

Agenda Item

File ID: 2025-1082

Substitute 9/30/2025

Public Hearing: YES ☒ NO ☐

Department: Planning and Sustainability

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): Commission District 04 Super Districts 06 & 07

Application of the Director of Planning & 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 future development of the planned area.

Petition No.: N-13-2025-1082 TA-25-1247701

Proposed Use: Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan.

Location: Commission District 4, Super Districts 6 & 7

Parcel No.: N/A

Information 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) Full-Cycle Deferral.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: (September 2025) Approval_rev. 09.26.2025

PLANNING 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) Full-cycle deferral 8-0-0. Commissioner Murphy moved, Commissioner Cooper seconded for a full-cycle deferral to the November 2025 zoning agenda to allow the applicant to receive more input from the community and to allow the Board time to review changes in the draft that they just received prior to this meeting. Commissioner Costello was not present for this vote.

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.

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 charette. 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.

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 & Parking Strategy, Funding & Financing Mechanisms, Public Infrastructure Cost Estimate, 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

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

July 29, 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:

WILLIAM LINKOUS, III

County Attorney

JULIANA NJOKU

Director of
Planning and Sustainability



DeKalb County
GEORGIA



DEKALB STONE MOUNTAIN TRAIL MASTER PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2025

POND

BAE



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan was made possible through the leadership and vision of DeKalb County and the dedication of countless individuals and organizations who contributed their time, insights, and passion to this effort. This plan reflects the dedication and shared commitment of the community to create spaces that connect people, enhance experiences, and celebrate the unique identity of this area.

We want to thank the Atlanta Regional Commission's Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) for their partnership on this study. This effort has been in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, and the Federal Highway Administration.

We are grateful for the time and effort of:

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Tricia Provost, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability
Larry Washington, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability
Brian Brewer, Long Range Planning, DeKalb County
Kristin Allin, Atlanta Regional Commission
Eva M Chauveau, DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability

DESIGN TEAM

Lilian Al Haddad, Project Manager, Pond
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Erika Herbel, Landscape Designer, Pond
Jessica Florez, Placemaking and Strategy, JFG Cities
Anna Johnson, Community Engagement Lead, Blue Cypress
Emily Walker, Community Engagement, Blue Cypress
Sherry Okun-Rudnak, Economic Development and Housing Strategy, BAE Urban Economics
Lauren Beduhn, Economic Development, BAE Urban Economics

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

Beth Ganga, DeKalb County, Commission District 2
Courtney Smitch, City of Tucker
Krista Durant, Clarkston Community Foundation
Michael Duncan, City of Clarkston
Michael Rafshoon, MARTA Government Affairs
Caleb Wittenmeyer, DeKalb County Parks & Recreation Department
Lori Leland, City of Avondale Estates
Kristin Moretz, City of Avondale Estates
Rich Pasenow, DeKalb County, Community Council
Jesse Rilling, Engineer, CIS Engineer Firm (Larry Kaiser)
Stephanie Fleming, Exhibiting Artist, Stone Mountain Village Resident
Tiffany Wills, Decide DeKalb Development Authority
Victoria Webb, DeKalb County Soil & Water District Supervisor, DeKalb County Community Council
Kelly Cato DeKalb County, Office of Commissioner Super District 6
Diana Pitcher-Williams, Decide DeKalb Development Authority
Jacob Bouie, City of Clarkston
Sara Zou, DeKalb County Planning Commission, District 2

DEKALB COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Commissioner Ted Terry, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, District 6
Commissioner Chakira Johnson, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, District 4
Commissioner Ladena Bolton, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, District 7



Finally, a special thank you to every partner, interviewee, and participant whose invaluable input has fueled this transformative vision!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan transforms a well-used path into a powerful civic connector—linking Clarkston’s multicultural hub, Scottdale’s historic neighborhoods, and Stone Mountain’s vibrant downtown. It reframes the trail as a shared backbone for mobility, housing & anti-displacement, economic development, placemaking, and safety & infrastructure. This is not just an infrastructure upgrade—it’s a strategy to unite communities, celebrate their character, and spark growth that benefits everyone.

Shaped by over 2,600 voices—many from residents often left out of the planning process—the plan puts safety, identity, and inclusion at its core. People asked for safer crossings, clear wayfinding and public art, more green space, and development that keeps long-time neighbors in place. These priorities are woven into actions that combine better transit access, affordable housing, small-business support, and public art to create a trail experience that is as meaningful as it is functional.

As a critical link in metro Atlanta’s trail and transit network, the Implementation chapter outlines catalytic projects, quick-win improvements, and funding strategies to ensure momentum from day one. Built for and by the community, the plan turns a recreational route into a unifying force—one that carries local identity forward while opening doors to a more connected, resilient future.



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The background image is a photograph of a street scene, tinted in a monochromatic green color. In the foreground, a line of cars is parked on the left side of the road. A group of cyclists is riding away from the viewer down the center of the street. The road is wet, reflecting the light. On the right side, there are trees and a utility pole with wires. The sky is filled with clouds. The overall mood is serene and active.

01

INTRODUCTION

A CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY

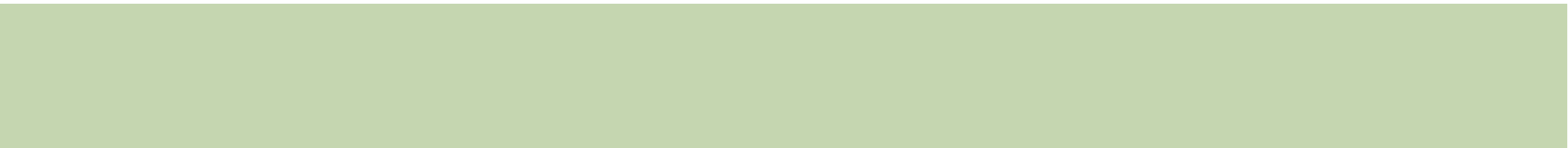
1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE

The Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan is a transformative initiative rooted in DeKalb County's commitment to equity, connectivity, and community well-being. Spearheaded by the County's Planning and Sustainability Department and supported through the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP), this plan builds upon the County's Unified Development Plan (UDP) and the County's broader vision for an inclusive and forward-thinking DeKalb, one where transportation investments support cultural vibrancy, housing diversity, and economic opportunity.

This project seeks to elevate the Stone Mountain Trail beyond its recreational role by reimagining it as a dynamic civic spine: a continuous corridor that ties together legacy neighborhoods, immigrant communities, and emerging destinations across

unincorporated DeKalb, Stone Mountain, Clarkston, Tucker, and Avondale Estates. The plan addresses mobility and land use integration, housing, inclusive economic development, anti-displacement strategies, and creative placemaking through public art and public space enhancements.

Key to the purpose of this effort is leveraging the corridor's rich cultural, environmental, and historic assets to catalyze investment that benefits current residents while welcoming future growth. Through a inclusive engagement process and robust technical analysis, the plan identifies catalytic projects and near-term actions that advance the County's 2050 vision while ensuring stability, affordability, and access for all. This CDAP is not just a trail plan: it is a platform to activate a healthier, more connected, and more resilient DeKalb County.



1.2 STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

The Stone Mountain Trail runs through the center of DeKalb County and serves as the spine of the study area. This trail connects a series of diverse communities: Clarkston, Scottdale, and the City of Stone Mountain, as well as parts of unincorporated DeKalb County. While the trail is heavily used for recreation, its role in linking neighborhoods, public spaces, schools, transit stops, commercial areas, and employment centers makes it a key piece of community infrastructure with untapped potential.

The study area is defined by a wide range of land uses, development patterns, and population groups. It includes post-war residential neighborhoods, older apartment complexes, recent townhome developments, industrial sites, and emerging commercial nodes. Some areas are experiencing reinvestment, while others face continued disinvestment and aging infrastructure. Together, they represent the complexity and diversity of DeKalb County.

Clarkston is nationally recognized for its refugee and immigrant populations. It has been a resettlement hub for decades, and many residents are originally from countries such as Myanmar, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Sudan. This diversity has shaped the area's commercial landscape and social institutions, with numerous small businesses, religious centers, and community organizations serving multilingual and multicultural populations. Scottdale has a long history as a working-class, predominantly Black community, and is now facing pressure from surrounding growth and rising housing costs. Stone Mountain brings its own identity, with a mix of historic homes, civic landmarks, and access to parkland and tourism infrastructure at the base of Stone Mountain Park.

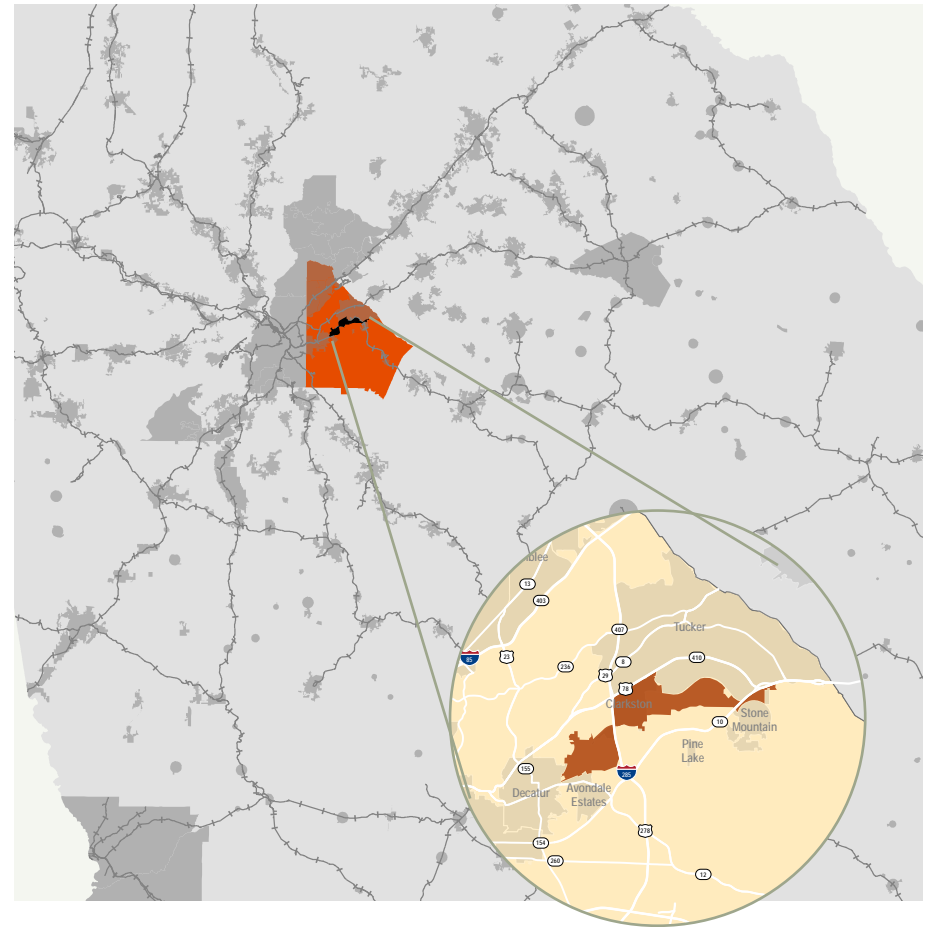


Figure 5. Context Map - Study Area

Housing conditions and affordability vary significantly across the corridor. Older single-family homes and 1960s-era apartments provide lower-cost housing options, but many are in need of reinvestment. Newer developments tend to target middle- and upper-income households, raising concerns about displacement and loss of affordability in historically underserved communities. Preserving housing choice and supporting affordable, high-quality housing near transit and trails is a critical need throughout the study area.





Transit access is available throughout the corridor, with multiple bus routes operated by MARTA and DeKalb County Transit. These routes connect residents to jobs and services, but first- and last-mile connections are often incomplete. Sidewalk gaps, limited crossings, and poor lighting create barriers for safe and equitable access to transit. The Stone Mountain Trail has the potential to help close these gaps and improve multimodal access across the corridor.

Overall, the study area represents a complex and evolving part of DeKalb County. It includes a wide range of housing, employment, transportation, and cultural conditions, some of which are changing quickly due to market trends and demographic shifts. At the same time, long-standing community identities, affordability concerns, and infrastructure needs continue to shape local priorities. This plan recognizes the potential of the Stone Mountain Trail corridor to support more connected, inclusive, and resilient communities by aligning public investments with local goals and building on the assets already in place.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

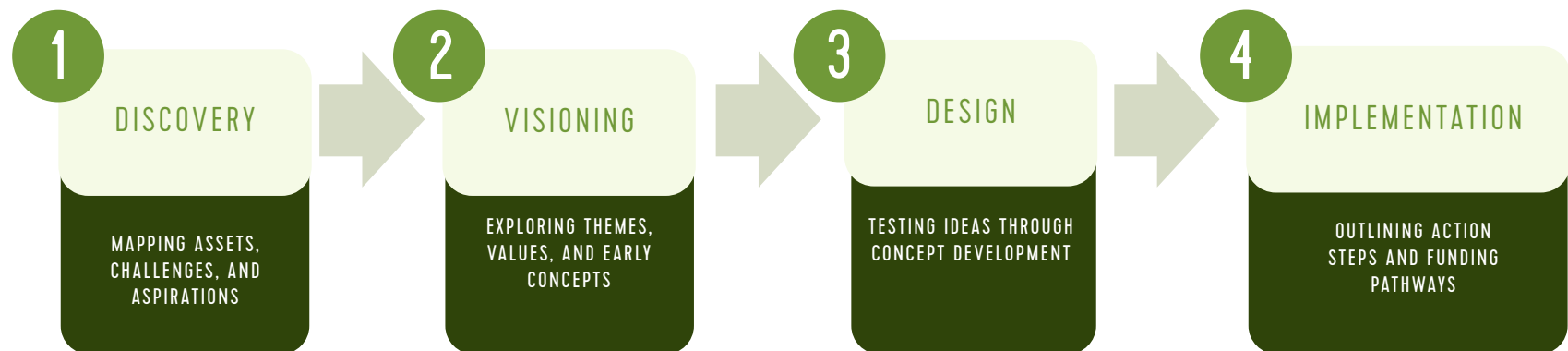
At the heart of the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan was a commitment to inclusive and community-driven planning. This was not just a technical study, it was a collaborative process shaped by the voices, stories, and lived experiences of those who call this richly diverse corridor home.

With over 40 languages spoken across the study area, the planning team recognized the importance of meeting people where they are and creating multiple avenues for participation that honored the community's cultural and linguistic diversity. From the outset, the process focused on building trust and expanding access to ensure all residents, and especially those who are typically left out of traditional planning conversations, had a seat at the table.

Rather than confining engagement to a single event, it was woven throughout the entire process from early site walks and stakeholder interviews to hands-on design sessions and targeted outreach.

A range of engagement strategies were used to ensure a broad and representative cross-section of the community could participate. Public design workshops invited residents to explore alternatives and share preferences related to access, safety, and trail character. These interactive gatherings gave community members a direct hand in shaping the design vision. Focus groups were conducted in partnership with local organizations and faith groups to hold culturally responsive conversations with immigrant families, youth, and elders. These smaller sessions provided a safe and accessible space for sharing concerns and ideas, often in the participant's preferred language.

The planning process unfolded over a 15-month period and was structured into four stages:





In addition to workshops and focus groups, individual and small-group interviews were conducted with business owners, educators, civic leaders, housing advocates, and representatives of local institutions. These conversations offered nuanced insights into community dynamics, displacement concerns, and long-standing aspirations for the corridor. Engagement extended to the arts community as well, with public artists and designers brought into the process early on not only as potential implementers, but as co-authors of the corridor's cultural expression. Their involvement helped anchor the plan in local identity and storytelling.

Recognizing that not everyone can attend formal meetings, the team also conducted pop-up outreach at apartment complexes, transit hubs, local restaurants, and community events. These informal interactions allowed us to reach people during their daily routines, offering easy, on the spot opportunities to contribute.

Through this layered and intentional approach, the planning process reflected the vibrant complexity of the study area. It centered equity, celebrated diversity, and prioritized those voices too often unheard, resulting in a plan that belongs to the community because it was built by the community.

Workshops + Focus Groups +

Interviews + Arts + Engagement +

Pop-Up Outreach + Open Houses

1.4 REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

While inherently local in its character, the Stone Mountain Trail study area holds immense regional significance as **a vital connector within the broader transportation and recreational landscape of metro Atlanta**. It serves as a crucial segment of DeKalb's extensive trail network, which spans over 50 miles across Georgia, providing safe, accessible, and sustainable routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Beyond its immediate benefits, the trail aligns with the Atlanta Regional Trail Vision, a comprehensive plan to create a seamless, interconnected trail system that enhances mobility, recreation, and quality of life across the region.

The trail's strategic location also intersects with key components of the DeKalb County Transit Master Plan, which aims to improve public transit access and connectivity. By linking downtown Stone Mountain, the BeltLine, and major MARTA bus and rail corridors, the Stone Mountain Trail strengthens first/last-mile connectivity, ensuring that residents have reliable and equitable access to public transportation options. This connectivity is particularly important for communities in Tucker, Clarkston, Avondale Estates, and Stone Mountain, where the trail serves as a bridge between historically underserved neighborhoods and regional opportunities.

Tucker, a rapidly growing suburban hub, benefits from the trail's ability to enhance multimodal transportation options and support local businesses. Clarkston, known for its diverse immigrant population, gains improved access to recreational spaces and economic opportunities, fostering inclusivity and community engagement. Avondale Estates, with its historic charm and small-town appeal, sees the trail as a catalyst for economic development and tourism. Stone Mountain, a cultural and recreational destination, benefits from increased accessibility to its downtown area and the iconic Stone Mountain Park, boosting tourism and local commerce.

The corridor's potential extends beyond transportation and recreation, it serves as a demonstration model for equitable trail development in the region. By prioritizing accessibility, affordability, and community engagement, the Stone Mountain Trail exemplifies how trail projects can bridge socioeconomic divides, support small businesses, and foster social cohesion. Its success could inspire similar initiatives across metro Atlanta and beyond, setting a standard for inclusive and sustainable infrastructure development.



STRATEGIC CONNECTOR:

This area ties together neighborhoods, business hubs, and job centers, making it a key link in the region's network.



REGIONAL GAME-CHANGER:

Sitting in the heart of metro Atlanta, this project will be all about driving smarter more inclusive development.



TRAIL POWERHOUSE:

The Stone Mountain Trail stretches across the study area connecting Decatur through the city of Stone Mountain.



COMMUNITY AT ITS CORE:

Home to vibrant and historic communities, four cities, diverse and established neighborhoods.

1.5 CORE VALUES: EQUITY, RESILIENCE, IDENTITY

To guide decision making throughout the process, the planning team centered the work around three core values: equity, resilience, and identity. These values emerged directly from conversations with local residents, community organizations, and stakeholders, and they reflect both the challenges and the opportunities that exist along the trail. They are not abstract ideas—they are practical principles used to evaluate every recommendation, from infrastructure improvements to community programs.

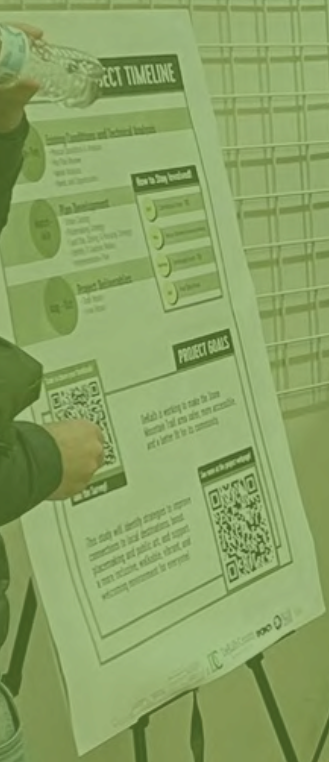


Together, these values shape a vision for the trail corridor as more than a route for travel. It becomes a shared community asset that supports daily life, reflects local identity, and helps the area grow in a way that is inclusive and sustainable.

02

COMMUNITY VOICES

LISTENING, LEARNING & CO-CREATING



2.1 COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Engaging with members of the community played an essential role in developing and implementing a successful planning effort that resulted in community-driven plan outcomes. The engagement process targeted areas along the Stone Mountain Trail corridor between Avondale Estates and Stone Mountain Village, including portions of unincorporated DeKalb County, City of Avondale Estates, City of Clarkston, City of Stone Mountain, Scottdale community, and areas adjacent to City of Tucker. Early in the planning process, a high-level community assessment provided insight into who lives in the area, which helped the project team better understand engagement audiences and guided the implementation of outreach tactics and communication methods.

STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS



LOCAL CHARACTER

Spanning multiple jurisdictions and neighborhoods, the trail corridor spans unique and evolving characters along its path—from development types and physical characteristics to the people and businesses who live and work in the area.



MULTICULTURAL TAPESTRY

One of the most prominent features of the area is the highly diverse population, representing dozens of cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds from across the globe: more than 60 languages are spoken within the study area.



OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Given needs and vulnerabilities of the local population, establishing and expanding trail access to adjacent neighborhoods and businesses is paramount for the future success of the trail.

STUDY AREA HIGHLIGHTS

- The study area has a relatively high percentage racial and ethnic minority populations, including foreign-born and limited English proficient (LEP) community members
- Concentrations of vulnerable populations include Clarkston and the surrounding areas, especially to the south and east of the city, the Brook Hollow area, and residential areas south of Ponce de Leon Avenue.
- All census tracts within the study area have an Average to Well Above average percentage of residents who live in households with an income level below 200% of the national poverty level.

25+ neighborhoods

18.6% households below poverty level

6 jurisdictions

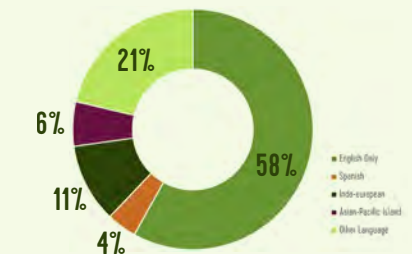
9.6% zero car households

\$62,152 median income

9.6% seniors (age 65+)

27.6% youth (age <18)

60+ languages spoken



2.2 OUTREACH APPROACH

The engagement program connected the project team collection of diverse voices through an iterative, tailored outreach process that layered digital and in-person input opportunities in a variety of formats. Utilizing a combination of boots-on-the-ground and innovative technology to engage the community, outreach methods aimed to foster an accessible, inclusive process that invites all voices of the community to be heard.

Engagement activities were organized into **three phases**, which aligned with key components of plan development. This structure guided timing for engagement opportunities to ensure community feedback was strategically woven into technical analysis and plan development to ultimately inform plan outcomes and recommendations.

PROJECT TIMELINE

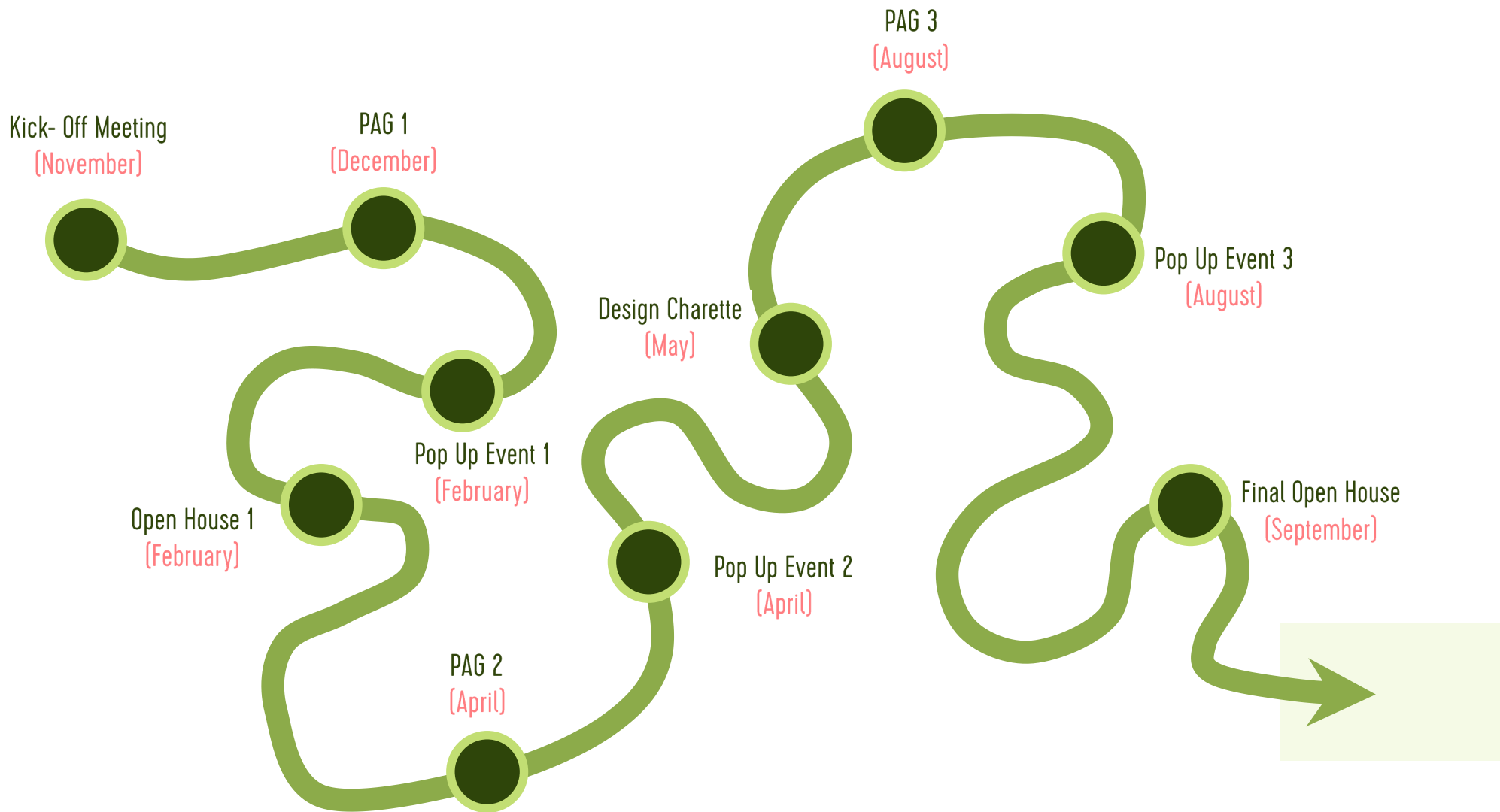


Given the study area’s uniquely diverse population, engagement strategies utilized a variety of outreach methods and meeting formats to share information and collect input from the community, including in-person and online opportunities. Similarly, the survey and project webpage were able to be translated into multiple languages to connect with a variety of residents. Translation services were also promoted on project flyers to further spread awareness about translation services. Additionally, a robust digital outreach campaign helped expand project reach to local businesses and community organizations representing various sectors of the population.

Ultimately, feedback collected through the engagement process helped shape the development of plan recommendations and final plan outcomes to create a safe, accessible, and community-focused Stone Mountain Trail corridor.

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Key engagement activities were facilitated between December 2024, and September 2025. In addition to the series of stakeholder and community engagement opportunities reflected in the graphic, other outreach activities included an online survey, intercept activities and targeted outreach tactics, focus group discussions, and stakeholder interviews.



2.3 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The engagement process targeted the community at large, with a focus on connecting with neighborhoods, residents, businesses, organizations, and others along or adjacent to the Stone Mountain Trail corridor, between Avondale Estates and Stone Mountain.

In addition to the broader population, the planning process also prioritized connecting with key stakeholders and local experts to facilitate support and ownership by property owners and implementation partners.

Engagement activities were geared towards:

- Residents
- Property owners
- Business owners
- Elected officials
- City representatives
- County staff
- Community organizations
- Housing advocates and developers
- Artists and placemaking advocates
- Mobility advocates
- Current and future trail users

*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.*





COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Three public meetings were held at key junctures during the planning process, to ensure community input was woven into the development of the master plan. These meetings served to educate the community about the project, gather input on challenges and opportunities, as well as future development concepts, and encourage creative collaboration on design outcomes.

Over 100 people attended the Kickoff Open House and Design Charrette to share input on key plan topics. The final community meeting will take place in September 2025.

1

Kickoff Open House

February 11, 2025 | 5:30 - 7:30 pm | Clarkston Public Library

2

Community Design Charrette

May 21, 2025 | 3:00 - 7:00 pm | Clarkston Woman's Club

3

Final Open House

September 2025 | *Meeting Details in Progress*



POP UP EVENTS

Pop up events allow the project team to interact more organically with members of the public and share project information while collecting their perspectives on the study area. By participating in local events, the project team was able to gain invaluable insight into the public's perception of the trail, including areas of concern and opportunity.

The team facilitated a project booth at two community events, connecting with over 100 people. Participants provided input via map-based exercises and the online survey. The third project booth is anticipated in August.

1

Avondale Estates Farmer's Market

February 2, 2025 | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

2

Refuge Coffee Spring Market

April 26, 2025 | 12:00 - 4:00 pm

3

Pop Up Project Booth #3

August 2025 | *Meeting Details in Progress*





INTERCEPT ACTIVITIES & TARGETED OUTREACH

Intercept activities aim to **build project awareness** and **gather on-the-spot input** from trail users and residents and businesses along the trail corridor, in order to better understand the various needs, challenges, and perspectives across the study area.

Meeting people on and around the trail was an important part of the engagement process. During April and May, the project team conducted **intercept activities at four key locations** across the study area, connecting with 29 individuals and 11 local businesses. Members of the project team walked along the trail and surrounding areas (highlighted in the box below) to distribute project flyers to pedestrians, transit riders, and businesses. They also promoted the project survey and encourage participation in upcoming events. This approach enabled the project team to meet people where they are and gain on-the-spot insight into local perspectives on the future of the Stone Mountain Trail.



SPREADING PROJECT AWARENESS

To better reach the diverse communities which are located within this study area, targeted outreach tactics were implemented to reach communities who had not participated as much, or to reach those who could provide specific insight into certain topics or components of the plan.

1

Erskin Rd to Hambrick Rd
Downtown Clarkston
April 25, 2025

2

Brockett Rd, Montreal Rd
North Indian Creek Rd
May 6, 2025

3

Robinson Ave (Scottdale) to
Laredo Dr (Avondale Estates)
May 9, 2025

4

Mountain Industrial Blvd
(Tucker) to Juliette Rd
May 9, 2025



Digital promotions were circulated to local community leaders, business owners, residential developments, and schools in the study area to reach a wider portion of the community.

Outreach efforts considered refugee population and more vulnerable community members through circulating **digital and printed flyer outreach** to local community organizations and businesses in areas with higher percentages of foreign-born and Limited-English Populations (LEP), such as areas around Clarkston. Project team members also provided a project update and promoted the online survey at a monthly Clarkston Health Equity Coalition Meeting.

Digital flyers were also circulated to local senior facilities and several apartment complexes across the study area.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement, in combination with technical analysis and broader public outreach, is critical for informing the needs analysis and development of preliminary and final recommendations. These perspectives provided valuable context and confirmation for the development of the plan.



PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

The project advisory group (PAG) included members of the community who represented community interests and implementation partners. The PAG served as the primary stakeholder committee for the project and met three times throughout the study process. The PAG consisted of 44 stakeholders, who each brought unique insight, backgrounds, and expertise to the committee. Input collected from committee members, as well as their partnership to help build project awareness, was invaluable in guiding the planning process and developing community-driven solutions.

PAG REPRESENTATIVES

- DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability
- DeKalb County Housing
- DeKalb County Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Affairs
- DeKalb County Commissioner District 4
- DeKalb County Commissioner District 7
- DeKalb County Commissioner Super District 6
- DeKalb County Community Council Representatives
- DeKalb County Planning Commission
- City of Avondale Estates
- City of Clarkston
- City of Tucker
- City of Stone Mountain
- DeKalb Housing Authority
- Decide DeKalb Development Authority
- MARTA Government Affairs
- Scottdale Community
- PATH Foundation
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Refugee Women’s Network
- Coalition for a Diverse DeKalb
- Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership
- Local artists
- Clarkston Community Foundation



FOCUS GROUPS

Small group conversations were facilitated with certain stakeholder groups to provide deeper insight into specific issues, concerns, or opportunities.

Over thirty stakeholders were invited to participate across three focus groups, which were convened during the second round of engagement. A fourth group was attempted with industrial sector stakeholders, but a meeting has not been scheduled to-date.



In the developers and housing advocates group, the conversation focused on the commercial nodes and areas which pose the biggest opportunity for redevelopment and growth.

The artist and placemaking focus group imagined the future of the Stone Mountain Trail integrated with public art by creating a sense of place.

In the Scottdale community focus group, participants shared their insight on trail safety and re-development along the trail while identify areas they use the trail to travel to – such as Avondale Estates downtown.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with County leadership during the planning process to provide insight into perspectives on key topics including pedestrian safety and mobility, housing, economic development, placemaking, and more. Input from these discussions will help guide and refine the development of preliminary recommendations.

ONLINE SURVEY

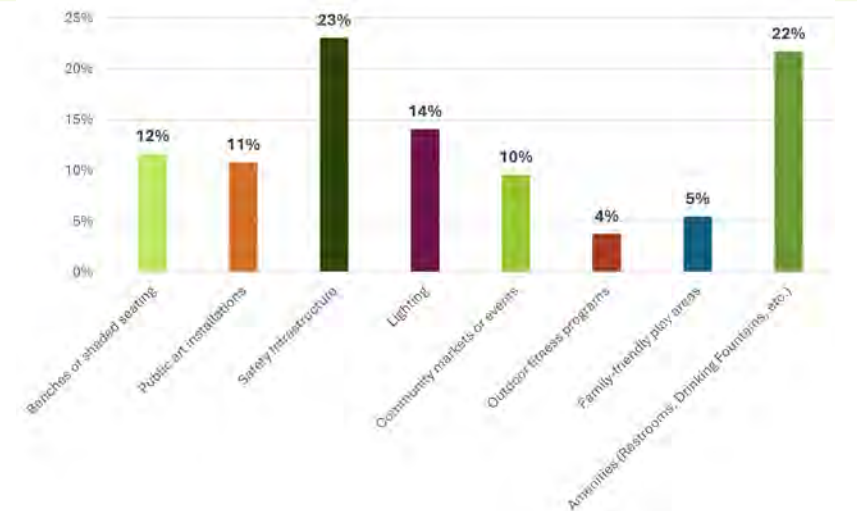
An online survey was available for approximately four months, which aimed to gather feedback on concerns, challenges, and opportunities for the existing trail, as well as ideas for how the trail could evolve in the future. Overall the survey collected 330 responses from community members who shared areas of concern along the trail, ideas for on-trail amenities, and desires for strategic development surrounding the trail.

"The Stone Mountain Trail a major asset of this region that can help drive meaningful change and impact in a way that preserves its inherent identity."

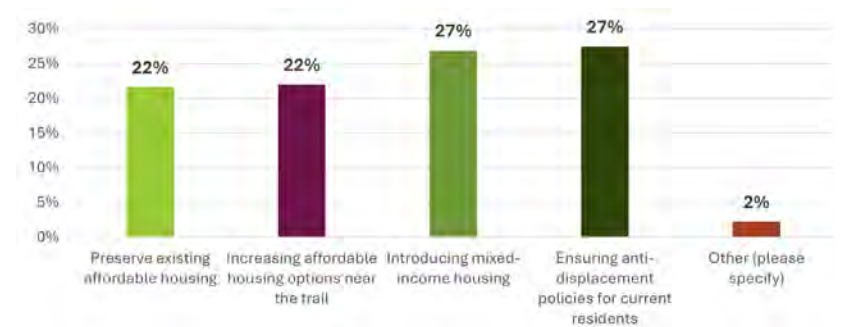
WHAT WE HEARD

- **Safety** was a top priority for survey respondents, including intersections where pedestrians feel unsafe crossing over roadways or the railroad, and areas where there is limited visibility and lighting.
- Another community priority was establishing a **sense of place** through **wayfinding elements** like trail signage, public art, or similar placemaking elements. Survey respondents noted the presence of branded signage both on and around the trail would help inform trail users of local destinations and amenities, while residents and visitors in areas around the trail would be able to easily identify trail access points.
- Providing **safe connections** to the trail from adjacent neighborhoods and community destinations was important for residents and trail users.
- Diversifying **housing options**, prioritizing **affordability**, and mitigating potential displacement of current residents are a key priority for the community.
- **Trail amenities**, such as seating, restrooms, drinking fountains, and lighting, would enhance the trail user experience.
- Community members would like to see more **parks and greenspaces** as well as **retail and dining** options along the trail. **Offices** and **affordable housing options** were also preferred development types.

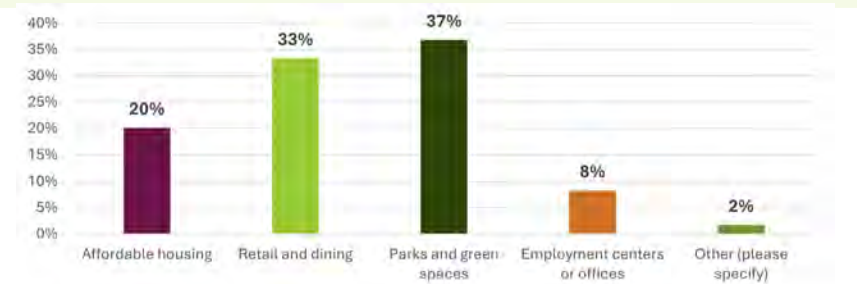
What features would most improve your experience on the trail?



What housing-related measures should the project prioritize?



What type of development near the trail would most benefit the community?



PROMOTIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

The project team partnered with the County's RPCA Communications team on the production and distribution of community promotions and advertising. In addition, stakeholders were invited to share and help distribute promotions within their networks.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media content was shared via the County media platforms to expand project reach and promote input opportunities. County Commissioners also promoted project activities to their constituents through text message and e-mail newsletter campaigns. In addition, social media promotions were provided to the PAG and other key stakeholders who helped circulated project updates in their networks.



PROJECT WEBPAGE

A project webpage hosted on the County's website served as the project information hub to share information about the project, promote input opportunities, and link meeting documents. The webpage and online survey were able to be translated into a variety of languages. Visitors to the site were also able to sign up for updates by subscribing to an outreach list.



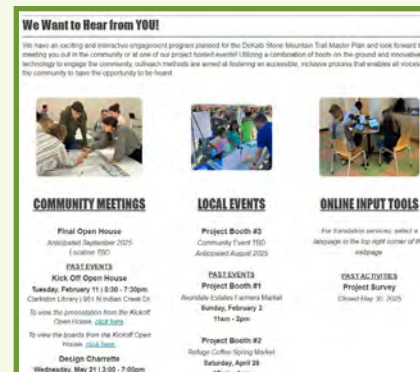
EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Emails were collected at all public events and through the website to allow members of the public to subscribe to project updates and public input opportunities through a newsletter that was managed by the DeKalb County Planning and Sustainability Department Communications.



FLYERS & HANDOUTS

A variety of printed promotions were developed to promote in-person and online input opportunities. These were distributed at events and dropped off to local businesses and organizations.



2.4 KEY THEMES

Emerging themes and key takeaways were identified through the robust stakeholder outreach and community engagement process. These themes were heard repeatedly at community events, stakeholder meetings, and other outreach activities.



IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & MOBILITY

The trail often puts users alongside vehicular traffic, over railroad crossing, and long stretches of trail that is not visible from the roadways. In addition, amenities such as mile markers or emergency phones are also lacking from the trail, leading users to feel unsafe along the trail.



DEFINING IDENTITY & CELEBRATING COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Given the changing character and multiple jurisdictions and neighborhoods along the trail, creating sense of identity is crucial. Trail users indicated wayfinding along the trail was difficult due to lack of signage about surrounding destinations or amenities. This represents an opportunity to introduce public art into the creation of a unique identity for the trail which reflects its diverse setting.



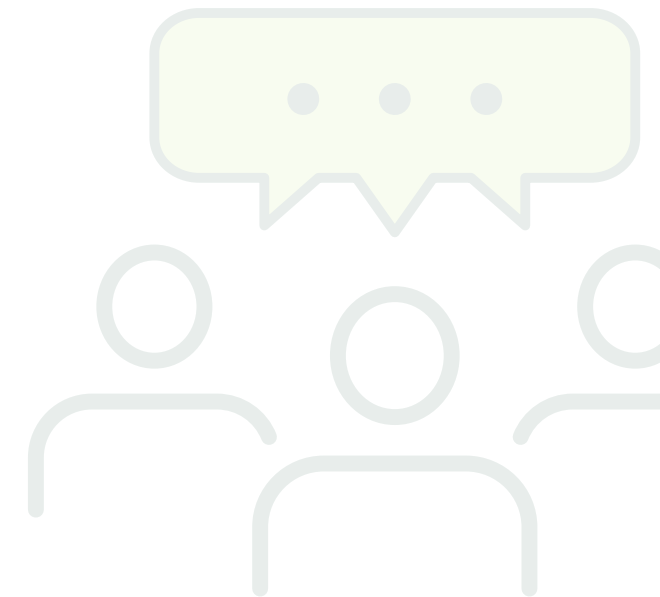
CREATING CONNECTIONS

Connectivity is key. Getting to the trail is a major barrier for some residents who may want to use the trail. The sidewalk network surrounding the trail should be built up to ensure safer access to the trail and to local transit stations as well.



PROMOTING BALANCED & CONTEXT-SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Development should be sensible and context-sensitive. While it was recognized that this area may be a valuable location for redevelopment and future development opportunities, members of the community felt this development should be balanced and compatible with existing development character. This means ensuring that the current residents and businesses are able to remain while promoting mixed-use, mixed income, community oriented development along the trail. This area is underutilized and has the opportunity to be something special.





2.5 ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

The third and final round of engagement will be conducted in August and September leading up to plan adoption. Engagement activities will focus on collecting input on draft recommendations for mobility, housing, land use and zoning, and placemaking, as well as on preliminary design concepts for catalytic nodes across the study area.

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming engagement activities aim to collect input on draft recommendations and design concepts for catalytic sites across the study area. Feedback collected from this final round of outreach will inform final updates to the plan.



County Leadership Interviews

Late July / Early August



Pop Up Project Booth

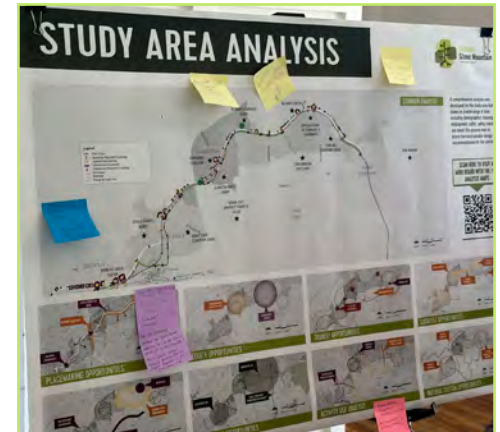
August | Local Community Event



Final Open House

Mid-Late September

Details and logistics for upcoming engagement activities are underway. Once completed, these they will be integrated into the engagement summary and related appendices.





03

EXISTING CONDITIONS

UNDERSTANDING PLACE, PEOPLE & PRESSURES

3.1 EXISTING PLANS

The Stone Mountain Trail corridor, running through Scottdale, Clarkston, Tucker, and Stone Mountain, lies within one of the fastest-growing areas of DeKalb County. This district is experiencing rapid change, with new developments, expanding infrastructure, and city growth transforming the character of each community along the trail. As activity accelerates, numerous local and regional plans have been created to guide development and investment. This corridor study reviews those existing plans and goals, identifies gaps in connectivity between the cities, and outlines strategies to create a more seamless, accessible, and connected network for residents and visitors. Four major themes have popped up that overlay between each plan; this includes: housing, micro transit / last mile issues, economic development, and placemaking.

OVERALL STRATEGY

1. DEKALB 2050 UNIFIED PLAN
2. DEKALB COUNTY TRAILS PLAN
3. CLARKSTON PEACHTREE CREEK GREENWAY STUDY
4. MEMORIAL DRIVE CORRIDOR STUDY

DETAILED PLANS

5. AVONDALE ESTATES DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE
6. STONE MOUNTAIN CONNECTING PARKS, PATHS, AND PUBLIC SPACES STUDY
7. DEKALB COUNTY ZONING CODE UPDATE
8. CLARKSTON ZONING UPDATES
9. LAREDO DRIVE COMPLETE STREET
10. PONCE AND CHURCH STREET PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS
11. CLARKSTON HOUSING STUDY
12. CITY OF TUCKER STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
13. MARTA NEXT GEN BUS NETWORK

FOUR DRIVING THEMES

- 1 HOUSING
- 2 MICRO TRANSIT
- 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 4 PLACEMAKING

DeKalb 2050 Unified Plan



Plan Purpose

A countywide blueprint integrating land use and transportation planning

Key Information

- Over 1,200 transportation projects through 2050
- Funded via SPLOST, MARTA penny tax, and potential referenda
- Short-term actions: zoning updates, sidewalk & pavement assessments, trail/transit planning

DeKalb County Trails Plan (Jan 2025)



Plan Purpose

Create a connected, equitable trail & greenway system for recreation, mobility, and health.

Key Information

- Plan identifies trail standards
- Plan to connect major trails: Stone Mountain, South River, Arabia Mountain, South Peachtree Creek
19 priority segments

Clarkston Peachtree Creek Greenway Study



Plan Purpose

A continuous, traffic-separated greenway along North Fork Peachtree Creek linking parks, neighborhoods, offices, and shopping.

Key Information

- 71% of Clarkston residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park
- Existing parks/trails concentrated in the south.
- Prioritization of a regional greenway park creation, safe crossings over freeways and major roads

Memorial Drive Revitalization Corridor Study



Plan Purpose

Transform a 5-mile stretch of Memorial Drive into a vibrant, inclusive, and economically healthy corridor.

Key Information

- Challenges include economic decline, high renter rates, low incomes, outdated suburban development, lack of investment
- Prioritization of improved walkability and celebrating cultural diversity
- Encourage mixed-use development near I-285

3.2 MARKET ASSESSMENT

The market assessment started with a broad view of the DeKalb region and narrowed to the core district. After reviewing the surrounding context, key areas adjacent to our study area were defined as having a major impact on our corridor. The market assessment examined demographic, economic, housing, and commercial market conditions in the study area and around it to guide an approach that welcomes reinvestment while safeguarding affordability and community identity.

The market assessment evaluated trends across the Trail Trade Area (TTA) and its two submarkets: East I-285 and West I-285 using DeKalb County as a benchmark. The process combined quantitative and qualitative inputs.



DATA

DATA COLLECTION:

2023–2024 DATASETS FROM PUBLIC SOURCES, COSTAR MARKET DATA, AND HUD AFFORDABILITY STANDARDS.

GEOGRAPHIC

GEOGRAPHIC FRAMEWORK:

TTA, EAST I-285, WEST I-285, AND COUNTYWIDE BENCHMARKS.

FIELD

FIELD OBSERVATIONS:

ON-THE-GROUND REVIEW OF HOUSING, RETAIL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL CORRIDORS.

REVIEW

ALIGNMENT WITH PLANS:

REVIEW OF RELEVANT COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY.

CURRENT MARKET CONDITIONS



DEMOGRAPHICS

The TTA's median household income is \$55,018 which is well below the countywide \$81,401. Homeownership rates are under 50%, and the area has a higher share of minority residents and lower educational attainment levels. Sixty percent of households earn at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI), making them eligible for federal housing programs but also placing them at high risk of being priced out.



EMPLOYMENT

Local jobs are concentrated in public administration (18.6%), retail trade (12.8%), and manufacturing (11.2%). Despite overlapping industry presence, few residents work locally, pointing to a workforce disconnect and a missed opportunity to capture more local spending and reduce commute times.



HOUSING

The corridor's affordability is largely due to older housing stock, much of it built in the 1970s, with minimal new construction in recent years. For-sale vacancy rates (3.7%) exceed the healthy market rate of 1.5%, and rental vacancy rates (10.1%) are double the long-term equilibrium. While this creates naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), reinvestment without protections could rapidly transform the market and displace vulnerable households.



COMMERCIAL MARKETS

Commercial markets along the Stone Mountain Trail corridor are mixed. Retail vacancy is tight at 2.8%, though East I-285 rents fell 30.9% in the past year. Office space has a low 5.1% vacancy but is recovering slowly with no new deliveries. Industrial space is in high demand with 3.4% vacancy, East I-285 rents up 20.5%, and West I-285 rents down 11.5%. The Trail Trade Area holds nearly 20% of DeKalb County's industrial inventory.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

1. HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Housing will be a central factor in balancing growth and affordability. Preservation of historic homes and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) will help maintain stability for existing residents, while targeted new housing can meet future demand and expand choice.

- Preserve historic homes and NOAH properties through home repair programs, affordability covenants, and community land trusts.
- Introduce workforce housing near industrial districts to connect residents to employment opportunities.
- Encourage mixed-income, transit-oriented development (TOD) near MARTA stations and future BRT hubs.

2. RETAIL & MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Retail demand is strongest in existing activity centers where the trail already generates visibility and foot traffic. Strengthening these hubs will help small businesses thrive and keep spending local.

- Concentrate new retail in downtown Clarkston, the Scottdale node, and other established activity centers.
- Prioritize experiential uses and neighborhood-serving businesses over large-format retail.
- Leverage placemaking, public art, and outdoor gathering spaces to extend dwell time and repeat visits.

3. INDUSTRIAL & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Industrial space in the corridor is in high demand, particularly in East I-285, while West I-285 offers opportunities for adaptive reuse. Linking residents to these employment assets will help keep economic benefits in the community.

- Develop workforce training programs tied directly to industrial and light manufacturing employers.
- Support adaptive reuse of small industrial spaces in West I-285 for artisan production, creative industries, and maker spaces.
- Create pathways for local hiring as part of public-private partnerships.

The Stone Mountain Trail corridor's affordability, diverse community, and strategic location make it one of the county's most promising reinvestment areas—but also one of its most fragile. Without proactive policies, the market could shift quickly, pushing out the very residents and businesses that make it a hidden gem. This assessment underscores the need for a dual approach: stimulate targeted, high-quality development while embedding affordability, anti-displacement measures, and workforce connections into every stage of implementation.

3.3 PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

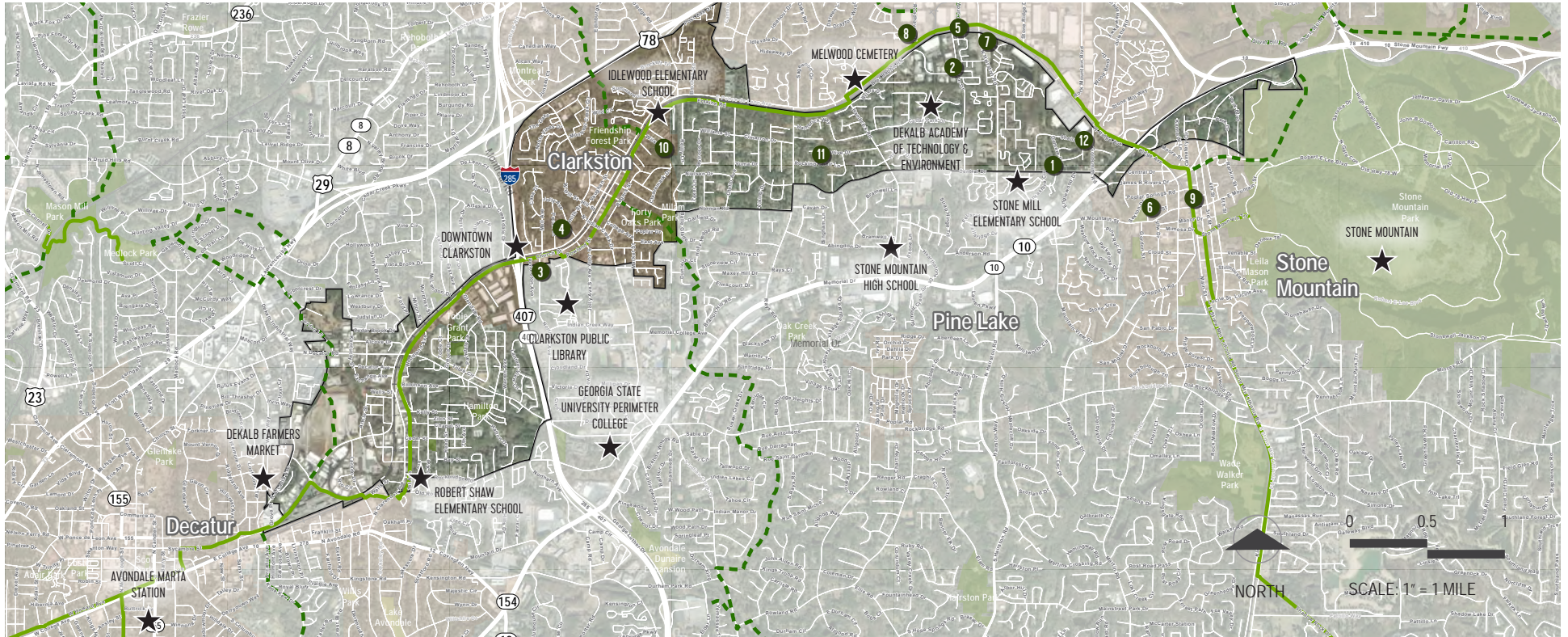
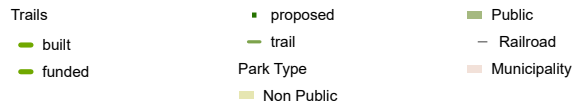


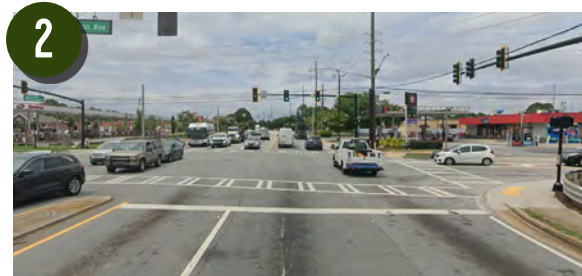
Figure 9. Existing Trail and Adjacency Map



A comprehensive analysis was developed for the study area that draws on a wide range of data including demographics, housing, employment, traffic, safety, transit, and more. The purpose was to inform the most suitable design recommendations for the corridor. The key character areas and differences across the corridor are described in the following images. A full inventory and analysis report is located in the appendix. Key findings are summarized here.



Intersection of Goldsmith and E Ponce de Leon Ave



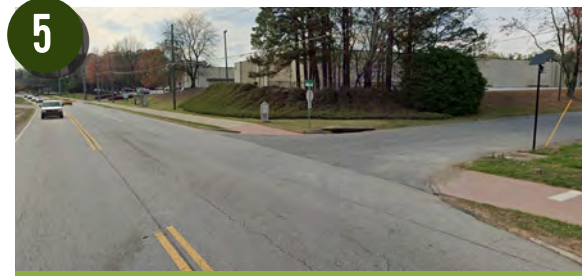
Intersection of N Hairston and E Ponce de Leon Ave



Intersection of Indian Creek and E Ponce de Leon Ave



Intersection of Market St and E Ponce de Leon Ave



Intersection of McCurdy Dr and E Ponce de Leon Ave



E Ponce de Leon Ave Bridge



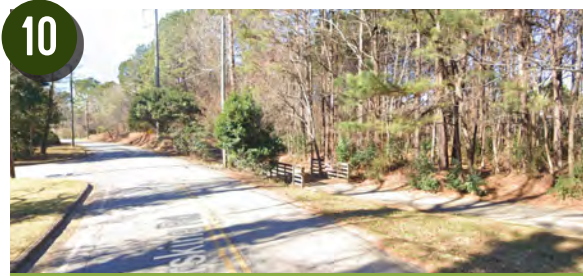
E Ponce de Leon Ave PATH Trail Industrial Intersection



Intersection of Roadhaven and E Ponce de Leon Ave



E Ponce de Leon Ave Stone Mountain Trail Connection



PATH Trail Segment



PATH Trail Segment



PATH Trail Segment

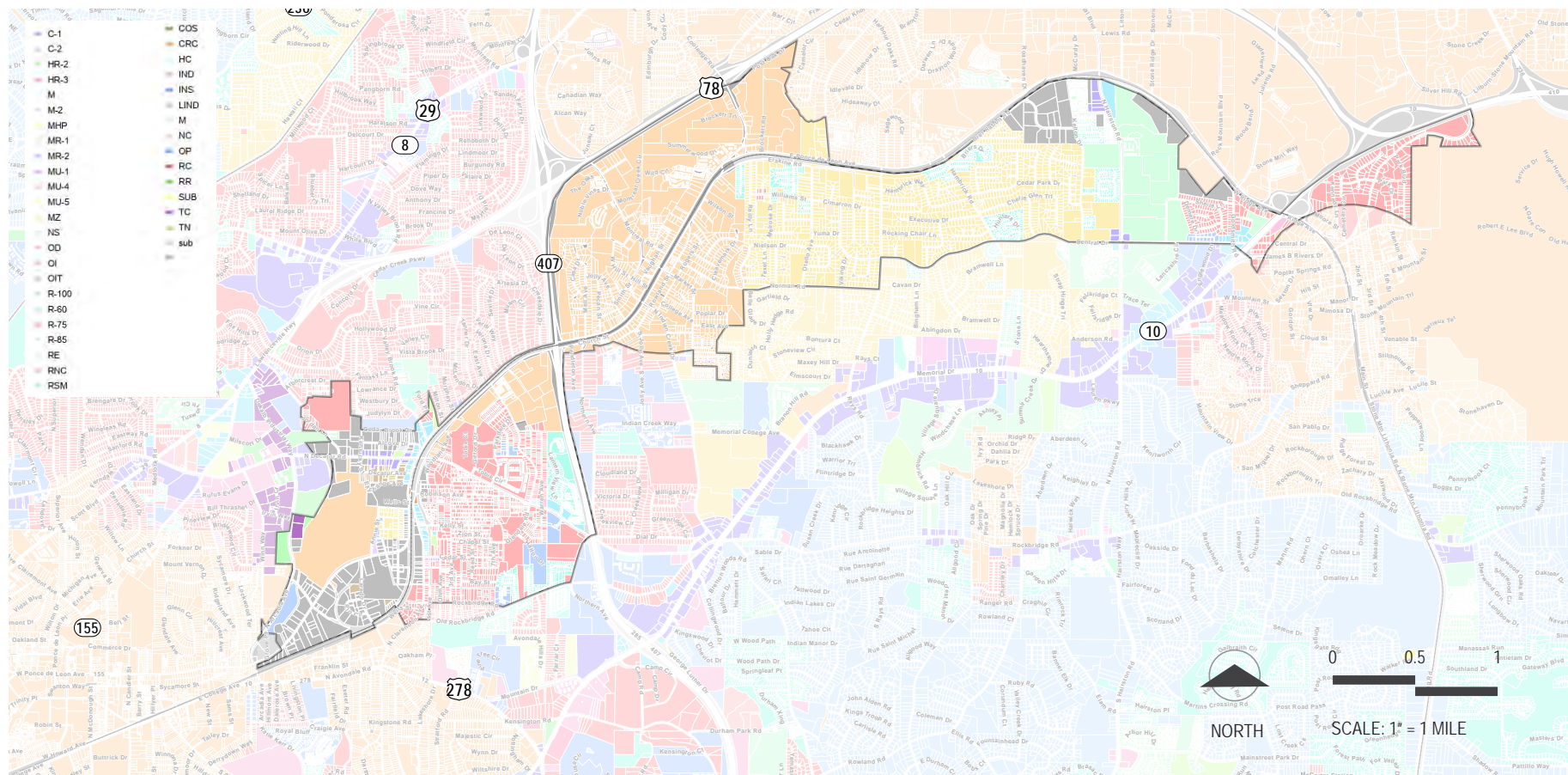


Figure 10. Unincorporated DeKalb County Zoning Map with Study Area Mask

The Stone Mountain Trail runs through multiple jurisdictions with varied residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional zoning. Many residential areas near the trail face redevelopment pressure, highlighting the need for anti-displacement tools and affordable housing incentives. Commercial and mixed-use nodes have redevelopment potential but often lack pedestrian-oriented requirements; targeted rezonings or overlays could encourage walkable, trail-facing

uses. Pockets of underutilized industrial land offer adaptive reuse opportunities, while institutional and park zones provide key access points. Zoning inconsistencies across jurisdictions—especially in permitted uses, setbacks, and parking—create barriers to cohesive development. The plan recommends coordinated overlays and trail-oriented guidelines to align growth with the corridor’s connectivity, equity, and placemaking goals.

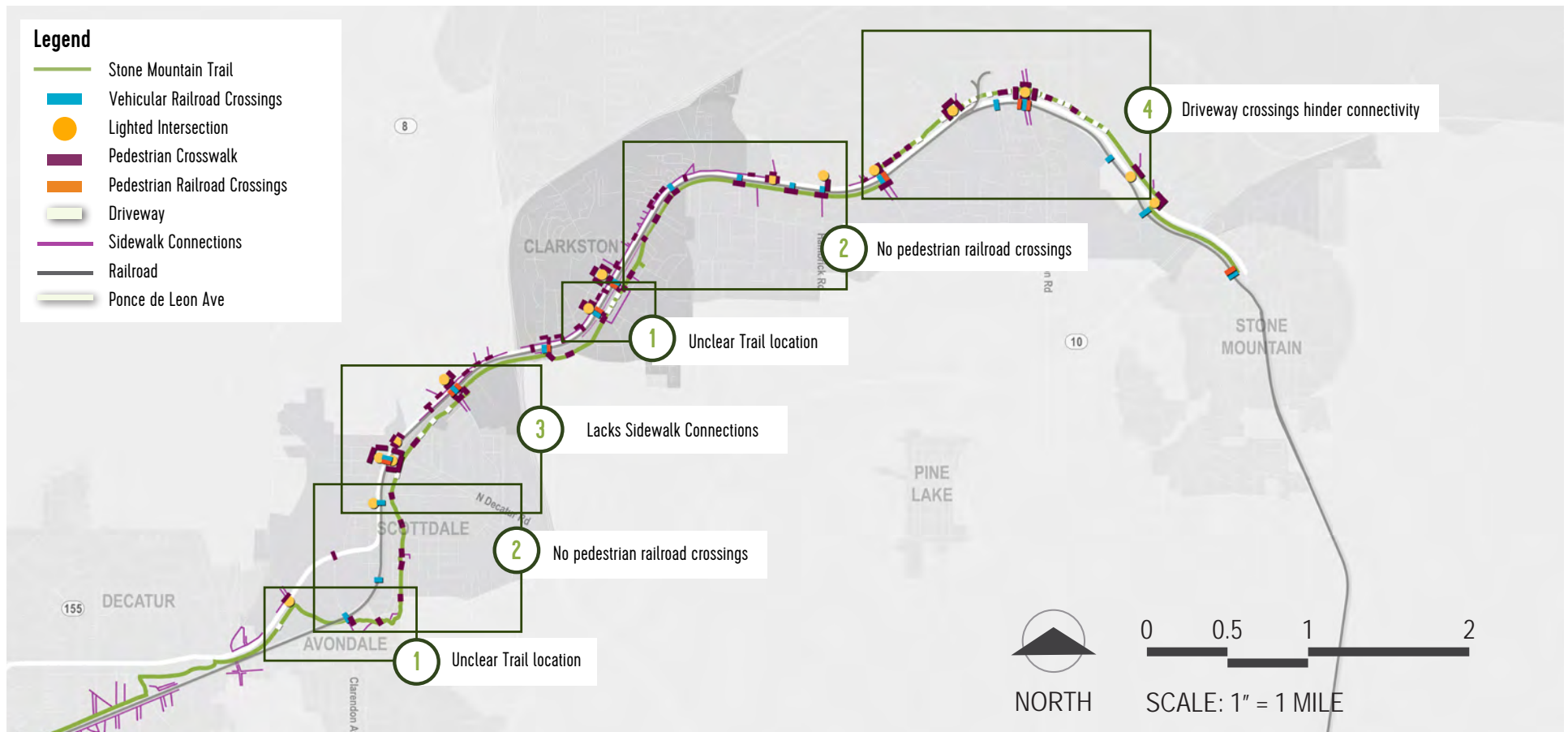


Figure 11. Trail District Inventory

Trail District Existing Conditions

This map illustrates key connectivity challenges along the Stone Mountain Trail corridor from Avondale to Stone Mountain. Major issues include unclear trail locations in multiple segments, missing pedestrian railroad crossings, lack of sidewalk connections, and driveway crossings that disrupt continuity. It also highlights intersections, crosswalks, railroad crossings, and other infrastructure features that impact pedestrian and cyclist accessibility along the route.

1 UNCLEAR TRAIL LOCATION

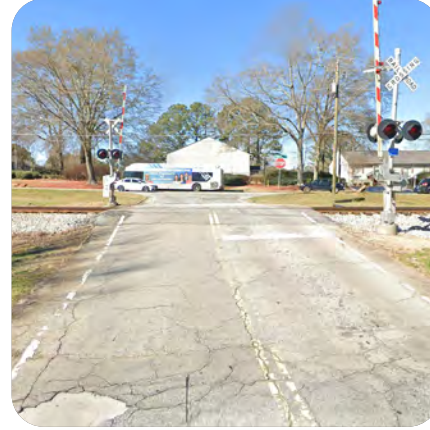


Wells Street



Church Street

2 LACKS PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS OVER RAILROAD

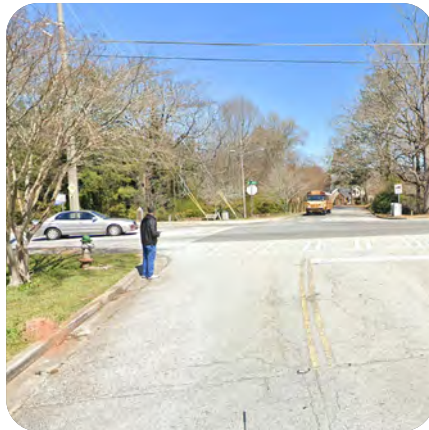


Country Address and Erskine Road



Wells Street

3 LACKS SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS

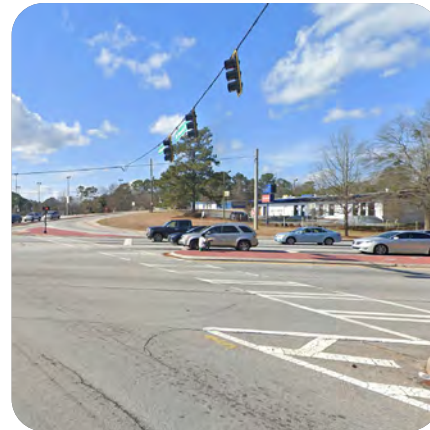


Hambrick Road



Ponce De Leon Avenue

4 DRIVEWAY CROSSINGS HINDER CONNECTIVITY



Brockett Road and Ponce De Leon Avenue



Brockett Road and Ponce De Leon Avenue

3.6 CHARACTER NODES

SCOTSDALE

Scottdale's location is its strength, being close to MARTA and Your DeKalb Farmers Market. There are established residential communities as well as greenspaces. While there is not much placemaking here yet, the character of Scottdale presents as hip and up and coming, crossing over from more industrial use to beginning to draw visitors. Recently, there has been more and more luxury home development, replacing older homes with larger, more expensive single-family homes. This area is likely to be developed quickly.



CLARKSTON

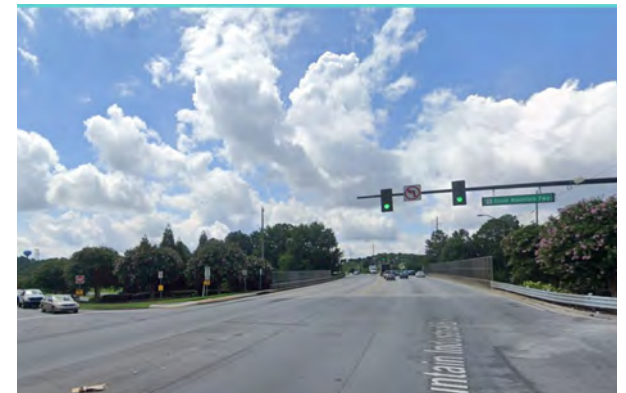
Clarkston's character is largely marked by its diversity and intense amalgamation of cultures. Their community is one of welcoming and celebrating their unique condition being a hub for refugees and home to over 40 nationalities. Their existing placemaking elements symbolize these characteristics.

While the downtown is walkable and the town has a vibrant culture, Clarkston faces high vulnerability and poverty, limited transit and food access, physical barriers, and poor connectivity to natural and residential areas.



INDUSTRIAL

The area benefits from productive industrial properties, a well-connected transit hub and corridor, dense residential pockets, and close proximity to Stone Mountain. However, it faces challenges such as limited greenspace, poor pedestrian and cyclist comfort, disconnected parcels and sidewalks, and a lack of distinctive placemaking, leaving it feeling like a concrete, business-dominated environment.



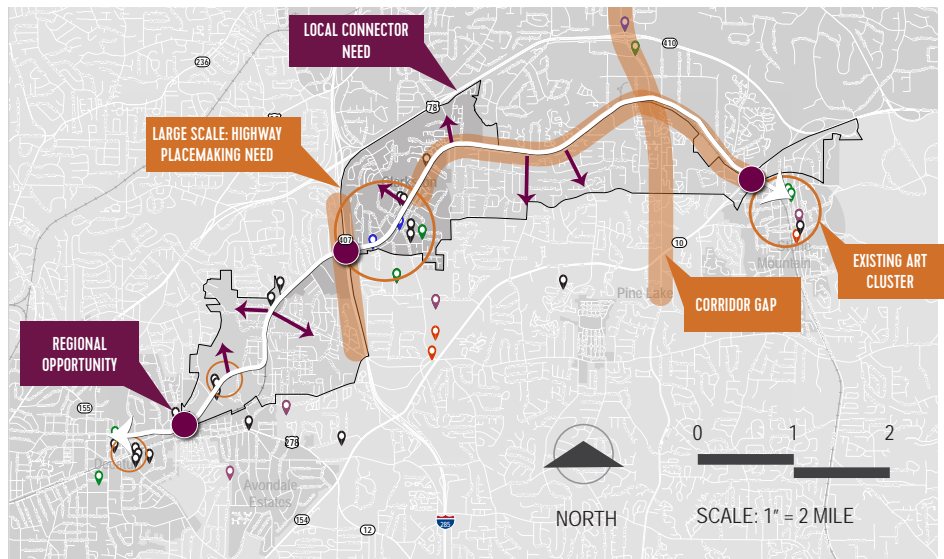


Figure 13. Placemaking Opportunities

The map and content highlight placemaking opportunities along the corridor from Decatur to Stone Mountain, identifying existing art clusters, gaps, and connection needs. Key opportunities include creating a regional gateway at the western entrance, addressing corridor gaps, and improving local and highway-scale placemaking. The vision emphasizes developing an art corridor along the trail, leveraging major nodes like the Stone Mountain and I-285 interchange for visibility, and enhancing neighborhood corridors to foster a stronger sense of place where gaps currently exist.

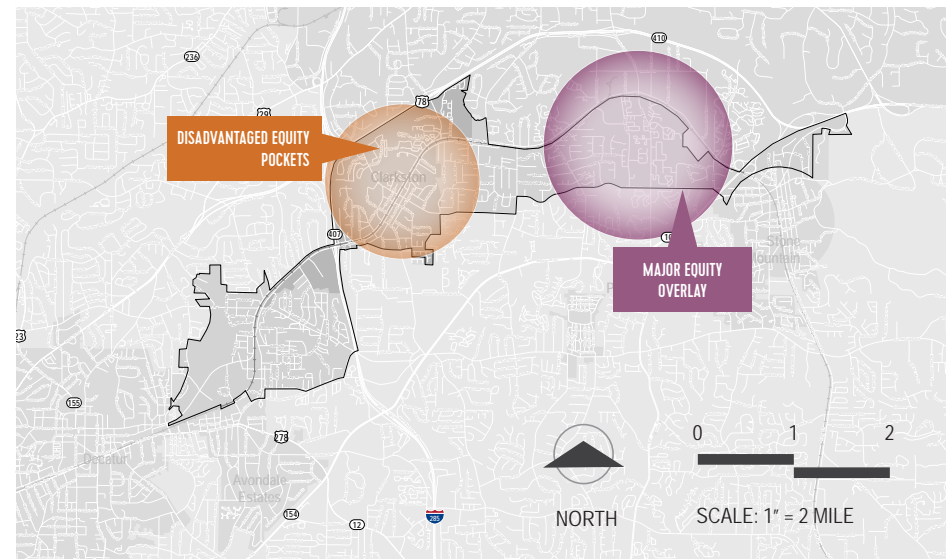


Figure 12. Vulnerability Locations

The area near the industrial core has the highest overlap of unemployment, poverty, housing affordability, foreign born, residents, and income. Clarkston has pockets of inequities in different pockets of the city. It emphasizes where equity considerations should be prioritized in planning and development efforts.

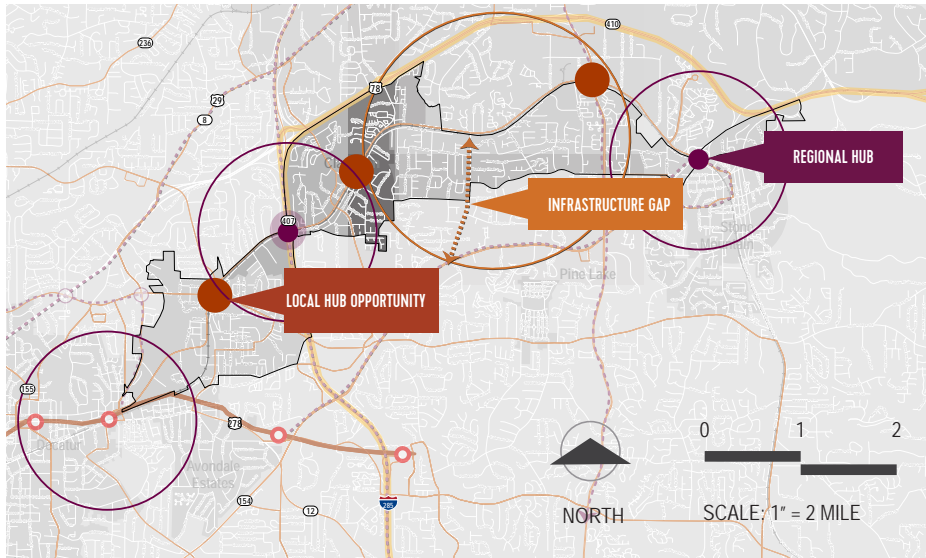


Figure 15. Transportation Opportunities

The eastern portion of the site faces significant gaps in transit connectivity, with a shortage of multi-modal hubs and limited density near existing routes and stops. However, there is strong potential for strategic infill development along the corridor.

Regionally, future hubs could leverage the planned BRT connections around Stone Mountain and I-285, while locally, hub opportunities could be anchored in the industrial area, as well as in Clarkston and Scottdale.

DeKalb County is to update its transit development plan. This may adjust the specific vision, but the plan should ensure connection to the trail and nodes identified in this study.

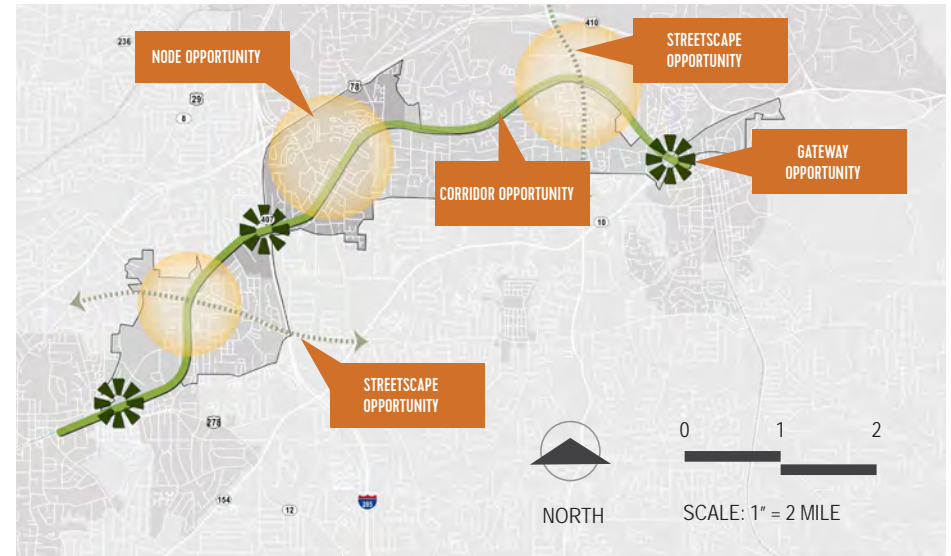


Figure 14. Nodal, Corridor, and Gateway Opportunities

The four-scale planning framework focuses on nodes, corridors, streetscapes, and gateways. Key nodes include Scottdale, Clarkston, and the Industrial areas, all of which can be linked through a cohesive, well-designed corridor. This corridor offers multiple gateway opportunities to enhance placemaking, foster a strong sense of identity, and create visual and functional continuity throughout the area.

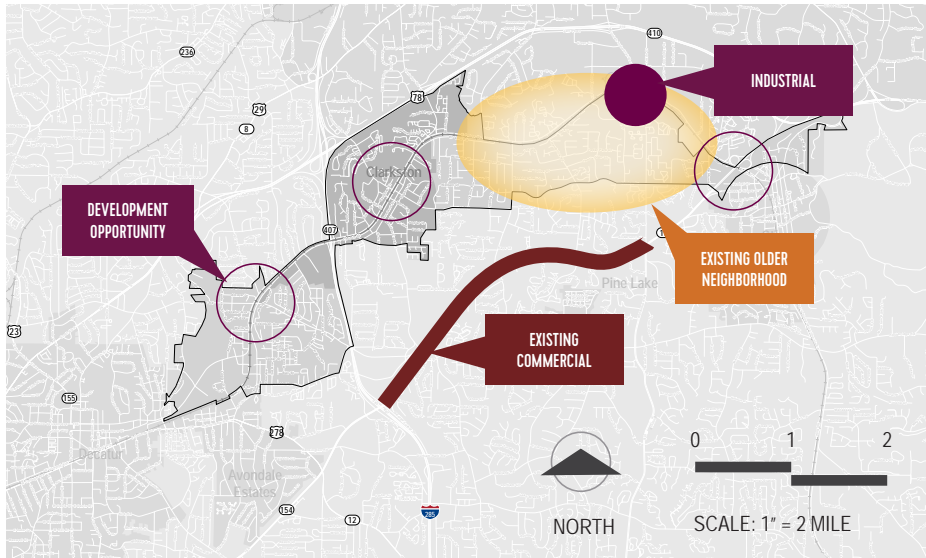


Figure 28. Development Opportunities

The identified development opportunities are Clarkston, Scottdale, and the connection to Stone Mountain. There are vacant land and greenspace in these areas that could be developed to activate the property along the Stone Mountain Trail. The existing commercial area is south of the study area. The Industrial node area contains existing older residential neighborhoods that the community wants to preserve, so it is not considered to be a development opportunity.

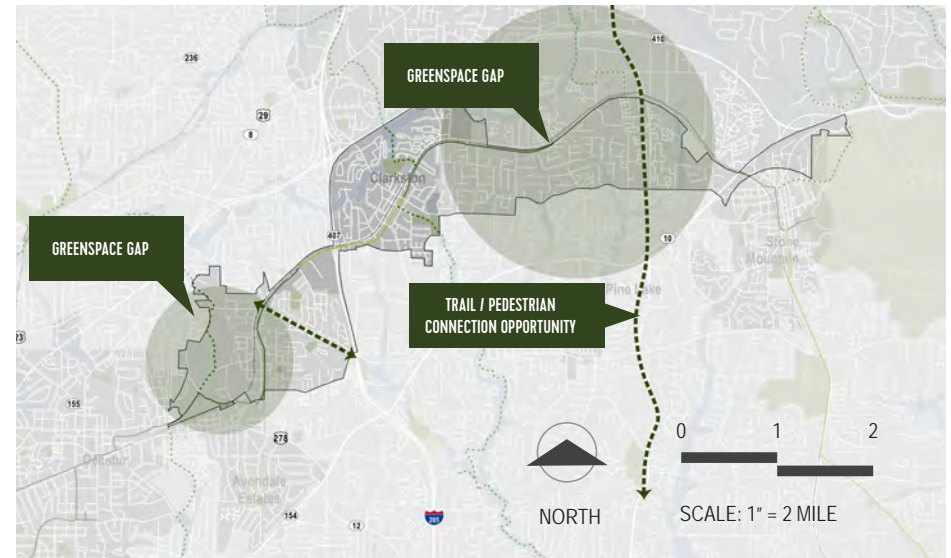


Figure 27. Recreation Opportunities

There are linear corridors of greenspace scattered throughout the study area and parks are fairly equally dispersed. The gap in green space exists on the east side of I-285. The existing and planned greenways connect large portions of this region except along North Hairston Road. There is also a green link connection opportunity in Scottdale.

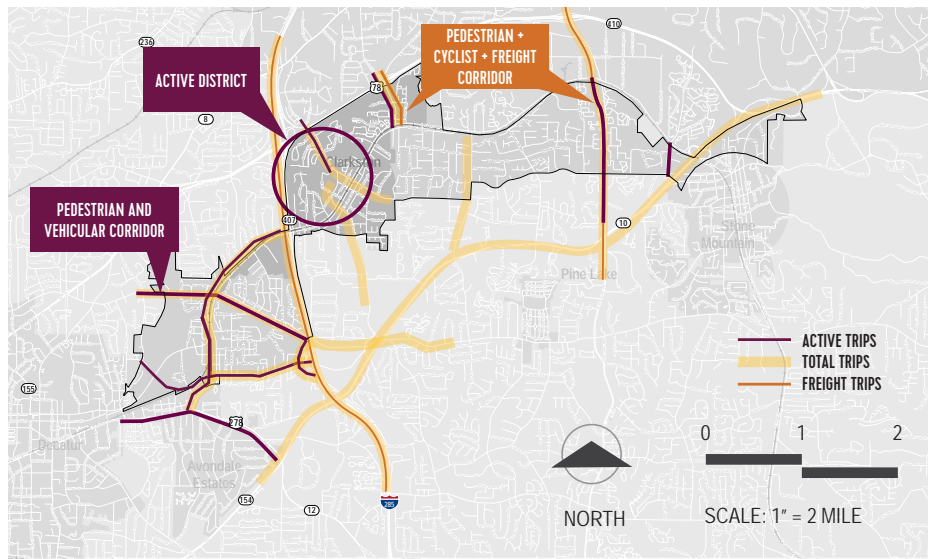


Figure 30. Mobility Opportunities

The pedestrian and cyclist corridors identified on this map currently function as isolated segments, highlighting an opportunity for enhanced connectivity to create an integrated active transportation network. Analysis of movement patterns indicates consistent pedestrian and cyclist traffic across the site, with notable nodes of activity centered in Clarkston and significant crossover at the intersection of North Hairston Road.

Furthermore, the spatial overlap of active transportation routes, industrial land uses, and vehicular traffic along North Hairston Road corresponds strongly with census tracts characterized by higher poverty rates and lower-income households. Clarkston has a high density of active trips distributed across its street network, underscoring the need for infrastructure improvements to support safe and efficient multimodal mobility in these socio-economically vulnerable areas.

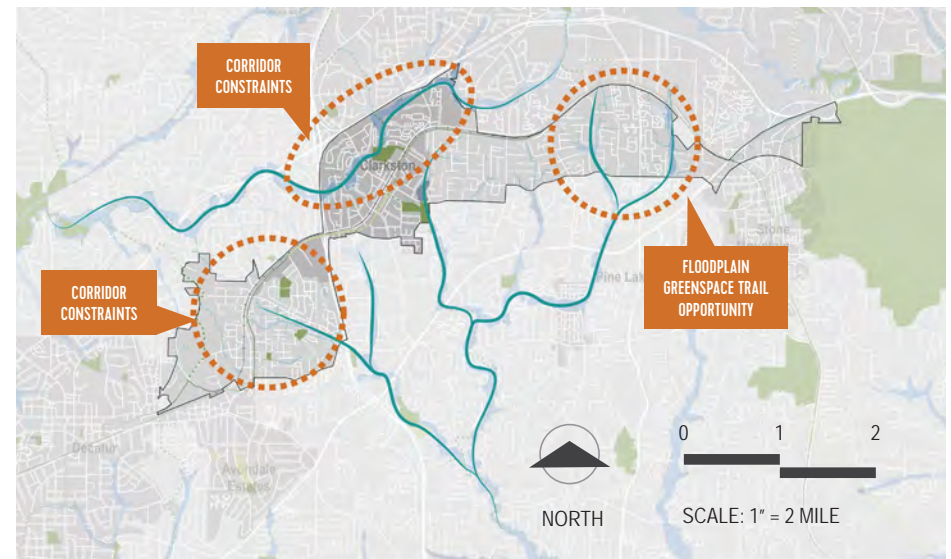


Figure 29. Natural System Opportunities

There are minor natural systems in the study area, connected to larger systems throughout the region. A main floodplain creek area runs through Clarkston and bisects the community. The industrial area and Scottdale have small creeks but no major natural systems.

The entire district has limited greenspace, shade, or natural systems. The industrial land and infrastructure have created a large amount of impervious surface. The Stone Mountain Park is the largest park near this region and has a major impact on the district.

Stormwater infrastructure is also limited. Introducing green infrastructure improvements can reduce flooding and demand for expensive and maintenance intensive grey infrastructure.

3.4 TRAIL ANALYSIS

After understanding the key existing features of the district, key opportunities and constraints were identified:

STRENGTHS



CLARKSTON DOWNTOWN
YOUR DEKALB FARMERS MARKET
MARTA TRAIN STATION
STONE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
HISTORIC SCOTSDALE NEIGHBORHOOD
DIVERSE COMMUNITY

S

WEAKNESSES



POVERTY
DISCONNECTED FROM ATLANTA REGION
SENSE OF IDENTITY
INDUSTRIAL LAND
POLLUTION
TRAFFIC SAFETY

W

OPPORTUNITIES



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
INFILL
BUILD ON INDUSTRIAL LAND
CONNECT COMMUNITIES

O

THREATS



FAST GROWING AREA
INCREASED PRICES
DISPLACEMENT
VULNERABLE POPULATION

T

3.5 DISTRICT ANALYSIS

After analyzing the district, the primary barriers disconnecting our study area are the railroad and the main roads. The key themes are summarized below:

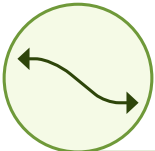
The recommendations in this report respond to these key opportunities and constraints and the focus areas centered on the existing activity in the region.



- Equity discrepancies between east and west of the highway
- Future transit hub opportunities



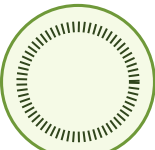
- Housing regions to protect
- Housing opportunities



- Key roadway corridors
- Key problem intersections




- Existing trail as the ribbon that binds the district together
- Limited greenspace in the industrial area



- Three activity centers highlighted as key nodes
- Gateway opportunities for visitors





04

VISION AND FRAMEWORK

DESIGN FOR INCLUSION. MOBILITY, &
RESILIENCE

4.1 PLAN PURPOSE

This project is vital to increase connection through inclusive growth, bridging diverse communities, and leveraging urban density to create shared spaces that unite rather than separate. The purpose of this plan is to evaluate and identify key locations to connect, enhance, and strengthen the study area for residents and visitors alike. The plan identified 5 key components and needs to better understand the district and provide recommendations that meet the needs of the community. They include:

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

Input from residents, business owners, and local stakeholders provided critical insights into the priorities and concerns of the district. The combined findings of the technical analysis and community feedback informed a simplified vision for the corridor:

VISION

Create a cohesive corridor through the lens of anti-displacement



4.2 PROJECT GOALS

In order for this plan to achieve a cohesive corridor that connects the community through the lens of anti-displacement, three primary goals were established. These goals structure the recommendations and strategies presented in this document, ensuring that proposed improvements address both physical and social dimensions of the corridor. The goals of the plan, as described below, are: enhance connectivity, strengthen neighborhoods, and foster a sense of place. Together, these goals form the foundation of the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan and guide the approach to creating a connected, inclusive, and resilient corridor.



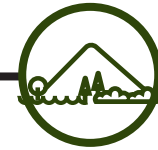
Enhance Connectivity

Enhancing connectivity requires reducing barriers to travel across the district. Priorities include strengthening connections to regional rail routes, improving the safety and accessibility of railroad crossings, and upgrading wayfinding systems to better serve both local and regional users.



Strengthen Neighborhoods

Strengthening the district's diverse and active community by enhancing existing services, introducing needed amenities, and improving connections between neighborhoods. Efforts aim to support a vibrant local culture, foster social interaction, and ensure that all residents have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.



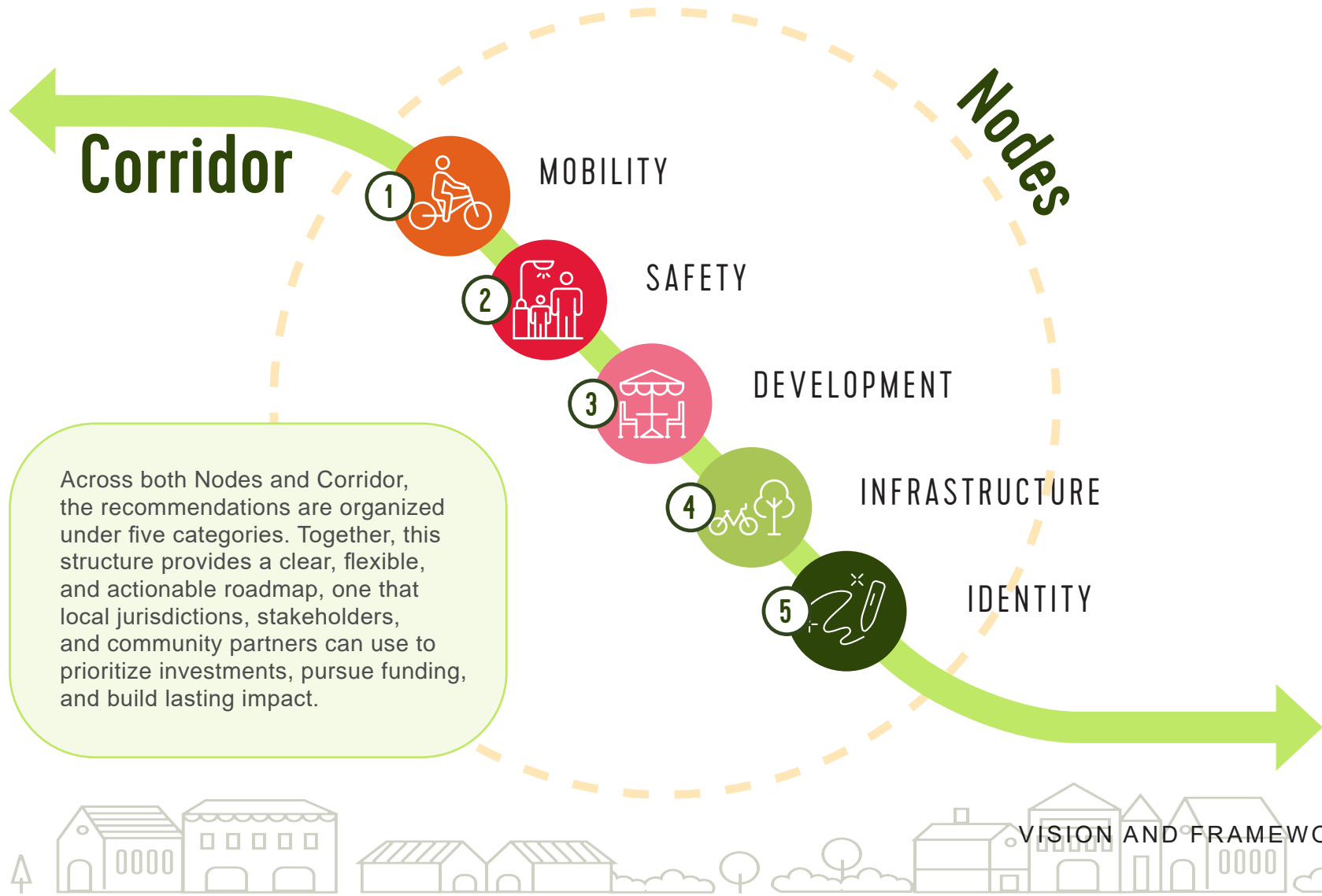
Foster A Sense of Place

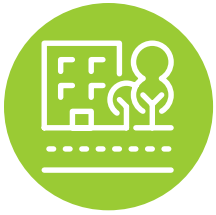
The character of the region varies block by block, shaped by its diverse developments, communities, and streets. The goal is to highlight and celebrate these unique identities, bringing them to the forefront of the corridor's sense of place.



4.3 DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The design framework for the Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan developed through an iterative process informed by technical analysis and community engagement. Over the course of the project, distinct design categories emerged as essential to addressing both large-scale corridor needs and localized challenges within key activity centers. **The framework organizes recommendations into two scales: corridor-wide strategies that knit the district together, and node-specific strategies that provide targeted interventions.** The design recommendations are grouped into **five interconnected categories: mobility, safety, development, infrastructure, and identity.** This structure provides a clear and adaptable approach for implementing improvements that respond to the diverse needs of the corridor to meet the goals of the plan.

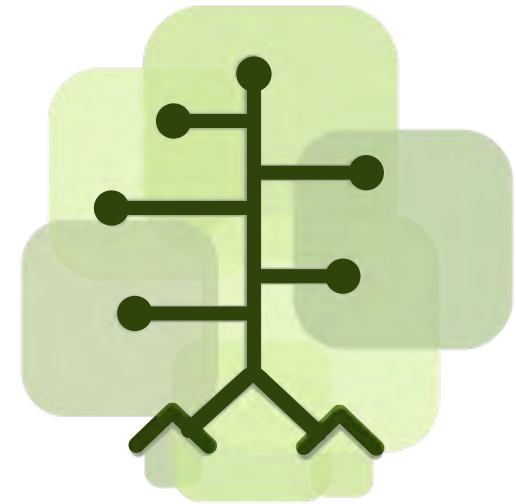




CORRIDOR DISTRICT

SCALE 1: CORRIDOR-WIDE DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES

These recommendations apply broadly across the study area and address district-wide systems and policies. They include major mobility upgrades, infill and redevelopment strategies, trail visibility improvements, public art planning, housing stability tools, and infrastructure modernization. This scale reflects the vision level changes needed to shift the corridor from a vehicle-oriented thoroughway to a cohesive, multimodal, and people-centered place.



Unifying Trail

The study area shares the Stone Mountain Trail corridor, which connects and unifies the surrounding areas.

Approach Diagram



NORTH

0 0.5 1 2

SCALE: 1" = 3/4 MILE

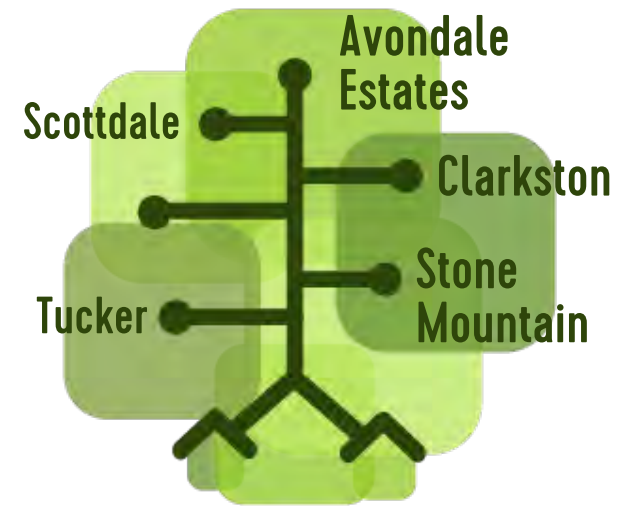
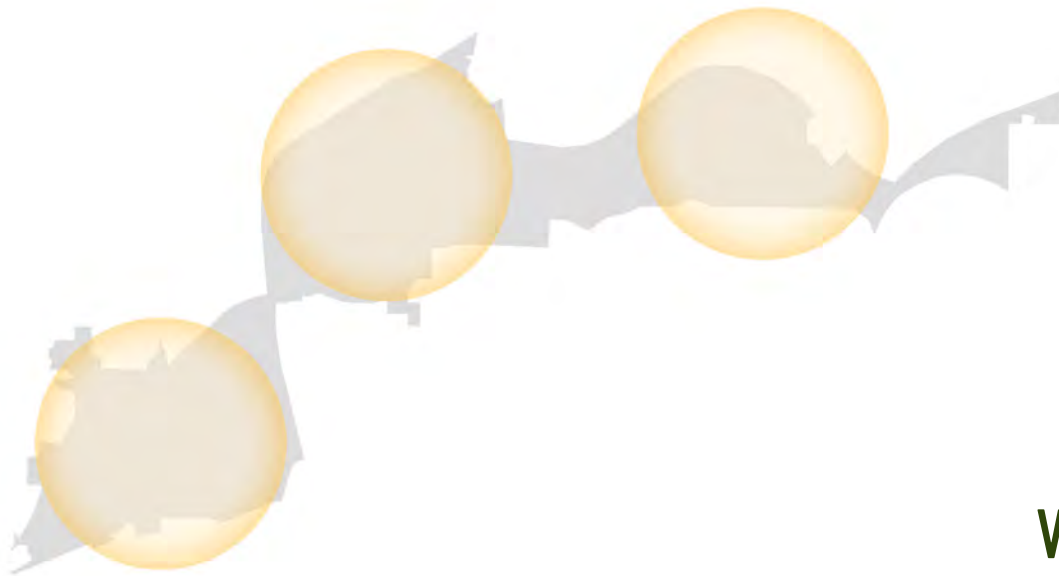




NODES

SCALE 2: NODAL STRATEGIES

Building on the corridor framework, these recommendations focus on three key nodes: Scottdale, Clarkston, and the Industrial Node. Each node presents distinct opportunities to implement targeted enhancements at a human scale through streetscape improvements, cultural activation, last-mile connectivity, housing variety, and strategic partnerships. These place based strategies are where the larger vision becomes tangible, creating momentum through visible, incremental change.



Varied Regions, Varied Character

The study area is very diverse in terms of demographics, development, housing, character, and more. Though identifying key nodes in the district, areas are critically analysed as distinct zones with unique character and needs. The three key nodes for this plan are the Scottdale, Tucker, and Industrial areas.

Approach Diagram



NORTH

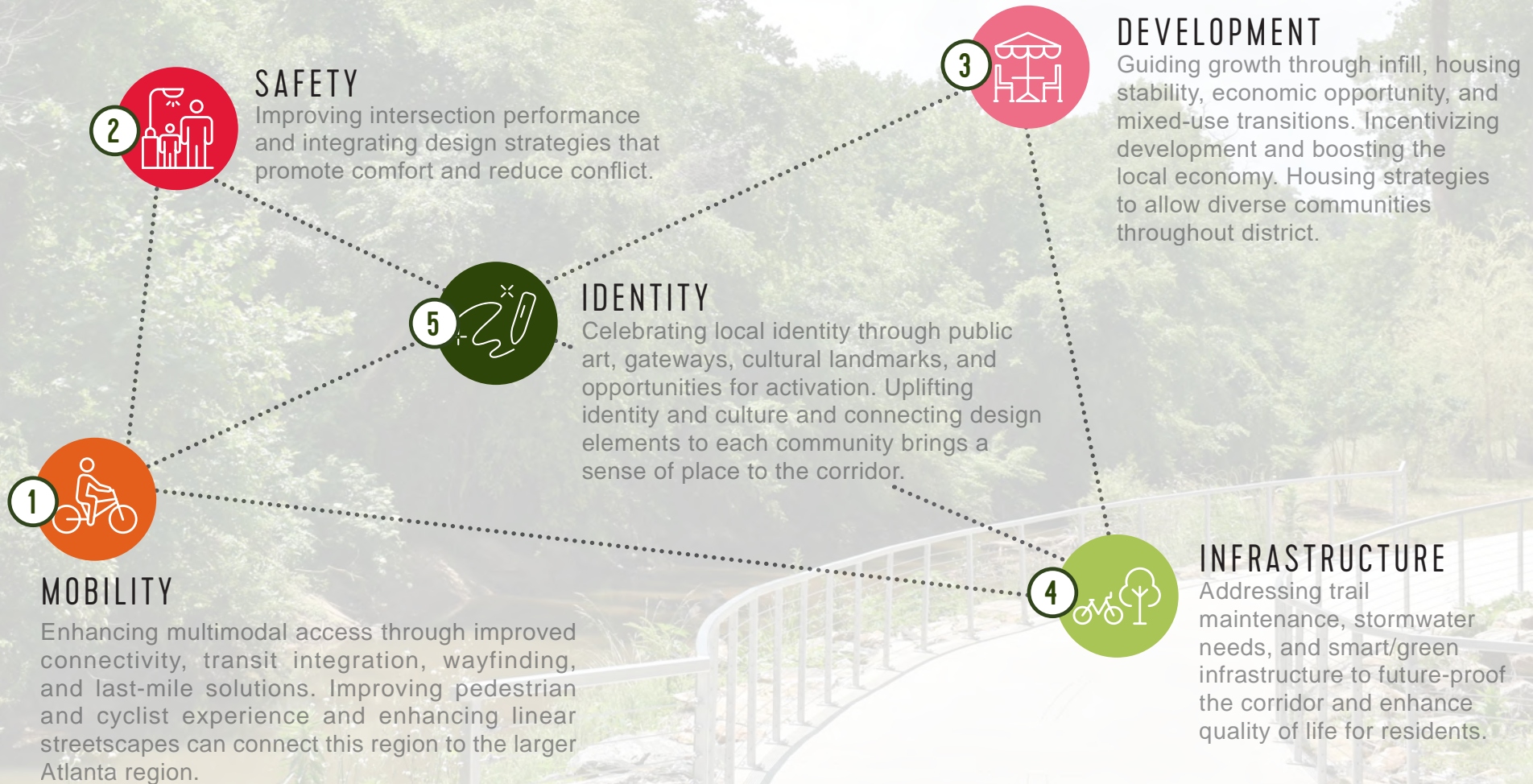
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SCALE: 1" = 3/4 MILE



DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The five design elements can improve the corridor in strategic areas to meet the 3 primary goals of the project. Enacting these design elements will enhance connectivity, strengthen neighborhoods, and foster a sense of place for the region.





05

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

BRINGING THE DISTRICT TO LIFE



CORRIDOR DISTRICT

The corridor is made up of multiple communities with very different developments and character. The district is bisected by major roads and the railroad which separates communities and limits regional accessibility. The proposed recommendations evaluate transportation, development, and identity needs to elevate each neighborhood.



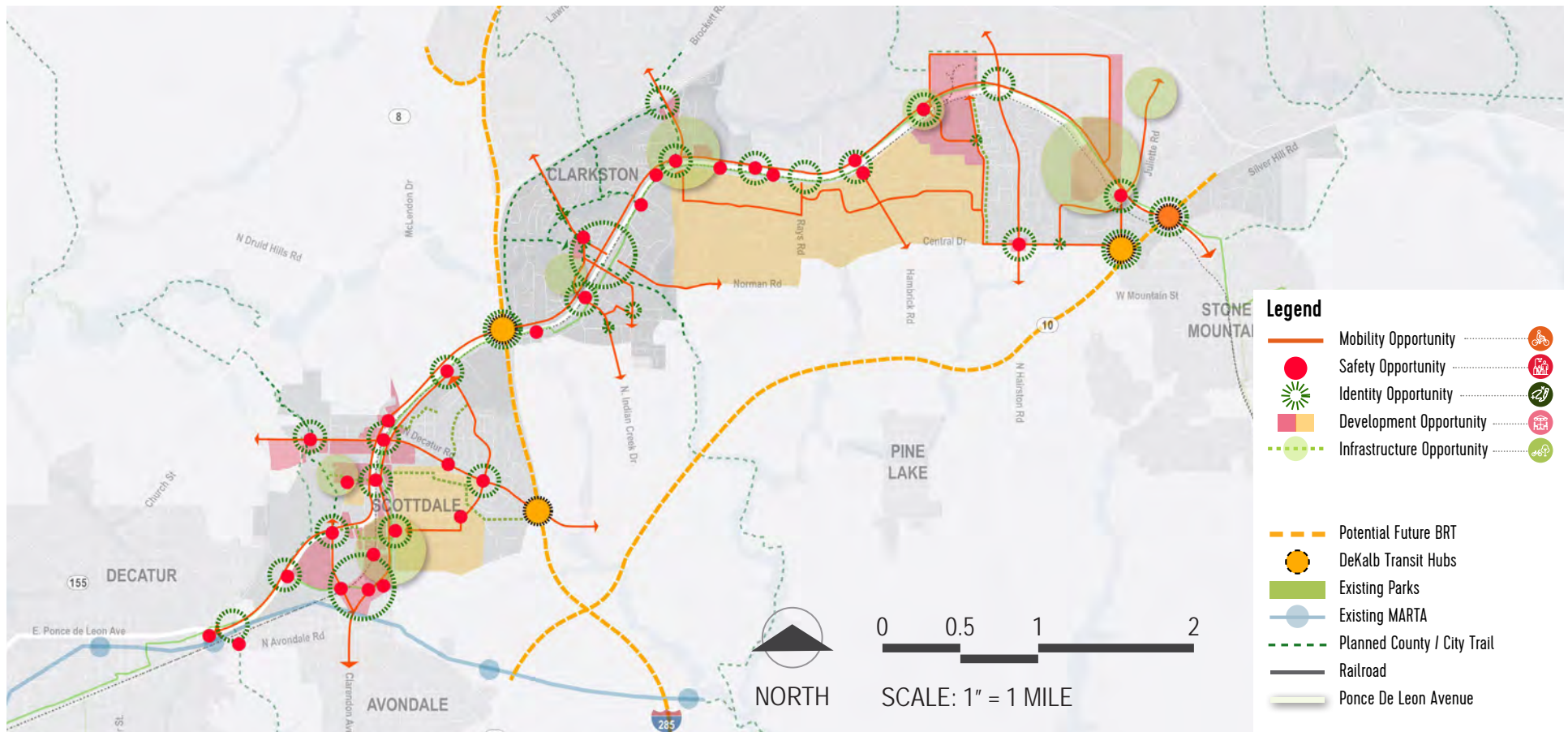


Figure 17. Corridor Design Recommendations

Overall Design Recommendations

Improving the trail goes beyond the trail footprint it begins with the surrounding communities and their unique context. There are five key elements that guide recommendations to enhance the project area include : Mobility, Safety, Identity, Development, and Infrastructure. Together, they form a layered approach to reconnect neighborhoods, support vibrant public spaces, and create a safer, more inclusive environment. The map illustrates where these strategies can deliver the greatest impact.

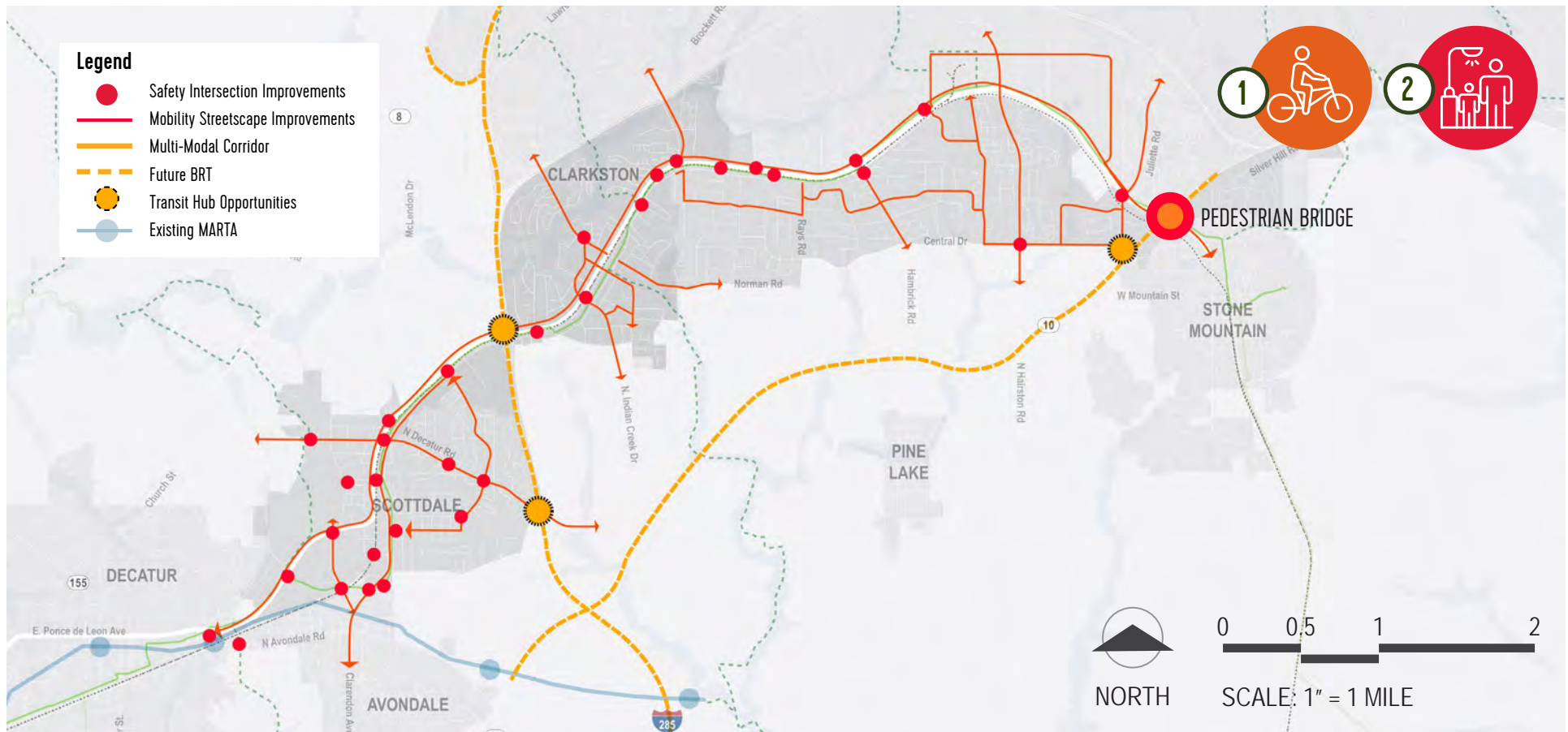


Figure 18. Corridor Mobility Recommendations

1. Mobility Opportunities

The study area supports an existing multimodal network that includes MARTA rail, local bus service, and a growing trail system. However, infrastructure gaps at key connection points continue to limit overall accessibility and network efficiency. This plan proposes targeted intersection upgrades, sidewalk improvements, and streetscape enhancements that can strengthen regional accessibility and provide

space for amenities such as shelters, bike parking, and shuttle stops. Recommendations were developed by analyzing crash statistics, current pedestrian and cyclist usage, existing projects, activity centers, and community input. Key safety and mobility recommendations differ depending on the location along the corridor. Specific recommendations are described in detail for each node.

Connection Recommendations

The recommendations are organized into three categories of improvements: full streetscape enhancements, minor mobility improvements, and identity upgrades.

Full streetscape improvements include road diets, narrowing lanes, adding bike and pedestrian infrastructure, street trees, pedestrian amenities, and safety enhancements. These strategies are designed to improve the entire corridor and create a safe and comfortable connection for all modes of transportation.

Minor mobility improvements include building off of the existing streetscape to add ADA enhancements, close sidewalk gaps, and infill pedestrian amenities to make each street fully accessible for the entire community.

Identity upgrades include minor additions to create a cohesive identifiable corridor to better connect people to destinations. Recommendations mostly include wayfinding, signage, and placemaking elements to create branded streetscapes unique to each community.

Two key connections include North Hairston Road and North Decatur Road. These are currently highly trafficked corridors for all modes of traffic and uncomfortable for pedestrians and cyclists. These main roads cross the major barriers of our district and link communities together. The proposed cross sections are illustrated in Figures 20 to 21 and define minimum requirements for each roads such as median additions, landscape enhancements, multi-use path requirements, signage and wayfinding requirements, and site amenity standards.

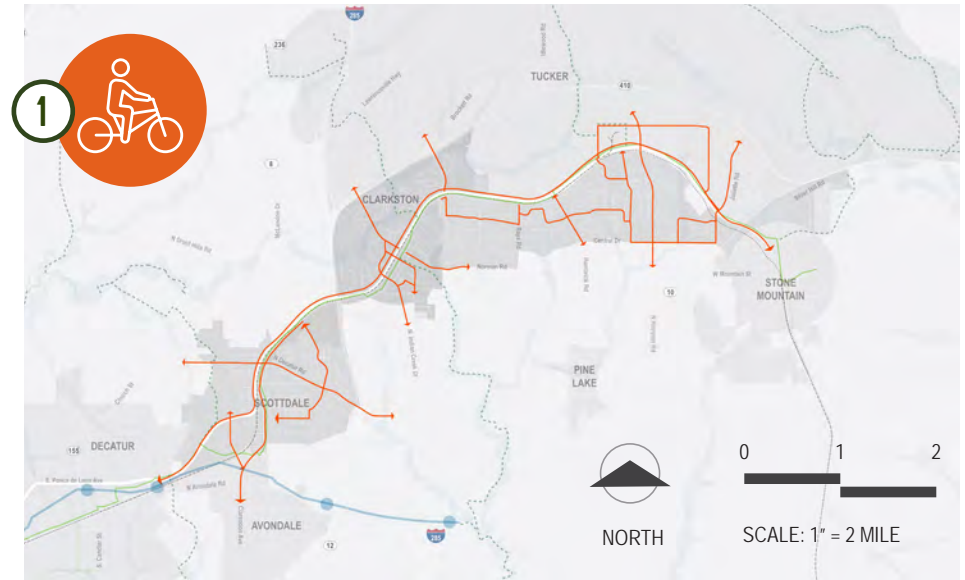


Figure 19. Corridor Streetscape Improvements

Connections

A total of 21 local street connections are identified to strengthen the pedestrian network and improve access between neighborhoods and destinations. These connections span over seven miles of local streets, prioritizing sidewalk gaps, ADA accessibility, and traffic calming measures. Priority corridors that connect the district together include:

- Laredo Drive
- North Decatur Avenue
- North Clarendon Avenue
- Brockett Road
- North Indian Creek Drive
- North Hairston Road
- Goldsmith Road

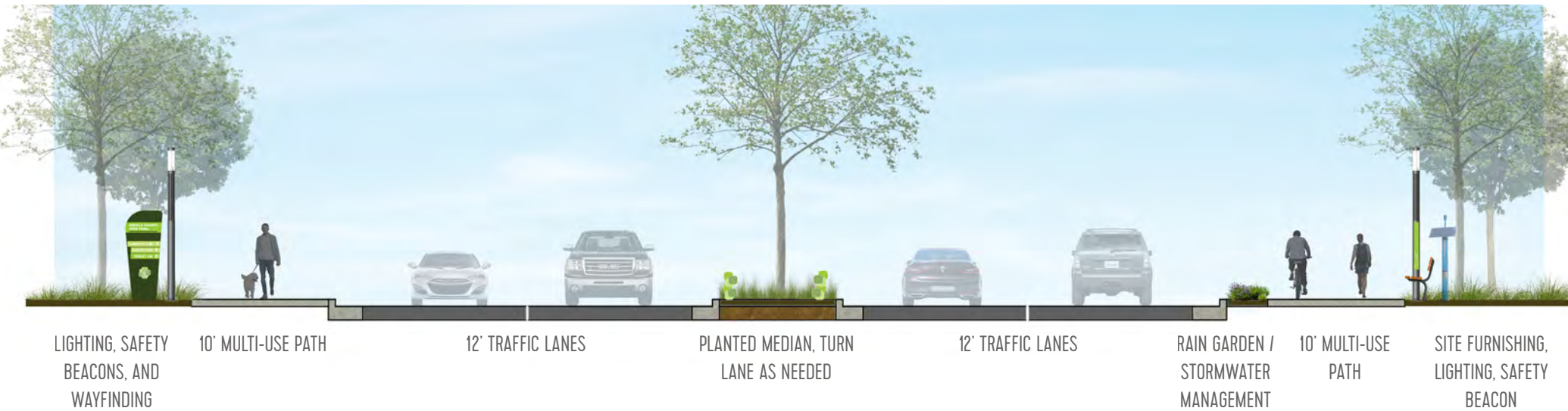


Figure 20. Trail Section

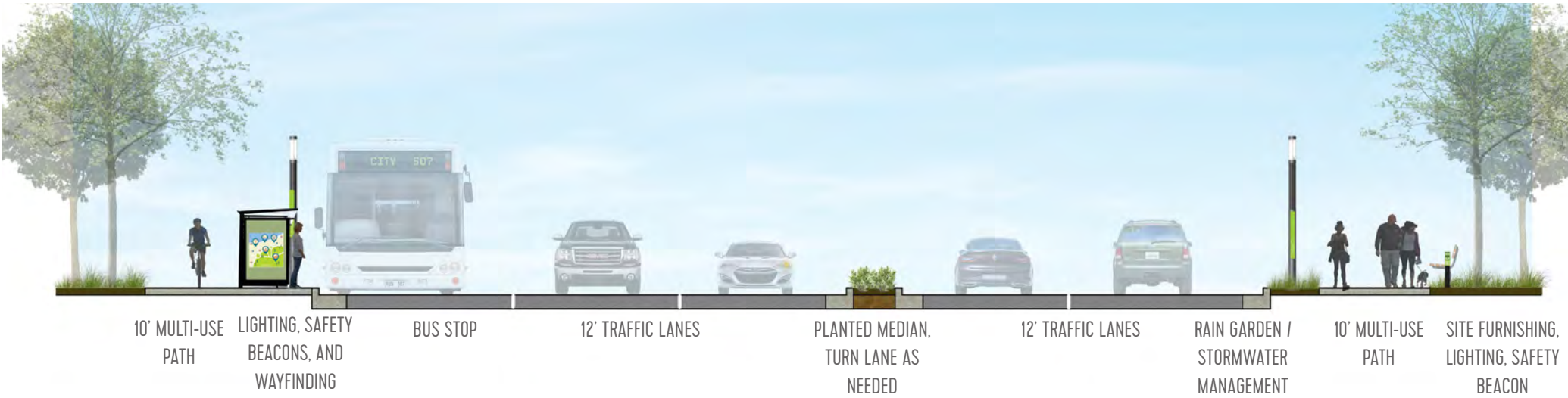


Figure 21. Trail Section

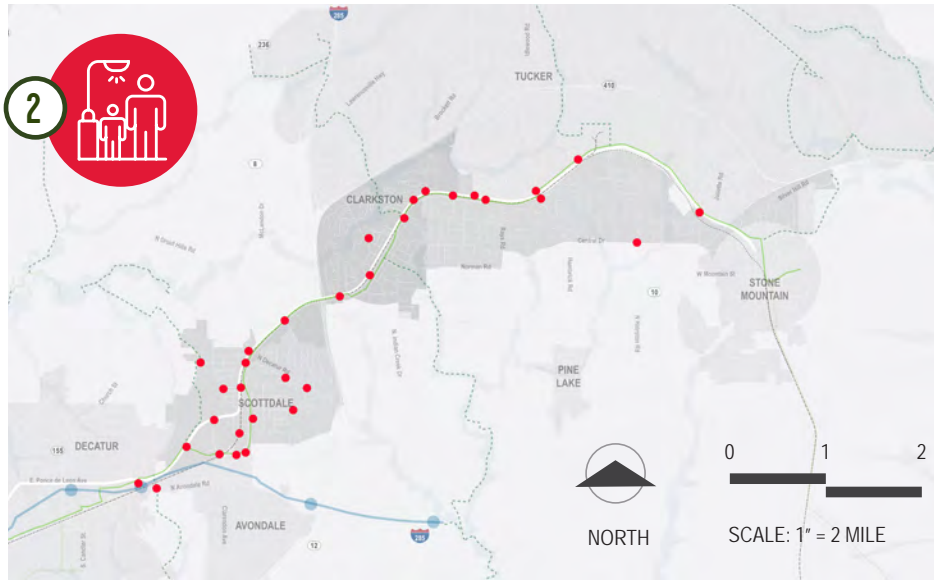


Figure 22. Corridor Safety Recommendations

INTERSECTIONS

Key intersection improvements focus on safe crossings over freight rail lines, enhanced access across Ponce de Leon Avenue, and improved signage and visibility at critical nodes. These include new crosswalks, signals, and wayfinding at 18 intersections. Through overlaying community input with our analysis a few key priority intersections were identified as the most needed enhancements.

Priority intersections include:

- Goldsmith Road and West Ridge Avenue
- Brockett Rd and E Ponce De Leon Avenue
- North Indian Creek Drive and Ponce De Leon
- North Decatur Road & Ponce De Leon / Church Street
- North Clarendon Ave / Ponce De Leon / Church Street / Wells Street
- Laredo Drive & Ponce De Leon / Church Street
- Ponce De Leon & DeKalb Industrial Way

2. Safety Recommendations

To guide the development of safety recommendations at key intersections within the county, this plan will draw on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Proven Safety Countermeasures toolbox. These evidence-based treatments are designed to address common crash types, improve visibility, and enhance safety for all users. Applicable strategies include high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, leading pedestrian intervals, road diets, and improved lighting, among others. By applying these proven solutions—tailored to the context of each location—the county can implement targeted, cost-effective improvements that measurably reduce crash risk while creating a safer, more comfortable environment for people walking, bicycling, and driving.

Safety Recommendations include:

- Goldsmith Road and West Ridge Avenue
- Brockett Rd and Ponce De Leon
- North Indian Creek Drive and Ponce De Leon
- North Decatur Road & Ponce De Leon / Church Street
- North Clarendon Ave / Ponce De Leon / Church Street / Wells Street
- Laredo Drive & Ponce De Leon / Church Street
- Ponce De Leon & DeKalb Industrial Way



Safety enhancements along the Stone Mountain Trail focus on key intersections near schools, trail crossings, and major roads like Ponce de Leon Avenue and Church Street. These locations experience frequent pedestrian activity and traffic conflicts, making safety upgrades critical to reducing crashes and improving walkability.



CROSSWALK + VISIBILITY ENHANCEMENTS

High-visibility markings at key trail and school crossings, especially along Church Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue, to increase driver awareness.

- Improved street lighting at nighttime hotspots and key crossings and approaches.
- Increase driver yielding and pedestrian visibility
- Raised crosswalks slow vehicle speeds and emphasize pedestrian priority.



MEDIANS AND PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLANDS

Medians and refuge islands installed on multi-lane roads such as Glendale Road and Montreal Road to offer safe waiting zones for pedestrians.

- Provide safe two-stage crossings on multi-lane roads.



TRAFFIC CALMING AND SIGNAL UPGRADES

Leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), RRFBs

- Give pedestrians a head start before vehicles get a green light.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs)

- Provide controlled midblock crossings on high speed or high volume roads.
- Reduce vehicle speeds on roads.

Specifically at high-risk intersections in Clarkston, Scottdale, and near the Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.



INTERSECTION AND ROADWAY DESIGN

Includes curb extensions (Bulb-outs)

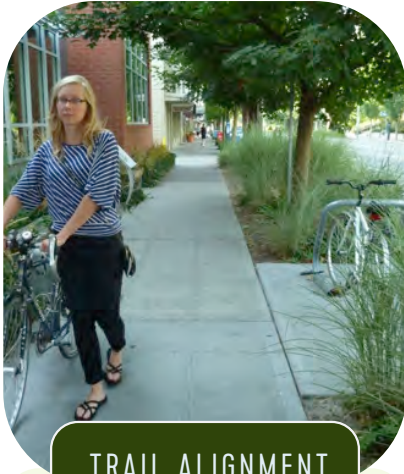
- Reduce crossing distance and increase pedestrian visibility

Tighter curb radii which shortens crossing distance and reduces turning speeds.

- Also includes protected Intersections

Implement road diets on low traffic corridors

- Reallocate space to reduce travel lanes, lower speeds, and add pedestrian/bike facilities.



TRAIL ALIGNMENT AND SEPARATION

- Grade separation: where feasible, provide overpasses/underpasses at high-volume or high-speed crossings
- Physical separation using landscaping, bollards, or vertical barriers to separate the trail from adjacent vehicular traffic.



WAYFINDING AND USER INFORMATION

- Consistent signage including trail branding, distance markers, destinations, and safety reminders.
- Conflict Warning Signs which alert motorists of trail users and vice versa at shared areas or crossings.



INTEGRATION WITH TRANSIT AND KEY DESTINATIONS

- Safe access to transit stops which provide crosswalks, curb ramps, and waiting areas where the trail intersects with MARTA bus stops.
- School zone enhancements: Use flashing beacons, school signage, and advanced yield lines near schools.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Targeted public awareness campaigns in partnership with local schools and law enforcement

Zoning Strategies

Several zoning strategies apply to the entire corridor and district, aiming to provide cohesive development and activation along the trail, enable affordable housing options, preserve and elevate existing character, and enhance pedestrian safety and mobility. Zoning strategies specific to housing preservation are explored further in Chapter 6.



- Define trail frontage and establish frontage requirements for redevelopment and new development on parcels with direct frontage along the Stone Mountain Trail or trail access corridors to require provisions for pedestrian connections to adjacent trail amenities
- Accommodate “missing middle” and small-scale housing types such as accessory dwelling units, cottage courts, duplexes, multi-plexes
- Streamline permitting process for smaller and compact housing types in existing neighborhoods
- Explore inclusionary zoning designations around transit-oriented development (TOD) hubs, employment centers, and within a half-mile distance of the Stone Mountain Trail
- Improve flexibility in zoning and development while preserving existing residential development patterns and traditional and historic neighborhoods
- Provide density bonuses for redevelopment of priority areas in the form of provision of public art, reduction in parking requirements, provision of additional open space or communal areas, etc. This is further defined for each node



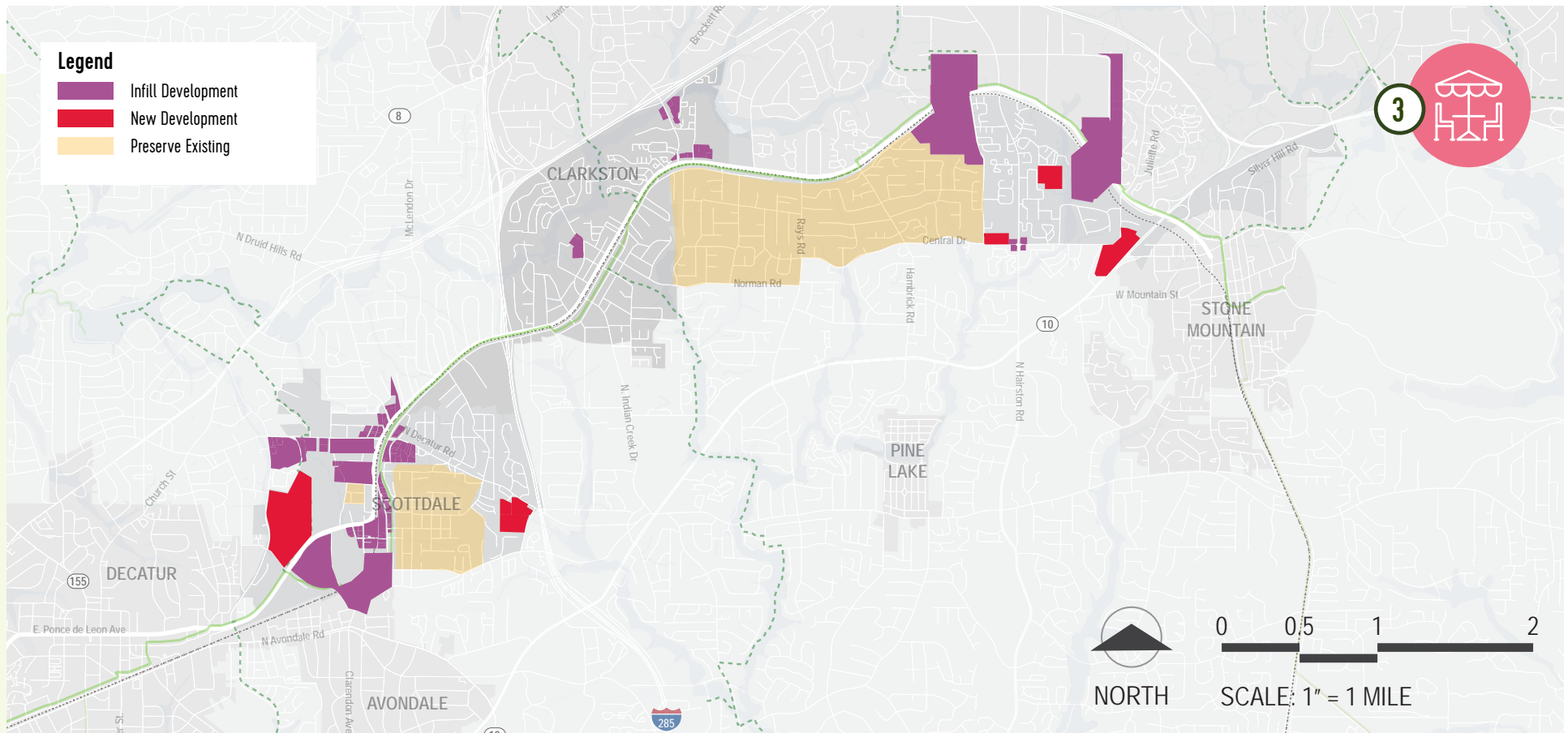


Figure 23. Land Use Plan

Development Opportunities

The development recommendations are defined by primary categories: infill redevelopment, new development opportunities, and preservation of existing developments. The district is mostly developed and only has a few locations where new development is appropriate. Due to the varying needs and character of the region, the types of development appropriate differ for each node. This is described in the detailed plan enlargements in the node section.

There is also a concern about displacement of the current residents and businesses of the area. Particularly for housing there is a lot of reinvestment in the region that is pushing out existing communities and a lot of affordability lost. This is described more in the housing chapter.



INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Since the area is mostly developed infill strategies are key to enhancing the existing communities in the area and build off the existing successes in the region. We have identified key locations of large parcels, vacant, underutilized land, and single ownership that are prime for infill.



NEW DEVELOPMENT

There are very few vacant parcels to add new development. New development would focus on denser mixed use development to add the variety of housing and services needed for the region.



PRESERVE DEVELOPMENT

Due to the fast growth of the region, the residents of this area are at a high rate of displacement. There are still remaining pockets of affordable homes and single family housing, The preservation strategies are described in chapter 06, housing stability.

Figure 24. Urban Infill Development, New Residential Development, Preserve Existing Residential Development

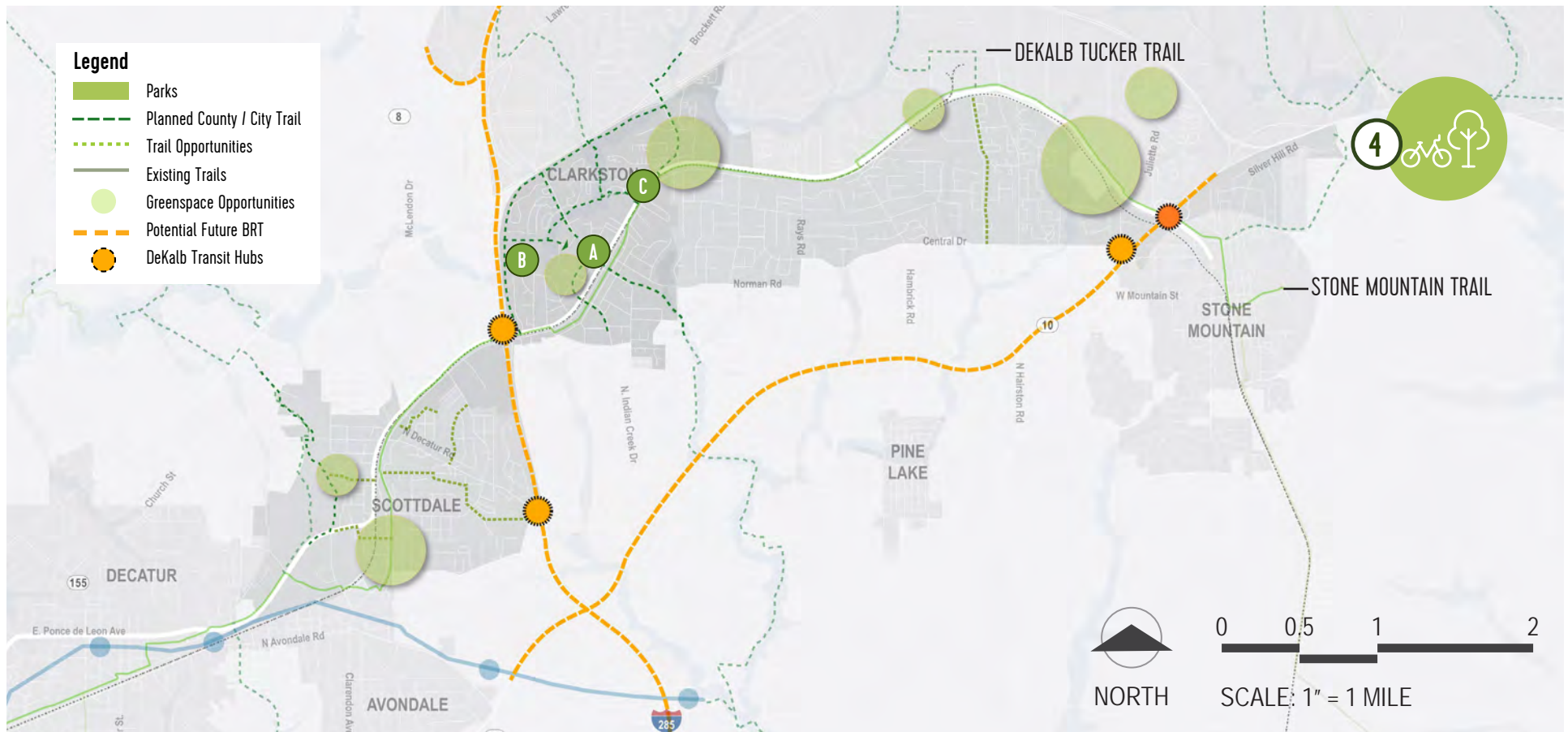
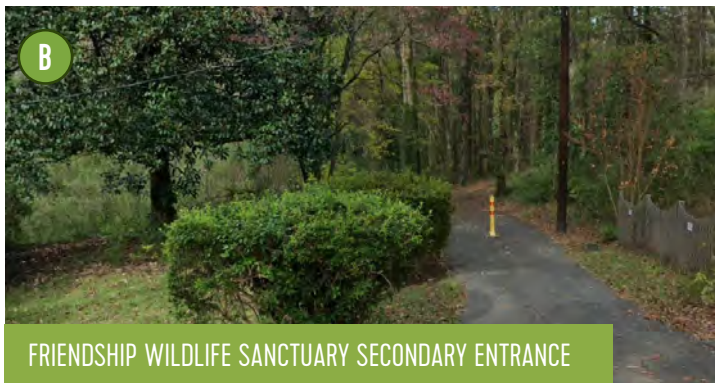


Figure 25. Greenspace Opportunities Plan

4. Infrastructure

The purpose of infrastructure recommendations is to increase the quality of life in the district. They focus on parks, greenways, open space, shade, and water management strategies. This plan proposes new trail connections and targeted green space improvements to close gaps within the study area. Green space opportunities are focused on key intersections and trailheads,

where new gathering areas, pocket parks, or stormwater features could activate underused land and strengthen neighborhood identity. New trail connections build off of regional plans and add neighborhood connections in both Scottdale and the Industrial district. There are described in the zoomed in plans of each node.



GREENSPACE

The district has three key park needs: more greenspace, stronger connections, and clearer access. Many natural areas are hidden behind industrial edges or disconnected sidewalks. This plan recommends:

- Clearer signage at Rowland Street and Hill Street.
- Sidewalk infill near Scottdale and Clarkston.
- Increase visibility and use of Friendship Wildlife Sanctuary. Improve the Church Street entrance and eastern trail access, along with wayfinding, lighting, and seating to bring a valuable but underused resource to life.
- Three sites at 1050 Vaughan Street, 3489 Hill Street, and 3520 Montreal Creek Court could become pocket parks, gardens, or stormwater features.
- A shaded rest stop with benches, native plants, and public art at the Brockett Road dead end

TRAILS

Proposed trails would expand the network into undeserved areas, including a key connection through the industrial district linking to Clarkston and the future DeKalb-Tucker Trail. Trail enhancements should also support park access improvements, with safer crossings and wayfinding to highlight nearby recreational opportunities.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure strategies along the corridor focus on managing stormwater runoff and planting trees in areas experiencing redevelopment, frequent flooding, or limited green space. Key opportunities include tree planting in the industrial area to mitigate air quality and heat island effect. Additionally, adding bioswales along flood-prone segments in Clarkston and Scottdale can mitigate stormwater runoff and green infrastructure retrofits at key trail-roadway intersections can enhance water quality. These improvements can reduce runoff, improve air quality, and create more resilient public spaces while complementing park and trail investments.

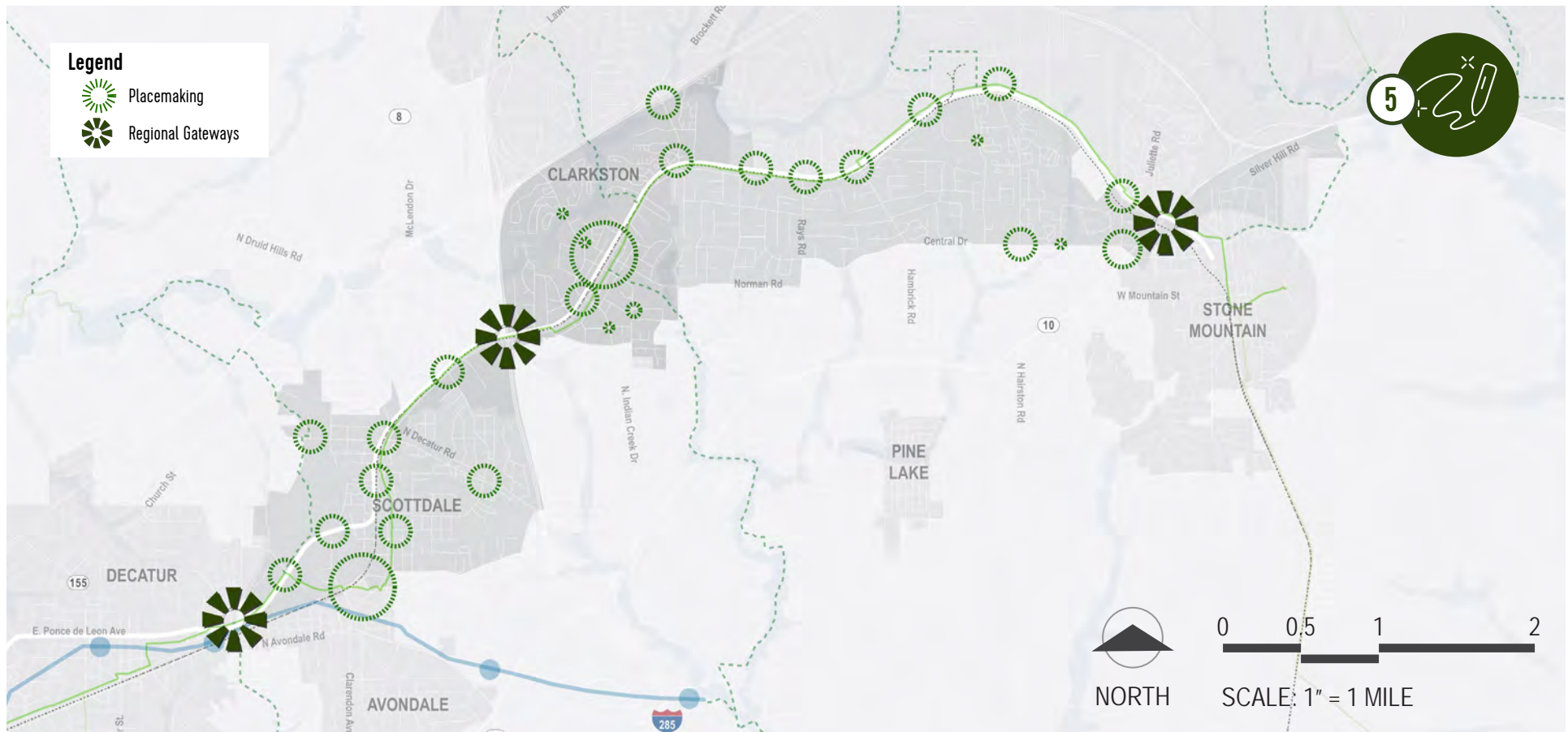


Figure 26. Corridor Identity Improvements

5. Identity

Placemaking combines public art, wayfinding, and branding to create a sense of identity along the corridor and within nearby neighborhoods. These elements help mark key trail access points, support navigation, and reflect the character of surrounding communities. These recommendations highlight opportunity areas, not existing features, where new signage, murals, sculptures, or gateway elements could be

installed. Focus areas include major intersections such as Memorial Drive, Church Street, and Ponce de Leon Avenue where enhancements can signal arrival and improve connectivity between the trail and adjacent destinations. Recommendations focus on bringing the identity of existing activity centers to the forefront of the corridor.



WAYFINDING

Wayfinding signage is focused on developing linkages between the trail, neighborhoods, and the key activity centers. Along the trail, signage will be installed at key trail access points to help users identify nearby amenities, transit stops, and neighborhood destinations. Recommended elements include trailhead kiosks, directional signs, and mile markers every half mile. These tools will support both local navigation and regional trail use. Additionally neighborhoods and cities have gaps in wayfinding connecting local neighborhood amenities together. Recommendations include enhancements at strategic intersections and streetscape corridors to direct people to key destinations.



BRANDING

Monument and icon installations are proposed at highly visible gateways to serve as placemaking anchors and reinforce identity. The recommendations include regional scale recommendations and local scale recommendations. Branded elements for each city should focus on key intersections to brand local communities within the study area. Regional scale recommendations include major highway visible monuments along state route 10, I-285, and the train station to direct visitors to regional destinations.



PUBLIC ART

Community art will be prioritized at gathering spaces and neighborhood nodes, including Clarkston Town Center, the Rowland Activity Node, and the Scottdale MARTA access node. These projects should feature local artists and be developed through community-led processes. Opportunities include murals, utility box wraps, and sculptures. Additionally interactive art panels are proposed along the trail corridor that celebrate the people and stories of the region.

Figure 27. Smart bike barometer, solar shade furniture, painted street art

WAYFINDING

The recommendations for wayfinding build from trail wayfinding standards and district wayfinding standards. Including map kiosks, directional signage, pole banners



BRANDING

The recommendations include regional branding elements and local branding strategies. Gateways provide iconic moments that create interest in the region, provide insight into the character of the district, and provide a memorable moment. Gateways should be scaled to the audiences - with roadway gateways large enough to have a visual impact at high speeds. Three key gateways were identified for the district, located at the intersection of Ponce De Leon Avenue and I-285, US-78, and Laredo Drive.



REGIONAL

PUBLIC ART

Public art can be incorporated into each aspect of all design recommendations. There are numerous ways art can be incorporated into the district from paint, to sculptures, street furniture, shade structures, and building façades. Additional elements of public art can include music, lighting, temporary installations, etc.



BRANDING

Local branding strategies include trail markers, city signs, sidewalk art, etc. small human scale elements to identify the place.



LOCAL





CORRIDOR TRAIL

The trail recommendations are focused on developing the trail as the iconic link throughout this unique community. This section of the trail plays a pivotal role in regional connectivity, linking key destinations throughout DeKalb County. However, the corridor is bisected by major roads and rail lines, limiting access for surrounding neighborhoods. The trail lacks frequent, safe crossings, especially over the railroad and major arterials, which challenges its use as a mobility asset. Proposed recommendations include creating bold identify able design standards, enhancing multimodal access and creating safe, frequent connections to ensure the corridor functions as a fully integrated part of the region.



Trail Recommendations

DeKalb County Trail Design Guidelines lay out recommendations for typical trails designed within the county. As a primary corridor, the Stone Mountain Trail is a regional connector that needs enhanced design features. The recommended cross-section for this plan includes a 10' cyclist corridor, minimum 2' internal trail buffer, and 6' sidewalk. If the trail borders a street the minimum DeKalb buffer design standards are 6' between the street and the trail. Where limited ROW exists, the minimum street buffer should be 2' with a reduction in the internal trail buffer. This widened cross section can enhance each users experience. Due to this trail being utilized for recreational riders, visitors, regional transportation, and local residents separating the trail uses is key. The plan recommends trail widening and user separation reduce

conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and micromobility users as a key strategy to enhancing trail experience throughout the corridor.

Trail infrastructure should be designed with clarity, comfort, and visibility in mind. Key elements include well defined bike and pedestrian lanes, consistent paving, iconic branding, safety enhancements, buffer standards, and clear signage. These strategies improve safety and user experience, especially in high traffic zones like transit hubs, schools, and commercial nodes. Combined, these elements enhance the trail's identity and support its long-term use as both a transportation and recreation corridor.



Figure 28. Trail Section



PAVEMENT MATERIALS

Pavement should be consistent, durable, and easily distinguishable between walking and biking areas. Coloring the trail with a durable warranted adhesive can brand and identify the trail. Textured or colored surfaces can improve visibility, reduce maintenance, and enhance the corridor's visual identity, particularly at crossings and key trailheads.



SAFETY / VISIBILITY

Safety beacons, midblock crossings, high visibility crosswalks, and enhanced lighting improve trail visibility, comfort, and security. At entrances and crossings, clear sightlines should be prioritized to increase visibility and safety.

BUFFER STANDARDS

Buffers play a key role in separating different trail users and enhancing the trail environment. In constrained areas, raised curbs, bollards, or textured paving can maintain separation while preserving trail width.

WAYFINDING

A countywide wayfinding plan is in progress. Wayfinding helps users navigate the trail and connect to nearby destinations. Elements like distance markers, directional panels, and branded gateways should be strategically placed at trail entries, intersections, and transition points to reinforce trail identity and improve the user experience.



PLACEMAKING

Public art and creative placemaking elements such as murals, interactive art walls, or custom gateways help express local culture and create a memorable trail identity. These elements should be integrated at key nodes and community entry points to build pride and encourage stewardship.

TRAIL DESIGN

The design cross section needs to accommodate a range of users, including cyclists, walkers, and scooter riders, by providing separated zones.

Maintenance

A well maintained trail is the single most important step in elevating the Stone Mountain Trail from its current state to a state-of-the-art regional pride. The Stone Mountain Trail was originally designed and managed by the PATH foundation and maintenance carried out through a combination of PATH staff, contracted services, volunteer programs, and sponsorships. Updates and responsibilities were piecemeal throughout the corridor with the variety of people involved in the management and upgrades.

Currently, the trail is managed by the DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department. This shift centralized oversight under one agency, ensuring the trail would be managed as part of the county's broader parks network. While this provided a single point of accountability, it also meant trail upkeep now depended on fixed annual budgets and staff resources that must be shared across dozens of parks, facilities, and programs countywide.

By clearly defining management and maintenance responsibilities along the corridor, the trail can remain a functional link through neighborhoods while being able to phase key design elements to create the ideal multi-functional facility for the community.

Key actions needed to define management and maintenance for the Stone Mountain Trail include:

- 1 Decentralize maintenance responsibility so each municipality directly manages the segments inside its property limits, integrating them into local public works and parks programs.
- 2 Maintain county-level coordination through DeKalb Parks & Recreation to oversee standards, training, inspections, and regional funding opportunities.
- 3 Integrate smart infrastructure such as Sensor-based lighting and CCTV for safety, Condition-monitoring sensors, Smart trail counters and geofenced activity tracking to measure usage, and Live dashboards to alert maintenance teams when a section requires urgent attention.
- 4 Adopt consistent maintenance standards for trail surfaces, signage, lighting, and furnishings to ensure a unified user experience across the corridor.
- 5 Develop a GIS-based asset inventory to track conditions, schedule inspections, and record completed work for every segment





SMART

SMART elements can be used to monitor trail usage, enhance trail safety, streamline maintenance, and enhance the user experience. Smart infrastructure uses data-driven, sensor-enabled, and connected systems to make trails safer, more resilient, and better integrated with the community. By combining advanced physical tools such as GIS mapping, adaptive lighting, environmental monitoring, and real-time usage tracking with data-driven policy and governance strategies, communities can create safer, more resilient, and more equitable trail networks.

SMART design recommendations for the trail include both physical design elements and data related recommendations to align both design, function, maintenance, and policy. These recommendations can help coordinate planning efforts, phase design implementations, and monitor use to develop the trail to meet the needs of the diverse corridor.

DESIGN PHASE

- GIS & Digital Twin Modelling – Using high-resolution geospatial data, LiDAR, and 3D models to map terrain, predict drainage issues, and optimize trail alignment before construction.
- Predictive Surface Design – Sensors embedded in pavement or trail material can help select surfaces that perform better under actual use and weather loads.
- Integrated Lighting – Adaptive, solar-powered lighting that responds to motion or daylight conditions for safety and energy efficiency.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT

- Trail Counters & Usage Sensors – Infrared or pressure-based counters track pedestrian and cyclist flow to identify peak times, underused segments, and seasonal trends.
- Environmental Sensors – Measure temperature, humidity, soil moisture, erosion rates, and flood risk to guide maintenance and protect sensitive habitats.
- Condition Monitoring – Embedded vibration sensors or drone surveys detect cracks, potholes, or subsidence early, enabling preventative maintenance.

USER EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENTS

- Interactive Wayfinding – Smart kiosks or QR codes that provide real-time trail maps, detours, and amenity locations.
- Emergency Systems – GPS-enabled emergency call points or geofenced alerts that notify responders of incidents along the trail.
- Accessibility Tech – Beacons and apps that give audio navigation cues for visually impaired users.

DATA-INFORMED PLANNING

- Performance Metrics in Policy – Use trail counter data, safety incident reports, and environmental monitoring to set standards for trail performance, accessibility, and safety.
- Prioritization for Funding – Data helps justify investment in high-demand or underserved areas, strengthening grant applications and budget proposals.
- Climate Resilience Requirements – Smart monitoring data can trigger mandatory design upgrades to handle heat, flooding, or extreme weather.

INTEGRATION WITH BROADER SYSTEMS

- Transportation Planning Coordination – Trail data integrated into regional transport models for multimodal planning.
- Land Use and Zoning Alignment – Policy can require developers to connect to existing trail networks or share real-time construction updates to avoid blockages.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & TRANSPARENCY

- Open Data Portals – Governments can release anonymized usage and environmental data to the public, encouraging community advocacy and participation.
- Equity Mapping – Data layers showing where trails lack accessibility features, lighting, or safe crossings can guide equity-focused investments.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

- Smart Infrastructure Standards – Establishing approved sensor types, interoperability standards, and privacy guidelines for all trail projects.
- Maintenance Accountability – Using real-time condition monitoring to ensure agencies or contractors meet performance-based maintenance contracts.
- Emergency Response Protocols – Coordinated with local police, EMS, and parks departments using real-time alerts from trail infrastructure.

Short-Term Trail Design Recommendations

In order to create a sense of place that crosses multiple cities, major roads, and railroads the scale and intent needs to be Big and bold. In order to create an immediate impact on the trail 3 key recommendations to create a sense of identity.

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.

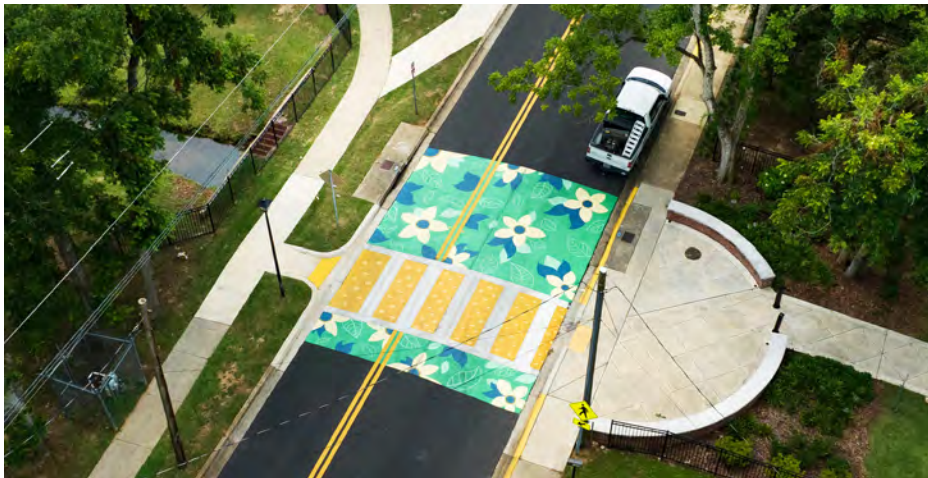


Figure 29. Painted High Visibility Crosswalks Photo credit Graham Projects LLC

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.



Figure 30. Vibrant site furniture

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.

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.

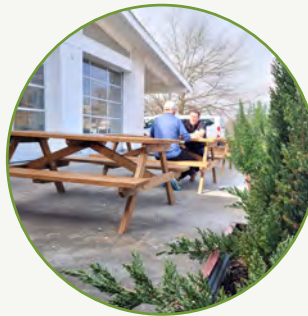


Figure 31. Interactive Art Installation Walls



NODES

The activity nodes of Scottdale, Clarkston, and the Industrial Area represent key opportunity zones along the Stone Mountain Trail where targeted investments can elevate local character and community identity. Each node was analyzed through the lenses of mobility, safety, development, placemaking, and infrastructure to identify tailored improvements. Because of the varied zoning, businesses, and characteristics, a focused analysis of each node was done to best strengthen the existing communities. Due to their differences, design recommendations vary across the corridor and each design map illustrates where recommendations can make the most impact. These nodes offer scalable, context-sensitive interventions that can anchor the corridor as a vibrant, connected regional asset.



DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS



SCOTTDALE NODE

In Scottdale, enhancements focus on accessibility, housing protections, and retail activation. Opportunities include: Proximity to MARTA, Adjacent To Farmers Market, Established Residential Communities, Creek Access, Open Space Areas, And Vacant Land. Challenges Include: Active Industrial, Fast Moving Development, And Small Lots.



CLARKSTON NODE

Clarkston, the emphasis is on walkability, transit integration, and cultural placemaking. Challenges include: Food Desert, Poor access to the creek, development connections. Strengths include: Vibrant culture, Walkable downtown, and South Fork Peachtree Creek



INDUSTRIAL NODE

Industrial Area, priorities include safety upgrades, lighting, and green buffers. Challenges include: Lack of Greenspace, Industrial sized and uncomfortable for pedestrians and cyclists, Lots of large driveways and disconnected sidewalks, parcels don't connect between properties. Strengths include: Productive Industrial Properties, Existing Transit hub and transit corridor, Dense residential pockets, and Proximity to Stone Mountain.

Each node includes five key priorities that can make a major impact on each node. Each have differing levels of cost, difficulty, and impact. The recommendations differ at each location and have varying levels of intervention that are needed. The priority recommendations have been analyzed to determine how costly, effective, and difficult it will be to implement. One dot, dollar sign, or bar representing the lowest level and three being the max.

DIFFICULTY



COST

\$\$\$\$

IMPACT





Figure 32. Industrial Node Diagram

INDUSTRIAL NODE

INDUSTRIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Industrial Area is one of the corridor's most disconnected zones, characterized by large blocks, minimal shade, and limited safe crossings. This section of the trail runs along the north side of Ponce De Leon through the major industrial blocks.

Recommendations here focus on stitching the trail into surrounding neighborhoods by adding safety and wayfinding enhancements at regular intervals and key intersections.

The mobility recommendations here focus on through streets that connect communities to schools, parks, and trails. To strengthen the surrounding community, the plan proposes educational or training-related infill, affordable housing, and neighborhood retail services. Streetscape enhancements like trees and buffers along Ponce De Leon will help soften the industrial edge and create a more comfortable experience for all users.

Long term investments include a pedestrian bridge over State route 10 and infill development near the future proposed BRT routes.



01 MOBILITY

North Hairston Road and Goldsmith Road are the 2 primary corridors that need full streetscape enhancements. Both corridors connect to Tucker and provide access to the larger regional area.



02 SAFETY

The three primary safety recommendations for this node include the Goldsmith railroad and Ponce De Leon intersection enhancements, driveway visibility enhancements along the trail, and a new pedestrian crossing over the railroad near Roadhaven Drive



03 DEVELOPMENT

Development recommendations center on infill education and training centers near key intersections with the community. The goal is to better connect the existing community to employment opportunities and increase the workforce for the existing developments.



04 INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure recommendations here include adding greenspace near proposed development opportunities to increase shade, water quality, and comfort of the node. The residents in this area have limited access to recreation and neighborhood and pocket parks would provided needed amenities.



05 IDENTITY

Key identity enhancements include implementing the trail cross section, intersection enhancements along North Hairston Road, and the gateway over State Road 10.

PRIORITIES

The five key priorities are catalyst opportunities that can make a major impact node. Each have differing levels of cost, difficulty, and impact

1 GOLDSMITH INTERSECTION

The Goldsmith and Ridge intersection across the railroad and Ponce De Leon connects to Tucker investments and would connect the North and South district of the trail.

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



Figure 34. Goldsmith Existing



Figure 35. Goldsmith Proposed

COST: range item will cost to implement.

IMPACT: Level of impact item will have on a given site. For example: large murals will have more of an impact than bench seating along a streetscape.

DIFFICULTY: Level of difficulty it will take to implement the item. Items requiring more partnerships, coordination, and larger construction will require more work to accomplish.

INDUSTRIAL NODE - PRIORITY ONE

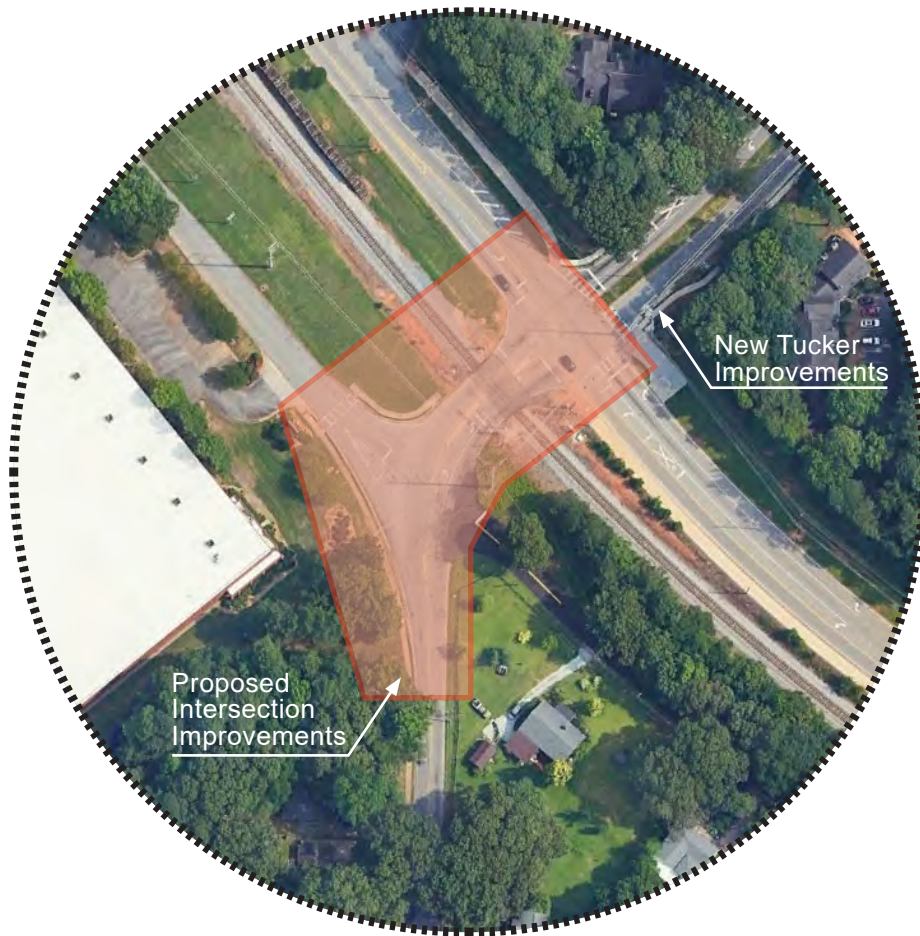


Figure 36. Goldsmith Proposed

A key priority, safety improvements to Goldsmith intersection would improve connectivity to the trail and in the region.

GOLDSMITH INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Use enhanced crossing treatments (e.g. colored pavement), consolidate curb radii to slow turning vehicles, evaluate signage and pavement markings to reduce driver confusion.

Modify pavement markings for single lane approach along West Ridge Avenue so travel lane is more defined, use textured pavement for high visible mountable curbs. Reduce sea of pavement.

Narrow lanes to add sidewalk or pedestrian walking area across rail. Pedestrian crossings and sidewalk on all four legs of the intersection.

ZONING STRATEGIES: INDUSTRIAL NODE

To accommodate future redevelopment opportunities along the trail, several zoning strategies were identified to facilitate and even incentivize infill development opportunities in the Industrial Node. These strategies support industrial to residential conversion, highlight opportunities to diversify housing options and increase affordability, prioritize employment opportunities, promote neighborhood-oriented amenities, and enhance trail access and interconnectivity.



HOUSING

Rocky Mountain Boulevard parcels:

- Requires rezoning from Light Industrial (M) to Medium Density Residential (MR-1), which aligns with the zoning of adjacent parcels to the east
- Industrial to residential zoning district conversions are permitted by special land use permit (SLUP) barring the site meets certain criteria
- Density bonuses are available for MR-1 standards through incentivising public art, open space, reduced parking, etc.
- Requires coordination with City of Tucker for rezoning



MIXED USE

Employment & education area considerations (west of DeKalb Academy of Technology and Environment):

- Requires rezoning from Light Industrial (M) to a mixed use zone (MU-3, MU-4)

Transit Hub area considerations (Memorial Drive / Goldsmith Road):

- Requires rezoning from commercial zones (C-1, C-2) to mixed use zones (MU-3, MU-4)
- Establish development standards for interconnectivity and access to pedestrian and transit facilities
- Implement inclusionary zoning requirements
- Allow for streamlined adaptive reuse development near transit facilities



NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

Central Drive, between Kelton Drive & N Hairston Road:

- Requires rezoning of undeveloped parcel from R-85 to small-scale commercial zoning (C-1 NS)
- Implement development standards to provide pedestrian connections from new development to trail connection corridors (Kelton Dr., Hairston Dr.) and across Central Drive for safe access to Stone Mountain High School



EDUCATION / TECH / TRAINING

Tucker parcels (North of Ponce de Leon Avenue and adjacent to Stone Mill Elementary School):

- Educational institutions and training facilities are permitted by right under current zoning (Light Manufacturing (M)). To accommodate residential components around employment centers, rezoning to Office Institutional - Transitional (OIT) is needed
- Implement frontage requirements to ensure future development activates frontage along the Stone Mountain Trail

Unincorporated DeKalb parcels (south of DeKalb Academy of Technology and Environment):

- Rezone to Office Institutional - Transitional (OIT) to accommodate residential components
- Streamline permitting process for smaller housing types in the R-85 district, such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and cottages
- Decrease minimum unit size requirements to allow for smaller housing types and increase affordability

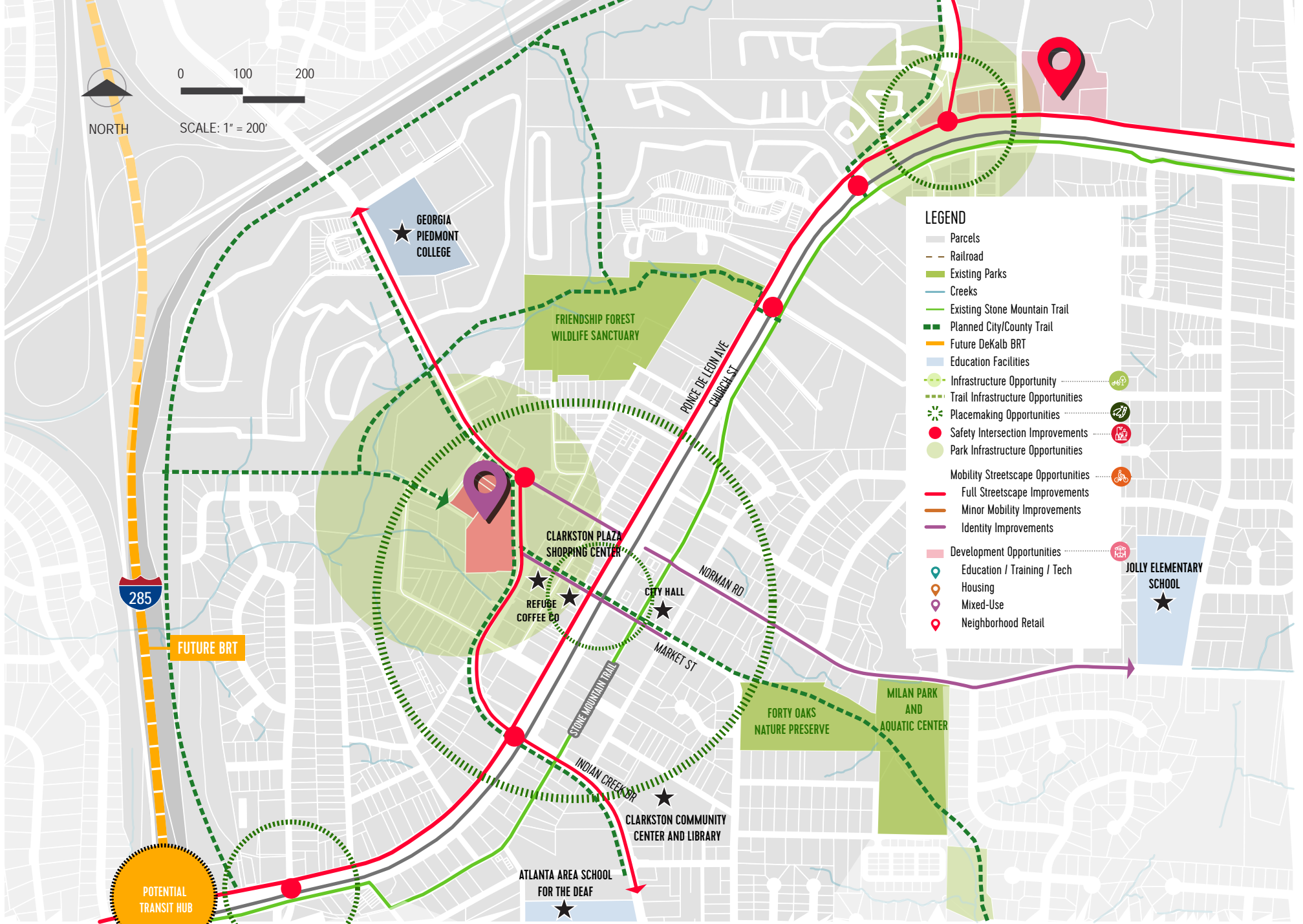


Figure 37. Clarkston Node Diagram

CLARKSTON NODE

CLARKSTON RECOMMENDATIONS

Clarkston is a diverse and active community with strong cultural identity and a walkable downtown. The recommendations for this area focus on strengthening downtown as a civic and economic anchor, improving connections between neighborhoods and the trail, and enhancing the public realm along Ponce de Leon Avenue.

Key strategies include redeveloping underused sites, supporting transit-oriented development, and creating safer, more welcoming streets and public spaces.

Brockett Road is the other key opportunity in this node that was identified as an unsafe and uncomfortable intersection. Getting to the trail is difficult in the northern section of the city. Key opportunities include intersection enhancements, signage and wayfinding, and traffic calming measures to create a safe connected network.

The recommendations focus on adding to the existing plans of the city and filling in the minor gaps in connections, development, and greenspace.



01 MOBILITY

Most roads through Clarkston need minor identity improvements to create consistent corridors. The main streetscape improvement here is North Indian Creek Drive that brings people from Tucker to the south of the city.



02 SAFETY

The key safety enhancements include the three roadway crossings in the north of the city.



03 DEVELOPMENT

Development here is focused on infill development building off the existing neighborhood amenities. Adding mixed-use development in the underutilized parcels of downtown can add activity for local business and neighborhood retail to support the community.



04 INFRASTRUCTURE

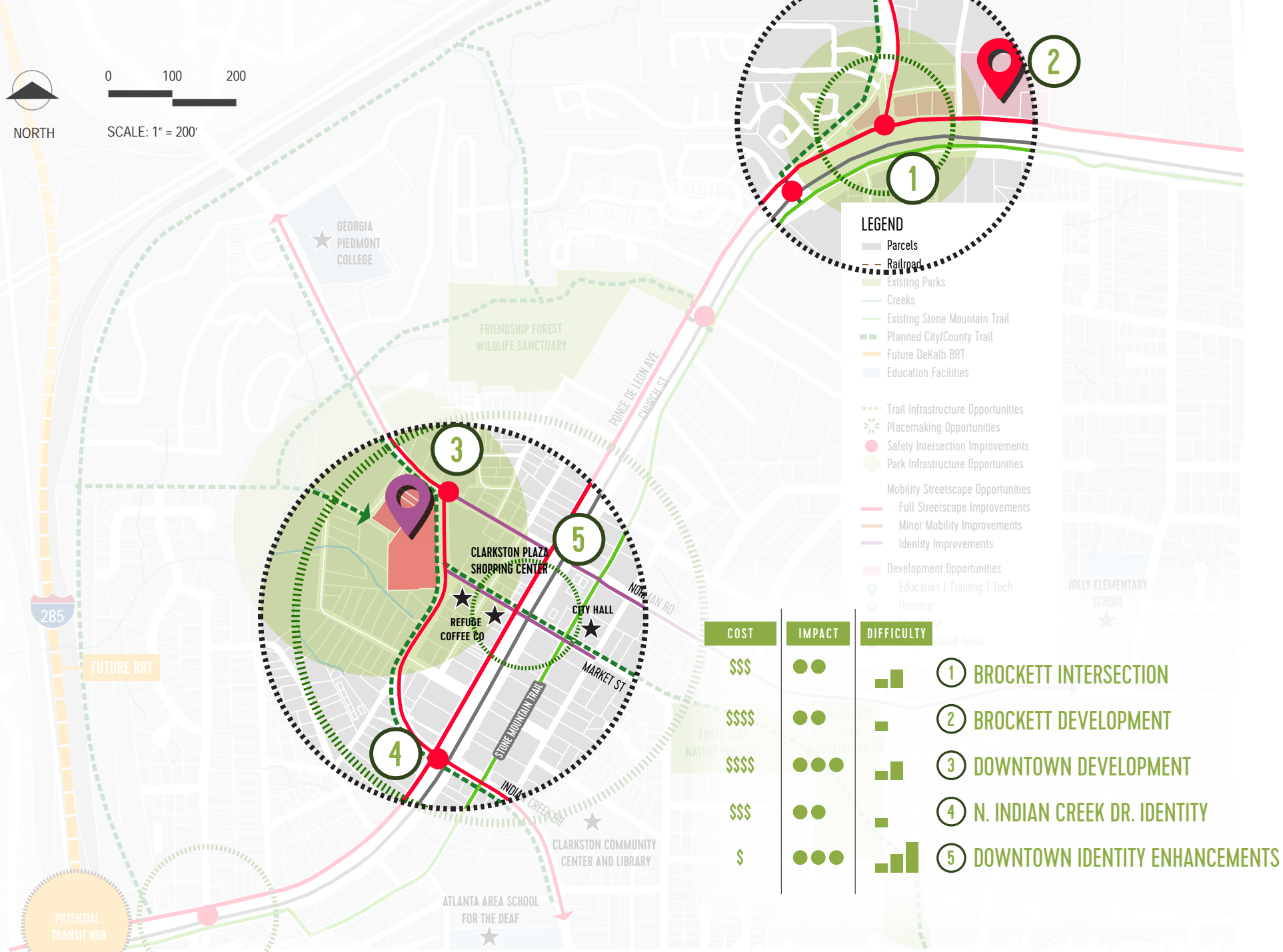
Small greenspaces along the creeks and in underutilized parcels can add amenities for the local residents.



05 IDENTITY

Bold statements building off the existing character can make a major impact to brand Clarkston in the district. Intersection murals, median sculpture elements, and local gateways can transform the place.





CLARKSTON NODE PRIORITIES

Figure 38. Clarkston Node Priorities

PRIORITIES

The 5 key priorities are catalyst opportunities that can make a major impact in Clarkston.

1

BROCKETT INTERSECTION

The Brockett intersection needs to implement the transportation enhancements planned to connect communities to the trail.

2

BROCKETT DEVELOPMENT

Infill neighborhood services is key to increasing activity for residents in the Northern area of Clarkston.

3

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

New mixed use development would build off the success of the downtown and help activate local businesses and increase housing opportunities. .

4

N. INDIAN CREEK DR. IDENTITY

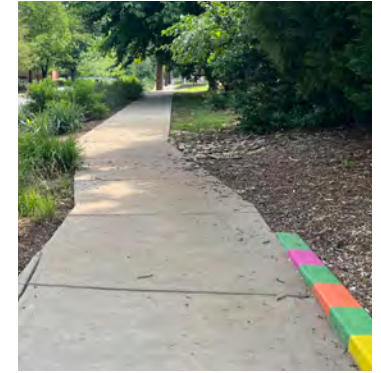
Adding visibility, safety enhancements, identity, and wayfinding will increase access over the major barriers disconnecting Clarkston.

5

DOWNTOWN IDENTITY ENHANCEMENTS

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

Successful existing identity in Clarkston



CLARKSTON NODE - QUICK WIN

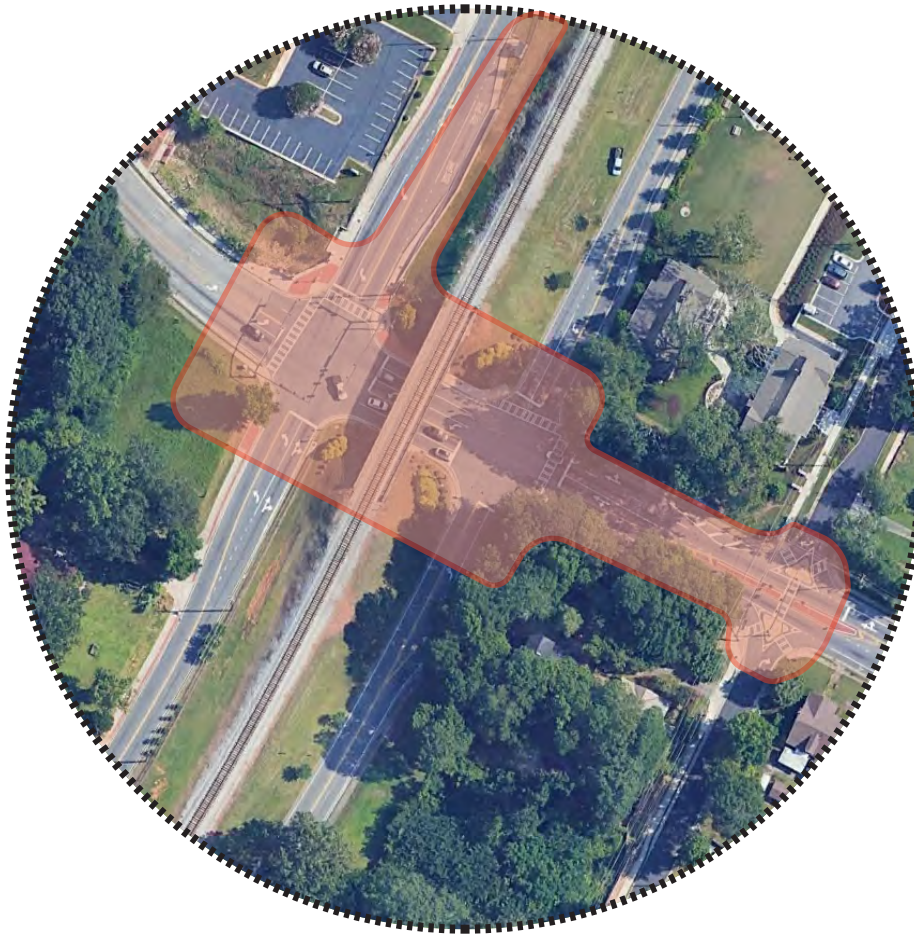


Figure 39. Indian Creek Intersection Proposed

A key priority in Clarkston, Indian Creek Road provides connection to downtown and proposed future developments. This intersection is heavily used by all modes of transportation. It connects the Southern area of Clarkston together and connects Clarkston to the larger region. This intersection has some pedestrian and safety infrastructure in place but is not comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists.

INDIAN CREEK INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rowland St. Wayfinding, directional signage, and placemaking enhancements.

Railroad underpass art and wayfinding additions. Large mural and gateway are key to enhancing visibility in this section.

Bus Stop accessibility improvements along Ponce De Leon Ave intersection.

Ponce De Leon Ave wayfinding and intersection art to increase visibility and identity to the intersection,

ZONING STRATEGIES: CLARKSTON NODE

Zoning strategies for the Clarkston Node focus on leveraging the existing momentum of the downtown area and encouraging people-oriented development and connections throughout the area. These strategies take advantage of infill development opportunities to expand community amenities and retail opportunities through mixed use and neighborhood retail establishments to support this unique community.



HOUSING

Housing strategies applicable to the Clarkston area are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 and are not specifically displayed on the map.



MIXED USE

- Assemble parcels and leverage existing Town Center (TC) zoning and establish a cohesive Planned Mixed Use Development
- Allow townhomes or similar housing types in the Mixed Use district in portions of the site that abut single family residential development to minimize impacts of development intensity
- Implement development standards to provide safe pedestrian connections from infill development to trail connection corridors (Planned Clarkston Greenway, Market Street, etc.) and across N Indian Creek Drive and Montreal Road to other businesses around downtown and north along Montreal Road
- Implement architectural and buffer standards to ensure development scale is compatible with adjacent residential development to the west and north of the site. Concentrate density and height towards downtown and N Indian Creek Drive and Montreal Road



NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

- Existing zoning Moderate Density Neighborhood Commercial (NC-2) and Low Density Neighborhood Commercial (NC-1) can be leveraged for desired infill development
- Assemble NC-2 parcels to encourage cohesive, compact development through a Planned Commercial Development
- Implement development standards to provide pedestrian connections from new development to existing and planned trail connection corridors (Brockett Road and spur) as well as a safe connection across Ponce de Leon Avenue to the Stone Mountain Trail



Figure 40. Scottsdale Node Diagram

SCOTSDALE RECOMMENDATIONS

Scottdale is an historic neighborhood adjacent to MARTA rail stations and home to several civic anchors. This area plays a key role in strengthening connections to the larger ATL region.

The largest barriers of this district are the road networks, large blocks, and the railroad which is industrial sized and not friendly for the community. Recommendations focus on eliminating the barriers and improving connections between the community and regional destinations.

Connections focus on connecting larger transit networks to existing infrastructure and enhancing key intersections that intersect with Ponce De Leon and N. Clarendon Ave such as: Wells St, Laredo Dr., and DeKalb Industrial Way.

With the fast growing nature of this district preservation is a key strategy. The majority of development recommendations are focused West of the Stone Mountain Trail and near transit hubs.



01 MOBILITY

Key streetscape enhancements are needed along the major roads which were designed for industrial use and need amenities to make them safe and comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists.



02 SAFETY

The intersections in this district are multi faceted and require a lot of improvements. Each intersection has a major road alignment, or railroad crossing needed to improve connectivity.



03 DEVELOPMENT

Development here is focused on density near regional amenities, preservation of single family neighborhoods, and housing options.



04 INFRASTRUCTURE

The major recommendation here includes the trail addition from Robinson Ave to Wells St. that would connect the schools, parks, and neighborhoods to the DeKalb Farmers Market, commercial center, and transit amenities.



05 IDENTITY

Identity improvements are focused along the Stone Mountain Trail and major intersections to direct people to major amenities and brand the Scottdale community within the district.



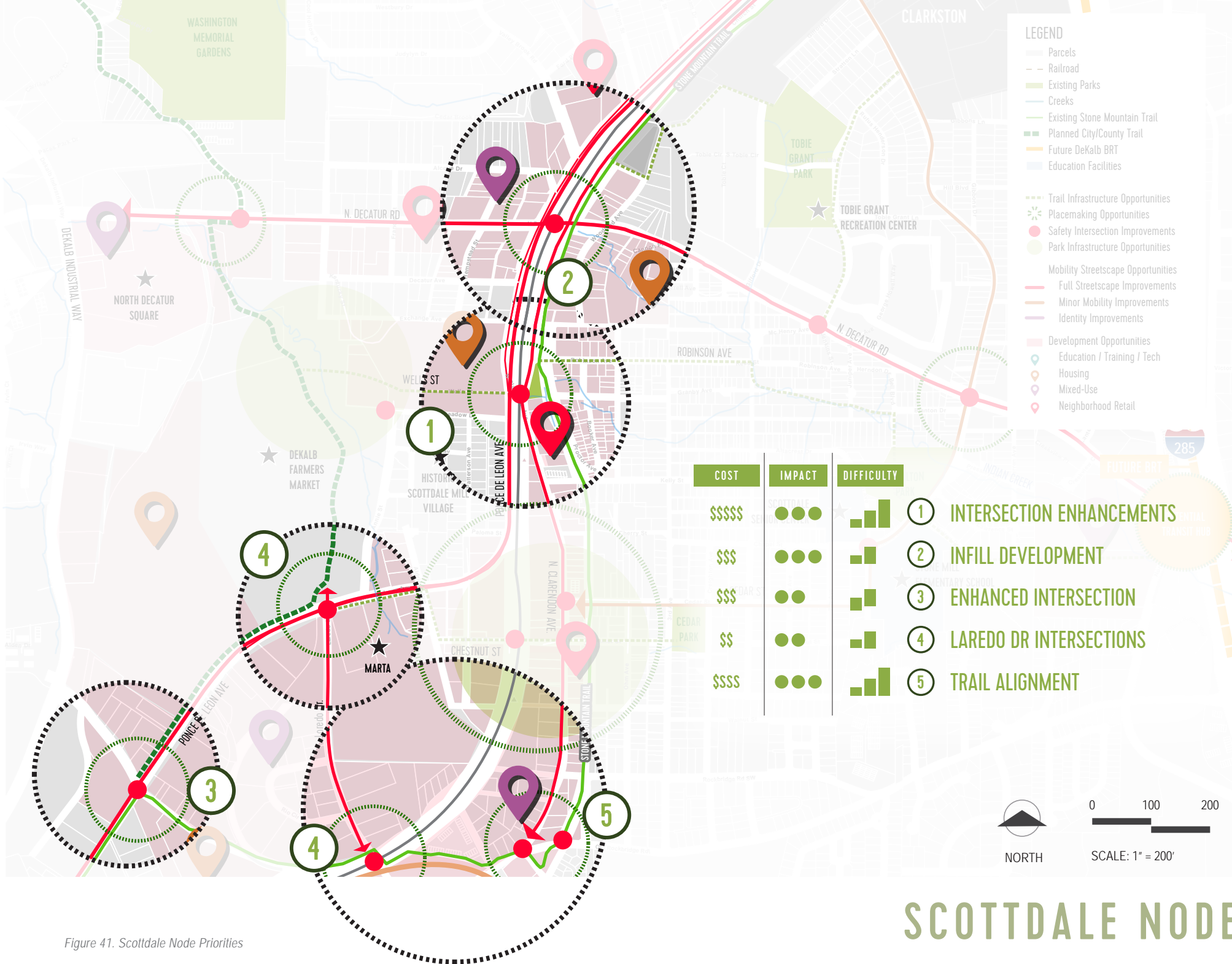


Figure 41. Scottdale Node Priorities

PRIORITIES

The key priorities are focused on connecting the regional destinations to the district. They include:

- 1 INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS**
The Wells Street, North 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 LAREDO 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.



Figure 42. Laredo Drive Existing



Figure 43. Laredo Drive Proposed

SCOTTTDALE NODE - PRIORITY ONE



WELLS STREET, NORTH CLARENDON, PONCE, AND CHURCH STREET INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS:

Option 1: Close existing rail crossing, add roundabout system at Robinson Ave and new intersection at East Ponce, realign Clarendon Avenue and Church Street to become the same roadway

Option 2: Close cross over at Clarendon Avenue and turn lane improvements north at North Decatur

Figure 44. Wells Street, North Clarendon, Ponce, and Church Street

ZONING STRATEGIES: SCOTTTDALE NODE

As a key connection between Decatur/Avondale Estates and communities east of I-285, the Scottdale Node acts as a unique gateway, with future transit hub opportunities and infill development that builds off of the momentum of recent successful development in Avondale Estates and the surrounding areas. Zoning solutions for the Scottdale node prioritize preservation of historic residential development, compatibility of new development, access to and provision of community amenities, and safer trail access. These strategies aim to activate underutilized parcels along the trail to create a walkable, vibrant retail and restaurant scene, while preserving existing character. In addition strategies identify infill opportunities to expand housing options, provide new job opportunities, and leverage existing neighborhood-scale development to provide more community-oriented retail options.



HOUSING

- Accommodate a variety of housing types offering medium to high density solutions through necessary rezonings, including industrial to residential conversions.
- Implement inclusionary zoning near transit facilities and within a half mile distance of the trail
- Implement frontage requirements to ensure future development activates frontage along, and provides pedestrian connections to, the Stone Mountain Trail
- Update Scottdale Overlay District to align permitted uses with future development needs that prioritize walkability and compact development, limiting auto-oriented uses
- Expand boundaries of the Scottdale Mill Village Overlay (Tier III) to preserve existing housing and encourage trail connections and interconnectivity



MIXED USE

- Requires rezoning from Light Industrial (M), Heavy Industrial (M-2), or General Commercial (C-2) to a medium to high-density mixed use district, depending on surrounding development character (MU-3, MU-4, MU-5)
- Mixed use development along N Clarendon Avenue, south of the railroad corridor requires rezoning from medium residential (R-75) to Mixed Use Medium Density (MU-2)
- Assemble parcels to encourage cohesive redevelopment and prioritize interconnectivity within a site



NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

- Existing zoning along Clarendon includes manufacturing, medium residential, commercial, and office districts. Required rezonings vary depending on location and surrounding context within the mode.
- Assemble parcels for more cohesive development outcomes, and accommodate local retail opportunities and more housing through rezoning to Medium Density Residential (MR-2) or Small Lot Residential Mix (RSM), which are already present in the area
- Implement frontage requirements for parcels with trail frontage to orient future development towards the trail and provide safe trail access. Outdoor retail and dining areas along the trail are encouraged to promote trail activation
- Implement development standards to provide pedestrian connections from new development to trail connection corridors (North Clarendon Avenue, Wells Street, Robinson Avenue, Chestnut Street, North Decatur Road)



Implement frontage requirements to ensure future development activates frontage along the Stone Mountain Trail

- Incentivize density bonuses through community amenities, public art, transit facilities and access, pedestrian facilities, trail access, and/or affordable or workforce housing options
- Coordinate with DeKalb Farmers Market on infill development opportunities
- Encourage higher density transit-oriented development around the transit hub (N Decatur Road at I-285) through rezoning from R-75 to MU-5.





06

HOUSING STABILITY

PREVENTING DISPLACEMENT, PRESERVING COMMUNITY

HOUSING STABILITY & ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

Currently the district has a diversity of housing types at multiple price points that service a diverse community. As investment in the DeKalb Stone Mountain Trail corridor accelerates, housing stability must be a foundational priority, ensuring that the communities who built and sustained this area can continue to call it home. Without intervention, improvements to green space and mobility risk fueling real estate speculation, cultural erasure, and displacement of long-time residents. This chapter offers a district-scale housing strategy grounded in current conditions, policy opportunities, and actionable tools that protect affordability, uplift legacy neighborhoods, and expand access to opportunity.

VISION

Housing stability and equal opportunities



6.1 HOUSING NEEDS AND MARKET PRESSURES

Understanding the unique housing landscape along the trail corridor is essential to crafting responsive strategies. Preventing displacement begins with protecting the homes and communities that already exist. This section outlines preservation strategies and policies designed to stabilize vulnerable households, especially in areas with legacy residents, historic structures, and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH). These tools are tailored to meet the unique needs of different



There is a high housing demand and need for density and housing options with the proximity to the train station. The area recently opened 1,030 new rental units, but vacancy remains low. The area features a concentration of single-family homes and new apartment complexes.

Updating the overlay district to allow more density to accommodate greater housing diversity is appropriate for some locations. Encouraging dense mixed-use, missing middle typologies, and protecting single family areas will keep the housing diversity in this area while meeting housing demands. .

ADDING DENSITY | MAINTAIN DIVERSITY



This area has a higher share of older housing stock. It contains large-format multifamily complexes and single family neighborhoods, many built pre-1980. Rents have dropped and vacancy is soft, signalling a concentration of NOAH. A high proportion of residents fall under 50% ami, highlighting eligibility for targeted federal support.

Opportunity to develop workforce housing in strategic infill sites, developing policy to protect the NOAH and putting in rent protections will help maintain the affordability and housing diversity of this area.

MAINTAIN AFFORDABILITY | PROTECT HOUSING STOCK | INFILL WITH WORKFORCE HOUSING

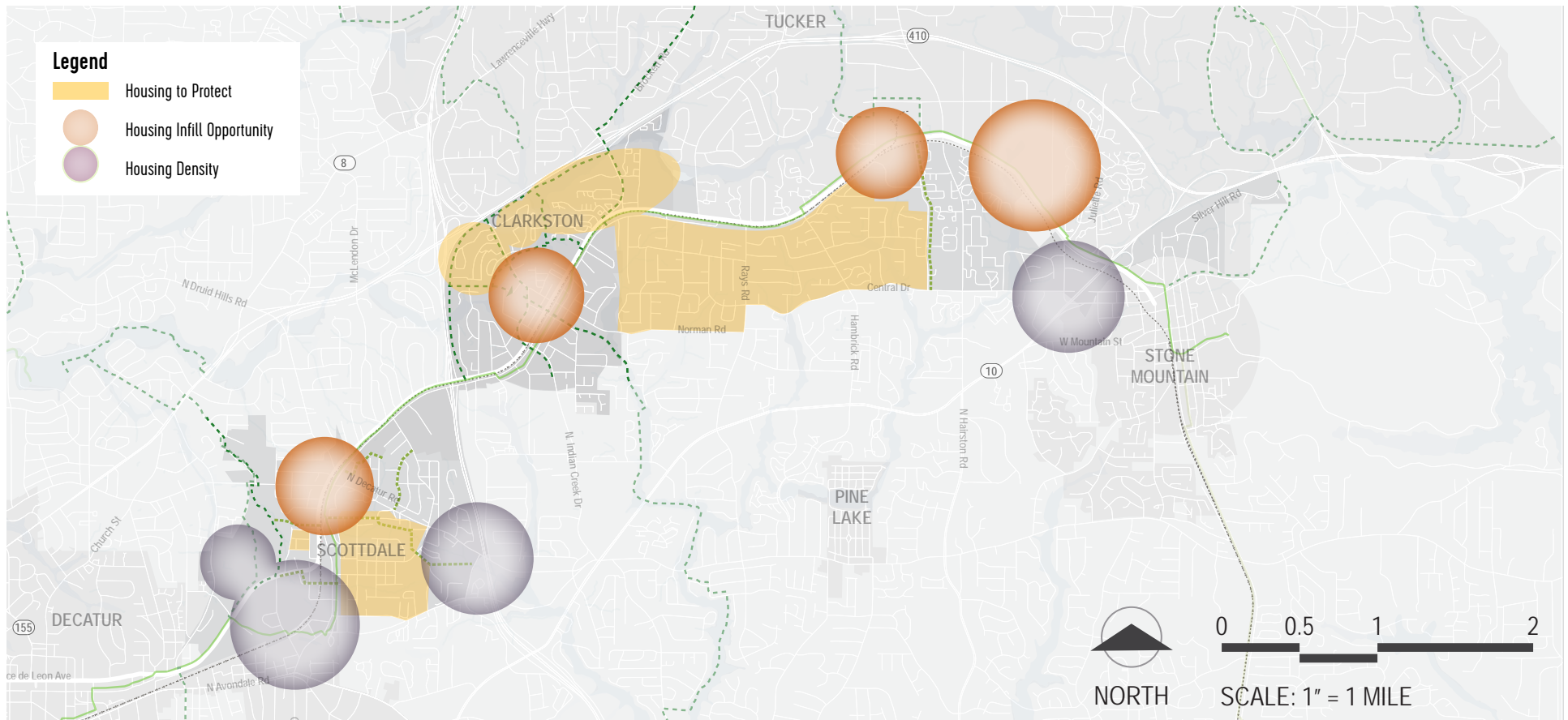
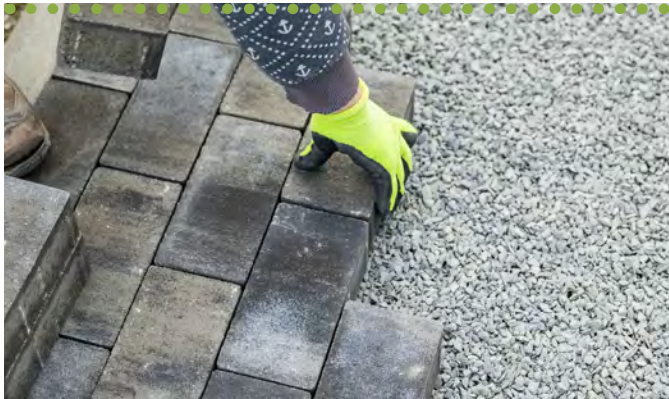


Figure 21. Housing Plan

HOUSING STRATEGY

The housing strategy focus on the primary themes throughout the district: housing to protect, infill housing opportunities, and housing density opportunities. Housing to protect includes historic homes, at risk housing typologies, and older housing stock that provides NAOH options. Housing infill opportunities are locations that are in need of housing options to add to area. Examples such as: adding workforce

housing in the industrial district and infill in Clarkston downtown can activate those active regions. New housing density areas are located adjacent to transportation nodes, such as the MARTA stations and future transit hubs. These strategic housing zones protect existing residents and plan for targeted opportunities for the future. These protection and development strategies are elaborated upon in sections 6.2 and 6.3.



MAINTAIN NEIGHBORHOODS

Preserving the character and affordability of existing neighborhoods is essential to ensuring that long-term residents can remain in place as the corridor evolves. Streetscape improvements, green infrastructure, and trail connections should be designed to benefit current communities without triggering displacement. Investments in home repair programs, anti-displacement policies, and community land trusts can further support neighborhood stability.



HOUSING POLICY

To meet future housing needs while promoting equity, this plan recommends a mix of policy tools that encourage affordability, protect tenants, and align zoning with community goals. Strategies include inclusionary zoning near future BRT stations, reduced parking requirements near transit, and rental assistance programs to support vulnerable households. Development in growth areas should incorporate affordable housing. Coordinating these tools across jurisdictions will help ensure consistent outcomes along the corridor.



INFILL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Several underutilized parcels, particularly near Clarkston, Scottdale, and along Memorial Drive, present strong opportunities for context-sensitive infill housing. These sites can support townhomes, small multi-family buildings, or mixed-income apartments that enhance housing choice while respecting neighborhood scale. New development should prioritize walkability, connect to trail infrastructure, and provide affordable units where feasible.

Figure 22. Photo credit (c) Hawkins Partners, Inc., (TOP), (c) New Jersey Future (MIDDLE)

6.2 ZONING & OVERLAY STRATEGIES

While housing programs and subsidies are critical, the long-term trajectory of affordability and community stability is largely shaped by zoning. The Stone Mountain Trail corridor includes a patchwork of jurisdictions, Clarkston, Scottdale, unincorporated DeKalb, each with different zoning codes, capacities, and development pressures. Without proactive zoning strategies, even well-intentioned trail investments can fuel speculative development and displace the very communities the trail aims to benefit. This section outlines zoning and overlay strategies to ensure that future development or redevelopment aligns with anti-displacement goals and reinforces neighborhood identity, affordability, and livability.

1

INCLUSIONARY ZONING OVERLAYS NEAR JOB CENTERS AND INDUSTRIAL HUBS

Areas near East Ponce de Leon Avenue and East College Avenue are expected to see growing pressure for mixed-use and residential development. These corridors are adjacent to logistics jobs, MARTA stations, and key employment hubs, making them critical targets for affordable housing.

- Create overlay districts that require or incentivize a percentage of units in new developments to be **affordable to households** earning below 80% AMI.
- Provide **density bonuses or expedited permitting** in return for deeper affordability.
- Target parcels in **Clarkston and along the Indian Creek transit corridor for pilot overlays.**

2

HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICTS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER & PRESERVATION

Districts allow for the development of single-family, duplex, and triplex dwellings on all lots.

Scottdale's Historic Mill Village and surrounding community are under increasing pressure from teardown redevelopment. While past preservation efforts stalled due to misconceptions, the existing DeKalb County Tier 3 Overlay, which focuses on the Mill Village, offers a foundation for renewed action. Updates to the overlay could provide greater flexibility and integrate community-driven recommendations.

- Develop **clear design guidelines** in collaboration with residents to ensure the overlay **supports affordability**, community character, and appropriate scale—**not just architectural aesthetics.**
- Align the overlay with **tax relief strategies** to mitigate assessment increases for long-term homeowners.

6.2 ZONING & OVERLAY STRATEGIES



By layering these zoning and overlay tools, the County and its municipal partners can ensure that land use policy becomes a driver of equity, aligning redevelopment with community needs rather than market speculation.

3

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION OVERLAYS IN VULNERABLE AREAS

Large multifamily complexes in Clarkston and near Brockett Road are among the corridor's most vulnerable sites for speculative investment, displacement, and rent hikes.

Introduce **Neighborhood Stabilization Overlays** to require community engagement, tenant protection plans, and affordability guarantees, and inclusionary zoning in any redevelopment proposals.

Allow jurisdictions to **pause rezonings or upzonings in these areas** until anti-displacement strategies are in place.

Streamline the permitting process for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or provide technical assistance to homeowners, especially in areas where ADUs can support housing stability without triggering large-scale displacement.

4

ADAPTIVE REUSE INCENTIVES FOR HOUSING CONVERSION

Commercial along East Ponce de Leon include aging retail, motels, and underutilized industrial and office buildings that could be repositioned for housing, but current zoning may not allow it.

Amend zoning codes to allow for streamlined adaptive reuse **where infrastructure and transit access already exist.**

Prioritize affordability in reuse projects through incentives such as **permit fee reductions, design flexibility, or tax abatements** for projects that convert buildings into affordable housing.

Partner with developers and landowners to identify priority sites along East Ponce, and North Decatur Road.

Amend zoning codes to allow for a **wider range of housing options** near the trail (**cottage courts, duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units, etc.**).

6.3 POLICY TOOLBOX: PRESERVATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION

Anti-displacement planning goes beyond housing policies, it protects affordability, builds economic resilience, and secures community voice. The following strategies offer a multi-layered approach to stabilizing neighborhoods and preventing displacement as the trail spurs new investment.

1 **Preserve Legacy Neighborhoods & NOAH:** Preservation protects both affordability and identity



- Expand Scottdale Mill Village Historic District and **clarify that designation does not limit property resale.**
- Launch a **Multifamily Rehabilitation Fund** for aging apartment complexes in Clarkston and unincorporated DeKalb.
- Use Georgia's Property **Tax Freeze Program** and state/federal historic tax credits to prevent displacement of long-time homeowners.
- Provide technical assistance and toolkits through **partnerships with GSU, DeKalb History Center, and Georgia Historic Preservation Division.**
- Monitor neighborhood displacement risks through the **tracking of key metrics including price and rent appreciation rates**, housing cost burden rates, changing household incomes and demographics, and number of investor purchases.
- Partner with nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity for home repair and rehabilitation to support stability for owners of NOAH properties
- Multifamily Property Tax Exemption - create a program to incentivize developers to set aside income-restricted units for a defined affordability period in exchange for a property tax exemption for 10 years.

2 **Align Housing with Workforce Opportunity** Housing access should support the corridor's workforce



- **Pilot trail-related employment programs** that hire local youth, returning citizens, and underemployed residents.
- Partner with Georgia Piedmont Tech, Goodwill Industries, and unions to **offer job pipelines in logistics, CDL licensing, and green infrastructure.**
- Prioritize **transit-accessible infill housing** near Redan Park, East Ponce, and Memorial Drive using public land or zoning overlays.

6.3 POLICY TOOLBOX: PRESERVATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION

3 Tenant Stability & Renters' Rights Protect and support a vulnerable community



Renters make up a significant portion of the corridor's population, particularly in Clarkston and near I-285. Many live in aging multifamily properties vulnerable to rapid rent increases, evictions, or neglect. Protecting these residents means **proactively supporting tenant organizing, strengthening legal protections, implementing policies, and addressing property conditions before market pressure intensifies.**

- Launch a Tenant Resource Program to provide legal aid and translation services for renters in vulnerable properties.
- Fund and support tenant association organizing through community-based nonprofits.
- Offer renter education workshops in multiple languages to inform tenants of their rights and available support systems.
- Adopt policies to promote development of workforce housing

This toolbox can be integrated with other policies:

- New Market Tax Credits around TOD
- HUD's 203(K) Rehab Mortgage Insurance program
- HUD's Title I Property Improvement Loan
- USDA's Section 504 Home Repair Program



6.3 POLICY TOOLBOX: PRESERVATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, & PROTECTION

As this plan takes shape, the Stone Mountain Trail has the potential to become a transformative asset—improving access to green space, enhancing mobility, and creating a stronger sense of community identity. However, trail investments can also accelerate real estate speculation and housing turnover, especially in areas already facing economic vulnerability. In the study area, where legacy Black neighborhoods and modest single-family communities intersect with emerging market interest, proactive policies are essential to ensure that current residents are not priced out of the very improvements intended to serve them.

This toolbox outlines three interconnected strategies tailored to the context of the study area, offering practical, place-based approaches to support housing stability, prevent displacement, and preserve the social and cultural fabric of these communities:



1. PRESERVATION: PROTECTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HONORING COMMUNITY HERITAGE

In the DeKalb Stone Mountain Trail corridor, preservation is not just about bricks and mortar—it's about safeguarding the character, memory, and affordability of long-standing communities. Many of the neighborhoods adjacent to the trail, including Scottdale, Clarkston, and parts of unincorporated DeKalb, contain modest homes, legacy churches, and historic schools that tell the story of DeKalb's working-class and African American heritage. These structures are also key sources of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), making preservation a dual strategy for both community identity and housing stability.

Without intentional intervention, these assets are vulnerable to:

- **Speculative redevelopment that replaces affordable units with higher-cost housing**
- **Deterioration due to aging infrastructure and lack of maintenance funding**
- **Cultural erasure, as new development shifts the visual and social fabric of these neighborhoods.**

Scottdale Mill Village represents a significant opportunity for historic preservation. Previously nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, the effort stalled due to homeowner concerns around tax increases and development restrictions, misconceptions that continue to deter support. In reality:

- **National Register Designation** is an honorary, federal-level recognition that does not restrict resale, private property improvements, or zoning rights.
- **Local Historic Designation**, while involving architectural review, still allows changes with approval and can be tailored to the community's goals.

A revived and expanded nomination for Scottdale and Clarkston could include not just the mill homes, but surrounding churches, schools, and civic buildings, creating a more cohesive historic district that reflects the area's full cultural footprint.

To make preservation a viable strategy for housing stability, the following tools should be explored and promoted:

- **State and Federal Historic Tax Credits:** Owners who renovate contributing properties can access income tax credits, up to 20% (federal) and 25% (state), to offset renovation costs.
- **Georgia Property Tax Freeze Program (8.5 years):** Eligible homeowners in historic districts can apply for a freeze on their property taxes, ensuring rising assessments do not push them out of their homes post-renovation.
- **Community Education and Engagement:** Many residents are unaware of these benefits, or fear restrictions. A targeted preservation awareness campaign can help demystify the process, clarify what designation does and doesn't mean, and encourage voluntary participation.
- **Partnerships with Preservation Agencies:** Working with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, DeKalb History Center, and academic institutions like Georgia State University's Historic Preservation Program, the County can sponsor surveys, facilitate district nominations, and create design guidelines that honor community intent.
- **Preservation-Based Revitalization:** Preservation can also be a catalyst for economic revitalization. When paired with trail improvements, restored historic homes and buildings can anchor local businesses, senior housing, cultural centers, or affordable rental units, all while retaining neighborhood identity.



2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Many residents in the study area face barriers to economic mobility, such as limited access to job training, stable employment, or reliable transportation. These challenges increase their risk of displacement as the area experiences new investment and market pressure. Workforce development strategies can bridge the gap between housing stability and economic opportunity by equipping residents with the skills and pathways needed to thrive locally.

In the study area, the trail proximity to industrial and logistics employment centers presents a significant opportunity. These job hubs offer roles in distribution, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades that often do not require a four-year degree but do require technical training or certifications. The following strategies can help connect residents to these opportunities:

- **Partnering with local technical colleges and workforce agencies,** to provide hands-on training in high-demand fields like commercial driving, welding, logistics, and industrial maintenance.
- **Expanding trail-related and green economy employment,** including trail construction, landscape maintenance, and bike/pedestrian infrastructure jobs, which can provide entry points into public works or infrastructure careers.
- **Locating affordable housing near employment centers and transit routes,** particularly MARTA and future mobility hubs, to reduce the time and financial burden of commuting ensuring workers can live near where they work.
- **Supporting entrepreneurship and microbusiness incubation,** especially for residents interested in starting services or businesses that serve trail users and the surrounding community (ex: cafés, bike repair, food carts, etc.).

By aligning housing planning with workforce development, the trail can serve not just as a recreational amenity, but as a catalyst for economic mobility ensuring that long-time residents are positioned to succeed and grow along with the area.



3. CULTURAL IDENTITY AND STORYTELLING: CENTERING COMMUNITY MEMORY

Preserving housing stability also means preserving the stories, identities, and cultural landmarks that define a community. Along the DeKalb Stone Mountain Trail, the opportunity to elevate Black heritage, immigrant history, and Indigenous presence can ground new investment in a deeper sense of place. Storytelling and cultural expression not only celebrate the community's past, they reinforce belonging and resist displacement by affirming the value of those who have long called these neighborhoods home.

In the study area, the trail proximity to industrial and logistics employment centers presents a significant opportunity. These job hubs offer roles in distribution, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades that often do not require a four-year degree but do require technical training or certifications. The following strategies can help connect residents to these opportunities:



■ **Signage and Trail Naming:**

Collaborate with residents and community representatives to explore inclusive trail branding that reflects the diverse identities of neighborhoods along the corridor. While renaming individual sections of the trail may raise concerns about fragmentation, there is an opportunity to develop a unifying name or brand that resonates across communities, paired with localized signage and wayfinding that honors each area's unique history and culture. This could include acknowledging Indigenous presence, such as the Muscogee/Creek Nation, through interpretive elements, and integrating neighborhood-specific stories, symbols, and public art. Although a full renaming process is outside the current scope, this plan recommends a future community-driven branding effort to ensure the trail is not only physically continuous, but also socially and culturally connected.

■ **Community Arts and Murals:**

Support public art projects, oral history recordings, and neighborhood-based art installations that reflect the diverse cultural fabric of the area.

■ **Educational Programming and Exhibits:**

Partner with organizations like the DeKalb History Center to curate rotating exhibits, school partnerships, and walking tours that amplify neighborhood history.

■ **Neighborhood Branding and Gateways:**

Design trail gateways and public spaces that reflect the community's identity, heritage, and aspirations, resisting generic development and preserving neighborhood character.

Integrating cultural identity into the fabric of the trail and surrounding development help preserve not only who lives in the community—but how the community defines itself for future generations.



4. INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY POWER: SHAPING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

Lasting housing stability requires more than good policies—it requires shared power. In the DeKalb Stone Mountain Trail corridor, where communities have experienced disinvestment and limited input in past planning efforts, inclusive governance is essential to ensure current residents are not left behind. This strategy focuses on creating long-term mechanisms that empower residents to shape decisions around housing, development, and public investment.

- **Continue the work of the PAG into a Community Advisory Group (CAG):**
Continue the work of the PAG to advise on plan recommendation implementation. Maintain consistent communication to keep them informed on how the plan is advancing. This could be through email, newsletter, or quarterly meetings and compensated participation.
- **Support and Expand Community and Local Housing Programs: Housing Trust Funds & Community Land Trust (CLTs):**
Explore CLT models to ensure permanent affordability and community control of land. Partner with groups like the Atlanta Land Trust to conduct feasibility and identify pilot sites.
- **Strengthen Tenant Organizing and Representation:**
Provide legal and organizing support to renters, particularly in vulnerable multifamily complexes. Create tenant advisory roles in planning and redevelopment processes.

Inclusive governance ensures planning is done with communities, not to them. By creating permanent structures for shared decision-making, this strategy builds trust, honors lived experience, and helps ensure the study area becomes an asset rooted in equity, belonging, and long-term stewardship.





07

IMPLEMENTATION

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

7.1 PHASING STRATEGY

Transforming the Stone Mountain Trail from a hidden gem into a world-class regional asset will take more than just great ideas. It requires coordination, commitment, and clear direction. This chapter provides a pragmatic roadmap to move the plan from vision to action, prioritizing what happens first, who is responsible, how it gets funded, and how early momentum can be built.

01 IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Trail Maintenance (Critical Priority): Address trail flooding, erosion, and paving needs across priority segments. Leverage Parks and Recreation’s in-house efforts while seeking city-level partnerships (example- Clarkston, Scottdale). Improve drainage infrastructure and upgrade surfaces to meet ADA and e-scooter standards.

Model Mile in Scottdale: In partnership with Super District 6, implement a “model mile” showcasing upgraded branding, wayfinding, lighting, crosswalks, and landscape care. This flagship segment will serve as a prototype and advocacy tool for corridor-wide improvements.

Trail Access & Crossings: Address the most dangerous or disconnected access points to improve safety, especially near school zones and transit stops.

100-Day Action Plan (see 7.4): Focus on catalytic short-term actions that build momentum.

1-2
years

02 STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Install corridor-wide wayfinding, trailheads, and branding elements.

Implement zoning overlays, preservation programs, and workforce housing pilots.

Deepen coordination with transit, parks, and economic development initiatives.

Support workforce development spaces co-located with trail access (especially near North Hairston & Ponce Industrial zone).

2-5
years

03 COMPLETING THE VISION

Establish Interjurisdictional Trail Governance Model: Formalize collaboration between DeKalb, cities, and the Advisory Group.

Preservation & Housing Stability Programs: Expand funding, incentives, and capacity for long-term affordability.

Corridor-Wide Trail Identity System Launch: Implement cohesive signage, storytelling, public art, and gateways.

Create a Dedicated Legacy Fund: Secure long-term financing through TADs, SPLOST, or foundation partnerships.

Institutionalize Trail Cultural Programming through launching annual festivals, youth projects, and place-based community events.

5-10
years

7.2 PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK: WHO LEADS WHAT

Trail transformation requires a coalition of committed partners working across sectors and jurisdictions. From trail maintenance to zoning, tenant support to cultural storytelling, the success of this plan hinges on coordinated leadership that reflects the complexity of the corridor itself. Elected officials, from commissioners to city council members, play a vital role in advancing this vision. Their leadership is essential not only for adopting policies and budgets, but also for championing equitable implementation, convening stakeholders, and holding agencies accountable to community priorities.

Lead Agency / Partner	Roles & Responsibilities
DeKalb County Parks & Recreation	Corridor-wide trail maintenance, capital upgrades, interjurisdictional MOUs, Model Mile coordination
City of Clarkston	Local zoning overlays, trail access upgrades, tenant protection policies
City of Stone Mountain	Wayfinding implementation, placemaking, mobility enhancements
City of Tucker	Local rezonings, trail access upgrades, workforce pipeline resources
Decide DeKalb / Economic Development	Align economic strategy with housing/jobs, pursue funding for corridor-wide improvements
Community-Based Organizations	Lead resident engagement, tenant organizing, community power-building, and cultural programming
Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)	Technical assistance, regional coordination, funding support, equitable growth strategies
Elected Officials	Champion policy adoption, convene agencies and stakeholders, secure resources, and ensure accountability
Workforce Partners	Deliver job training, certification programs, and pipelines linked to trail and green jobs
Community Advisory Group	Ensure continuous resident voice in implementation, track progress, and hold partners accountable
Georgia Department of Transit (GDOT)	Coordinate with the planning, designing, construction, and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.

7.3 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

A sustainable funding strategy must braid together public, philanthropic, and private resources. Each funding source should align with the design component it supports, whether trail infrastructure, housing stability, or workforce development.

PUBLIC FUNDING

- TSPLOST & SPLOST (DeKalb County + Cities): Capital funding for trail upgrades, signage, and crossings.
- CDBG / HOME (HUD): Used for multifamily rehabilitation, tenant protection, and housing preservation.
- ARPA / Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA): Target short-term investments in workforce training and trail access.
- MARTA TOD and Safe Routes to Transit Grants: Support access improvements and land use integration near stations.
- GDOT: Transportation and safety improvements.

STATE & REGIONAL TOOLS

- Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB): Low-interest loans for crossing safety and street improvements.
- Georgia Historic Preservation Division Grants: Funding for preservation plans and historic district designation.
- ARC Livable Centers Initiative (LCI): Leverage planning-to capital pipeline for trail connectivity and access.
- Georgia DCA: LIHTC - Low-Income Housing Tax Credit - as a resource.
- Housing Trust Fund: State and Local: Community Land Trust development or rent support programs.

PHILANTHROPIC & PRIVATE SOURCES

- Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta: For community arts, engagement, and storytelling.
- TBD Foundation Support: Seek national partners aligned with trail equity, housing justice, or cultural preservation.
- Trail Sponsorship: Pilot funding model mile or trail amenities with local business support.

INNOVATIVE FINANCING

- Tax Allocation District (TAD) / Value Capture Strategy: Explore for long-term funding in high-growth nodes.
- Trail Legacy Fund: Proposed pooled fund supported by public, private, and philanthropic contributions to sustain long-term implementation and maintenance.



COMPREHENSIVE
FUNDING STRATEGY

7.4 100-DAY ACTION PLAN

JUMPSTARTING TRAIL TRANSFORMATION

The first 100 days after plan adoption are critical to building momentum, aligning partners, and demonstrating visible progress. This short-term action plan prioritizes achievable steps that strengthen public trust, lay the foundation for long-term implementation, and position the corridor for early wins in funding and maintenance.



100-DAY ACTION PLAN

4

Activate Community Engagement and Visibility Weeks 4-10

Transition the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) into a permanent Trail Corridor Advisory Committee with representation from Clarkston, Scottdale, and Stone Mountain. Launch a public-facing engagement campaign including a Trail Day event, youth-led mural project, and storytelling pop-ups to elevate community ownership and visibility.

5

Submit Initial Grant Applications Weeks 6-14

Identify and pursue early grant opportunities to support trail priorities. Target programs such as:

- GDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- ARC Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) supplemental funds
- NRPA Park Maintenance or Equity-Focused funding
- State and local community development block grants

Focus applications on immediate improvements such as safe access near schools and transit, model mile branding and signage, and trail-based workforce development pilots.

7.5 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

LIST OF ACRONYMS

FUNDING PROGRAMS & SOURCES

ARC – Atlanta Regional Commission

ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant (HUD)

CIP – Capital Improvement Program

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

GDOT – Georgia Department of Transportation

HOME – HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HUD)

HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

LCI – Livable Centers Initiative (ARC)

LMIG – Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (GDOT)

NEA – National Endowment for the Arts

SPLOST – Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SS4A – Safe Streets and Roads for All (USDOT)

TAP – Transportation Alternatives Program

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

ORGANIZATIONS & PARTNERS

ARC Workforce – ARC Workforce Development Programs

CLT – Community Land Trust

MARTA – Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

P3 / Public-Private Partnerships – Joint public and private investment projects

7.5 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Phase	Category	Recommendation	Partners	Funding Source	Cost	Impact	Difficulty
1	Overall District Recommendations	1 Convene a Workforce Development Roundtable	Georgia Piedmont Tech, Goodwill, WorkSource DeKalb, Local Unions, Industrial Employers, ARC Workforce Programs	WIOA, ARC Workforce Grants, Employer Contributions	\$\$	High	Medium
		2 Launch a Housing Stability Pilot	DeKalb Housing Authority, Nonprofits, Tenant Groups, ARC	ARPA, HUD CDBG, Philanthropy	\$\$	High	Medium
	Trail Recommendations	3 Corridor-wide trail maintenance audit and shared responsibilities	DeKalb Parks & Rec, Cities	General Fund, LMIG	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		4 Fix top 3 most dangerous trail access points near schools & transit stops	DeKalb Transportation, Cities	SS4A	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		5 Audit stormwater and flooding hotspots along trail	DeKalb Watershed, ARC	ARC Green Communities	\$\$	Medium	Medium
		6 Install hydration and rest stops on high-use segments	Cities, Local Businesses	Public Health, Private/Philanthropy	\$\$	Low	Medium
	Industrial Node	7 Goldsmith and Ridge Intersection	DeKalb, Cities	GDOT Safety Grants, HSIP	\$\$\$	High	Medium
	Clarkston Node	8 Pilot gateway design at Brocket Intersection	City of Clarkston, Local Artists	NEA Our Town	\$\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		9 Church Street Railroad Crossing (pedestrian upgrades, trailhead)	Planning Depts, ARC	ARC LCI, TAP	\$\$	Medium	Medium
	Scottdale Node	10 Model Mile (Flagship Corridor Segment)	DeKalb, Super District 6	Transportation Funds	\$\$\$	High	Medium

Phase	Category	Recommendation	Partners	Funding Source	Cost	Impact	Difficulty
2	Overall District Recommendations	11 Adopt Neighborhood Stabilization Overlays	DeKalb Planning Dept, ARC	ARC LCI, General Fund	\$\$	Medium	Low
		12 Launch Community Land Trust (CLT) pilot	Nonprofits, CLT Coalition	HUD, Housing Trust Fund	\$\$\$\$	High	High
		13 Development – Infill, housing stability, and mixed-use transitions	DeKalb Planning, ARC	ARC LCI, HUD	\$\$\$	Medium	High
		14 Infrastructure – Lighting, drainage & stormwater upgrades	DeKalb Watershed, Parks	EPA Green Infra, SPLOST	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
	Trail Recommendations	15 Create dedicated trail infrastructure improvement fund	DeKalb, Partners	SPLOST, CIP	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		16 Adopt long-term trail asset management system	Parks, IT, Finance	Capital Funds	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		17 Identity – Corridor-wide branding, gateways, and public art	Cities, Local Artists, ARC	Cultural Affairs, NEA Our Town	\$\$\$\$	High	Medium
	Industrial Node	18 <u>Infill Education and Training Center</u>	<u>DeKalb Economic Development, Georgia Piedmont Tech, Workforce Development Agencies, Local Developers</u>	WIOA, ARC Workforce Programs, Public/Private Partnerships	\$\$\$	High	Medium
	Clarkston Node	19 Pilot housing rehab fund for apartments in Clarkston	DeKalb, Housing Authority	ARPA, HOME	\$\$	Medium	Medium
		20 Clarkston Transit Hub (near Georgia Piedmont College)	DeKalb, MARTA, ARC	ARC/Federal Transit	\$\$\$\$\$	Medium	High
	Scottdale Node	21 Industrial Reuse & Creative Industries	DeKalb Economic Development	Creative Economy Grants	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		22 Workforce Housing near Industrial Districts	DeKalb Housing, Developers	Housing Trust/Federal	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		23 Neighborhood Park & Greenspace (Milan Park, Aquatic Center)	Parks Dept, Community Groups	Parks Bonds/Grants	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium

Phase	Category	Recommendation	Partners	Funding Source	Cost	Impact	Difficulty
3	Overall District Recommendations	24 Infrastructure – Smart/green infrastructure for resiliency	DeKalb, Utilities	Capital Funds, Federal Grants	\$\$\$\$	Medium	High
		25 Fund rotating public art program (youth + local artists)	Schools, Local Artists	Cultural Affairs	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
	Trail Recommendations	26 Implement pedestrian-first intersection policies	County + Cities	General Fund	\$\$\$\$	High	High
		27 Create dedicated trail infrastructure improvement fund	DeKalb, Partners	SPLOST, CIP	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		28 Adopt long-term trail asset management system	Parks, IT, Finance	Capital Funds	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		29 Integrate trail maintenance into capital improvement programming	DeKalb Parks & Rec	General Fund, SPLOST	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
		30 Maintain consistent branding in all trail upgrades	Parks, Cities, ARC	Capital Budgets	\$\$	High	Medium
		31 Launch trail ambassador safety program	Community Orgs	Civic Grants	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium
	Industrial Node	32 North Hairston Gateway + Trailhead Hub	DeKalb County, ARC, Local Artists, Industrial Employers, Community Orgs	ARC LCI Implementation, Tourism/Branding Funds, Cultural Affairs Grants, Public/Private Partnerships	\$\$\$\$	High	High
	Clarkston Node	33 Downtown Development (mixed-use)	Developers, DeKalb Economic Development	GDOT LMIG, SS4A, TAP	\$\$\$\$	Medium	High
	Scottdale Node	34 Identity Enhancements (branding & placemaking)	City of Clarkston, ARC, Local Artists, Community Orgs	ARC LCI , Cultural Affairs Funds, Tourism Funds	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium

THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION BEGINS NOW!

With a clear roadmap, committed partners, and a community-driven vision, the Stone Mountain Trail Corridor is poised to become more than a line on a map, it can be a backbone of equity, mobility, culture, and resilience. The actions we take in the first 100 days, and the partnerships we cultivate along the way, will determine whether this trail becomes a world-class regional asset or a missed opportunity. The momentum is here. The time to act is now.





08

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
EXISTING CONDITIONS
REPORT

APPENDIX B
CORRIDOR ANALYSIS
REPORT

APPENDIX C

CHARACTER REPORT

APPENDIX D

MARKET ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX E

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

APPENDIX F

MEETINGS