

Aerotropolis ATLANTA

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY



Kimley»Horn
JANUARY 2019

SPECIAL THANKS

To the cities of Atlanta, College Park, East Point, and Hapeville, as well as Fulton County—their elected officials, leadership, and staff for your guidance and participation.



To the City of East Point and its staff for providing the City Hall Annex for the Public Open House.

And, to all interviewed Stakeholders and community members who attended the public open house for your time and commitment to the Aerotropolis area.



VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY

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VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

AEROTROPOLIS ALLIANCE CID MASTER PLAN

VIRGINIA AVENUE STUDY AREA

AEROTROPOLIS ATLANTA CIDS MASTER PLAN

The Aerotropolis Atlanta Community Improvement Districts (AACIDs) Master Plan was adopted in May 2017. The Master Plan outlines a unified vision and action plan for the districts including 30 improvement projects and initiatives in the areas of public safety, beautification, infrastructure, and wayfinding. The Plan identified Virginia Avenue as one of three corridors within the district positioned to guide future growth and contribute in a substantial way to enhancing area’s sense of place. The plan cited Virginia Avenue’s significant redevelopment potential and identity as Aerotropolis’ “Main Street” as key reasons to reposition it as a walkable, mixed-use corridor — leveraging it as a catalyst that would “spark” the surrounding area.

The Master Plan recognized several challenges unique to redevelopment along Virginia Avenue. The corridor extends across four jurisdictions, including College Park, East Point, Hapeville, and Atlanta, meaning any cohesive redesign efforts would require communication, policy coordination, and consistent design standards. The corridor was also recognized as having overhead utility lines along the north sidewalk, posing a significant obstacle to any improvement effort.

The Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs Master Plan outlined two potential approaches to enhance Virginia Avenue and influence future development to be more walkable and dynamic. One approach suggested a shallow build-to zone to create a more urban walkable street, with potential relocation of overhead utilities. The other approach suggested a controlled setback to maintain the utilities in place and limiting parking along the corridor’s frontage.

This Virginia Avenue Corridor Study sought to further investigate and detail the opportunities and challenges along the corridor, while working with the four cities and community to develop a plan for corridor improvements.



Airport West CID

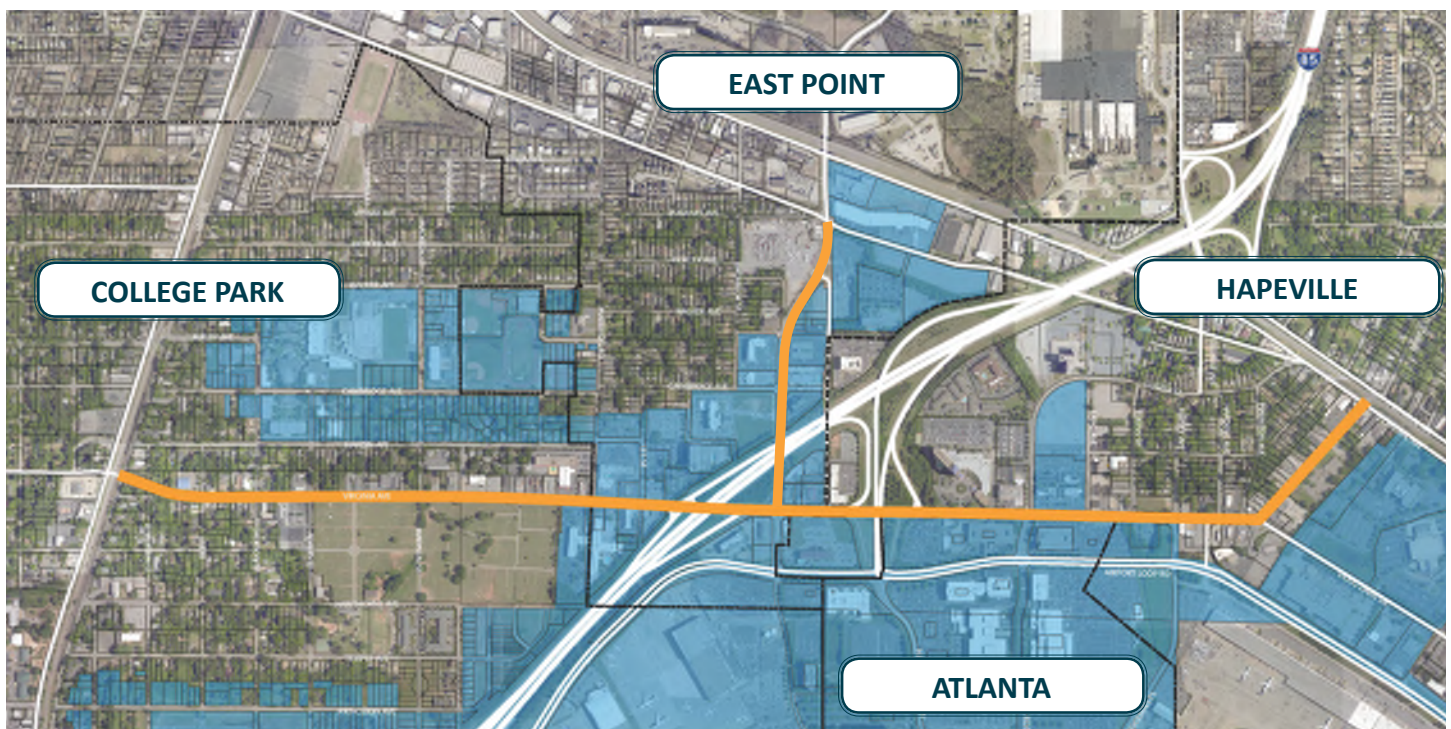
Priority	Project Name	Project Type	Description
1	Wayfinding and Signage	Wayfinding	Regional, District and Local Wayfinding Signage
2A	Virginia Avenue Corridor Study	Streetscape and Corridor Study	From East Main Street in College Park, GA to South Central Avenue in Hapeville, GA. Lane width reduction, sidewalk widening, appropriate landscaping, potential relocation of overhead power.
2B	Virginia Avenue Corridor Enhancement	Streetscape and Corridor Enhancements	From East Main Street in College Park, GA to South Central Avenue in Hapeville, GA. Lane width reduction, sidewalk widening, appropriate landscaping, potential relocation of overhead power.
3	Virginia Avenue at Interstate 85 Interchange Enhancements	Interchange Beautification	Maintenance and landscaping

2016 Master Plan (left) and associated Action Plan (right), including Virginia Avenue Corridor Study as a priority project to be completed by Airport West CID.

VIRGINIA AVENUE STUDY AREA

CORRIDOR EXTENTS

The extents to be studied were also outlined in the Master Plan, establishing a study area from East Main Street in College Park to South Central Avenue in Hapeville. During the Corridor Study process Bobby Brown Parkway from Virginia Avenue to Willingham Drive was added. The map below illustrates the portion of the corridor this study considered, highlighted in orange. Airport West CID properties are highlighted in blue, while cities are delineated with black dashed lines.



CORRIDOR STUDY GOALS

The Virginia Avenue Corridor Study was developed and executed with the following goals, developed by CID staff and board members:

1. Inventory and assess existing conditions
2. Facilitate a collective vision
3. Create and refine concepts
4. Establish a five-year action plan

VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY



EXISTING CONDITIONS

CHAPTER 2

JURISDICTIONS AND PARTNERS

LAND USE

TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

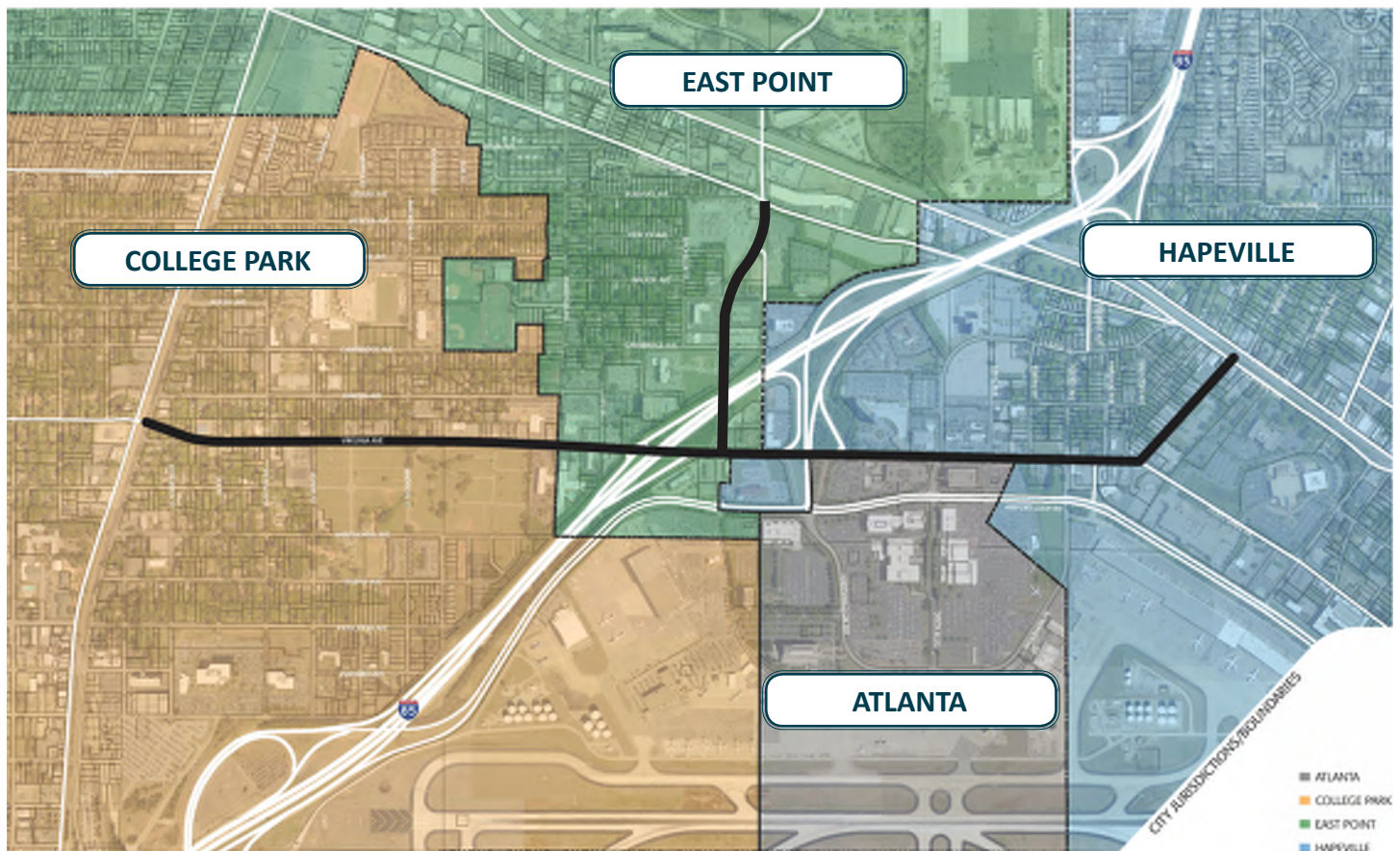
EXISTING STREET SECTIONS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

JURISDICTIONS AND PARTNERS

TWO STREETS, FOUR CITIES

The Virginia Avenue study area spans two miles, but in that short distance it crosses four cities from west to east: College Park, East Point, Atlanta, and Hapeville. While Virginia Avenue (and Bobby Brown Parkway in East Point) is an important activity center within each municipality, each city's approach to maintaining and enhancing the corridor may be different. Yet, the corridor is envisioned as the "Main Street" for the Aerotropolis Area and as such, is intended to accommodate growth and experience increased development over the next decade.



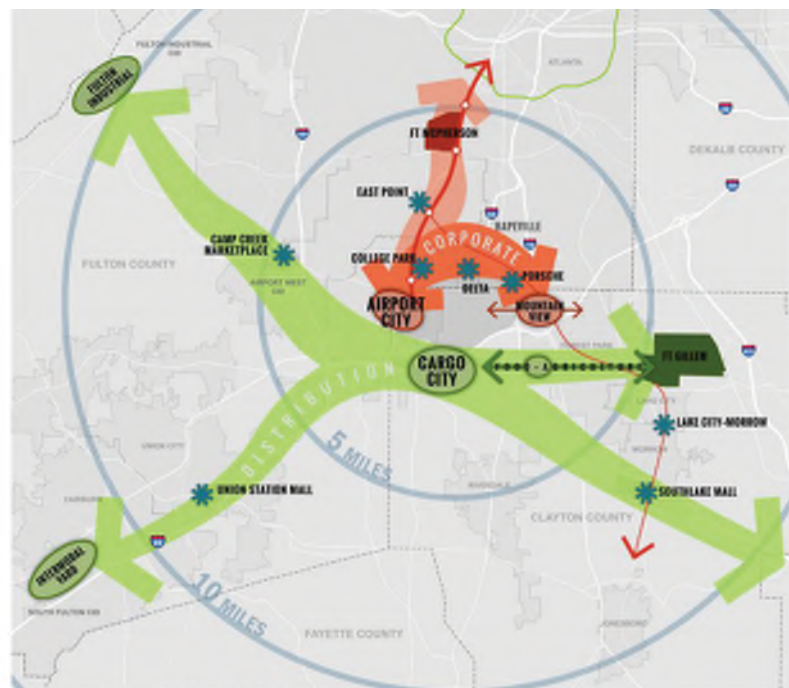
AEROTROPLIS ATLANTA ALLIANCE “BLUEPRINT”

The Aerotropolis Atlanta Blueprint is a first of its kind strategy for the Atlanta region—providing the framework and impetus to transform metro Atlanta’s Southside around Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL). The Blueprint is the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance’s visionary, community-derived development plan that intends to leverage the airport as a major asset to drive economic investment, job growth, and quality of life in the area. —From Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance

The Aerotropolis Atlanta Blueprint, completed in 2016, considered the area north of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport as the “Corporate Crescent” due to the amount of corporate headquarters and facilities located in the area. This vision for the greater Aerotropolis area influenced and set the tone for the AACID Master Plan and Virginia Avenue Corridor Study.

With the Blueprint, this area was identified as a priority investment area with several mentions made to improving the Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Areas through “gateway [creation] and a beautification program.” The Blueprint also called for the need to “strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections from Virginia Avenue to existing neighborhoods”

This corridor study further explores and details the goals of the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance Blueprint.



THE AEROTROPOLIS ATLANTA CORE



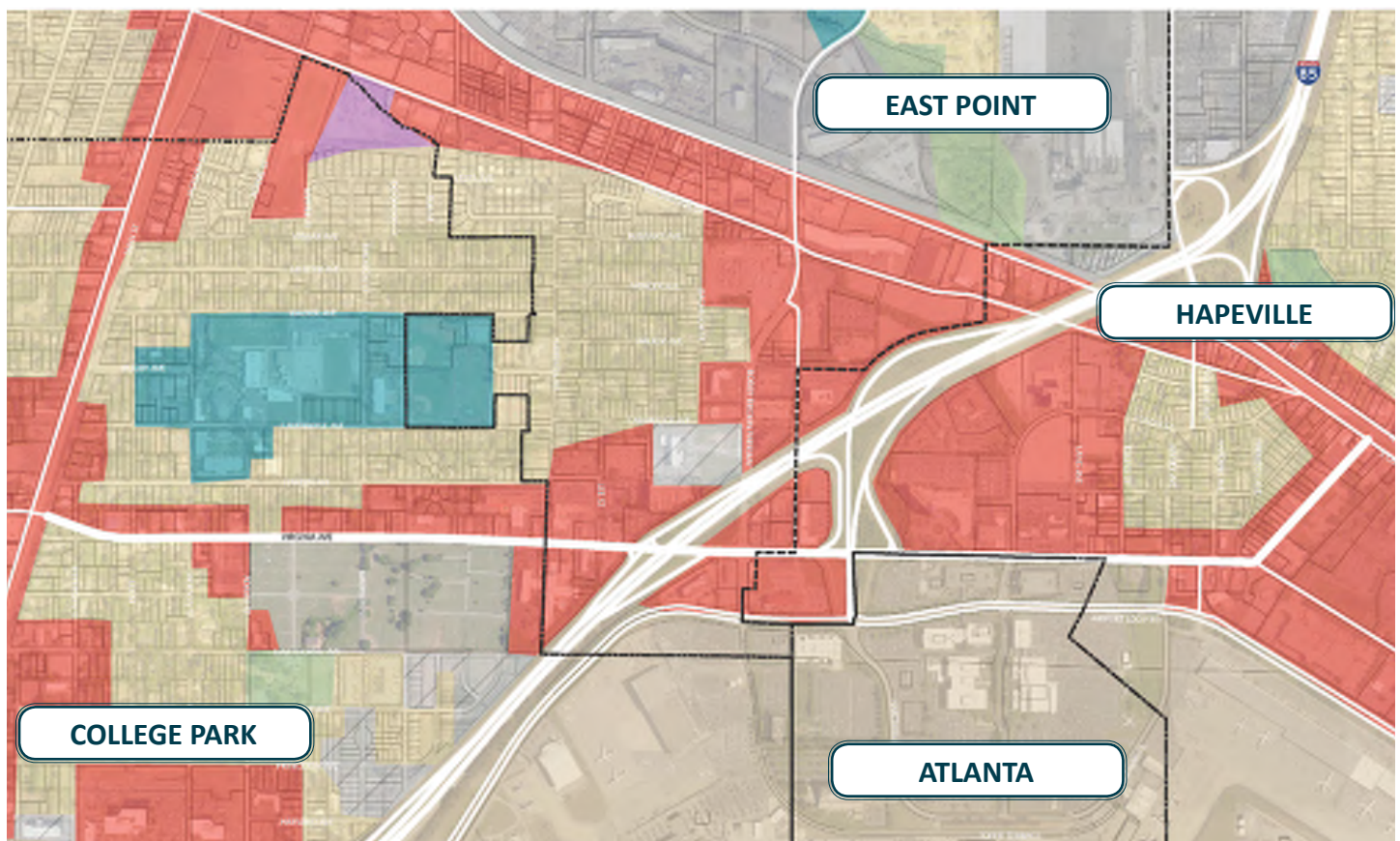
AEROTROPOLIS
ATLANTA

LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

Virginia Avenue is predominately lined with commercial land uses between Main Street in College Park and S. Central Drive in Hapeville. This land use is consistent across all jurisdictions and is typically comprised of single-story low-density retail, restaurant, or office uses. There are some pockets of higher density in Hapeville/Atlanta, where portions of Virginia Avenue house higher density commercial and office uses including Delta Airlines Corporate Headquarters and the Virginia Crossings shopping and office complex. Likewise, Bobby Brown Parkway is completely commercial with some of the area's larger hotels lining a large percentage of its frontage.

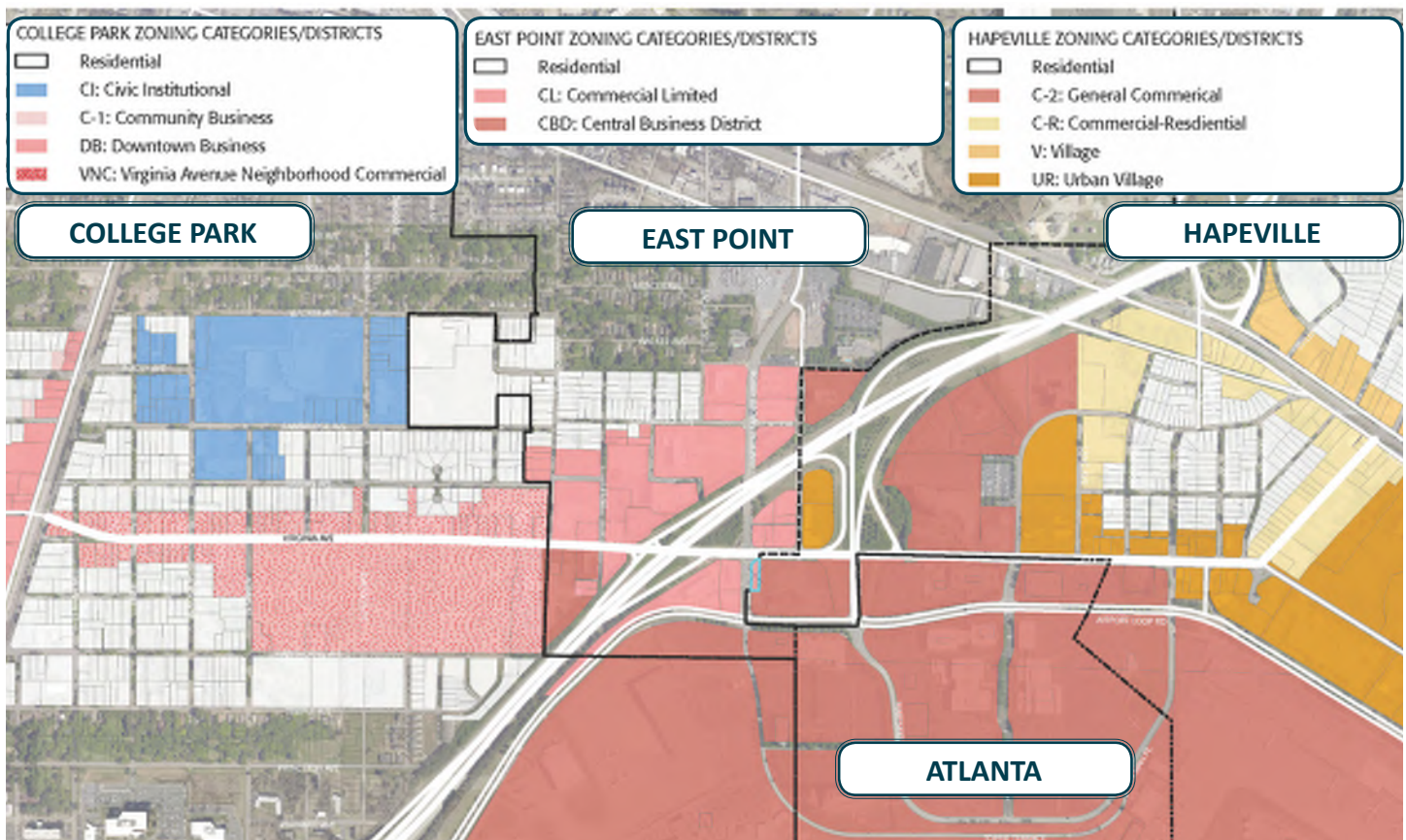
Some portions of Virginia Avenue in College Park are fronted by residential properties and the privately owned College Park Cemetery on the southern side of the street.



EXISTING ZONING

Similar to existing land uses, zoning regulations along the Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown corridors include various commercial categories. This pattern is consistent in both College Park and East Point where zoning districts limit redevelopment to commercial properties within the Virginia Avenue Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial Limited zoning districts. While these zoning districts have slight differences in their bulk standards, allowed uses are generally consistent across the two cities. Existing zoning along the corridor generally matches the existing land uses with the exception of several residential properties in College Park.

Some variety to the commercial zoning is found in Hapeville where properties to the north and east of Delta Airlines' headquarters are in an Urban Village zoning district which allows a variety of uses including residential.



TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC COUNTS

Due to the study area's proximity to Interstate 85 and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport the perception of traffic is much higher than the actual counts on the ground. For most of its length, Virginia Avenue averages less than 2,500 cars a day with an up-tick to less than 8,500 cars per day at the corridor's intersection with I-85 and Doug Davis Drive on the east end of the corridor. Bobby Brown Parkway accommodates more traffic on an average day versus Virginia Avenue, but still less than 8,500 cars/day.

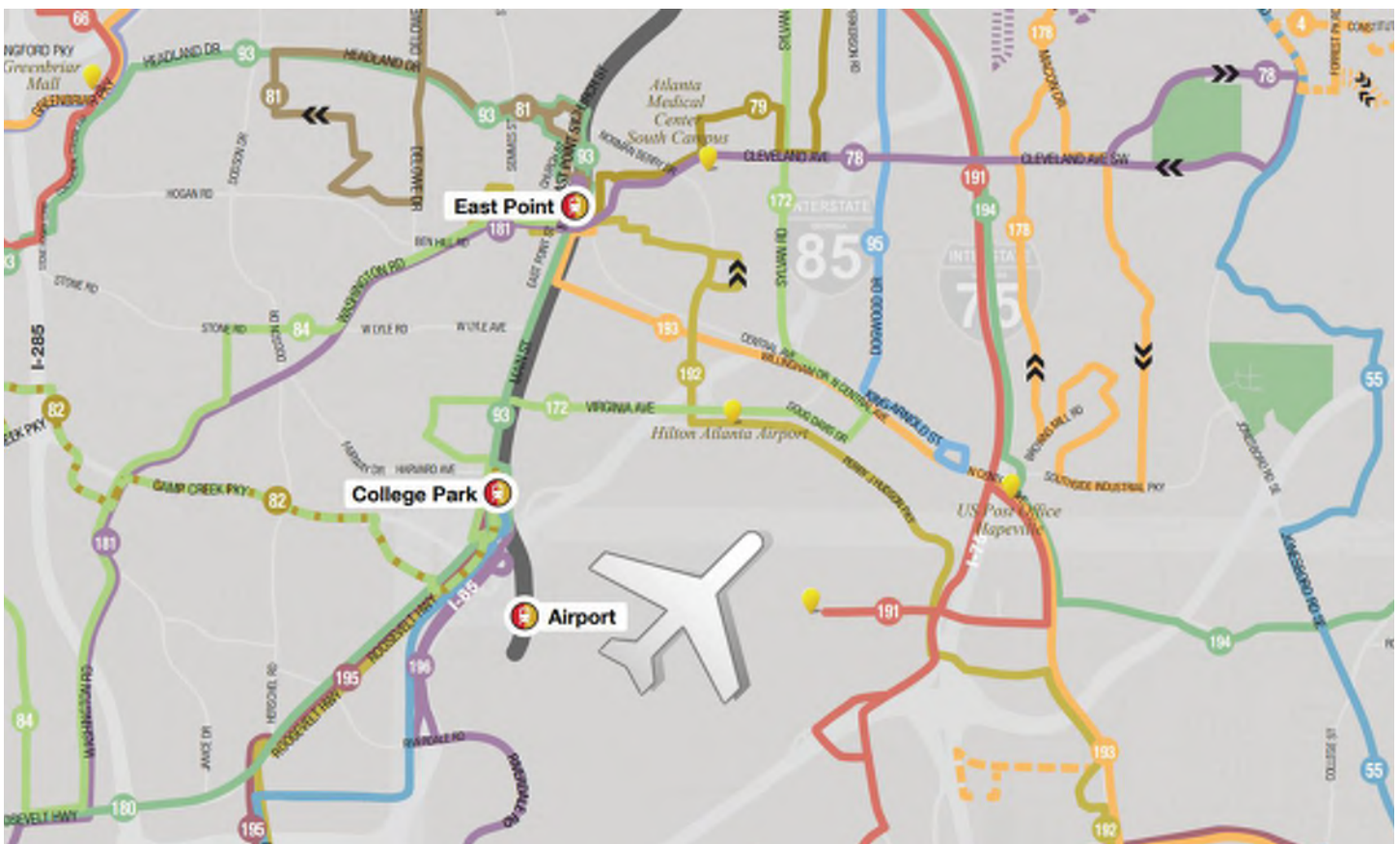
Area traffic counts show that Loop Road to the south and Willingham/Central Avenue to the north carry the highest traffic volumes within the study area. This finding was supported in discussions regarding daily commutes during stakeholder meetings.



TRANSIT

The Virginia Avenue corridor has limited access to the region's transit network. The only active transit routes traversing the corridors are the MARTA 172 which connects Downtown Hapeville to the College Park MARTA Station and MARTA 192 which connects the East Point MARTA Station to Loop Road bus routes. Connecting the study area directly to the East Point and College Park Rail Stations allows users to directly connect to the Airport or northward into Atlanta.

Other major bus routes serving the general area include the Willingham Drive/193, Main Street (College Park)/93, and Sylvan Road/172.

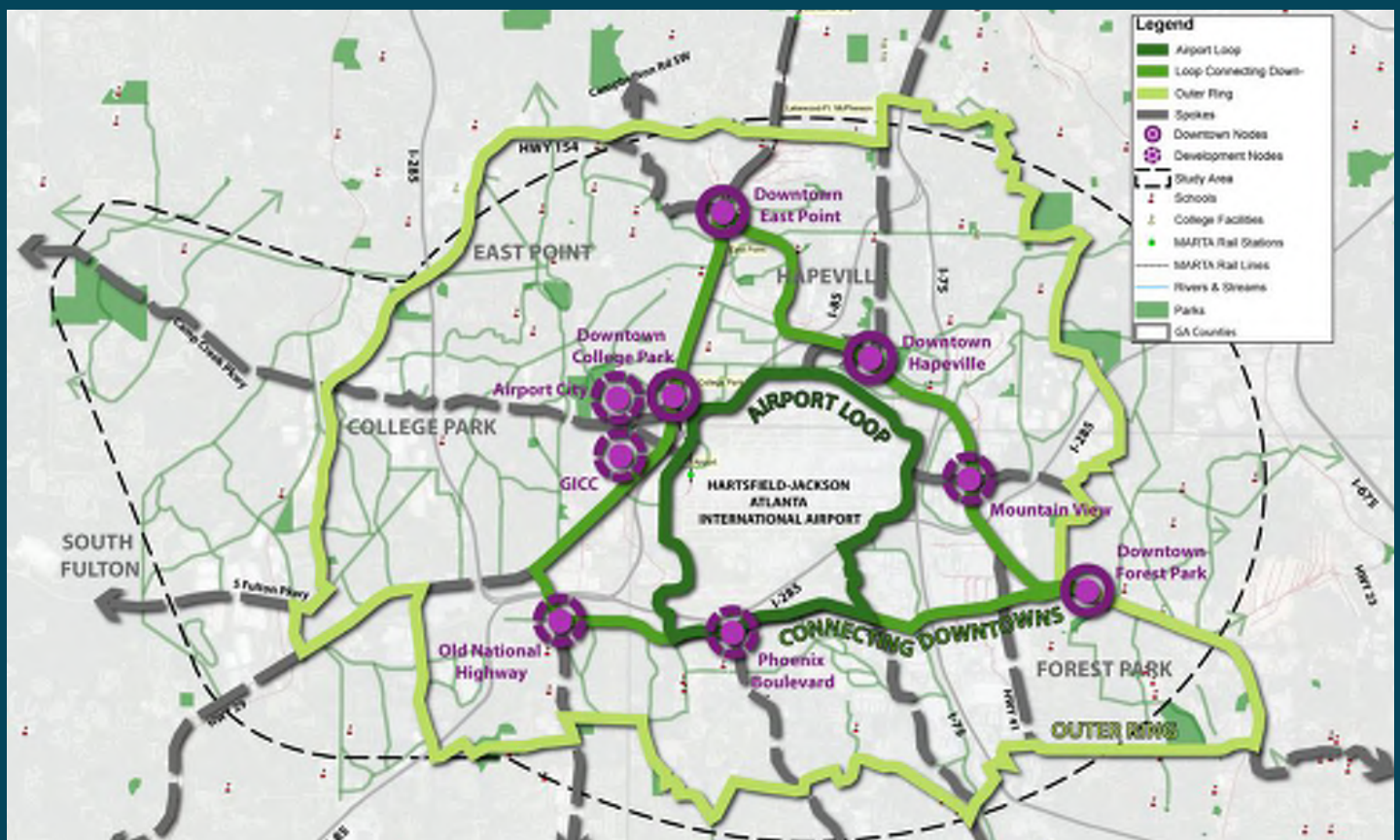


GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

There are no significant trails or bike facilities in the study area today. As part of a recent study, the Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs in collaboration with the Atlanta Regional Commission developed a AeroATL Greenway Plan to identify and prioritize greenway and trail efforts within the area.

AeroATL Greenway Plan (SIZEMORE GROUP)

In 2017 the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance and CIDs partnered with Sizemore Group to “provide a visionary framework for trail connectivity across the Aerotropolis region. The study area included the airport and the surrounding cities and portions of Fulton County and Clayton County. The study integrates previous plans and initiatives and incorporated the current needs and opportunities identified within the area.” - AeroATL Greenway Plan



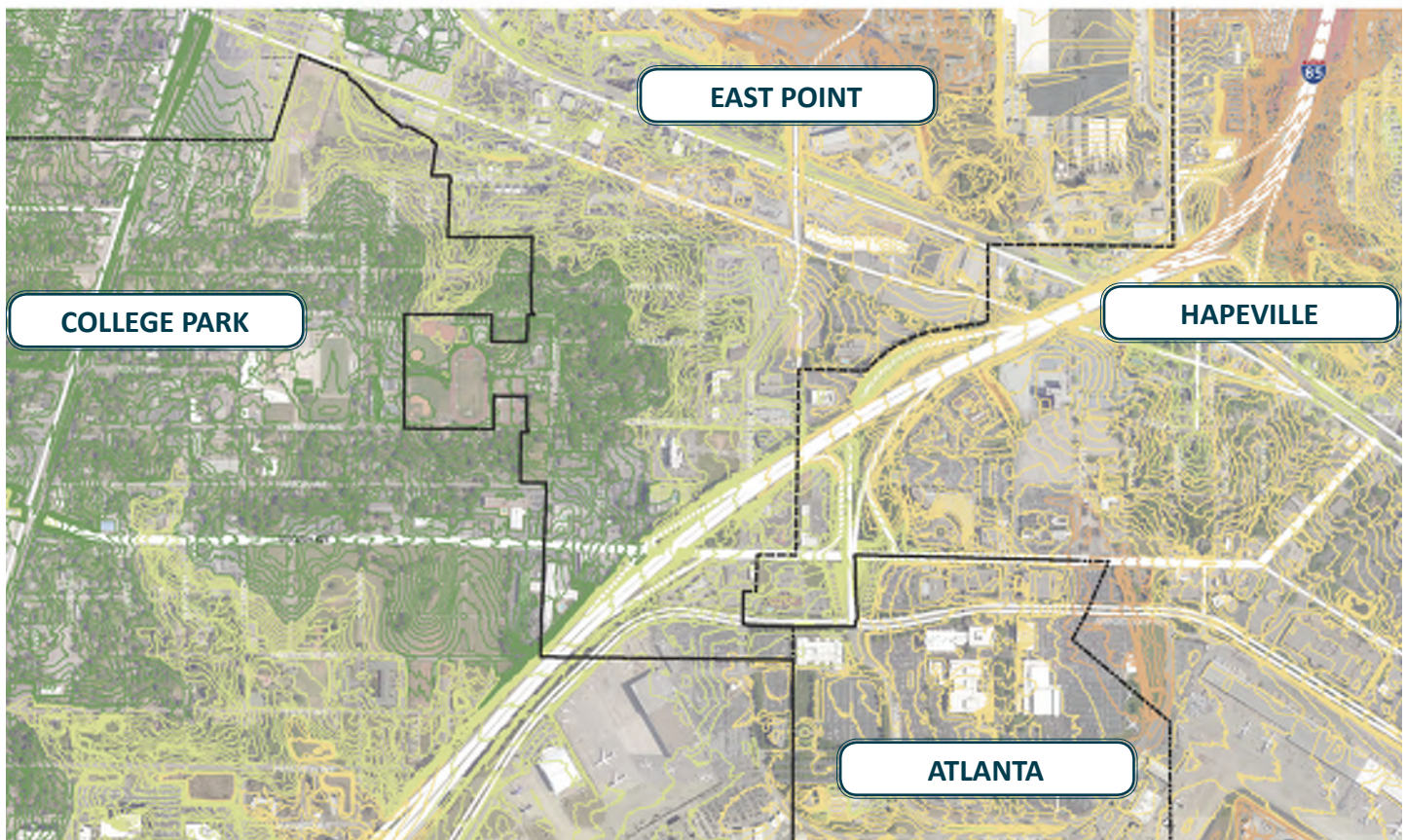
ENVIRONMENTAL

WATER BODIES

The Virginia Avenue Corridor is the location of the headwaters of the Flint River. The Flint River originates just north of Virginia Avenue and travels beneath the corridor and runways of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport before heading southward for over 300 miles to just north of the Florida state line. The Flint River is one of the country's longest rivers without impediment from dams or other man-made deterrents and is a celebrated environmental feature for many communities down river. The Flint River is predominately underground in the study area and daylights as a drainage system just north of the airport property and east of Delta Airline's headquarters.

FINDING THE FLINT (SIXPITCH)

In 2017 the *"Finding the Flint"* study was undertaken to bring multiple previous plans and "ideas together in an aerotropolis-wide vision for the Flint River headwaters." Finding the Flint influenced and was incorporated into the recommendations of the Virginia Avenue Corridor Study.



VISUAL ASSESSMENT

COLLEGE PARK (VIRGINIA AVENUE)



VISUAL CONDITIONS





SEGMENT DESCRIPTION

Virginia Avenue functions as a two-lane local street throughout College Park. Both sides of the corridor are lined with sidewalks directly adjacent to the back of curb with little to no separation. Between cars and pedestrians, pedestrian scaled lighting line both sides as well. Some stretches, predominately on the northern side of Virginia Avenue, feature newly installed street trees cut into the sidewalk. The southern side of the street has overhead power lines located at the back of the curb.



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6



8

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

EAST POINT (VIRGINIA AVENUE)



VISUAL CONDITIONS



1



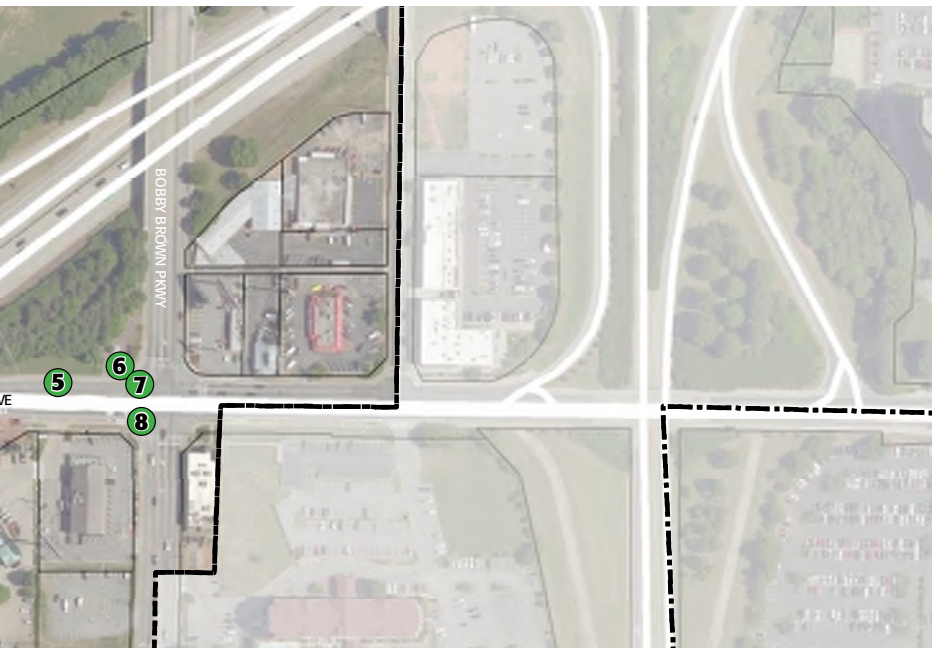
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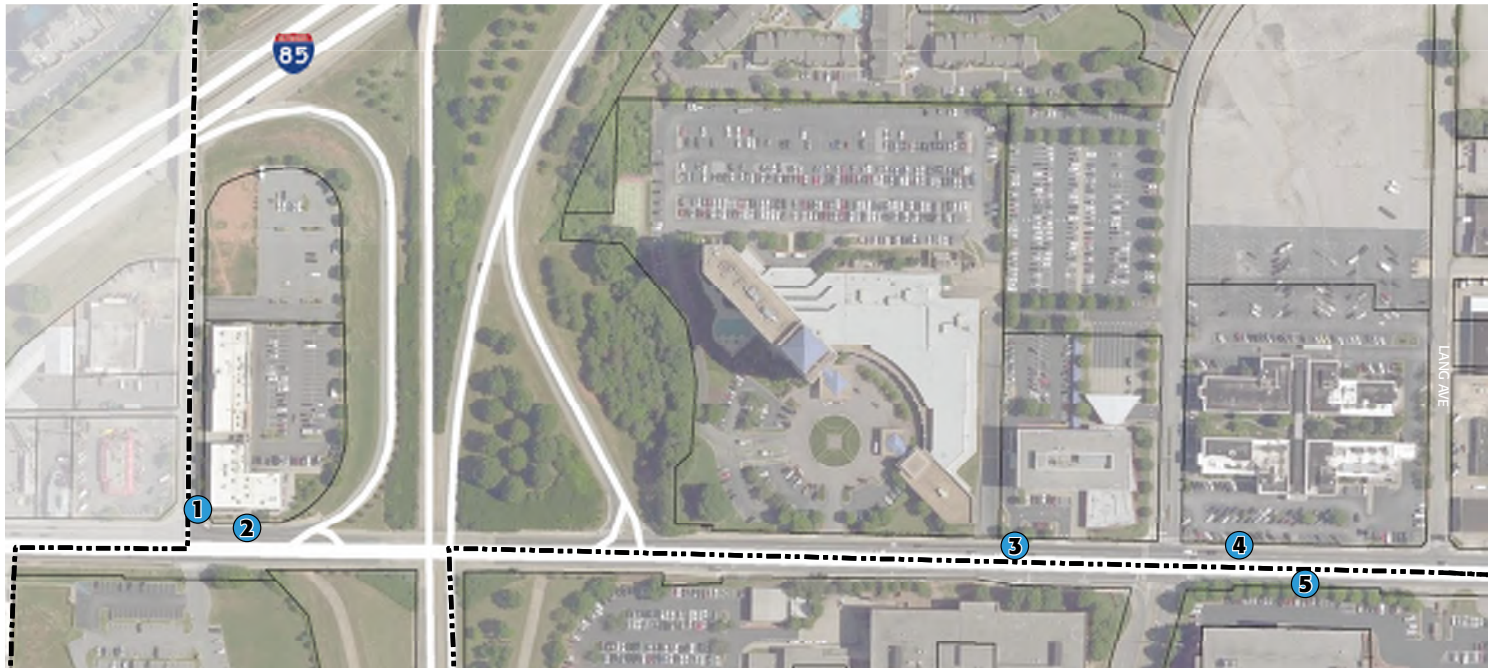
SEGMENT DESCRIPTION

Virginia Avenue ranges from three to four lanes throughout East Point. This stretch of Virginia Avenue contains sidewalks on both sides of the street, usually containing a small grass strip along the back of curb. The southern side of the street has overhead power lines that vary in location. Usually, they are located along the back of the curb. At the intersection of Bobby Brown Parkway and Virginia Avenue, East Point has created a small park that is difficult to access with the current streetscape conditions.



VISUAL ASSESSMENT

HAPEVILLE/ATLANTA (VIRGINIA AVENUE)



VISUAL CONDITIONS



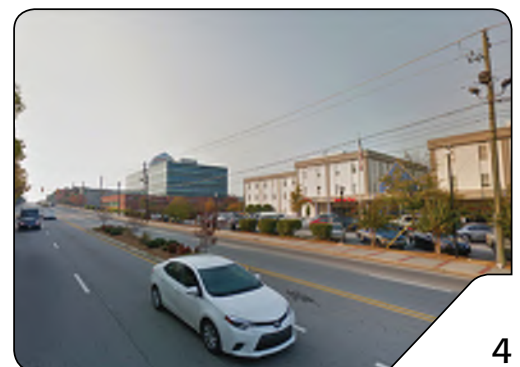
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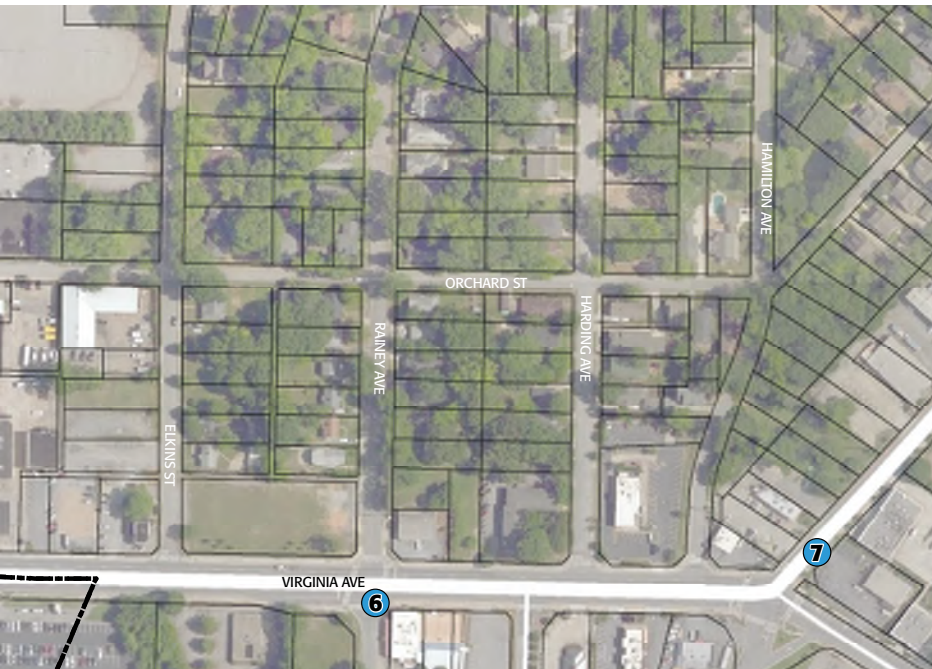
3



2



4



SEGMENT DESCRIPTION

Virginia Avenue is a four-lane corridor with planted medians between Bobby Brown Parkway and the intersection with Doug Davis Drive. Turning northeastward toward Central Avenue and Downtown Hapeville, Virginia Avenue becomes a two-lane local street. Sidewalks line both sides of the street and include a brick banding pattern and pedestrian scaled lighting at the back of sidewalks, implemented by the City of Hapeville. Overhead powerlines line the back of Virginia Avenue's northern sidewalk.



5



7



6



8

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

EAST POINT (BOBBY BROWN PARKWAY)



SEGMENT DESCRIPTION

Bobby Brown Parkway from Virginia Avenue northward to Willingham Drive includes four travel lanes and a consistent center turn lane. This stretch contains sidewalks on both sides of the street, typically located directly adjacent to the travel lanes. Overhead power lines vary by location, but run the entire length of the eastern side of Bobby Brown Parkway. This section of the study area has a higher susceptibility to change than some of the others due to the current development market and large underdeveloped or vacant parcels.

VISUAL CONDITIONS



1



5



2



6



3



7



4



8

EXISTING STREET SECTIONS

COLLEGE PARK (VIRGINIA AVENUE)

Average Section-

Right of Way: 50'

Total Lanes: 2-3

Travel Lanes: 1 Northbound, 1 Southbound

Sidewalks:

7' Concrete Sidewalk Northside (includes some obstructions from street trees)

7' Concrete Sidewalk Southside (includes obstructions from overhead power)

Note: Two blocks of Virginia Avenue, east of I-85, are within the City of East Point, but are similar in dimensions to College Park.

HAPEVILLE (VIRGINIA AVENUE)

Average Section-

Right of Way: 80'

Total Lanes: 5

Travel Lanes: 2 Northbound, 2 Southbound

Sidewalks:

10' Concrete/Brick Sidewalk Northside (includes planting strip)

9' Concrete Sidewalk Southside (includes obstructions from overhead power)

Note: The two blocks of Virginia Avenue within the City of Atlanta are similar in dimension to the City of Hapeville and include similar sidewalk improvements.

EAST POINT (BOBBY BROWN PARKWAY)

Average Section-

Right of Way: 80'

Total Lanes: 5

Travel Lanes: 2 Northbound, 2 Southbound

Sidewalks:

9' Concrete Sidewalk Northside (includes obstructions from overhead power)

7' Concrete Sidewalk Southside (includes some obstructions from street trees)

Note: Overhead utilities cross the street in multiple locations. The Bobby Brown bridge over I-85 is a notable exception to the typical section/street pattern outlined above.

COLLEGE PARK (VIRGINIA AVENUE)



HAPEVILLE (VIRGINIA AVENUE)



EAST POINT (BOBBY BROWN PARKWAY)



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ANALYSIS

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis (SWOT) was completed during the stakeholder interviews and initial stakeholder committee meeting. This analysis is useful as it highlights the major issues facing both Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway.

Strengths

Strong Hotel Population

Three Cities

Historic Downtowns

Growth Potential

Positive Momentum/Change

Corporate Centers

Very High Daytime Population

Area Agencies (CIDs, Alliance, ETC...)

High Pedestrian Count

Low Vehicular Count

Access to nearby MARTA Stations and the Airport

Weaknesses

The Interchange

Functionality

Appearance

Physical Barrier

Inter-city Coordination/Communication

Pockets of Redevelopment- Not Corridor-wide

Area Perception

Not a Defined District

Opportunities

Headwaters of the Flint River

Growing Corporate “Hot Bed”

Available Vacant Properties

Super Bowl Improvements

Residential Growth

Relationship to Airport

Busiest Airport in World

Airport Expansion

Community embraces the need to enhance the corridor

Threats

Potential negative Impact on Residential Neighborhoods

Development Occurring Elsewhere

Airport Expansion

Cities working in “silos”

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Each City/Municipality has its own approach and vision for the corridors regarding redevelopment and future improvements.



Each city's vision is somewhat similar and the CID may provide the forum for a common area vision.



The vehicular traffic count is lower on Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway in comparison to area perceptions.



Pedestrian count is surprisingly high- particularly along Bobby Brown Parkway near the hotels as well as Virginia Avenue at Delta and Virginia Crossings.



There is a tremendous amount of interest in the revitalization of Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway.

VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY



PLAN DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 3

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

INTERCHANGE CONCEPTS

DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCE

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

STREET TYPE PREFERENCE

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

CONCEPT DESIGN

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The consultant team and CIDs staff conducted a series of stakeholder interviews at the beginning of the project to identify area perceptions, needs, and concerns. Stakeholders included elected officials, city staff, community leaders, and business owners who have a vested interest in the corridor.

WHAT WE HEARD

Pedestrians are the key focus

- Hotel Patrons
- Corporate Employees and Guests (Delta in particular)
- Local area residents

Interstate is a barrier between cities

- Heavy traffic on bridge
- Lack of pedestrian friendliness
- Interchange needs attention and aesthetic improvement

Access and traffic flow issues

- Block between Norman Berry and Bobby Brown creates traffic back ups
- Entrance to 85 northbound is difficult to locate

Need for a consistent approach to pedestrian amenities

Environmental Concerns

- Airport impact on area
- Flint River runs under Virginia Avenue and Airport

Underground utilities and fiber optic lines run along Virginia Avenue, especially in Hapeville near Delta

Plantings need to have a constant look but also have a maintenance schedule and plan in place

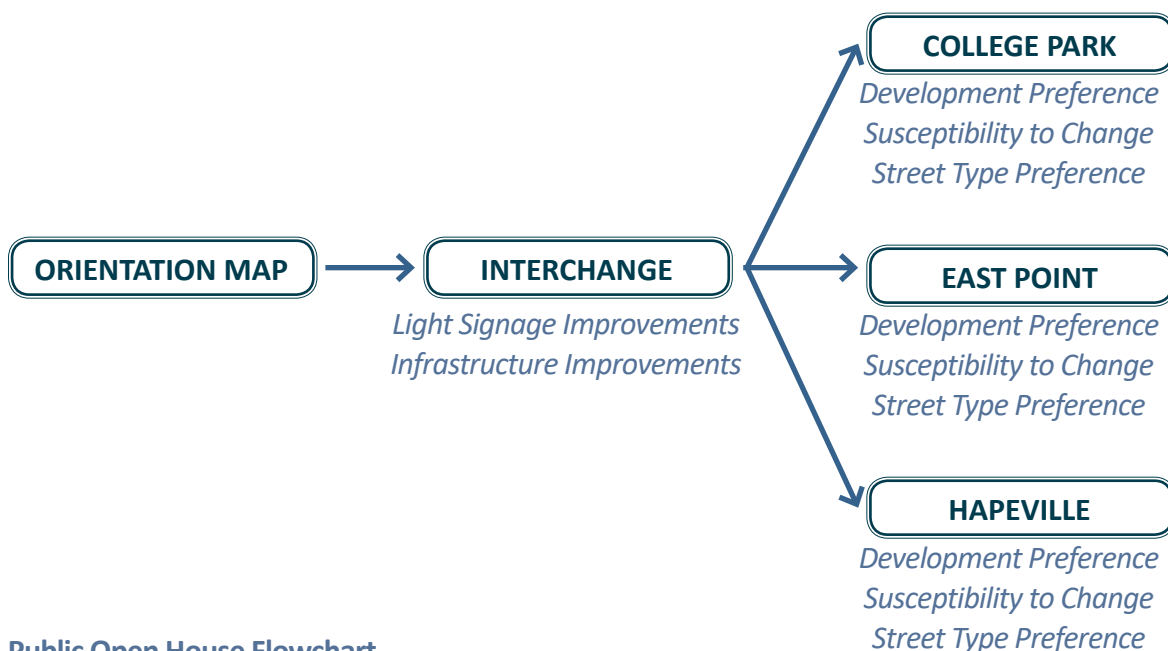
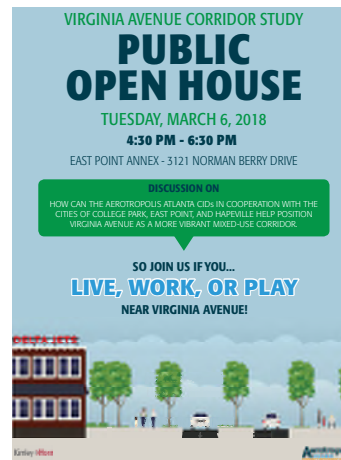
I-85 at Virginia Avenue is often the first or last impression of Atlanta for visitors to/from the Airport

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

To gather feedback on development of the plan the CID hosted a community open house on March 6th, 2018. This well attended community drop-in focused on:

How can the Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs in cooperation with the cities of College Park, East Point, and Hapeville help position Virginia Avenue as a more vibrant mixed-use corridor?

Conceptual approaches for the corridor were presented and community members were encouraged to provide feedback and input for corridor improvements. Attendees were given passports guiding them through the meeting's five stations. This structure allowed community members the ability to visit each station, but spend as much time as needed on issues that most applied to them.



Public Open House Flowchart

INTERCHANGE CONCEPTS

The significant number of access points near the I-85/Virginia Avenue interchange and confusion locating the Interstate on-ramps result in transportation challenges and conflicts along Virginia Avenue. Due to topography and limited right-of-way at construction the interchange does not include an access point from Virginia Avenue to I-85 North close to the interstate. This causes many visitors to the area to incorrectly turn on Bobby Brown Parkway in an effort to access I-85 North- leading to conflicts with pedestrians and other vehicles in the area. The consultant team looked at two conceptual improvements to this interchange.

STRIPING AND SIGNAGE

The first concept takes a lighter approach by improving the signage and striping of the intersections associated with I-85. This approach updates the existing overhead sign suspended across Virginia Avenue and provides two additional signs at more appropriate locations. In addition to signage this concept suggests restriping and adding pavement markings in the lanes designated for access to I-85 north. This concept is relatively inexpensive and could be completed as a pilot project for the district.



INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES

A desire to update the interchange was desired by some local stakeholders. This approach involves removing the existing Norman Berry Drive Bridge and the Virginia Avenue Westbound exit from I-85. By removing those the topography can be reconfigured to allow interstate access at Bobby Brown Parkway, providing a full interchange at Virginia Avenue.

This concept would require two new traffic signals to coordinate traffic at I-85 and Bobby Brown Parkway and an additional signal on Virginia Avenue at I-85 North. These new pattern changes would require the signals on Virginia Avenue at I-85 South and Bobby Brown Parkway to be coordinated with the new signalized intersections.



SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

Susceptibility to change maps were developed for each section of the corridor. Properties identified as having a medium to high likelihood for redevelopment included large vacant parcels, underdeveloped parcels with favorable market conditions, and available properties (on or recently on the market).

HAPEVILLE SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

Aerotropolis
ATLANTA
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

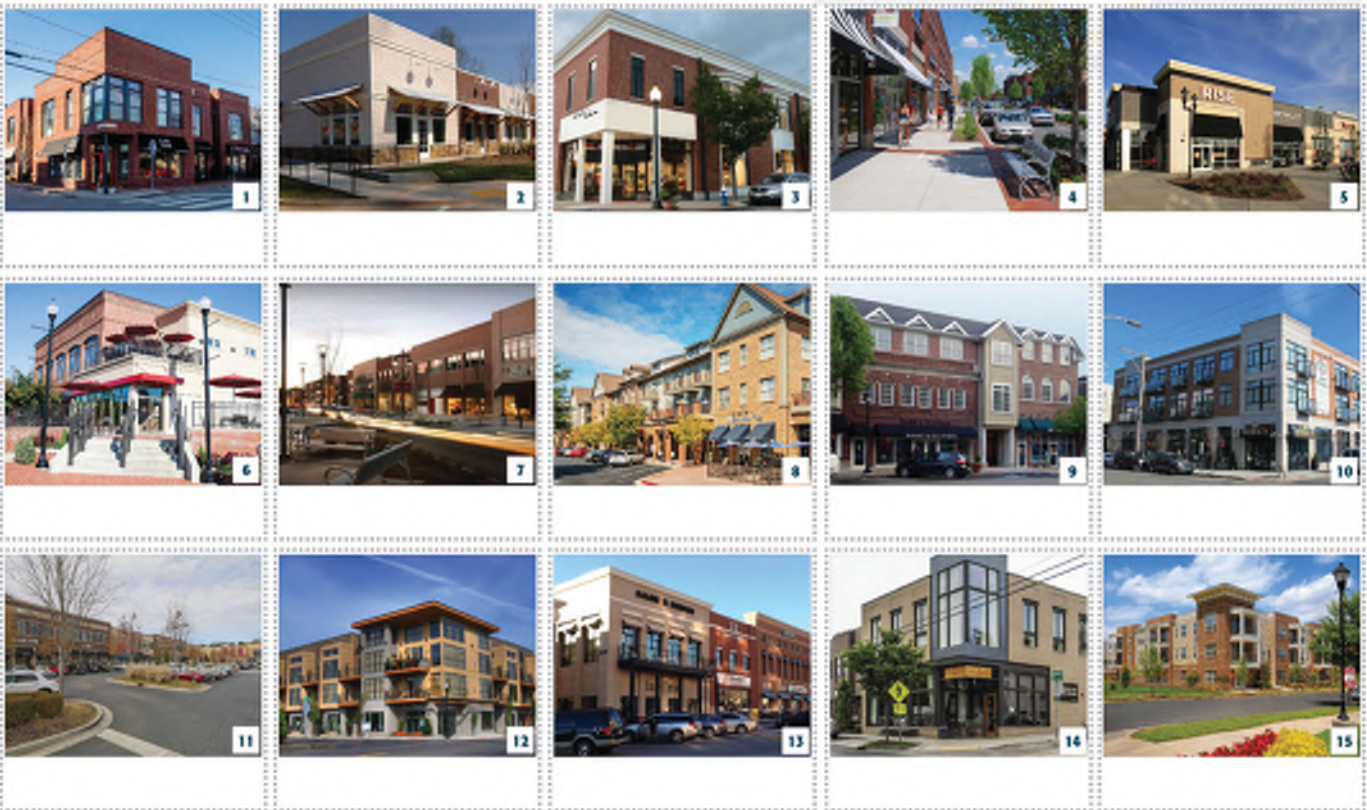
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE



DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCE

Based on the Susceptibility to Change map for each segment of the corridor, community members identified preferred development styles to inform the plan's urban design recommendations. Selected images provide a framework of community desires and expectations related to the variety, type, and style of potential future development along the corridor.

COLLEGE PARK POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STYLES



STREET TYPE PREFERENCE

The “Potential Street Sections” (or Street Type Preference) activity provided community members with the opportunity to review potential reconfiguration of Virginia Avenue. Using the online tool streetmix.net, the consultant team created five example sections based on differing priorities and approaches to the development of the corridor. Each priority maximized a trait identified during the stakeholder process.



Parking: This section provided on-street parking along both corridors in locations where it would be most feasible



Green: The Green section sought to provide wider planted medians and green areas throughout the corridor.



Biking: On-street bike lanes were provided along all corridors in this scenario.



Multiuse Path: The Multiuse path would be a sidewalk level path shared by pedestrians and bicyclists.



Pedestrian: The Pedestrian section maximized sidewalks on both sides of the street.

MAXIMIZE PARKING



MAXIMIZE GREEN



MAXIMIZE BIKING



MAXIMIZE MULTIUSE PATH



MAXIMIZE PEDESTRIAN



Attendees identified their most and least preferred approaches and were provided an opportunity to create modifications to create an optimum cross-section for the corridor.

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING

Following the Community Open House the Kimley-Horn team and CIDs staff met with the stakeholder committee to discuss the desired outcomes for the project. Feedback from the stakeholder committee and open house was combined to identify preferred improvements to the corridor.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Establishing a **Multiuse Path on Bobby Brown Parkway** compliments the ongoing CIDs Greenways Master Plan and current East Point path on Bobby Brown to Virginia Avenue
- A “**Spin the District Initiative**” is being put in place to **attract visitors** as well as Tri-cities residents to bike the area
- The stakeholder group followed the community’s desires to focus on a **multiuse path** approach that **prioritizes pedestrians and accommodates bikers** while incorporating green/landscape features
- The **roundabouts** considered on Virginia at Madison Street and at Doug Davis Drive needed to be studied in relation to the proposed streetscape plan
- The stakeholder group prioritized **identifying key areas to bury the power lines**, leaving the remainder of the utilities above ground and creatively designing around them
- The group gave direction to pursue a **Design Review Committee (DRC)** as a recommending arm — A DRC would help build continuity across the various municipalities and provide a forum for consistent policies and policy application along the corridor

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

OVERVIEW

With guidance from the Public Open House and stakeholder committee, the consulting team created preliminary sections for Bobby Brown Parkway and the east and west sections of Virginia Avenue. Each section utilizes existing right of way to incorporate a multiuse path for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

EAST POINT (BOBBY BROWN PARKWAY)

Currently Bobby Brown Parkway is a five lane road with sidewalks running directly against outer travel lanes. Some sections of Bobby Brown Parkway also include small street trees within the right of way.

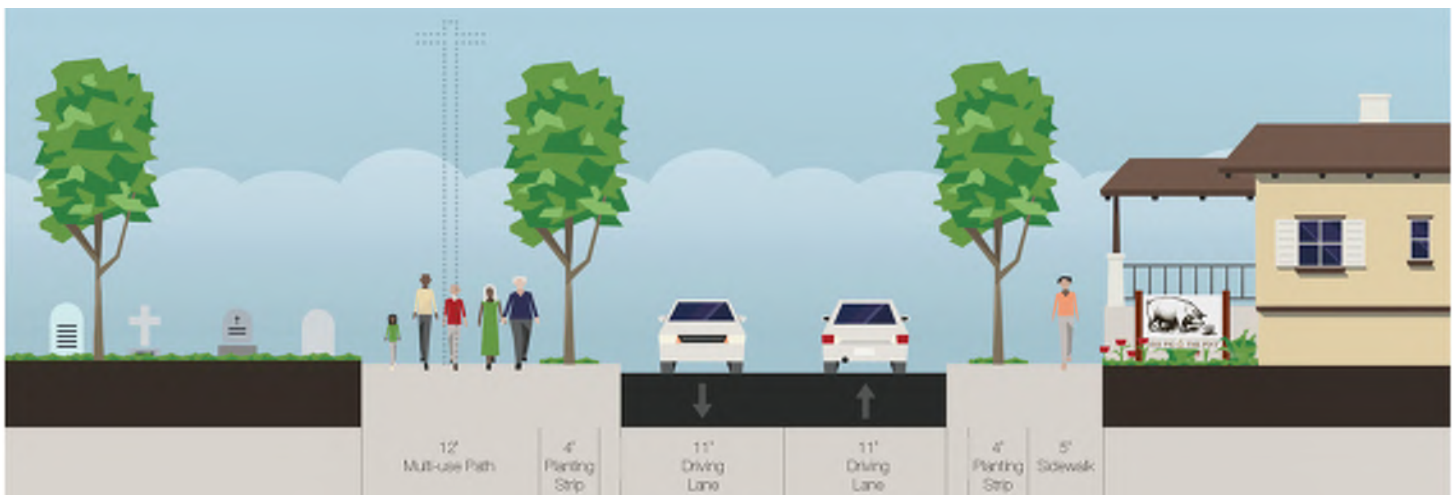
The conceptual design includes a multiuse path on the west side of Bobby Brown Parkway separated from the narrowed travel lanes by a 5' planting strip. The east side of the street would add a 4' planting strip or bay of tree wells to separate the sidewalk from the travel lanes. A planted median may be provided in locations where a full turn lane is not needed.

If power is not relocated underground it is recommended to be relocated to one side of the street where redevelopment is least likely to occur.



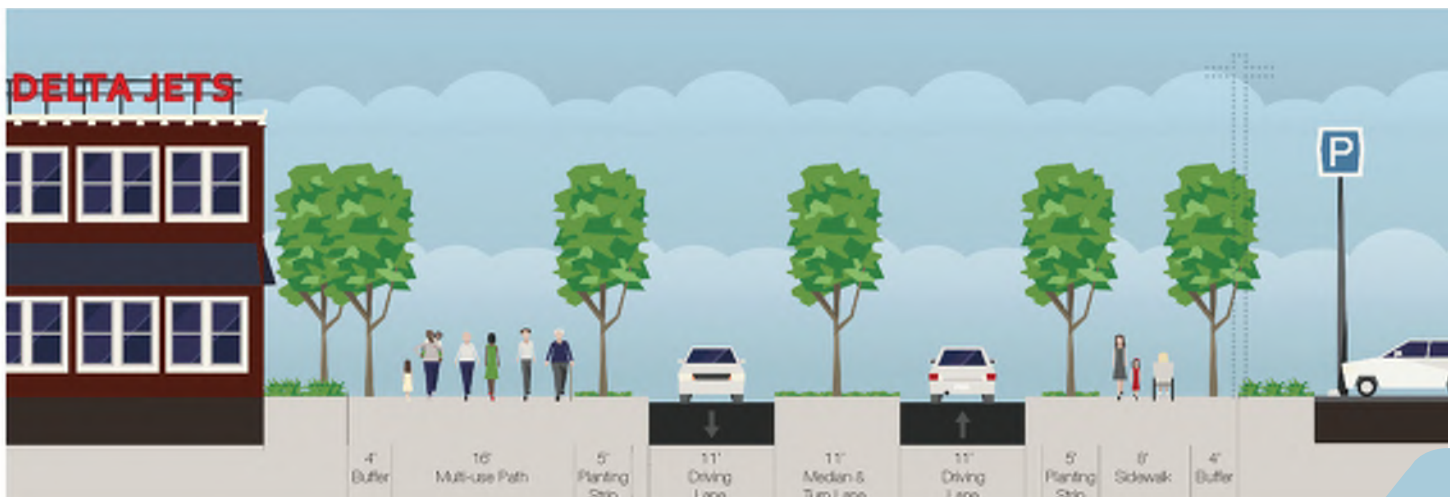
COLLEGE PARK (VIRGINIA AVENUE)

The College Park section of Virginia Avenue retains the local two lane street character that exists today. A 12' wide multiuse path can be established on the southern side of the street with a 4' planting area buffering the travel lanes. The northern portion of the street gains a slightly wider sidewalk with a consistent planting area.



HAPEVILLE (VIRGINIA AVENUE)

The Virginia Avenue section through Hapeville/Atlanta sees the biggest change going from five lanes to three. A multiuse path is provided along the southern side of the street with planted buffers on either side and mimicked by a traditional sidewalk with buffers to the north. Enhanced landscaping may be incorporated into medians where appropriate.



VIRGINIA AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY



CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 4

PLAN OVERVIEW

AEROTROPOLIS' MAIN STREET

CITY SECTIONS

INTERCHANGE DESIGN

URBAN DESIGN RECOMENDATIONS

NEXT STEPS

PLAN OVERVIEW

With input from the public open house and stakeholder committee, the Corridor Master Plan was further detailed and refined to foster a more walkable, dynamic activity center along Virginia Avenue. Plan recommendations are intended to create a more connected environment with a stronger sense of place to attract and retain area workers, residents, and visitors. The strategies and recommendations reinforce the community's goals to enhance the area's brand and perception and to encourage additional growth and investment in the area.

This core desire is to transition Virginia Avenue from a mixture of spread out, disjointed, inconsistent development styles to a thriving, urban main street that serves more than the daytime population and airport passengers. If executed properly this plan will help the Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs begin to transition Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway into a community focal point and regional destination.

The plan focuses on three primary components to enhance the corridor:

- Corridor improvements
- Interchange enhancements
- Consistent urban design and architectural standards

Improvements to the use and function of the street, access and appearance of the interchange, and architectural guidelines that unite the four cities the Virginia Avenue Corridor can become the new Main Street for the Aerotropolis area.

AEROTROPOLIS' MAIN STREET

A primary focus of the Master plan is how to reallocate existing roadway right of way to create a more balanced and consistent multimodal environment. While right of way widths vary along the corridor, the lane widths and curb-to-curb distances are larger than necessary to carry existing and anticipated traffic along both Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway.

Input from area stakeholders and leaders, strongly suggests reducing travel lane widths to slow traffic while maintaining appropriate traffic flow, and prioritizing more space to pedestrians and bicycles along the corridors. The desired solution is to create a shared, sidewalk level multiuse path across the full length of the corridor that connects the three cities and additional planned and existing pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Generally, the desired improvements and enhancements can be accommodated within the existing right of way. However, some limited areas along the corridor may require supplemental space that could be accomplished through corridor design standards. Frontage zones and regulations, via design standards or updated zoning codes, should be established and enforced by enhanced regulations to create a more urban, street-front environment.

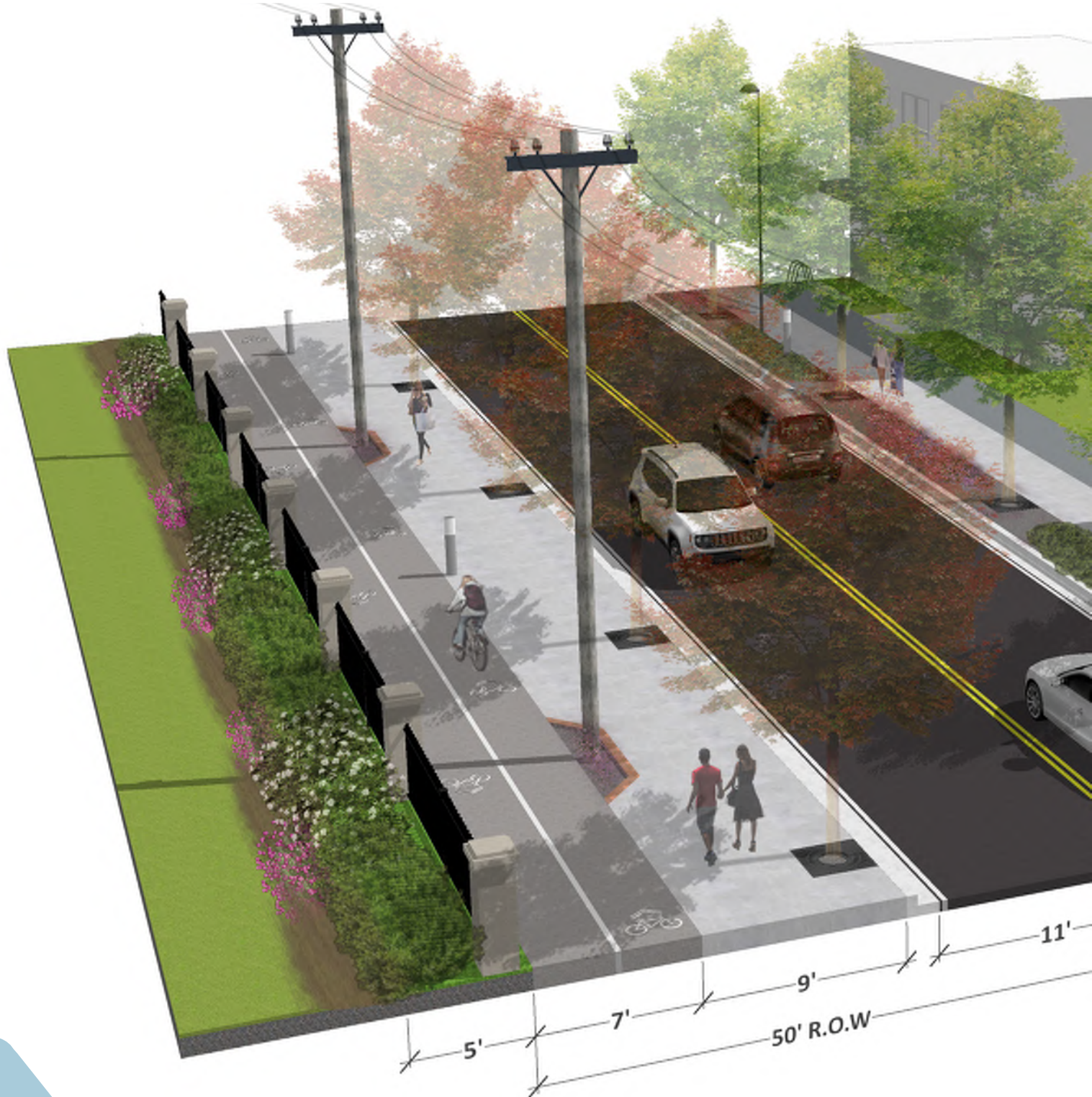
While the approach and regulations for the corridor should be consistent across all jurisdictions, there may be some variations due to varying right of way widths or city-specific programmatic needs.

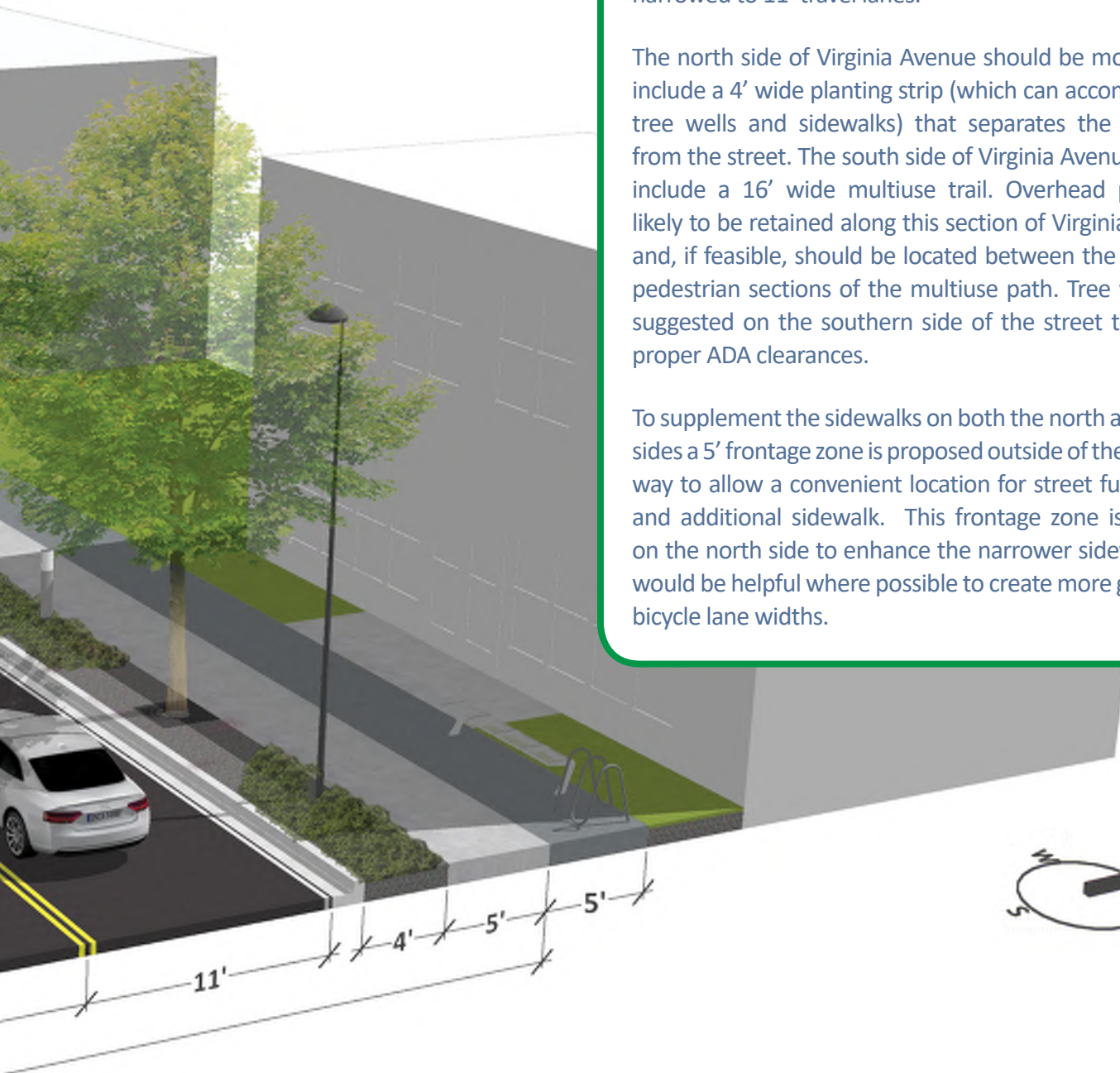


CASE STUDY: Indianapolis Cultural Trail

COLLEGE PARK

VIRGINIA AVENUE





The College Park section of Virginia Avenue has the narrowest available right-of-way of the three street sections. The traditional two-lane street is retained and narrowed to 11' travel lanes.

The north side of Virginia Avenue should be modified to include a 4' wide planting strip (which can accommodate tree wells and sidewalks) that separates the sidewalk from the street. The south side of Virginia Avenue should include a 16' wide multiuse trail. Overhead power is likely to be retained along this section of Virginia Avenue and, if feasible, should be located between the bike and pedestrian sections of the multiuse path. Tree wells are suggested on the southern side of the street to ensure proper ADA clearances.

To supplement the sidewalks on both the north and south sides a 5' frontage zone is proposed outside of the right-of-way to allow a convenient location for street furnishings and additional sidewalk. This frontage zone is needed on the north side to enhance the narrower sidewalk and would be helpful where possible to create more generous bicycle lane widths.



HAPEVILLE

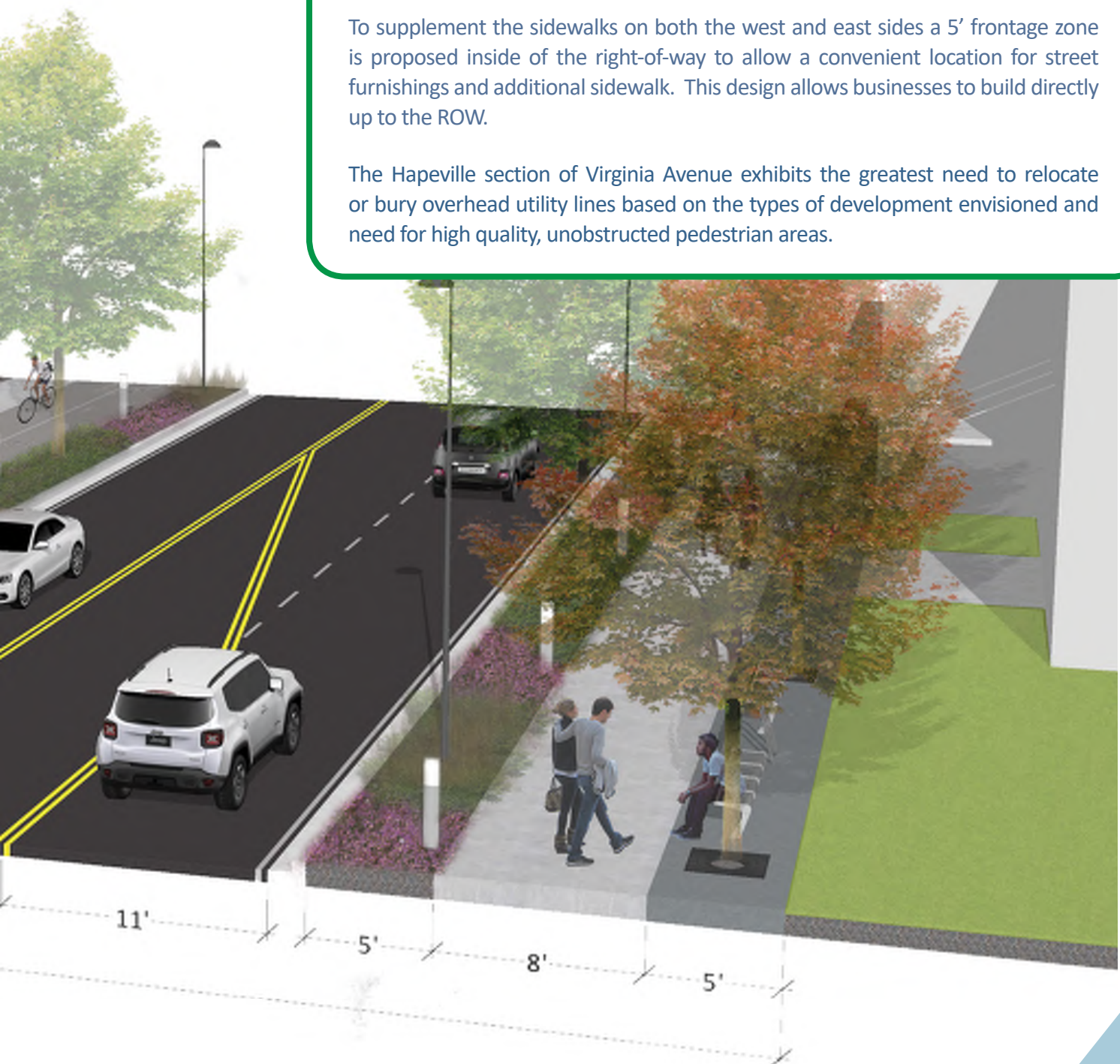
VIRGINIA AVENUE



The Hapeville section of Virginia Avenue should be reduced from five travel lanes to three lanes with a center turn lane. This reconfiguration would allow a 5' planting area on both sides of the street. An 8' wide sidewalk should be provided on the north side of the street, while an unobstructed 16' multiuse path should be accommodated on the south side of the street.

To supplement the sidewalks on both the west and east sides a 5' frontage zone is proposed inside of the right-of-way to allow a convenient location for street furnishings and additional sidewalk. This design allows businesses to build directly up to the ROW.

The Hapeville section of Virginia Avenue exhibits the greatest need to relocate or bury overhead utility lines based on the types of development envisioned and need for high quality, unobstructed pedestrian areas.



EAST POINT

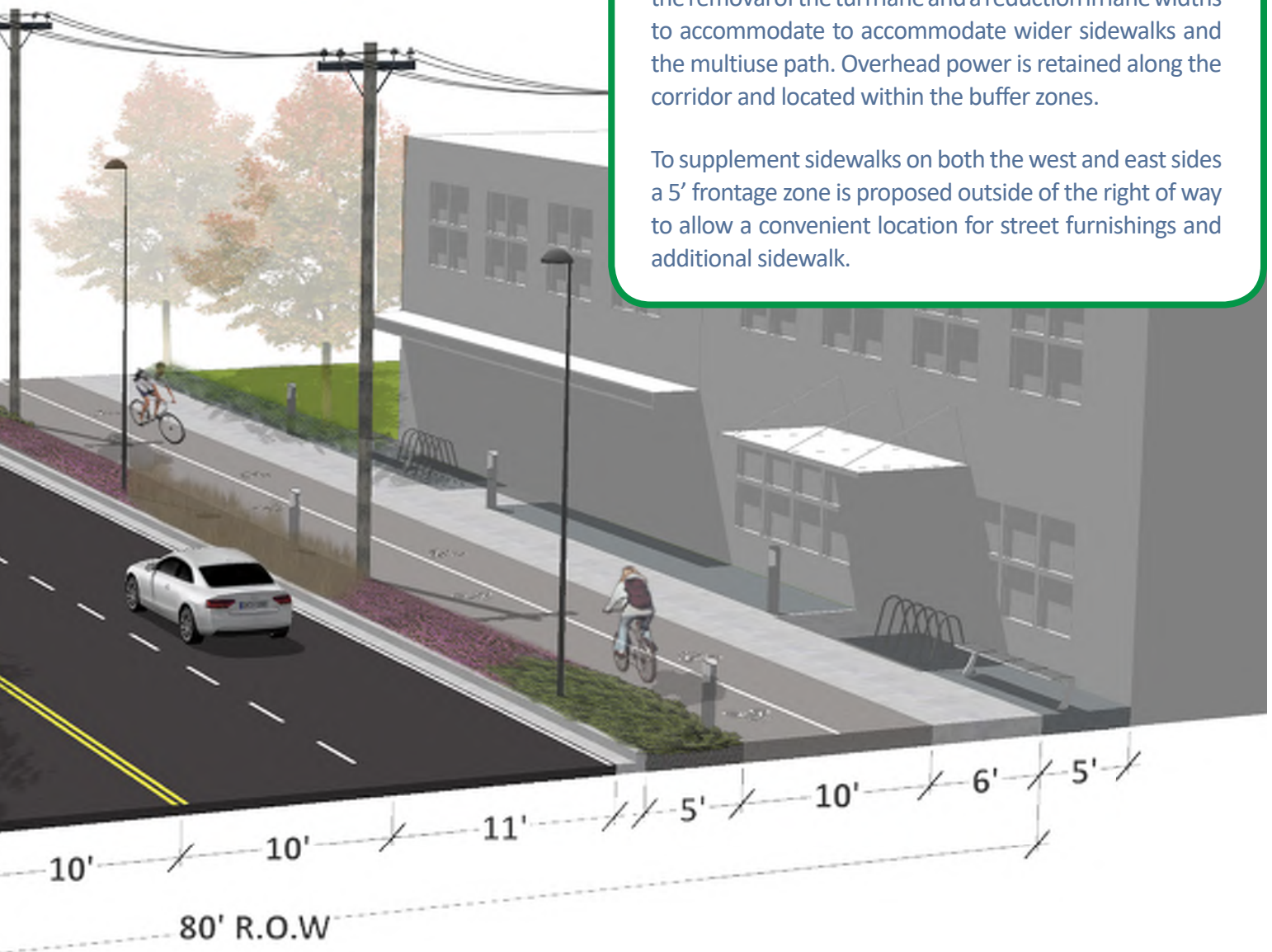
BOBBY BROWN PARKWAY



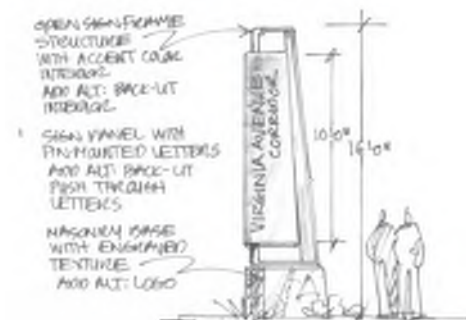
The segment of Bobby Brown Parkway north of Virginia Avenue has the highest traffic counts and demands of the three corridor sections considered in this study. With the higher volume of traffic and based on the development character along the corridor, the proposed cross section retains the four travel lanes- 2 in each direction.

The typical section for Bobby Brown Parkway recommends the removal of the turn lane and a reduction in lane widths to accommodate wider sidewalks and the multiuse path. Overhead power is retained along the corridor and located within the buffer zones.

To supplement sidewalks on both the west and east sides a 5' frontage zone is proposed outside of the right of way to allow a convenient location for street furnishings and additional sidewalk.



ACCESS AND TRAFFIC FLOW

[illegible]

49

BEAUTIFICATION

Enhancements to the interchange of Interstate 85 and Virginia Avenue were a priority recommendation of the Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs Master Plan.



While these elements will improve the aesthetic appearance of the interchange and corridor, they are not expected to alter or improve walkability along the bridge. While 5 travel lanes may be maintained for traffic flow, the CID should meet with GDOT and the City of East Point to discuss the feasibility of reducing travel lane widths to provide wider sidewalks across the bridge.

The bridge may also be modified with enhanced fencing or additional design elements that create greater visual interest or sense of place along the corridor.



URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

In addition to roadway and interchange improvements, a new set of design and zoning standards are needed to improve the look and feel of the corridor and create a greater sense of place and attraction. The images below were identified based on input from area leaders and stakeholders.

Generally, area stakeholders desire a more consistent architectural theme that is multistory and urban in form, while embracing more historic materials (brick and stone) and the sense of art and creativity within the adjacent communities. Future development should be predominately brick and stone with varying amounts of glass. The introduction of modern elements through form and shape should be encouraged. The images below were selected by community members as their preference for the area as it redevelops over time.



The Corridor Master Plan looks at transitioning Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway to a more urban pattern of development that encourages alternative modes of transportation. New investments should be closer to the street, putting a higher priority on the pedestrian realm, with parking located to the back or side of primary structures.

ZONING AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

New zoning and design standards, including the formation of a design review board, should be adopted across the corridors' jurisdictions to ensure consistency of future development and placemaking along the corridor.

Through conversations with stakeholders and the CIDs staff the consultant team believes the best approach to ensure consistency along the corridor would be to create a single zoning overlay or form-based code that applies to properties in the Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway areas across city lines.

To ensure these standards are adhered to while still providing some flexibility in review it is recommended that the CIDs and Cities appoint local representatives to serve on a Design Review Board or Committee (DRC). This committee would be responsible for reviewing development proposals and would offer a recommendation of approval to the approving body based on the location of the project.

CASE STUDY: BERRY HILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE

Adopted in 2009, the Berry Hill Community Development Code was designed to guide future development within the City that created a vibrant community with a mix of uses. The code was not intended to change the character of the community, but provide a planning and regulatory framework to support and enhance growth and development as it occurs.

Today the code provides the flexibility for a mix of uses consistent with the City's current development pattern while establishing a consistent set of development standards.

The biggest success of this code is the continued transition from traditional single story, auto-oriented sites to a more urban, walkable form.

The code has also proven to be successful at not preventing smaller scale commercial uses. Newer, single-story commercial development that addresses the street is accommodated along 8th Avenue.



NEXT STEPS

The Virginia Avenue corridor area has the potential to become the primary destination and hub for the growing Aerotropolis Area. The corridor's complete street goals has the potential to unite its partner communities and become the focal point for area investment. Development interest in the area has recently increased due to the corridor's prime location and will likely accelerate if the CID and its partners utilize this Master Plan to create a "Main Street" for the Aerotropolis.

In addition to the recommendations in this Master Plan the CID and its partners will undertake a Smart Corridor study in early 2019 to consider additional technology tools along the corridor. The CID is also expected to pursue local, state, and other grants to help implement corridor improvements over the next several years and should work with the local municipalities to adopt a unified code for the corridor and fund facade grants and development assistance programs.

COMPARABLE EXAMPLES



FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

The action plan outlines the proposed investments needed to accomplish the overall vision established within the master plan. The actions are labeled and prioritized based on overall importance to the corridor. Project priorities should be evaluated periodically and adjusted due to funding constraints and potential.

YR	Project Name	Project Type	Description
1	Corridor Design Guidelines Form-Based Code/Overlay District	Planning	Strengthen the Corridors by establishing a consistent development pattern through entitlements/zoning
	Design Review Committee	Planning	Establish a Design Review Committee made up of representatives from each City and the CID.
	Interchange Striping and Signage Design	Design	Design the improved striping and signage for interchange at I-85/Virginia Avenue
	Interchange Striping Installation	Build	Install pavement markings along Virginia Avenue to direct vehicle traffic to I-85 North
	Streetscape Design	Design	Design both Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway Streetscapes
	Interchange Landscaping/ Beautification	Build	Install landscape design for the I-85/Virginia Avenue Interchange from AACID Master Plan Process
2	Streetscape Design	Design	Design both Virginia Avenue and Bobby Brown Parkway Streetscapes
	Interchange Signage Installation	Build	Install signage for I-85 North over Virginia Avenue
3	Virginia Avenue- East Portion of Streetscape Installation	Build	Install Virginia Avenue streetscape improvements from Doug Davis Drive to Bobby Brown Parkway
	Design Gateway Bridge Improvements	Design	Design improvements for bridge crossings over I-85 on both Bobby Brown Parkway and Virginia Avenue
4	Bobby Brown Parkway- North Portion of Streetscape Installation	Build	Install Bobby Brown Parkway streetscape improvements from Virginia Avenue to Willingham Drive
	Bobby Brown Parkway/ I-85 Gateway Bridge	Build	Install gateway improvements on Bobby Brown Parkway/I-85 Bridge
5	Virginia Avenue- West Portion of Streetscape Installation	Build	Install Virginia Avenue streetscape improvements from Main Street to Bobby Brown Parkway
	Virginia Avenue/I-85 Gateway Bridge	Build	Install gateway improvements on Virginia Avenue/ I-85 Bridge

