

# CHAPTER 4

## VISION

- >> Introduction
- >> Vitality
- >> Mobility
- >> Livability

**BUCKHEAD**  
**REdeFINED** ▶

# CHAPTER 4: VISION

## INTRODUCTION

THE VISION FOR BUCKHEAD IS TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMUNITY, WHILE CREATING USABLE PUBLIC SPACES THAT COMPLEMENT CURRENT RESOURCES AND ENERGIZE BUCKHEAD TO BECOME A MORE VIBRANT PLACE. BUCKHEAD ALSO SEEKS TO IMPROVE MULTIMODAL ACCESS IN, AROUND, AND THROUGHOUT BUCKHEAD, WHILE EXPANDING CONNECTIVITY AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY BONDS WITH PROGRAMMATIC AND POLICY CHANGES TO CREATE A MORE COMFORTABLE, SAFE, AND INCLUSIVE DISTRICT.

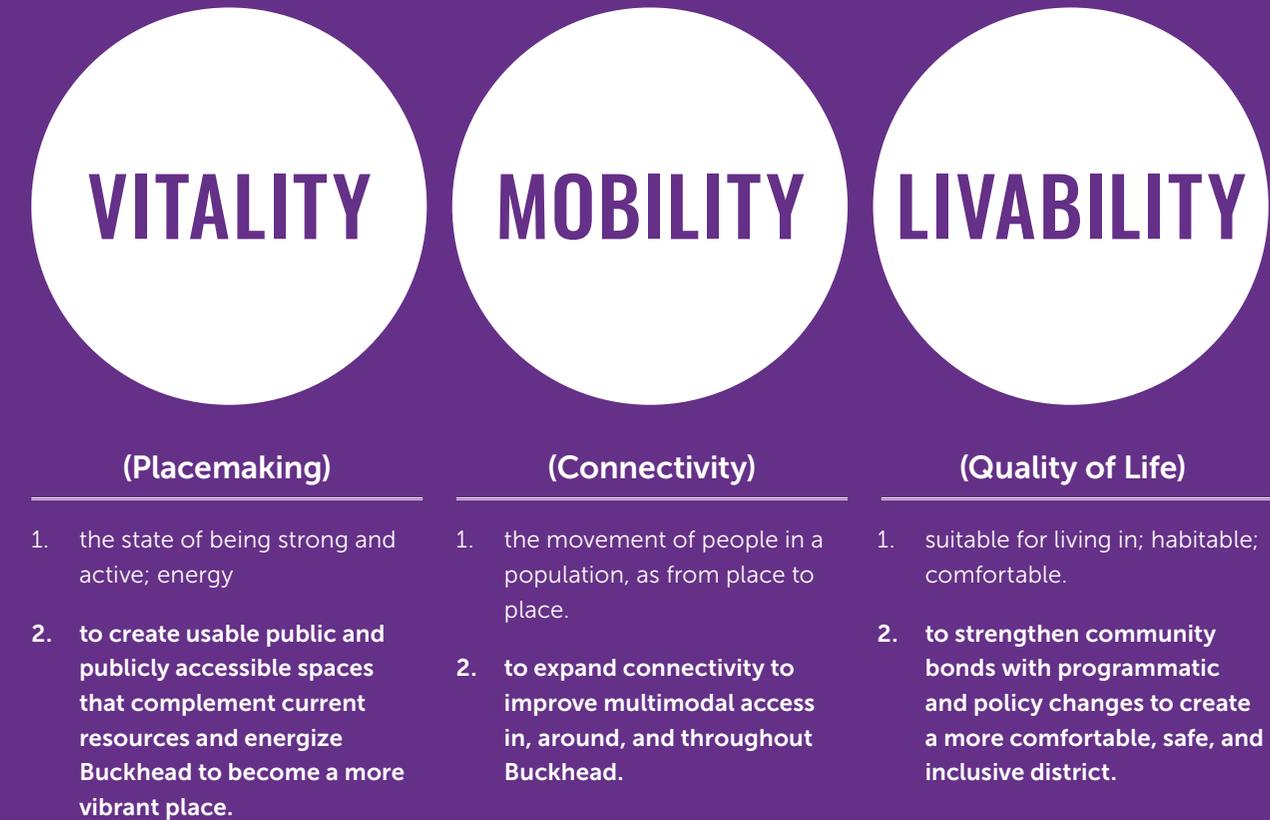
To sustain a growing community, it is critical for Buckhead to create places for public interaction and recreation, address congestion, enhance mobility, and support policies that make the district more accessible and livable.

Creating a framework and organizational structure that respects the will and desire of Buckhead's many voices is central to achieving the **BUCKHEAD REdeFINED** vision outlined in this chapter.



## VISION THEMES

The **BUCKHEAD REdeFINED** vision can be summarized in three district-wide themes to which each programmatic improvement is tied.



# CHAPTER 4: VISION VITALITY

## TODAY

BUCKHEAD IS THE CONFLUENCE OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, SHOPPING, BUSINESS, AND ENTERTAINMENT ROOTED IN A UNIQUE HISTORY

## VISION

BUCKHEAD EMERGES AS AN ENERGIZED AND CULTURALLY VIBRANT COMMUNITY ORGANIZED AROUND A CONNECTED NETWORK OF USABLE AND BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES THAT COMPLEMENT A GROWING ROSTER OF SHOPPING, BUSINESS, AND ENTERTAINMENT OPTIONS.

While land values in Buckhead make the creation of open space on privately-owned land extremely difficult, particularly within a growing urban district, the community desires more public and publicly accessible spaces. A network of beautiful and usable parks, plazas, and green spaces has the power to transform and connect the community, providing important areas for rest, recreation, and celebration.

Opportunities for new civic spaces in Buckhead exist along major roadways, at high traffic intersections, on vacant and underutilized properties, between current retail and commercial uses, and at the Lenox and Buckhead MARTA transit stations. The **VITALITY** vision plan identifies implementable strategies to create more active public spaces and public art throughout the district.



# STRATEGIES

Three implementable strategies are proposed to achieve the **VITALITY** vision.

## PUBLIC SPACE FRAMEWORK

Emphasize the importance of implementing the Buckhead Collection Greenspace Action Plan, while recommending additional locations that could be appropriate for public spaces and / or redevelopment.

- Continue study and implementation of Park Over GA400
- Aggregate green spaces to create larger community parks within redevelopment sites or on underutilized land where appropriate
- Integrate new green spaces with the existing parks and trails network

## STREET ACTIVATION PROGRAM

Enhance street activity through the construction of temporary infill retail (shipping containers, liner buildings, shops in vacant storefronts, food trucks) on vacant and underutilized land, such as semi-public plazas, surface parking lots, and office lobby spaces.

- Construct short-term solutions (shipping container retail or retail retrofits such as South City Kitchen on Peachtree Road) in appropriate places as placeholders for future redevelopment
- Use the portions of underutilized parking lots that face sidewalks to construct temporary buildings.
- Encourage long-term redevelopment to include active uses at street-level

## PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Builds upon the Buckhead Heritage Society's Interpretive History Plan and Livable Buckhead's Mile Long Museum concept, while incorporating newly identified opportunities for curated installations along corridors and at key intersections.

- Formation of Public Art Organization to lead and seek funding for a Public Art Program
- Continue efforts to implement public art installations and strategies outlined in existing Interpretive History Plan and Mile Long Museum concept
- Identify key corridors for additional public art installations (Piedmont, Lenox, Roswell, Peachtree, and the Buckhead Cultural Loop Trail)

# CHAPTER 4: VISION

## PUBLIC SPACE FRAMEWORK

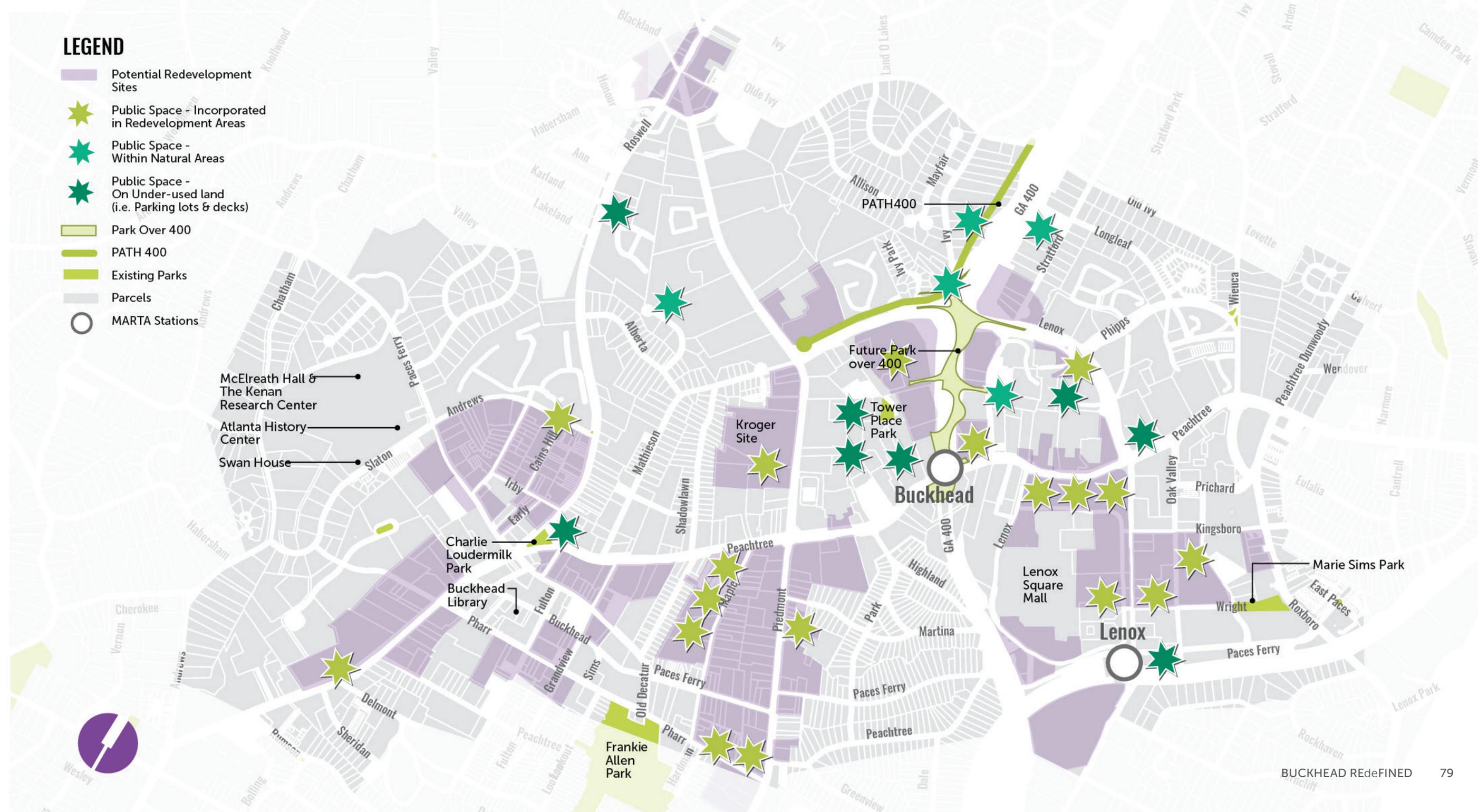
The City of Atlanta has not established a policy goal for the percentage of land that should be park space; however, only 0.2% of the study area is dedicated to public space, compared to 6% for the City of Atlanta as a whole. Although many semi-public greenspaces exist in Buckhead, few are designed for purposeful civic use. Small, private open spaces created in accordance with area zoning rarely provide meaningful gathering spaces desired by the public.

In order to address the lack of public space in Buckhead, a strategic network of green space must be created. Each subarea should accommodate the needs of users by offering a variety of types and sizes of public space that reflect Buckhead's cultural history in order to achieve greater vitality, street activation, and quality of life.

The opportunities identified in the Public Space Framework to the right represent locations for potential public space, some of which are within future redevelopment sites. Building on the significant investment proposed in the Buckhead Collection Greenspace Action Plan and Park Over GA400, these opportunities could occur on underutilized land such as existing parking lots, undevelopable natural areas, or sites that could provide public space as they redevelop. MARTA transit stations also provide key opportunities to create true public spaces. High-quality public spaces should address a number of social, cultural, and environmental issues in order to ensure Buckhead's history, culture, and natural resources are preserved.

### LEGEND

-  Potential Redevelopment Sites
-  Public Space - Incorporated in Redevelopment Areas
-  Public Space - Within Natural Areas
-  Public Space - On Under-used land (i.e. Parking lots & decks)
-  Park Over 400
-  PATH 400
-  Existing Parks
-  Parcels
-  MARTA Stations



# CHAPTER 4: VISION STREET ACTIVATION PROGRAM

The Street Activation Program suggests using public art installations, programming, and infill retail to add vitality to Buckhead's existing streets. It builds on the Buckhead Heritage Society's Interpretive Art Master Plan and Livable Buckhead's Mile Long Museum concept. Efforts should be concentrated in existing and proposed public spaces, at MARTA transit stations, at key intersections, and along the Street Art Corridors shown at right.

A wide range of art and activities described on the following pages, can enliven places throughout Buckhead. The area's most visible and visited destinations offer ideal locations for art and activation in order to make the most significant impact on the public realm.

## LEGEND

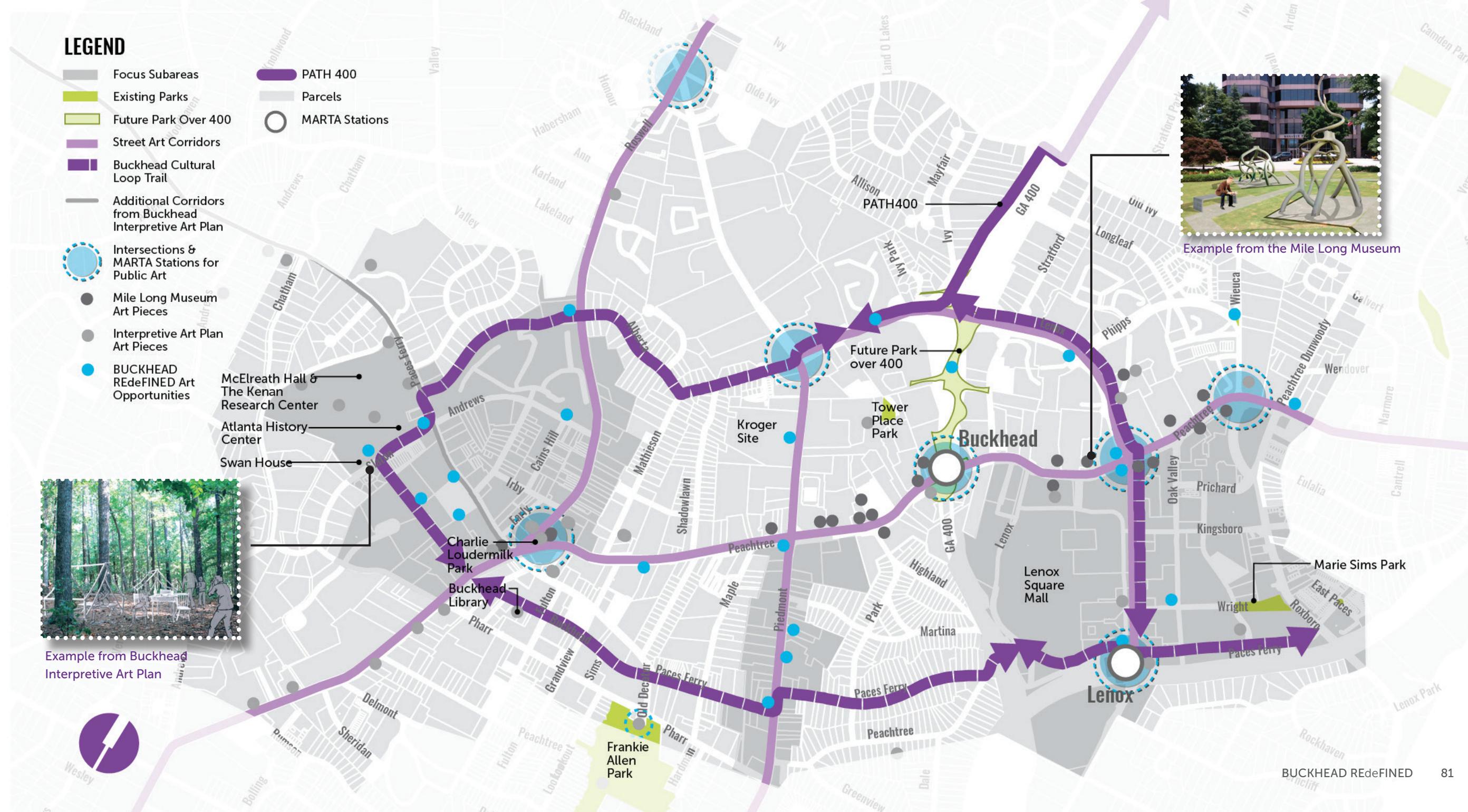
- Focus Subareas
- Existing Parks
- Future Park Over 400
- Street Art Corridors
- Buckhead Cultural Loop Trail
- Additional Corridors from Buckhead Interpretive Art Plan
- Intersections & MARTA Stations for Public Art
- Mile Long Museum Art Pieces
- Interpretive Art Plan Art Pieces
- BUCKHEAD REdeFINED Art Opportunities
- PATH 400
- Parcels
- MARTA Stations



Example from Buckhead Interpretive Art Plan



Example from the Mile Long Museum



Wesley

# CHAPTER 4: VISION

## STREET ACTIVATION PROGRAM

STREET LEVEL RETAIL WILL FURTHER ACTIVATE BUCKHEAD'S STREETS AND UNDERUTILIZED PUBLIC SPACES, WHILE MAKING THE DISTRICT MORE WALKABLE AND CONNECTED.



FIRST FLOOR OF GARAGE / TOWER



STREET VENDORS

Retail is a key driver of street vitality in urban areas. Buckhead's existing quality of life zoning requires storefronts to activate sidewalks. In areas built under previous zoning, infill retail and repositioning may be needed to help activate streets and maximize real estate value until major redevelopment occurs. Several priority redevelopment locations have been identified on the adjacent page.

Street activation can take a number of forms, including:

- First floor additions to towers and parking garages
- Street vendors
- Shipping containers repurposed for temporary retail
- Parking lot liner buildings (small retail buildings constructed adjacent to the sidewalk, which could fill a single row of parking)
- Pop-up retail within vacant storefronts or office lobbies



### FIRST & NEXT STEPS EXAMPLE

This coffee shop in Midtown was formerly located in a temporary, single-story building and activated an important street corner with outdoor seating. This short term solution has been replaced by a midrise residential building that now houses the same coffee shop in a more permanent building, but serving the same purpose. South City Kitchen on Peachtree Road has accomplished a similar result, and more retail destinations like this should occur where appropriate.



POP-UP RETAIL IN OFFICE BUILDING LOBBIES  
Photo courtesy: supahcute^ / Flickr



LINER BUILDINGS



SHIPPING CONTAINER RETAIL

### STREET ACTIVATION IN BUCKHEAD

Activation strategies can bring enhanced activity and increased vitality to areas of Buckhead that have not developed in an active, street-oriented form. The appropriate strategy varies based on context. For example, shipping container infill or street vendors in surface parking lots may be more appropriate in the West Village because of the small building scale and types of establishments. MARTA

transit station plazas may also provide opportunities for these activities because of the high volume of pedestrian traffic. Pop-up sidewalk fronting retail within building lobbies is more appropriate in the Buckhead Loop and Piedmont Road north of Peachtree. Retail may be more appropriate at the sidewalk edge of large existing surface parking lots, for example, at Lenox Square Mall or along Piedmont Road south of Peachtree.

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## PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

PUBLIC ART IS A KEY COMPONENT OF URBAN STREETS. STRATEGIC ART INVESTMENTS IN BUCKHEAD, LED BY A PUBLIC ART ORGANIZATION WILL ADD VITALITY, WHILE BUILDING ON LOCAL HISTORY AND PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS.

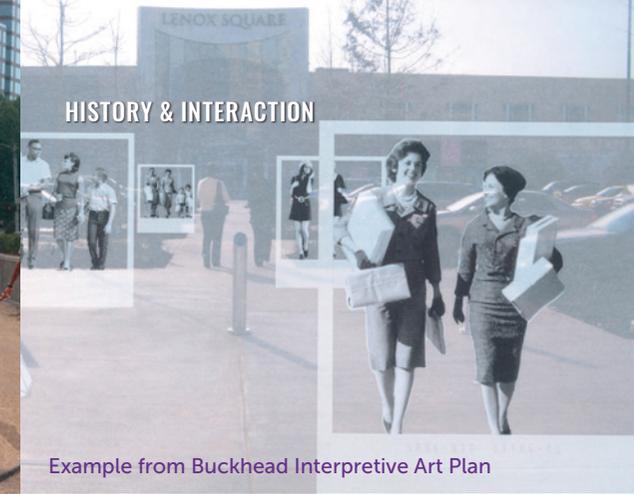
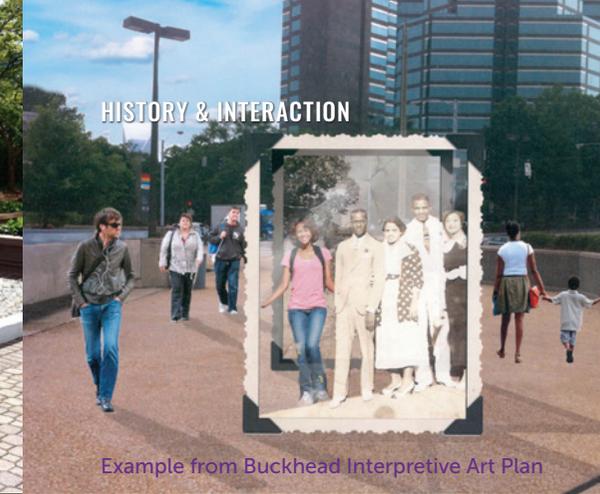
### PUBLIC ART TYPOLOGIES

The Public Art Program recommended in BUCKHEAD REdeFINED identifies specific public art typologies that are appropriate in specific locations. Public art can take many forms, including temporary or permanent installations. Buckhead can accommodate both including:

- Monumental sculptures
- Lighting installations
- Interactive installations
- Murals on buildings, bridges, or underpasses
- Temporary installations
- Painted crosswalks, utility boxes, and street furniture
- Performance art and events
- History exhibits and interactions

Both the **Interpretive History Plan** and the **Mile Long Museum** incorporate many of these typologies in their recommendations. The Interpretive History Plan identifies locations for art installations, their themes, and types of art that could be appropriate

throughout Buckhead. More than 30 installations are recommended within the study area, on key corridors and along the Buckhead Cultural Loop Trail. The flexibility of the installations presents opportunities to populate the Cultrual Trail and other locations with historic imagery. The Mile Long Museum has four phases of installations identified along the Peachtree Road corridor. BUCKHEAD REdeFINED's recommendations follow the same corridors and offer additional public art typologies, shown in the photos.



### HOW CAN THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM BE IMPLEMENTED?

Cities across North America have created public art organizations in order to fund and implement public art master plans. The role of this organization would be to guide the creation of an official Public Art Master Plan that incorporates the recommendations of this plan, the Buckhead Heritage Society's Interpretive History Plan, the Mile Long Museum, and other public art opportunities that may arise, and to guide the implementation of the Public Art and Street Activation Programs.

### PUBLIC ART ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Public art organizations typically have an appointed board of 7-9 members, including a City Council member. The board would hire a consultant to create a public art master plan to consolidate the recommendations of all existing relevant

plans and create an implementation plan and timeline that addresses art typologies, specific locations, and priority installations. The board would then commission, acquire, and exhibit new art. Special Administrative Permit (SAP) applicants could be required to meet with the board to learn about the public art program before designing their developments.

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The operations of the public art organization would be funded by donations from individuals, businesses, developers, and foundations. A number of other funding opportunities are also available for implementing art projects, including:

- Private grants
- Individual donations
- Crowdfunding
- Fulton County Arts Council
- City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs
- Georgia Council for the Arts

- Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund
- Proposed City of Atlanta art sales tax
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Parking revenue
- Atlanta Public Arts Legacy Fund

A public-private matching funds could also allow the public art organization and real estate developers to share the cost burden of art in a public-private partnership. Funds from the arts organization would be made available to developers who contributed significantly toward art within their projects.

A more formal program could also require developers within certain areas to either incorporate art into their projects, or pay fees in lieu to the public art organization, who would then invest funds on art installations throughout Buckhead.

# CHAPTER 4: VISION MOBILITY

## TODAY

BUCKHEAD IS A TRANSPORTATION HUB WITH THREE TRANSIT STATIONS, MAJOR ROADWAY CORRIDORS, SUPERBLOCKS, AND HIGH TRAFFIC DEMAND

## VISION

BUCKHEAD OFFERS A BALANCE OF CONNECTED MOBILITY OPTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS, IMPROVE CONNECTIONS AND FACILITATE TRANSIT USE AND PUBLIC MOBILITY THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AND TO DESTINATIONS BEYOND

Today, over 98% of jobs in the Study Area are filled by employees who live outside of the district. This jobs-to-housing imbalance is a significant contributor to Buckhead's congestion along major roadway corridors. Buckhead has made great strides in improving **MOBILITY** throughout the district, with projects such as the transformation of the Peachtree Corridor; a \$32 million pedestrian bridge across GA400 connecting MARTA's Buckhead transit station; and 2.5 miles of PATH400, a north-south multi-use trail along GA400. While these connectivity projects, along with private-sector driven redevelopment efforts, have greatly enhanced Buckhead's character and walkability—particularly along Peachtree Road near GA400 and in the Buckhead Village, continued vehicular, bicycle/ pedestrian (particularly East-West connectivity), additional housing options for area employees, and increased transit usage is critical to balancing growth and quality of life in the future



# STRATEGIES

Four implementable strategies are proposed to achieve the **MOBILITY** vision.

## VEHICULAR FRAMEWORK

Identifies existing roadway and corridor enhancements, new street connections, key intersection improvements, and improved access to and from GA400.

- Promote vehicular improvements and connections that foster greater connectivity between Buckhead area destinations and neighborhoods
- Analyze local commute patterns to determine appropriate transportation demand management (TDM) strategies that help to alleviate traffic congestion

## BIKE / PED FRAMEWORK

Builds upon the successes of PATH400, providing greater, safer access to foster mobility, enhance recreation opportunities, and create a viable alternative for local commuters.

- Expand and connect to existing bike/ped facilities
- Promote and expand Buckhead's multi-modal network
- Incentivize local developers to incorporate the installation of bikeshare stations

## TRANSIT FRAMEWORK

Enhance last mile connectivity to extend access to current transit and expand opportunities for local circulators and shuttle services.

- Enhance the user experience and sidewalk connections to MARTA transit stations
- Expand "the buc" circulator shuttle (funding and service area) to serve a wider range of Buckhead stakeholders, particularly within Buckhead Village
- Evaluate and encourage GRTA Xpress service to and from the Buckhead business district
- Expand Transportation Demand Management strategies

## TRANSPORTATION-HOUSING CONNECTION

Match Buckhead employees to Buckhead residences as a means to reduce the percentage of workers commuting into and out of the district by single occupancy vehicles.

- Conduct a housing study to determine housing gaps, needs and opportunities
- Partner with developers to address housing gaps and needs
- Identify aging residential properties that may be appropriate for renovation and/or repositioning
- Incentivize residential developments to provide better access to alternative forms of transportation

# CHAPTER 4: VISION

## VEHICULAR FRAMEWORK

Strategies to address congestion along Buckhead's major roadways include **Major Corridor Enhancements** to the Roswell Road, Piedmont Road, and Lenox Road Corridors. Recommended enhancements include the addition of pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle lanes where applicable, roadway expansion and/or contraction depending on current and projected traffic volumes, reconfiguration of intersections at key locations, improved roadway and pedestrian lighting, street trees and landscaping, and the installation of street furniture along high activity corridors.

**Local Street Enhancements** include multimodal improvements to foster greater connectivity for a variety of modes between Buckhead area destinations and neighborhoods. Typical improvements should consider narrowed travel lanes on or off-street bicycle facilities, landscape buffers, and wide pedestrian sidewalks.

**New Street Connections** are intended to fill missing links within the existing roadway network and provide alternate connections.

### LEGEND

-  Interchange Enhancements (GA 400)
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Ramp Improvements
-  Major Corridor Enhancements
-  Local Street Enhancements
-  New Street Connections
-  Parcels
-  MARTA Stations

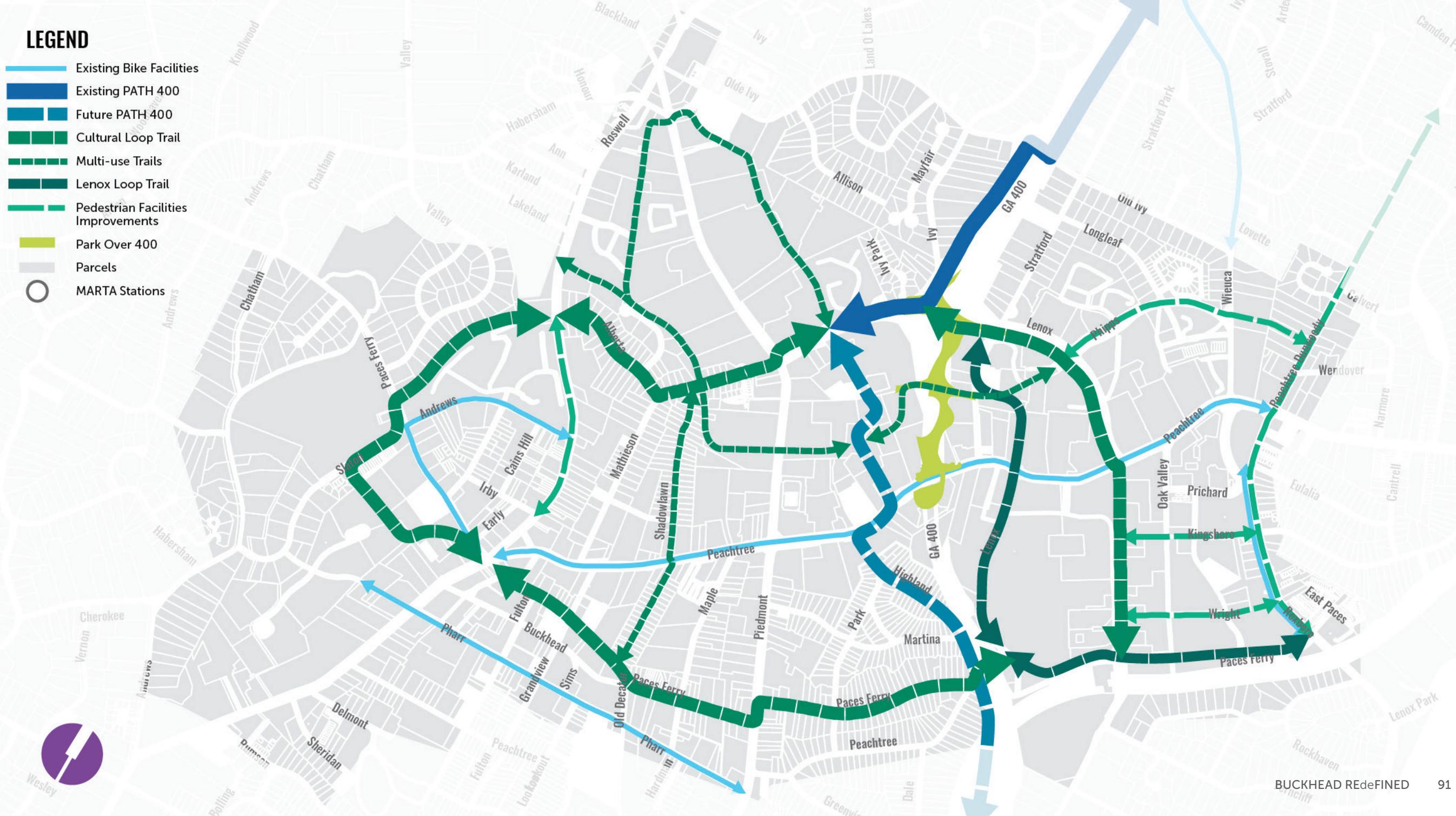


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## BIKE / PED FRAMEWORK

Currently serving as the spine of the bike network in Buckhead, **BUCKHEAD REdeFINED** seeks to build upon the success of PATH400. With the implementation of one of the most ambitious improvements projects of the study, the **Buckhead Cultural Loop Trail**. The proposed trail will provide district-wide connections to PATH400 and destinations throughout the community. The Buckhead Cultural Loop Trail links Buckhead's commercial core to the neighborhoods that exist within and surround the Study Area. This project, along with improvement to existing pedestrian facilities, and connections to/from the proposed Park Over GA400 will allow existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to link to expand Buckhead's multimodal network, fostering greater district-wide mobility.

These alternative routes will provide Buckhead commuters an option to avoid congestion along major roadway corridors and utilize amenities both on and off the major roadway systems, further enhancing quality of life for those who live, work, and visit the community.



# CHAPTER 4: VISION

## TRANSIT FRAMEWORK

While Buckhead benefits from the presence of two MARTA transit stations and numerous bus routes, existing transit infrastructure only meets the needs of a small percentage of potential riders. Accommodating projected growth will require a variety of transit improvements and investments to provide meaningful options and alternatives to single occupancy automobile travel.

Recommended strategies to address traffic congestion and improve transit infrastructure include:

- Enhance the user experience and sidewalk connections to MARTA transit stations
- Expand “the buc” circulator shuttle (funding and service area) to serve a wider range of Buckhead stakeholders, particularly within Buckhead Village
- Evaluate and encourage GRTA Xpress service to and from the Buckhead business district
- Expand Transportation Demand Management strategies
- Enhance walkability and connections to stations within walking distance and expand circulator and/or other services beyond walkable distance (bikeshare, Uber, Lyft, shuttle, etc.)

### LEGEND

-  Buckhead MARTA Red Line
-  Lenox MARTA Gold Line
-  MARTA Bus Route 110 - Peachtree St./“The Peach”
-  MARTA Bus Route 25 - Peachtree Ind. Blvd/Johnson Ferry
-  MARTA Bus Route 5 - Piedmont Road/Sandy Springs
-  MARTA Bus Route 33 - Briarcliff Road/Shallowford Road/Lindbergh
-  “the buc” Piedmont-Lenox Line
-  “the buc” Lenox Park Line
-  Parcels



# CHAPTER 4: VISION LIVABILITY

## TODAY

“OLD BUCKHEAD” VS. “NEW BUCKHEAD”  
WITH COMPETING BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL  
PRIORITIES

## VISION

BUCKHEAD STRENGTHENS’ COMMUNITY BONDS  
WITH PROGRAMMATIC AND POLICY CHANGES  
TO CREATE A MORE COMFORTABLE, SAFE, AND  
INCLUSIVE DISTRICT

The strength of a community can be found in its people. While Buckhead is not short on community based organizations, the ability for these organizations to work collaboratively to solve district-wide issues has not been easy. As in the 2002 LCI Plan, **BUCKHEAD REdeFINED** must result in a renewed collaboration commitment to collaboration and new partnerships to be successful.

It is vital that Buckhead organizations work together with City of Atlanta staff, private developers, and community leaders to provide expanded housing choice, address affordability challenges, enhance public safety, and embrace sustainability practices to propel Buckhead in the direction of positive change.



## STRATEGIES

To better facilitate a district-wide vision for improving **LIVABILITY** and quality of life for community members, **BUCKHEAD REdeFINED** includes three programmatic strategies.



**Provide opportunities for Buckhead area employees to live in and around Buckhead, increase the supply of affordable housing in and connected via transit to the District.**

- Conduct housing study to determine housing gaps, needs and opportunities
- Partner with Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) to better utilize existing affordability programs
- Explore potential for employer assisted programs to incentivize local housing and transit usage for district employees
- Evaluate and incorporate transit access to affordable housing throughout the MARTA system

**Continue to address and enhance public safety in Buckhead.**

- Continue to partner with Zone 2 to monitor and communicate public safety information
- Collaborate with private security forces to communicate and monitor area issues
- Continue partnership between City Council members and Buckhead
- Evaluate the potential to expand the public safety camera system in partnership with Atlanta Police Department

**Incorporate sustainability measures as a key element of Buckhead area improvements.**

- Promote and expand Livable Buckhead’s sustainability programs, including Buckhead Recycles
- Capitalize on enhanced walkability and transit access as a sustainability measure
- Increasing public space and tree canopy area-wide