

Public Hearing: YES ☒ NO ☐

Department: Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): Commission District 04; Super Districts 06 and 07

Application of the Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is for the adoption of the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan and its vision, policy, and goals for future development of the planned area.

PETITION NO: 2025-1082 TA-25-1247701

PROPOSED USE: Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan.

LOCATION: Commission District 4, Super Districts 6 & 7

PARCEL NO. : N/A

INFO. CONTACT: Tricia Prevost, Sr. Planner, AICP

PHONE NUMBER: 404-371-2155

PURPOSE:

Application of the Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is for the adoption of the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan and its vision, policy, and goals for future development of the planned area.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (Aug. 2025) Approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION: (Sept. 9, 2025) Pending.

PLANNING STAFF: Approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The applicant is seeking to adopt the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan's general vision, policies, and goals to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the 2050 Unified Plan as guidance for future development of the planned area. This study was funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission under the Community Development Assistance Program to study the subject area and provide recommendations for economic development, affordable housing, anti-displacement strategies, mobility, and placemaking. As an important pedestrian corridor, the Stone Mountain Trail provides the opportunity to enhance the neighborhoods around it through pedestrian connectivity, infill housing options, public art, trail amenities, safety improvements and economic development. Between October 2024 and September 2025, DeKalb County, with consultants from Pond & Company, underwent an extensive planning process, including existing conditions analysis, public engagement, and developing strategies and recommendations. The public engagement efforts included a project website and survey, which received over 300 responses, two pop-up events, two open houses, and a design charrette. Intercept surveys were also conducted on the trail to directly engage trail users. Additional feedback and reviews were received from a stakeholder committee, County staff, and County Commissioners. The combination of public engagement and feedback from community and County representatives ensured plan recommendations aligned with the goals and vision of the subject area. The plan includes 3 nodes with recommendations tailored to the unique conditions and goals of each area. Recommendations include intersection safety and connectivity improvements on the trail; opportunities for mixed-use development and affordable housing; placemaking through art and furnishings; and anti-displacement strategies to protect existing residents and ensure equitable development. Adopting the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan as an amendment to Chapter 5 Small Area Plans

in DeKalb County's 2050 Unified Plan will enable the Planning & Sustainability Department – Long Range Division – to move forward with ARC and DeKalb County's shared goal of creating a strong, equitable pedestrian-oriented community along the trail corridor. Therefore, Staff recommends "***Approval***".

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (September 9, 2025) Pending.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (Aug. 2025) Approval 5-0-3.

Planning Commission Hearing Date: September 9, 2025
Board of Commissioners Hearing Date: September 30, 2025

STAFF ANALYSIS

CASE NO.: TA-25-1247701		File ID #: 2025-1082
Address:	N/A	Commission District: 4 Super District: 6 & 7
Parcel ID(s):	N/A	
Request:	Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability to Amend Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is for the adoption of the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan and its vision, policy, and goals for the future development of the planned area.	
Property Owner(s):		
Applicant/Agent:	Director, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Department	
Acreage:		
Existing Land Use:		
Comprehensive Plan:	<u> X </u> Consistent <u> </u> Inconsistent	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval

The applicant is seeking to adopt the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan’s general vision, policies, and goals to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the 2050 Unified Plan as guidance for future development of the planned area.

This study was funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission under the Community Development Assistance Program to study the subject area and provide recommendations for economic development, affordable housing, anti-displacement strategies, mobility, and placemaking. As an important pedestrian corridor, the Stone Mountain Trail provides the opportunity to enhance the neighborhoods around it through pedestrian connectivity, infill housing options, public art, trail amenities, safety improvements and economic development.

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The plan includes 3 nodes with recommendations tailored to the unique conditions and goals of each area. Recommendations include intersection safety and connectivity improvements on the trail; opportunities for mixed-use development and affordable housing; placemaking through art and furnishings; and anti-displacement strategies to protect existing residents and ensure equitable development.

Adopting the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan as an amendment to Chapter 5 Small Area Plans in DeKalb County’s 2050 Unified Plan will enable the Planning & Sustainability Department – Long Range Division – to move forward with ARC and DeKalb County’s shared goal of creating a strong, equitable pedestrian-oriented community along the trail corridor.

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA TO ADOPT THE STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL MASTER PLAN STUDY AND TO AMEND THE DEKALB COUNTY 2050 UNIFIED PLAN, CHAPTER 5, SMALL AREA PLANS, TO INCLUDE THE STUDY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Stone Mountain Trail was opened in 1996 as a regional trail to connect sites of the 1996 Olympics and now serves as an important pedestrian transportation corridor in DeKalb County; and

WHEREAS, in May 2023, DeKalb County was awarded \$300,000 by the Atlanta Regional Commission under the Community Development and Assistance Program to conduct the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study; and

WHEREAS, the study aimed to bring together cross-jurisdictional stakeholders, align planning goals, create affordable housing options, improve multimodal transportation options, and provide recommendations for other amenities along the trail; and

WHEREAS, between January 2025 and September 2025, a diverse array of stakeholders and community members participated in public meetings and workshops to contribute input on the goals and objectives of the study; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability department and ARC recognize that the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study aligns with both the 2050 Unified Plan and DeKalb County's Trails Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study is an amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the 2050 Unified Plan, offering additional guidance for the study area; and

WHEREAS, the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study includes the following elements: Community Engagement Process, Assessment of Conditions (Existing Conditions Analysis, Safety Assessment, Future Land Use & Zoning Analysis, Housing Issues & Opportunities), Trail

July 29, 2025

Corridor Visioning (Connectivity, Safety, Placemaking, Open Space & Parks, Land Use, Character & Density, Amenities), Implementation Framework (Phasing Strategy, Funding & Financing Mechanisms, Proposed Implementation Schedule); and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure plan implementation, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt the proposed Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study as an amendment to the 2050 Unified Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners:

- (1) hereby adopts the DeKalb Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study, and amends the 2050 Unified Plan, Chapter 5, Small Area Plans, to include this Plan; and the recommended policies and implementation proposals contained in the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan Study provide specific guidelines to support the character areas of the Future Land Use Map of the 2050 Unified Plan and provide specific density/intensity guidelines.

APPROVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

MICHELLE LONG SPEARS
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

July 29, 2025

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

LORRAINE COCHRAN-JOHNSON
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

BARBARA SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners
and Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

MATTHEW WELCH
Interim County Attorney

JULIANA NJOKU
Director of
Planning and Sustainability



DeKalb County
GEORGIA



DEKALB STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL MASTER PLAN

August 2025



PROJECT OVERVIEW

VISION AND PURPOSE

Create a cohesive corridor through the lens of anti-displacement

The purpose of this study is to develop enhanced access to greenways and trails, transit, and enhance connectivity to institutions and gathering spaces along the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan.

GOALS

1. HOUSING AND ANTI-DISPLACEMENT STRATEGIES:

Demographic trends and strategies for equitable development.

2. TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND MICROTRANSIT:

Enhance connectivity between the PATH trail, neighborhoods, and transit hubs.

3. LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Smart growth that prevents displacement, while driving economic development through strategic partnerships.

4. PLACEMAKING:

Transform public spaces with placemaking elements.

5. TRAIL MAINTENANCE, SAFETY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

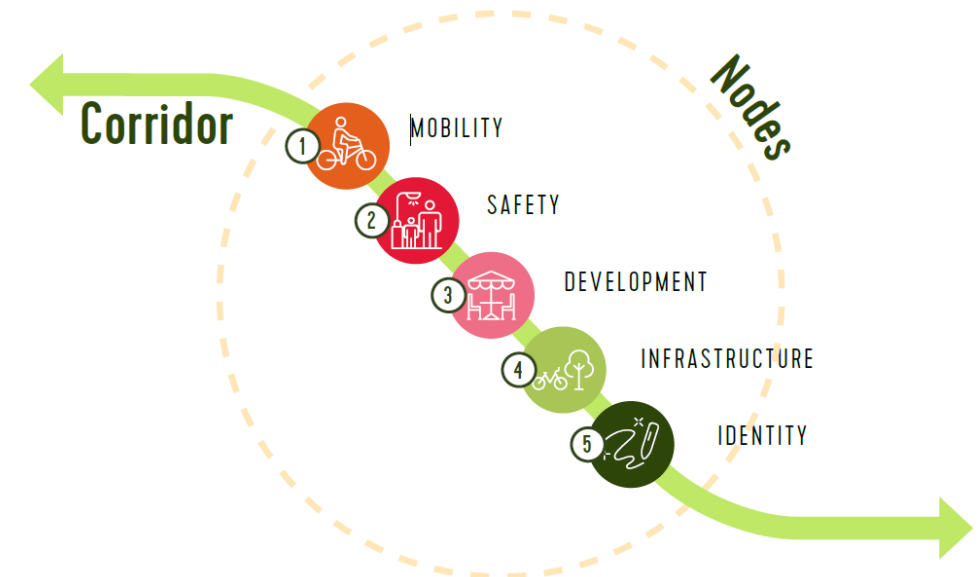
Improve trail safety by enhancing wayfinding, signage, and maintaining essential infrastructure for long-term accessibility and user experience

PROJECT TIMELINE



FRAMEWORK

2 scales, 3 nodes, 1 unifying trail



COMMUNITY VOICES

WHO HAVE WE REACHED?

3500+ people reached!

Check out the
project website
here!

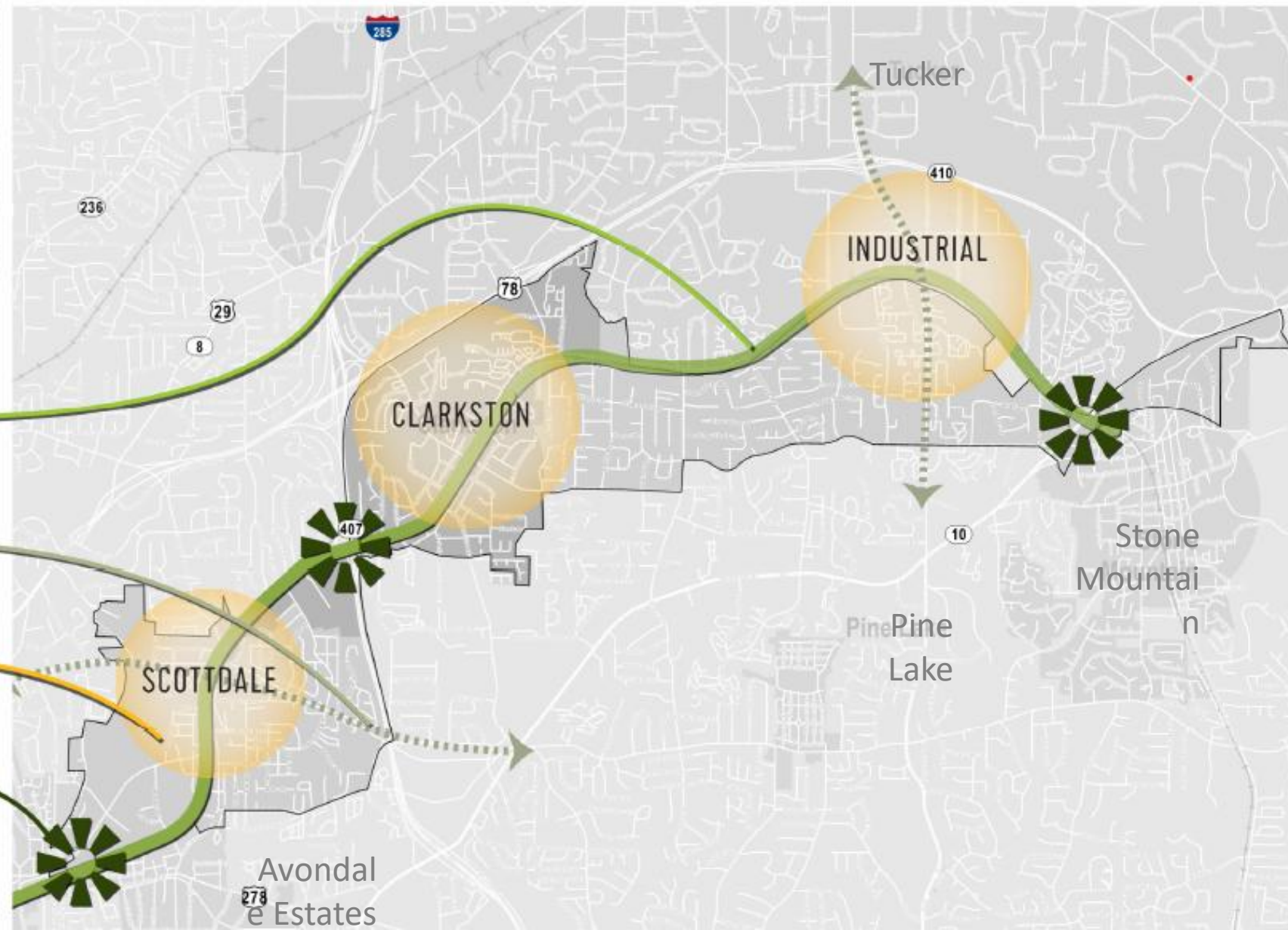
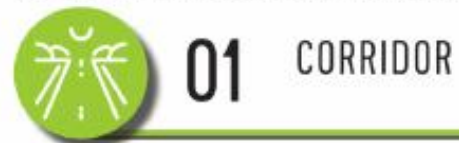


Listening to and learning from those who live, work, and invest their time within the community was a vital part of the community engagement process.

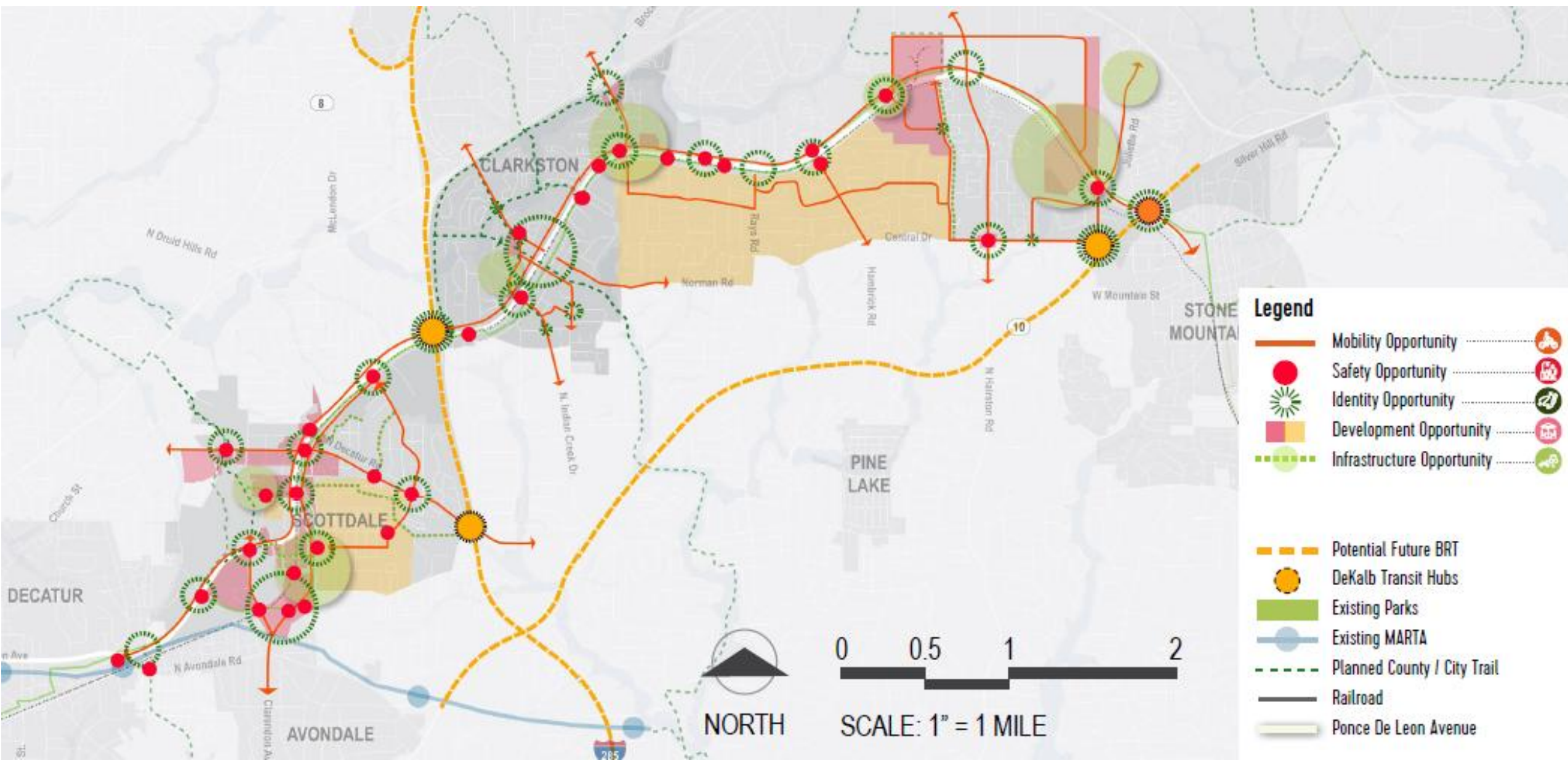


STUDY AREA COMPONENTS

The study area is highly diverse in terms of demographics, development, housing, and character. To create a cohesive and connected corridor, the design framework applies a scaled approach focused on four layers: nodes, gateways, streetscapes, and the overall corridor. Each layer provides specific recommendations to improve connectivity, community identity, and access across the trail and its adjacent neighborhoods.



TRAIL DISTRICT DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS



TRAIL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS



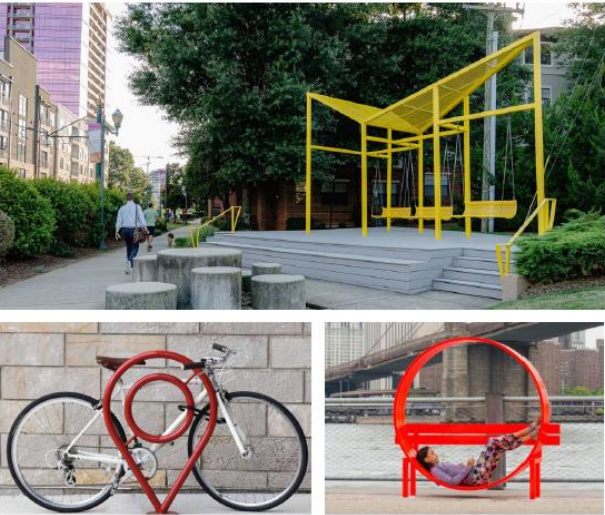
1 BOLD TRAIL RIBBON + INTERSECTION ART

Repeating sidewalk art creates a consistent character, highlights the trail at intersections, and introduces attractive design throughout the corridor.



2 ICONIC BOLD SITE FURNISHINGS

Vibrant site furnishings provide a repeated element for a signature and recognizable features. Attractive and bold benches, bike racks, water fountains could be utilized.



3 DESIGNED INTERACTIVE WALL

In order to create a sense of place that crosses multiple cities, major roads, and railroads the scale and intent needs to be BIG.

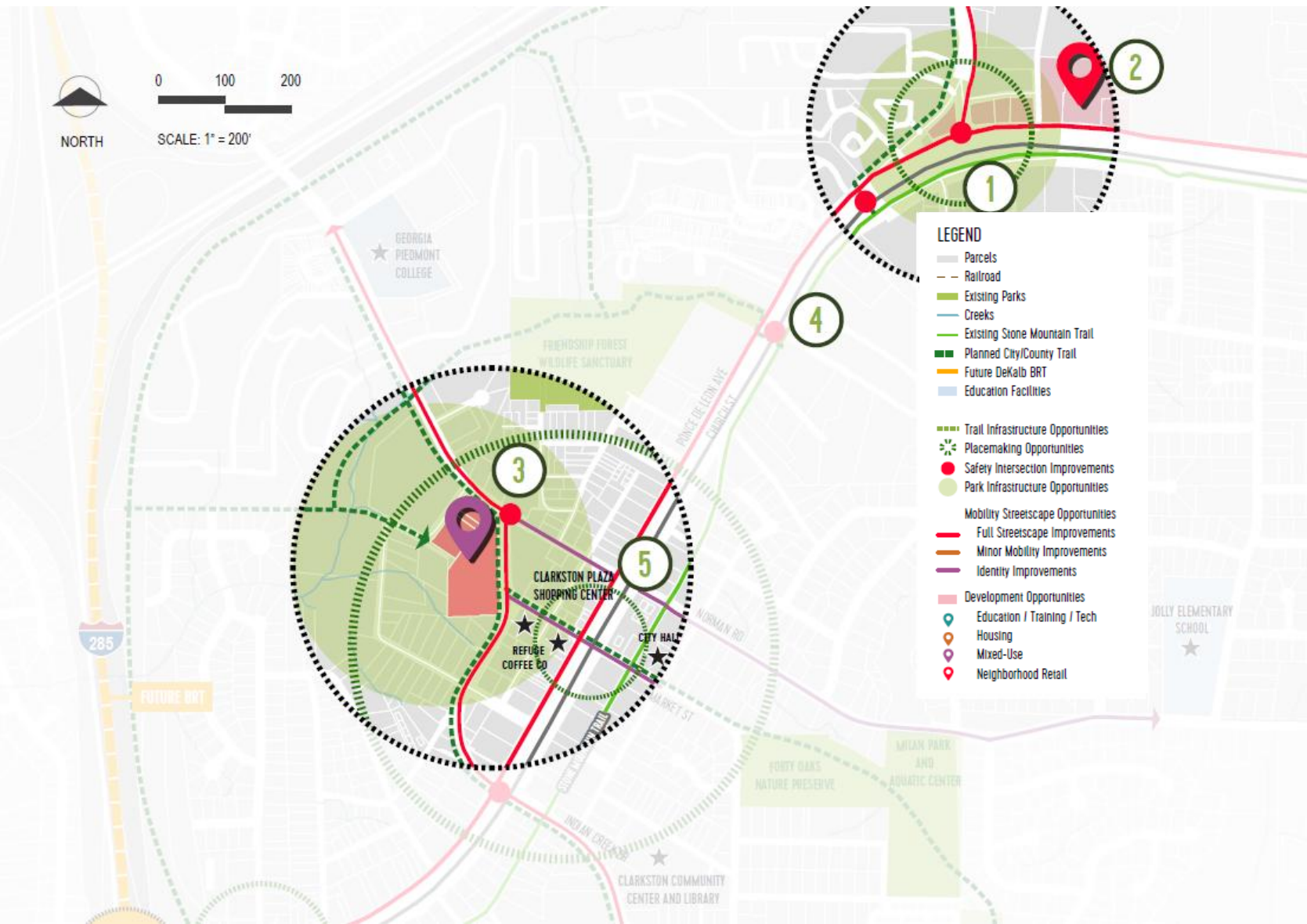


NODAL RECOMMENDATIONS- The Industrial Node



- 1** GOLDSMITH
The Goldsmith and Ridge intersection across the railroad and Ponce De Leon. Connects to Tucker investments.
- 2** NEW PARK
Greenspace addition in vacant or underutilized parcels.
- 3** NEW INTERSECTION
New intersection addition to add connections to new developments and neighborhoods.
- 4** NEW TRAIL
Trail connection to parks and neighborhoods.
- 5** PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
Pedestrian Bridge over State Road 10 / Memorial Drive

NODAL RECOMMENDATIONS- Clarkston Node



2

1

BROCKETT INTERSECTION

The Brockett intersection needs to remove the slip lanes to force cars to stop and improve safety for all modes.

2

BROCKETT DEVELOPMENT

Infill neighborhood services is key to increasing activity for residents.

3

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

New mixed use development building off the success of the existing downtown.

4

CHURCH STREET RAILROAD CROSSING

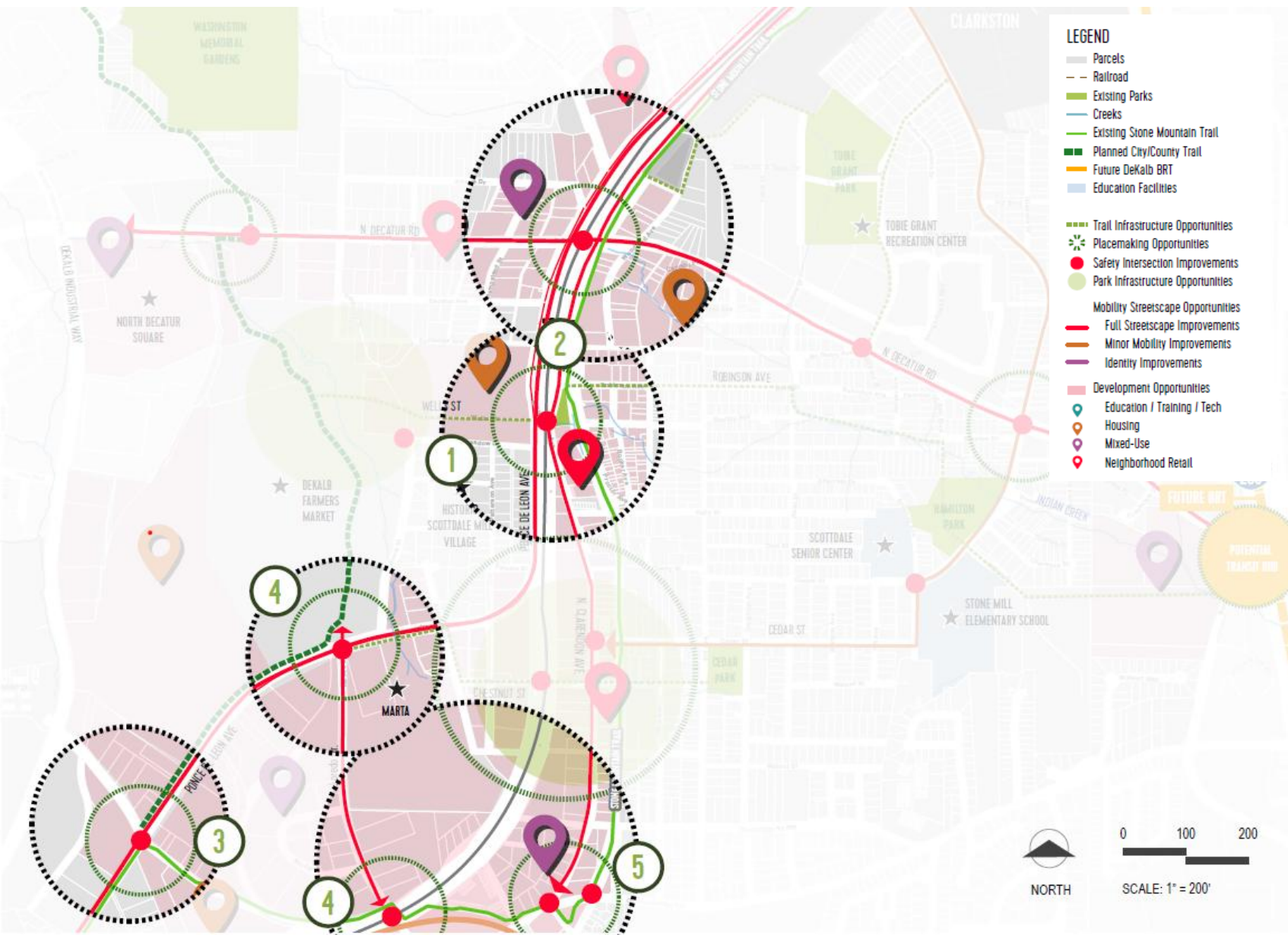
Addition of a pedestrian crossing, visibility and safety enhancements, and wayfinding will increase access to the trail. A trail head is also key to directing users around Clarkston.

5

DOWNTOWN IDENTITY ENHANCEMENTS

Specific enhancements along Ponce De Leon will bring the identity of the community to the forefront of the city.

NODAL RECOMMENDATIONS- Scottdale Node



1

INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

The Wells St, N. Clarendon, Ponce, and Church Street intersection is a major hazard for all modes of travel. Improvements here would fix many of the connectivity issues of the district and connect regional gaps.

2

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Infill development along this area of the Ponce corridor can add needed density and services to the community.

3

Enhanced INTERSECTION

The intersection enhancements along DeKalb industrial way is a key gateway that connects this region to MARTA stations and the greater ATL area.

4

LOREDO DR INTERSECTIONS

Adding visibility, safety, and placemaking elements can build off of the streetscape improvements and connect Avondale Estates to the Farmers Market.

5

TRAIL ALIGNMENT

With new development in the area the roads should be realigned to create safe intersections and a fully connected trail.

NEXT STEPS

- PECS Meeting August 26th
- Final Open House September 8th
- Planning Commission Presentation September 9th
- BOC Presentation and Adoption September 25th



Thank you!



DeKalb
Stone Mountain Trail
MASTER PLAN



POND