Northlake Livable Centers Initiative Study

February 28, 2002

LaVista Road Conceptual Renderings
Northlake Livable Centers Initiative

Executive Summary

The Northlake Study was completed as part of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). LCI is an unique program designed to support innovative land use and transportation planning within activity and town centers around the metropolitan Atlanta region. The Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. (NCA) was awarded an LCI grant in 2001 to complete a study of the area around Northlake mall in cooperation with the DeKalb County Planning Department and a consulting team. NCA was the only nonprofit, all-volunteer organization to receive LCI funding.

Problem statement

The Northlake activity center differs from typical towns or cities. Unlike a proper town, Northlake has no official public function or space, such as a courthouse or town green. The absence of an easily accessible public space limits opportunities for residents and users to participate in a meaningful public life. Study participants have expressed a desire for sidewalks, parks, and pedestrian plazas, and seek a stronger voice in the development decision-making process. The task of the Livable Centers Initiative is to devise a pragmatic plan that addresses these issues while balancing the demands of existing commercial interests.

Existing conditions

The Northlake LCI Study Area lies northeast of Atlanta in unincorporated DeKalb County, along the edge of Interstate-285 near its interchange with LaVista Road. The Study Area covers approximately 1,000 acres and is dominated by commercial and industrial uses. Private automobiles are the primary means of transportation for the majority of the population.

Population

Two residential population trends appear to be impacting Northlake. The first is a shift in household structures among the existing population, indicated by smaller average household sizes, a greater percentage of adults over age 65, and an increase in the proportion of nonfamily households. The second is the increase (133% since 1990) in the number of individuals identifying themselves as some race other than white (Black, Asian, Other).

Employment

Throughout the 1990s, there were more workers than residents in Northlake. Over those years, total employment grew by 7%. Though perceived by many to be primarily a retail center, retail employment in Northlake actually declined between 1990 and 2000, and now represents less than 20% of the total.

Organizations

At present, there are several stakeholding organizations of various sizes and stature operating in Northlake, each with a specific scope of interest. The connections among them are varied and complex. These organizations include the Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. (NCA), DeKalb County, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), MARTA, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and a new, as-yet-unnamed business interest group.

Land Use/ Zoning/ Urban Design

Land uses in the Study Area are primarily commercial, office, and industrial, with limited residential and public/institutional along the periphery. DeKalb County's zoning ordinance, which governs all development in Northlake, has strictly separated these uses and effectively shaped the Northlake activity center at the cost of accessibility and pedestrian-friendliness.

Transportation

Automobile travel is the dominant transportation mode in the Study Area. Mass transit, bicycles, and walking combined account for a very small percentage of total trips.

Urban Forestry

The existing tree cover in the Study Area is estimated to be less than 20%. Since land was first graded for commercial development in Northlake, an insubstantial number of trees have been replanted.

Public Participation Process

The public assumed a fundamental role in defining a vision for the Study Area. Three methods were used to gauge public interest: community vision questionnaires, community design preference surveys, and community design workshops. The entire process occurred over the course of six formal public meetings and several additional outreach events. Responses to open-ended questions posed in the community vision questionnaire guided development of the community design preference survey, the results of which were used as organizing principles for the community design workshop.

Public Participation Results

Information gathered from study participants was treated as qualitative data. Patterns and trends that represented the collective vision of the participants and would lead to recommendations for implementation were sought. Three general categories of concern were identified among the written comments and results of the design preference survey: buildings/land, roadways/transit, and in-between spaces. These categories relate to public function and space. Features such as sidewalks, parks, and civic squares are intimately connected to traditional public activities. They are the essential pieces of public space: areas where repeated formal and informal interaction among strangers occurs. The historic symbolic force of such spaces in the urban environment makes their absence in Northlake profound, though sometimes overlooked amid day-to-day activities.

Organizational Recommendations

Based on input from participating stakeholders, the perception of "place character" appears to be connected to the content and quality of the built environment. This has been expressed as a desire for sidewalks, parks, and pedestrian plazas, and for a stronger voice in the development decision-making process. Thus, recommendations for improving conditions in the Study Area center around the perceived absence of public function and space in the built environment and the local public's chance for equitable participation in the development process. The ideas presented here are suggestions for opening communication channels between stakeholding individuals, groups, and organizations.

Resolve problems of the built environment

- Establish special building design standards for the Study Area

- Create accessible and usable public spaces by requiring the installation and improvement of sidewalks along all roads (both county- and state-controlled), planting trees in the right-of-way, building small parks and plazas in leftover spaces, and providing traffic control to minimize conflicts between cars and pedestrians
- Pursue funding for capital investments from all available sources
- Work with public/private entities to develop a focal point, like a town square or civic plaza
- Lobby DeKalb County to develop a public park in or near the Study Area
- Encourage DeKalb County to locate a public function in a significant location within the Study Area

Increase public involvement in development decisions
- Create a special Northlake Planning District as an amendment to the DeKalb Comprehensive Plan
- Approve a community future land use map for the Study Area
- With cooperative efforts from NCA, DeKalb County and the PATH Foundation, begin implementing the DeKalb Greenways Plan in Northlake
- In conjunction with the DeKalb County Planning Department, review existing zoning categories for inappropriate regulations
- Continue to promote NCA's community building role to business owners, workers, and shoppers in Northlake.
- Devise a new Northlake zoning category to address the unique design and land use issues in the Study Area

Transportation Recommendations

Transportation recommendations are based on observations and evaluations of the existing transportation infrastructure and traffic conditions in the area. These recommendations outline a multi-modal approach for improving mobility in the Study Area that addresses both short-term needs and long growth and redevelopment potential. Major recommendations include:
- Pedestrian enhancements along LaVista Road
- Pedestrian crossing refuge medians to reduce unprotected crossing distances.
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) implementation through a Northlake Transportation Management Agency (TMA)
- Improvements to allow pedestrian and bicycle movements throughout study area
- Improvements to the accessibility and usability of transit facilities
- Provision of additional roadway connectivity including a new crossing of I-285 between LaVista Road and the CSX railroad
- Intersection and operational improvements to enhance use of the street network by vehicles and pedestrians

Land Use Recommendations

Since the built environment cannot be recreated overnight, future land use changes in Northlake are expected to occur incrementally. As individual parcels are redeveloped, revised development standards should be in place so that new structures adhere to recommended land use and design patterns. Toward this end, a few land use categories new to the Study Area will be necessary. These new categories are intended to complement the standard categories already in the DeKalb Land Use Plan while encouraging mixed-use and mixed-density development. The proposed categories are as follows:
- Mixed-use Commercial: allows for vertical or horizontal mixture of retail commercial and residential uses on a single parcel. This could take the form of residential above or next door to small-to-medium sized retail stores
- Mixed-use Office: provides space for vertical or horizontal mixture of office, single-family, multi-family, and retail commercial uses; specific ratios of uses should be determined by prevailing market conditions. This category is similar to the existing OMX category.
- Mixed-density Residential: provides space for the mixture of single- and multi-family residential units on a single parcel.

Urban Design Recommendations

Several fundamental principles of pedestrian-oriented development should be followed when considering changes to the built environment. These include moderate and high density housing and employment uses sited within walking distances of transit; residential and employment uses mixed with shopping opportunities and public facilities; and multiple and direct street connections between transit stops and shopping areas. Implementation of these recommendations should enhance the overall pedestrian experience of the Study Area without unfairly penalizing or excluding automobiles.
- NCA should request that DeKalb County establish design standards for the Study Area.
- DeKalb County should facilitate public process to establish design guidelines; NCA should be a lead stakeholder.
- DeKalb County should amend the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to provide for transit supportive development.
- DeKalb County should coordinate the final design review process by establishing design guidelines and standards. Design Guidelines should be both qualitative and quantitative and provide designers with flexibility in achieving design intent.

Conclusion

The Northlake LCI study is the capstone of an effort to create a process for improving the public's voice in development decisions for unincorporated urban places. In outlining a path to a better Northlake, the LCI study includes recommendations that are based on the suggestions of study participants regarding the arrangement of land use and transportation infrastructure, the design and appearance of the activity center, and the organizational capacity needed to accomplish change. All recommendations and ideas must be able to flex to the changing needs of community stakeholders. In order for this to happen, stakeholders must continuously evaluate the fitness of the plan. What is important is not necessarily the specific recommendations, but rather the intensity and depth of the dialogue surrounding them. This dialogue is the crucial momentum of the plan. The momentum must be carried forward and leveraged with future efforts in order to maximize the legacy of the collaborative effort represented by the Northlake Livable Centers Initiative.

For additional information about the Northlake Livable Centers Initiative or the Northlake Community Alliance, Inc., please visit the NCA website: www.nlake.org

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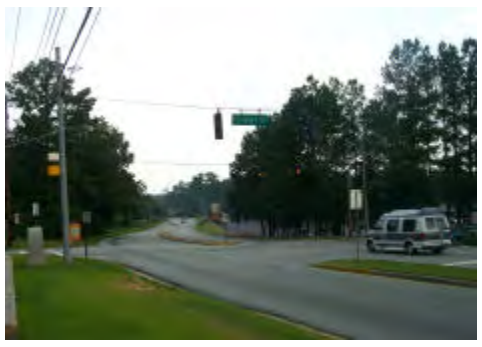
INTRODUCTION

This plan was completed as part of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The LCI is a planning and funding program designed to support innovative development within activity and town centers around the Atlanta metropolitan area. The goal of the initiative is to find ways to better link regional and local decisions regarding land use and transportation within town and activity centers. Special planning and implementation funds have been set aside for this purpose.

This recommendations presented here, primarily concerned with transportation-related issues, were generated during an extended effort to encourage open dialogue among various stakeholders (individuals, institutions, and organizations) in Northlake, a several square mile area surrounding the intersection of LaVista and Briarcliff Roads. The high level of public involvement during the study has helped create tremendous new momentum. A larger number of individuals than ever before recognize the importance of having a local voice in the development process, and appear to be willing to work toward the goal of a better Northlake.

The Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. became the first all-volunteer organization to receive LCI funds. The grant was issued to study land use and transportation issues in a 1000-acre activity center surrounding the intersection of LaVista Road, Briarcliff Road, and Interstate-285. Northlake Mall, the largest and most significant commercial use, sits near this intersection. The resulting Northlake LCI Study represents a substantial planning and public participation effort coordinated by the Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. (NCA), with assistance from consultants Robert and Company, Day Wilburn Associates, Urban Design Collaborative, and Sycamore. NCA volunteers and citizens who shared their time and energy during the study are to be commended for their foresight and initiative throughout this groundbreaking process.



PROBLEM STATEMENT

A major automobile thoroughfare (Interstate-285) encircling Atlanta was constructed (1969), which helped accelerate a new pattern of regional movement and support a metropolitan-wide population and development shift, which, beginning in the late-1960s, gave rise to Northlake and other similar areas (Perimeter Center, Cumberland/Galleria). Arrayed like satellites just beyond the reach of Atlanta's city limits, each was anchored by a large, enclosed shopping mall, attracted office development, and characterized by large-scale commercial uses.

Once established, the emphasis within these areas shifted to improving internal circulation. Building and expanding local thoroughfares to accommodate increased auto traffic helped transform the areas into relatively self-contained activity nodes. As patterns of movement shifted, the diversity and intensity of local activities increased. This fueled an increase in the number and duration of individual visits and transformed the areas into major activity nodes. As this transformation unfolded, Northlake became a center with an identifiable function.

But the function of the center of Northlake differs from that commonly found in towns. While the activity space functions as a point of convergence for a variety of individuals and groups, as in a town, the purpose of this convergence is restricted. Unlike a proper town, there is no public function associated with Northlake. The symbolic juxtaposition of formal religious space, government space, social space, and economic space that characterizes a town is missing. In terms of traditional urban discourse, Northlake is functionally incomplete. In the absence of formal public function, only the commercial function of the center is left. Thus commerce is the organizing force of the Northlake LCI Study Area.

In many instances, this condition poses no problem. If a complete activity center, where public space and function is visible and available, is nearby and easily accessible, nodes of commercial space are not expected to also serve as arenas for formal social and political expression. But the rapid and somewhat unguided horizontal growth of the metropolitan area has left behind vast swaths of unincorporated, undefined space, filled with residential and commercial uses, that lies distant and disconnected from organized public places. This space is administered by county governments which have neither the resources nor the incentive to develop and support the level and intimacy of public function typically found in towns. The ongoing demand for commercial space, which requires relatively low public expenditure, offers substantial financial returns, and fulfills consumer needs, has helped further diminish the position of public space in the hierarchy of government concern.

The absence of accessible public function and space restricts residents' and users' ability to participate in a meaningful public life. (Bickford, 2000) Though the individuals that occupy unincorporated spaces do so fully aware of the risk of relinquishing easy accessibility to a traditional public forum, this does not mean that their desire to experience and take advantage of some of the benefits of an active public place vanishes, as demonstrated by participants in the Northlake Study.

The current effort to develop a plan for Northlake is the groundwork for a means to influence future decisions regarding the role and prominence of public function and space in the local geography. The motivation for the effort has been enunciated by study participants as a desire for sidewalks, parks, and pedestrian plazas, and a voice in the development decision-making process. The problem, then, is to devise a pragmatic plan that addresses this desire within the context of the demands of space designed exclusively for commercial activity. Toward that end, the current function of Northlake as a commercial activity center must be balanced against the growing expectations of it becoming a more complete place (like a town). It is evident that the outcome of this effort will be to propose a future at odds with the present.

Definitions

Residents: anyone permanently residing within the nine census tracts used for data purposes

Users: workers, business owners, and shoppers who mostly do not reside within the nine census tracts used for data purposes

Function: term used to circumscribe groups of land uses and landscape features that comprise four general types of space: public, sacred, commercial, residential.

Geography of function: location and juxtaposition of particular functions in space

Study Area: space defined by the Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. and used during the present plan as the central point of activity

Data Area: nine census tracts surrounding the Study Area used for purposes of gathering and analyzing population, housing, and employment data. Tracts are numbered by the Census bureau as follows: 217.02, 217.03, 217.04, 217.05, 217.06, 218.05, 218.08, 218.09, 218.10, and 220.01.

Public voice: formal and informal input by stakeholders (residents and users) in the public portion of the planning and development process

Built environment: all the man-made structures and infrastructure in a particular place, e.g. sidewalks, buildings, and utility lines

Frame: the way individuals and organizations enunciate their ideas about a given issue

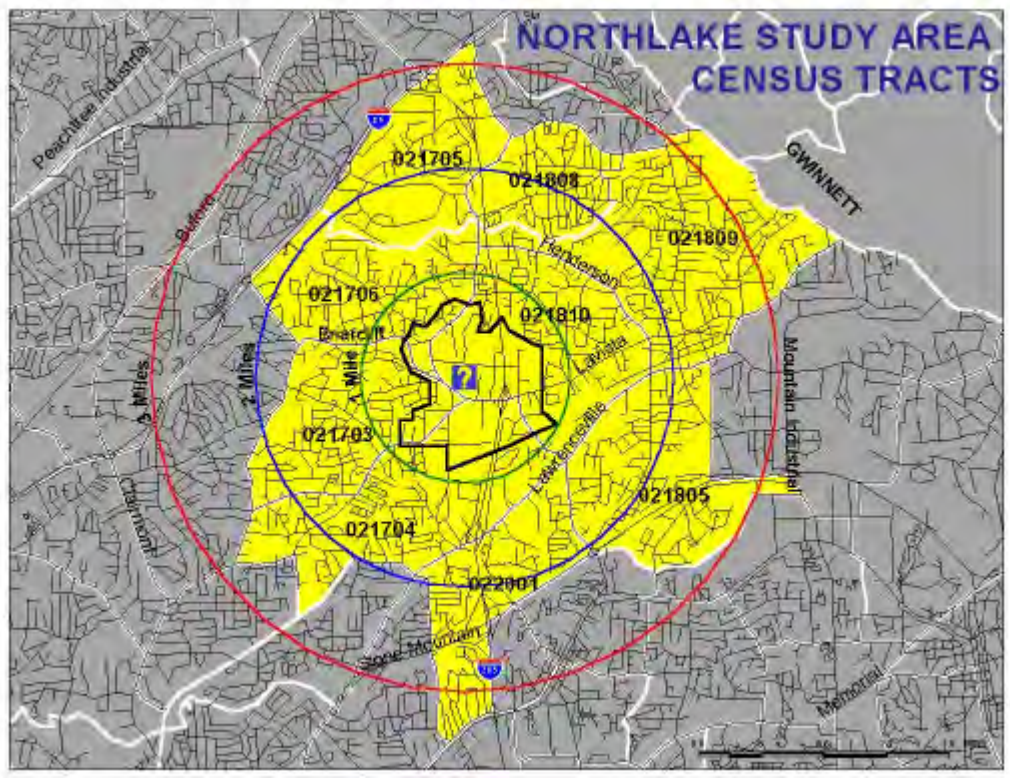
Character of place: the aspects of a particular place that in combination create a consistent perception of that place

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Northlake Study Area lies along the edge of Interstate-285, near its intersection with Interstate-85. I-285 is a major thoroughfare encircling Atlanta, constructed during the 1960's as part of President Eisenhower's national road building program. At the time, land in the area adjacent to the highway was sparsely developed, cheap, and plentiful, traveling by automobile simple and quick. Interchanges were established where major local roads crossed the interstate, creating a series of transportation transfer nodes. The presence of an interchange raised the investment value of nearby land. Indeed, the decision to build Northlake proved to be an effective long-term anchor for attracting and retaining large-scale commercial development. Because the mall was the first and largest structure, it became the area's most recognizable feature. Participants in the study process suggested, explicitly or otherwise, that the mall remains the primary defining feature of the local landscape.

Study Area Geography

The Northlake LCI Study Area lies northeast of Atlanta, along the edge of Interstate-285 just south of its intersection with Interstate-85. The Study Area covers approximately 1000 acres and is dominated by commercial and industrial uses. Though private automobiles are the only means of transportation for the majority of the population, five MARTA bus routes link the area to rail transit stations. A single freight railroad (operated by CSX) cuts an east-west path across the southern edge of the Study Area.



Analysis of Population and Employment

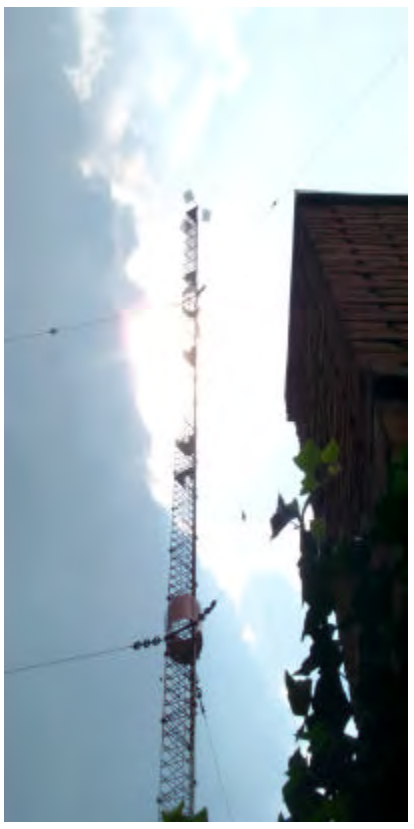
Quantitative data used in the study was collected from the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing as well as the 1999 Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Employment Report. The Census information came from Summary Tape File 1, a 100-percent count of total population, households, housing units, and a few selected characteristics of each. Employment information provided by ARC was organized by major industrial category and derived from business tax records (ES202). Data included total employment only; for privacy purposes, other characteristics were not available. Information from these sources was compiled into spreadsheets to facilitate analysis of trends and changes. These trends are detailed in the following sections.

Northlake Demographics

A commercial and office center surrounded by residential uses, the Study Area hosts two distinct populations. For the purpose of this study, the first group, which includes workers and shoppers who may or may not live near the study area, shall be called users. They visit the Study Area often but use other commercial areas as frequently as Northlake. The other group is residents, who live immediately adjacent to or within the area, usually shop and may also work there, make frequent visits to obtain basic goods and services, and typically use other commercial areas less frequently.

The geography of the Study Area cuts randomly across census tract boundaries, which makes an accurate accounting of either residential or user populations difficult. Therefore, nine census tracts surrounding the Study Area were taken to approximate substantial portions of these populations. The criteria used required a major part of each tract selected to lie within 2 miles of the Study Area. Invariably, only a portion of those defined as users will be included in this sample. It is certain that other, potentially frequent, users come from places beyond these tracts, but it was prohibitively difficult given the scope of the present study to accurately measure an average point of origin for all users.

Northlake Area Population and Housing	2000	1990	% Change
Population	45,720	43,351	5.5%
Median Age (years)	na	na	na
62 years and over	8,920	5,734	55.6%
65 years and over	7,573	na	na
18 years and over	36,913	35,312	4.5%
Under 18 years	8,807	8,039	9.6%
Percent under 18 years	19.3%	18.5%	na
Black	4,409	1,743	153.0%
Asian or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,923	2,153	82.2%
Other Race	1,207	185	552.4%
Hispanic or Latino	3,155	990	218.7%
White	35,229	39,234	-10.2%
Total Nonwhite	9,539	4,081	133.7%
Percent Black	9.6%	4.0%	139.8%
Percent Asian	8.6%	5.0%	72.8%
Percent Hispanic (of any race)	6.9%	2.3%	202.2%
Percent White	77.1%	90.5%	-14.9%
Percent Nonwhite	20.9%	9.4%	121.6%
Total Households	18,945	17,402	8.9%
Nonfamily Households	6,569	4,631	41.8%
Percent nonfamily households	34.7%	26.6%	30.3%
Households with individuals under 18 years	5,059	4,785	5.7%
Percent households with individuals under 18 years	26.7%	27.5%	-2.9%
Married-couple family with own children under 18 years	3,713	3,866	-4.0%
Percent married-couple family with own children under 18 years	19.6%	22.2%	-11.8%
Total Housing Units	19,507	18,262	6.8%
Vacant Housing Units	562	860	-34.7%
Vacancy Rate	2.9%	4.7%	-38.8%
Renter-occupied housing units	4,636	4,457	4.0%
Percent renter-occupied housing units	23.8%	24.4%	-2.6%
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.49	2.55	-2.5%
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.49	2.47	0.7%



Note: Data concerning race in the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population experienced significant recategorization, making accurate direct comparison difficult. The race/ethnicity comparisons used in this study were made with considerable caution, but should not be considered absolute. The goal was to identify potentially broad and general changes and trends, not precisely measure tiny fluctuations.

Sample Tract Demographics

The characteristics of the residential population in the space surrounding the Study Area vary by tract. For the purpose of this study, two tracts, 217.05 and 217.03, were selected for analysis to highlight the diversity of the residential population. This analysis provides a detailed view of the relative extremes of Northlake, and thus insight into broader patterns of demographic change. Tracts 217.05 and 217.03 stand out in terms of their divergent pattern of ethnic composition, age structure, and household characteristics, yet both lie inside the perimeter highway and on the western side of the Study Area. As these issues are concerned, the other seven tracts in the area fall somewhere in between.

Sample Tracts

	217.05	217.03
Total Nonwhite	1,944	333
Percent Nonwhite	38.7%	7.3%

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Tract 217.03 was the least diverse in the study; 92 percent of the total population reported themselves as white. It also had the smallest total number and percentage of blacks and Hispanics (of any race). Tract 217.05 was the most diverse in the study area, both in terms of total percent non-white population and the relative representation of major non-white groups. Thirty-nine percent of the population reported themselves as nonwhite; Asian was the single largest nonwhite race category. Nearly 15 percent of the population identified themselves as Hispanic of either race.

Age of the Population

The median ages in tracts 217.03 and 217.05 differ by 15 years. The difference in the percentage of adults (over age 18) over age 62 is also dramatic, though the percentage of population under age 18 does not differ significantly. At the household level, the divergence between these tracts remains apparent. Tract 217.03 has the highest percentage of married couple families with children under 18 years; 217.05 has the lowest percentage. The proportion of nonfamily households is highest in 217.05 and lowest in 217.03.

Housing Units and Households

Vacancy rates are consistently low across the Study Area (ranging from 1.7% to 4.4%), though the sample tracts stand at the extremes of the range: 217.03 is the lowest, 217.05 the highest. The proportion of units in 217.05 occupied by renters is considerably greater than in 217.03. Tract 217.05 is the only renter-majority area in the study. The average size of owner-occupied units in tract 217.03 is half a person greater than 217.05; average household size among renter-occupied units in the tracts is equal.

Trends

In the 1990 Census, tract 217.05 did not exist. It was included in tract 217.02, which was split in the 2000 Census into tracts 217.05 and 217.06. Thus direct comparability between sample tracts across time is constrained. In the interest of identifying a few general patterns and trends during the last decade in the most diverse tract in the Study Area, data from 2000-era tracts 217.05 and 217.06 was recombined and compared to 1990-era tract 217.02. The boundaries of tract 217.03 did not change during the decade, which makes most longitudinal tract-level data compatible.

Since 1990, tract 217.03 has grown slightly less homogeneous. Total population increased by 7.6 percent while the percent of population identifying themselves as white dropped from 96 to 92 percent. In the larger context of Northlake or metropolitan Atlanta this may not seem significant, but any general movement away from homogeneity toward diversity potentially signals the beginning of deeper long-term changes. The adult population in tract 217.03 grew older during the decade, showing a 10 percent increase in the number of adults (over 18 years) over 65 years, as the population under 18 years grew by only 3 percent.

The percent of married-couple households with children under 18 years grew from 21.6 to 24.6 in the decade. These numbers reflect the growth in the total population under 18 years. Share of nonfamily households increased from 16 to 25 percent. During the same period the total number of households increased from approximately 1600 to 1800, a 13 percent growth. The number of housing units increased by 11 percent, slightly slower than the growth of households. At the same time the vacancy rate for all units increased by half a percent, the proportion of renter-occupied units increased from 4.7 to 6.7 percent. The average household size of owner-occupied units showed a small decrease, but the average size of renter-occupied housing units increased rather significantly, from 2 to 2.5.

Since 1990, tract 217.02 (217.05/06) has shown significant change. Total population grew by 16 percent as the area has become considerably more diverse, decreasing from 85 to 66 percent white (indicating a reduction in the absolute number of whites) with a simultaneous doubling of the percentage of Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics. The proportion of adults over 65 years grew by 2 percent; the proportion of individuals under 18 years grew by 1.5 percent.

The number of households increased by 13 percent, a rate slightly slower than that of the total population (16 percent). In 2000, nonfamily households comprised about 5 percent more of the total than in 1990. The percent of married-couple households with children under 18 years showed little change, as did the proportion of all households with children under 18 years. The number of housing units increased by 10 percent while the overall vacancy rate dropped by nearly half. The proportion of units occupied by renters hovered just above 45 percent in both counts. The average size of owner-occupied units showed a drop, from just above 2.5 to around 2.3; the size of renter-occupied units showed a larger increase, from 1.9 to 2.5.

Analyzing some of the recent trends in comparison to existing conditions helps explain the evolution of the geography of function in the Study Area. This analysis should shed light on the origin of current conflicts and suggest steps to address those conflicts.

Two incipient trends in Tract 217.03 impacting the Study Area appear to be occurring simultaneously. One is the shift in the age structure of the population during the last decade. The proportion of nonfamily households and adults over age 65 increased at rates greater than total population growth. During the same period, the average number of persons per rental unit dropped, while the total number of housing units and households increased at nearly identical rates. These factors together point to an expanding, older population cohort beginning the process of shifting toward less traditional living arrangements. These new households likely include single persons or co-habitating unrelated individuals, and appear to be concentrating in multi-family structures (the typical form of rental units).

The second is related to the increase in the non-white population. The percentage of the population under 18 years (children), the relative size of the non-white population and the number of married-couple (family) households grew during the decade. This suggests a small, but likely growing, influx of young families with children. The fact that the non-white population also grew during this period indicates that significant portions of these families are non-white. Since the average size of owner-occupied units did not change, and the size of rental units dropped, the largest new households, non-white families with children, most likely assumed ownership of their housing units. Growth in the number of households and housing units outpaced that of population during the decade. Considering the decline in the size of renter-occupied units as additional evidence, it also appears that a reduction in overall residential density occurred, as proportionally fewer individuals spread across a larger number of units.

Tracts 217.05 and 217.06 (1990-era tract 217.02) were marked by the growing influence of non-white households. While age cohorts did not change dramatically (adults over 65 and individuals under 18), nor did the proportion of renter-occupied units, the relative representation of Asians, blacks, and Hispanics increased significantly. At the same time total population and total households grew at rates faster than the number of housing units, the overall housing vacancy rate fell by nearly half and the average size of renter-occupied households grew from less than 2 to 2.5 individuals. The confluence of these factors helped offset the small loss of density in owner-occupied units and contributed to an overall increase in residential density.

A shift toward different household structures among the existing, home-owning population is indicated by smaller average household sizes, a greater percentage of adults over age 65, and more nonfamily households. Like tract 217.03, this is likely the result of children leaving home, divorce, and natural life expectancy. In-migrant families provided sustenance to areas vacated by older households, helping maintain the overall balance of age cohorts by replacing pre-existing children (under 18 years) and married-couple households that were lost. The additional households that were not accommodated in newly constructed units filled existing vacant units as renters and owners in roughly equal proportions. The rise in size of renter-occupied units suggests that the largest households moving into the area were renting rather than purchasing living space, though it is not clear exactly how rental units are allocated among single- and multi-family structures.

Given the recent direction of demographic trends in the metropolitan population, these two tracts should be viewed as stations along the path of an on-going process of urban development. As households grow, age, and shrink, their functional needs change. New households move to occupy spaces older households can no longer use. The expectations of the members of younger households may diverge from those of older households. Different versions and expectations of the public interest among groups of households may arise. Competing versions of the public interest can lead to conflict..

Employment and Economic Activity

Quantitative information about the user population is more limited. Workers form a large and important part of the user category. Employment data from 1990 and 1999 (provided by ARC) detail the number of workers by major industry classification by census tract, but tell little of the social characteristics of those workers. They spend significant amounts of time and money in Northlake businesses as employees, employers, and consumers. It can be assumed that some of the workers counted in the employment data also live within the nine-tract data area, and are thus counted in the Census data. The problem is determining which workers live in the area and, for those that do, where within the area they live. Within the scope of this study, such a determination proved infeasible.

Employment Trends

Throughout the decade, there were more workers than residents in the Northlake data area. Over those years, total employment grew by seven percent (compared to five-percent population growth). The balance of private employment growth appears to have occurred in three industries, service, construction, and manufacturing. Each saw an increase in total employment greater than 20 percent. This growth was offset somewhat by substantial decreases in retail and wholesale employment. Together the three sectors of government employment (local, state, federal) grew at rates faster than private employment, though they comprised only 12 percent of the total. Like residential population characteristics, employment varies with the internal geography of the data area. The concentration of employment in Northlake appears to be centered in three tracts, 217.02, 217.03, and 218.10. Together, these tracts held 83 percent of total employment in the Data Area.

Most of the space of the Study Area lies within these tracts, which include much of the land dedicated to commercial and office use. Of the major industrial categories, only business services and government employment increased in all three tracts. Other categories were less consistent, gaining and losing employees according to an opaque logic. For example, two adjacent tracts, 217.03 and 217.04, lost and gained employees, respectively, at rates of more than 37 percent. Both tracts lie west of the Study Area, a fact that belies a common expectation that employment concentrations are moving from inside to outside the perimeter highway, or west to east in this case. The likely explanation for this is openings and closings of large facilities (factories, office parks, warehouses, etc.), actions that cannot be seen with data aggregated to the census tract level.

Though thought to be primarily a retail center, Northlake area retail employment actually declined between 1990 and 2000, and now represents less than 20 percent of total data area employment. During the same period, business services grew into the dominant industrial sector. This trend will significantly affect the long-term development potential in the Study Area and beyond.

	217.02	**217.04**	**218.1**
Total Private	8609	10269	16175
Total Government	2744	1718	409
Total	11353	11987	16584

1990 - 1999 Change by Industrial Category		**Total**
Percent Change Private		4.7%
Percent Change Government		27.2%
Percent Change Total		7.0%
Percent Change Misc.		12.4%
Percent Change Construction		25.9%
Percent Change Manufacturing		21.7%
Percent Change TCU		12.8%
Percent Change Wholesale		-14.2%
Percent Change Retail		-1.4%
Percent Change FIRE		-14.4%
Percent Change Service		21.3%

Source: The Atlanta Regional Commission

Key Organizations

Several significant stakeholding organizations currently operate in Northlake. Each has a specific domain of interest, though overlap invariably occurs. In many cases, overlap is a result of scale: regional organizations operate beyond the reach of local organizations. It is through the connections between areas of overlap that the interests of different organizations become collective.

Northlake Community Alliance, Inc.

Founded in 1998, the Northlake Community Alliance, Inc. (NCA) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, community-based organization of residents and business owners allied over concern for the future development of the area. The self-stated goal of the organization was to improve relations between the two primary populations in the area, residents and users, while attempting to create a sense of community often associated with small municipalities. Organizing the two populations was seen as the first task, so that a representative voice of the community could be heard.

In late 1999 and early 2000, several open meetings were held. Residents, business owners, and government officials were invited and encouraged to voice opinions and concerns about the state of Northlake. Data from these meetings suggested several emergent issues. One, local commercial space is utilized by a variety of individuals from a large geographic area. Two, despite perceived increases in residential property values, commercial space value in Northlake has remained stagnant. Three, little formal recognition of the potential market for building new residential units in the commercial space is apparent. And four, other local neighborhood organizations have failed to develop significant linkages to business and commercial property owners.

Currently, NCA has more than 300 dues-paying members and is governed by an elected board with balanced representation from resident and business interests. Small subcommittees have been formed to address specific issues (restaurants/services, development, environment, and public relations). As the present planning process has unfolded, membership and interest in NCA has grown and should be expected to continue as further efforts are undertaken to publicize issues surrounding future development.

DeKalb County Government

As an unincorporated area, government functions in Northlake are the domain of DeKalb County. But despite being outside any town or city limits, Northlake's population receives a full array of urban services from DeKalb County. These include emergency medical, roads, parks, sewers, water, and public health, which makes for a complex web of administrative overseers. As pertains to the present study, the county planning department is the primary recommending body regarding future land use and development.

DeKalb is the most urbanized and ethnically diverse county in the metropolitan region. With a vast economy, 665,865 residents, and 261,231 housing units, it is practically a city unto itself, though the great majority of the population (88 percent) lives in unincorporated areas like Northlake. DeKalb as a whole grew faster during the decade than the data area, though much of this growth occurred in previously undeveloped southern and eastern sections of the County. It also grew considerably more diverse during the same period as the nonwhite population increased its overall size by nearly two-thirds.

Atlanta Regional Commission

As the planning body responsible for ensuring coordination among regional, county and municipal plans, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) normally has only indirect involvement in areas like Northlake. However, with the advent of the Livable Centers Initiative, ARC has recently assumed a more direct role. Together with activities in other LCI communities, the Northlake study represents an effort on the part of ARC to directly plan and fund small-scale infrastructure improvements in towns and activity areas around the region. This effort was necessitated by the metropolitan area's air quality problems, among other regional concerns.

MARTA

MARTA, one of four mass transit authorities serving metropolitan Atlanta, is the only provider of non-automobile transportation within the Northlake Study Area. One of the intended outcomes of the LCI program is the reduction of daily vehicle miles traveled, a goal that focuses particular attention on the role of MARTA in moving individuals into, out of, and within activity centers like Northlake. While MARTA's responsibilities are regional, local improvements to transit ultimately improve the system as a whole. This connection is important, for the path to reducing automobile travel must include the creation of alternative transportation networks that can fairly compete with private vehicles.

GRTA

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) oversees all major transportation investments in the metropolitan region. GRTA has a stake in Northlake by virtue of its status as the State agency charged with governing and approving the activities of ARC and MARTA.

GDOT

The Georgia Department of Transportation controls the State's road system. Depending on how a particular road is categorized, the DOT's authority moves from direct to indirect. State or Federal funding for building and improving county roads is channeled through DOT on its way to

municipalities and regional planning agencies. Large roads are controlled directly by DOT, from funding to design to construction. The Northlake Study Area contains both categories, and thus lies within the realm of DOT's concern.

Existing Land Use

Land use in the Study Area is primarily commercial, office, and industrial. Commercial lies at the geographic center, and is easily the most recognizable. Industrial buildings are clustered in the south part of the Study Area, east of Montreal Road and north of the CSX rail line. Offices sit closer to the edge, particularly along Northlake Parkway; residential occupies the periphery. Public/Institutional properties are lightly sprinkled across the area. The land use categories described below were developed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and serve as standards for community planning efforts throughout the State.

- Single-family Residential: provides space for detached single-family housing units; other uses are generally forbidden
- Multi-family Residential: provides space for detached and attached single-family housing, duplexes, triplexes, and multi-unit structures.
- Commercial: provides space for non-industrial retail and wholesale businesses of various sizes and intensities.
- Industrial: provides space for large-scale heavy and light manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution in areas separated from most other uses.
- Public/Institutional: provides space for government functions and institutions (colleges, schools, churches, cemeteries, libraries, post offices).
- Office: provides space for professional office buildings and complexes; limited commercial uses can exist, though retail typically is not allowed.
- Transportation/Communications/Utilities: provides space for water and sewer facilities, power stations, substations, radio and television infrastructure, highways, railroads, and utility easements.
- Park/Recreation/Conservation: land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses; can be publicly- or privately-owned and could include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, national forest, golf courses, and similar uses.

Urban Design

The design of Northlake can be characterized by horizontal space and automobiles, though in many respects, the landscape does not appear to have been consciously designed at all, at least to any extent beyond basic compliance with building setbacks, parking requirements, and buffers. Buildings are single story, road rights-of-way wide and unadorned with trees or sidewalks, and uses separated by empty spaces.

Most single-family residential land lies at the perimeter of the Study Area. Many of the structures were constructed during the 1960s and 1970s, and show signs typical of automobile-oriented domestic design: deep set backs, wide side yards, private driveways, no sidewalks, and separation from other uses. More recent infill residential subdivisions are also found, often at higher densities but still automobile-centered and separated from other uses.

Two large multi-family developments lie within the Study Area. One is 1970s garden-style, meaning low-density, auto-centered, flooded with surface parking, but also with significant greenspace. The other is much more recent, still auto-oriented but higher-density, adjacent to the Mall, near the core of the Study Area, and transit accessible. This development could serve as a model for other high-density infill housing in Northlake.

A large portion of the Study Area is currently dedicated to commercial uses, housed in structures mostly completed after 1968, apparently spawned by the building of the Mall. They can be characterized by their orientation toward wide auto thoroughfares and surface parking lots. Most are one story and lack distinguished design.

Industrial buildings are clustered among several large square blocks just north of the CSX railroad, south of LaVista Road, west of Interstate 285, and east of Montreal Road. Primarily one-story, the activities housed within include fabricating, assembly, wholesaling, and warehousing. Industrial activity within the Study Area counts for a significant and growing segment of the Northlake employment base.

Office buildings have grown to comprise a substantial use of space in the Study Area. A variety of operations are housed there, including branches of large corporations, real estate agencies, telecommunications firms, banks, and a range of business services. These structures vary in age and design, but most were built as office parks, i.e. low-density, sprawling, no pedestrian access. During the last decade, business services has grown into the largest industrial category in terms of employment in Northlake, and thus the land these firms occupy is important to the future land use equation.

Public/Institutional uses comprise just a small segment of the total space in the Study Area. The largest are Henderson Mill Elementary School and the Northlake branch of the DeKalb Public Library, both located along the periphery of the Study Area. Both serve important community functions. One church lies within the Study Area; several others are nearby. The construction dates and designs of these structures vary from the 1960s to the 1990s; several are potentially significant for their design.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities in the Northlake study include the several-hundred-foot tall telecommunications tower owned by a local radio station that sits on a small parcel in the middle of the Northlake Tower Festival parking lot and a Georgia Power-owned electricity sub-station on Fielding Road. Because of its height, the tower demands certain safety regulations for buildings around it, which may impact future development activities.

There are but a few vacant parcels in the Study Area, though a number of vacant interior spaces exist within otherwise occupied buildings. The vacant parcels are mostly the sites of old warehouses. The abandoned buildings date from the late 1960s and 1970s, reflecting design details common to the era. Vacant interior spaces, originally designed for retail, are more difficult to account for, but, based on a cursory survey, likely number somewhere between 6 and 20; their sizes vary.

Park/Recreation/Conservation land is virtually absent. North Lake, a private water body surrounded by low-density single- and multi-family dwellings, is bounded by greenspace, though none publicly accessible. There are no public parks, passive or active, or other recreation lands in the Study Area. A few slivers of land could be used for conservation purposes, including the area around the LaVista and I-285 interchange, swaths of unpaved earth along street rights-of-way, and strips included in old railroad rights-of-way.

Historically, the area was covered with cultivated land and undisturbed forest, but there is currently no land in or near the Study Area used for agriculture or forestry.

Zoning and Development Regulations

Review of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance has accompanied the survey of existing land uses in the Northlake LCI study area. The Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance play a particularly important role in DeKalb County, where there is an active development community and equally active and vocal organizations of residents and other stakeholders involved in development issues.

Zoning regulations are the most significant land use controls a municipal government possesses, and typically have a much more significant impact on land values than any other regulatory device. (Ellickson, 1973) The first attempts at zoning were largely driven by perceived market failures in the allocation of land costs and benefits and were particularly concerned with the negative externalities created by specific kinds of land uses considered noxious, or just socially unacceptable. Formal comprehensive zoning originated in New York City in 1916, when four land use zones were designated and then placed in a pyramid of importance: residential the highest and most exclusive (permitting only residential uses), industrial the lowest and least exclusive (permitting any use).

The legal validity of such restrictive zoning ordinances was firmly upheld by the 1926 Supreme Court in a decision that effectively made zoning the bedrock of land use control in American municipalities for decades to come. Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company (272 U.S. 365, 1926) gave powerful authority to the newly popular method of dividing and separating land uses considered incompatible. As several subsequent generations of property owners have been reared in an environment where Euclidean-style zoning is normative, the practice has grown into a enormously powerful force in local government, often intractable and ignoble, but never ignored.

It almost goes without saying that the single largest problem facing those interested in changing development patterns of land in the Study Area is the demands of DeKalb's zoning ordinance. The ordinance currently has 13 different use categories in Northlake. The separation of these categories is most pronounced when viewed side by side on a zoning map. Boundaries are often rigid and typically follow significant physical barriers (railroad tracks, multi-lane arterial roads, floodplains, etc.). The uses prescribed in each category are detailed and specific. Like almost all zoning ordinances in the Euclidean tradition, single-family residential districts are the most prized and therefore considered the most vulnerable to the intrusion of noxious uses. Recent revisions indicate an attempt to modernize the ordinance, though none of these changes have yet affected Northlake.

One particularly insightful analysis of zoning suggested that the system as currently practiced fails to control the three major kinds of costs it was originally designed to address. Nuisance, prevention, and administration costs are all associated with negative externalities that arise between neighboring property owners. While the magnitude of these costs varies, the way property owners choose to address them can have significant impacts on not just the immediate conditions but on the options for action other owners will face in the future. Typical zoning ordinances attempt to minimize nuisance costs (usually those that most directly affect neighbors) at the expense of raising both prevention and administrative costs. While this is not inherently problematic, because in some cases the combination of prevention and administration costs may in fact be considerably less than nuisance costs, it is questionable whether this approach is suitable for all possible situations. (Ellickson, 1973)

The built environment is the product of an incredibly complex set of decisions by a wide array of individuals and groups who often operate under vastly different constraints. Traditional zoning, using Ellickson's interpretation, works like a blunt instrument applied mistakenly to situations needing greater nuance. Total costs are only occasionally minimized and an efficient arrangement of the landscape is only occasionally achieved, as demonstrated by present-day Northlake. The result is a built environment that many individuals find aesthetically unsatisfactory and costly. If the legal structure (zoning) supporting land use controls is not suited to the stated goals of a place, it is prudent to consider modifying the laws. If we consider zoning the most direct means of controlling future development, it may be necessary to challenge the utility of existing regulations in order to encourage better development.

A brief description of the general restrictions and design requirements for each district is presented below. Within the matrix of numbers lies a hidden program of urban design. The set back distances, lot coverage percentages, and minimum frontages force buildings and the visage of local streets to look a certain way. These regulations have resulted in the built environment an individual experiences as Northlake.

Viewed from above, the borders between districts are sharply defined. As a rule, multiple uses on a single parcel are not allowed. Residential and commercial (including retail) properties are oriented and spaced far enough apart to discourage, and often completely inhibit, non-automobile access. The existing built environment displays the long-term effect of development decisions based on a framework of use incompatibility and automobile dependence. There are currently no special development or zoning districts affecting the Study Area. The creation of any such districts ultimately requires action on the part of the County Planning Department and County Commission. Recommending specific changes to zoning categories is currently beyond the scope of this study. Such decisions should be made only after input by all major stakeholders has been considered.

District	Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft)	Front Set Back (ft)	Minimum Frontage (ft)	Maximum Height (ft)	Minimum Floor Area (sq. ft)	Maximum Lot Coverage (%)
R-100	15000	50/40/35	100	35	2000	35
R-85	12000	50/40/35	85	35	1800	35
R-75	10000	45/35/30	75	35	1600	35
R-A5 (detached)	6000	5	60	35	1400	50
R-A5 (attached)	5 units per acre	5	100	35	1400	50
R-A8 (detached)	6000	5	60	35	1200	50
District	**Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft)**	**Front Set Back (ft)**	**Minimum Frontage (ft)**	**Maximum Height (ft)**	**Minimum Floor Area (sq. ft)**	**Maximum Lot Coverage (%)**
R-A8 (attached)	8 units per acre	5	100	35	1200	50
R-50	6000	5	60	35	1600	35
RM-100 (single family)	6000	35	100	4 stories	1000	35
RM-100 (multi-family)	12 units per acre	30	60	4 stories	650/800/1000	35
RM-HD (single family)	6000	50	100	5 stories	1000	65
RM-HD (multi-family)	30 units per acre	30	60	5 stories	650/850/1000	65
NS	20000	50	100	35	50000 (maximum)	80
O-I	20000	50	100	70	-	80
C-1	20000	75	100	35	-	80
C-2	30000	75	100	35	-	80
M	30000	75	100	5 stories	-	80
M-2	43560	75	150	5 stories	-	80

The information provided here was gathered from the most recently updated version of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance.

Automobile Infrastructure

An examination of transportation conditions in the Northlake LCI study area requires consideration of the various transportation modes available, including roadway, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel. Travel in the area is primarily by automobile. Mass transit, bicycles, and walking together comprise but a very small percentage of total trips. The objectives of the LCI project will take the existing conditions as starting points and focus improvements on enhancing use of the pedestrian and transit travel modes in conjunction with changes recommended in the land use context to provide a center which balances opportunities to live, work, shop, and recreate. The following paragraphs describe the existing transportation conditions.

Existing Roadway System

The existing roadway system in the Northlake LCI study area services a variety of trip purposes and lengths. These trip types range from long trips passing through the area on I-285 and along the LaVista Road corridor to local trips between commercial and residential uses within the study area. The existing roadway network includes roadways that are classified functionally to support travel on an area-wide basis, as well as local roadways that provide access to commercial, office, and residential areas. The arterial roads in the Northlake LCI study area accommodate both long-range and short-range trips. Figure T-1 shows the existing roadway facilities in the study area and indicates the number of travel lanes on each facility. Figure T-2 shows daily traffic volumes in the study area and delineates functional classification for the arterial and collector roadways.

East-West Traffic Flow

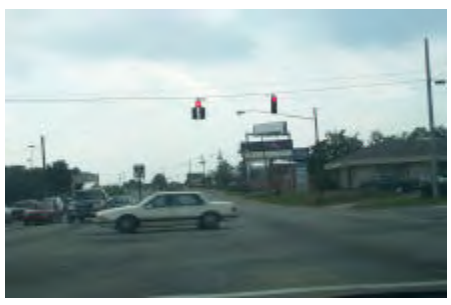
The majority of the arterial roadway network serves east-west traffic movements. The following three streets primarily serve east-west traffic:

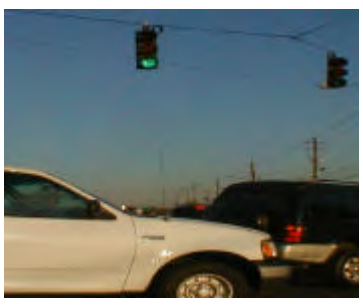
- LaVista Road is a minor arterial that passes through the heart of the study area and has an interchange with I-285. LaVista Road has a cross section that varies between four and six lanes and served between 19,500 and 21,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 1999. These vehicle trips are a combination of local and commuter trips. East of I-285, LaVista Road continues into Tucker, where it intersects Lawrenceville Highway. West of the study area, LaVista Road travels southwest through the Toco Hills area, where it shifts alignment to run east into the City of Atlanta and becomes Lindbergh Drive.

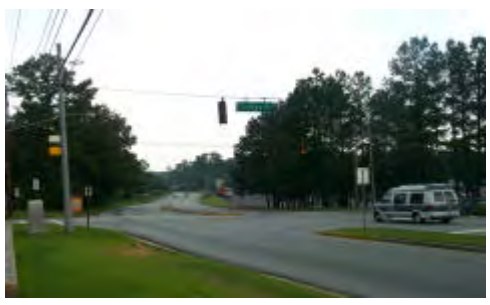
- Briarcliff Road acts as a minor urban arterial, running roughly west from its intersection with Henderson Mill Road to intersections with Clairmont Road and North Druid Hills before it changes to a north-south alignment and intersects LaVista Road. Briarcliff Road also serves a combination of local and commuter trips. In 1999, Briarcliff Road had an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of approximately 12,000 vpd.

- Northlake Parkway has a partial interchange with I-285, north of LaVista Road, providing access to and from I-285 in the north direction only. West of I-285, Northlake Parkway ends at a T-intersection with Henderson Mill Road. East of I-285, Northlake Parkway changes alignment to a north-south roadway and intersects LaVista Road. Northlake Parkway serves local trips to the surrounding commercial uses and serves as a relief point for the LaVista Road interchange for more long-range trips. Northlake Parkway had a 1999 ADT volume of approximately 14,000 vpd between I-285 and Henderson Mill Road.

LaVista Road and Briarcliff Road are classified as minor thoroughfares, in which the ability to provide through capacity is balanced by the needs for local access and circulation. Northlake Parkway is classified as a collector roadway, balancing access to local development with movement of traffic through the Northlake area on the arterial road network.







North-South Traffic Flow

In addition to the east-west connectivity, the existing roadway network in the study area has several roads that serve north-south traffic:

- Henderson Mill Road operates as an urban arterial for the Northlake LCI study area, connecting LaVista Road to the south with Chamblee-Tucker Road to the north. South of Briarcliff Way, Henderson Mill Road has two travel lanes for each approach. North of Briarcliff Way, Henderson Mill Road becomes a two-lane facility that served approximately 15,500 vpd in 1999.

- As mentioned previously, Northlake Parkway changes alignment to a north-south roadway east of I-285. Between LaVista Road and I-285, Northlake Parkway had a 1999 ADT of approximately 24,000 vpd. Continuing south from the study area, Northlake Parkway connects to Lawrenceville Highway, where it changes names to Cooledge Road and continues to its interchange with Stone Mountain Freeway.

- Montreal Road acts as a local collector, connecting LaVista Road on its northern end to Lawrenceville Highway on its southern end. Montreal Road served an ADT of approximately 12,000 vpd, according to the 1999 traffic counts.

- Several north-south streets in the study area serve primarily local traffic with relatively low traffic volumes, including Weems Road, Parklake Drive, and Northlake Court.

Henderson Mill Road is classified as a minor thoroughfare, similar to LaVista Road and Briarcliff Road. The north-south portion of Northlake Parkway remains classified as a local collector, as is Montreal Road. The other north-south roads are classified as local streets, with which local access and circulation as the primary objectives.

On and Off-Street Parking

Parking is not permitted on the majority of existing roadways in the Northlake LCI study area. Within the study area, most of the roads are either arterials or major collectors, which are not typically compatible with on-street parking, or local roads leading to commercial, office, or industrial developments. Observations indicate that Northlake LCI area businesses provide adequate parking on-site so that local roads do not typically experience parking problems. Parking is permitted on-street in the residential areas which border the Northlake LCI study area. The location of major off-street parking facilities can be seen in Figure T-3.

Intersection Traffic Control and Operations

Intersections are important components of the roadway network as they meter the crossing of traffic and pedestrian flows. To accommodate conflicting traffic flows, intersections assign right-of-way to vehicles by the means of traffic signals. The signalized intersections for the Northlake LCI study area are identified in Figure T-1.

Observation during the weekday AM, noon and PM peak hours indicates that the intersections typically operate with relatively good levels of service as long as the interstate system serving the area does not experience excessive congestion. Though traffic volumes were heavy on the collector and arterial roadways of the study area, long queuing and extensive delays were not observed at most locations.

During the AM peak period, the majority of traffic flows toward the northbound I-285 access points. Notable queuing was observed on the westbound approach at the intersection of Northlake Parkway and LaVista Road. At this intersection, the heavy westbound movement experiences delay during the AM peak period from commuter vehicles traveling from Gwinnett County toward northbound I-285 and westbound LaVista Road. Traffic volumes are also substantial on the opposing northbound approach, which complicates any potential adjustment to traffic signal timing to account for these delays. A diagram of the primary traffic flows and observed areas of congestion for the weekday AM peak period can be seen in Figure T-4.

During the noon peak period, traffic flows are less directional, with the major flows occurring along LaVista Road and Northlake Parkway. Congestion was observed traveling westbound on LaVista Road from the southbound I-285 off-ramp. Additional congestion occurred on side-street access points along LaVista Road that serve local commercial developments. A diagram of the primary traffic flows and observed areas of congestion for the weekday noon peak period can be seen in Figure T-5.

During the PM peak period, some eastbound queues were observed at the signalized intersections along LaVista Road and Henderson Mill Road. This congestion was primarily caused by returning commuter trips on LaVista Road through the Northlake LCI area toward Gwinnett County. A diagram of the primary traffic flows and observed areas of congestion for the weekday PM peak period can be seen in Figure T-6.

Because the area's arterial roadways tend to act as relief capacity for adjacent interstate facilities, congestion can worsen significantly during times of excessive congestion on this portion of I-285 and the nearby interchange between I-85 and I-285. The proportion of commuter vehicle trips on study roadways increases significantly, saturating the local roadway network and increasing queues and delays for drivers, as well as creating a more hostile environment for pedestrians.

Major Traffic Generators

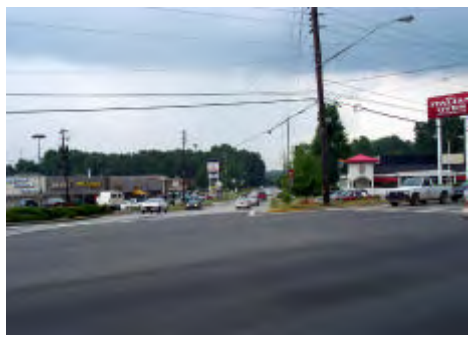
Commercial development is the primary traffic generator in the Northlake LCI study area. Among the most significant commercial developments are the following:

- Northlake Mall, located east of Henderson Mill Road and south of Northlake Parkway.
- Northlake Festival Shopping Center, located south of LaVista Road and west of I-285.
- Briarcliff Village Shopping Center, located west of Henderson Mill Road, just north of its intersection with LaVista Road.
- Atlanta Tucker Industrial Park, between LaVista Road and the nearby railroad line, which forms the southern boundary of the study area.
- Northlake Business Park, located along Northlake Parkway near I-285.

In addition to these significant traffic generators, smaller commercial developments are also included within the study area. Residential development, located in all directions, adjacent to the study area, is another contributor to both local trips and commuter traffic volumes.

Traffic Circulation Issues

As mentioned previously, one of the primary circulation concerns for the Northlake LCI study area is that spillback congestion causes extensive queuing and delays along the arterial roadway network when the adjacent interstate network experiences congestion. Some traffic circulation difficulties are caused by sharp curves near the intersections of Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Road and at LaVista Road adjacent to the Briarcliff Village Shopping Center. Vehicular circulation concerns are detailed on a background map of the study area in Figure T-7.



Public Transit

Three MARTA bus routes serve the Northlake LCI study area. These bus routes include the following:

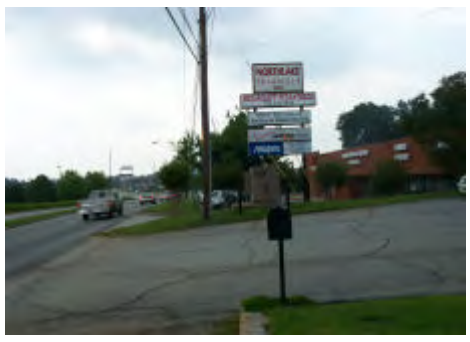
- Route 91, which skirts the northwest edge of the study area as it travels between the Doraville and Brookhaven MARTA rail stations.
- Route 30, which circles the Northlake Mall area on the western end of its route, and terminates at the Lindberg MARTA station to the east.
- Route 125, which travels around a large portion of the Northlake LCI area via Northlake Parkway and LaVista Road on its route from the Chamblee MARTA rail station to the Avondale MARTA rail station.

Though these routes provide some circulation in the study area, their primary role is to move people in a linear fashion along the route, feeding the MARTA rail stations. These routes have scheduled headways of 20 to 30 minutes peak and 40 to 50 minutes off-peak.

Most of the identified study area is within a ¼mile walking distance of a bus stop (considered to be a walkable distance by most people). The area east of I-285 and south of LaVista Road is the primary portion of the study area that is not served by the bus route system within a reasonable walking distance. In addition, several riders were observed accessing the industrial area along Montreal Industrial Way via the transit stops along Montreal Road. Though much of this area is greater than ¼mile from the transit stops, the travel path is direct and free from major conflicting vehicle flows (other than the crossing of Montreal Road).

In some locations, inadequate pedestrian facilities (such as sidewalks and crosswalks) may discourage transit use. However, beaten paths along bus routes indicate that pedestrian access to transit is an issue, particularly in the vicinity of heavily used stops, such as those adjacent to Northlake Parkway and along LaVista Road near Montreal Road.

The Georgia Passenger Rail Authority is planning to provide commuter rail service between Athens and Atlanta along the railroad facility which forms the southern border of the study area. The Northlake area is a potential candidate for a commuter rail station location. Another potential location is Tucker, approximately three miles east of the study area. The presence of a commuter rail station could act as a catalyst for redevelopment of the southern portion of the Northlake LCI area. This potential, explored during a series of charettes, was considered in the development of land use strategies as a part of the land use context.



Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions

Pedestrian travel is vital to encourage livable centers, and transit use, as it is the mode of travel between transit, local trip origins and local trip destinations. As the Northlake LCI study area is redeveloped to achieve the initiatives of the LCI program, pedestrian traffic flow will become more important, forming a primary element of the transportation system. In addition to pedestrian travel, bicycle use provides the potential to extend the traditional walking trip of ¼to ½mile to an overall trip length of two miles or more.

Existing pedestrian and bicycle activity is relatively light within the Northlake LCI study area. Some pedestrian traffic was observed to and from the MARTA bus service, especially along LaVista Road and Northlake Parkway. However, the vision for this area includes pedestrian oriented land-use, which is anticipated to increase pedestrian activity significantly. This increase in pedestrian use will reduce the number of local trips made by vehicle, which will in turn reduce the overall vehicle travel demand. The following paragraphs describe the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area and discuss important pedestrian crossing issues.

Pedestrian Facilities and Usage

Sidewalks exist on portions of several roads in the study area, including LaVista Road, Briarcliff Road, Henderson Mill Road and Northlake Parkway. Figure T-9 shows existing sidewalk locations. As this figure shows, many of the main roads have large portions without sidewalk facilities, significantly impeding pedestrian travel. While pedestrian signals are provided at some signalized intersections, no intersection within the Northlake LCI study area was observed to have pedestrian signal facilities for all approaches.

Some signalized intersections have no pedestrian amenities (crosswalks or pedestrian signal phases). Some of these intersections include free-flow right turn lanes, which interfere with pedestrian crossing, especially where traffic volumes are high. Two intersections of particular concern are adjacent to Northlake Mall, at the intersections of LaVista Road at Briarcliff Road and Briarcliff Road at Henderson Mill Road. At both of these intersections, two northbound travel lanes operate under free-flow conditions. The need to cross two free-flow lanes, combined with relatively high volumes, creates crossing challenges. In addition, the roadway geometry allows these free-flow lanes to pass through the intersection on a gentle curve. Thus, little speed reduction occurs at the intersection and the driver's expectancy of seeing a crossing pedestrian is low. These intersections currently do not provide facilities for pedestrian crossings and have low observed pedestrian volumes.
Most of the pedestrian activity observed in the Northlake area involves travel to and from the bus stops. Where sidewalks do not exist, beaten paths have been observed at several locations throughout the study area, particularly near heavily used bus stops.

In the Northlake area, a number of major commercial developments are located in close proximity to one another, putting the total pedestrian trip distance from facility to facility at ¼mile or less. This distance is considered a "walkable" distance by most people. Thus, if appropriate facilities are in place, people will consider pedestrian travel as a viable mode within approximately ¼mile. The "walkable distances for several Northlake LCI commercial and office developments are shown in Figures T-10 through T-13.

Encouraging pedestrian oriented development is likely to increase both pedestrian crossings of LaVista Road and the number of pedestrian trips within "walkable" distance. Improvements will be required to provide a safe and pleasing walking environment, which increases the attractiveness of walking as a mode of travel.

Bicycle Facilities and Usage

There are currently no bicycle lanes, multi-use paths or designated bike routes in the study area. Traffic volumes on LaVista Road are not generally conducive for sharing the road for novice or children cyclists. Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road north of the study area transition to two lane facilities with no passing zones and little usable shoulder, presenting a barrier for bicycle traffic. However, some of the roads in the central study area are potentially navigable by bicycle traffic, including the east/west portion of Northlake Parkway and Parklake Drive.

The PATH Foundation has developed a potential route through the study area, which would connect with a regional route network being coordinated by the foundation. Figure T-14 shows the potential PATH Foundation route through the Northlake LCI study area.

Circulation Issues

The lack of continuous sidewalk facilities in the Northlake LCI study area creates difficulties for all pedestrians, and especially for handicapped users. Intersection geometry and traffic signal timing at some signalized intersections can also inhibit pedestrian activity. Pedestrian circulation concerns are detailed on a background map of the study area in Figure T-14.

Urban Forestry

Discovering the condition of the urban forest in the Northlake LCI study area involved a subjective evaluation of aerial photographs, perspective photographs, and windshield surveys. Presently, there is no significant canopy of trees in the core of the Study Area. The existing tree cover in the Study Area is estimated to be less than 20 percent. Since the land was graded for commercial development, an insubstantial number of trees have been replanted. Most of the vegetation and landscaping consists of grass, shrubs, ornamental flowers, and small trees. Closer to the periphery, among the office parks, the tree canopy is in better condition. In residential areas, the forest is considerably denser, though likely does not reach the 40 percent coverage level suggested by the *Georgia Model Urban Forest Book*.

In conjunction with Trees Atlanta, a tree planting program has been initiated in the Study Area. The first mass planting occurred in January 2001. A second planting has been scheduled for January 2002. Though still a long way from the level of urban forest considered healthy, the current tree planting effort is a crucial step in the process of building the environment the community identified as ideal during this study.

NORTHLAKE LCI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Part of the planning process is effectively defining the ends to be attained from implementation and ensuring that those ends fall within a pre-defined definition of the public interest. Public planning projects typically pursue a variety of different ends, some deemed more important than others, and some more or less visible than others. As such, achieving one end may necessitate the abandonment of other ends. The decision to pursue one end over others is always accompanied by certain consequences, anticipated and unanticipated, sought and unsought. (Meyerson and Banfield, 1955) These consequences may impact whether or not the plan meets the public interest.

Since the problem facing the Study Area concerns the geography of function as it relates to the experience of public space, the methods used to document the extent and intensity of the issues should reflect the fundamental role of the public in defining its own interest. Toward this end, three different but related methods were used for documenting this interest: community vision questionnaire, community design preference survey, and community design workshop. Each method was intended to showcase the role of public participation in defining public interest. Information from participatory activities was cumulative. Responses to open-ended questions posed in the community vision questionnaire were used to develop the community design preference survey, the results of which were used as organizing principles in the community design workshop.

The three methods were administered over the course of three sets of two public meetings. Each set of public meetings was organized around a particular method of public involvement, which also provided the primary content for the meetings.

Vision Questionnaire

Two versions of the vision questionnaire were used. A small size (8.5" x 11") community vision questionnaire was printed and distributed during the first set of meetings. Each consisted of two questions: "What can Northlake be?" and, "What is your vision?" The remainder of the form was covered in blank lines, providing space for participants to respond however they saw fit. There were no explicitly scripted answers (though given the nature of the question, answers were perhaps more likely to follow a particular format).

The questionnaires were first used during a public meeting announcing the commencement of the planning process. Each participant was given a response form upon arrival and encouraged at several points during the meeting to write down ideas, thoughts, questions, or criticisms of Northlake. The forms were collected at the end of the meeting, converted to electronic format with word processing software, and entered into a comment database.

A second, large-size questionnaire was also used during the first set of meetings. In the first meeting (June 28), the large format consisted of a single sheet of white paper (36" x 60") with the two questions printed in the center. The paper was laid across a flat table and pens were provided for participants to write their responses to the questions anywhere on the page. The responses on the paper were later entered into the comment database. The other large format was used during the second of the first pair of public meetings (June 30). Participants were divided into small groups (6 – 8 individuals) after the two questions were verbally announced. Once divided, they were asked to discuss the questions, and then write their responses on large sheets of white paper (20" x 30"). Those responses were then posted on a wall in the meeting room for all participants to read. An open discussion followed. Responses were later entered into the comment database and analyzed for content and patterns.

The first meeting was held inside Northlake Mall, from 10:00am to 12:00pm. The second was held in St. Bede's Episcopal Church, on the edge of the study boundary, from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Approximately 140 individuals attended this set of meetings. The participants ranged in age, however most appeared to be greater than 30 years old.

Community Design Preference Survey

The second set of meetings were used to administer the community design preference survey, the second primary method of public involvement. The survey was developed to allow self-defined Northlake stakeholders an opportunity to comment on development styles and patterns in a non-verbal way. Composed of one hundred different photographs, the survey, constructed using presentation software, was essentially a series of images depicting various features of the urban landscape. The images were selected based on analysis of the responses received from the initial round of vision questionnaires. Each image was displayed for 8 seconds; the entire survey lasted about 15 minutes. Respondents used an answer sheet to assign the images a numeric score, using a scale from –3 to +3. Instructions given participants before the survey explained that images should be rated according to how comfortable or uncomfortable it makes them feel. Survey response sheets were collected and entered into a database for later analysis.

The survey was administered as the central piece of two open house-style public meetings. Planning staff was on hand to discuss issues and answer questions. A few small static displays were set up with photographs of, and basic information about, the LCI program and the Northlake Study Area, as well as information about public responses to the questionnaires received so far. Vision questionnaires were also available. The first meeting was held August 2 at the Kaiser Permanente Crescent Medical Center; the second was August 4 at Henderson Mill Elementary School. Total attendance at this set of meetings was 92 (based on the number of surveys completed). The ages of participants varied, but there was a substantial cohort of middle- and older-age individuals (over 45 years). The user population was under represented.

In an attempt to reach a wider audience, the community design preference survey was also presented as part of several other public functions. These included an informal meeting of Northlake business owners/operators, a small homeowners association, Tucker Days (a public festival in Tucker), a typical Saturday at Northlake Mall, and a Northlake area Rotary Club meeting. The results from each meeting were tabulated and added to the database. After all responses had been received, the cumulative results were analyzed and used to develop the community design workshop.

Community Design Workshop

The community design workshops, of which there were two, allowed participants an opportunity to spend several focused hours thinking about, then developing, different future land use scenarios for the Study Area. A brief orientation on various development concepts gave participants some ideas about the connections between transportation and land use planning. The concepts emphasized development styles that received strong positive responses in the preference survey.

The large group was then divided into several small groups (two at the first meeting, three at the second). Each group, along with a member of the planning team, gathered around a large-scale base map of the Study Area. Participants were instructed to think of two planning scenarios for the Study Area: a short-term community-scale center and a longer-term regional-scale center. Participants discussed their ideas for each scenario, then using paper pieces to represent various development types (multi-family, commercial, mixed-use commercial, industrial, etc.), created a land use/development map that was both conceptual and tactile, representing the collective thoughts of the group. At the end of the process, the maps were posted around the room and a member from each group presented an overview of the concepts each particular map

expressed. Questions and discussion followed. Vision questionnaires were also distributed before, during, and after the meetings. The resulting maps were later analyzed for trends and patterns in the geography of development types.

The workshops were held September 20 from 2pm to 5pm and September 22 from 9am to 12pm. There were about 40 participants between the two meetings, not including the planning staff. The age range, despite fewer participants, appeared to be more balanced than other meetings.

Public Participation Results

The results of the phases of public participation were complied into a qualitative database. Patterns and trends were sought that represented the collective vision of the participants and would lead to recommendations for implementation.

Vision Questionnaire

Using a rudimentary textual analysis, the responses to the community vision questionnaires were analyzed for patterns. Repeated words and phrases were recorded and counted. As the list grew, the verbal data began to cluster around content categories. Looking over this list, it appeared that many of the issues that emerged from the discussion concerned physical landscape details. For purposes of analysis, these issues were divided into three general categories of concern: buildings/land, roadways/mass transit, and in-between spaces (sidewalks, bike trails/paths, greenways, etc.). Generally, the ideas expressed most frequently were those concerning sidewalks, traffic congestion, greenspace, and local retail businesses.

> *"Improved pedestrian environment – sidewalks, crosswalks."*

> *"Northlake should be a walking community for children and adults, families to enjoy. Sidewalks should be constructed on all roads so that those who choose to walk would not be at risk for being run over by motorists."*

> *"Northlake can be pedestrian-friendly, with greenspace, non-intrusive signage and relief from traffic congestion. The mall must encourage top quality merchants and restaurants. The surrounding areas can support fine restaurants and shops also. Greenspace could also be used to provide more parks for children (with playground equipment)."*

A number of participants explicitly mentioned the need to create a town-like place in the area.

> *"Community gathering area – not commercially based. Reduce retail areas. Plant trees everywhere – big ones. Sidewalks!!"*

> *"Create a town square something like what Decatur has done. Sponsor music and art events. Why do we have to drive to Decatur for culture?"*

The perceived irregularity of MARTA service, the overabundance of billboards, and the relationship of the mall to the surrounding community also received repeated comment.

> *"Increase MARTA bus service (#91, 30, 125 in particular) for frequent and reliable (including late night) service to Lindbergh or Brookhaven or Chamblee stations. Construct sidewalks in business and residential areas. Be sure that any changes that are made are changes that the people really want not just a way to spend money."*

> *"I have two main priorities for this effort: 1) elimination of and/or reduction in height/size of billboards and other signs; 2) construction of the Northlake segment of the multi-use trail as approved in the master plan for trails and bike paths."*

> *"The Mall could really use some more premium stores and merchandise. This area doesn't get the same variety or collections like Lenox or some of the other nicer malls and nicer areas. Affordable housing is needed. Community activities, furniture stores, MARTA train station, bus route closer to Kaiser for their members and employees who use public transportation."*

What do these comments suggest? Among other things, the public is interested in the tactile features of the landscape, the details that an individual experiences on a periodic (daily, weekly, monthly) basis. Transportation and accessibility are important, particularly by means that do not require the use of an automobile, though mass transit is apparently less important than pedestrian infrastructure. Participants seemed to recognize a need to improve the condition of the existing public spaces (sidewalks, parks, streets, etc.); concomitantly, they also expressed recognition of a failure on the part of government to provide and maintain those public spaces. Finally, a pronounced sensitivity to perceived quality of retail businesses emerged in many comments.


Community Design Preference Survey

The results of the community design preference survey corroborate many of the comments received in the questionnaires. Organized along the same categories identified in the vision questionnaires, the collection of images should be understood as a qualitative data set. Identifying and properly noting particular features in isolation was the first step. Thus each image was broken into its component parts. Specific concrete features were catalogued in a spreadsheet according to presence or absence. At the end of this process was a matrix showing the occurrence of various landscape features. The presence of each feature was recorded with a simple "yes" or "no". The numbers of each type of response were then counted.

The matrix was useful for identifying the points where different features intersect. Intersections offered ideas about the relationships among features. The point was to better understand how the interaction of certain features influenced the perceived quality of the landscape. This information was analyzed in the context of the comments received from the community vision questionnaires. An effort was made to respect the cumulative nature of the data.

The fourteen images with the highest average scores were selected for analysis. The content of these images varies. Many depict, all or in part, parks and greenspace. The notable features of these places are those that might be anticipated: trees, pedestrian walkways, clipped grass, ornamental plants, decorative materials, furniture, and lights. Others show small-scale urban places. These places share many of the same features as the parks and greenspaces. The motif among these images appears to be the relationship of organic and inorganic components. In

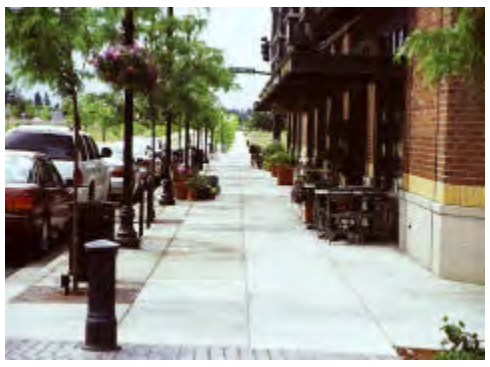
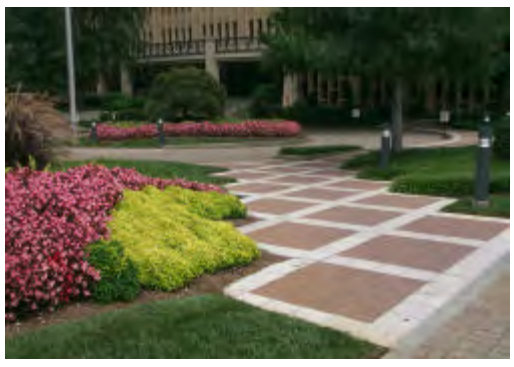
every highly rated image, these components are blended to an extent that visible separation of sub-spaces occurs (public/private, pedestrian/machine, internal/external).

Thirteen images selected as the least preferred were also analyzed, to emphasize the comparative nature of the process of establishing preferences. These images overwhelmingly lack most of the key features of those that were highly rated. Organic components tend to be overwhelmed by inorganic components. Pedestrian features are either not present, invisible, or in poor repair. The overall effect is a lack of sufficient separation of sub-spaces. Exactly where the lines lie between public/private, internal/external, and pedestrian/machine is not always apparent in these images.

Community Design Workshop

The results of the community design workshop place the verbal comments and visual data in the space of the Study Area. The emphases differed from map to map, but certain features were consistent. Most maps located a significant public park along the shore of North Lake and showed the full implementation of pedestrian/bicycle trails recommended by the DeKalb County Greenways Plan. Most also suggested the installation of sidewalks throughout the area (implicit in the idea of improved streetscapes, mixed-use, and transit-oriented developments). The triangle intersection formed by LaVista and Briarcliff Roads was identified as a redevelopment node, where streets could be realigned to create a small grid to support more intense mixed-use retail/residential structures. Several maps suggested transforming the streetscape and development of LaVista Road between Interstate-285 and the triangle intersection into a traditional town/village area, with small retail spaces beneath apartments and townhouses. Others mentioned small transit-oriented development (TOD) nodes at LaVista Office Park and Crescent Center/Lakeside Office Park. A transit node inside the existing industrial area, near the proposed location of a commuter rail station, was also proposed.

Corroborating the direction of the written comments and the results of the design preference survey, the redevelopment features identified in the maps can be placed into the three categories of concern: buildings/land, roadways/transit, and in-between spaces. The utility of these categories of data is that they speak to the problem of the geography of function. Sidewalks, parks, and town squares are intimately connected to traditional public activities. They are the essential pieces of public space, the core areas where public functions take place (urban parks have historically provided space for recreation and informal interaction among strangers). Imparted with considerable symbolic force in the urban environment, their absence is notable, though often overlooked in day-to-day activity. A clear manifestation of this absence was evinced by the data gathered from the Northlake participants, data that indicates the close relationship between public function and daily experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the results of the planning process suggests that Northlake is a place in transition. The public perception of this transition appears to have engendered a heightened sense of uncertainty about the future, if the opinions and ideas study participants expressed during the process are to be believed. A common way to address this kind of uncertainty is to promote the role of public voice in the development decision making process. This helps give local actors a sense of participation and influence. The past and present actions of the NCA and the results of this study indicate adequate momentum and motivation to sustain a strong public voice may have finally emerged.

Recommendations for the Northlake study area are based on information gathered during the planning process. Accordingly, each of the recommendations presented references major concepts identified during analysis. Each idea should have some explanatory function embedded. The point is to show how the recommendations corroborate the notion of a general connection between the built environment, public voice, and the perception of the character of a place.

Organizational Improvements

Economic and demographic changes in the composition of residential and user populations, while experienced and recounted anecdotally, can deeply influence an individual's evaluation of a place, particularly when the changes seem beyond control. Large urban counties like DeKalb rarely possess the resources necessary for highly specific local service delivery. Unincorporated places within such counties (like Northlake) do not offer the intimacy and responsiveness of service and function found in smaller cities and towns. The confluence of these circumstances, perceived change coupled with lack of control, has created considerable frustration in the minds of study participants. This frustration has been interpreted here as a result of a lack of a resonant public voice.

Perception of place character flows in part from place-dependent experiences. In the case of Northlake, place character appears to be connected in the minds of study participants to the condition and quality of the built environment. Though experienced as a backdrop to other activities, the landscape has assumed a significant place in the equation of overall place quality. As an unincorporated, primarily commercial area, Northlake's landscape does not show the kind of geography or variety of functions found in cities and towns. Structures and spaces associated with contemporary commerce are abundant (rows of shops, offices, and auto parking lots), while those associated with public life are largely absent (sidewalks, plazas, and parks). This incomplete geography has negatively influenced the way individuals (residents and users) occupy and relate to the Study Area.

The present recommendations reflect some of the frustration with change and lack of control expressed during the planning process. Based on recounts of individual experiences in the Study Area, participants appear to be using the emerging issue of new investment in the built environment as a means to confront the instability and uncertainty recent demographic changes have provoked. Data provide evidence that this connection has been made, but show also the difficulty of accurately measuring exactly how it was made. In this case, knowledge that the connection has occurred must suffice, since the scope of the study allows neither time nor space for deeper investigation.

Recommendations for improving conditions in the Study Area center around this most complex connection between problems of the built environment and public voice. The ideas presented here are meant to provide suggestions for opening communication channels between stakeholding individuals, groups, and organizations. Developing an effective public voice requires extensive and repeated opportunities for both direct and indirect communication. With a stronger public voice comes a greater chance to engage the development decision-making process, and thus influence over the form and content of the future built environment.

The key to developing a public voice for Northlake is organizing disparate groups of local stakeholders into an identifiable entity. To do this, residents, users (shoppers and workers), business owners, corporations, and property holders need an arena for equitable and meaningful interaction. In smaller towns and cities, local government provides this arena; in Northlake, some kind of intermediary is necessary. One important result of this study has been to encourage the growth and organizational capacity of local representative organizations. This will give stakeholders in Northlake the necessary arenas in which a public voice can be nurtured and expressed, and hopefully a forum for influencing decisions regarding the built environment.

Resolve the problem of the built environment

- Establish special building design standards for the Study Area
- Create accessible and useable public spaces by requiring the installation and upgrade of sidewalks along all roads (both county- and state-controlled), planting trees in the right-of-way, building small parks and plazas in leftover spaces, and providing traffic control to conflicts between cars and pedestrians
- Using the techniques outlined in the Georgia Forestry Commission's *Georgia Model Urban Forest Book* develop a program for creating urban forest conditions in the Study Area
- Work with public/private entities to develop a focal point, like a town square or civic plaza
- Lobby DeKalb County for a public park in or near the Study Area
- Encourage DeKalb County to locate a public function in a significant location within the Study Area
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing an internal public circulator system
- Pursue funding for capital investments from all available sources
- Establish a beautification fund among area businesses to pay for landscape upgrades, public art, etc.

Increase public voice in development decisions

- Build community identity, solidarity, cooperation
- Create special Northlake Planning District as an amendment to the DeKalb Comprehensive Plan
- Approve a community future land use map
- Research and begin procedures for implementing a Transportation Management Association (TMA)
- In conjunction with the DeKalb County Planning Department, review existing zoning categories for harmful regulations
- Devise a new Northlake zoning category to address the unique design and land use issues in the Study Area
- Initiate relationship with Simon Properties to discuss redevelopment of mall surface parking lots
- Develop a relationship between NCA, DeKalb County Planning, and the PATH Foundation to begin implementing DeKalb Greenways Plan
- Initiate discussion with absentee landowners regarding future development scenarios and community concerns
- Develop a schedule of regular monthly meetings to discuss the state of development in the area.

- Establish a permanent mall kiosk to serve as a community information center (promote community identity, cohesion, inclusiveness)
- Expand content and circulation of NCA newsletter
- Continue to utilize NCA website for community discussion information distribution, and links to outside organizations
- More aggressively promote NCA to business owners, workers, and shoppers

Transportation Improvements

The Northlake LCI project requires a blending of improvement efforts related to land use and transportation to provide a consistent approach to supporting the identified vision for the study area. Through an evaluation of study area conditions, discussions with DeKalb County staff, and input from Northlake Community Alliance members, a comprehensive plan was developed for the Northlake LCI study area. This plan was adapted from the existing physical and land use conditions observed in the study area in order to develop a land use context from which to examine area needs and opportunities. Existing roadway and pedestrian conditions, transit access needs, and functional roadway classification were used to examine transportation needs and opportunities that are supportive of the project vision and consistent with the desired land uses. The land use and transportation recommendations are combined in the activity center plan, from which specific improvement projects are defined.

The transportation portion of the activity center plan is based on observations and evaluations of the existing transportation infrastructure and traffic conditions for the area. One tool used to definite the roadway network is its functional classification. The roads in the Northlake LCI study area are functionally classified as minor urban arterials (also known as minor thoroughfares), urban collectors and local streets. The minor thoroughfares balance the movement of through traffic with local vehicular and pedestrian circulation. This is contrasted with local streets, which have access and local circulation as their main objectives, with less emphasis on through traffic movement. The urban collectors provide a connection between the mobility of the arterial roadway network and development access through local streets. Though pedestrian movement is balanced with vehicular traffic flow needs along the thoroughfares, providing for pedestrian safety and crossing capabilities is important on all roadways and is reflected in the recommendations for pedestrian travel on all roadway classes.

The following is a summary of the roadway classification in the Northlake LCI study area:

- Minor arterials/thoroughfares
  - LaVista Road
  - Briarcliff Road
  - Henderson Mill Road
- Urban collectors
  - Northlake Parkway
  - Montreal Road
- Local streets include
  - Weems Road
  - Parklake Drive
  - Northlake Court

Thus, improvement strategies on LaVista Road, Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road focus on balancing traffic movement and access to adjacent land uses, while Northlake Parkway and Montreal Road will more heavily weigh the needs of access and local circulation. Review of these classifications allows for the opportunity to reconsider the existing physical layout of the roadway network, which is more strongly oriented toward automobile through traffic than pedestrian movement and safety. Although LaVista Road, Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road do need to accommodate vehicular movements through the study area, this function should be balanced with local access and pedestrian facilities. This reorientation holds especially true for the collector and local roadways within the study area. Focusing on the pedestrian travel mode is critical to foster the pedestrian-oriented livable centers environment. Transportation needs and opportunities for the Northlake LCI study area are described in the following paragraphs.

Roadway Network

Overall transportation network operations in the area were examined to determine existing system deficiencies and potential future needs following implementation of the activity center plan. This assessment focused on opportunities to make new roadway connections and spread traffic demands among parallel facilities rather than widening of existing arterials. The ability to accommodate area changes without the need for additional roadway capacity is beneficial, especially when viewed in light of limitations to adding roadway capacity due to air quality restrictions. Future land use and preferred travel mode split were also considered when evaluating the transportation network for future needs. The following findings aided in the identification of appropriate infrastructure features for implementation in the Northlake LCI study area, as follows:

- Access to transit needed to support transit-oriented development requires safe and accessible pedestrian travel paths from potential origins and destinations to the transit facilities.
- Transit-oriented development patterns rely on good pedestrian connectivity throughout the area, which support trip making through pedestrian movement.
- Potential pedestrian demand exists beyond the study area, so connections across the study area boundary to adjacent neighborhoods should be made where appropriate.
- Roadway cross-section and intersection treatments should reflect the functional classification of the roadway and relative needs for access and pedestrian flow versus circulation.
- Roadway and inter-parcel connections should focus on providing alternatives to travel along the arterials for circulation for local trips.
- Pedestrian crossing treatments should be provided at signalized intersections and other locations, where needed. The type of crossing protection (crosswalk, crosswalk with median, or signalized crossing) should be determined based on the pedestrian demand, intensity of vehicle traffic, and intersection geometry.

In general, the transportation recommendations are geared towards improving pedestrian travel conditions, optimizing traffic operations, and reallocating laneage to foster a pedestrian oriented environment that still operates at acceptable levels of service for vehicles. Several roads in the study area were examined to determine the transportation improvement recommendations which best support the livable centers initiative. The following paragraphs summarize the needs and opportunities along these roads.

LaVista Road

The LaVista Road corridor is functionally classified as a minor urban arterial, which focuses on balancing movement of through vehicles and service to local development. This function is consistent with the Northlake LCI vision for the area. While this corridor should be kept as attractive as possible for through traffic, providing safe pedestrian access across the road is an important need. To complement signalized crossing improvements, additional sidewalks are needed along several stretches of LaVista Road, including across the I-285 overpass. Potential intersection improvements have been identified along LaVista Road, primarily at its intersections with Briarcliff Road, Henderson Mill Road and Northlake Parkway.

Briarcliff Road

Briarcliff Road also operates as a minor arterial for the Northlake LCI study area, providing connectivity for roughly east-west traffic movements. According to data collected from Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) count stations, Briarcliff Road serves fewer vehicles per day than LaVista Road. These lower traffic volumes allow Briarcliff Road to focus greater attention on local access and pedestrian movements. The need for additional pedestrian facilities has been identified along this corridor.

Henderson Mill Road
Henderson Mill Road provides north-south connectivity in the arterial roadway network. This corridor connects Northlake with residential communities and Chamblee Tucker Road to the north. The two-lane section of Henderson Mill Road, north of Northlake Parkway experiences high traffic volumes and marginal to poor LOS (LOS D to LOS F). The Henderson Mill Road traffic joins with Briarcliff Road traffic north of Northlake Mall creating one of the major traffic flows into the critical "triangle" area created by the intersections of Briarcliff Road, Henderson Mill Road, and LaVista Road. Improvement needs related to local access and pedestrian facilities have been identified along this section of the corridor.

Another section of Henderson Mill Road extends from Briarcliff Road to LaVista Road, adjacent to the Briarcliff Village shopping center. This four-lane section of Henderson Mill Road provides overall capacity which is adequate for accommodating traffic demand. However, operational difficulties are present at the Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road at LaVista Road intersections, due to horizontal curvature on the intersection approaches. Realignment of this section of Henderson Mill road to form an extension of Montreal Road from LaVista Road to Briarcliff Road is proposed, as discussed in further detail below.

Northlake Parkway
While the partial interchange of Northlake Parkway with I-285 acts as a relief point for the LaVista Road interchange, the east/west portion of Northlake Parkway primarily serves as an urban collector within the Northlake LCI study area. As a collector facility, Northlake Parkway primarily provides a traffic connection between the local developments and the arterial roadway system. As growth in the Northlake area continues, this roadway is likely to experience some increases in through volume. The east/west connection across I-285 provided by Northlake Parkway, provides an opportunity for linking bike facilities east and west of I-285. However, installation of bike lanes along this section will require replacement of outside curb and gutter, along with associated drainage structures. In addition, the available width on the bridge over I-285 necessitates use of a share the road concept for bicycles crossing the bridge.

The north/south section of Northlake Parkway serves collector functions as well, linking traffic on LaVista Road to local access roads and driveways for adjacent development. However, this roadway also serves significant through traffic volumes as drivers travel parallel to I-285 from Highway 78 and US 29 to LaVista Road.

Montreal Road
Montreal Road operates as a collector between LaVista Road at its northern end and Lawrenceville Highway at its southern end. Like Northlake Parkway, pedestrian amenities will be recommended along Montreal Road in order to serve the adjacent office and industrial land uses. In addition, Montreal Road serves as a connection into the industrial area adjacent to the railroad tracks, a primary potential redevelopment area within Northlake. As this area redevelops in the future, Montreal Road will serve as a key link to the heart of the Northlake area near LaVista Road and Briarcliff Road.

Traffic Operations in the "Triangle" Area
In the Northlake LCI area, the centroid of existing commercial development and the intersection of primary arterial traffic flow occurs in an area often referred to as the "triangle" area. The "triangle" is formed by the following three intersecting roadways:

- Henderson Mill Road
- Briarcliff Road
- LaVista Road

The potential extension of Montreal Road north to Briarcliff Road would replace one side of the "triangle" area. This extension would make traffic operations more complex at the LaVista Road and Montreal Road intersection, but would allow for removal of the traffic signal at the existing LaVista Road and Henderson Mill Road intersection, spreading the signalized access point in the "triangle" area.

In addition, to accommodating traffic movement in the "triangle" area, providing for pedestrian crossings of the major roadways is important in this central area. The current design of the LaVista Road at Briarcliff Road intersection provides two free flow right turn lanes from LaVista Road eastbound onto Briarcliff Road northbound. These two lanes are not signal controlled and create a barrier to pedestrian movement in the area. To provide pedestrian crossings at this intersection and facilitate the heavy vehicle movements present, alternative improvements of the intersection were examined. These alternatives included:

- Realignment of the Briarcliff Road intersection to form a right angle with LaVista Road in conjunction with removal of the free flow right turn.
- Installation of a roundabout at the intersection of LaVista Road at Briarcliff Road. This alternative was suggested in charettes involving NCA and others in the Northlake community.

A detailed traffic analysis of the operations of a modified intersection configuration and a roundabout was performed. This analysis indicated that a modified intersection configuration will provide acceptable operations during peak period traffic conditions, while allowing for pedestrian crossing movements. Examination of the roundabout concept indicated that poor peak period traffic operations are anticipated with installation of a roundabout. In addition, due to its free flowing operation, the roundabout would not serve the pedestrian movements in a protected manner, limiting its ability to foster pedestrian movement across the intersection. A detailed evaluation of roundabout operations for this intersection is included in Appendix A.

Connections Across I-285
The limited bridge crossings of I-285 constrain the Northlake area's east/west movements. The operations on the LaVista Road-I-285 bridge experience near capacity conditions during the peak hours. The Northlake Parkway-I-285 bridge serves as a reliever bridge for some through trips crossing I-285 and some of the traffic traveling between the Northlake area and I-285 to the north. This connection across I-285 has allowed the northern portion of the Northlake area to develop without overloading LaVista Road. Providing a similar connection south of LaVista Road could enhance east/west traffic movement and provide for additional I-285 access needs as the area south of LaVista Road between I-285 and Montreal road redevelops.

Local Roads
Local roads support the proposed pedestrian oriented land use patterns by providing access to local developments and facilitating pedestrian and bicycle movements. As the Northlake LCI area continues to redevelop as part of the activity center plan, pedestrian connections should be provided on the local roadway network in order to encourage the live/work environment with an attractive walking environment. In addition to the opportunity to provide for pedestrian traffic, local roadways which link adjacent land uses can reduce the number of vehicles which access the arterial roadway network to make local trips. Providing increased local roadway connectivity is important as future development adds traffic to the area, to help distribute the traffic effectively to the roadway network.

Public Transit/MARTA
The use of public transit in the form of existing MARTA bus service or the potential future commuter rail connection reflects a transportation opportunity in the study area. Transportation improvements are recommended to support the attractiveness of transit use through pedestrian and transit amenities.

In addition to increased use of MARTA bus routes, a potential future opportunity for shuttle/circulator service exists. Shuttle programs have proven effective in eliminating some single-occupancy vehicle trips, resulting in an effective increase in person trips served by the local transportation infrastructure. The existing MARTA bus routes perform some circulation functions in the area. However, the route length and

headways do not lend themselves to servicing a large portion of local trips within the Northlake area. The existing concentrations of retail formed by Northlake Mall, Briarcliff Village shopping center and Northlake Festival shopping center are serviceable by pedestrian travel modes.

The potential effectiveness of a shuttle/circulator program would increase if significant redevelopment of the area south of LaVista Road occurs, creating an additional densely developed area. In addition, implementation of potential commuter rail station in the southern portion of the study area would increase the need for short headway circulation between the station and Northlake employment centers.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

Bicycle and pedestrian trips account for a relatively small portion of the existing local trips in the Northlake LCI study area. However, land use changes proposed as part of the activity center plan will increase the amount of pedestrian traffic to and from transit and other destinations. Many major commercial developments in the Northlake LCI study area are within ¼mile of another major commercial development or a MARTA bus stop. This close proximity puts these areas within the walking distance typically considered acceptable by pedestrians. Through connection to planned bicycle facilities, this acceptable distance can be extended to a few miles for bicycle travel. The proposed land use changes create the need for improved pedestrian facilities throughout the study area, particularly in the primary emphasis areas along LaVista Road and Northlake Parkway. The pedestrian facilities include a combination of sidewalks, multi-use paths and signal system elements to enhance pedestrian movement and crossing.

The needs and opportunities associated with bicycle and pedestrian travel recognize pedestrian travel patterns between origins and destinations. In most cases, the pedestrian improvements needed are located within the roadway right-of-way. Many of these needs and opportunities are discussed in the roadway network section. In addition to providing pedestrian facilities along these corridors, a multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path that travels through the Northlake LCI study area is an important component for encouraging cycling trips by less experienced cyclists and those who are less willing to travel with vehicular traffic.

Transportation Capital Investments

Developing a community which provides opportunities to live, work, and shop and which balances transportation needs among various travel modes is the primary objective of the LCI for the Northlake study area. To accomplish this objective, land use strategies were developed through charettes with Northlake Community Alliance (NCA) and the public. These strategies were refined to reflect a cohesive future land use plan for Northlake. Transportation improvement projects were then identified to support the future land use plan through specific transportation strategies. The improvements define a multi-modal approach for providing mobility in the Northlake area that addresses short-term needs and supports future growth and study area redevelopment.

The recommended transportation improvements are grouped into three general categories: immediate, short-term, and mid to long-term projects. Immediate projects are recommended for implementation as soon as funding is available and include the projects of primary focus. Short-term projects are recommended to occur within the next five years and also include the primary improvements. The mid to long-term projects are recommended to occur in greater than five years. These improvements are supportive of longer term redevelopment opportunities.

Immediate Implementation Projects

The improvements described below and shown in Figure T-15 are recommended for immediate implementation in the Northlake LCI study area. These improvements include pedestrian enhancements along the LaVista Road from Harobi Road to Northlake Parkway. The improvements build on the project already defined in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to add sidewalks along this corridor.

Pedestrian enhancements along the LaVista Road

- Add a median on LaVista Road from Montreal Road through Briarcliff Road.
- Install sidewalks and streetscape improvements along LaVista Road from Harobi Road to east of Northlake Parkway including landscaping, street lighting, street furniture, specialty paving (brick or stone) on sidewalks and crosswalks, and road resurfacing. Include addition of crosswalks across all sides of the following intersections as a part of streetscape modifications:
    - LaVista Road at Montreal Road
    - LaVista Road at Henderson Mill Road
    - LaVista Road at Ranchwood Drive
    - LaVista Road at Parklake Drive
    - LaVista Road at I-285 SB (only one crossing of LaVista Road needed at SB ramps)
    - LaVista Road at I-285 NB (only one crossing of LaVista Road needed at NB ramps)
    - LaVista Road at Northlake Parkway
- Install pedestrian improvements to facilitate crossing of LaVista Road at I-285 bridge, including:
    - Removal of median section and reallocation of pavement to provide room for sidewalk installation along sides of bridge.
    - Installation of sidewalks along both sides of bridge over I-285.
    - Installation of protective fencing along outside edge of bridge over I-285.
- Install pedestrian crossing refuge medians to reduce unprotected crossing distances at the intersection of LaVista Road at Northlake Parkway.

Estimated costs of the recommendations for immediate and short-term implementation are provided in the five year implementation plan, Table T-1. As this table shows, implementation of all improvements in the immediate and short term implementation plan is estimated to cost $21.0 million. The immediate implementation items, described above are projected to cost 4.8 million.

Short-Term Projects

The improvements described below, along with the immediate implementation projects, are recommended as a part of the five-year implementation plan in the Northlake LCI study area. The recommended short-term improvements are shown in Figure T-16.

Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) through Transportation Management Agency (TMA)

- Establish TMA for implementation of TDM and coordination of area-wide transportation needs. Include liaisons with DeKalb County, GDOT, MARTA, ARC, and GRTA.
- Establish area-wide carpool/vanpool program for existing commercial and residential centers.
- Plan and coordinate implementation of LCI recommendations.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle movements throughout study area

- Install sidewalk and streetscape improvements (lighting, wide sidewalks, benches, textured sidewalk inlay, street trees and wayfinding signs) along the following primary pedestrian corridors:
    - Briarcliff Road from LaVista Road to Henderson Mill Road
    - Henderson Mill Road from Briarcliff Road to proposed park site along Henderson Mill Road north of Henderson Elementary School (former Korean Church site)
    - Northlake Parkway from north to south portion from Northlake Center Drive to Robinhill Drive
- Install new sidewalks of at least five feet in width at the following locations:
    - Exchange Place (along entire length)
    - Montreal Road from LaVista Road to Montreal Circle

- Northlake Center Drive (along entire length)
- Ranchwood Drive (along entire length)
- Crescent Center Boulevard from Exchange Place to southern terminus
- Montreal Industrial Way (along entire length)
- West side of Weems Road (along entire length)

- Provide ADA compatible sidewalk throughout the Northlake area, including:
  - Improved handicapped ramps along existing sidewalk (10 locations).
  - ADA ramps at all intersections of curbs with streets or driveways where new sidewalks are installed.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings of roadways, including:
  - Addition of pedestrian crossings and crosswalks at the following intersections to provide crossings of both main street and side streets on all sides of intersection:
  - Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Way
  - Northlake Parkway at Henderson Mill Road
  - Henderson Mill Road at Fielding Drive
  - Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Road (south intersection)
  - Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Village Shopping Center entrance
  - Northlake Parkway at Exchange Place
  - Northlake Parkway at Northlake Center Drive
  - Northlake Parkway at I-285 SB
  - Northlake Parkway at Parklake Drive
  - Weems Road at access drive
  - Installation of a traffic signal with pedestrian crossing on Northlake Parkway at Northlake Court/Mall entrance.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connection from Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road via Parklake Drive including:
  - Sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of Parklake Drive
  - Multi-use path section along the access road from LaVista Road to Weems Drive
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connection from Northlake Parkway to neighborhoods to the north, including:
  - Sidewalks and designated bike route (share the road) along Parklake Drive from Northlake Parkway to northern terminus
  - Multi-use path through wooded area to connect Parklake Drive to Lauderdale Drive
  - Multi-use path through wooded area to connect Northlake Parkway to Henderson Mill Court
  - Multi-use path section along Northlake Parkway from Henderson Mill Court connection to proposed signalized intersection at Northlake Court
- Provide Multi-use path connection from Northlake Parkway to neighborhoods to the east, including:
  - Designated bike route/multi-use path through the business park from the east end of Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road
  - Multi-use path section along north side of LaVista Road from the path connection at the business park to connect to neighborhoods to the east
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements along east/west portion of Northlake Parkway, including:
  - Sidewalks
  - Bike lanes (requiring widening of roadway)
  - Installation of sidewalks and protective fencing on I-285 bridge
  - Share the road bike section on I-285 bridge
- Provide bicycle and multi-use facilities to connect to planned PATH Foundation trails, including:
  - Multi-use trail from park development at former Korean church site to Northlake Parkway along Northlake Court (PATH Foundation route)
  - Multi-use path section along Northlake Parkway from trail at Northlake Court to new traffic signal at the eastern mall entrance
  - Multi-use path section along side of mall property from Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road
  - Multi-use path section along LaVista Road from Northlake Mall to Ranchwood Drive
  - Multi-use path section along access road from LaVista Road to Weems Drive
  - Multi-use path section along Weems Drive to PATH Foundation planned route along rail spur
  - Multi-use path section along rail spur and rail line (PATH Foundation route)
  - Multi-use path section along Crescent Center Boulevard from rail line to southern terminus (PATH Foundation route)
  - Multi-use path section from Crescent Center Boulevard to US 29 along new alignment (PATH Foundation route)

<u>Improve access and usability of transit facilities</u>

- Provide ADA compatible sidewalks and intersection crossings along transit routes (as a part of pedestrian and bicycle improvements described previously).
- Provide signage with route destinations at all bus stop locations.
- Modify transit routes to provide front door access to Northlake Mall and Northlake Festival Shopping Center.
- Provide common bus stop for three bus routes with transfer information.

<u>Provide additional roadway connectivity</u>

- Extend Montreal Road to Briarcliff Road and remove existing Henderson Mill Road section between Briarcliff Road and LaVista Road. Design as a pedestrian-oriented downtown street with on-street parking and bike lanes.

<u>Provide intersection and operational improvements to enhance use of street network by vehicles and pedestrians</u>

- Realign Briarcliff Road to Henderson Mill Road via Fielding Drive. As part of this modification, relocate traffic signal and install pedestrian crossing at this intersection and remove traffic signal at existing Briarcliff Road at Henderson Mill Road intersection.
- Provide monitoring and congestion management of LaVista Road and Briarcliff Road via ITS, including development of special signal plans to accommodate saturated conditions.
- Install queuing detector on LaVista Road east of Northlake Parkway and on I-285 ramps to flush traffic during heavy queuing periods.

Estimated costs of the recommendations for immediate and short-term implementation are provided in the five year implementation plan, Table T-1. As this table shows, implementation of all improvements in the immediate and short term implementation plan is estimated to cost $21.0 million.

Mid- to Long-Term Implementation Projects

The improvements described below are recommended for mid and long-term implementation beyond the five-year implementation plan. The recommended mid and long-term improvements are shown in Figure T-17.

Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) through Transportation Management Agency (TMA)

- Continue area-wide carpool/vanpool program with the addition of new commercial facilities.
- As non-retail employment density increases, coordinate staggered work hours.
- Provide additional pedestrian and bicycle connections geared to live/work communities as area redevelops.
- Continue planning and coordination of LCI recommendations.
- Formulate new recommended transportation improvements to respond to specific growth and development issues.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle movements throughout study area

- Install sidewalk along all new streets as development and redevelopment continues.
- Install multi-use path section along railroad tracks from PATH Foundation path to Montreal Road.

Provide for potential commuter rail connection

- Coordinate pedestrian facilities and roadway connections with commuter rail station.
- Provide pedestrian connections from rail station to adjacent redevelopment area.
- Modify local MARTA bus service to include commuter rail station.

Improve access and usability of transit facilities

- Expand MARTA bus route to include Northlake Parkway south of LaVista Road and crossing of I-285 to Montreal Road via new bridge connection.
- Examine feasibility of shuttle circulator to service commuter rail station, employment centers, Northlake Mall and Northlake Festival shopping center.
- Provide area-wide shuttle/circulator with the following features:
  - Access to areas east and west of I-285
  - Transfer center at commuter rail station
  - Frequent headways during commuter rail operating times and midday lunch periods.

Provide additional roadway connectivity

- Extend Montreal Industrial Way west to LaVista Road.
- Provide additional roadway capacity across I-285 south of LaVista Road at Montreal Industrial Way.
- Extend Weems Road south to Montreal Industrial Way.
- As area adjacent to railroad tracks and Montreal Industrial Way redevelops, provide additional connector roads and inter-parcel access.

Provide intersection and operational improvements to enhance use of street network by vehicles and pedestrians

- Realign Briarcliff Road to intersect LaVista Road at a right angle. As part of this modification, add crosswalks and pedestrian indications at the intersection.
- Provide Montreal Road bridge over railroad facilities.
- Reconstruct Montreal Road from railroad tracks to LaVista Road as a landscaped boulevard with wide median/linear park, pedestrian facilities and bike lanes.
- Provide improvements to distribute traffic between Northlake Parkway, LaVista Road, and Montreal Industrial Way extension, including:
  - Installation of a half diamond interchange at new bridge crossing of I-285 at Montreal Industrial Way
  - Removal of interchange ramps at LaVista Road at I-285
  - Installation of frontage roads from Montreal Industrial Way to Northlake Parkway

- Realign Briarcliff Road to Henderson Mill Road via Briarcliff Way (including intersection realignment of Briarcliff Way intersections at Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road).
- Continue congestion management program and refine signal timing plans as needed.

Future Land Use Improvements

Recognizing that the current landscape was not created overnight, the new land use categories suggested for Northlake show a gradual evolution. As existing structures are demolished and buildable space opens, revised development standards will require new structures to adhere to the land use patterns suggested in this plan. This will occur over the duration of a generation or more.

Zoning, a topic vitally important to the long-term success of this plan, is intimately connected to land use and development. At this point, DeKalb County administers all zoning matters concerning Northlake and the Study Area. As the organizational capacity of NCA improves, and its voice is injected into the development decision-making process, it will become better equipped to engage the County planning department in a formal dialogue about zoning issues. At this point, efforts should be targeted toward building the organization's standing among local stakeholders, opening communication channels with regional stakeholders (ARC, GRTA, MARTA, and large landowners), and devising a suitable future land use scheme.

The proposed categories include an array of future land use types, some that have been previously defined, and others that have not. Since several of these types are not currently permitted in the context of the DeKalb County Land Use Plan, the form they finally take may differ from the way they are described here. Three land use categories new to the Study Area have been provisionally defined. Unforeseen changes in the development context may necessitate their future alteration or abandonment. Thus the land use scheme included in this plan, which utilizes these categories, is intended to be flexible, meaning it is one of many possible scenarios. The exact orientation and location of future uses will depend on the influence of a variety forces, including the land market, population shifts, transportation technology, political context, etc.

Proposed Future Land Use Categories (Figure L-2)

- Mixed-use Commercial: provides space for vertical or horizontal mixture of retail commercial and residential uses on a single parcel. This could take the form of residential above or next door to small-to-medium sized retail stores
- Mixed-use Residential: provides space for the mixture of single- and multi-family residential units on a single parcel.
- Mixed-use Office: provides space for vertical or horizontal mixture of office, single-family, multi-family, and retail commercial uses; specific ratios of uses should be determined by prevailing market conditions
- Park/Greenspace: publicly-owned and maintained parks (passive and active) and undisturbed, undeveloped greenspace.
- Transit: facilities related to the operation of MARTA, GRTA, or any other mass transportation authority as yet unnamed.
- Public/Institutional: provides space for government functions and institutions (colleges, schools, churches, cemeteries, libraries, post offices).
- Commercial: provides space for non-industrial retail and wholesale businesses of various sizes and intensities.
- Industrial: provides space for large-scale heavy and light manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution in areas separated from most other uses.
- Office: provides space for professional office buildings and complexes; limited commercial uses can exist, though retail typically is not allowed.
- Transportation/Communications/Utilities: provides space for water and sewer facilities, power stations, substations, radio and television infrastructure, highways, railroads, and utility easements.
- Single-family Residential: provides space for detached single-family housing units; other uses are generally forbidden.
- Multi-family Residential: provides space for detached and attached single-family housing, duplexes, triplexes, and multi-unit structures.

Urban Design Improvements

There are several fundamental principles of pedestrian-oriented development that should be followed when considering changes to built environment. These include moderate and high density housing and employment uses sited within walking distance of transit; residential and employment uses mixed with shopping opportunities and public facilities; and multiple and direct street connections between transit stops and shopping areas. Bearing these principles in mind, this plan identifies locations for major gateways, attractions, and neighborhood focal points in addition to existing and future public functions and spaces: pedestrian and bicycle pathways, open space, pedestrian plazas, scenic view points, and future community building. Following these recommendations should enhance the overall pedestrian experience of the Study Area without unfairly penalizing or excluding automobiles.

- NCA should formally request that DeKalb County establish design standards for the Study Area.
- County should facilitate public process to establish design guidelines; NCA should be lead stakeholder.
- County should amend comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to provide for transit supportive development.
- County should coordinate the final design review process by establishing design guidelines and standards. Design Guidelines should be both qualitative and quantitative and provide designers with flexibility in achieving design intent.




CONCLUSION

This document, purposefully concise, is the capstone of an effort to outline a process for improving the visibility of the public voice of unincorporated urban places in development decisions. It also suggests possible changes, based on the desires and suggestions of study participants, to the arrangement of transportation infrastructure and land use. But this plan is not intended to be a static document. The recommendations and ideas presented here must be able to flex to the changing needs of community stakeholders. In order for this to happen, these stakeholders must continue to evaluate the fitness of the plan. As new information emerges, certain recommendations will be altered or dropped while new ones are added. What is important is not necessarily the specific recommendations, but rather the intensity and depth of the dialogue surrounding them. This dialogue is the crucial momentum of the plan. A greater number of stakeholders than ever before now recognize the important role of a coherent public voice engaged in the development process. This recognition must be carried forward and leveraged with future efforts in order to maximize the long-term impact of the plan. If the present effort is any indication, tremendous potential exists waiting to be tapped.

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APPENDIX A – EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVES FOR CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS

The transportation improvements recommended for the Northlake LCI study area were primarily based on field observations and experience with similar projects. However, further analysis and evaluation were considered necessary for the recommendations concerning three key intersections on LaVista Road. These intersections are as follows:

- Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road
- Henderson Mill Road at LaVista Road
- Montreal Road at LaVista Road

One potential improvement, suggested in the community design charettes, was to install a roundabout at the intersection of Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road. Because of the high traffic volumes served by both roadways, this potential improvement was closely evaluated. This evaluation included investigation into roundabout design guidelines and estimation of traffic volumes which could be served by this intersection design with acceptable levels of service. An alternative treatment for this intersection involves realignment of the Briarcliff Road approach to intersect LaVista Road in a tee intersection with conversion of the free flow westbound right turn to a signal controlled dual right turn.

One of the other potential improvements involves the realignment of Henderson Mill Road so that it intersects LaVista Road at the existing T-intersection with Montreal Road. This realignment would cause Henderson Mill Road to run adjacent to the Briarcliff Village Shopping Center storefronts. Transportation measures would be applied to reduce traffic speeds along this realigned portion, in order to have safe pedestrian movements from the parking facilities to the shopping center. These changes to Henderson Mill Road are expected to cause a local shift in traffic patterns. The intersections of LaVista Road with Briarcliff Road and Henderson Mill Road / Montreal Road were analyzed for this future condition.

Roundabout Evaluation

In investigating the potential installation of a roundabout at the intersection of Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road, the following points were considered for roundabout capacity, including its operations during failure mode, and the advantages and disadvantages of roundabouts.

Roundabout Capacity

- For an assumed 40% left turn percentage and 33% of the traffic coming from the minor approach, a single-lane roundabout with three legs can handle about 15,000 average daily traffic (ADT) and a two-lane roundabout can handle about 30,000 ADT.
- Practical two-lane roundabout capacity is approximately 3700 vph. This is reduced by the number of left turns needed. Practical signal capacity is approximately 5800 vph. (Assumptions for this comparison are 20% left turns and four-legged approaches).

Failure Mode

- Roundabouts only operate effectively when there are sufficient longer and acceptable gaps in the circulatory traffic to allow traffic to enter the roundabout. Entrance metering can help this potential problem, but will cause more queues on the main roadways.
- Under failure conditions signals can allocate time to movements in proportion to volume, where roundabouts tend to allocate time to all approaches.

Advantages

- Reduced conflict points – A typical four-leg intersection (two-lane roadways) has 32 conflict points and a typical four-leg single-lane roundabout has 8 conflict points.
- Because a roundabout does not require vehicles to stop, off-peak usage operates better than other forms of intersection control.
- When there are queues on one or more approaches, the traffic still continues to move slowly, which is more tolerable to many drivers than a stopped or standing queue.
- Roundabouts tend to reduce noise and air quality impacts by eliminating the need for the vehicles to come to a complete stop.
- According to FHWA, service life of a roundabout is approximately 25 years. (A signalized intersection has a service life of around 10 years.)

Disadvantages

- More difficult for pedestrians, especially elderly, children and the visually impaired.
- Size – Typical inscribed circle diameter (measured between the outer edges of the circulator roadway) of an urban double-lane roundabout is 150 to 180 feet.
- Speed – Recommended maximum entry speed is 25 mph.
- Double-lane roundabouts have complications that result in poorer safety characteristics than single-lane roundabouts, particularly for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- A congested roundabout could hamper emergency response routes.
- Roundabouts may disperse and rearrange platoons of traffic, reducing traffic progression in coordinated traffic signals.

Results

Left turn movements through a roundabout reduce the overall traffic capacity, because the vehicle must remain in the roundabout longer and (in the case of a two-lane roundabout) will require lane changes within the roundabout. The high left turn volumes from southbound Briarcliff Road would therefore reduce the total number of vehicles that could be served by a roundabout at this location.

Two estimates for ADT volumes at this intersection were made: one with all movements through the intersection and one with all right turn movements separated from the intersection. These estimates indicated that, even with existing traffic volumes, a roundabout at this intersection would require two lanes and would be operating near to above capacity during peak periods with separated right turns. With all movements incorporated, the traffic volumes served by this intersection are expected to significantly exceed those recommended for a two-lane roundabout during the peak periods.

The results of the traffic analysis indicate that a two-lane roundabout at the intersection of Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road will not accommodate anticipated traffic demands at the intersection. In addition, lack of driver familiarity with this style of traffic control device is a concern in installing a multi-lane roundabout at the intersection of two urban arterials, as no similar roundabout facilities are currently in place in Georgia.

Intersection Analysis

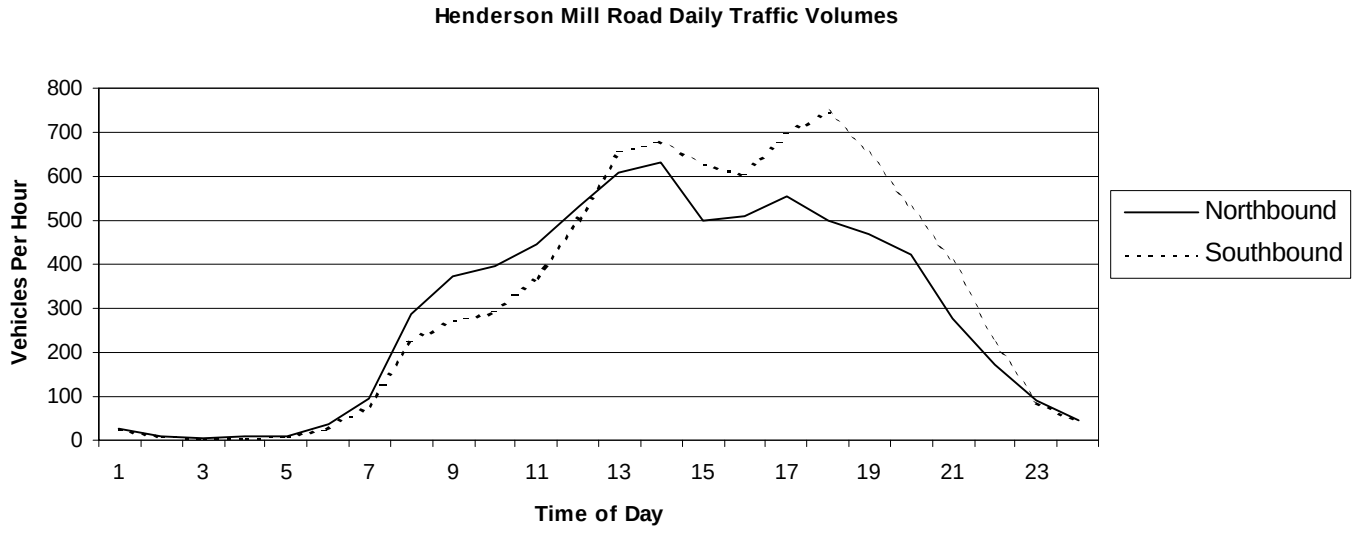
The realignment of Henderson Mill Road is expected to change local traffic patterns around this intersection. In order to determine the effects, analyses were conducted at the new four-leg intersection of Henderson Mill Road, Montreal Road and LaVista Road and at the intersection of Briarcliff Road and LaVista Road.

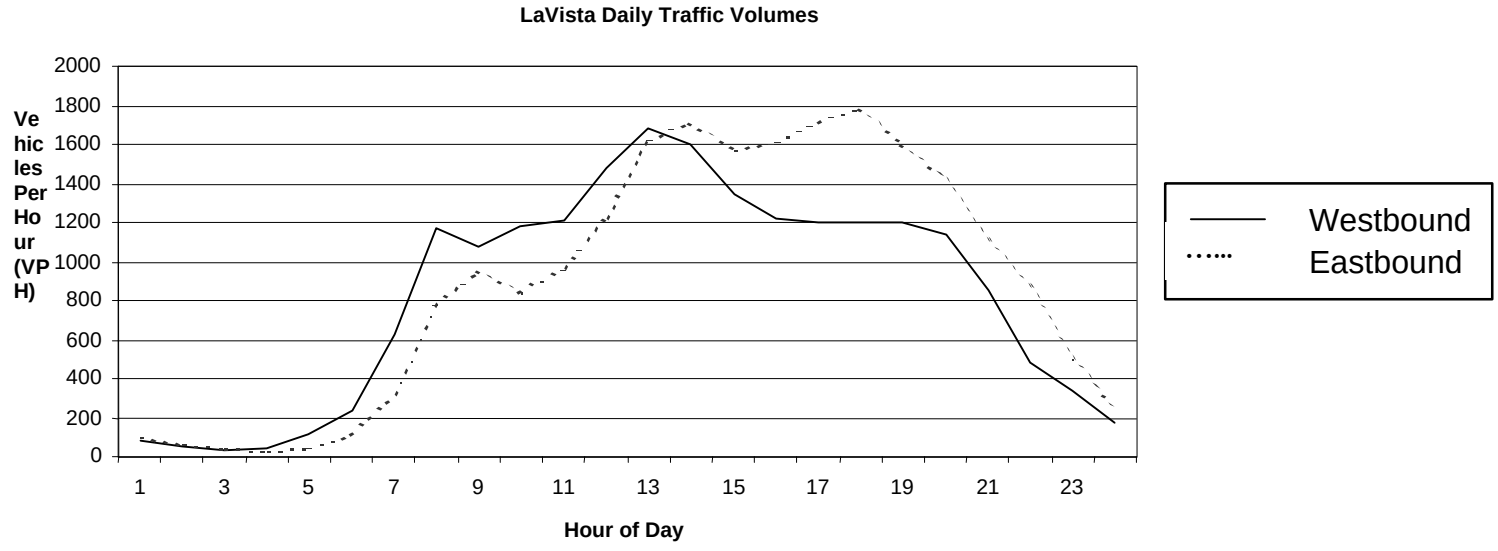
Traffic Volumes

Existing 24-hour counts were taken on LaVista Road and Henderson Mill Road on Thursday, October 18, 2001, in order to observe daily traffic patterns and up-to-date average daily traffic volumes. LaVista Road had an ADT volume of approximately 41,000 vpd just east of Briarcliff Road. Traffic volumes for each approach were graphed to determine the relationship between eastbound and westbound traffic volumes over a 24-hour period in Figure 1.

Henderson Mill Road had an ADT volume of approximately 15,000 vpd just north of LaVista Road. Traffic volumes for the northbound and southbound approaches were graphed to determine the relationship between the traffic volumes over a 24-hour period in Figure 1.

Henderson Mill Road has an atypically low AM peak volume, because of the typical commuter travel paths in the area. Peaking characteristics for lunchtime and PM peak periods are similar to those for LaVista Road.





As can be seen in Figure 2, generally LaVista Road has typical traffic peaking characteristics for an urban minor arterial. The PM peak period volumes are the highest for LaVista Road, which supports traffic conditions observed in field observations.

Existing turning movement counts were performed on Thursday, October 18, 2001. All turning movement counts were recorded during the weekday morning and evening peak times between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., respectively. The four consecutive 15-minute interval volumes that summed to produce the highest volume at each intersection were then determined. These increased volumes make up the peak hour traffic volumes for the intersections counted. These peak hour volumes were then adjusted for expected changes in travel patterns. The changes to the roadway system expected to cause travel pattern changes are as follows:

- Realignment of Henderson Mill Road to connect to the existing Montreal Road at LaVista Road intersection.
- Change in the realigned section of Henderson Mill Road from an arterial roadway function to more emphasis on pedestrian movements and local access, because of close proximity to storefronts and parking facilities.

In order to account for these changes, some existing traffic was shifted from Henderson Mill Road to Briarcliff Road. It was assumed that 30% of the existing turning movements would remain at the Henderson Mill Road intersection. Northbound and southbound through traffic volumes were determined by existing traffic volume ratios.

Roadway Geometry

The existing lane geometry of Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road discourages pedestrian activity, especially on the westbound and southbound approaches of the intersection. No crosswalks or pedestrian signals are currently in place at the intersection, and the westbound free-flow right turn movement further inhibits pedestrian crossings. In order to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment while still serving the vehicular traffic, this intersection was analyzed with changes to the lane geometry, as follows:

- Southbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane and a shared left/right turn lane with right turn flare.
- Eastbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane and three exclusive through lanes.
- Westbound approach: two exclusive through lanes and two exclusive right turn lanes with protected-only signal phasing.

The lane geometry assumed at the new intersection of Henderson Mill Road/Montreal Road at LaVista Road was based on the existing lane geometry of the two T-intersections and on the suggested roadway functionality. The following geometry was used in the analysis:

- Northbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane and a shared through/right turn lane.
- Southbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane and a shared through/right turn lane.
- Eastbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane, two exclusive through lanes, and a shared through/right turn lane.
- Westbound approach: an exclusive left turn lane, one exclusive through lane, and a shared through/right turn lane with a right turn flare.

These elements were used in order to determine traffic operations after the proposed intersection modifications.

Results

The methodology used for evaluating traffic operations at intersections is based on the criteria that is set forth in the Transportation Research Board's 2000 update of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). Synchro software, which is based on the HCM methodology, was used for the analysis.

Level of service for a signalized intersection is defined in terms of average control delay per vehicle. Level of service A indicates operations with very low control delay while level of service F describes operations with extremely high average control delay, which typically results in traffic congestion and excessive queue lengths. Level of service F is considered to be unacceptable by most drivers. Level of service D is considered to by the upper limit of acceptable operations on urban roadways.

Using the adjusted traffic volumes and lane geometry changes described previously, the intersections of Briarcliff Road at LaVista Road and Henderson Mill Road / Montreal Road at LaVista Road are expected to operate acceptably after implementation of the improvements (LOS D or better) during the AM and PM peak hours. Therefore, implementation of the above referenced modifications to these intersections is recommended.

APPENDIX B – FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002 TO 2006

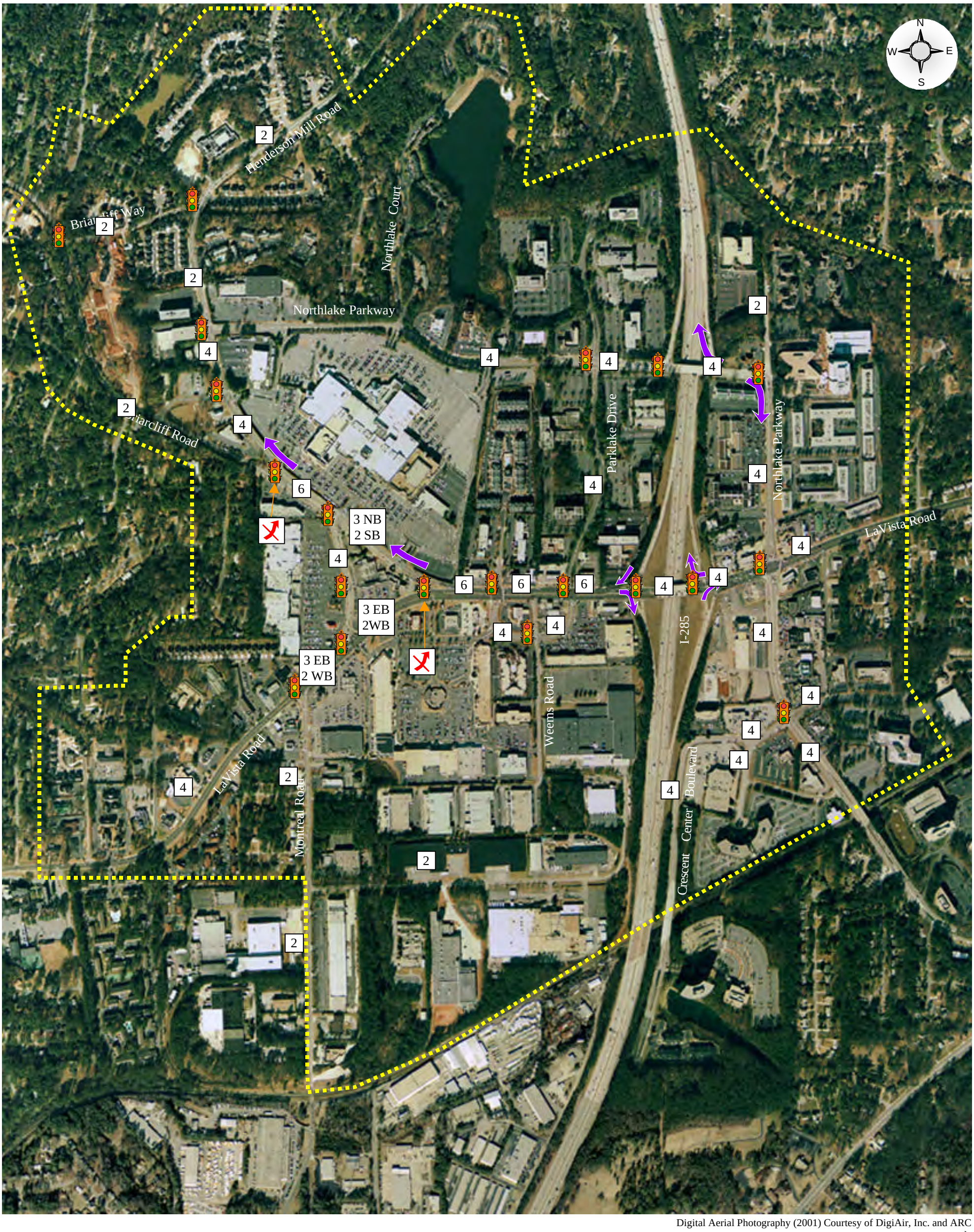
FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2006										
Transportation Projects										
Description	**Type of Improvement**	**Engineering Year**	**Engineering Costs**	**Construction Year**	**Construction Costs**	**Total Project Costs[1]**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding Source**	**Local Source &**	**Match Amount**
Provide streetscape and pedestrian crossing improvements along LaVista Road from Harobi Road to east of Northlake Parkway. Improvements include:										
Add a median on LaVista Road from Montreal Road through Briarcliff Road.										
Install sidewalks and streetscape improvements along LaVista Road from Harobi Road to east of Northlake Parkway including landscaping, street lighting, street furniture, specialty paving (brick or stone) on sidewalks and crosswalks, and road resurfacing. Include addition of crosswalks across all sides of the following intersections as a part of streetscape modifications: LaVista Road at Montreal Road, LaVista Road at Henderson Mill Road, LaVista Road at Ranchwood Drive, LaVista Road at Parklake Drive, LaVista Road at I-285 SB (only one crossing of LaVista Road needed at SB ramps), LaVista Road at I-285 NB (only one crossing of LaVista Road needed at NB ramps), LaVista Road at Northlake Parkway[2]	Pedestrian	2003	$480,000	2004	$4,806,000	$5,286,000	Dekalb County	N/A	Dekalb County	$1,057,200
Install pedestrian improvements to facilitate crossing of LaVista Road at I-285 bridge, including: removal of median section and reallocation of pavement to provide room for sidewalk installation along sides of bridge, installation of sidewalks along both sides of bridge over I-285, and installation of protective fencing along outside edge of bridge over I-285.										
Install pedestrian crossing refuge medians to reduce unprotected crossing distances at the intersection of LaVista Road at Northlake Parkway.										
[1] Costs do not include right-of-way										

FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2006										
Transportation Projects										
Description	**Type of Improvement**	**Engineering Year**	**Engineering Costs**	**Construction Year**	**Construction Costs**	**Total Project Costs[1]**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding Source**	**Local Source &**	**Match Amount**
Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) through Transportation Management Agency (TMA). Establish TMA for implementation of TDM and coordination of area-wide transportation needs. Include liaisons with DeKalb County, GDOT, MARTA, ARC, and GRTA. Establish area-wide carpool/vanpool program for existing commercial and residential centers. Plan and coordinate implementation of LCI recommendations. (cost is for first five years)	Transportation Demand Management	2002-2006	$750,000	N/A	N/A	$750,000	Northlake Community Alliance/ Dekalb County	Local	Dekalb County	$750,000
Install sidewalk and streetscape improvements (lighting, wide sidewalks, benches, textured sidewalk inlay, street trees and wayfinding signs) along the following primary pedestrian corridors: Briarcliff Road from LaVista Road to Henderson Mill Road (1500'), Henderson Mill Road from Briarcliff Road to proposed park site along Henderson Mill Road north of Henderson Elementary School (former Korean Church site – 4300'), Northlake Parkway from north to south portion from Northlake Center Drive to Robinhill Drive (4300')[2]	Pedestrian	2003	$542,000	2004	$5,422,000	$5,964,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$1,192,800
Install new sidewalks of at least five feet in width along both sides of the road at the following locations: Exchange Place (2000'), Montreal Road from LaVista Road to Montreal Circle (3400'), Northlake Center Drive (1300'), Ranchwood Drive (1400'), Crescent Center Boulevard from Exchange Place to southern terminus (2900'), Montreal Industrial Way (1500'), and West side of Weems Road (1400')	Pedestrian	2004	$58,000	2005	$578,000	$636,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$127,200
Provide ADA compatible sidewalk throughout the Northlake area, including improved handicapped ramps along existing sidewalk (10 locations) and ADA ramps at all intersections of curbs with streets or driveways where new sidewalks are installed[3]	Pedestrian	2003	$1,000	2003	$8,000	$9,000	Dekalb County	local	Dekalb County	$9,000
[1] Costs do not include right-of-way										
[2] Based on a streetscape cost of $500 per foot for elements such as street trees and landscaping, benches near street corners, pedestrian scale lighting fixtures, and aesthetic sidewalk surface treatments.										
[3] Based on replacement of 10 existing handicapped ramps.										

FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2006										
Transportation Projects										
Description	**Type of Improvement**	**Engineering Year**	**Engineering Costs**	**Construction Year**	**Construction Costs**	**Total Project Costs[1]**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding Source**	**Local Source &**	**Match Amount**
Provide safe pedestrian crossings of roadways, including Addition of pedestrian crossings and crosswalks at the following intersections to provide crossings of both main street and side streets on all sides of intersection: Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Way, Northlake Parkway at Henderson Mill Road, Henderson Mill Road at Fielding Drive, Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Road (south intersection), Henderson Mill Road at Briarcliff Village Shopping Center entrance, Northlake Parkway at Exchange Place, Northlake Parkway at Northlake Center Drive, Northlake Parkway at I-285 SB, Northlake Parkway at Parklake Drive, and Weems Road at access drive - Installation of a traffic signal with pedestrian crossing on Northlake Parkway at Northlake Court/Mall entrance.	Pedestrian	2004	$28,000	2005	$280,000	$308,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$61,600
Provide pedestrian and bicycle connection from Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road via Parklake Drive including sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of Parklake Drive (2000') and a multi-use path section along the access road from LaVista Road to Weems Drive (500')[2]	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2004	$56,000	2005	$562,000	$618,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$123,600
Provide pedestrian and bicycle connection from Northlake Parkway to neighborhoods to the north, including: sidewalks and designated bike route (share the road) along Parklake Drive from Northlake Parkway to northern terminus (1400'), multi-use path through wooded area to connect Parklake Drive to Lauderdale Drive (700'), multi-use path through wooded area to connect Northlake Parkway to Henderson Mill Court (200'), multi-use path section along Northlake Parkway from Henderson Mill Court connection to proposed signalized intersection at Northlake Court (400')[2]	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2005	$22,000	2006	$224,000	$246,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$49,200
[1] Costs do not include right-of-way										
[2] Based on a streetscape cost of $500 per foot for elements such as street trees and landscaping, benches near street corners, pedestrian scale lighting fixtures, and aesthetic sidewalk surface treatments.										

FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2006										
Transportation Projects										
Description	**Type of Improvement**	**Engineering Year**	**Engineering Costs**	**Construction Year**	**Construction Costs**	**Total Project Costs[1]**	**Responsible Party**	**Funding Source**	**Local Source &**	**Match Amount**
Provide Multi-use path connection from Northlake Parkway to neighborhoods to the east, including: designated bike route/multi-use path through the business park from the east end of Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road (1400') and multi-use path section along north side of LaVista Road from the path connection at the business park to connect to neighborhoods to the east (1500')[2]	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2005	$21,000	2006	$209,000	$230,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$46,000
Provide pedestrian and bicycle improvements along east/west portion of Northlake Parkway, including sidewalks, bike lanes (requiring widening of roadway), installation of sidewalks and protective fencing on I-285 bridge, and share the road bike section on I-285 bridge	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2004	$207,000	2005	$2,072,000	$2,279,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$455,800
Provide bicycle and multi-use facilities to connect to planned PATH Foundation trails, including: multi-use trail from park development at former Korean church site to Northlake Parkway along Northlake Court (PATH Foundation route – 3200'), multi-use path section along Northlake Parkway from trail at Northlake Court to new traffic signal at the eastern mall entrance (200'), multi-use path section along side of mall property from Northlake Parkway to LaVista Road (2400'), multi-use path section along LaVista Road from Northlake Mall to Ranchwood Drive (300'), multi-use path section along access road from LaVista Road to Weems Drive (500'), multi-use path section along Weems Drive to PATH Foundation planned route along rail spur (1600'), multi-use path section along rail spur and rail line (PATH Foundation route – 1400'), multi-use path section along Crescent Center Boulevard from rail line to southern terminus (PATH Foundation route – 1700'), multi-use path section from Crescent Center Boulevard to US 29 along new alignment (PATH Foundation route – 2400')[2]	Pedestrian / Bicycle	2005	$197,000	2006	$1,972,000	$2,169,000	Dekalb County	TIP	Dekalb County	$433,800
[1] Costs do not include right-of-way										
[2] Based on a streetscape cost of $500 per foot for elements such as street trees and landscaping, benches near street corners, pedestrian scale lighting fixtures, and aesthetic sidewalk surface treatments.										

FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2006										
Land Use and Organizational Projects										
Description	**Type of Improvement**	**Engineering Year**	**Engineering Costs**	**Implement Year**	**Construction Costs**	**Total Project Costs**[1]	**Responsible Party**	**Funding Source**	**Local Source &**	**Match Amount**
Pursue funding for capital investments from all available sources	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2002 - 2006	N/A	TBD	NCA	Local, State, Regional	TBD	N/A
Approve community future land use map	Land Use	N/A	N/A	2002	N/A	N/A	NCA	Local	N/A	N/A
Initiate discussions with absentee landowners regarding community concerns	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2002 - 2004	N/A	N/A	NCA	Local	N/A	N/A
Develop schedule of monthly meetings to discuss the state of development in the Study Area	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2002	N/A	N/A	NCA	Local	N/A	N/A
Expand content and circulation of NCA newsletter	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2002	N/A	TBD	NCA	Local	N/A	N/A
Aggressively promote NCA to business owners, workers, and shoppers	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2002	N/A	N/A	NCA	Local	N/A	N/A
Create Northlake Planning District as an amendment to DeKalb Comprehensive Plan	Land Use	N/A	N/A	2003	N/A	N/A	NCA, DeKalb County	Local	N/A	N/A
Revise existing zoning and development regulations to include a Northlake Overlay	Land Use/Design	N/A	N/A	2003	N/A	**$18,000**	NCA, DeKalb County	Local	**$18,000**	N/A
Develop relationship between NCA, DeKalb Planning, and PATH Foundation to implement Greenways Plan	Organizational	N/A	N/A	2003	N/A	N/A	NCA, DeKalb County	Local	N/A	N/A
Establish special design standards for Study Area	Design	N/A	N/A	2004	N/A	**$12,000**	DeKalb County	Local	**$12,000**	N/A
Establish a beautification fund among area businesses to pay for landscape upgrades, public art, etc.	Organizational/Design	N/A	N/A	2004	N/A	**TBD**	NCA	Local	**TBD**	N/A
Work with public/private entities to develop a town square or central civic plaza	Land Use	N/A	N/A	2006	N/A	**TBD**	NCA, DeKalb County		**TBD**	N/A
Encourage DeKalb County to locate a public use within the Study Area	Land Use	N/A	N/A	2006	N/A	N/A	DeKalb County		N/A	N/A



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map not to scale

Roadway Network

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Traffic Signal

4 Number of Through Lanes

Free Flow Movement

Prohibited Left Turn Movement

Figure T-1

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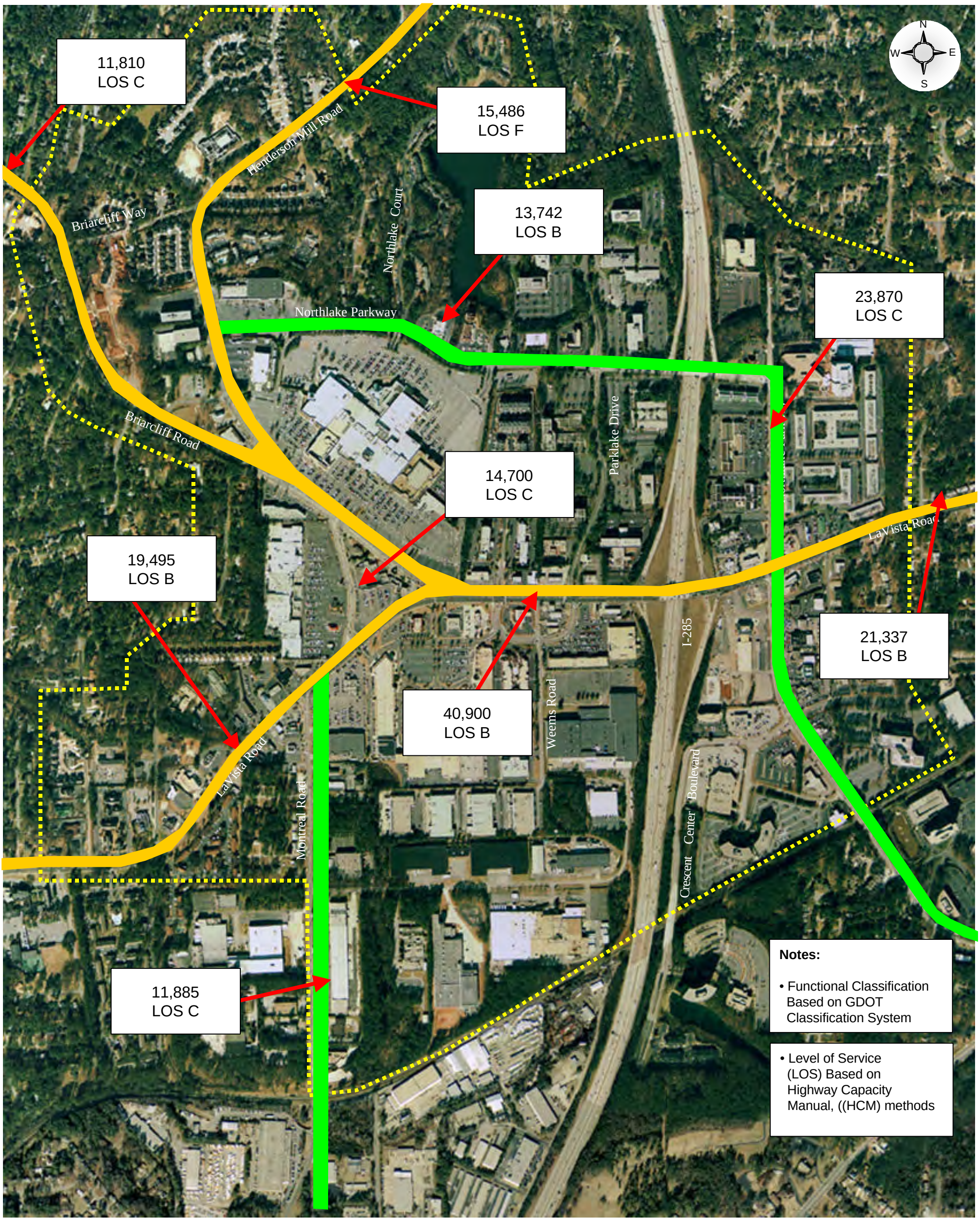

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Roadway Volumes and Functional Classification

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

19,495-1999 Daily Traffic Volumes (both directions) based on GDOT Count Stations

- Urban Minor Arterial
- Urban Collector

Figure T-2

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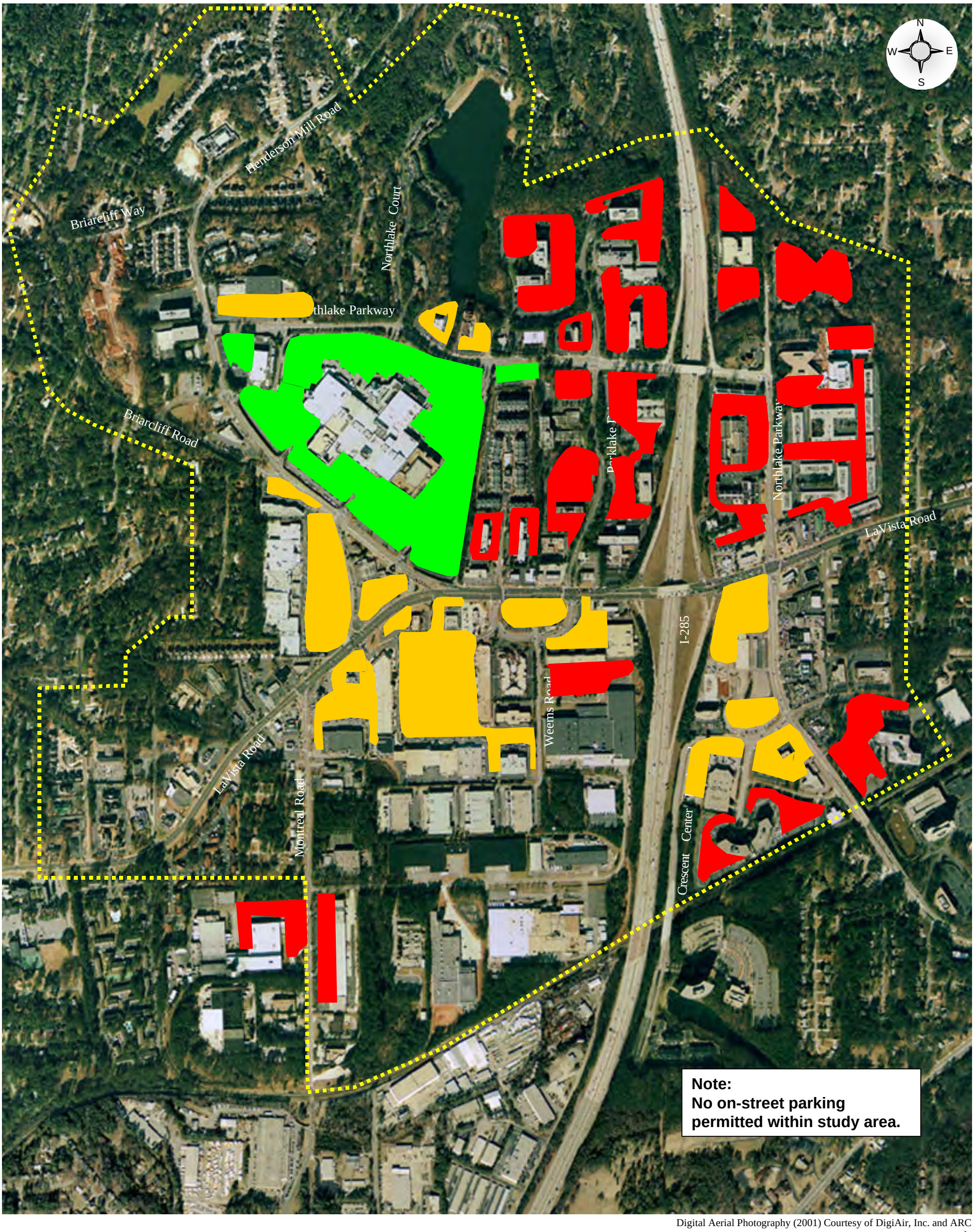

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map not to scale

Major Off-street Parking Facilities

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- Northlake Mall Parking
- Retail Center Parking
- Office Parking

Figure T-3

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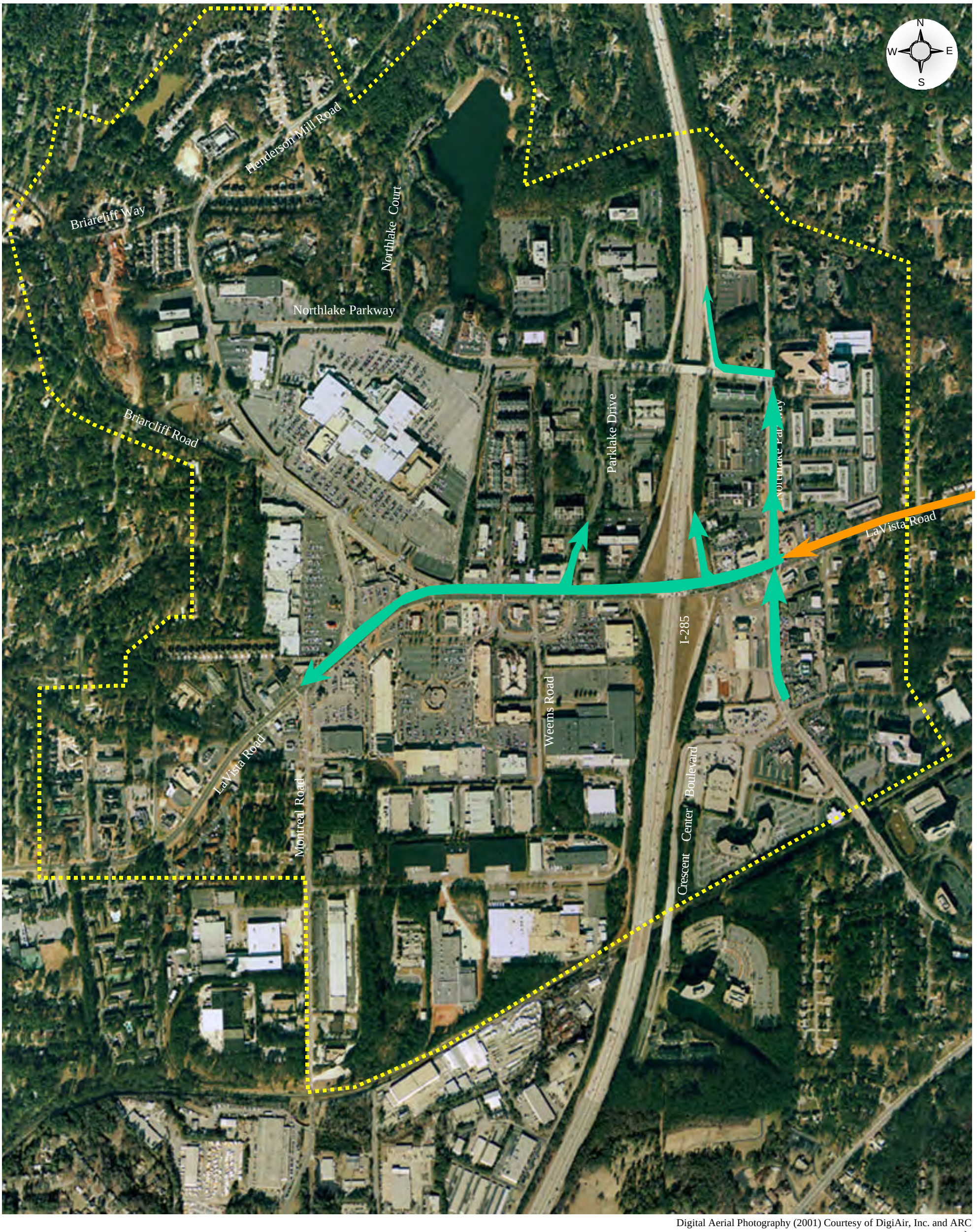

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

AM Peak Hour Observed Traffic Congestion

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Primary Traffic flows

Congested Areas

Figure T-4

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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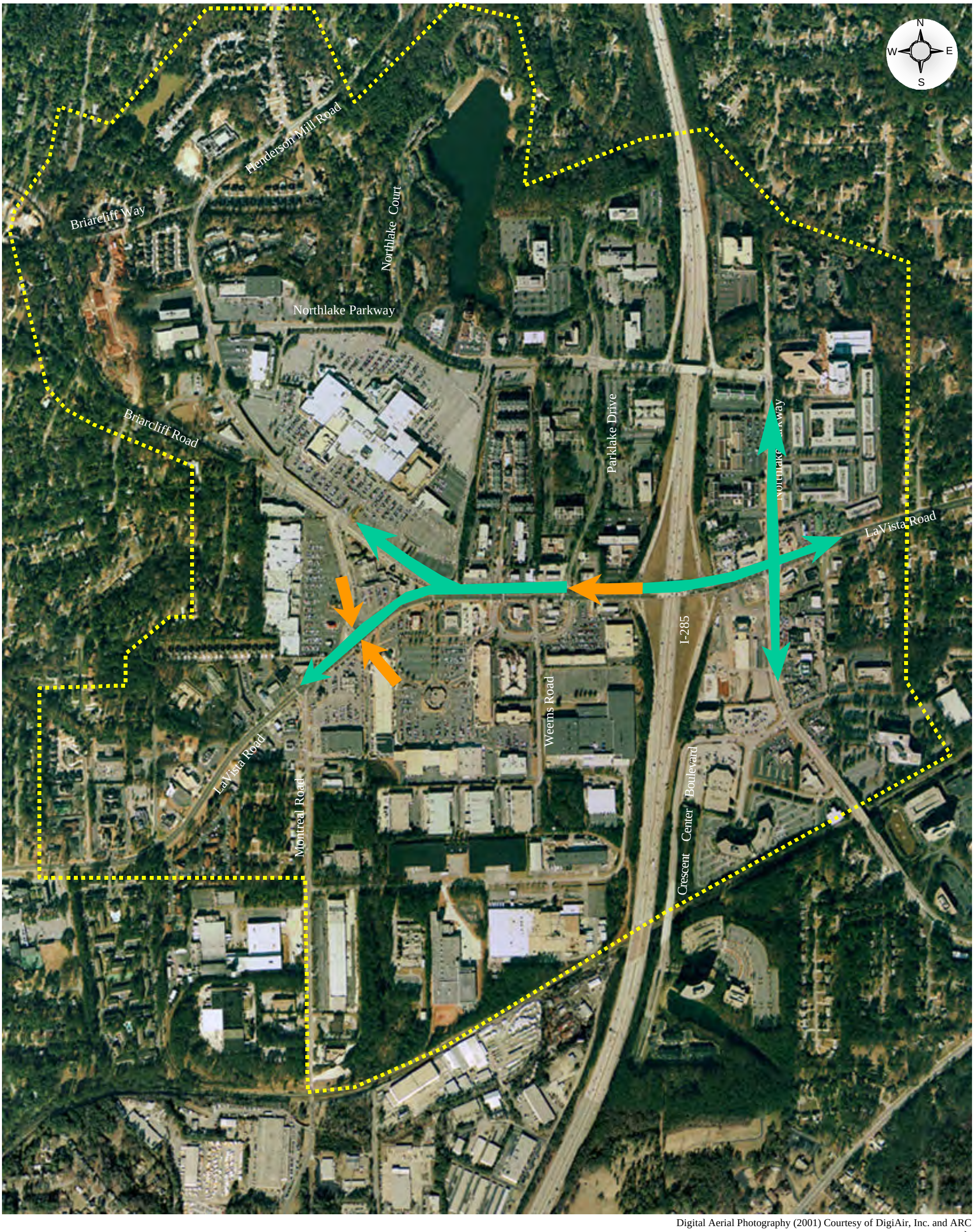

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Noon Peak Hour Observed Traffic Congestion

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Primary Traffic flows

Congested Areas

Figure T-5

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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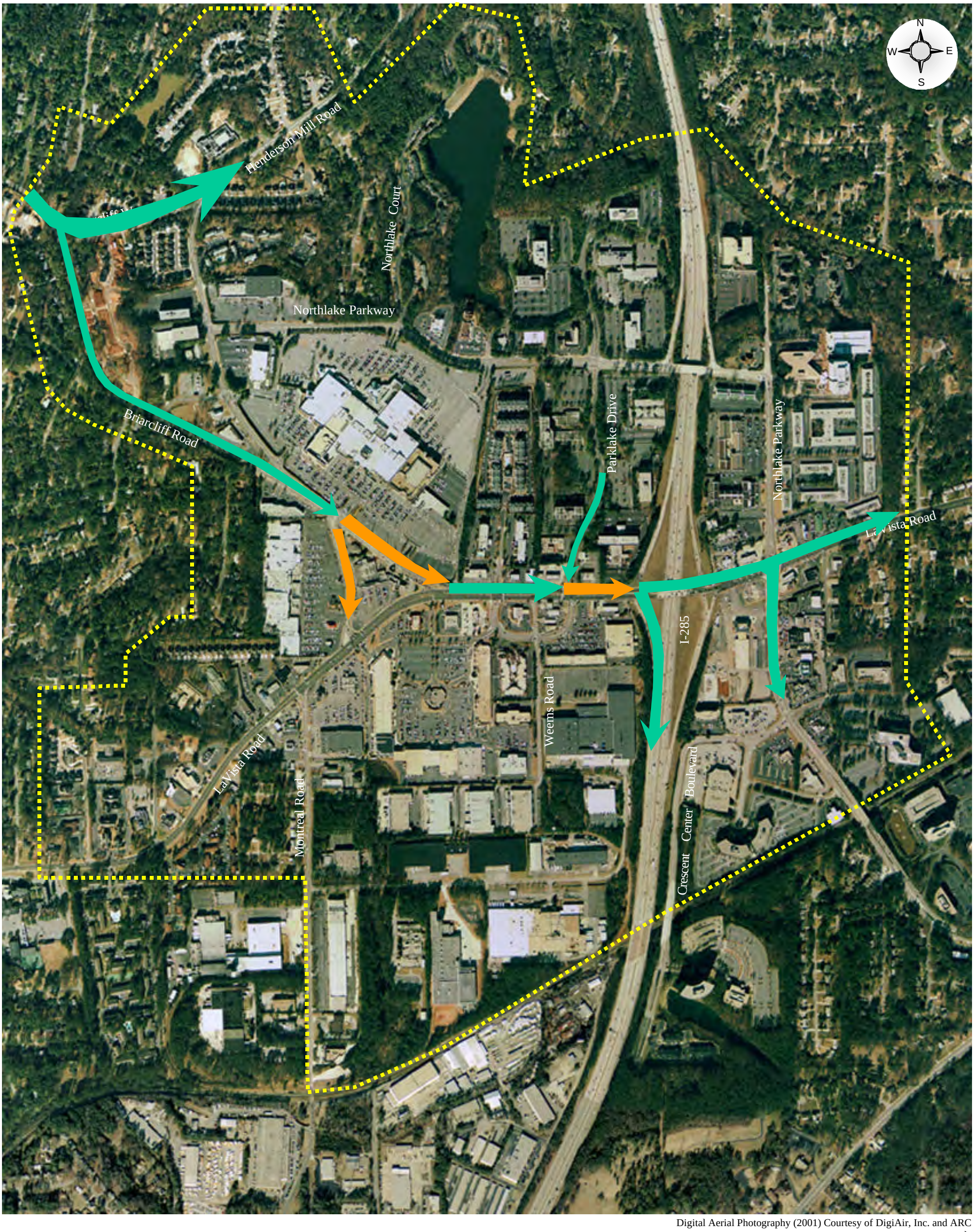

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map not to scale

PM Peak Hour Observed Traffic Congestion

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Primary Traffic flows

Congested Areas

Figure T-6

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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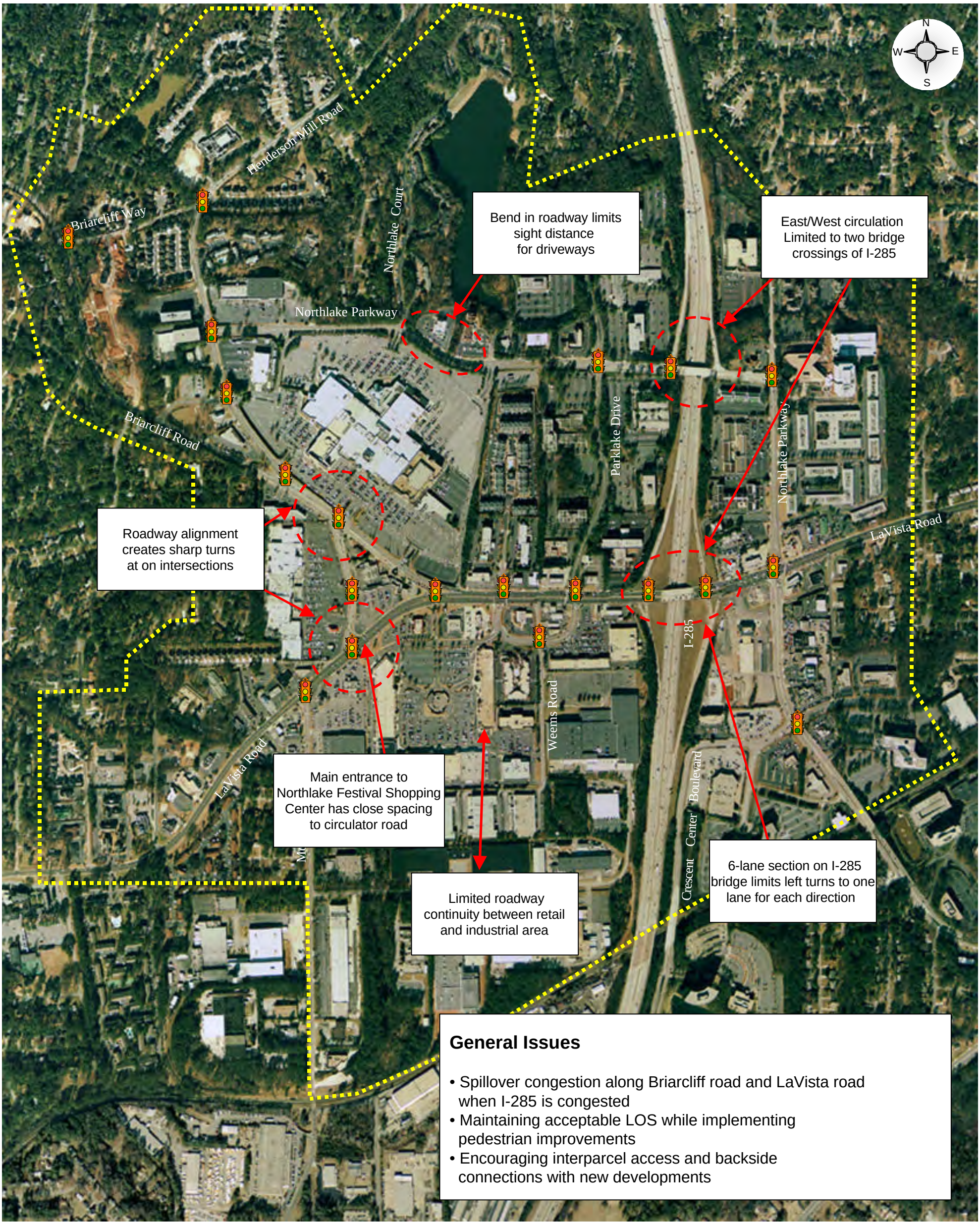

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Vehicle Circulation Issues

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Traffic Signal

Figure T-7

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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Route 91 to:
• Embry Hills Shopping Center
• Doraville Rail Station

Route 125 to:
• KOGER Executive Center
• Chamblee Rail Station

Route 91 to:
• Buford-Clairmont Mall
• Brookhaven Rail Station

Route 30 to:
• Toco Hill shopping center
• Lindberg Rail Station

Route 125 to:
• Dekalb Community College
• Dekalb General Hospital
• Avondale Rail Station

Henderson Mill Road
Northlake Court
Parklake Drive
Northlake Parkway
LaVista Road
I-285
Weems Road
Montreal Road
Crescent Center Boulevard

N
W
E
S

Transit Issues

- Possible location of Commuter Rail Station in area
- Possible shuttle opportunities with Commuter Rail Station
- Potential need for transit transfer center at Northlake Mall
- Current bus routes do not travel to Mall front door

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Transit Routes and Issues

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- MARTA Bus Route 30 (LaVista)-Headway-30 min peak hr /45 min off-peak-6am to 11pm
- MARTA Bus Route 91 (Henderson Mill)-Headway-30 min peak hr /50 min off-peak am to 9pm
- MARTA Bus Route 125 (Chamblee-Avondale)-Headway-20 min peak hr/40 min off-peak-5am to 1am
- Proposed Athens-Atlanta Commuter Rail Line

Figure T-8

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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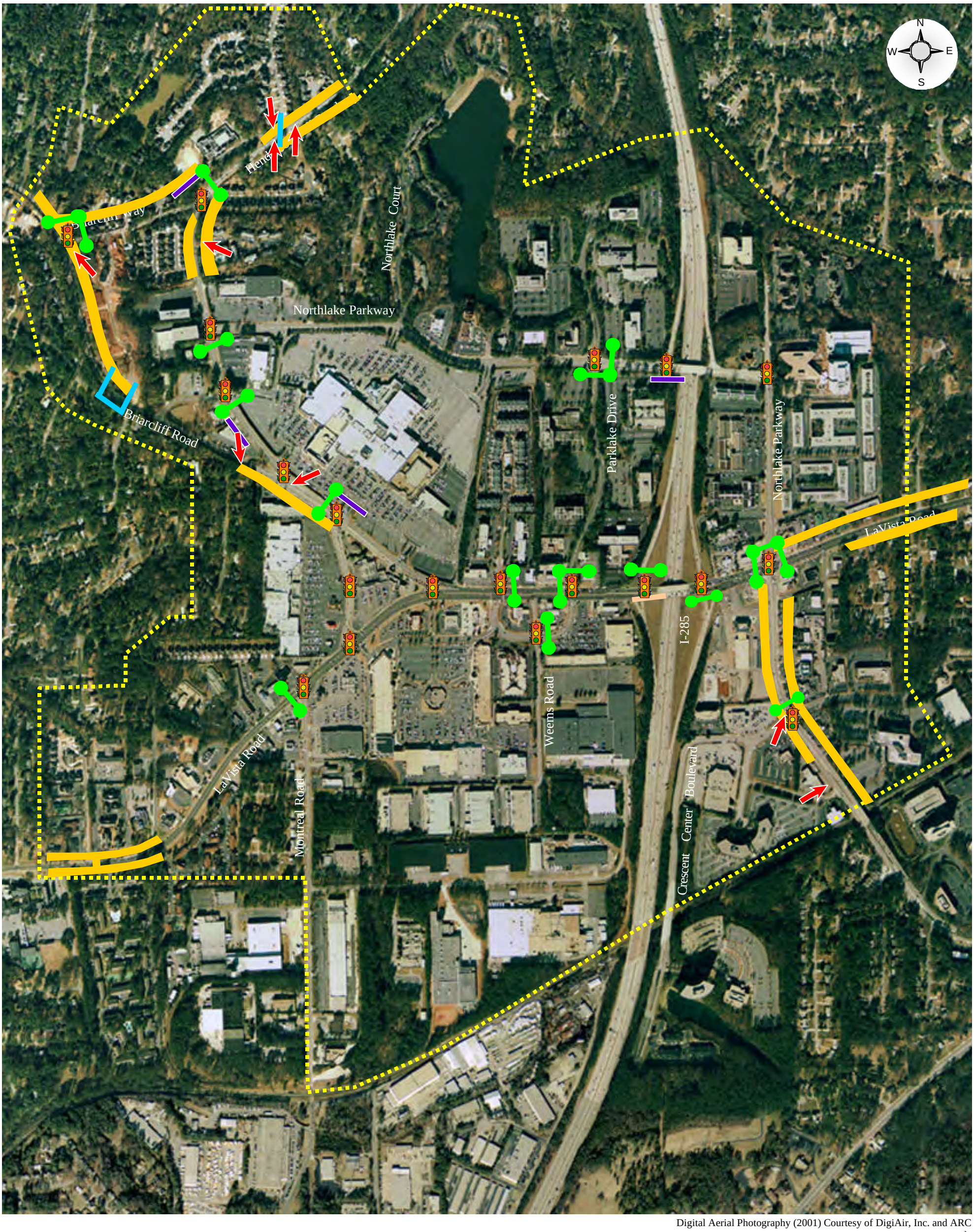

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Pedestrian Circulation

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- Traffic Signal
- Sidewalks
- Handicapped Ramp missing with existing Sidewalk
- Signalized Pedestrian crossing with indicators
- Signalized Pedestrian crossing without indicators
- Unsignalized crosswalk

Figure T-9

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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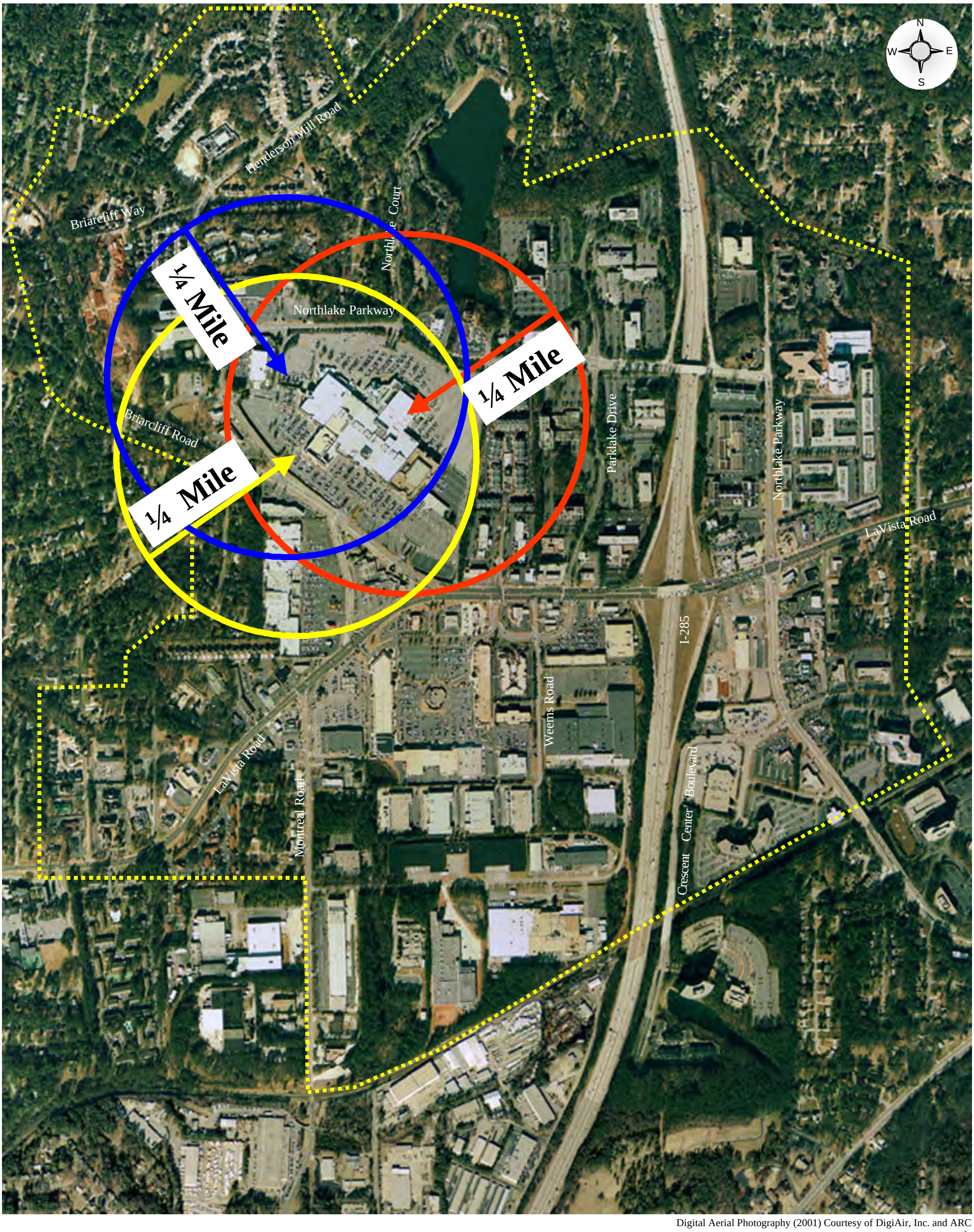


Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Walkable Distance from Northlake Mall

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

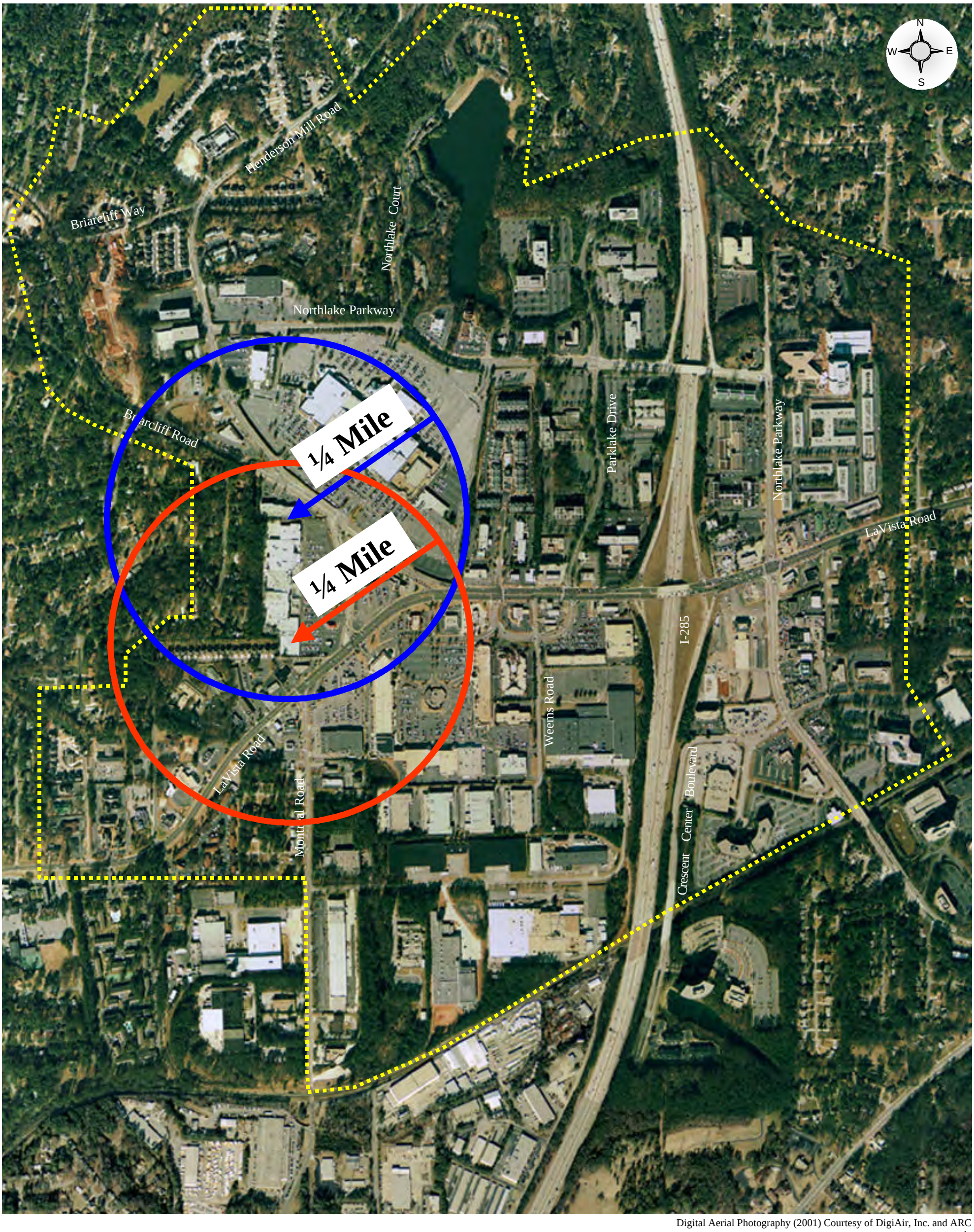
Legend

¼ mile Walkable Distance

Figure T-10

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.



Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Walkable Distance from Briarcliff Village Shopping Center

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

¼ mile Walkable Distance

Figure T-11

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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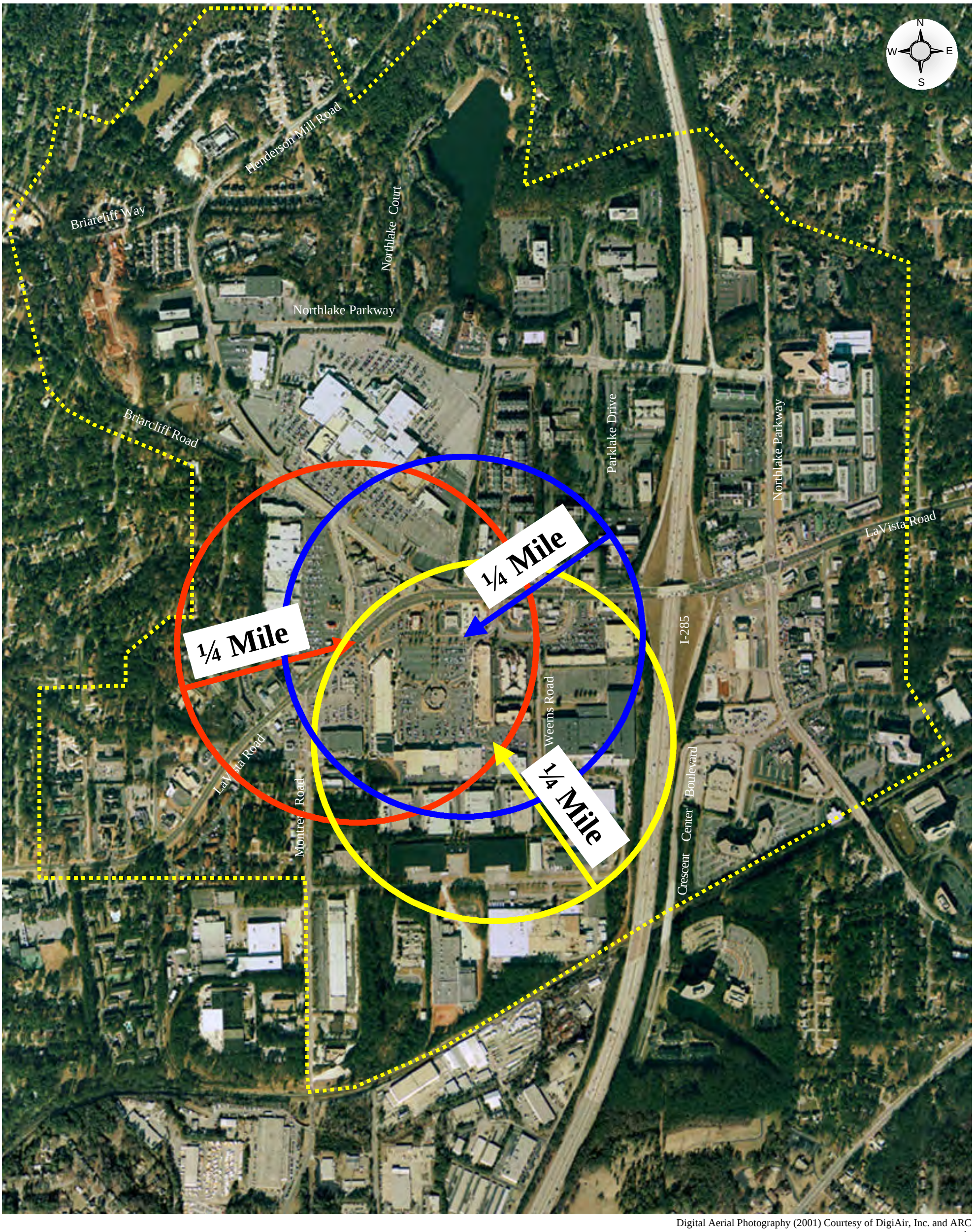

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map not to scale

Walkable Distance from Northlake Festival Shopping Center

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

¼ mile Walkable Distance

Figure T-12

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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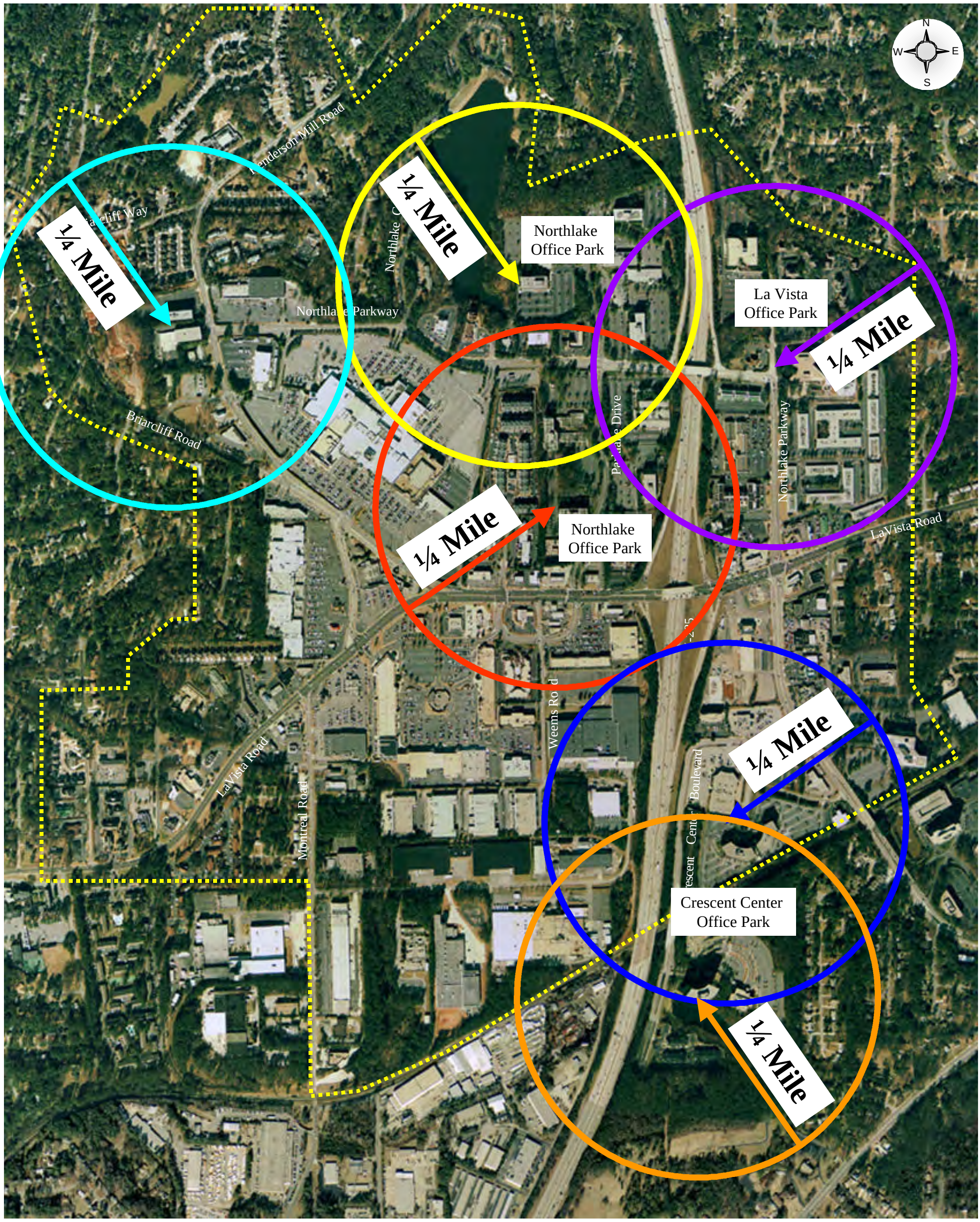

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Walkable Distance from Various Office Buildings

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

¼ mile Walkable Distance

Figure T-13

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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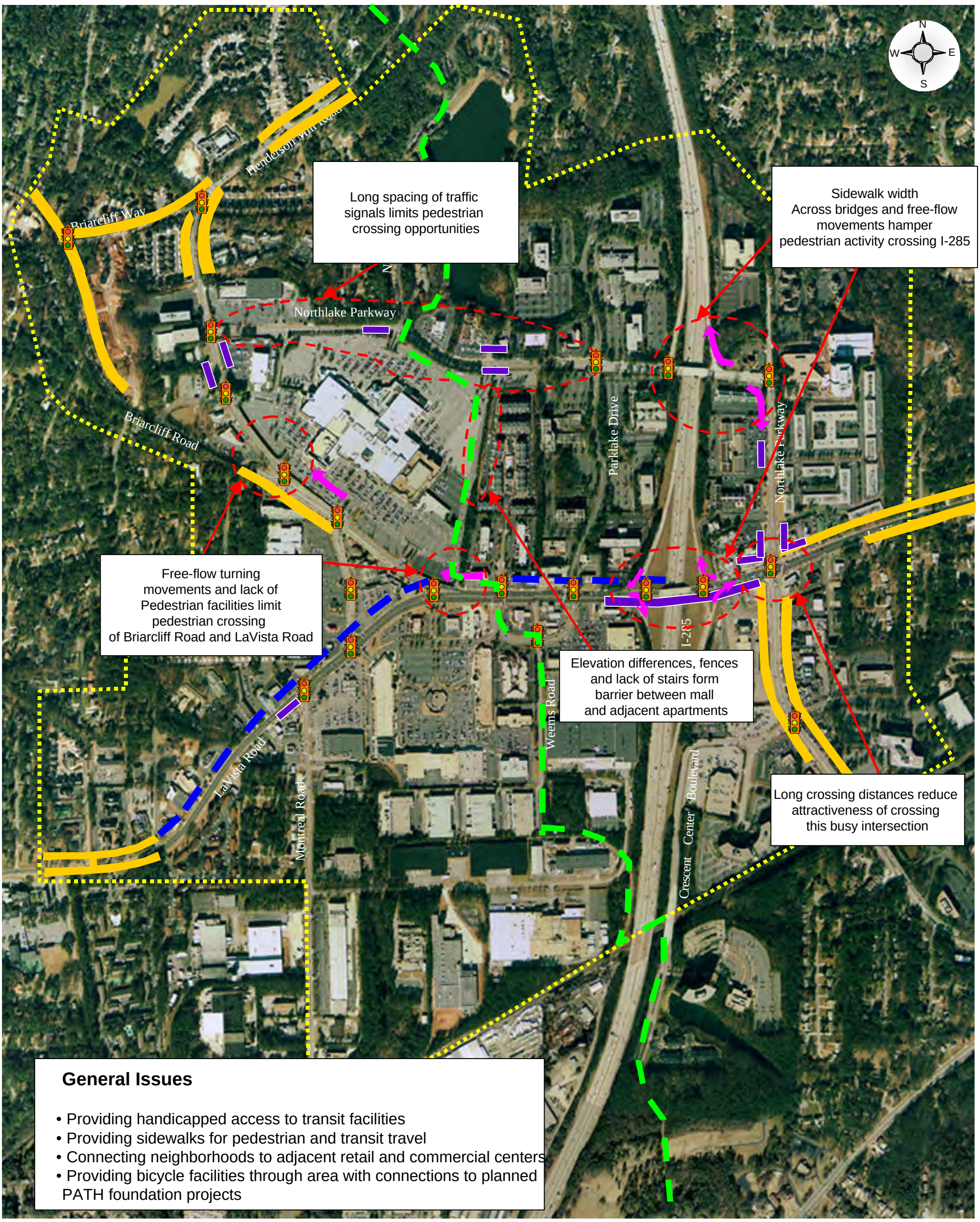

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Pedestrian Circulation Issues

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- Free-flow movements
- Sidewalk
- Sidewalk planned in GDOT Work program STP 0002-00(905)
- Observed pedestrian activity
- PATH Foundation Planned Trail

Figure T-14

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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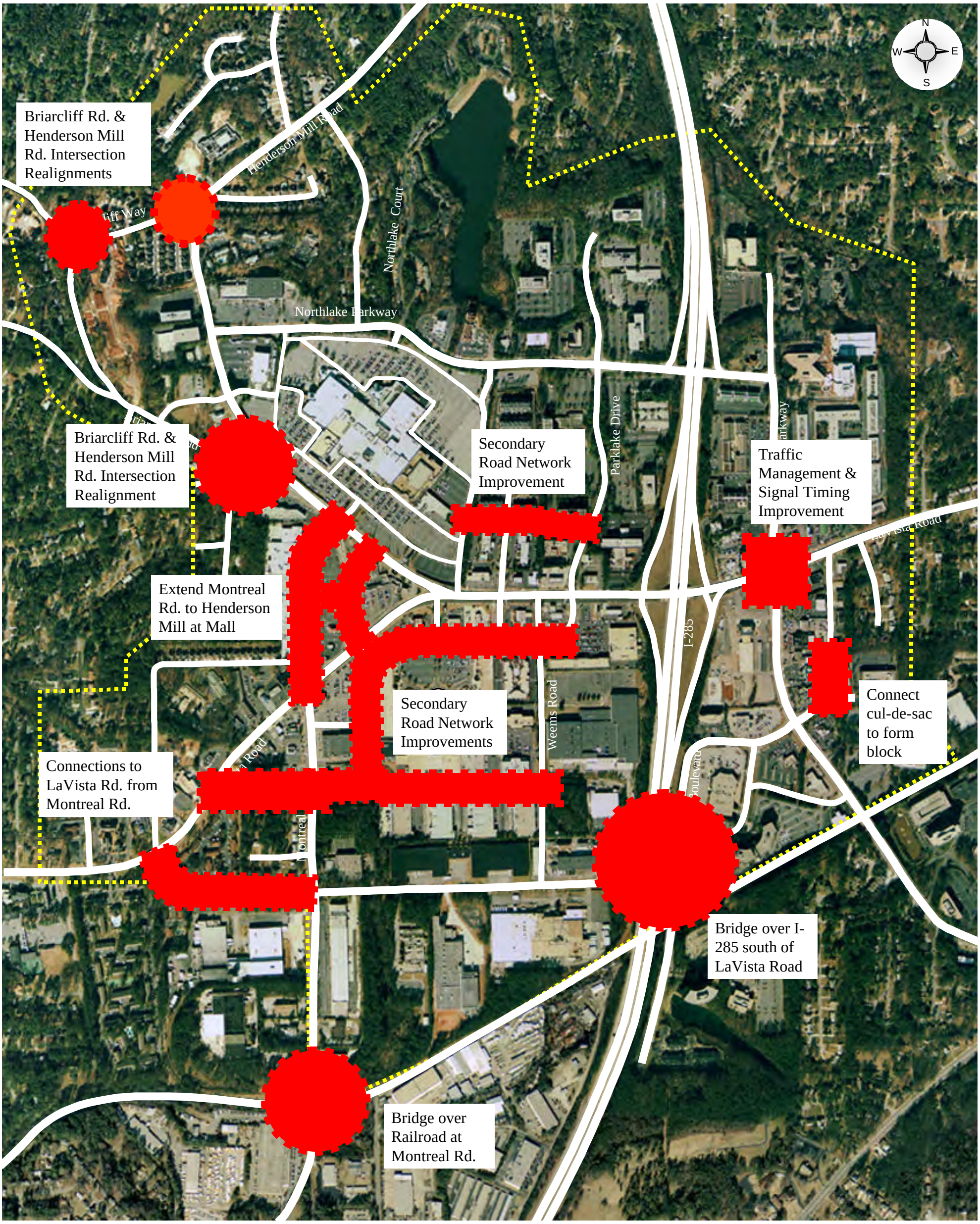

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Future Road Improvement Recommendations - Ten Year Planning Horizon

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS)

Legend

Area of Recommended Road Changes

Figure TR-1

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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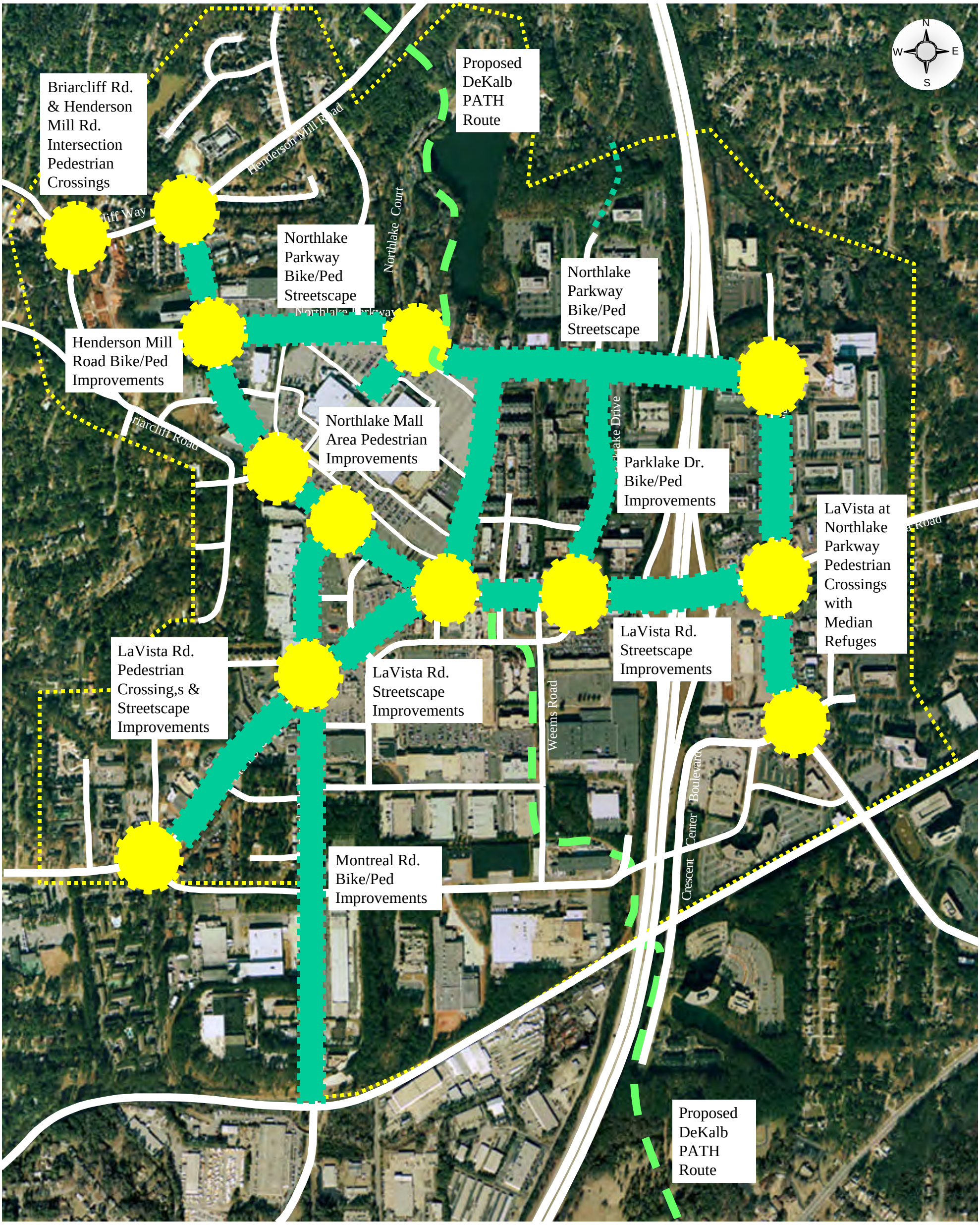

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Major Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvement Recommendations - Ten Year Planning Horizon

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS)

Legend

Areas of Recommended Bicycle/Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements

Areas of Intersection Pedestrian Crossing Safety Improvements

PATH Foundation Planned Trail

Note: General sidewalk improvements are recommended throughout the Study Area

Figure TR-2

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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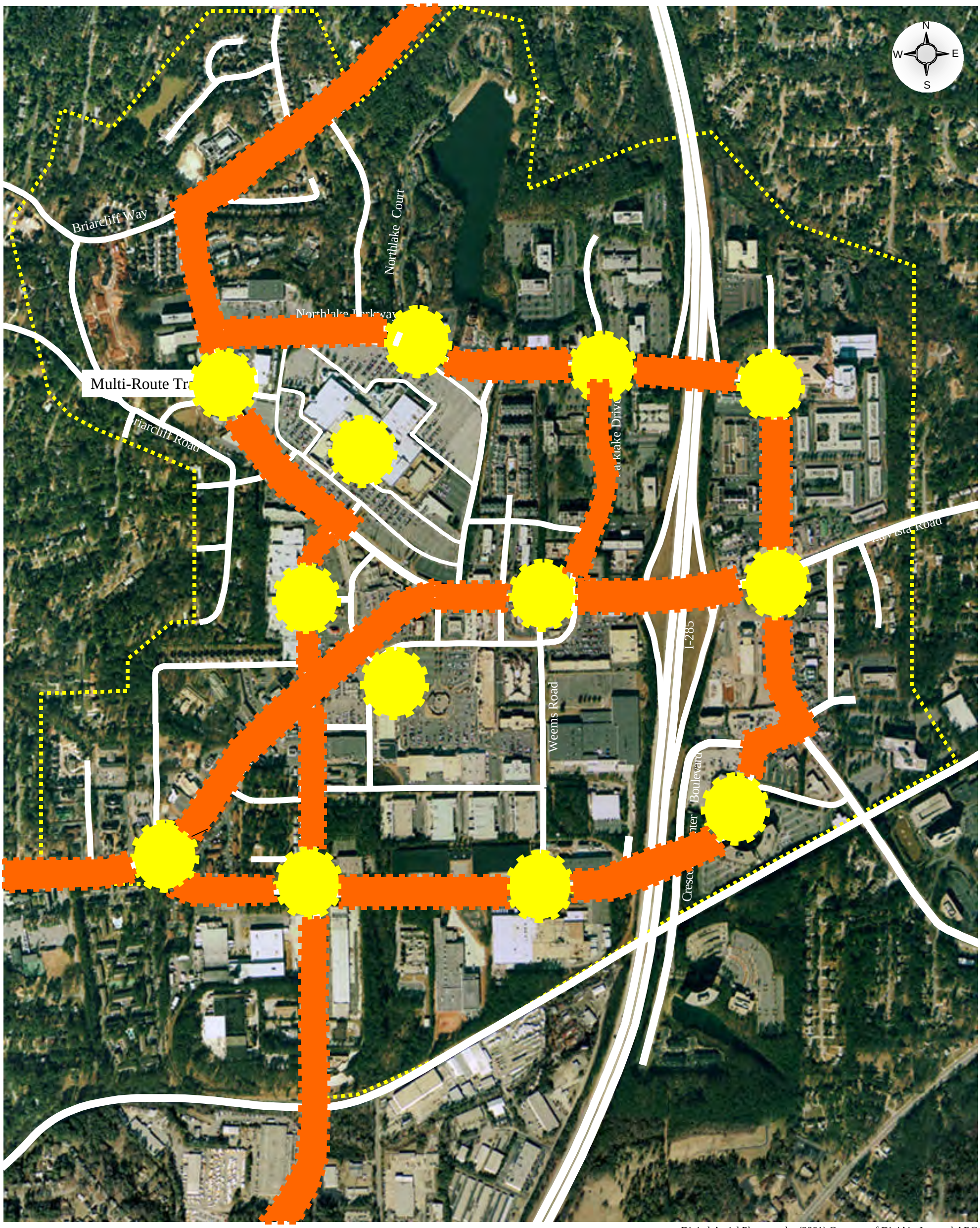

Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Transit Serviced Corridors - Ten Year Planning Horizon

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS)

Legend

- Primary Transit Corridors
- Primary Transit Stops

Figure TR-3

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

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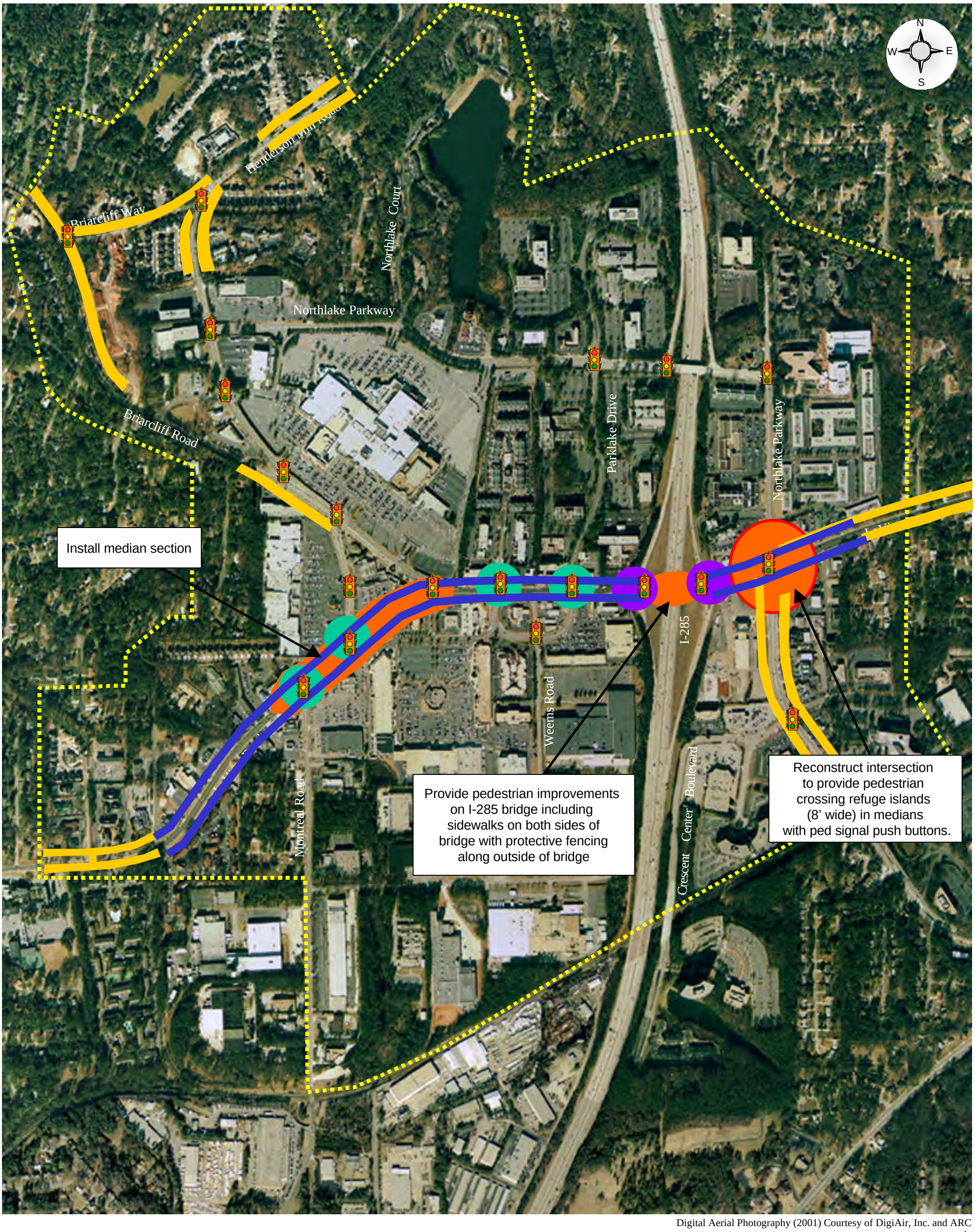


Digital Aerial Photography (2001) Courtesy of DigiAir, Inc. and ARC
map not to scale

Recommended Immediate Implementation Projects

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

Existing Sidewalk

Proposed sidewalk/streetscape

Crosswalks/ped signal phases on all sides of intersection

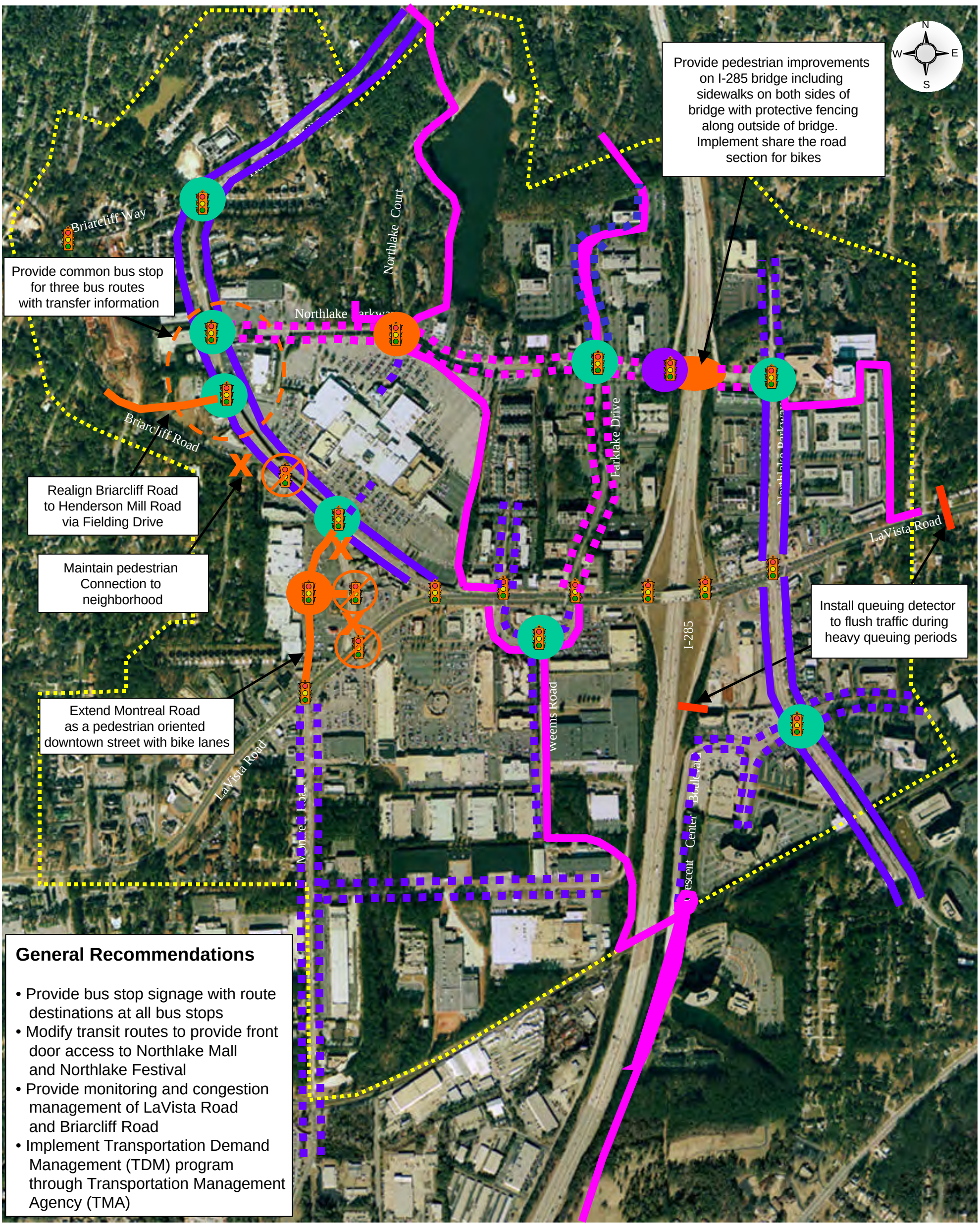
Crosswalks/ped signal phases on side roads with one main road crossing

Roadway/bridge improvement

Figure TR-4

URBAN DESIGN UDC COLLABORATIVE

DWA Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.



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map not to scale

Recommended Short-Term Projects

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- Proposed sidewalk
- Proposed sidewalk/streetscape
- Proposed Bike lanes with sidewalk
- Proposed multiuse path
- Proposed share the road section

- Crosswalks/ped signal phases on all sides of intersection
- Crosswalks/ped signal phases on side roads with one main road crossing
- Roadway/bridge improvement
- Queuing Detector

- X — Close roadway access to intersection
- Install traffic signal with ped crossings
- Remove traffic signal

Figure TR-5

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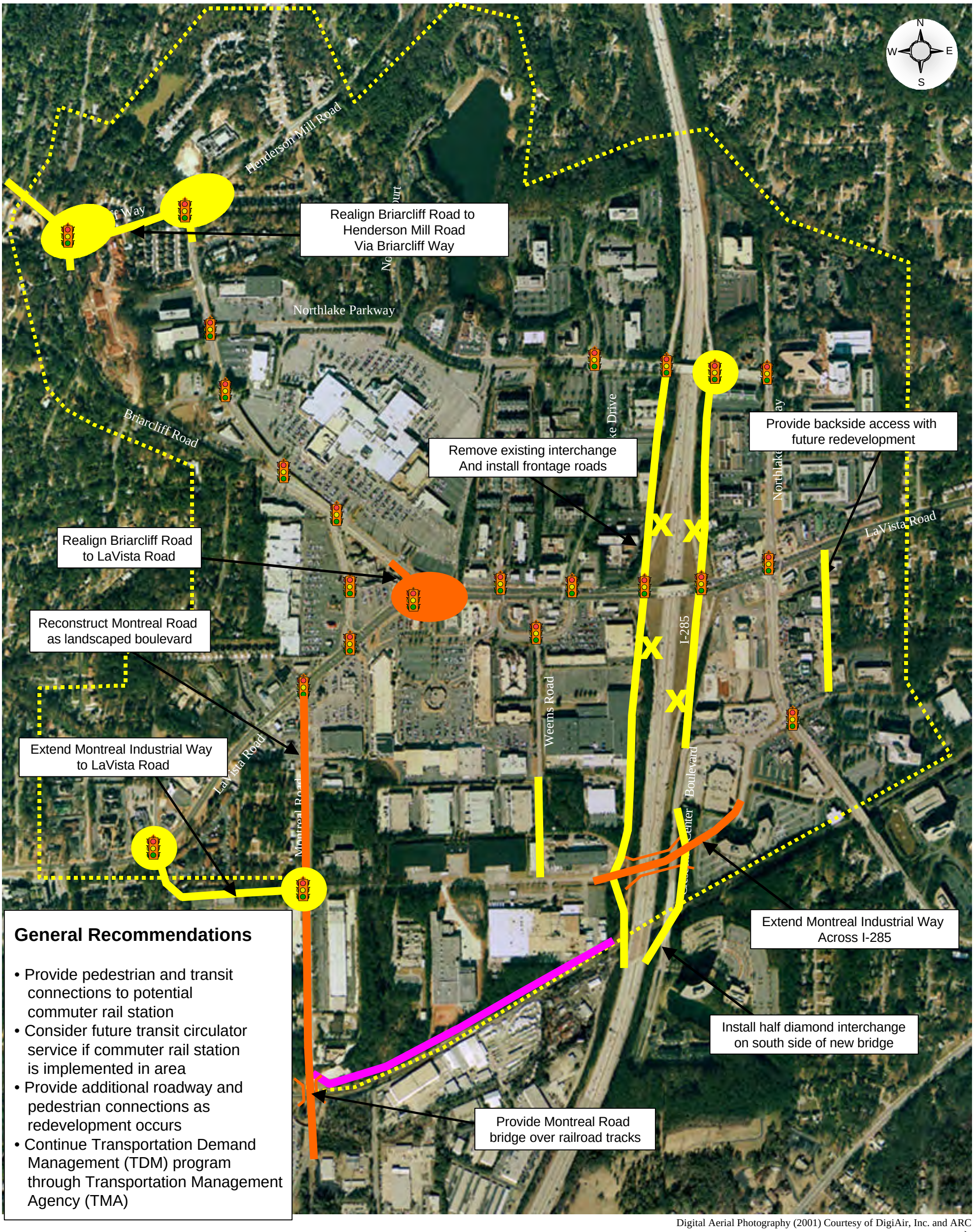

General Recommendations

- Provide pedestrian and transit connections to potential commuter rail station
- Consider future transit circulator service if commuter rail station is implemented in area
- Provide additional roadway and pedestrian connections as redevelopment occurs
- Continue Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program through Transportation Management Agency (TMA)

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Recommended Mid to Long-Term Projects

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS) - November 2001

Legend

- Mid-Term roadway/bridge improvement (5-10 yrs.)
- Long-Term roadway/bridge improvement (> 10 yrs)
- Proposed Mid-Term multiuse path
- Mid-Term roadway and intersection modification
- Long-Term roadway and intersection modification
- X — Close roadway access to interchange
- Install traffic signal with ped crossings

Figure TR-6

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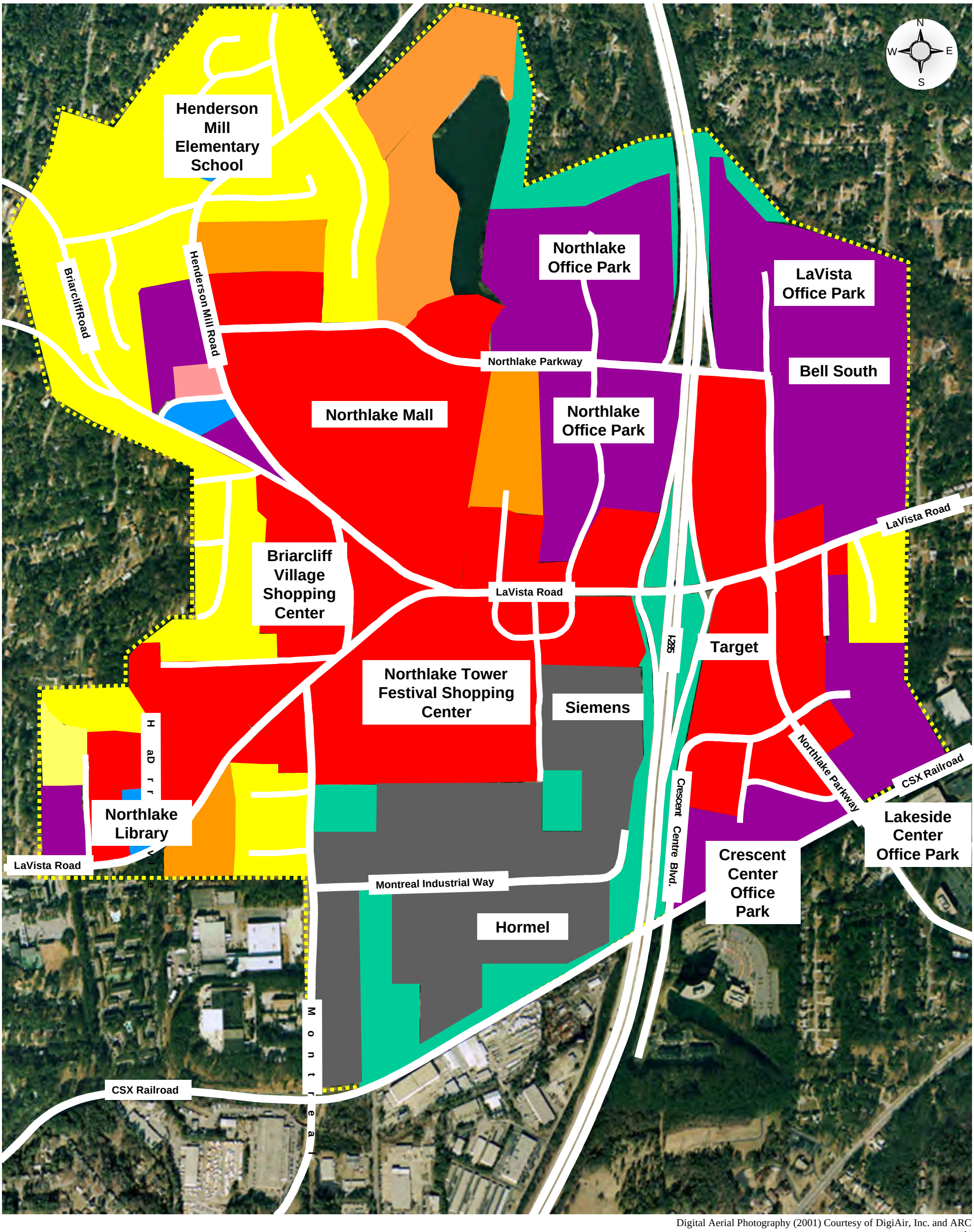

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map not to scale

Existing Land Use Inventory with Major Centers and Businesses

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS)

Legend

- Commercial
- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential
- Office
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Transportation, Communication, Utilities
- Undeveloped/Open Space

Figure L-1

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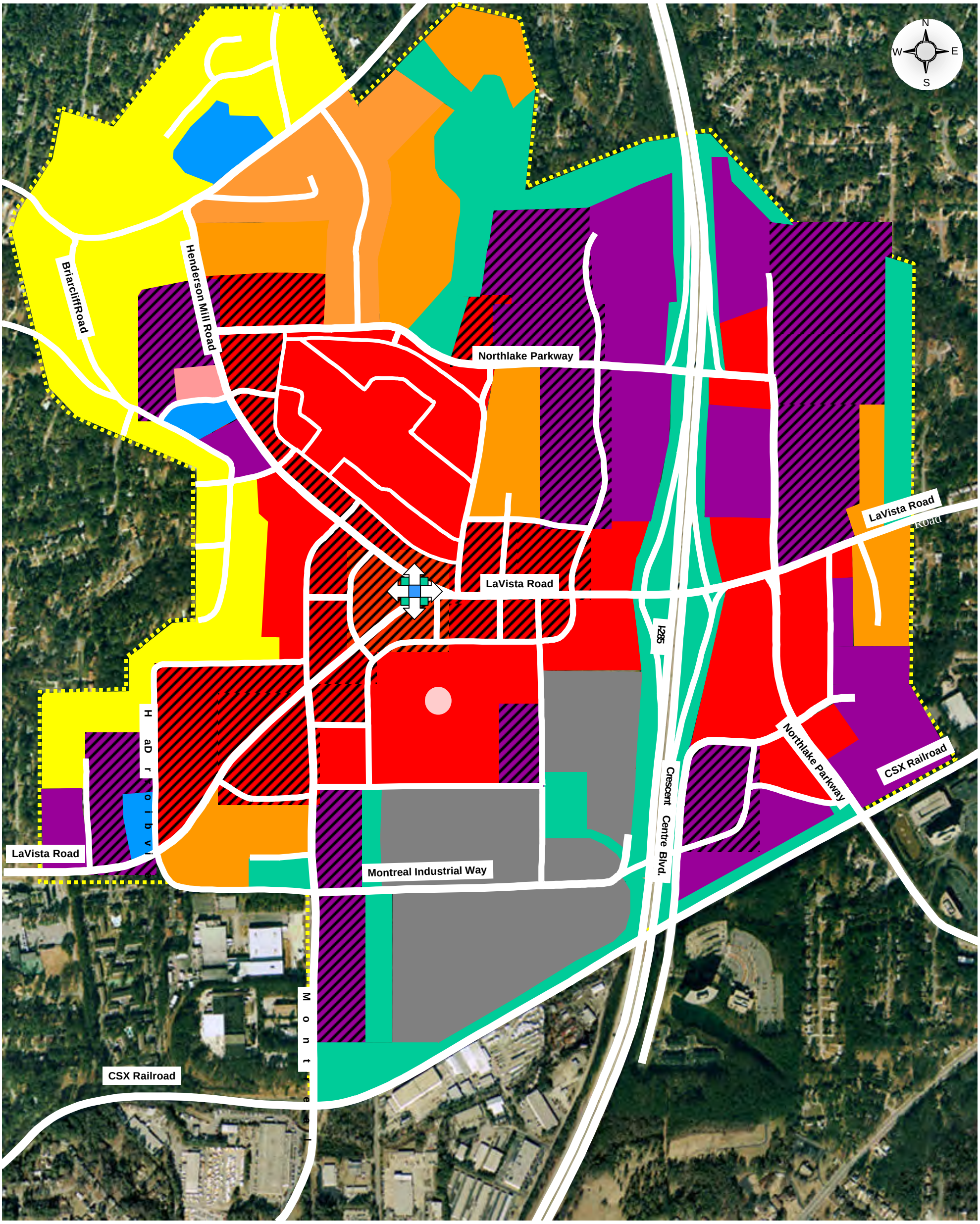

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map not to scale

Future Land Use Recommendations - Ten Year Planning Horizon

Northlake Livable Centers Initiative - Activity Center Town Center Investment Policy Study (LCI/ACTIPS)

Legend

- Single-family residential (8 DU/AC Max)
- Multi-family residential (30 DU/AC Max)
- Mixed Use Commercial, Office and Residential
- Mixed Use Office and Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Light Industrial/Mixed
- Utilities
- Public/Institutional
- Parks/Greenways/Buffers/Transit Facilities
- Northlake Central Focus Area

Note: Areas of Recommended Land Use Change are indicated with Bold Colors

Figure L-2

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