



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

File #: 2020-0841

9/1/2020

File Status: Preliminary Item

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): 4 & 6

Application of the Director of Planning & Sustainability to amend text in the DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7, to include the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan as a Small Area Plan (SAP).

PETITION NO: N9. TA-20-1244141 2020-0841

PROPOSED USE: Planning Study

LOCATION: 4900 Memorial Drive

PARCEL NO. : 18-043-01-004

INFO. CONTACT: Cedric Hudson, Administrator, Long Range Planning

PHONE NUMBER: 404-371-2155

PURPOSE:

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability to amend text in the DeKalb County 2035 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7, to include the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan as a Small Area Plan (SAP)". The Plan is located along the corridor of Memorial Drive, bounded by Interstate 285 to the west and E. Ponce de Leon Avenue to the east, and is further defined by the Boundary Map.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Approval with a Condition.

PLANNING COMMISSION: Pending.

PLANNING STAFF: Adoption of the Plan and Resolution.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The DeKalb County entered into contracts with Pond, Inc. (the consultant) to implement the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contract scope of services for the Memorial Drive corridor. The Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan is located on Memorial Drive, State Highway 78, bounded by Ridge Avenue to the east and Interstate 285 to the west. The Memorial Drive corridor is recognized as a major connection between the City of Atlanta and Stone Mountain Park, and is home to many international

businesses, Georgia State University, Georgia Piedmont College, major retail chains, as well as Kensington MARTA Station. A Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders was appointed and a number of public meetings and workshops conducted between May 2019 and December 2019 for community participation and input into the goals and objectives of the plan. This Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contains recommendations which substantiate the need for sustainable land uses, economic and transportation investment in the area. This Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contains an Action Plan that will guide short- and long-term implementation projects, along with the involvement of a grassroots Community Action Group (CAG).

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Pending.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: Approval 7-3-0. The condition recommended is that land use character areas and zoning districts do not change. Discussion included diversity of community outreach and the status of Land Use Character areas.

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA TO ADOPT THE MEMORIAL DRIVE REVITALIZATION PLAN AND TO AMEND THE DEKALB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, SUPPLEMENTAL PLANS SECTION 5.7 TO INCLUDE THE PLAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners entered into contracts with Pond, Inc. (the consultant) to implement the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contract scope of services for the Memorial Drive corridor, and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan is located on Memorial Drive, State Highway 78, bounded by Ridge Avenue to the east and Interstate 285 to the west; and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Drive corridor is recognized as a major connection between the City of Atlanta and Stone Mountain Park, and is home to many international businesses, Georgia State University, Georgia Piedmont College, major retail chains, as well as Kensington MARTA Station; and

WHEREAS, a Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders was appointed and a number of public meetings and workshops conducted between May 2019 and December 2019 for community participation and input into the goals and objectives of the plan, and

WHEREAS, this Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contains recommendations which substantiate the need for sustainable land uses, economic and transportation investment in the area;

WHEREAS, this Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan contains an Action Plan that will guide short- and long-term implementation projects, along with the involvement of a grassroots Community Action Group.

August 20, 2020

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

- (1) hereby adopts the attached final draft Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan dated _____ and amends the 2035 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, Supplemental Plans Section 5.7, to include this Plan; and
- (2) the recommended policies and development standards contained in the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan provide specific guidelines to support the character areas of the Future Development Map of the 2035 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan and serve as the density/intensity standards; and
- (3) adoption of this Plan shall require a land use amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, to ensure consistency by incorporating these specific policies and Future Development Map changes.

APPROVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ___ day of _____, 2020.

STEVE BRADSHAW
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this ___ day of _____, 2020.

MICHAEL L. THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

August 20, 2020

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

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

VIVIANE ERNSTE
County Attorney

ANDREW BAKER, AICP
Director
Planning and Sustainability Department
DeKalb County, Georgia



Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan Study

Text Amendment to the DeKalb County Comprehensive plan

Small Area Plan

September 24, 2020 BOC Hearing

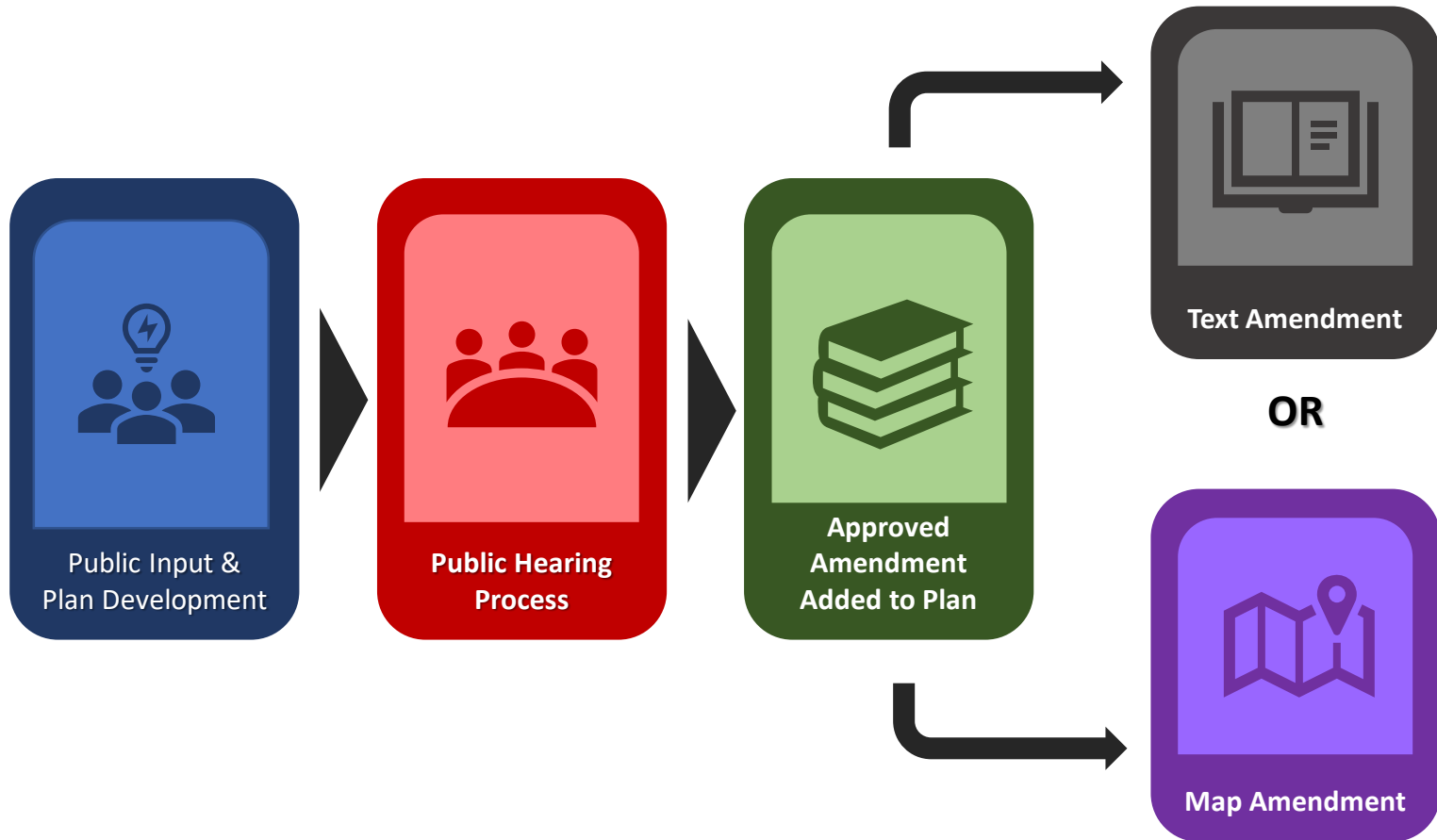




Purpose

To adopt the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan as a Small Area Plan to the 2035 Comprehensive Plan . Adopting the Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan will provide additional guideline for future development within the study area. The overall goal is to reference the Memorial Drive revitalization plan as the guiding principal for economic growth and development.

DeKalb County Amendment Process to the Comp Plan



Amends to the comp plan text may occur to any chapter of the plan, Chapters 1-8, and they may range from scrivener errors, policy, or any part of the physical text. SAPs are the most common. **NO CHANGES WILL OCCUR TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.** Land Use Recommendations are limited to development guidelines.

OR

Only amends to the Future Land Use Map and/or Concept Development Map may be implemented in this portion of the process. Changes occur to the following: Chapter 7 of the Comp Plan, Land Use Parcel Map Book, and the GIS Flex Map.

Small Area Plans (SAPs) Types



Occasionally, communities have unique character due to age, housing style or inefficient services. These small areas' needs aren't captured by planning tools designed for larger areas. Planning staff will partner with other groups in efforts to address these needs.

Various Types of Studies that form SAPs

- **Livable Center Initiative (LCI)** –Offered By Atlanta Regional Commission. This program link transportation and land use development strategies to create sustainable and livable communities.
- **DeKalb Master Active Living Plans (MALP)**- This program is more health focus through the promotion of physical activity and good nutrition to combat obesity in the county .
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) project**- The objective of this project is to strengthen the functionality and 'sense of place 'of communities.

DeKalb County Existing Small Area Plans(SAPs)

- 2003 Kensington Station Livable Center Initiative (LCI).
- 2012 Kensington Station Transit Oriented Development Supplemental Study.(LCI)
- Candler Road/Flat Shoals Parkway Livable Center Initiative (LCI)
- Medline Livable Center Initiative (LCI)
- North Druid Hills Livable Center Initiative (LCI)
- Wesley Chapel Activity Center (LCI)
- Belvedere Study Area – Master Active Living Plan (MALP)
- Panola Road/Salem Road - Master Active Living Plan (MALP)
- Covington Highway Corridor - Master Active Living Plan (MALP)
- Gresham Road Study - Master Active Living Plan (MALP)
- Indian Creek Marta Station- Master Active Living Plan (MALP)

Note : Memorial Drive is not an LCI nor MALP. However the progress by County Government ,Residents, and Stakeholders position Memorial Drive for a future Livable Center Initiative opportunity.



Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan Background !

- Past efforts included Memorial Drive Study by R.C. Lester (2000) and the Memorial Drive Guidelines (2003).
- In October 2018, District 4 Commissioner Steve Bradshaw along with the Planning Department allocated funds to conduct a Memorial Drive Revitalization Corridor Study.
- Planning team led by Pond & Company (assisted by Sycamore Consulting and Bleakly Advisory Group).
- The corridor planning process began in the Spring of 2019 concluding in the winter of 2019.





Corridor Plan Process

Three overall
steps were
taken 

Step 1. Data Gathering

- Focused on understanding the underlying conditions.
- Analyzing the market conditions, demographics, employment figures.
- Conducting physical assessment of the corridor.

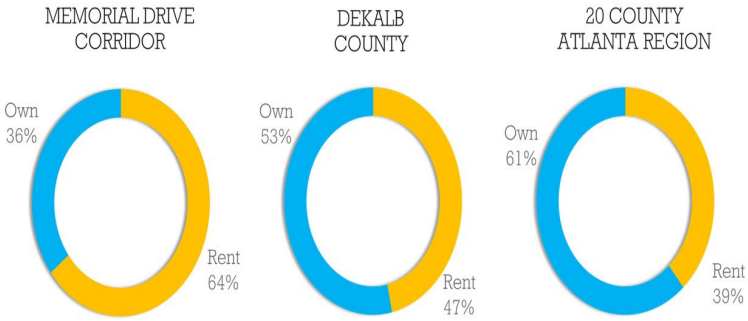
Step 2. Identifying Opportunities

- Consisted of robust community engagement process.
- Understanding the corridor from the perspective of it's residents, worker, and property owners

Step 3. Action Plan

- The final phase of the study consisted of formulating the vision for the corridor.

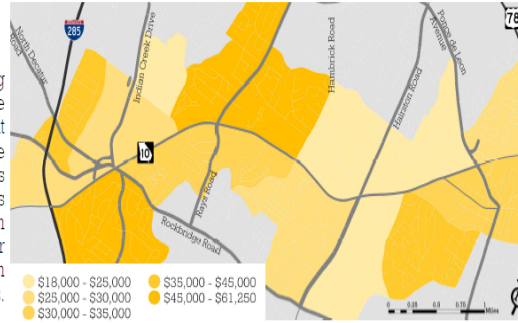




TODAY...

Median Household Income (2016)

Median household incomes along the corridor are fairly low with the highest observed rates topping at just over \$60,000 a year and some areas showing particular struggles with median household incomes less than \$25,000. The median income within the Corridor (\$37,794) is nearly 40% lower than DeKalb County's.



Average Commercial Rental Rates

According to CoStar, average commercial rental rates within the Corridor lag both the surrounding market area and the County.

- **Multi-family** - 28% lower than average rents in DeKalb
- **Retail** - 24% lower than average rents in DeKalb
- **Office** - 28% lower than average rents in DeKalb

Data Gathering

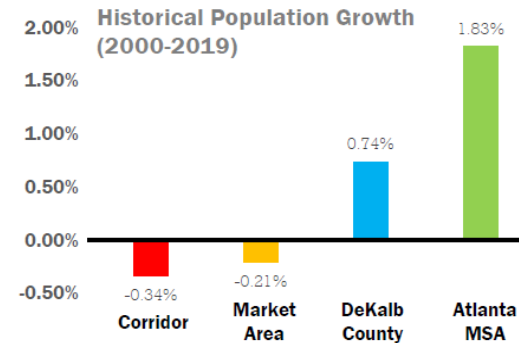
INCOME: There has been practically no new commercial development on the corridor in nearly 30 years.

POPULATION: The area has even seen a decrease in population.

ECONOMY: Despite some high-profile retail closures (such as Kroger and Publix) and a few struggling shopping plazas, vacancy rates tend to be low along the corridor, showing that most spaces are being well utilized.

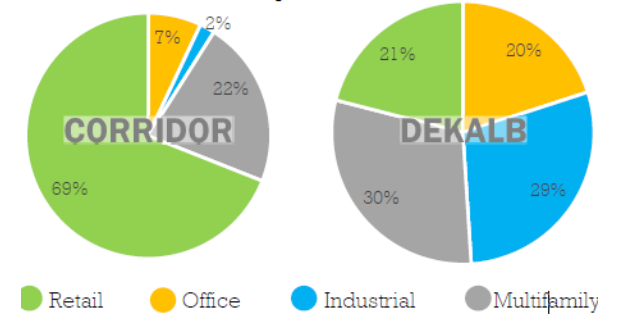
Population

Population has been declining along the Memorial Drive corridor and surrounding area since the year 2000, despite a modest increase in DeKalb County of 0.74% and a metro Atlanta growth of 2% during the same time period.



Commercial Space by Land Use

Especially when compared to the rest of DeKalb County, the Memorial drive corridor has a significant amount of commercial space dedicated to retail.





Commitment

to Community Engagement!

June 11, 2019 Business Development Advisory Committee

- (BDAC)-a group comprised of business owners and operators, area non-profits, and residents, meets for the first time.(4Meeting)

“Pop Up” events

- April 23, 2019 – Georgia State University
- May 18, 2019 (International Trade Mall)
- June 20,2019-Nam Dae Mun grocery store

June 25, 2019-Community Open House!

- Over 200 people attend the first meeting

August 21, 2019-Design workshops

- A multi-hour Design Workshop was held where members of the community worked with the design professional .

October 07, 2019-Community open house

- The initial recommendations were presented and discussed. Land Use Concepts, Gateway features, Connectivity, and redevelopment ideas.

November 16, 2019 –Final Recommendations of The Corridor

- Taste of Memorial Drive from various businesses along corridor
- Over 100 people

Surveys –Summer 2019

- Over 900 people took our online survey , with an interactive maps.



Action Plan

There are three overall strategies that should be followed to help encourage revitalization on the corridor

STRATEGY

1

CHANGE THE PERCEPTION

While there are many notable and positive things happening on the corridor, this section of Memorial Drive has a perception problem. Initiatives and activities need to take place to encourage people to rethink these perceptions and see the corridor in a different light.

STRATEGY

2

CREATE DEMAND

Because it has effectively been 30 years since there was demand for new development on the corridor, public sector initiatives will need to take place that fill in that gap and create demand where there is currently none by the private sector. By leading the way, private sector investment can follow.

STRATEGY

3

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY REDEVELOPMENT

A positive regulatory environment can make it easier for the private sector to invest in the corridor by offsetting the risk associated with redevelopment.



Implementation Of The Plan !

A various of initiatives was created to support the three overall strategies.

MEMORIAL DRIVE
REVITALIZATION CORRIDOR PLAN

CREATE DEMAND STRATEGY 2

Initiative 2.2 – Establish an Arts Corridor

MEMORIAL DRIVE
REVITALIZATION CORRIDOR PLAN

CHANGE THE PERCEPTION STRATEGY 1

Initiative 1.1 – Façade Improvement Program

Action Plan

MEMORIAL DRIVE
REVITALIZATION CORRIDOR PLAN

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 3

Initiative 3.3 – Investigate Investor Programs

Memorial Drive Revitalization Plan Next Steps!

Happening Now !

- Community council Meeting
08/18/2020
- Planning Commission
Meeting 09/01/2020
- Board of Commissioners
Meeting 09/24/2020





Thank You
From
Planning Department
Long Range Division

RESOURCES

Access the Final Plan and Story Map:

<https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning-and-sustainability/long-range-small-area-plans-and-studies>

Contact Information :

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