

Chapter Three

DATA COLLECTION &

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Previous Plans & Studies
- Neighboring Community Initiatives
- Existing Transportation Network
- Policy Review
- Other Guidance

3 Existing Conditions

The technical elements of the planning effort began with a data collection phase and assessment of existing conditions. This chapter documents this process, including review of previous plans and studies, coordination with neighboring communities, assessment of the existing transportation network and community, a review of existing policies, and adherence to general best practices.

Previous Plans & Studies

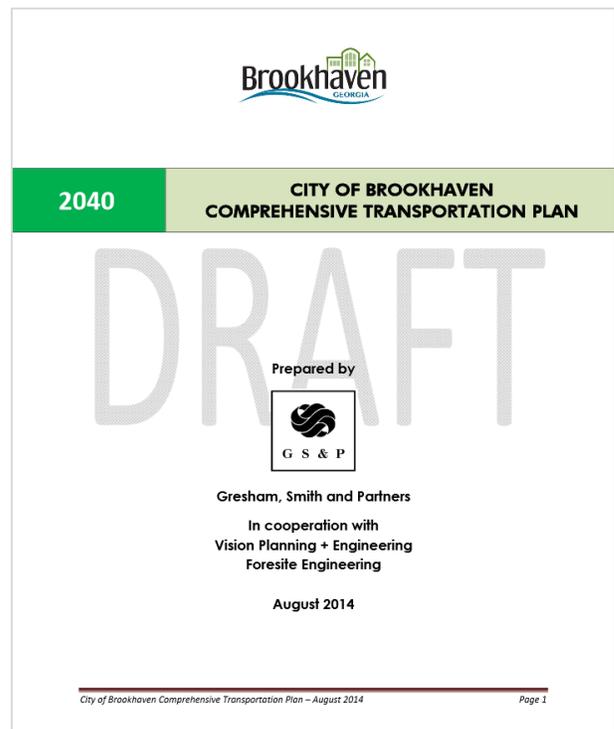
Several recent plans have emphasized revamping the transportation network of Brookhaven to better serve both choice users as well as dependent populations. The following is a summary of the findings of these recent plans.

Brookhaven Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The recent Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), completed in 2014, summarizes recommendations in the following goals:

- **Safety-** To plan, develop, and manage a multimodal transportation system that is safe for all users.
- **Mobility and Access-** To efficiently and affordably connect all City residents with neighborhoods, workplaces, commercial areas, medical/wellness centers, civic places, educational venues, and green spaces to maintain a highly desirable quality of life.

- **State of Good Repair-** To provide for regular maintenance of streets, highways, sidewalks, bike lanes and paths, other transportation-related facilities to protect the City’s investment in quality transportation infrastructure.
- **Economic Prosperity-** To provide the needed mobility and access for workers, customers, goods, and services that are essential to protecting the City’s economic competitiveness within the Atlanta region.
- **Public Health-** To plan and develop an active transport system that contributes positively to the health of residents of all ages by providing opportunities to walk, bicycle, and access public transportation.

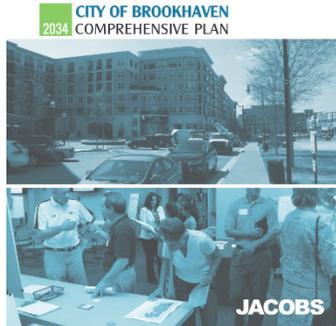


Four out of five of these goals directly emphasize support for bolstered active transportation options within Brookhaven, so improvement in this regard is clearly a priority for the city.

Brookhaven Comprehensive Plan



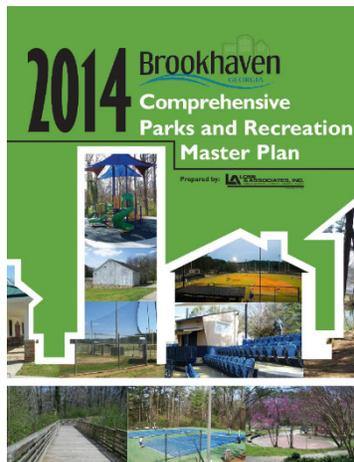
The Comprehensive Plan (2014) echoes the goals of the CTP in a policy statement that aims to “achieve greater walkability, bikeability, and overall mobility for day-to-day activities through transportation and land use



coordination.” It also recognizes a need to promote infrastructure and design that support health and exercise in the community. One of the top priorities identified by the Comprehensive Plan is to implement a Complete Streets policy, a need also demonstrated in the CTP. Furthermore, the plan promotes the creation of “overlay districts and/or design guidelines for specific areas and corridors to enhance community character, walkability and sense of place.”

Brookhaven Parks & Recreations Plan

The Parks and Recreation Plan (2014) further details the needs of Brookhaven, calling for a network of small neighborhood parks connected by a community greenway system that complements the complete streets initiatives of the city. The Parks and Recreation Plan and other recent documents support the achievement of all these goals by articulating the current (deficient) conditions of the active



transportation network and suggesting potential outcomes based on these analyses.

Buford Highway Improvement Plan & Economic Development Strategy



Buford Highway Improvement Plan and Economic Development Strategy

AUGUST 12, 2014



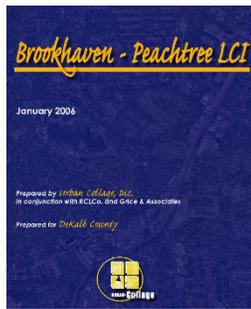
Most notably, this plan recommended the removal of a vehicular travel lane in each direction of Buford Highway as part of a streetscape to include sidewalk on one side of the corridor and a multi-trail on the other side. Other recommendations included mid-block crossings, aesthetic treatments, and gateway features.

DeKalb Comprehensive Transportation Plan



The DeKalb CTP (2014) recommended a Complete Streets Policy so that all roadway projects would be evaluated as candidates for possible bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Additionally, a priority bicycle network was established with several corridors being identified as part of either the “Second Tier Priority Network” (corridors such as Peachtree Road, Buford Highway, and Nancy Creek) or the “First Tier Priority Network: (Clairmont Road and Ashford-Dunwoody Road).

Brookhaven-Peachtree Livable Centers Initiative



Prepared in 2006, prior to the formation of the City of Brookhaven, this Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan focused on a variety of land use and urban design elements within the Peachtree Road corridor

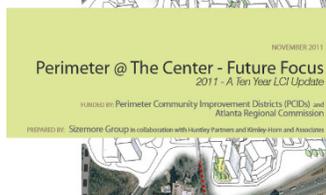
through central Brookhaven. Specific pedestrian and bicycle recommendations were not included but overall challenges to connectivity were addressed with the plan concluding that while neighborhood connections would help, connectivity would likely need to occur on the Peachtree Road corridor itself.

Perimeter Community Improvement District Livable Centers Initiative

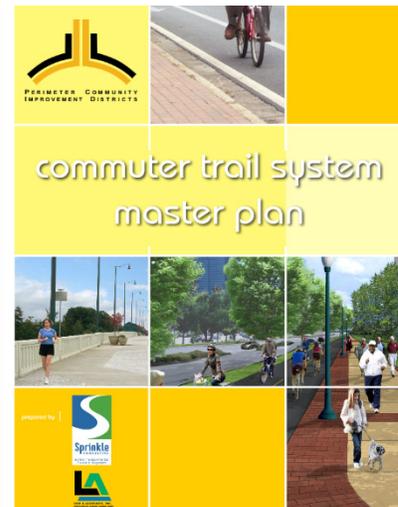


A 2011 update to the original LCI plan for the Perimeter Community Improvement District (PCID) was entitled "Perimeter @ The Center - Future Focus" and was intended to reflect the area's evolution into a

mixed-use community. Among the overall recommendations were concentrating growth around transit stations, reducing large block sizes, and improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.



Perimeter Community Improvement District Commuter Trail System Plan



This plan, also completed for PCID, focused on bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help facilitate commuter movements within the Perimeter area. Specific

recommendations were developed for Lake Hearn Drive (a shared lane marking, or sharrow), Ashford-Dunwoody Road (a proposed sidepath), and Perimeter Center Parkway (a proposed sidepath) within the Brookhaven community.

Neighboring Community Initiatives

As part of the data gathering effort, the study team met with representatives from surrounding jurisdictions and transportation decision makers to coordinate planning activities. The following summarizes findings from these conversations.

City of Sandy Springs

The study team met with City of Sandy Springs Staff to discuss the Sandy Springs Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trail Plan and Brookhaven's efforts. Discussion points included:

- Improvements along Peachtree-Dunwoody Road in the Sandy Springs plan were identified but not ranked highly due, in part, to lack of connectivity with other planned facilities. The recommendations coming out of the Brookhaven plan are likely to show

connections to the Peachtree-Dunwoody Road corridor.

- The path of the Path400 Multi-use trail and its relationship to the 400/285 interchange was discussed. GDOT's plans include swinging the trail through the SE quadrant of the interchange and connecting to Peachtree-Dunwoody Road at that road's interchange with I-285.

City of Chamblee

The study team met with planning staff from the City of Chamblee to discuss general coordination and some of the recommendations evolving out of the Brookhaven Bike Ped and Trail Plan. The following items were discussed:

- The Clairmont Road corridor borders the City of Chamblee but the right-of-way is entirely within Brookhaven. Chamblee staff were receptive to the idea of a multi-use trail along this corridor and requested that the City of Brookhaven continue to coordinate, particularly in regards to future development along the corridor to ensure compatibility.
- The Chamblee-Dunwoody Road corridor borders the City of Chamblee with the right-of-way being entirely within Chamblee. Chamblee staff was receptive to the recommendation of sidewalks along the entirety of the corridor. An E-W greenway connection from Chamblee Dunwoody Road, south of Savoy Drive was also mentioned.
- Sidewalk connections on Donaldson Drive and Harts Mill Road (where right-of-way is within City of Chamblee) were also discussed.

- The need to connect Keswick Park to Brookhaven (immediately to its west) was discussed and agreed to be an important connection
- Maintaining a similar section on Johnson Ferry Road between Chamblee and Brookhaven was discussed. Chamblee isn't currently designing a streetscape with 8 foot sidewalk (effectively a multi-use trail) on their side. This may be important with the anticipated Whole Foods development.
- Extending the proposed trail along Peachtree Road/Peachtree Boulevard from Brookhaven to Chamblee was discussed. This also would connect to the anticipated Whole Foods development.
- A formal intergovernmental coordination committee to include the North DeKalb cities (Brookhaven, Chamblee, Dunwoody, and Doraville) was discussed. With greenways and trails being a priority with Atlanta Regional Commission, the possibility that this could be a strong issue to frame this cooperation was discussed.

Perimeter Community Improvement District

The study team met with PCID staff to discuss the progress of initiatives documented in their Trail System Plan. Among the items discussed were the creation of a loop through the southern part of the district (and extending into Brookhaven) formed by a two-way cycle track on Peachtree-Dunwoody Road (north of I-285) and corresponding improvements on Hammond Drive, Perimeter Center Parkway, and Lake Hearn Drive. Additionally, a trail parallel to the MARTA line connecting to the

Medical Center Station and Perimeter Center Parkway was discussed.

Buckhead Community Improvement District

The study team met with Buckhead CID staff to discuss Buckhead bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. The following items were discussed:

- A cycle track is being planned along East Paces Ferry Road using City of Atlanta Infrastructure Bond funding. This would connect to Brookhaven at Roxboro Road.
- The Path 400 Trail is being extended north from its current terminus at Old Ivy Road to Wieuca Road. It will ultimately proceed further north.
- Buckhead CID is looking at the extension of the Peachtree Streetscape and bike lanes to the City limit and this is a primary area of focus.
- Another area being considered for bike lanes is along Powers Ferry Road to connect Chastain Park to Roswell Road and along Old Ivy Road to Path 400 and Wieuca Road.
- Coordination is needed to find a connection from the Old Ivy and Wieuca Road access to Path 400 east into Brookhaven, perhaps using sharrows along residential roads.
- Buckhead has several ongoing programs related to bicycle sharing and establishing a bike boulevard:
 - A bike share program with 6-8 kiosks is planned for implementation in 2016.
 - Simon properties had a Holiday bike taxi pilot program in 2014.

BCID may work with them to expand it in 2015 or 2016.

- The City of Atlanta is developing a bike boulevard through the Garden Hills neighborhood along Grandview Avenue.

City of Atlanta

The study team met with City of Atlanta staff to further discuss connections between Brookhaven and the City of Atlanta. Among the initiatives discussed were the Path 400 and Beltline.

Regional Initiatives

In addition to the initiatives of surrounding communities and partner agencies, there are several regionally significant initiatives relevant to the City of Brookhaven.

Most notably is an update to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, from which a draft version was released in December 2015. As part of this effort, ARC periodically shared information with stakeholders such as the City of Brookhaven. In their planning efforts, ARC had identified major regional corridors to consider for pedestrian and bicycle investment – within the City of Brookhaven, they identified both the Peachtree Creek and the need for what is effectively the north-south spine envisioned by the community.

Other major regional initiatives include the ongoing development of the Beltline Trail in the City of Atlanta, a 22 mile loop utilizing abandoned rail corridors that has contributed to significant reinvestment along its path. Connections through the Peachtree Creek will eventually connect the City of Brookhaven to the Beltline. In the opposite direction, the former General Motors site in Doraville is the focus of redevelopment efforts. Currently being known as “The Assembly”, the redevelopment

efforts include the creation of a mixed-use “live-work-play” regional attraction.

Existing Transportation Network

Due to the nature of auto-oriented development in Brookhaven within the last several decades, the City lacks provisions for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Though a rudimentary sidewalk system exists in Brookhaven, the sidewalk network is fragmented in many areas due to the disconnected hierarchal street system endemic to Brookhaven.

For instance, some destinations are separated by large distances that discourage active transportation by choice users. As such, previous planning efforts have recommend reconnecting the fragmented network wherever possible to ensure optimal routes for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition to these, many plans assert the importance of multi-use destinations to support incidental active transportation and the eventual redevelopment of the Brookhaven MARTA station into a dense, multi-use destination is highly emphasized.

The pedestrian infrastructure present in Brookhaven is far more developed than that provided specifically for bicyclists. Currently, there are limited facilities for bicyclists, especially in the form of separate bicycle facilities strongly desired by the community. There is only one dedicated multi-use trail in the city, the Nancy Creek Trail in northern Brookhaven.

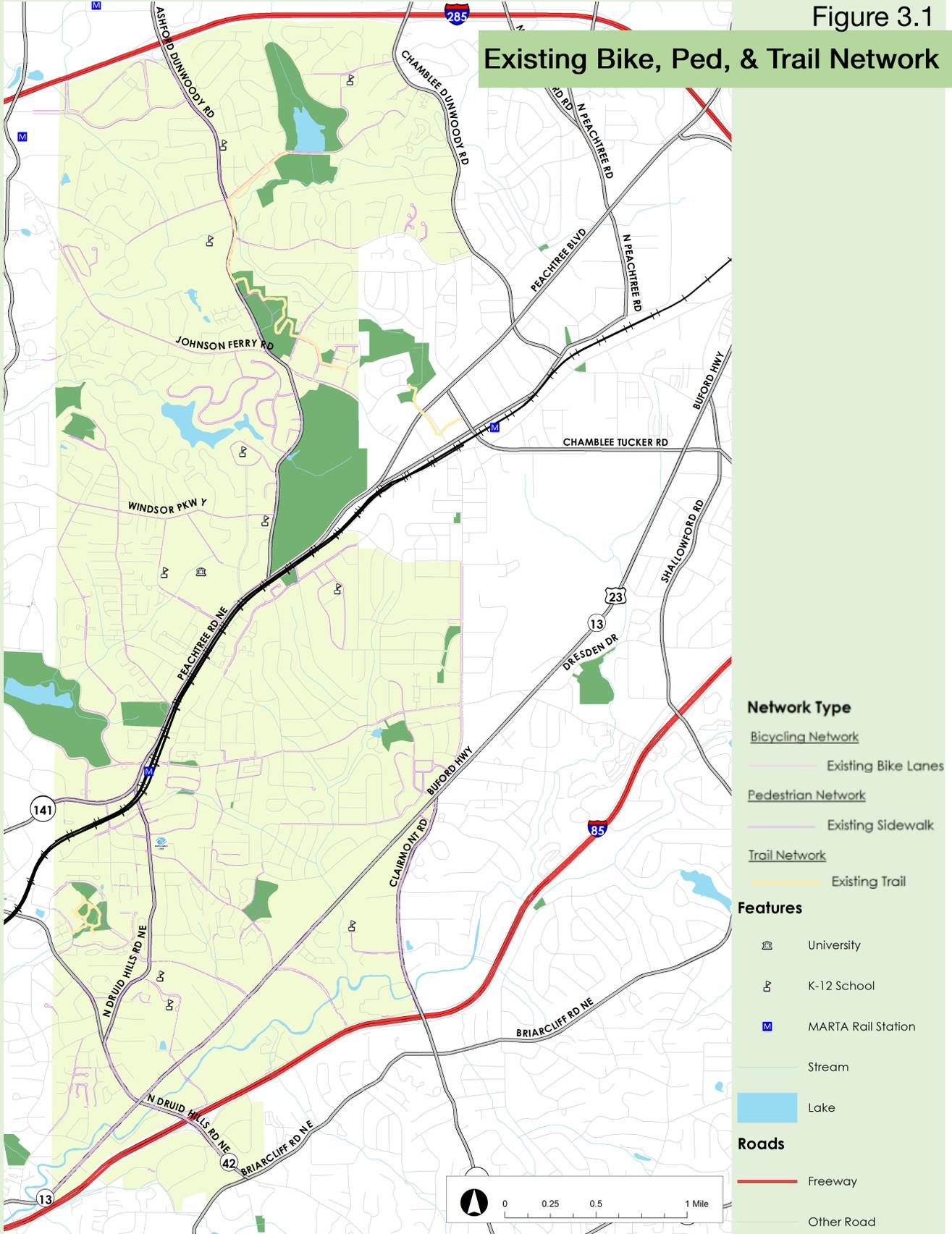
Also notable is that several challenges exist in implementing and constructing new bicycle, pedestrian, and trail facilities in several of the residential neighborhoods in the central and southern parts of the community. In many of these neighborhoods, existing roadway pavement is not wide and there are limited setbacks for the various structures located on these corridors, creating very little physical

room for new facilities without being particularly impactful to existing properties.

A map of the existing bicycle, pedestrian, and trail network is provided in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1

Existing Bike, Ped, & Trail Network



Policy Review

The study team conducted a review of existing policies in the City of Brookhaven code related to bicyclists and pedestrians. The majority of these policies were inherited from DeKalb County at the City's foundation and are primarily related to function and do not take an active role in promoting bicycle or pedestrian travel within the City. For documentation purposes, the applicable policies are indicated in **Appendix G**.

Other Guidance

Additionally, reviews were conducted of various local, state, and national level resource documents relating to bicycle, pedestrian, and trail facilities. This includes:

- United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) which authored a Policy Statement (dated March 11, 2010) re-emphasizing the consideration of walking and biking as equal to other transportation modes
 - The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) which was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012 and makes a variety of progressive changes from previous transportation bills.
 - Chapter 9 of the GDOT Design and Policy Manual, which includes GDOT's 'Complete Streets' policy to "routinely incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit (user and transit vehicle) accommodations into transportation infrastructure projects"
 - Other resources such as:
 - AASHTO Guide for Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities
 - GDOT Guidebook for Pedestrian Planning
- GDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan
 - GDOT Pedestrian and Streetscape Guide
 - Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
 - NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide

