

## SECTION 2

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PREPARED FOR:



**DeKalb County, Georgia**



**Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority**

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# SECTION 2: REDEVELOPMENT VISION

Section 2 is built upon input from the public engagement process and the conclusions drawn from the analyses identifying issues and opportunities. It proposes the community's vision for the corridor, with transit-supportive land uses, infrastructure investments, and public realm improvements in each station area. The Station Area TOD Vision Chapter illustrates the potential development buildout and context-sensitive urban design elements needed to make TOD successful. This section also includes zoning policy recommendations, a breakdown of transportation infrastructure improvements needed, along with funding, financing and other implementation strategies that can incentivize private development and help achieve the community's vision for TOD in this corridor.

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# 1 CORRIDOR TOD VISION

Planning TOD within the context of the corridor will organize and prioritize programming for individual station areas. The goal is to strike a balance between stations to avoid competing interests and optimize functionality at the neighborhood, corridor and regional scales.

This Corridor TOD Vision focuses on directing future growth to clusters along the MARTA I-20 East High Capacity Transit Corridor to better distribute economic opportunity and its subsequent benefits across the corridor. It coordinates growth targets among the six station areas so that each has a distinct role that contributes to the overall goals of the entire corridor. Their unique roles complement the programs in other station areas, encouraging trips made using transit and, therefore, reduces the use of private vehicles. Implementing TOD on a corridor scale also increases access to a variety of jobs and expands the economic opportunities in this part of DeKalb County.

## 1.1 VISION STATEMENT

**The MARTA High Capacity Transit Corridor will concentrate transit-supportive land uses, development density, and public realm improvements that unlock the full potential of the transit investment and promote economic growth at strategic locations along the corridor. The corridor will have walkable station areas guided by varying development strategies ranging from “town center main street” to business and entertainment destination. Each station area will provide pedestrian-friendly street connections and a network of public spaces that supports increased mixed-income housing and expanded neighborhood services.**

## 1.2 MARTA TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

MARTA's Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines identify seven TOD Station Typologies for station areas along its existing and future network: urban core, town center, commuter town center, neighborhood, arterial corridor, special regional destination, and collector. Since these typologies are developed for stations across a much wider geographic region, some do not apply to the context of the I-20 East Corridor. This TOD Community Plan draws on three typologies as defined below:

- **Town Center** stations are set in relatively dense, active and mixed-use nodes of development. These station areas primarily have mid-rise buildings, TOD-friendly street networks, a rich pedestrian environment, and identifiable civic landmarks. Housing is a significant component of the Town Centers in addition to a balanced mix of uses. The proposed Covington Highway Station area will fall under this typology.
- **Commuter Town Center** stations have all the characteristics of town center stations with additional emphasis on their roles as “capture points” for commuter transferring. They need to provide park-and-ride capacities and accommodate a higher level of rush-hour commuter traffic. Commuter Town Centers are newly planned places strategically located near the interstate highway system. Indian Creek, Wesley Chapel Road, Panola Road, and Mall at Stonecrest Station areas are identified to be future Commuter Town Centers.
- **Arterial Corridor** stations in the MARTA TOD Guidelines originally refer to stations along an arterial rapid bus corridor. The transit routes enhance mobility and transform the existing auto-oriented, homogeneous commercial corridor into a walkable environment with a sense of place. There will still be a mix of uses, but the development density may appear to be less intense than the Town Center or Commuter Town Center typologies. Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station area fits the profile of this less intense typology.

## 1.3 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The community vision for station area development at full build-out would accommodate up to 17 million square feet across six station areas. These potential developments would be comprised of approximately 80% residential, 7% retail, 10% commercial and flexible space, and 3% entertainment and other uses. The potential development areas were derived from the urban design concept plans that spatially interpret the community station areas visions.

The development strategy for each station area highlights its role along the corridor. It builds on each station's existing land use and urban design opportunities, as identified in Chapter 4 Station Area Existing Conditions and Chapter 5 Urban Design Analysis of Section 1. It also reflects input from stakeholders, developers, and the public. The development strategies and anticipated potential development quantities for the six station areas are:



### INDIAN CREEK STATION: REINVENT THE PARK-AND-RIDE LOT AS A TOWN CENTER MAIN STREET.

#### **Long-term Development Potential: 2 Million Square Feet**

There are several key elements that differentiate Indian Creek Station from the others. This station is an existing MARTA Blue Line station. Known to current MARTA riders and regional commuters who use the Park-n-Ride lot, this station has attracted developer interests and can capture the stronger real estate market just on the other side of I-285 to the west. The land around this station is also publicly owned, making it an ideal site to implement a public-private partnership to catalyze TOD. Indian Creek Station is, therefore, identified by this TOD Community Plan as one of the two priority stations for earlier and focused TOD implementation.

With a total of almost 30 acres of Park-n-Ride and undeveloped land around the station, the Indian Creek station area can spur around two million square feet of mixed-use development to create a Town Center Main Street environment if a new network of public streets and utilities is in place.





### **COVINGTON HIGHWAY STATION: REDEVELOP THE FORMER SHOPPING CENTER AS A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER.**

#### **Long-term Development Potential: 1.5 Million Square Feet**

The Covington Highway station area will accommodate a smaller scale and lower density TOD compared to other station areas along the corridor due to its close proximity to single-family residential neighborhoods. This station area can provide over 200,000 square feet of commercial and neighborhood retail space to address the needs expressed by local residents and become a small-scale Neighborhood Center.

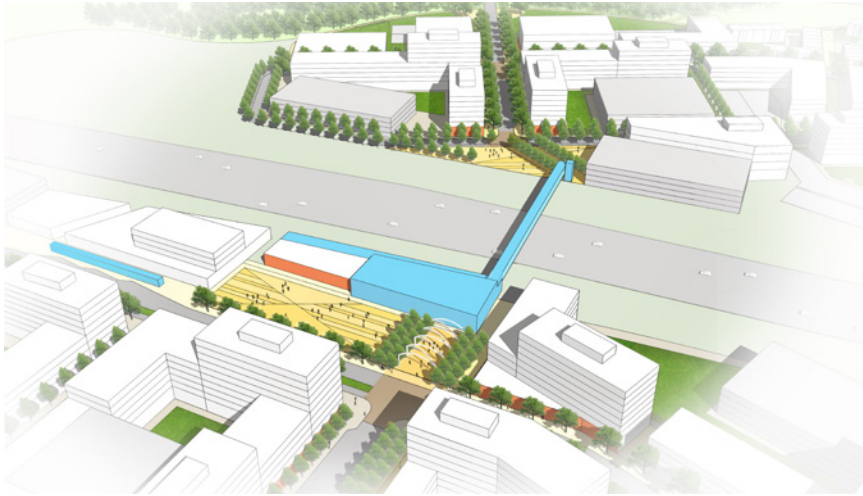


### **WESLEY CHAPEL ROAD STATION: CREATE A 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS DESTINATION SERVED BY THE MULTIMODAL HUB.**

#### **Long-term Development Potential: 4 Million Square Feet**

Wesley Chapel Road Station will connect the I-20 East Corridor to other transit networks and serve as a multimodal hub in the future. This station area has over 60 acres of underutilized and re-developable land allowing for a major transformation. The development strategy—to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business Destination—originated from a market analysis and public input. This station area will differentiate itself from the rest along the corridor by providing urban amenities to attract younger workforce and employers that target this cohort.





**PANOLA ROAD STATION: DENSIFY AROUND EXISTING ANCHORS TO ESTABLISH A MIXED USE CENTER.**

**Long-term Development Potential: 3 Million Square Feet**

There are a few strong economic anchors and existing employers near Panola Road Station that are located just outside the station area. Mixed use development in the station area will connect these anchors to transit and provide an environment that attracts similar industries and businesses. Approximately three million square feet of development can happen on both sides of I-20 if a pedestrian bridge is provided to connect both sides to the future station.

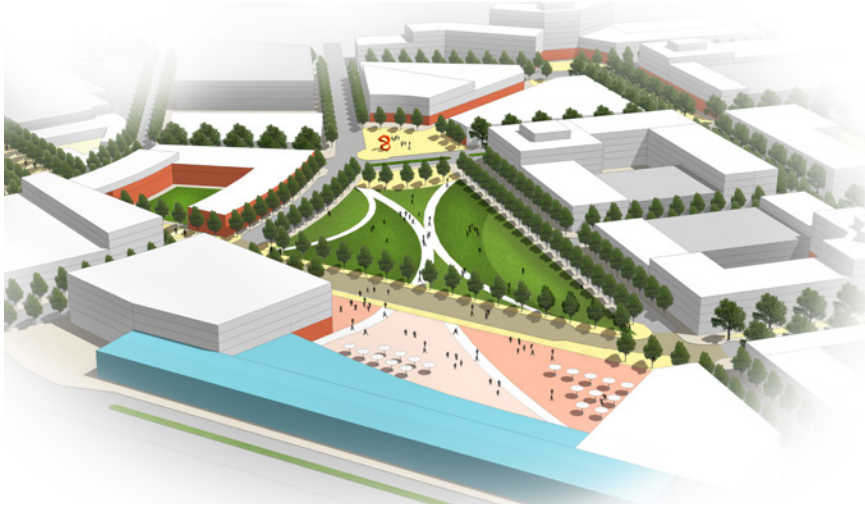


**LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD STATION: CREATE A HEADQUARTERS CAMPUS TO COMPLEMENT NEARBY LIGHT INDUSTRIAL.**

**Long-term Development Potential: 2 Million Square Feet**

There is strong interest from stakeholders and developers to create an office campus for a corporate headquarters in the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard station area. With an industrial corridor along Lithonia Industrial Boulevard north of I-20 and a mega church—the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church—to the south, the new development in this station needs to be sensitive to its context. The proposed two-million-square-foot potential development will consist of a medium- to low-density office campus, residential townhouses, and low-density apartment buildings served by open spaces and neighborhood amenities.





## **MALL AT STONECREST STATION: RE-IMAGINE THE AREA AROUND THE MALL AS A REGIONAL LIVE-WORK-PLAY DESTINATION.**

### **Long-term Development Potential: 4 Million Square Feet**

Mall at Stonecrest Station is identified as another priority station for TOD. With over one million square feet of existing retail space, the Mall at Stonecrest is already a regional attraction. Though vacant for some years, the sites around the mall are primed for development with streets and utilities already in place. These sites provide a much larger land area for TOD than what is available at other station areas along the corridor.

Building upon the analyses and public input documented in Section 1 of this report, the TOD vision for this station area is to create a regional destination by introducing programs that complement the mall use and draw people from the region for all-day or multi-day activities. This vision is strengthened by additional residential and office uses that can activate the community 24/7. Under this vision, roughly four million square feet of development can be built out.

These development strategies are the starting point for the Station Area TOD Visions, which are laid out in the next chapter. Each station area concept plan reflects proposed development build-outs, walkable street environments, and public realm improvements needed to achieve TOD. Indian Creek and Mall at Stonecrest stations are the Priority Station areas where catalytic projects can lead to “early wins” in achieving the desired economic development outcomes. Strategies for these two priority stations are included in Chapter 6 Priority Station Area TOD Vision.

# 2 STATION AREA TOD VISION

## 2.1 OVERVIEW

The Station Area TOD Vision described in this chapter proposes the community's visions for station area TOD. The vision is guided by the MARTA TOD Guidelines to achieve the following goals:

- To generate greater transit ridership—a natural consequence of clustering mixed-use development around stations and along corridors.
- To promote a sustainable, affordable, and growing future for the people of Metro Atlanta.
- To generate a return on MARTA's transit investment—through enhanced passenger revenues, greater federal support, and, where applicable, development on MARTA property.

The TOD Guidelines are built on four foundational principles:

- Station area development that is compact and dense relative to its surroundings.
- A rich mix of land uses.
- A great public realm.
- A new approach to parking.

These four foundational principles are translated into key strategies specific to each station area's planning context, which are incorporated into the station area plan and discussed in the vision section of each station. To further differentiate the mix of uses, scale, and density of future development in each station area, a MARTA-defined TOD station typology has been applied as a starting point.

## 2.2 STATION AREA TOD PLAN

The station area-specific TOD plan for each station is described in this chapter. For each station, the following key urban design elements are presented:

- The **vision** section highlights the overarching theme or goal, and the broad design ideas behind the specific proposed character for each station.
- The street grid laid out in the **mobility** section sets up the “bones” of the station area plan, establishing the blocks and circulation pattern.
- The **open space** network section overlays a system of open spaces on the street grid to expand and complement its non-vehicular connectivity. It describes the scale and type of each individual space that makes up the larger network to provide amenities and create a sense of place.
- The **land use and density** section discusses proposed development patterns for the station area, specifically the density and scale, mix of uses, and any station-area-specific parking strategies.
- The **public realm improvement** section encapsulates specific elements from the mobility, open space, and land use sections to establish a unique character for each station area.



## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Commuter Town Center

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Reinvent the Park-and-Ride Station as a new community anchored by an Inter-modal Town Center Main Street.

## 2.2.1 INDIAN CREEK STATION



**Figure 2-1:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-1:** Key Strategies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a medium-density mixed-use core at the station</li> </ul>  |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redevelop existing Park-and-Ride lot into a new community</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PARKING APPROACH</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prioritize transit use and promote a shared parking programs</li> <li>○ Condense commuter parking based on current utilization and future projection</li> </ul> |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Connect to existing green corridor along Indian Creek</li> <li>○ Focus on improving connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods</li> </ul>                        |

## THE VISION

The TOD framework envisions a centrally located Civic Plaza surrounded by retail, restaurants, and apartments that would combine with Indian Creek Station to create a new place for local and regional gathering. The mix of uses connects to Redan Road as a 'Main Street' retail and residential corridor and is the primary gateway for the development. A Community Green forms the interface between the station area and a multi-family neighborhood (see Figure 2-2). This area of apartments is organized along a north-south boulevard that connects all areas of the development.

The proposed transit station would be in the center of the redevelopment site, providing opportunity for integration with the private development and planned civic spaces. Aside from existing MARTA facilities, the site is clear of structures. On the northern portion of the site, new development and open spaces are proposed on the existing station surface parking lot while on the southern portion, redevelopment is proposed to take the place of underutilized vacant land. The plan for the Indian Creek Station will create a transformative, mixed-use town center with the potential to become a regional draw for Atlanta and a gateway to expanded transit service and new development along the I-20 corridor to the east.

The TOD vision for the Indian Creek Station will be accomplished through the key strategies highlighted in Table 2-1.





**Figure 2-2:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Indian Creek Station Area

## MOBILITY

The proposed street grid will be optimized for walkability and bicycle access and support a range of mixed-use and residential development densities. All streets are designed with Complete Streets principles and include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and on-street parking. Safe and convenient circulation and access for residents, commuters and visitors are a priority.

A centrally-located north residential boulevard, Central Boulevard, serves the station area and joins the neighborhood to the north with the mixed-use district to the south. Main Street parallels Central Boulevard through the mixed-use district and curves eastward to intersect with Elder Lane. Currently, Elder Lane is a north-south service road for the existing Indian Creek Station. This road will be upgraded to facilitate additional pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation on-street parking.

Today, direct vehicular access to the Indian Creek station area from the I-285 is limited. MARTA buses servicing the station arrive via a restricted access northbound off-ramp and depart via a restricted access southbound aerial ramp. The current configuration of these ramps will remain and be integrated with the redevelopment of the Indian Creek station area. Vehicular access on these ramps would provide direct access to the station. The closest connection from southbound and to northbound I-285 is from the Memorial Drive interchange, with George Luther Drive and Durham Park Road providing the most direct route from the northern portion of the station area site.

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

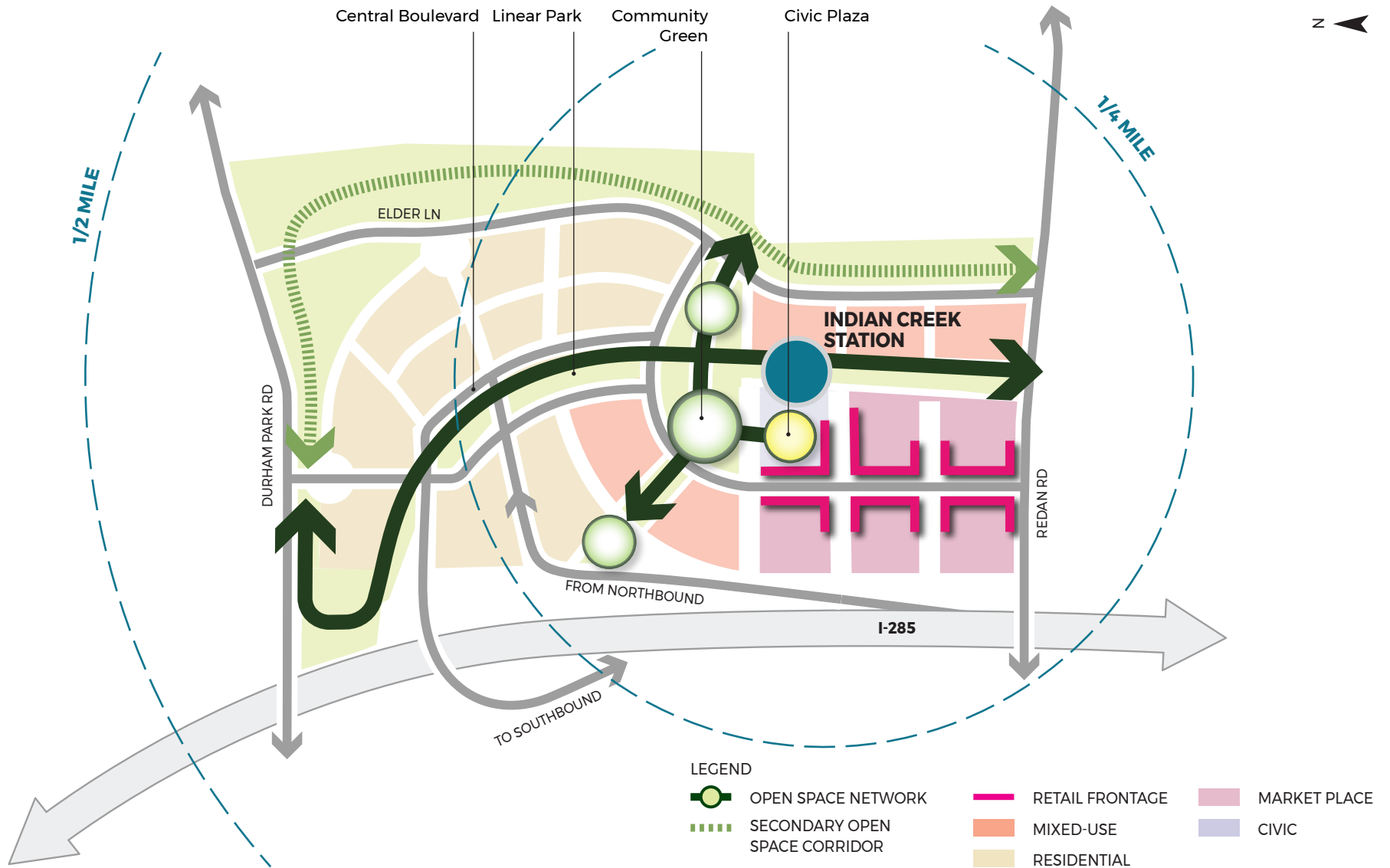
Civic Plaza and Community Green form the primary open spaces for the proposed Indian Creek development. Combined with the station, these elements create a memorable and important transit-centric place for residents, commuters and visitors. A linear Park connects the neighborhood and the mixed-use district with places for recreation and gathering, and forms a pedestrian and bicycle network for the entire site.

At the heart of Indian Creek is Civic Plaza. Framed by the station to the east, lively and active retail and restaurant frontages to the south and west, and the Community Green to the north, Civic Plaza is the premiere gathering place for the community and has the potential to become a regional destination. A variety of programming ensures the space is active year-round and can include farmers and makers markets, outdoor performances, and holiday and food festivals.

The Community Green is a large open space for residents, commuters and visitors alike. This space is framed to the north and west by an arc of multi-family apartments that follow the curve of Main Street. The Community Green acts as a 'front yard' where the neighborhood to the north and the mixed-use district to the south meet.

Across its half-mile length, the Linear Park is intended for passive and active uses and includes places for rest and relaxation, fitness stations, dog runs and a multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists. Along the northern and eastern stretches, users of the path will engage Indian Creek and experience dense swaths of preserved forest that also act as buffers between the new development and single family homes to the east.





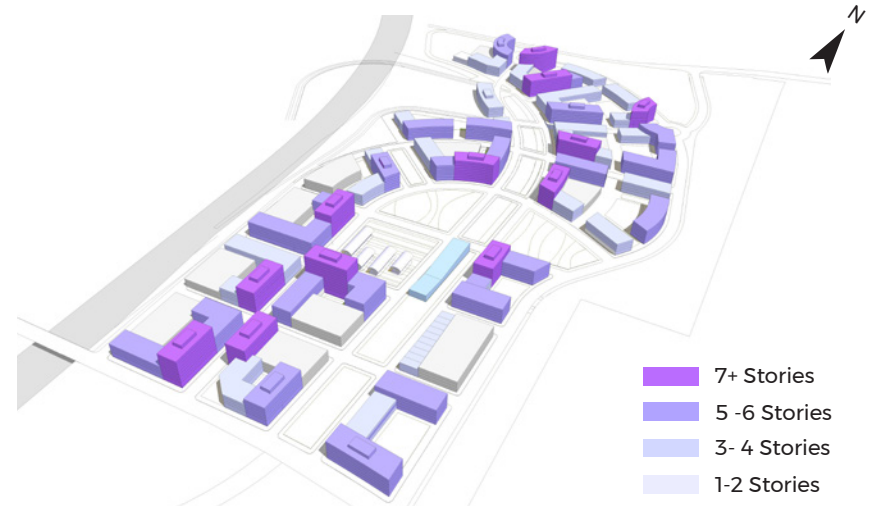
**Figure 2-3:** Indian Creek Station Area Design Framework Diagram

## LAND USE & DENSITY

The station area plan is divided into two distinct areas: a Mixed-Use District and a Residential Neighborhood. The nine-block Mixed-Use District envisions the Indian Creek development as a regional destination by including a diverse and complementary mix of national anchor and local retail options, restaurants and places for entertainment. These uses are focused at the ground level along Main Street and frame the Civic Plaza and station area. Parking is provided for each block by an above-grade garage that is integrated with the development to preserve a continuous street wall and reinforce the street as “public space”. The garages offer parking for visitors and residents as well as allocated Park-and-Ride spaces for commuters connecting with transit at the station. When combined with the apartments above each block, the Mixed-Use District is a lively, transit-centric urban place for the east side of I-285 and the I-20 corridor.

The plan re-imagines what is currently a large surface parking lot for the existing MARTA station as a seven-block neighborhood of medium and low-density multi-family apartment buildings, ranging in height from 3 to 5 stories. Interior courtyards offer amenities for residents and are integrated with above-grade parking garages. Neighborhood services, like dry cleaners and small markets, are included at the ground level of buildings to meet residents needs.

Development densities would be highest in the Mixed-Use District, with block base heights ranging from 4 to 5 stories and 7 to 10 story towers. The development scale is most dense around the station and Civic Plaza, with density gradually decreasing from west to east, transitioning to the single-family homes east of Elder Lane and the Green Buffer. The Neighborhood is a mix of medium and low-density blocks, with some towers ranging in height from 6 to 8 floors to mark important intersections. Development densities should be moderately higher than the surrounding development to support transit ridership.



**Figure 2-4:** Indian Creek Development Density



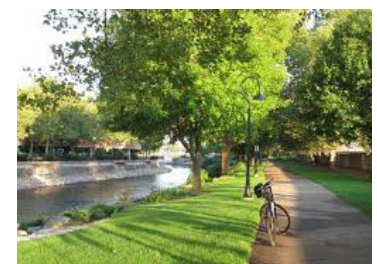
**High-Density Mixed-Use**



**Main Street Retail**



**Farmers/Makers Market**



**Linear Park**

**Figure 2-5:** Examples of Uses and Densities

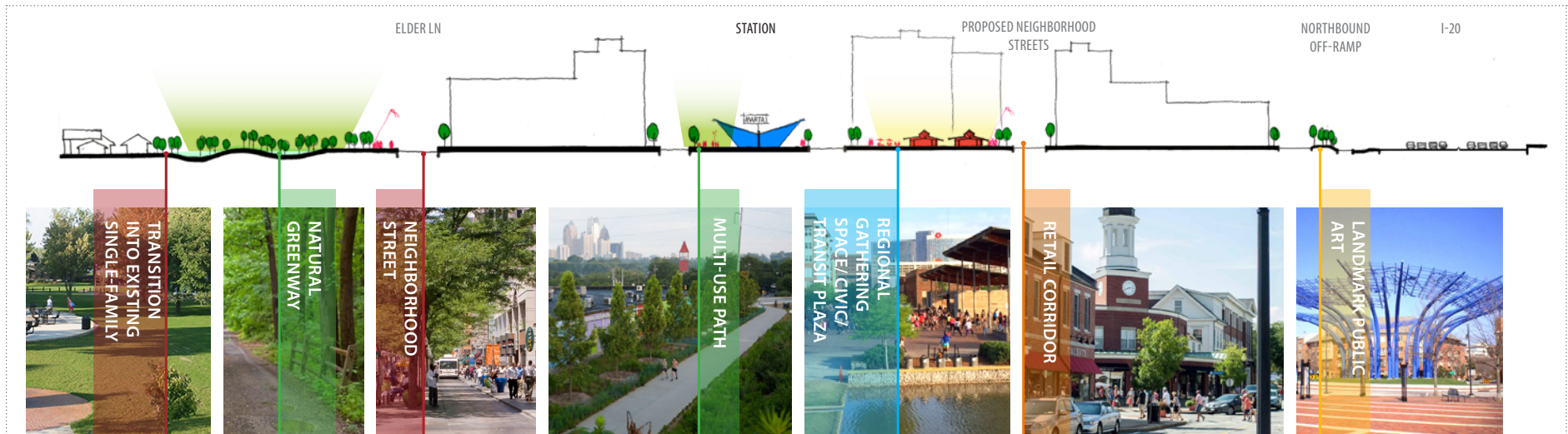




**Figure 2-6:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-out in the Indian Creek Station Area (Looking Northwest)



## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS



**Figure 2-7:** Conceptual Section Showing Programs Proposed for Public Space (Looking South)

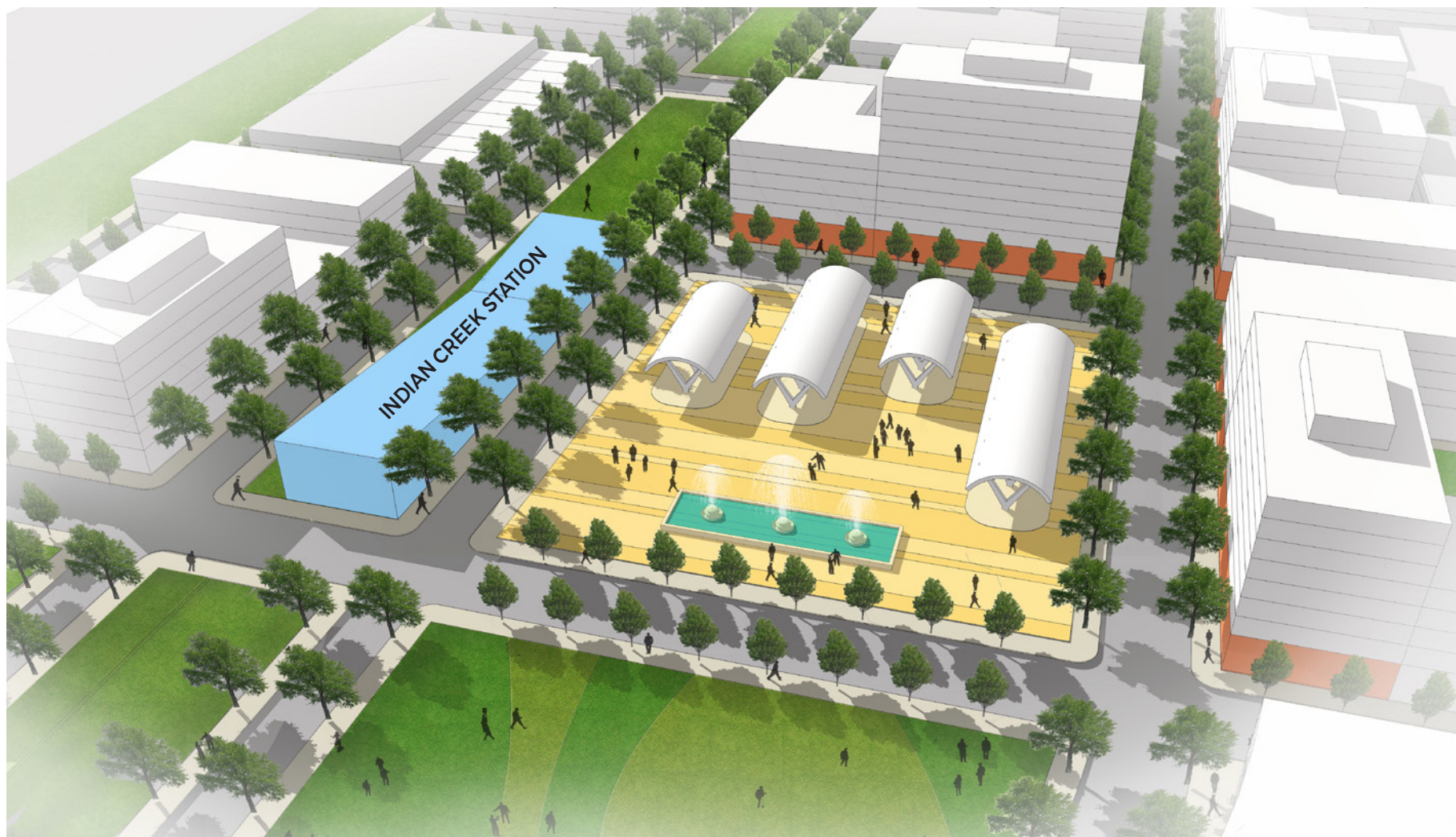
Civic Plaza is the space on which all other spaces and corridors of the envisioned Indian Creek development would converge. Large-scale water features and special paving underscore the importance of Civic Plaza and the space can also be designed without curbs to strengthen pedestrian connectivity to the adjacent transit facility and surrounding retail and restaurants.

The Community Green is programmed for active and passive recreation. A shallow earthen mound can define a portion of the space and offer users a view of the development and opportunities for passive engagement. Other areas can accommodate soccer or baseball fields to add to the development's active recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Central Boulevard is a formal, tree-lined corridor that connects directly with Civic Plaza and Community Green and is the prominent address for development, similar in principle to Peachtree Street in Atlanta or McKinney Boulevard in Dallas. The linear park, with areas for passive recreation and

public art, is integrated within the right of way and adds to the boulevard's prominence.

The character of Main Street changes across its length. Within the Mixed-Use District, wide sidewalks, planters, street trees, festive lighting and public art foster an exciting and active urban street scene. Architectural elements like awnings and storefronts of various scale and composition combine with areas for outdoor dining to contribute a pedestrian scale to the bustling corridor. As Main Street curves eastward, the corridor becomes a threshold between Community Green and the neighborhood. Apartment buildings, with lobbies, amenity spaces and small stores for neighborhood services overlook Community Green and includes on-street parking and lanes for bicycles.



**Figure 2-8:** Zoom-in View of the Civic Plaza and Community Green in Front of the Indian Creek Station (Looking South)





## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Town Center

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Redevelop Covington Highway station area as a Town Center with a mix of uses anchored by open space and connected by a network of walkable streets.

## 2.2.2 COVINGTON HIGHWAY STATION



**Figure 2-9:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-2:** Key Strategies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a mid-density mixed-use corridor</li> </ul>  |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redevelop key parcels along Covington Highway to establish a consistent street wall</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PROGRESSIVE PARKING</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduce amount of parking on-site through a shared parking program</li> <li>○ Place surface parking behind the buildings in new developments</li> </ul>      |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; ENGAGING CIVIC SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish main street characteristics for new streets created around the proposed station</li> <li>○ Create gateway features in the station area</li> </ul> |

## THE VISION

The Covington Highway station area plan envisions a walkable town center. A Commercial Core sits right at the station, surrounded by neighborhood retail and an anchor retail store with residential above (see Figure 2-10). The proposed development is defined and enhanced by an open space at each end of the station area: the plaza and green space on the east end, next to the station, greets transit riders and visitors; the park space on the west end, in the residential area, serves as an amenity for surrounding residents. In between, the existing Peace Baptist Church remains in place as a link between the commercial core and the residential focused area. Covington Highway is re-imagined as a street that allows for safe use by pedestrians and cyclists as well as automobiles.

To carry out this vision, redevelopment is envisioned for the existing shopping plaza and several low-density, underutilized commercial properties north of Covington Highway and west of I-285, where the future station will be located. Some parcels south of Covington Highway are included because of their development potential.

The station area plan can transform the area around the station into an attractive, local mixed-use retail destination and a gateway to a new community in scale with existing surrounding development. The TOD vision for the Covington Highway station area will be accomplished through the key strategies highlighted in Table 2-2.





**Figure 2-10:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Covington Highway Station Area

## MOBILITY

A walkable street network radiates from each of the main public open spaces, providing safe and convenient station access for residents from the west, with minimal conflicts with vehicles. New streets establish blocks that support a gradient of density that transitions development to the existing single-family home neighborhoods that surround the station area plan and range from larger commercial streets to neighborhood streets.

New streets are introduced to connect to Covington Highway and Paul Edwin Drive, increasing accessibility and supporting circulation around the new development sites. The future station is served by a one-way loop with a pick-up/drop-off location in front of the station. The new streets are designed with Complete Streets principles in mind to enhance walkability and bicycle access, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and on-street parking.

Covington Highway is a major thoroughfare with heavy traffic. Further pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements are recommended for the segment of Covington Highway within the station area to encourage non-vehicular activities around transit.

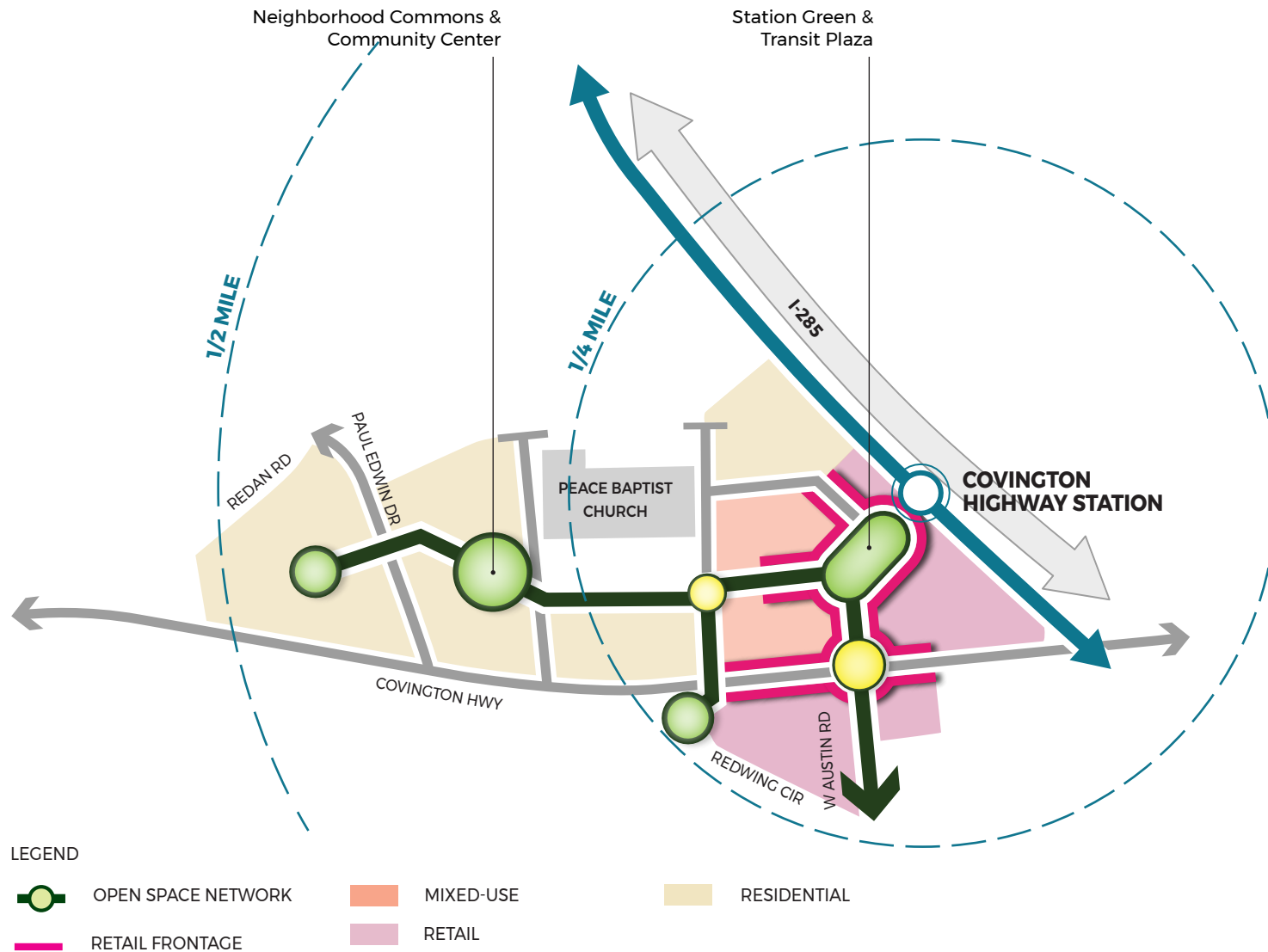
## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Open spaces anchor the development at each end of the site. To the east, the transit plaza and Station Green are two civic-focused spaces in front of the station. To the west, the Neighborhood Commons, a park space focused around a proposed community center, provides recreational amenities for the surrounding residential development. The two clusters of open spaces are connected by neighborhood streets with an enhanced pedestrian realm, and includes bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian paths and trails.

The transit plaza in front of the station is a feature identifying the station area as a place for riders to connect to their modes of transit. The Station Green is an inviting social hub for community events. Envisioned as the centralized gathering space surrounded by retail and other active uses, this area is the centerpiece of the open space network and community activity.

As the open space network moves west into the low-density residential development, it transitions to passive, landscaped public spaces for the surrounding residents. The new neighborhood spine that runs parallel to Covington Highway empties into a more tranquil neighborhood common space with a community center.





**Figure 2-11:** Covington Highway Station Area Design Framework Diagram

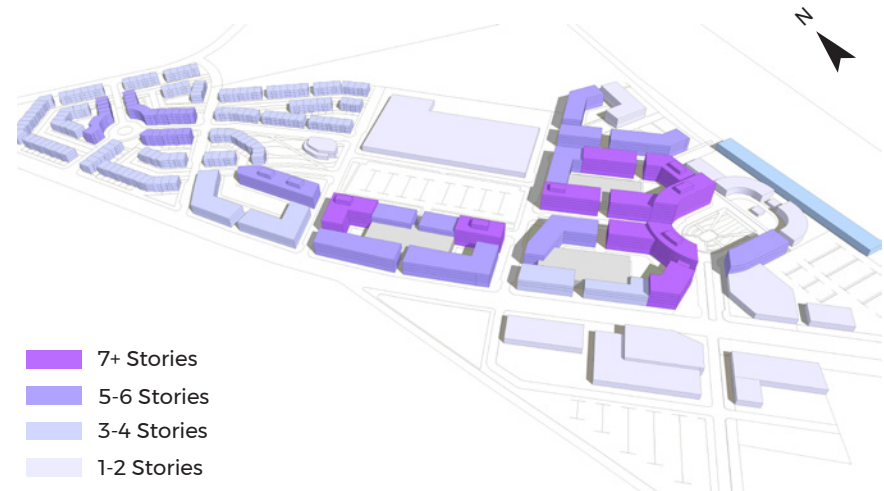


## LAND USE & DENSITY

The plan is focused around a commercial core consisting of an anchor store and neighborhood service retail at the station that then transitions to exclusively residential uses to the west end of the station area. The commercial core includes different types of retail to achieve a balance of internal neighborhood service with a high-quality anchor retail. The anchor retail proposed near the highway interchange accommodates parking at the rear of the building to preserve a continuous street wall and reinforce streets as “public space”.

The plan proposes the potential redevelopment of what are currently surface parking lots around Peace Baptist Church into residential uses. With a development of this scale, a mix of uses allows for innovative parking strategies. Surface parking can be minimized through enhancing access to transit, centralized parking facilities, managed parking demand, and shared parking, among many other uses. As more travelers use transit, parking needs can be reduced to accommodate this redevelopment.

Development densities should be moderately higher than the surrounding development to support the transit ridership. The density is concentrated around the station and commercial core. The development scale gradually transitions to a lower density to better integrate into the existing neighborhood fabric.



**Figure 2-12:** Covington Highway Development Density



**Anchor Retail**



**Central Green**



**Medium-Density Multi-Family Residential**



**Neighborhood Amenities**

**Figure 2-13:** Examples of Uses and Densities



**Figure 2-14:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-Out in the Covington Highway Station Area (Looking Northeast)



## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm is centered around Station Green and the transit plaza, and is where surrounding streets converge to create a focal point. Station Green is an interactive and lively space designed for events and activities. An example of this is the Clarendon Commons in Arlington, VA, which has an enclosed, central space with well-designed landscape, accented by features such as fountains and public art. Clarendon Commons serves as the model for Station Green at Covington Highway, which also features a landscaped enclosure with space for farmers markets, outdoor movies, local festivals and concerts, and other community events.

The transit plaza across from Station Green facilitates pick-up/drop-off activities, accommodates transit-supportive amenities, and acts as an extension to Station Green. Special paving is used on the transit plaza as well as on the fronting street to slow traffic, guide pedestrian crossings, and establish a consistent aesthetic around the transit facility.

The open spaces are complemented by streets with a distinct character that expresses local identity. These are pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets with narrow, low speed travel lanes. Wide sidewalks and pockets of public space support pedestrian flow and outdoor seating. The intersection at Covington Highway and Austin Road aims to be a gateway to the station area TOD. Its design features curb extensions, and orientation of building faces towards the center of the intersection, create a large and prominent pedestrian space. These features will generate activity on the street, and create a safe, comfortable, active public realm.



**Figure 2-15:** Zoom-in View of the Station Green and Transit Plaza (Looking South)



Clarendon Commons  
Arlington, VA





**Figure 2-16:** View Looking towards Covington Highway Station Showing Ground Floor Retail and Street Level Vision for the Station Green



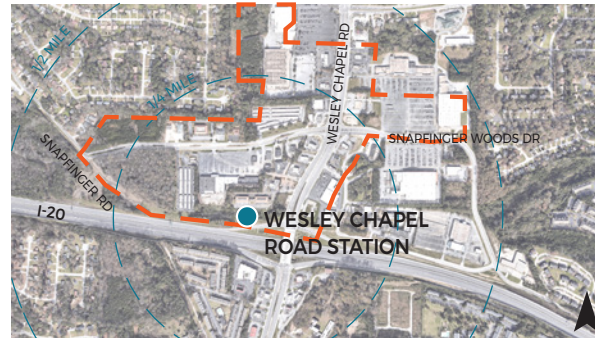
## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Commuter Town Center

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Leverage multi-modal connection opportunities to create a transit hub that services a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century business destination.

## 2.2.3 WESLEY CHAPEL ROAD STATION



**Figure 2-17:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-3:** Key Strategies

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create medium- to high-density office supported by mixed-use development</li> </ul>  |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redevelop selective big-box retail sites to increase density</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PARKING APPROACH</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide station parking for commuters</li> <li>○ Reduce amount of parking on-site through shared parking program</li> </ul>  |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design a transit hub that supports transfers between different modes</li> <li>○ Use public space and improved pedestrian space to connect high capacity transit and local buses</li> </ul> |

## THE VISION

The Wesley Chapel Road station area plan envisions a 21<sup>st</sup> Century business destination supported by a multi-modal transit hub and mixed-use development. Located near the interchange of I-20 and I-285, the station is a node to switch modes and transfer between transit lines. The plan proposes a mix of office, retail, apartments, townhouses and open spaces in the station area to create a vibrant transit-oriented community that has the potential to revive this crossroads for the I-20 corridor (see Figure 2-18).

The redevelopment is concentrated in the area north of I-20 and west of Wesley Chapel Road. The station area TOD plan is built on a consolidation and redevelopment of low-density and underutilized commercial parcels and the redevelopment of an underutilized shopping center north of the station area.

The station area plan creates an environment ideal for attracting young professionals and businesses with a variety of transit-centric lifestyle amenities. The TOD vision for the Wesley Chapel Road station area will be accomplished through the key strategies highlighted in Table 2-3.





**Figure 2-18:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area



## MOBILITY

Wesley Chapel Road Station is a major connection point in the region and serves the I-20 and I-285 corridors. To facilitate transfers between MARTA high capacity transit, BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) and local buses, the transit hub will consist of a multi-modal station and large transit plaza called Station Place, which is a key feature in the design. Station Place includes areas for bus berthing and a circle for vehicular functions like pick-up/drop-off. Commuter parking is provided in an adjoining parking garage. Station Place is accessed from a new extension of Snapfinger Road and connects with Wesley Chapel Road. The extension of Snapfinger Road, which includes on-street parking and bicycle lanes, supports station area pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular circulation for the residential and mixed-use blocks adjacent to the new station.

New streets designed with Complete Streets principles are introduced throughout the station area and integrate with Wesley Chapel Road and Snapfinger Woods Drive. The scale of the resulting blocks is ideal for transit-oriented mixed-use, residential and office development, and transform the station area into a walkable and pedestrian friendly environment.

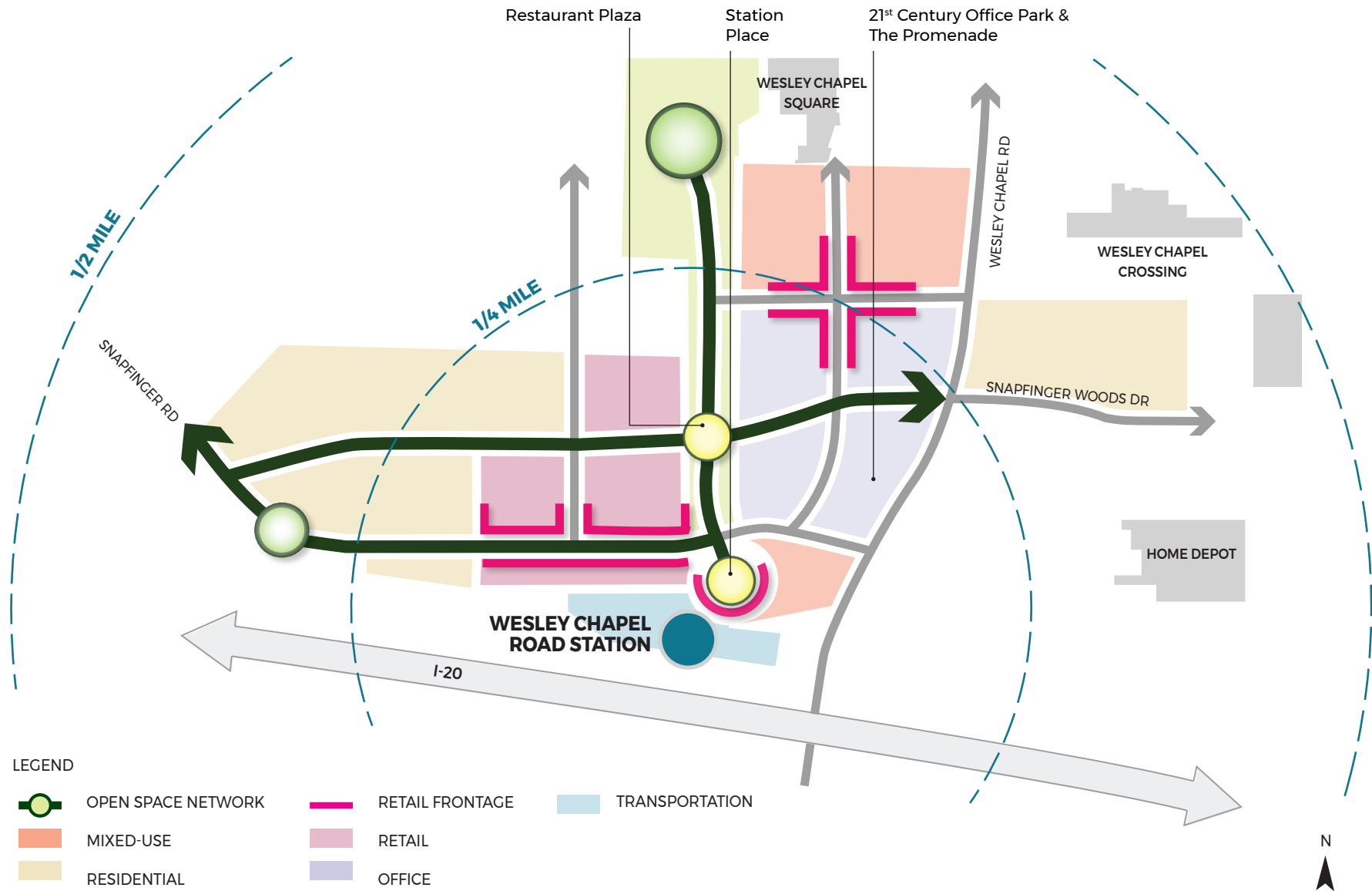
A grid of Complete Streets connects residents and workers to residential, office and recreational uses, as well as additional connections to Wesley Chapel Road. The new Station Plaza Road is the primary north-south corridor facilitating pedestrian and vehicular circulation between the new station and development blocks to the north.

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The station area plan is structured around a network of open spaces and corridors of enhanced public realm that converge at Station Place. Surrounded by the new station, hotels, restaurants and apartments, the scale and programming of this large civic space establishes it as a hub for the entire open space network and as an important point of arrival and departure for transit users. Radiating north and west from Station Place, three corridors connect the development to the new station and provide a sequence of spaces that respond to use and density.

The Promenade is a wide, pedestrian-only thoroughfare that serves to connect Station Place with new development north of Snapfinger Woods Drive and is also a prime location for a 21<sup>st</sup> century office park. One block west is a lively cluster of restaurants, cafés and bars that surround a centrally-located plaza. This multi-purpose space is also the gathering place for the community and can be programmed with year-round activities like holiday and art festivals.

As the open space network extends north across Snapfinger Woods Drive from the promenade and plaza, and west along Snapfinger Road, neighborhood streets with an enhanced public realm, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, aid with the transition to lower intensity development and add to the overall neighborhood feel.



**Figure 2-19:** Wesley Chapel Road Station Area Design Framework Diagram

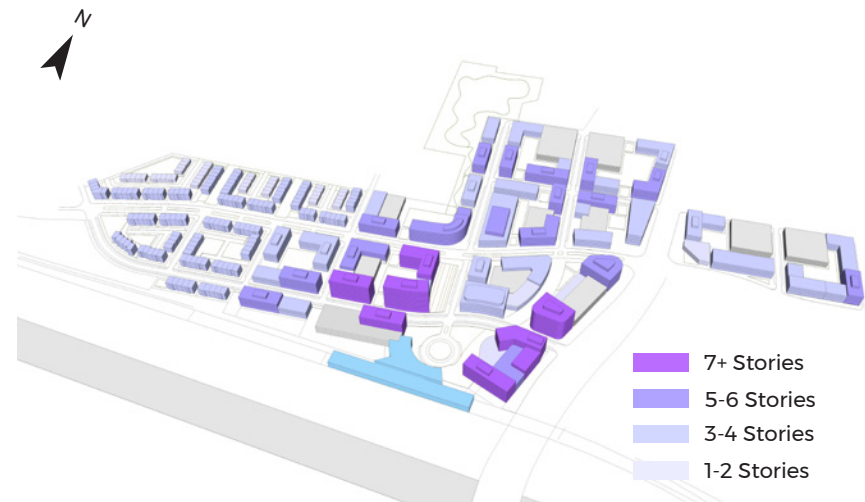
## LAND USE & DENSITY

The TOD vision comprises three distinct areas of land use: the Mixed-Use Hub, which includes a 21<sup>st</sup> Century office park, a district of apartments and offices north of Snapfinger Woods Drive, and to the west, a quiet neighborhood of townhomes integrated with open space.

The Mixed-Use Hub will be a regionally significant development centered around the new station facility and transit plaza, Station Place. Tremendous value is unlocked by replacing the underutilized Chapel Hall Shopping Center and adjacent economy motels and fast food restaurants with pedestrian-friendly blocks of high-quality, mixed-use development that leverages new and existing transportation infrastructure investment. Commuter parking is accommodated for in garages integrated within development blocks that surround the new station facility. West of the Mixed-Use Hub, a Townhome Neighborhood transitions the station area plan to quiet, residential blocks that are integrated with the surrounding open space.

To the north, a residential cluster is intended to provide office workers an option to live near their place of employment. Each block meets the needs of residents by including essential neighborhood retail, courtyards for outdoor amenities, and parking garages. The new apartments and offices replace land that is currently underutilized, including a vacant big box structure, fast food establishments and public storage. However, the residential component integrates well with the existing and successful Wesley Chapel Square shopping center to the north.

The development densities within the Mixed-Use Core are among the highest of the six new station areas. Residential towers range from 8-14 floors, while office buildings range from 3-8 floors. The higher densities are focused around the new station facility to leverage the large investment in transit and locate the largest number of people nearest to the station. Moving north and west of the Mixed-Use Core, the development pattern begins to break down into blocks of smaller apartment buildings and rows of townhomes to facilitate the transition to the surrounding low-density single-family homes and commercial strip centers.



**Figure 2-20:** Wesley Chapel Road Station Development Density



**High-Density Mixed-Use**



**Transportation**



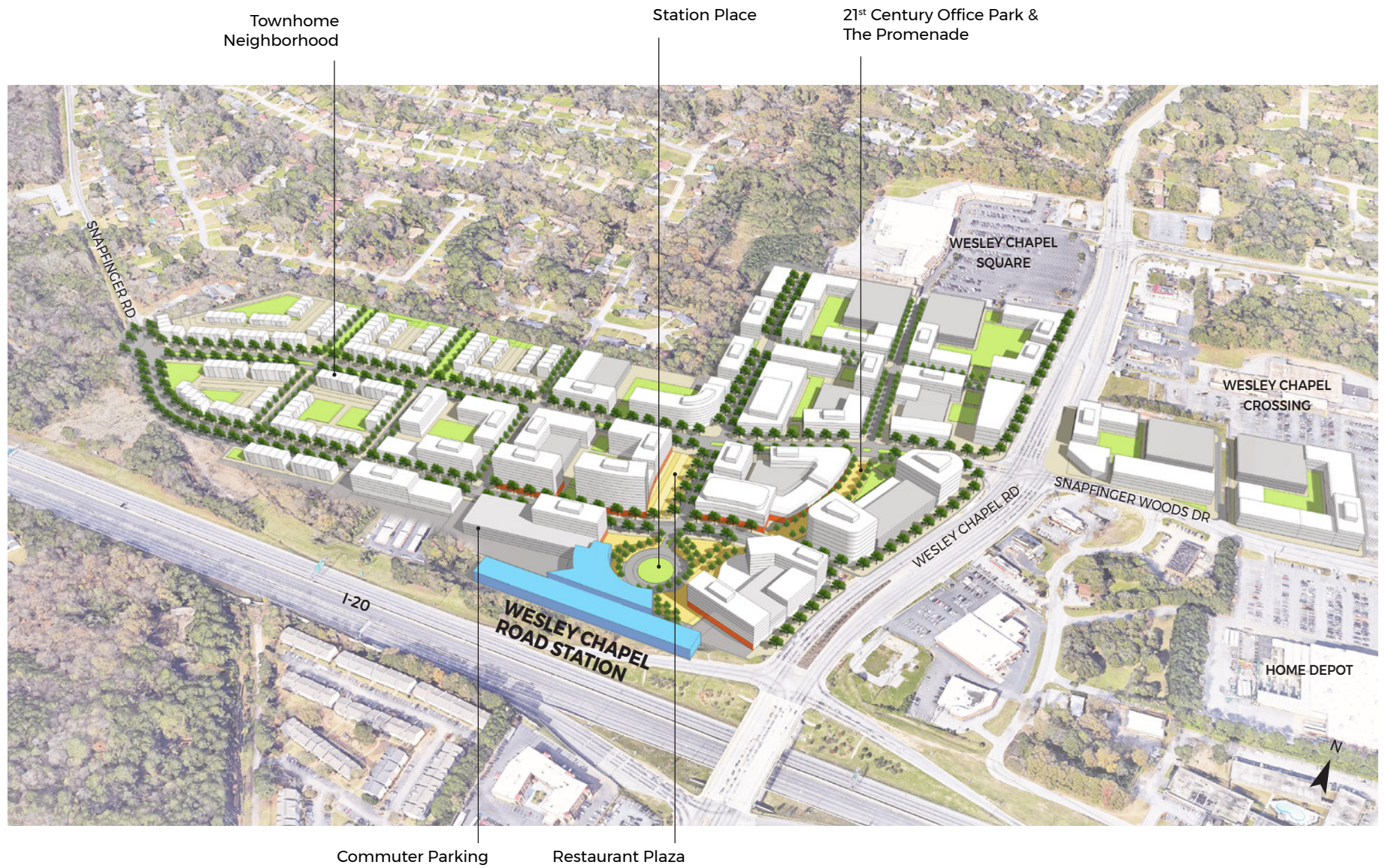
**Main Street Retail**



**Medium-Density Office**

**Figure 2-21:** Examples of Uses and Densities





**Figure 2-22:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-Out in the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area (Looking Northwest)



## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The focal point for the public realm is Station Place, an energetic civic-scaled space that brings together a high-density mix of uses with transportation (see Figure 2-23 and Figure 2-24). Distinctive paving and lighting, interactive works of art, lobbies, retail storefronts and restaurants with outdoor seating reinforce Station Place as the anchor for the station area development.

The Promenade and restaurant plaza are the next major spaces in the station area's public realm sequence. The Promenade provides a reprieve from the high energy of Station Place. Hanging lights, an alley of trees, and pockets of seating create an intimate and elegant atmosphere and is why the pedestrian-only thoroughfare is an attractive address for offices and retail providers. The restaurant plaza is most active during the evenings and weekends and offers a place for office workers and area residents to socialize. During warmer months, the outdoor dining floods into the space to create a festival-like scene.

From these spaces, the character of streets transition to lower densities and residential use to cultivate a neighborhood feel. Planters, street trees and lighting create a safe, comfortable and intimate public realm and reinforce the pedestrian scale of these corridors.



**Figure 2-23:** Zoom-in View of the Station Place and Promenade (Looking Northeast)



Decatur MARTA Station  
Decatur, GA



**Figure 2-24:** View from Station Place Showing the Pedestrian Environment





## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Commuter Town Center

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Densify around existing anchors to establish a town center that unifies uses in different quadrants of the Panola Road interchange.

## 2.2.4 PANOLA ROAD STATION



**Figure 2-25:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-4:** Key Strategies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a medium-density mixed-use cluster with senior housing</li> <li>○ Provide office space near existing light industrial and healthcare facilities</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase density along Panola Road and around big-box shopping malls</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PARKING APPROACH</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Condense commuter parking based on current utilization and future projection</li> <li>○ Reduce amount of parking on-site through shared parking program, and redevelop parking lot</li> </ul> |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a pedestrian connection across I-20</li> <li>○ Introduce a centralized civic space and connect it to existing green corridor</li> </ul>  |

## THE VISION

The Panola Road station area plan seeks to unify the disconnected quadrants separated by I-20 and Panola Road by providing infrastructure that connects across physical barriers, encouraging density near the station, and attracting uses that reinforce jobs, offer retail services, and provide housing. The plan proposes three clusters, each targeting a different type of development: a Mixed-Use Center immediately around the station; lower density housing proposed on the Walmart and Lowe's parking lots; and office space near the growing light industrial and healthcare cluster north of I-20 (Figure 2-26). Together, these three clusters form a station area plan that is context-sensitive and transit-supportive.

There is an opportunity to connect across the physical separation of I-20 at this station. A pedestrian bridge is proposed to link the Panola Road Station to the area north of I-20 to serve existing and future businesses and their employees. This station area plan redevelops the Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA) Panola Park-and-Ride lot, existing low-density commercial establishments along Panola Road, and parking lot around big-box shopping malls.

The station area plan transforms the area around the station by recognizing the existing assets, enhancing the existing uses, and creating a center for future commuters. The TOD vision for the Panola Road station area is achieved through the key strategies emphasized in Table 2-4.





**Figure 2-26:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Panola Road Station Area

## MOBILITY

A compact street network is created by completing the neighborhood grid with extensions to existing streets or creating new streets, and results in regularly-shaped, walkable blocks that support denser developments. A network of pedestrian and bicycle paths enhance accessibility and provide continuous sidewalks, safe crosswalks, dedicated bicycle lanes, and off-road shared-use paths.

The new Commuter Transfer Center will integrate the existing bus station at the GRTA Panola Park-and-Ride. This accommodates future growth needs for bus bays and provides a new station headhouse, bus shelters, ticketing kiosks, a climate-controlled waiting area, and other station amenities. The Commuter Transfer Center is served by a pick-up/drop-off area in front of the transit plaza. The existing Park-and-Ride is consolidated into two parking structures with approximately 1,200 total spaces on either side of the pedestrian bridge.

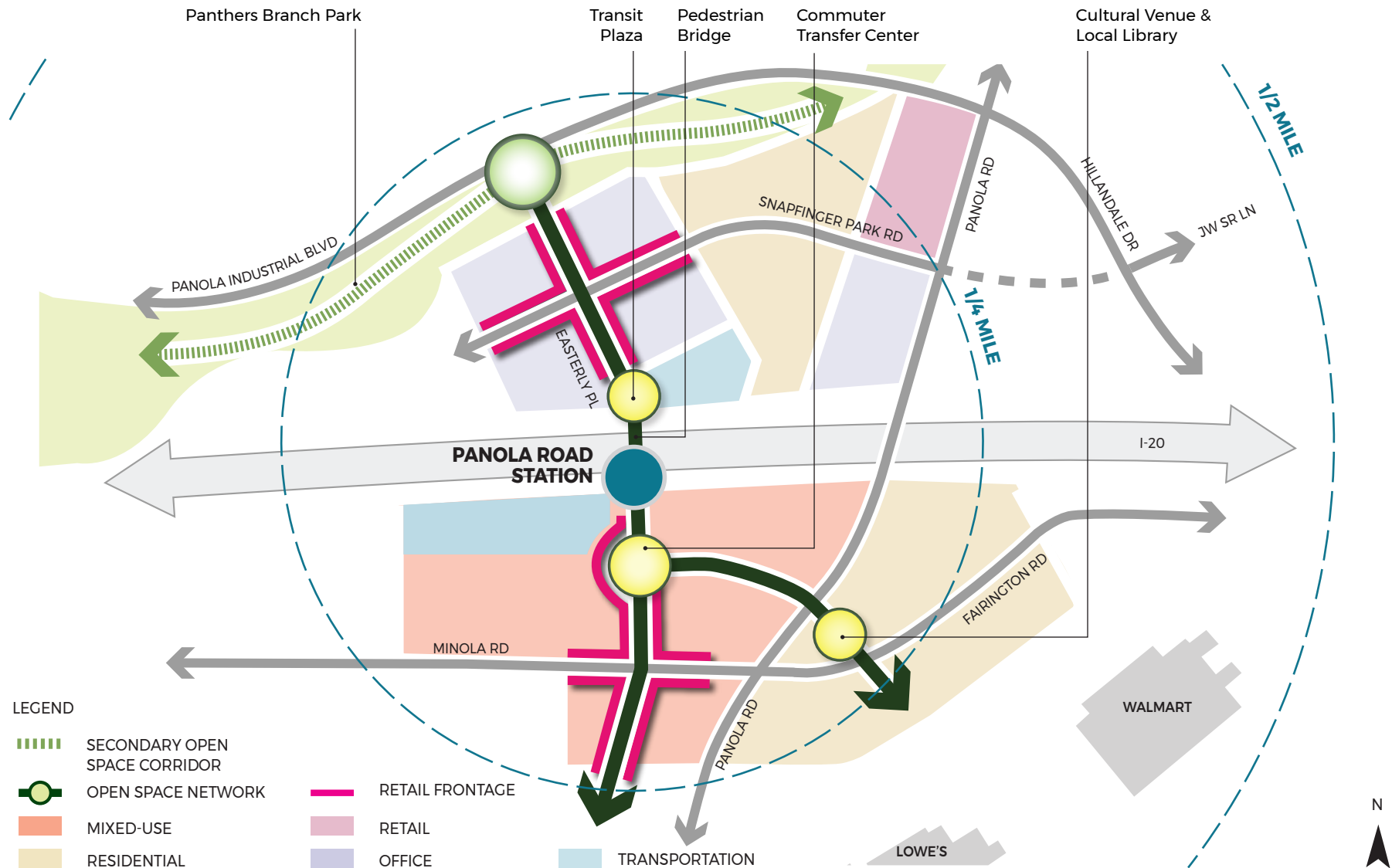
The proposed pedestrian bridge that spans I-20 will create safe access to transit, employers, residential, and retail services while also becoming an iconic landmark for the Panola Road area. To further reinforce this north-south pedestrian connection, two streets extending from each end of the pedestrian bridge are redesigned with improvements for the pedestrian experience at intersections and sidewalks. Textured and colored crosswalks are installed at these intersections to prioritize pedestrian crossings. Facilitated by street designs that control and mitigate potential conflicts and local policies in place, these two stretches of streets are transformed into “shared streets”, where pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles travel safely together at lower speeds.

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The open space network is built on the north-south pedestrian connection and retail corridor across I-20 established by the proposed street network. Pockets of public space are set up along this connection to create nodes of activities that support surrounding uses. Two public plazas anchor either end of the pedestrian bridge. North of I-20, the pedestrian-friendly Easterly Place draws pedestrians from the transit plaza north to Panthers Branch Park and provides public access to the natural green belt. South of I-20, a series of plazas and pedestrian spaces connect the station and transit plaza south to the Publix Super Market. This creates an axis of pedestrian activity that runs through the entire station area.

The cultural venue and local library building provides a future hub for community activities and events. Located at the corner of Panola Road and Fairington Road, this public building and its outdoor plaza are a short walk away from the north-south pedestrian axis, attracting pedestrian activity back to Panola Road and the residential cluster along Fairington Road.





**Figure 2-27:** Panola Road Station Area Design Framework Diagram

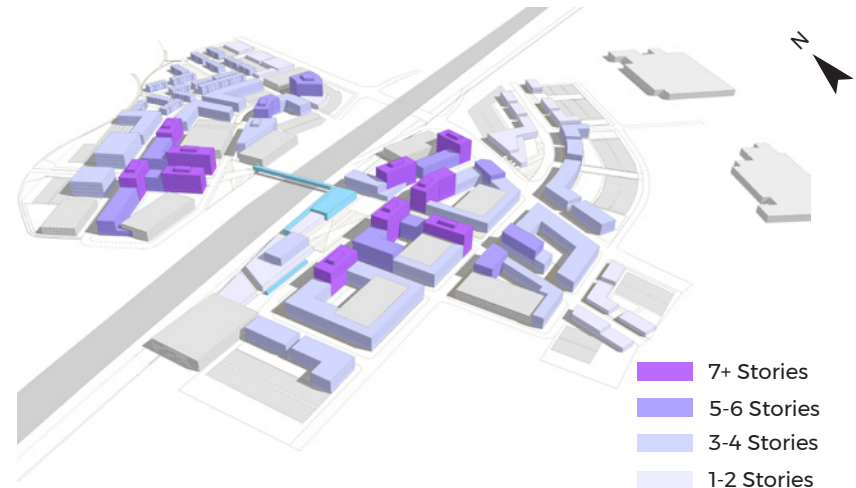
## LAND USE & DENSITY

The plan is centered on the proposed station and the Mixed-Use Center redeveloped on the existing Park-and-Ride lot. The Mixed-Use Center creates a town center feel with lively ground floor retail to serve commuters, visitors, and residents from within and around the station area. This cluster of medium- to high-density mixed-use development increases transit ridership and accommodates senior housing near a variety of amenities.

There are existing activity and employment centers north of I-20 that can be built upon and enhanced to attract related uses. Here, proposed low- to medium-density office use attracts co-working, small, and start-up businesses, and the healthcare industry. Under the existing condition, a group of healthcare uses is growing, providing the opportunity to form a larger cluster and attract more specialty businesses, increasing employment. An existing large concentration of light industrial and related businesses provides employment and can generate high ridership when its transit needs are properly served by the future station. The proposed office development bridges the gap between this employment cluster and the northern transit plaza. The proposed mix of office, residential, and local retail supports the growth of existing uses while activating the northern half of the station area in the evenings.

The plan redevelops a part of the parking lot of Walmart and Lowe's as low- to medium-density multi-family residential that fronts along Fairington Road. Anchored by a community cultural venue and local library, this development is a pilot for a long-term vision to rethink big-box shopping centers. A similar development pattern near MARTA's Inman Park-Reynoldstown Transit Station has been proven successful in creating active street frontage while preserving big-box shopping centers within the block.

Development densities are concentrated near the station to capitalize upon transit accessibility and transition to lower density at the edge of the quarter-mile radius around the new station (see Figure 2-28). Existing retail use along Panola Road is preserved, but higher densities and new site layouts to create active street walls are encouraged on those sites.



**Figure 2-28:** Panola Road Station Development Density



**Healthcare & Co-Working Office**



**Residential/Senior Housing**



**Main Street Retail**



**Pedestrian Bridge**

**Figure 2-29:** Examples of Uses and Densities

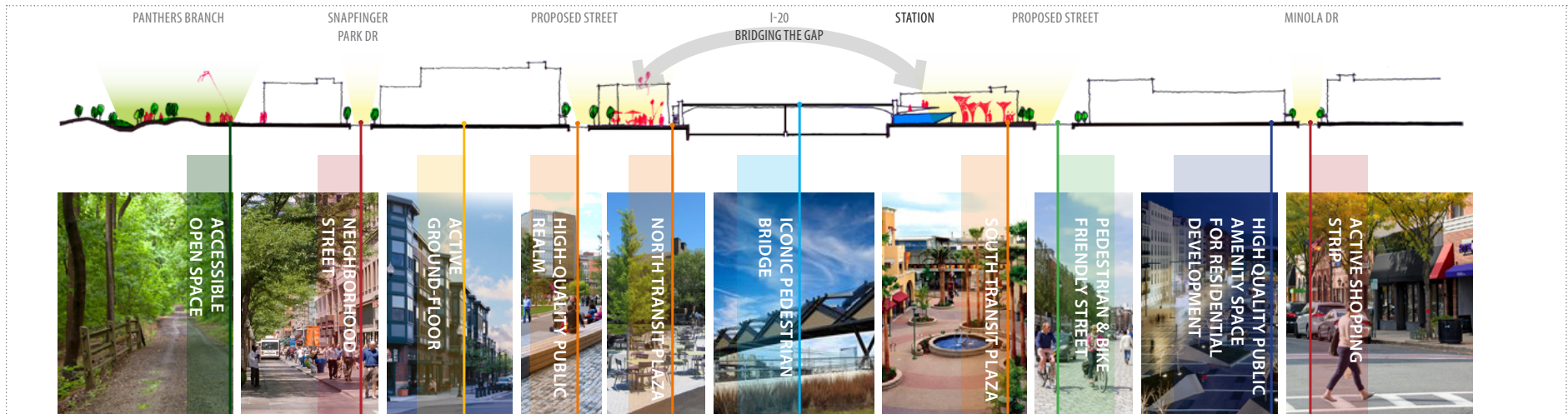




**Figure 2-30:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-Out in the Panola Road Station Area (Looking Northeast)



## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS



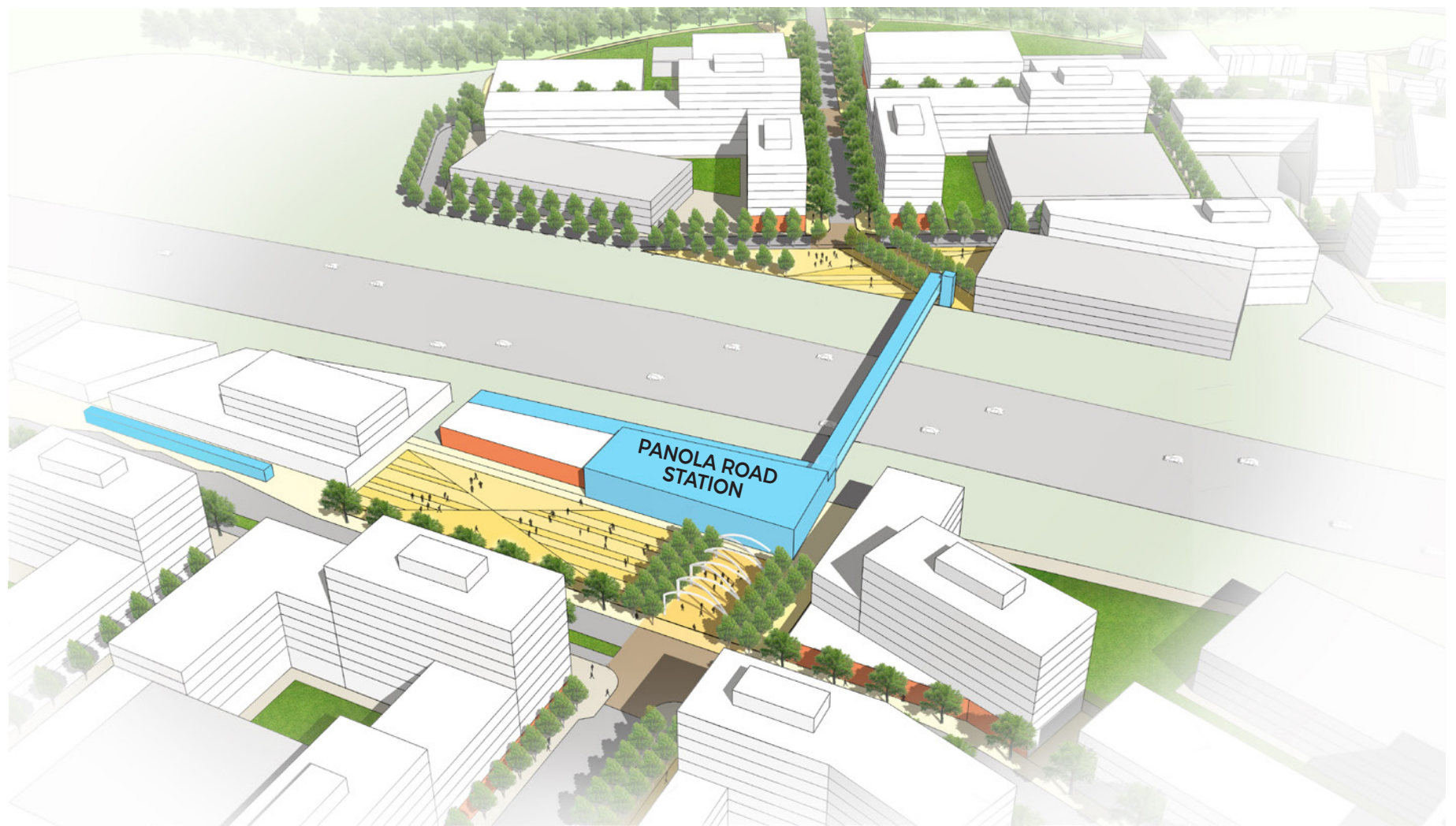
**Figure 2-31:** Conceptual Section Showing Programs Proposed for Public Space (Looking East)

The proposed public realm improvements for the Panola Road station area connect people to transit, jobs, services, and open space by means of the north-south pedestrian axis that runs through the dense mixed-use TOD between Publix Super Market and Panthers Branch. Built upon a network of pedestrianized streets and open spaces of various scales, this axis allows pedestrians to experience the station area's diverse characteristics while walking from one end to the other (see Figure 2-31).

Connected by a pedestrian bridge that provides direct access to the station, the two plazas on either side of I-20 are centers of activity. The transit plaza south of I-20 serves as a transfer point between the new Panola Road Station and the bus station. Its design features distinctive architecture and landscape design elements to celebrate the new Commuter Transfer Center and create a local landmark. Streets south of this transit plaza are designed with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to support high volumes of non-motorized traffic accessing the new station. Private developments are encouraged to include ground floor retail and adequate setback from the

sidewalk to accommodate outdoor seating. The terminus for this active retail street environment is the Publix Super Market, an important business and local destination.

The plaza north of I-20 serves surrounding office and residential uses and creates a distinct entry to the Commuter Transfer Center. It is activated by surrounding ground floor retail and designed with landscape elements that encourage gathering, socializing, and sitting. Moving northward, the public space transitions to smaller spaces along the streets at Snapfinger Park Drive, where the pedestrian realm primarily serves local employees and residents. The northern half of the pedestrian axis terminates at Panthers Branch and is where proposed multi-use paths through the woods follow a meandering creek and provide public access to this precious green corridor.



**Figure 2-32:** Zoom-in View of the Transit Plaza and Pedestrian Bridge (Looking Northwest)



## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Arterial Corridor

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Create an office park headquarters campus that attracts regional employers.

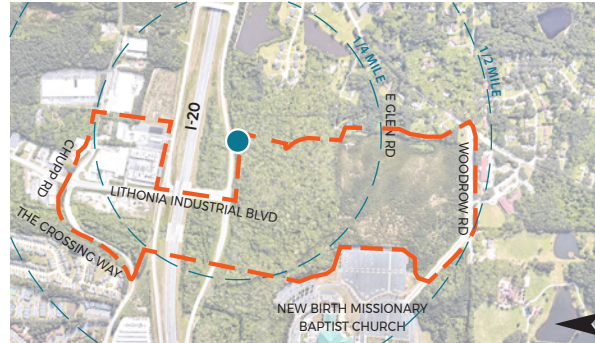
## 2.2.5 LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD STATION

### THE VISION

The station area TOD vision transforms the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard corridor from a low-density industrial and auto-oriented thoroughfare into a corporate office environment supported by residential development. The plan comprises two development zones along Lithonia Industrial Boulevard (see Figure 2-34). The Corporate Headquarters Campus, north of I-20, is an anchor to the existing industrial park to the north and offers office space and amenities to attract regional employers and large businesses. A Residential Core sits at the future station, directly south of I-20, providing residential and retail uses adjacent to transit, and is served by the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard extension currently under construction. The residential zone at the south end of Lithonia Industrial Boulevard is a cluster of context-sensitive residential townhouses built on an extensive network of open spaces.

This vision is based on proposed redevelopment of existing vacant and underutilized industrial and commercial parcels north of I-20, and greenfield development at strategic locations south of I-20 and along the new extension of Lithonia Industrial Boulevard.

The station area plan envisions an employment center complemented by a vibrant residential neighborhood, both of which will contribute to future transit ridership and the long-term economic development of this area. The TOD vision for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard station area is accomplished through the key strategies highlighted in Table 2-5.



**Figure 2-33:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-5:** Key Strategies

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a high-density office park and a low-density neighborhood that transitions to existing homes</li> </ul>   |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redevelop vacant and low-density industrial land</li> <li>○ Create greenfield development at strategic locations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PARKING APPROACH</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a centralized parking structure to serve surrounding commercial use</li> </ul>  |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create high-quality public spaces for office and residential uses</li> <li>○ Improve north-south pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along Lithonia Industrial Boulevard</li> <li>○ Create connections to existing Arabian Mountain Trail</li> </ul> |





**Figure 2-34:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area

## MOBILITY

Lithonia Industrial Boulevard is the backbone of the station area plan and a vital connection for overcoming the major physical and visual barrier created by I-20. The TOD vision enhances this major thoroughfare and establishes a well-connected street network that branches out from it. These new streets serve a residential community near the station, provide a framework for public space, and support easy access to transit.

A pedestrian route runs through the station area, between the Corporate Headquarters Campus to the north and the neighborhoods and existing Arabian Mountain Trail to the south. It consists of continuous on-street pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and off-street multi-use paths. The I-20 underpass is the key connection between developments on either side of the highway. It should be improved with sidewalks, protected bicycle lanes, and lights to provide safe and comfortable passage for non-motor circulation. Intersection safety improvements, especially north to Chupp Road, encourage walking to transit by strengthening the pedestrian experience.

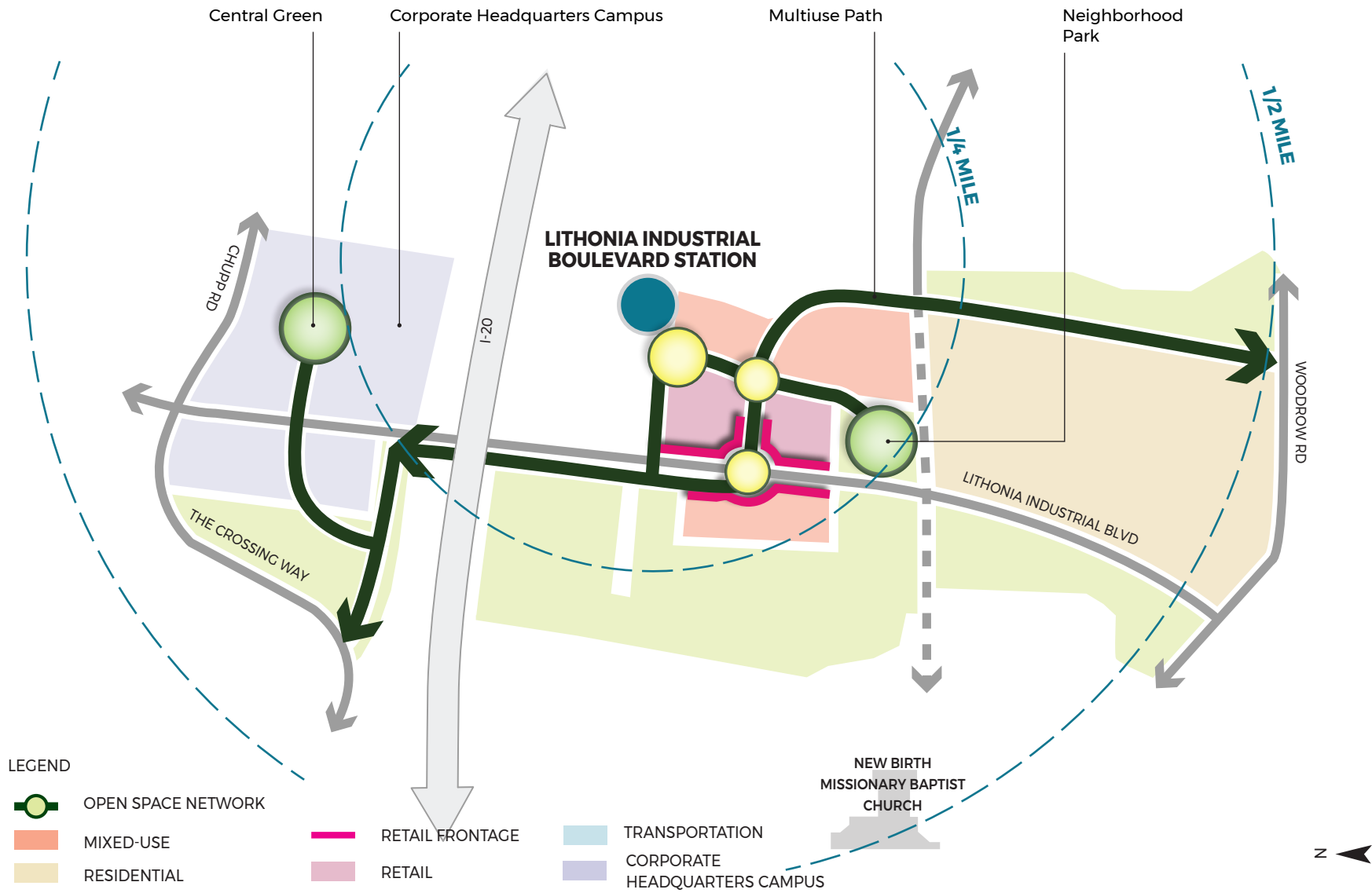
In the southern portion of the station area, the potential westward extension of East Glen Road connects the station area with the surrounding neighborhoods and to New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, allowing church members to access transit and providing additional vehicular access, which can mitigate long-standing traffic issues along Woodrow Road.

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The future station location is mostly undeveloped and heavily vegetated. A large area of green space is preserved around new development to buffer it from existing single-family homes and the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church. An open space network connects proposed public plazas and parks in the station area to the surrounding green space, offering public access to natural areas and providing “wildlife corridors” for the surrounding ecosystem.

The plan proposes two major open spaces connected by a multi-use path: the Central Green in the Corporate Headquarters Campus and a one-acre park in the residential area. The Central Green is an identifying space for social interactions critical for an office environment. The multi-use path begins here, with another trail branching off to the neighborhood to the west. The park in the southern portion of the station area serves both higher-density mixed-use development and low-density townhouses fronting it. In addition to the two major spaces, the multi-use path is accentuated by smaller plazas, pocket parks, and segments of tree-lined streets. The path ultimately connects to the greater Arabia Mountain Path, which is to the east of the station area.





**Figure 2-35:** Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area Design Framework Diagram

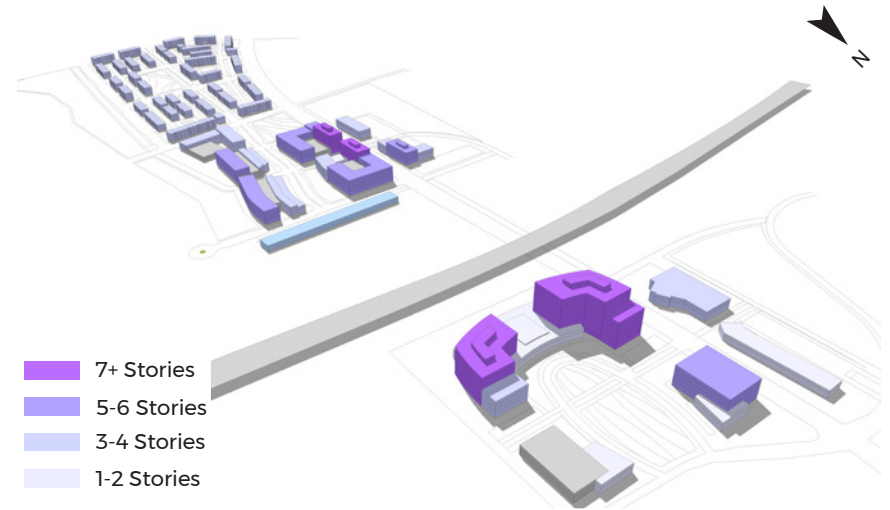


## LAND USE & DENSITY

The station area plan is structured around three development zones because of the physical barrier created by I-20 and complex site conditions to the south. Existing waterbodies, such as Pole Bridge Creek and Pole Bridge Creek Tributary H, and steep topographic changes force development to be contained at strategic locations.

The Corporate Headquarters Campus is an essential part of the large swath of light-industrial uses to the north. A conceptual layout of the campus features office towers connected by amenity decks and a system of courtyards (see Figure 2-40). A food court is located on the ground floor of the podium and creates a social hub encouraging informal meeting and interaction. Parking is provided by two parking garages on the north end of the campus. These structures are wrapped with commercial uses on the street fronting side to create an active frontage along Chupp Road and Lithonia Industrial Boulevard.

Retail components are integrated into the mixed-use development around the new station and provide essential neighborhood services. This medium-density, mixed-use development quickly transitions to low-density townhouse development near Woodrow Road, where the housing market is strong and existing density is low (see Figure 2-36). New Birth Missionary Baptist Church is buffered from the new development of the station area plan. As a major land owner and stakeholder, it can be further integrated into the future vision and benefit from infill or redevelopment opportunities on-site and the availability of station area plan amenities.



**Figure 2-36:** Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Development Density



**Low-Density Townhouse**



**Medium-Density Residential**



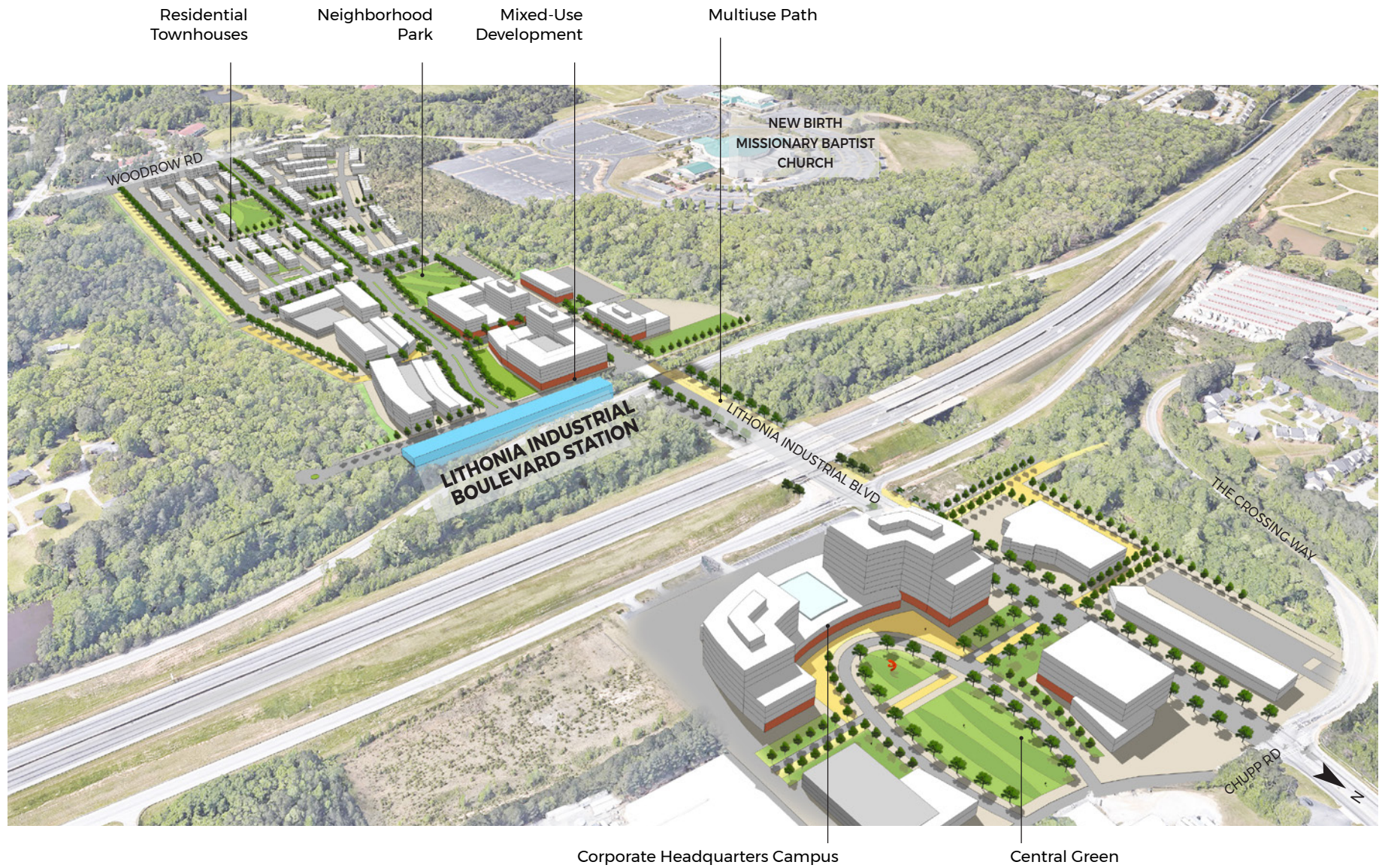
**Open Space**



**Corporate Headquarters**

**Figure 2-37:** Examples of Uses and Densities

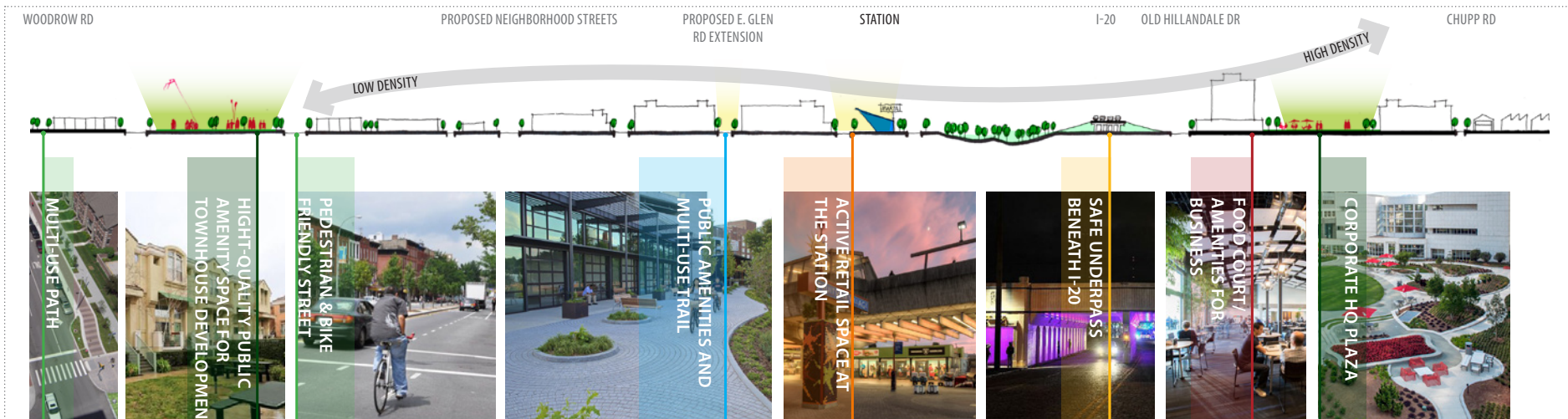




**Figure 2-38:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-Out in the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area (Looking Southwest)



## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS



**Figure 2-39:** Conceptual Section Showing Programs Proposed for Public Space (Looking West)

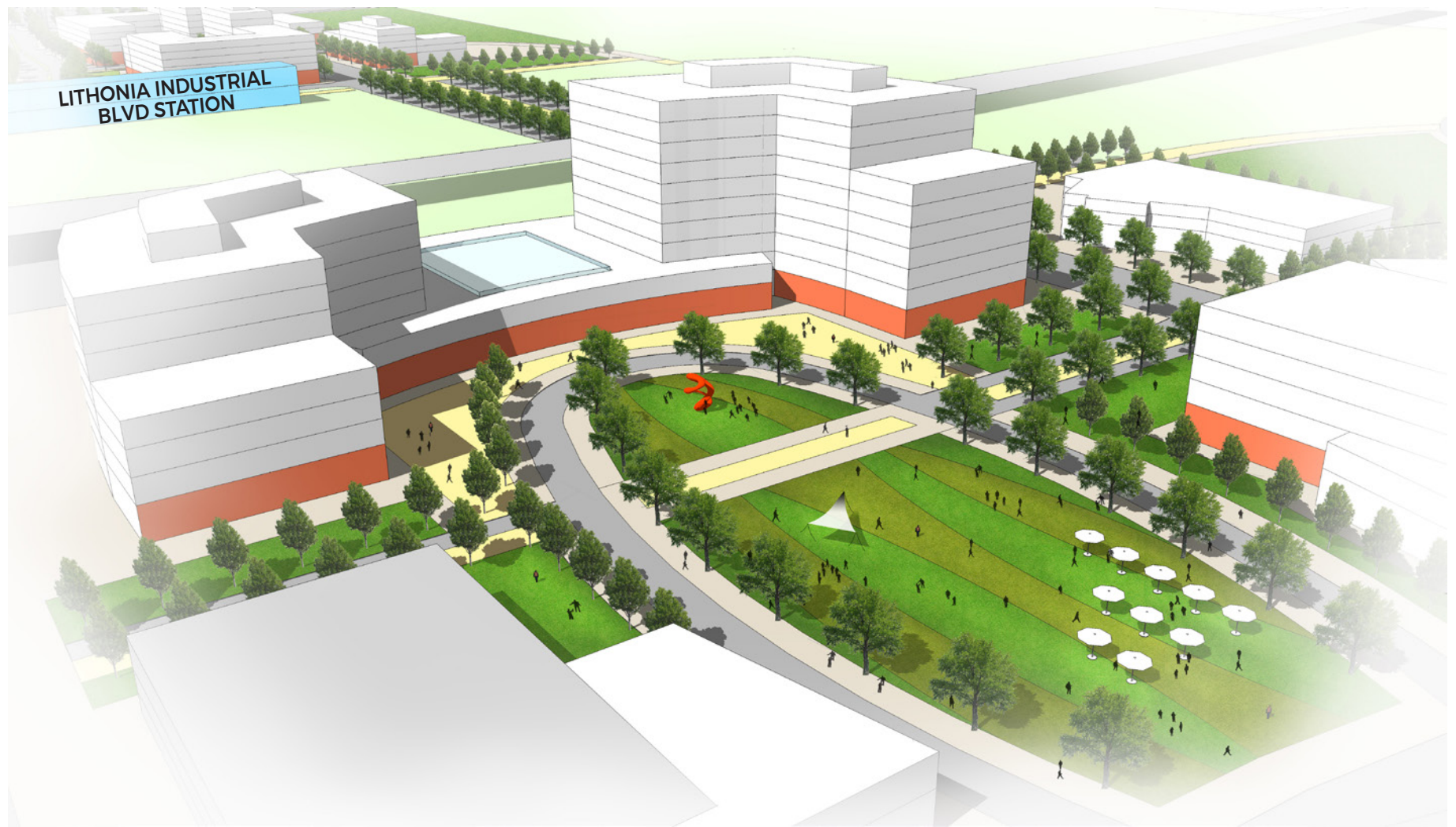
The proposed public realm improvements create diverse experiences across the station area, as depicted by a diagrammatic section cutting from north to south (shown in Figure 2-39). From north, the formal lawn of the Corporate Headquarters Campus transitions into intimate, pedestrian-scaled public plazas and sidewalks framed by low-density residential townhomes. This area is anchored by a large greenspace that brings the surrounding natural environment into the center of the development site.

The Corporate Headquarters Campus is designed to provide a high-quality office environment that attracts regional employers. Its Central Lawn organizes common spaces, shared amenities, and retail and restaurants, and is the center of activity. From the Central Lawn, a multi-use path along Lithonia Industrial Boulevard connects the employment center to transit, service retail, and residential south of I-20. Designed with pedestrian lights and protection barriers, this pedestrian and bicycle path creates a safe and comfortable environment for non-motor users when traversing below the highway.

Proposed pedestrian and bicycle-friendly neighborhood streets run south from the station area into the residential zone, an area with narrow, low speed travel lanes, wide sidewalks and on-street parking.

As the development transitions from medium to low density, the area opens to a large neighborhood park that features lush vegetation and natural landscape. This public amenity is a destination for relaxing and exercising and includes space for social interactions. The park is connected to green space outside the development area by tree-lined sidewalks and a multi-use path, which is proposed to be eventually extended to the existing Arabian Mountain Trail.





**Figure 2-40:** Zoom-in View of the Corporate Headquarters Campus and Central Green (Looking Southwest)



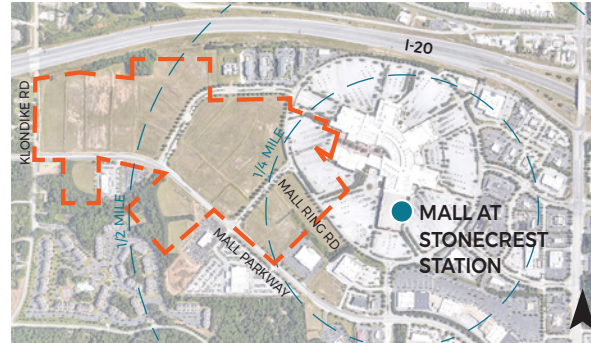
## TOD STATION TYPOLOGY

Commuter Town Center

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Re-imagine the area around the mall as a regional attraction and a live-work-play district.

## 2.2.6 MALL AT STONECREST STATION



**Figure 2-41:** Existing Condition

**Table 2-6:** Key Strategies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>TOD DENSITY &amp; MIX OF USAGE</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance existing anchor with complementary entertainment, office, and residential uses</li> <li>Plan for flexibility to accommodate Atlanta Sports City proposal</li> </ul> |
| <b>REPURPOSING &amp; INFILL</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redevelop vacant sites and mall parking lot</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PARKING APPROACH</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create centralized parking garages to serve the station, entertainment and retail uses</li> </ul>   |
| <b>COMPLETE STREETS &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD SPACE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a walkable street grid</li> <li>Enhance pedestrian and bicycle experience</li> <li>Create a new civic space that engages the existing mall</li> </ul>                |

## THE VISION

The Stonecrest Station, along with a diverse mix of uses that includes retail, restaurants, residences and offices, form a core of TOD directly west of the Mall at Stonecrest. At the center of this proposed development, a civic-scaled transit plaza and community green are the focal point for commuters, residents, workers and visitors (see Figure 2-42). An entertainment district complements and integrates with existing mall programming and forms the eastern border of the new development. To the west, apartments and neighborhood retail combine with a system of parks to create a new neighborhood for the city of Stonecrest.

The vision for Stonecrest's station area locates development on surface parking lots and underdeveloped pad sites that were created when the mall was originally constructed. The existing development is single-use in nature and includes stand-alone restaurants and strip retail on parcels that surround the mall's surface parking lots. The new development around the Stonecrest Station will use best practices for transit-oriented, mixed-use development by being walkable, pedestrian friendly and integrate bicycle and open space networks. The introduction of residences, along with entertainment venues, restaurants and offices, can leverage the value of the mall and become a catalyst for revitalization, reinforcing the area as the premiere place for gathering, shopping and entertainment for Stonecrest and the region. The TOD vision for the Mall at Stonecrest Station area is accomplished through the key strategies highlighted in Table 2-6.





**Figure 2-42:** Illustrative Site Plan of the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area



## MOBILITY

The existing road network was designed to facilitate high-volume traffic between commercial sites and I-20 and support single-use retail development surrounded by parking. The proposed network creates a fine-grain grid to reinforce local circulation and create smaller, walkable mixed-use blocks.

The proposed street grid integrates with existing streets to both take advantage of the existing vehicular network and form walkable blocks that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and circulation, and that are optimized for mixed-use development. New street designs and existing street upgrades follow Complete Streets principles and include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and on-street parking.

A new east/west street that runs parallel to Mall Parkway is one of two major new streets that form the circulation framework for the station area plan (see Figure 2-43). Beginning at Klondike Road, this new street connects the neighborhood with the TOD mixed-use core before terminating within the entertainment district. A new north-south street provides a major connection between the development, the new station and the Mall at Stonecrest.

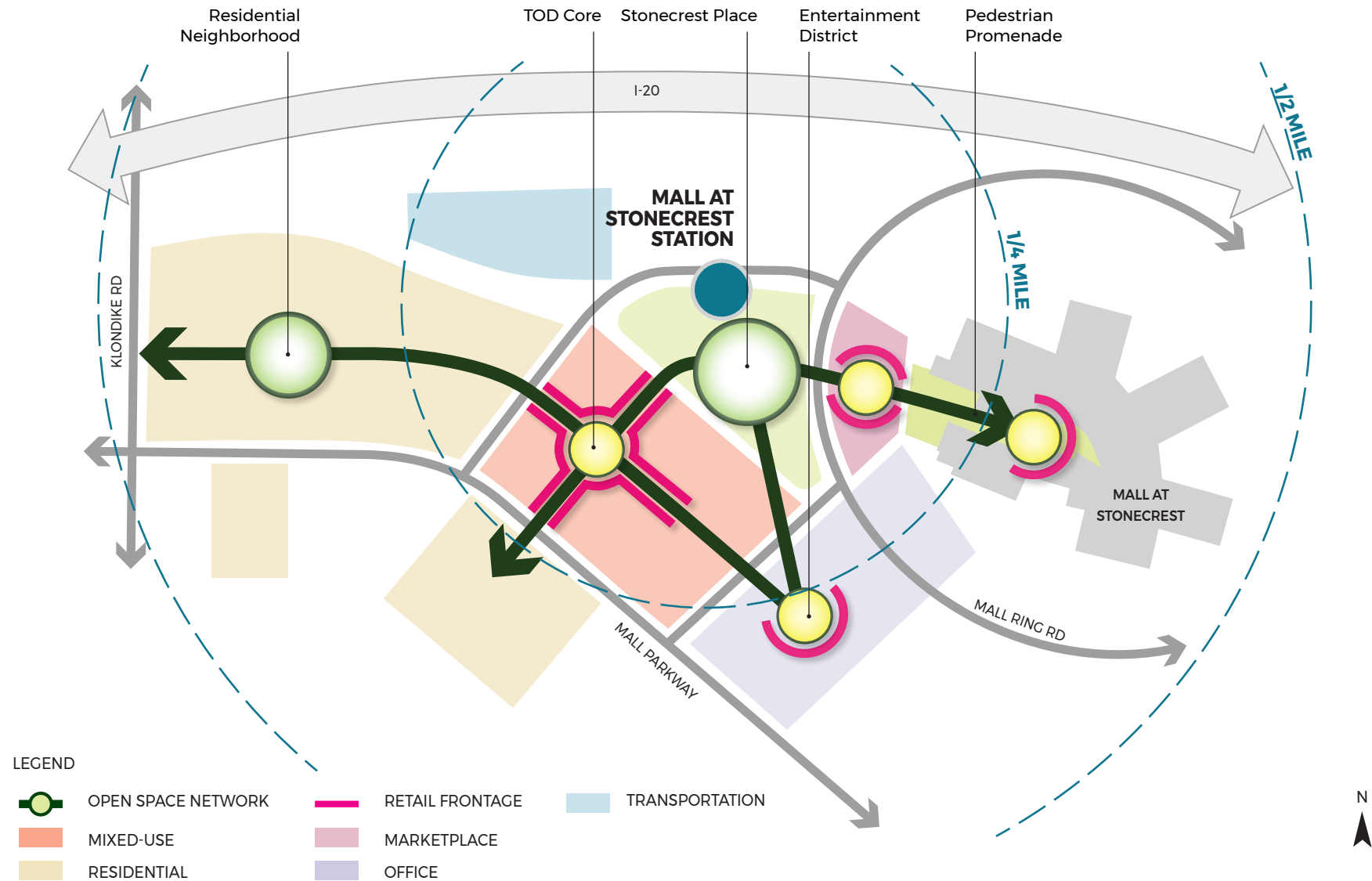
With the arrival of transit and because Stonecrest Station will serve as the last station of the MARTA extension, the area is poised to become a major commuter hub for the region. The new street network is designed to effectively facilitate multiple modes of circulation between the surrounding area, the development and the new station. Additionally, parking garages adjacent to the station will provide approximately 3,000 spaces for park-and-ride functions, while also serving the needs of the station area.

## OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The centrally-located Stonecrest Place, comprising a large community green and plazas for transit and entertainment, serves as a hub for a robust network of open space and green corridors that connect new development to the station and beyond. This space will serve multiple purposes, including being an important landmark for users arriving to and departing from the new transit station and a focal point for the surrounding commercial and entertainment development. The expanse of green provides active and passive recreation options for residents, office workers and visitors and serves as a gateway to the mall and entertainment district to the east as well.

An enhanced public realm is integrated with the design of the primary street and pedestrian network to extend green, pedestrian and bicycle friendly corridors throughout the station area.

The pedestrian promenade is an important corridor within the open space network and is the primary connection between the mall and the new station. This corridor activates and re-energizes a formerly dated space at the mall and across its length includes unique lighting, colorful pavers and rows of trees. Along the new east/west street, wide sidewalks lined with trees, residential-scaled lighting and streetscape promotes passive engagement. To the west, a large community park provides open space and recreation for residents of the surrounding multi-family apartment buildings. Active recreation like soccer and baseball can be accommodated, as well as informal gathering places. Within the entertainment zone, a plaza, anchored by a hotel, meeting and entertainment venues provides the terminus for the corridor.



**Figure 2-43:** Mall At Stonecrest Station Area Design Framework Diagram



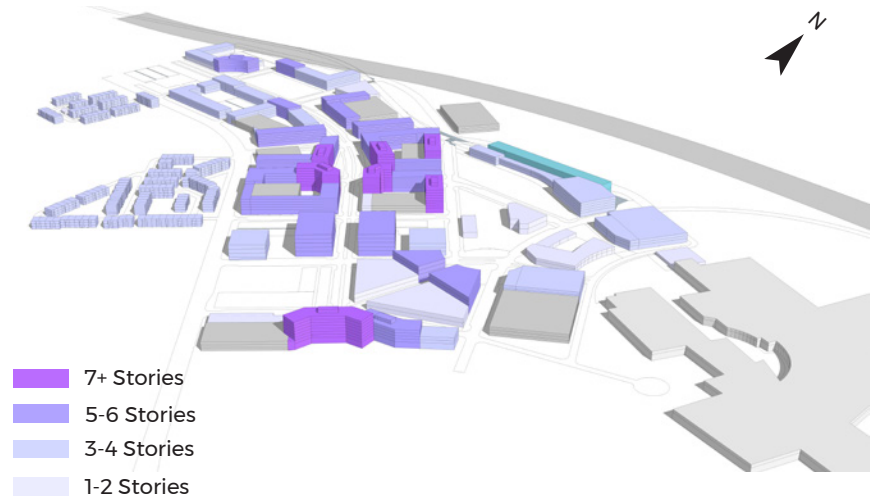
## LAND USE & DENSITY

The Stonecrest Station development plan is divided into three areas: a core of TOD, an entertainment district adjacent to the Mall at Stonecrest, and a neighborhood to the west. The TOD Core will be the heart of the station area development and includes the new station facility. This area features a mix of uses within walkable and pedestrian-friendly blocks. The new development directly integrates with the mall to create a seamless connection between existing and new. Parking is provided by above-grade parking garages that are integrated with the blocks. The land uses of the TOD Core complement existing uses by adding new and compatible amenities: multi-family residential, office and new-to-market trends in dining like food halls. The TOD core is a self-contained, Phase 1 development that has the potential to create a robust, transit-centric place without additional phases while potentially catalyzing the revitalization of the mall and surrounding areas and thus a source of ridership for the new station.

The proposed Entertainment District is a high-energy collection of themed restaurants, attractions and media studios. These uses have the potential to become a regional draw and are a key strategy to revitalize the Mall at Stonecrest. Many older shopping centers around the country are incorporating entertainment destinations to reposition themselves within their respective markets. Creating a cluster of shopping, dining and entertainment uses that are also unique and experiential is a way to adapt to changing retail trends and reposition the area as a regional destination.

The residential neighborhood will combine with the multi-family units of the TOD Core to reinforce the station area's status as a place to reside. Each block includes essential, ground-level retail and garage parking to support the needs of residents. While the primary use proposed for the area is residential to leverage proximity to transit, an alternative use is recreational development, as proposed by the Atlanta Sports City project.

Development densities are highest in the TOD Core, with some residential buildings rising 6-8 floors to define key intersections and spaces. Further from the station area, densities are lower in the residential neighborhood, where building heights typically range from 3-5 floors (Figure 2-44).



**Figure 2-44:** Mall At Stonecrest Station Development Density



**Medium-Density Office**



**Medium-Density Townhouse**



**Marketplace Retail/Food Hall**



**Entertainment District**

**Figure 2-45:** Examples of Uses and Densities



**Figure 2-46:** Aerial View of Potential Future Build-Out in the Mall At Stonecrest Station Area (Looking Northwest)

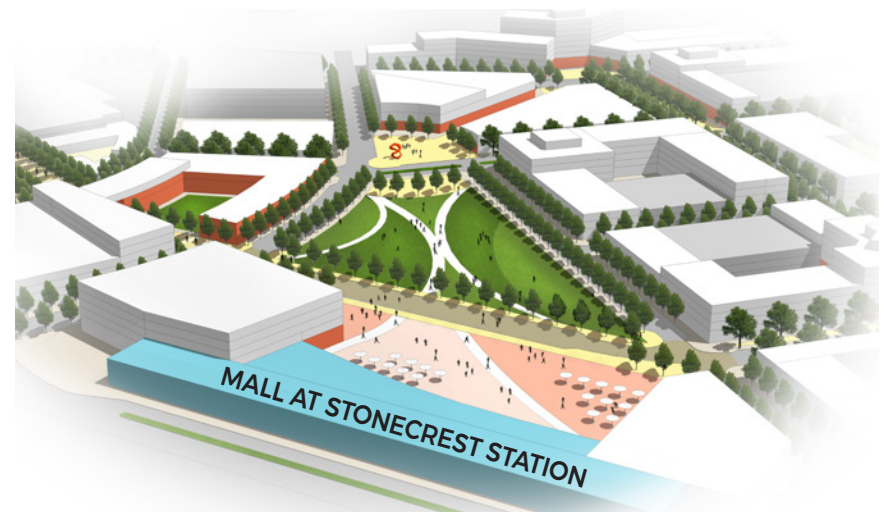


## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed public realm improvements throughout the station area are designed to foster a unique and varied user experience, while at the same time creating clear and cohesive sequences between existing and new development. An architecturally distinctive canopy promotes exploration between the mall and new development and acts as a gateway to a large, new-to-market destination Food Hall. This indoor/outdoor, multi-level space will attract food-centric visitors from across the metropolitan area with on-trend restaurants, bars and food vendors within an exciting and communal space, as is the case at City Place in West Palm Beach. Hanging lights, live music performances and dining that flows outdoors reinforce the Food Hall's festival character.

Stonecrest Place is the centerpiece of the public realm sequence and is the first impression one receives upon arriving from transit, as well as serving as the front door for surrounding development districts. This space could have the potential to become a regional draw of its own accord should a high-caliber landscape design is implemented.

The character of the east/west street is defined by a sequence of spaces occurring across its length, each responding to adjacent use and density. At the Entertainment and Convention Hotel, the character of the public realm reflects the high-energy nature of the adjacent entertainment venues, themed restaurants and media studios. Wide sidewalks help facilitate large volumes of pedestrians, while bold pavers and festive banners on streetlights underscore the district's energy. At the intersection with the north-south street, mid-rise apartments with ground floor retail, restaurants and lobbies, define a Barcelona-style plaza that serves as a nexus for area residents and as a gateway to the neighborhood to the west. The public realm of the neighborhood takes on a quiet, residential character. Materials traditionally used in residential construction combine with green corridors optimized for the pedestrian. At the center of the neighborhood, a large community green acts as a front yard for the residents of the surrounding blocks.



**Figure 2-47:** Zoom-in View of Stonecrest Place and Entertainment District (Looking South)



Cityplace  
West Palm Beach, FL





**Figure 2-48:** View Looking east toward the Marketplace/Foodhall at the Pedestrian Promenade

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# 3 LAND USE AND ZONING

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Plan creates a blueprint for development in the proposed transit corridor, focusing on the existing Indian Creek Station and five proposed stations located at Covington Highway, Wesley Chapel Road, Panola Road, Lithonia Industrial Boulevard, and the Mall at Stonecrest. These station area TOD concepts are complemented by transportation infrastructure improvement projects, described in detail in chapter 4 to further support mobility and safety.

This chapter begins with existing layout of the streets, buildings and development patterns in each station area. Next, a detailed examination of the existing DeKalb County zoning district regulations and the DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan that apply to these areas provides the template for the parameters under which all future development would be planned, reviewed, permitted and constructed. Taking these first two sets of information together, a series of recommended transit oriented development and redevelopment plans were developed, appropriate for the scale of land use and traffic expected in each of the six proposed station areas. Finally, each station was assigned a description that we have entitled the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Typology.

The Station Area TOD Visions described in this plan can be implemented over time through a combination of agency-guided joint-developments, large master developments, and incremental redevelopment projects driven by market forces potentially shaped with some public financing. All of this will be regulated by land use policy and zoning law. These development regulations are the critical implementation controls that define the character of new development and redevelopment and will ensure that projects aspire to the vision inherent within each station's typology, theme, and strategies.

More specifically, the comprehensive plan and zoning regulations will impact development patterns around each station area by controlling the allowable land uses, densities, bulk and form, and height associated with new transit-oriented development. Additionally, supportive elements such as parking, land subdivision, and right-of-way dedication will be addressed. More broadly though, ensuring higher densities, mixing uses, and clustering development within the station area will play an important role in generating ridership and encouraging mode-shifting.



## 3.2 VISION, POLICY, AND LAW

All new development on parcels within the station areas that will contribute to the vision are subject to the policies contained in the DeKalb 2035 Comprehensive Plan as well as directly through the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. The plan is a document that generally provides policy toward growth and development in the future. The zoning ordinance represents laws that have been adopted to include requirements related to maximum densities, land uses, heights, dimensional standards, and parking. The zoning ordinance includes multiple zoning overlay districts within the I-20 corridor that may impact TOD, in addition to the underlying zoning districts that provide much more detailed standards that regulate new development on a permit-by-permit basis.

Each of these regulatory tools will have different impacts on the proposed TOD vision. When land uses and densities of new development proposed in the vision conflict with the underlying zoning regulations, the regulations contained within the overlay shall typically prevail. For example, there is a greater potential for conflicts between land uses that are prohibited within underlying zoning, deemed not applicable within the overlay district, or exceeding densities set for in the comprehensive plan. Anticipating these conflicts, the overlay districts applicable to the I-20 corridor in DeKalb County are more transit-supportive and offer greater flexibility with respect to mixing land uses and increasing densities.

The process to review zoning for each station area involved a parcel-based assessment of the TOD vision elements compared to the core guidelines contained in the land use policy and zoning law. This section does not intend to reflect a comprehensive review as would be conducted by DeKalb County during the permitting process; but, rather offers a broad review of the proposed vision with the intention that recommendations contained herein can act as a guide for updating land use and zoning at a future date. Specific elements which were reviewed and cross-analyzed include:

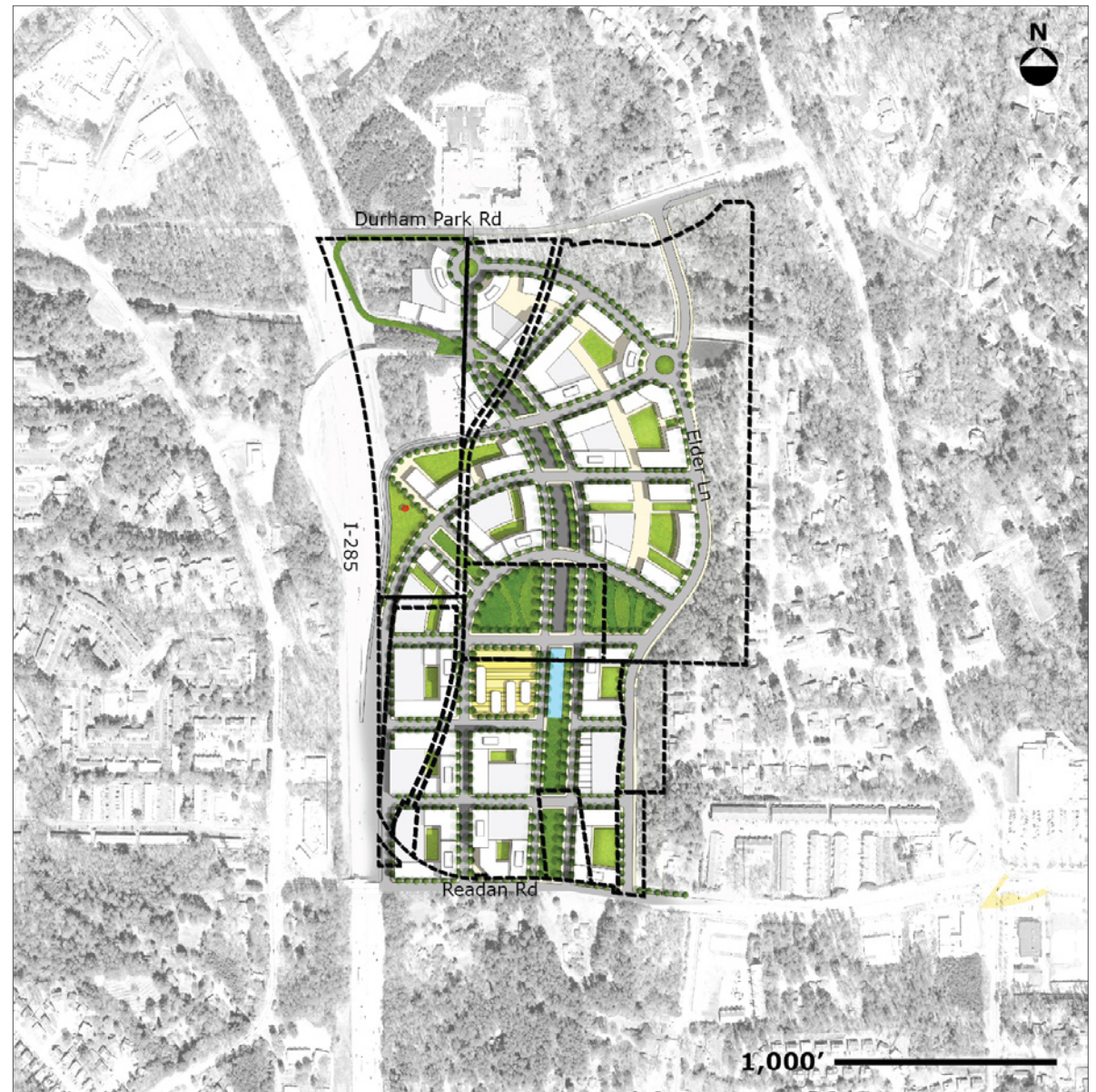
- *TOD Typology, Theme, Strategies, Vision, Land Uses and Densities*
- *Land Use Policies: The DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan*
- *Zoning District Regulations: Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County*

## 3.3 INDIAN CREEK STATION

The TOD framework envisions a centrally located Civic Plaza surrounded by retail, restaurants, and apartments that would combine with Indian Creek Station to create a new place for local and regional gathering. The station area plan is divided into two distinct areas: a Mixed-Use District and a Residential Neighborhood. The Mixed-Use District envisions the Indian Creek development as a regional destination by including a diverse and complementary mix of national anchor and local retail options, restaurants and places for entertainment. The plan also re-imagines what is currently a large surface parking lot for the existing station as a neighborhood of medium and low-density multi-family apartment buildings.

### 3.3.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of twelve (12) large and very large, irregular patterns shaped by land access and access to Interstate 285. Land subdivision will primarily be needed, as well as some consolidation and dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities to ensure that the TOD vision can be realized in the long-term.



**Figure 3-1:** Existing Parcellation for the Indian Creek Station Area



### 3.3.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use within the station area is exclusively categorized as **Town Center** as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035. The intent of the Town Center Character Area within land use policy is to **promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures, which serve many communities in order to reduce automobile travel, promote walkability and increased transit usage**. These areas consist of a focal point for several neighborhoods with a variety of activities such as general retail, commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that are easily accessible by pedestrians. The preferred density for areas of this type is up to 60 dwelling units per acre.

Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in the **Tier III: Indian Creek Wellness Community portion of the Kensington-Memorial Drive Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district is intended to develop **multi-modal TOD that integrates physical activity with trails to parks and open spaces, with mixed use, residential, and senior facilities**. The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily include **OI: Office / Institutional District**, **MR-1: Medium-Density Residential District**, and very limited portions of **R-75: Residential**.

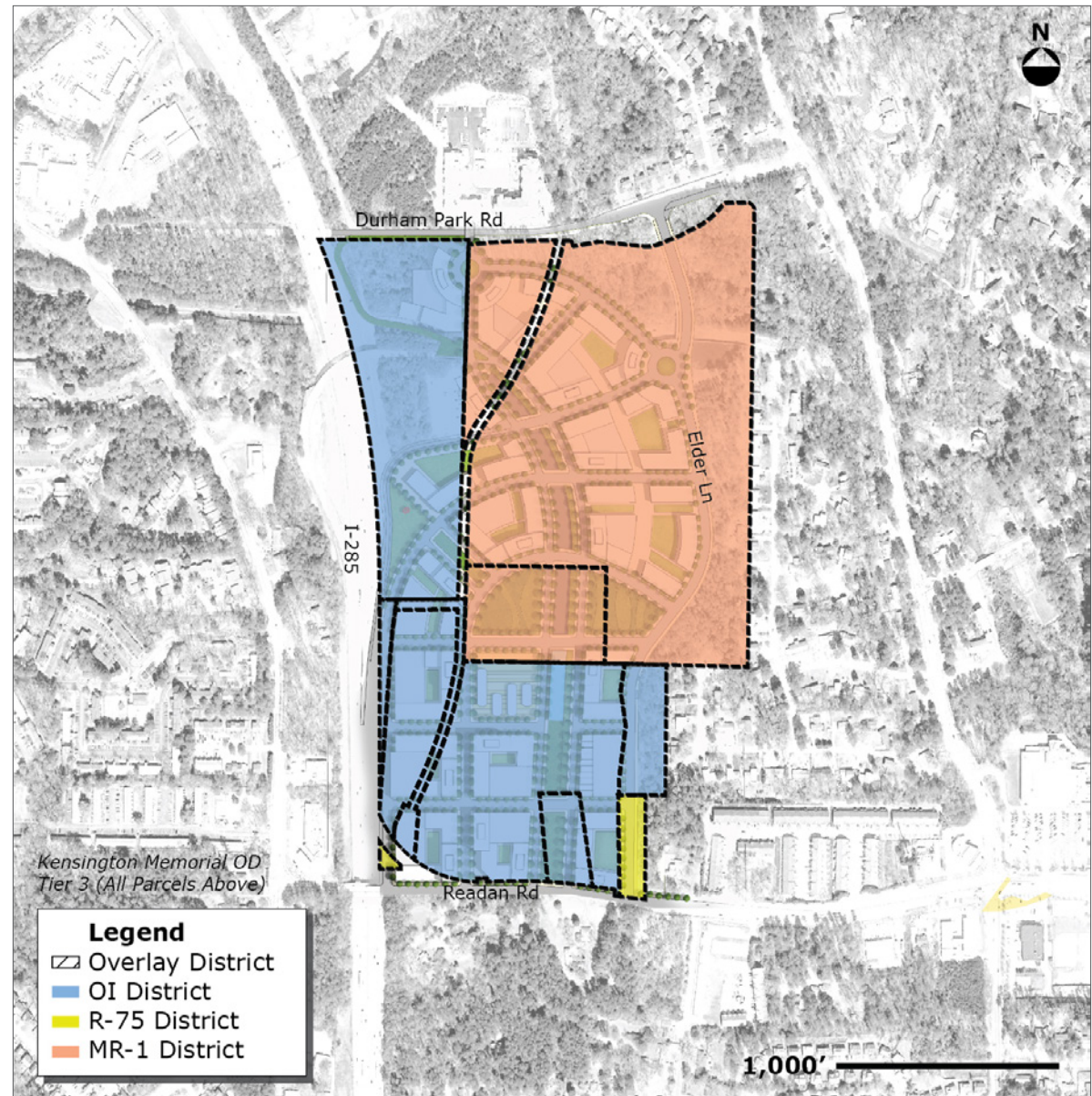


Figure 3-2: Existing Parcellation for the Indian Creek Station Area



Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- *Allows heights to exceed 6 stories with a special use permit;*
- *Allows mixing-of-uses allowable within the underlying zoning;*
- *Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses;*
- *Site design requirements have maximum setbacks, rather than minimums;*
- *Development standards generally support better site layout and parking placement; and*
- *Variety of density bonuses available for ¼ mile of a MARTA station.*

### 3.3.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Indian Creek station area is the **Commuter Town Center** that thematically seeks to **reinvent the park and ride station as a new community anchored by an inter-modal town center main street**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including a medium-density mixed-use core, the development of a new community, priority access to transit and shared parking, and major connections to Indian Creek and the surrounding neighborhoods. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law.

The typology and theme of the TOD vision integrate relatively well with both the intentions of the Town Center character area and the Kensington-Memorial Drive Overlay District, specifically with respect to enhancing physical activity within the station area. The plan provides for several new community greens, a central boulevard, and connections to the Indian Creek which will expand the opportunity for recreation and activity that will be interconnected with transit. Additionally, new infrastructure surrounding the core redevelopment area includes recommendations for complete streets that expand bicycle infrastructure and add sidewalk, all recommendations that will dramatically expand physical activity

with access to trails, parks, and open spaces. Though the vision does not speak specifically to the senior facilities component of the Tier III: Indian Creek Wellness Community, it's important to acknowledge that new developments contained within the vision could include senior housing and lifestyle centers that are integrated into mixed-use development, transit, and multi-modal facilities, which does align with the broader intention of the zoning overlay district.

### 3.3.4 LAND USE AND DENSITY

Land use and density will play an important role in shaping the character of the station area and ultimately achieving the intentions set forth in the vision. The TOD vision proposes a mixture of mixed-use, residential, market place, and civic uses with a focused 3-block strip of retail frontage with an interconnected open space network traversing the station area connecting with transit and open space corridors. This includes a 9-block mixed use district with 4 to 10 story buildings (and generally with densities of 70-80 dwelling units per acre) in the southern portion and a new residential neighborhood with some buildings at significant intersections from 6 to 8 stories (and generally 3 to 5 stories with densities of 90-100 dwelling units per acre) in the northern portion.

Proposed densities typically exceed the maximums allowable in the Town Center character area; however, there are a variety of density bonuses available for mixed-use, shared parking, and MARTA-adjacent development. Densities are also shaped by allowable heights and dimensional standards that apply to new projects. Table 3-1 compares the proposed TOD vision with existing land use policy and zoning law.

**Table 3-1:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Indian Creek Station Area

|   | TOD VISION  | LAND USE POLICY  | ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT  | ZONING DISTRICTS   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
|   |   |  |  | OI DISTRICT  | MR-1 DISTRICT  | R-75 DISTRICT                                    |
| Land Uses   | <b>Mixed-Use, Marketplace (Retail), Residential, and Civic</b><br>-Establish a mixed-use district (on the south) and a residential neighborhood (on the north)<br>-Residential neighborhood includes courtyards, amenities, above-grade parking garages, and neighborhood services<br>-Mixed-use area includes civic and transit plazas | <b>Town Center</b><br>-Townhomes; Condominiums; Apartments; Retail and commercial; Office; Park & Rec; Institutional; Civic; Entertainment & Cultural; Health Care, Technology Centers | <b>Tier III: Indian Creek Wellness Community</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include office and institutional buildings, professional and law offices, single-family residential (as part of a mixed-use project retail, and senior housing)<br>-Prohibited uses include commercial parking lots and temporary / seasonal outdoor sales<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and parking garages | -Mixed-use: Office uses permitted; other commercial uses permitted (CBC)<br>-Marketplace: Retail uses generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Multi-family (supportive living), high-rise apartment (SP), live/work permitted<br>-Civic: Recreation and community areas permitted | -Mixed-use: Office uses permitted as accessory use (CBC); Commercial uses generally prohibited<br>-Marketplace: Retail generally prohibited<br>-Residential: Multi-family (including supportive living), townhouse, and live/work permitted<br>-Civic: Recreation and community areas permitted as accessory use | -N/A: R-75 is very limited portion of TOD vision |
| Heights / Density   | <b>Range of Heights from 3 to 10 stories (by use)</b><br>-Residential area is TYP 3 to 5 stories (and 6 to 8 stories at key intersections) in range with 90-100 DU/Acre<br>-Mixed-use area is TYP 4 to 5 story base height with 7-10 story towers with 70-80 DU/Acre  | -Up to 60 DU / Acre  | -Height may exceed 4 stories without special permit, and parking deck cannot exceed height of main building  | -Max height = 5 stories or 70'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'   | -Max height = 4 stories or 60'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'   | -N/A: R-75 is very limited portion of TOD vision |
| Dimensional Standards   | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (60K-80K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 250' TYP; Max 430'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)  | -  | -None specified; See underlying zoning district  | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 10' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 1,000 SF<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion)   | -Max base density = 8-12 Units/Acre<br>-Min open space = 20%<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 65%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 0' and 20' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 650 SF  | -N/A: R-75 is very limited portion of TOD vision |
| Parking   | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages (Block-by-Block) Integrated with Development</b><br>-Parking to serve development TYP also includes visitor parking and park-and-ride spaces<br>-Ratios not identified   | -  | -See above<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; Residential = 1.25/ DU; and Retail = 1/250  | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type                                | -Shared parking reduction available when mixed-use<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200   | -N/A: R-75 is very limited portion of TOD vision |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |   |  |  |  |  |  |

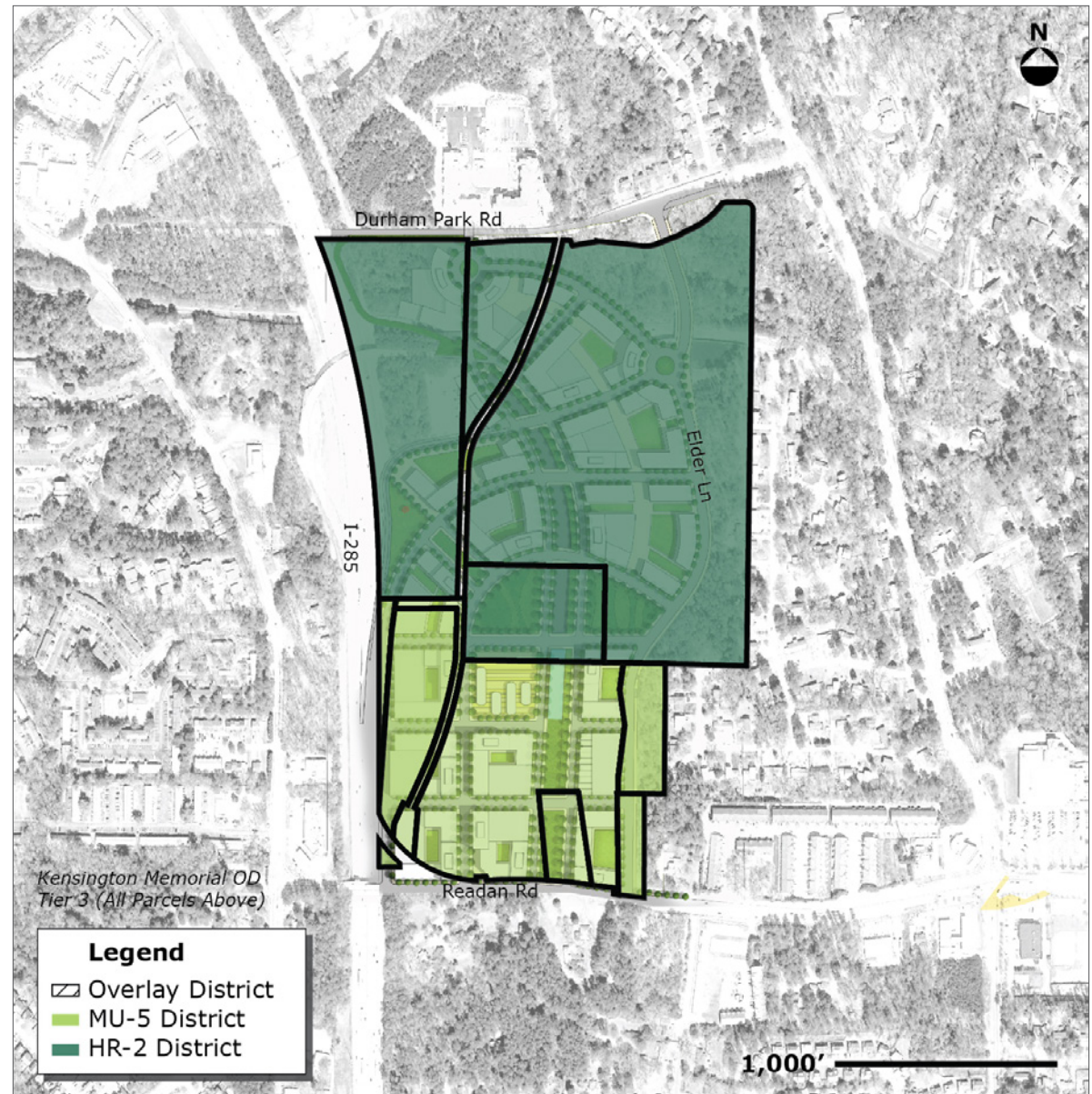
### 3.3.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Land use policy with the station area appear relatively consistent with the plan; however, the following potential updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating four (4) parcels on the north side of the station area from MR-1 and OI to HR-2 to require higher residential densities and allow for additional supportive commercial and retail uses such as neighborhood services and corner stores; and
- Consider updating eight (8) parcels on the south side of the station area immediately adjacent to the MARTA Station from OI to MU-5 to require higher residential densities, more flexibility with building form (i.e. transitional height planes, height, and setbacks), and increased opportunity for mixing uses.

**Table 3-2:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 6         | OI District     | MU-5 District   |
| 2         | R-75 District   | MU-5 District   |
| 1         | OI District     | HR-2 District   |
| 3         | MR-1 District   | HR-2 District   |



**Figure 3-3:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Indian Creek Station Area



## 3.4 COVINGTON HIGHWAY STATION

The TOD framework envisions a walkable town center with a commercial core surrounded by neighborhood retail and an anchor retail store with residential above. The proposed development is defined and enhanced by an open space at each end of the station area: the plaza and green space on the east end, next to the station, greets transit riders and visitors; the park space on the west end, in the residential area, serves as an amenity for surrounding residents. Covington Highway is re-imagined as a street that allows for safe use by pedestrians and cyclists as well as automobiles.

### 3.4.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of sixteen (16) irregular, small to very large parcels shaped by land access and access to Covington Highway and Interstate 285. Land consolidation will primarily be needed, as well as dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities. Several major and subdivisions will also be needed, particularly with respect to the largest parcels within the station area.



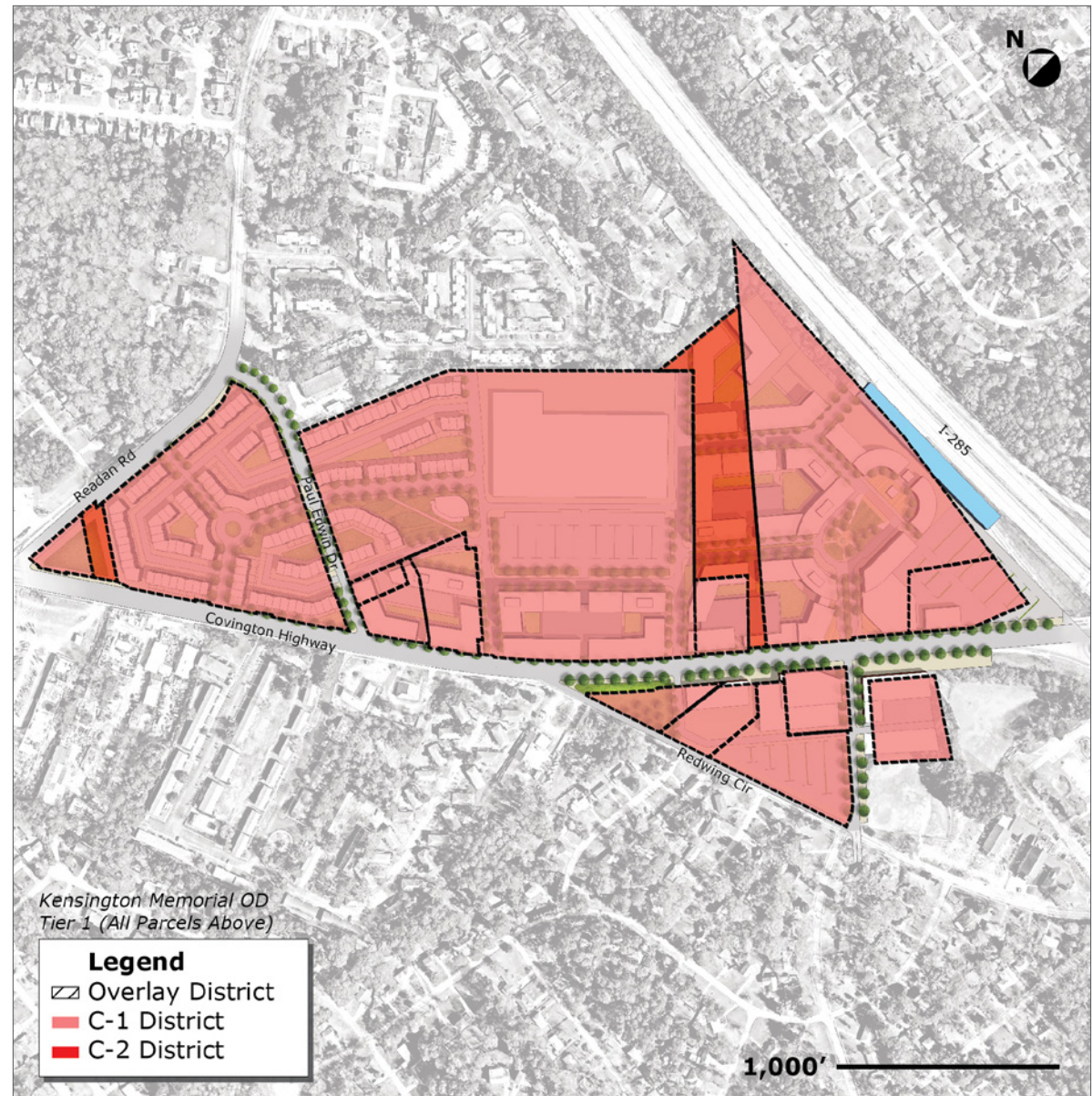
**Figure 3-4:** Existing Parcellation for the Covington Highway Station Area



### 3.4.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use within the station area is exclusively categorized as **Commercial Redevelopment Corridor** as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035. The intent of the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor Character Area within land use policy is to **promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors**. These areas mostly consist of strip-style shopping centers that are in need of aesthetic or functional improvements, are in economic decline or are vacant. They are often characterized by a high degree of vehicular traffic, on site parking, moderate floor to area ratio and large tracks of land. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 18 dwelling units per acre.

Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in the **Tier I: Covington Gateway portion of the Kensington-Memorial Drive Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district is intended to serve as a **gateway into Avondale Estates, Decatur and Atlanta into 285 east through redevelopment with fitness trails, connectivity of trails and parks, mixed use residential that will promote health and wellness**. The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily includes **C-1: Local Commercial District**, and very limited portions of **C-2: General Commercial District**.



**Figure 3-5:** Existing Zoning for the Covington Highway Station Area

Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- *Allows heights to exceed 6 stories with a special use permit;*
- *Allows mixing-of-uses allowable within the underlying zoning;*
- *Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses;*
- *Site design requirements have maximum setbacks, rather than minimums;*
- *Development standards generally support better site layout and parking placement; and*
- *Variety of density bonuses available for ¼ mile of a MARTA station.*

### 3.4.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Covington Highway station area is **Town Center** which thematically seeks to **redevelop the Covington Highway station area as a town center with a mix of uses anchored by open space and connected by a network of walkable streets**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including a medium-density mixed-use corridor, consistent street walls, shared parking behind new development, main street characteristics, and gateway features. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law.

The typology and theme of the TOD vision integrate well with the intention of the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor, specifically seeking redevelopment of the existing shopping plaza and other low-density, underutilized commercial properties north of Covington Highway and west of I-285; however, density maximums and limitations on underlying zoning may affect implementation of the vision. With respect to the zoning overlay, the TOD vision shares less in common with regulatory intentions, though specific strategies such as the parks and open space entrances and the mixed-use retail destination will act strongly as a gateway for the new community and existing neighborhoods.

The overlay then expands the opportunity for multi-family development as part of mixed-use developments while it prohibits the opportunity for stand-alone multi-family development, which may necessitate variances to support the vision in the areas surrounding the neighborhood commons on the west end of the station area. Generally, the overlay and underlying zoning allow for the supportive commercial, retail, office, and multi-family uses that support the new town center concept; however, the residential components are not required as part of new development, which could dramatically impact the character and identity of the station area.

### 3.4.4 LAND USE AND DENSITY

Land use and density will play an important role in shaping the character of the station area and ultimately achieving the intentions set forth in the vision. The TOD vision proposes a mixture of mixed-use, residential, retail core surrounding the transit plaza with a major connection to Covington Highway. The commercial core is between 5 to 7 stories (generally between 90-100 dwelling units per acre) including different types of retail to achieve a balance of neighborhood service with high-quality anchor retail. Moving westward, the vision transitions into exclusively high-density residential uses between 5 to 7 stories (generally between 70-80 dwelling units per acre) and low-density residential between 3 to 4 stories (generally between 12-18 dwelling units per acre) to integrate with the existing neighborhood fabric and create a gateway.

Proposed densities greatly exceed the maximums allowable in the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor character area with respect to the commercial core; however, the proposed residential areas in the western portion of the station area fall within density limitations in land use policy. There are also a variety of density bonuses available for mixed-use, shared parking, and MARTA-adjacent development that will support the vision. Densities are also shaped by allowable heights and dimensional standards that apply to new projects. Table 3-3 compares the proposed TOD vision with existing land use policy and zoning law.



**Table 3-3:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Covington Highway Station Area

|   | TOD VISION  | LAND USE POLICY   | ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT   | ZONING DISTRICTS   |   |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
|   |   |   |   | C-1 DISTRICT   | C-2 DISTRICT  |
| Land Uses   | <b>Mixed-Use, Retail, and Residential</b><br>-Establish a mixed-use, commercial core (on the southeast) and a residential neighborhood (on the northwest)<br>-Residential area includes courtyards, amenities, rear parking, and a neighborhood commons<br>-Commercial core includes a transit plaza, station green, and structured parking | <b>Commercial Redevelopment Corridor</b><br>-Commercial and Retail; Office; Condominiums; Townhomes; Mixed Use; Apartments; Institutional | <b>Tier I: Covington Gateway</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include office and institutional buildings, multi-family within mixed use development, outdoor/indoor recreation activities, professional offices, and retail<br>-Prohibited uses include single-use multi-family<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and parking garages | -Mixed-use: Office uses, live/work and other commercial uses permitted<br>-Retail uses permitted<br>-Residential: Multi-family, townhouse, urban single-family, and high-rise apartment prohibited   | -Mixed-use: Office uses, live/work and other commercial uses permitted<br>-Retail: Retail uses permitted<br>-Residential: Multi-family, townhouse, urban single-family, and high-rise apartment prohibited                          |
| Heights / Density   | <b>Range of Heights from 3 to 10 stories (by use)</b><br>-Commercial core is TYP 5 to 7 stories with 90-100 DU/Acre<br>-Low-density residential area is TYP 3 to 4 stories in range with 12-18 DU/Acre<br>-Med-density residential is TYP 4 to 7 stories with 70-80 DU/Acre   | -Up to 18 DU / Acre   | -Height may exceed 5 stories without special permit, and parking deck cannot exceed height of main building   | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-No Transitional Height Plane  | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-No Transitional Height Plane   |
| Dimensional Standards   | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (80K to 120K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 275' TYP; Max 400'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)  | -   | -None specified; See underlying zoning district   | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 50' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion) | -Min Lot Area = 30,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 50' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = Not Permitted |
| Parking   | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages, Surface Parking Lots, Alley Parking Integrated with Development</b><br>-Parking to serve development TYP seeks to minimize with management, sharing, and transit<br>-Ratios not identified  | -   | -See above.<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; Residential = 1.25/DU; and Retail = 1/250   | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Retail = 1/500-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type                         | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Retail = 1/500-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type          |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |   |   |   |  |   |

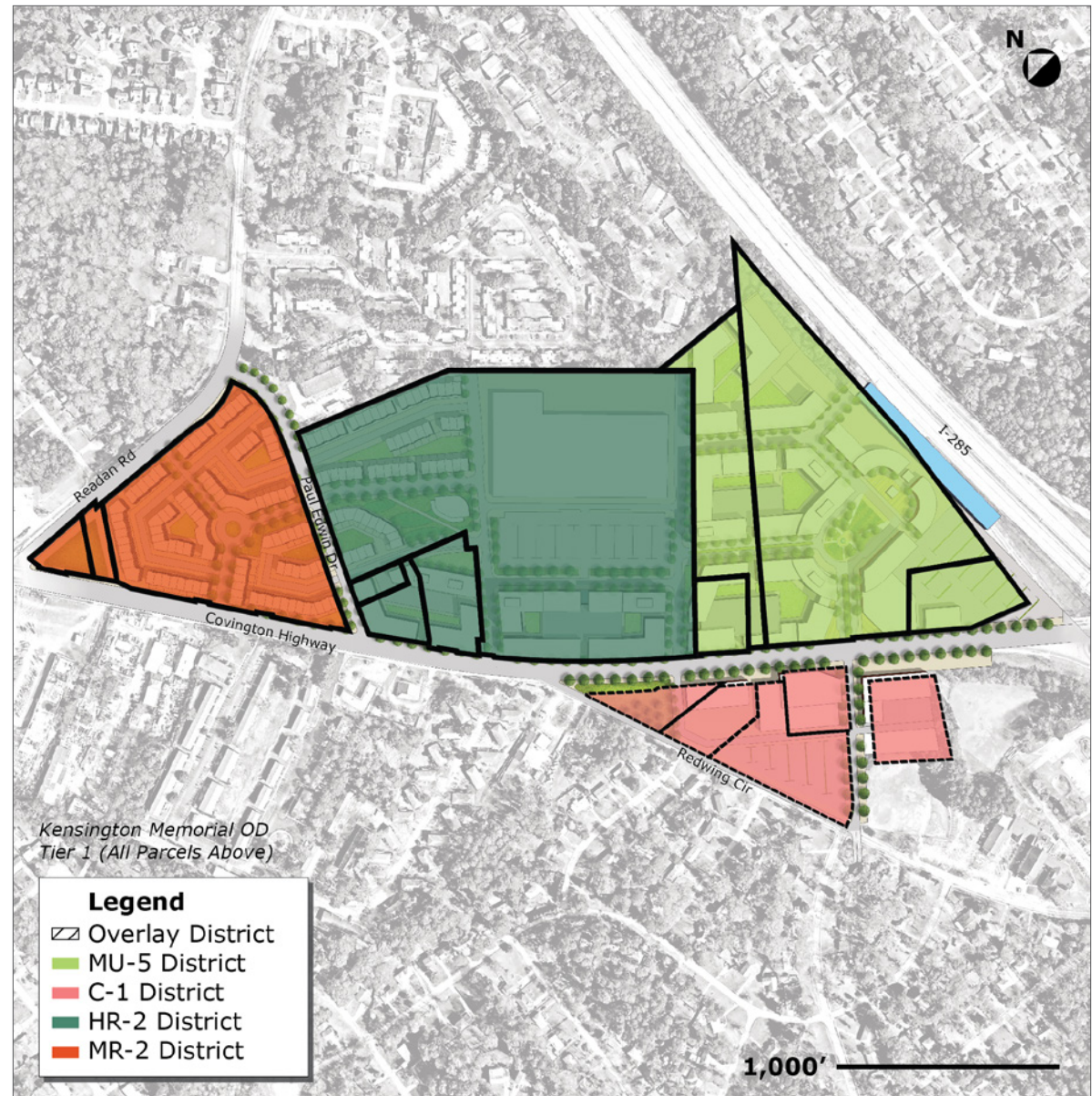
### 3.4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Initially, consider updating Commercial Redevelopment Corridor land uses to Town Center land uses to better support densities. In addition, the following updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating four (4) parcels to the southeast adjacent to the MARTA Station from C-1 and C-2 to MU-5 to allow for higher baseline densities and require mixed-use projects;
- Consider updating four (4) parcels in the middle of the station area from C-1 to HR-2 to allow for greater base densities, mixed-use development, and stand-alone multi-family development; and
- Consider updating three (3) parcels on the northwest side of the station area from C-1 and C-2 to MR-2 to require denser multi-family, residential uses within proposed new residential area.

**Table 3-4:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 3         | C-1 District    | MU-5 District   |
| 1         | C-2 District    | MU-5 District   |
| 4         | C-1 District    | HR-2 District   |
| 2         | C-1 District    | MR-2 District   |
| 1         | C-2 District    | MR-2 District   |
| 5         | C-1 District    | No Change       |



**Figure 3-6:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Covington Highway Station Area

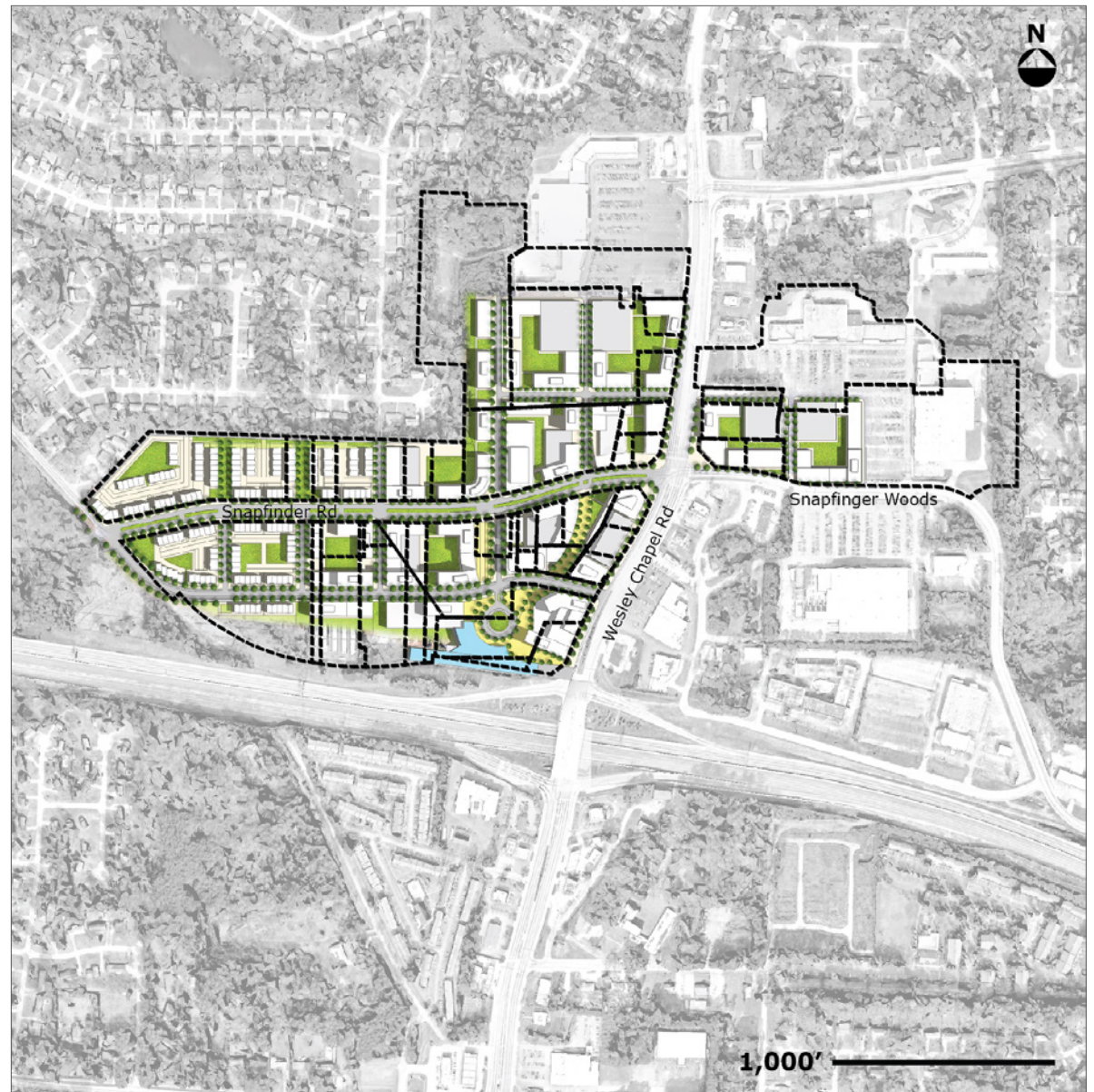


## 3.5 WESLEY CHAPEL ROAD STATION

The TOD framework envisions a 21st Century business destination supported by a multi-modal transit hub and mixed-use development with a mix of office, retail, apartments, townhouses, and open space to create a vibrant transit-oriented community that will revive this crossroads for the I-20 corridor. The station area plan is built around redevelopment of existing underutilized shopping centers to include a variety of transit-centric amenities in the areas north of I-20 and west of Wesley Chapel Road. It also includes a neighborhood of townhouses, an office-park promenade, station place, and a restaurant plaza to provide new amenities for adjacent neighborhoods.

### 3.5.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of forty-five (45) irregular, very small to very large parcels shaped by I-20 and land access to Wesley Chapel Road and Snapfinger Woods Drive. Land consolidation will primarily be needed, as well as dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities and consolidation for several key developments.



**Figure 3-7:** Existing Parcellation for the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area



### 3.5.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use within the station area is exclusively categorized as **Town Center** as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035. The intent of the Town Center Character Area within land use policy is to **promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures, which serve many communities in order to reduce automobile travel, promote walkability and increased transit usage**. The areas consist of a focal point for several neighborhoods with a variety of activities such as general retail, commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that are easily accessible by pedestrians. The preferred density for areas of this type is up to 60 dwelling units per acre.

Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in the **Tier I, II, and III: Interstate 20 Corridor Compatible Use Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district has a broad range of intentions intended to achieve a **variety of mixed-use communities, with individual tiers moving from high-intensity (Tier I) to medium-intensity (Tier II) and low-intensity (Tier III)**. Tier I allows up to 20 stories in height and 60 dwelling units per acre; while, Tier III allows up to 4 stories and 40 dwelling units per acre. The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily includes **C-1: Local Commercial District** with very limited portions of **OI: Office-Institutional District**, **OD: Office-Distribution District**, and **MU-1: Mixed-Use Low Density District**.

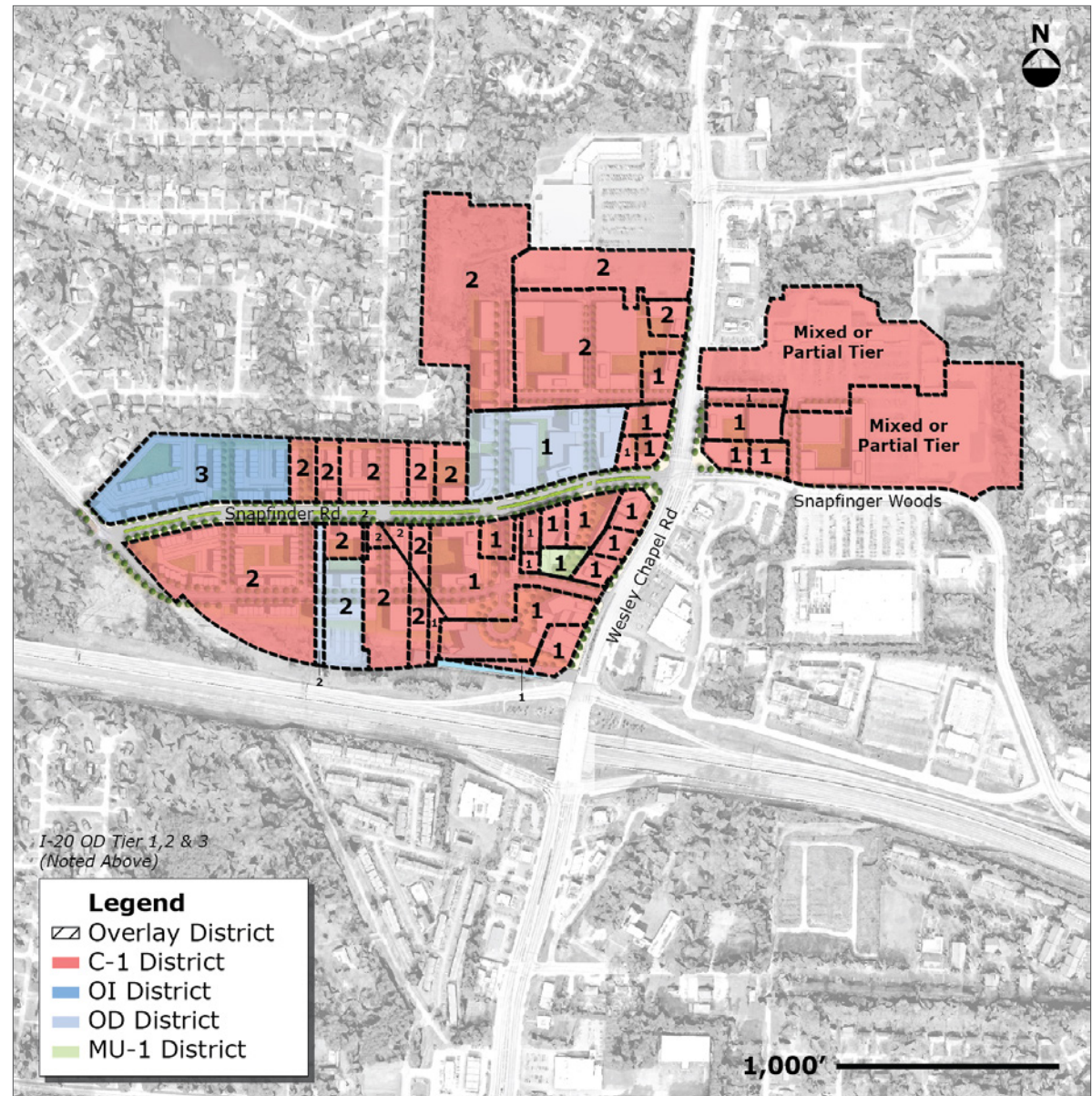


Figure 3-8: Existing Zoning for the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area

Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- o *Allows very tall heights and densities that are very transit-supportive, including Tier I: High-Intensity (20 stories / 60 units per acre), Tier II: Medium-Intensity (8 stories / 40 units per acre), and Tier III: Low-Intensity (4 stories / 40 dwelling units per acre);*
- o *Allows mixing-of-uses above and beyond the underlying zoning, all very supportive of mixed-use and multi-family dwellings;*
- o *Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses;*
- o *Site design requirements are more geared toward walkable building form;*
- o *Development standards generally support better site layout and parking placement;*
- o *Parking ratios are lower and well within a transit-supportive range; and*
- o *Variety of density bonuses and increased FAR available for new development.*

### 3.5.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Wesley Chapel Road station area is the **Commuter Town Center** that thematically seeks to **leverage multi-modal connection opportunities to create a transit hub that services a 21st Century business destination**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including medium and high-density office supported by mixed-use development, redevelopment and re-purposing of big-box sites, and shared parking strategies. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law.

The typology and theme of the TOD vision aren't particularly aligned with the intentions of the Town Center character area; however, it is not miss-aligned with the character intentions either. The Town Center area is about creating a center with a variety of uses, reducing automobile use, and increasing walkability and transit use - a center for the surrounding area that is centered around transit. The vision speaks to that generalized

intention with a strong focus on expanding retail, commercial, office, and high-density housing. With respect to the zoning overlay, the TOD vision shares similarities with regulatory intentions. Generally, the overlay and underlying zoning allow for the supportive commercial, retail, office, and multi-family uses that support the business destination concept; however, density limitations in zoning may need more attention.

### 3.5.4 LAND USE AND DENSITY

Land use and density will play an important role in shaping the character of the station area and ultimately achieving the intentions set forth in the vision. The TOD vision proposes a townhome neighborhood on the west, a 21st century office park on the east, and a mixed-use hub immediately adjacent to the MARTA station. The townhome neighborhood is between 2 to 4 stories (generally between 12-15 dwelling units per acre), the office park is between 3 to 8 stories, and the mixed-use hub with residential towers up to 14 stories (generally between 125-140 dwelling units per acre).

Proposed densities greatly exceed the maximums allowable in the Town Center character area with respect to the mixed-use hub; however, the proposed residential areas in the western portion of the station area and office destination fall within density limitations in land use policy. There are also a variety of density bonuses available for mixed-use, shared parking, and MARTA-adjacent development that will support the vision; however, baseline floor area ratios (FAR) of 3.5 may also limit densities even when including bonuses of 2.0 additional FAR (over baseline) for the provision of amenities (such as increasing public space). Densities are also shaped by allowable heights and dimensional standards that apply to new projects. Table 3-5 compares the proposed TOD vision with existing land use policy and zoning law.

**Table 3-5:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area

|   | TOD VISION  | LAND USE POLICY  | ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT  | ZONING DISTRICTS   |   |   |   |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
|   |   |  |  | C-1 DISTRICT   | OI DISTRICT   | OD DISTRICT   | MU-1 DISTRICT   |
| <b>Land Uses</b>  | <b>Mixed-Use, Retail, Office and Residential</b><br>-Establish a mixed-use residential hub, office / business destination, and townhome neighborhood<br>-Townhome neighborhood includes retail, courtyards, outdoor amenities and garages<br>-Office / business destination includes retail, office, and business-supportive uses | <b>Town Center</b><br>-Townhomes; Condominiums; Apartments; Retail and commercial; Office; Park & Rec; Institutional; Civic; Entertainment & Cultural; Health Care, Technology Centers | <b>Tier I, II, and III: I-20 Corridor</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include many types of Dwellings with any combination of retail and office, offices uses, restaurants, and retail.<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and parking garages | -Mixed-use: Office uses, live/work and other commercial uses permitted<br>-Retail: Retail uses permitted<br>-Residential: Multi-family, townhouse, urban single-family, and high-rise apartment prohibited   | -Mixed-use: Office uses permitted; other commercial uses permitted (CBC; Retail uses generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Multi-family (supportive living), high-rise apartment (SP), live/work permitted                                       | -Office uses: Permitted<br>-Commercial uses: Permitted (CBC)<br>Retail uses: Generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Prohibited  | -Office uses: Permitted<br>-Commercial uses: Permitted (CBC)<br>Retail uses: Generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Permitted<br>-10% Mix required for non-residential; and 15% required for residential  |
| <b>Heights / Density</b>  | <b>Range of Heights from 1 to 14+ stories (by use)</b><br>-Residential area is TYP 2 to 4 stories in range with 12-15 DU/Acre<br>-Mixed-use hub is TYP 8 to 14 stories with 125-140 DU/Acre<br>-Office is TYP 3 to 8 stories  | -Up to 60 DU / Acre  | -Tier I = up to 20 stories in height and 60 DU per acre; Tier II = up to 8 stories and 40 DU per acre; and Tier III = up to 4 stories and 40 DU per acre<br>-No development shall exceed Floor Area Ratio of 3.5; unless includes public space adjacent    | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-No Transitional Height Plane  | -Max height = 5 stories or 70'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'  | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'  | -Max height = 5 stories or 70'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'  |
| <b>Dimensional Standards</b>  | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (90K to 140K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 300' TYP; Max 425'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP (10' Townhomes TYP; 70' Restaurant Row)<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)  | -  | -Front Setback = Min 0'  | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 50' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion) | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 10' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 1,000 SF<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion)          | -Min Lot Area = 30,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = 0'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = Not Identified  | -Min Lot Area = 12,500 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 50'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = No Max<br>-Front Setback = B/T 10' and 50'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 550 to 850 SF (by type)<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 400 SF (Residential Portion)                |
| <b>Parking</b>  | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages, Surface Parking Lots, Alley Parking Integrated with Development</b><br>-Parking to serve development TYP seeks to minimize with management, sharing, and transit<br>-Ratios not identified  | -  | -See above.<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; (Multi-family) Residential = 1.25/ DU; and Retail = 1/250  | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Retail = 1/500-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type                         | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |   |  |  |  |   |   |   |



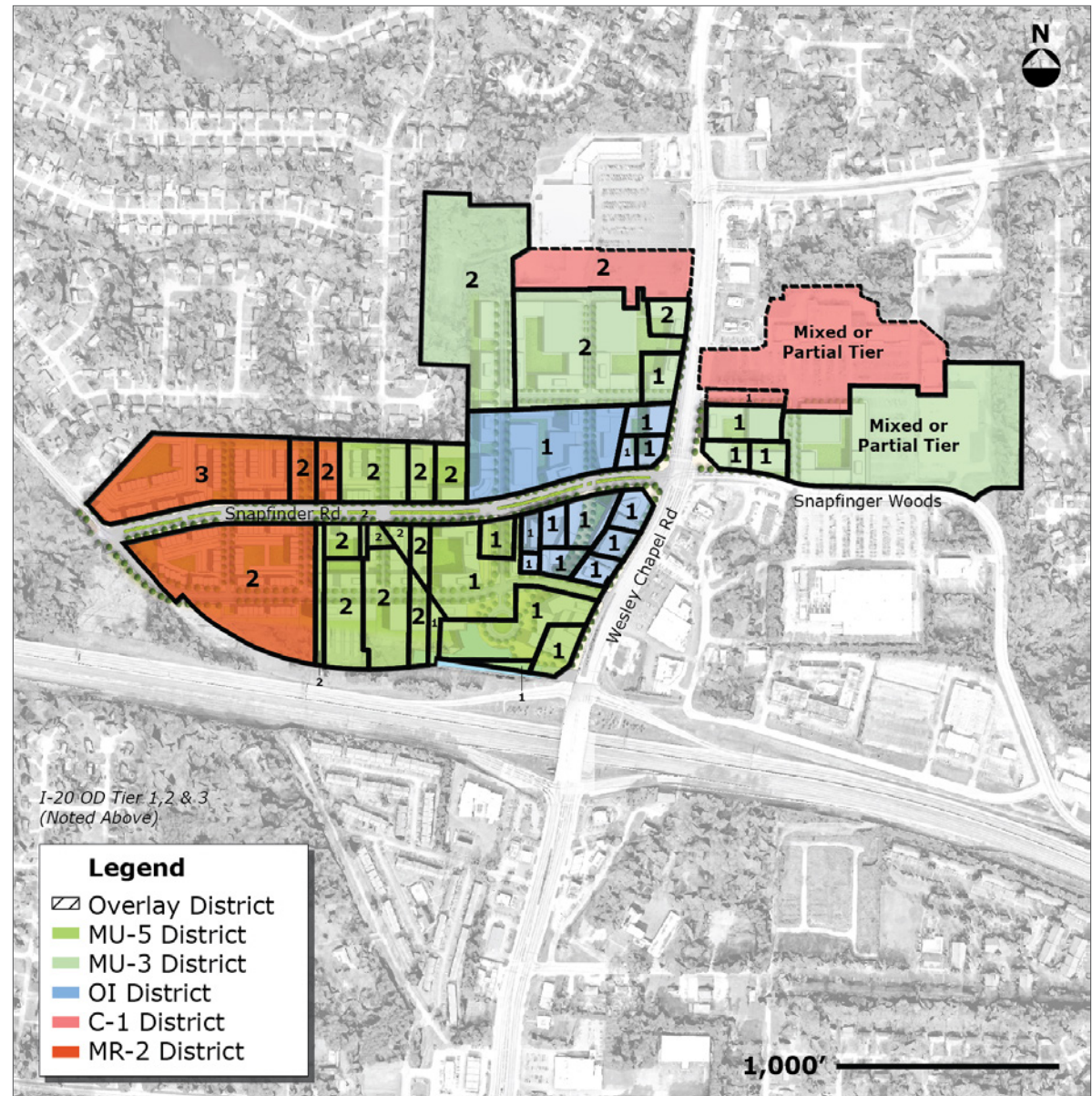
### 3.5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Land use policy with the station area appear relatively consistent with the plan; however, the following potential updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating twenty-six (26) parcels from C-1 and OD to MR-5 and MR-3 to require denser multi-family residential and commercial uses within the proposed mixed-use hub and shopping center redevelopment areas;
- Consider updating twelve (12) parcels near Snapfinger Road from MU-1, C-1, and OD to OI to require office uses within proposed business destination / office park; and
- Consider updating four (4) parcels on the western portion of the station area from C-1 and OI to MR-2 to require residential within proposed townhome neighborhood.

**Table 3-6:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 17        | C-1 District    | MU-5 District   |
| 2         | OD District     | MU-5 District   |
| 7         | C-1 District    | MU-3 District   |
| 1         | MU-1 District   | OI District     |
| 10        | C-1 District    | OI District     |
| 1         | OD District     | OI District     |
| 3         | C-1 District    | MR-2 District   |
| 1         | OI District     | MR-2 District   |
| 3         | C-1 District    | No Change       |



**Figure 3-9:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Wesley Chapel Road Station Area



## 3.6 PANOLA ROAD STATION

The TOD framework seeks to unify the four quadrants disconnected by I-20 and Panola Road by providing infrastructure that supports increased density, job creation, retail services, and housing. This includes a mixed-use core around the station, lower-density housing on underutilized surface lots, office space adjacent to existing industrial uses, and a healthcare cluster. The plan proposes to recognize existing cultural assets, enhance existing uses, and create a center for commuters.

### 3.6.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of forty-four (44) irregular, small to very large parcels shaped by I-20 and land access to Panola Road and Minola Road. Land consolidation and subdivision will both be needed, as well as dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities. Large surface parking lots adjacent to the proposed MARTA Station offer early TOD opportunities.



**Figure 3-10:** Existing Parcellation for the Panola Road Station Area



### 3.6.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use within the station area consists of **Town Center** and **Light Industrial** as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035, and the intentions of these two distinct land use policies are very different with respect to character.

The intent of the Town Center Character Area within land use policy is to **promote the concentration of residential and commercial structures, which serve many communities in order to reduce automobile travel, promote walkability and increased transit usage**. The areas consist of a focal point for several neighborhoods with a variety of activities such as general retail, commercial, professional office, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses that are easily accessible by pedestrians. The preferred density for areas of this type is up to 60 dwelling units per acre.

The intent of the Light Industrial Character Area within land use policy is to identify **areas appropriate for industrial type uses**. The location of these areas shall preserve the appeal and appearance of residential and commercial areas from the prospective intrusion of light industrial land uses. These areas consist of areas used in low intensity manufacturing, including wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, vibration, air pollution or other nuisance characteristics. The preferred density for areas of this type is up to 120 dwelling units per acre.

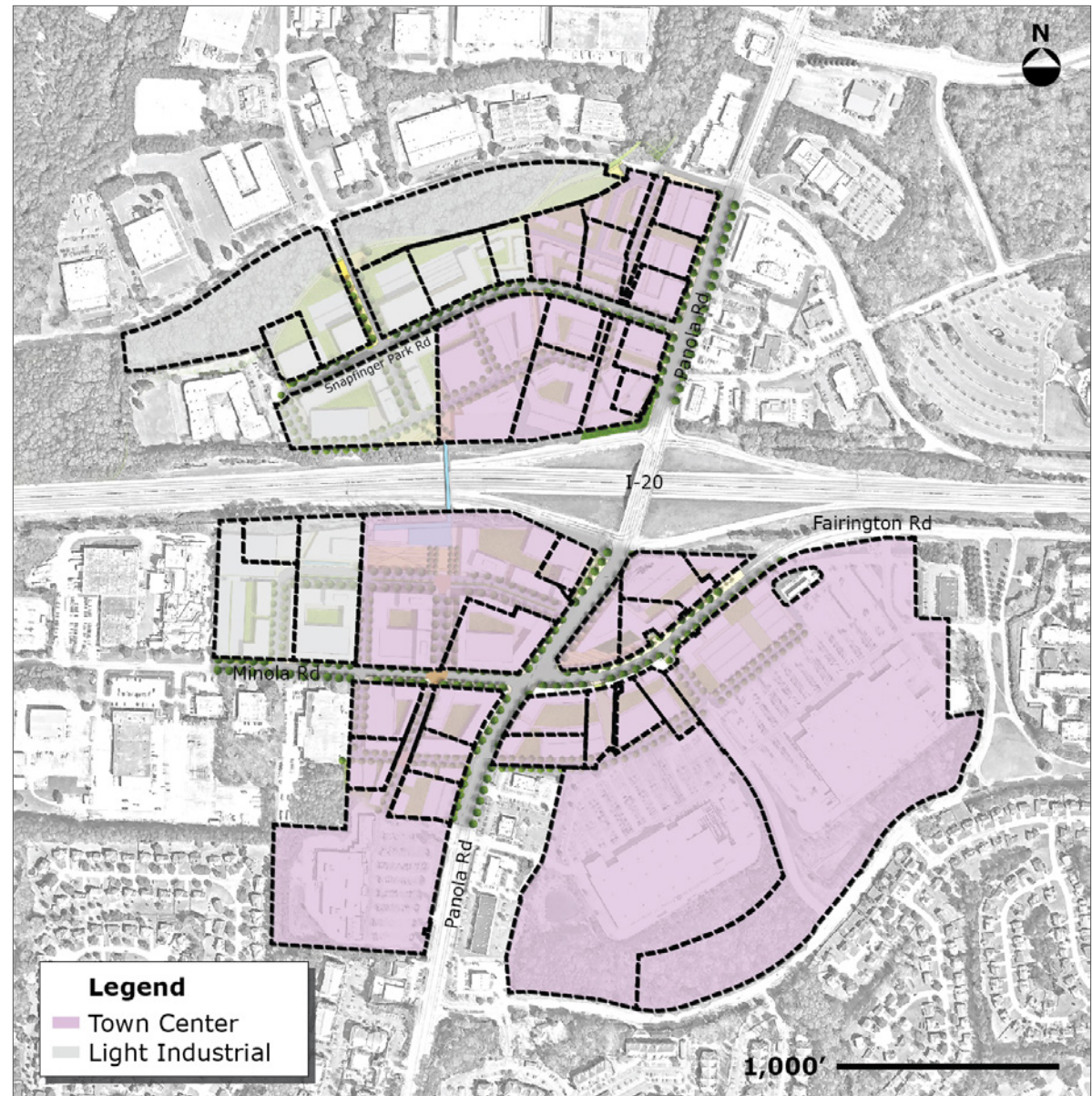


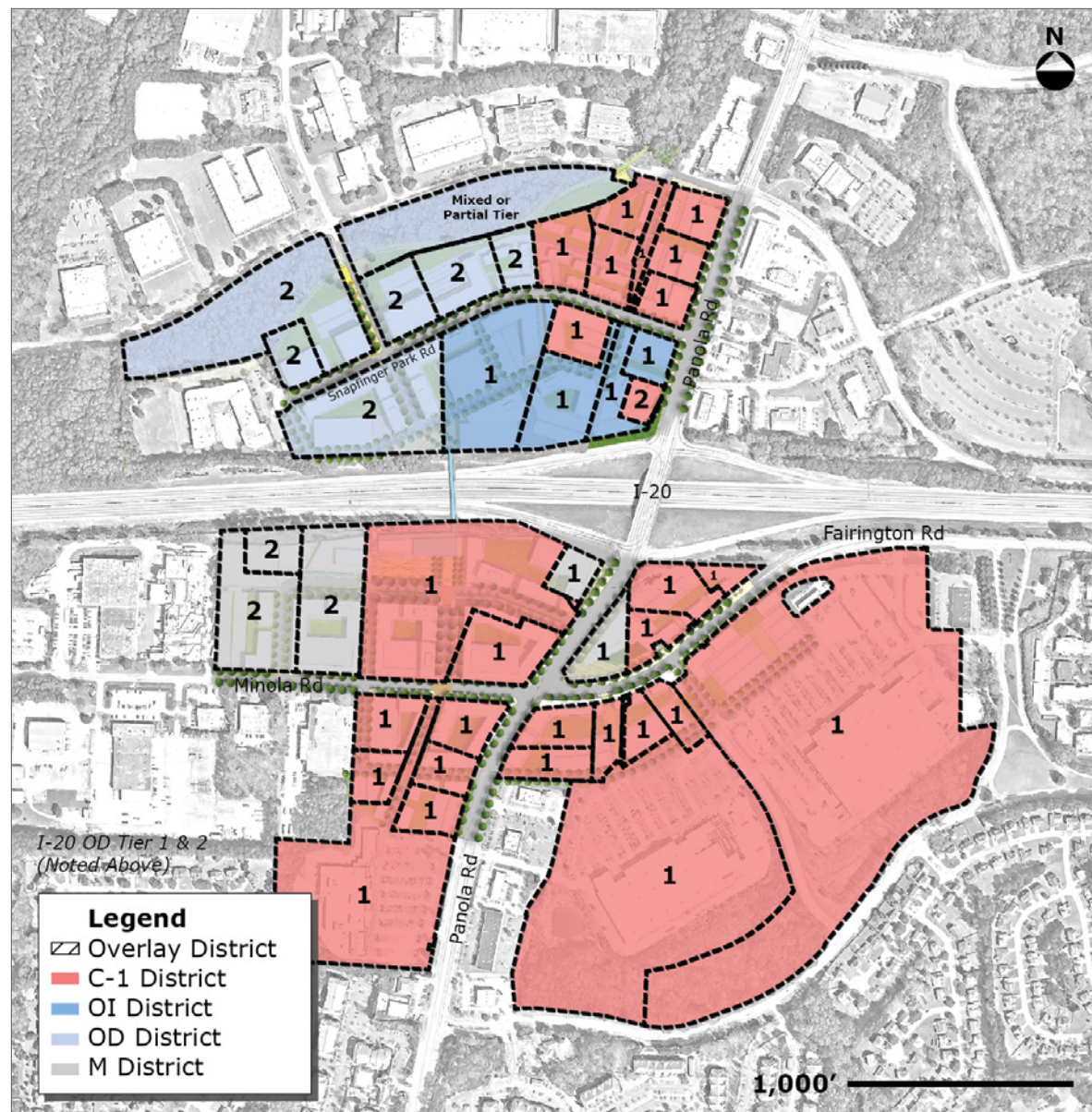
Figure 3-11: Existing Land Use for the Panola Road Station Area



Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in the **Tier I and II: Interstate 20 Corridor Compatible Use Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district has a broad range of intentions intended to achieve a **variety of mixed-use communities, with individual tiers moving from high-intensity (Tier I) to medium-intensity (Tier II)**. Tier I allows up to 20 stories in height and 60 dwelling units per acre; while, Tier II allows up to 8 stories and 40 dwelling units per acre. The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily includes **C-1: Local Commercial District, OI: Office-Institutional District, OD: Office-Distribution District, and M: Light Industrial District**.

Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- Allows tall heights and densities that are very transit-supportive, including Tier I: High-Intensity (20 stories / 60 units per acre) and Tier II: Medium-Intensity (8 stories / 40 units per acre);
- Allows mixing-of-uses above and beyond the underlying zoning, all very supportive of mixed-use and multi-family dwellings;
- Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses;
- Site design requirements are more geared toward walkable building form;



**Figure 3-12:** Existing Zoning for the Panola Road Station Area

- *Development standards generally support better site layout and parking placement;*
- *Parking ratios are lower and well within a transit-supportive range; and*
- *Variety of density bonuses and increased FAR available if public space is provided.*

### 3.6.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Panola Road station area is the **Commuter Town Center** that thematically seeks to **add density around existing anchors and establish a town center that unifies uses in the different quadrants of the Panola Road Interchange**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including medium-density housing cluster, office space near existing light industrial and healthcare facilities, and increased density along Panola Road and big-box shopping malls. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law.

The typology and theme of the TOD vision align relatively well with the intention of the Town Center character area; but, not particularly well with the intention of the Light Industrial character area in future land use policy, primarily in that the vision proposes land uses that will have a range of conflicts with low-intensity manufacturing, distribution, and wholesale uses intended by land use policy. Consideration should be given to modification of underlying land use policy as part of implementation to better align policy with the vision.

### 3.6.4 LAND USE AND DENSITY

Land use and density will play an important role in shaping the character of the station area and ultimately achieving the intentions set forth in the vision. The TOD vision proposes a medium to high-density, mixed-use center immediately adjacent to the MARTA station. This area ranges in height from 4 to 10 stories (generally between 125 to 140 dwelling units per acre) and is intended to create a town center feel with lively ground floor

retail to serve commuters, visitors, and residents from within and around the station area. North of I-20, the vision proposes the expansion of many existing light industrial and office uses to create a low to medium-density office area (5 to 7 stories in height) that will attract co-working, small, and start-up type businesses and leverage the adjacent healthcare facilities. Expanding business here can further mix-uses and expand transit ridership. Southeast of Panola Road, the vision proposes the redevelopment of a portion of both big-box parking lots into a low to medium-density, multi-family residential district between 2 to 4 stories (generally between 20 and 25 dwelling units per acre) anchored by existing cultural and community centers.

Proposed densities exceed the maximums allowable in both Town Center and Light Industrial character areas with respect to the mixed-use center south of I-20; however, consideration should be given to updating Light Industrial areas to Town Center areas to ensure that the use-mix available in zoning will aid in developing the appropriate character. The underlying zoning generally supports the mixed-use center concept south of I-20 and the office/industrial/co-working park concept north of I-20; however, issues with underlying zoning may arise with respect to the uses and densities of proposed residential area southeast of Panola Road. Updates to zoning south of I-20 should be considered to ensure that development can proceed with limited variances.

Densities are also shaped by allowable heights and dimensional standards that apply to new projects. Table 3-7 compares the proposed TOD vision with existing land use policy and zoning law.



**Table 3-7:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Panola Road Station Area

|   | TOD VISION   | LAND USE POLICY  |   | ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT  | ZONING DISTRICTS   |   |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
|   |  | TC   | LIND  |  | C-1 DISTRICT   | OI DISTRICT   | OD DISTRICT   | M DISTRICT  |
| <b>Land Uses</b>  | <b>Mixed-Use, Retail, Office, Residential</b><br>-Mixed-use center around the station<br>-Low-density residential on underutilized surface parking lots<br>-Office space near existing light industrial and healthcare cluster | <b>Town Center</b><br>-Townhomes; Condominiums; Apartments; Retail and commercial; Office; Park & Rec; Institutional; Civic; Entertainment & Cultural; Health Care, Technology Centers | <b>Light Industrial</b><br>-Warehouse Distribution; Wholesale/ Trade; Automotive; Entertainment | <b>Tier I and II: I-20 Corridor</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include many types of Dwellings with any combination of retail and office, offices uses, restaurants, and retail.<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and parking garages | -Mixed-use: Office uses, live/work and other commercial uses permitted<br>-Retail: Retail uses permitted<br>-Residential: Multi-family, townhouse, urban single-family, and high-rise apartment prohibited   | -Mixed-use: Office uses permitted; other commercial uses permitted (CBC); Retail uses generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Multi-family (supportive living), high-rise apartment (SP), live/work permitted                                      | -Office uses: Permitted<br>-Commercial uses: Permitted (CBC)<br>Retail uses: Generally permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Prohibited  | -Office uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>-Commercial uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>Retail uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Prohibited   |
| <b>Heights / Density</b>  | <b>Range of Heights from 1 to 10 stories (by use)</b><br>-Mixed-use center is TYP 4-10 stories with 125-140 DU/Acre<br>-Low to Med-density residential is TYP 2-4 stories with 20-25 DU/Acre<br>-Office area is 5-7 stories    | -Up to 60 DU / Acre  | -Up to 120 DU / Acre  | -Tier I = up to 20 stories in height and 60 DU per acre; and Tier II = up to 8 stories and 40 DU per acre<br>-No development shall exceed Floor Area Ratio of 3.5; unless includes public space adjacent   | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'.<br>-No Transitional Height Plane   | -Max height = 5 stories or 70'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'  | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'  | -No Max (above 3 stories must be approved by Fire Department)<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'   |
| <b>Dimensional Standards</b>  | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (80K to 200K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 300-325' TYP; Max 500'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)     | -  | -   | -Front Setback = Min 0'  | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 50' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion) | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 10' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 1,000 SF<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion)          | -Min Lot Area = 30,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = 0'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = Not Identified  | -Min Lot Area = 30,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = 0'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 1,000 SF<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion)  |
| <b>Parking</b>  | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages, Surface Parking Lots</b><br>-Commuter parking based on future projections<br>-Shared parking<br>-Ratios not identified   | -  | -   | -See above.<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; (Multi-family) Residential = 1.25/ DU; and Retail = 1/250  | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Retail = 1/500-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type                         | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |  |  |   |  |  |   |   |   |

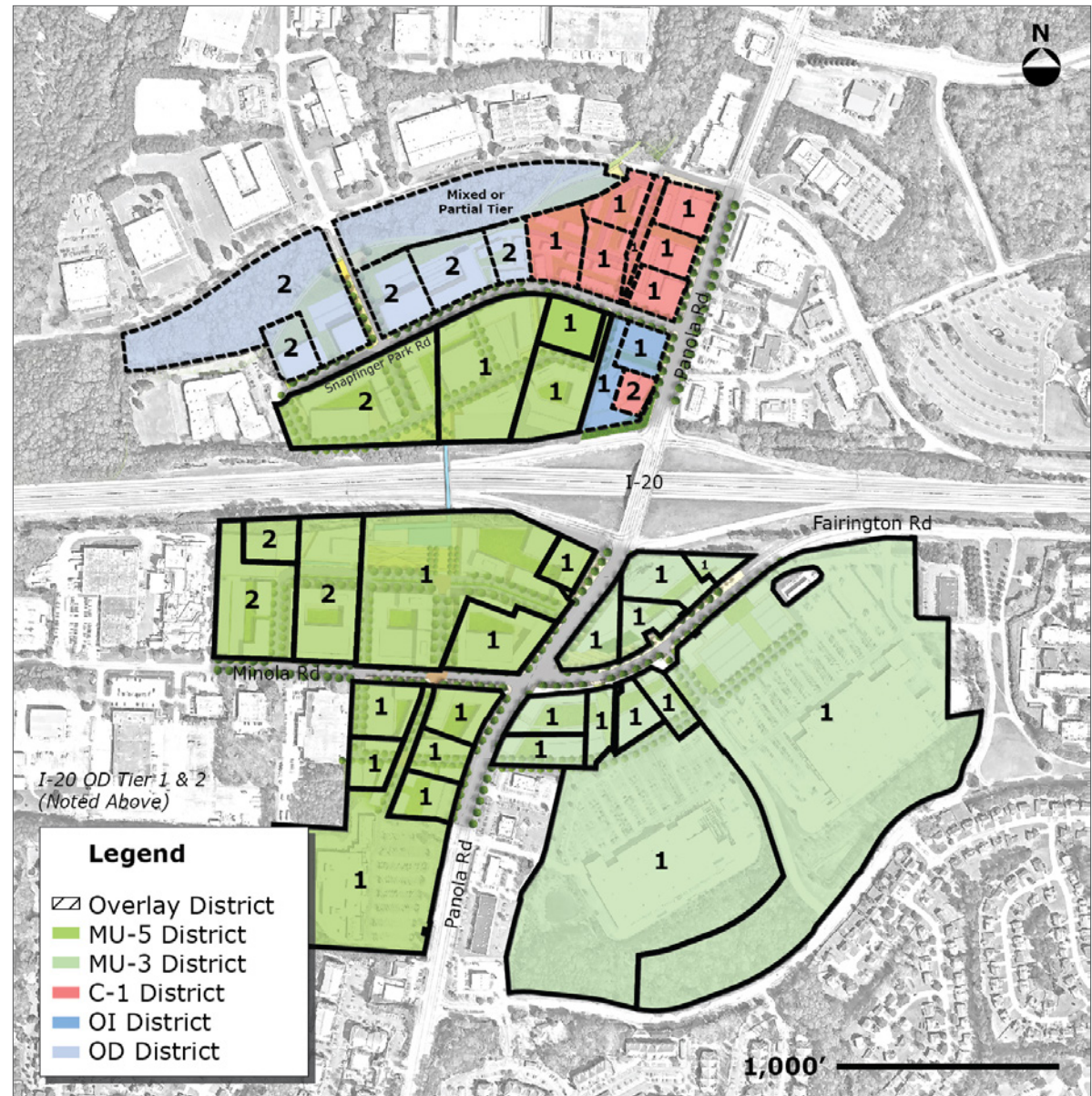
### 3.6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Initially, consider updating Light Industrial land uses to Town Center land uses to better support densities and land uses. In addition, the following updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating twelve (12) parcels near the MARTA Station from C-1 and M to MR-5 to require denser multi-family, residential uses within proposed mixed-use hub;
- Consider updating four (4) parcels north of I-20 from C-1, OI, and OD to MR-5 to require denser mixing of uses adjacent to the new bridge connection to the MARTA station; and
- Consider updating eleven (11) parcels southeast of Panola Road from C-1 and M to MU-3 to enable more mixing of uses and higher-density multi-family residential.

**Table 3-8:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 10        | C-1 District    | MU-5 District   |
| 2         | OI District     | MU-5 District   |
| 1         | OD District     | MU-5 District   |
| 4         | M District      | MU-5 District   |
| 10        | C-1 District    | MU-3 District   |
| 1         | M District      | MU-3 District   |
| 8         | C-1 District    | No Change       |
| 2         | OI District     | No Change       |
| 6         | OD District     | No Change       |



**Figure 3-13:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Panola Road Station Area

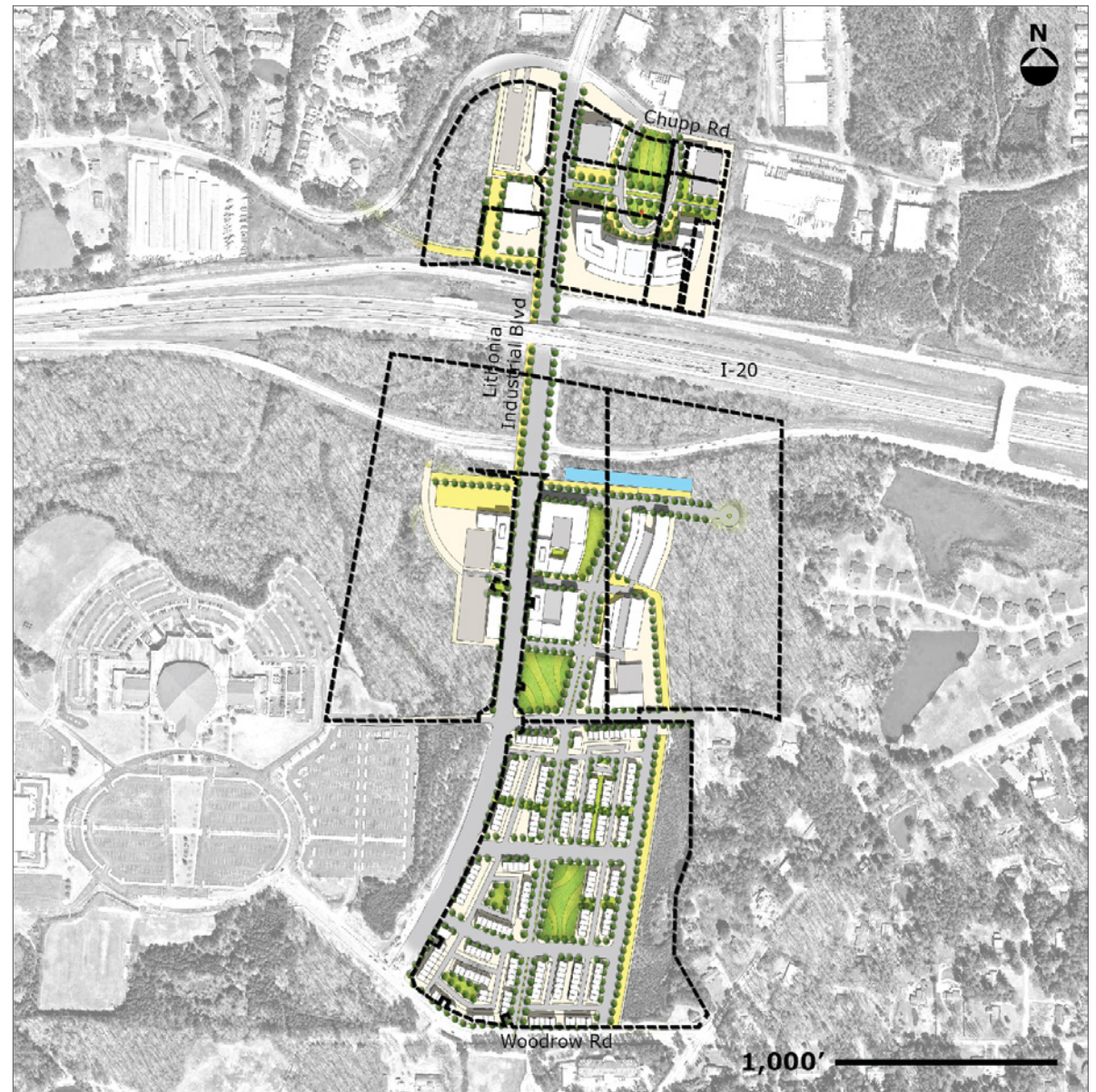


## 3.7 LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD STATION

The TOD framework seeks to transform Lithonia Industrial Boulevard into a major corporate office and business destination supported by adjacent residential development. North of I-20, the corporate headquarters will be an anchor for the existing industrial park offering amenities that attract regional employers and businesses. South of I-20, a small mixed-use core is proposed to support ridership with some neighborhood retailing with a new neighborhood and public park.

### 3.7.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of thirteen (13) irregular, very small to very large parcels shaped by I-20 and land access to Lithonia Industrial Boulevard. Land consolidation will primarily be needed north of I-20 and land subdivision will primarily be needed south of I-20, as well as dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities. Large lots south of I-20 will need extensive due diligence with respect to natural resources and topography.



**Figure 3-14:** Existing Parcellation for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area

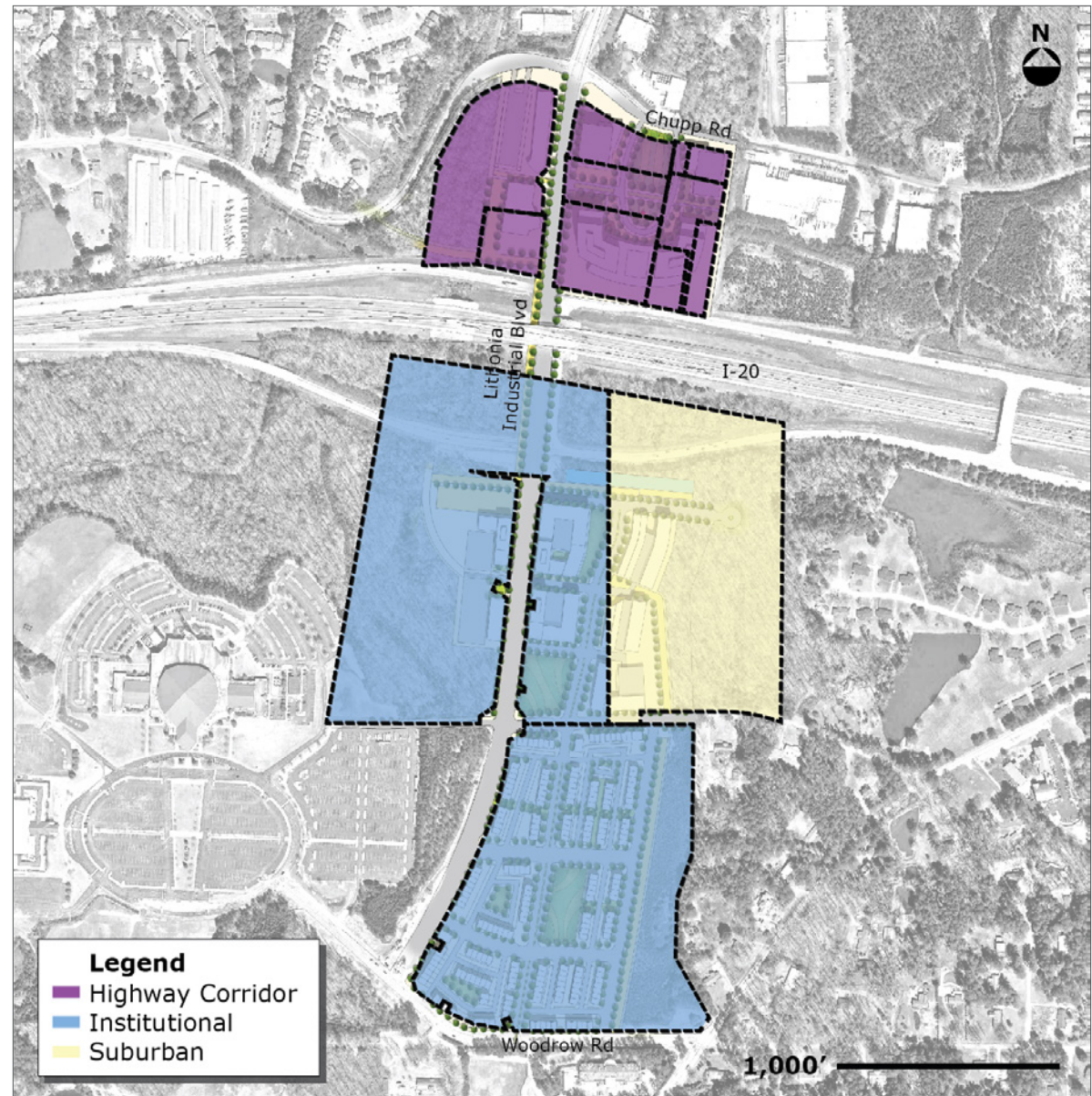


### 3.7.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land uses within the station area consist of **Institutional**, **Suburban** and **Highway Corridor** as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035; however, there is currently no overview of the Highway Corridor Character Area within the plan, and further research would be needed to understand full implications on the vision. Intentions of these character areas differ greatly from the TOD vision:

The intent of the Institutional Character Area within land use policy is to **designate specific areas that provide institutional services**. These areas consist of large areas used for religious, civic, educational and governmental purposes. Those smaller areas with similar purposes have been integrated into the rural, suburban and traditional neighborhood character areas as secondary uses and are considered residential support uses. The preferred density for areas of this type are unclear.

The intent of the Suburban Character Area is to **recognize those areas of the county that have developed in traditional suburban land use patterns while encouraging new development to have increased connectivity and accessibility**. These areas include those developed (or built-out) and those under development pressures. These areas are characterized by low pedestrian orientation, limited transit access, scattered civic buildings and curvilinear street patterns. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 8 dwelling units per acre.

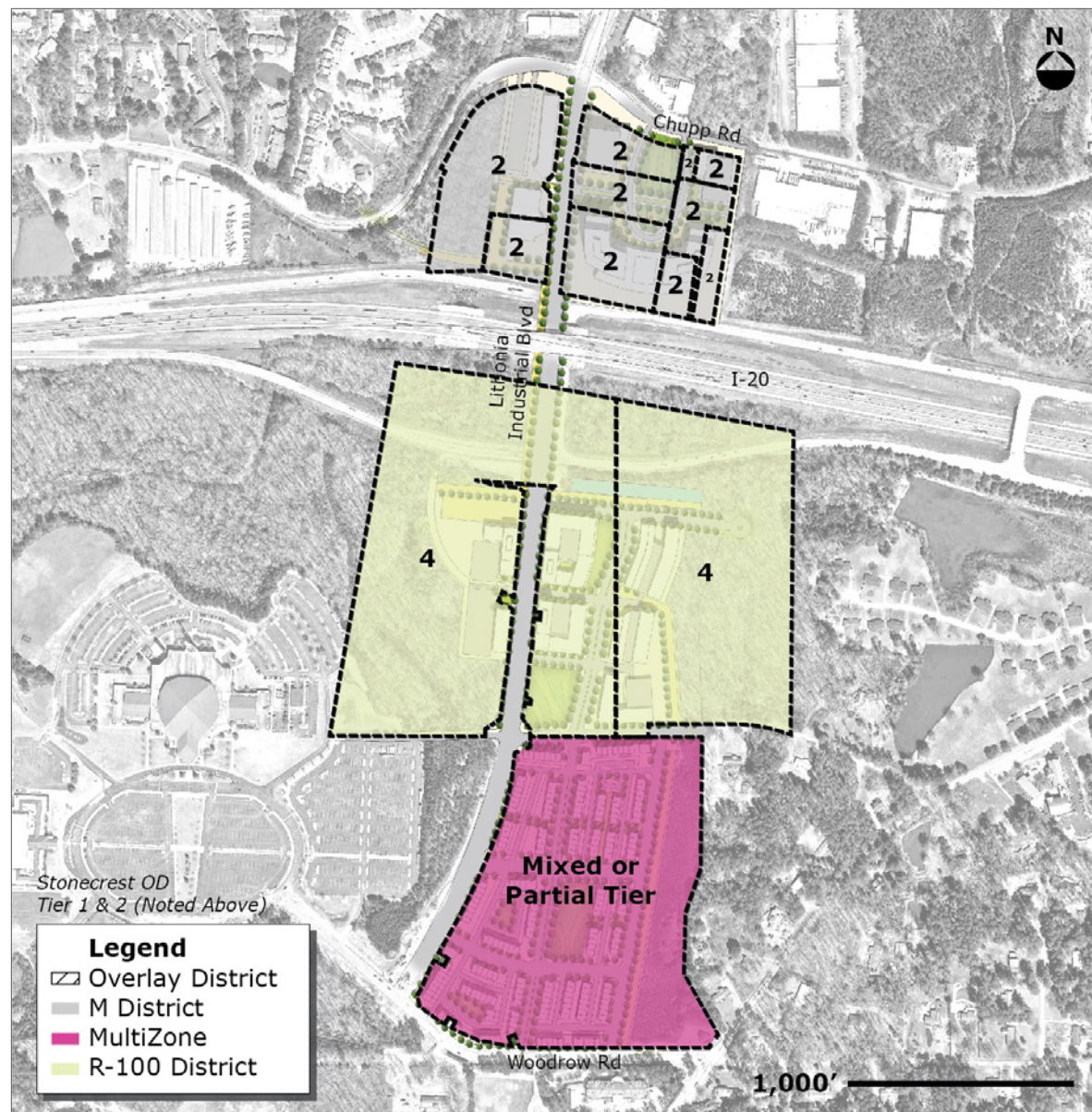


**Figure 3-15:** Existing Land Use for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area



Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in **Tier IV: Transitional Mixed-Use Zone of the Stonecrest Area Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district has a broad range of intentions intended to **encourage mixed use development in a well-planned community and encourage principally office, residential and commercial uses to serve the convenience needs of the local community.** The Tier IV: Transitional Mixed-Use Zone allows multi-family dwellings at densities not exceeding 30 dwelling units per acre and floor area ratio of one and one-half (1.5) with maximum heights of five (5) stories or seventy-five (75) feet. A floor area ratio bonus of up to one (1.0) additional is available for the provision of increased public space along with other lesser bonuses available for mixing-uses and inter-parcel access for pedestrians.

The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily includes **R-1: Medium Residential District** and **M: Light Industrial District**. The overlay district expands principal uses to include uses permitted in OCR: Office-Commercial-Residential District, C-1: Local Commercial District, C-2: General Commercial District, RM-HD: High Density Residential, and O-I: Office-Institutional. Multiple zoning districts are applicable to the southernmost parcel within the station area; however, those regulations are unclear.



**Figure 3-16:** Existing Zoning for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area

Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- *Allows tall heights and densities that are generally transit-supportive, including Tier IV: Transitional Mixed-Use Zone (5 stories / FAR of 1.5 and 30 units per acre).*
- *Allows mixing-of-uses and expands uses available to other existing zoning districts.*
- *Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses.*
- *Parking ratios are lower and well within a transit-supportive range.*
- *Variety of density bonuses and increased FAR available if public space is provided.*

### 3.7.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard station area is the **Arterial Corridor** that thematically seeks to create an **office park headquarters that will attract regional employers**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including a high-density office park, low density neighborhood, redevelopment of vacant and low-density industrial land, and greenfield development at strategic locations. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law; however, both policy and law are very fragmented within the station area, suggesting that a true assessment would need to occur on a project-by-project basis throughout implementation.

At a high-level, it is safe to say that redevelopment south of I-20 greatly contradicts the intentions of the Institutional land use policy, which is more intended to create a religious, civic, educational and governmental center. Land use policy updates should be considered that speak more to the intentions of the TOD vision and better support implementation.

### 3.7.4 LAND USE AND DENSITY

Land use and density will play an important role in shaping the character of the station area and ultimately achieving the intentions set forth in the vision. The TOD vision proposes a corporate office campus just north of I-20 supported by increased residential and neighborhood services. North of I-20, the Corporate Headquarters Campus will range in height from 5 to 10 stories and is intended to build on existing light industrial uses further north. South of I-20, the vision proposes a medium-density, mixed-use residential area ranging in height from 4 to 10 stories (generally between 125 and 140 dwelling units per acre) immediately at the MARTA station and a lower-density residential neighborhood ranging in height from 2 to 4 stories (generally between 20 and 25 units per acre) anchored by a new park space in the southernmost portion of the station area.

Proposed densities greatly exceed the maximums allowable in both Highway Corridor and Suburban character areas, and land uses greatly conflict with the intended land uses within the Institutional character area. The implications of the Highway Corridor and multi-district zoning in the area are not clear; but, strong consideration should be given to updating land uses within the station area to better support the TOD vision. Table 3-9 compares the proposed TOD vision with existing land use policy and zoning law.



**Table 3-9:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area

|   | TOD VISION  | LAND USE POLICY  |  |  | OVERLAY DISTRICT  | ZONING DISTRICTS  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|--|
|   |   | HC   | INS  | SUB  |   | M DISTRICT  | R-100 DISTRICT   |
| <b>Land Uses</b>  | <b>Mixed-Use, Retail, Office, Residential</b><br>-Mixed-use center around the station<br>-Low-density residential on underutilized surface parking lots<br>-Office space near existing light industrial and healthcare cluster  | <b>Highway Corridor</b><br>-Commercial and Retail; Office; Condominiums; Townhomes; Mixed Use; Apartments; Institutional | <b>Institutional</b><br>-Religious; Civic; Educational; Governmental | <b>Suburban</b><br>-SF detached; Townhomes; Assisted Living facilities; Neighborhood Retail; Schools; Libraries; Parks and Related; Health Care; Civic | <b>Tier IV: Transitional Mixed-Use (Stonecrest)</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include additional office, commercial, high-density residential, and institutional<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and decks               | -Office uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>-Commercial uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>Retail uses: Some permitted (CBC)<br>-Residential: Prohibited   | -Residential: Single-family detached permitted; others prohibited.   |
| <b>Heights / Density</b>  | <b>Range of Heights from 1 to 10 stories (by use)</b><br>-Mixed-use center is TYP 4-10 stories with 125-140 DU/Acre<br>-Low-density residential is TYP 2-4 stories with 20-25 DU/Acre<br>-Corporate HQ (office) is 5-10 stories | -Up to 30 DU / Acre  | -Not Available   | -Up to 8 DU / Acre   | -Tier IV = up to 5 stories or 75' in height and 30 DU per acre<br>-Residential Max Height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-No development shall exceed Floor Area Ratio of 1.5 (and bonuses of up to additional 1.0 with provision of public space) | -No Max (above 3 stories must be approved by Fire Department)<br>-45-degree transitional height plane at 35' (at front setback) applies to commercial or multi-family uses on street with width > 50'   | -Max 35'   |
| <b>Dimensional Standards</b>  | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (80K to 200K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 300-325' TYP; Max 500'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)      | -  | -  | -  | -Min Lot Area = 1 Acre<br>-Min Lot Width = 100'<br>-Front Setback = 0'<br>-Residential dimensions vary from these.  | -Min Lot Area = 30,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = 0'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = 1,000 SF<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion)  | -Min Lot Area = 15,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 35%<br>-Front Setback = Min 25'<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Min 2,000 SF   |
| <b>Parking</b>  | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages, Surface Parking Lots</b><br>-Commuter parking based on future projections<br>-Shared parking<br>-Ratios not identified  | -  | -  | -  | -See above.<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; (Multi-family) Residential = 1.5/ DU; and Retail = 1/250  | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family and Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 for single-family attached<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; Retail = 1/500-1/200; and Outdoor use = 1/300-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |   |  |  |  |   |   |  |

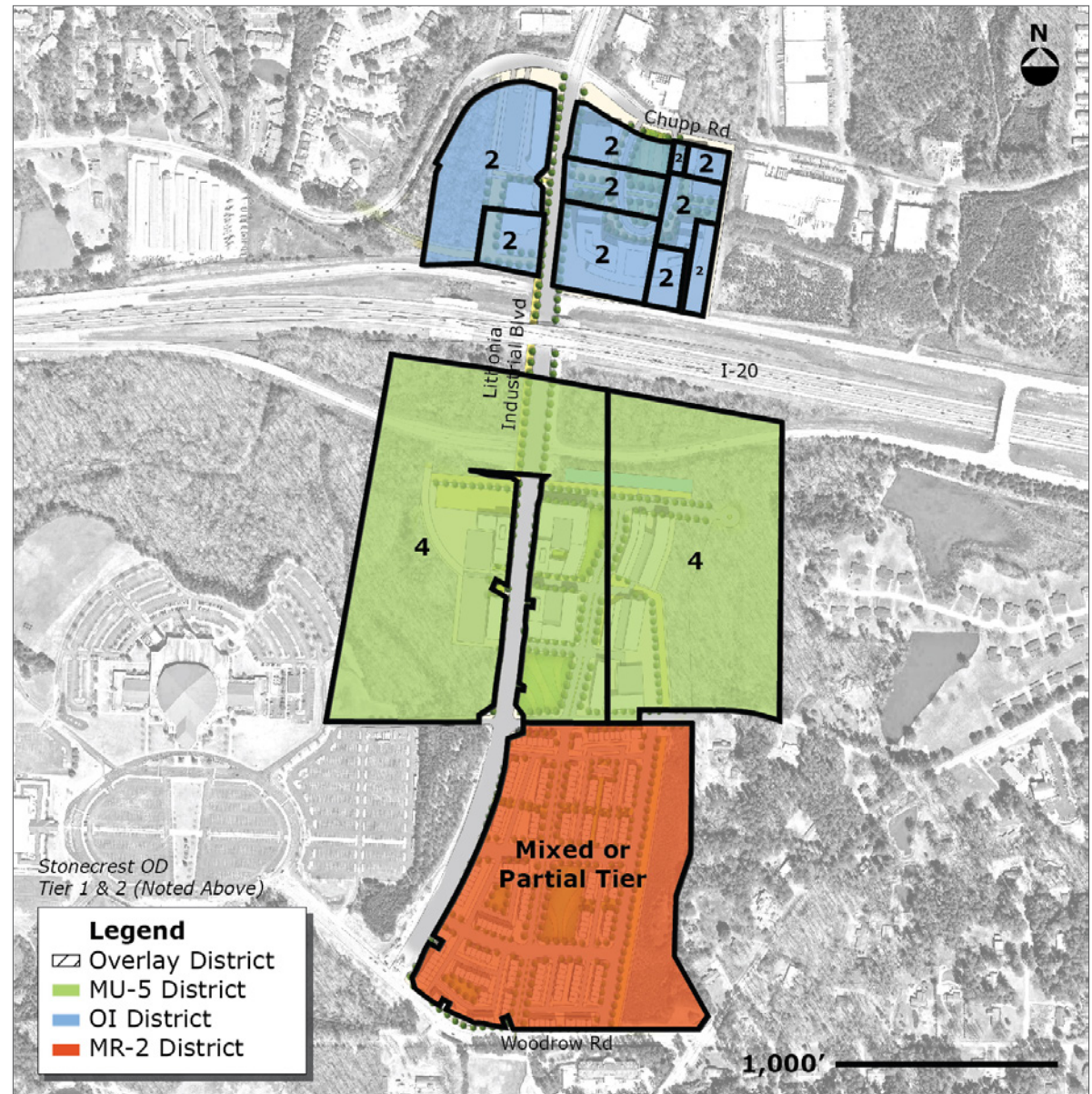
### 3.7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Initially, consider updating all underlying land use from Highway Corridor, Institutional, and Suburban to Town Center land use categories that will be more supportive of density and uses necessary to achieve the vision. In addition, the following updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating two (2) parcels near the MARTA Station from R-100 to MU-5 to require denser multi-family, residential and commercial uses within proposed mixed-use hub;
- Consider updating ten (10) parcels north of I-20 from M to OI to require more office and corporate headquarters type of uses; and
- Consider updating one (1) parcel in the southernmost portion of the station area from multi-zone designations to MR-2 to ensure transit-supportive residential densities.

**Table 3-10:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2         | R-100 District  | MU-5 District   |
| 10        | M District      | OI District     |
| 1         | Multi-Zone      | MR-2 District   |



**Figure 3-17:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station Area

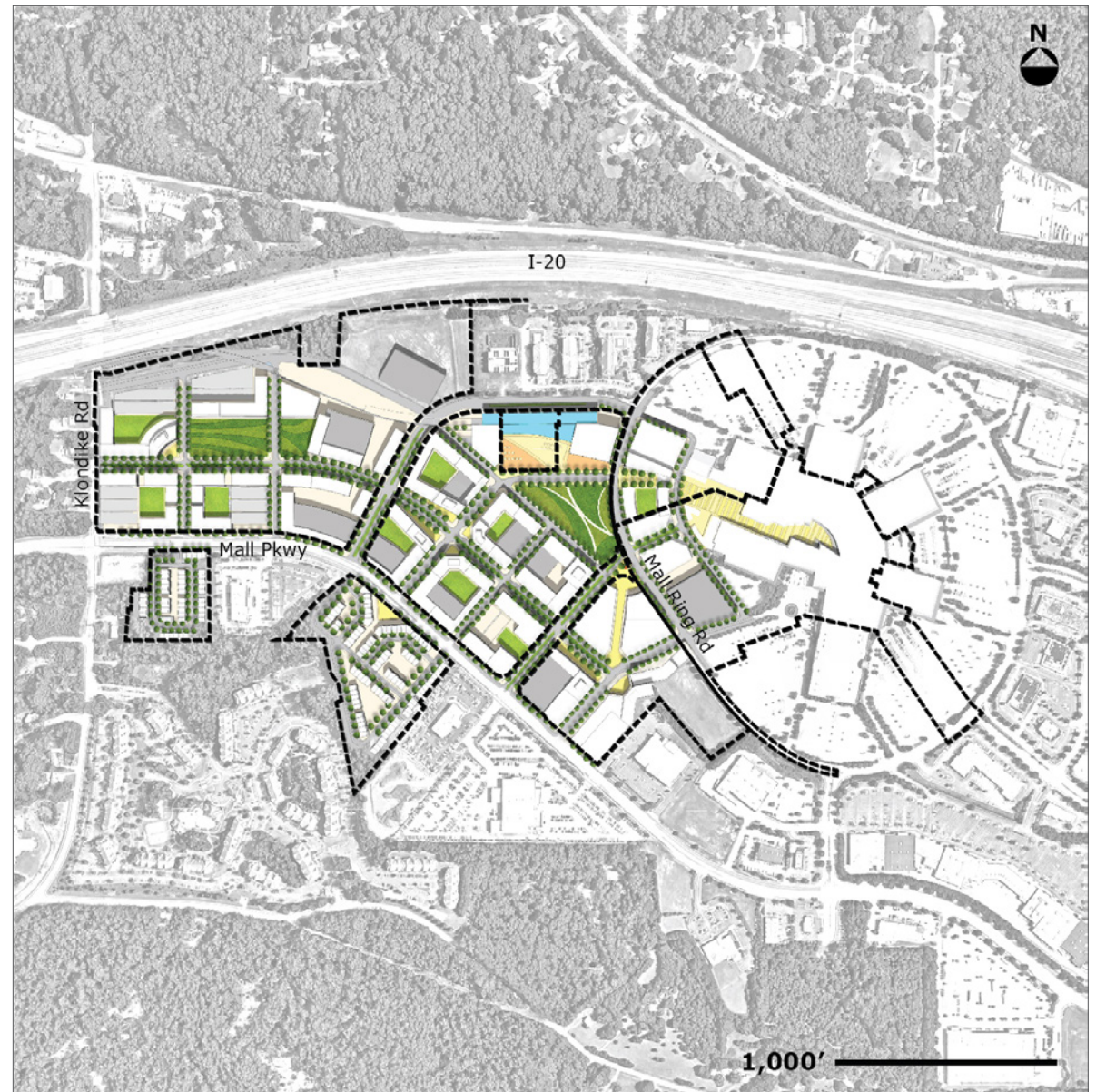


## 3.8 MALL AT STONECREST

The TOD framework seeks to establish a mixed-use core anchored by a civic-scaled plaza and community green to activate an entertainment district with retail, restaurants, office, and residential uses. The vision also proposed to redevelop underutilized surface parking and connect the new development to the station area with walkable streets and a network of open spaces and a new residential neighborhood on the west. The vision intends to act as a major catalyst for revitalization, reinforcing the area as the premiere place for gathering, shopping, and entertainment.

### 3.8.1 PARCELLATION

Land parcellation is important because it determines how permitting of uses are regulated, how dimensional requirements affect density, and where land subdivision or consolidation will be needed. Shown here, land parcellation within the station area consists of nine (9) irregular, large and very large parcels shaped by I-20 and land access to Stonecrest Mall. Land subdivision will primarily be needed to develop a rational, walkable grid for new development, as well as dedication of public rights-of-way for streets, public spaces, and transit facilities.



**Figure 3-18:** Existing Parcellation for the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area



### 3.8.2 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use within the station area consists of **Regional Center**, as part of the DeKalb Plan 2035. The intent of the Regional Activity Center character area is to **promote the concentration of regional serving activities to a centralized location that allow for a variety of uses while reducing automobile travel, promoting walkability and increased transit usage**. These areas consist of a high intensity of regional commercial, office, employment areas and higher-education facilities. These areas are characterized by high vehicular traffic, and high transit use, including stops, shelters and transfer points. The areas also have on-site parking, high floor-area-ratios, large tracts of land, and campus or unified development. The proposed density for areas of this type allows up to 120 dwelling units per acre, with a preferable minimum of 10 stories, no maximum.

Properties within the station area are regulated by requirements set forth in the **Tier I and II: Stonecrest Overlay District** section of the Zoning Ordinance of DeKalb County. This zoning overlay district has a broad range of intentions intended to **encourage mixed use development in a well-planned community and encourage principally office, residential and commercial uses to serve the convenience needs of the local community**. The Tier I: High-Rise Mixed-Use Zone allows multi-family dwellings at site densities with floor-area-ratios not exceeding three and one-half (3.5) with a density bonus of up to six (6.0)

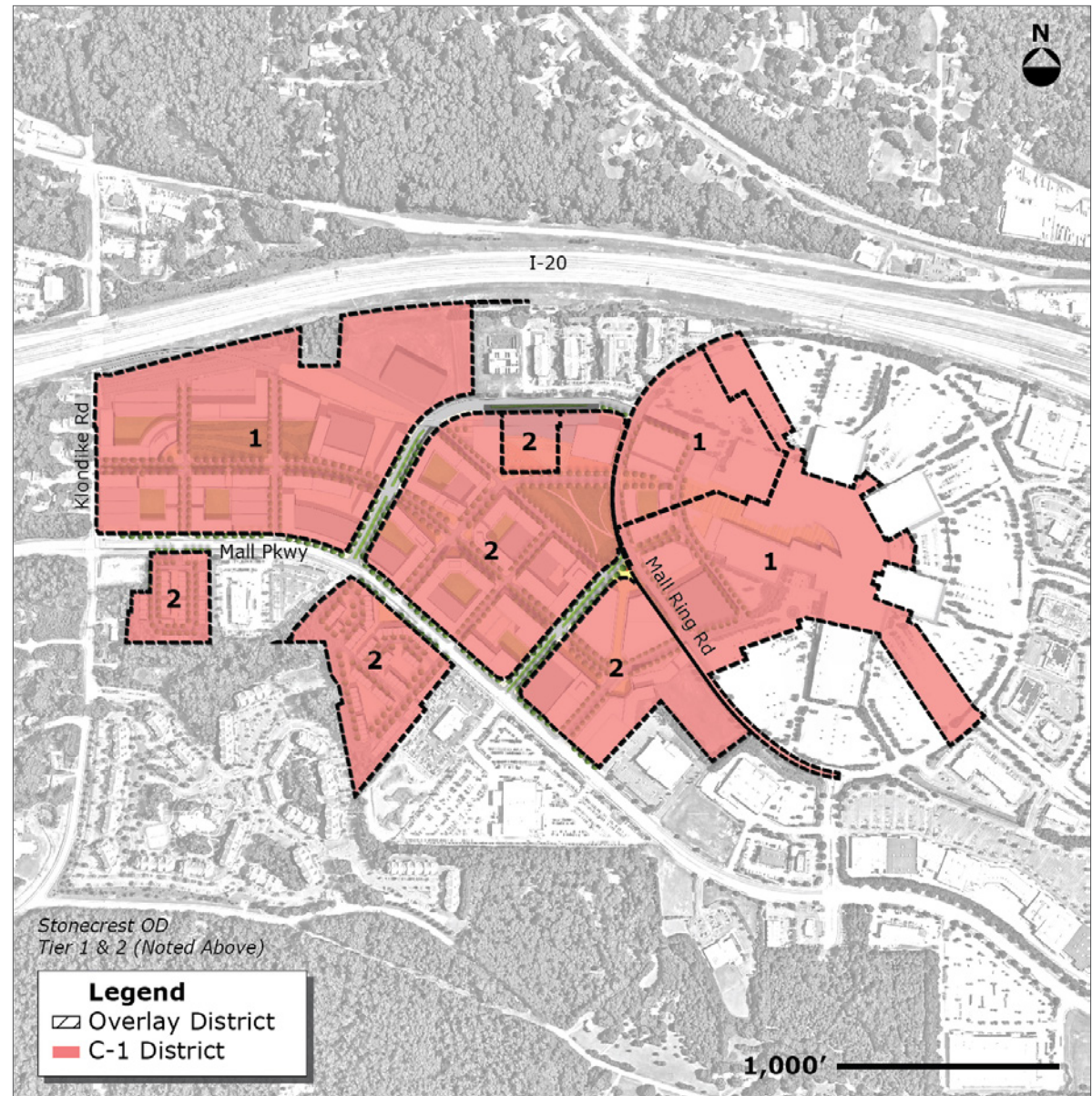


Figure 3-19: Existing Zoning for the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area



for the provision of specified amenities; and the Tier II: Mid-Rise Mixed-Use Zone allows multi-family dwellings at site densities with floor-area-ratios not exceeding two and one-half (2.5) with a density bonus of up to four (4.0) for the provision of specified amenities. The zoning overlay district also defers some requirements to the underlying zoning districts which primarily includes **C-1: Local Commercial District**.

Zoning will play a major role in implementation of the TOD vision, in that it will regulate density and uses of new development on a permit-by-permit basis. Opportunities within the overlay district include:

- *Allows very tall heights and densities that are very transit-supportive, including Tier I: High-Rise Mixed-Use Zone (No maximum height / FAR of 3.5) and Tier II: Mid-Rise Mixed-Use Zone (10 stories / FAR of 2.5).*
- *Allows mixing-of-uses and expands uses available to other existing zoning districts.*
- *Prohibits permits for many auto-centric and less transit-supportive land uses.*
- *Parking ratios are lower and well within a transit-supportive range.*
- *Variety of density bonuses and increased FAR available if public space is provided.*

### 3.8.3 TYPOLOGY, THEME, VISION & STRATEGIES

The proposed TOD typology for the Mall at Stonecrest station area is the **Commuter Town Center** that thematically seeks to **re-imagine the area around the mall as a regional attraction and live-work-play district**. The TOD vision employs several specific strategies including enhancing the existing mall with complimentary entertainment, office, and residential uses; redevelopment of vacant sites and parking lots; and large civic space and promenade that tie development together. It is important for us to compare the intention of this TOD vision to the intention of land use policy and zoning law.

Immediately south of the MARTA station, the mixed-use core is a 6 to 8 story (generally between 80 and 120 dwelling units per acre) intended to serve the station area and connect the station to the existing mall and the proposed entertainment area (generally between 4 and 10 stories) that will act as a regional destination and serve local residents. Further west, the new residential neighborhood anchored with parks and open space is between 3 and 5 stories (generally between 40 and 50 dwelling units per acre).

The typology and theme of the TOD vision align relatively well with the intention of the Regional Center character area in that the vision seeks to establish a regional entertainment attraction that increases office, commercial, and employment densities by re-utilizing existing surface parking lots and reducing the need for automobiles over time. With respect to the zoning overlay, the TOD vision also intends to provide a live-work-play district which, along with the mixed-use center, will provide the local community with greatly needed neighborhood services and amenities. Land uses and densities are generally aligned with the intention of the character area, as well.

**Table 3-11:** Comparison Table of the Vision, Land Use Policy and Zoning Law for the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area

|   | <b>TOD VISION</b>  | <b>LAND USE POLICY</b>   | <b>ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT</b>  | <b>ZONING DISTRICTS</b>  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
|   |  | <b>RC</b>  |   | <b>C-1 DISTRICT</b>  |
| <b>Land Uses</b>  | <b>Mixed-Use, Retail, Residential, Marketplace, Office</b><br>-Mixed-use center at the station<br>-High-density and medium-density residential to the west<br>-Entertainment district on the east  | <b>Regional Center</b><br>-Townhomes; Condominiums; Apartments; Retail and commercial; Office; Park & Rec; Institutional; Civic; Entertainment & Cultural; Health Care, Technology Centers | <b>Tier I: High-Rise Mixed-Use and Tier II: Mid-Rise Mixed-Use (Stonecrest)</b><br>-Principle uses of OD expand to include additional office, commercial, high-density residential, and institutional<br>-Accessory uses include parking lots and decks | -Mixed-use: Office uses, live/work and other commercial uses permitted<br>-Residential: Multi-family, townhouse, urban single-family, and high-rise apartment prohibited   |
| <b>Heights / Density</b>  | <b>Range of Heights from 3 to 10 stories (by use)</b><br>-Mixed-use center is TYP 6-8 stories with 80-120 DU/Acre<br>-High-density residential is TYP 3-5 stories with 40-50 DU/Acre<br>-Med-density residential is TYP 2-3 stories with 10-12 DU/Acre<br>-Entertainment area TYP 4-10 stories | -Over 60 DU / Acre (No Maximum)<br>-Height = Prefer 10 stories, no maximum   | -Tier I = May exceed 5 stories in height and FAR of 3.5; and Tier II: Max of 10 stories in height and FAR of 2.5<br>-Additional FAR of 2.5 in Tier I, and FAR of 1.5 in Tier II   | -Max height = 2 stories or 35'<br>-No Transitional Height Plane  |
| <b>Dimensional Standards</b>  | <b>Dimensions Generally vary by Development</b><br>-Lot area = Vary by block (80K to 120K SF TYP)<br>-Width = Vary by block; 275'-300' TYP; Max 525'<br>-Front setback = 0' TYP<br>-Unit size = Vary (Assumed 1,000 SF AVG)  | -  | -Min Lot Area = None<br>-Min Lot Width = None<br>-Front Setback = 15'   | -Min Lot Area = 20,000 SF<br>-Min Lot width = 100'<br>-Max Lot Coverage = 80%<br>-Front Setback = B/T 50' and 60' (based on street type)<br>-Min Residential Unit Size = Not Identified<br>-Min Live/Work Unit Size = 650 SF (Residential Portion) |
| <b>Parking</b>  | <b>Above-Grade Parking Garages, Surface Parking</b><br>-Centralized structured parking to entertainment and mixed-use<br>-Surface parking serving residential uses<br>-Ratios not identified   | -  | -See above.<br>-Min (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/333; (Multi-family) Residential = 1.25/DU; and Retail = 1/250  | -Min 1.5 and Max 3.0 spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family<br>-Min and max (PS/SF) by use: Office = 1/500-1/200; Residential = 1/150-1/75; and Retail = 1/500-1/200<br>-Shared parking reduction available by use type                         |
| Abbreviations: Average (AVG), case by case basis (CBC), dwelling unit (DU), maximum (max), minimum (min), overlay district (OD), parking space (PS), square foot (SF), special permit (SP), and typical (TYP) |  |  |   |  |



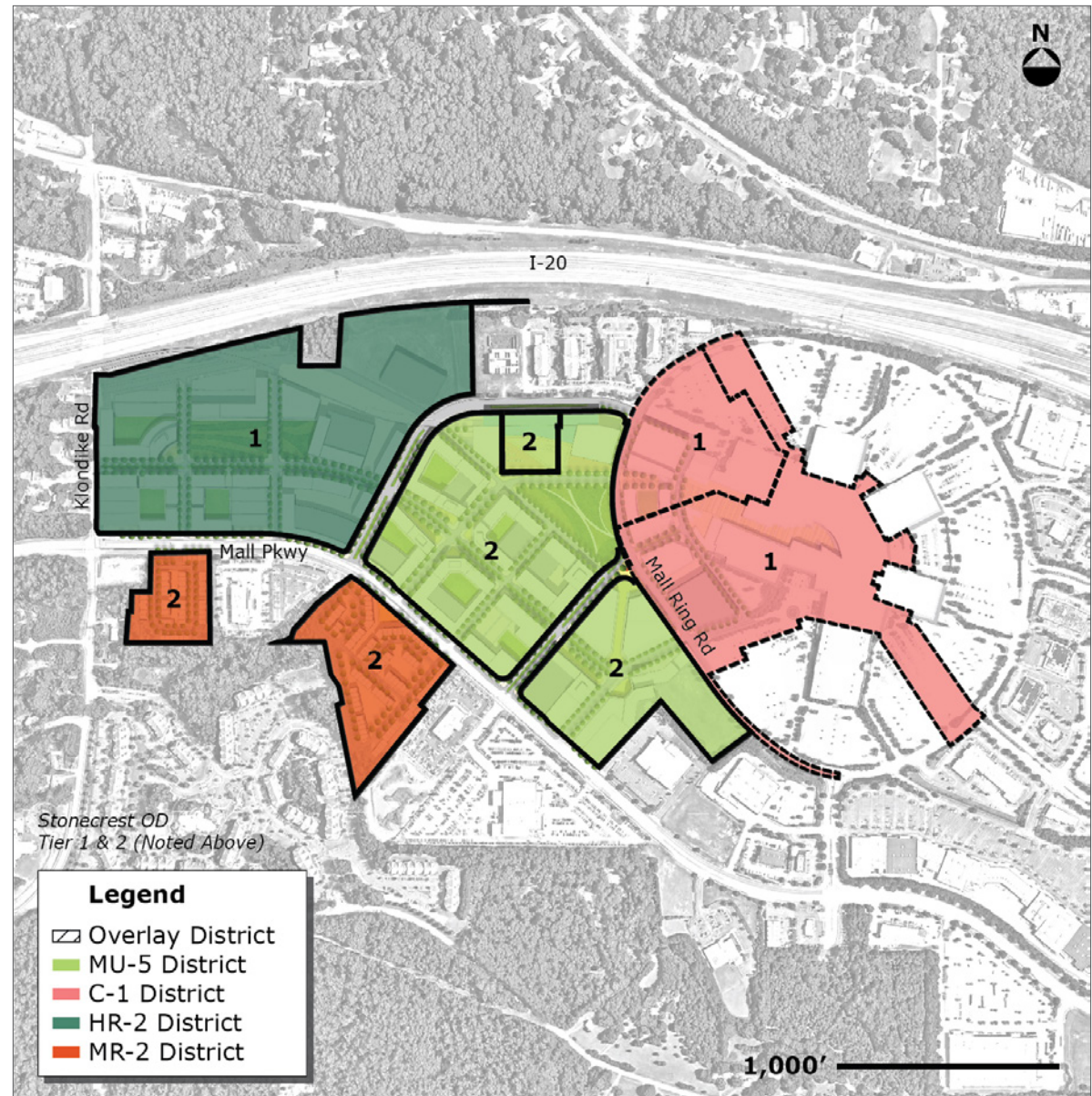
### 3.8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Land use policy with the station area appear relatively consistent with the plan; however, the following potential updates to existing zoning could also be considered to better support implementation of the TOD vision within the station area:

- Consider updating three (3) parcels near the MARTA Station from C-1 to MU-5 to better support densities and heights within the mixed-use center;
- Consider updating one (1) parcel in the westernmost area from C-1 to HR-2 to require higher densities of residential in the neighborhood area; and
- Consider updating two (2) parcels south of Mall Parkway from C-1 to MR-2 to require more medium-density and height residential uses.

**Table 3-12:** Zoning Conversion Table

| # PARCELS | EXISTING ZONING | PROPOSED ZONING |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 3         | C-1 District    | MU-5 District   |
| 2         | C-1 District    | HR-2 District   |
| 2         | C-1 District    | MR-2 District   |
| 2         | C-1 District    | No Change       |



**Figure 3-20:** Recommended Zoning Updates for the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area

# 4 TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Station area TOD concepts are complemented by transportation infrastructure improvement projects to support the mobility and safety of all users. This chapter describes transportation improvement projects recommended to support the proposed station area TOD frameworks. Project recommendations include:

- Station area street grids include newly proposed streets within the station area.
- Complete Streets within and around station areas incorporate features like medians, sidewalks, street parking, and bike lanes to provide for the mobility of all uses.
- Capacity improvements and bridge replacements would address need for additional capacity on the roadways that provide primary vehicular access to station areas.
- Pedestrian safety and streetscape improvements are recommended at major intersections to accommodate easy, safe pedestrian access to stations and station areas.

Transportation improvement projects around the station areas were developed based on analysis of station area TOD concepts, crash data, future traffic conditions, and complete streets and context sensitive design. The Atlanta Regional Commission's latest travel demand model was referred to determine future traffic conditions around the station area. Additional information about project costs, including methodology and project cost breakdowns, are provided in Appendix A.



## 4.1 COMPLETE STREETS AND CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN

Roadway improvement recommendations at station areas are guided by policies set by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and DeKalb County. GDOT policy guides transportation improvement projects proposed on the state routes that provide access to most stations, while DeKalb County policies govern local roads interior to the station areas. Both GDOT and DeKalb County have context-sensitive design policies, as well as Complete Streets policies that require the design of roadway improvement projects to consider bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.

### 4.1.1 COMPLETE STREET TYPOLOGIES

Complete streets can enhance liveliness and livability of a community by making it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, bicycle to work, and walk to and from transit stations. For the I-20E TOD project, complete streets concepts are used in streets within and around the station areas. Consistent with the state and county standards, the following street typologies were developed for this project to be used for four different levels of streets, including a main street/boulevard, a retail main street, a neighborhood street, and a residential alley.

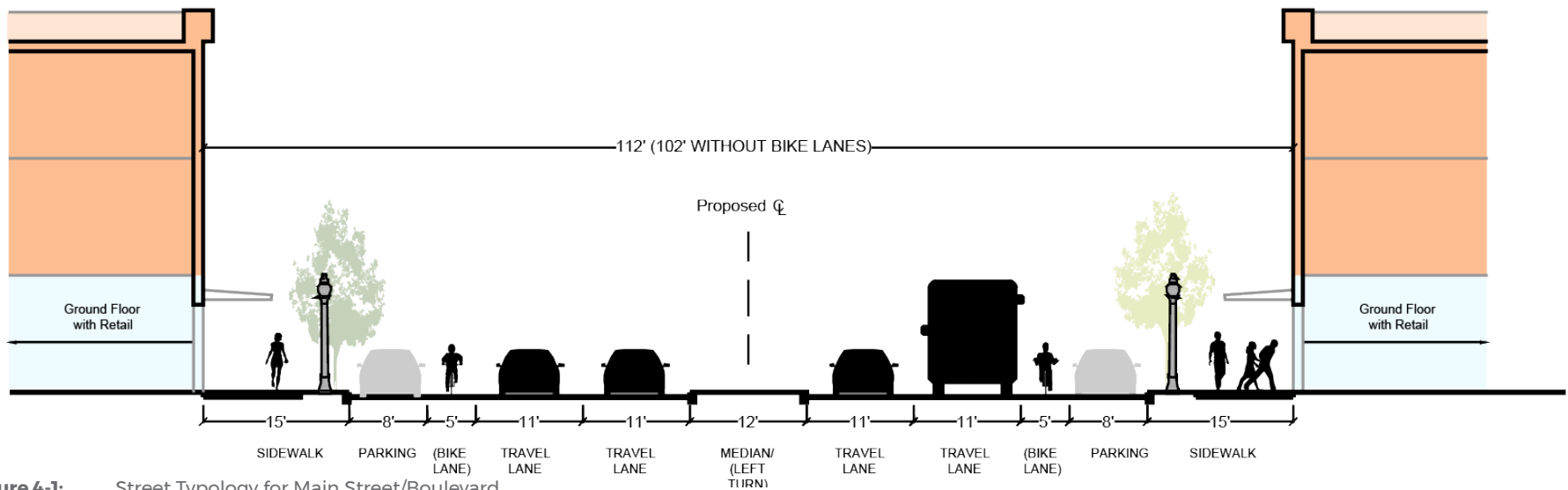
**Figure 4-1** shows the street typology for Main Streets/Boulevards that includes 4-11' travel lanes, 2-5' bike lanes, 2-8' street parking, 2-15' sidewalks, and a 12' median.

**Figure 4-2** shows the street typology for Retail Main Streets that includes 4-11' travel lanes, 2-5' bike lanes, 2-8' street parking, and 2-15' sidewalks.

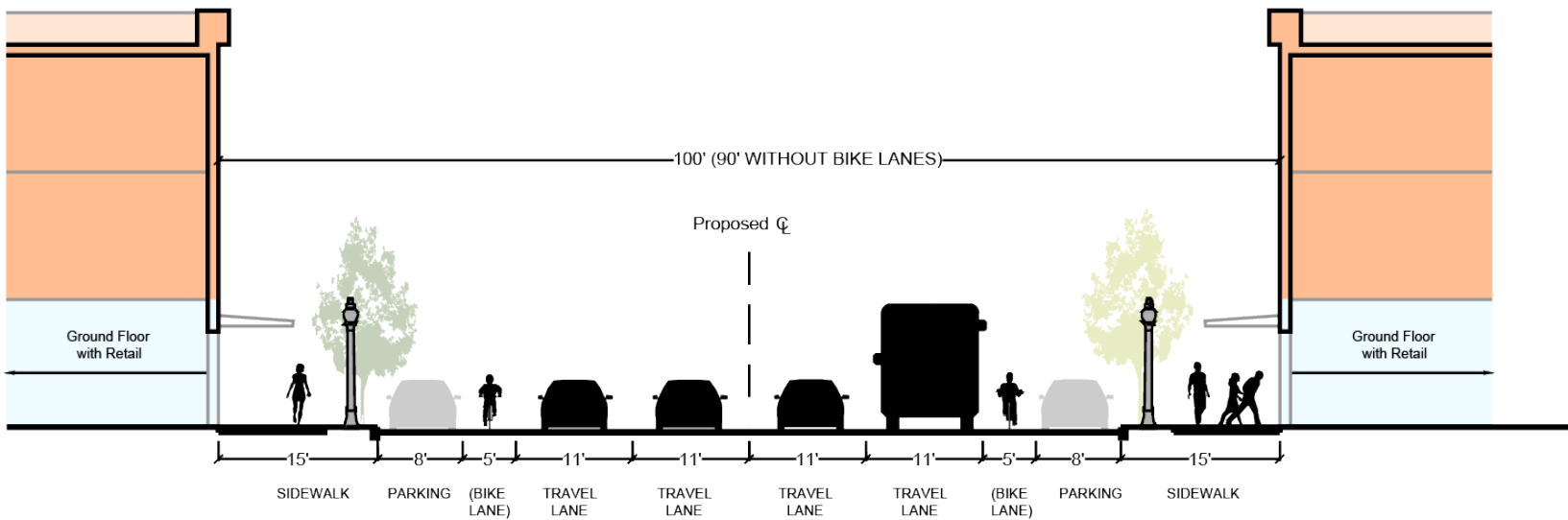
**Figure 4-3** and **Figure 4-4** show the street typologies for Neighborhood Streets with and without a median, respectively. The typical sections include 2-11' travel lanes, 2-5' bike lanes, 2-8' street parking, 2-12' sidewalks with an option of having a 12' median.

**Figure 4-5** shows the street typology for Residential Alleys that includes 2-13' travel lanes with sharrows and 2-12' sidewalks.

**Figure 4-6** shows the street typology for a Shared Streets concept that includes a shared right-of-way for vehicles and pedestrians and unique paving schemes.

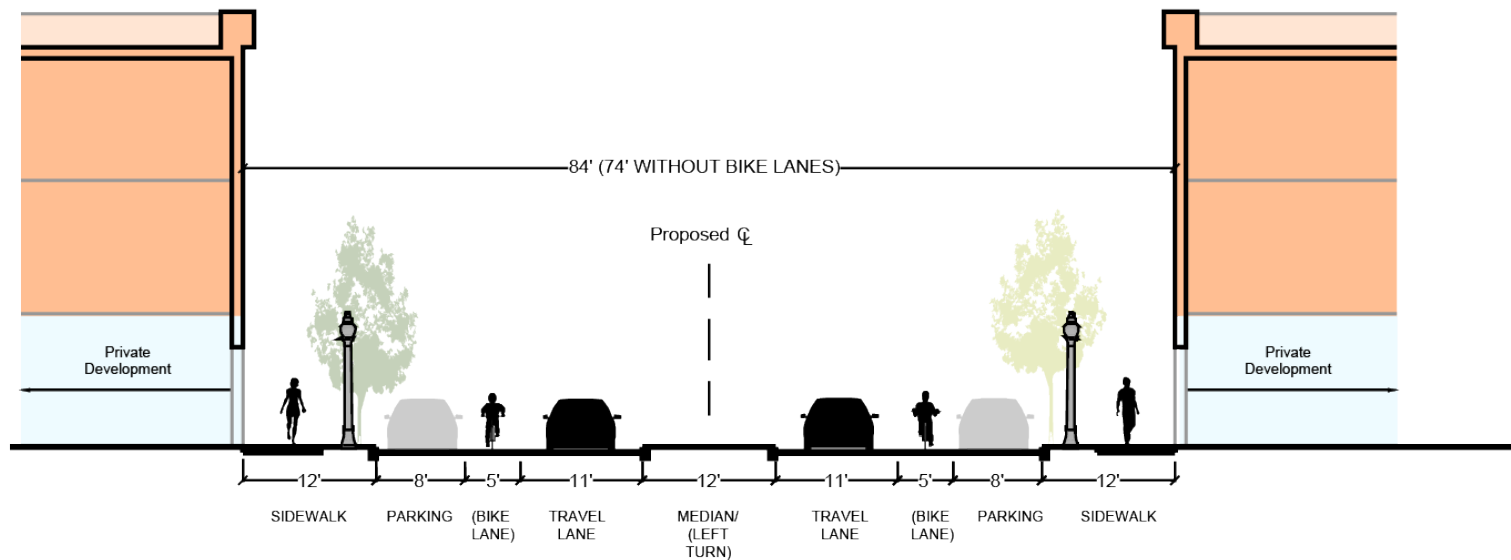


**Figure 4-1:** Street Typology for Main Street/Boulevard

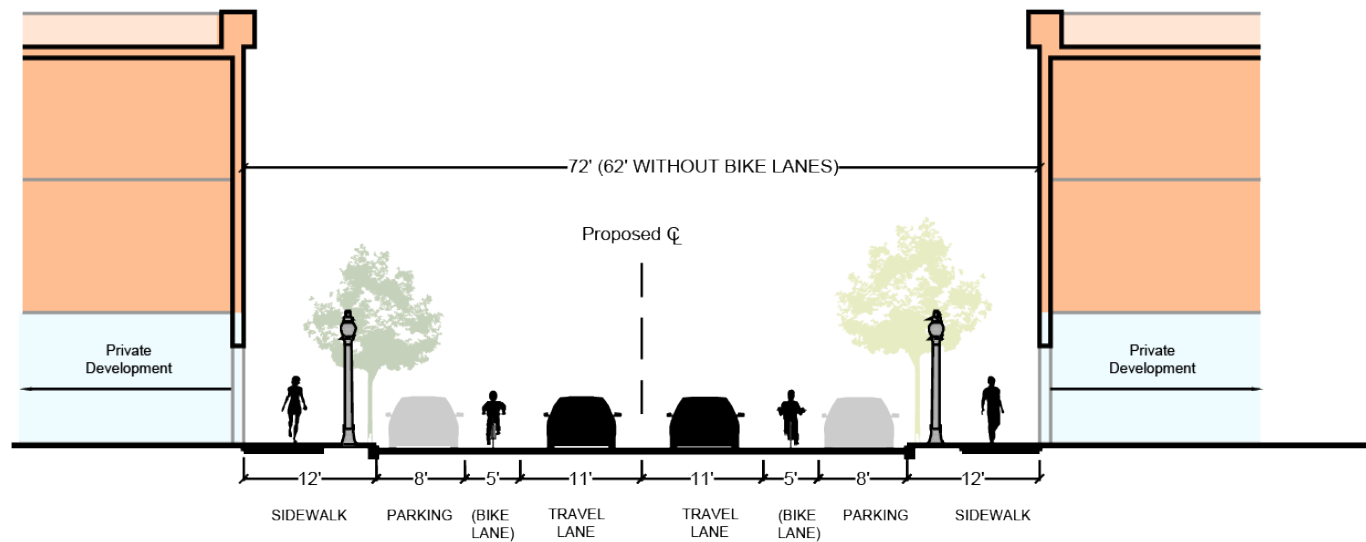


**Figure 4-2:** Street Typology for Retail Main Street

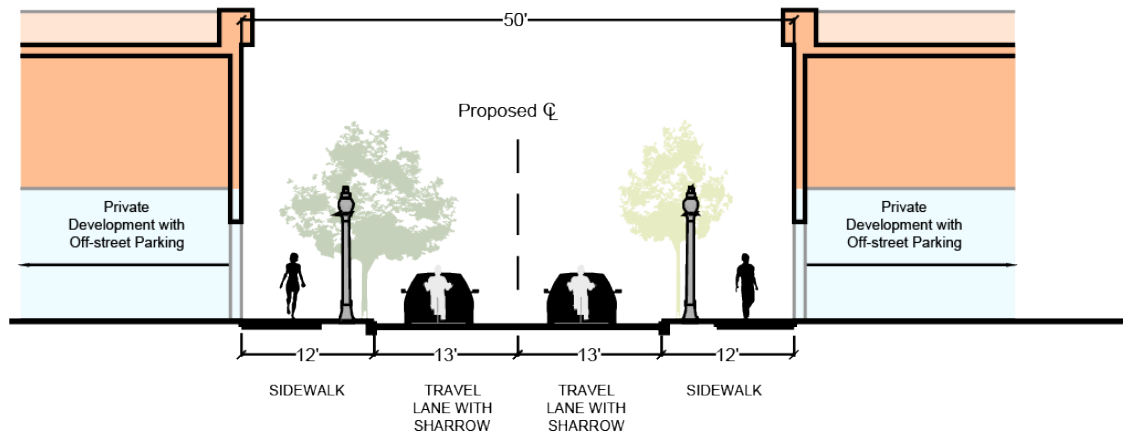




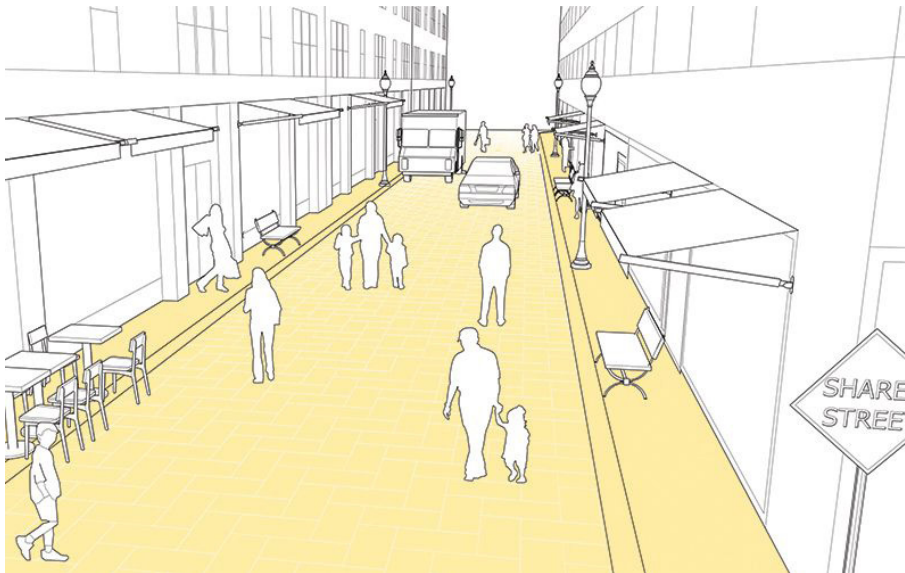
**Figure 4-3:** Street Typology for Neighborhood Street with Median



**Figure 4-4:** Street Typology for Neighborhood Street without a Median



**Figure 4-5:** Street Typology for Residential Alley



**Figure 4-6:** Street Typology for a Shared Street. Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials



## 4.2 PROJECT PHASING

The project team recognizes that all projects suggested in the station areas are essential to realizing the recommended TOD vision. However, projects differ in characteristics such as their function, urgency, funding sources, delivery type. Projects proposed at stations areas can be divided into two groups:

- Phase 1 projects, which are exterior to the station area and will provide or enhance the connection to the proposed station location from the greater roadway and pedestrian network. The projects that are essential to access the station should be developed first.
- Phase 2 projects, which are interior to the station area and will support the TOD vision for redevelopment. In some cases, developers will be responsible for building new streets in the TOD area. The rest of the projects can be completed at a later stage based on market conditions and developer interest.

Parking, landscaping and other improvement projects were kept separate from the transportation improvements and were not included in the phasing plan or cost estimates. Such projects will need to be completed independently based on the conditions in each station area

Planned and programmed projects in the station areas are also likely to impact the type of improvements needed in a project area, delivery schedule and construction costs. For example, GDOT's planned managed lanes on I-20 have a potential access point at Miller Road and Klondike Road that might impact some projects in the Panola Road and Mall at Stonecrest station areas. Similarly, the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard extension project will likely impact some projects in the station area located on that facility. Project delivery would also need to be done in coordination with such projects to avoid additional costs and temporary impacts due to construction.

Table 4-1 summarizes costs for phase 1 and phase 2 projects. Quality of life improvements such as landscaping, new transit stops, additional street and pedestrian scale lighting, additional crosswalks etc. would depend on other developments in each station area and their costs cannot be reasonably estimated at this point.

**Table 4-1:** Project Cost Phases

| <b>STATION</b>                              | <b>PHASE 1 COSTS:</b> | <b>PHASE 2 COSTS:</b> | <b>TOTAL ROADWAY PROJECT COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST \$1,000)</b> | <b>TOTAL COST FOR PARKING</b> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Indian Creek                                | \$5,149,000           | \$54,367,000          | \$59,516,000   | \$30,037,000                  |
| Covington Hwy                               | \$3,083,000           | \$66,316,000          | \$69,399,000   | N/A                           |
| Wesley Chapel                               | \$4,425,000           | \$60,198,000          | \$64,623,000   | \$22,676,000                  |
| Panola Road                                 | \$4,765,000           | \$69,451,000          | \$74,216,000   | \$30,802,000                  |
| Lithonia Ind. Blvd                          | \$4,295,000           | \$44,067,000          | \$48,362,000   | N/A                           |
| Mall at Stonecrest                          | \$5,377,000           | \$80,488,000          | \$85,865,000   | \$88,195,000                  |
| <b>TOTAL<br/>(Rounded to nearest 1,000)</b> | <b>\$27,094,000</b>   | <b>\$374,847,000</b>  | <b>\$401,981,000</b>   | <b>\$171,710,000</b>          |

## 4.3 STATION AREA TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

### 4.3.1 INDIAN CREEK STATION

As the existing eastern terminus of MARTA heavy rail service, the Indian Creek Station is currently characterized by large surface parking lots for end-of-the-line commuters. This MARTA-owned Park-and-Ride lot is a great opportunity for joint development between MARTA and developers, with or without new transit investment. Complete streets within and around the station area, pedestrian safety improvements, and capacity improvements where needed would support the transformation of this Park-and-Ride station as an intermodal commuter town center.

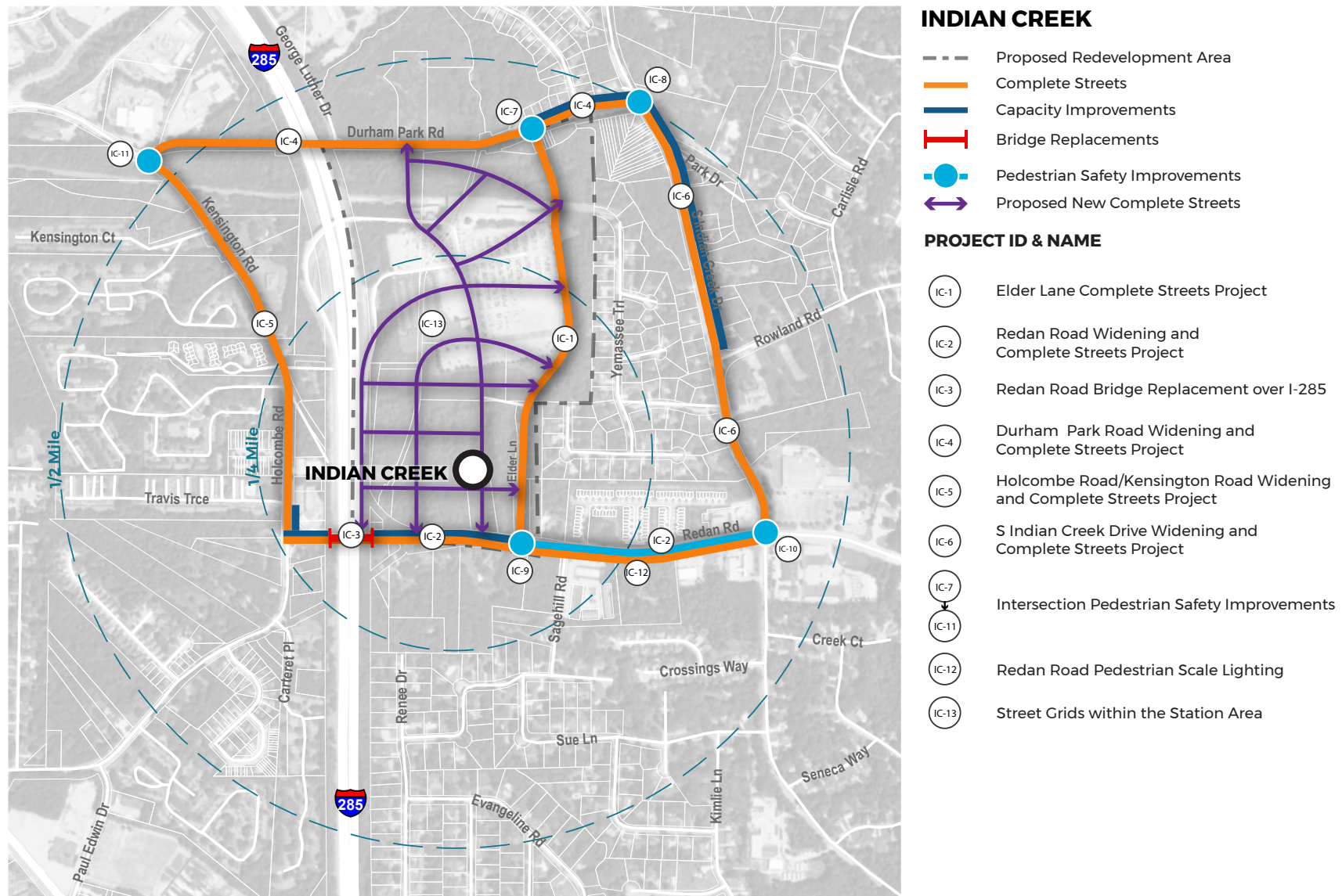
Phase 1 projects near Indian Creek Station include a complete street project connecting existing station location with the proposed station. Phase 1 features grid projects connecting the proposed location with Redan Road and Elder Lane as well as pedestrian safety improvement projects. Table 4-2 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Indian Creek Station. Figure 4-7 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-2:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Indian Creek Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION  | FROM            | TO                   | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|--|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| IC-1       | Elder Lane Complete Streets Project                    | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median turn lane, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Redan Road      | Durham Park Road     | 0.55          | \$ 5,548,000                                    | 2     |
| IC-2       | Redan Road Widening and Complete Streets Project       | Widen from existing 2 lanes to 4 travel lanes and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.            | Holcombe Road   | Elder Lane           | 0.29          | \$ 3,412,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Widen to include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Elder Lane      | S Indian Creek Drive | 0.31          | \$ 2,761,000                                    | 2     |
| IC-3       | Redan Road Bridge Replacement over I-285               | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge  |                 |                      |               | \$ 7,175,000                                    | 2     |
| IC-4       | Durham Park Road Widening and Complete Streets Project | Widen from existing 2 lanes to 4 travel lanes and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.            | Kensington Road | Elder Lane           | 0.5           | \$ 5,455,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Widen to include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Elder Lane      | S Indian Creek Drive | 0.14          | \$ 1,134,000                                    | 2     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION  | FROM         | TO                   | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|--|--------------|----------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| IC-5       | Holcombe Rd/Kensington Rd Widening and Complete Streets Project | Widen from existing 2 lanes to 4 travel lanes and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.      | Redan Road   | Travis Trace         | 0.43          | \$ 5,420,000                                    | 2     |
|            |   | Widen to include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Travis Trace | Durham Park Road     | 0.1           | \$ 1,025,000                                    | 2     |
| IC-6       | S Indian Creek Dr Widening and Complete Streets Project         | Widen from existing 2 lanes to 4 lanes and include bike lanes (Per neighborhood street typology). Add sidewalks. | Rowland Road | Durham Park Road     | 0.34          | \$ 3,231,000                                    | 2     |
|            |   | Widen to include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Redan Road   | Rowland Road         | 0.23          | \$ 1,862,000                                    | 2     |
| IC-7       | Durham Park Road and Elder Lane Intersection                    | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |              |                      |               | \$ 54,000                                       | 1     |
| IC-8       | Durham Park Road and S. Indian Creek Road Intersection          | Add high visibility crosswalks   |              |                      |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| IC-9       | Redan Road and Elder Lane Intersection                          | Add high visibility crosswalks   |              |                      |               | \$ 14,000                                       | 1     |
| IC-10      | Redan Road and S. Indian Creek Road Intersection                | Add high visibility crosswalk and pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency              |              |                      |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| IC-11      | Durham Park Road and Kensington Road Intersection               | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |              |                      |               | \$ 54,000                                       | 1     |
| IC-12      | Redan Road Pedestrian Scale Lighting                            | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency  | Elder Lane   | S Indian Creek Drive |               | \$ 366,000                                      | 1     |
| IC-13      | Street grids within the station area                            | Phase 1  |              |                      | 0.42          | \$ 4,625,000                                    | 1     |
|            |   | Phase 2  |              |                      | 0.46          | \$ 17,344,000                                   | 2     |



**Figure 4-7:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Indian Creek Station

## 4.3.2 COVINGTON HIGHWAY STATION

The Covington Highway Station is proposed for the northwest corner of US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway interchange with I-285. Access management, complete streets within and around the station area, pedestrian safety improvements, and a bridge replacement where needed would support the redevelopment of this station area into a town center. The consolidation of closely-spaced driveways along US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway west of I-285 is recommended to improve safety and traffic operations, complying with the GDOT Regulations for Driveway and Encroachment Control

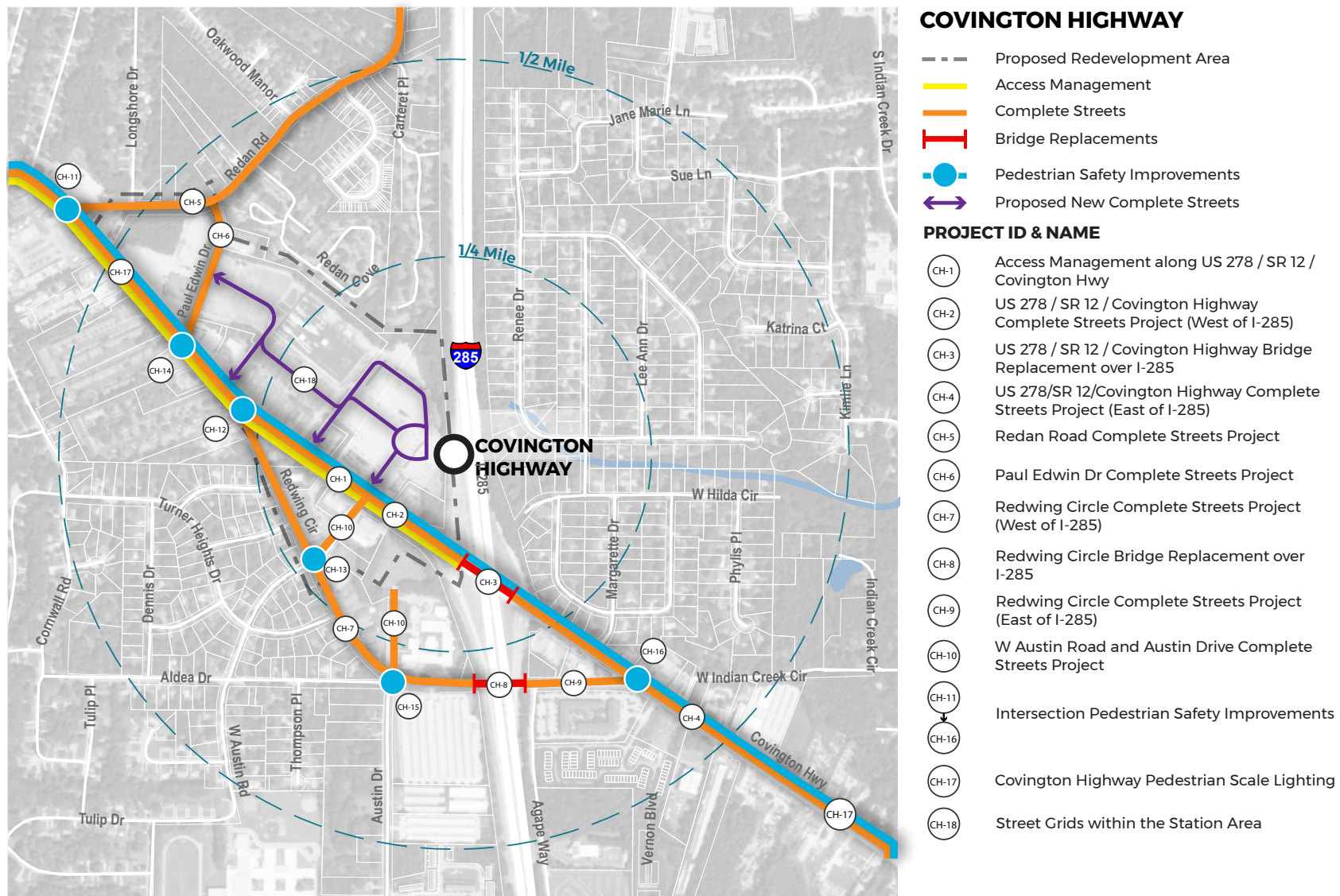
(August 2018). The replacement of the bridge on US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway over I-285 with a new bridge featuring complete street elements is also recommended. Phase 1 projects would provide direct vehicle and pedestrian connections to the station area. Table 4-3 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Covington Highway Station. Figure 4-8 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-3:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Covington Highway Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION  | FROM              | TO                           | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|--|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| CH-1       | Access Management along US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway                  |  |                   |                              |               | \$ 240,000                                      | 2     |
| CH-2       | US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway Complete Streets Project (West of I-285) | Widen (Per main street/boulevard street typology) to include a median, street parking, and buffered bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | SR 154 Spur       | I-285                        | 0.67          | \$ 10,063,000                                   | 2     |
| CH-3       | US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway Bridge Replacement over I-285            | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge  |                   |                              |               | \$ 10,660,000                                   | 2     |
| CH-4       | US 278/SR 12/Covington Highway Complete Streets Project (East of I-285) | Widen to include a median, and buffered bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | I-285             | Redwing Cir                  | 0.2           | \$ 2,231,000                                    | 2     |
| CH-5       | Redan Road Complete Streets Project                                     | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median turn lane, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.         | Covington Highway | Redan Road/<br>Holcombe Road | 0.58          | \$ 7,273,000                                    | 2     |
| CH-6       | Paul Edwin Drive Complete Streets Project                               | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median turn lane, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.         | Covington Highway | Redan Road                   | 0.19          | \$2,485,000                                     | 2     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION  | FROM               | TO          | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|--|--------------------|-------------|---------------|---|-------|
| CH-7       | Redwing Circle Complete Streets Project (West of I-285)   | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median turn lane, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Covington Highway  | I-285       | 0.5           | \$ 6,805,000                                    | 2     |
| CH-8       | Redwing Circle Bridge Replacement over I-285              | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge  |                    |             |               | \$ 10,114,000                                   | 2     |
| CH-9       | Redwing Circle Complete Streets Project (East of I-285)   | Widen to include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   |                    |             | 0.14          | \$ 1,709,000                                    | 2     |
| CH-10      | W Austin Road and Austin Drive Complete Streets Project   | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median turn lane, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. |                    |             | 0.21          | \$3,869,000                                     | 2     |
| CH-11      | Covington Highway and Redan Road Intersection             | Add high visibility crosswalks   |                    |             |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| CH-12      | Covington Highway and Redwing Circle (North) Intersection | Add high visibility crosswalks   |                    |             |               | \$ 14,000                                       | 1     |
| CH-13      | Covington Highway and W Austin Road Intersection          | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |                    |             |               | \$ 58,000                                       | 1     |
| CH-14      | Covington Highway and Paul Edwin Drive Intersection       | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |                    |             |               | \$49,000  | 1     |
| CH-15      | Redwing Circle and Austin Drive Intersection              | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |                    |             |               | \$ 63,000                                       | 1     |
| CH-16      | Covington Highway and Redwing Circle (South) Intersection | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs   |                    |             |               | \$ 58,000                                       | 1     |
| CH-17      | Covington Highway Pedestrian Scale Lighting               | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency  | Redan Road         | Madison Way | 0.97          | \$ 1,145,000                                    | 1     |
| CH-18      | Street grids within the station area                      | Main Street retail   | Around the station |             | 0.25          | \$ 1,669,000                                    | 2     |
|            |   | Main Street retail   | Around the station |             | 0.15          | \$ 10,867,000                                   | 1     |



**Figure 4-8:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Covington Highway Station

### 4.3.3 WESLEY CHAPEL STATION

The Wesley Chapel Road Station is proposed for the northwest corner of the Wesley Chapel Road interchange with I-20. Complete streets within and around the station area, capacity improvements and a bridge replacement, and pedestrian safety improvements would support the transformation of this station as a multimodal transit center. Phase 1 projects include new roads that would connect the station with Snapfinger Woods Drive and Wesley Chapel Road and pedestrian safety improvement projects.

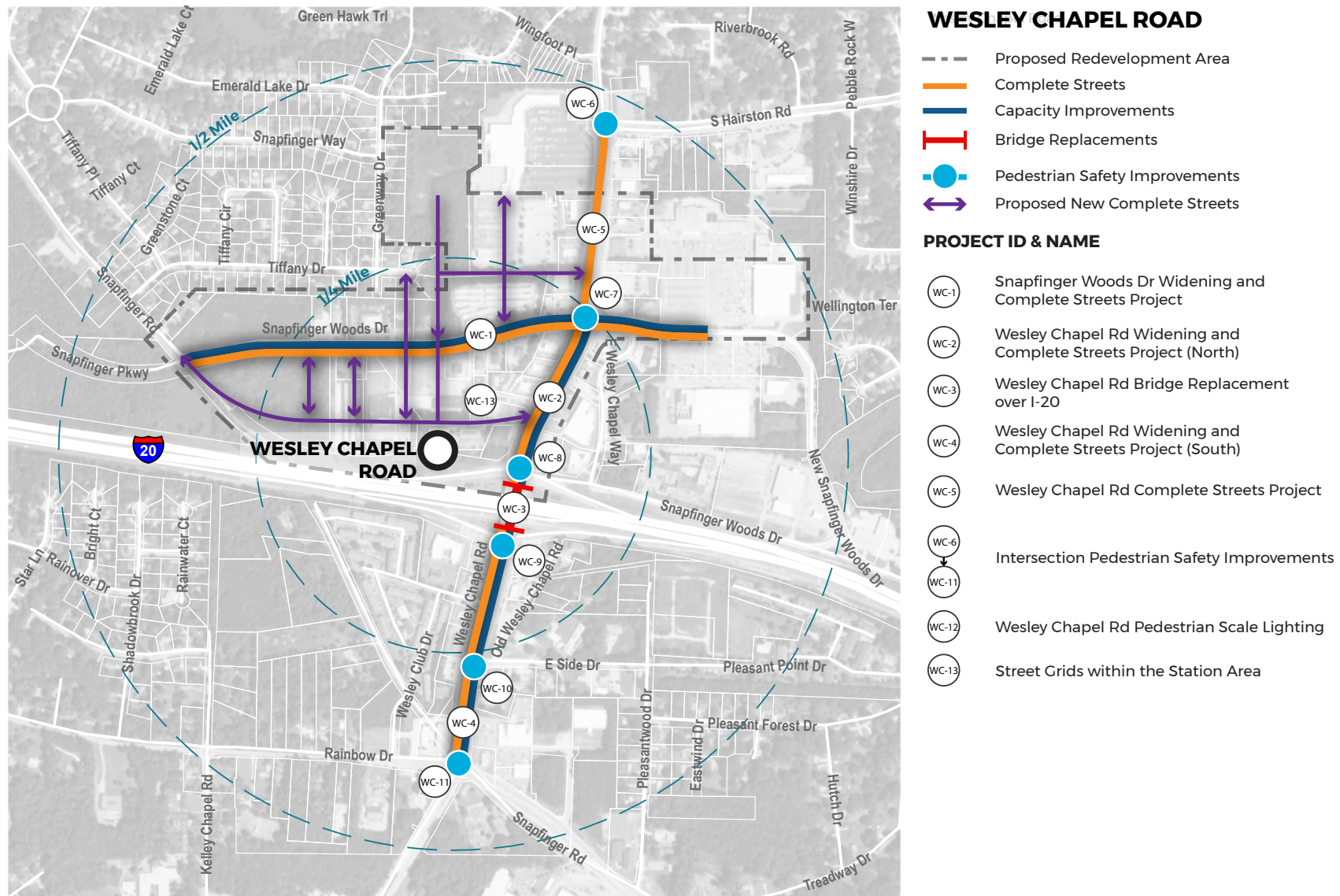
Table 4-4 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Wesley Chapel Station. Figure 4-9 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-4:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Wesley Chapel Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION  | FROM               | TO                     | FINAL<br>ESTIMATED<br>COST<br>(ROUNDED TO<br>NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------|---|-------|
| WC-1       | Snapfinger Woods Drive Widening and Complete Streets Project             | Widen from existing 4 lanes to 6 travel lanes (Per main street/boulevard street typology + 2 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Snapfinger Road    | Wesley Chapel Road     | \$ 7,982,000  | 2     |
|            |  | Widen from existing 4 lanes to 6 travel lanes (Per main street/boulevard street typology + 2 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Wesley Chapel Road | CVS mall entrance      | \$ 3,918,000  | 2     |
|            |  | Widen from existing 2 lanes to 4 travel lanes (Per neighborhood street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.                         | CVS mall entrance  | E Wesley Chapel Way    | \$ 4,183,000  | 2     |
| WC-2       | Wesley Chapel Road Widening and Complete Streets Project (North of I-20) | Widen from existing 6 lanes to 8 lanes (Per main street/boulevard street typology + 4 more lanes) include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.            | I-20               | Snapfinger Woods Drive | \$ 2,655,000  | 2     |
| WC-3       | Wesley Chapel Road Bridge Replacement over I-20                          | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge  |                    |                        | \$ 15,147,000   | 2     |
| WC-4       | Wesley Chapel Road Widening and Complete Streets Project (South of I-20) | Widen from existing 6 lanes to 8 lanes (Per main street/boulevard street typology + 4 more lanes) include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.            | Rainbow Drive      | I-20                   | \$ 5,561,000  | 2     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION   | FROM                   | TO               | FINAL<br>ESTIMATED<br>COST<br>(ROUNDED TO<br>NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|---|------------------------|------------------|---|-------|
| WC-5       | Wesley Chapel Road Complete Streets Project (North of Snapfinger Woods Drive) | Widen to include a median, and buffered bike lanes. Add sidewalks.    | Snapfinger Woods Drive | S Hairston Road  | \$ 5,233,000  | 2     |
| WC-6       | Wesley Chapel Road and S. Hairston Road Intersection                          | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 18,000   | 1     |
| WC-7       | Wesley Chapel Road and Snapfinger Woods Drive Intersection                    | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 18,000   | 1     |
| WC-8       | Wesley Chapel Road and I-20 Westbound Ramp Intersection                       | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 18,000   | 1     |
| WC-9       | Wesley Chapel Road and I-20 Eastbound Ramp Intersection                       | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 18,000   | 1     |
| WC-10      | Wesley Chapel Road and Eastside Drive Intersection                            | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 18,000   | 1     |
| WC-11      | Wesley Chapel Road and Rainbow Drive Intersection                             | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                        |                  | \$ 23,000   | 1     |
| WC-12      | Wesley Chapel Road Pedestrian Scale Lighting                                  | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency | Rainbow Drive          | S. Hairston Road | \$ 991,000  | 1     |
| WC-13      | Street grids within the station area  | Main Street retail  |                        |                  | \$ 3,108,000  | 2     |
|            |   | Main Street retail  |                        |                  | \$ 3,321,000  | 1     |
|            |   | Neighborhood street   |                        |                  | \$ 10,387,000   | 2     |
|            |   | Residential alley   |                        |                  | \$ 2,024,000  | 2     |



**Figure 4-9:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Wesley Chapel Station

### 4.3.4 PANOLA ROAD STATION

The Panola Road Station is proposed for the southwest corner of the interchange of Panola Road with I-20, which runs through the center of the station area, dividing the neighborhoods to the north and south. Complete streets within and around the station area, shared streets, road widening and a bridge replacement, and pedestrian safety improvements would support the transformation of this station into a commuter town center. A pedestrian bridge that spans I-20 is proposed to create safe access to transit, employers, residential, and retail services while also serving as an iconic landmark for the Panola Road area. To further reinforce this north-south pedestrian connection, two streets extending from each end of the

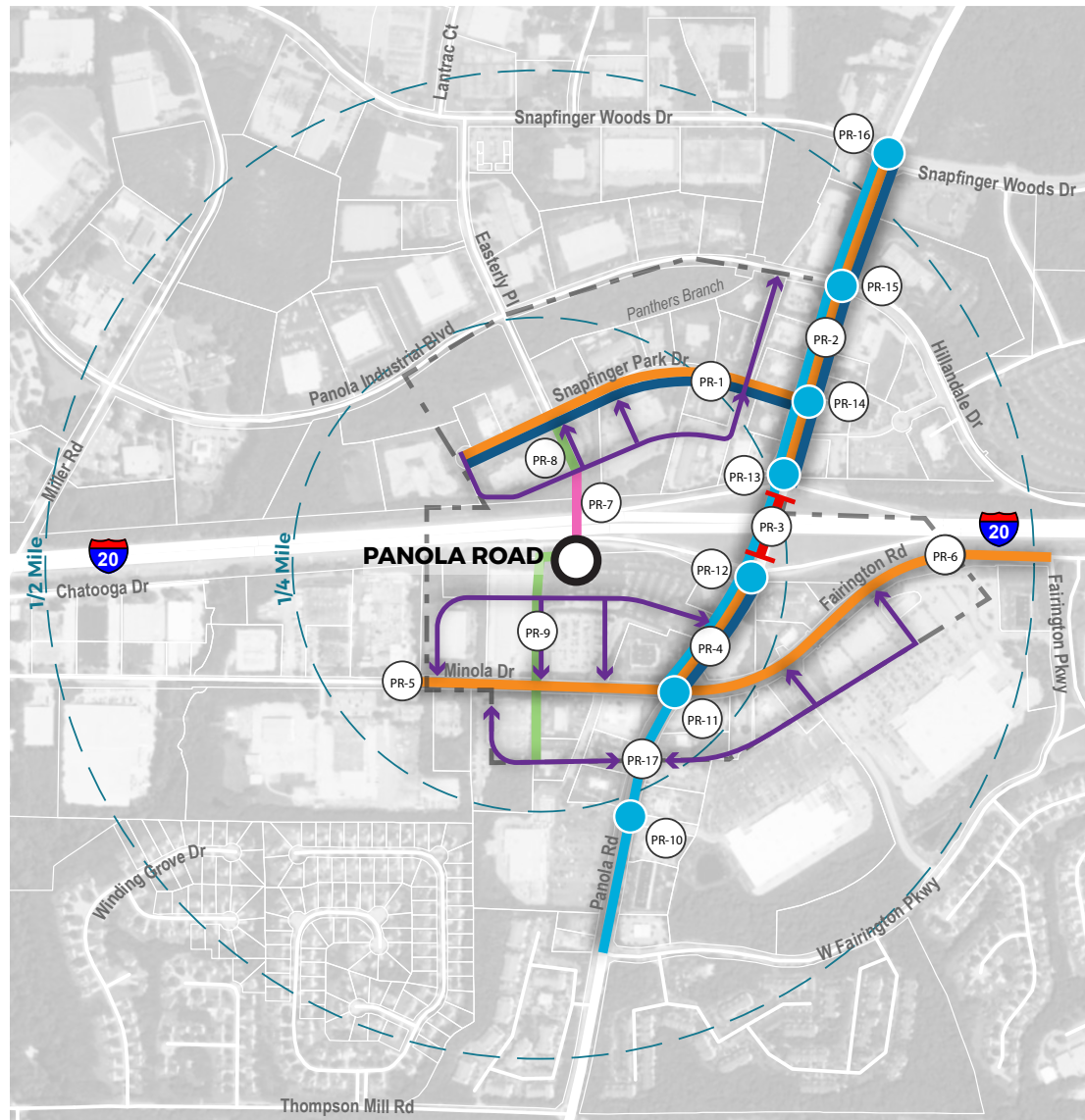
pedestrian bridge are proposed to be designed as “shared streets,” where pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles travel safely together at lower speeds. Textured and colored crosswalks are proposed at these intersections to prioritize pedestrian crossings. Phase 1 includes new street access to the station as well as pedestrian safety improvements. Table 4-5 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Panola Road Station. Figure 4-10 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-5:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Panola Road Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION   | FROM                             | TO                               | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| PR-1       | Snapfinger Park Drive Complete Streets Project                    | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) to include a median, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.  | Snapfinger Woods Drive           | Minola Drive/ Fairington Road    | 0.36          | \$ 6,033,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-2       | Panola Road Widening and Complete Streets Project (North of I-20) | Widen from existing 4 lanes to 6 travel lanes (Per main street/ boulevard street typology + 2 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | I-20 Westbound Ramp Intersection | Snapfinger Woods Drive           | 0.36          | \$ 6,246,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-3       | Panola Road Bridge Replacement over I-20                          | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge   |                                  |                                  |               | \$ 16,127,000                                   | 2     |
| PR-4       | Panola Road Widening and Complete Streets Project (South of I-20) | Widen from existing 4 lanes to 6 travel lanes (Per main street/ boulevard street typology + 2 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Minola Drive/ Fairington Road    | I-20 Eastbound Ramp Intersection | 0.15          | \$ 2,603,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-5       | Minola Drive Complete Streets Project                             | Widen to include a median, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Right after Georgia Power        | Panola Road                      | 0.27          | \$ 3,844,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-6       | Fairington Road Complete Streets Project                          | Widen to include a median, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | Panola Road                      | Fairington Parkway               | 0.42          | \$ 4,628,000                                    | 2     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION   | FROM                 | TO                     | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|---|----------------------|------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| PR-7       | Pedestrian Bridge over I-20  | Construct an iconic pedestrian bridge that connects south and north sides of I-20 |                      |                        |               | \$ 9,900,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-8       | Shared Street north of I-20  | Shared Street   |                      |                        | 0.1           | \$ 1,232,000                                    | 2     |
| PR-9       | Shared Street south of I-20  | Shared Street   |                      |                        | 0.3           | \$3,500,000                                     | 2     |
| PR-10      | Panola Road and Lowes/Publix Driveway Intersection                         | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-11      | Panola Road and Fairington Road/Minola Drive Intersection                  | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-12      | Panola Road and I-20 Eastbound Ramp Intersection                           | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-13      | Panola Road and I-20 Westbound Ramp Intersection                           | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-14      | Panola Road and Snapfinger Park Drive Intersection                         | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs  |                      |                        |               | \$ 58,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-15      | Panola Road and Panola Industrial Boulevard/ Hillandale Drive Intersection | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-16      | Panola Road and Snapfinger Woods Drive Intersection                        | Add high visibility crosswalks  |                      |                        |               | \$ 23,000                                       | 1     |
| PR-17      | Panola Road Pedestrian Scale Lighting                                      | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency             | W Fairington Parkway | Snapfinger Woods Drive | 0.87          | \$ 1,027,000                                    | 1     |
| PR-18      | Street grids within the station area                                       | Main Street retail  |                      |                        | 0.16          | \$ 1,816,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Main Street retail  |                      |                        | 0.1           | \$ 1,107,000                                    | 1     |
|            |  | Neighborhood street   |                      |                        | 0.61          | \$ 6,093,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Neighborhood street   |                      |                        | 0.74          | \$ 7,429,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Neighborhood street   |                      |                        | 0.25          | \$ 2,460,000                                    | 1     |



## PANOLA ROAD

- Proposed Redevelopment Area
- Complete Streets
- Shared Streets
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Capacity Improvements
- Bridge Replacements
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- Proposed New Complete Streets

## PROJECT ID & NAME

- PR-1 Snapfinger Park Dr Complete Streets Project
- PR-2 Panola Rd Widening and Complete Streets Project (North)
- PR-3 Panola Rd Bridge Replacement over I-20
- PR-4 Panola Rd Widening and Complete Streets Project (South)
- PR-5 Minola Dr Complete Streets Project
- PR-6 Fairington Rd Complete Streets Project
- PR-7 Pedestrian Bridge over I-20
- PR-8 Shared Streets (North of Pedestrian Bridge)
- PR-9 Shared Streets (South of Pedestrian Bridge)
- PR-10 Intersection Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- PR-16
- PR-17 Panola Rd Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- PR-18 Street Grids within the Station Area

**Figure 4-10:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Panola Road Station

### 4.3.5 LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD STATION

The proposed Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station is located south of I-20, at the terminus of Lithonia Industrial Boulevard. Complete streets within and around the station area, widening, and pedestrian safety improvements would support creating an office park headquarters for new business at this location.

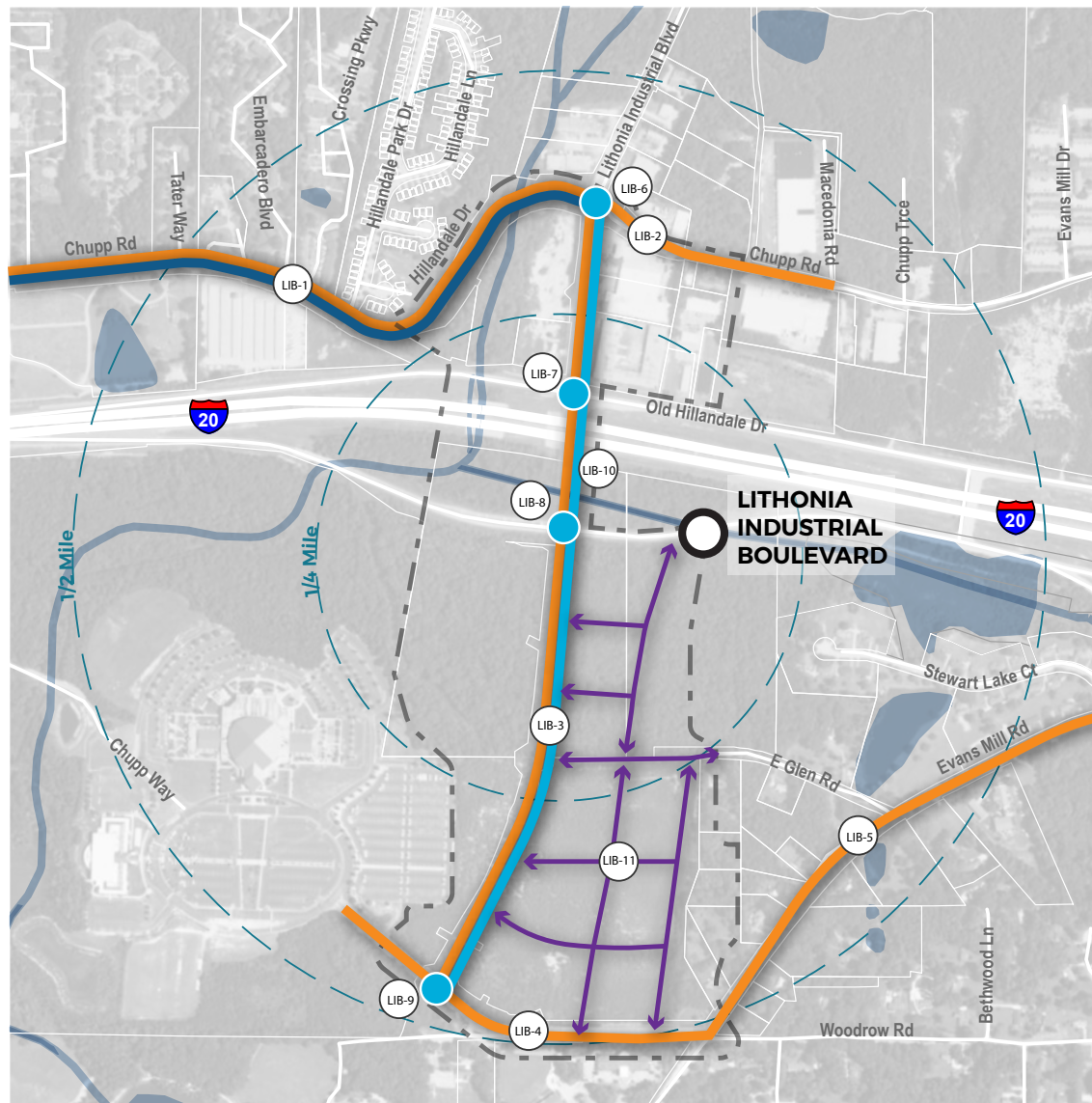
Phase 1 projects include parts of the new street grid providing multimodal access between the station and Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and access road for I-20, as well as pedestrian safety improvements. Table 4-6 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station. Figure 4-11 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-6:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION  | FROM                   | TO                          | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| LIB-1      | Hillandale Drive/The Crossing Way Widening and Complete Streets Project                      | Widen from existing 2 to 4 lanes (Per neighborhood street typology + 2 more lanes) to include a median, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | DeKalb Medical Parkway | LIB                         | 1.07          | \$ 12,342,000                                   | 2     |
| LIB-2      | Chupp Road Complete Streets Project  | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | LIB                    | Macedonia Drive             | 0.25          | \$ 3,480,000                                    | 2     |
| LIB-3      | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Complete Streets Project                                       | Widen (Per main street/boulevard street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.  | Woodrow Road           | The Crossing Way/Chupp Road | 0.73          | \$ 8,920,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Widen (Per main street/boulevard street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.  | Woodrow Road           | The Crossing Way/Chupp Road | 0.1           | \$ 1,121,000                                    | 1     |
| LIB-4      | Woodrow Road Complete Streets Project  | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   | New Birth Church       | Evans Mill Road             | 0.43          | \$ 4,338,000                                    | 2     |
| LIB-5      | Evans Mill Road Complete Streets Project (to connect to the Mall at Stonecrest Station area) | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.   |                        |                             | 0.73          | \$ 5,935,000                                    | 2     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION   | FROM         | TO                           | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|---|--------------|------------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| LIB-6      | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and The Crossing Way/Chupp Road Intersection | Add high visibility crosswalks  |              |                              |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| LIB-7      | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and I-20 Westbound Ramp Intersection         | Add high visibility crosswalks  |              |                              |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| LIB-8      | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and I-20 Eastbound Ramp Intersection         | Add high visibility crosswalks  |              |                              |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| LIB-9      | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and Woodrow Road Intersection                | Add high visibility crosswalks and RRFBs (2)                          | Woodrow Rd   | The Crossing Way/ Chupp Rd   | 0.83          | \$ 55,000                                       | 1     |
| LIB-10     | Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Pedestrian Scale Lighting                    | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency | Woodrow Road | The Crossing Way/ Chupp Road | 0.83          | \$ 979,000                                      | 1     |
| LIB-11     | Implement green space and open space                                       | Main Street retail  |              |                              | 0.17          | \$ 1,879,000                                    | 2     |
|            |  | Main Street retail  |              |                              | 0.19          | \$ 2,086,000                                    | 1     |



## LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BLVD

- Proposed Redevelopment Area
- Complete Streets
- Capacity Improvements
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- ↔ Proposed New Complete Streets

### PROJECT ID & NAME

- LIB-1 Hillendale Dr/The Crossing Way Widening and Complete Streets Project
- LIB-2 Chupp Rd Complete Streets Project
- LIB-3 Lithonia Industrial Blvd Complete Streets Project
- LIB-4 Woodrow Rd Complete Streets Project
- LIB-5 Evan Mill Rd Complete Streets Project (to connect to the Mall at Stonecrest Station Area)
- LIB-6 Intersection Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- LIB-9 Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- LIB-10 Street Grids within the Station Area
- LIB-13

**Figure 4-11:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Lithonia Industrial Boulevard Station

### 4.3.6 MALL AT STONECREST STATION

Large parcels of undeveloped and unoccupied land to the west of the Mall at Stonecrest Station represent opportunities for future growth and transit oriented development. Complete streets within and around the station area, multi-use path connection, widening and a bridge replacement, and pedestrian safety improvements would support creating a future regional live, work, and play district at this location.

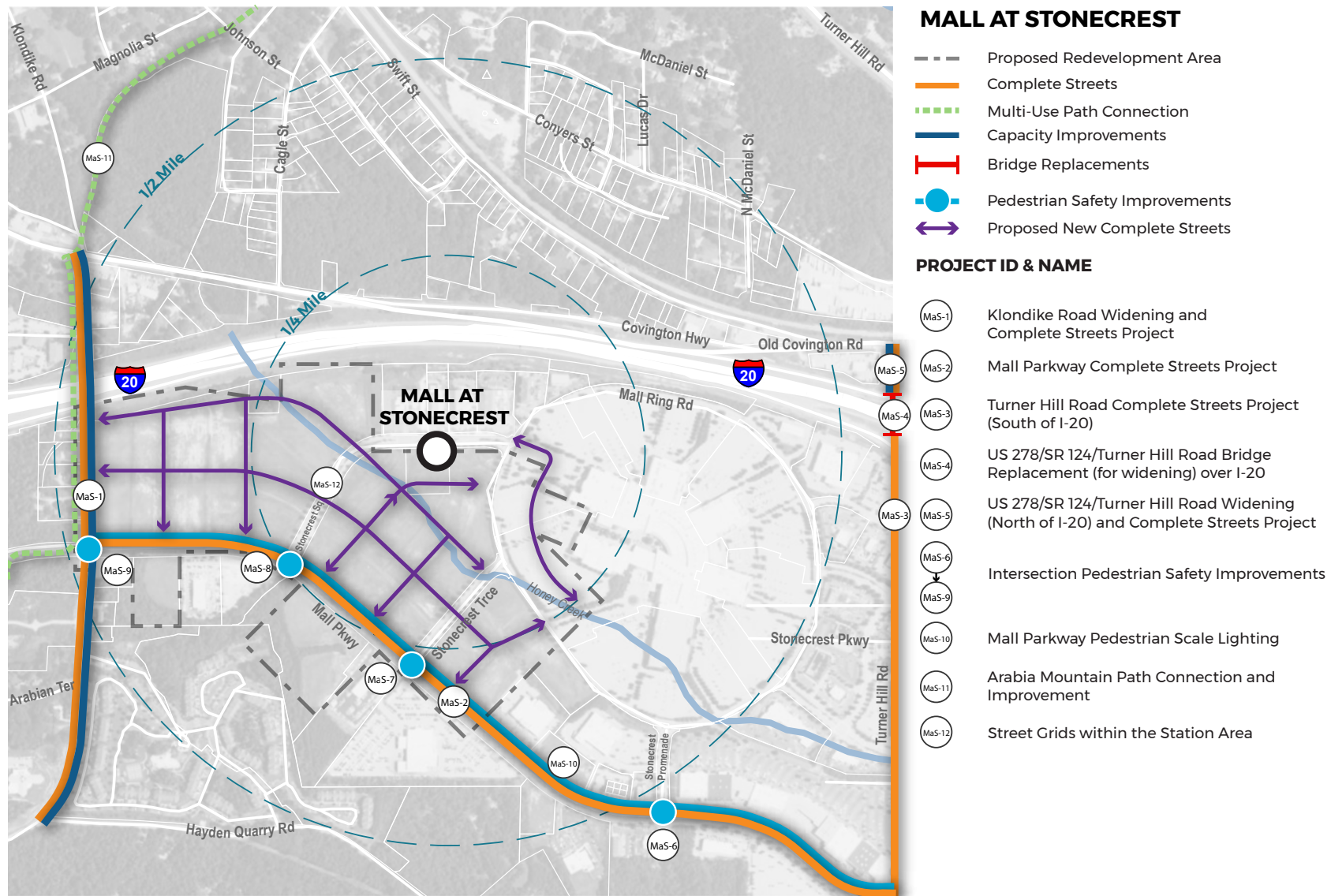
Phase 1 includes new streets that would provide multimodal access to Mall parkway, Stonecrest Square and Stonecrest Trace as well as pedestrian safety improvements. Table 4-7 summarizes proposed transportation infrastructure projects around the Mall at Stonecrest Station. Figure 4-12 illustrates different types of recommended projects in this station area.

**Table 4-7:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Mall at Stonecrest Station

| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME   | DESCRIPTION  | FROM               | TO                               | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|--|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| MaS-1      | Klondike Road Widening and Complete Streets Project                                  | Widen from existing 2 to 4 lanes (Per neighborhood street typology + 2 more lanes) to include a median, street parking, and bike lanes. Add sidewalks. | Hayden Quarry Road | Covington Highway                | 0.82          | \$ 11,937,000                                   | 2     |
| MaS-2      | Mall Parkway Complete Streets Project  | Widen (Per neighborhood street typology + 2 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.                                  | Klondike Road      | Turner Hill Road                 | 1.27          | \$ 15,586,000                                   | 2     |
| MaS-3      | Turner Hill Road Complete Streets Project (South of I-20)                            | Widen (Per main street/boulevard street typology) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.  | Mall Parkway       | I-20 Eastbound Ramp Intersection | 0.53          | \$ 6,390,000                                    | 2     |
| MaS-4      | US 278/SR 124/Turner Hill Road Bridge Replacement (for widening) over I-20           | Replace existing bridge with a new bridge  |                    |                                  |               | \$ 16,738,000                                   | 2     |
| MaS-5      | US 278/SR 124/Turner Hill Road Widening (North of I-20) and Complete Streets Project | Widen from existing 4 to 6 lanes (Per neighborhood street typology + 4 more lanes) and include a median turn lane and bike lanes. Add sidewalks.       | I-20 bridge        | (Old) Covington Highway          | 0.1           | \$ 1,811,000                                    | 2     |
| MaS-6      | Mall Parkway and Stonecrest Promenade Intersection                                   | Add high visibility crosswalks   |                    |                                  |               | \$ 23,000                                       | 1     |



| PROJECT ID | PROJECT NAME  | DESCRIPTION  | FROM          | TO               | LENGTH (MILE) | FINAL ESTIMATED COST (ROUNDED TO NEAREST 1,000) | PHASE |
|------------|---|--|---------------|------------------|---------------|---|-------|
| MaS-7      | Mall Parkway and Stonecrest Trace Intersection                                | Add high visibility crosswalks   |               |                  |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| MaS-8      | Mall Parkway and Stonecrest Square Intersection Pedestrian Safety Improvement | Add high visibility crosswalks   |               |                  |               | \$ 54,000                                       | 1     |
|            |   | Add sidewalk on Stonecrest Square between station and mall   |               |                  | 0.19          | \$ 696,000                                      | 1     |
|            |   | Add sidewalk on Mall Ring Road between Stonecrest Square and new road to station                                       |               |                  | 0.09          | \$ 530,000                                      | 1     |
| MaS-9      | Mall Parkway and Klondike Road Intersection                                   | Add high visibility crosswalks   |               |                  |               | \$ 18,000                                       | 1     |
| MaS-10     | Mall Parkway Pedestrian Scale Lighting  | Add pedestrian scale lighting to address Pedestrian safety deficiency  | Klondike Road | Turner Hill Road | 1.48          | \$ 1,744,000                                    | 1     |
| MaS-11     | Arabia Mountain Path Connection and Improvement                               | Multi-use path connection and improvement, excluding portion along Klondike between Covington Highway and Mall Parkway |               |                  | 1.63          | \$ 4,042,000                                    | 2     |
| MaS-12     | Street grids within the station area  | Main Street retail   |               |                  | 0.76          | \$ 8,903,000                                    | 2     |
|            |   | Main Street retail   |               |                  | 0.21          | \$ 2,294,000                                    | 1     |
|            |   | Neighborhood street  |               |                  | 1.51          | \$ 15,081,000                                   | 2     |



**Figure 4-12:** Transportation Infrastructure Projects around the Mall at Stonecrest Station

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# 5 TOD FUNDING AND FINANCING GUIDE

## 5.1 OVERVIEW

The successful implementation of TOD in the I-20 East corridor depends upon identifying the right existing and future opportunities to fund its costs. This chapter presents an overview of funding, financing, and incentive-based tools for DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest, and private developers as a reference guide – and potential roadmap – for achieving the TOD vision realized through this Community Plan.

This chapter presents an overview of the following funding and financing mechanisms that can be used to support TOD in the I-20 corridor:


- Grants
- Loans and debt
- Tax credits
- Value capture mechanisms
- Developer incentives

Each of the “Opportunity Profiles” presented in these categories below include critical information on how the program or mechanism works, and how it may be used to fund a portion of TOD in the I-20 East corridor.

This report also includes “TOD Spotlights” which provide examples of how various funding and financing opportunities have been successfully utilized to achieve TOD visions in the Atlanta region and elsewhere.

Although some of the opportunities profiled here are immediately available, it is understood that the complete build-out of TOD in the I-20 East corridor would not likely occur until after federal funding for a high capacity transit alternative is secured. Therefore, each opportunity profile notes if it can or should be pursued in one of the following time frames presented in Table 5-1 which align with the implementation schedule assumed in MARTA’s June 2018 I-20 East Transit Performance Alternatives Analysis.

**Table 5-1:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Timeline



| IMMEDIATE  | I-20 EAST TRANSIT APPROVAL  | DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES  |
|--|---|---|
| During the next one to three years   | After the I-20 East transit project is approved and transit funding is secured  | During the official pre-development phases of identified TOD projects, which will likely occur after I-20 East transit project approval, during its construction, and beyond  |
| These are opportunities the County, the City of Stonecrest, or developers can immediately begin pursuing. These actions most frequently refer to building a vision for TOD around proposed station areas, and pre-emptive measures the County can take to ensure future opportunities, such as adjusting zoning laws, and adopting incentive policies. | Once a project has been approved for federal funding, developers may be incentivized to begin purchasing properties and planning developments. Some items in this time frame would include implementation of sites identified in the land banking process or projecting potential revenues from Tax Allocation Districts. | Funding for individual developments can be pursued in earnest once a parcel has been identified and conceptual plans are under way based on developers' interest in having product ready for rent at the same time or after transit service begins. Many tax credit and loan programs can only be pursued once a site is identified and the developer can show a market-supported, financially feasible development scenario. |

## 5.2 GRANTS

This section presents an overview of funding, financing, and incentive-based tools for DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest, and private developers to use as a reference guide – and potential roadmap – for achieving the TOD vision realized through this Community Plan. Table 5-2 summarizes the following grants.

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Brownfield Cleanup Grants
- Livable Center Initiative (LCI) Grants
- Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG); and
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grants.

### 5.2.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program provides a flexible funding option for a variety of projects to ensure communities have decent affordable housing, provide services to vulnerable populations, and create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. HUD annually allocates its CDBG funds on a formula basis directly to larger cities and urbanized counties. Nearly all decision-making on the use of CDBG funds is made by local community development agencies that receive these funds from HUD. These may be used as “non-federal” matching funds for some Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula programs.

In 2016 DeKalb County was allocated \$4.74 million in CDBG funds. Figure 5-1 shows how DeKalb County has used its CDBG funds for a variety of projects. Almost half of these funds (\$2.3 million) were dedicated to public facilities and improvements, including senior centers, parking facilities, and parks and recreations facilities; land acquisition; and for housing rehabilitation and services and the repayment of the County's Section 108 loans.

To apply for CDBG funding from DeKalb County, non-profit organizations, including non-profit developers, may submit projects for review through the County's annual application process. The County offers detailed application guidelines to hopeful sub-recipients and hosts a number of technical assistance workshops before the annual deadline.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DeKalb County. 2018 CDBG Application Guidelines. 2018. <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/user2778/2018%20CDBG%20Application%20Guidelines.pdf>

#### Opportunity Snapshot - CDBG



Sub-recipients apply to DeKalb County



\$: < \$1 million



Pre-development and development activities that benefit low-and-moderate income persons



CDBG funds may be used for new TOD that will actively promote economic development along the I-20 corridor. For example, they could be used for affordable housing, a new community center, educational facilities, perhaps associated with a mixed-income or mixed-used private development.



## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

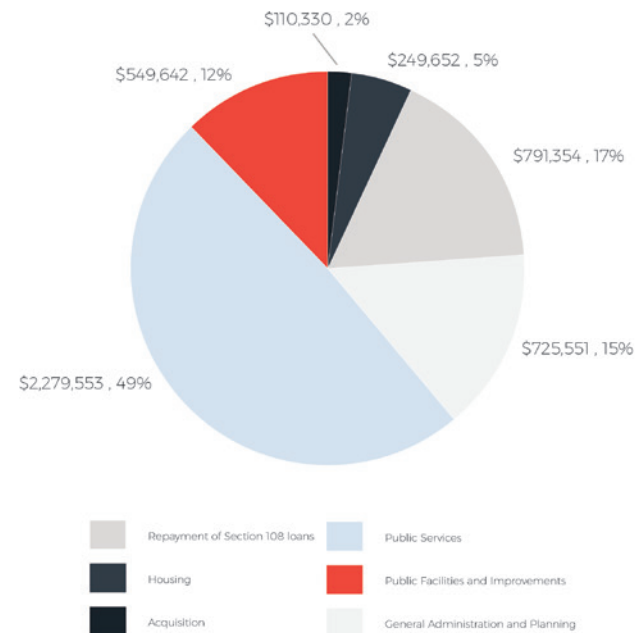
Eligible project costs include a wide range of activities that benefit low-and moderate-income persons, such as acquisition of real property, rehabilitation and construction of new structures that will benefit the community. Eligible costs include purchase costs, surveys, marketing, transfer taxes; public facility improvements; site clearance; public services; relocation; loss of rental income; utilities; rehabilitation; housing constructions; code enforcement; special economic development activities; homeownership assistance; and planning and capacity building.<sup>2</sup>

## FUNDING POTENTIAL

DeKalb County was allocated \$5.25 million in 2018 CDBG funds. DeKalb County has not specified maximum or minimum award amounts for its 2018 program; however, given the limited funding for the entire county, and the number of past awards per project, it is likely that CDBG awards will provide only a small amount of funding (less than \$500,000) per project.<sup>3</sup>

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

This is considered a long-term option that would be pursued once a specific development has been planned and the developer is looking for available sources to complete its capital stack. It is unknown what CDBG funding levels will be at that time.



**Figure 5-1:** DeKalb County CDBG 2016 Uses

<sup>2</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Categories of Eligible Activities*. [https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC\\_17133.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_17133.PDF)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. *CDBG Community Development Block Grant Performance Profile*. 2016. [https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CDBG\\_Perform\\_Granttee\\_DEKA-GA\\_GA\\_2016.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CDBG_Perform_Granttee_DEKA-GA_GA_2016.pdf)

## 5.2.2 BROWNFIELD CLEANUP GRANTS (FEDERAL)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers grants for cleanup and remediation of brownfield sites to ready them for development through its Brownfield Program. The funds are limited to remediating sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. For example, the former site of a gas station would be an eligible area. The proposed Covington Highway station area features two sites that have been identified as contaminated, and which would be eligible for these funds.

Brownfield grants are awarded nationally by EPA on a competitive basis. These funds can be pursued by DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest, a land agency or redevelopment authority. Applications must include information confirming that the site is in an eligible brownfield and a draft analysis of the brownfield cleanup alternatives. The draft analysis must be presented to the community for comment, and should include a summary of the site's contamination issues, the evaluated alternatives to remediate the site, and the proposed use after cleanup is complete. Applications must include documentation from a public meeting focused on the site's cleanup, including sign in sheets and notes on public comments.

Locally, the East Decatur Greenway (EDG) non-profit organization received a \$200,000 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant in 2014 to remediate a former gas station site. The one-acre property was developed as a gas station in 1940 and abandoned in 1999. The grant funding allowed EDG to clean up the site for use as a community green space with an outdoor classroom, bike racks, and active and passive recreation. The site serves

as the beginning of a 1.2-mile bike and pedestrian trail leading to MARTA's Avondale Station and TOD joint development project.<sup>4</sup>

### AWARD AMOUNTS

Grant awardees may receive up to \$200,000 per site and must contribute 20 percent of the cleanup cost share to match the federal funds, either in the form of cash, labor, materials or services. A single entity may only receive funds for up to three brownfield sites.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS





Environmental work supporting the I-20 East Transit Initiative: Heavy Rail Transit Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (2015) identified two sites near the Covington Highway station that might qualify as brownfields. These sites may be acquired through a regional land bank, and the County, City, or development partner. However, only municipal or non-profit owners are eligible to apply for grant funds. An eligible applicant may then apply for funding once they are prepared to show the future use of the site. This is likely only to occur after a I-20 East transit project has secured federal funding approval, but can happen at any point in time if a developer is interested in remediating and redeveloping a brownfield site.

<sup>4</sup> *Decatur Metro. East Decatur Greenway Begins Clean up at Columbia Gas Station Site. 2015. <http://www.decaturm metro.com/tag/890-columbia-drive/>*

### Opportunity Snapshot - Brownfield Cleanup

 DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest, land agencies, redevelopment authorities

 \$: < \$1 million

 Funds are limited to remediating sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants

 DeKalb County or the City of Stonecrest may apply to remediate a site near the Covington Highway station, to ready it for development to achieve the I-20 E TOD vision.

## 5.2.3 ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION FUNDING

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), administers a number of federally-funded programs which could support TOD infrastructure. Eligible applicants must be "Local Administered Project (LAP)"-certified by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). MARTA and DeKalb County are LAP-certified; the City of Stonecrest will need to pursue this certification to apply for these ARC opportunities.

### LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE

ARC administers the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), a grant program that incentivizes local jurisdictions to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles and provide improved access to jobs and services.<sup>5</sup> The LCI program is funded with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) dollars allocated by formula to the Atlanta region, and provides two types of direct funding: 1) neighborhood planning funding to support a future designation by ARC of an "LCI Area" and 2) capital funding for community improvements in LCI Areas.

Since 2000, ARC has invested \$201 million in LCI funding in 120 communities throughout the Atlanta region, helping to pay for planning studies and the construction of transportation projects, such as sidewalks and intersection improvements.

<sup>5</sup> ARC. *Livable Centers Initiative*. <https://atlantaregional.org/community-development/livable-centers-initiative>

Together LCI areas have experienced the development of:

- Over 46 million square feet of office space;
- More than 17,000 hotel rooms;
- A total of 242-mixed-used developments; and
- 75 public and civic features, including schools, parks, senior centers, and libraries.


ARC has made two \$5 million capital awards to MARTA projects in LCI areas, which funded parking structures at joint development sites where there was a requirement to replace parking spaces eliminated by the development. The LCI capital grant eliminated the construction of the replacement parking from the developer's proforma. The LCI application process is held annually for both study and construction funds.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS




Wesley Chapel Road and the Mall at Stonecrest have already been designated LCI areas upon completion of LCI planning studies. It is recommended that the County work with ARC prior to formal adoption of the I-20 East TOD Community Plan to have the remaining four proposed transit station areas designated as LCI areas. To do this, the County will need to show ARC how this TOD Community Plan meets similar objectives of other LCI studies. LCI Area designation allows the County and the City of Stonecrest to unlock future ARC funding associated with the first-and-last mile, parking garages, or bike and pedestrian connections associated with TOD.

#### Opportunity Snapshot - LCI Grants

 DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest may apply after it is LAP-certified by GDOT

 **\$5** \$1 to 5 million

 Capital improvements identified in an LCI study to promote walkable communities. These included bike and ped facilities, streetscaping or parking garages at transit stations

 The County and MARTA should work with ARC to receive LCI Area designation for the remaining four stations.



## 5.2.4 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT (STBG) AND CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CMAQ) PROGRAM

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, passed by Congress in 2015, authorizes five years of transportation funding (FY16- FY20). The authorization includes approximately \$12 billion per year in FHWA STBG funding across the US. STBG funds are distributed to state and local governments by formula based on lane-miles of federal-aid highways, total vehicle-miles traveled in federal highways, and estimated contributions to the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund attributable to commercial vehicles. In FY 2018, the Atlanta urbanized area was allocated \$85 million in STBG funds. At least ten percent of total STBG funding for a region is set-aside specifically for "transportation alternatives" projects, aimed at bike and pedestrian improvements. Funding is applied for through ARC's biennial Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) solicitation process

FHWA's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program is distributed to air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas (regions that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter) using a formula based on an area's population by county and the severity of its ozone and carbon monoxide problems with the non-attainment or maintenance area. Greater weight is given to areas that are both carbon monoxide and ozone non-attainment/maintenance areas. Funds are allocated by state DOTs and MPOs for transportation

projects and programs - including park-and-rides and new transit services - that contribute to reducing congestion and improving air quality in existing and former air quality non-attainment areas. The FAST Act authorizes over \$2 billion per year in CMAQ funding through 2020. ARC receives approximately \$29 million per year in CMAQ funding.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

STBG and CMAQ funding provides DeKalb County with a near-term opportunity to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects around proposed I-20 East corridor transit station areas that would support future TOD. As part of its 2019 Transportation Plan update, it is recommended that the County develop a program of bike and pedestrian projects that can be pursued in the short-term to help prepare the area for new, active, transit-and-pedestrian-oriented development. MARTA or the County can apply for these projects either during the FY19 or FY21 ARC solicitation cycles. These improvements will help to begin to change the perception of the corridor and to help residents see tangible changes in their communities right away.

#### Opportunity Snapshot - STGB and CMAQ Grants



DeKalb County



\$1 to 5 million



Capital improvements identified in the Community Plan to promote vibrant walkable communities. These include bike and ped facilities, streetscaping, or parking garages at a transit station



The County may pursue CMAQ and STBG funding through ARC's regional solicitation every two years. The county should follow the solicitation guidelines published on ARC's website to select TOD-related projects that align with ARC's current priorities and selection criteria

**Table 5-2:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Reviewed: Grants

| OPPORTUNITY  | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/ ENTITY                      | OVERVIEW   | FUNDING POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT   | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES  |
|--|---|--|-------------------|---|--|
| Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)  | Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program is a source of flexible funding for projects that ensure communities have affordable housing, provide services to vulnerable populations, and create jobs through expansion and retention of business.                 | \$\$              | DeKalb County and its sub recipients (public agencies, non-profit organizations, including non-profit developers) | Property acquisition, rehabilitation, and costs to facilitate affordable housing development and public services |
| Brownfield Cleanup Grants  | Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)             | The competitive Brownfield Cleanup Grants provide funds for eligible activities to cleanup and remediate Brownfield sites to ready them for development. They are limited to sites that are contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. | \$                | DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest, Land Bank, Redevelopment Authority   | Brownfield site remediation  |
| Congestion Mitigating and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) <sup>1</sup>                                | ARC   | CMAQ funds transportation projects or programs that contribute to improving air quality and relieving congestion, including pedestrian and bicycle improvements, transit, and demand management  | \$\$              | DeKalb County, MARTA  | Bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements from TODs to stations are eligible                               |
| Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG) – Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-aside <sup>2</sup> | ARC   | STBG includes a set-aside for smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, community improvements such as historic preservation, and environmental mitigation related to storm water.                               | \$\$              | DeKalb County, MARTA  | Bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements from TODs to stations are eligible                               |

<sup>1</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission. CMAQ Program Overview. 2017. <https://documents.atlantaregional.com/transportation/projsolicitation/2017/cmaqprogramoverview.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> Federal Transportation Administration. Transportation Alternatives. 2016. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/transportationalternativesfs.cfm>

## 5.3 LOANS/DEBT

Traditional commercial loans are an option for developers. However, there are other loan options with special terms that offer a public or private party lower interest rates and flexible terms to meet the often-complex mixed-use nature of TODs.

Developers of TOD should also consider different types of loan products. For example, mezzanine debt, an unsecured subordinated loan which may have equity-like characteristics, can fill a loan-to-value (LTV) ratio gap when resources to fund a large portion of a project aren't available in the financial market. One TOD study found that developers in strong TOD markets accepted a lower LTV in exchange for other favorable terms, like reduced level of recourse or lower loan fees.<sup>6</sup>

This section discusses the following debt options that may assist the I-20 East TOD buildout:

- Section 108 Loans;
- DeKalb County Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund;
- Tax Exempt Bonds; and
- TOD Structured Loan Funds.

These debt options are also summarized in Table 5-4.

<sup>6</sup> Enterprise Community Partners and the Low-Income Investment Fund. *Filling the Financing Gap for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development*. 2013.

### 5.3.1 SECTION 108 LOANS

The Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108) is the loan guarantee component of the CDBG program. Section 108 funds can be used by a designated public entity to undertake eligible projects, or, alternatively, can be loaned to a third-party developer to undertake the projects. This flexibility makes it one of the most effective public investment tools that HUD offers to local governments.<sup>7</sup> The Section 108 program allows borrowers to take advantage of flexible repayment terms and lower interest rates than available through traditional lenders.

The Section 108 program further allows local governments receiving CDBG funds, such as DeKalb County, to create federally guaranteed loans from the funds being used to attract private investments. Localities borrowing the funds through the program are required to pledge future CDBG funds as repayment; however, it is the intention that the project receiving the Section 108 loan will generate enough cash flow to repay the funds, thereby freeing future CDBG resources for other revitalization projects.

DeKalb County may either expend the funds directly, or loan the funds to a developer as a third-party loan.

<sup>7</sup> HUD. *Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program Fact Sheet*. 2018. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/section-108/section-108-program-eligibility-requirements/#overview>

#### Opportunity Snapshot - Section 108



DeKalb County



\$1 to 5 million



Eligible projects include physical development projects, such as housing rehabilitation and public facilities



Section 108 loans may be used to fund TOD along the I-20 East corridor. Once the developers are ready to plan actual TOD projects, the County should assess its borrowing capacity.



**Table 5-3:** DeKalb County Section 108 Borrowing Capacity

| FY 2017 CDBG AWARD (\$) | CURRENT/<br>PRIOR SECTION<br>108 USER | MAXIMUM<br>BORROWING<br>CAPACITY (5X<br>CDBG) | AVAILABLE<br>SECTION 108<br>BORROWING<br>CAPACITY (\$) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| \$4,746,548             | Yes                                   | \$23,732,740                                  | \$14,232,740   |

## \$ FUNDING POTENTIAL

Loans typically range from \$500,000 to \$14 million, depending on the magnitude of the project and DeKalb County's Section 108 financing capacity. The County can borrow a maximum amount of five times the amount of the area's CDBG award. Table 5-3 shows the maximum and available borrowing capacity of DeKalb County through the program. As of 2018, the County can borrow up to \$14.2 million, as a portion of its borrowing capacity is currently committed to existing Section 108 loans. This amount will change once those loans are repaid, or additional loans are made.

## NEXT STEPS



DeKalb County has experience using Section 108 loans, and is currently in year eight of its twenty-year repayment to HUD for a \$14 million loan used to design and construct three Senior/Community Centers in the County.

Public entities are advised to contact HUD for guidance and a discussion of project eligibility before preparing a Section 108 loan application. Applicants must outline the proposed eligible activities in detail, discuss the community objectives of the project, and identify which portions of it that are expected to generate income to repay the loan. Applicants must also pledge future CDBG funds as security as well as a general fund backup pledge, provide a schedule for repayment, and identify how the loan guarantee will be paid for. Completed applications must be included in a localities' HUD Consolidated Plan. A Consolidated Plan is a jurisdiction's mandatory comprehensive planning document for HUD funding.<sup>8</sup>

These activities are likely long-term and would occur only after a transit investment in the I-20 East corridor has secured funding and TOD projects begin pre-development activities such as site selection, design, and securing financing.

<sup>8</sup> HUD. *State CDBG Program Eligibility and Requirements*. 2018. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg-state/state-cdbg-program-eligibility-requirements/>

### 5.3.2 DEKALB COUNTY BROWNFIELD REVOLVING LOAN FUND

In 2012 DeKalb County received \$650,000 to remediate hazardous substances and \$250,000 for petroleum cleanup from the EPA's Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Grant program. The grant was used to create the Brownfield Program Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), whereby DeKalb County provides loans to cleanup sites contaminated with petroleum or hazardous substances.<sup>9</sup> As noted earlier, two hazardous waste sites have been identified in the



Covington Highway station area.

#### NEXT STEPS

Environmental work supporting the I-20 East Transit Initiative: Heavy Rail Transit Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (2015) identified two sites near the Covington Highway station that might qualify as brownfields. These sites should be confirmed. An RFL loan would be applied for once the brownfield site has been acquired - potentially through a regional land bank - and the County, City, or development partner is prepared to investigate the site.

Similar to the federal Brownfield Cleanup grants, these loans can be awarded before a I-20 East transit project has been approved and federal funding secured, however it is likely that the majority of development will be planned once the transit project is approved. If one of the two brownfield sites attract development interested in the near term, the County should consider if developer proposals include a site plan that complements the vision for the area presented in this Community Plan.

#### Opportunity Snapshot - Brownfield RLF



DeKalb County



\$ < \$1 million



Loans to clean up sites contaminated with petroleum or hazardous substances



These funds may cover the cost of a potential TOD site's environmental investigation at the Covington Highway station area.

<sup>9</sup> EPA. *Brownfields 2012 Revolving Loan Fund Grant Fact Sheet DeKalb County, GA.* [https://cfpub.epa.gov/bf\\_factsheets/gfs/index.cfm?xpg\\_id=7811&display\\_type=HTML](https://cfpub.epa.gov/bf_factsheets/gfs/index.cfm?xpg_id=7811&display_type=HTML)

### 5.3.3 TAX EXEMPT BONDS

A tax-exempt bond, or a municipal bond, is issued by a state or local government, and is payable from general funds of the issuer. These bonds entail the full faith, credit, and often taxing power of the issuer, depending on state and local law.<sup>10</sup> This means that unlike revenue bonds, tax exempt bonds can use other resources, such as taxes and credits, to pay bondholders. As a result, they generally receive high investment grade ratings from credit rating agencies. These interest payments are not subject to federal income taxes.

Tax exempt bonds allow the issuer to raise funds for a project that may not generate direct revenue, so they are most frequently used to fund public works projects. DeKalb County's voter-approved Parks and Greenspace Bond Program has issued \$226 million to be repaid with property tax revenues levied in unincorporated DeKalb County. The bond program states that at least 70 percent of the funding is to be used for land acquisitions for parks and greenspace and the remaining 30 percent is dedicated to park improvements and developing new facilities.<sup>11</sup> DeKalb County could assemble a program of infrastructure related projects to assist in the I-20 East TOD build-out to be presented for voter approval once a transit project in the corridor is approved and funded.

#### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



The new bond program would not be issued until the transit project had been approved and funding secured. The bond program, like the Parks and Greenspace program, may need voter approval. If this is the case, the County will need to market the bond program to the public, and educate residents on the catalytic nature of the specific list of projects towards attracting a high rate of real estate investment, new jobs, and amenities to the area.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.msrb.org/glossary/definition/general-obligation-bond-or-go-bond.aspx>  
<sup>11</sup> DeKalb County. Parks Bond Program. <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/parks-bond-greenspace/parks-bond-program>

### 5.3.4 STRUCTURED LOAN FUND

A structured loan fund is an investment tool that combines multiple types of capital into a single fund, attracting investors with different goals and risk tolerances to invest together. Structured loan funds often establish rules on what types of loans they will make, how they will be governed, and what criteria to use when underwriting loans, as well as the portion of funds that must be set aside as reserves and the hierarchy of repayment to investors. The benefit of these funds is that they are able to aggregate more capital than a Community Development Investment Fund, or a local government, so the funds can make bigger loans, and can direct investment to a targeted activity, such as affordable housing or TOD.<sup>12</sup>

For example, Invest Atlanta, the City's economic development agency, announced in October 2018 that it would be launching a \$15-million TOD fund to provide "below-market, patient capital to support the acquisition and pre-development of workforce housing near MARTA stations, the Atlanta Streetcar, the Atlanta Beltline, and other modes of transit."<sup>13</sup> The fund is comprised of \$4.5 million of the City's Housing Opportunity financing with an additional \$10.5 million from the Enterprise Community Loan and Low Income Investment Funds. The \$15 million will be used for a revolving loan fund to provide low-interest loans to affordable housing real estate developers building near transit stations.

#### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



In the short-term, DeKalb County should evaluate the potential opportunity to develop its own TOD Structured Loan fund. This fund will likely not attract investors until the I-20 East transit project is approved.

<sup>12</sup> Living Cities TOD Working Group. Structured Fund Analysis. 2011. <https://slide-player.com/slide/10484057/>

<sup>13</sup> Invest Atlanta. Invest Atlanta Announced Atlanta's First Transit-Oriented Development Fund. 2018. <https://www.investatlanta.com/impact-insights/invest-atlanta-announces-atlantas-first-transit-oriented-development-fund>



**Table 5-4:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Reviewed: Loans

| OPPORTUNITY                            | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/ ENTITY | OVERVIEW  | FUNDING POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT                          | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES   |
|--|------------------------------|---|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Section 108                            | HUD                          | The Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108) is the loan guarantee component of the CDBG program.   | \$\$              | DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest, | Economic development projects, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and other physical development projects |
| Brownfield Revolving Loan Funds        | DeKalb County/ Decide DeKalb | DeKalb County's Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RFL) provides funding to assist in the removal of contaminated soil, petroleum and hazardous waste at abandoned or underused sites, known as brownfields.   | \$\$              | Developers                         | Brownfield site remediation   |
| Tax Exempt Bond Financing <sup>1</sup> | DeKalb County/ Decide DeKalb | Decide DeKalb serves as a "conduit issuer" for companies and institutions seeking access to taxable or tax-exempt financing using private placements or rated bonds. The bonds are to be repaid by the borrower.  | \$\$\$            | Businesses or Developers           | Capital projects which demonstrate economic development benefits to the County                                    |
| Structured Loan Funds                  | TBD                          | A structured fund is a loan fund that pools money from different investors with varying risk and return profiles. Structured funds have a dedicated purpose, such as TOD, which is clearly defined before the fund is formed, and are managed by professionals with fund formation and loan underwriting experience. This is an emerging tool and has been successfully used in Denver, amongst other places. Invest Atlanta recently launched its first TOD Structure Loan Fund for \$ 15 million, to provide "below-market, patient capital to support the acquisition and predevelopment of workforce housing near MARTA stations, the Atlanta Streetcar, the Atlanta Beltline, and other modes of transit" <sup>2</sup> | \$\$\$            | Developers, DeKalb County          | TOD construction  |

<sup>1</sup> DeKalb Count. *Overview of Private Activity Bond Financing and Incentives*. <http://www.dekalbchamber.org/DADC/pdf/bonds-private.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Curbed Atlanta. *Invest Atlanta Launches \$15< transit-oriented development fund, but is it enough?* 2018. <https://atlanta.curbed.com/2018/10/22/17996782/invest-atlanta-transit-oriented-development>

## 5.4 TAX CREDITS

A tax credit is an amount of money that can be subtracted from a tax liability, or the amount of taxes due to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Unlike a tax deduction, which lowers taxable income, a tax credit of a certain dollar amount decreases taxes owed by that amount. Most tax credits are “non-refundable”, which means that the excess credits expire in the year in which the tax credit is used. In other words, non-refundable tax credits cannot reduce a tax liability to below zero. There are also refundable tax credits, which are also subtracted from the amount of taxes owed. Unlike non-refundable tax credits, refundable tax credits can decrease a tax liability to below zero.

Developers either use the tax credits to partially finance the project, or exchange them with an investor for equity. In many cases, the exchange is structured as a limited partnership between the developer and investor. The developer has a small ownership percentage, but has the authority to build and run the project. The investor, on the other hand, has a large ownership percentage, but is not very involved in the day-to-day business of the project.<sup>14</sup>

This section discusses four tax credit programs:

- New Market Tax Credits
- Historic Tax Credits
- 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits

These programs are summarized in Table 5-5.

<sup>14</sup> <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22389.pdf>

### 5.4.1 NEW MARKET TAX CREDIT

The New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) program, overseen by the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund within the U.S. Department of Treasury, is aimed at incentivizing community development and economic development through private investment. Private parties make equity investments in a domestic partnership called a Community Development Entity (CDE) to fund an economic development capital project. CDEs can choose to be national, statewide, regional, or local when determining where they may invest. In return, investors receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit against their federal income tax, which are claimed over a seven-year period. These tax credits are issued to CDEs who select projects to receive the equity after an investor purchases the credit.

NMTCs are awarded to CDEs by the Department of Treasury each year through a competitive application process. Since the program's first awards were made in 2003, Treasury's CDFI Fund has made 1,150 allocation awards totaling \$45 billion in tax credit authorities to CDEs nationwide. It is estimated that for every dollar invested by the federal government through NMTCs, the program generates over eight dollars of private investment. Eighty-five percent of proceeds from the equity raised through NMTCs must be invested in low-income community investments (QLCIs).<sup>15</sup>

NMTCs may be combined with Historic Tax Credits and but not with Low Income Housing Tax Credits. In 2017, two CDEs in Atlanta were awarded NMTCs:

<sup>15</sup> 2017. <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Documents/Final%202017%20NMTCAward%20Book%20v4%20021218.pdf>

#### Opportunity Snapshot - New Market Tax Credit



Approved CDEs who may dedicate them to DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest, or a developer



\$1 to 5 million



Acquisition, rehabilitation and construction of projects spurring economic opportunity.



Developers may use NMTCs to fund a portion of a mixed-use TOD development

1) Atlanta Emerging Markets, Inc. received \$60 million; and 2) SunTrust Community Development Enterprises, LCC., received \$70 million. Past projects to receive NMTCs from Atlanta Emerging Markets include Fort McPherson – Tyler Perry Studios, the Center for Civil and Human rights, and the Family First Headquarters. Atlanta Emerging Markets, INC. tied to Invest Atlanta, will only award NMTC's to projects within Atlanta's city limits; however, DeKalb County is eligible to apply for NMTCs from SunTrust Community Development Enterprises, LLC.



## ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

NMTCs are awarded to approved CDEs through a competitive process. CDE's select Qualified Active Low Income Community Businesses (QALICBs) to fund individual projects in the area using NMTC proceeds. QALICBs must be located in a designated low-income community as defined by the U.S. Census with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent or with median family incomes that do not exceed 80 percent of the area median incomes.<sup>16</sup>

QALICB's in DeKalb County may apply for funds through SunTrust Community Development Enterprise, or any other CDE that awards projects at the national level. A list of all current CDEs who serve nationally can be found at CDFI's website.<sup>17</sup> As determined in the I-20 East Extension Corridor Market Study and Equitable TOD Assessment, all station areas, excluding the Stonecrest station, would qualify as low income census tracts with a poverty rate of higher than 20 percent.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

NMTCs can support a wide range of capital projects aimed at spurring economic and business growth and job creation in under-served communities. Typical projects involve the acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of real estate for commercial offices, retail spaces, factories or industrial facilities, educational facilities, entertainment/culture facilities, community centers, health related facilities, hotels, and hospitality properties. NMTCs can be used to fund residential units located within mixed-use properties only if the commercial component of the development creates at least 20 percent of a project's gross income.<sup>18</sup>

## FUNDING POTENTIAL

Due to the expensive financing costs to complete a NMTC deal, project cost are typically at least \$5 million.

## NEXT STEPS



Once a site is selected and a project is conceptualized, the developers should meet with Atlanta's CDE to discuss how to best align the project with the objectives of the NMTC program.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bank. *New Market Tax Credits*. <https://www.usbank.com/commercial-business/tax-credit-financing/new-markets-tax-credits-basics.html>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury. *Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. NMTC Allocatee States Served*. 2018. <https://www.cdfifund.gov/awards/nmtc/Pages/default.aspx?state=GA&Name=Georgia>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.propertymetrics.com/blog/2017/06/19/new-markets-tax-credits-nmtc/>



## 5.4.2 HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

The federal Historic Tax Credit Program (HTC) was created in 1976 to encourage private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. The program is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the IRS, in partnership with the historic preservation offices located in each state. The HTC allows developers to claim 20 percent of eligible improvement expenses against their federal tax liability. If the developer is unable to use the tax credit, they can offer the credits to a third party, including banks and federal savings associations to raise part of the equity funding for a project, reducing the amount of needed debt financing.

### FUNDING POTENTIAL

A 20 percent income tax credit is available for projects involving historic properties, and a 10 percent income tax credit is available for projects involving non-historic properties that were placed in service prior to 1936.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties. National Park Service. 2017. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>*

## NEXT STEPS

According to the federal Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, to be eligible for HTCs, property owners must complete a three-part application process for historic preservation certification.<sup>20</sup> In Georgia, this process is managed by the NPS and Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).<sup>21</sup> DeKalb County and the City of Stonecrest should work with property owners of the identified historic properties along the I-20 East TOD corridor (identified in Chapter 4 Existing Conditions) to identify potential interest and opportunities for rehabilitations that may fit the overall I-20 TOD strategy.

Even if this program is not used for large-scale transformative redevelopment, these funds can help individual historic structures along the corridor be reinvigorated. Well-kept historic buildings, even single-family homes, surrounding the proposed dense TOD will add character to the area, increase property values, and help to positively impact the perception of the corridor.

<sup>20</sup> *Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. Historic Tax Credits. 2017. <https://www OCC.gov/topics/community-affairs/publications/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-historic-tax-credits.pdf>*  
<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

### Opportunity Snapshot - Historic tax Credits



Individual homeowners living in designated historic structures or developers who own a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register District



**\$** \$1 to 5 million



Acquisition, rehabilitation and construction of projects spurring economic opportunity.



There are several historic districts and historic places on the National Register located in DeKalb County. If any such building is located within proximity to a proposed station, the building would be eligible to receive these tax credits to help fund a portion of their redevelopment.

### 5.4.3 GEORGIA HISTORIC REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT

The states' historic rehabilitation tax credit (HRTC) works similarly to federal HTC. Jointly administered by the Georgia Department of Revenue and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division, HRTCs provide a tax credit to eligible rehabilitations of certified historic buildings and homes, for up to 25 percent of a project's eligible expenditures. Projects may receive up to an additional five percent (totaling 30 percent) of expenditures if located in a HUD designated low-income housing area. All station areas, excluding the Mall at Stonecrest, would qualify. Akin to federal HTCs, these credits may be used to offset personal taxes, or corporate income taxes, often being sold to banks to raise equity for the redevelopment.

The maximum amount of credits that can be awarded to a certified historic structure (excluding personal homes) is \$10 million. Georgia may not issue more than \$25 million in credits in a fiscal year. To apply for these credits, taxpayers submit a primary certification application and technical specifications for their projects before beginning work. Credits are allocated after preliminary certification, and awarded once the final certification forms have been approved after a project's completion. These credits are available on a rolling basis each year, distributed to eligible projects on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Similar to the national program, the County should work to educate owners of the identified historic properties presented in this Community Plan to alert them to this funding opportunity for renovations and building rehabilitations.

#### *Local Example*

Since 2008, 19 projects in DeKalb County have received HRTCs (15 personal and 4 income-producing projects). A nearby example of an HRTC project not dissimilar from the development concepts envisioned in the I-20 East corridor is the Ponce City Market in Atlanta. The developer rehabilitated the former retail store and distribution center of Sears, Roebuck & Co. into Ponce City Market, the City's largest adaptive reuse mix-used development. The development received both federal and state historic tax credits (\$48 million and \$300,000, respectively), as well as other economic development incentives to create the retail, dining, and residential (affordable and market rate) housing in the historic structure.

## 5.4.4 LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (9%)

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to incentivize the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing. LIHTC have both a 9 percent and 4 percent credit component. The 9 percent LIHTCs are awarded to developers on a competitive basis based on certain qualifications laid out in each state's qualified allocation plan (QAP), which is intended to prioritize housing projects that serve the lowest income households and/or remain affordable for the longest period of time.<sup>22</sup>

These 9 percent credits can cover up to 70 percent of the qualified basis, or the "applicable fraction" of the eligible construction or acquisition costs that can be attributed to low income units.

Developers then apply to the DCA for the credits with a proposed development plan. Nine percent LIHTCs are awarded through a competitive process to projects that most closely align with the QAP.

In Georgia, 10 percent of the credits are set aside for non-profit organization (NPO) sponsored applications. That means that the NPO has at least 51 percent ownership of the general partner interests. The NPO must also materially participate in the project, rather than take a passive role and demonstrate qualifications that prove its ability to own, develop, and operate the project.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22389.pdf>  
<sup>23</sup> <http://transalliance.wpengine.com/finance-toolbox/>

If a project is selected, then a certain amount of that state's LIHTCs must be set aside for it. Once it is complete, or "placed in service" the developer can claim the tax credits over a 10-year period.<sup>24</sup>

### ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

Nine percent LIHTC are typically used for new construction projects, rather than preservation. However, in the state of Georgia, the DCA awards bonus points in its application evaluation process to projects that meet the DCA's preservation priority. The developer must choose one of the following two income tests to qualify for an LIHTC allocation from the DCA:

- For 20-50 minimum tax credit set-aside, at least 20 percent of the units must be affordable at 50 percent or less area median income (AMI), and
- For 40-60 minimum tax credit set-aside, at least 40 percent of the units must be since affordable at 60 percent or less AMI.

### FUNDING POTENTIAL

The DCA awards a maximum of \$1,000,000 in credits to a project in each year through the competitive process following the QAP.

<sup>24</sup> DCA Housing Finance and Development Division. 2018 *Tax Credit Manual*. 2018. <https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/2018lihtcmanual.pdf>

### Opportunity Snapshot - LIHTC 9%



Private and not-for-profit developers of affordable housing.



\$ < \$1 million



Depreciable costs associated with affordable housing



Developers focusing on affordable or mixed-income housing projects surrounding the I-20 East transit corridor should consider aligning projects with the QAP to receive up to \$1 million in 9% LIHTC credits from the state



## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Once development activities begin, developers may pursue LIHTCs to fund a portion of a mixed-income, or fully affordable project. These developments often include existing amenities for residents, and a mix of uses such as community spaces, education, or workforce centers. The applicant will need to apply for the 9 percent credits through the DCA and ensure that the proposed project is well aligned with the QAP, receiving the highest number of points possible, as the program is highly competitive each year.

## 5.4.5 LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (4%)

The LIHTC 4 percent program is a non-competitive counterpart to the 9 percent program used for projects with 50 percent or more of the basis of the land and construction costs financed through tax-exempt bonds.<sup>25</sup> Four percent LIHTCs were authorized under the same Tax Reform Act of 1986, but they offer only a 30 percent subsidy of the qualified basis of a project. In Georgia, these credits can be applied for at any point during the year using the same application forms and following the same general requirements as for the 9 percent annual competitive process.

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Once development activities begin, a developer who has already secured tax exempt bond financing to cover a portion of an eligible LIHTC project may apply for 4 percent credits through DCA. The Tax-exempt bond issuer must determine the project's eligibility and issue a Letter of Determination to the Owner.

25

*Ibid*

### Opportunity Snapshot - LIHTC 4%



Private and not-for-profit developers of affordable housing.



\$ < \$1 million



Acquisition, and new construction or rehabilitation costs using tax-exempt bonds



Developers focusing on affordable or mixed-income housing projects surrounding the I-20 East transit corridor which are also using tax-exempt bonds may work with DCA to secure 4% credits.

**Table 5-5:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Reviewed: Tax Credits

| OPPORTUNITY                                 | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/ ENTITY   | OVERVIEW   | FUNDING POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT   | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES   |
|---|--|--|-------------------|---|---|
| New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)               | The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund within the US Department of the Treasury          | The purpose of the competitive New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) program is to incentivize community development and economic development through private investment. Private parties make equity investments in a domestic partnership known as a Community Development Entity (CDE) that funds an economic development capital project. In return, they receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit against their federal income tax, claimed over seven years.  | \$\$\$            | Approved CDE  | The acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of non-residential real-estate |
| Historic Tax Credits                        | National Park Service (NPS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)      | The goal of the federal Historical Tax Credit Program (HTC) is to encourage private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. To be eligible to receive HTCs, the property must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or contributing to a National Register District. The HTC allows developers to claim 20% of eligible improvement expenses against their federal tax liability or offer them to a third party to raise part of the equity funding for a project | \$                | Individual homeowners living in designated historic structures, or Developers | Brownfield site remediation   |
| Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) 9%   | State Housing Finance Administrations (HFAs)   | The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (9%) is a program that incentivizes the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing. The credits are awarded to developers in a competitive process, and can then be used to partially finance the project, or exchanged with an investor for equity. The tax credits are claimed over a period of 10 years.  | \$                | Affordable Housing Developers   | New production and preservation of existing affordable rental housing.          |
| LIHTC 4%                                    | State Housing Finance Administrations (HFAs)   | 4% LIHTCs are used for projects utilizing tax-exempt bonds, and may cover up to 30% of eligible costs. The 4% LIHTC awards allows the developer a 130% basis boost in high-cost areas. These bonds require at least 50% project equity.  | \$                | Affordable Housing Developers   | New production and preservation of existing affordable rental housing.          |
| Georgia Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits | The Georgia Department of Revenue and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division | ... similar to the federal HTCs discussed above. HRTCs provide a tax credit to eligible projects that rehabilitate certified historic buildings and homes, for up to 25% of a project's eligible expenditures. They may also receive an additional 5% if the property is in a HUD designated low-income housing area.  | \$                | Developers  | Rehabilitation of historic property   |

## 5.5 VALUE CAPTURE MECHANISMS

This section presents an assessment of the I-20 East TOD's potential to collect revenues to pay for certain TOD improvements, based on property taxes generated from future development. This value capture assessment has been based on the proposed future development identified through the I-20 East TOD Community Planning process.

Given the limited funding options to support TOD, transit agencies and local governments are increasingly turning to value capture strategies surrounding transportation projects to recover (or "capture") a portion of increased property values associated with public investments. Typical value capture mechanisms, which are described in this section and summarized in Table 5-8, include:

- Joint Development, including FTA Joint Development;
- Ground Leases;
- Developer Impact Fees;
- Corridor-Level Parking Management
- Tax Allocation Districts (TADs);
- Community Improvement Districts (CID); and
- Development Impact Fees.
- Air Rights;

These value capture mechanisms are summarized in Table 6-8.

Value capture mechanisms are often associated with TOD, as many studies have proven that TOD can result in higher sales prices and rents for properties located near transit. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has found that value capture techniques can generate revenue from a transit project beyond the standard half-mile radius known as the "transit area of influence."<sup>26</sup>

The level of transit-influenced value creation varies greatly from project to project based on local economic and market considerations, such as real estate market conditions and developer buy-in; regulatory conditions, such as land use regulations and zoning; and the ability of a transit project sponsor and its partner to articulate a compelling business case for the investment through developer outreach.<sup>27F</sup>

The value capture analysis presented later in this section relies on the Land Use and Development Program Review report completed by BAE Urban Economics as a part of the I-20 TOD project in 2018, which envisions nearly \$4 billion of development along the I-20 corridor. The total potential development costs were calculated using the residual land values prepared by BAE Urban Economics (2018) multi-total development footprint and development typologies envisioned for the I-20 East station areas. This \$4 billion in potential development could generate significant potential property tax increment and assessment revenues to support investments in TOD.

<sup>26</sup> *Guide to Value Capture Financing for Public Transportation Projects. TCRP. 2016. <https://www.ssti.us/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/TCRP-report-on-value-capture-editted.pdf>*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*



## 5.5.1 JOINT DEVELOPMENT

Joint development, in the context of TOD, is a strategic partnership between the public sector (transit agency) and one or more private sector partners to simultaneously build TOD and improve the transit system. In a transit-oriented joint development, the transit agency provides property towards the development and benefits by sharing the cost of the transit improvements and subsequent revenues from the real estate developments with its development partners. In other cases, private companies have agreed to incorporate a transit stop into their development. Examples of transit-oriented joint development include a transit agency contributing the air rights over a transit station to a private partner to develop an office building or converting a surface parking lot owned by the agency into affordable housing near a transit stop or station

### FTA JOINT DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing the importance of TOD joint development in generating revenues for transit agencies and improving land use surrounding transit stations, the FTA allows FTA funds or FTA assisted property to be contributed to eligible joint development activities. FTA and other USDOT capital programs that may be used to support joint development including Urbanized Area Formula Grants; Capital Investments Grants (Core Capacity, New Starts, or Small Starts); Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Grants; Formula Grants for Rural Areas; State of Good Repair Grants; Bus and Bus Facility Grants; and FHWA flexible funding such as STBG and CMAQ.

This opportunity is reserved for public transit agencies receiving FTA funds for a corresponding transit project associated with the FTA development.<sup>28</sup> Since 2014, FTA has approved 11 joint development projects in five states and the District of Columbia. Each of these projects uses property previously acquired with FTA assistance, rather than new FTA funds. The amount of FTA funds invested in these projects totals \$33 million.<sup>29</sup>

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Once federal funding for a high capacity transit project in the I-20 East corridor is secured, MARTA can approach FTA about joint development possibilities. Similarly, once the transit project begins development, MARTA may release a request for proposals (RFP) looking for developers to enter a joint development agreement to develop TOD on MARTA owned land surrounding the station.

<sup>28</sup> \* Federal Transit Administration. *Joint Development Circular FTA- 7050.1A*. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/funding-finance-resources/joint-development/joint-development-circular>  
<sup>29</sup> Federal Transit Administration. *Joint Development*. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/funding/funding-finance-resources/joint-development/64731/joint-development-brochure.pdf>

#### Opportunity Snapshot - FTA Joint Development



MARTA



< \$1 million



Site acquisition, utility relocation, construction, open space, community facilities, bike and pedestrian improvements, and design costs



Once FTA Capital Investment Grant Program funding is approved for I-20 transit project, MARTA, in partnership with DeKalb County, may use a portion of FTA funds toward non-transit related TOD Costs around an approved station area otherwise ineligible for FTA funding.

### *TOD Spotlight - MARTA Joint Development*

MARTA's Office of Transit Oriented Development and Real Estate has successfully used Joint Development to build TOD at its rail stations. Recent TOD efforts include King Memorial, Avondale, and Edgewood-Candler Stations (Figure 6-2).

In April 2018, MARTA released a request for proposals (RFP) for private developers to propose a TOD project at its Peachtree Center Station Entrance #2. The RFP stated that the control of the property would be released to the developer through a 99-year ground lease, air rights lease, or another mutually agreed upon transaction.

Developers must adhere to MARTA's TOD guidelines and policies, which state that MARTA sets a 20 percent housing affordability goal for each joint development project. For Peachtree Center, MARTA required that 20 percent of the residential units be reserved for families at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI.)

**Figure 5-2:** MARTA Edgewood TOD



### *TOD Spotlight - MARTA Joint Development*

In Seattle, Washington, Sound Transit built the Capitol Hill station in 2016 as a part of the University Link light rail transit extension project, partially funded through FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program. The land for the station was acquired using CIG funds. During project planning the project sponsor, Sound Transit, saw an opportunity to partner with a private developer to construct a mixed-use retail and residential development above the station to maximize the value of the land and promote ridership. Sound Transit will lease the land (acquired through FTA funds) to the developer for 99 years and receive at least \$19 million and up to \$40 million in lease revenues over the life of the project. The private developer will invest \$135 million in the development. Figure 6-3 presents a rendering of the proposed development.

**Figure 5-3:** Sound Transit TOD - FTA Joint Development



## 5.5.2 GROUND LEASES

A commercial ground lease is generally defined as a lease of land (typically unimproved) for a substantial period (often 99 years), to a tenant who bears all costs and responsibility for property maintenance (including taxes, improvements, constructions, maintenance etc.)<sup>30</sup> Using a ground lease agreement structure significantly reduces the initial development costs of a project because the developer can forgo upfront property acquisition costs, and can instead pay annual lease payments that is built into the developer's operating budget. Lease payments to the land owner can be structured in several ways. They may include a minimum amount of revenue generated to the agency through annual lease payments with the potential for higher rents based on the revenues of the projects, or with a set guaranteed lease payment.

MARTA's preferred approach to TOD on land that it owns is to enter into a long term ground lease instead of a sale. Ground lease rates may be offered below what a full market value would demand, but are agreed to based on the financing need justified by a developer's proformas.

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



DeKalb County should identify underutilized publicly- or privately-owned parcels surrounding proposed transit stations, and evaluate the financial feasibility of purchasing them in the near term before land values increase. Identification of underutilized parcels can then be used in ground lease agreements when land values have risen due to the I-20 East transit project and developers are actively seeking joint development opportunities.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Dean. *Pros and Cons of Commercial Ground Leases*. 2007. <https://www.wendel.com/knowledge-center/publications/2007/pros-and-cons-of-commercial-ground-leases>



### 5.5.3 DEVELOPER IMPACT FEES

Local governments may require that the landowner pay a fee as a condition of issuance of permits for land use change. Development impact fees generally are applied to capital improvements and are not used for ongoing operations and maintenance costs. In addition, they are not typically applied to resolve existing infrastructure deficiencies. This type of value capture mechanism helps generate revenues right away, but is not well-suited for yielding a multi-year cash flow.

In Georgia, local governments are allowed to charge developers onetime fees to cover the proportionate share of the new infrastructure capacity new development requires, within certain categories of capital facilities and with restrictions as to track calculation, collection, and administration.<sup>31</sup>

These fees can be used in one of two ways for I-20 East TOD:

1. They can be collected by DeKalb County to offset the cost of the new infrastructure needed for each project; or
2. The County can offer to exempt private developers of these fees as an attractive financial incentive for developers to participate in these development projects.

A municipality may exempt all or part of a development project's impact fees if it believes the projects will create extraordinary economic development and employment growth or affordable housing.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Georgia Department of Community Affairs. *Hot to Address Georgia's Impact Fees Requirements*. 2008. [http://www.impactfees.com/resource/state-local/GA\\_guidebook2008.pdf](http://www.impactfees.com/resource/state-local/GA_guidebook2008.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> DIFA. O.C.G.A 36-71-4(k)) [http://www.impactfees.com/resource/state-local/GA\\_guidebook2008.pdf](http://www.impactfees.com/resource/state-local/GA_guidebook2008.pdf)

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Once development activities begin in earnest, the County should work with developers to identify the appropriate amount of developer impact fees associated with each project to contribute towards necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate the additional density; or it should explore the option of exempting a developer from these fees to generate private sector interest. These options should be considered at the project level and will require a thorough review of the planned development.

## 5.5.4 TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICTS

Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), also known as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, are financing mechanisms that use a special designated area or district to raise revenue for public improvements by capturing a portion of the additional increase in assessed property value generated by private-sector development. The tax increment is collected until all redevelopment costs and bonds have been paid. The tax increment can be used to issue bonds, allowing the issuer to access the value up front.

TAD is an existing value capture mechanism in Georgia. To enact a TAD, a majority of qualified voters must pass a local act in a special election. When a community passes a local act to enact a TAD, it must also seek consent from entities with taxing authority (i.e., a school district) that are eligible for a portion of the tax. A TAD's taxing ability expires when the bond issuances is repaid in full.

Under Georgia Law, TAD revenues or bond proceeds may be used to achieve “redevelopment,” which is broadly defined as the preservation or improvement of historical or natural assets within a defined area. Examples of applicable activities, projects, and services that qualify as redevelopment, include:

- Construction of buildings and facility for commercial, industrial, governmental, educational, charitable or social purposes;
- Renovation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and repair of existing buildings and facilities;
- Construction or redevelopment of public or private housing, public works or public facilities;
- Historic preservation works;
- Preservation, protection, and creation of open spaces, green spaces, recreational facilities, public art and cultural facilities;
- Development, construction, repair, demolition, alteration or expansions of structures, equipment and facilities for mass transit, pedestrian access and safety, and telecommunication infrastructure.

Eighteen cities and eight counties in Georgia have passed legislation for TAD successfully, including the creation of three TADs in DeKalb County.

### Opportunity Snapshot - TAD



TOD sites to be structured by the City of Stonecrest, DeKalb County, and DeKalb County School District.



\$\$\$ > \$5 million



TAD successfully implemented in Georgia, strong track-record of success in incentivizing developers.



Bonds secured by City/County may be viewed positively by developers who see bond proceeds used to invest in developing TOD at a station site, thereby increasing the rent premium for the developable land.

## CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT VALUES

Table 5-6 on the following page presents an estimate of the potential development values for the six station areas assumed in the I-20 East TOD Community Plan. The current market conditions for the six station areas, in addition to the envisioned development footprint, FAR, and typologies, result in an anticipated total development value of almost \$4 billion at full build out.

## PROPERTY TAX CALCULATION

Table 6-7 presents a preliminary estimate of potential property tax revenues based on current unincorporated DeKalb County millage rating, and the existing split of tax revenues among the County, the School District, and other tax entities; we developed three preliminary TOD revenue scenarios based upon the following participation rate assumptions:

- Scenario A - Both DeKalb County and the School District contribute 100 percent of their share of tax increment to TOD in the I-20 East corridor;
- Scenario B - Both DeKalb County and the School District contribute 50 percent of their share of tax increment to TOD; and
- Scenario C - DeKalb County contributes 50 percent and the School District contributes 25 percent of their share tax increment to TOD.

## FUNDING POTENTIAL

Under the first scenario, the potential development would generate approximately \$50.8 million in annual tax increment revenues at full TOD build-out to support TOD related infrastructure costs. Under the second scenario, the annual tax increment drops to approximately \$25.4 million. Under the third scenario, where the School District is only contributing 25 percent of its tax increment, annual revenues would be less than \$16.2 million annually at full build out.

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



No TAD currently exists in the corridor and its ultimate establishment and share of tax increment will be based on negotiations among the taxing entities. Harnessing the value generated by tax revenue is first accomplished by the enactment of legislation to establish a TAD among DeKalb County, the City of Stonecrest and the DeKalb County School District. Alternatively, the County or City of Stonecrest may also establish separate TADs. In Georgia, TADs exist until the initiating jurisdiction votes to terminate it; however, a jurisdiction may not terminate a TAD until redevelopment costs and bond debt service have been paid. The TAD should be formed when the government entities expect development activity to occur and should account for the maximum amount of developable space to be made available to the developer.

Decide DeKalb is currently evaluating modifications to its existing TADs and exploring locations for new TADs. Decide DeKalb is encouraged to make one or more new TADs along the I-20 East corridor.

### *Local Example*

One of Atlanta's first TADs, Techwood Park, failed to generate the expected tax revenues because new development did not match the pace of the city's projections. The structure of the TAD also included a park covering 25 percent of developable land. The City expanded the TAD boundaries and was able to issue the bonds needed to finance developer incentives within the District. There is a need for Dekalb County, City of Stonecrest, and Decide DeKalb to work collaboratively to address TAD constraints early in the structuring process.



### *TOD SPOTLIGHT - AEROTROPOLIS AND PERIMETER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS*

The Aerotropolis and Perimeter Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) are examples of predominately commercial areas using tax assessed values for different uses.

The Aerotropolis CIDs comprise two CIDs with joint administration. The Aerotropolis CIDs are located in Fulton County and portions of College Park, East Point and unincorporated Fulton County. The current millage rate for the CIDs is 5 mills, 1/10th of 1 percent of the assessed value of property. Collectively, the CIDs cover 15.5 square miles. Annually, the CIDs spend \$3 million on road and infrastructure improvements, beautification, and safety measures.

The Perimeter CID was established with five local governments: the Cities of Sandy Springs, Dunwoody, Brookhaven, DeKalb County and Fulton County. The Perimeter CID is a part of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative. Perimeter has used \$6 million in LCI grant funds to support "smart growth" and placemaking initiatives. As of 2014, the CID generated \$236.6 million in state tax revenues, with a 63.4% net fiscal impact on the City of Dunwoody's budget, 26.4% impact for the City of Sandy Springs, and 7.1% impact on the City of Brookhaven.

### *TOD SPOTLIGHT - PRINCETON LAKES TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT*

In 2001, the City of East Point and Fulton County, Georgia established a Tax Allocation District (TAD) at the northwest and southwest quadrant of I-285 and Camp Creek Parkway. The site was the last undeveloped tract of land at the I-285 interchange. The site was underused due to the challenges presented by steep-sloped topography and proximity to a wetland. In May 2002, the TAD issued \$26 million in bonds to finance infrastructure improvements, such as site work to address topography and wetlands, water and sewer systems, new streets, sidewalks, and walking trails.

As a result of the infrastructure investment, North American Properties and Duke Realty developed Camp Creek MarketPlace, a shopping center, and created the Camp Creek Trade Center, a business park. The MarketPlace's success prompted a second phase of 550,000 square-feet of retail in 2006. The TAD helped create the 400-acre site with 11 parcels into a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development that included 1,400 housing units in the form of single-family homes, townhomes, and planned development housing.

The TAD attracted \$366 million (2002 dollars) in private capital investment and generates approximately \$4.27 million annually in tax increment revenues. The City and County also benefited from \$350,000 in new sales tax revenues and nearly 3,000 new, permanent jobs. The TAD attained 25.2 percent of the projected redevelopment increment and contributed to a 6.3 percent (CAGR) tax revenue increase within the City.

**Table 5-6:** I-20 East TOD Station Development Potential

|                              | RESIDENTIAL       | RETAIL        | COMMERCIAL/<br>FLEXIBLE SPACE | OTHERS<br>(ENTERTAINMENT/CIVIC) | PUBLIC PARKING | TOTAL VALUE     |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                              | Total Residential | Total Retail  |                               |                                 |                |                 |
|                              | SQ.FT.            | SQ.FT.        | SQ.FT.                        | SQ.FT.                          | STALL          |                 |
| Indian Creek                 | 1,830,000         | 90,000        | -                             | 30,000                          | 1,100          |                 |
| Covington Highway            | 1,770,000         | 220,000       | -                             | -                               | -              |                 |
| Wesley Chapel Rd             | 3,230,000         | 160,000       | 470,000                       | -                               | 800            |                 |
| Panola Rd                    | 2,590,000         | 320,000       | 300,000                       | -                               | 1,200          |                 |
| Lithonia Industrial Blvd     | 1,520,000         | 70,000        | 750,000                       | -                               | -              |                 |
| Mall at Stonecrest           | 3,080,000         | 300,000       | 200,000                       | 410,000                         | 3,300          |                 |
| Corridor Summary             | 14,020,000        | 1,160,000     | 1,720,000                     | 440,000                         | 6,400          |                 |
| Value per SF (BAE Estimates) | 217               | 292           | 295                           | 150                             | 3,500          |                 |
| Total Value                  | \$3,042,340,000   | \$338,720,000 | \$507,400,000                 | \$66,000,000                    | \$22,400,000   | \$3,976,860,000 |

Source: WSP and BAE Urban Economics, 2018.

**Table 5-7:** Projected Tax Increment

|  | % Contribution | Tax Share <sup>1</sup> |                 |
|--|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Value (estimated)                          |                |                        | \$3,976,860,000 |
| Assessment Rates at \$.10/100 of assessed value  |                |                        | \$1,590,744     |
| Millage Rate                                     |                |                        | .04409          |
| Total Property Taxes (at 40% of estimated value) |                |                        | \$70,135,903    |
| Scenario A                                       |                |                        |                 |
| DeKalb County                                    | 100%           | 19.7%                  | \$13,816,773    |
| Schools  | 100%           | 52.8%                  | \$37,031,757    |
| Total Property Taxes                             |                |                        | \$50,848,530    |
| Scenario B                                       |                |                        |                 |
| DeKalb County                                    | 50%            | 19.7%                  | \$ 6,908,386    |
| Schools  | 50%            | 52.8%                  | \$ 18,515,878   |
| Total Property Taxes                             |                |                        | \$ 25,424,265   |
| Scenario C                                       |                |                        |                 |
| DeKalb County                                    | 50%            | 19.7%                  | \$ 6,908,386    |
| Schools  | 25%            | 52.8%                  | \$ 9,257,939    |
| Total Property Taxes                             |                |                        | \$ 16,166,326   |

<sup>1</sup> Tax Share is the percentage of the total property tax revenues received by the County and the school district.



## 5.5.5 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

A Community Improvement District (CID) is a self-taxing district that uses additional property tax dollars to improve its district with beautification, infrastructure, and public safety improvement projects. CIDs are comprised of private, non-exempt commercial properties. Residential and multi-family properties are not taxable by a CID. It is an effective tool for financing improvements that directly enhance property values by allowing property owners to determine how funds are spent in their area. CID funds can augment existing services such as public safety and they can also be used to leverage additional public and private funds. CIDs are currently being used throughout metro Atlanta.

CIDs can use a tax rate applied to a defined district that cannot exceed 2.5 percent of the assessed value of real property. Tax revenues generated by the CID may fund certain governmental services within the CID, such as street and road construction and maintenance, parks and recreation, storm water and sewage systems, water systems, public transportation systems, and other services and facilities.

A CID generates revenue based on the value of parcels, which leverages current and future development. Landowners and developers are inclined to participate in a CID until they can anticipate their return on investment. Knowing that new transit service is planned will be an incentive for most developers and nearby property owners to participate in a CID. Developers may want to coordinate the opening of their product to coincide with the beginning of service

to maximize the rent premium associated with the transit investment. However, it is necessary for the investment to occur prior to an improvement to fund needed infrastructure in advance of an enhancement such as new transit station and/or service.

### EAST METRO DEKALB COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Formed in 2014, the East Metro DeKalb Community Improvement District (EMDCID) is located along the I-20 East corridor in southeast DeKalb County, extending east to west from approximately Flat Shoals Road to Mall Parkway Lithonia, and north to south from Covington Park Highway to Flat Shoals Parkway. The EMDCID covers 30 square miles and has the potential to have up to 1,600 members. Property owners located in the district must sign an affidavit to become members of the EMDCID. The EMDCID's focus areas include beautification, public safety, and transportation improvements to increase economic development within the District boundaries. For its participating commercial property owners, the current millage rate is three mils.

The EMDCID participated in an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel in 2016. The panel assessed the market conditions and characteristics of the EMDCID as well as identified opportunities contingent on a new transit investment. The ULI Panel found that there are large tracts of developable land available at competitive prices, including underdeveloped retail and industrial parcels. The EMDCID also contains ample industrial zoning, which is increasingly scarce in the region while also integral to the region's logistics cluster. Proximity to both

#### Opportunity Snapshot - CIDs



Legislation must be passed to authorize the establishment of CIDs



\$\$\$ > \$5 million



Bonded debt is permitted and CID revenues must be dedicated to government services and facilities.



While CIDs may be used to fund station improvements to the benefit of developers and for bonding issuance purposes, proceeds cannot be utilized to directly fund private enterprise.

I-20 and I-285 make the EMDCID an ideal location for distribution hubs and light manufacturing. Factors like lower industrial and warehouse rents, higher apartment vacancies, and lower resident spending power constrain developers' appetite for new development within EMDCID boundaries, but present long-term investment opportunities if transit improvements are undertaken as the region continues to expand.

### FUNDING POTENTIAL

As noted in Table 5-6, the assumption for this analysis is that the properties would be assessed at \$.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Under that assumption, the CID would generate approximately \$1.6 million in annual revenues at full build out. Similar to the TAD revenue scenarios were outlined above, an adjustment in the assessment rate from \$.10 per \$1,000 of assessed values can similarly be done as discussions advance with landowners and developers. Where the CID revenues will be allocated will be an important consideration. The project team has identified approximately \$155.5 million in infrastructure needs across the I-20 East corridor. It will require more than the CID revenues to fund the infrastructure costs, therefore working with the county to determine the level of support that can be expected from their sources and other revenue sources will be critical.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



A MARTA system expansion along the I-20 corridor would increase EMDCID's appeal as an employment destination. As a result, the I-20 East TOD vision presents a mutually beneficial opportunity for both I-20 East stakeholders and EMDCID. First, the presence of EMDCID, and its relationship to the four of the six station areas analyzed in this report, eliminates the need to form a CID (or multiple CIDs) for I-20 East station areas. Secondly, the availability of land in the EMDCID – particularly as it relates to the potential station areas at Wesley Chapel Road and Panola Road – present opportunities to attract developers to the I-20 East corridor. As a result, I-20 East stakeholders and EMDCID should collaborate in identifying CID projects within the four station areas that would increase the commercial activity for existing EMCID members, attract new EMCID members, and incentivize developers to invest in the four station areas.

Once a tax sharing arrangement between DeKalb County and the City of Stonecrest is determined, the City and County would develop a governance structure for the allocation of the CID revenues in a manner that would meet the requirements of underwriters to issue bonds to support the program. That structure may be a Joint Powers Agreement or similar vehicle legally allocating the revenues.

## 5.5.6 ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPER INCENTIVES UTILIZING LAND VALUE CAPTURE

Analyses presented here must be considered preliminary and subject to change based on how the market performs in the ensuing years.

The BAE Market Assessment summarized in Chapter 5 of the I-20 East TOD Community Plan concludes that four of the five development types proposed in the corridor are not feasible because current rents will not support new construction. The time between now and when high capacity transit service commences will likely provide time for area rents to grow, based on the proposed new transit service and the general growth forecast within the corridor.

While developing the TOD Community Plan, outreach to public and private stakeholders, such as developers, Decide DeKalb, the City of Stonecrest, and DeKalb County, focused on raising awareness of the possibilities under land value capture programs. There are ongoing discussions with DeKalb County, Decide DeKalb, and the City of Stonecrest on the benefits and potential revenues from TADs and CIDs and district structuring possibilities. The project team has met with key developers and landowners and those meetings continue to both educate them and to determine their level of interest and view of the potential for new development along the I-20 East corridor.

## 5.5.7 AIR RIGHTS

Air rights refer to the right to develop, occupy, and control the vertical space above a property. Air rights can either be bought, leased, or transferred. This is most often seen in transit projects where the space above a transit station is developed by a private developer to build TODs, such as the case with Sound Transit's TOD in Seattle. Densification above a proposed station would provide for significant private sector investment, possibly promoting economic development, and increasing ridership.

### TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Once the I-20 East Transit project is approved and stations are being designed, MARTA and DeKalb County should work to solicit for a developer partner to build atop the proposed station.

### Opportunity Snapshot - Air Rights



Developers may lease or purchase land or air rights from MARTA or the County above or adjacent to an I-20 East station



\$\$\$ > \$5 million



Air rights and ground leases provide rental income to the transit agency or County and valuable TOD real estate for the developers



MARTA may solicit a joint development proposal for above or adjacent to a new station associated with the I-20 East project that allows a private partner to develop on top of or next to a station, creating dense mixed-use TOD and increasing ridership.



**Table 5-8:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Reviewed: Value Capture Mechanisms

| OPPORTUNITY                                    | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/<br>ENTITY                             | OVERVIEW  | FUNDING<br>POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT                         | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES  |
|--|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Tax Allocation District (TAD) Financing        | Funds collected and distributed by the County or City       | Tax Allocation Districts (TAD), also known as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, is a financing mechanism that establishes a special designated area to raise revenue for public improvements by capturing a portion of the additional increase in assessed property value generated by private-sector development. | \$\$\$               | DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest | Capital projects, infrastructure, and TOD construction                                   |
| Community Transportation Improvement Districts | Funds collected and distributed by the County or City       | Community Improvement Districts (CIDs), also known as Special Assessment Districts (SADs), are designated geographical areas in which an additional property tax is applied to parcels of land that receive a special benefit from one or more public improvements funded by the special tax.                             | \$\$\$               | DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest | Capital projects, infrastructure, and TOD construction                                   |
| Developer Impact Fees                          | Private Developers  | When a landowner requests a permit for a land use change (such as a building permit or certificate of occupancy) that places a burden on existing infrastructure, local government or another public agency may require that the landowner pay a fee as a condition of issuance.  | *                    | DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest | Fees cover the cost of additional infrastructure needed to support increased development |
| Air Rights                                     | MARTA, County, or City in agreement with Private Developers | Air rights refer to the right to develop, occupy, and control the vertical space above a property. Air rights can either be bought, leased, or transferred. This is most often seen in transit projects where the space above a transit station is developed by a private developer to build TODs.                        | *                    | MARTA                             | Evaluated  |

\* The options under Value Capture Mechanisms do not have a financial benefit assigned, as their benefits are difficult to quantify.

## 5.6 TOD POLICY AND DEVELOPER INCENTIVES

There are many policy tools and developer incentives that DeKalb County, and the City of Stonecrest can employ to entice developers to invest in the I-20 East corridor. These can range from reductions in taxes owed to increased allowable building footprints. This section will briefly outline the following opportunities:

- Land banks;
- Sales tax abatements;
- Density bonuses;
- Decide DeKalb Incentives such as:
  - Permit fee reductions;
  - Water and sewer fee reductions; and
  - Accelerated development review processes.

These incentives are summarized in Table 6-11.

### 5.6.1 LAND BANKS

Land banks can be used to acquire property and assemble developable land in station areas to make TOD and associated infrastructure projects more feasible.

In DeKalb County, the Regional Land Bank is a government entity that focuses on converting vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties to productive use in order to stabilize neighborhoods and promote quality housing, encourage new industry, and generate additional jobs.<sup>33</sup> Decide DeKalb has indicated that this entity may be revived to allow DeKalb County and the City of Stonecrest to communicate their preferences for identified sites or underutilized parcels that may be catalytic in spurring development along the I-20 East corridor.



#### NEXT STEPS

A land bank could acquire properties in the I-20 East corridor before land prices rise to the arrival of a transit project, and then either sell at market price to a developer to benefit the local government, or “write down” the value of the land when transferring it to a developer to build the TOD. Selling the land to the developer at the original sale price will incentivize the developer to invest in the site. In some TOD cases, land banks transfer the land to developers at no cost, with certain building restrictions such as affordable housing or parking.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *DeKalb Regional Land Bank.* <https://www.dekalbcounty-ga.gov/community-development/dekalb-regional-land-bank>

<sup>34</sup> *EPA. Infrastructure Financing Options for TOD.* 2013. [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-02/documents/infrastructure\\_financing\\_options\\_for\\_transit-oriented\\_development](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-02/documents/infrastructure_financing_options_for_transit-oriented_development).

#### Opportunity Snapshot - Land Banks



The County can assemble land surrounding proposed transit stations.



N/A



Ensures that equitable, mixed-use, visionary TOD occurs in prime parcels surrounding stations.



The DeKalb County Regional Land Bank could begin to identify and acquire parcels within a half-mile radius of proposed I-20 East transit stations. The County can “hold” them before the transit project is under construction and then can offer developers financially feasible ground leases, or transfer the properties to developers at the original cost

## 5.6.2 PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

Property tax abatements allow a property owner to either completely forgo or pay a reduced amount of property tax on improvements to a property over a defined period. Property tax abatement programs do not completely eliminate an owners' tax bill, as the owner is still responsible for paying taxes on the value of the property before improvements. These programs can be applied to single family homes, commercial, and multi-family residential properties. Property taxes, particularly on larger commercial or multi-family residential property, can be a burdensome amount of the property's operating costs each year. For commercial properties, these costs are passed on to the consumer renting the properties. These costs may make rents unachievable for a market area and the development financially infeasible, stalling the County's TOD vision. Property tax abatement programs can help overcome this barrier to redevelopment by lowering the costs of property taxes the owner must pay each year, thereby reducing their annual operating budget, allowing owners to charge lower rental prices to remain affordable and consistent with the existing local market. Decide DeKalb offers property tax abatements over 10, 15, and 20-year time periods.<sup>35</sup>

pdf  
35 *Decide DeKalb. Incentive Programs - Property Tax Incentives.* <https://www.decidedekalb.com/what-we-do/financing-incentives.stml>

### NEXT STEPS



DeKalb County should work with developers of proposed TOD to identify possible tax abatements for large investments along the corridor. The County will need to be strategic in selecting sites for abatements, carefully considering where TADs may be proposed.

#### TOD Spotlight

In 1995 the Oregon State Literature amended legislation to enable local jurisdictions to adopt a Transit Oriented Development tax abatement program. Recognizing the higher development costs associated with building higher densities, the legislation's purpose is to promote higher-density residential and mixed use development near major public transit facilities (Figure 6-5). These tax exemptions increase a TOD project's financial feasibility by reducing their operating costs through a ten-year tax abatement on the improvement of the property. The property owners continue to pay taxes on the land value during the exception period.

**Figure 5-5:** Portland TOD



#### Opportunity Snapshot - Property Tax Abatement



Developers will benefit from a reduced property tax bill



\$\$ \$1 to 5 million



Lowers annual operating costs of developments.



DeKalb County can provide property tax abatements to assist projects that are not otherwise financially viable. The abatements are made on a project-by-project basis. The County provided a tax abatement for Stonecrest Mall through 2020.



### 5.6.3 SALES TAX ABATEMENT

For major sales tax generating developments, such as national retailers, sales tax rebates have been utilized to support projects where the land price is too high for the development to be feasible. Under the approach, the land price is reduced (or the funds are advanced by the project sponsor) and the local governmental entity that receives the sales tax agrees to a sales tax rebate. The structure is typically the rebate of a percentage, such as the lesser of a percentage of development costs or a capped percentage of total sales tax generated at the project site.

Under the Georgia Tourism Development Act (GA Code § 48-8-273 (2015)), companies constructing new tourism attraction projects receive a sales tax abatement of the lesser of the total amount of the increase in sales and use taxes or up to 2.5 percent of the development costs. The abatement program runs for ten years. To receive this rebate, eligible entities must have constructed a project that cost a minimum of \$1 million, and provide three-years of estimated state and local sales tax generations showing that at least 25 percent of its visitors from out of state. Eligible tourism attractions include cultural or historic sites, recreation or entertainment facilities, convention hotels and conference centers, automobile race track with tourism amenities, golf courses with tourism amenities, marinas and water parks with lodging and restaurant facilities, or a Georgia crafts and products center. Facilities such as shopping malls, retail centers, and movie theaters are not eligible for this abatement.

The program is managed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Department establishes the administrative regulations for applicants eligible

for the program and reviews requests. DeKalb County and/or the City of Stonecrest should contact the Department to understand how projects may be eligible under the law and uncover any barriers to successful implementation.

#### NEXT STEPS



DeKalb County should consider which uses identified in the I-20 TOD Community Plan may qualify for this sales tax rebate and court potential developers and businesses who qualify to occupy those proposed spaces.

#### *Opportunity Snapshot - Sales Tax Abatement*



Developers will benefit from additional building capacity



**\$\$** \$1 to 5 million



Lowers annual operating costs of developments.



DeKalb County should heavily promote the state's sales tax abatement incentive to qualified potential I-20 East TOD developers. This will allow the County to attract a desired mix of uses, including visitor- and tourist-generating uses such as convention centers. These uses will generate additional revenue for the city be attracting out of town guests who will patronize local business, restaurants, and hotels.

## 5.6.4 DENSITY BONUSES

A density bonus is a zoning tool that grants developers the ability to build at higher than allowable zoned densities, in exchange for providing an economic benefit that a jurisdiction desires. The bonuses are provided at no cost to the local government, but enable them to promote goals such as mixed-income housing to benefit a wider pool of residents. The additional building allowances means the developer can increase the number of units, making a project with 20 percent income-restricted units more financially feasible. Some local governments provide transit-related density bonuses. In other cases, localities offer bonuses based on amenities and location.

### NEXT STEPS



In DeKalb County, existing zoning allows for – and encourages – density based on the quality of development and amenities and services provided to each new development. As shown in Table 5-9 TOD in the I-20 East corridor will be eligible for a 100 percent density bonus if located within a quarter-mile of an existing MARTA station. DeKalb County should continue to work with developers to promote this incentive.

**Table 5-9: DEKALB COUNTY DENSITY BONUSES**

| DENSITY BONUS | ELIGIBILITY   |
|---------------|---|
| 20%           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant provides public improvements (bus shelters, public trail, sidewalks beyond site, etc.)</li> <li>Locate within ¼ mile of park-n-ride or ride-share</li> <li>Non-residential is 10-25% of total GSF (Mixed Use only)</li> <li>Locate within ¼ mile from amenities (senior center, schools, shopping, recreational facility)</li> </ul> |
| 50%           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant provides public improvements (bus shelters, public trail, sidewalks beyond site, etc.)</li> <li>Locate within ¼ mile of park-n-ride or ride-share</li> <li>Non-residential is 10-25% of total GSF (Mixed Use only)</li> <li>Locate within ¼ mile from amenities (senior center, schools, shopping, recreational facility)</li> </ul> |
| 100%          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced open space increased to 35%+ of site</li> <li>Locate within ¼ mile of existing MARTA rail station</li> </ul>  |

DeKalb County. *Economic Development Incentives Policy*. 2018. <http://web.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/edIncentivesPolicy.pdf>

### Opportunity Snapshot - Density Bonuses



Developers will benefit from additional building capacity



\$\$ \$1 to 5 million



Lowers annual operating costs of developments.



DeKalb County should heavily promote the density bonus incentive to potential I-20 East TOD developers. This will allow the County to achieve desired densities and uses while providing developers with additional revenue potential.

## 5.6.5 DECIDE DEKALB POLICY INCENTIVES

Decide DeKalb, established in 1974 as the Development Authority of DeKalb County, is the County's primary economic development agency. Decide DeKalb is tasked with attracting, expanding, and retaining businesses, and to work with partners, stakeholders, and the business community in order to encourage capital investments and job growth in target industries. The DeKalb County Incentives Policy documents fee waivers, reductions, matching funds, and other economic development incentives. The following three incentive programs have the most potential to spur TOD along the corridor by decreasing the costs associated with new developments. The annual budget for such incentives is approximately \$1 million, meaning the County will not be able to offer these incentives to all potential developers with additional funding.

### PERMIT FREE REDUCTION

DeKalb County offers a reduction in the cost of land development and building permit fees, up to 100 percent based on the economic impacts (financial investment and jobs created) of a project (Table 5-10). Business occupation taxes will also be capped at \$1,000 for a set period determined by the size of the investment. These permit fee reductions can encourage land development and job creation in the area, while increasing the presence of some of the County's target industries. In order to qualify for these permit reductions, a project must meet the economic impact threshold requirements which can be found in the County's Economic Development Incentives Policy document.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 5-10:** Permit Fee Reduction Thresholds

| TIER | POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT  | POTENTIAL INCENTIVES   |
|------|--|--|
| I    | For investment projects with a taxable value within a range of \$10 to \$15 million and creating a minimum of 20 new jobs          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit discounts of 50% on General Contractor Fees</li> <li>Business Occupation taxes capped at \$1,000 for one (1) year</li> </ul>     |
| II   | For investment projects with a taxable value within a range of \$16 to \$20 million and creating a minimum of 30 new jobs          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit discounts of 60% on General Contractor Fees</li> <li>Business occupation taxes capped at \$1,000 for two (2) years</li> </ul>    |
| III  | For investment projects with a taxable value within a range of \$21 to \$30 Million dollars and creating a minimum of 40 new jobs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit discounts of 70% on General Contractor Fees</li> <li>Business occupation taxes capped at \$1,000 for three (3) years.</li> </ul> |
| IV   | For investment projects with a taxable value within a range of \$31 to \$50 Million dollars and creating a minimum of 60 new jobs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit discounts of 80% on General Contractor Fees</li> <li>Business occupation taxes capped at \$1,000 for four (4) years</li> </ul>   |
| V    | For investment projects with a taxable value within a range of \$51 Million and above, and creating a minimum of 100 new jobs.     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit discounts of 100% on General Contractor Fees</li> <li>Business occupation taxes capped at \$1,000 for five (5) years.</li> </ul> |

<sup>36</sup> DeKalb County. *Economic Development Incentives Policy*. 2018. <http://web.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/edIncentivesPolicy.pdf>



## WATER AND SEWER FEE REDUCTIONS

DeKalb County will match each dollar contributed towards the cost of capacity improvements for water/and or sewer up to \$750,000 based on the economic impact of a project. The project must fall into a target industry of the County's Economic Development Community Plan. This means that much needed improvements can be made to important public works in the County, and it can be done within a larger project to minimize disruptions. An added benefit is that the County does not bear the entire cost of the capacity improvements.

To qualify for the improvement matching funds, the project must meet the water usage criteria which can be found in the County's *Economic Development Incentives Policy* document.<sup>37</sup>

## ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Any proposed development with a taxable value of at least \$10 million may request an expedited process for Land Development and Building permits. For approved projects, the County will provide guaranteed service level agreements for completion of all Land Development and Building permit reviews within ten business days of applicant submission. Additionally, the County will establish a single point of contact to work closely with project managers, contractors, owners, and other interested parties. Accelerating the review process can decrease project costs and result in more rapid achievement of development.

- LIHTC 4%
- Georgia Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits
- Property Tax Abatement
- Permit Fee Reductions
- Water and Sewer Fee Reductions
- Accelerated Development Review Process

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<sup>37</sup> DeKalb County. *Economic Development Incentives Policy*. 2018. <http://web.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/edIncentivesPolicy.pdf>

**Table 5-11:** TOD Funding and Financing Options Reviewed: Policy Incentives and TOD Tools

| OPPORTUNITY                          | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/ ENTITY     | OVERVIEW   | FUNDING POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT                        | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES   |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Developer Bonuses (Zoning)           | DeKalb County                    | A zoning tool that grants developers the ability to build at higher than allowable zoned densities, in exchange for providing an economic benefit the locality desires.  | *                 | Developers                       | Increases allowable FAR and densities for developments  |
| Land Banking                         | DeKalb County Regional Land Bank | Used in TOD to assemble developable land in station areas to make TOD and the associated infrastructure projects more feasible.  | *                 | DeKalb County, Developers        |   |
| Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) | ARC                              | Grant program that incentivizes local jurisdictions to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles and provide improved access to jobs and services  | \$\$              | DeKalb County, Developers        |   |
| Ground Leases                        | DeKalb County or MARTA           | A joint development tool used when the local government or transit agency owns the land in proximity to a station and lease the it to a private developer. This provides an income stream for the land owner and is often more financially viable for the developer.   | *                 | DeKalb County, MARTA, Developers | Acquisition costs for new development   |
| Property Tax Abatement               | DeKalb County                    | Allow a property owner to either completely forgo or pay a reduced amount of property tax on improvement to a property over a defined period. Property Tax Abatement programs do not eliminate an owners' tax bill, as the owner is still responsible for paying taxes on the value of the property before improvements.   | *                 | Developer, Property Owner        | Real property   |
| Sales Tax Rebates                    | State of Georgia                 | Have been utilized to support projects where the land price is too high for the project to be feasible. Under the approach, the land price is reduced (or the funds are advanced by the project sponsor) and the local governmental entity that receives the sales tax agrees to a sales tax rebate. The structure is typically the rebate of a percentage, such as the lesser of a percentage of development costs or a total of a percentage of total sales tax collected at the site. | *                 | Developer, Property Owner        | Qualifying Georgia tourism attractions include cultural or historic sites, recreation or entertainment facilities, convention hotels and conference centers, automobile race track with tourism amenities, golf courses with tourism amenities, and more. |

| OPPORTUNITY                            | ADMINISTERING AGENCY/ ENTITY  | OVERVIEW  | FUNDING POTENTIAL | RECIPIENT              | ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES   |
|--|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| Permit Fee Reduction                   | DeKalb County / Decide DeKalb | DeKalb County offers a reduction in the cost of land development and building permit fees, up to 100% based on the economic impacts of a project (financial investment and jobs created). Business occupation taxes are also capped at \$1,000 for a set period of time determined by size of the investment. The project must fall into a target industry of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan  | \$                | Developers, Businesses | Reduction in land development and building fees, as well as a capped business occupation tax for a set number of years. |
| Water and Sewer Fee Reductions         | DeKalb County / Decide DeKalb | DeKalb County will match each dollar contributed towards the cost of capacity improvements for water/and or sewer up to \$750,000 based on the economic impact of the project t (financial investment and jobs created). The project must fall into a target industry of the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan   | \$                | Developers, Businesses | Reduction in water and sewer infrastructure costs associated with the new development                                   |
| Accelerated Development Review Process | DeKalb County / Decide DeKalb | Any proposed development with a taxable value of at least \$10 million may request an expedited process for Land Development and Building permits. For approved projects, the County provides guaranteed service level agreements for completion of all Land Development and Building permit reviews within ten business days of applicant submission. Additionally, the County can establish a single point of contact to work closely with project managers, contractors, owners, and other interested parties. | \$                | Developers, Businesses | Approved development project proving to have an economic benefit to the county  |

\* The options under Policy Incentives and TOD Tools do not have a financial benefit assigned, as their benefits are difficult to quantify.



# 6 RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

## 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

This report concludes with recommended next steps for DeKalb County and others to consider to promote and incentivize TOD along I-20 East, and to access the widest array of funding and financing opportunities to assist in completing the envisioned build-out design presented in the Community Plan.

A limited number of funding and financing opportunities that can support TOD along the I-20 East corridor are truly dependent on transit approval. Most of the loan, grant, and tax credit sources presented in this report may be applied for by the County, MARTA, City of Stonecrest, or private developers at any time to begin to transform the character of the I-20 corridor through strategic development. While proximity to transit will make some projects more competitive for certain funding opportunities, the absence of a station does not preclude a development project from

receiving funds through several programs profiled in this report. However, these programs should be pursued strategically through a phased approach that maximizes the development potential along the corridor and best leverages a future I-20 East transit investment.

This section identifies several actions that DeKalb County and MARTA can take a) in the short term (one to three years) to best prepare the area for development; b) in the intermediate term (once the I-20 East transit project receives approval and funding) to tap into TOD specific funding sources, such as a TOD structured loan fund or a bond program; and c) development activities that will likely be undertaken by private developers that can be taken anytime – but likely close to or after implementation of high capacity transit in the I-20 East corridor - to design, finance, and construct projects similar to ones proposed in this Community Plan.

## 6.1.1 IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Although approval and commitment of federal funding for a high capacity transit investment in the I-20 East corridor is not expected before 2024, it is never too early to begin implementing portions of this TOD Community Plan. Shifting the perception of the corridor early to cultivate an image of a developer-friendly County is paramount to achieving the desired full build-out envisioned by the Community Plan. To do this, there are several actions DeKalb County and MARTA can take right away and can continue to pursue in the short-term. An overview of the funding and financing opportunities that require short term actions is presented below.

1. **Include a “whereas” statement approved by ARC that will grandfather the Indian Creek, Covington Highway, Panola Road, and Lithonia Industrial Boulevard station locations as LCI Areas when DeKalb County adopts the I-20 East TOD Community Plan.** Achieving LCI status would allow DeKalb County and MARTA to immediately pursue federal funds available through ARC for bike and pedestrian projects associated with the I-20 East TOD vision at these four station locations not currently designated as LCI areas. The County should present this Community Plan to the LCI team at ARC to ensure all LCI study requirements are met and confirm the grandfathering language with ARC before Plan adoption.
2. **Confirm recommended priority bike, pedestrian, and complete streets projects presented in this Community Plan and start building the vision.** This Community Plan includes a proposed program of immediate improvements to the I-20 East corridor that the County can begin undertaking in the near-term to help change the perception of the area and entice future development. Once the County confirms these proposed priorities, it should:
  - a. Include these projects in the County’s 2019 Transportation Plan update;

- b. Prioritize these TOD supportive projects within the County’s CIP;
- c. Identify sources for the 20 percent local match required to pursue federal funding from ARC; and
- d. Apply for ARC funding for the selected bike, pedestrian, and complete streets projects.

3. **Work with Decide DeKalb to create one or more new TADs.** A recommended roadmap for TAD creation follows:
  - a. DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest and DecideDeKalb should consider the geographic boundaries for TADs in the six station areas envisioned for the I-20 East corridor. Those boundaries should consider the maximum amount of developable land available to developers, the existing zoning, underutilized or vacant parcels, and existing anchor institutions (employers, educational centers, etc).
  - b. The DeKalb County and/or City of Stonecrest should consider the driving goals for the acquisition of “catalytic” properties within proposed TAD boundaries. “Catalytic” properties are those that have the potential to increase affordable housing; serve the space and commuting needs for regional employers, such as logistics providers, or medical facilities; and to reactivate underutilized or vacant retail and industrial parcels. The goals of respective stakeholders will inform each TAD’s governance structure and the approach the stakeholders must take to justify the purpose and function of the taxing entities.
  - c. The DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest and DecideDeKalb should approach the DeKalb County School District to assess interest in the proposed TADs. Involving the school system will increase the amount of revenue the TADs are able to generate. Economic development in the corridor has a direct impact on student population and resources.

- d. To enact the TADs, a local act must be passed by a majority of qualified voters in a special election by the political subdivisions directly affected (DeKalb County, City of Stonecrest, school system).
- e. After pursuing the legislative changes necessary to implement the TADs, the entities should coordinate master planning efforts to enact cohesive change across the corridor and conduct outreach to developers interested in accessing the benefits of the established TADs. Since Georgia has several successful TADs in the I-20 East region, the TAD governing bodies should tap into this existing network and leverage lessons learned to develop a strategy that engages developers prior to the commencement of transit service.

**4. Identify a program or projects that are consistent with policies of the existing East Metro DeKalb Community Improvement District (EMDCID)-** The size of the EMDCID is both an advantage and a disadvantage; it encompasses the Mall at Stonecrest, Lithonia, Panola Road, and Wesley Chapel Road station areas, but this size also decreases the visibility of the CID's improvements, making it more difficult to engage with commercial property owners that do not directly benefit from EMDCID efforts. I-20 East stakeholders may help EMDCID focus interest on the four station areas. Focusing on specific station areas within the EMDCID allows for a targeted approach and more visible return on investment for EMDCID members most impacted by a transit investment in the I-20 East corridor. In turn, this will enable EMDCID to engage with more potential members around the station areas. The proposed vision for I-20 East offers opportunities to create vibrant, live-work-play areas that offer increase commercial activities. The County, MARTA, and City of Stonecrest, then, should educate EMDCID members about the benefits of the proposed transit improvements and coordinate with EMDCID to slate projects that attract developers and employers to the four station areas. DeKalb County and City of Stonecrest should engage with the EMDCID to:

- a. Identify existing and potential CID members in the four station areas;
- b. Calculate the potential revenues generated by existing (and

potential) commercial property owners closest to the four station areas;

- c. Work with EMDCID to identify beautification, infrastructure, and public safety improvement projects that would attract developers to the four station areas;
- d. Approach existing and potential members to gain their confidence that CID revenues would be applied to making improvements in the station areas that have the greatest impact on livability and transit access that result in a return on investment for members; and,
- e. Collaborate with EMDCID's board to update EMDCID's Master Plan to include those projects and coincide project execution with the construction timeframe for the I-20 East transit project.

**5. Identify strategic and catalytic sites to be acquired through the regional land bank.** Land banking is a powerful tool to safeguard pivotal sites proximate to the proposed station locations, allowing the County to have influence over the density, use, and even style of building erected by developers. Without the ability to land bank, key parcels near station areas may be acquired too early – before transit arrives – and be developed into an undesired use, such as single family homes or low density commercial. To do this, the County and City of Stonecrest must:

- a. Select priority sites both in the County and in the City of Stonecrest to acquire. Both parties will need to identify the owners of each site and current value.
- b. Reinstate the DeKalb County Regional Land Bank and identify the source of County funds to acquire land and operate the land bank. This may include reassigning County staff to manage the land bank full or part time.



**6. Encourage TOD at the existing MARTA Indian Creek Station.** Since the Indian Creek Station already exists, the County should coordinate with MARTA to prioritize TOD at the Indian Creek station. Pending the DeKalb County's Master Transit Plan approval, the project team will:

- a. Confirm station location and transit alignment.
  - i. Station Location. The current plan for the station area assumes that in the future the station will be relocated south of the current location. The plan locates the highest density mixed use development around the new station. If the transit plan keeps the station in the current station location, the plan should reconsider the location of the highest density development to leverage proximity to transit.
  - ii. Alignment. Development must respect the transit alignment. In the short-term development, can leverage existing transit access so long as the ROW is preserved for the future alignment of the transit extension.
- b. Prepare a site master plan for Indian Creek station area. Once the project team knows what the transit plan will call for at Indian Creek, the team will prepare an alternative site master plan for MARTA and DeKalb County to consider. Phasing of the project should allow for development to occur in the short term that accommodates the final alignment in the long-term. Specific elements that will be built out to set the stage for a master development should sequence construction to prioritize:
  - i. Central boulevard - Improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods
  - ii. Site infrastructure - street greed and utilities to begin to prep sites for development
  - iii. Residential neighborhood - begin construction of the residential neighborhood to create demand for future retail uses
  - iv. Community Green - construct open space to provide amenity for residents and to create a focus for development
  - v. Central structured parking - as the park and ride surface lots are built out the commuter parking will need to be replaced

with structured parking. Synergies for shared parking with on-site uses should be investigated to reduce parking demand.

- vi. Civic Plaza - once a critical mass of residents is established construct the civic plaza to create a focus for the mixed-use district. Before the mixed-use district is constructed the plaza can be programmed to attract visitors who otherwise would not visit the site and start to change perceptions of Indian Creek as a destination.
- vii. Mixed use district - it is envisioned that the last area to be developed would be the mixed-use district. This is the highest density of uses closest to transit and is where most of the retail uses are proposed in a 'Main Street' environment. The phasing this district is ultimately based on market demand, but it is assumed that it would occur in later phases once a critical mass of residents has been established and perceptions of Indian Creek Station area have been changed

**7. Connect with Invest Atlanta to understand their process for creation of the new Atlanta TOD Structured Loan Fund. Using Atlanta as a case study may help DeKalb County replicate a similar fund. The County should also monitor the success of Invest Atlanta's fund, and work with it to benefit from any possible lessons learned. To create a structured loan fund, DeKalb County will need to:**

- a. Identify investors; and
- b. Develop investing guidelines of the fund.

**8. Continue the outreach and education process with developers on the potential of the corridor and TOD vision** – Throughout the development of this Strategic Plan, the project team has worked alongside DeKalb County and MARTA to educate a broad range of stakeholders such as the City of Stonecrest, community groups, and private developers on the breadth of development possibilities along the I-20 East corridor. DeKalb County and MARTA should continue these efforts, including to:

- a. Facilitate developer coordination surrounding strategic land parcels. This will include working with Decide DeKalb and the Regional Land Bank to reach reasonable sale or lease prices with possible use restrictions to support the Community Plan's vision.
- b. Host periodic community meetings to present the progress of development interest and activity around the stations.

**9. Continue the equity work surrounding the I-20 East TOD efforts by creating a TOD advisory committee** – Equitable TOD is a priority of DeKalb County and MARTA and this Community Plan reflects that. The desired mix of development uses and affordability levels are designed to create a vibrant and diverse corridor where existing residents can remain and thrive, while attracting new residents to the increased access to transit, amenities, and jobs along the I-20 East corridor. This goal of equitable TOD should remain in the forefront of future planning discussions, and should be championed by a range of stakeholders. To do this, the County and MARTA should create a TOD Equity Committee comprised of community members, local governmental officials, developers, and MARTA representatives. Identifying project champions is an integral part of fueling the momentum for a development effort of this magnitude. An official advisory committee can:

- a. Serve as a unified voice to keep the public informed of progress, consider development proposals, and actively pursue new residents, employers, and developments.
- b. Change perceptions of the corridor by proposing and promoting new marketing efforts for the County and by implementing the initial phases of bike and pedestrian improvements discussed earlier in this section. The full build-out of TOD surrounding these stations is proposed to occur in phases, and the Advisory Committee should keep other developers, investors, and the public apprised of continued progress.
- c. Educate developers to inform them of the availability of incentive programs, grants, loans, and tax credit opportunities available in the area as provided in this Plan. This report can serve as a helpful resource - and roadmap - for the Advisory Committee to reference when meeting with potential developers and investors.

## 6.1.2 I-20 EAST TRANSIT APPROVAL

The following action items should take place soon after the I-20 East transit project is approved and funding is secured. While discussions surrounding these items can certainly occur in the short term, opportunities will be dependent on the financial commitment to implement high capacity transit in the corridor. These opportunities are described in greater detail below.

### FUTURE ACTIONS

1. Work to confirm available public land near station areas. MARTA and DeKalb County should work together to identify possible opportunities for air rights or ground lease joint development opportunities with developers. It is more probable that the I-20 East TOD will occur on MARTA or County owned land using ground leases rather than air rights, due to the lower density nature of the corridor and the high construction cost associated with vertical development atop stations.
  - a. Once sites are identified, the property owner (MARTA or DeKalb County) should develop an RFP for joint development partners that may include some use restrictions such as density and income targets as a part of the deal.
2. Create a new bond program to specifically fund a portion of the infrastructure improvements associated with new TOD around the station areas. This will occur after the I-20 East transit project is confirmed, as the use of bond proceeds will be restricted to projects specifically tied to elements of the I-20 East project. Depending on the bond program, it may need voter approval, which will require community outreach and marketing.
3. Court tourism-generating development projects along the I-20 East corridor. DeKalb County should work with developers of possible major convention and expo centers, as well as other major tourism draws such as entertainment uses to locate near one of the new stations, such as the proposed entertainment center at Stonecrest Mall. These types of projects will be eligible to receive a state sales tax rebate, allowing the developers and operators to maximize profits without affecting DeKalb County's property tax revenues.
4. Implement TOD-specific sources that have been identified and researched in the short-term. Once the County and MARTA undertake the immediate next steps presented earlier (i.e. identifying new TAD locations, understanding CID opportunities, and evaluating a structured TOD Fund), they can begin to utilize these sources for proposed TOD.



### 6.1.3 DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Most of the specific “long-term” funding and financing options presented in this report will be pursued by individual developers of TOD surrounding the I-20 East stations. While these opportunities are immediately available for developers to begin densifying and diversifying land uses surrounding the proposed station areas, it is expected that the influx of major real estate investment will occur once the I-20 East transit project has secured funding, putting the “T” in TOD. At that time, these sources should be reevaluated to identify current funding levels, requirements, and program priorities before applying for any source.

Each of the incentives and funding and financing sources listed below relies on having an individual development project proposed with a strong level of certainty. In Section 2 Funding and Financing TOD of this report, each source opportunity profile identifies the administering agency, how to apply, typical funding levels, and eligibility information.

Since it is anticipated that the largest portion of the development presented in this Community Plan won’t be catalyzed until the I-20 East transit project’s approval in 2024, the information presented in this report will likely need to be refreshed at that time. Developers can find links to all program websites in this report’s references, and should monitor future funding levels and opportunities once ready to apply.

- Developer Impact Fees
- Developer Bonuses (Zoning)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Section 108 Loans
- New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)
- Historic Tax Credits
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) 9%

# I-20 EAST TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) COMMUNITY PLAN

## SECTION 2

November 2019

