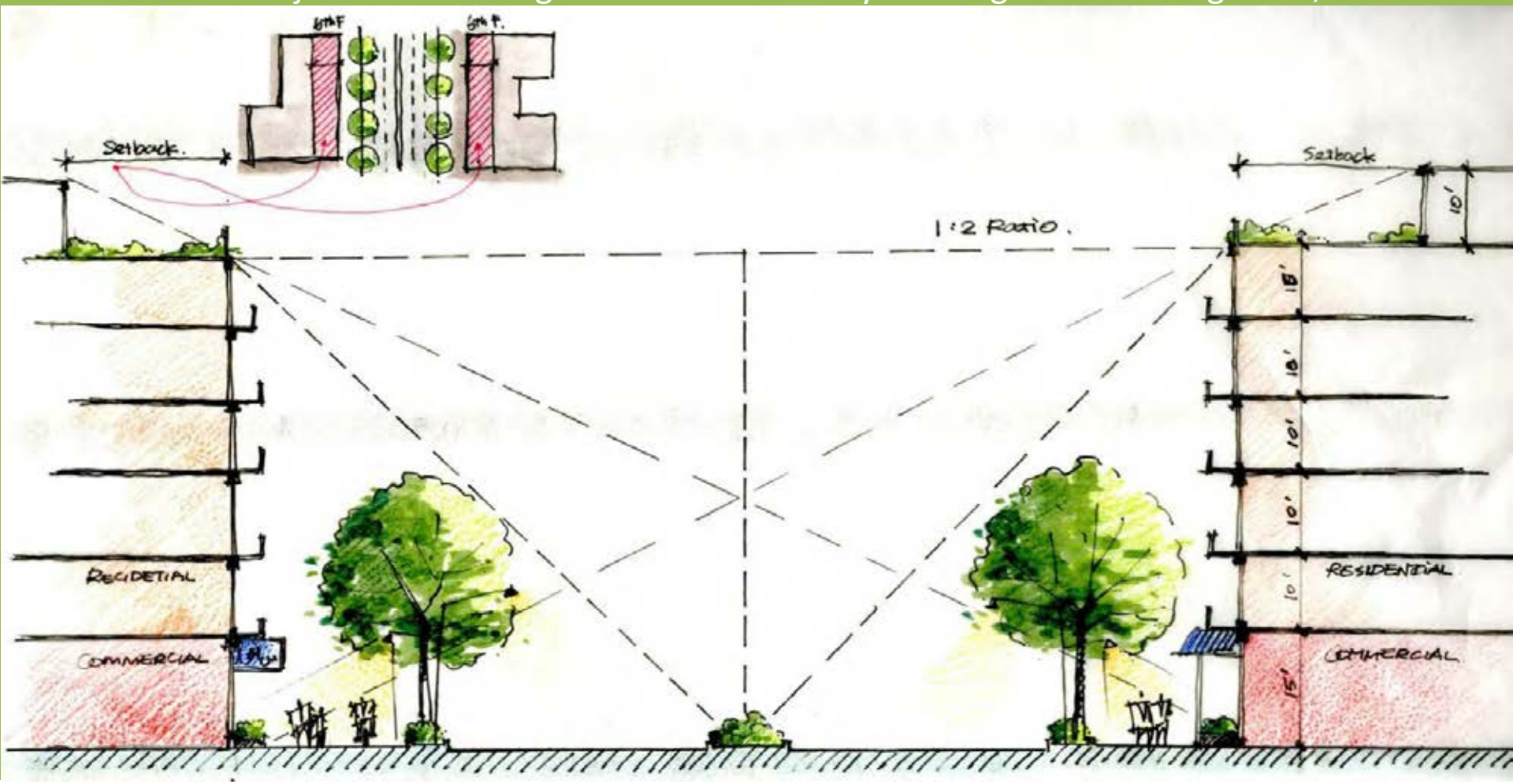
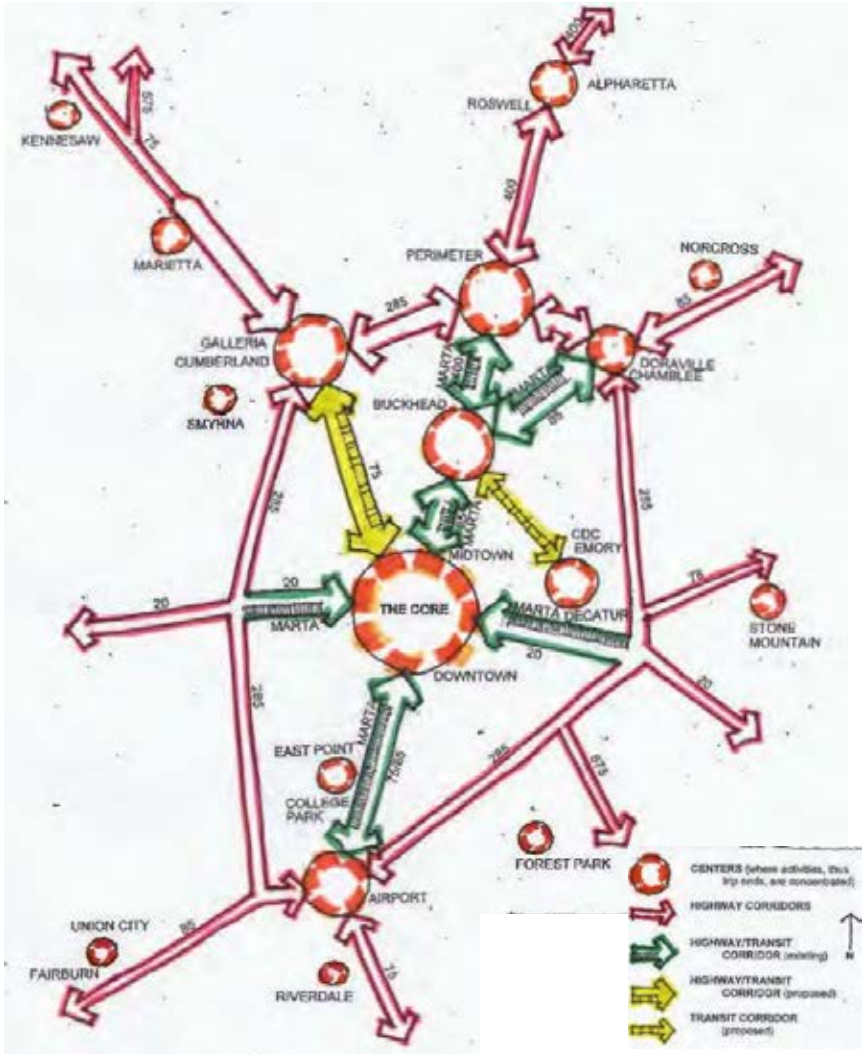
NORTHSIDE DRIVE AS A MULTIMODAL DEVELOPMENTAL CORRIDOR: TRANSFORMATION FROM UTILITARIAN AUTO ROUTE TO GRAND TRANSIT BOULEVARD

A Studio Project of the Georgia Tech School of City and Regional Planning – Fall, 2012



Cross-section through the NEW Northside Boulevard, showing mixed use development framing inviting streetscape

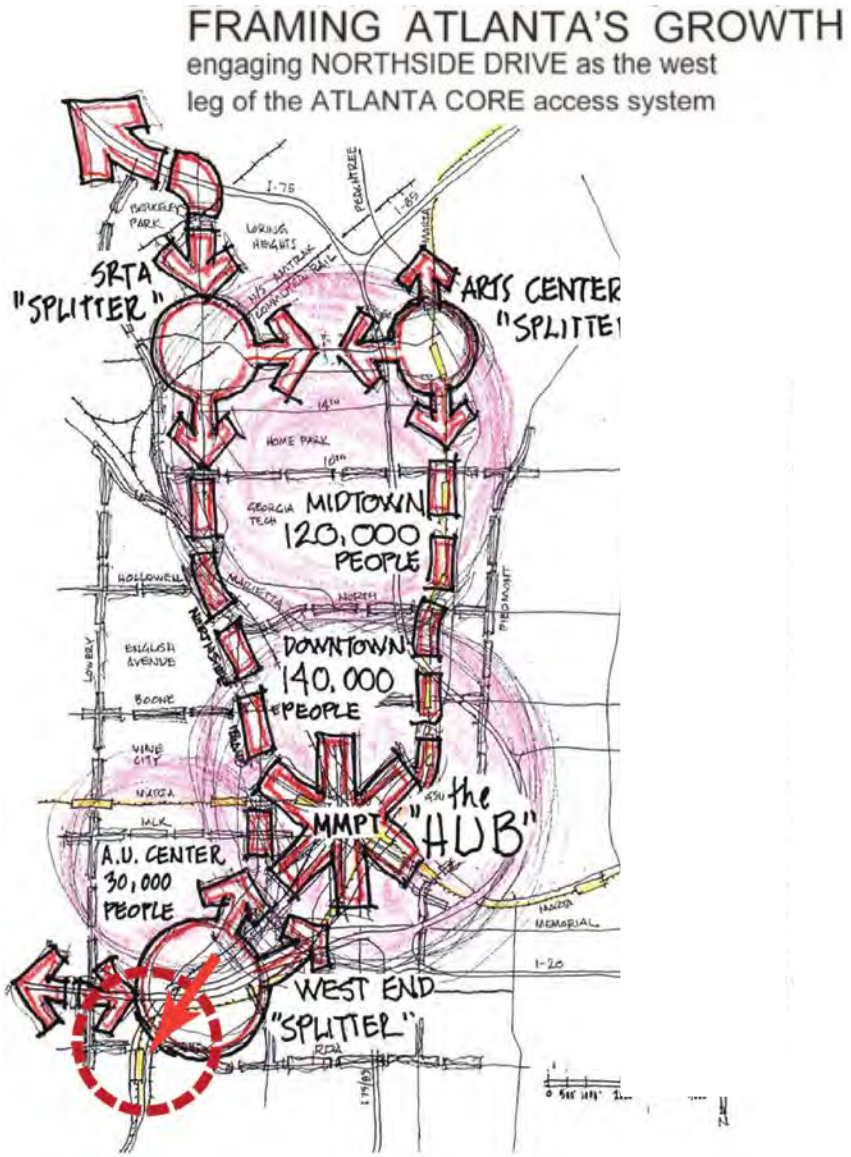
BACKGROUND



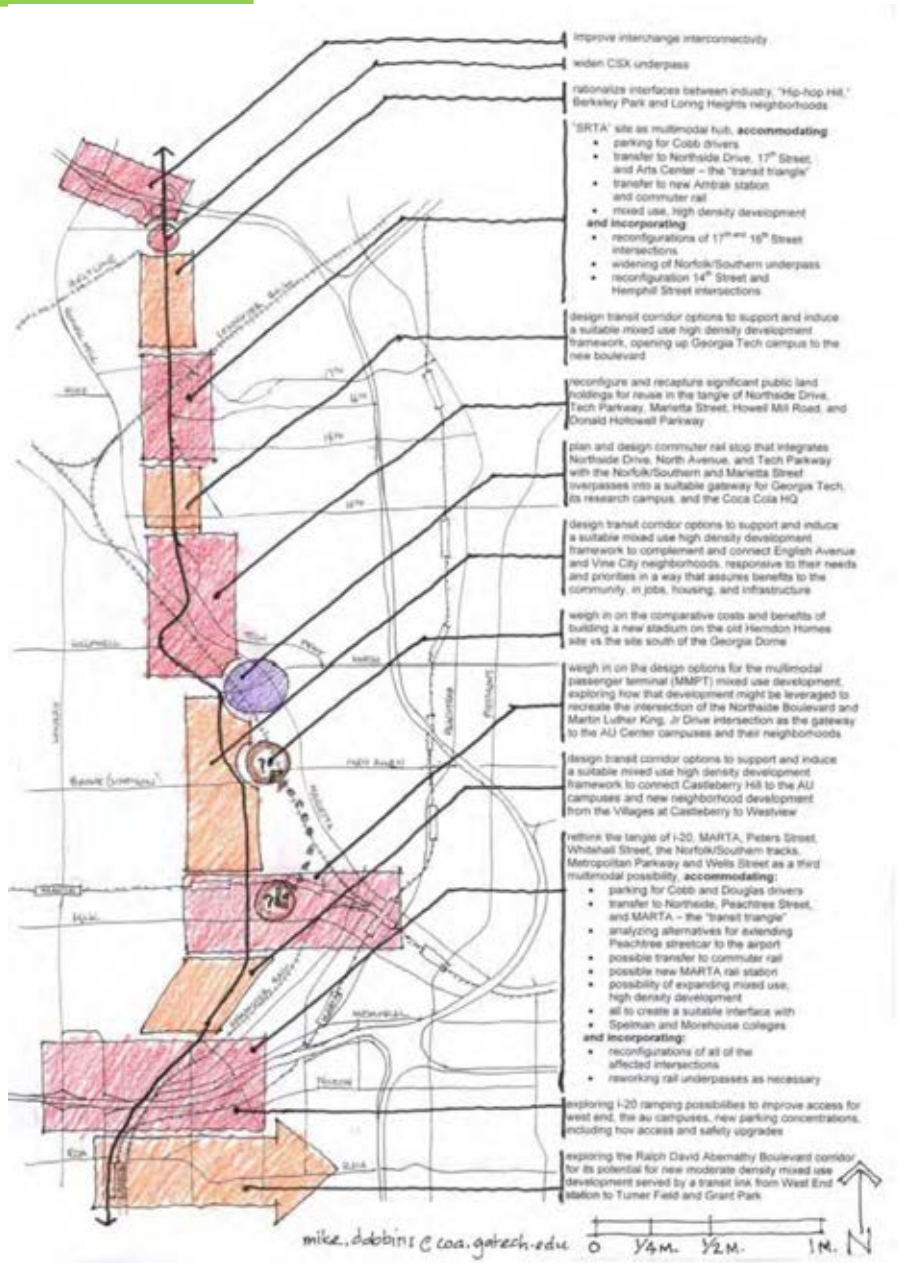
Solving regional congestion by strengthening regional centers

Transit ladder for the core of future Atlanta: MARTA rail and Northside BRT as the rails, RDA, Fair, MLK, James Boone/Ivan Allen, North, Hollowell, 10th, 14th, and 17th as the rungs

BACKGROUND



Atlanta's core: the densest concentration of trip origins and destinations in the southeast

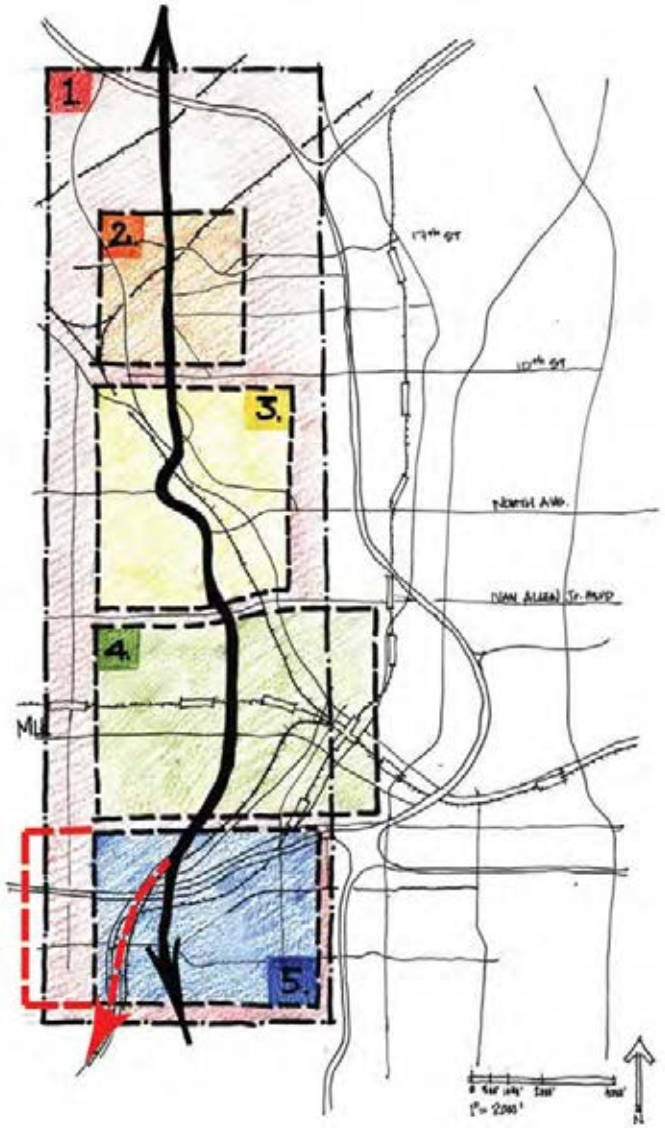


Initial project scope (since modified)

STUDY OUTLINE

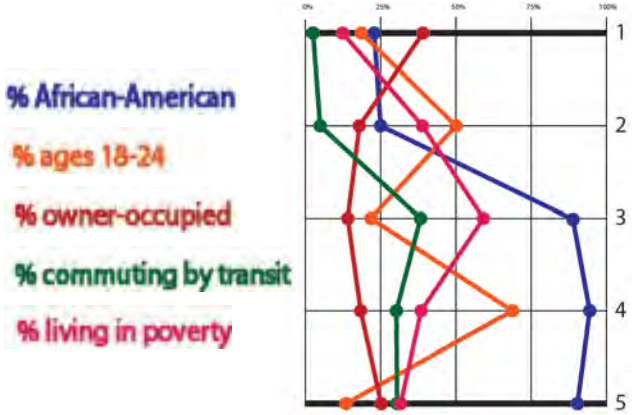
- **SCOPE SUMMARY**
  - TRANSPORTATION – ALL MODES
  - LAND DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN DESIGN
  - HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
  - ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE
- **ANALYSIS SCREEN (T.O.P.I.C.)**
  - TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS
  - ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES
  - POLITICAL ISSUES
  - INVESTMENT AND FINANCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES
  - CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

STUDY AREAS



Initial team designations

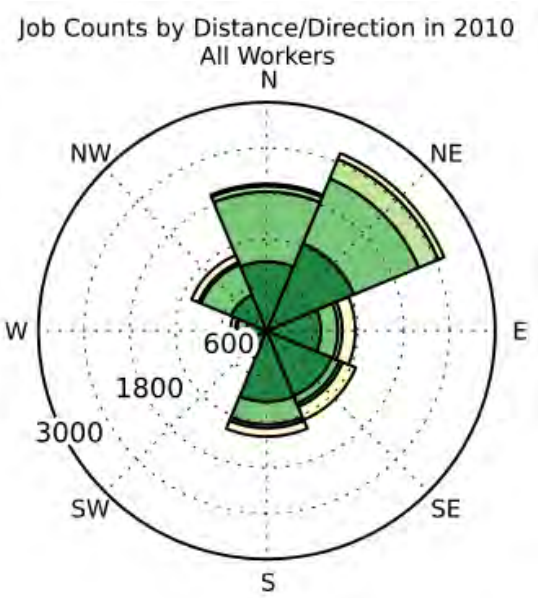
DEMOGRAPHY



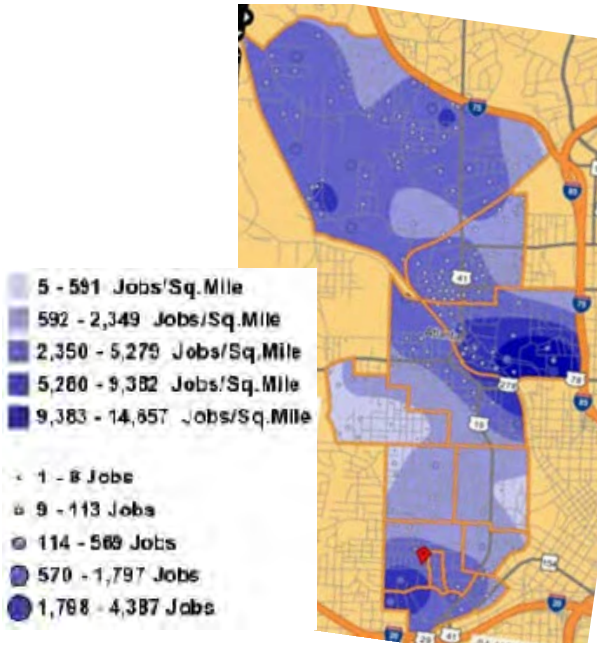
Summary of demographic and cultural indicators by study area

Jobs by Distance - Home Census Block to Work Census Block

	2010 Count	Share
Total All Jobs	10,205	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	5,724	56.1%
10 to 24 miles	3,100	30.4%
25 to 50 miles	599	5.9%
Greater than 50 miles	782	7.7%



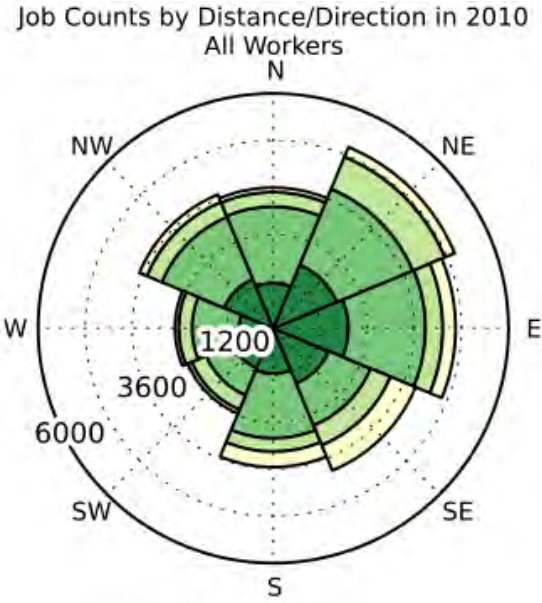
Where people living in the corridor work



Job concentration in Northside corridor census tracts

Jobs by Distance - Work Census Block to Home Census Block

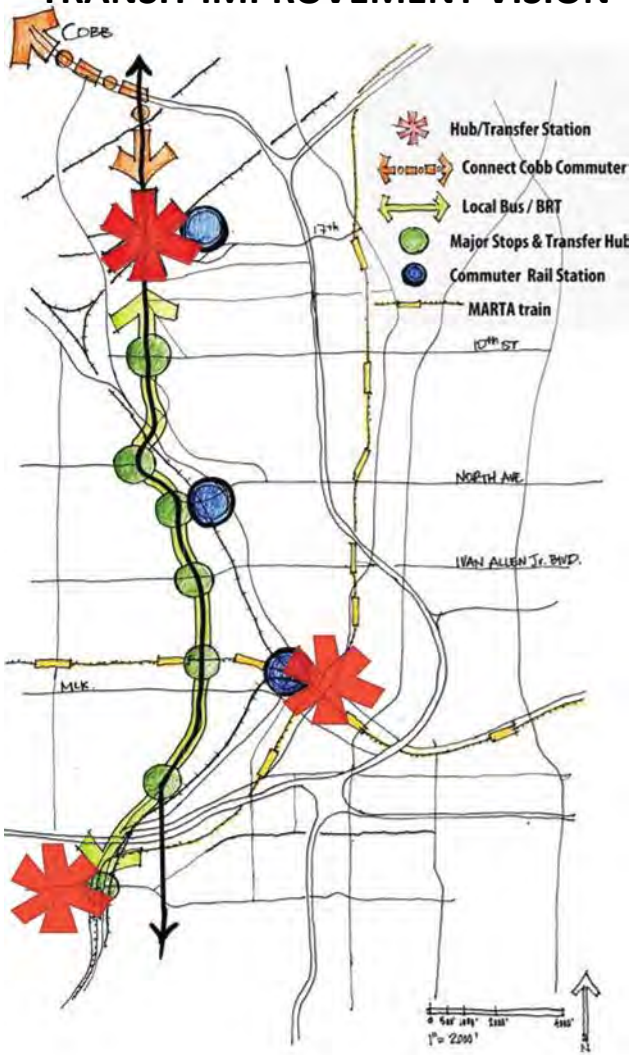
	2010 Count	Share
Total All Jobs	29,286	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	10,860	37.1%
10 to 24 miles	12,482	42.6%
25 to 50 miles	3,739	12.8%
Greater than 50 miles	2,205	7.5%



Where people working in the corridor live

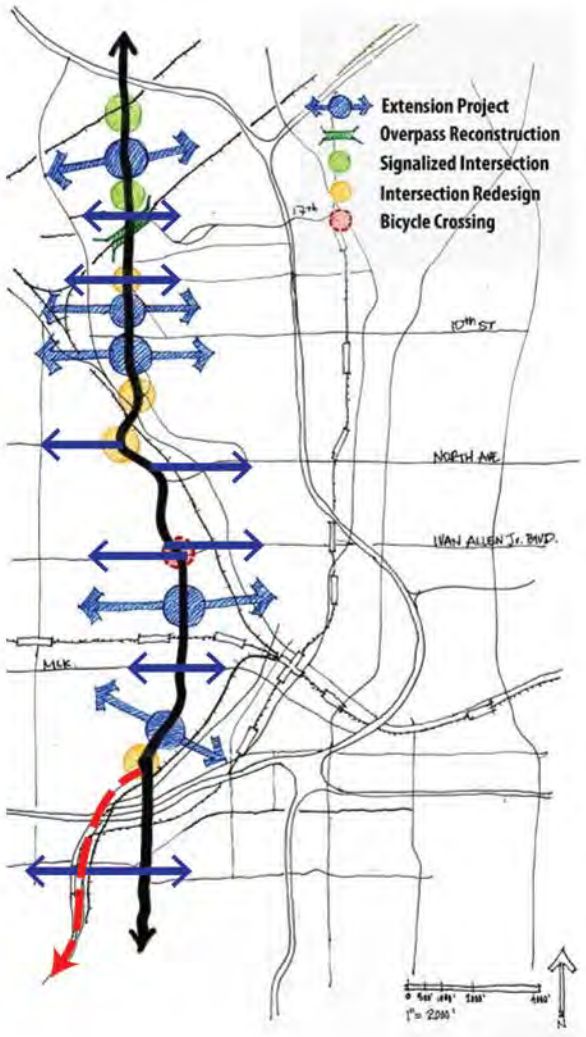
TRANSPORTATION-SYSTEM VISION

TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT VISION



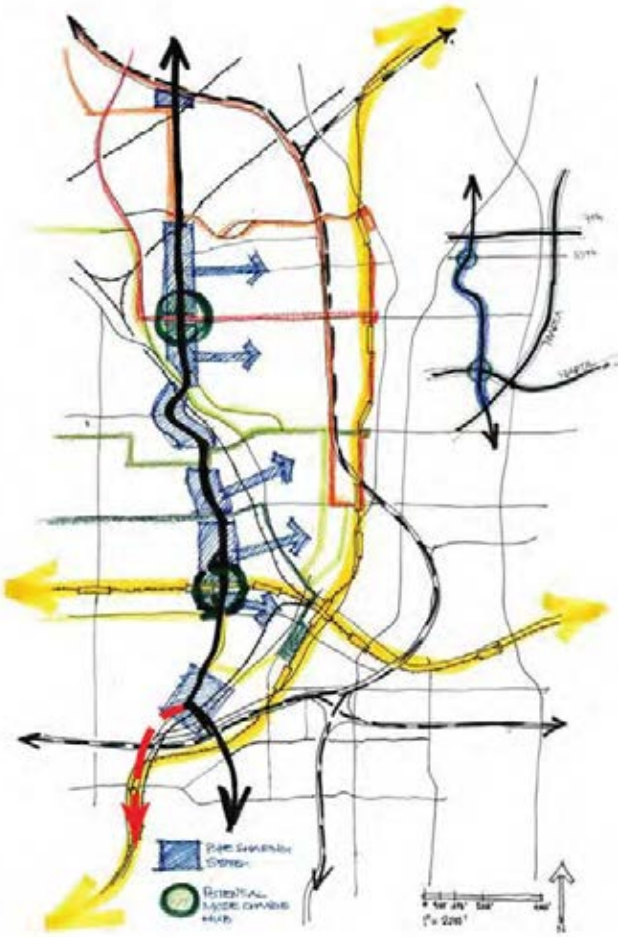
Preliminary corridor transit concept – establishing robust north-south multimodal service

TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT VISION



Preliminary corridor transportation connectivity – prioritizing east-west links

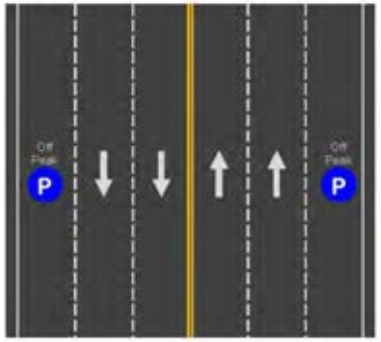
BIKE SHARING SYSTEM VISION



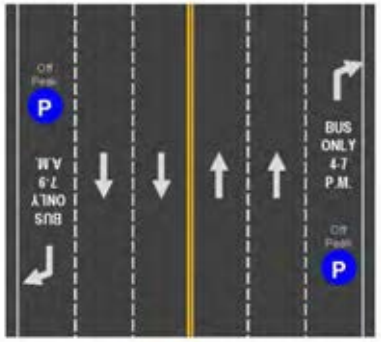
Preliminary bicycle network expansion concept

TRANSPORTATION-SYSTEM VISION

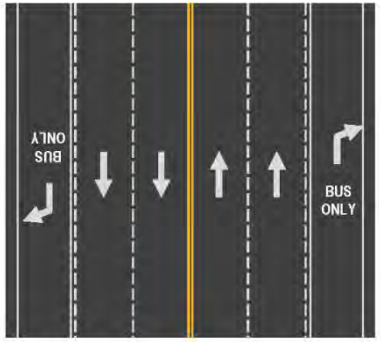
TRAFFIC OPERATION EXPANSION PLAN



Phase 1: Introduce parking strip throughout corridor
- Provide a parking strip for north and southbound lanes except during peak travel time (7-9am inbound, 4-7pm outbound)
- Preserve 2 lanes/direction at all locations
- Provide left-turn pockets at all major intersections
- Ensure minimum 68' cross section (curb-to-curb) for through
- Adds buffer for pedestrians throughout most times of day while preserving three peak lanes of capacity for commuters.
- Allows use of all lanes for special events through special restrictions

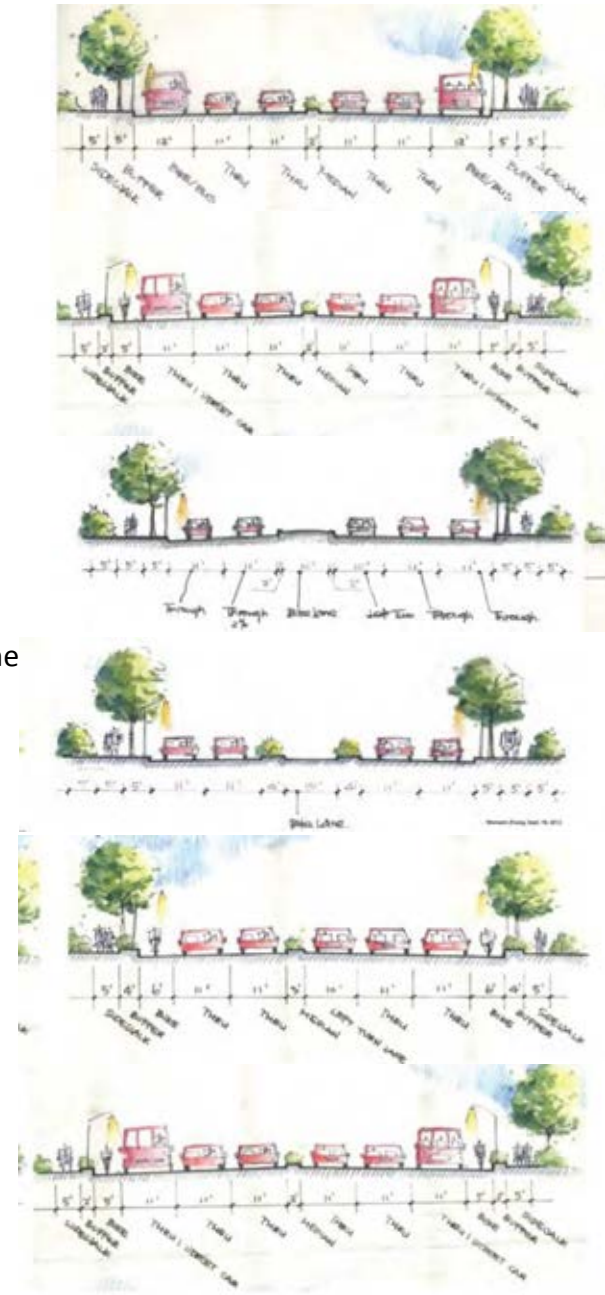


Phase 2: Add buses. Replace peak-hour curb lane with transit
- During the peak travel hours, replace the general purpose curb lane with transit and/or HOV restrictions
- Construct local bus stops
- Maintains all buffer characteristics of phase 1
- May require lane widening at intersections for queue jumps



Phase 3: Full time transit lanes
- When ridership and policy allow, introduce full-time transit lanes
- Transit signal priority may be added
- Preserve 2 general purpose travel lanes/direction

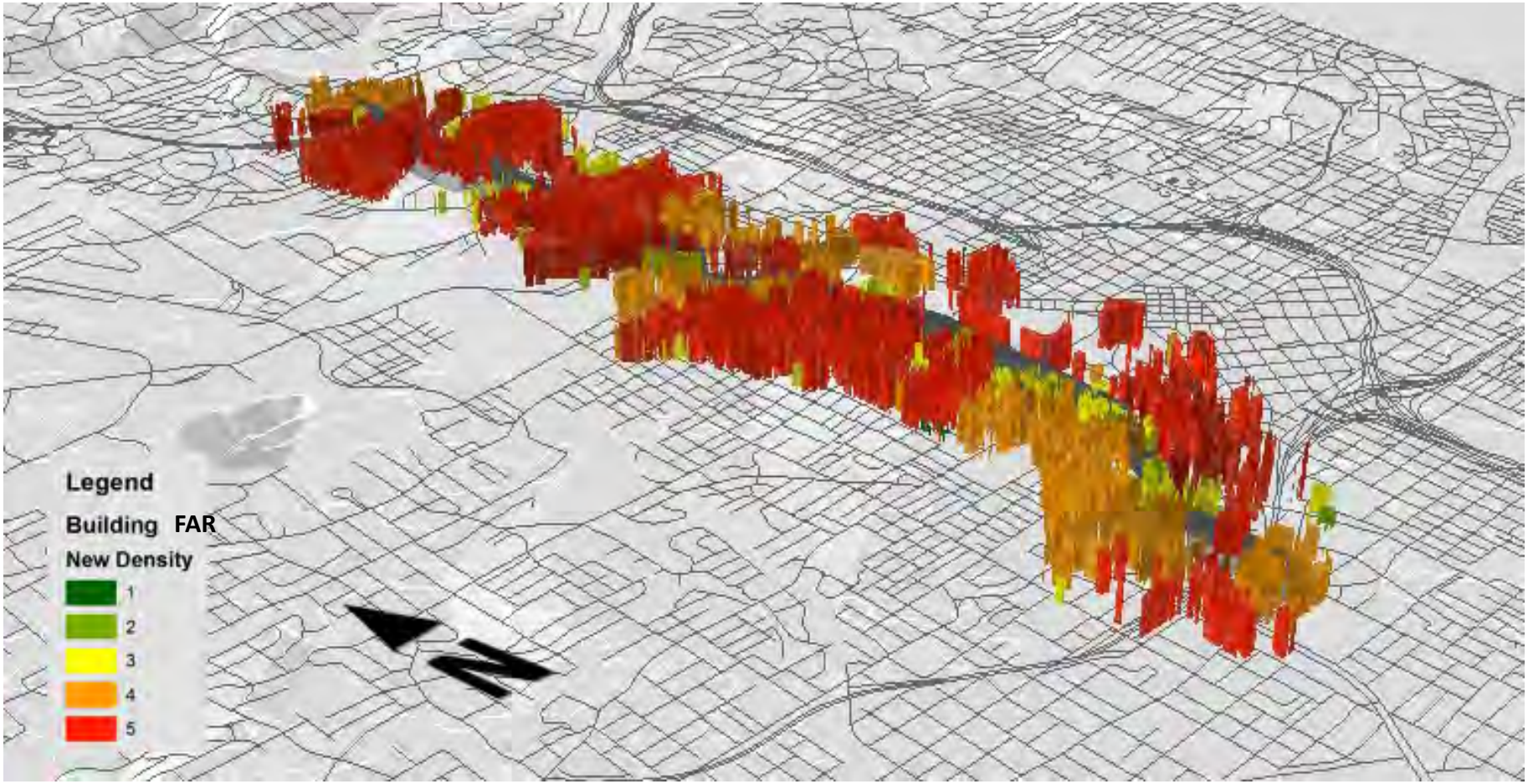
Lane configuration by phase in traffic operation expansion plan



Multimodal cross-sectional alternative sketches

LAND USE-SYSTEM VISION

PROPOSED MAXIMUM DENSITY WITHIN 10 MINUTES WALKSHED



Characterization of corridor development potential, focusing on vacant and underdeveloped parcels

WHOLE CORRIDOR CONSIDERATION

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

- Create planning, design, and regulatory framework to transform present dismal corridor into distinguished boulevard – BEFORE the market comes back

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- Conserve stable single family houses
- Stabilize housing where historic and threatened by deterioration and speculation
- Introduce new mixed use, mixed income higher density housing within a block or two of Northside

ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE:

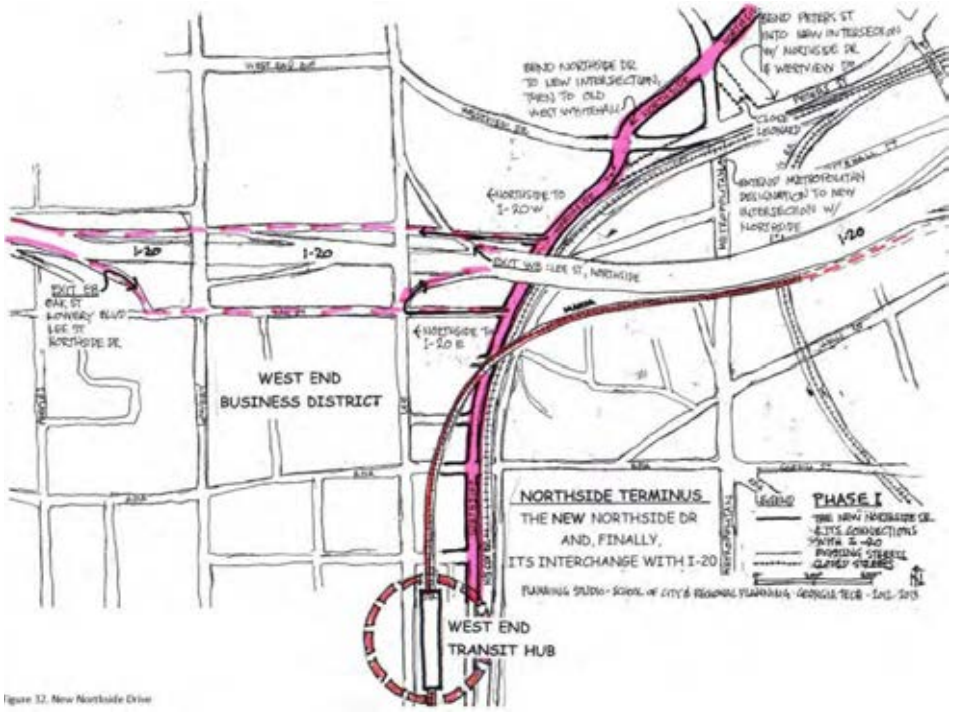
- Use topography and drainage basins as the shaping elements for creating shared park systems that distinguish single family neighborhoods from higher density redevelopment areas

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-I 20 AREA

EXISTING

Current condition, Northside cut off from West End, MARTA, and I-20

PROPOSED



With intersection modification at Northside, Peters St, Westview, and West Whitehall, Northside can connect with existing I-20 frontage roads, flow directly into West End, the MARTA station and Lee Street heading south

WEST END BUSINESS DISTRICT – THE TOD TERMINUS OF THE NEW NORTHSIDE

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

- With the rerouting of Northside directly into West End, the MARTA station, and Lee Street going south, create a new planning, design, and development vision for West End as the southwest hub of Atlanta's core
- Implement with a new regulatory framework and coordinated infrastructure support, perhaps SPI zoning

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- Conserve the West End historic district
- Introduce new mixed use, mixed income, higher density into existing underutilized business district fabric

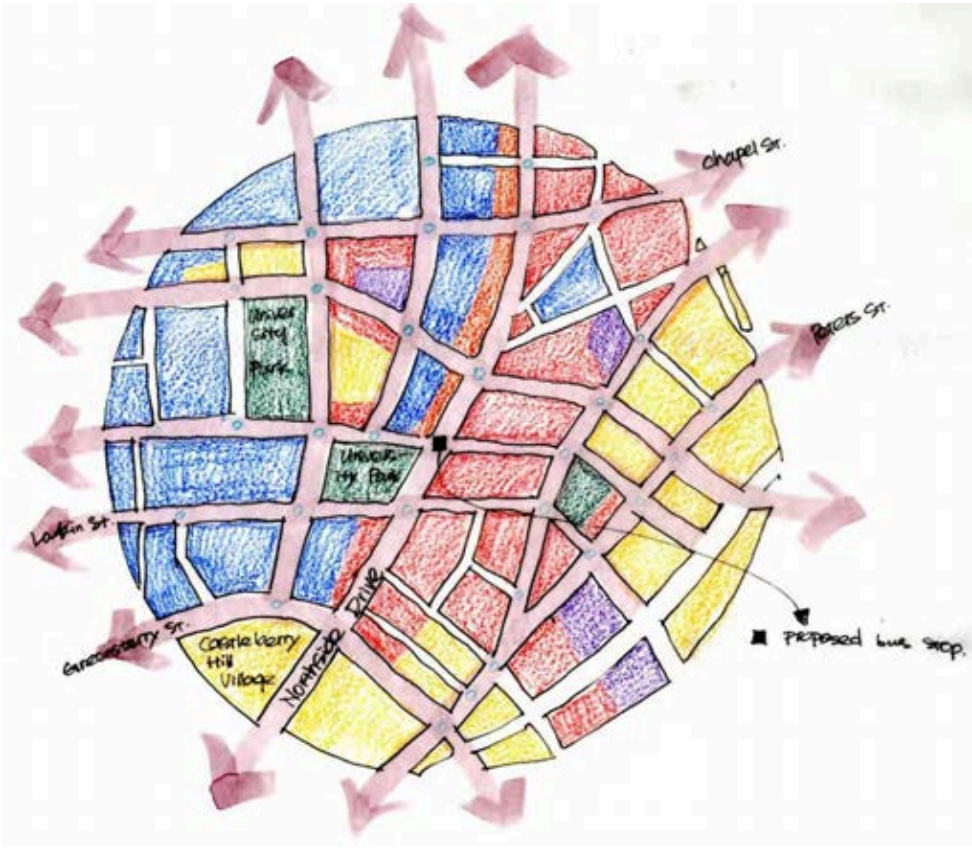
ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE:

- Use park systems and topography to site new, higher density mixed use development

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-FAIR STREET

EXISTING

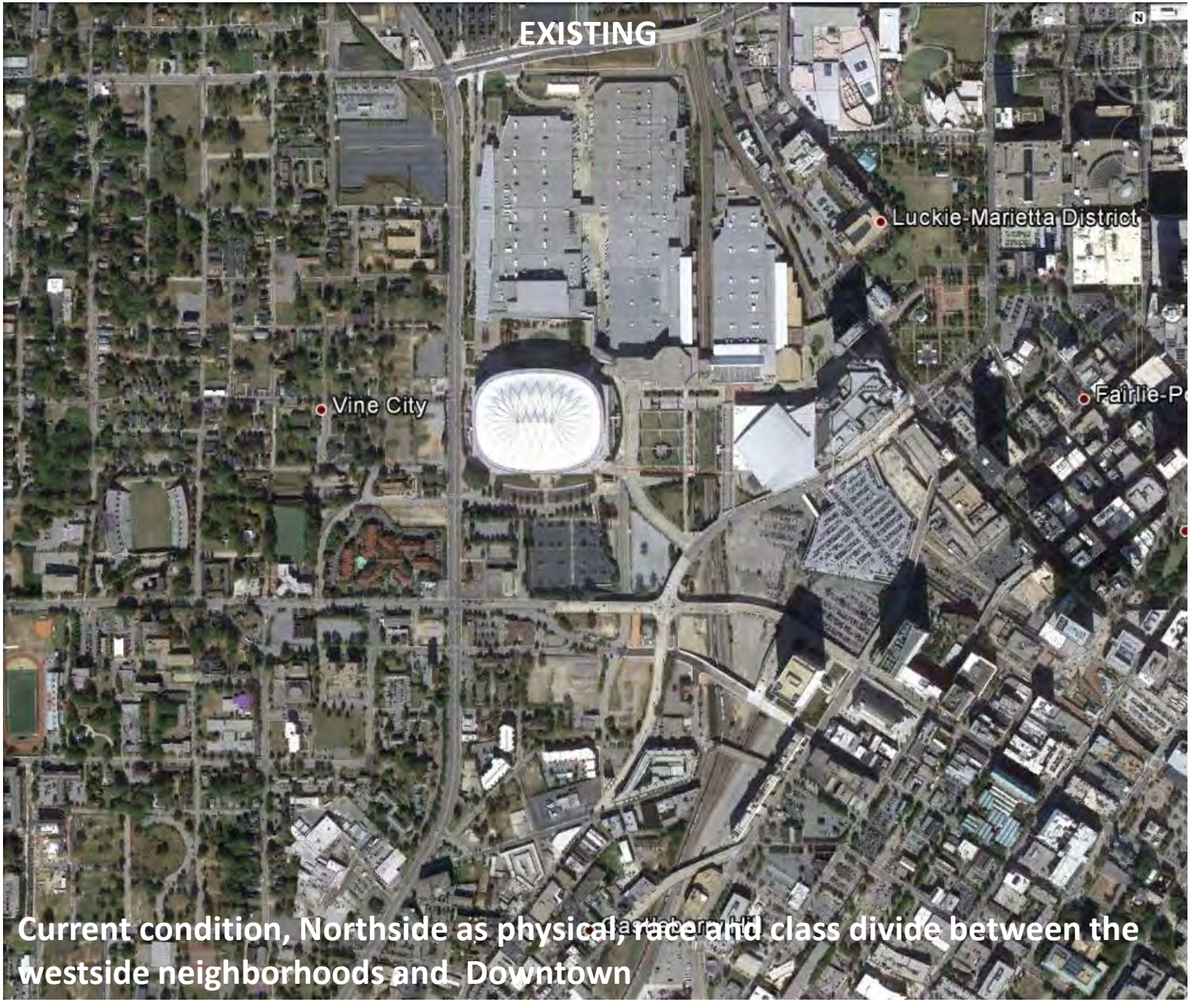
PROPOSED



Current condition, unrealized opportunity to connect the AUC campuses by all modes across Northside into Castleberry Hill at Fair Street, then into Walker Street, Centennial Olympic Park Drive – as a two-way street – to Centennial Olympic Park

Sketch of connectivity potential for Northside/Fair intersection

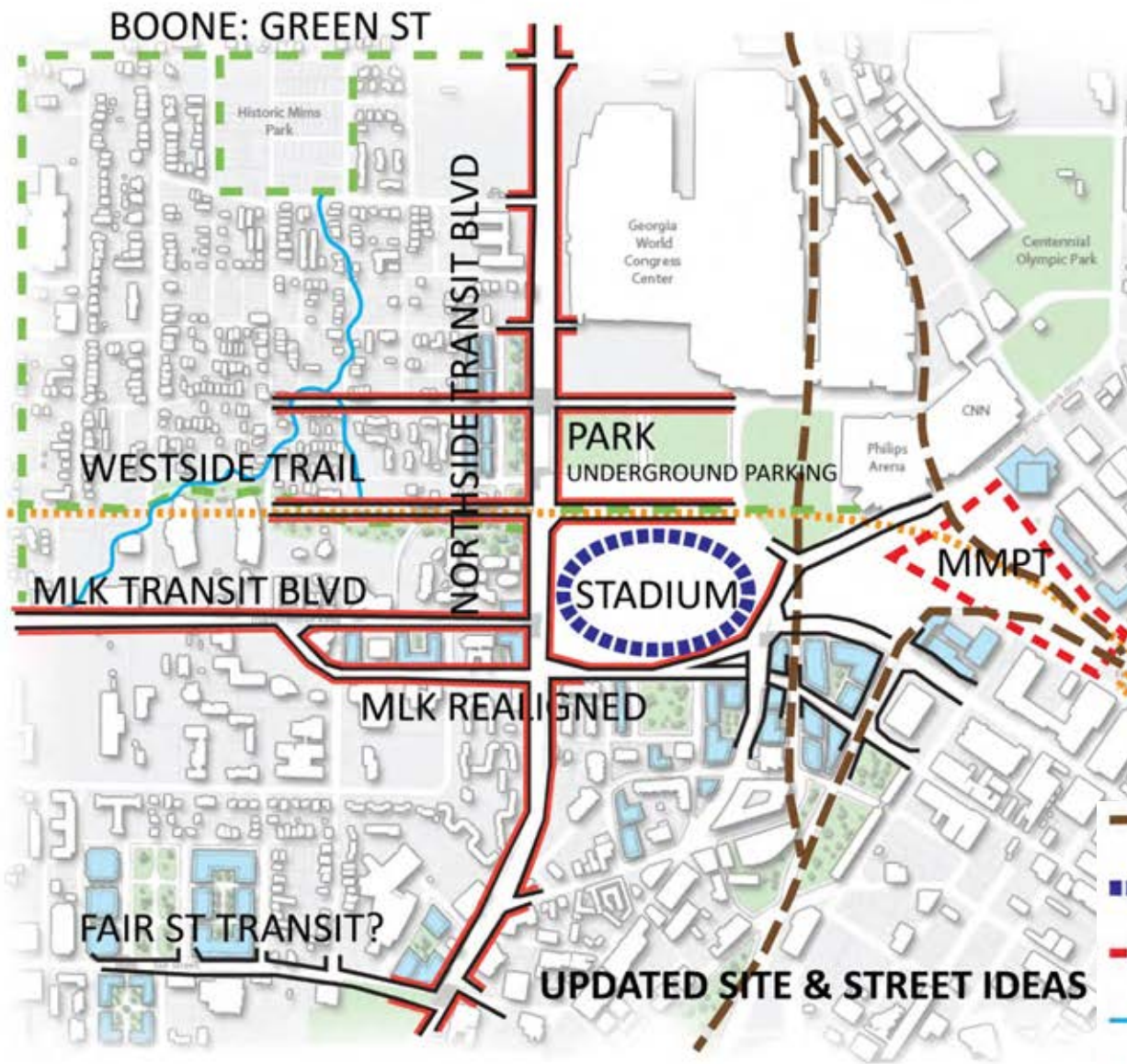
SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-STADIUM-AUC-MMPT



Current condition, Northside as physical, race and class divide between the westside neighborhoods and Downtown

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-STADIUM-AUC-MMPT

PROPOSED



With new developments designed to front onto Northside and cross into neighborhoods and the AUC along MLK, the divide can begin to dissolve, to the benefit of all concerned, strengthening the core

- Rail Line
- Stadium Site
- MMPT Site
- Drainage (Park&Pride Study)
- Bike Path

CONNECT AUC CAMPUSES, CASTLEBERRY, VINE CITY, AND ENGLISH AVENUE TO NEW STADIUM, MMPT, AND DOWNTOWN

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

- Plan, design, and develop a mixed use high density corridor along Northside Drive that serves to extend street fronting activities and streetscape quality into the MLK and Walker to Fair Street corridors
- Structure the regulatory framework and infrastructure priorities to use the promised funding to implement the connective vision

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- Preserve and stabilize remaining viable housing areas
- Ensure a component of affordability in all new mixed income higher density development

CONNECT AUC CAMPUSES, CASTLEBERRY, VINE CITY, AND ENGLISH AVENUE TO NEW STADIUM, MMPT, AND DOWNTOWN (CONTINUED)

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED):

- Establish a menu of community benefits to include:
  - Community representation in all negotiations for the use of the promised funds
  - Stabilize and support rehabilitation of viable housing stock
  - Honor the special historic significance of the neighborhoods and their places
  - Establish job training and employment programs for nearby neighborhoods with measureable and enforceable criteria, including individuals irrespective of their start-up qualifications
  - Provision through the promised funding for administrative support for various neighborhood-identified initiatives
  - Infrastructure development to effect the goal of fully integrating the neighborhoods with downtown, both physically and in terms of sharing resources

CONNECT AUC CAMPUSES, CASTLEBERRY, VINE CITY, AND ENGLISH AVENUE TO NEW STADIUM, MMPT, AND DOWNTOWN (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE:

- Use the Proctor Creek North Avenue neighborhood initiated plan developed by Park Pride and subsequent planning work to shape the future park and redevelopment framework for the Vine City and English Avenue neighborhoods, BEGINNING with incorporating the green system and flooding mitigation in the design of the Stadium and the MMPt
- Develop new parks that relate to watershed treatment and that are designed to be shared spaces between existing and emergent communities

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-IVAN ALLEN JR. BLVD

EXISTING

PROPOSED

Current condition, except for relatively new Antioch-sponsored apartment complex, a dismal stretch, but with many opportunities for mixed use redevelopment and friendlier urban design frontages

Potential for mixed-use, mixed density new and infill housing

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-NORTH AVE

EXISTING

PROPOSED

Current condition, showing excessive and confusing intersection condition and vacant Georgia Tech redevelopment site opportunity to the southeast

Tightened intersection with one concept for mixed use development; other options might include playing fields to share with west side neighborhoods, as well as significant upgrades to North Avenue in conjunction with a possible commuter rail station serving Georgia Tech and Coca Cola

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-DONALD LEE HOLLOWELL

EXISTING

PROPOSED

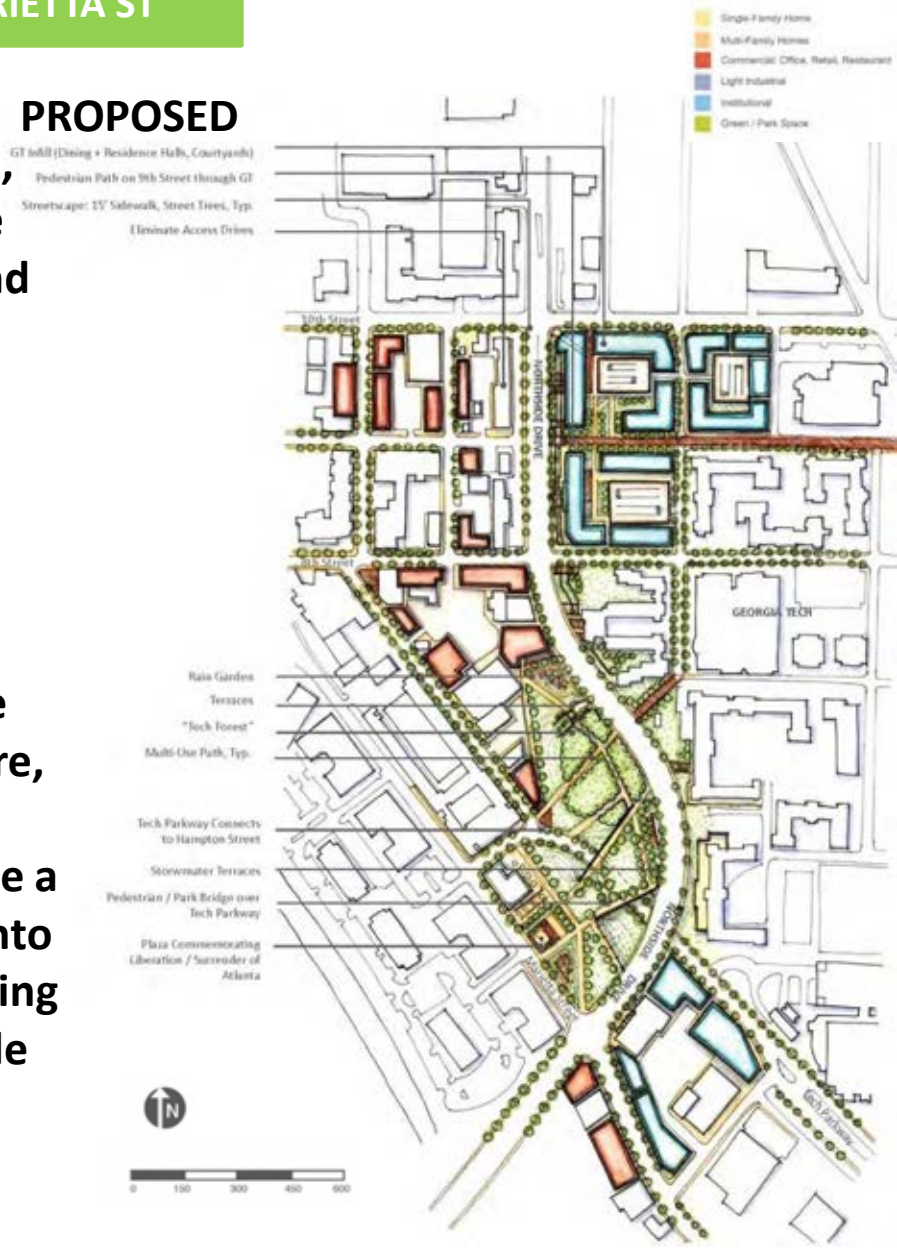
Current condition, showing excessive and confusing intersection, route of abandoned rail and abandoned Bankhead/Means St bridge

Tightened intersection with mixed use development opportunity along with possible use of abandoned rail and abandoned bridge across active rail as bike ped links connecting west side neighborhoods to Marietta Street and Georgia Tech

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-TECH PKWY/MARIETTA ST

EXISTING

PROPOSED

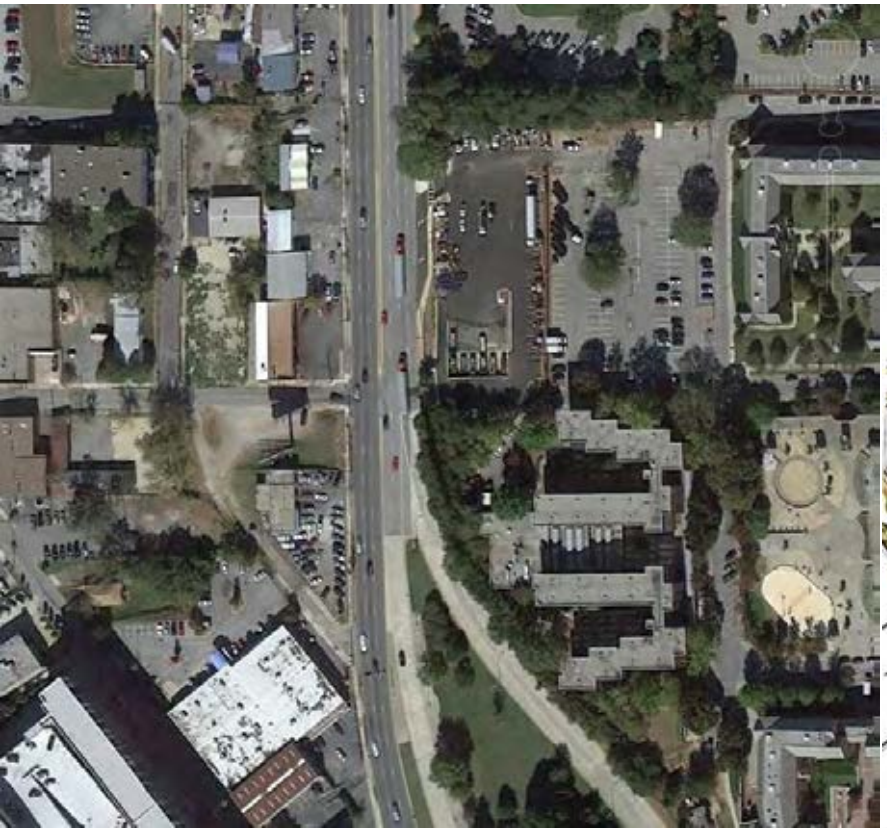


Left: Current condition, showing way excessive unused right of way and really confused intersection condition

Right: Ultimate design proposal, following a series of incremental steps, diverting all Northside traffic to the existing bridge structure, tying Tech Parkway, modified to incorporate a bike-ped conversion, into Marietta Street and using the existing inaccessible forest as a park to be shared by westside neighborhoods and Georgia Tech

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-NEAR 8TH STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED

Current condition, underscoring total lack of east-west connectivity between 10th Street and North Avenue

Following on from the reconfiguring of the intersection to the south, introducing a crossing at 8th Street, connecting the emergent Midtown West activity center into the Tech campus, beginning with a bike-ped bridge across Northside, using advantageous topography

MID-CORRIDOR – CONNECTING THE WESTSIDE TO GEORGIA TECH

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

- Plan, design, and develop Georgia Tech's properties fronting on North Ave and Northside in a manner that anticipates and supports higher density, mixed use development to the west – walkable sidewalks and bicycle continuity
- Adopt the plan and develop the regulatory framework and infrastructure priorities to implement

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- Support affordable housing initiatives for Tech staff, students and faculty that close the divide between west and east

ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE:

- Use reconfigured open lands to develop park and recreation resources that can be shared by emerging communities

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-HEMPHILL AVE/14TH STREET

EXISTING

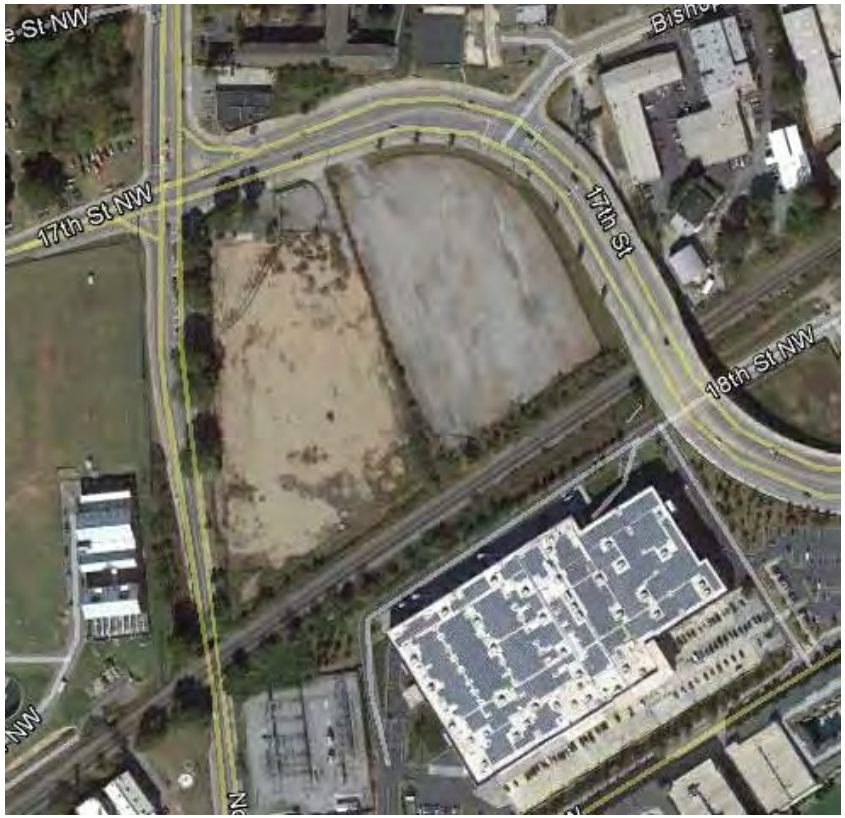
Current condition, showing excessive right of way and confusing intersection at Hemphill, 14th Street, and Northside

PROPOSED

Cutting off the projection of Hemphill across 14th Street, thus freeing up unused right of way for possible development and greatly improve bike and ped crossing from east to west; ultimately converting Hemphill into a bike-ped only link south to Ethel Street

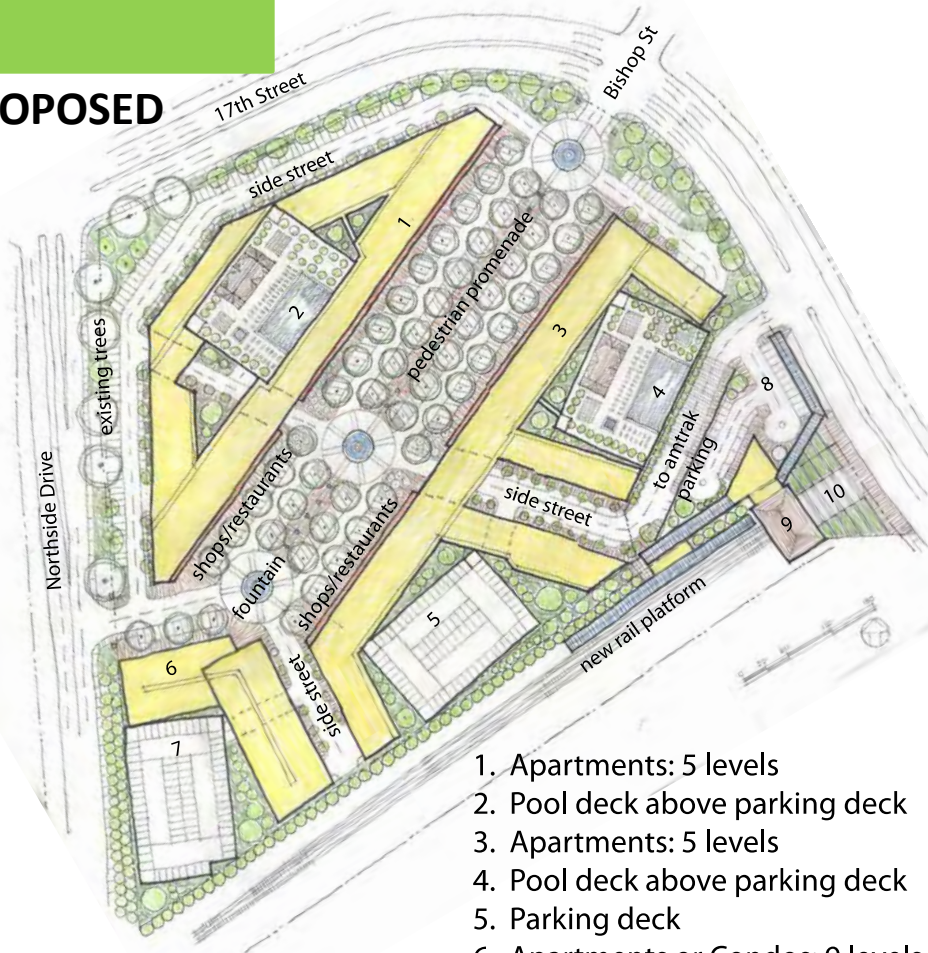
SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-17TH STREET

EXISTING



Current condition, showing the major entry intersection into Atlantic Station and Midtown Atlanta from the west, with the site to the southeast projected as a major transit hub, potentially connecting Amtrak, the Atlantic Station shuttle, Cobb Community Transit's Bus Rapid Transit line, MARTA, GRTA, and Greyhound, and future commuter rail

PROPOSED



1. Apartments: 5 levels
2. Pool deck above parking deck
3. Apartments: 5 levels
4. Pool deck above parking deck
5. Parking deck
6. Apartments or Condos: 9 levels
7. Parking deck
8. Amtrak parking and taxis
9. New Amtrak station
10. Amtrak plaza

Proposed redevelopment plan for site, with a transportation base carved into the site from the existing Norfolk/Southern trackage level and high density mixed use development above, connecting across the tracks to IKEA

THE NORTHERN REACH – FROM TECH TO THE INTERSTATE

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:

- Taking off from the reconfigured Tech Parkway – Marietta intersection, plan, design, and develop future Tech buildings so that they front on Northside, complemented by development on the west that extends and continues to fill in the Midtown West market and development phenomenom
- Establish the SRTA, Lionsgate properties as a high density mixed use center atop a multimodal transportation hub entry to Atlantic Station and Midtown and south to West End
- North to the interstate, respond to the steep slope topography by orienting development perpendicular to rather than parallel along Northside – a series of terraces
- Using enhanced east-west links, support the ongoing planning, design and development of Midtown West

THE NORTHERN REACH– FROM TECH TO THE INTERSTATE (CONTINUED)

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- Conserve housing stock and neighborhood character in nearby Loring Heights, Home Park, Berkeley Park, and Underwood Hills
- Support continued housing and mixed use infill conversions in the area, like along Bishop Street, and higher density new development along Northside

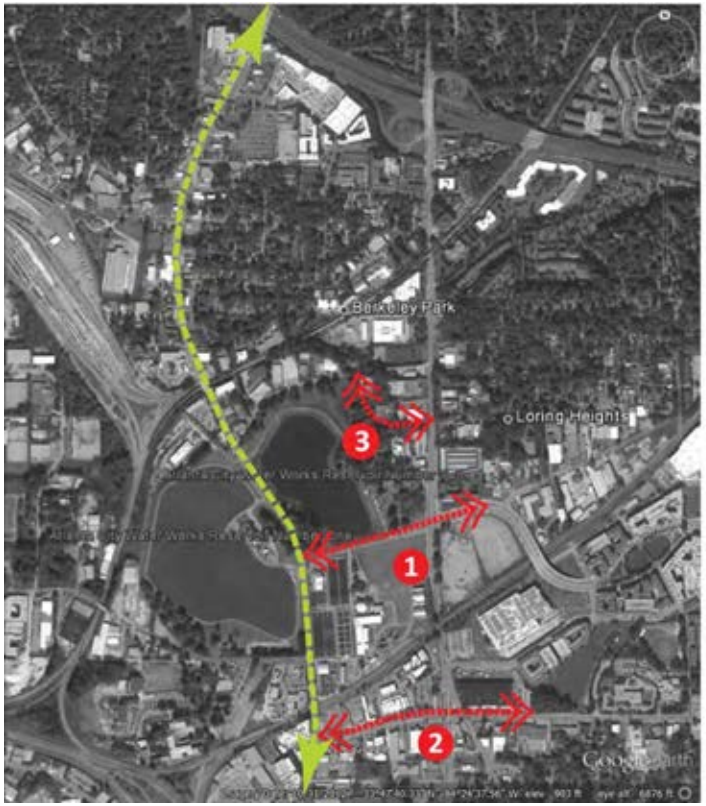
ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE :

- Develop a creek oriented greenway trail system that begins with enhanced use of the northern portions of the Watershed Management property, joined by trail from Atlantic Station and proceeding under the Interstate into Tanyard Creek Park

SUBAREA IMPROVEMENT-17TH STREET

EXISTING

PROPOSED



Current condition, showing the larger context of I-75, Howell Mill Rd, Northside, and 14th Street, where the emergent Midtown West district has grown into a major mixed use retail, arts, entertainment, and residential area, with attendant traffic headaches

Alleviating traffic congestion by providing a series of better west-east links to Northside at Trabert St, 17th Street, and 14th Street, which should be dressed up as the major Midtown to West Midtown boulevard; a possible contraflow lane connecting east to west in the I-75 right of way should be investigated for further mobility improvements in the area