives will integrate the park with the rest of the area, guaranteeing access to everyone.



FIGURE 5.8 North Druid Hills Road, 2007.

The Circulation Network

IT IS QUITE COMMON TO DEFINE “circulation” very narrowly: as moving motor vehicles rapidly. This definition has set many communities on an impossible quest, while incrementally degrading the quality of the public realm. Briarcliff-North Druid Hills will stand to benefit from a broader definition of circulation: as moving people conveniently, whether on foot, by bicycle, by public transit, or by automobile. This broader definition should also conceive of circulation as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself; in other words, as an ingredient of the public realm and the quality of life.

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NEW BOULEVARDS

NORTH DRUID HILLS AND BRIARCLIFF ROADS within this part of DeKalb County will be rebuilt as broad, tree-lined boulevards. This conversion will transform the entire area. The boulevards will be approximately 50 feet wider than the existing arteries and will consist of a central roadway flanked on both sides by landscaped islands, local service roads, bikeways, and sidewalks.

The central roadways will prioritize regional motor traffic. The islands will separate these central roadways from local service roads, which prioritize local traffic. This separation will allow both types of traffic to

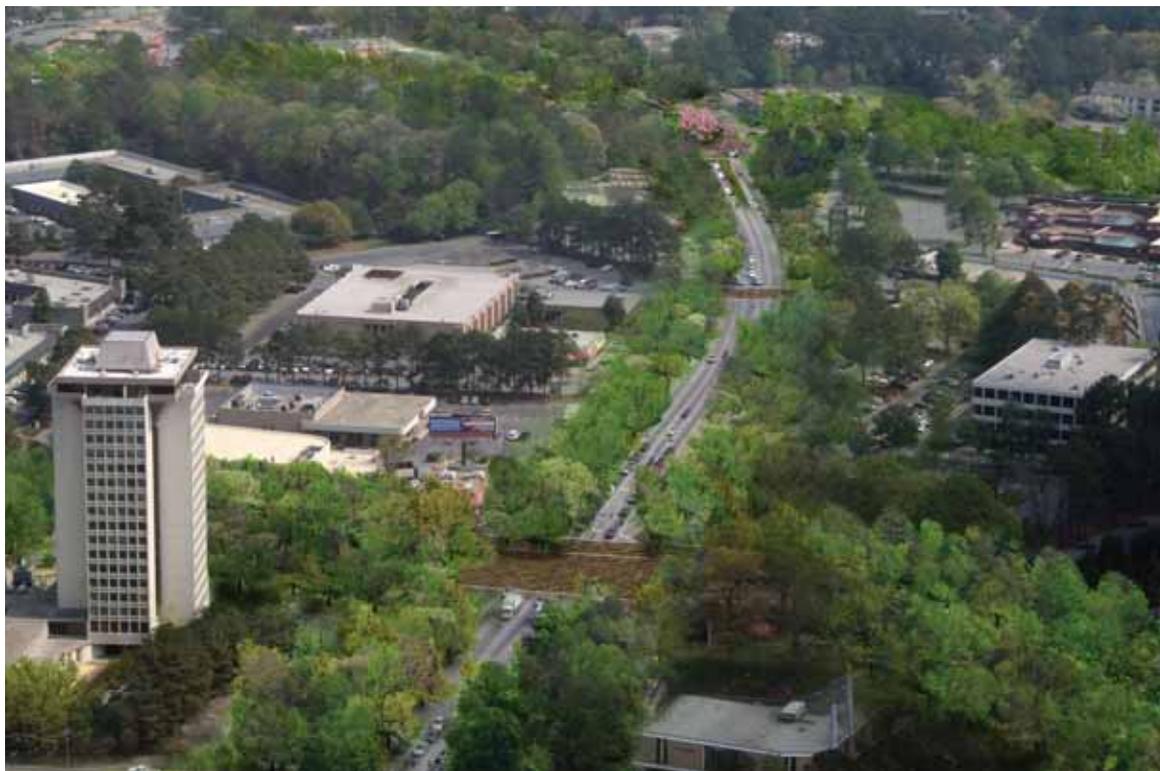


FIGURE 5.9 Transforming Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into tree-lined boulevards that separate local and regional vehicular traffic and include ample sidewalks and bike lanes will turn these arteries into desirable destinations and ease congestion.

reach their destinations more rapidly and safely, and will prevent a major cause of congestion – their interference with one another. The new boulevards also contain no driveway curb cuts in the central, regional roadway, thereby significantly reducing traffic accidents and any interruption of traffic headed to and from the intersection, and increasing traffic capacity.

The central roadway will widen at each bus stop, thereby narrowing the dividing island between the central roadway and the service road, to accommodate buses pulling out of the traffic flow. The trees in the planted islands will serve as buffers between the traffic and buildings, filtering some of the noise and dust of the traffic and providing a natural addition to the sidewalks and bike lanes. Nine hundred 900 trees will shade the new Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Boulevards.

Nine hundred trees will be planted on North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads.

The service roads will be very different from the central roadways. Bounded on the outside by a protected bike lane and a pedestrian sidewalk, they will accommodate several types of users – not just motorists. All traffic will be strictly local: motorists looking for a place to park, pedestrians walking to a store, and cyclists on their way to Kittredge Park.



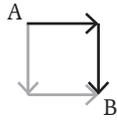
FIGURE 5.10 Great streets, like Yamhill Street in Portland, OR, are destinations unto themselves.

CONNECTIVITY AND CONGESTION

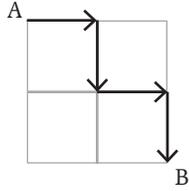
VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IS THE ISSUE about which the residents of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills expressed the most concern at the monthly open meetings and on the public participation website. The traffic congestion on Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads results directly from the area's lack of a true road network.

A street derives most of its value from the network to which it connects – a dead-end street may be generously proportioned for cars, but it leads nowhere but to the houses that line it. Dead-end streets limit options for motorists, and the result is an overload on the few roads that connect destinations within the area and provide access to destinations outside the neighborhood.

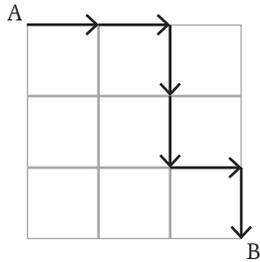
The diagram to the right, derived from Dom Nozzi's book, *The Road to Ruin: An Introduction to Sprawl and How to Cure It*, is purely hypothetical. But it illustrates very clearly the power of an articulated network.



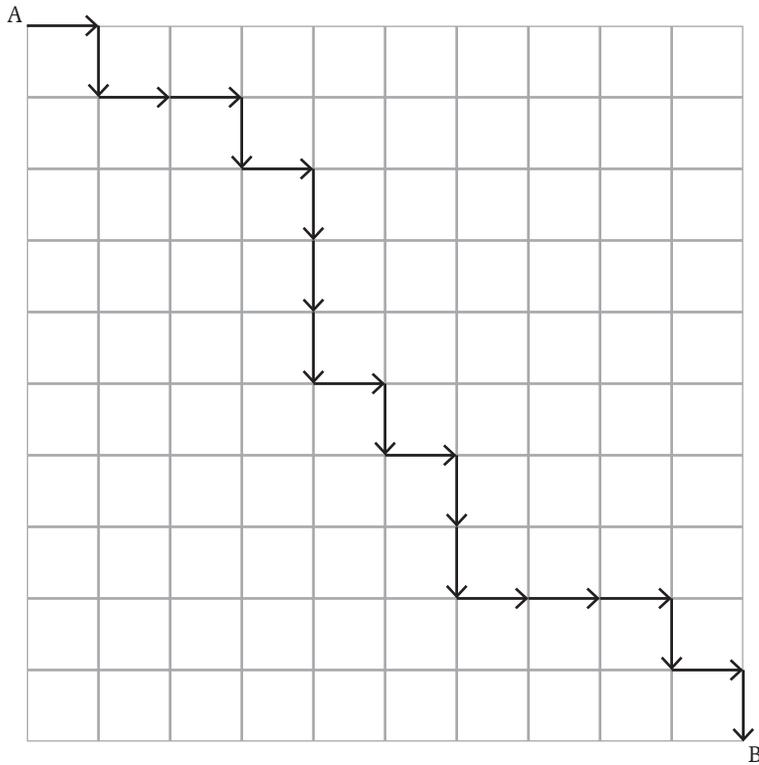
There are two routes from point A to point B, only moving down and right.



Six routes from A to B.



Twenty routes from A to B.



Here, there are 184,756 routes from A to B.

FIGURE 5.11 Source: Dom Nozzi, *The Road to Ruin: An Introduction to Sprawl and How to Cure It*.

FIGURE 5.12 All new street types in the new network will contain sidewalks and bicycle lanes.



SIDEWALK AND BIKE LANE NETWORKS

IN PLACES WHERE WALKING AND BIKING are common forms of transportation, the reasons for their popularity are numerous: they are easier, more convenient, less expensive, healthier, more sociable, or simply more fun than driving a car. That is why both pedestrian and bicycle networks must be as complete as possible – to provide all people with a convenient way to visit their neighbors, go to the park, run quick errands, visit the doctor, attend religious services, go to dinner at a local restaurant, or exercise.

Every new street type described on pgs 68–71 incorporates a broad sidewalk and bike lane in its design because, taken together, the new roads will create a comprehensive walking and biking network connecting every part of the neighborhood. Only such an extensive network will encourage walking and biking as meaningful alternatives to driving.

Comprehensive, safe networks for biking and walking generally cannot be created overnight. But much of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills is likely to be redeveloped in the foreseeable future. Thus, every time a large property is developed the redevelopment authority will include sidewalks and protected bike lanes on any new road that it builds.

The bicycle lanes that ACA recommends are like those in Copenhagen, Vienna, Amsterdam, and other European cities: they run between the sidewalks and the on-street parking. Moreover, the bike lanes are all wide enough for a car door to open (about three feet) and a cyclist to pass by comfortably without hitting or being hit by the door. Other design variations are possible, such as a height differential between the bike lane and both the sidewalk and the road bed.

Bicycling and walking will not replace driving as the predominant means of getting around this part of DeKalb County, but the existence of genuine bike lane and sidewalk networks will provide residents with choices they currently do not enjoy – choices that offer health, economy, and convenience.

DIFFERENT STREETS POSSESS different balances of activities and functions. Briarcliff–North Druid Hills will have four main types of roads, each with its own character and purpose: *boulevards*, *residential streets*, *retail streets*, and *park drives*. (The previous section on the improvements to Kirtledge Park introduces the *park drives*.) Each of them contains a different mixture of the same basic elements – vehicle lanes, on-street parking, sidewalks, protected bicycle lanes, and street trees and landscaping.



FIGURE 5.13 This separated bike lane in Vienna, Austria, is safe and pleasant. Such a system in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills will make cycling a viable option for local residents on short trips.

FOUR ROAD TYPES

Only extensive sidewalk and bicycle networks will offer and encourage alternatives to driving.



FIGURE 5.14 (TOP) AND FIGURE 5.15 (BOTTOM)

PARK DRIVES

The 60-foot wide *park drives* border parkland; buildings line the side opposite of the parkland. As discussed on pgs 60–61, their purpose, in part, is to provide access to parkland. Other features of the *park drives* include the following:

- 1 One lane in each direction; on-street parking on both sides
- 2 Sidewalks on both sides
- 3 One separated bike lane on the park side
- 4 Tree pits protruding into the parking lanes at regular intervals not only to accommodate new trees, but also to create the perception of periodic constraints, thereby encouraging motorists to drive at appropriate speeds

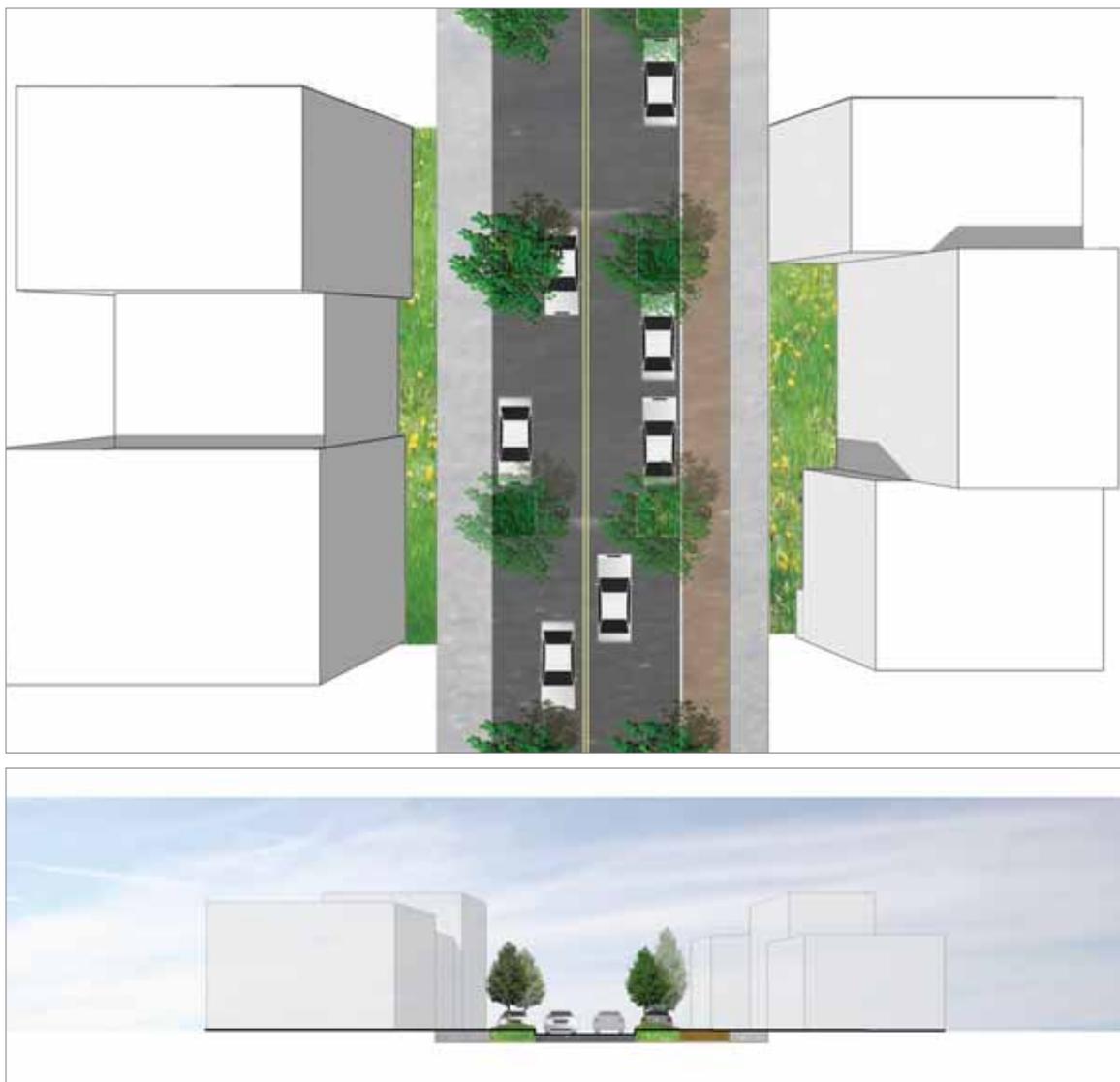


FIGURE 5.16 (TOP) AND FIGURE 5.17 (BOTTOM)

The *residential streets* are 60 feet wide and will be lined on both sides with buildings. These streets include:

RESIDENTIAL STREETS

- 1 One two-way bike lane, since bicycle traffic will be relatively light
- 2 Sidewalks on each side serve all of the buildings
- 3 Tree pits jutting into the parking lanes at regular intervals not only to accommodate new trees, but also to encourage motorists to drive at appropriate speeds because they perceive periodic constraints



FIGURE 5.18 (TOP) AND FIGURE 5.19 (BOTTOM)

BOULEVARDS

The *boulevards*, which are 148 feet wide, separate local from regional vehicular traffic include the following characteristics:

- 1 Bus stops that allow buses to pick up and drop off passengers without interrupting other traffic
- 2 Four rows of trees and other plantings
- 3 Ample sidewalks and bike lanes and both sides
- 4 A central roadway for regional traffic and slower-moving access roads, with on-street parking, for local traffic

Please see a description of the conversion of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into *boulevards* on pg 62.



FIGURE 5.20 (TOP) AND FIGURE 5.21 (BOTTOM)

The *retail streets* are 114 feet wide, and are designed to accommodate and encourage more bustle, more traffic, and more pedestrians than the *residential streets*. Their characteristics include:

RETAIL STREETS

- 1 Four lanes of automobile traffic – two in each direction
- 2 Wide sidewalks to accommodate large numbers of pedestrians
- 3 Angled parking to serve the stores
- 4 Tree pits at regular intervals in the parking area, spaced widely enough for shoppers on one side of the street to look across and see merchandise in the shops on the opposite side
- 5 Protected bike lanes, serving both directions



FIGURE 5.22 Some streets, like this one in Decatur, have room for trees that ameliorate the environment for people window shopping, having a bite in a café, strolling, as well as for parked cars and vehicular traffic.

BALANCED STREETS

STREETS ARE SOME OF THE MOST PERVASIVE and important elements of the public realm; great streets play a variety of complex roles in our communities. Not only do they serve pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists moving from point A to point B, they are great public spaces, accommodating much more than circulation. Three main elements will help tip the balance of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills’ roads toward other uses besides moving vehicular traffic: appropriate lane widths, on-street parking, and street trees. Ample sidewalks and safe, convenient bike lanes are also crucial elements; these are discussed on pgs 66–67, under “Sidewalks and Bike Lane Networks.”

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Appropriate Lane Widths

Today, new streets are often designed with 12-foot lanes, the standard width used for the federal Interstate Highway System. This may make sense for a highway in open country, where the purpose is to move trucks quickly, but it does not make sense in a more crowded environment such as Briarcliff–North Druid Hills because such wide lanes waste valuable space, encourage cars to drive too fast, increase the risk of traffic accidents, and are unrelated to the surrounding neighborhood. Consequently, the four new road types described on pgs 68–71 feature narrower vehicular travel lanes.

The widths of vehicle lanes are intended to move traffic at speeds that are appropriate for their contexts. Thus, on the *boulevards*, the two inner lanes within the central roadways are 10 feet wide – wide enough to smoothly move traffic at about 35 miles an hour, which is a suitable speed for regional roadways. (The two outer lanes in the central roadways are 11 feet wide to accommodate buses more easily.) The lanes on the *retail streets* are also 10 feet wide, since these are busy streets that will have significant traffic. The *residential streets* and the *park drives* are intended to be slow and quiet; consequently, they have nine-foot lanes. The narrow lanes will encourage motorists to drive at moderate speeds. The *boulevards'* service road lanes also are nine feet wide for the same reason, since the service roads are intended to be dominated by pedestrians and bicyclists, not cars.

At first glance, on-street parking might seem redundant for this area – there is already more than enough off-street parking in enormous parking lots. However, on-street parking serves a number of functions. Providing places to park on the street encourages people to leave their cars, get out, and walk around – it enlivens the street and suggests a change in character to a more street-oriented, walkable setting. By contrast, off-street parking is better suited to people driving to and parking at every destination individually. Parked cars also create a separation between traffic and the non-vehicular realm, protecting people on bicycles and sidewalks from moving cars.

The impacts of trees are widely understood. They absorb carbon dioxide and pollutants, trap particulates, soak up stormwater, provide shade, and moderate ambient temperatures. The new street trees will help beautify Briarcliff–North Druid Hills, and restore some of the extensive greenery that once made this part of the Atlanta metropolitan region an especially appealing place to live.



On-Street Parking

Street Trees

FIGURE 5.23 Omaha and other cities have invested in planting street trees, which filter the air, absorb stormwater, provide shade, and moderate ambient air temperature.

FIGURE 5.24 Two lanes of the North Druid Hills Boulevard will pass underneath the roundabout.



FIGURE 5.25 AGA recommends further study of building the roundabout without the underpass.



The Roundabout

MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT TRAFFIC CONGESTION in the area center on the intersection of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff Roads. The new network of streets will make new routes available for motorists to avoid the intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads, and although the majority of vehicles may continue to go through this intersection, siphoning off even a small fraction of them will improve traffic flow. Still, converting the intersection into a roundabout will be an important step toward handling vehicular traffic – as well as bike and pedestrian traffic – safely and efficiently. In addition, the interior of the roundabout will be a new, central public space.

Two roundabout designs are presented here: one with an underpass (Figure 5.24) and one without (Figure 5.25). Although the roundabout



FIGURE 5.26 The intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads will be converted into a roundabout. This new configuration will ease vehicular congestion, improve safety, and provide a new destination in the area.

with an underpass is the primary proposal, AGA strongly recommends further study of the roundabout with no underpass, which would be much less expensive to construct.

Communities in the United States typically resist new roundabouts (known as “modern roundabouts”) because they confuse them with older traffic circles. But across the country, as people become familiar with roundabouts, they are increasingly positive about them. A New York State Department of Transportation survey of public opinion found the following:

PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ROUNDABOUTS			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
Before Construction	29%	59%	12%
After Construction	3%	42%	55%

As the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) points out, the roundabout is one of three types of circular intersections. The other two, with which most Americans are familiar, are neighborhood traffic circles, which are on local streets and are very small, and old-style rotaries, which were common in the United States prior to the 1960s and still exist today. Roundabouts exhibit the following characteristics:

FIGURE 5.27 Before and after the conversion of the intersection of Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into a roundabout.



- 1 Vehicles in the circle have the right of way - vehicles entering the circle yield
- 2 Vehicles entering the circle are “channelized,” or guided with physical features such as bollards or traffic islands
- 3 The circle’s radius is designed to slow traffic down, thereby increasing efficiency because of shorter distances between vehicles
- 4 Traffic flows more consistently

The number of modern roundabouts in the United States is growing. They are used in Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Texas, and other states. The USDOT sums up reasons for the roundabout’s rising popularity, saying that they:

- 1 Reduce crash severity for pedestrians and bicyclists, including older pedestrians, children, and impaired persons;

- 2 Provide more time for entering drivers to judge, adjust speed for, and enter a gap in circulating traffic;
- 3 Allow safer merges into circulating traffic;
- 4 Provide more time for all users to detect and correct for their mistakes or mistakes of others;
- 5 Make collisions less frequent and less severe; and
- 6 Make the intersection safer for novice users.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety provides more specific information about safety. In 2001, the Institute analyzed 23 intersections that were converted into roundabouts, and found that the conversions led to the following reductions:

Reduction of All Crashes: 39%

Reduction of All Injuries Resulting from Crashes: 75%

Reduction of Serious and Fatal Injuries Resulting from Crashes: 89%

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCESS to and from I-85 are necessary: (1) new turn-off lanes into Executive Park Drive; (2) the elimination of the bump-out where the north-bound exit ramp from I-85 reaches North Druid Hills Road; (3) the conversion of the I-85 service road north of North Druid Hills Road to two-way service; and (4) a new street leading to the service road from Tullie Drive.

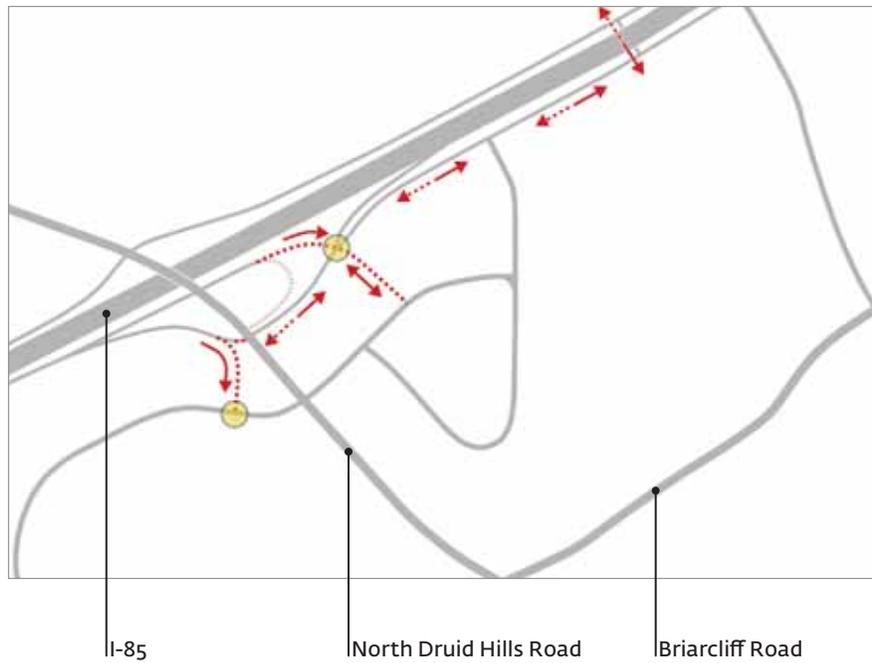
Improved Access to and from I-85

HRPT, the owner of Executive Park, is interested in redeveloping this office park. This redevelopment will require rezoning, and the new zoning requirements should be based on the improvements to the public realm described in this chapter, including the construction of a pair of new turn-off lanes from I-85. These new turn-off lanes will lead directly from the I-85 off-ramp onto Executive Park Drive, allowing motorists heading into Executive Park and toward points south of the Briarcliff-North Druid Hills intersection (such as Emory and the CDC) to avoid the intersection entirely. Also, the “bump-out” in front of the Sun Trust Bank will be eliminated to smoothen traffic traveling east.

As part of the redevelopment of the BellSouth Tower property, its owner will have to allow the construction of a new road through the property connecting Tullie Road to the I-85 access road. The current underpass under I-85, near Cliff Valley Way, will be improved and made more accessible. As a result of these improvements, vehicles throughout the entire northeastern quadrant will be able to enter onto I-85 northbound, and motorists from I-85 northbound will be able to reach that quadrant – all without touching North Druid Hills Road or its intersection with Briarcliff Road.

FIGURE 5.28 Access improvements to I-85 include new connecting roads, new traffic lights, and changing one-way roads to two-way roads.

- Existing roadway
- - - - - Road to be removed
- ⋯⋯⋯ New roadway
- ↔ Two-way traffic
- One-way traffic
- ↔⋯⋯ New two-way traffic
- Proposed traffic light



Public Transit

WELL RUN TRANSIT ROUTES THAT ATTRACT USERS will ease automobile congestion in the area generated by local trips. While the Atlanta region as a whole may be, as some contend, too dispersed to support a heavily used, large-scale public transit system, pockets of greater density are evolving, and opportunities for more transit may grow with them. A new local and a new regional, express bus route will serve Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. The express bus route (Figure 5.29) will connect the area to two major regional destinations: Lindberg Station and Emory University.

AGA recommends studying the possibility of converting the route into a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route. BRT uses dedicated lanes, low-floor buses, and stations where passengers pay before boarding. Some BRT routes even have signal priority at intersections. BRT does not experience delays, thereby making it an attractive alternative to driving. Also, it is much cheaper to build and operate than a rail transit system.²

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² Appendix F features more information about BRT.

The new local bus route in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills (Figure 5.30) will connect local destinations.

Workforce Housing

AS THE POPULATION OF DEKALB COUNTY grows and becomes increasingly diverse, there will be more demand for housing at every price point. Private developers are increasingly unable to build at prices that are affordable to the lower end of the economic spectrum. The usual solution is a subsidy – from federal or state government programs or from non-profit agencies. This is rarely

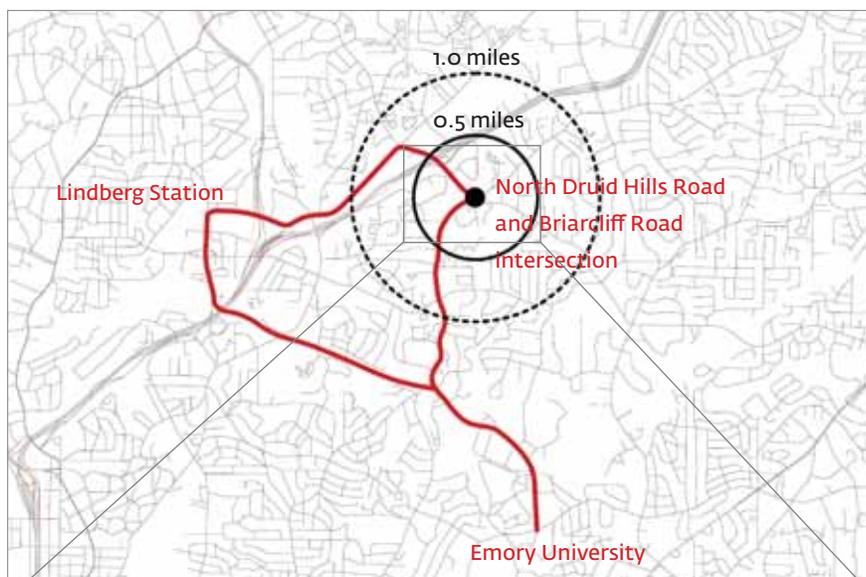


FIGURE 5.29 A new express bus route will link major regional destinations.



FIGURE 5.30 A new local bus route will connect to the express bus route at two points and provide passengers with easy access to local destinations.

I-85

Briarcliff Road

North Druid Hills Road

reliable, because so little money is available from these sources. To the degree that there are funds remaining after all necessary infrastructure improvements have been made, TAD revenues should be used to write down the cost of workforce housing.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE in any community is determined by the quality of its public realm. But the quality of that public realm is not just a matter of the graciousness of its sidewalks, the utility of its bikeways, the attractiveness of its street trees, or the charm of its parks. The public realm is also affected by the character of the buildings

that enclose it, the activities that take place on those properties, and the ways in which they interact with one another. Consequently, this report also includes regulations to guide the relationship between new private development, the public realm, and existing residential developments.

This is not the approach typically taken by building regulations, which generally regulate what can be built on private property, sometimes arbitrarily limiting property owners' options without providing much in the way of noticeable public benefit. Instead, the following regulations that ACA recommends are geared toward shaping and protecting the public realm by ensuring that new development:³

³ See Appendix E.

- 1 Provides an appropriate frame for the public realm
- 2 Provides enough access points from existing public roads to diffuse rather than concentrate traffic
- 3 Provides sufficient access to adjacent public parks
- 4 Does not overshadow the occupants of existing, adjacent small-scale properties

The buildings framing roads and lining public parks affect the character of the public realm. The proposed zoning overlay limits their heights at six stories. However, rigidly maintaining that height over the entire 688 acres of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills would limit development too much, and would preclude a greater variety of building types. Consequently, the zoning overlay district also provides property owners with the right to devote up to 8% of properties larger than five acres to taller buildings, with residential buildings not to exceed 210 feet and mixed-use buildings not to exceed 240 feet.

Currently, automobiles and bicycles must enter and exit local streets from Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads. The zoning overlay district requires streets to intersect the boulevards at an average of 750 feet; this provides alternative routes, and will help relieve congestion during peak hours. The zoning overlay district also prevents too much interference of streets with the boulevards by requiring that these streets be no less than 200 feet apart.

The zoning overlay district provides the public access to parks described earlier in this chapter. It requires the 60-foot-wide Park Drives that include parallel parking, sidewalks, and bicycle paths lining any parkland.

At every public meeting, residents expressed concern that new developments will overpower their neighborhood. Consequently, the zoning

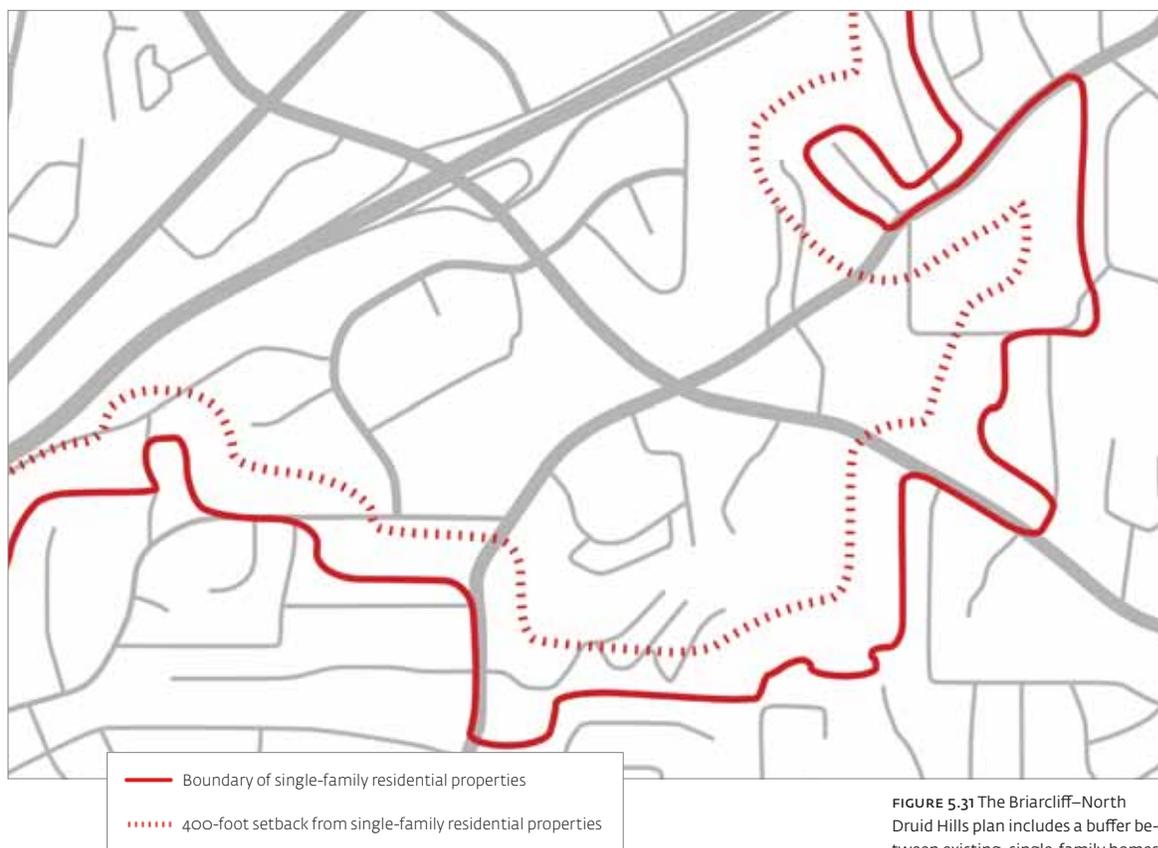


FIGURE 5.31 The Briarcliff-North Druid Hills plan includes a buffer between existing, single-family homes and buildings taller than 35 feet.

overlay district provides specific setback requirements for construction on properties abutting one-family residential areas. In addition to the setback requirements, the zoning overlay district specifies that nothing taller than six stories can be built within 400 feet of any single-family property zoned R-A5, R-A8, R-100, R-85, R-75, R-60, or R-50.⁴

⁴For more detail about these regulations, please see the full, proposed text for the zoning overlay district in Appendix E.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED at the very first public meeting have shaped all these proposals. They require a public realm that provides universal, safe access for pedestrians at all hours of the day; recreational opportunities for all ages; mass transit and bicycle alternatives to private motor vehicles; expanded circulation opportunities within the area; and easy access to and from regional transportation routes. Over time, more than 3,000 trees will be planted in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills, 900 on the new boulevards alone. Impervious paving will be strictly limited and accompanied by additional planted areas to absorb run-off. All these improvements to the area will guarantee a safer, healthier environment and a much improved quality of life, not only for residents but for anybody who visits this community.

Conclusion

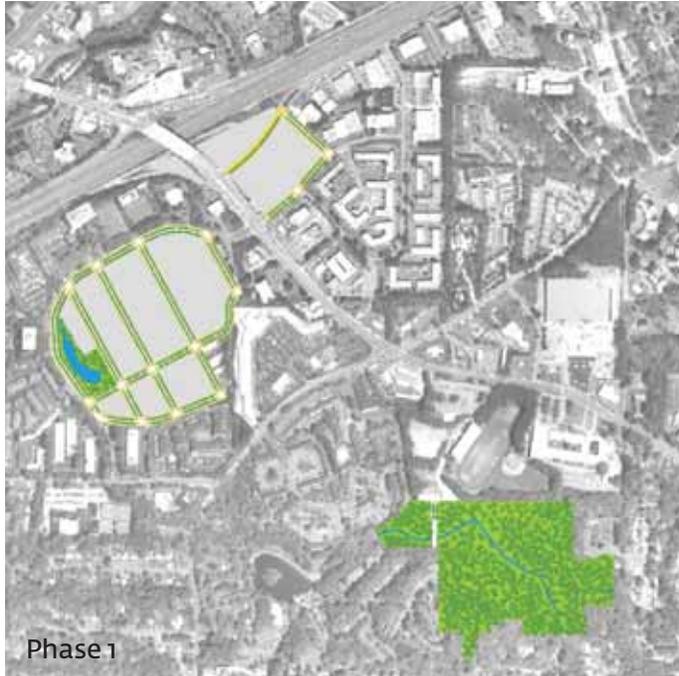
06 Implementation

Introduction

IT HAS BEEN NEARLY A CENTURY since Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett produced *The Plan of Chicago*, the first comprehensive plan for any American city. Since then master plans have been issued for virtually every city in the land. Very few, however, have been implemented.

There are many reasons plans do not become reality. Often, the reason is that property owners are unwilling to take the recommended actions or that they are unprepared to pay for recommended actions – or else nobody is empowered to carry them out. Other times, plans do not become reality because there is insufficient public support.

The planning process in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills began with large property owners who wanted to change things and public officials who were insistent that any changes had to be of benefit to the community. The public and most stakeholders were involved in every step of this process; among those who participated were the owners or potential owners of Executive Park, the Park at Briarcliff and the adjacent Board of Education properties, the BellSouth Tower, Loehmann’s Shopping Center, and Children’s Health Care. Consequently, ACA took into account what these and other large property owners are willing to do as well as what they will do if – and only if – the County requires them to do so. The planning process also involved virtually every County agency that will have to be involved in carrying out any recommendations for Briarcliff–North Druid Hills. As a result, ACA also took into account what they will and will not be willing to do.



FIGURES 6.1–6.4 The improvements to Briarcliff–North Druid Hills’ public realm will occur in three phases, resulting in a dramatic transformation.

Because of what some large property owners are already planning to do, Briarcliff–North Druid Hills will not be the same 20 years from now. In fact, it will be a very different place even five years from now – whether or not AGA’s recommendations are implemented. Already, HRPT Properties Trust, the owner of Executive Park, has sold a portion of the property to Gables Residential, which is using the site to build more apartments. Current activity clearly demonstrates that Second Growth is already underway.

Owners will continue to make changes to the area. Accordingly, Alex Garvin & Associates recommends actions for DeKalb County that will make Briarcliff–North Druid Hills a healthier, safer, and more convenient and attractive place. AGA estimates the cost of these capital improvements to the public realm to be \$135–\$185 million.

Finance

THERE ARE TWO MAIN FINANCIAL COMPONENTS TO AGA’S recommendations: the capital costs of new infrastructure – the construction of new roads, bike lanes, and sidewalks, the planting of new trees, the park renovations, and so forth; and maintenance and operating costs – the tree pruning, street light maintenance, trash pick-up, security, etc.

The obvious way to finance capital costs is to tap into the tremendous development potential that the capital improvements will spur. While there will be opportunities for State and Federal funding to support these capital improvements, investment in the public realm will cause real estate values within the redevelopment area to rise, and thus generate higher real estate tax revenues. The redevelopment authority will use these projected additional taxes to finance the improvements by projecting the probable stream of revenue and issuing bonds in anticipation of that revenue. Debt service on the bonds will be retired, or paid off, from the additional tax revenue.

CAPITAL COSTS: REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT

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AGA RECOMMENDS THAT, before anything else – even any necessary rezoning – DeKalb County create a redevelopment authority with bond issuing authority to implement the public realm improvements, as well as a Tax Allocation District, or TAD, to finance these capital improvements. A TAD is a physical area designated to fund development from any increase in tax revenues. Existing tax revenues continue to flow into the taxing jurisdictions’ budgets at the same amount collected at the time of the formation of the TAD. If tax revenues grow from an increase in property values within the TAD, the additional revenues are used (1) to pay for capital improvements and (2) to pay off bonds issued to pay for new infrastructure within the TAD. Therefore, no tax revenues from outside the TAD fund those improvements, and the taxing jurisdictions continue to collect revenues at their original levels. In DeKalb County, the maximum life span of a TAD is 25 years.

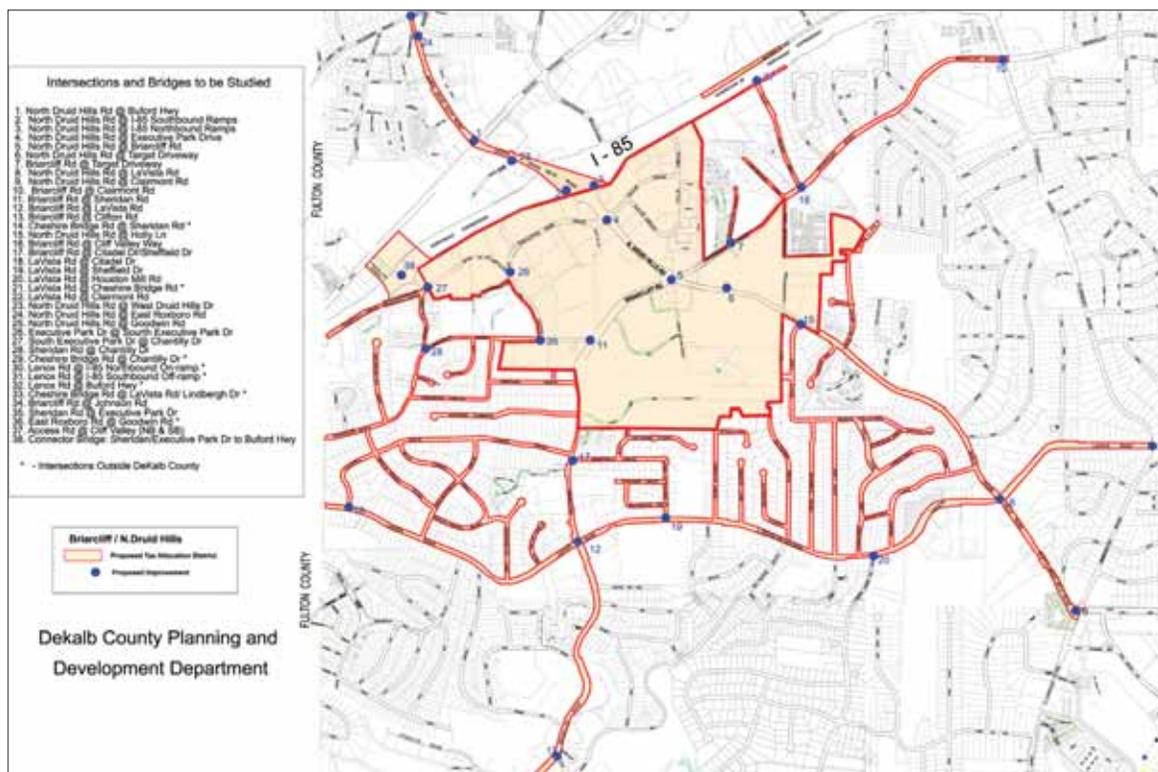


FIGURE 6.5 The proposed Briarcliff-North Druid Hills Tax Allocation District.

The Livable Communities Coalition recently published a study on Georgia’s 27 TADs – the first of which was created in 1999. Four cities – Acworth, Atlanta, East Point, and Marietta – have issued TAD bonds. In the Atlanta metropolitan region, they include:

- 1 Northwest Atlanta Redevelopment Area and TAD-Perry/Bolton, which has recently seen a 21.2% compounded annual growth rate in property valuation. Total appreciation there has been 199.7%. The annual appreciation rate there before the district’s creation: 10.8%.
- 2 Atlantic Steel TAD (Atlantic Station), which has enjoyed a 65.4% compounded annual growth rate, with a total 7,213.5% rate of appreciation. The estimated annual rate before creation of the district’s creation: 6.9%.
- 3 Princeton Lakes Redevelopment Area and TAD, which has benefited from a 152.9% compounded annual growth rate. Total appreciation has been 10,246.5%. The estimated annual rate before the district’s creation: 10.8%.

There are two TADs in DeKalb County: the Avondale Mall/Columbia Drive TAD and the Kensington/Memorial Drive TAD. While there is no measurable history for Kensington, Avondale Mall/Columbia drive has

seen a 20% compounded annual growth rate (the pre-TAD estimated annual rate is 9.0%); its total appreciation has been 345.3%

AGA recommends the creation of a single TAD covering the entire area of Briarcliff-North Druid Hills. The potential level of funding could be enormous. For example, the Sembler Company is projecting that its proposed development will generate \$16 million in taxes per year.

The TAD’s first revenues will pay for improvements that will benefit all properties in the area: improving access to and from I-85, transforming Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into boulevards, creating the roundabout, and implementing a master plan for the improvement of Kittredge Park. Other improvements, such as the park extension along the creek, will be timed to coincide with the redevelopment of individual properties.

As shown in the table below, the total estimated cost of the improvements is \$135-\$185 million, depending on the improvements and the timing of those improvements.

¹ Any funds remaining after capital improvements will be devoted to the construction of affordable and workforce housing.

ESTIMATED PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT COSTS (IN MILLIONS) ¹	
Kittredge Park Improvements	\$10 – \$20
New Parkland	\$15 – \$20
Burying Utility Lines	\$15 – \$25
Boulevards	\$50 – \$60
Street, Pedestrian, Bike Network	\$40 – \$50
I-85 Access Improvements	\$5 – \$10
Total	\$135 – \$185

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS COSTS: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CID)

AGA RECOMMENDS THAT commercial property owners in the area form a self-taxing district called a “Community Improvement District,” or CID. A CID allows the participants to pay for services provided in common within a defined area through an agreed-upon annual assessment in excess of their normal real estate taxes. These services can include sanitation, security, and general maintenance and operations.

In Atlanta, CIDs have performed a variety of functions. The Perimeter CID, for example, has devoted most of its funds to improving conditions for traffic and pedestrians. The Buckhead CID has used part of its revenue to fund “the Buc,” a free transit shuttle. The Atlanta Downtown Improvement District has released studies on parking.

In DeKalb County, a CID is formed when 50% or more of the property owners controlling 75% or more of the total assessed value of commercial property in a prescribed area vote to create it. CIDs are funded through a self-imposed, self-regulated *ad valorem* real estate tax, and

their governing boards are comprised of nine members. Two of these directors are appointed by the governing authority of DeKalb County; the remaining seven are elected by the property owners in the area. Of those seven, one is elected by a majority of electors present and voting at a caucus, with one vote per elector; the other six are elected by the majority of electors present and voting, with one vote per \$1,000 (or fraction thereof) of assessed taxable property value.

KITTREDGE PARK IS already County-owned. The cost of the improvements outlined in the previous chapter is estimated at \$10 – \$20 million. The extension of the park will require acquisition of the creek that currently flows through the Park at Briarcliff, Athletic Club Northeast, the Gables development, Executive Park, and the parking lot on Briarcliff Road.

AGA assumes that current and future property owners will donate the land along the creek to accommodate the two 75-foot creek buffers and the two 60-foot Park Drive rights-of-way (ROWS), if and when they obtain the necessary rezoning and proceed with their proposed developments. The County will have to purchase the land between Briarcliff and Sheridan Roads. Other developers will contribute the remaining property. Property acquisition and design and development of the park extension will total an estimated \$25–\$40 million and will be paid out of TAD proceeds.

THE INSTALLATION of new sidewalks and bicycle lanes will be the responsibility of the redevelopment authority and will be paid for out of TAD revenues. The CID will be responsible for their maintenance. The previous plan chapter establishes the dimensions of sidewalks and bike lanes adjacent to residential, retail, and mixed-use buildings.

THE NEW BOULEVARDS WILL REQUIRE a 48–50-foot expansion of the existing Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads rights-of-way (ROWS). AGA proposes that the County acquire by condemnation 25 feet on either side of Briarcliff Road, from the southern edge of the Park at Briarcliff to Childerlee Lane, and 25 feet on either side of North Druid Hills Road, from I-85 to Briarcliff Road. A 50-foot ROW on North Druid Hills Road between Briarcliff Road and Holly Lane should be acquired on the south side of the road, leaving the north side as is.²

The estimated cost of the acquisition, design, and construction of the boulevards and roundabout is \$50–\$60 million. The redevelopment authority will be responsible for all construction, with financing from the TAD. The CID will maintain the boulevards and roundabout.

The redevelopment authority will also acquire the land necessary for the

The Park Network

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks

The Boulevards, the Roundabout, and I-85

² Prior to this property acquisition, the DeKalb Department of Public Works will acquire State Road 42, which includes North Druid Hills Road from I-85 to Briarcliff Road, and Briarcliff Road from North Druid Hills Road on south, from the Georgia Department of Transportation as part of a road swap.

The Road Network

turn-off lanes between I-85 and Executive Park Drive, and will install the new lanes. Here, too, the TAD will finance acquisition and construction. The CID will maintain the turn-off lanes. AGA estimates the total cost of the turn-off lanes to be \$5–\$10 million.

ALL NEW ROADS AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, with the exception of boulevards and the turn-off lanes between I-85 and Executive Park Drive, will be implemented simultaneously with redevelopment of the adjacent properties. The roads will have to meet the dimensional requirements outlined in the previous chapter and will be built by the redevelopment authority. The authority will convey ownership of the roads to DeKalb County, which will enter into an agreement with the CID to maintain them as public ROWs.

Staging

THE MONEY NEEDED to make the major capital improvements recommended in the previous chapter can only be raised if redevelopment proceeds. As explained above, the initial infrastructure investments will consist of improving access to and from I-85, transforming Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads into boulevards, and creating the roundabout. At this time it is not evident how quickly private development will proceed, nor is it clear whether the sizes, densities, and land uses will reach the property owners' current projections. However, it is clear that several property owners will act long before the possible redevelopment of the properties now occupied by Children's Healthcare, Loehmann's, and Target. Consequently, public investment in the southern portion of the area will precede development of the northern part of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills.

Next Steps

PLANNING IS AN ONGOING PROCESS – there is no such thing as a fixed plan. The proposals in this document provide an important starting point for future planning efforts in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills, but only a starting point. A plan will always evolve due to changes in circumstances, market demand, priorities, and countless other factors. The best plans are those that are ready to accommodate future evolution by outlining the framework for that change to occur. With this in mind, we recommend that the following five actions be taken in the order in which they are listed:

- STEP 1. The DeKalb County Commission (with approval of the Board of Education) establishes the TAD to pay for the recommended public realm proposals and a redevelopment authority to implement them. This will require financial and economic analysis, as well as legal preparation. The TAD should be created, if at all possible, before the end of the fiscal year, so that the base property tax levels are as low as possible. This will ensure the maximum possible increment available to issue bonds.

- STEP 2. The redevelopment authority commissions environmental impact studies of the public realm improvements in order for them to satisfy County, regional, and State reviews and to qualify for actions such as rezoning and amendments to the DeKalb County Transportation Plan and the Atlanta Regional Commission Transportation Improvement Program.
- STEP 3. The Atlanta Regional Commission amends the Transportation Improvement Program to reflect the transportation improvements outlined in Chapter 5. Also, improvements to State and Federal roads are subject to State and Federal review.
- STEP 4. Once the DeKalb County Commission has created the TAD, it adopts AGA's proposals to improve the public realm and rezones the area. This rezoning will become the basis for all future development in Briarcliff-North Druid Hills. The Commission should enact the rezoning as rapidly as possible because the infrastructure improvements and the creation of the CID depend on it.
- STEP 5. The redevelopment authority commissions engineering studies for all public realm improvements and a master plan for Kittredge Park. This work will include establishing more exact dimensions, working out design details, and specifying the materials that must be used to construct the roads. However, it is essential that the authority carry out this design and engineering work in accordance with the principles laid out in the previous chapter and that it continue to advocate strenuously for conformity to these principles.
- STEP 6. The redevelopment authority begins to implement the public realm improvements.
- STEP 7. Property owners in the area vote to establish the CID. This is important because it will allow work to begin on sidewalk repairs, and for remediation and minor improvements along the creek and in Kittredge Park.





FIGURES 6.6 (LEFT) AND 6.7 (RIGHT)
Briarcliff Road can be retrofitted with a public realm that will transform this regional traffic artery from a place that is avoided by anybody who is not in a car, into a pleasant destination for many outdoor activities.

07 Conclusion

WHEN WE STEP OUT ONTO A STREET, the public realm surrounds us. It pervades our experience of a place and provides the framework around which all other development occurs.

What is happening in DeKalb is happening across the country. But DeKalb now has a particular opportunity in the inevitable progress of suburban Second Growth. It can become the proving ground for a new model of planning in the twenty-first century. A prototype for all communities, it will show how to build great communities from proliferating sprawl that has left a legacy of problems on the American landscape. The problems of sprawl must be solved if DeKalb County is to avoid even worse problems that will accompany the coming Second Growth surge.

The inspiration for this approach comes from the public realms of the world's great cities. The expanded park system, bustling sidewalks, safe bicycle network, hierarchy of connected streets, roundabout, better connections to I-85, improved transit service, are grafted, retuned, and tailored to the specific requirements of DeKalb County. They are not just copied from other places, but made to fit the goals and process of development here for the residents of this neighborhood.

This collaborative, public process is also a prototype for a different kind of planning, in which the public, the developers, and city officials work together from the very beginning for the good of all. It demonstrates that common ground and common goals can be the best foundation for planning in the twenty-first century. The public realm is the physical manifestation of this process. But it is not enough to dream and plan together. The financial framework must also be in place to make that public realm.

Should DeKalb implement these proposals, the entire country will see an example of how Second Growth can become an asset to a community, how the quality of life directly relates to the quality of the public realm, and how insight into and forethought about public infrastructure can transform a suburb into a great place.

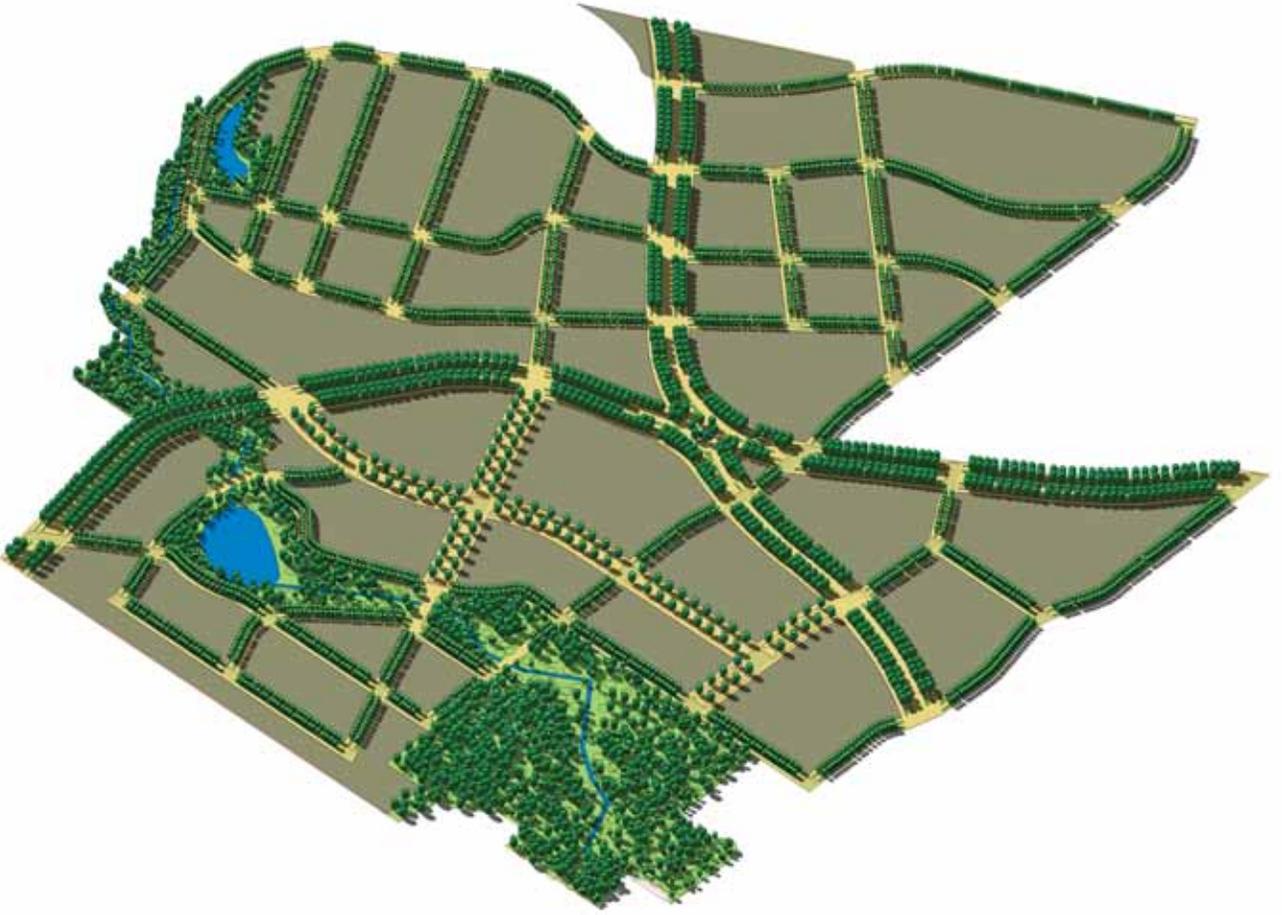


FIGURE 7.1 Axonometric view of the new public realm for Briarcliff-North Druid Hills.

A Appendix

Stakeholder Groups

Jim Durrett, Livable Communities Coalition
Commissioner Kathie Gannon, District 6
Commissioner Jeff Rader, District 2

Business and Property Owners Committee

Pete Abernathy, Chick-Fil-A
 John Baldwin, CHOA
 Sterling Bethea, DeKalb Housing Authority
 Doug Clyburn, Loehmann’s Plaza, Regency
 Heather Duffy, The Sembler Company
 Jeff Fuqua, The Sembler Company
 Doug Harrington, CHOA
 Marvin Isenberg, Piedmont Properties
 Crawford Lewis, DeKalb Board of Education
 Bill McGahan, HRPT
 Vippin Pattni, Pattni Lodging Group
 Harish Pattni, Pattni Lodging Group
 John Sullivan, HRPT
 Craig Williams, QuikTrip

Residents Committee

Josiah Benator, Sheffield Civic Association
 Liz Beyer, BZA
 Larry Danese, PC
 Graham Lenne, Sheffield Glenn
 Allan Scher, Toco Hills Jewish Organization
 Gene Schmidt, LaVista Park
 Danny Wright, Executive Park Condos
 Flo Wolf, Merry Hills

Technical Review Committee

Larry Fonts, Chairman
 Liz Beyer
 Don Broussard
 Gary Cornell
 Larry Danese
 Debra Edelson
 Bob Hughes
 Paul Kelman
 Dan Reuter
 Eddie Rhinehart
 Gene Schmidt
 Barry Williams
 Danny Wright

B Appendix

Schedule of Public Meetings

14 MARCH 2007

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AGA laid out the basic planning principles that would underpin the analysis of Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and that would ultimately guide the planning process. These principles were (1) to create a Public Realm Framework, (2) to enhance access to Briarcliff–North Druid Hills and circulation within it for multiple modes of transportation, and (3) to encourage environmentally responsible, “green” development.

AGA then asked participants to provide examples of destinations that are important to them. At the end of the meeting, participants asked questions of AGA and the Commissioners.

15 APRIL 2007

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Proceeding from two months of site visits, reviews of maps and data, and discussions with local property owners, public servants, local residents, and community leaders, AGA presented an analysis of the main issues facing this part of DeKalb County.

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31 MAY 2007

PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

Drawing upon the previous analysis and the public’s input, AGA presented a series of initial schematic proposals for the public realm that it had drawn up since the previous meeting to address problems and to capitalize on opportunities.

PROPERTY OWNER PLANS

27 JUNE 2007

The major property owners in Briarcliff–North Druid Hills presented their current plans to develop their properties.

PROPOSED MASTER PLAN AND PROPERTY REGULATIONS

27 JUNE 2007

ACA, incorporating feedback from the public, presented preliminary proposals for the study area.

FINAL MASTER PLAN AND PROPERTY REGULATIONS

06 SEPTEMBER 2007

Based on feedback from the public and from the stakeholder groups, ACA presented a revised master plan to the public.

C Appendix

Public Survey #1

Total Respondents: 202

1. How often do you walk a significant distance (over 1/4 mile)?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Less than once a week	27	14%
Once or twice a week	38	19%
A few times a week	78	39%
Every day	57	29%
Total Respondents	200	
(Skipped this question)	2	

2. Why do you walk?
(Choose all that apply.)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Exercise/pleasure	179	90%
Religious reasons	66	33%
Run errands/shop	51	26%
Get to work/school	23	12%
No other way to get around	3	2%
Other (please specify)	33	17%
Total Respondents	198	
(Skipped this question)	4	

3. How often do you bike?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Never	126	63%
Less than once a month	41	21%
A couple times a month	22	11%
Once a week or more	7	4%
Every day	4	2%
Total Respondents	200	
(Skipped this question)	2	

4. If you bike, why do you bike?
(Choose all that apply.)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Exercise/pleasure	73	91%
Run errands/shop	13	16%
Get to work/school	14	18%
No other way to get around	2	3%
Other (please specify)	13	16%
Total Respondents	80	
(Skipped this question)	122	

5. How many driving trips do you make in a day?
(Note: To the store and back is two trips; to work then dinner then home is three; *et cetera*.)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Don't own a car	0	0%
Less than one a day	10	5%
One to three	87	44%
Four to six	73	37%
More than six	27	14%
Total Respondents	197	
(Skipped this question)	5	

6. What prevents you from walking more often?
(Choose all that apply.)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
No convenient destinations	86	50%
Safety	93	54%
No convenient routes	70	41%
No pleasant way or place to do so	77	45%
No safe or convenient place to park	18	10%
I just don't like to and nothing would change that	13	8%
Total Respondents	172	
(Skipped this question)	30	

7. What prevents you from biking more often?
(Choose all that apply.)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
No convenient destinations	32	20%
Safety	95	58%
No convenient routes	63	38%
No pleasant way or place to do so	62	38%
No safe or convenient place to park	23	14%
I just don't like to and nothing would change that	45	27%
Total Respondents	164	
(Skipped this question)	38	

8. What is your strongest concern about this part of DeKalb County?
(Choose all that apply)

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Traffic: Congestion	175	89%
Traffic: Safety	132	67%
Crime	62	31%
Pollution	55	28%
Lack of public parks and other amenities	110	56%
Housing prices	48	24%
Lack of good convenient places to shop	30	15%
Lack of things to do	24	12%
Lack of places to walk	94	48%
Lack of places to bike	58	29%
Lack of recreational opportunities	71	36%
Would like community to be more attractive	75	38%
No concerns	3	2%
Other (please specify)	51	26%
Total Respondents	197	
(Skipped this question)	5	

9. Have you or anyone you know been involved in a traffic accident over the past year?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Yes	103	54%
No	89	46%
Total Respondents	192	
(Skipped this question)	10	

10. How often do you or someone in your family go shopping?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
Less than once a week	6	3%
Once a week	35	18%
A few times a week	140	72%
Every day	14	7%
Total Respondents	195	
(Skipped this question)	7	

11. How far do you typically drive to shop for groceries and other basic needs?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
1-10 minutes	122	63%
10-15 minutes	48	25%
15-20 minutes	15	8%
20-30 minutes	6	3%
More than 30 minutes	3	2%
Total Respondents	194	
(Skipped this question)	8	

12. How far do you typically drive to shop for major purchases?

	RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE %
1-10 minutes	21	11%
10-15 minutes	65	35%
15-20 minutes	58	31%
20-30 minutes	36	19%
More than 30 minutes	8	4%
Total Respondents	188	
(Skipped this question)	14	

D Appendix

Public Survey #2

Total Respondents: 132

Note: Percentages below are calculated based on the total respondents per question.

1. Please rate the following recommendations regarding the proposed road network.

	STRONGLY LIKE	LIKE	NEUTRAL	DISLIKE	STRONGLY DISLIKE	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Boulevards with service lanes	37%	22%	17%	9%	9%	120	94%
Additional tree cover along roads	60%	22%	7%	3%	2%	120	94%
Additional street network	45%	31%	11%	3%	5%	121	95%
Bicycle network	44%	28%	14%	6%	3%	121	95%
Sidewalk network	64%	24%	6%	2%	2%	124	98%
Roundabout	32%	16%	20%	8%	18%	120	94%
Road adjacent to Kittredge Park	27%	29%	17%	8%	12%	118	93%
Total Respondents						127	
(Skipped this question)						5	

2. Please rate the following recommendations regarding the proposed park and open space opportunities.

	STRONGLY LIKE	LIKE	NEUTRAL	DISLIKE	STRONGLY DISLIKE	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Improved access, landscaping, and management of Kittredge Park	63%	21%	7%	2%	2%	120	95%
Extension of Kittredge Park to Briarcliff and beyond along the stream bed	56%	21%	11%	5%	2%	120	95%
The 75-foot buffer on each side of the streams in the Park extension	40%	18%	6%	3%	4%	90	71%
Walk/bike-ways within the buffer areas along the streams in the park extension	55%	22%	7%	5%	3%	116	92%
Playgrounds within the buffer areas along the streams in the park extension	45%	18%	21%	5%	5%	118	94%
Total Respondents						126	
(Skipped this question)						6	

3. Please rate the following additional recommendations from the proposed public realm plan.

	STRONGLY LIKE	LIKE	NEUTRAL	DISLIKE	STRONGLY DISLIKE	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Trees in parking lots	62%	19%	11%	3%	0%	116	95%
Local public transit loop shuttle	30%	30%	24%	6%	3%	113	93%
Total Respondents						122	
(Skipped this question)						10	

4. What community facilities should be part of the plan? Please rank on a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 being the highest priority and 6 being the lowest.

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Senior Citizens Center	13%	7%	7%	10%	17%	8%	76	63%
Daycare Center	3%	5%	10%	9%	16%	19%	75	62%
Auditorium/amphitheater	11%	11%	6%	10%	10%	16%	77	64%
Library	7%	10%	16%	12%	9%	10%	77	63%
Police	28%	12%	12%	7%	3%	2%	77	64%
Fire	5%	19%	9%	15%	10%	8%	80	66%
Total Respondents							121	
(Skipped this question)							11	

5. What *new* school facilities should be part of the plan? Please rank on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest priority and 4 being the lowest.

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
DeKalb School for the Arts	26%	18%	12%	2%	61	58%
Kittredge Magnet School	10%	30%	17%	2%	62	59%
Open Campus High School	1%	2%	13%	40%	59	56%
Stadium	22%	10%	13%	14%	62	59%
Total Respondents					105	
(Skipped this question)					27	

6. Please rate the proposed 400-foot distance between single-family houses and any buildings over five stories.

	STRONGLY LIKE	LIKE	NEUTRAL	DISLIKE	STRONGLY DISLIKE	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
400-foot buffer	42%	22%	14%	10%	6%	107	94%
Total Respondents						114	
(Skipped this question)						18	

7. Please rate the proposed 8% of land area limit on buildings taller than six stories.

	STRONGLY LIKE	LIKE	NEUTRAL	DISLIKE	STRONGLY DISLIKE	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Eight percent of land area limit	37%	21%	21%	6%	10%	101	95%
Total Respondents						106	
(Skipped this question)						26	

8. Do you think building heights should be uniform or varied?

	UNIFORM	VARIED	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Building heights	13%	82%	108	96%
Total Respondents			113	
(Skipped this question)			19	

9. What vision for development in the quadrants do you feel most comfortable with? Please rate in order of preference from 1 to 4 with 1 being your favorite and 4 being your least favorite.

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Atlantic Station	5%	14%	27%	21%	76	68%
Perimeter Center	11%	12%	19%	29%	79	71%
Downtown Decatur	52%	14%	7%	3%	85	76%
Midtown Atlanta	5%	29%	21%	15%	80	71%
Total Respondents					105	
(Skipped this question)					27	

10. A Tax Allocation District (TAD) is a public funding mechanism where additional tax revenues collected from new development in the TAD area are used to fund infrastructure and other capital expenses (including those discussed above) within the District. Tax rates are not increased. Should a TAD be used to fund infrastructure and other improvements in the area?

	YES	NO	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
Tax Allocation District	68%	28%	109	96%
Total Respondents			113	
(Skipped this question)			19	

11. If a TAD is implemented in the area, should it include surrounding neighborhoods and be used to make infrastructure improvements there?

	YES	NO	TOTAL RESPONSE	RESPONSE %
TAD to include and to fund surrounding neighborhoods?	64%	32%	102	96%
Total Respondents			106	
(Skipped this question)			26	

12. Other comments.

	TOTAL RESPONSE
Total Respondents	73
(Skipped this question)	59

E Appendix

Public Realm Overlay District Zoning Proposal

Section 27-729.1 Scope of Regulations.

This division establishes standards and procedures that apply to any development, use, alteration, height, density, parking, open space, and building on any lot or portion thereof which is in whole or in part contained within the boundaries of an area designated by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners as a “Public Realm Overlay District” (“the District”). These regulations shall supplant existing zoning districts or portions of districts as shown on the Official Zoning Map of DeKalb County.

Section 27-729.2 Definitions & References.

- a Public Realm: The Public Realm consists of all parkland, plazas, streets, sidewalks, bicycle paths, parking areas, and buildings, such as schools and libraries, that are owned and managed by a public agency, including such quasi-public agencies as TADS, redevelopment authorities, and CIDS.
- b Public Realm Framework: The Public Realm Framework is the network of publicly owned parkland, streets, sidewalks, bicycle paths, parking areas, and public buildings around which private property is developed.

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Section 27-729.3 Statement of Intent.

The purpose and intent of the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners in establishing a Public Realm Overlay District is as follows:

- a Implement the policies and objectives of the DeKalb County Compre-

hensive Plan 2005-2025.

- b Using the County’s ownership of public rights-of-way and properties as leverage, create a superior public realm in order to shape private development in the public interest.
- c Improve the flow of pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle traffic within the area itself.
- d Provide for a pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented environment in the District.
- e Encourage a compatible mixture of residential, commercial, office, cultural and recreational uses.
- f Provide parking that is shared among different uses.
- g Maximize on-street parking and count it toward the total inventory of parking spaces throughout the District.
- h Construct a grid of connected streets to improve access and reduce congestion.
- i Provide publicly accessible open space for active and passive recreation and as an encouragement to desirable private development.
- j Guarantee the provision of work force housing and/or seniors housing.

Section 27-729.4 Boundaries.

- a The boundaries of a Public Realm Overlay District and sub-areas within those areas shall be established via a Zoning Map amendment approved by the Board of Commissioners.
- b A Public Realm Overlay District may be divided into two tiers:
 - (1) High-Intensity Development Tier; and
 - (2) Low-Intensity Development Tier. This tier extends into the District 400 feet in straight line distance from any adjacent single-family home.

Each tier shall share some standards but also shall have its own set of standards as further described herein.

- c The Director of Planning and Zoning shall be the final authority to

determine whether a property is located within the boundaries of the District and its tiers, if any. If any part of a tract under common ownership is within the District, then all of the tract shall be subjected to the standards of the District. Property which straddles two tiers shall be developed in accordance with the regulations applicable to the Tier in which a majority of the property lies. However, in no instance may development violate the requirements described in Section 27-729.9 District Development Regulations Applicable to Low-Intensity Development Tier.

Section 27-729.5

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Consistency.

Public Realm Overlay Districts may be located only in areas designated by the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan 2005-2015 as “Regional Center,” or “Town Center,” or such areas as the County Commission may designate for redevelopment.

Section 27-729.6 Procedures.

a Designation of a Public Realm Overlay District.

The initial designation of a Public Realm Overlay District shall be approved by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to a proposed ordinance introduced by one or more members of the Board of Commissioners, by official action of the Planning Commission, by recommendation from the Director of Planning and Zoning, or by way of a Petition filed or authorized by the owner(s) of the property to be designated. As such, all of the procedures set forth in Chapter 27, Article v, Division 1 pertaining to zoning map amendments shall be followed in approving such initial designation.

b Development Approval After Public Realm District Is Designated.

- (1) **Large-Scale Properties:** A Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) shall be required prior to the development or redevelopment of five or more contiguous acres located in a Public Realm Overlay District. An applicant for such a SLUP shall be subject to all of the procedural and other requirements set forth in Chapter 27, Article v, Division 2 in filing and the consideration of such SLUP applications. Such a SLUP may be pursued simultaneously with an Application for Designation of a Public Realm Overlay District. However, it shall not be heard or approved by the Board of Commissioners unless such District first is adopted.

- (2) **Small-Scale Properties:** Development or redevelopment of a tract of land located within a Public Realm Overlay District which is less than five contiguous acres in size shall be allowed by way of the Special Administrative Permit Process contained in Chapter 27, Article v, Division 3; provided, however, that said development must conform to the requirements of the Public Realm Overlay District set forth herein.

Section 27-729.7 Uses.

- a All uses allowable elsewhere in the zoning ordinance may be placed in the Public Realm Overlay District except:
- + Boarding and breeding kennels
 - + Storage yard for damaged automobiles or confiscated automobiles
 - + Tire retreading and recapping
 - + Adult entertainment establishment
 - + Adult service facility
 - + Go cart concession
 - + Heavy repair shop and trade show
 - + Pawn shops
 - + Heavy construction contractor
 - + Crematorium
- b Residential Buildings which are more than 20 stories and exceed 210 feet in total height, exclusive of customary rooftop equipment such as elevator shafts and rooftop amenities (grills, gazebos, gardens, etc.), are prohibited anywhere in the Public Realm Overlay District.
- c Mixed-Use Buildings which are more than 20 stories and exceed 240 feet in total height, exclusive of customary rooftop equipment such as elevator shafts and rooftop amenities (grills, gazebos, gardens, etc.), are prohibited anywhere in the Public Realm Overlay District.
- d Buildings which exceed than six stories in total height, exclusive of customary rooftop equipment such as elevator shafts and rooftop amenities (grills, gazebos, gardens, etc.), are prohibited in the Low-Intensity Development Tier of the Public Realm Overlay District.

Section 27-729.8 District Development Regulations Applicable to Entirety of Public Realm Overlay District.

- a **Minimum Acreage Requirement:** Any Public Realm Overlay District

must contain a minimum of five acres of land. This land may be separated by existing rights-of-way or public easements.

- b Park Space: Within each Public Realm Overlay District any park space must be accessible to and capable of use by the general public. This park space shall consist of park land owned by the County, conservation easements created by the property owner with rights of public use, new space created by a developer and dedicated to the County or otherwise subjected to a mandatory Community Improvement or some other form of District Property Owners' Association which requires its continued maintenance for the benefit of the public, hardscape amenities, and bike and pedestrian paths.
 - (1) Park space shall be lined, to the extent the grade change is less than 12%, with "Park Drives" or "Creek Roads" as defined in Section 27-729.9(c) and 729.10(3). However, the mandate to create a grid system or to allow connectivity to the balance of the development will supersede this requirement if approved by the Board of Commissioners. No building shall be constructed within this road.
 - (2) Park space, unless otherwise prohibited by existing restrictions of record, shall be pruned, planted with in-fill landscaping per plans approved as part of any Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) application, and shall contain walkways of a permeable surface not greater than 20 feet in width.
 - (3) Public realm space also may include public space which may be used for recreational or entertainment purposes as allowed by the Board of Commissioners and likewise may include benches, public restrooms, kiosks, fountains, sidewalks and hardscaping (with the proposed development) and other items which may be required by the Board of Commissioners.
 - (4) With respect to the Public Realm space created in a Public Realm Overlay District, the developers of any property therein shall present as part of any building permit application a legal mechanism under which all such land shall be protected and maintained. Such device must be recorded in DeKalb County deed records to put all future property owners on notice of this development restriction.
 - (5) Open space (whether hardscaped or landscaped) that is contiguous with public streets and parks is considered to be part of the Public Realm for purposes of management and maintenance
- c Road Systems:

- (1) All streets within a Public Realm Overlay District shall be designed to include the following features: pedestrian lighting, crosswalks, street trees, landscaping, and waste receptacles. Pedestrian zones shall be paved in concrete or other appropriate pedestrian materials such as stone or brick pavers and kept clear and unobstructed for the safe and convenient use of pedestrians, subject to encroachments by benches and other street furniture.
- (2) General requirements: Streets within a Public Realm Overlay District may be public or private, provided the latter are constructed pursuant to County specifications for public streets. Streets within the development shall have the following characteristics:
 - (a) Boulevard: Street with minimum right-of-way of 148 feet, to consist of 12-foot sidewalks on both sides, 7-foot bicycle paths on both sides, one service drive in each direction of 17 feet; bus pull out lanes; and a minimum of two additional travel lanes for vehicular use in either direction, for a total of a 148-foot multi-use roadway. Boulevards shall contain an 8-foot wide landscaped strip between the travel lanes and service drives; and a 4-foot wide landscaped strip between the service lane and the bicycle path. Parallel parking is provided on the service lanes, but prohibited on the travel lanes.
 - (b) Town Center Drive: Street with right-of-way of 149 feet, to consist of 14-foot sidewalks on both sides, a 7-foot bicycle lane on one side, four rows of angled parking in lanes of 17 feet 6 inches, and four total lanes for vehicular traffic each 10 feet in width. Landscape islands measuring at least 9 feet by 24 feet shall separate every 11 parking spaces.
 - (c) Retail Street: Street with right-of-way of 114 feet, to consist of 14-foot sidewalks on both sides, a 7-foot bicycle path on one side, a 17-foot strip of angled parking on both sides, four 10-foot travel lanes, two in each direction; and a 4-foot center landscaped median. Landscape islands measuring at least 9 feet by 24 feet shall separate every 11 parking spaces.
 - (d) Center Street: Street with minimum right-of-way of 104 feet; to consist of two 14-foot sidewalks, one 7-foot bicycle lane, two rows of angled parking in a 17-foot 6-inch strip on either side of street; two travel lanes of 15 feet, and one 4-foot center landscaped median. Landscape islands measuring at least 9 feet by 24 feet shall separate every 11 parking spaces.
 - (e) Park Drive: Street with minimum right-of-way of 60 feet,

to consist of one 7-foot sidewalk and one 10-foot sidewalk, a 9-foot bike path on the side of the street which adjoins the park, a row of parallel parking spaces on 8 feet on one side of the street next to the park, and a 9-foot travel lane in either direction. Landscape islands measuring at least 8 feet by 24 feet must separate every 11 parallel parking spaces.

- (f) Residential Street: Street with right-of-way of 60 feet, to consist of a 10-foot sidewalk on either side, an 8-foot bike lane on one side, parallel parking spaces of 7 feet on both sides, and a 9-foot travel lane in either direction. Landscape islands as described in Section 27-729.9(d)(4) must separate every 10 parallel parking spaces.
 - (g) Townhome Drive: Street with right-of-way width of 60 feet, to consist of a 10-foot sidewalk adjacent to townhomes, two travel lanes of 10 feet each, and a 30-foot green space on the side of the street opposite the townhomes.
- (3) The intent of these road characteristics is to conceive of roads as public spaces for use by automobile, cyclists, and pedestrians.
 - (4) When existing roads within the Overlay District are to be improved to these standards, the owners of either side of the existing road shall be equally treated in terms of requiring right-of-way dedication or contribution towards making the necessary improvement, unless otherwise agreed by them.
 - (5) An interconnected network of new or improved roads should be created in order to qualify for SLUP approval of a development in this Overlay District. Cul-de-sacs are prohibited. Except for service alleys, dead-end roads are allowed only instances where roads within the Overlay District have no alternative but to terminate at points bordering on properties outside the Overlay District.
 - (6) Entrances to new parking areas must be from internal roadways and not from service drives in Boulevard right-of-way.
 - (7) The separation of roads shall be no less than 200 feet, or, no greater than an average of 750 feet along a Boulevard.
 - (8) Service drives in Boulevard rights-of-way may be used for loading and unloading passengers and parking.
 - (9) Safe and convenient pedestrian pathways shall be provided from sidewalks along streets to each structure entrance. All such walkways shall be a minimum width of 5 feet. Where newly constructed

sidewalks abut narrower existing adjacent sidewalks, the newly constructed sidewalk shall provide an adequate transitional clear zone width for the purposes of providing a safe facilitation of pedestrian traffic flow between the adjacent sidewalks.

- (10) There shall be clearly articulated crosswalks at all intersections for pedestrian access within the Overlay District.

d Parking

- (1) There are no minimum or maximum parking requirements for any development in the Overlay District.
- (2) Shared parking for different uses is required.
- (3) Parking structures must be wrapped on at least two sides by retail, office, residential, or mixed-use structures.
- (4) The following landscape requirement shall apply to any surface parking lot:

One (1) tree of at least 2.5 inches diameter at breast height for every eight spaces.

- (b) Any existing tree cut down to create the parking area must be replaced at a ratio of one tree for every 3 inches of diameter at breast height.
- (c) Each lot must contain at least a 10% landscaped area, which does not include the required edge buffer in the parking regulations found in DeKalb County Code §14. This landscaped area must be evenly dispersed throughout the lot.
- (d) Any landscaped island must be at least 6 feet by 10 feet.
- (e) Every row of parking must be separated from any facing row by a landscaped strip.
- (f) No more than 11 cars may be parked in a contiguous row without landscaping.
- (g) Except when separated by a parking access lane, trees shall be no further apart than 25 feet center to center.
- (5) The following drainage standards apply to any surface parking lot:
 - (a) As a whole, the parking lot must treat, retain, and infiltrate

85% of storm events (the first 1.2 inches of any storm event in Georgia).

- (b) Each landscaped area functions as a natural filtration swale (bio-swale) that meets the recommended standards set in the Georgia Stormwater Manual. Underground cisterns in swales may be used to meet the standards set in the Georgia Stormwater Manual. Curbs in parking areas shall have openings every 2 feet at most to allow water to enter the bio-swale planting areas.
- (c) No surface parking lot may be constructed within 65 feet of Boulevard right-of-way.



FIGURES E.1 (TOP) AND E.2 (BOTTOM)
The landscaping requirements in the proposed Public Realm Zoning Overlay District would preclude large retailers, like Target, from covering their site with asphalt. Instead they would have to provide grass strips, trees, and landscaping that would improve air quality, absorb stormwater, provide shade, and moderate ambient air temperature.

e Water Quality.

- (1) A 75-foot stream buffer (graded to allow natural drainage) shall be maintained from center line of any flowing waters existing on property within a Public Realm Overlay District.
- (2) No encroachment is allowed within this buffer except as follows:
 - (a) To improve and/or remediate the stream and bank, if needed, pursuant to a plan approved by the DeKalb County Roads and Drainage Division.
 - (b) To clean, landscape, and maintain the buffer area.
 - (c) To install walkways or paths of permeable surface, not greater than 20 feet in width (parallel to the stream bank).
 - (d) To place benches or other seating along walkways or paths.
 - (e) In-fill landscaping in this buffer shall consist of trees with a minimum 2.5-inch diameter at breast height (DBH), planted along the paths/walkways at a minimum of 25 feet on center.
 - (f) Should retention of existing trees within this buffer result in a conflict with this 25-foot spacing requirement, then the distance between a tree to be retained and a required new tree may be varied by no greater than 30%.
 - (g) Roads are allowed to cross the stream and buffer at a perpendicular angle, as are utilities, provided that plans are approved by the County Commission. These crossings may not disturb sensitive and/or rare wildlife habitat.
 - (h) Retention of healthy hardwood trees equal to or greater than 12 inches DBH is required within this buffer.
 - (i) A detention or retention pond is not considered flowing, state waters. If such a pond is designed to become a water amenity for the site, then allowed uses may be constructed to within 30 feet of the top of the pond bank, and impervious paths may be as close as 20 feet from the top of the bank. However, the area between any building and the pond bank shall be landscaped and incorporated into the design of any use which adjoins it.
 - (j) Responsibility for stream remediation or maintenance, landscape maintenance including replacement of required trees, maintenance of any paths/walkways/benches, and other needed

buffer maintenance shall be placed in a Community Improvement District/Mandatory Property Owners' Association prior to the issuance of any certificate of occupancy.

f Underground Utilities.

Underground utilities are required for all new development in a Public Realm Overlay District except for major electric transmission lines and substations, if the Director of Planning and Development determines that underground utilities are not feasible due to physical conditions, such as conflicting structures or utilities, shallow rock, high water table, or other similar geologic or hydrologic conditions.

g Setbacks.

There are no minimum setbacks within the Public Realm Overlay District. Instead, those setbacks reflected on the Conceptual Site Plan presented during the SLUP process shall be observed. These setbacks may be reduced by up to 10% to account for engineering changes required during development. Setbacks may be increased via the administrative approval process set forth in §27-845. All setbacks and building separations must be approved by the DeKalb County Fire Marshall in compliance with the State Fire Marshall's Code.

h Landscaping.

Any Applicant who seeks a SLUP to secure approval of a development within the Overlay District must submit a detailed Landscape Plan which identifies where and what kind of trees and other existing green space must be cleared, how many replacement trees would be required by the Tree Protection Ordinance of DeKalb County, where new trees will be planted, and how the developer will maintain those trees after development is complete.

i Buildings at Ground Level.

Blank walls along 100 continuous linear feet of any building are prohibited.

j Lighting.

Exterior light poles on the Subject Property shall not exceed 35 feet in height and shall be of high-pressure sodium, metal halide or similar design intended to minimize light spillover. Exterior light poles and other exterior lights shall be directed inward and downward and have a controlled footprint intended to minimize light spillover. All outdoor

lighting shall be designed and located such that the maximum illumination measured in initial foot-candles at the external property lines of the subject property shall not exceed 0.3 onto adjacent residential properties.

- k Future Subdivision of Property.
 - (1) Parts of the Property may be conveyed as separate tracts and to separate owners with different ownership structures under the zoning plan.
 - (2) Should there be a conveyance of part of the property to different owners, all zoning conditions and variances shall remain applicable to any portion of the conveyed Property, regardless of what future person or entity owns the subdivided Property.
 - (3) Conveyance of part of the property to different owners shall not require any changes to the zoning plan for the Development nor any variances. The newly created property lines which arise from these conveyances are not required to observe setback, buffer or other requirements provided the building layout for the project as a whole continues to comply substantially with the Site Plan.
 - (4) All development within a Public Realm Overlay District shall be a master planned development.

Section 27-729.9 Public Realm Overlay District Development Regulations Applicable to Low Intensity Development Tier Only.

- a For a depth of 400 feet from any external property line of the Overlay District which immediately adjoins any property zoned R-100, R-85, R-75, R-60 and R-50; as well as any zoning district with detached residential units in R-A5 or R-A8.
 - (1) No building greater than six stories or 75 feet (whichever is less) in height adjacent to the side which faces a residential property shall be erected within 400 feet of the property line.

AND

- (2) There shall be an initial setback area of 30 feet from the property line abutting the external district to a building wall of three stories or 35 feet (whichever is less). This area may be used as private yards or planted buffer. The opposite side of the three-story buildings

must face a standard Residential Street. A building of no greater than six stories or 75 feet may be constructed on the opposite side of said street.

AND

- (3) No building greater than three stories or 35 feet, whichever is less, shall be erected within 100 feet of the property line. Within this 100 feet, there shall be at least a 30-foot planted buffer, and a Residential Street (which may be built only 50 feet wide). This 100-foot distance may also include, on the opposite side of said street, a building of no taller than 35 feet or three stores, whichever is less.
- b Heights in the Low-Intensity Development Tier shall be measured from average finished grade to average roof peak, exclusive of elevator shafts and rooftop amenities.
- c Nonresidential uses are restricted to the ground floor of any residential development in the Low-Intensity Development Tier, except for associated building amenities.

Section 27-729.10 Funding Mechanisms.

The various mechanisms available for the funding of public capital improvements within the Public Realm Overlay District include but are not limited to developer contributions and improvements at its own expense, Tax Allocation Districts, Community Improvement Districts, Transportation Management Plans and similar devices.

F Appendix

Information on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a type of bus service that, while often confused with express bus service, is actually much more similar to rail. It has gained favor in many cities because capital and operations costs are much lower than those associated with subway, light rail, or heavy rail service. BRT exhibits the following characteristics:

- 1 *Exclusive right-of-way.* BRT buses are separate from other traffic, making them more reliable and faster than regular buses.
- 2 *Low-floor buses.* Passengers entering and exiting BRT buses do not have to contend with stairs. This reduces boarding and unboarding times.
- 3 *Stations.* The stops on BRT systems are enclosed and have elevated platforms so that there is no grade differential between them and the interiors of the buses. This further speeds up boarding and unboarding.
- 4 *Pre-boarding fare collection.* While passengers on regular buses pay their fares upon boarding, on BRT systems they pay at the station before boarding, similar to subway riders. This also keeps the boarding times to a minimum.

BRT boils down to two main components that increase reliability and speed: (1) segregation from other traffic and (2) easy and fast boarding and unboarding. This type of system often also includes articulated buses for greater capacity and more recently, traffic signals that can detect approaching buses and give them priority over other vehicles.

This type of system has been implemented around the world, including in California (between El Monte and Los Angeles), Bogotá, Colombia, Curitiba, Brazil, and Mexico City, Mexico.

APPROXIMATE TRAVEL IN 30 MINUTES			
MODE	DISTANCE IN MILES	SPEED IN MPH	CAPACITY
Subway	15.0	≥30	20,000
Light Rail (dedicated right-of-way)	15.0	30	5,000
Light Rail (on-street right-of-way)	7.5	15	2,500
Bus (dense city traffic)	1.5	3	750
Bus (suburban streets)	4.0	8	1,200
Bus (express)	7.5	15	3,000
BRT (dedicated right-of-way)	15.0	30	5,000

ALSO BY ALEX GARVIN AND ALEX GARVIN & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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- 2 Land Use Planning
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