Blueprint: Piedmont Heights

Georgia Tech City and Regional Planning
Piedmont Heights Civic Association
Georgia Conservancy

Blueprints for Successful Communities
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Agenda

- Introduction
- Themes
- Axes of analysis
- Existing conditions / susceptibility to change
- Vision and recommendations
  - Neighborhood overall
  - Ansley Mall
  - Monroe Crescent
  - Armour-Ottley
- Policy Concerns
Introduction

- Between Downtown and Buckhead
- Experiencing redevelopment pressure
  - Intown location
  - Beltline TAD
- Entered Blueprints process to provide vision for future change
Major Themes

- Multimodal Connectivity
- Greenspace Optimization
- Urban Design Standards
- Concurrency
- Preserving Housing Affordability
- Neighborhood Guided Development
Axes of Analysis

- **Topics**
  - People – demographics, economics
  - Environment – greenspace, water
  - Buildings – architecture, urban design, land use
  - Infrastructure – transportation

- **Geography**
  - Entire Community +
  - Neighborhood Core
  - Ansley Mall Vicinity
  - Monroe Crescent
  - Armour-Ottley

- **Time**
  - Short/Medium (3 – 10 years)
  - Long (> 10 years)
Existing Conditions
Area first inhabited by Cherokee Indians, then owned by Benjamin Plaster – in 1893 the family still owned 1,300 acres.


“Piedmont Heights” name first used in 1920.

I-85, built in the 1950’s, led to forming of the neighborhood association.
Demographics and Housing

- High concentration of men, esp. age 24-44
- 85% White
- $90,310 Median Family Income (2000 census)
- High Educational Attainment
- Housing more affordable than surrounding neighborhoods
- 350 Businesses

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<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
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2000 Census data
Environment and Topography

- Hilly neighborhood w/ large elevation changes
- Surrounded by creeks with extensive floodplains
- Underutilized greenspace
Facilities and Sidewalks

- Community Facilities
  - Several churches
  - Fire station
  - No public schools

- Sidewalks
  - Usually on one side of street, if existing
Land Use and Zoning

[Map showing land use and zoning with various zones indicated by different colors and symbols.]
Beltline TAD & Redevelopment Plans

Above: NE Beltline Neighbors Plan

Right: ADA Redevelopment Plan

Right: Beltline TAD
Areas Susceptible to Change

- Why susceptible?
  - Prime location (transportation, etc)
  - Underutilized
  - Older, not thriving
  - Excessive parking or empty space

- Though these areas are susceptible to change, it is not guaranteed that all changes and development will or should occur at the same time

- The Neighborhood Core area is well established and will have to resist the forces of change and increased density if the core wishes to stay as is
Sub-areas: images of places susceptible to change
Vision and Recommendations
Overall Neighborhood Vision

Short/Medium-term (3 – 10 years)

Long-term (> 10 years)
Overall transportation and greenspace connectivity improvements

Short-term (3 – 10 years)
- Traffic calming + sidewalks
- Beltline, n’hood trails
- Formalization of parks
- Intersection improvements
  - Change/add signalization
  - Directional signage
- New n’hood access roads (minor)
- Route transit via Piedmont Ave
  - Support 2-way traffic

Long-term (> 10 years)
- New multi-modal and Beltline transit stations
- Corridor improvements
- Interchange improvements
- Intersection geometry improvements
- New n’hood access roads (major)
- Roadway realignments
Overall improvements, continued

Int. of Piedmont Rd & Monroe Dr
Sub-area: Ansley Mall & Vicinity
Ansley Mall – Existing Conditions (1)

- **Key location**
  - Intersection of Monroe Ave. & Piedmont Rd.,
  - Piedmont Park expansion
  - Beltline along Clear Creek

- **Businesses and Residents**
  - Ansley Mall: 200,000 SF shopping center serving the neighborhood and the larger midtown area
  - Ansley Forest: 269 units of affordable housing
Ansley Mall – Existing Conditions (2)

- Great high-density redevelopment potential
  - Poses a threat to the affordability of the existing rental housing, currently primarily occupied by long term residents
  - Provides opportunities to improve the green space connectivity and the condition of Clear Creek.

- Numerous transportation challenges
  - Traffic congestion
  - Limited current transit connectivity
  - Lack of pedestrian infrastructure
**Recommendations**

- Streetscape improvements to Monroe Drive
- Key intersection improvements
- Streetscape improvements to Piedmont Road, small park
- New trails should for access to the expanded Piedmont Park and Beltline.
- New and updated MARTA routes will help residents use existing transit options in a more efficient manner
- New buildings along Monroe Drive should be built within a new block structure:
  - frontages along the street, allowing easy pedestrian access and contributing to the boulevard character
  - parking should be located on surface or structures behind buildings
- Ansley Forest should be preserved as affordable housing
Builds upon improvements begun during the short term vision phase

Recommendations

- Implement new block structure in Ansley Mall.
- Improve street grid and connectivity
- Blocks front Monroe Drive and the Beltline / Clear Creek
- New buildings
  - 4 to 6 stories high
  - mixed-use
  - structured parking
  - maximize the use of the land for Beltline transit
LONG TERM VISION: Looking North on Monroe

LONG TERM VISION: Looking West on Monroe

LONG TERM VISION: Plan view
Ansley Mall – Architectural Visions
Ansley Mall – Policy Considerations

- Maintaining affordable (workforce) housing
- Transportation and streetscape funding – TAD funding
- Concurrency
Sub-area: Monroe Crescent
Monroe Crescent – Existing Conditions

- Prime location near I-85, Buford Hwy, and Piedmont Rd
  - Underutilized land
  - Great redevelopment potential
  - Limited by aging infrastructure
- Complicated and substandard roadway infrastructure
  - Outdated highway interchange design
  - Access management issues with many free-standing businesses along roadways
  - Unsafe sidewalks
- Gotham Park
  - Wonderful nook within neighborhood
  - Lack of connectivity with the neighborhood or surrounding area
- Nearby Beltline
  - Tremendous opportunities for better connectivity to surrounding areas
Monroe Crescent – Short Term Vision

Northwest Monroe Drive

- New road: “Gotham Park Drive”
  - Located to the south and parallel to Monroe Drive
  - Extends from Monroe Drive to Piedmont Ave
  - On street parking, pedestrian landscape
- Streetscape and sidewalk improvements
- Install traffic lights with pedestrian signals along Monroe Drive
- Armour Drive extension (name change) to Piedmont Rd
Monroe Crescent – Short Term Vision

Piedmont Circle
- Beginning as retail development
- Streetscape improvements
- On-street parking and safe pedestrian facilities

Gotham Park
- Aesthetically enhanced
- Connect greenways
  - to Morningside Baptist Church
  - to future BeltLine, west of Gotham Park
  - to Piedmont Ave, east of Gotham Park
Monroe Crescent – Long Term Vision

New roadways
- Three new roads connecting with Piedmont Circle

Pedestrian Improvements
- Northwest Monroe Drive
- Piedmont Circle

Greenspace
- Extend greenway alongside Armour Drive, north into Armour-Ottley area

Piedmont Circle
- Retail Focus

Northwest Monroe Drive
- Office and residential
Different Vision-Piedmont Circle

- Before
- After
Monroe Crescent – Focus on connectivity

Above: Perspective view of long-term vision

Above: Short-Term
Below: Long-Term
Monroe Crescent road alignment details, as drawn
Monroe Crescent road improvement alternatives (1)
Monroe Crescent road improvement alternatives (2)
Monroe Crescent – Policy Considerations

- Improve directional signage
- Acquire green areas to enhance greenspace connectivity
- Possible Brownfield redevelopment
- Negotiate with landowners concerning road right-of-way
Sub-area: Armour-Ottley
Sub-area: Armour-Ottley
Armour-Ottley – Existing Conditions

- Bounded by highways and creeks
- Primarily light industrial
- No formal parks
- TAD coverage in unexpected pattern
- Limited pedestrian, bike, vehicular access
- Rail transportation nexus
Armour-Ottley – Short Term Vision

- Sets groundwork for long-term vision
  - Access
  - Connectivity
  - Block structure
- Divided into smaller sections
  - Rollins / Piedmont
  - Ottley Circle
  - Mayson / Plasamour
Rollins / Piedmont

- Early redevelopment potential
- New public park in floodplain
- Transportation
  - Corridor improvements (Piedmont)
  - New access roads to sub-area
    - Near MARTA yard
    - Along creek to P’tree Hills
Ottley Circle

- Must have additional transit and vehicular access for higher intensity development
- Begin defining blocks with new streets
- Interim development modeled on Miami Circle
  - Commercial, arts
- Infill buildings and renovation
Mayson St and Armour Dr

- Armour Dr --> 4 lanes throughout
- Potential middle school site
Above, 1-3: Routes utilizing western tunnel

4: Route utilizing eastern tunnel
(same as Beltline Transit LPA)

5: Route utilizing Monroe Crescent greenway and Armour Drive
Armour-Ottley – Long Term Vision

- Multi-modal transfer station, connecting
  - MARTA
  - Beltline
  - Commuter Rail
  - Amtrak
- Major redevelopment of Ottley Circle and areas adjacent to MM station
  - Mixed use, walkable
  - Tapered residential density
Armour-Ottley – Long Term Vision
Armour-Ottley – Policy Considerations

- CONCURRENCY
- Neighborhood-guided redevelopment
- TAD boundaries
- Brownfield remediation
- Parks, floodplains, stormwater mgmt
- Parking and transit mode split
Overall Policy
Policy – Transportation

- **Multi-modal Connectivity** – federal and state funding, funneled through City of Atlanta and ARC (two main vehicles are Transportation Improvement and Regional Transportation Plan)

- **Quality of Life Bonds** – can help with sidewalks and traffic control measures.

- Because so many agencies are involved in transportation decisions, the best policy is knowing what your priorities are, and staying on top of the other actors such as MARTA, Beltline Inc., City of Atlanta, ARC, GRTA and GA DOT

*Local participation and advocacy is key!*
Policy – Land Use and Zoning

- Quality of Life Zoning – Implement throughout the neighborhood
- Beltline Overlay District – limits rezoning
- Concurrency –
  - Make zoning contingent on concurrency of infrastructure
  - Amend CDP to include concurrency

Local participation and advocacy for concurrency is key!
Policy – Greenspace

- To create a network of greenspace that will protect the natural environment while improving quality of life.
- **Funding** is crucial issue – grants, bonds, loans and donations.
- Consider **conservation easements** to connect green areas

*Local participation and advocacy for greenspace is key!*
Policy – Brownfields and Floodplains

- **Brownfields** – real property contaminated by pollutants. During cleanup, property is taxed at 40% of FMV.

- **Floodplains** – new construction requires permit and flood insurance. City of Atlanta’s maps are not up to date.
Primary goal: No net loss in affordability

- **Inclusionary zoning** should be applied to new development
- Tools to preserve affordable and single-family core housing
  - City of Atlanta Enterprise Zone Program
  - Multi-family Housing Program
  - City of Atlanta Block Grants
  - Usage of TAD funds contingent on no net loss in affordability
Policy – Economic Development

“New Century Economic Development Plan” (NCEDP)

Piedmont Heights Can...

- Utilize NCEDP as a foundation for neighborhood development

- "Creation of neighborhood attractions to promote the character of Atlanta’s neighborhoods”
  - Market existing neighborhood character, historical & entertainment assets through signage & events calendar promotion

- “Physical infrastructure is imperative to the city’s future economic stability”
  - Apply for Livable Centers Initiative funding through ARC

- Healthy Neighborhoods & Quality of Life
  - Utilize Quality of Life Bonds & Community Benefits Agreements
Policy – Historic Preservation

- Enable the rehabilitation and protection of cultural resources.

- Properties are eligible so long as they are shown to be:
  - Architecturally or archaeologically important
  - Associated with historically important individuals, groups, or events
  - Closely resemble their historical character
  - At least 50 years old

- The City of Atlanta maintains a Historic Preservation Ordinance in addition to State and Federal Historic Registry.

- Direct implications for community include housing affordability and neighborhood character recognition.

Local participation and advocacy for historical designation is key!
Summary

- Assessed existing conditions, change forces, challenges, and assets
- Met frequently with stakeholders to determine priorities and receive feedback
- Provided short and long-term vision / recommendations for entire neighborhood and sub-areas
- Documented policy considerations to guide change

Established a Blueprint for Success in Piedmont Heights!
Questions and comments?

Short/Medium-term (3 – 10 years)

Long-term (> 10 years)