

# recommendations





## 5.0 Recommendations

The multimodal approach of this study created a list of 47 recommended projects tailored to fit the comments and input received during this study process, but grounded by technical analysis that shows

that each recommendation will improve travel conditions. If implemented, these projects will have a major improvement on the quality of life for all user groups of the Piedmont Road corridor. This multimodal approach will provide more reasonable and sustainable transportation solutions to those who chose to use them. Graphics providing a visual representation of the comprehensive list of recommended projects are broken into the five study segments and are provided at the conclusion of this report.

The below graphics depict the future look of Piedmont Road as compared with its existing state. The first image shows Piedmont Road between the Buckhead Loop and Tower Place Drive (looking north) while the second image shows Piedmont Road just north of Lindbergh Drive (looking south).



Above and right:  
Piedmont Road at Tower  
Place Drive

Top left and above: Pied-  
mont Road at Lindbergh  
Drive

As discussed earlier in this report, Piedmont Road is nearing its capacity, some would even argue that it already has reached its breaking point. This study endeavors to improve conditions for all users, especially those choosing to travel by modes other than the single occupant vehicle. Balancing mobility is the driving force behind the recommendations. The following is a summary of the types of improvements recommended to balance mobility in the Piedmont Road corridor:

- Enhancements to transit service and infrastructure will entice more users to its more convenient service and comfortable facilities
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be improved by creating a safer and more aesthetically pleasing environment
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and regulatory changes are recommended to help encourage commuters and developers to make certain decisions which will have large impacts on the corridor



- Roadway improvements will improve capacity for the general motorists and bus service, and be constructed in such a way to increase the aesthetics and safety for pedestrians and not preclude dedicated bicycle lanes from being constructed in the future
- System improvements will help relieve some of the traffic demand on the Piedmont Road corridor due to the region's freeway system capacity shortfalls
- New roadway connections will improve the street grid network that will aid all modes of travel

As previously mentioned, the Piedmont Road corridor was divided into five segments for the purposes of this study. The segments are distinct both in their current characteristics as well as in their future vision. With this in mind, general themes were identified for each segment that guided the development of the recommendations:

*Segment 1, Roswell Road to Peachtree Road* – Create a gateway to Buckhead in the north, pedestrian and transit connections throughout, and a vehicular/pedestrian boulevard in the south

*Segment 2, Peachtree Road to Pharr Road* – Create a boulevard that supports redevelopment, manages access along the west side of Piedmont Road, and provides enhanced mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists

*Segment 3, Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard* – Preserve the residential character while improving traffic flows and safety

*Segment 4, Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Lindbergh Drive* – Create vehicular/pedestrian boulevard, manage high volumes of traffic, improve safety, and enhance pedestrian access to the Lindbergh Center MARTA station and the street network along the east side of Piedmont Road

*Segment 5, Lindbergh Drive to I-85* – Manage high volumes of traffic, improve safety, and encourage the development of the Beltline project

*Below is a complete listing of the recommended projects identified by this study. This list of recommended projects is the result of recommendations created by an intense public engagement process and thorough technical analysis.*

#### **Transit**

- T1 – Express Bus Service Enhancements
- T2 – Activity Center Circulator Expansion
- T3 – MARTA – Increase Frequencies
- T4 – MARTA – Consolidate/Enhance Bus Stops
- T5 – Transit Signal Priority
- T6 – Uniform Bus Stop Standards
- T7 – Queue Jumper Lanes

#### **Pedestrian**

- P1 – Pedestrian Crossing Safety Improvements (Entire Corridor)
- P2 – Sidewalk Improvements – Powers Ferry Road to Buckhead Loop
- P3 – Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Over GA 400 (Northern Concourse)

#### **Bicycle**

- B1 – Bicycle Routes/Lanes

#### **Transportation Demand Management**

- TDM1 – Zipcar
- TDM2 – TDM Education Campaign
- TDM3 – Congestion Monitoring Web Application

#### **Corridor**

- C1 – Signal Timing Plan
- C2 – Signal Equipment Upgrades
- C3 – Speed Limit Reductions
- C4 – Way-Finding Signage
- C5 – Streetscape Specifications
- C6 – Georgia Power Substation Screening
- C7 – Buckhead Loop to Peachtree Road (Capacity Improvement)
- C8 – Peachtree Road to Pharr Road (Capacity Improvement)
- C9 – Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard (Capacity Improvement)
- C10 – Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Lindbergh Drive (Capacity Improvement)
- C11 – Lindbergh Drive to Lambert Drive (Capacity Improvement)



**Intersection**

- I1 – Piedmont Road/Roswell Road/Habersham Road Triangle
- I2 – Piedmont Road at Buckhead Loop
- I3 – Piedmont Road at Tower Place Drive
- I4A – Piedmont Road at East Wesley Road – Interim
- I4B – Piedmont Road at East Wesley Road – Long Term
- I5 – Miami Circle Relocation
- I6 – Lindbergh Drive Consolidation/Main Street Signal

**System**

- S1A – I-85/GA 400 SB to NB Connection – Interim
- S1B – I-85/GA 400 SB to NB Connection – Long Term
- S2 – I-85/GA 400 SB Merge Improvements
- S3 – I-85/Lindbergh Drive HOV Ramps

**New Connections**

- NC1 – Buckhead Loop to Piedmont Center (Shuttle/Express Bus Only)
- NC2 – Piedmont Road to Roswell Road
- NC3 – Piedmont Road to Maple Drive (Two Connections)

**Regulatory**

- R1 – Buckhead CID Extension/Special Assessment District
- R2 – Buckhead CID/BATMA DRI Review
- R3 – Zoning Ordinance Amendments (SPI 9, 12, and 15)
- R4 – Impact Fee Credit Structure
- R5 – GA 400 Toll Policy Changes
- R6 – Side-Street Maximum Signal Timing Policy Changes

**Further Investigation by the City**

- FI1 – Piedmont Road/Roswell Road/Habersham Road Triangle Long Term Solution
- FI2 – Miami Circle Extension Over GA 400

It should be noted that design features to enhance pedestrian and bicycle modes of travel are included in the corridor improvement projects.

“... Creating solutions for the greater good was no small task, but we think that significant public involvement has helped us create a plan that is good for everyone.”

The following are detailed descriptions of each recommended project.

**Transit Projects**

**T1 – Express Bus Service Enhancements**

Currently, only one express bus route serves the Buckhead community directly. GRTA Xpress route 410 travels between Gwinnett County and the Lindbergh Center MARTA station. While this station is located in a transit oriented development (TOD), the major employment density in Buckhead is located in the northern activity center which is centered around the MARTA Buckhead rail station. Approximately one-third of the workers in this area live in Cobb and Gwinnett Counties; therefore, it is reasonable to expect that demand for express bus from these areas exists. It is recommended that vanpools be initiated to determine the extent of the demand for exclusive express routes to this area.

Express routes serving Cobb County (Town Center Mall), Gwinnett County (Discover Mills Mall), and DeKalb/Rockdale Counties (Panola Road and Sigman Road Park and Ride lots) should be investigated. At a minimum, express bus should serve the northern activity center by serving the Piedmont Center development, as well as the office building located along Tower Place Drive. The service should also serve areas east along Peachtree Road. The Express Buses should access the area from GA 400 and options should be explored as to providing exclusive transit access to areas that may have the capability (i.e. project NC1 – Buckhead Loop to Piedmont Center, Shuttle/Express Bus Only).

GRTA should work closely with CCT and GCT to develop vanpools and from the recommended locations and swiftly move toward providing express bus from these the counties needed most.

**T2 – Activity Center Circulator Expansion**

The “buc” is the area’s existing activity center circulator. It currently serves areas along Piedmont and Peachtree Roads north and east of the intersection of Piedmont Road at Peachtree Road. With densities increasing in the Lindbergh area and with the proposed Streets of

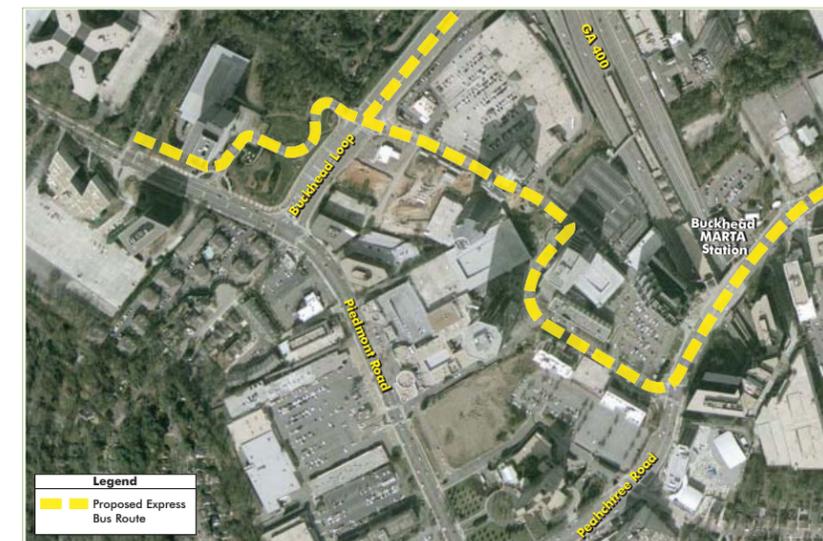


Figure 5.1 Proposed Express Bus Service



Buckhead development in the Buckhead Village, trips between these dense clusters of development will continue to grow. As this development occurs, efforts should be made to connect these areas together with an activity center circulator that provides no or low-cost service to those making short trips between these centers.

Federal funding for the “buc” has been eliminated since the three year initiation period, leaving funding the system the responsibility of the local government. It is recommended that further funding sources be investigated and the Buckhead CID and BATMA pursue opportunities to increase and expend service in coordination with MARTA.

**T3 – MARTA – Increase Frequencies**

MARTA currently serves the study area with bus and rail transit. While the existing service provides routes and connections to many parts of the region, feedback from stakeholders provided insight into how ridership can increase. Amongst the largest complaints the public had are long wait times and unreliable service, many times caused by the high levels of congestion along the Piedmont Road and adjacent corridors (bus only). Existing MARTA infrastructure will be drastically improved by increasing frequencies of rail and bus service.

This study recommends that MARTA increase peak hour rail frequencies from the existing 10 minute headways, to shorter 5 minute headways during peak commute hours. Additionally, it is recommended that MARTA increase the frequency of bus service in the area by 30 percent (existing routes along the corridor consist of headways ranging from 15 to 30 minutes during peak commute hours). Projects that will aid in achieving higher frequencies are Bus Stop Consolidation/Improvements (T4), Transit Signal Priority (T5), and Queue Jumper Lanes (T7).

**T4 – MARTA – Consolidate/Enhance Bus Stops**

The Piedmont corridor currently has several bus stops that receive very little activity. Some stops record less than ten riders per day. Elimination of these stops will help improve travel times. Table 18 provides a complete listing of the existing bus stops and their recommended treatment.

**Table 18  
Existing and Proposed MARTA bus stops**

Existing Bus Stop		Location	Recommendation
Stop ID	Side of Piedmont Road		
900477	East	At Miami Circle	Maintain existing location
900478	East	At Alpine Road	Remove
900479	East	At Elliott Circle	Maintain existing location
900480	East	At Burke Road	Remove
900481	West	North of E Paces Ferry Road	Remove
900482	West	Pharr Road	Maintain existing location
900483	West	North Hills Drive	Maintain existing location
900484	West	South of Elliott Circle	Remove
900566	East	At Sidney Marcus Boulevard	Maintain existing location
901702	East	At Peachtree Drive	Maintain existing location
901703	East	South of E Paces Ferry Road	Remove
901704	East	At Martina Drive	Maintain existing location
901705	West	At Martina Drive	Maintain existing location
901706	West	At E Wesley Road	Remove
901707	West	At Alpine Road	Remove
901755	West	North of Miami Circle	Remove
901756	West	Sidney Marcus Boulevard	Maintain existing location
901757	East	At Darlington Road	Maintain existing location
905172	East	At Piedmont Center/Manor at Buckhead	Maintain existing location, Create “Super Stop”
905289	East	At Tower Place Drive	Maintain existing location
905290	East	South of Buckhead Loop	Maintain existing location
905407	West	North of Piedmont Center/Manor at Buckhead	Remove
905408	West	North of Piedmont Center/Securities Centre	Maintain existing location, Create “Super Stop”
905409	West	At Buckhead Loop	Maintain existing location
905410	West	North of Tower Place Drive	Maintain existing location
905429	East	North of Peachtree Road	Relocated to south of Peachtree Road, Create “Super Stop” with redevelopment
905523	East	North of Piedmont Center/Manor at Buckhead	Remove
905524	East	At Habersham Road	Maintain existing location
905525	West	At Tower Place Drive	Maintain existing location
905526	West	North of Peachtree Road	Maintain existing location, Create “Super Stop” with redevelopment
905760	West	North of Piedmont Center/Securities Centre	Remove
905928	West	At Habersham Road	Maintain existing location
N/A	West	At Lindbergh Center Rail Station	Create “Super Stop” at existing bus drop-off



Enhanced bus stops

Enhancing the existing bus stops and incorporating a series of “Super Stops” will entice individuals by providing a more convenient and welcoming environment. Enhanced amenities at minor bus stops should at minimum be the replacement of broken furniture with new furniture (T6) and clearly marked signage with route information.

“Super Stops” should be located in areas with dense development, specifically on the east and west sides of Piedmont Road at the following locations along the corridor:

- North of Securities Centre/Piedmont Center
- Piedmont Road at Peachtree Road
- Lindbergh Center MARTA station



Super stops should consist of additional amenities such as covered and attractive structures with comfortable seating, complete MARTA system route information, and LCD display boards showing arrival times. Special Super Stop consideration should be given to specific areas that are prime for redevelopment. The Piedmont Road/Peachtree

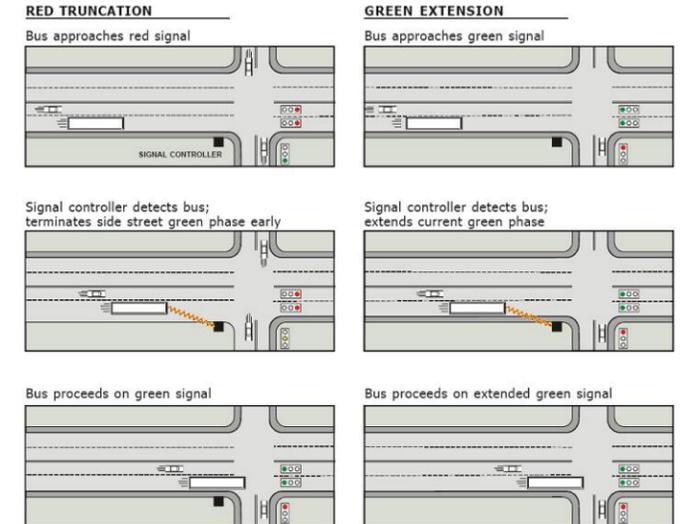
Road intersection is a prime location for Super Stops when the adjacent properties redevelop. Incentives should be given to the developers of these properties to incorporate the bus stops into the building structure and connect them with the retail functions of the development. Efforts to share these stops with other transit providers is encouraged.



Example Super Stop Source: MARTA, Memorial Drive Bus Rapid Transit Study

**T5 – Transit Signal Priority**

Transit signal priority uses technology that allows busses along a given corridor to communicate with upcoming traffic signals in order to maximize the amount of green time they experience, improving progression along the corridor. Wireless transit signal priority technology was developed jointly between MARTA, the DeKalb County Public Works Department, and GDOT and is set to be implemented in 2008 on several corridors within the city, along with traffic signal controller upgrades.



Source: TCRP Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual

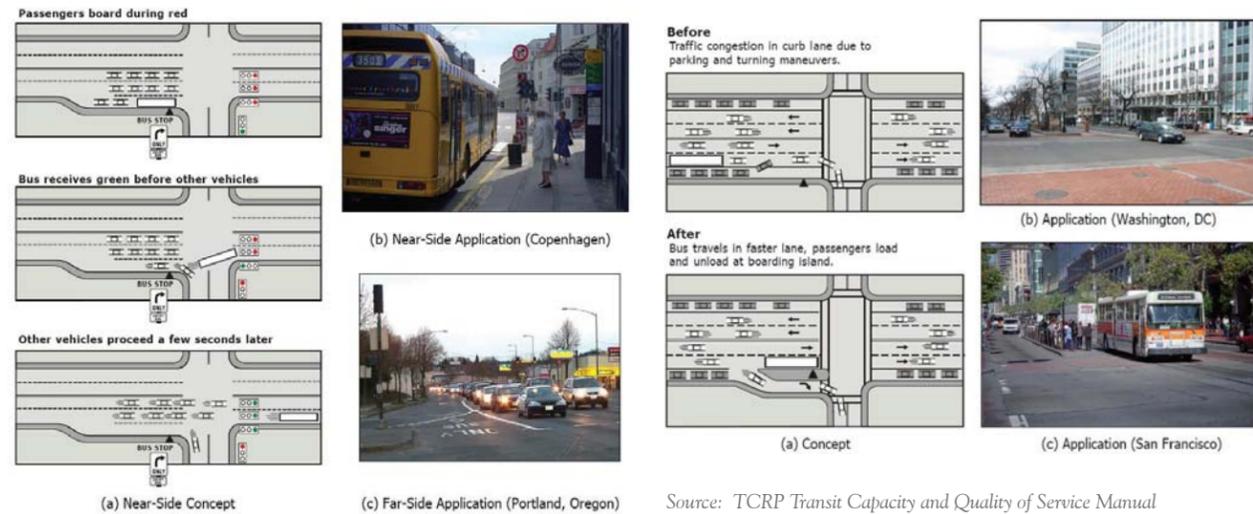
MARTA believes that the Piedmont Road corridor, as well as surrounding corridors in the study area; such as Roswell Road, Sidney Marcus Boulevard, and Peachtree Road, appear to be well suited for wireless transit signal priority. Transit bus signal priority attracts people to transit because of higher frequencies made possible by improved traffic flow by allowing bus stops to be moved from the near to the far side of intersections and reducing delays related to slower bus acceleration and braking characteristics.

**T6 – Uniform Bus Stop Standards**

Uniform bus stop standards should be developed to ensure that each bus stop contains certain amenities at a minimum. These standards should be addressed in coordination with the City of Atlanta and MARTA and be applied to stops in the study corridor as well as throughout the City and MARTA’s service area.

**T7 – Queue Jumper Lanes**

A queue jumper lane is a type of roadway geometry that provides either an exclusive bus lane or one shared with right-turning vehicles on the approach to a signalized intersection. The intent of the lane is to allow the high-capacity vehicles (buses) to avoid long queues, reducing the delay caused by the signal and improving the operational efficiency of the transit system. A queue jumper lane is generally accompanied by a signal which provides a phase specifically for vehicles within the queue jump (buses). Such a signal reduces the need for a designated receiving lane, as vehicles in the queue jump lane get a “head-start” over other queued vehicles and can therefore merge into the regular travel lanes immediately beyond the signal.



Source: TCRP Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual

Existing and expected traffic queuing, Right-of-way constraints, and bus routes were all considered for selection of queue jumper lane locations. This study recommends that the City initiate a queue jumper study for heavily congested corridors containing major bus routes. For the Piedmont Road corridor, queue jumper lanes are recommended at the following locations:

- Northbound approach at Piedmont Road/Buckhead Loop
- All approaches at Piedmont Road/Peachtree Road
- Northbound and southbound approaches at Piedmont Road/Morosgo Drive

**Pedestrian Projects**

**P1 – Pedestrian Crossing Safety Improvements**

As discussed in this report, several intersections along the corridor have a history of pedestrian-vehicle crashes. This project consists of a major overhaul of pedestrian treatment at intersections in order to enhance pedestrian safety. The below specific pedestrian safety improvements are recommended for implementation:

- Bring all pedestrian facilities to ADA-compliance standards
  - Pedestrian ramps and crossings at all intersections
  - Eliminate obstructions in clear zone (such as utility poles, bus shelters, etc.)
- Restripe crosswalks and stop bars along the corridor (where needed)

- Install countdown pedestrian signals at all existing and proposed signalized intersections
- Convert left-turn signal phasing from lead to lag where possible at intersections in the following locations:
  - Powers Ferry Road to Pharr Road
  - Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Garson Drive

This project can be implemented either as a stand-alone project or in conjunction with the corridor and intersection projects that follow this section.

Lagging left-turns are protected left-turn maneuvers that are required to occur at the end of the traffic signal cycle, as opposed to at the beginning of the cycle. This change in the order of the left-turn maneuver provides for vehicle/pedestrian separation, as pedestrians normally tend to cross at the beginning of the straight-through green interval. Where pedestrians are crossing the side street, the pedestrians have cleared the intersection prior to the beginning of the lagging-green interval, thus avoiding conflict with left-turning vehicles.

- Provide a Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) at the following signalized intersections with Piedmont Road:
 

– Tower Place Drive	– Morosgo Drive
– Peachtree Road	– Main Street (once signalized)
– Sidney Marcus Boulevard	– Lindbergh Drive

Pedestrians who cross in the crosswalk during the green light have trouble with drivers who turn into their path and neglect to yield. This conflict has been the cause of many pedestrian injuries and deaths, and is one of the main deterrents of blind people concerned with crossing streets independently. The LPI provides a few seconds head start to the pedestrians. The pedestrian signal begins while the signal for the drivers remains red; after pedestrians have had a few seconds to commence crossing the street, the drivers receive a green signal.

**P2 – Sidewalk Improvements – Powers Ferry Road to Buckhead Loop**

While roadway widening is not recommended in the area between Powers Ferry Road and the Buckhead Loop (other than the turn lane associated with project I1), sidewalk enhancements are recommended. In an effort to make this portion of the corridor more pleasing and safe for pedestrians, this project includes creating a five-foot furniture zone between the roadway and a minimum six-foot sidewalk. A portion of this project may be constructed with the Piedmont Road/Roswell Road/Habersham Road Triangle project (I1).



**P3 – Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over GA 400 (Northern Concourse)**

The Buckhead CID, MARTA, and SRTA are currently in the design phases for a pedestrian and bicycle connection over GA 400, connecting Tower Place Drive on the west with Stratford Road to the east, just north of the Buckhead MARTA rail station. This report recommends that the bridge be designed in such a way to accommodate busses for future use by shuttle.



**Bicycle Projects**

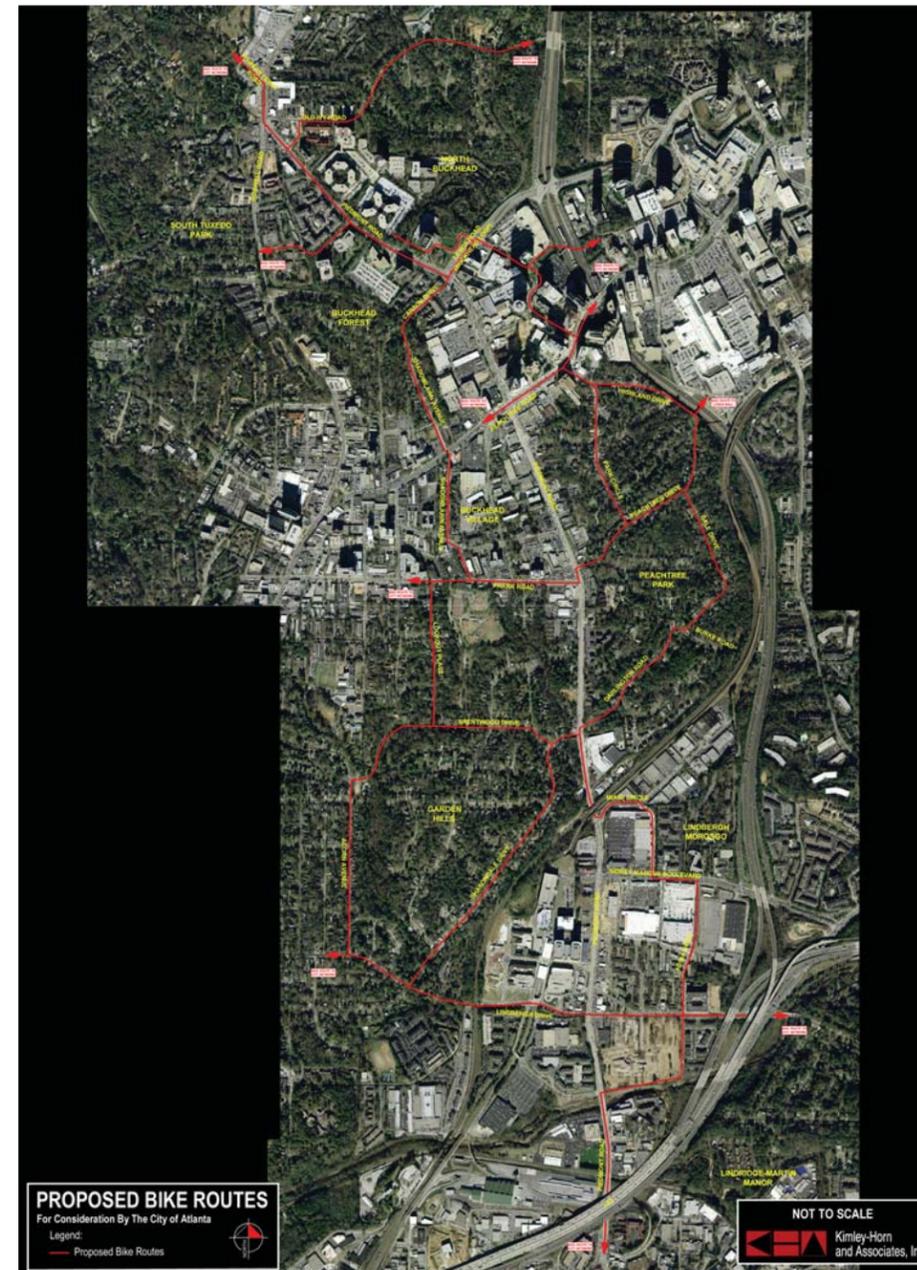
**B1 – Bicycle Routes/Lanes**

Due to several factors, such as right-of-way constraints caused by shallow commercial properties and the existing Southern Railroad bridge, between Pharr Road and Sidney Marcus Boulevard, the possibility of exclusive bicycle lanes along Piedmont Road is well beyond the 2027 time frame for recommendations in this study. Ultimately, once the Southern Railroad bridge is replaced and right-of-way acquisition can occur from Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard, it is recommended that this segment be widened to accommodate exclusive bicycle lanes from Peachtree Road to Lindbergh Drive.

The recommendations associated with this project are broken into two categories; 1. Before bridge replacement and right-of-way acquisition and 2. After bridge replacement and right-of-way acquisition. The following is a description of each of the two sets of recommendations.

*Before bridge replacement and right-of-way acquisition –*

Several neighborhood streets along both the east and west sides of Piedmont Road have been identified as possible designated bicycle routes. Because of on-street parking and right-of-way constraints, these bicycle routes would predominantly consist of signage guiding bicyclists through the area, not designated or exclusive bicycle lanes. The route selections were based on field observations of traffic volumes, speeds, and sight distance. Route selection was also based on logical north-south and east-west roadways that connect the area to other roadways in the area. It should be noted that the routes chosen have not been evaluated using a technical process. The routes chosen for study are shown graphically below and should be studied by the City of Atlanta as part of the Connect Atlanta Plan. This study recommends that the City of Atlanta creates a city-wide bicycle suitability factor scale that analyzes each of the suggested routes. Additionally, the City should identify adjacent roadways for logical bicycle travel that tie into the Piedmont corridor. Mathieson Drive, Shadowlawn



Proposed Project B1

Avenue, Pharr Road, Dale Drive, and Sharondale Drive are among the most suitable identified bicycle routes.

This project also includes recommending exclusive five-foot bicycle lanes on both the northbound and southbound sides of the Piedmont Road from Peachtree Road to Pharr Road. These bicycle lanes are included in Project C8, which consists of roadway widening and pedestrian improvements. Providing this section bicycle lanes before the southern portion of the corridor can accommodate bicycle lanes is recommended because there are two reasonable termini. The bike lanes will connect to the existing bicycle lane network along Peachtree Road to the north and will connect to the proposed bicycle lanes on Pharr Road (not included in this report's recommendations) to the south.

While the portion of Piedmont Road from the Buckhead Loop to Peachtree Road is recommended to be widened in Project C7, this study does not recommend exclusive bike lanes along this portion of Piedmont Road. Instead, it is recommended that

bicyclists be directed to use Peachtree Road's bicycle lanes to travel to Tower Place Drive, which will be signed as a bicycle route. Cyclists can then access the Piedmont Center development and points northward via Tower Place Drive.



*After bridge replacement and right-of-way acquisition –*

As stated before, this study ultimately recommends the inclusion of exclusive bicycle lanes along Piedmont Road from Peachtree Road to Lindbergh Drive. The portion of Piedmont Road from Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Lindbergh Drive is recommended to be widened as part of Project C10. While at the time of construction, Project C10 is recommended to be void of bicycle lanes, wider lanes should be constructed, allowing for the inclusion of the lanes with restriping once the segment of Piedmont Road between Pharr Road and Sidney Marcus Boulevard can be widened to accommodate the lanes and the Southern Railroad bridge can be replaced. This restriping should occur when the entire segment from Peachtree Road to Lindbergh Drive is wide enough to accommodate the bicycle lanes.

### Transportation Demand Management Projects

#### TDM1 – Zipcar

Zipcar recently merged with Flexcar and operates in many cities across the United States. The company provides satellite locations sprinkled throughout high density areas where a variety of cars can be rented at an hourly or daily rate (includes gas, insurance, and maintenance). Zipcar currently operates successfully in Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, making it reasonable to expect that the dense activity centers of Buckhead will support a successful program. Zipcar should be implemented in both the northern and southern activity centers.

#### TDM2 – TDM Education Campaign

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is described as applying measures that influence traveler behavior for the purpose of reducing or redistributing travel demand. The primary purpose of TDM is to reduce the number of vehicles on the roadway network while providing a wide variety of travel options.

BATMA and the ARC currently provide incentive programs and information to commuters on TDM measures such as transit, walking, and biking options and incentives, carpooling, vanpooling, teleworking, and a guaranteed ride home. A marketing and education campaign should be initiated on a local or city-wide scale.

#### TDM3 – Congestion Monitoring Web Application

This study recommends creating a web-based Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) application providing real-time surface street congestion information to motorists that produces visual graphics and information much like the existing Georgia Navigator application does for the region's freeway system. Technologies such as cellular telephone monitoring should be investigated to understand

the capabilities of detecting speeds and congestion levels along all major Buckhead surface streets. The intent is for commuters to make commute time decisions based on real-time traffic congestion periods, thus spreading out peak travel times and lowering the severity of congestion during any given point during the day. This system may be implemented on a local basis (Buckhead only) or city-wide (preferred).

### Corridor Projects

#### C1 – Signal Timing Plan

A major signal timing plan for the entire study corridor is underway. This project consists of adjusting traffic signal timings (in conjunction with adjacent roadways) in order to reduce inefficiencies in processing vehicles. Since traffic signals become less synchronized and travel patterns change over time (creating unnecessary delay for motorists) this study recommends that a signal timing plan be performed for the Piedmont Road corridor every two to five years. The plan will consist of optimizing and coordinating traffic signals in such a way as to favor progression of vehicles along the corridor.

#### C2 – Signal Equipment Upgrades

Detectors are used to identify when vehicles are approaching a traffic signal in order to maximize efficiency. A traffic signal with properly working detectors may operate much better than one with broken detectors. This is because the signal determines how much time to give each approach based on the demand of vehicles. For instance, if an intersection has no vehicles present on the side-street, the signal may skip the green phase for the side-street and continue allowing the main corridor movement.

It is estimated that approximately 75 percent of the detectors along the study corridor are currently broken. Replacement of the broken detectors would result in a noticeable increase in operation of the corridor and would eliminate inconvenient and unnecessary delay, especially during off-peak times. It is recommended that all broken detectors be replaced and signal timings be adjusted to accommodate for the new working detectors.

#### C3 – Speed Limit Reductions

The existing posted speed limit along most of the study corridor is 40 mph, with 35 mph posted in several areas. In order to provide a safer and more pleasing experience for pedestrians and bicyclists it is recommended that speed limits be reduced in most areas. Speed limit recommendations are as follows:

- Buckhead Loop to Pharr Road – Reduce speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph
- Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard – Reduce speed limit from 40 mph to 35 mph



- Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Garson Drive – Reduce speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph
- Garson Drive to Lambert Drive – Reduce speed limit from 40 mph to 35 mph

These speed limit changes should be implemented with the recommended corridor projects and occur when each project is constructed.

**C4 – Way-Finding Signage**

The Piedmont corridor lacks continuity and is confusing to those that may be new or visiting the area. A way-finding signage plan should be performed to provide consistent signage for major streets, transit stations, bus stops, and local attractions.

**C5 – Streetscape Specifications**

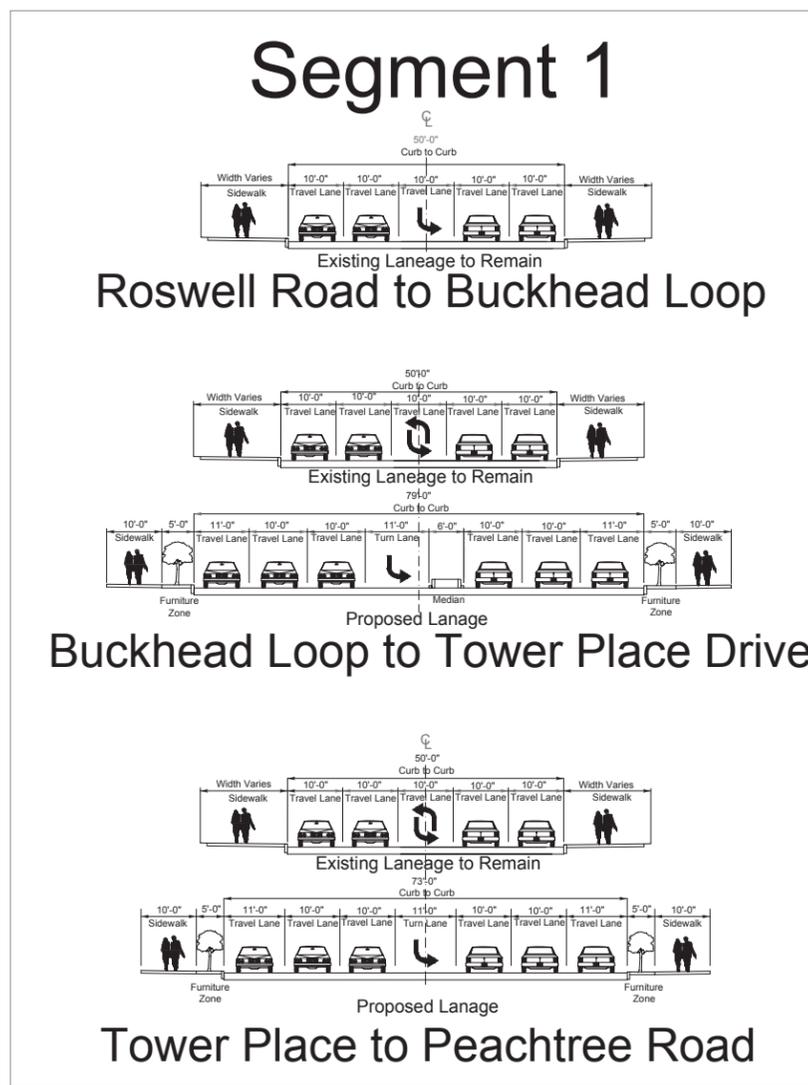
In efforts to make the corridor more functional and aesthetically pleasing, streetscape specifications should be developed. These specifications should provide a common design standard for new and modified traffic signals (mast arm, not span-wire), street furniture, and information signage. The specifications should be incorporated into all overlay districts (SPIs) and applied to all new construction projects along the corridor.

**C6 – Georgia Power Substation Screening**

Two Georgia Power substations are located along the study corridor, one on the east side of Piedmont Road, south of East Paces Ferry Road, and one on the west side of Piedmont Road just north of Sidney Marcus Boulevard. These substations consist of very large equipment shielded by a low brick wall. This project calls for additional vertical screening, such as large trees, to be provided along the walls that front Piedmont Road. While the northern substation is located well outside of the road’s right-of-way, the southern substation is located adjacent to the sidewalk. Further investigation needs to be performed for a solution for screening this substation.

**C7 – Buckhead Loop to Peachtree Road (Capacity Improvement)**

This portion of the corridor currently consists of a five-lane section with two northbound lanes, two southbound lanes, and exclusive left-turn lanes at traffic signals. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the road at varying widths. No furniture or buffer zone is present except at the recently completed Terminus office building. Piedmont Road from the Buckhead Loop to Peachtree Road will be widened from the existing five-lane section to a seven-lane section consisting of three northbound lanes, three southbound lanes, and exclusive left-turn lanes at traffic signals. Ten-foot sidewalks will be separated from the roadway by a five-foot furniture zone.



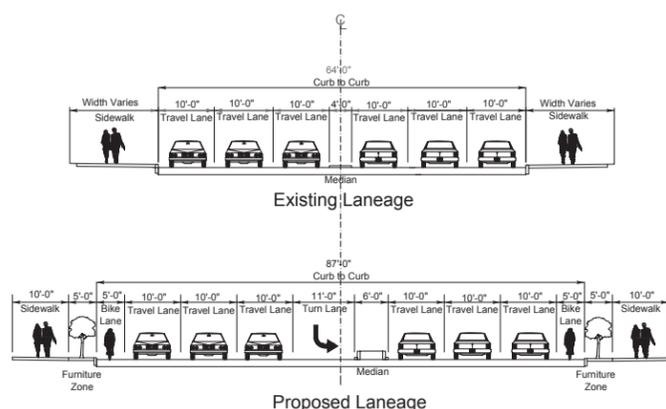
Three signals currently exist along this portion of roadway; one at the Buckhead Loop, one at Tower Place Drive, and one at Peachtree Road. It is recommended that one additional traffic signal be installed mid-block between the Buckhead Loop and Tower Place Drive (at the existing Hampton Inn and Tower Place parking deck driveways). Since access for Carson Lane to the north is recommended to be modified to prohibit left and through movements out (I2), it is highly recommended that the parcel on the southwest corner of the Piedmont Road/Buckhead Loop/Carson Lane intersection have shared access to the new signal through the existing Hampton Inn driveway.

It is also recommended that the Ivy Place and Lincoln building driveways be converted to right-in/right-out operation. Access for the Ivy Place building is currently provided onto the Buckhead Loop via Tower Place Drive. The Lincoln building should gain access to Tower Place Drive so that it can be used as access for this building as well. The widening will also include a six-foot raised median between the Buckhead Loop and Tower Place drive. No median will exist between Tower Place Drive and Peachtree Road.

As this project is constructed every effort should be made to move overhead utilities underground where possible. The overhead Georgia Power main transmission lines will be relocated several feet to the west to accommodate the widening.



## Segment 2



### Peachtree Road to Pharr Road

#### C8 – Peachtree Road to Pharr Road (Capacity Improvement)

This portion of the corridor currently consists of a six-lane section with shared left-turn lanes at several intersections and a raised concrete median. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway and average width of six feet. No buffer or furniture zone separates the sidewalk from the roadway. The segment is littered with driveways which attract drivers from all directions, many crossing over the existing four-inch high median.

In anticipation of development

along the western side of Piedmont Road, the boulevard as described in project C7 with a raised median is recommended for this portion of roadway. Northbound and southbound five-foot bicycle lanes are also recommended for this portion of roadway. Widening is recommended to occur generally along the center line of the road, with parcels on both the east and west side of the road absorbing some of the widening.

As stated before, this area currently consists of numerous driveways. It is recommended that driveways be consolidated where possible and as new development occurs along the western side of the road that access for these developments occurs along newly constructed roads connecting Piedmont Road to Maple Drive (NC3).

A five-foot furniture zone and ten-foot sidewalk is proposed along both sides of Piedmont Road in this location. The six-foot raised median will allow for pedestrian refuge at signalized intersections and discourage mid-block crossing.

This project also consists of construction of an additional northbound left-turn lane from Piedmont Road onto Pharr Road.

As this project is constructed every effort should be made to move overhead utilities underground where possible. The overhead Georgia Power main transmission lines will be relocated several feet to accommodate the widening.

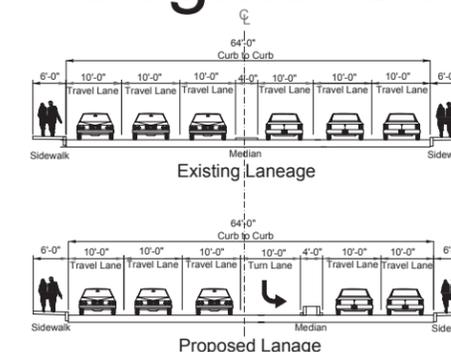
#### C9 – Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard (Capacity Improvement)

This portion of roadway intersects no other major arterials. Given the existing right-of-way constraints and adjacent land uses and narrow parcel size, widening of this section is not recommended. Acceptable operating conditions can be achieved with conversion of lanes. This study recommends converting the existing six lane cross-section to a cross-section consisting of two northbound lanes and three southbound lanes, with exclusive left-turn lanes at signalized intersections. This will be achieved by relocating the median to allow the northbound inside lane to be used as an alternating left-turn lane. The median will be constructed higher as to not allow vehicles to cross. Since limited right-of-way exists, it is expected that this segment will consist of six-foot sidewalks. Where possible, a five-foot furniture zone should separate the sidewalk from the roadway.

This new roadway alignment will decrease the number of rear-end crashes and provide a more fluid flow of vehicles through this relatively unobstructed portion of the corridor.

This project also includes widening from two to three southbound through travel lanes and installation of red light enforcement cameras at Sidney Marcus Boulevard.

## Segment 3



### Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard





**12 – Piedmont Road at Buckhead Loop**

The improvements to the Piedmont Road/Buckhead Loop intersection are as follows:

- Convert the westbound laneage to provide a third left-turn lane from Buckhead Loop onto southbound Piedmont Road (conversion of the center lane of the existing five-lane approach)
- Restrict eastbound left/through movement out of Carson Drive
- Install Red Light Enforcement cameras
- Reconstruct westbound right-turn lane from Buckhead Loop onto northbound Piedmont Road to require Buckhead Loop motorists to merge with Piedmont Road traffic



Figure 5.8 Proposed Project 11

The above recommendations address several deficiencies with the intersection. First, the triple left-turn from the Buckhead Loop onto Piedmont Road will alleviate some of the heavy queuing that currently occurs. Project C7 will provide three southbound receiving lanes which will make it possible to provide the triple left-turn lanes.

Restricting the eastbound egress to right-turn out only will allow the signal to operate much more efficiently. While this will reduce access out of the adjacent parcels (adjacent to Carson Drive) at this intersection, the proposed signalized intersection between the Buckhead Loop and Tower Place Drive (C7) will provide egress for these parcels. Efforts should also be made to provide access for the Cambridge at Buckhead apartments to the existing Securities Centre driveway to the north.

Reconstruction of the westbound right-turn lane from the Buckhead Loop to Piedmont Road will eliminate the existing merging conflicts associated with the office buildings to the north and the proposed red light enforcement camera will discourage vehicles turning right on red.

**13 – Piedmont Road at Tower Place Drive**

In preparation of density increases in the northern activity center, this project calls for increasing capacity at Tower Place Drive. The project adds an additional westbound left-turn lane from Tower Place Drive onto southbound Piedmont Road (changes existing two-lane approach to a three-lane approach consisting of one dedicated left-turn lane, one dedicated through lane, and one dedicated right-turn lane)

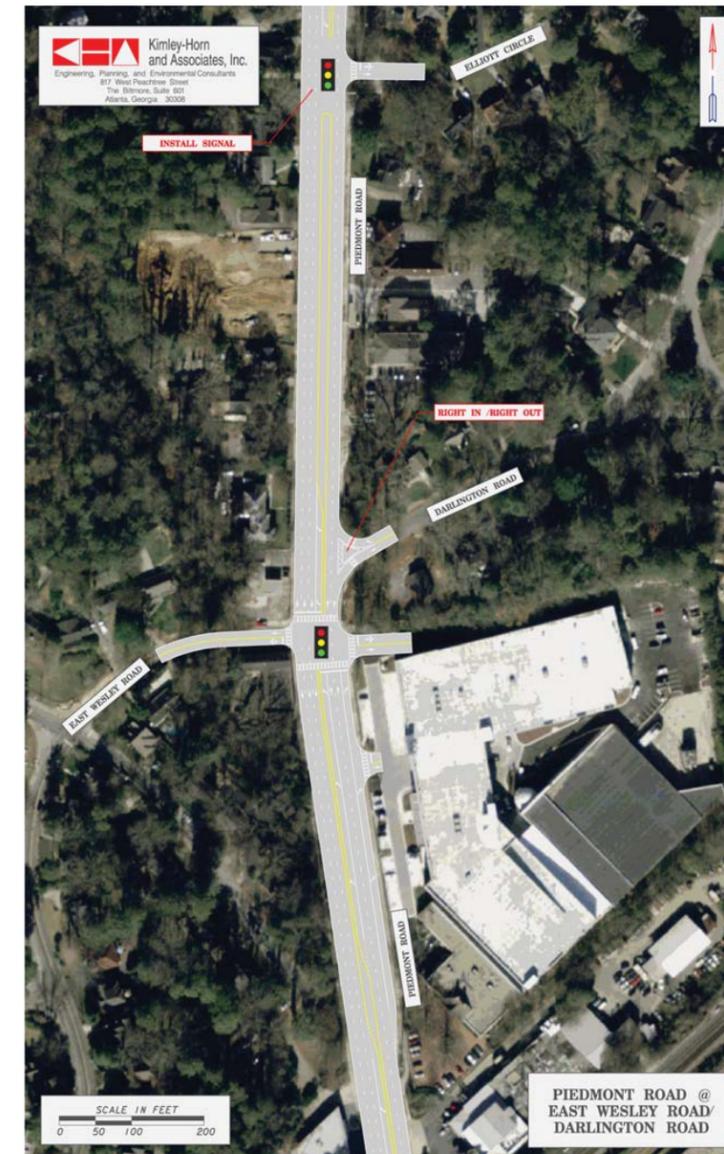


Figure 5.9, Proposed Project 14B

**I4A – Piedmont Road at East Wesley Road/Darlington Road (Interim)**

Until more substantial changes can be made, this intersection should undergo relatively inexpensive changes to help pedestrian safety and prevent blocking of the intersection during peak congestion times.

- Restripe crosswalks and stop bars
- Install “Do Not Block Intersection” signs on the northbound and southbound approaches

**I4B – Piedmont Road at East Wesley Road/Darlington Road (Long Term)**

In order to increase both pedestrian and vehicular safety, as well as continue to the lane conversation as described in project C9, long term changes to the intersection should be constructed as follows:

- Convert Darlington Road to right-in/right-out operation and remove from signal control
- On the north side of the intersection, relocate the existing median one lane to the east and extend further south to East Wesley Road
- Provide dedicated northbound and southbound left-turn lanes with protected signal phases
- Install a traffic signal at Elliott Circle (this provides better egress for the Peachtree Park Neighborhood)

It should be noted that this project can be constructed without the rest of the segment from Pharr Road to Sidney Marcus Boulevard having been constructed.

**15 – Miami Circle Relocation**

Due to the high numbers of southbound left-turning vehicles from Piedmont Road onto Miami Circle and in an effort to increase safety, a southbound left-turn lane should be constructed. An existing MARTA bridge is located to the north of Miami Circle. This can be achieved by relocating Miami Circle approximately 150 feet to the south and relocating the impact attenuator closer to the MARTA bridge structure to the north. This will allow for a turn lane with approximately 100 feet of storage.

**16 – Lindbergh Drive Consolidation/Main Street Signal**

The below changes should be made to Lindbergh Drive/Way and the adjacent Main Street intersection:

- Combine Lindbergh Drive/Lindbergh Way into one four-legged conventional intersection and remove the existing northern-most signal. Eliminate access to Piedmont Road where abandoned
- Install a traffic signal at Main Street (mid-block between Morosgo Drive and Lindbergh Drive). Construction of an east leg of this intersection should be considered when the parcels to the east are redeveloped. This provides a crosswalk for pedestrians accessing the Lindbergh Center MARTA rail station, enhances the street grid network, and allows full movement vehicular access to Main Street. The above changes will facilitate redevelopment of the adjacent properties, help traffic operations through the corridor, and provide a well-needed pedestrian crossing at the Main Street intersection.



Figure 5.10 Proposed Project 16

**System Projects**

**S1A – I-85/GA 400 Southbound to Northbound Connection (Interim)**

The need for the I-85/GA 400 southbound to northbound interchange has been discussed in this report. In order to address the traffic congestion caused by the lack of these much needed ramps, the below high-value changes are recommended, that will provide much needed relief until ramps can be constructed:

- Add third left-turn lane from GA 400 southbound ramp onto Sidney Marcus Boulevard
- Widen Sidney Marcus Boulevard to three lanes eastbound from GA 400 ramps to Buford Highway (requires moving existing sidewalks to outside of GA 400 bridge supports)
- Add third eastbound left-turn lane from Sidney Marcus Boulevard onto Buford Highway
- Widen northbound Buford Highway from Sidney Marcus Boulevard to Cheshire Bridge Road from two to three lanes
- Add second northbound left-turn lane from Buford Highway onto Lenox Road
- Add third westbound left-turn lane from Cheshire Bridge Road onto Buford Highway



Figure 5.11 Proposed Project S1A



**S1B – I-85/GA 400 Southbound to Northbound Connection (Long Term)**

This report presents a strong case for the need for the I-85/GA 400 southbound to northbound interchange ramps. Construction of the ramps will separate freeway and surface street traffic and dramatically reduce delay along Sidney Marcus Boulevard, Buford Highway, and Cheshire Bridge Road. The project is currently in the ARC RTP (Envision6) and TIP and initial design concept and environmental steps are currently being conducted. A preliminary report performed by GDOT estimates that each of these ramps will be used by 31,000 vehicles each day.

**S2 – I-85/GA 400 Southbound Merge Improvements**

The deficiency that affects the study corridor with the most negative impact is that of the downtown connector (I-85/I-75) and the I-85/GA 400 southbound merge. As discussed earlier, when traffic congestion increases along I-85 (mainly during the afternoon peak periods), many motorists “bail-out” onto Piedmont Road at either the Buckhead Loop or at Sidney Marcus Boulevard. As a result, Piedmont Road has become the primary alternative to GA 400 during congested times.

Currently, GA 400 merges completely into I-85. Other merging options, as to allow GA 400 to maintain a lane, are strongly recommended. It is recommended that GDOT study the option to merge only one of the two southbound GA 400 lanes into southbound I-85 (as opposed to the existing geometry where both the southbound GA 400 lanes merge into southbound I-85). The other lane continues as the right-most southbound I-85 lane. This requires reducing southbound I-85 upstream by one lane.

**S3 – I-85/Lindbergh Drive HOV Ramps**

I-85 southbound off-ramps and northbound on-ramps currently exist at Lindbergh Drive. This recommendation completes the interchange by adding an HOV only I-85 southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp. These ramps would provide a much easier and less congested method for express bus traveling between the Buckhead area and areas south of Atlanta as well as from the I-75 corridor (T1).

**New Connection Projects**

**NC1 – Buckhead Loop to Piedmont Center (New Connection)**

The existing driveway for the MARSH building at the Buckhead Loop/Tower Place Drive intersection should be used as a shuttle and express bus connection to both the MARSH and Piedmont Center developments. The recommended route will utilize much of the existing driveway; however, a shuttle only portion of roadway will need to be constructed between the MARSH building and Piedmont Center.

**NC2 – Piedmont Road to Roswell Road**

The exact placement of this connection may occur at one of several places along the Piedmont corridor; however, it should occur somewhere between the two Piedmont Center driveways and near Securities Centre. Traffic volumes will most likely require traffic signals to be placed at its termini with both Roswell Road and Piedmont Road. This new roadway connection will reduce some of the delay at the Piedmont Road/Habersham Road/Roswell Road intersection by allowing northbound left-turning vehicles to turn left prior to the triangle. The construction of this connection will require the cooperation of several property owners.

**NC3 – Piedmont Road to Maple Drive (two connections)**

The parcels along the west side of the corridor from Peachtree Road to Pharr Road are prime for redevelopment. This project improves accessibility and mobility, provides safer conditions for pedestrians crossing Piedmont Road, and creates more street front retail opportunities by providing two new roadway and pedestrian connections between Piedmont Road and Maple Drive. The connections should be equally spaced between Peachtree Road and East Paces Ferry Road and median breaks with traffic signals should occur at their termini with Piedmont Road. Traffic signals and capacity improvements along Maple Drive may be warranted.

The construction of these connections will require the cooperation of numerous property owners and must be coordinated between developers and the City as redevelopment occurs.

**Regulatory Projects**

**R1 – Buckhead CID Extension/Special Assessment District**

In order to provide a more comprehensive and coordinated corridor an additional method of local funding must be identified. Two ways to collect the money needed to perform the projects in this study and other local projects are the expansion of the Buckhead CID and/or the creation of a Special Assessment District. The Buckhead CID is allowed to collect funds from only commercial properties while a Special Assessment District would allow taxing all parcels, no matter what zoning designation.

As this study describes, the entire study corridor is interconnected and several of the recommended projects stretch the length of the corridor. For this reason, the overlay district should represent the entire corridor. With either option, the area covered by the chosen district should include at the least, all parcels adjacent to Piedmont Road from Roswell Road to I-85.



**R2 – Buckhead CID/BATMA DRI review**

A Development of Regional Impact (DRI) is a proposed development that reaches a certain density threshold as defined by the ARC and GRTA. This recommendation would provide that a staff member from either the Buckhead CID or BATMA play an active role in the DRI review process for any proposed development within the boundaries of the Buckhead CID. The staff member would attend the DRI review meetings and provide feedback to GRTA for transportation recommendations with the goal of preserving the goals and recommendations of this study and others performed for the Buckhead area.

**R3 – Zoning Ordinance Amendments (SPI 9, 12, and 15)**

Several types of zoning ordinance changes are recommended as part of this study, both zoning overlay district expansions as well as specific additions to these ordinances. There are currently four zoning overlay districts (Special Public Interest, or SPI) in and around the study corridor; SPI-9 Buckhead Village, SPI-12 Buckhead/Lenox Stations, SPI-15 Lindbergh Transit Center, and SPI-19 Buckhead Peachtree Corridor.

- SPI Expansion Recommendations
  - SPI 9 to be extended to the commercial parcels along the west side of Piedmont Road from Peachtree Road to Pharr Road.
  - SPI 12 to be extended to the commercial parcels along the west side of Piedmont Road from Buckhead Loop to Peachtree Road.

SPI zoning code should be revised to reflect the following additions:

- SPI-9
  - Shower facilities (as described in SPI-15)
  - Internal development bike and moped circulation improvements
  - Implement shared parking incentives
  - Provide stronger enforcement of Transportation Management Plan (TMP)
  - Require interparcel connections as development occurs
- SPI-15
  - Provide affordable housing
  - Reduce parking requirements and implement shared parking incentives
  - Provide stronger enforcement of TMP
  - Require interparcel connections as development occurs

**R4 – Impact Fee Credit Structure**

Impact Fees are imposed by the City on new developments and are currently based purely on land use and density. Private developers may get impact fee credit for improvements made on site that have a direct positive impact on the general public as well. In efforts to encourage more dense and transit oriented growth, incentives to private developers should be created to give impact fee credits for development that do the following:

- Unbundled and share parking, especially near MARTA rail stations
- Eliminate free parking
- Incorporating bus stops into development store front
- Making transit/pedestrian/bicycle connections to driveways serving adjacent properties

**R5 – GA 400 Toll Policy Changes**

A study of toll policy modifications by SRTA is currently underway. This study should be expanded to investigate advantages of toll pricing favoring express bus and HOV travel.

**R6 – Side Street Maximum Signal Timing Policy Changes**

Currently, many side-streets and driveways use a large percentage of time on traffic signals along the Piedmont Road corridor. In order to reduce the delay on Piedmont Road and other main arterials caused by these side-streets, a city-wide standard should be created and enforced for maximum signal phase time given to any side-street that serves a private road or driveway.



**Projects for Further Investigation by the City of Atlanta**

**FI1 – Piedmont Road/Roswell Road/Habersham Road Triangle Long Term Solution**

Project FI1 will provide much needed relief to the Piedmont/Roswell/Habersham Road triangle; however, a more long term solution must be identified. Improvements to this triangle should be made with strong consideration of the effects the low capacity roads of West Paces Ferry Road, Habersham Road, and Powers Ferry Road have on the area.

The above roadways are currently operating at or near capacity, meaning that substantial improvements to the triangle will be overshadowed by the inability to process vehicles downstream. A comprehensive approach should be made by the City of Atlanta to understand more fully travel patterns and needs of the commuters utilizing these alternatives to the freeway system. Alternatives for Cobb County and northwest commuters such as express bus and commuter rail should be investigated further.

This study consisted of heavy involvement from neighborhood groups and technical analyses. A final solution for the triangle was initially developed and presented to the public; however, a solution was



Figure 5.12 Initial Proposed Project FI1



not agreed upon by all interested parties because of the impacts it had on the adjacent neighborhoods. The below items are recommended as a guide toward finding a long term solution:

- Create grid system around the Tuxedo Festival property and adjacent properties, creating options for motorists to maneuver through the area
- Add traffic signals at new intersections
- Increase various turning bay lengths
- Investigate TDM that reduces single occupant vehicular trips in this area
- Investigate express bus, commuter rail, and other commuter transit alternatives

The below drawing is the initial proposed recommendation for the triangle area

The below sketch is the revised concept as a result of meeting with various neighborhood groups.

Figure 5.13 Revised Proposed Project FI1

**FI2 – Miami Circle Extension over GA 400**

This study did not analyze the affects of making a connection of Miami Circle over GA 400 to Lenox Road via either Burke Road or Canterbury Road; however, an initial review of traffic volumes and patterns in the area suggest that this would be a beneficial connection. Due to the anticipated increase in southbound left-turning vehicles from Piedmont Road onto Miami Circle given this connection, a wider Norfolk Southern bridge would need to be constructed to allow for a longer turn-lane. The City of Atlanta should investigate this connection in context with the City's broader local street network.