



IMAGINE MEMORIAL

A planning partnership with Councilwoman Natalyn Archibong,
Atlanta residents, and Georgia Tech's School of City and Regional Planning

DRAFT
2/12/15

Development and Market Feasibility

Suggested topics for comment:

Would you support changing the Industrial and Commercial zoned properties to Mixed Residential Commercial zoning classifications? Would you support retaining the Industrial and Commercial zoned properties as employment centers? If so, why?

Where do you see commercial opportunities on the east side of the Memorial Drive corridor? Do you believe any rezonings would be necessary to accomplish that commercial vision? If so, what zoning classifications would be appropriate?

Issues and opportunities west of Moreland:

- lack of affordable housing
- limited redevelopment opportunities in Cabbagetown Historic District
- mixed-use development (retail and residential) rapidly replacing employment centers
- lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support new residents

Issues and opportunities east of Moreland:

- underused neighborhood commercial nodes
- vacant/underused land
- lack of employment centers
- lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support new residents
- decline in commercial uses
- tree canopy along the corridor
- parks, educational and recreational assets

Please share any other ideas that you have related to this topic.

would like to keep their in-town location. They have a mix of hourly and salaried workers there, totaling 150 employees. Over 40% of the hourly employees live in the area and many walk to work. They are interested in additional transit options and pedestrian infrastructure. However, the final decision of whether to sell will come from their New York headquarters. If a sale were to happen, they would likely sell the land along with the business, which is a Leggett & Platt subsidiary called Masterrack.

V. MARKET FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

Introduction

Memorial Drive, especially west of Moreland Avenue, has seen a boom in acquisition and construction in the last three years, with multiple multifamily and mixed-use projects planned. This growth has been catalyzed by the Atlanta BeltLine's planned Eastside Trail extension from Irwin Street to Memorial, the recent rebound of the real estate cycle, and the founding of several charter schools along the corridor. The growth is shaping the demand for LCI travelway improvements.

Making population and employment projections even out to just five years during such a boom can be problematic and prone to significant amounts of error. Looking at current real estate trends provides a better sense of the revealed preferences for the volume and demographics of people who will want to live

and work in the area. Also, it is important to note the amount of capital flowing into the corridor. The total amount of public and private investment that has been programmed or dedicated to the corridor currently totals over \$100 million.

Memorial Drive has seen a flood of new mixed-use developments, some under construction and some in planning, which will drive demand for biking and walking. Residents have echoed the need for pedestrian and biking infrastructure in every NPU and neighborhood meeting. A young girl was hit by a car crossing Memorial Drive trying to walk to school in October 2014. Currently, almost anyone who needs to traverse Memorial Drive with access to a car will choose to drive. By providing infrastructure for walking trips and transit and by decreasing traffic speed to support pedestrian environment, residents and visitors will have multiple options for travel. By giving travelers choices, the number of single-occupancy vehicle trips will go down and alleviate traffic pressure.

The rapid land use changes will continue to happen with or without the LCI transportation infrastructure intervention. However, the LCI has the potential to change the direction of future growth towards a more sustainable model.

Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design

The City's future land use plan and zoning maps generally support the LCI study's overall development and transportation

strategies. In broad terms, the length of Memorial west of Moreland Avenue is developing and redeveloping in a mixed-use, mixed-density fashion. The study anticipates and supports this incremental transformation. The study recommends caution in over-responding to the current boom in higher-end residential and retail development, out of concern that rising land costs and taxes could threaten the economic stability of the neighborhoods.

Just east of Moreland, the study notes new multifamily development activity. Farther to the east, the use, character, and zoning patterns are relatively stable, supporting single-family housing with occasional multifamily complexes and small, neighborhood-serving retail sites. In this part of the corridor, the study supports maintaining the future land use and accompanying zoning, with possible exceptions noted below.

The study's proposed transportation improvements along Memorial will support a modest and incremental increase in development activity and will do so in a manner that improves both access to destinations and the quality and character of the travel experience. Any major acceleration of new development or redevelopment, on the other hand, should not be encouraged unless and until significant new transit or other mode capacity is implemented.

A number of natural assets exist along the corridor that could contribute to a continuity of greenspace, watershed protection and recreational opportunities. Environmentally

oriented citizens and neighborhoods are already investigating ways to build on the strengths of existing green infrastructure. Future land use changes might be contemplated to support these initiatives by designating conservation easements or purchased lands as open space.

Within this general context, the study recommends the following:

- **Affordable Housing:** Noting that affordable housing is an LCI and City policy priority, the inclusion of affordable units should be considered by NPUs and city planning officials in the development of both public land and on some privately owned parcels requiring rezoning for development. MARTA has a useful precedent in requiring all future development on its properties to have 20% affordable units.
- **Job Creation:** Similarly, requirements related to hiring low-income individuals (including job training) to work on development projects should accompany disposition of land and future zoning requests.
- **Protecting Existing Jobs:** As land prices rise, employment centers are an important component of the corridor under threat of turnover. Besides existing retention incentives from Invest Atlanta, consider low-cost loans or grants for aesthetic improvements to commercial/industrial properties to make them more compatible with new residents.
- **Avoiding Premature Rezoning:** Rezoning for future development should be withheld until it's likely to happen. For example, the existing MRC 3-C zoning categories immediately west of Moreland Avenue are so permissive with respect to

density and use that the city may have already “given away the store.” The ability for the city or the community to adjust, refine, or reshape development to meet changing values has been ceded to the property owner, raising land costs and limiting inclusion of social values in future development.

- Urban Design: The proposed travel way modifications offer a grand opportunity to recast the character and quality of the Drive. That could more accessible and attractive neighborhood-serving nodes along the way. Where appropriate. change zoning classifications from the old C-1 and C-2 to the corresponding MRC and/or NC classifications to encourage more pedestrian-friendly, community-serving uses. Note that these changes should not increase developable densities but only assure better sidewalk and street frontages.

Key Segments of the Corridor:

The following section analyzes development on the corridor by dividing it into four key segments: 1) Capitol Avenue to Boulevard; 2) Boulevard to Moreland Avenue; 3) Moreland Avenue to Warren Street; and 4) Warren Street to Candler Road.

Memorial Drive Segment 1: Capitol Avenue to Boulevard

Key Issues:

- New affordable housing development is limited to the MARTA TOD site
- Lack of services, especially access to nutrition

- The Capitol Greenway project may be superseded by development opportunities

Key Opportunities:

- Underutilized and vacant commercial land near Boulevard may provide additional retail and commercial opportunities
- Activating the existing parcels of land for the Capitol Greenway would provide immediate benefits to existing and future neighbors

Key Properties in Transition:

ROUNDAABOUT

- Status: Planning
- Designer: HGOR

LIBERTY PLAZA

- Developer: Georgia Building Authority with HGOR as designer
- Status: Under construction, due 2014
- Deliverable: Greenspace for public assembly of up to 4500 people

GA SUPREME COURT

- Status: Planning underway

UNDEVELOPED AHA LAND (DORMANT GREENWAY)

- Developer: Integral Communities
- Status: Planning
- Deliverable: 600 residential units

GATEWAY PHASES III & IV

- Developer: Integral
- Status: Planning

CAPITOL AVENUE TO BOULEVARD

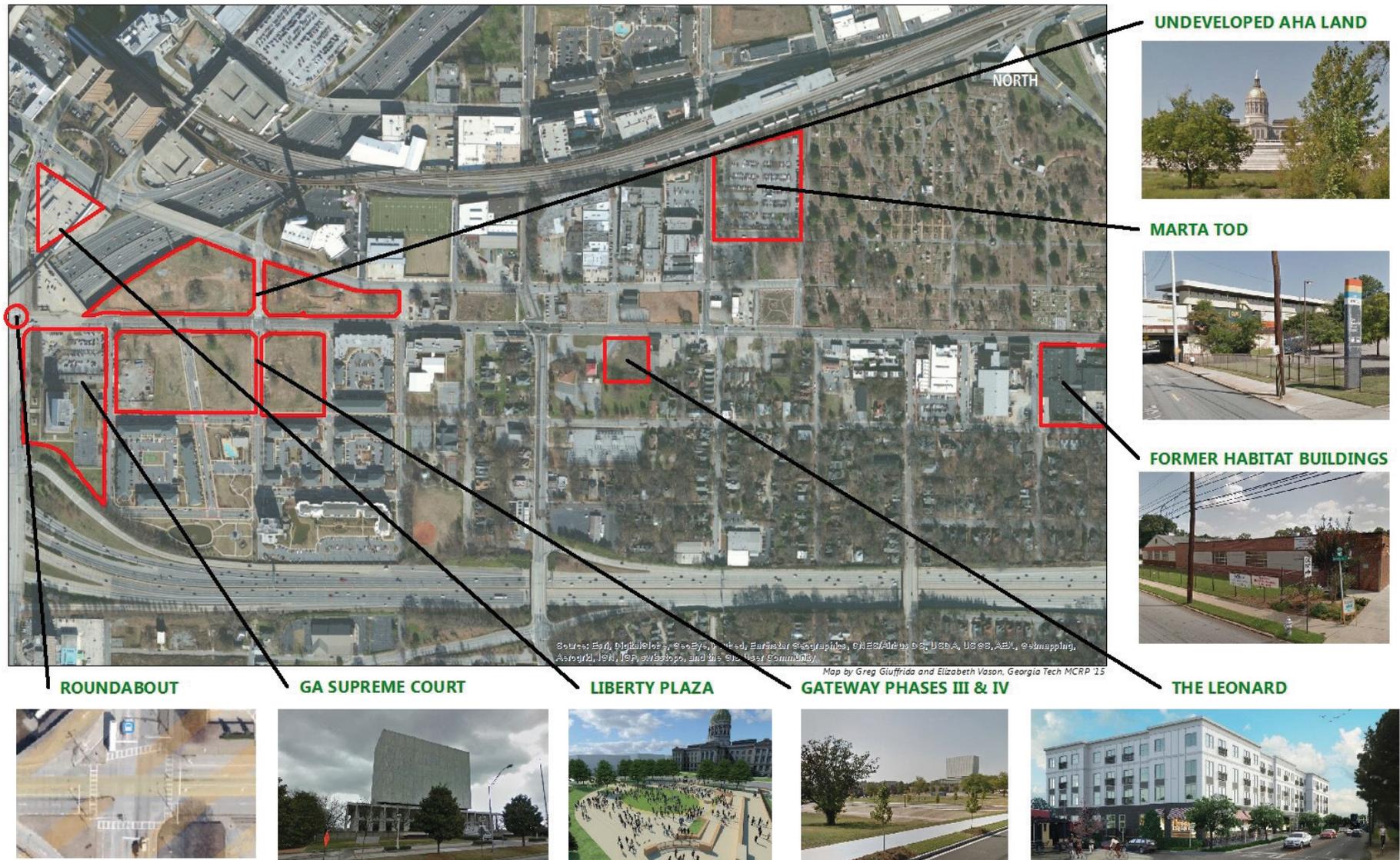


Figure 1: Detail map of transitional real estate from Capitol Avenue to Boulevard

New state projects offer more connectivity to Memorial Drive. The Memorial Greenway project has slowed for lack of funds to acquire parcels, but remains long-term vision. Existing and future multifamily developments could support more retail. MARTA TOD site will drive a stronger connection to King Memorial station.

- Deliverable: Residential units, number unknown

THE LEONARD

- Developer: Urban Realty Partners
- Status: Under construction, due 2014
- Deliverable: 94 residential units with 6000 sf retail

MARTA KING MEMORIAL TOD

- Developer: Walton Communities
- Status: Applied for Low Income Housing Tax Credits, due 2016
- Deliverable: 386 residential units with 13,000sf retail

FORMER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BUILDINGS

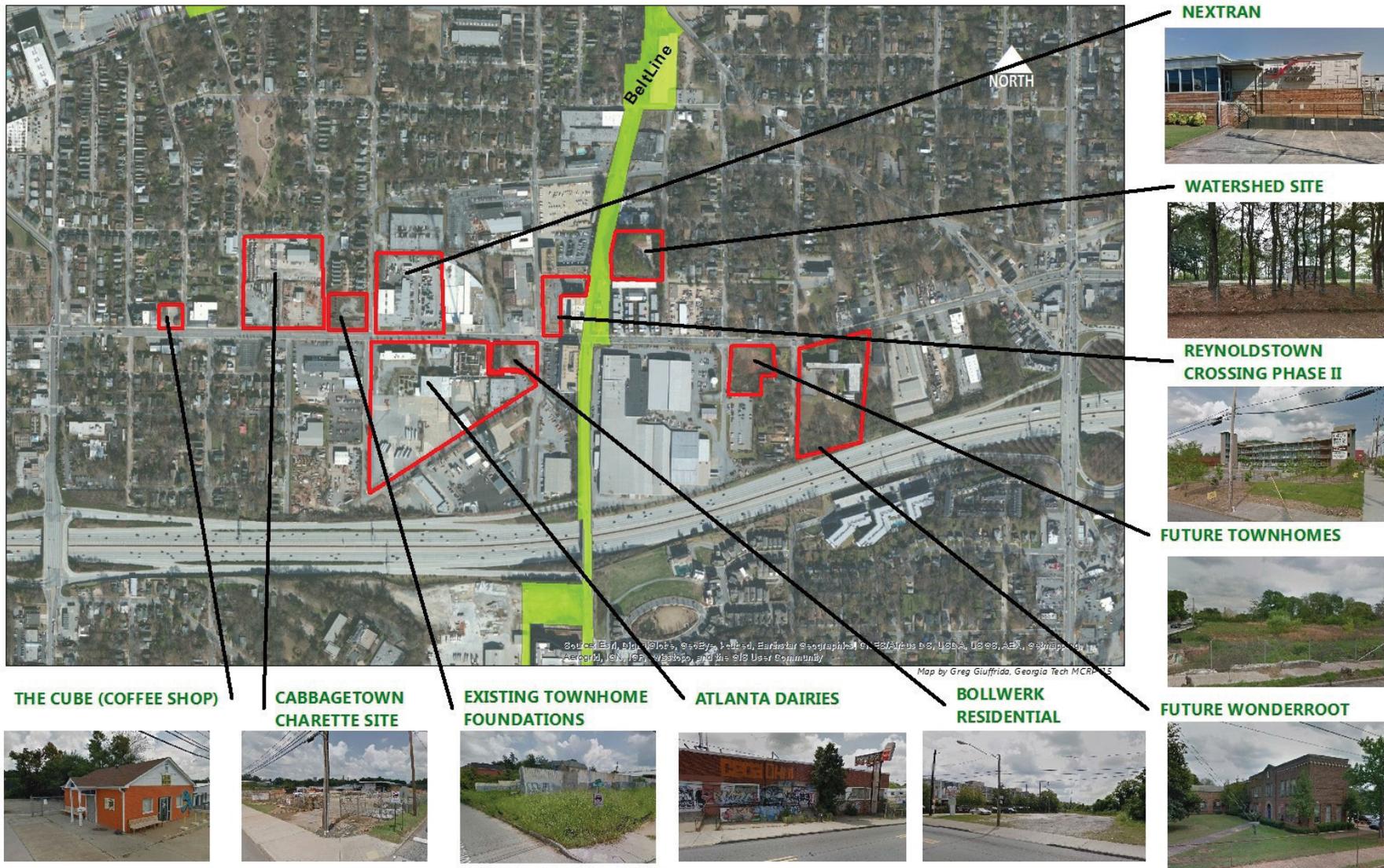
- Developer: Paces Properties
- Status: Under Contract

Invest Atlanta has been working for over a decade to acquire the parcels just north of Memorial Drive from Capitol Avenue to Oakland Cemetery for the Capital Greenway, a linear park that includes a cap over the interstate. This project has been under-funded because of competing city priorities. Integral, a member of the development partnership that built the Capitol Gateway project under Hope VI, has an option to develop several of the parcels. Integral is moving forward with these plans. If the City wishes to maintain these parcels for the Capital Greenway, the expected zoning change request should be conditioned on provisions for Integral to provide public access and trail connectivity through their development site. Also, the existing Capital Greenway parcels should be activated with landscaping and interim trails to encourage use by current and future residents

in that area. There are also plans to tear down the State Archives building, currently sinking on a weak foundation, to build a new location for the Georgia Supreme Court. In conjunction with this big construction project and the new Liberty Plaza, the Georgia State Building Authority has commissioned plans for the creation of a pedestrian-oriented roundabout at the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Memorial Drive. These plans are years away from execution, but the roundabout would help connectivity and provide an impressive grand entrance to both Memorial Drive and the Georgia Capitol.

The MARTA TOD planned for 2016 and the Leonard which completes construction this month will deliver a total of 482 new apartments in that area with about 20,000 square feet of retail. The future residents will increase the existing demand for services like grocery stores as well as pedestrian infrastructure improvements. Even with the new residential spaces and the future sale of the old Habitat for Humanity building, this segment of Memorial Drive has many more opportunities for development and transition. The areas around the Leonard and near Boulevard are vacant and underused. Grant Park is starting a "Living Memorial!" campaign to help attract more retail and commercial tenants to the corridor. The transportation, streetscape, and walkability improvements that the LCI proposes should serve to complement the goals of that campaign.

BOULEVARD TO MORELAND



THE CUBE (COFFEE SHOP)



CABBAGETOWN CHARETTE SITE



EXISTING TOWNHOME FOUNDATIONS



ATLANTA DAIRIES



BOLLWERK RESIDENTIAL



FUTURE WONDERROOT



FUTURE TOWNHOMES



REYNOLDSTOWN CROSSING PHASE II



WATERSHED SITE



NEXTRAN



Figure 2: Detail map of transitional real estate from Boulevard to Moreland

Heavy morning congestion is an issue at Boulevard, but corner parcels are underused. The next extension of the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail is driving major interest in dense development. Affordability and displacement of jobs will be lingering equity problems. A major retail center is coming to Glenwood Park, south of I-20.

Memorial Drive Segment 2: From Boulevard to Moreland Avenue

Key Issues:

- The streetscape and site design is not conducive to pedestrian traffic, e.g. large chain link and barbed wire fences line Memorial Drive
- No affordability requirements and the BeltLine does not currently have funding for planned affordable units
- Cabbagetown Historic District rules limit redevelopment opportunities, largely because of minimum parking requirements
- Mixed-use development opportunities threaten industrial employment centers

Key Opportunities:

- Adopt compatible urban design and streetscape measures to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and motorists
- Coordinate development access with travel improvement; consistent streetscape treatments deriving from street width reductions
- Maintain job centers on Memorial and fund aesthetic improvements for industrial uses
- Encourage creative design of the new City water storage tank at the Holtzclaw site (Note: A design competition is now planned).
- Consider using city-owned property west of Bill Kennedy Way for shared parking to support surrounding development

Key Properties in Transition:

CABBAGETOWN CHARRETTE SITE

- Status: Seeking Public Support

THE CUBE (COFFEE SHOP)

- Developer: Ron Fisher
- Status: Purchased

- Deliverable: 1000 sf coffee shop and rain garden

EXISTING TOWNHOME FOUNDATIONS

- Status: Under contract; new foundations likely needed.

FUTURE WONDERROOT

- Designer: Perkins + Will
- Status: Construction, due 2015
- Deliverable: 54,000 sf of artists' studio and meeting space in historic school

ATLANTA DAIRIES

- Developer: Paces Properties
- Status: Under contract; scale and number of units unknown

BOLLWERK RESIDENTIAL

- Developer: Enfold Properties
- Status: Permitting building expansion

FUTURE TOWNHOMES

- Developer: John Wieland Homes
- Status: Under contract

LOFTS AT REYNOLDSTOWN CROSSING PHASE II

- Developer: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. will put it to bid
- Status: Planning, but unfunded

WATERSHED SITE

- Developer: Department of Watershed Management
- Status: Planning new water storage tank, hosting design competition for appearance

NEXTRAN SITE

- Status: Recently sold, dealership plans to relocate in 2-3 years.

This segment of the corridor is the most in flux, in part catalyzed by the planned extension of the Atlanta BeltLine's Eastside Trail from Irwin Street to Memorial Drive. Several adaptive-reuse projects are complete or planned: Habitat for Humanity renovated the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Building from the 1950s; WonderRoot is adapting the former Tech High charter school building from the 1920s; and Paces Properties plans to

MORELAND AVENUE TO WARREN STREET

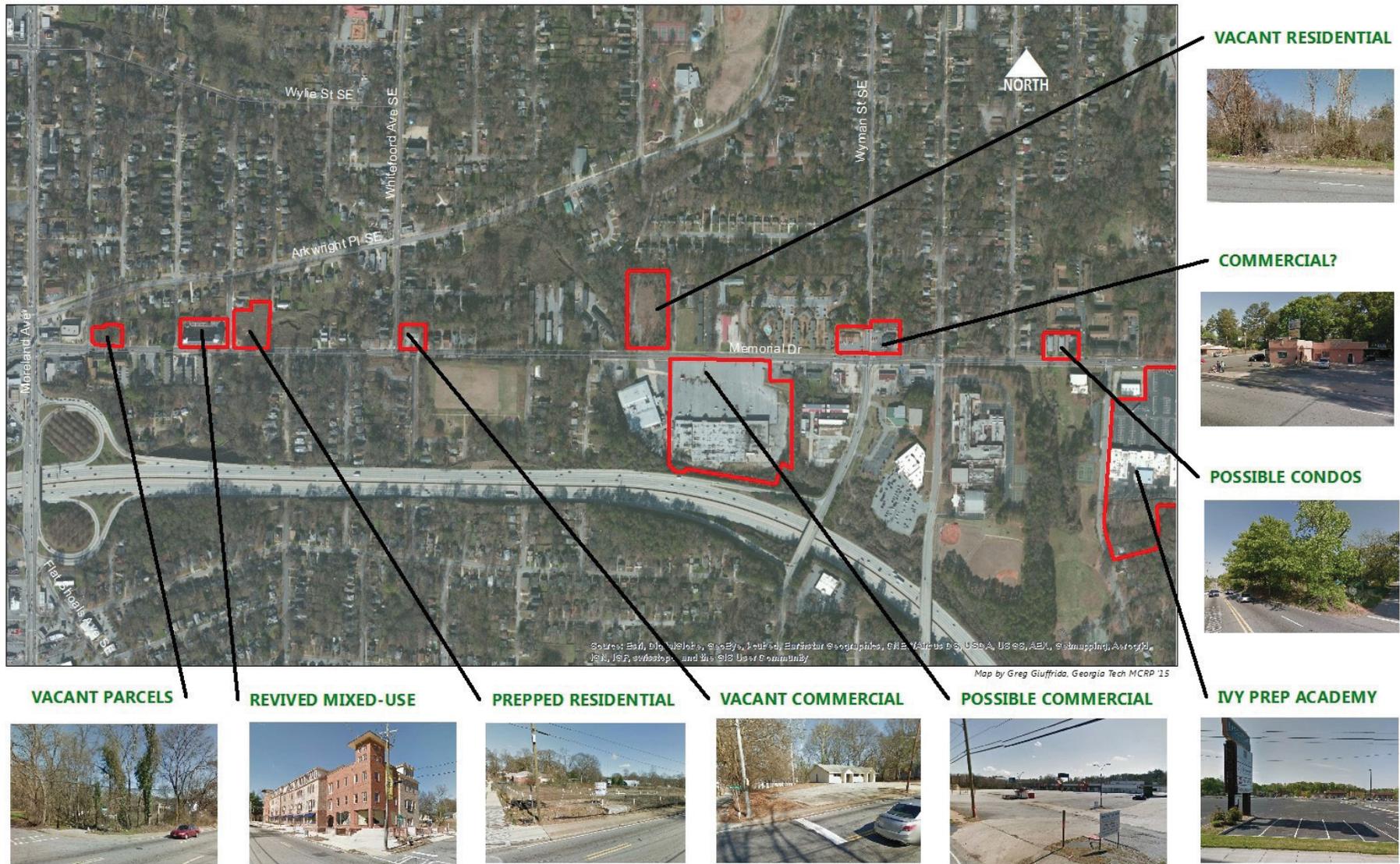


Figure 3: Detail map of transitional real estate from Moreland Avenue to Warren Street

The problematic intersection at Moreland/Arkwright will be redesigned. Stalled residential developments are being revived in southern Edgewood. The Atlantic shopping center site and Ivy Prep Charter sites offer potential for development that better engages the street. Safer pedestrian facilities for students are vital.

develop the Atlanta Dairies site while maintaining its historic 1940s character. On a smaller scale, a local Cabbagetown business owner plans to turn the Cube art gallery into a coffee shop. Several new residential developments are planned, including Lofts at Reynoldstown Crossing Phase II, a multifamily development next to the existing Lofts condos, and a new townhouse development east of the Leggett & Platt site.

Parking needs are expected to increase in coming years. One possibility for expanding parking is on city-owned land near I-20 and Old Flat Shoals for parking to serve new developments and BeltLine visitors.

Given the demand for residential mixed-use development, commercial uses in this segment of the corridor are at risk. Some Cabbagetown neighbors are frustrated by the industrial land uses. There is an effort led by some Cabbagetown residents to redevelop the block that is currently home to Cummins Landscape Supply, extra Grady ambulance space, and an underused warehouse. The neighbors involved would like to see active greenspace with mixed use development. Given the rising land prices, they may be outpaced by developers to bid on the property. However, the economic vitality of the corridor depends on a mix of jobs and residences as well as greenspace.

One of the biggest concerns from neighbors about industrial land uses is the fact that they do not relate to the pedestrian scale characteristic of residential neighborhoods. The tracts and buildings are large, with chain link fences protecting huge trucks and equipment. The aesthetic incongruity that industrial land creates in a neighborhood can be addressed with better design. For employers wishing to stay in the neighborhood, Invest Atlanta should consider engaging designers for landscaping design interventions. Hedges or wrought-iron fences instead

of chain link could enhance the pedestrian infrastructure improvements proposed for this LCI.

Another opportunity for design comes with the City Department of Watershed Management's plans for a new water storage tank on its parcel on Holtzclaw Street. The high elevation of the site above the BeltLine offers an impressive skyline view. Councilmember Archibong's office and the department have organized a design competition to solicit ideas for aesthetic appearance of the tank and the surrounding site.

Memorial Drive Segment 3: From Moreland Avenue to Warren Street

Key Issues:

- Vacant and underused land
- Limited connectivity of developments to neighborhoods and pedestrian experience
- Declining commercial uses

Key Opportunities:

- Potential for new urban design along adjacent land, especially at vacant or underused shopping centers.
- Allow incremental development along Memorial Drive to transform vacant properties while maintaining the stability of the occupied multifamily housing developments
- Encourage commercial redevelopment along the corridor to enhance job opportunities

Key Properties in Transition:

REVIVED MIXED USE

- Status: Recently opened for leasing

PREPPED SITE

- Status: Appears to be ready for redevelopment

WARREN STREET TO CANDLER ROAD - FOCUS ON COTTAGE GROVE POTENTIAL

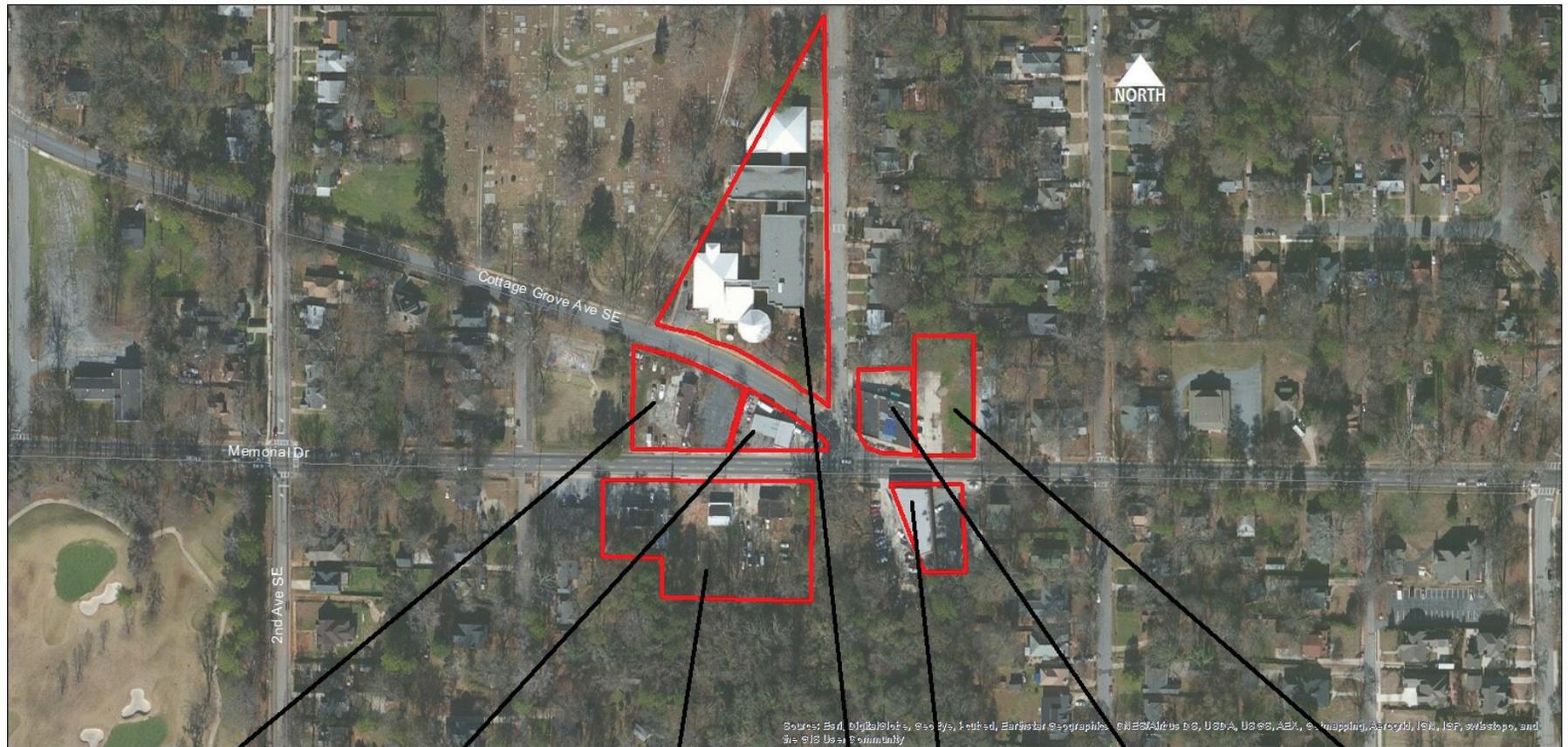


Figure 4: Detail map of transitional real estate at Cottage Grove

The current intersection design is inefficient and dangerous because of limited sight lines. A new design could improve safety, throughput, and activate a new space in front of the historic commercial block (details on pp. 57-59). The vacant school could be repurposed for community activities.

POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL: ATLANTIC SHOPPING CENTER

- Status: For sale by Vision Properties

POSSIBLE CONDOS: ROSEDALE APARTMENT COMPLEX

- Developer: Aletheia Ventures
- Status: Under contract, requesting permits

IVY PREPARATORY ACADEMY

- Status: Purchased, planning expansion

This segment has seen far less redevelopment in recent years, but it's ripe for transition. One recently completed project is a mixed-use residential development with some ground-floor retail, located at Dahlgren Street. Next door is a Planned Unit Development for 18 units with utility work already completed. Several other underused and vacant properties surround those developments as well as multifamily housing that is significantly more affordable than new construction.

The two largest sites in this section of the corridor are also undergoing changes. The Atlantic Shopping Center is currently for sale. As a retail location, it has declined over the years and has very low occupancy. The location and size of the site may lend itself to other uses. For example, this site is one of the few places along the corridor that could accommodate a new corporate complex which would ideally provide more jobs and improve the economic vitality of the corridor. The large parking lot could be reconfigured to house buildings closer to the street level. The buried creek underneath could be uncovered. But there is concern about its location in a floodplain, which could limit redevelopment. Another site with a similarly large footprint and plenty of underused surface parking is the Ivy Preparatory Academy, located between Wilkinson and Warren Streets. The school was formerly a tenant in the space, but recently worked with the DeKalb County Development Authority to use bond-financing to acquire the property. Expansion plans include building out 15,000

additional square feet for the school in the existing building, and the complex includes hundreds of unused parking spaces which could provide other interesting possibilities for future use. The school's board is considering future expansion plans, but nothing is imminent. It could consider selling or ground leasing a portion of the site nearest to Memorial Drive, currently unused parking, to a developer. Coupled with the travelway and streetscape enhancements from the LCI, a development closer to the road would help to visibly define the corridor, connect the development to the neighborhood, and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Memorial Drive Segment 4: From Warren Street to Candler Avenue

Key Issues:

- Development pressures from the western part of the corridor may creep into the neighborhood and undermine its existing residential character
- Creek buffer zones limit redevelopment potential
- The commercial node at Cottage Grove Avenue is underused
- Current intersection alignment has poor visibility and functionality

Key Opportunities:

- The creek buffer zones form a natural resource of local flora and fauna--these ecologically rich areas could be potentially recaptured as greenspace for the area
- With the proposed LCI improvements to Cottage Grove Avenue intersection, the declining retail outpost has the potential to reinvent itself as a thriving commercial node

Key Parcels in Transition:

FORMER EAST LAKE SCHOOL:

- Status: Closed

COTTAGE GROVE BUSINESS SITES:

- Status: Many are underutilized

This segment of the corridor is predominantly single-family homes. The proposed travelway and streetscape improvements would promote walking trips and allow children to more easily walk to school.

The intersection of Memorial Drive and Cottage Grove Avenue has great bones as a neighborhood commercial hub; it could become as much of an attraction as Downtown Kirkwood to the northwest. The LCI plans call for a narrowing of Memorial Drive that would devote more curb space near the existing coffee shop and salon. This area could become a bus shelter or potentially outdoor seating space for the coffee shop (A concept is contained in the intersection designs later). The LCI would also improve walkability of the area by constructing functioning sidewalks and crosswalks. However, the intersection will still need more planning to address the vacant land, empty school, and the challenge of redeveloping land along the creek bed to the south of the intersection. There should be a visioning effort between the neighbors, city officials, and property owners to determine the future possibilities of Cottage Grove.

Other than the Cottage Grove Avenue intersection, commercial development should be curtailed along this part of the corridor so that residents of single family homes along the corridor will not be displaced. Higher-density zoning should be avoided.

Trees and plants have lots of room to grow in this older residential part of the corridor, and they are a key natural resource that should be preserved. Atlanta is one of the most biodiverse cities in the US, and this area of the city, with myriad creeks that are protected with buffers provides a fantastic habitat. Native

species like White Oaks, some approaching 200 years old, thrive here. Many parcels in this part of the corridor along the creeks could function as usable greenspace if it weren't for invasive species like kudzo, English ivy, and privet which kill the native plants and make the areas look like an unnavigable jungle instead of a forest.

These creek buffer areas are a prime example of the potential for new usable greenspace through ecorestoration. Ecorestoration is a process of eradicating invasive species to allow native plants a chance to revive. Ecorestoration is most successful in areas where the soil has never been graded or chemically altered and still hosts indigenous seeds, bacteria, and fungi that support of the native ecosystem. The parcels with undisturbed soil are likely too small for conservation easements, but by working with naturalists and volunteer groups, the property owners may be educated on the possibilities for ecorestoration of their land. There are also opportunities for the City to set an example on some of their properties. For example Public Works could restore the creek at East Lake Park to a natural creek bed instead of concrete, and Watershed Management could restore their site at Willow Wood Circle, currently overrun by privet, to an urban forest.

Conclusion

The transportation improvements in this LCI are designed to complement the current real estate and land use trends in each of the four segments, and together they will catalyze future possibilities for the corridor. In the high-growth areas of the corridor at risk for more congestion, the streetscape improvements will increase walkability and decrease the number of trips taken by car. Increased street life will drive demand for new retail in mixed-use developments. In the lower-density areas, the streetscape improvements will increase neighborhood connectivity and spark