SANDY SPRINGS
GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

TO: Mayor & City Council **DATE:** December 12, 2012

FROM: John McDonough, City Manager

AGENDA ITEM: A Resolution to Accept the City Center Master Plan Recommendation from Goody Clancy

MEETING DATE: For Submission onto the December 18, 2012, City Council Regular Meeting Agenda

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (*Attach additional pages if necessary*)

See attached:

Memorandum
Resolution
City Center Master Plan

APPROVAL BY CITY MANAGER: _____ *APPROVED*

PLACED ON AGENDA FOR: 12-18-2012

CITY ATTORNEY APPROVAL REQUIRED: (✓) *YES* ( ) *NO*

CITY ATTORNEY APPROVAL: _____

REMARKS:

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: John McDonough, City Manager

DATE: December 12, 2012, for submission onto the Agenda of the December 18, 2012, City Council Meeting

ITEM: Approval of a Resolution recommending the adoption of the Sandy Springs City Center Master Plan that includes material from the 2012 LCI – 10 Year Update and to authorize the City Manager to execute.

City Manager Recommendation:

City Manager recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the attached Sandy Springs City Center Master Plan that includes material from the 2012 LCI – 10 Year Update. The adoption authorizes the City Manager and his staff to proceed with the necessary steps subsequent to the adoption of the Master Plan with the goal of implementing the Master Plan. Furthermore, it authorizes the City Manager to execute any documents and to take any other steps which may be necessary to effectuate the intent of this Resolution.

Discussion:

The Mayor and City Council issued a request for qualifications ("RFQ") on January 5, 2012 to identify a nationally recognized planning firm to develop a master plan for the City Center and a 10-year update to the Downtown Sandy Springs LCI Study. The recommended City Center Master Plan responds to the goals set by the Council by: (1) promoting community interaction through a wide variety of activities, walkable streets and convenient parking, and connecting the City Center to surrounding City neighborhoods; (2) expanding green spaces with a network of sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use recreational paths connecting the City Center to surrounding City neighborhoods; (3) inviting spontaneous fun through a destination cultural venue, a concentration of residents, workers and visitors, and an area that invites walking, outdoor dining, recreation and other activities; (4) nurturing unique local identity formed through a walkable setting with zoning and design guidelines that encourage buildings to frame distinctive, attractive address streets and the shared experiences that are enjoyed in the City Center; and (5) making the City Center walkable, providing access to transit services and on-street parking, linking activities and destinations within the City Center area.

On November 6, 2012, Goody Clancy presented to the Council in the work session their efforts to date to comply with the goals and objectives as set forth.

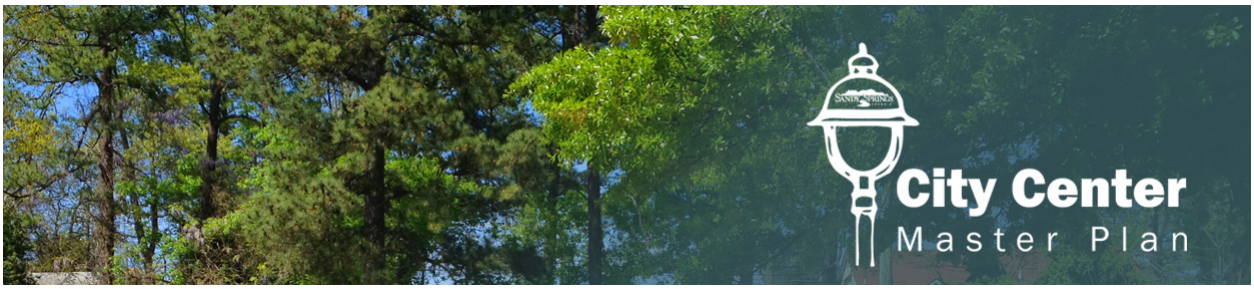
Alternatives:

Council could make changes to the Master Plan or decide not to approve it.

Financial Impacts:

The City has budgeted funds to begin purchasing property in the City Center area. Implementing the plan vision will require significant funding in future years.

City Manager



PROPOSED 2012

SANDY SPRINGS CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN

INCLUDING MATERIAL FROM THE 2012 LCI TEN-YEAR UPDATE

12 DECEMBER 2012 **DRAFT**

GOODY CLANCY
ARCHITECTURE
PLANNING
PRESERVATION

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Acronyms and Definitions

ARC | Atlanta Regional Commission

ARTERIAL ROAD | *Major arterials* are routes that serve the major centers of activity with the highest traffic volumes and the longest trip lengths. A *minor arterial* road has similar characteristics but is shorter in length and links between major arterials. *source: GDOT*

AS-OF-RIGHT ZONING | Development regulations that enable direct approval of a project proposal by City staff without design review, if the proposal fully meets stipulated standards.

ATMS | Advanced Transportation Management System

AUTO-ORIENTED | Development patterns and street networks that are primarily designed to accommodate automobile transportation and tend to discourage other types of access, such as walking, cycling and using transit.

BIOSWALES | Ditches with plantings specifically selected to help naturally cleanse and slow the flow of stormwater (see *Rain Garden*).

BOLLARDS | Posts used to prevent vehicles from traveling onto sidewalks and other pedestrian areas.

COGENERATION | Provision of combined heating, cooling and/or power generation with equipment that captures waste heat from these processes to improve energy efficiency.

COLLECTOR ROAD | Local roads in an urban area that provide low levels of travel mobility (i.e., a subdivision road). *source: GDOT*

COMPLETE STREETS | Streets that perform a variety of functions, with emphasis on safe, inviting sidewalks; incorporating street trees and other attractive plantings; and creating an appealing setting for homes and/or businesses.

DRAW AREA | Areas that households interested in living in City Center would come from.

EASEMENT | A right of use across property. Several adjacent private property owners might, for example, grant easements for public access along their property frontage to make space for a more generous sidewalk.

FORM-BASED CODE | An approach to development regulations that emphasizes desired qualities of buildings' forms (and focuses less on land use than conventional zoning); addresses street design as part of development regulations; and is typically presented in a highly graphic format to enhance understanding of code intent.

GDOT | Georgia Department of Transportation

LCI | Livable Centers Initiative

LEED© | Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LEVERAGE | A measure of the amount of private investment resulting from each dollar of public funds invested in infrastructure or related improvements to attract private investment.

MARTA | Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

PRO FORMA | A financial summary of potential development projects that addresses major factors such as development costs (land, design, demolition, construction) and revenues (proceeds from sale and/or rental of new space).

RAIN GARDEN | An area landscaped with plantings selected to help naturally cleanse and slow the flow of stormwater, as well as to serve as a landscape amenity. They may be used in planting strips between sidewalks and curbs and on private development sites.

ROW | Right of way

SHARROWS | Roadway lanes prominently marked to be shared by cars and bicycles along streets with relatively low traffic speeds.

STEP BACK | Building form in which upper-story facades are recessed back from lower-story facade.

TARGET MARKET | For housing, the range of households that best match the characteristics of those likely to choose to live in City Center. For commercial uses, those retail stores, office businesses, hotels or other users most likely to choose to locate in City Center.

TDM | Transportation demand management: a system of incentives (such as transit pass subsidies and guaranteed ride home service for nondrivers) and disincentives (such as assigning single-occupant vehicles to less convenient parking areas) designed to increase travel by means other than individual cars. Typically organized by employers, TDM programs often include owners of residential buildings, business associations and municipalities.

WALKABLE | Development patterns and street networks that make walking safe, enjoyable and a principal means of moving among a variety of places and activities.

Executive summary

City Center
Master Plan

UNLOCKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Sandy Springs intends to achieve a variety of objectives through the City Center Master Plan. These include:

- enhancing quality of life
- promoting economic development
- strengthening sense of community

The plan focuses on the City Center study area shown on the map on page *vii*, but it also takes into account related analysis performed for the larger Livable Centers Initiative study area described on page *vi*.

This plan establishes a framework for public and private action that capitalizes on new demographic and market trends. The plan will equip the City to fill unmet demand for an active, pedestrian-oriented downtown area that includes expanded transportation options. The following conditions have unlocked this unparalleled level of opportunity to create civic and economic value in the study area:

- Real estate market interest in walkable, mixed-use development can transform the study area over time into a district with significant new housing, job and retail options—while enhancing the City's fiscal position.
- Public interest in parks, walkable streets and cultural events that bring people together can shape private investment that helps build a welcoming place full of life and community.
- The City's interest in and ability to make infrastructure investments and to update development policies to attract and support private investment can help address the issues of mixed-use development.
- City Center can attract new high value development in ways that preserve and enhance nearby traditional residential neighborhoods.

GOALS

The Sandy Springs City Council outlined the core goals that the City Center Master Plan should strive to achieve:

- Create a unique, vibrant, walkable City Center rich in amenities desired by the community, such as commercial retail, recreational and cultural facilities.
- Catalyze significant market-driven private investment in walkable, mixed-use redevelopment that introduces substantial new dining, amenity retail, and entertainment options. This will both achieve City Center development goals and strengthen the district's ability to support Sandy Springs' fiscal goals.
- Create an appropriate setting for a new civic/cultural center that functions as a place of community activity and identity.
- Create comprehensive infrastructure to support City Center, which would include: walkable streets, stormwater, traffic flow, transit services, bicycling facilities, parking, utilities and signage.
- Introduce a green space network that accommodates a variety of activities, draws activity from new development, and ties together City Center, Sandy Springs' established neighborhoods, and existing open spaces.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to general public meetings, the planning process included meetings with stakeholder groups. These groups included:

- **Property and business owners (for example, the Main Street Alliance)**
- **Business promotion organizations (for example, the Sandy Springs/Perimeter Chamber of Commerce and Perimeter Community Improvement Districts)**
- **Neighborhood representatives (for example, the Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods and Sandy Springs Conservancy)**
- **Homeowners' associations**
- **Developers**
- **Sandy Springs Planning Commission**
- **Economic Development Advisory Committee**
- **Sandy Springs elected and appointed officials**
- **Partner government agencies (for example, GDOT and MARTA)**

These goals underwent significant discussion and refinement with a variety of stakeholders and with the general public in a series of forums designed to ensure that the final plan represents the broad interests of the Sandy Springs community and a balanced approach.

OUTCOMES

The master plan is intended to guide many individual actions in ways that achieve mutual benefits. The City has a central role in providing overall plan leadership and making strategic infrastructure investments, but the majority of new investment should come from private sources. The plan will create predictable conditions and policies to help attract this investment. Plan illustrations that depict scenarios for reinvestment on private and public sites suggest, but do not prescribe, the form of new investment. New investment should be shaped not only by plan recommendations, but by the unique creative perspective each investor offers.

Application of the plan will help Sandy Springs achieve important benefits within approximately ten years:

- Reinforce the City Center as an attractive place to live by establishing a series of internal neighborhoods with 1,500 or more units of new housing among them.
- Expand Sandy Springs' retail offerings to include districts of restaurants and other pedestrian-oriented businesses.
- Create civic facilities that draw the community together in shared activities and convey community identity.
- Foster new business growth spurred by an expanded workforce, retail choices, and transportation options.
- Improve the quality of traditional neighborhoods outside of the study area with new connections to City Center amenities and reduced development and traffic pressures.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This document provides background on the public participation process; describes the market analysis that advised planning decisions; outlines the resulting plan; and outlines implementation strategies to bring about the desired changes the plan identifies. Designed as a "living document," the plan will evolve over time to meet changing conditions, but the basic values and goals within this document establish a firm target for future growth. The vision for greater community interaction, more green spaces, spontaneous fun, a unique local identity, and a connected, walkable core will guide Sandy Springs toward creation of an attractive, competitive City Center in which all residents can take pride and enjoy.

COMPANION LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE (LCI) PLAN

The creation of the City Center Master Plan created an opportunity to add more depth to the City's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) with partial funding through a grant from the ARC.

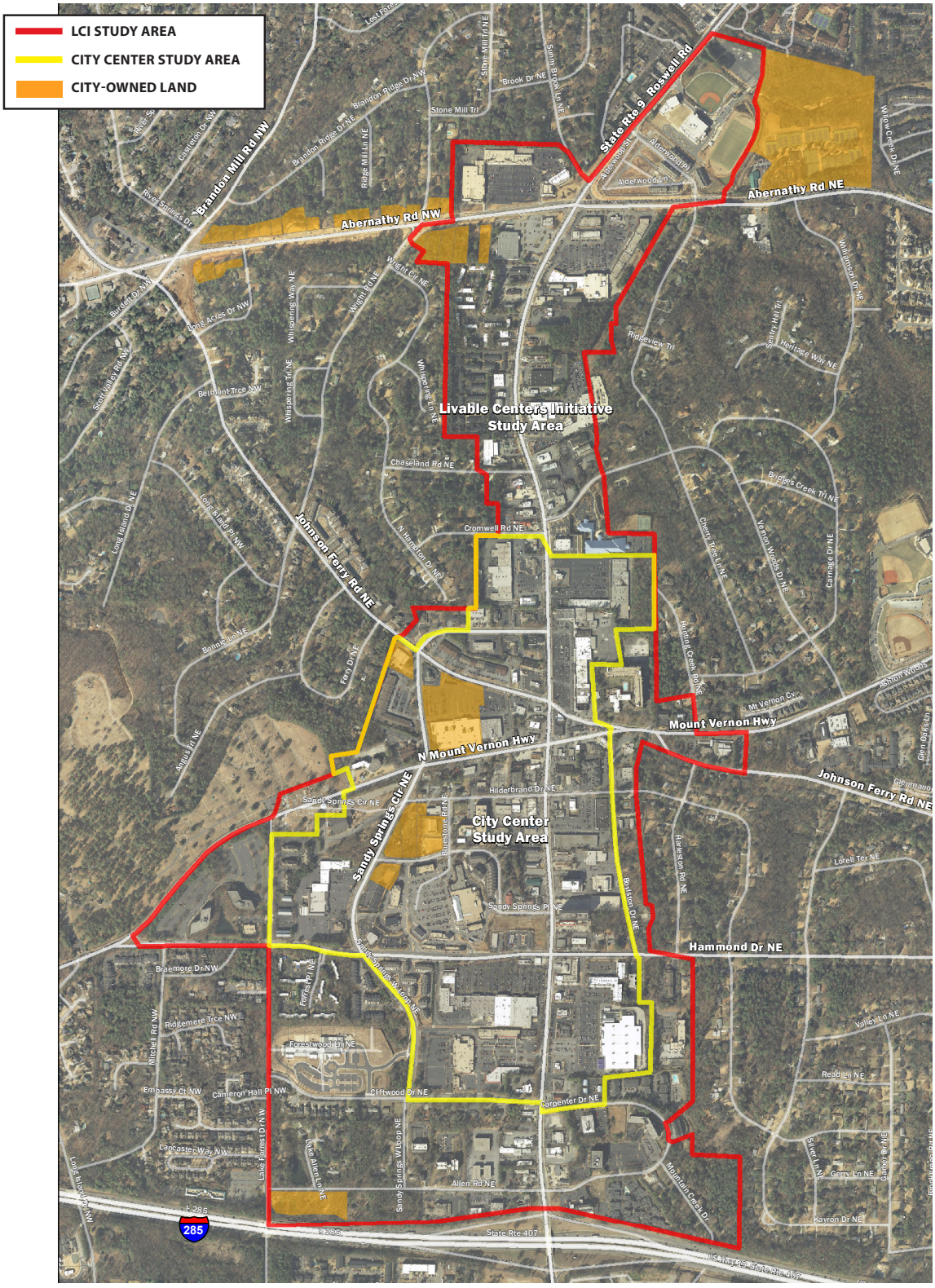
The City of Sandy Springs developed these plans with the help of a consultant team chosen for specific expertise in key areas:

- Urban design and planning: Goody Clancy (project leadership)
- Transportation: Kimley-Horn and Associates
- Commercial market analysis: W-ZHA
- Housing market analysis: Zimmerman/Volk
- Development regulations: Farr Associates

IMPROVE WHAT NEEDS HELP, EXPAND WHAT WORKS

Roswell Road today (top) has inadequate sidewalks and crosswalks in many areas, making it an unpleasant pedestrian environment. The popular Sandy Springs Farmers Market (above) takes place weekly in the former Target store parking lot.

Exhibit 1: City Center Master Plan Study Area



MARKET-DRIVEN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

The City Center Master Plan is built on the premise that market-driven private investment will spur economic growth and provide community benefits. Housing and commercial market analyses focused on opportunity over five to ten years. Multifamily housing emerged as the dominant market opportunity accounting for roughly 80-85% of likely mixed-use demand by floor area. Office, hotel and pedestrian-oriented retail constituted the remaining projected demand and would offer substantial benefits by generating pedestrian activity throughout the day and expand retail market demand. For further information, see the "Market Analysis" section beginning on page 2.

POTENTIAL FOR 8–10 BLOCKS OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING

Housing: 1,500 units over 7–10 years

- **Lofts, townhouses**
- **55% rental—many under way**
- **45% ownership—priority around City Green**

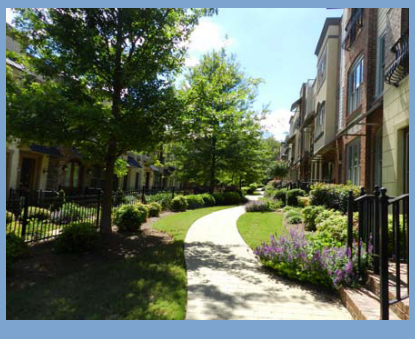
POTENTIAL FOR 3–5 BLOCKS OF WALKABLE RETAIL

10-year market potential:

- **Retail: 120,000-200,000 SF—replaces underutilized retail, dining, specialty stores**
- **Hotel: 60 to 90 room boutique hotel—distinct from current hotels in market**
- **Office: 28,000–83,000 SF—small tenants, emphasis on local customers and workforce**

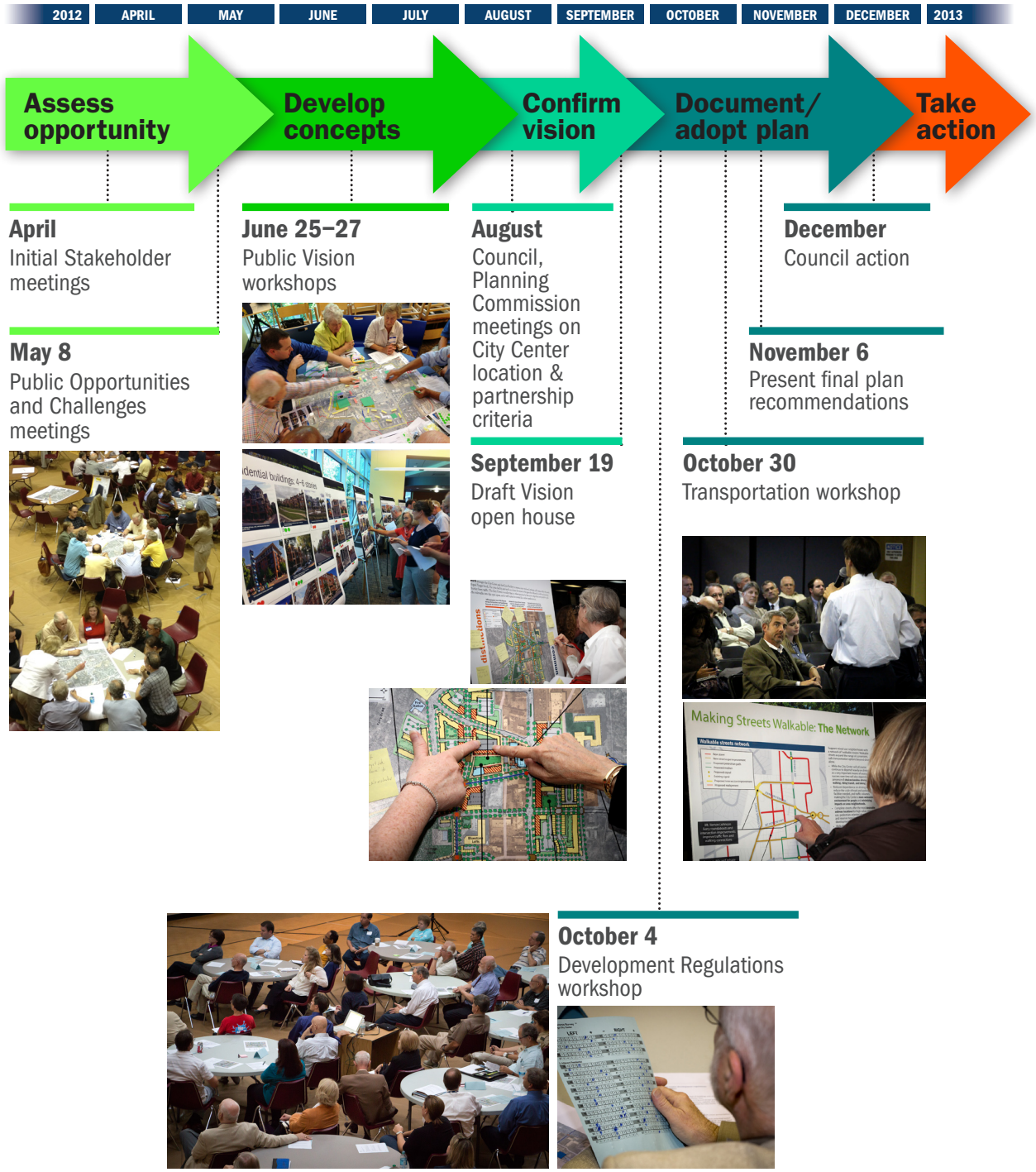
ADDING UP TO A VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD

Participants in an October 4, 2012 Public Participation Visual Preference Survey provided their thoughts on development precedents. The image at near right ranked among the preferred examples for a residential neighborhood. The image at far right ranked among preferred examples for a walkable setting with shops at ground level next to park space and housing above.



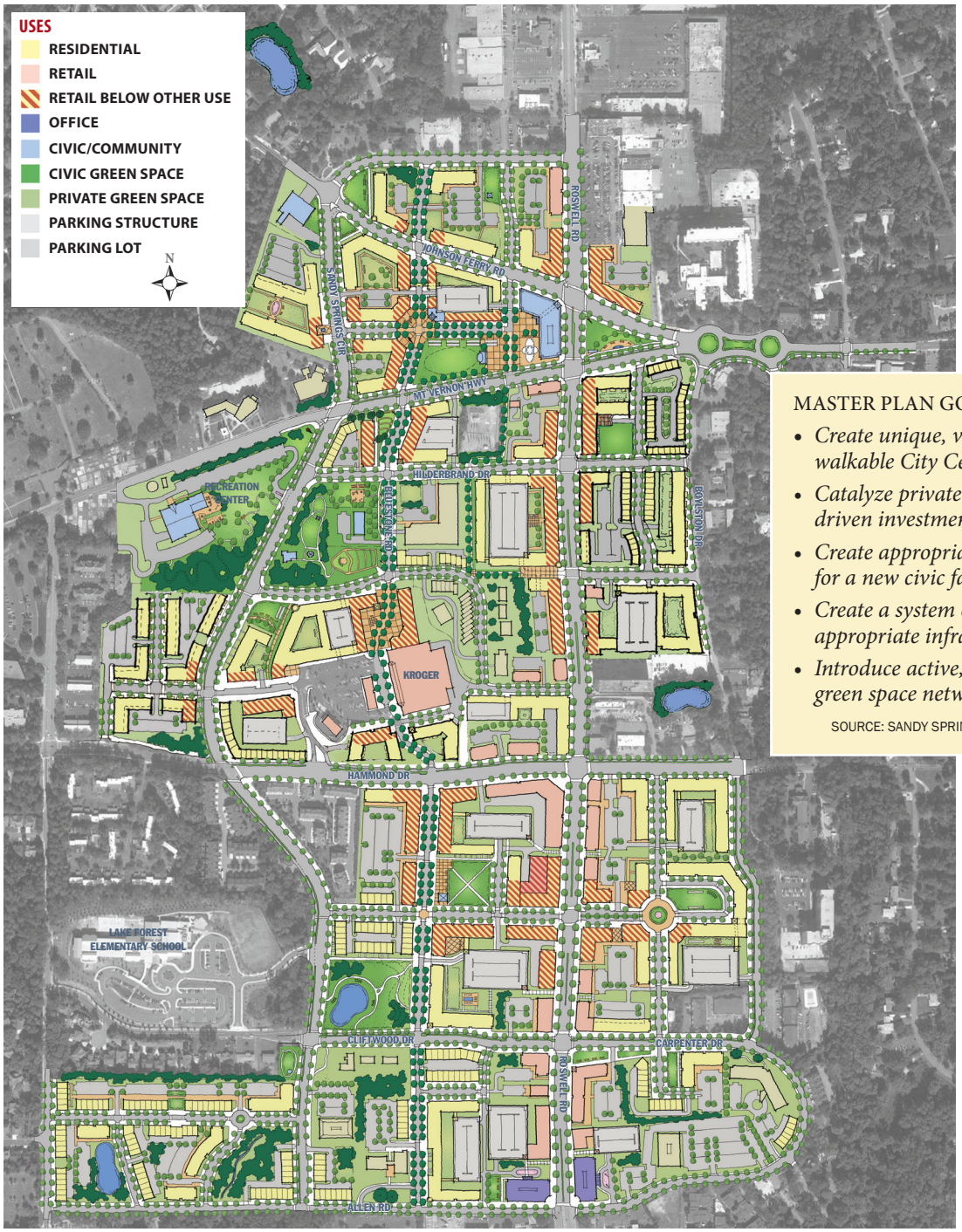
CITY CENTER PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process included many opportunities for public participation. Solicitation and incorporation of ideas from the public helped ensure that the plan accurately represents the spectrum of priorities among residents and other stakeholders who will play important roles in implementing the plan. The "Public Process" section that begins on page 6 includes additional information.



PROPOSED ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

The master plan vision builds on a foundation of community values and market-based investment strategies. The concepts behind the plan grew out of public input; research and analysis of economic, transportation and urban design factors; and proven street and site design approaches. The "Master Plan Vision" section that begins on page 11 includes a detailed discussion of these concepts and their application to City Center.



MASTER PLAN GOALS

- *Create unique, vibrant, walkable City Center.*
- *Catalyze private market-driven investment.*
- *Create appropriate setting for a new civic facility.*
- *Create a system of appropriate infrastructure.*
- *Introduce active, connected green space network.*

SOURCE: SANDY SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL

IMPLEMENTING THE CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN

Eight strategies arranged within three themes lay out specific action steps the City and other stakeholders should take to make progress on fulfilling the City Center Vision. The "Strategies" section that begins on page 20, describes the action steps in greater detail.

	STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS
Create mixed-use neighborhoods designed for people.		
1	Define **neighborhoods** within City Center.	• Define unique neighborhoods in the City Center character area based on their activities and appearance.
2	Bring a **mix of activities** together.	• Revise City Center development regulations to strongly encourage high value mixed-use development while accommodating improved single-use development along Roswell Road. • Develop a zoning code that defines coordinated land use and the design standards for sites, buildings and streetscapes.
3	Support mixed-use neighborhoods with a **network of walkable streets.**	• Define a range of street types according to their function. Use the street type definitions to indicate appropriate land uses and building/site design approaches along them. • For each street type, incorporate characteristics of walkable streets. • Refine the existing road layout into a finer grained network of walkable streets. • Improve streets in ways that enhance mobility for both vehicles and pedestrians: • Implement an access-management strategy to improve Roswell Road traffic flow, pedestrian safety and appearance. • Enhance the convenience and safety of bicycling in City Center. • Accommodate and encourage the reduced parking and driving needs associated with mixed-use. • Enhance the availability and convenience of transit services.
4	Take a **cost effective approach** to utility infrastructure.	• Manage stormwater using new retention facilities that serve whole areas within the City Center. • Bury or relocate overhead utilities where cost effective benefits to property value and public open spaces are possible. • Screen the power substation along Hilderbrand Drive and Mt. Vernon Highway. • Enable installation of district energy infrastructure such as cogeneration facilities.
Create places of community that serve all of Sandy Springs.		
5	Expand Sandy Springs' network of **parks and greenways.**	• Create a City Green to serve as a center of community activity and identity. • Create smaller parks and plazas throughout City Center to help enhance value and sense of place. • Create green network connections among parks, plazas and greenways.
6	Attract more **arts, cultural and civic events** to City Center.	• Create a Civic Facility with a multipurpose venue that can accommodate cultural events as well as city government activities. • Work with local and regional arts organizations to expand programming.
Encourage investment.		
7	Establish a clear, **predictable process for development** in City Center.	• Streamline development review and approval. • Create public-private partnerships where appropriate to enable private development investments. • Actively promote investment opportunities to potential developers, businesses and residents. Work with the Sandy Springs Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to promote City Center's new opportunities and identity. Recruit businesses, developers and/or others who would who would add value to the mix of uses in City Center.
8	Continue to focus on **key Roswell Road improvements.**	• Improve infrastructure by redesigning intersections, burying electrical distribution lines, synchronizing traffic flow, and adding medians where possible. • Unlock business and property reinvestment with incentives. • Rebrand Roswell Road as the City Center's gateway.

Methodology

The process of creating the City Center Master Plan began in early spring 2012 with commencement of work by the City's master planning team. The process incorporated input from a variety of sources:

- **Market analysis specific to the City Center study area, including:**
  - > Housing market analysis of demographic shifts to identify the emerging market for living in a City Center setting.
  - > Commercial market analysis with attention to retail, office and hotel uses in walkable settings.
  - > Economic analysis with close attention to the value and market potential of specific parcels in the study area, helping to identify development densities, parking configurations, building types and other characteristics that both represent attractive investment opportunities and support the City Center as a whole through appropriate design and character.
- **Public engagement in a variety of formats:**
  - > Multiple public meetings, each incorporating opportunities for direct input in small groups and one-on-one settings, were held throughout the planning process. Initial meetings identified community opinion on the core opportunities and challenges Sandy Springs faces in the City Center study area. Other workshops informed stakeholders about market, transportation and urban design conditions and invited them to collaborate on visions for the study area. Subsequent meetings shared vision scenarios for feedback.
  - > A website documenting the planning process: *http://sandyspringscitycenter.com/*.
  - > Ongoing meetings with key stakeholders.
  - > Close coordination of the planning process with City management.
- **Urban design analysis and development scenario testing, focusing on these principles:**
  - > Design characteristics of streets and buildings that make streets truly walkable.
  - > Combinations and proximities of land uses such as housing, stores and offices that support each other (i.e., connecting jobs and housing, and helping retail businesses tap multiple markets); that make efficient use of infrastructure (streets, parking, parks, etc.); and that keep public spaces active and interesting weekdays, weeknights and weekends alike.
  - > Building and site development approaches that are market-based and tested to confirm economic feasibility.
  - > Identification of sites for open space, cultural facilities and civic offices based on relevant precedents and past City study of office space needs.
  - > Careful analysis of existing conditions to determine which sites would most likely develop over what timeframe. This analysis, in turn, helped determine the priority of coordinated investments in development, infrastructure and placemaking.
  - > Planning approaches that make efficient use of energy, water, land and other key resources.
- **Analysis of the study area's street network, including:**
  - > Current and future traffic flow.
  - > Existing and missing connections within the City Center and to key destinations outside the district.
- **Analysis of the study area's utilities infrastructure, including:**
  - > Strategies for implementing district-based stormwater management.
  - > Strategies for improving the appearance of overhead utility lines.

This plan integrates all of this information into a coherent set of strategies.

Market analysis

The analysis employed Zimmerman/Volk Associates' proprietary target-market methodology to assess the depth and breadth of potential demand. This approach has proved particularly effective in defining housing potential. It takes into account not only basic demographic characteristics, such as household income and age, but also less frequently examined attributes, such as mobility rates, lifestyle patterns, and household compatibility.

Overview

The planning team carried out analyses of both the housing and commercial markets in the study area to build a clear picture of market opportunities. Both stakeholder outreach and data guided these efforts. Analysis focused on opportunities over the next five to ten years, beyond which predictions are typically difficult to make. A straight line extrapolation of the five to ten year results can produce a reasonable projection of potential 25-year demand. In addition, the team prepared sample pro formas for prototypical redevelopment projects on representative sites to determine feasible development densities and the formats most likely to attract developer interest.

Multifamily housing emerged as the dominant market opportunity, accounting for roughly 80–85% of likely mixed-use demand by floor area. This housing would contribute significantly to the City's goals for City Center by imparting a stronger sense of neighborhood, increasing retail demand, supporting business growth by adding workforce, and improving fiscal returns for the City. Office and hotel space together could make up, roughly, another 5–10% of likely demand. While modest, these uses would create substantial benefits by generating daytime pedestrian activity and expanding retail demand, while allowing complementary sharing of parking and street infrastructure with housing. Pedestrian-oriented retail space could make up the remaining 5–10% of likely demand, with emphasis on unique eating establishments. The market analysis identified feasible development opportunities that helped shape the vision process, concept plan and strategies described later.

Housing

BASE MARKET ANALYSIS

The master plan team conducted an analysis of housing-market potential in the study area. The analysis combined long-term demographic trends and key predictors of demand in emerging markets for walkable mixed-use neighborhoods (see Exhibit 2 on page 3). This analysis assumes that City Center will develop as a walkable mixed-use district with a sufficient range of housing types (described later) to be a neighborhood and not just a string of isolated developments. In the absence of this key condition, the analysis projects much lower demand. Quality transit service, neighborhood oriented retail, parks and similar amenities would enhance housing demand within City Center.

The analysis determined that:

- Market opportunity exists for approximately 1,155 housing units over five years, with sustained demand beyond that for as many as 1,500 units over ten years.
- The market would absorb 1,155 units at a rate of approximately 231 units per year, not including turnover.
- A varied mix of unit types, sizes and prices would generate the strongest market response. While households from across the age spectrum are interested in living in City Center, younger singles and couples account for more than 85% of the market potential.
- New housing should reflect a balance of rental and ownership units, recognizing that each type has a valuable role to play in supporting City Center as

Exhibit 2: Housing Market Within City Center Study Area (5 Years)

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL	MARKET-ENTRY BASE	UNIT SIZES	RENT/PRICE PER SF
Rental lofts/apartments	790	68%	$825–$2,300 per month	550–1,500 SF	$1.33–$1.56
Ownership lofts/apartments	150	13%	$150,000–$350,000	800–1,800 SF	$174–$198
Ownership townhouse/rowhouses/live-work	215	19%	$215,000–$375,000	1,200–2,200 SF	$170–179
TOTAL	**1,155**				

DATA SOURCE: **ZIMMERMAN/VOLK ASSOCIATES, INC. 2012**

a desirable place to live. The rental and ownership components of market potential share a desire for high quality housing located within convenient walking distance of good choices for shopping and dining, parks and transit. The rental component in particular, reflects growing interest in rental by households that may have the means to purchase a home but choose to rent to maintain more options for where to live and/or in response to a perception that ownership may offer only limited financial reward. In the near term, most new housing development (roughly two-thirds over the next five years) will likely take the form of rental housing due to strong market demand and the availability of development financing. Developer interest in ownership housing appears likely to strengthen as financing sources recover from the recession. As the City acts to promote housing development on its property at the heart of City Center, it may need to place special emphasis on ownership housing to ensure that this form of housing has enough presence to balance the rental component.

PROJECTED 25-YEAR HOUSING PROFILE IN THE CITY CENTER STUDY AREA

Longer-term projections assume that demand will continue at a similar level for up to fifteen years beyond the initial timeframe because the demographic trends driving the market projections will likely continue over that period. In addition, once established, a desirable City Center neighborhood will likely create new demand as people experience its sense of community, amenities and design (see Exhibit 3, below).

Exhibit 3: Projected 25-Year Housing Profile of City Center Study Area

TIMEFRAME	NEW UNITS (CUMULATIVE)	NEW RESIDENTS*	NEW HOUSING UNIT TYPE DISTRIBUTION
Existing (2010)	150	225	
5 years (2017)	1,265	1,930	• Rental lofts/apartments **68%** • Ownership lofts/apartments **13%** • Ownership townhouses/row houses/live-work **19%**
10 years (2022)	1,650	2,439	• Rental lofts/apartments **50-65%**; • Ownership lofts/apartments **15-25%**; • Ownership townhouses/row houses/live-work **15-25%**
15 years (2027)	2,340	3,547	
20 years (2032)	3,150	4,654	
25 years (2037)	3,900	5,761	

**** These figures assume an average of 1.5 new residents per new dwelling unit.***

DATA SOURCES: FUTURE HOUSING PROJECTIONS, **ZIMMERMAN/VOLK ASSOCIATES, 2012;** EXISTING HOUSING UNIT COUNT, **GOODY CLANCY, 2012**

Retail/office/hotel

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Projections of market potential and associated new employment include an estimate for 25 years based on extrapolation of ten-year projections (see Exhibit 4 below).

- **Retail:** Market potential exists for 120,000 to 200,000 square feet (SF) of pedestrian-oriented retail beyond existing retail over ten years. Principal types of retail within this demand include restaurants, coffee houses and specialty stores. To be successful, these businesses should be grouped in areas with adjacent retail storefronts, a walkable sidewalk network extending across multiple blocks, and a mixture of complementary uses, including housing and workplaces. Careful tenant selection should offer retail options that mark City Center as distinct from nearby retail centers.
- **Hotel:** Over ten years, the City Center could support a 60 to 90 room boutique hotel with a brand that sets it apart from other choices now in the market area. This potential exists independently of hotel market demand that may exist elsewhere in Sandy Springs. City Center would offer a unique setting for such a boutique hotel compared to other locations in the City or Perimeter area, which lack its walkable, amenity rich environment.
- **Office:** Market potential exists for approximately 28,000 to 83,000 SF of office space geared to small business tenants over ten years. Businesses focused on providing services to the local community and businesses drawing a significant number of employees from Sandy Springs would likely represent the prevalent tenants. Although relatively high office vacancy rates would normally discourage new office construction, the unique amenities of the walkable, mixed-use City Center would carve out a distinct market position that could support this modest level of development.
- **Employment:** Commercial development projections imply the creation of about 580 to 1,120 new jobs in the study area over the next ten years.

Methodology

Three sources of information frame the commercial market analysis: local fieldwork, third-party sources

Exhibit 4: Projected 25-Year Commercial Development and Employment Profile of City Center Study Area
(Extrapolated From 10-Year Commercial Market Potential)

	RETAIL, RESTAURANTS, ETC.			OFFICE		HOTEL		
TIME-FRAME	SQUARE FOOTAGE	SALES	JOBS	SQUARE FOOTAGE	JOBS	ROOMS	JOBS	TOTAL JOBS*
Existing (2010)	1,707,000**	$300 million**	4,800**	477,000**	1,275**	0	0	**6,075****
PROJECTED GROWTH BY FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (CUMULATIVE ADDITIONS TO 2010 FIGURES FOR EACH CATEGORY)								
5 years (2017)	60,000–120,000	$25–45 million	225–450	14,000–41,500	50–175			**275–625**
10 years (2022)	120,000–200,000	$45–75 million	450–750	28,000–83,000	100–325	60–90	30–45	**580–1,120**
15 years (2027)	165,000–275,000	$65–110 million	625–1,025	42,000–125,000	175–500	60–90	30–45	**830–1,570**
20 years (2032)	210,000–350,000	$80–135 million	800–1,325	56,000–166,000	225–675	120–180	60–90	**1,085–2,090**
25 years (2037)	255,000–425,000	$100–165 million	950–1,600	70,000–208,000	275–825	150–225	75–115	**1,300–2,540**

Job figures represent estimates based on typical employee counts per unit of floor area.
****Existing (2010) sales and job figures assume 25% vacancy.***
DATA SOURCES: EXISTING DEVELOPED FLOOR AREA, **GOODY CLANCY**; FUTURE DEVELOPED FLOOR AREA AND SALES PROFILE, **W–ZHA,** USING JOB-PROJECTION DATA FROM **ARC**

and personal interviews. W-ZHA fieldwork evaluated existing office supply in Sandy Springs and the competitive market area. Data from third-party sources steered the discussion of existing conditions and future opportunities. The major sources for this information were:

- Employment trends and projections by industry: U.S. Census, Atlanta Regional Commission, Moody's economy.com
- Office supply data: Colliers International, Dorey's
- Hotel performance data: Smith Travel Research

In addition to analyzing market data, W-ZHA conducted interviews with real estate brokers, property managers and developers. These person-to-person and telephone interviews provided valuable insights into the nuances of the local office and hotel markets.

Development feasibility

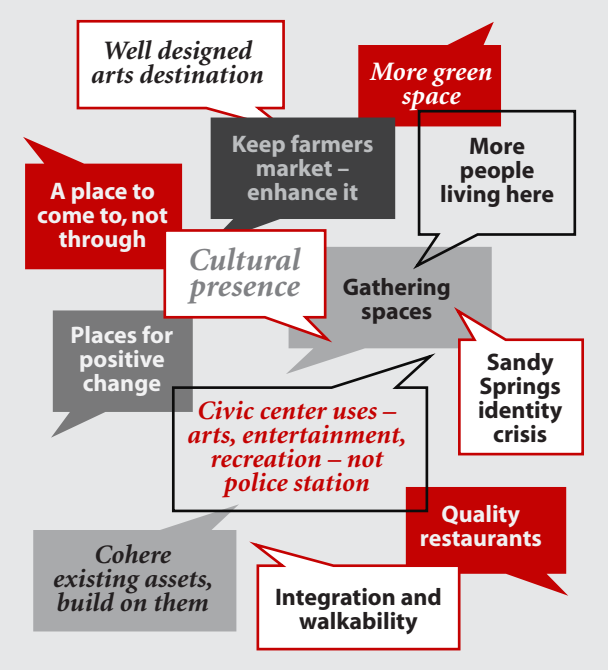
The feasibility analysis, built on sample development project pro formas, indicated that multifamily housing development with density of 40 to 50 units per net acre (measured without streets) represents the range of strongest development feasibility. This density translates into building heights of four to six stories and parking configurations of 30-50% surface spaces and 50-70% spaces located beneath buildings ("tuck under spaces") or one level of structured parking above grade or adjacent to sloping topography. Lower densities fail to add enough site value to cover assumed land costs; higher densities require more structured parking, whose costs begin to diminish the value created by each additional unit and reduce investment return. This analysis intentionally relied on conservative assumptions, however, and anecdotal accounts suggest that additional structured parking might work economically, possibly increasing densities to 60 units or more per acre.

Public Process

The planning process included many opportunities for public participation with an eye toward representing the breadth of ideas and priorities in the recommendations. Incorporating public input will help build support from residents and other stakeholders, who will play important roles in implementing the plan.

- **A series of public meetings**, created opportunities for public input in small group and one on one settings. Meetings designated below as "two sessions" repeated the same agenda at morning and evening times to expand the opportunity for participation.
  - > **Defining Opportunities and Challenges**, *May 8 (two sessions):* Meeting included a project overview, facilitated breakout groups and a survey questionnaire filled out by participants.
  - > **Background Factors of Growth and Change workshop**, *June 25:* Meeting presented the housing market analysis, transportation analysis, and people-focused planning and design approaches.
  - > **City Center Vision Workshop**, *June 26 (two sessions):* Workshop included facilitated breakout group exercises defining strategies and mapping improvements in the study area.
  - > **Vision Open House**, *June 27:* Day-long informal work session with one on one discussion opportunities with planning team members.
  - > **Draft Vision Presentation and Open House**, *September 19:* Informal session with periodic presentations of the City Center Master Plan concept scenarios, single-topic breakout groups, opportunity for one on one discussion with planning team members and a survey questionnaire filled out by participants.
  - > **Development Regulation Strategies**, *October 4:* Meeting included an overview of existing zoning policies and potential alternate tools for development review, an image preference survey, and discussions of building and street character appropriate for three types of areas: walkable mixed-use development with ground floor retail; Roswell Road; and predominantly residential areas.
  - > **Transportation Analysis and Strategies**, *October 30:* Meeting presented potential traffic impacts of mixed-use redevelopment and strategies to adequately accommodate future needs by expanding transportation options, concluding with breakout group discussions on specific transportation topics.
  - > **Draft Master Plan Presentation at City Council Workshop**, *November 6:* Overview of Master Plan concepts and recommendations including strategies for green space and the Roswell Road corridor.
  - > **Draft Master Plan Open House**, *November 13:* Public opportunity to view and comment on draft

Exhibit 5: Thoughts, Opinion, and Visions from the Community



Representative comments from the thoughts, opinions, and vision statements produced by members of the community.

Master Plan (shown in Exhibit 9 on page 10).

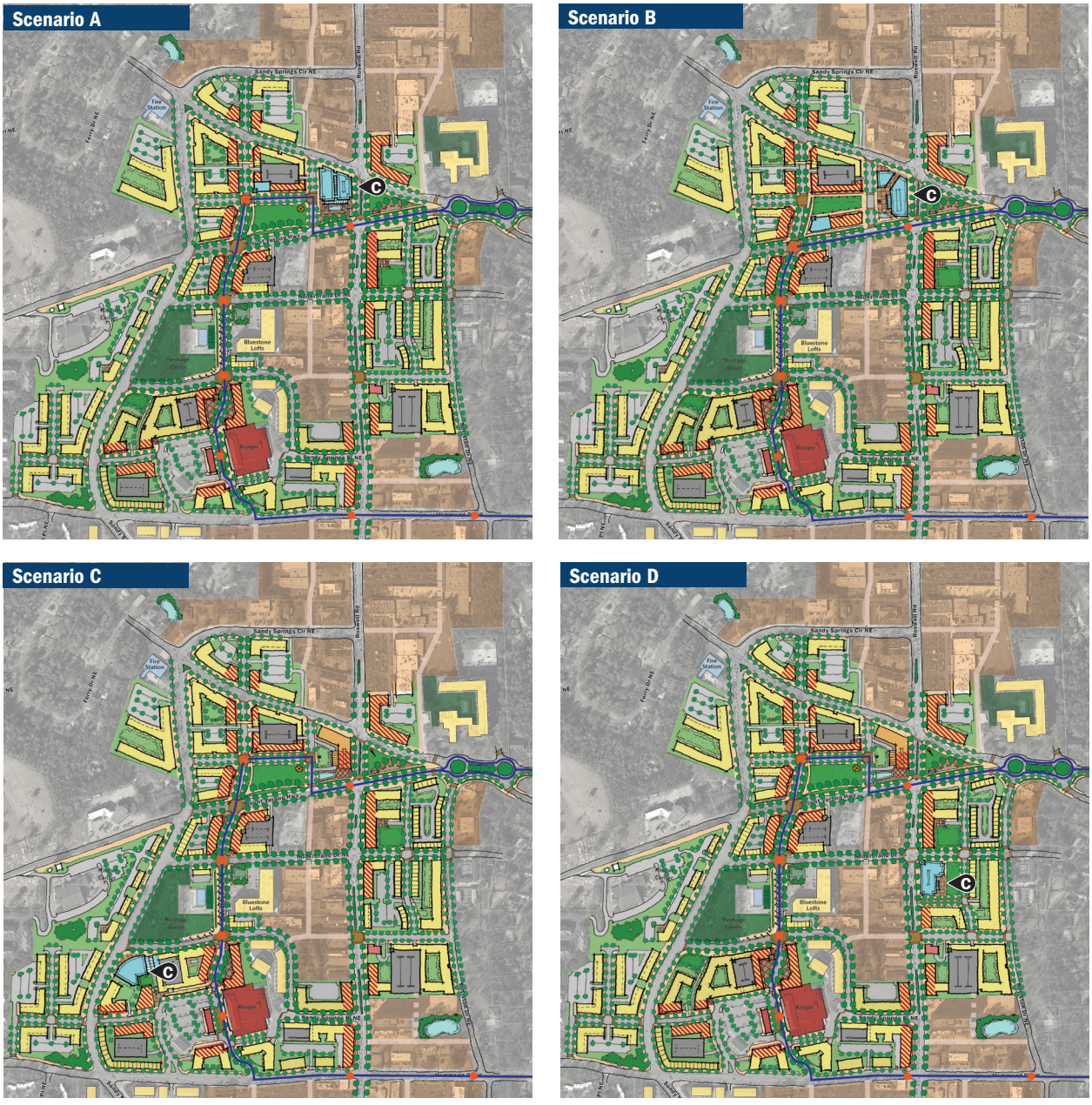
- **A website documenting the planning process,** *http://sandyspringscitycenter.com/*, promoted process transparency by hosting material discussed at the public meetings and providing surveys for online input. The site received more than 4,800 visitors, including 3,280 new visits through November 28, 2012; almost 80% of the traffic originated on the City's website or Facebook page.
- **Meetings with key stakeholders,** including:
  - > Property and business owners (for example, the Main Street Alliance)
  - > Business promotion organizations (for example, the Sandy Springs/Perimeter Chamber of Commerce and Perimeter Community Improvement Districts)
  - > Neighborhood representatives (for example, the Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods and Sandy Springs Conservancy)
  - > Homeowners' associations
  - > Developers
  - > Sandy Springs Planning Commission
  - > Economic Development Advisory Committee
  - > Sandy Springs elected and appointed officials
  - > Partner government agencies (for example, GDOT and MARTA)
- **Close coordination of the planning process** with City management staff.

Exhibit 6: Public Involvement Through Community Meetings

The public process included presentations, small group exercises and individual preference surveys.

Each of these scenarios includes a Civic Facility building next to public green space (shown as C). Responding to community interest, the Civic Facility would serve foremost as a place for cultural and other community activities as well as house City office space. In concept, the Civic Facility would include a hall that could accommodate performances, lectures and City Council and other public meetings. The facility would also include spaces for smaller community meetings and events. Scenarios A, B and D site the Civic Facility to support community activities on adjacent green space; in Scenario C, the facility complements adjacent retail activity and Heritage Green.

Exhibit 7: Initial Development Scenarios



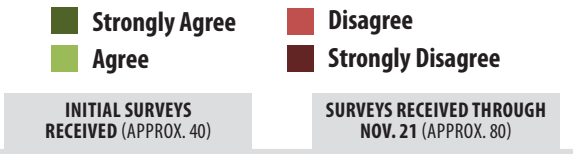
These scenarios illustrate alternative approaches to locating the Civic Facility and City Green based on input from the City and the public. They framed the development of the near-term plan in Exhibit 8, page 9.

The near-term plan evolved from public reaction to the initial development scenarios (Exhibit 7 on page 8). It combines features from those scenarios into one vision showing near-term investments that would do the most to attract further reinvestment. Exhibit 19 (page 47) shows a long-term development scenario for the entire City Center, and Exhibit 20 (pages 48-49) shows how development might progress over time based on the initiative of individual property owners.

Exhibit 8: Near-Term Plan

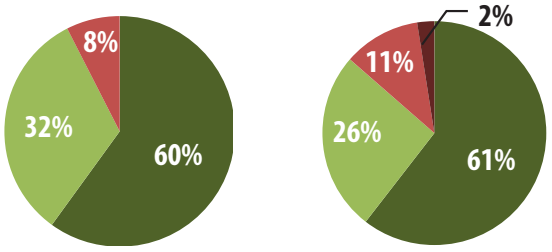
Exhibit 9: Public Surveys for the Preliminary Master Plan

Goody Clancy surveyed the community following the introduction of the draft master plan in September 2012 and in November 2012. Community members filled out paper surveys at the September 19 public meeting and had access to an electronic version of the same surveys posted on the City's website. These graphs show that the percentage of residents who strongly agreed with the ideas in the plan held steady or increased as the plan evolved.



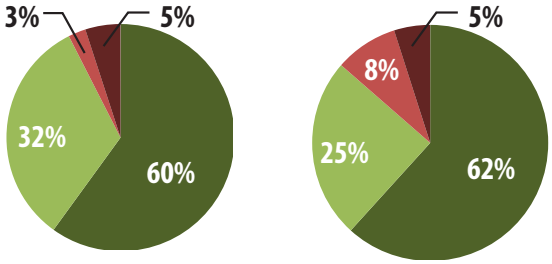
Community Vision

The five community vision principles accurately capture the main goals Sandy Springs community members have expressed for City Center.



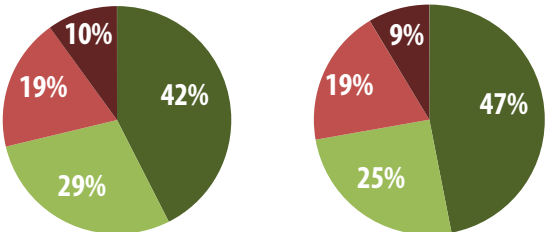
Walkable Development Focus Areas

Appropriate development in the focus areas identified will generally do more to catalyze further City Center reinvestment than will development in other areas.



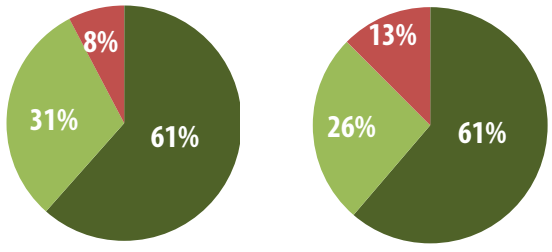
Vision Illustrations

The range of before/after illustrations show a series of City Center opportunities that are both inspiring and achievable. The types of activities and the scale of buildings, streets and parks look appropriate.



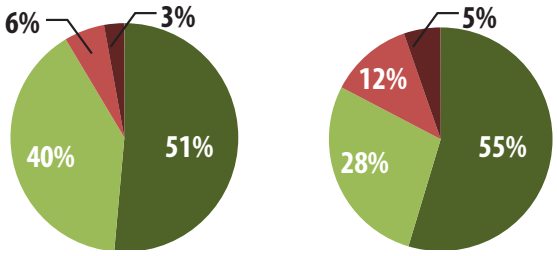
Development Incentives

Public investment supporting City Center development projects is justifiable if the investment results directly in compelling long-term public benefits—such as public park or parking infrastructure—as well as economic growth within a reasonable timeframe and per Master Plan criteria.



Action Strategy Balance

The draft action strategies effectively cover the range and depth of areas where plan implementation needs to focus.



Master Plan Vision

COMMUNITY VISION: A FOUNDATION IN COMMUNITY VALUES AND PROVEN INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The City Center Master Plan concepts emerged from a combination of public input; research on and analysis of economic, transportation and urban design factors; and proven approaches to street and site design. The plan continues to build on the community vision identified during public meetings.

COMMUNITY VISION: PROMOTE COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Safe and welcoming to all residents

Plan response

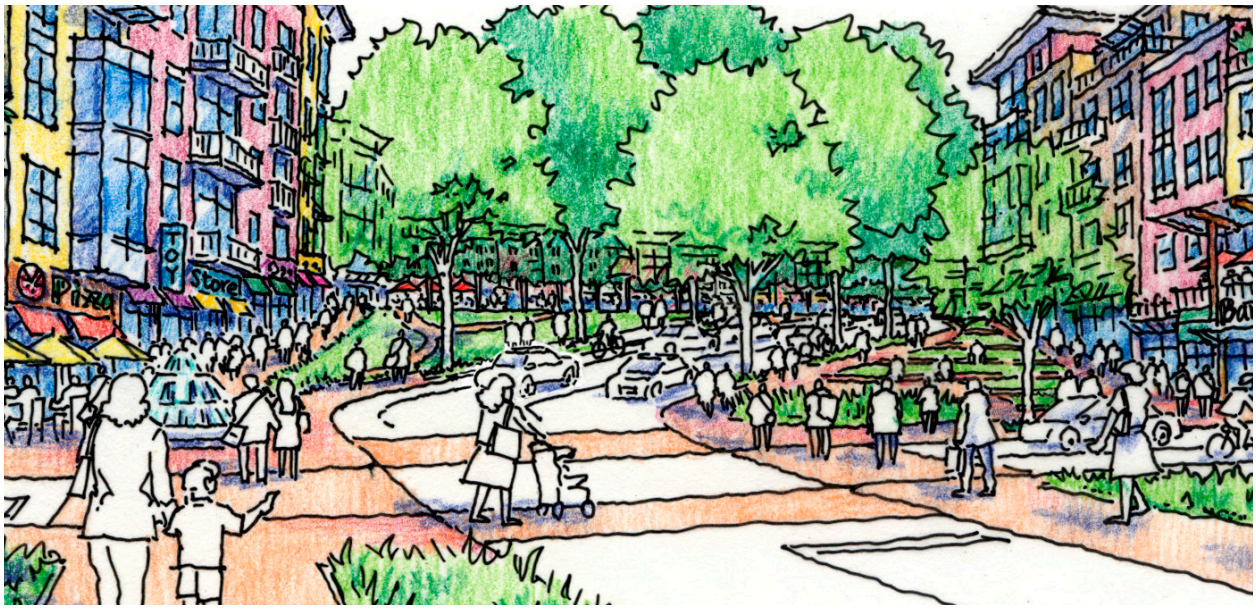
- *A wide variety of activities: culture, recreation, shopping, dining, working and living that draw the entire Sandy Springs community together.*
- *Consistent presence of windows and doors facing streets keep them visible and safe.*
- *Walkable streets and convenient parking that are safe and inviting knit the City Center together and tie it to surrounding Sandy Springs neighborhoods.*

COMMUNITY VISION: EXPAND GREEN SPACES

Destination parks, neighborhood links, a network serving the City

Plan response

- *A signature City Green accommodates diverse activities from farmers markets to concerts to Frisbee games. Active restaurants, shops and cultural destinations line the Green.*
- *A series of smaller green spaces provides an amenity and identity for subneighborhoods within City Center.*
- *A network of safe, welcoming sidewalks, bike lanes and multiuse recreational paths connect City Center with surrounding neighborhoods.*



COMMUNITY VISION: INVITE SPONTANEOUS FUN

Arts, Culture, Activity

Plan response

- *A destination cultural venue with programming welcomes all Sandy Springs residents and visitors.*
- *A concentration of residents, workers and visitors keeps City Center active weekdays, weeknights and weekends.*
- *Public streets, parks and plazas invite walking, outdoor dining, recreation and other visible activity.*

COMMUNITY VISION: NURTURE UNIQUE LOCAL IDENTITY

Civic, Business, Community

Plan response

- *A unique sense of place formed through a walkable setting, varied topography, and thoughtful grouping of activities provides City Center a distinct, high-value market profile relative to other development in the region.*
- *Zoning and design guidelines encourage buildings to frame distinctive, attractive streets.*
- *Civic identity grows from the shared experiences Sandy Springs residents can enjoy in City Center.*

COMMUNITY VISION: MAKE IT WALKABLE
Inviting, Connected, Healthy

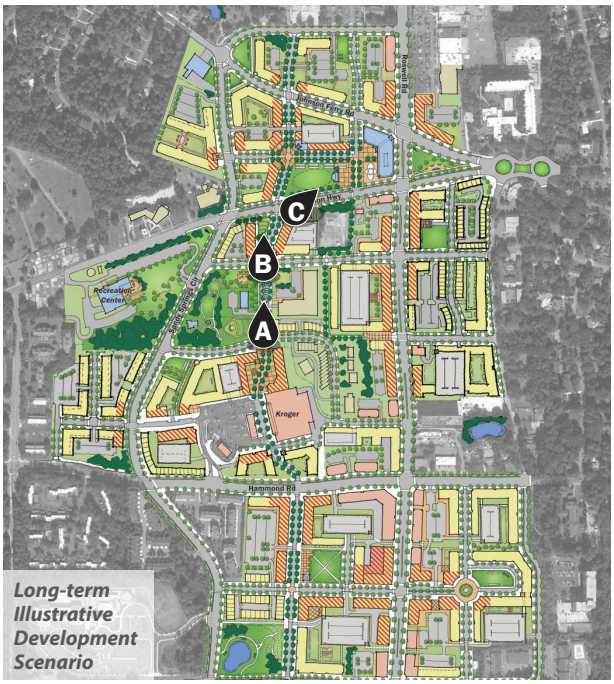
Plan response

- *Buildings create walkable streets with active retail and other uses at ground level, human-scaled design and numerous occupants.*
- *A mix of activities and destinations line walkable streets, making walking convenient and fun.*
- *On street parking shields pedestrians from traffic and provides convenient access to retail. Occupied buildings screen off street parking from principal walking streets.*
- *City Center offers easy access to transit services that conveniently and economically connect the district with the metro Atlanta region.*

Vision concepts: Walkable streets

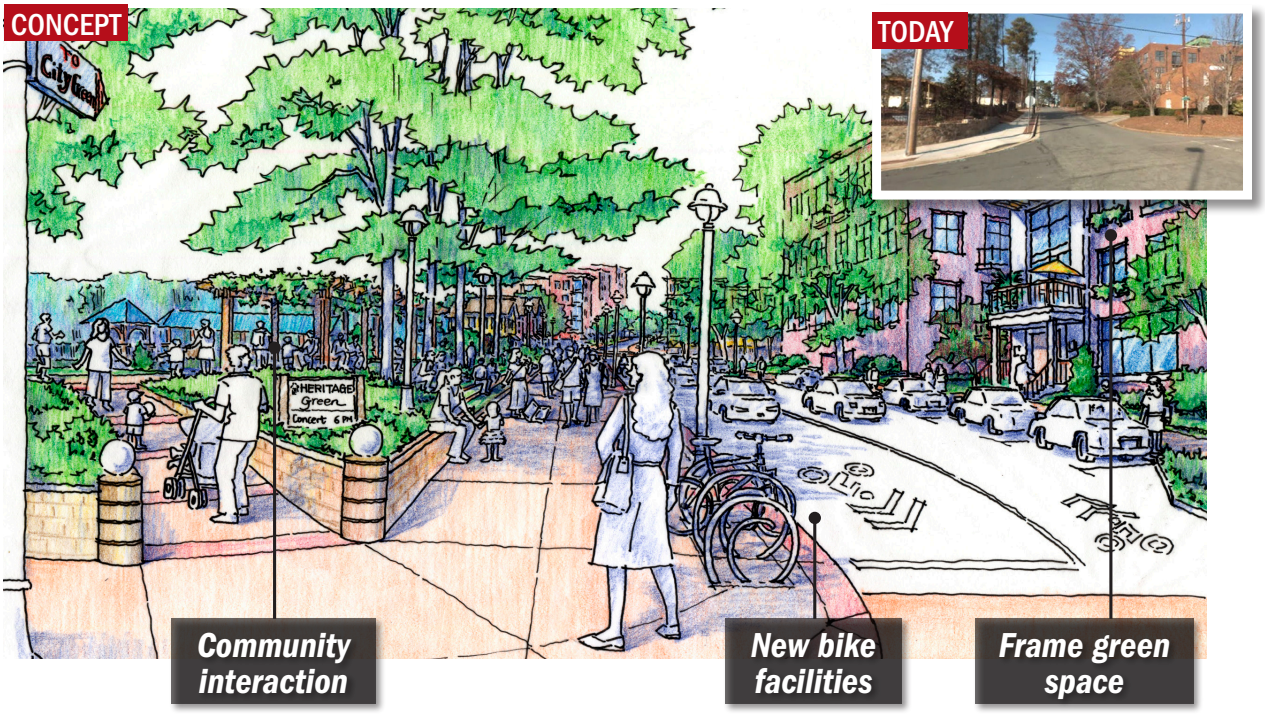
These illustrations suggest how existing City Center locations could change to support the community vision with a more walkable setting. Important characteristics and qualities for walkable streets include:

- Safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and seniors
- Attractive street environment
- Slower traffic that encourages walking
- On-street parking for easy access to parks and businesses

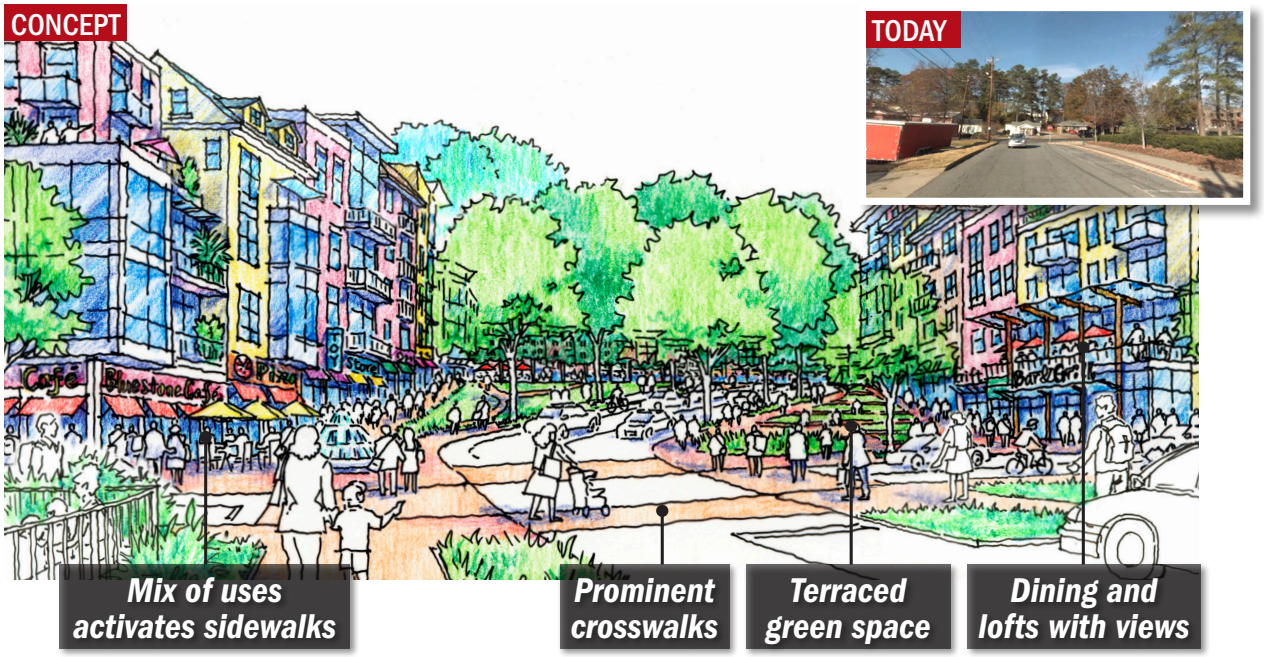


Long-term Illustrative Development Scenario

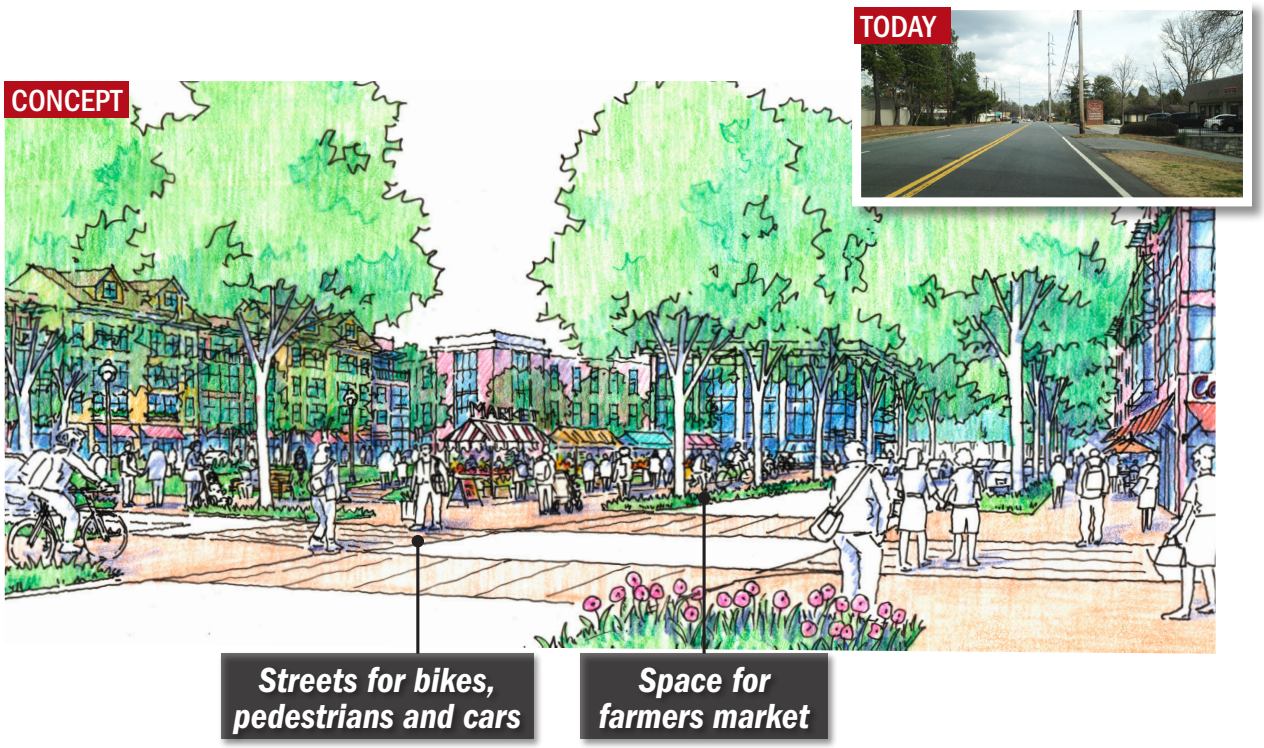
A | Bluestone Road: Promenade connecting centers of activity



B| Bluestone Road: New connection to City Green



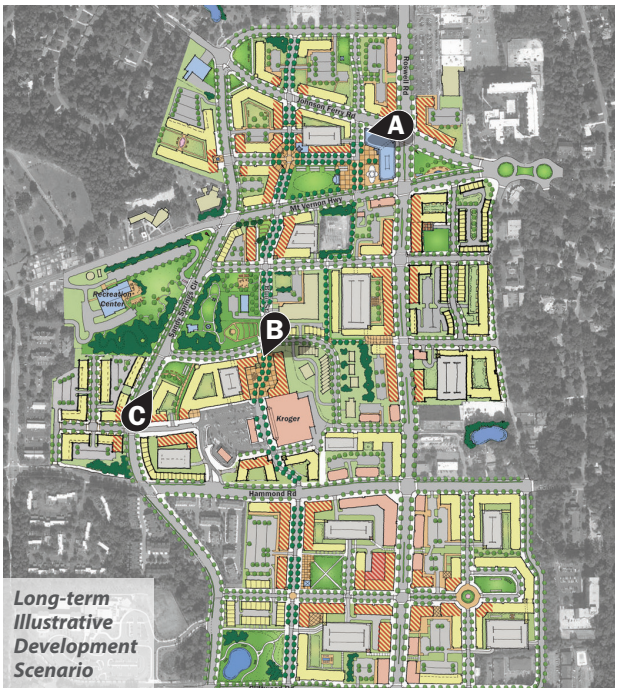
C | Mount Vernon: Walkable, bikeable connection the City Green



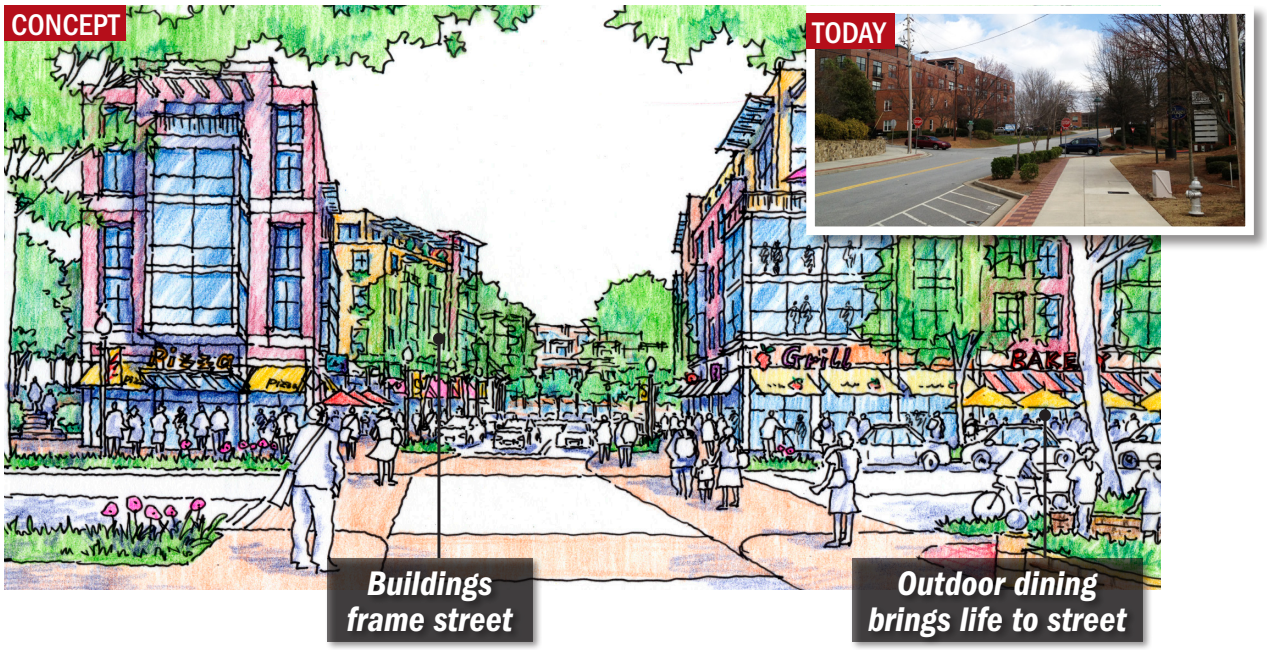
Vision concepts: Mixed uses

These illustrations suggest how existing City Center locations could change to support the community vision with a broader and better integrated mix of uses. Important characteristics and qualities for mixed-use development include:

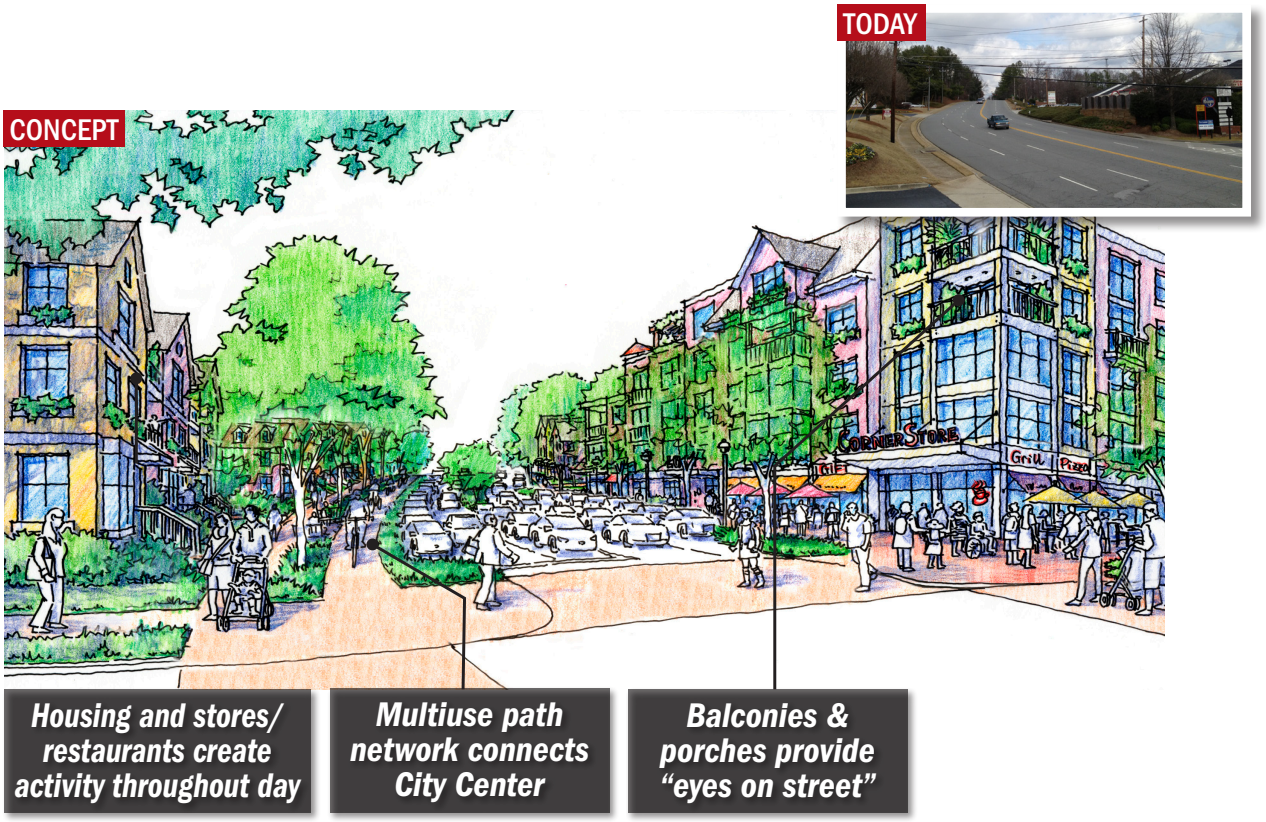
- Convenience
- Distinctive visual appeal
- Desirable residential and business location



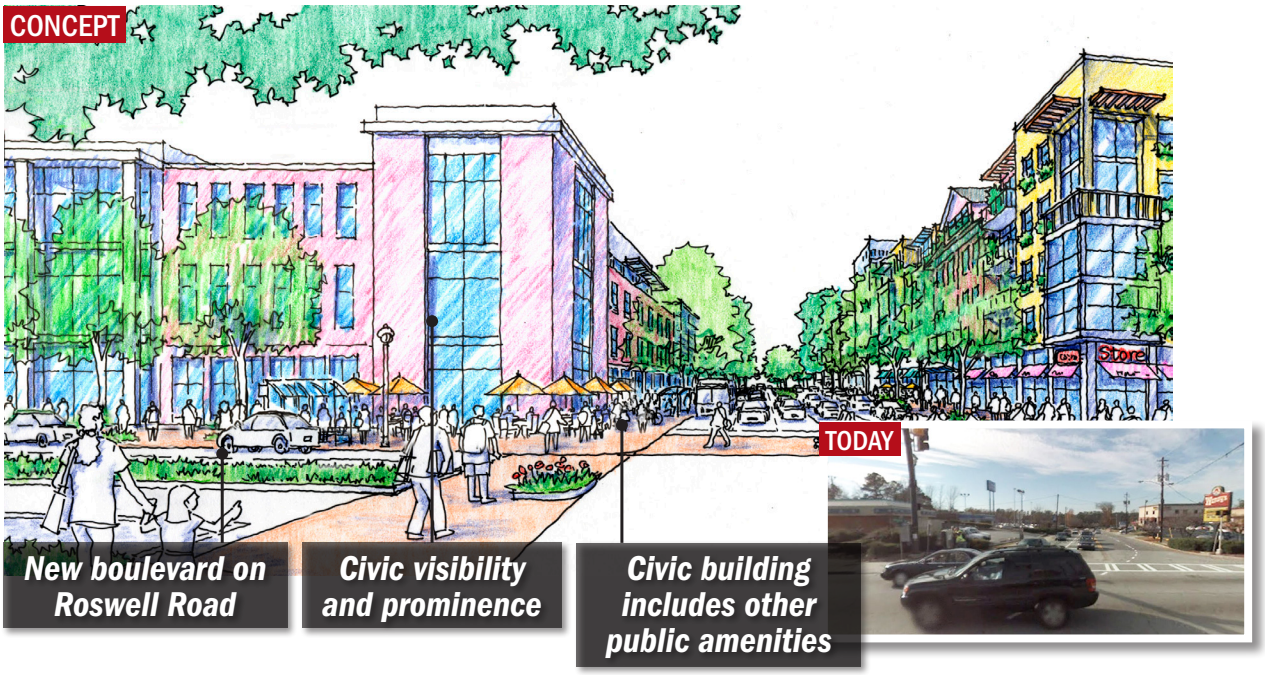
A | Bluestone Road at City Walk: A new Main Street



B | Sandy Springs Circle: Transformed into a neighborhood street



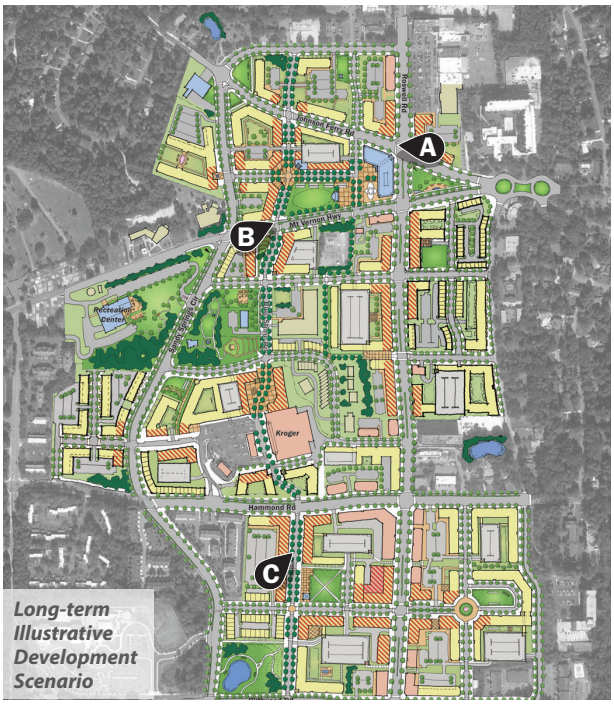
C | Johnson Ferry Road and Roswell Road: Walkable center for civic, hotel, business and retail activity



Vision concepts: Public squares

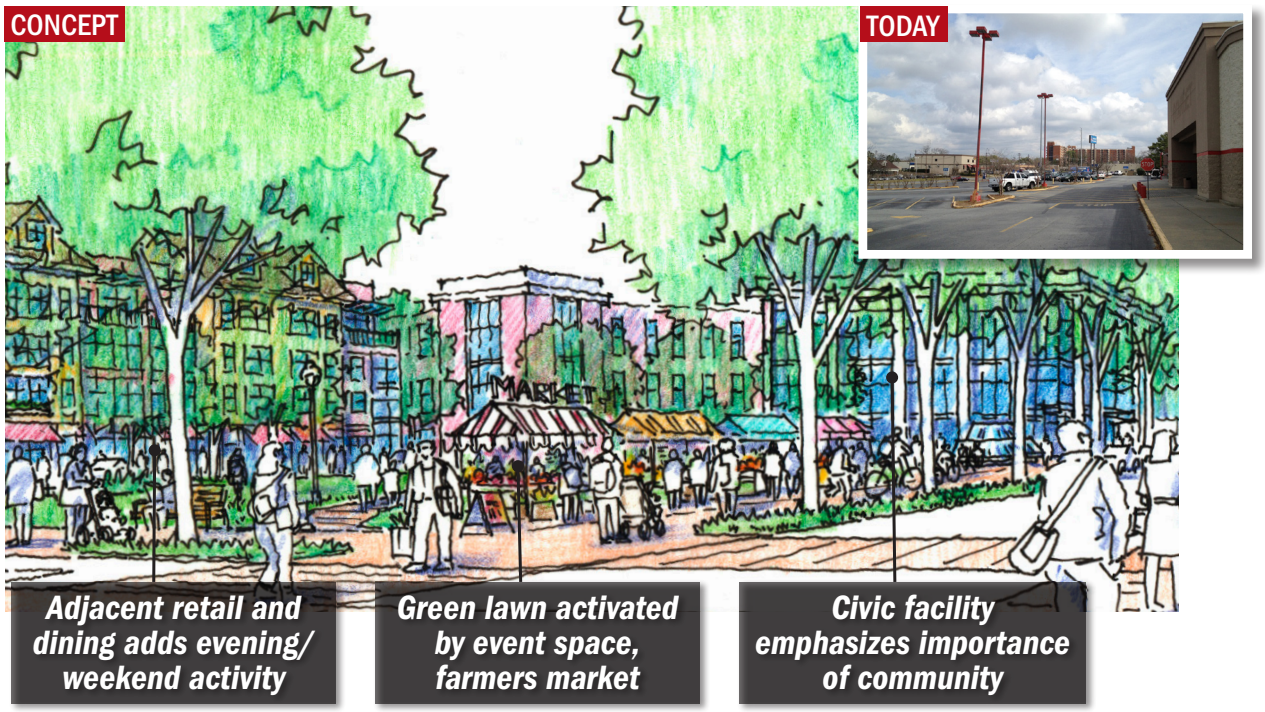
These illustrations suggest how existing City Center locations could change to support the community vision with active public parks and squares. Important characteristics and qualities for public places in City Center include:

- Safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and seniors
- Attractive street environment
- Slowed traffic that encourages walking
- On-street parking for easy access to parks and businesses



Long-term Illustrative Development Scenario

A | City Green: Activated by retail, dining, cultural and civic events, and residents



B | Triangle Green: Center of community identity at the historic crossing of Roswell Road, Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway

C | Smaller greens and squares add amenity and sense of place throughout the City Center

Strategies

This chapter outlines the actions that will do the most to realize the community vision for City Center. The actions are organized as a series of eight strategies that fall into three major themes; a summary of the actions and themes appears below. The strategies reinforce one another, so they should be pursued in parallel. They will provide clear guidance for City actions while giving the City enough flexibility to accommodate unforeseen opportunities and challenges.

STRATEGY SUMMARY

THEME: CREATED MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE

Strategy 1: Define neighborhoods within City Center.
Strategy 2: Bring a mix of activities together.
Strategy 3: Support mixed-use neighborhoods with a network of "walkable streets."
Strategy 4: Take a cost-effective approach to utility infrastructure.

THEME: CREATE PLACES OF COMMUNITY SERVING ALL OF SANDY SPRINGS

Strategy 5: Expand Sandy Springs' network of parks and greenways.
Strategy 6: Attract more arts, cultural and civic events to City Center.

THEME: ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT

Strategy 7: Establish a clear, predictable process for development in City Center.
Strategy 8: Continue to focus on key Roswell Road improvements.

THEME: CREATE MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE

Strategy 1: Define neighborhoods within City Center. Creating distinctive places amid the relatively anonymous character of much of the study area's commercial landscape will attract market interest for higher value development and provide the clearer sense of identity that Sandy Springs residents seek. This approach will also enhance quality of life and value in established residential neighborhoods in several ways:

- Focusing compact, high value development in existing commercial areas will minimize development pressures on traditional neighborhoods.
- A compact, mixed-use development approach in commercial corridors will minimize traffic impacts throughout Sandy Springs and expand ways to travel to adjacent neighborhoods, including walking, using transit and biking.
- A critical mass of mixed-use development will create a vibrant downtown environment that Sandy Springs residents can enjoy during the day, in the evenings, and on weekends.
- Adjacent neighborhoods will enjoy easy access to new retail, park and cultural amenities thanks to better connections that discourage cut-through traffic. These connections will include walking and biking routes as well as new public parking that lets residents park in one place to reach multple destinations. This improved access to amenities will increase property values in Sandy Springs, especially in places within walking distance of City Center.
- New housing attracting younger singles and couples will, over time, expand the market of people interested in purchasing traditional single-family homes in established Sandy Springs neighborhoods.
- Expanding the range of housing options will give current households opportunities to shift to a different type of housing that responds to changing life-cycle needs without having to leave the community.

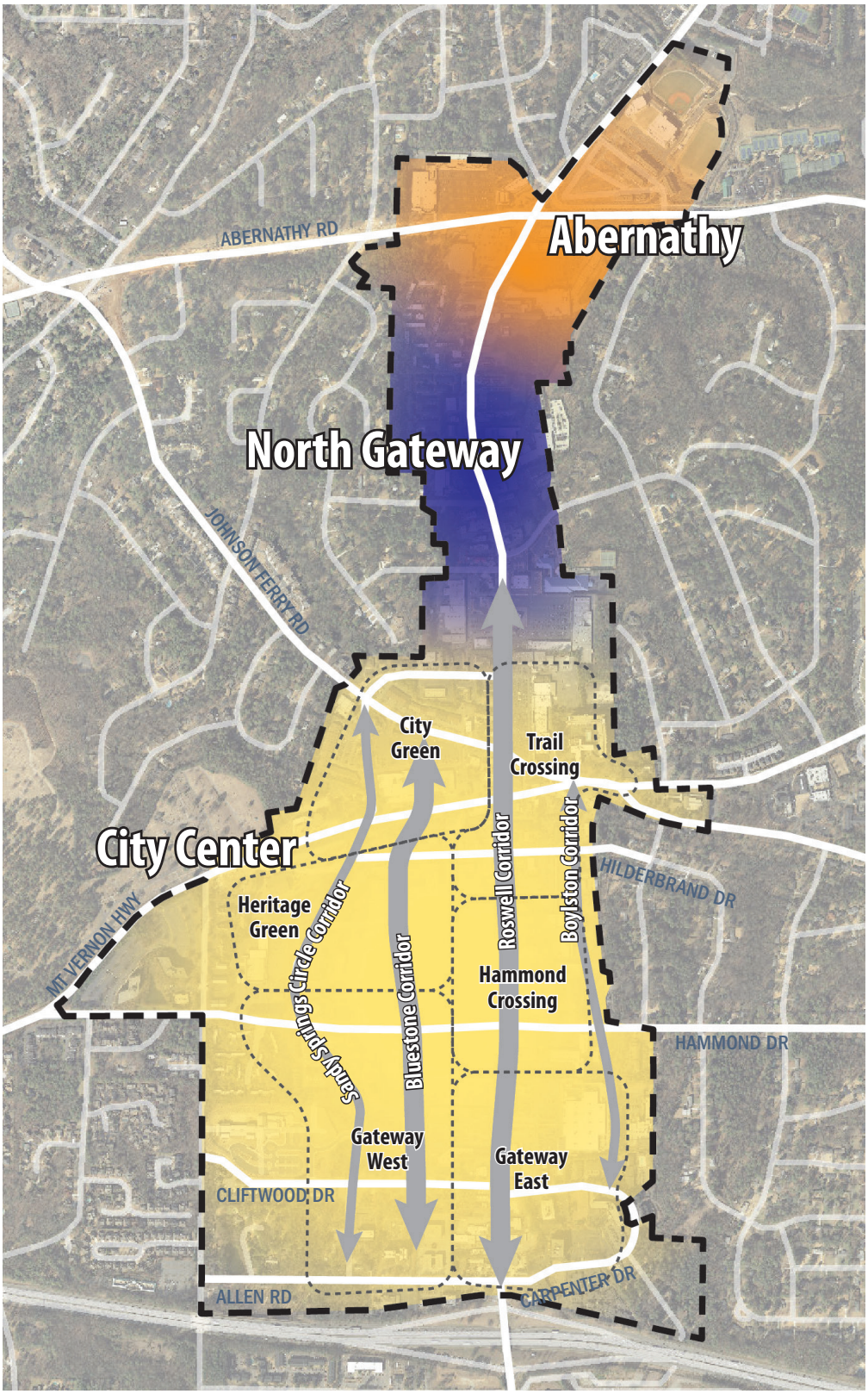
- Mixed income housing choices provide opportunities for a broader array of residents and families to join the diverse downtown community.

ACTION STEPS ▶

Define unique neighborhoods within City Center according to their activities and appearance (see Exhibit 10, page 22, and Strategy 2, page 23).

- **City Center,** with six component neighborhoods along two pairs of street corridors including:
  - > **CITY GREEN** (Sandy Springs Circle/Bluestone Road corridor). A multipurpose City Green accommodating the farmers' market, festivals, and other community events (and enlivened daily by adjacent dining, housing and a cultural center), will anchor this neighborhood at City Center's highest point. Street connections linking the neighborhood to all corners of Sandy Springs make this an especially important focus of civic activity and identity.
  - > **HERITAGE GREEN** (Sandy Springs Circle/Bluestone Road corridor). An active area combining the events and tranquility of Heritage Green with an intense retail "main street" reviving the City Walk development. Significant new housing at City Walk, an extension of Bluestone Road north of Hilderbrand Drive to connect with the City Green, and development on other sites will bring activity to the neighborhood and tie it securely into nearby housing, existing and new.
  - > **GATEWAY WEST** (Sandy Springs Circle/Bluestone Road corridor). A redeveloped north edge of Hammond Drive will join existing housing and staged redevelopment of large sites to the south to create a distinct and highly accessible neighborhood. New cross streets and improved sidewalks and crosswalks can transform this auto-dominated corridor into a place for people.
  - > **TRAIL CROSSING** (Roswell Road/Boylston Drive corridor). Welcoming new sidewalks, bike facilities and pedestrian-oriented buildings along Mount Vernon Highway and Johnson Ferry Road link this neighborhood to the Sandy Springs Circle/Bluestone Road Corridor and the larger city. Intersection investments and green space on the "triangle" set the stage for high value development on sites to the north and south, transforming Roswell Road into a fitting gateway for a walkable City Center. The smaller scale and light traffic along Hilderbrand Drive create good opportunities for property and business reinvestment that support walkability, whether at modest scale in existing buildings or at larger scale with more significant redevelopment.
  - > **HAMMOND CROSSING** (Roswell Road/Boylston Drive corridor). Improved pedestrian facilities along and across Roswell Road, and new housing east of the road, establish a mixed-use neighborhood that will grow along Roswell Road, Boylston Drive, and new east-west connections. Highly visible and accessible sites with exceptional views offer some of the most valuable development opportunities in City Center.
  - > **GATEWAY EAST** (Roswell Road Corridor). Walkable north-south connections along Roswell Road and Boylston Drive will introduce a richer mix of uses to this important gateway close to I-285 and create a comfortable transition from highway scale to pedestrian scale. High value commercial development could occur in a format that takes advantage of the combination of convenient I-285 access and a walkable, amenity-rich setting.
- **The corridors.** Both the Sandy Springs Circle/Bluestone Road corridor and the Roswell Road/Boylston Drive corridor provide a helpful combination of parallel streets offering opportunities for both walkability and convenient auto access. Of these, Bluestone Road offers the best opportunity to create a strong, positive near-term impact by pairing new mixed-use development with park space on opposite sides of the street. The other three corridors all offer good opportunities for incremental introduction of mixed-use development and more walkable conditions. The pairs of corridors will depend on walkable east-west connections among them, starting with Johnson Ferry Road, Mount Vernon Highway, Hilderbrand Drive and Sandy Springs Place, and expanding to other streets.

Exhibit 10: Character Areas



Unique Character Areas help define distinct places within the study area.

- **North Gateway.** The northern portion of the Roswell Road corridor offers opportunities for small business close to City Center's amenities and workforce, and opportunities to reaccommodate valued auto-oriented uses that are less desirable in the heart of City Center. Building reinvestment and redevelopment along Roswell Road should emphasize features that enhance the safety and appeal of walking. New walking connections could link neighborhoods across Roswell Road to each other and to amenities.
- **Abernathy.** The east-west parkway adds additional destination park amenities, biking and walking connections to a variety of neighborhoods and an important opportunity to route through traffic around City Center. Encouraging mixed-use redevelopment around the crossroads of Abernathy and Roswell Roads would enhance its identity and value with an expanded range of housing choices, higher education and continued retail presence.

Strategy 2: Bring a mix of activities together. Mixed-use development offers a number of advantages that support the master plan vision principles:

- Places stay active weekdays, evenings and weekends alike. This will keep City Center welcoming and safe while supporting retail businesses with a more diverse customer base.
- Investors can tap into a variety of markets, depending on where the strongest opportunities exist. This will help maintain ongoing investment in the study area during inevitable market cycles.
- Mixed uses can efficiently share infrastructure. For instance, stores, offices and housing have different peak times of occupancy through the day and week, meaning they can share parking spaces and spread out their traffic demands out over time. As a result, less road and parking infrastructure is necessary than for single-use development. This saves land and money while promoting economic development.
- People can conveniently walk among many different activities. It is possible to walk from home to a restaurant, or among multiple shops, reducing the number of car trips, increasing the appeal of walking, and further reducing need for road and parking capacity.

On some sites, particularly along Roswell Road, single-use commercial development and/or reinvestment in existing commercial properties will likely prove more feasible than mixed-use development in the near term. Relatively higher commercial property values make it harder for mixed-use development to generate sufficient economic returns, and creating the larger parcels mixed-use buildings typically require presents a challenge, given the small parcel sizes in some areas. As a result, Sandy Springs should encourage mixed-use redevelopment along Roswell Road, but it should also welcome single-use development or property renovation that enhances walkability and strengthens character along the corridor.

ACTION STEPS ▶

- Revise development regulations for the City Center area to encourage high value property and business reinvestment and redevelopment, emphasizing walkable street qualities and mixed-use development models. Employ form-based code to clearly define development standards tailored to the unique characteristics of neighborhoods and corridors within City Center. Standards should encourage preservation of existing mature trees where possible. Development standards should align with the street types defined under Strategy 3 and should address:
  - > Building height and massing
  - > Design of ground floor façades and their relationship to sidewalks and other aspects of the street edge, including setbacks and landscaping
  - > Overall architectural variety of façades
  - > Roof forms
  - > Allowed land uses
  - > Parking and driveways

  During the Image Preference Survey conducted in October 2012, residents weighed in on three types of City Center places and the kinds of qualities they wanted to see in them:

PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORRIDOR

- > Continuous **building edge** along sidewalk with variation in façade positions to create a variety of active wide sidewalk and plaza spaces, including outdoor dining, benches, street trees and other plantings.

> **Variation in long façades** created by the use of diverse materials, window or bay sizes, and/or changes in façade position.
> Significant presence of **windows** with relatively little opaque façade area.
> **Building height** ranges from three to eight stories, with a step back above the fourth story.
> **Roof forms** with prominent horizontal parapets, cornices, dormers and other details; gabled forms generally discouraged.
> **Parking** accommodated on street (parallel and/or angled) and behind buildings, with walking access to/from the street on pedestrian walkways.
> **Variety of uses,** including ground-floor retail with a mix of housing and offices above. No drive-throughs or other auto-oriented uses.

ROSWELL CORRIDOR (focused between Sandy Springs Circle and Hammond Drive)

> A **building edge** running as continuously as possible along the sidewalk, with variation in façade positions to create a variety of active wide sidewalk and plaza spaces, including outdoor dining, benches, street trees and other plantings. Outdoor dining will need to be buffered from traffic/noise.
> **Building height** ranges from one to eight stories, with a step back above the fourth story.
> **Parking** located to the side of buildings, at least for an interim period, if visibility from Roswell Road is necessary for development feasibility. Parking access from side or rear streets where at all possible instead of from Roswell Road, and designated pedestrian walkways linking larger parking lots to the sidewalk.
> **Building front doors** located at the corner of side parking areas and the sidewalk, unless they can be located along the sidewalk and connected to rear parking with pedestrian walkways.

ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS

> **Variation in long façades** created by the use of diverse window or bay sizes, and/or changes in façade position (changes in material are not as important).
> **Roof forms** with an emphasis on gabled/pitched roof profiles.
> **Building height** ranges from two to four stories.
> **Setbacks and landscaping** that can be more urban in feel, except where new development sits adjacent to existing housing. In those locations, larger setbacks with more plantings should be provided. Include courtyards and landscaped edges shaped by the buildings.

- Develop a zoning code that defines coordinated land use and design standards for sites, buildings and streetscapes. As-of-right zoning approval can expedite investment in City Center by establishing more specific development standards requiring little or no design review and a clear process for development approval. Development prototypes should address both land use and design approaches for sites and buildings. Definitions of all the prototypes should address:
  > Use options and mix
  > Emphasis on pedestrian access and scale
  > Strong relationship between buildings and streets, according to street type (see Strategy 3)
- Development prototypes should include:
  > Mixed housing, hotel or small office over retail
  > Multifamily housing (garden apartments)
  > Townhouses
  > Pedestrian-oriented retail
  > Pedestrian-oriented office
  > Pedestrian-oriented hotel
  > Civic, cultural and institutional uses
  > Off-street parking

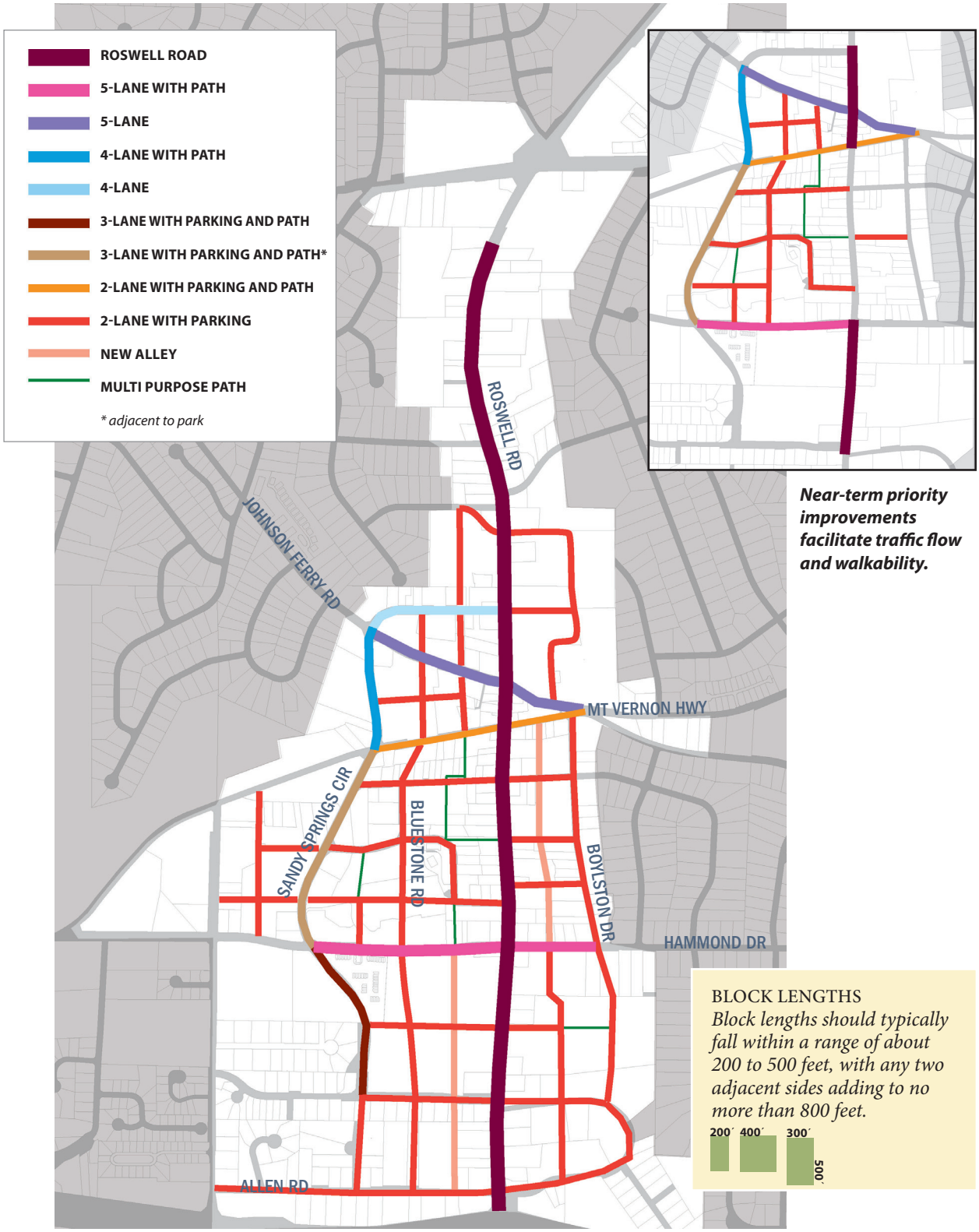
Strategy 3: Support mixed-use neighborhoods with a network of walkable streets. Walkable streets expand the range of convenient, safe transportation options beyond driving. While City Center will continue to rely on driving as an important means of access, its success will also depend upon the provision of viable alternatives to driving such as walking, riding transit and biking. Reduced dependence on driving will lower traffic volumes and the volume of road and parking facilities needed, making the City Center a more welcoming environment for people, minimizing impacts on area neighborhoods, and reducing costs to both the City and developers. Walkable streets offer the most desirable locations for high value, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented develop-

ment, and they reserve more land on which that development can occur. Walkable streets are also healthy streets, as they enable people to regularly complete the modest level of daily walking that research has shown can significantly improve individual health.

ACTION STEPS ▶

- Define a range of street types according to their function (see Exhibits 11 and 12 on pages 26-27). Use the street type definitions to spell out appropriate land uses and building/site design approaches along them (see Strategy 2, page 23). Similarly, use street type definitions to guide street improvements. Street types should include:
  - > **PRIORITY WALKING STREET** (including portions of Sandy Spring Circle, Johnson Ferry Road, Mount Vernon Highway, Hilderbrand Drive, Sandy Springs Place, Bluestone Road, and Boylston Drive)
  - > **PRIORITY WALKING STREET AND ACTIVE EDGE** (applied to edges of priority walking streets at selected locations where retail or other active ground-floor uses are especially important)
  - > **WALKABLE ARTERIAL (OR BOULEVARD) IN CITY CENTER** (Roswell Road)
  - > **WALKABLE ROAD** (portions of Hammond Drive, Johnson Ferry Road, and Mount Vernon Highway extending out of study area)
  - > **ALLEY** (minor service street to provide rear access to properties)
- For each street type, incorporate these characteristics of walkable streets as appropriate:
  - > Blocks should preferably measure about 300 to 400 feet per side and avoid stretching beyond 500 feet per side (see Exhibit 13 on page 28)
  - > Separate pedestrians and traffic (see street sections in Appendix B on page 50)
  - > Include street trees and other plantings
  - > Provide safe, convenient crosswalks
  - > Assure universal accessibility
  - > Provide complementary bike and transit facilities
- Refine the existing road layout into a network of walkable streets. Invest in new streets and street improvements in conjunction with private investment on adjacent parcels.
  - > Timing:
    - Acquisition/construction of a relatively small amount of new street length (Bluestone Road between Mount Vernon Highway and Hilderbrand Drive) takes priority for near-term actions.
    - Create the grid over time as redevelopment proceeds. Take care to coordinate parcel-to-parcel alignment of streets and blocks to ensure that the entire network works well for all property owners.
  - > Securing the street right of way:
    - The primary means of securing street right of way should occur through public-private partnership as major parcels are redeveloped. In some instances, property owners and developers may agree to provide right of way to the City, which will pay for construction of a street and undertake its ongoing maintenance. As an alternative, the developer may retain ownership but grant a permanent easement for public passage. In either case, an agreement must ensure that street design meets the City's standards.
    - Sandy Springs may need to acquire street right of way. Conditions warranting this approach include:
      - – Acquisition of the right of way in a timely manner significantly enhances the value or benefit of adjacent redevelopment, but current owners are not motivated to redevelop on their own.
      - – The right of way crosses two or more properties and at least one property owner is not prepared to offer land for additional right of way through redevelopment efforts.
      - – Acquisition of the right of way would not displace significant economically viable uses.
- Improve existing streets in ways that simultaneously enhance mobility for vehicles and pedestrians. As a general rule, crosswalks should not extend across more than five lanes of traffic. When longer crosswalks are necessary, an intermediate pedestrian

Exhibit 11: Proposed Street Section Key Diagram



Near-term priority improvements facilitate traffic flow and walkability.

Street sections address both transportation functions and the relationship of adjacent buildings and sites to the street.

Exhibit 12: Street Section Comparison

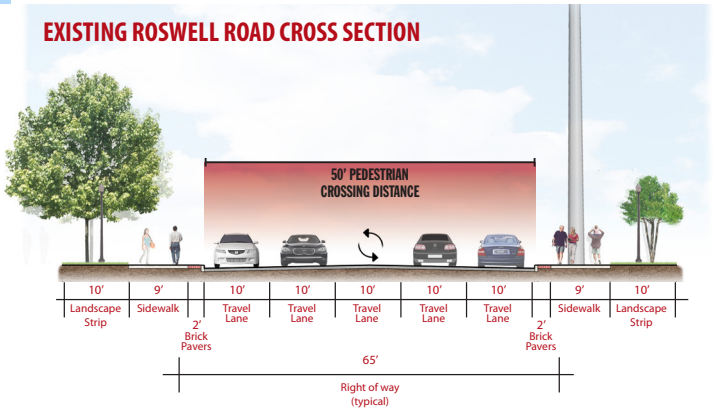
STREET SECTION	ROW WIDTH	TRAVEL LANES	MEDIAN?	BIKE?	MIN PED CROSSING DISTANCE	MAX PED CROSSING DISTANCE	EXAMPLE STREET APPLICATION	SIDE-WALK WIDTH
Roswell Road	65′	4	Yes	No	20′	50′	Roswell Road	9′
5-lane with path	110′	4	No	Off-street path	60′	60′	Sandy Springs Cir., Hammond Dr.	10′
5-lane	91′	4	No	No	55′	55′	Johnson Ferry Road	10′
4-lane with path	94′	4	No	Off-street path	48	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
4-lane with path—alternate	76′	4	No	Off-street path	48	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	6′
4-lane	84′	4	No	No	48′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
3-lane with parking and path*	86′	2	Yes	Off-street path	11′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	8′
3-lane with parking and path	92′	2	Yes	Off-street path	11′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
2-lane with parking and path	84′	2	No	Off-street path	20′	36′	Mt. Vernon Highway	10′
2-lane with parking	74′	2	No	Sharrow	22′	38′	Hildebrand Drive	10′
new alley	36′	2	No	No	24′	24′	Where shown on diagram	6′
multipurpose path	20′	N/A	No	Yes	12′	12′	Where shown on diagram	12′

** adjacent to park or green space*

Where possible, City Center will have "Complete Streets," an emerging national best practice that maximizes travel options by accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, cars, and bus transit (in appropriate locations).

NOTE
Appendix B contains a diagram for each street section type at full size. Street sections show the typical conditions recommended along selected streets. Their application may require minor variations in elements and dimensions to accommodate right of way limitations in some locations, special needs at intersections, or other specific conditions. Transitions between section types along a street or at intersecting streets should maintain the continuity of travel lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and off-street paths.

EXISTING ROSWELL ROAD CROSS SECTION



PROPOSED ROSWELL ROAD CROSS SECTION

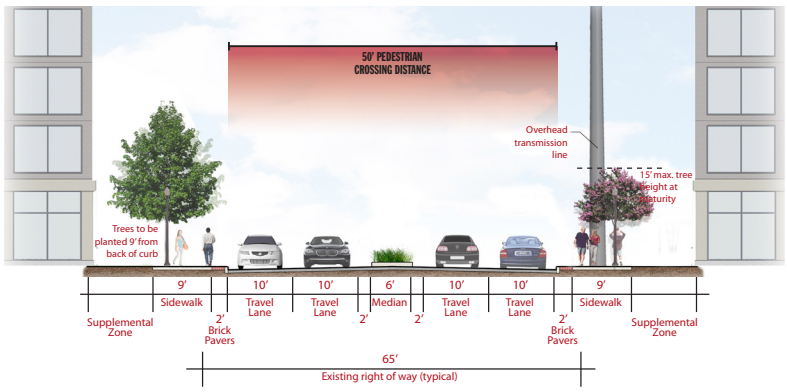
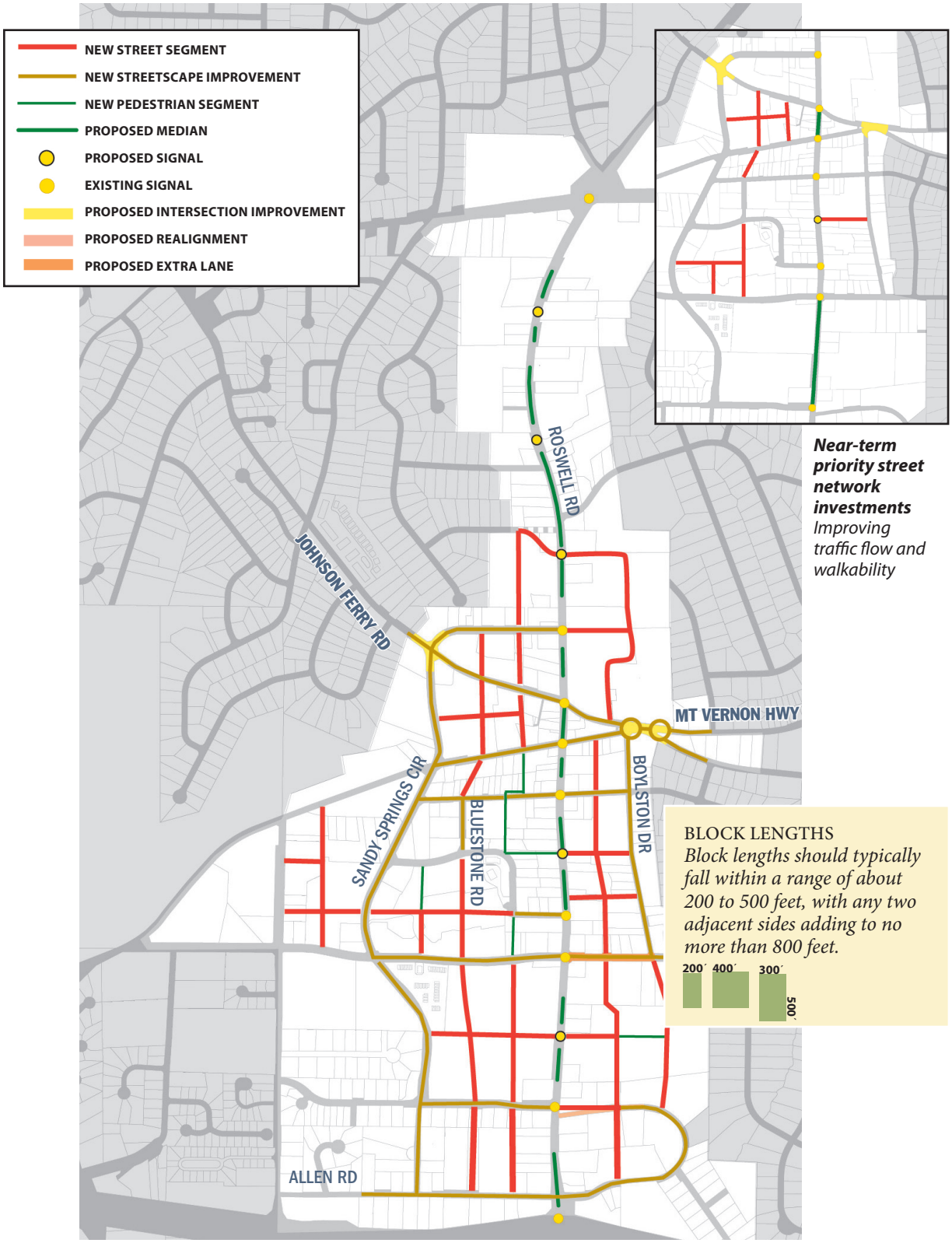


Exhibit 13: Proposed Walkable Blocks



Near-term priority street network investments *Improving traffic flow and walkability*

The grid network expands as opportunity allows. In most cases mixed-use redevelopment on large sites would create new street corridors through partnership between the parcel owner and the City. Lines indicate approximate preferred alignments for street corridors. *(Note: Medians, signals and lane additions or realignments will require technical evaluations prior to implementation.)*

refuge in the median, at least six feet wide, should break the crossing into shorter segments. Priority street improvements include:

> Move forward with the planned double roundabout at the intersection of Mt. Vernon Highway, Johnson Ferry Road and Boylston Drive. Ensure safe, convenient pedestrian and multiuse path accommodations along the edges of the intersection, linking Roswell Road to the Sandy Springs Library and neighborhoods to the east. Related improvements at the intersections of Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway with Roswell Road should minimize pedestrian crossing distance, incorporating pedestrian refuges in the median where necessary.

> Move forward with the planned intersection improvements at Johnson Ferry Road and Sandy Springs Circle.

> Consider operational improvements along Hammond Drive at Roswell Road and Boylston Drive. These may include additional left or right turn lanes from Hammond Drive onto Roswell Road and Boylston Drive.

> Along parts of Sandy Springs Circle, with more lanes than needed for anticipated traffic volumes (principally south of Hilderbrand Drive), convert one or more traffic lanes to improved sidewalks, landscaping, multiuse paths or other amenity according to the street sections.

> Move forward with planned Roswell Road streetscape improvements between Hammond Drive and Cliftwood Drive.

- Introduce an access management strategy along Roswell Road to improve traffic flow, pedestrian safety and corridor appearance (also see Strategy 8, page 37). Over time, provide incentives to encourage removal of Roswell Road curb cuts through the relocation of driveways to side or rear streets, and/or driveway consolidation into new streets. As parcels on the road gain access points that do not require left turns across the thoroughfare, install a central landscaped median in Roswell Road.
- Enhance bicycle convenience and safety by implementing a multiuse path and sharrows linking to designated bike routes. (see exhibit 15 on page 32)

> In the core of City Center, create a multiuse path to accommodate cyclists, walkers and joggers. Connect the path to as many park spaces and community destinations (including the library, Lake Forest Elementary School and Hitson Center) as possible.

> Mark two-lane streets with lower traffic speeds and "sharrows" markings to indicate that bikes can ride comfortably with traffic.

> Encourage development to include infrastructure that serves cyclists (which will reduce vehicle parking needs), including convenient bike parking, showers and lockers.

- Accommodate and encourage the reduced number of driving trips associated with mixed-use development in a variety of ways:

> Reduce minimum parking requirements to reflect the reduced vehicle trips and more efficient use of parking spaces typically possible with mixed-use development.

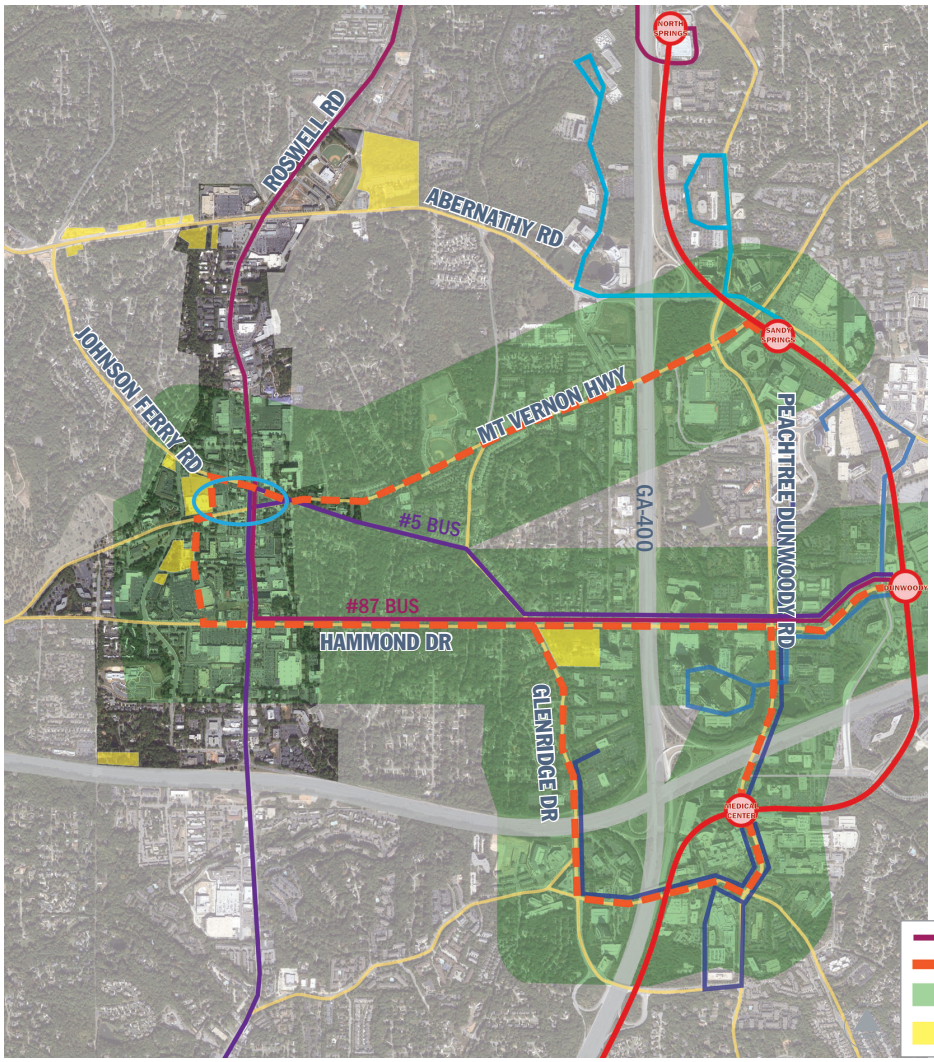
> Encourage the use of parking decks that serve multiple uses and/or parcels, including creation of public parking.

> Implement transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to influence route and mode choice, particularly along Roswell and Abernathy roads. TDM strategies come in many forms, primarily in incentive programs that focus on commuters and changes in physical infrastructure. Coordination should occur with the Clean Air Campaign, which receives federal funding to provide TDM support services for employers in areas like the Sandy Springs City Center.

- Enhance the availability and convenience of transit services (see Exhibit 14 on page 30).

> Establish a convenient, distinctively branded transit service linking City Center to MARTA rail service and nearby job and housing centers. Explore the potential to operate this service as an extension of existing shuttle services in the Perimeter area. Provide convenient transit stops in core areas of City Center.

Exhibit 14: Proposed Transit Service Area Enhancements



Redevelopment in the City Center area should include a sufficient concentration of people and activities to justify additional transit service in the future. This service, branded distinctly from MARTA but offering convenient interchange with MARTA services, should connect City Center to nearby MARTA rail stations as well as the major job concentrations in the Perimeter Center and Medical Center.

***Chattanooga downtown shuttle** offers a good model of a well-used, cost-effective shuttle system that enhances economic development and quality of life.*

TRANSIT SERVICE ACTION STEPS

1. Design the shuttle service (and the vehicle itself) to offer a compelling alternative to driving. Use the service to enhance mobility for residents, employees and visitors. Create seamless transfers between the circulator and MARTA. Avoid service duplication. Consider Chattanooga's electric downtown shuttle service as an example.
2. Plan shuttle routes and stops to link parking with activity centers, housing concentrations, employment centers, retail districts and other key City Center destinations.
3. Operate the shuttle frequently in peak periods. Provide safe and comfortable waiting areas at all downtown stops and peripheral parking lots.
4. Consider technologies such as Next Bus (www.nextbus.com) to provide information on waiting times to enhance ridership appeal of transit services.
5. Encourage use of "green" vehicles such as hybrid, electric and biodiesel.
6. Establish a pilot-service phase and progress to longer-term service.
7. Develop shuttle signage consistent with MARTA's wayfinding system.

> Create a central transit facility in City Center that makes transit services highly visible, enables convenient access to destinations, and facilitates transfers to established MARTA services. Include facilities that support biking.
> Explore opportunities to introduce priority traffic signals for transit vehicles and to allow buses to pass traffic using right turn lanes where they occur.

Strategy 4: Take a cost-effective approach to utility infrastructure. Solving stormwater management on a parcel-by-parcel basis results in redundant infrastructure investments, constrains development options, and undercuts creation of stormwater retention ponds that do double duty as public amenities.

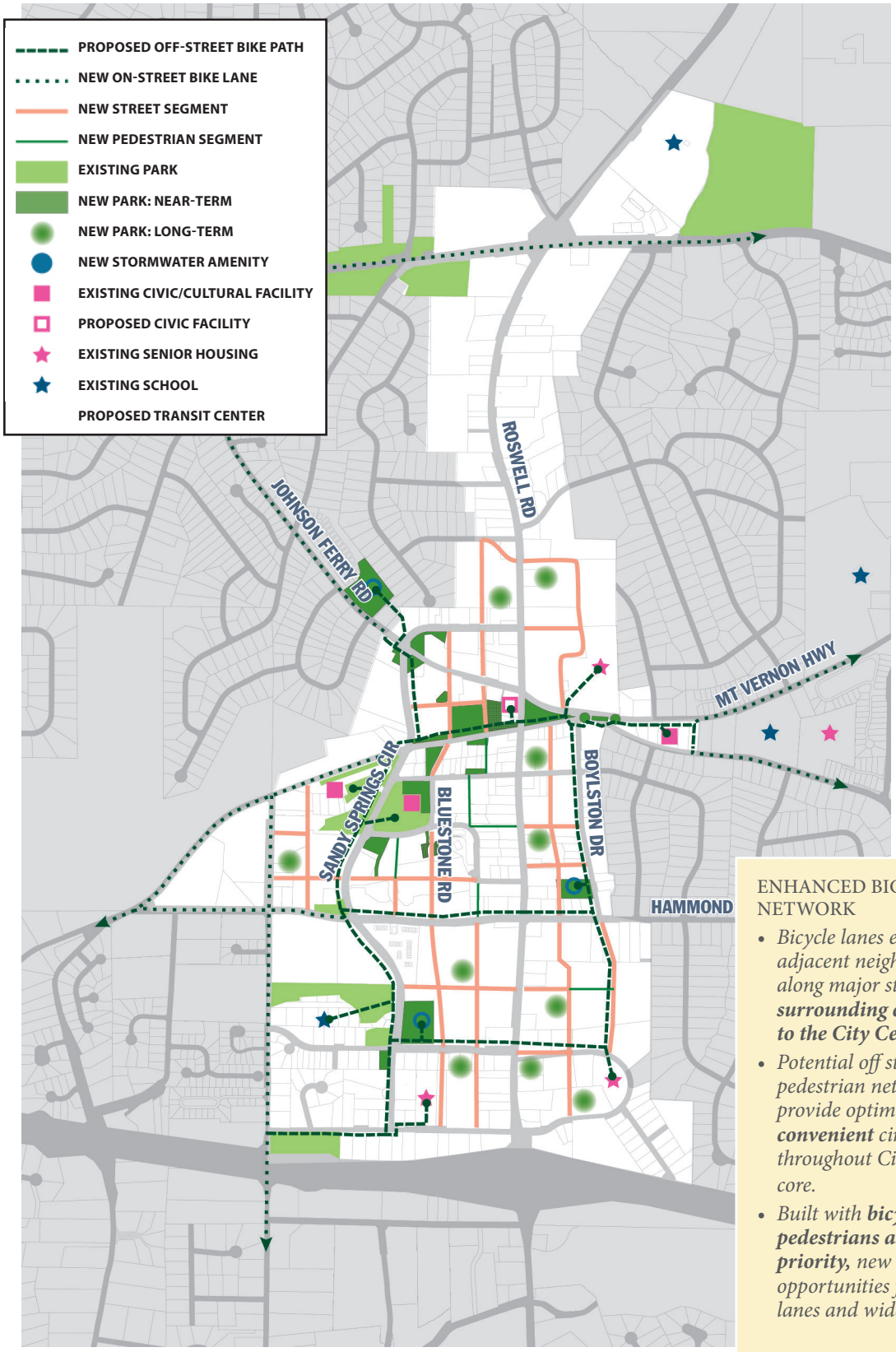
Providing power in an uncoordinated parcel-by-parcel fashion has created a visually unattractive collection of overhead wires along Roswell Road.

A cost effective approach that centrally manages stormwater from multiple sites and consolidates power infrastructure in new, less visible facilities (using new rights of way coordinated with redevelopment on multiple sites) can be more cost effective and attractive.

ACTION STEPS ▶

- Stormwater
  > Include low impact development (LID) principles in requirements for new development through options that include:
    - Repairing/increasing stormwater basin capacities
    - Incorporating best practices, such as bioswales and rain gardens into new site and street development
    - Increasing tree canopy and vegetation (retain existing tree canopy wherever possible)
    - Installing permeable pavement and pavers
    - Terracing sites to minimize extent of steep slopes
    - Reducing impervious surface by measures such as introducing more greenspace and/or requiring green roofs on buildings
  > Create new retention facilities to accommodate stormwater within City Center and to reduce the challenges of meeting low-impact development standards on a site-by-site basis. Design and locate these facilities to serve as park amenities. Exhibit 16 on page 34 shows recommended locations for stormwater facilities based on topography and drainage patterns.
- Overhead utilities
  > When building new streets, locate power and communications lines in buried conduits and/or above grade along parallel alleys behind buildings.
  > Improve existing streets, such as Roswell Road, by moving distribution lines either to buried conduits or to above ground installation in parallel alleys behind buildings.
  > Due to the high cost of burying or relocating overhead transmission lines, invest in these improvements judiciously. Overhead transmission line burial can cost up to 40 times more per linear foot (according to Georgia Power) than burying lower grade distribution lines, which tend to be more dominant in most peoples' field of view. Priority areas for burying transmission lines are within one to two blocks of the planned Civic Facility, along Roswell Road between Sandy Springs Circle and Hilderbrand Drive. Also consider the less costly alternative of painting transmission pylons to match lower pedestrian scale lighting fixtures.
- Screen the power substation along Hilderbrand Drive and Mount Vernon Road. Potential options include adding tall shrubs and/or vine plantings, and/or installing public art.
- Enable installation of cogeneration facilities on large mixed-use redevelopment sites and in public streets that link significant mixed-use redevelopment sites, if desired by developers.

Exhibit 15: Proposed Off-Street Multi-use Path Network



ENHANCED BICYCLE NETWORK

- *Bicycle lanes extending into adjacent neighborhoods along major streets* ***connect surrounding communities to the City Center.***
- *Potential off street bicycle/ pedestrian network could provide optimally* ***safe and convenient*** *circulation throughout City Center's core.*
- *Built with* ***bicycles and pedestrians as a top priority,*** *new streets provide opportunities for bicycle lanes and wide sidewalks.*

THEME: CREATE PLACES OF COMMUNITY SERVING ALL OF SANDY SPRINGS

Strategy 5: Expand Sandy Springs' network of parks and greenways. The City has made significant recent investments in park space, which residents have used heavily and appreciated. The City Center offers a prime opportunity to create additional park space in a highly accessible and visible location and to enhance connectivity among Sandy Springs' parks. City Center represents a unique opportunity to integrate parks into an active, mixed-use setting. This differs from less dense areas of the City, where natural features and sports use often represent a more appropriate emphasis for parks. Exhibits 15 (page 32) and 16 (page 34) summarize green space opportunities and program elements, and Appendix C contains additional detail on the Green Space Network and its components.

ACTION STEPS ▶

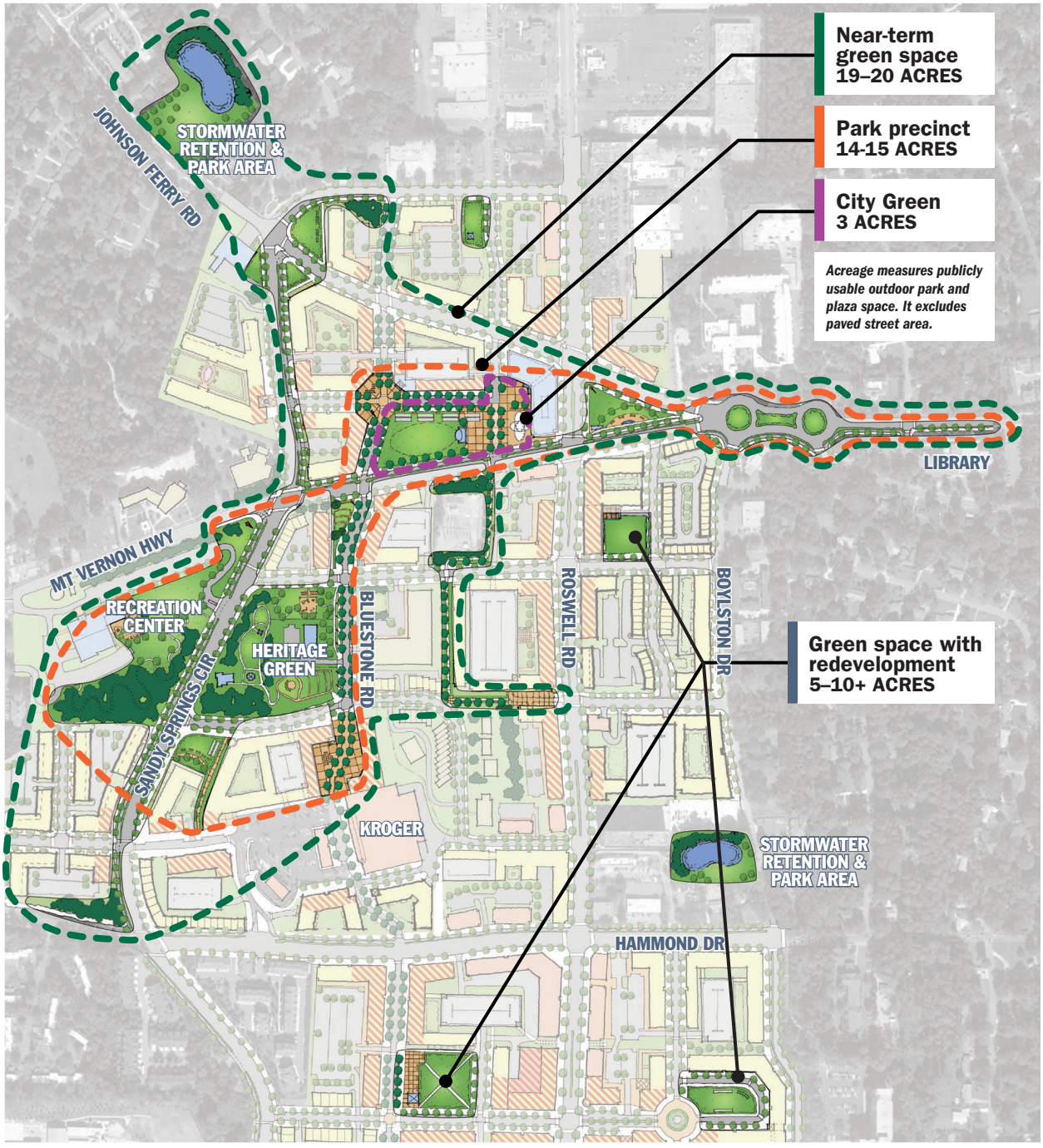
- Create a City Green within City Center to serve as a focal point of community activity and identity. Coordinate programming of the Green with mixed-use redevelopment so that people shopping, eating, living and working around the Green activate its edges and the City Green simultaneously adds value to those uses as an amenity. The Civic Facility (see Strategy 6, this page) could be highly appropriate as one of these uses. Portions of the City Green should accommodate the farmer's market and other periodic civic events.
- Create a network of smaller parks and plazas distributed throughout City Center to help enhance value and sense of place in all areas (see Exhibit 16, page 34). Through zoning or public-private partnership criteria, offer developers incentives to create public spaces within mixed-use redevelopment projects. Work with stakeholders to identify appropriate program goals for each park or plaza. Consider adding a playground in early phases of implementation.
- Create green network connections among parks and plazas (see Exhibit 15, page 32).
  - > Within City Center, create these connections with high quality streetscapes that feature generous sidewalks, distinctive street trees and other plantings, and bike lanes and/or multiuse paths where possible. Provide signage to help people travel to other parks and neighborhoods within City Center.
  - > Create connections to neighborhoods beyond City Center and to green spaces like the Abernathy Road Greenway Corridor. Improve sidewalks and bike facilities to make travel easier between City Center and these areas. Add signage and provide maps that describe the interconnected parks network.

Strategy 6: Attract more arts, cultural and civic events to City Center. Sandy Springs residents seek more cultural events and venues near dining and shopping choices. A mixed-use City Center offers the prime opportunity to bring people together around this variety of uses and public spaces. As City Center achieves a "critical mass" of active uses and growing residential population, it will gain spontaneous cultural activity in addition to planned events.

ACTION STEPS ▶

- Create a Civic Facility as a multipurpose venue capable of accommodating cultural events as well as city government activities.
  - > Identify and secure a site that enhances city identity, invites community members together, and catalyzes additional private investment in City Center.
  - > Confirm facility program needs, identify funding and build it.
- Work with local and regional arts organizations to expand programming.
  - > Find partner organizations to sponsor arts/cultural events and/or manage operation of the Civic Facility.
  - > Help promote arts/cultural events.

Exhibit 16: Green Space Framework



The proposed green space framework includes varied types of open space: more formal, intimate space lined with active uses (City Green) and larger, more passive space for recreation (Heritage Green playground). These appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors and allow diverse programming that can appeal to many users.

THEME: ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT

Strategy 7: Establish a clear, predictable process for development in City Center. Property owners, developers and other potential investors desire a more predictable process for having development projects approved. Predictability and clarity are especially important given the shift in development emphasis toward more complicated mixed-use development and away from conventional forms.

The planning process involved conversations with multiple developers and property owners to help develop interest in plan implementation and spur initial actions. Some developers expressed interest in purchasing land in the study area, potentially including City owned parcels that may be made available for strategic redevelopment (see Exhibit 17, page 36; the plan identifies additional parcels for City acquisition or public-private partnership redevelopment). These conversations built awareness of the market analysis undertaken for the plan, publicized the plan's key strategies, and drew valuable and typically supportive input on market economics and other factors affecting development feasibility. Experience in other communities demonstrates that conversations like these during a master planning process can prove very effective in advancing investments that achieve high quality results responsive to market opportunity and community goals.

ACTION STEPS ▶

- As part of zoning code revisions (see Strategy 2, page 23), streamline the development review and approval process.
- Encourage creation of public-private partnerships, where appropriate, to enable private development investments. To determine whether a project merits a public-private partnership, evaluate both the developer and the project against consistent criteria. These criteria should include a project's contribution to broader City Center redevelopment goals as measured by:
  - > size
  - > accessibility
  - > visibility
  - > adjacency to complementary amenities or other uses
  - > City ownership or initiative on adjacent parcels and/or streets.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE REDEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP CRITERIA

The private sector investor:

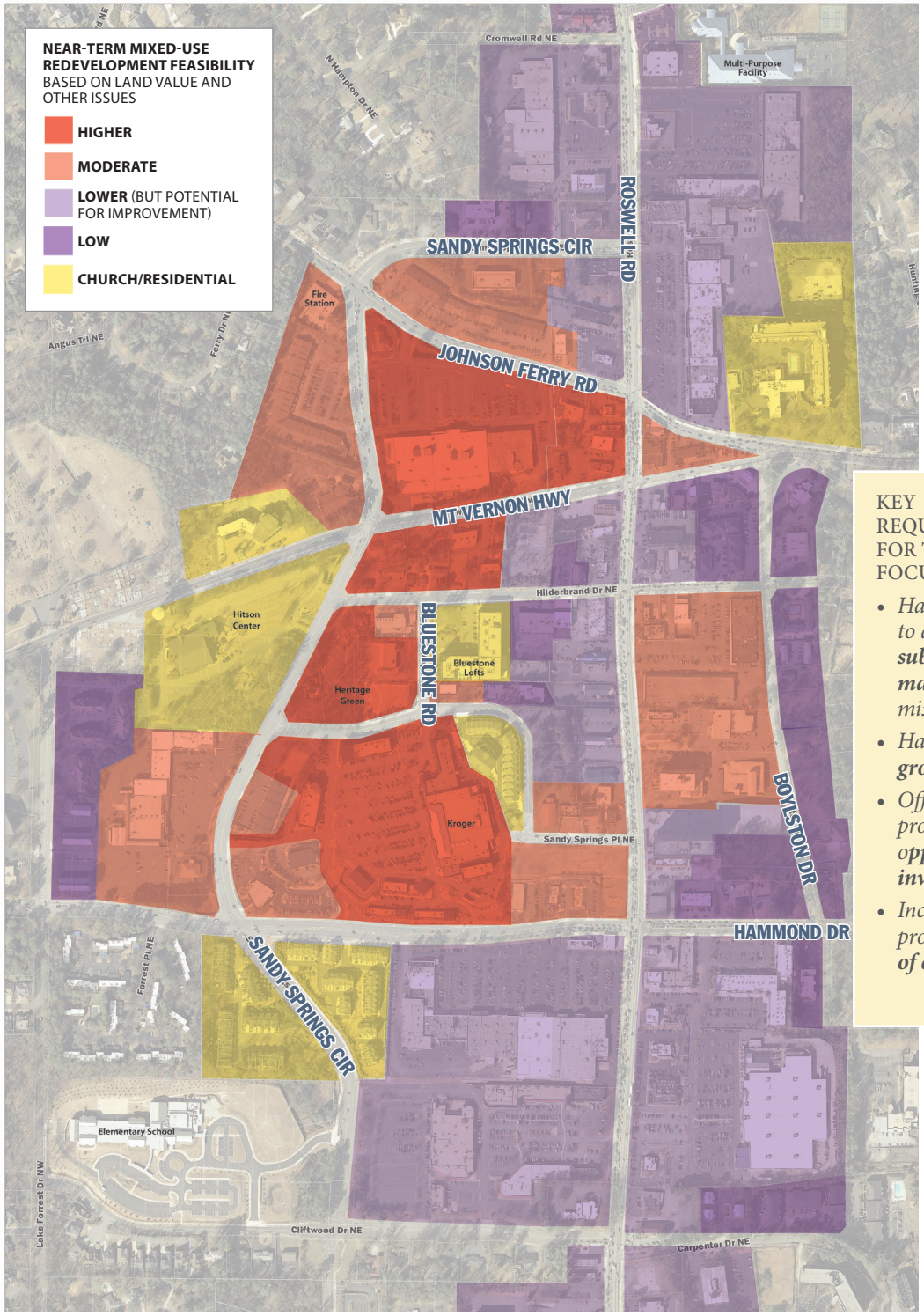
- **Appropriate experience (2–5 comparable projects by developer, designer)**
- **Financial qualifications**
- **Letters of reference (4-5)**
- **Project economics**
  - **> Demonstrated need for support**
  - **> Public sector leverage (typical ranges from 1:2 to 1:6)**

The project:

- **Required elements: walkable, mixed-use, appropriate location**
- **Optional elements: additional public benefits such as parks, streets, jobs or other economic development opportunities**

SOURCE: W-ZHA

Exhibit 17: Parcel Classification



KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OPTIMAL FOCUS AREA

- *Has the capacity to accommodate* ***a substantial, active, market driven,*** *mixed-use district*
- *Has the ability to* ***grow over time***
- *Offers many property owners* ***opportunities to invest***
- *Includes a prominent* ***center of civic identity***

Strategy 8: Continue to focus on key Roswell Road improvements The first impression of the Roswell Road corridor plays a central role in perceptions of City Center as a whole. While qualities of walkable, mixed-use development may appear faster in City Center areas outside of the corridor, the public realm and adjacent development along Roswell Road needs to exhibit some of these qualities and demonstrate the road's compatibility with them.

Roswell Road provides vital vehicular access to City Center. While a mixed-use approach to redevelopment in City Center intentionally minimizes increased traffic on Roswell Road (and may actually reduce it), the corridor remains the most important driving route to the City Center. The road's intersections and signals will require continued improvements to facilitate traffic flow. Pedestrian enhancements should increase convenience and safety for anyone using the road's sidewalks.

Roswell Road offers retail choices that complement walkable retail in other parts of City Center. The large size, high visibility and convenient auto access of parcels along the road accommodate large format retail stores that would be difficult or impossible to locate along smaller scale walkable streets. Customers at retailers, such as supermarkets and home/garden supply stores, often purchase volumes or kinds of merchandise that would be impractical to carry on foot or by transit or bike. These customers require auto access. As the traditional center of retail in the study area, the Roswell Road corridor also contains long-established local businesses that community residents value. Such businesses deserve the opportunity to remain along Roswell Road or to relocate elsewhere in City Center at the option of the owner.

ACTION STEPS ▶

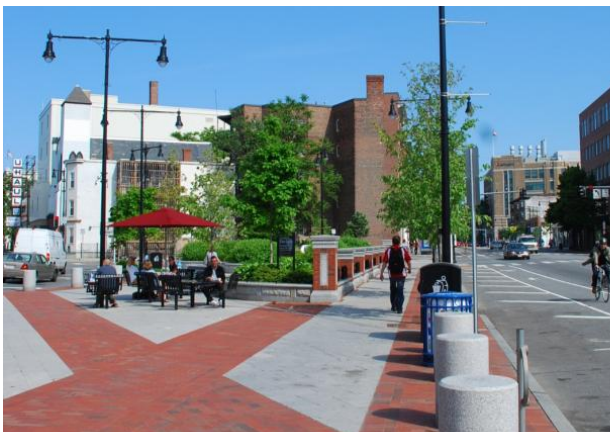
By taking prompt action on these steps, Sandy Springs will help business and property owners in the Roswell Road corridor prosper while setting the stage for high value reinvestment throughout City Center.

Improve infrastructure

- Rebuild the Roswell Road/Johnson Ferry Road/Mount Vernon Highway intersections; rebuild Roswell Road sidewalks and crosswalks on adjacent blocks, with bollards at intersections; bury electric distribution wires.
- Install an automatic traffic management system (ATMS) to synchronize traffic flow.
- Offer street/intersection improvements in return for driveway consolidation that removes Roswell Road curb cuts (see Exhibit 18, on page 39).

Unlock business and property reinvestment

- Today, property owners who increase property value by more than 40% must pay for streetscape improvements. Revise this policy with incentives under which the City invests in sidewalk/streetscape improvements in return for the owner's donation of a right of way easement for wider sidewalks.



Traffic management techniques could enhance the visual appeal of Roswell Road and create an appropriate gateway to City Center.

- Update development regulations to allow attractive single-use development that supports a walkable, mixed-use setting (see Strategy 7, on page 35).

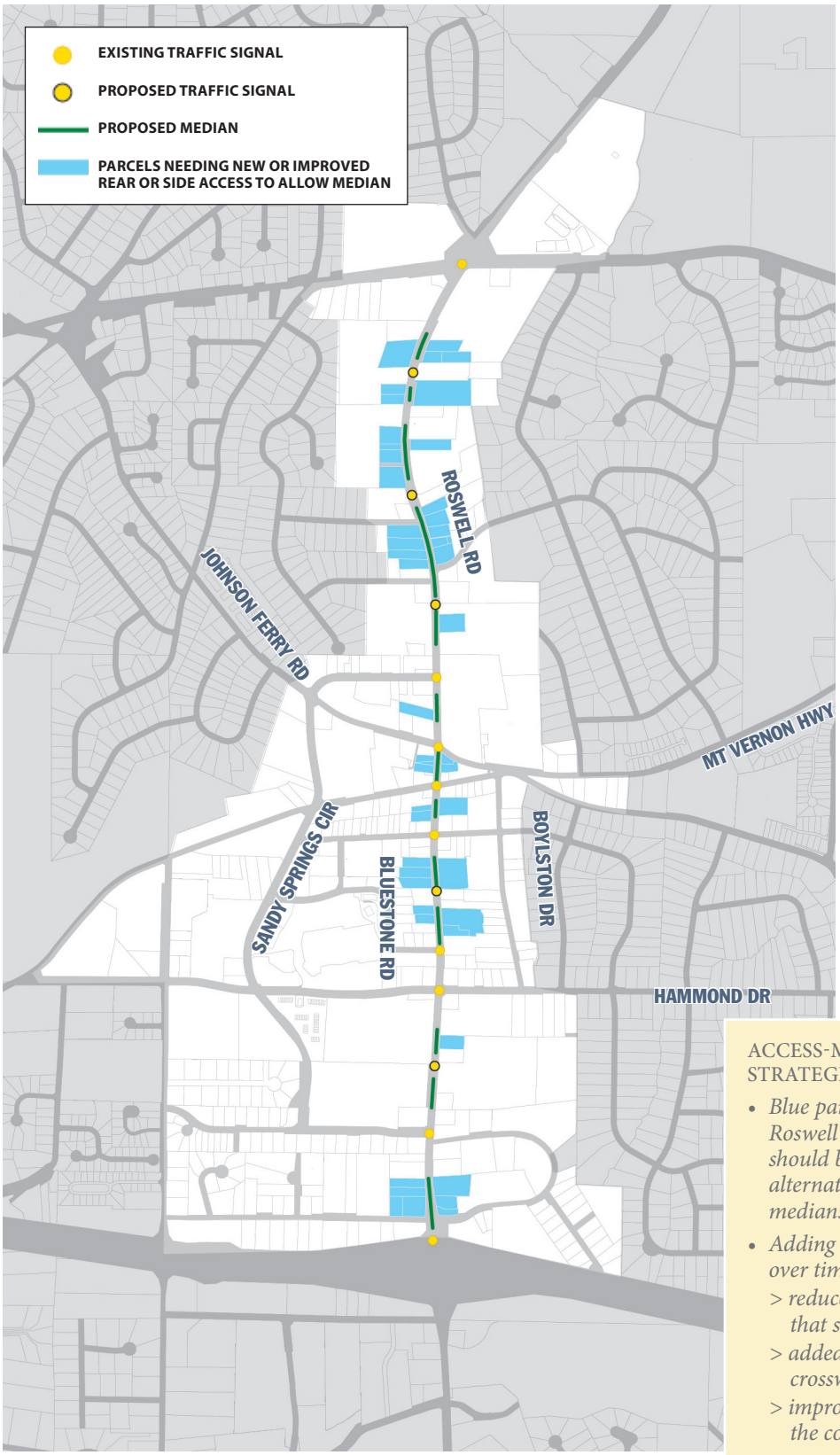
Emphasize Roswell Road as City Center Gateway

- Announce Gateway points with distinctive signage, information and tree/median plantings.
- Promote Roswell Road as an accessible retail destination:
  - > Highlight recent and planned roadway improvements.
  - > Join with businesses and business organizations to market City Center's retail choices.

Above: Examples from the Image Preference Survey. Right: Expressions of unique community identity as gateway opportunities.

- Actively promote investment opportunities to potential investors, businesses and residents. Collaborate with the Sandy Springs/Perimeter Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to publicize City Center's new identity. Recruit businesses and investors that want to be a valuable part of City Center.

Exhibit 18: Proposed Roswell Road Access Management Strategies



ACCESS-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- *Blue parcels depend solely on Roswell Road for access and should be priorities for creating alternative access points so medians can be installed.*
- *Adding medians to Roswell Road over time provides several benefits:*
  - *> reduced left turn movements that slow traffic*
  - *> added pedestrian refuge at crosswalks*
  - *> improved visual appearance of the corridor*

Implementation plan

Implementation strategy

This master plan works on two levels. First, it describes broad, long-term goals voiced by community members that establish the standards for achieving the City Center vision. Second, it contains strategies that identify the most effective actions the City and partner stakeholders can take to realize the community's vision. As elements of the plan are implemented, priority actions may need to evolve to address new needs and opportunities. The long-term vision goals, however, should remain constant and guide future decisions on priority actions.

This section of the plan provides a more detailed look at the near-term actions that make the most of City ownership of the "Target block." Strategies for continued long-term success of the plan follow the Target block discussion. They focus on leadership, community support, and evaluating progress toward the plan goals.

SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE "TARGET BLOCK"

The block bounded by Johnson Ferry Road, Sandy Springs Circle, Mt. Vernon Highway and Roswell Road, including the site of a former Target store acquired by the City, will play a central role in master plan implementation as a result of its strategic location and partial City ownership. The master planning process determined critical goals for the block, based on: (1) public input; (2) analysis of opportunity for mixed-use development and public park space; and (3) the City Council's goal to include a Civic Facility. These goals, in turn, yielded a specific set of guidelines for location of streets, public green space, and new development. The City should follow these guidelines as it proceeds with investments in parks, streets, parking and the Civic Facility infrastructure, and as it seeks development partners.

APPLYING THE MASTER PLAN GOALS TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TARGET BLOCK

MASTER PLAN GOAL	RESULTING SITE GUIDELINES
Include a new Civic Facility that accommodates both community serving cultural uses and City offices. Locate it in a prominent and easily accessible location to help activate adjacent public spaces and to complement and encourage mixed-use development nearby including retail, dining and housing.	• **Locate the Civic Facility along Roswell Road,** following previous studies that demonstrated the value of its prominence and public nature there. Use the building to create a substantial separation between public open space on the Target block and Roswell Road traffic. • **Orient the Civic Facility to create a strong presence** and have direct ground floor entrance (or entrances) on at least one side of the public open space. • Design the facility to **enhance the sense of Mt. Vernon Highway as a green corridor** connecting the Target block's open space with other public open space opportunities east of Roswell Road, including the block bounded by Johnson Ferry Road, Roswell Road and Mt. Vernon Highway. Incorporating large areas of windows into the design of buildings near Mt. Vernon Highway offers one way to enhance this sense of connection while maintaining the separation of open space from Roswell Road traffic.
Include public open space that accommodates activities and that serve as a destination. In particular, include a Green of about one acre and suitable for festivals and include space for the farmers' market (about 1.5 acres) featuring predominantly hard surfaces with shade trees. Accommodate at least one water feature and informal games. Line the open space with active buildings on at least three sides to make this a true City Center for Sandy Springs.	• Provide at least **2.5 acres of public open space** • Locate the public open space adjacent to the ridge along Mount Vernon Highway to **enhance visibility** and to offer views and amenities both north and south of the ridge. • **Provide public parking** in order to make the open space easily accessible to all Sandy Springs residents. • **Provide safe and inviting walking connections** to make the open space accessible to people living, working and visiting within several blocks.

APPLYING THE MASTER PLAN GOALS TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TARGET BLOCK (CONTINUED)

MASTER PLAN GOAL	RESULTING SITE GUIDELINES
Include new mixed-use development with housing, office and/or hotel space over ground floor, pedestrian-oriented retail and dining spaces. Based on market analysis, housing and pedestrian-oriented retail appear likely to offer the most significant amount of development opportunity in the near term. Housing should also receive priority to help build City Center's resident population to help keep streets, parks and retail active. To be economically feasible, mixed-use development needs appropriate density, parking and building formats.	• Encourage housing development with **a density of at least 40-50 units per acre** as part of mixed-use development. A review of development economics showed this density would meet the threshold of financial feasibility. Combined with ground floor retail where possible, it would translate into buildings averaging four to five stories high and potentially ranging from three to six stories. • Mixed-use development should i**nclude ground floor retail spaces that line streets with pedestrian-oriented storefronts.** Include at least two full adjacent block lengths of ground-floor retail and/or dining, preferably with some facing the public open space and some facing other retail across a street. • Organize new development on **blocks that typically measure at least 230' and no more than 500' on each side,** with lengths in the 300' to 400' range generally preferable. Lengths under 500' enhance walkability by providing waking route choices at reasonable intervals. Lengths over approximately 230' can accommodate residential buildings that screen internal parking with occupied units (assumes 120' core parking depth, flanked on each side by 10' parking ventilation space, 35' building depth and 10' front garden setback). Specific site geometry may justify modest deviations from these length standards. • **Introduce streets to create blocks with the recommended dimensions.** Promote opportunities for simultaneous redevelopment on two sides of a street. Provide access, addresses and on street parking that serve ground floor retail. Connect to existing or potential development on adjacent bocks. New development (and/or public open space) on two sides of a street creates more than double the impact of development along a single side because it defines the street itself as a distinct public place. Placing a grid of two north-south streets and one east-west street running partially across the site accomplishes these goals well. This approach ties into the Bluestone Road corridor to the south and with Johnson Ferry Road, to the north, where existing businesses and potential redevelopment can both benefit from connection to mixed-use development on the Target site. An east-west street makes a similar connection to Sandy Springs Circle.
Help spark private reinvestment on nearby sites by connecting them into a walkable street network and establishing a strong center of amenity and market-driven investment. Do this by reinforcing the character of buildings and walkable streets that connect beyond the Target block to other portions of City Center.	• Apply the updated development regulations created as part of the master plan process to **shape the form of mixed-use buildings.** • Apply the street section recommendations, created as part of the master plan process, to achieve **a balance of functions along each street.** These guidelines will promote transportation choices, create attractive addresses for development, and where possible, allow on street parking.

PROMOTING THE PLAN'S LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Over the longer term, this plan will prove most effective if the community and its leaders see that it delivers significant value through changes in markets, political leadership and private initiative. Several strategies for plan leadership, community engagement and plan evaluation can help maximize the value the plan produces for Sandy Springs.

STRATEGIES FOR PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Actions to implement the plan should reflect a partnership between private investors and City leadership. The City of Sandy Springs should take the lead on actions that benefit all of the City Center area by carrying out the master plan strategies through action steps described in the plan. It should also periodically refine the plan based on community response to plan results to date (see Strategies for Evaluation on page 43). At the same time, private land owners, investors, business owners, other organizations, and individual consumers will make the majority of investments in the master plan. Their decisions will play a central role in making the most of opportunities on specific sites. Strong City management of the overall plan will provide predictability and coherence that encourage individuals to invest with confidence. The City and private sector

should work together to integrate the efforts of other agencies, such as those providing transportation services, utilities and other infrastructure, into development in City Center.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Demonstrating ongoing returns on investment in City Center will help ensure continued support by the Sandy Springs community and key stakeholders. Financial returns will serve as a key measure, but Sandy Springs should keep in mind other important but less tangible measures of success like community pride and identity. Important strategies to earn continued support for the master plan include:

- **Rely on objective criteria for strategic city investments.** What investments will best promote growth in overall economic and community value over time? What data are needed to answer this question? Utilize the public-private partnership criteria identified in Strategy 7, page 35, along with continuous tracking of private investment resulting from public investment, to help address these questions. Key types of public investments include:
  - > Land acquisition for resale for mixed-use redevelopment
  - > Land acquisition for civic park space, cultural facility, city offices
  - > Targeted infrastructure investments, including street improvements that support walkability, bike and transit use, and needed traffic improvements; public parking that serves multiple uses; burial or other enhancements of above-ground utility lines; and stormwater improvements
- **Continue ongoing communication between the City and key stakeholders** to address new issues and priorities that emerge, as well as day-to-day management of City Center:
  - > Main Street Alliance and/or others engaged with issues important across City Center
  - > Sponsors of specific development projects, as they arise
  - > Partner government agencies such as Fulton County, GDOT and MARTA.
- **Actively market the master plan and help recruit priority tenants and investors.**
- Publicize plan achievements through regular public outreach such as:
  - > City website postings
  - > Press releases
  - > Periodic public meetings

STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION

The City should periodically evaluate the success of plan accomplishments in achieving core goals. Consider these measures of success:

GOAL: Create a unique, vibrant, walkable City Center rich in amenities desired by the community, such as commercial retail, recreational and cultural facilities.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- New choices for retail and dining, distinct from traditional options in the study area, are present and successful.
- New recreation and cultural facilities are present and draw users from around Sandy Springs as well as the immediate City Center area.

GOAL: Catalyze significant market-driven private investment in walkable, mixed-use redevelopment that introduces substantial new dining, amenity retail, and entertainment options. This will both achieve City Center development goals and strengthen the district's ability to support Sandy Springs' fiscal goals.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- The City Center has emerged as a walkable center for living, working, shopping and leisure.
- Investments in a walkable core attract investments on other sites over time.
- The overall level of private investment is in the range of at least $2 to $6 for every $1 of public resources invested.
- City Center emerges as a stronger center of economic development for Sandy Springs.

GOAL: Create an appropriate setting for a new civic/ cultural center that functions as a place of community activity and identity.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- A civic/cultural center, integrating a building with complementary public landscaped areas, is prominently in place. It attracts residents from throughout Sandy Springs to participate in a variety of activities throughout the day and week, with emphasis on cultural and community activities besides day-to-day City business.

GOAL: Create a comprehensive system of infrastructure to support City Center, including walkable streets, stormwater, traffic flow, transit services, bicycling facilities, parking, utilities and signage.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- Private investment increases in response to good quality streets, utilities and other key infrastructure.
- City Center includes places where walking is safe and enjoyable – enhancing the value of adjacent properties.
- More and better access choices are present, including new driving route options, inviting bike facilities and convenient transit services.

GOAL: Introduce a green space network that accommodates a variety of activities; draws activity from City Center development; and provides strong connections to City Center, established neighborhoods and Sandy Springs' open space network.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- A signature set of public parks and plazas distinguishes City Center from other portions of the City and from other communities in the region.
- City Center parks and plazas welcome a wide variety of activities that serve people from throughout Sandy Springs as well as the City Center area.
- City Center parks and plazas are easily accessible from existing nearby neighborhoods, which gain value from their presence.

In sum, the master plan should be evaluated for its ability to enhance quality of place in City Center in ways that make all of Sandy Springs proud. This means preserving existing assets, attracting reinvestment where appropriate, and guiding that reinvestment to ensure that it meets a high standard of value. The plan should establish a context that enables as many individuals as possible to participate in building City Center in ways that add value for everyone. This represents a departure from past patterns of development that promoted individual investments but did not necessarily coordinate them in a way that created mutual value. The City Center Master Plan, by contrast, should be held to the higher standard of becoming the center of activity and identity for every resident of and visitor to Sandy Springs.

APPENDICES
FOR THE 2012 SANDY SPRINGS CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN

Appendices

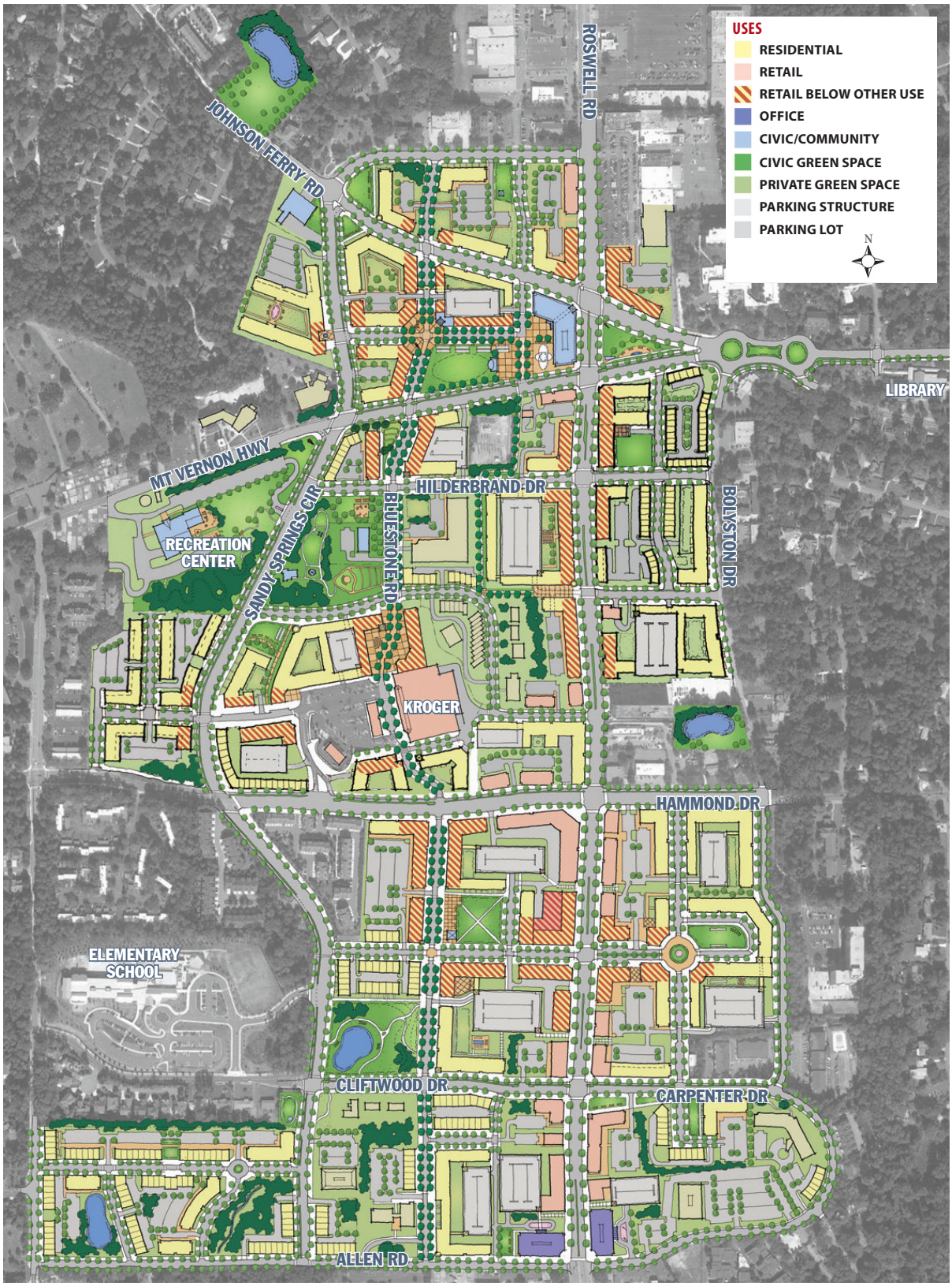
PAGE

47 Appendix A: Long-Term Illustrative Development Scenario

50 Appendix B: Proposed Street Sections

67 Appendix C: Public Green Space Network

Exhibit 19: Long-Term Illustrative Development Scenario

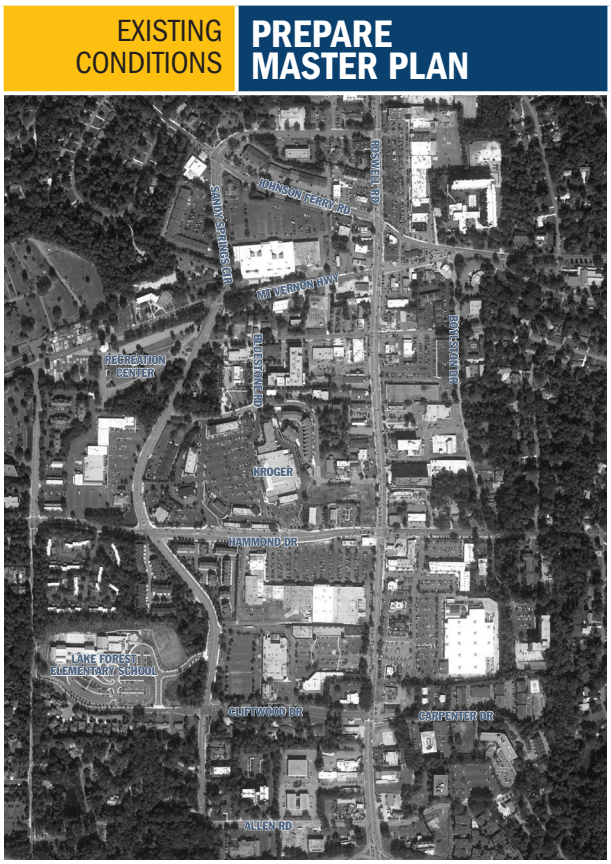


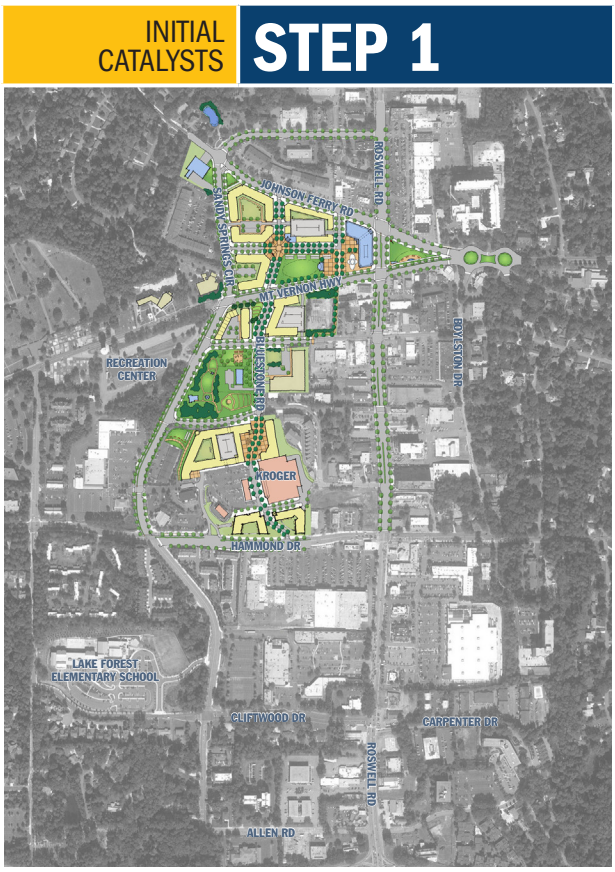
The long-term illustrative plan adds more detail south of Hammond to reflect developer interest in the area and incorporates an extensive pedestrian network of multipurpose paths and comfortable sidewalks to facilitate connections between areas.

Development phases

These plan views illustrate one scenario for sequential reinvestment in City Center infrastructure and properties. The master plan recommends specific near-term actions the City can take to achieve the investments shown in Step 1; these investments offer the greatest likelihood of spurring private investment in nearby City Center properties. Steps 2 through 5 illustrate a possible sequence of further redevelopment on other parcels by property owners at their option. City policy should support such reinvestment through companion investments such as street improvements.

Exhibit 20: Potential Development Phases



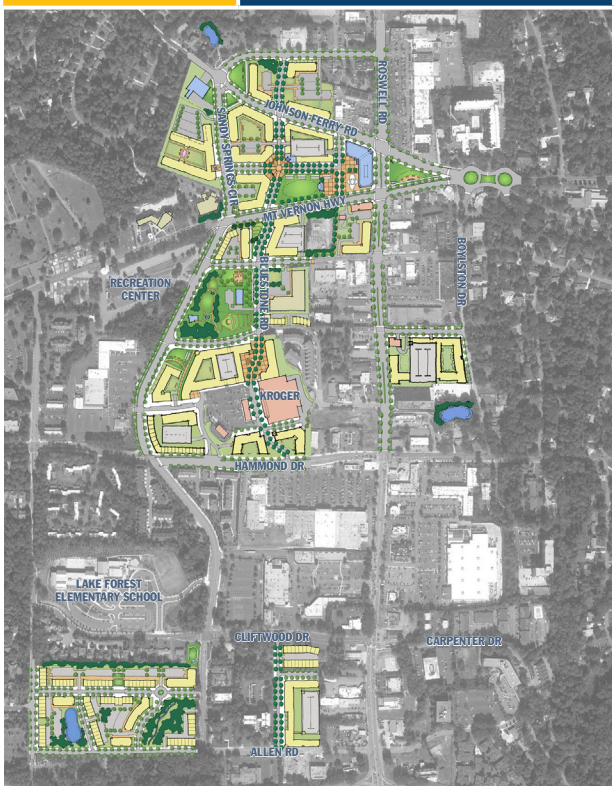


USES

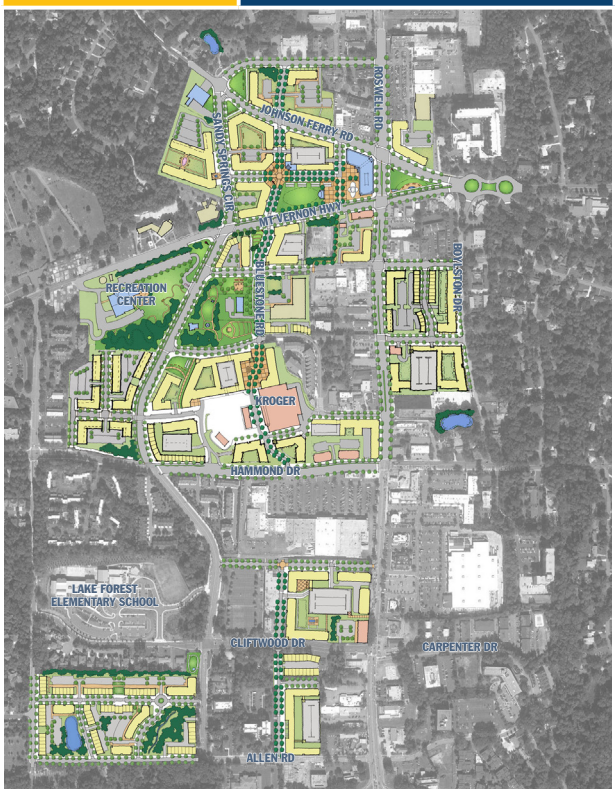
- RESIDENTIAL
- RETAIL
- RETAIL BELOW OTHER USE
- OFFICE
- CIVIC/COMMUNITY
- CIVIC GREEN SPACE
- PRIVATE GREEN SPACE
- PARKING STRUCTURE
- PARKING LOT

NOTE: THIS LEGEND APPLIES TO ALL ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS ON THIS PAGE AND THE FACING PAGE.

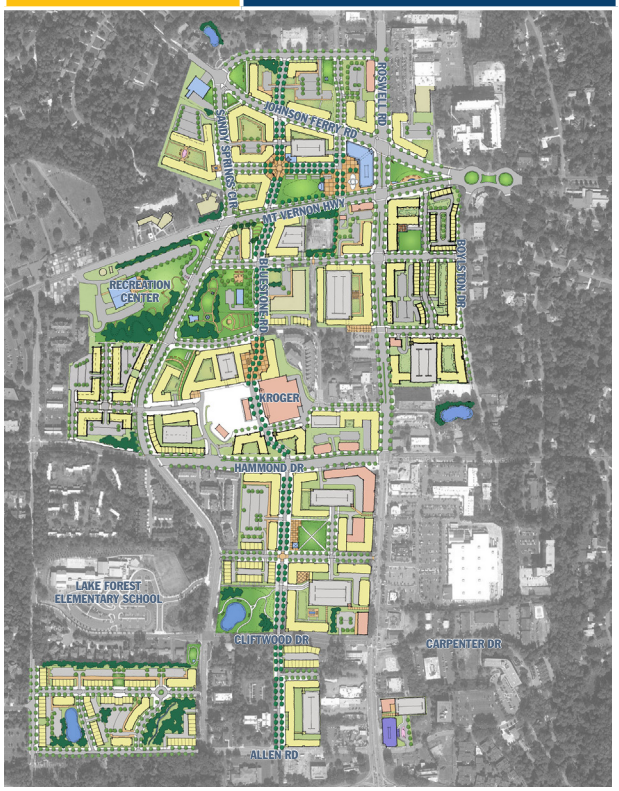
AS OPPORTUNITY EMERGES **STEP 2**



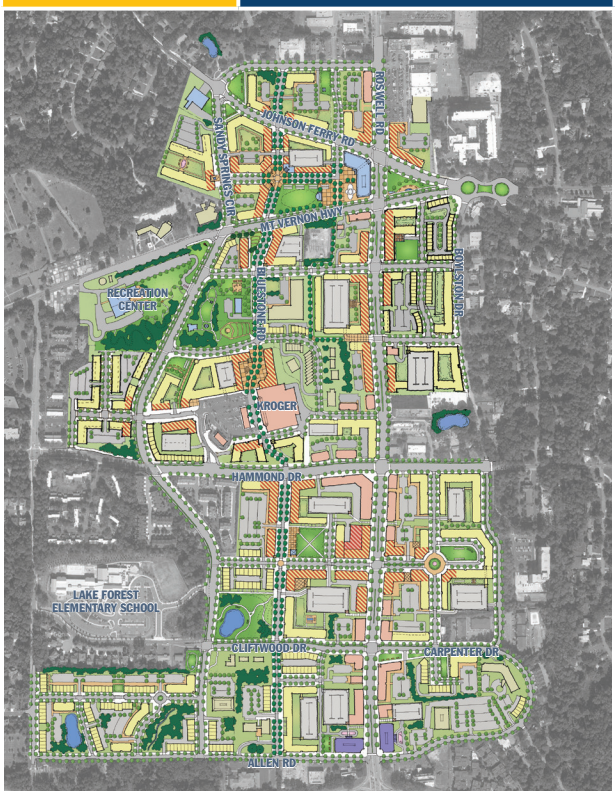
AS OPPORTUNITY EMERGES **STEP 3**



AS OPPORTUNITY EMERGES **STEP 4**

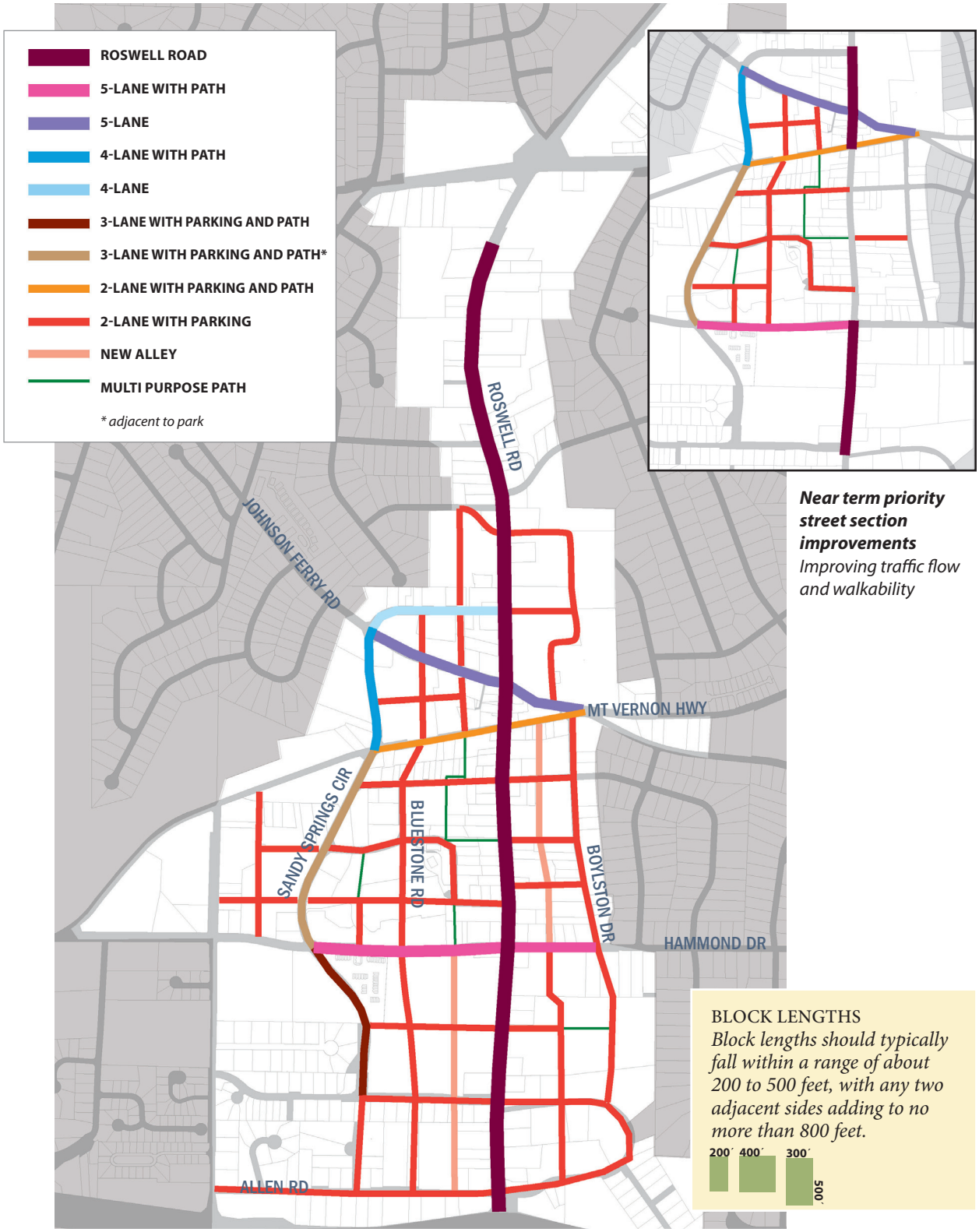


AS OPPORTUNITY EMERGES **STEP 5**



Step 5 is the same as the map on page 47 in Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 21: Proposed Street Section Key Diagram



Grid network expansion as opportunity allows—*In most cases, new street corridors would be created as part of mixed-use redevelopment on large sites through partnership between the owner and the City. Lines indicate recommended street section type based on existing right of way and design goals.*

Exhibit 22: Street Section Comparison

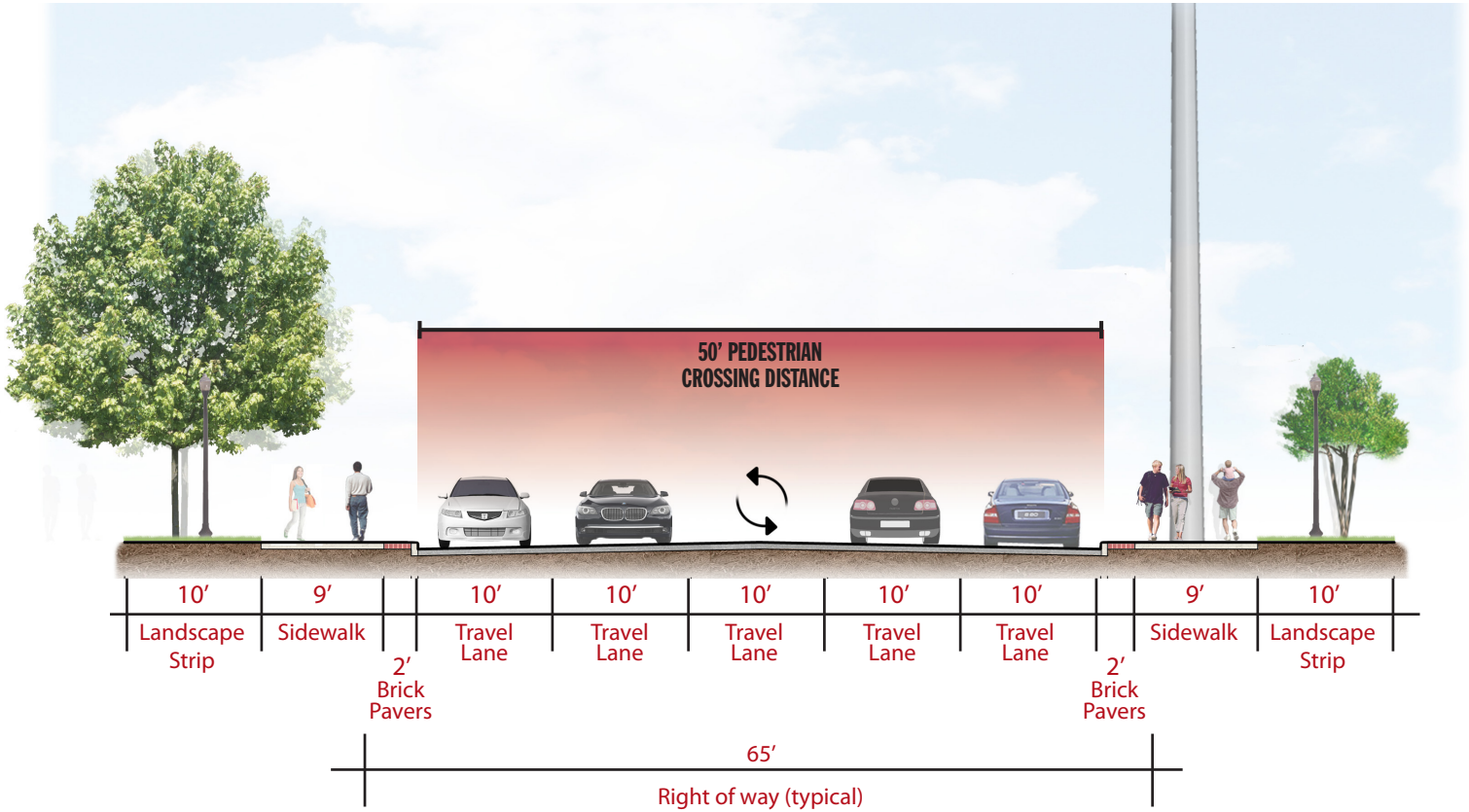
STREET SECTION	ROW WIDTH	TRAVEL LANES	MEDIAN?	BIKE?	MIN PED CROSSING DISTANCE	MAX PED CROSSING DISTANCE	EXAMPLE STREET APPLICATION	SIDE-WALK WIDTH
Roswell Road	65′	4	Yes	No	20′	50′	Roswell Road	9′
5-lane with path	110′	4	No	Off-street path	60′	60′	Sandy Springs Circle, Hammond Drive	10′
5-lane	91′	4	No	No	55′	55′	Johnson Ferry Road	10′
4-lane with path	94′	4	No	Off-street path	48	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
4-lane with path—alternate	76′	4	No	Off-street path	48	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	6′
4-lane	84′	4	No	No	48′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
3-lane with parking and path*	86′	2	Yes	Off-street path	11′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	8′
3-lane with parking and path	92′	2	Yes	Off-street path	11′	48′	Sandy Springs Circle	10′
2-lane with parking and path	84′	2	No	Off-street path	20′	36′	Mt. Vernon Highway	10′
2-lane with parking	74′	2	No	Sharrow	22′	38′	Hildebrand Drive	10′
new alley	36′	2	No	No	24′	24′	Where shown on diagram	6′
multipurpose path	20′	N/A	No	Yes	12′	12′	Where shown on diagram	12′

** adjacent to park or green space*

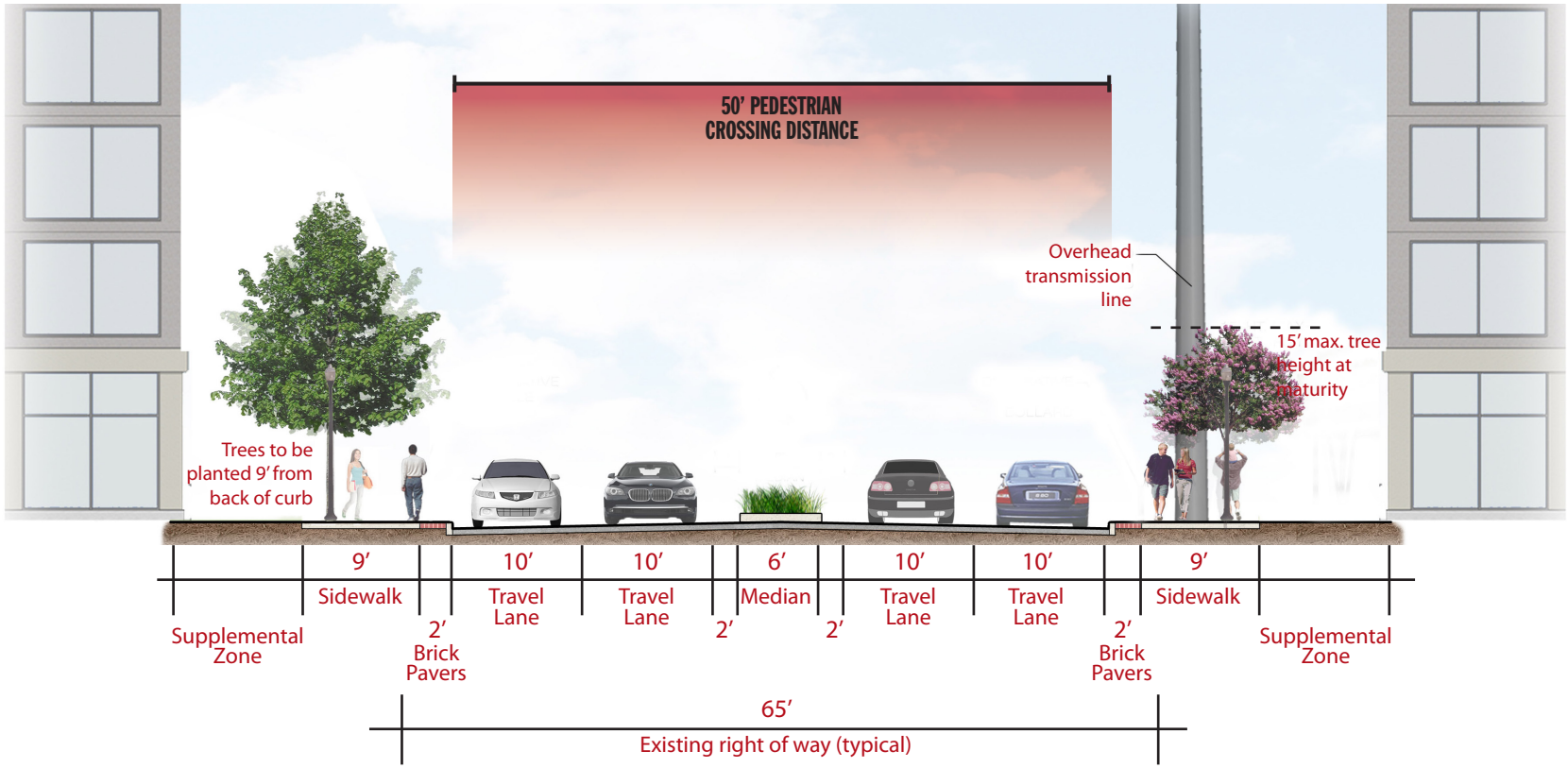
Where possible, City Center will have "Complete Streets," an emerging national best practice that maximizes travel options by accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, cars, and bus transit (in appropriate locations).

NOTE
Street sections contained in this appendix show the typical conditions recommended along selected streets. Application may require minor variations in these elements and dimensions to accommodate right-of-way limitations in some locations, special needs at intersections, or other specific conditions. Transitions between section types along a street or at intersecting streets should emphasize continuity of travel lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and off-street paths.

Existing Roswell Road Cross Section

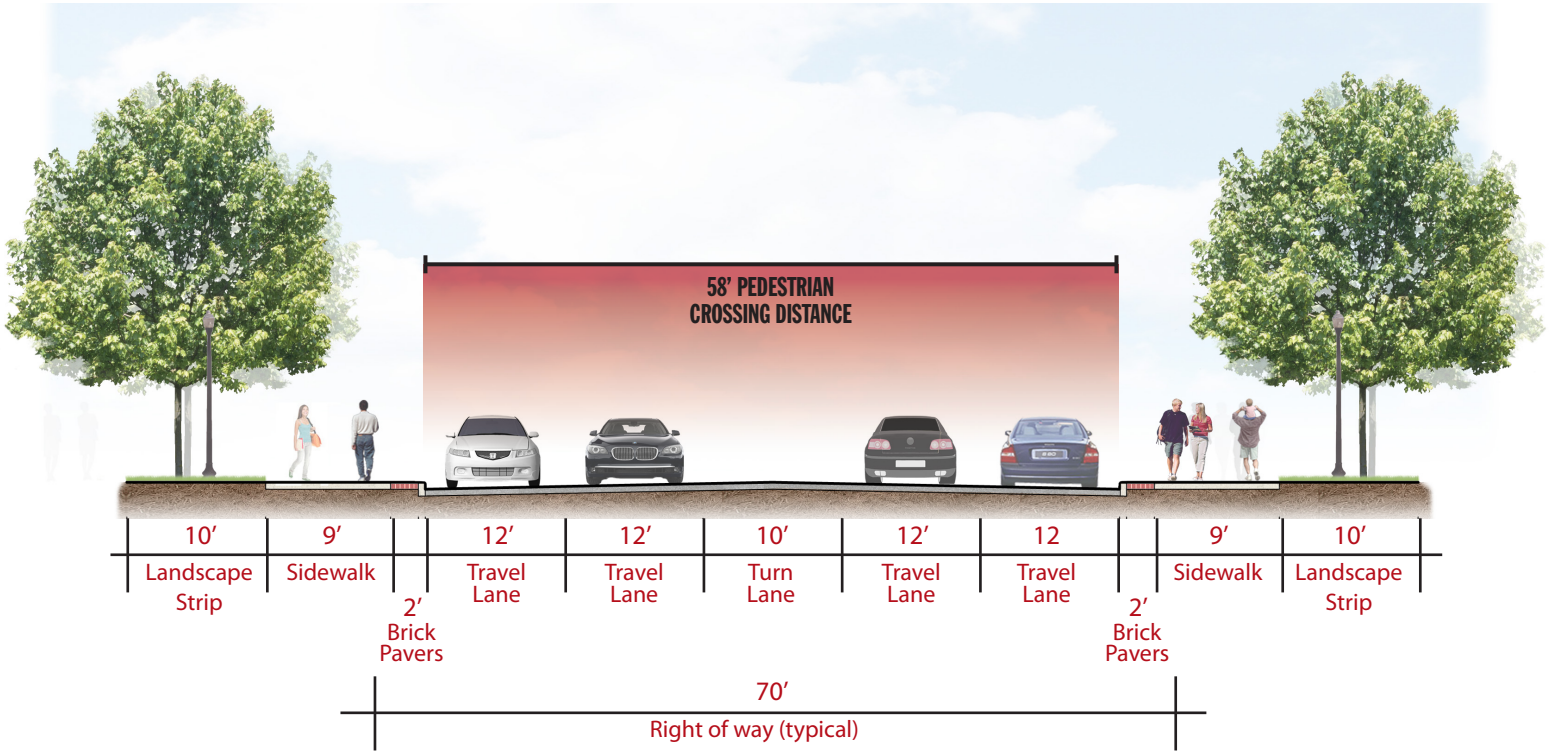


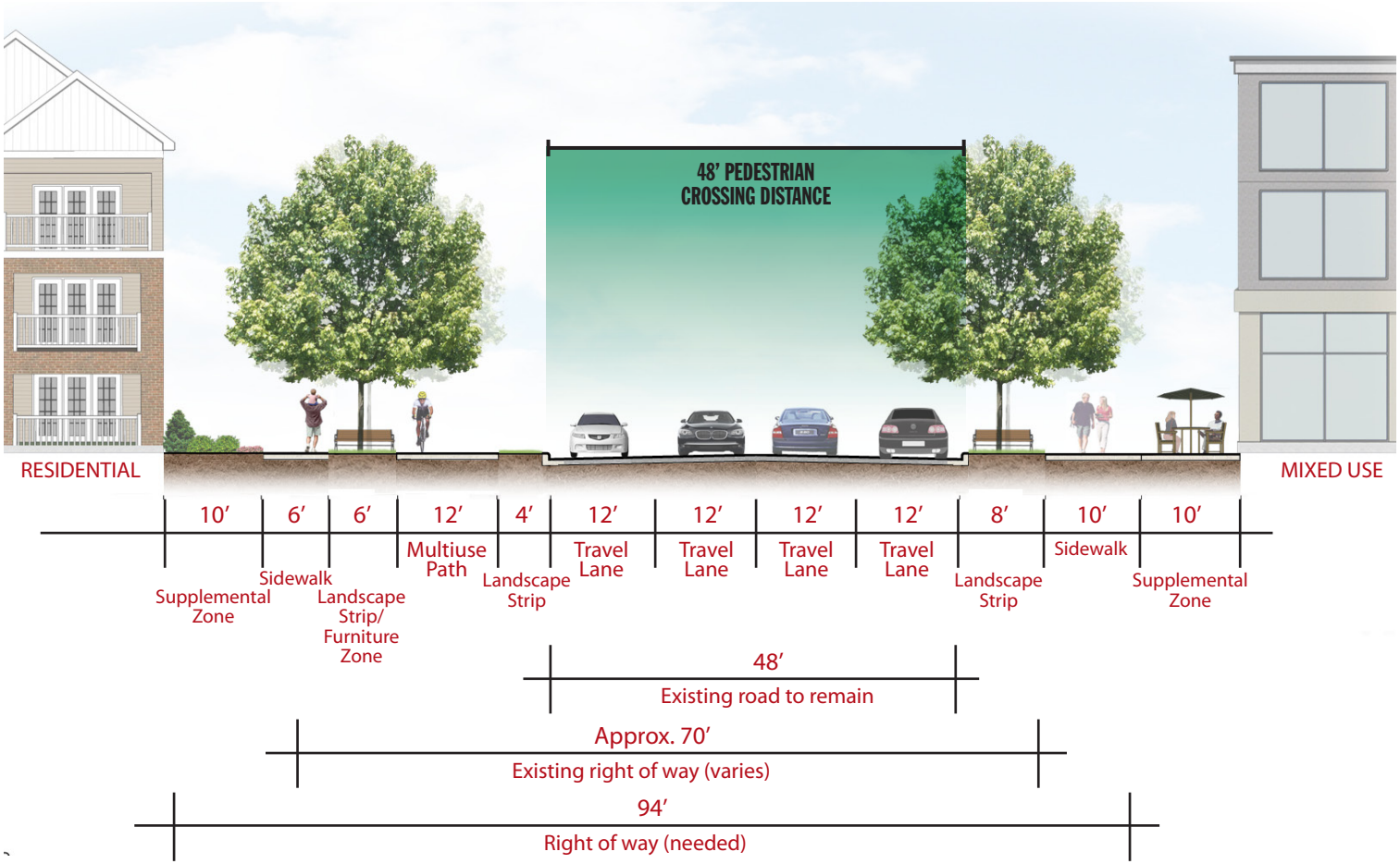
Note:
- Supplemental zone per zoning code



Note:
- Supplemental zone per zoning code

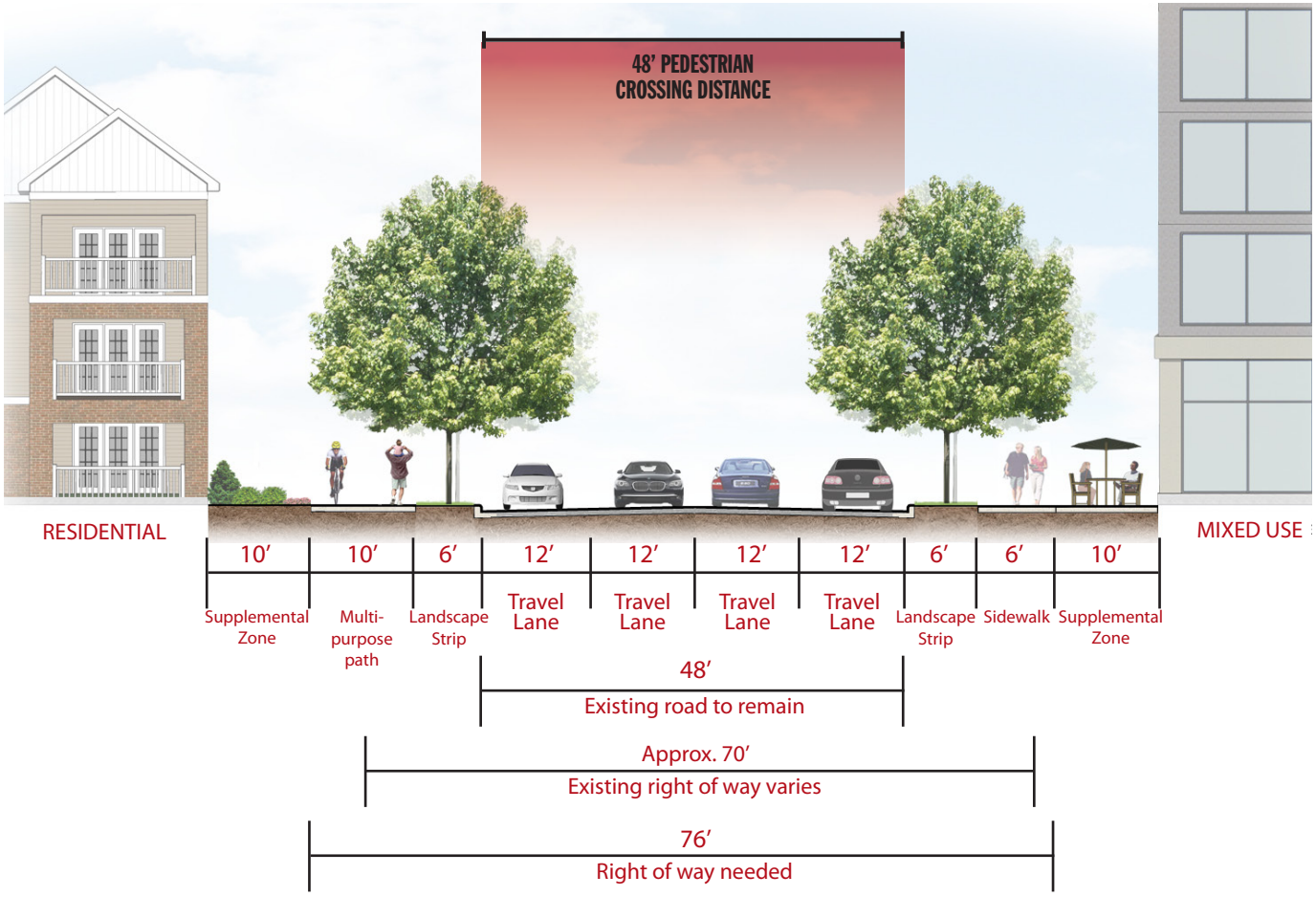
Existing Sandy Springs Circle Street Section



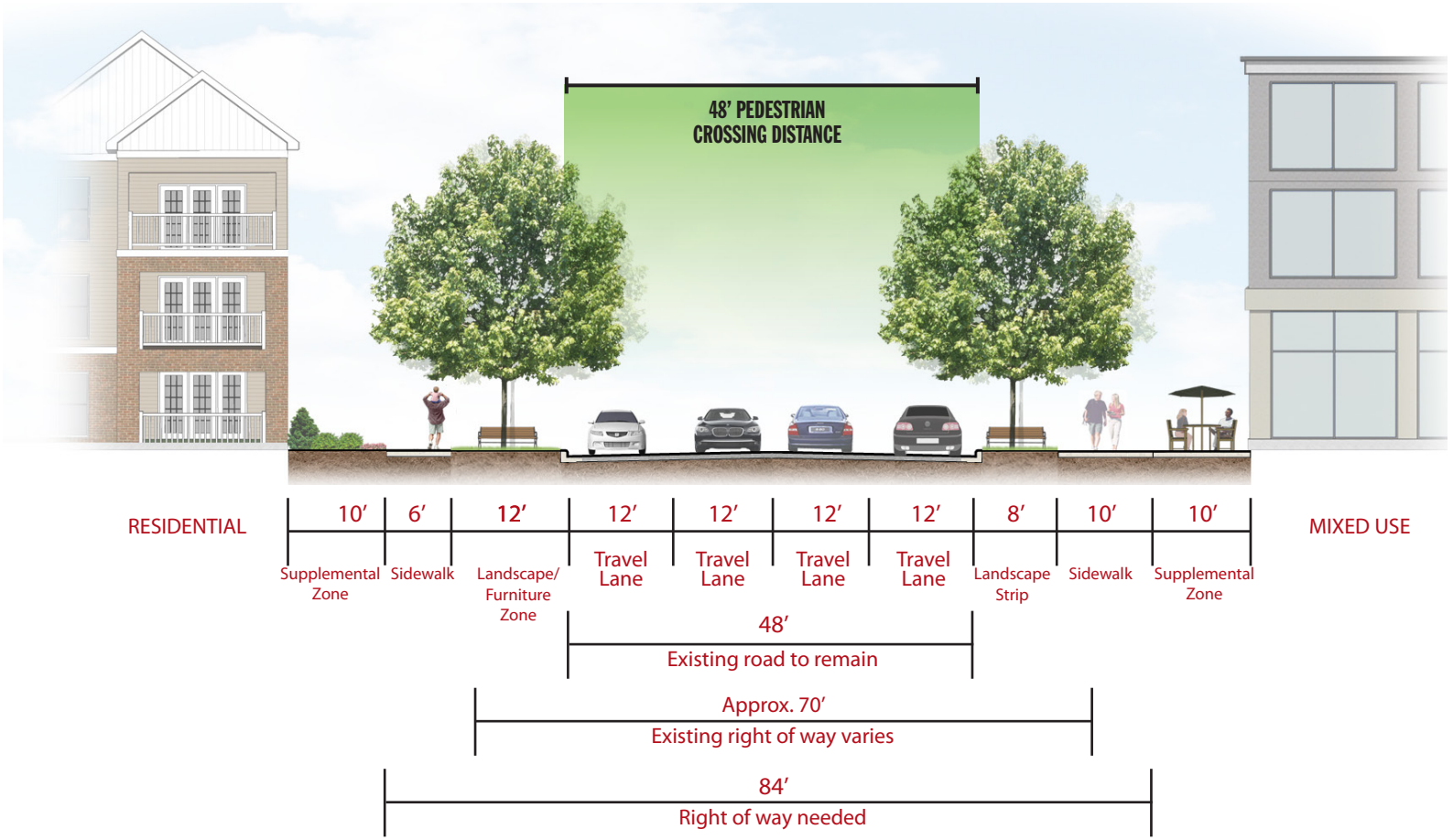


Note: Supplemental zone per zoning code

Alternate Proposed 4-Lane With Path Street Section

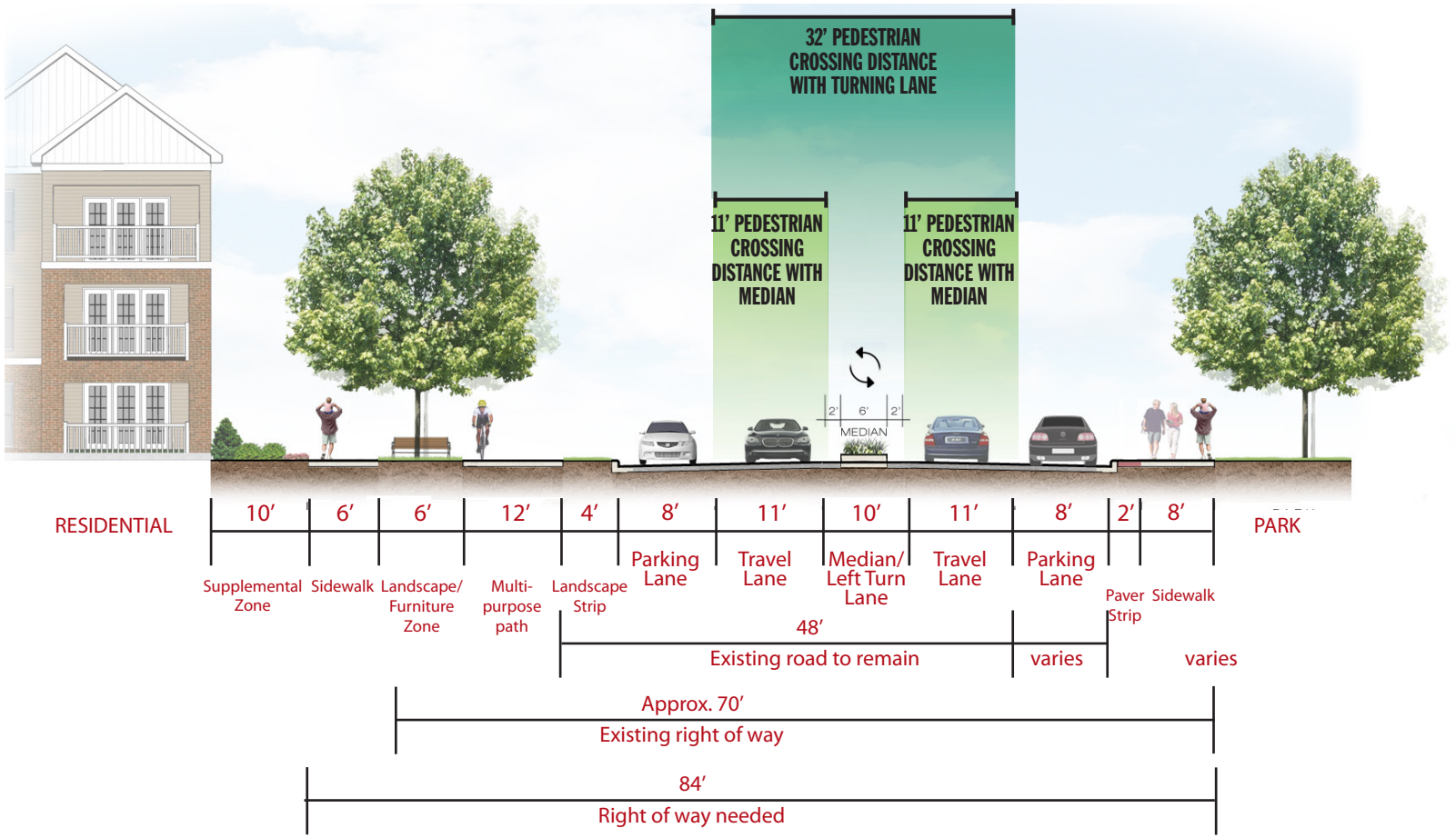


Note: Supplemental zone per zoning code

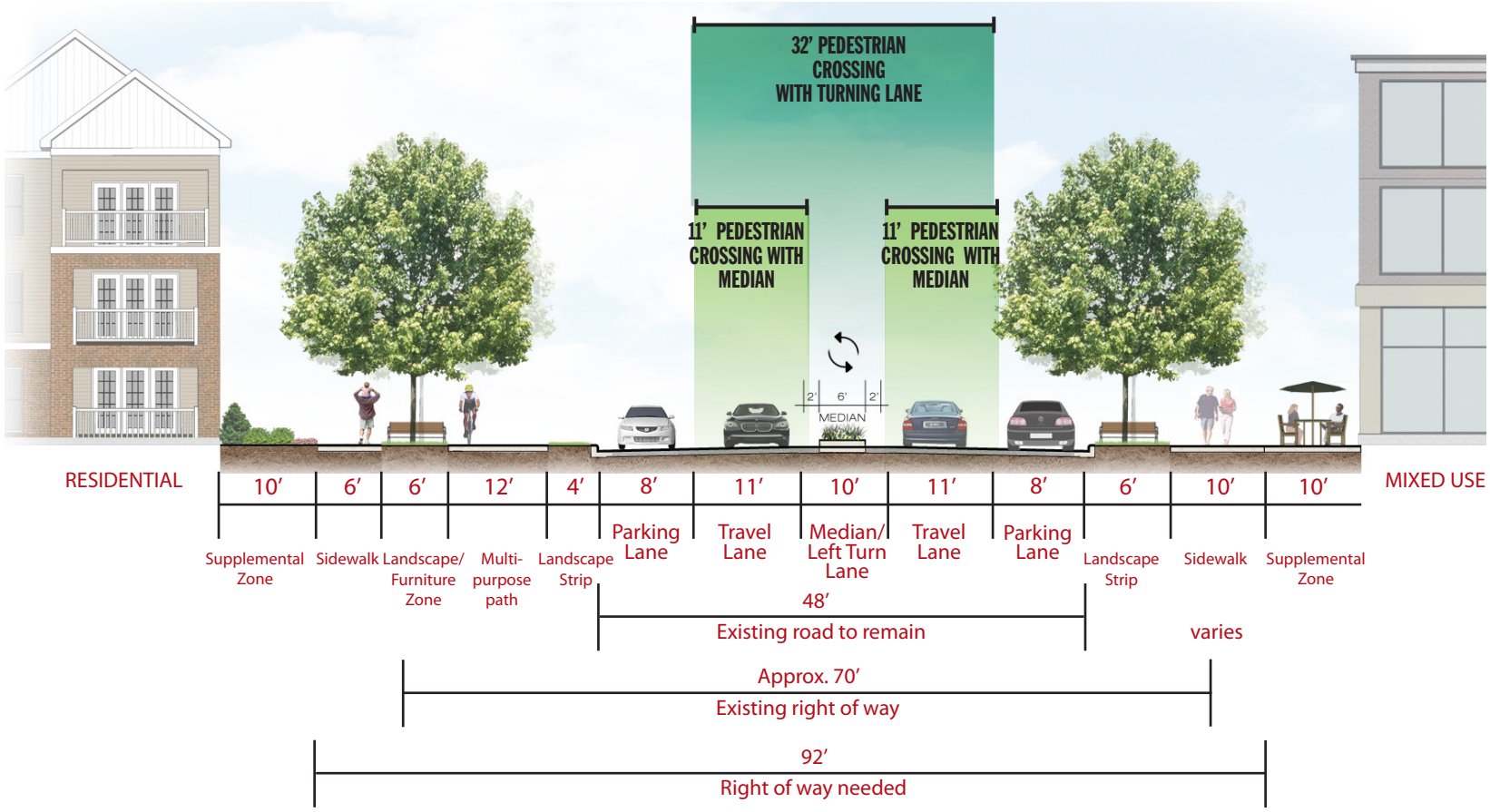


Note: Supplemental zone per zoning code

Proposed 3-Lane With Parking And Path (Adjacent to Park) Street Section

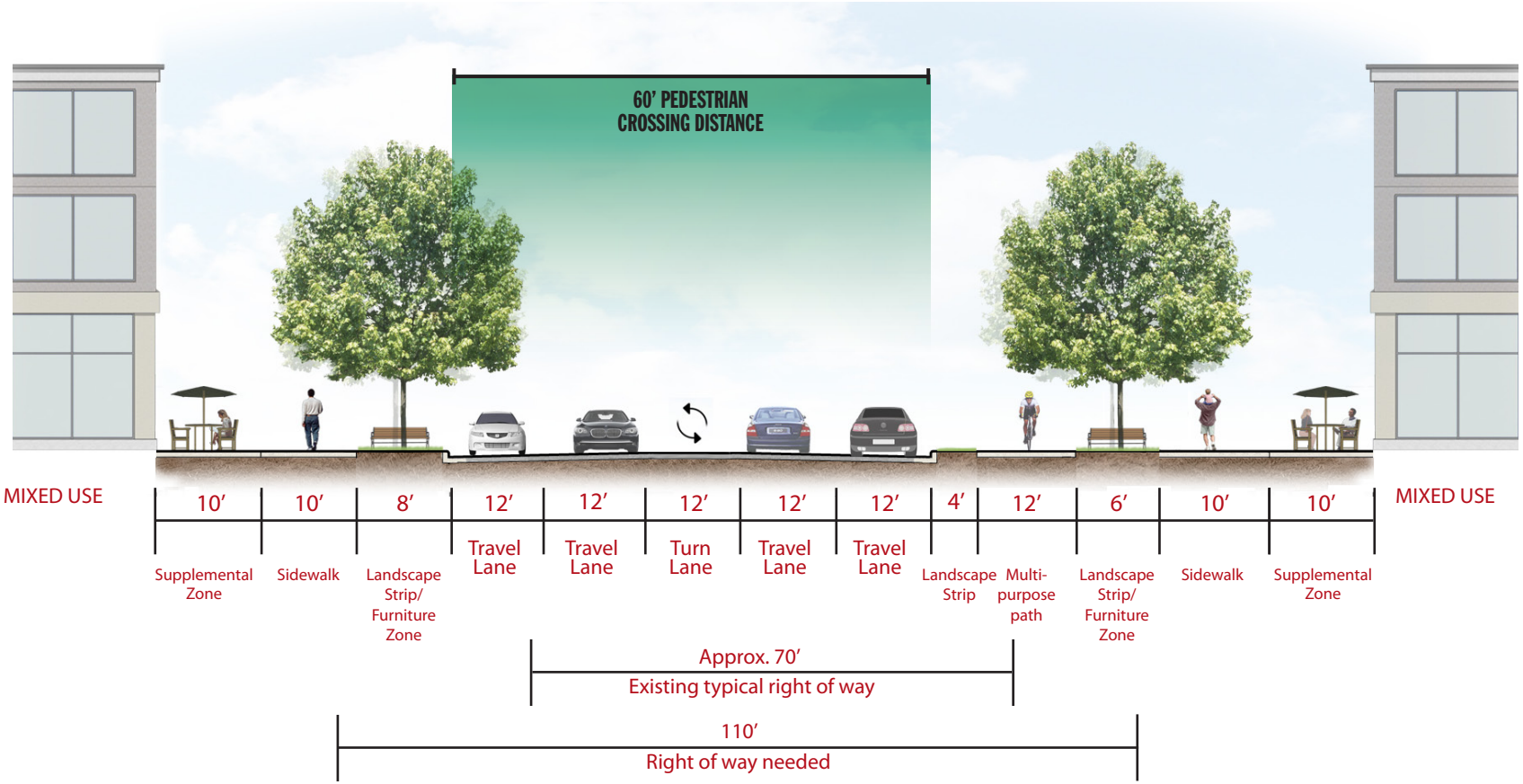


Note: Supplemental zone per zoning code

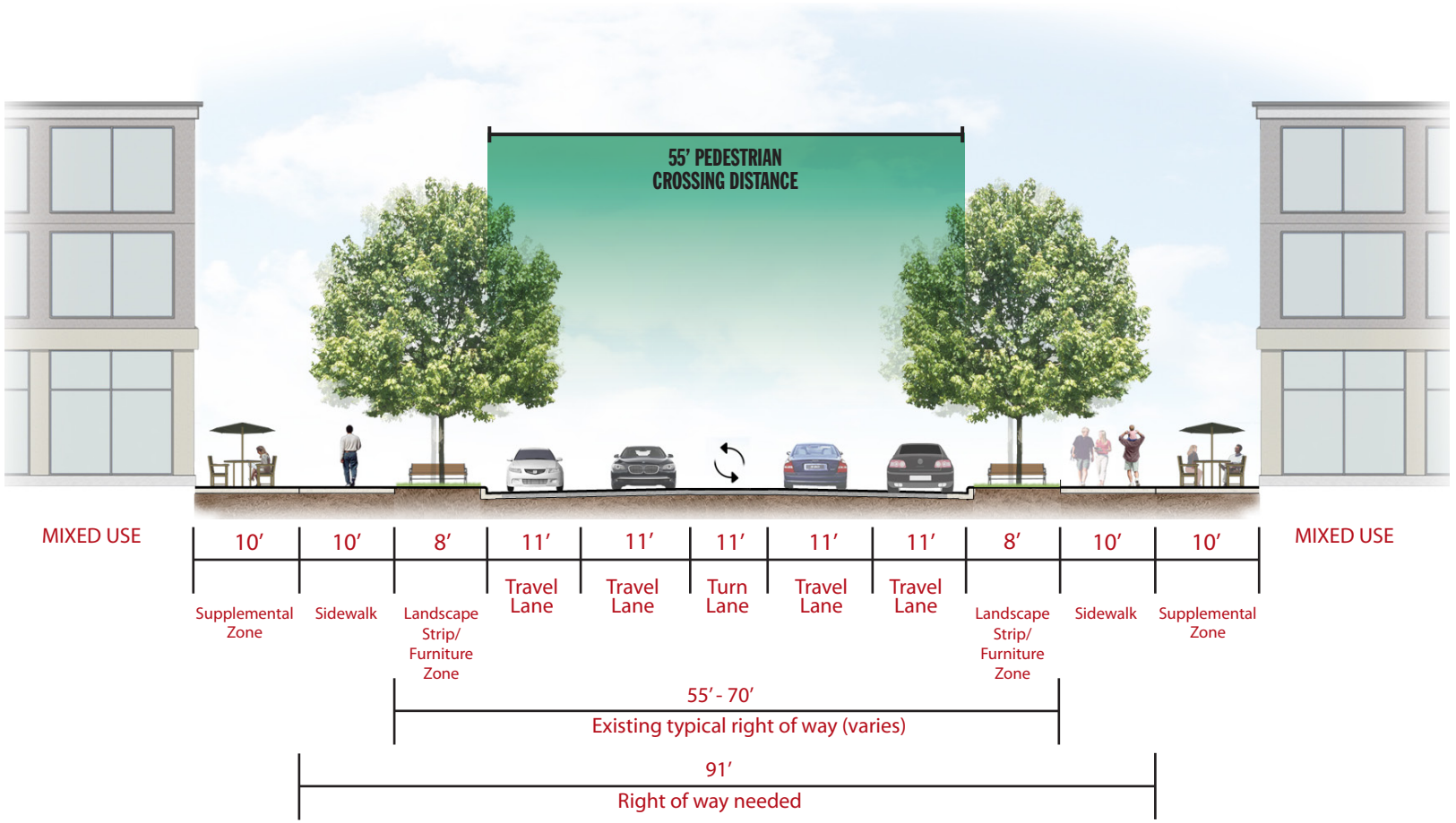


Note: Supplemental zone per zoning code

Proposed 5-Lane With Path Street Section

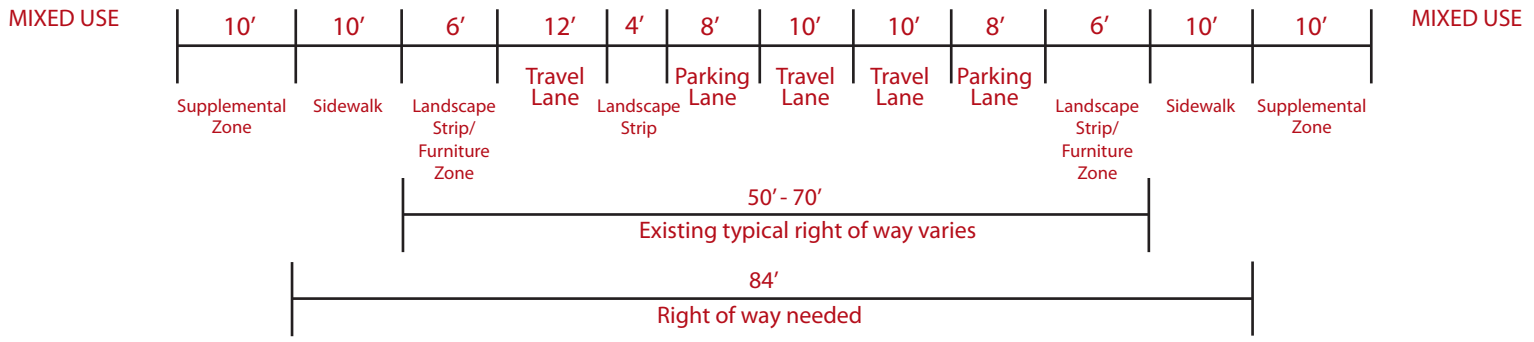


Note:
- Remove right turn lanes
- Provide 8′ on street parking where needed
- Supplemental zone per zoning code

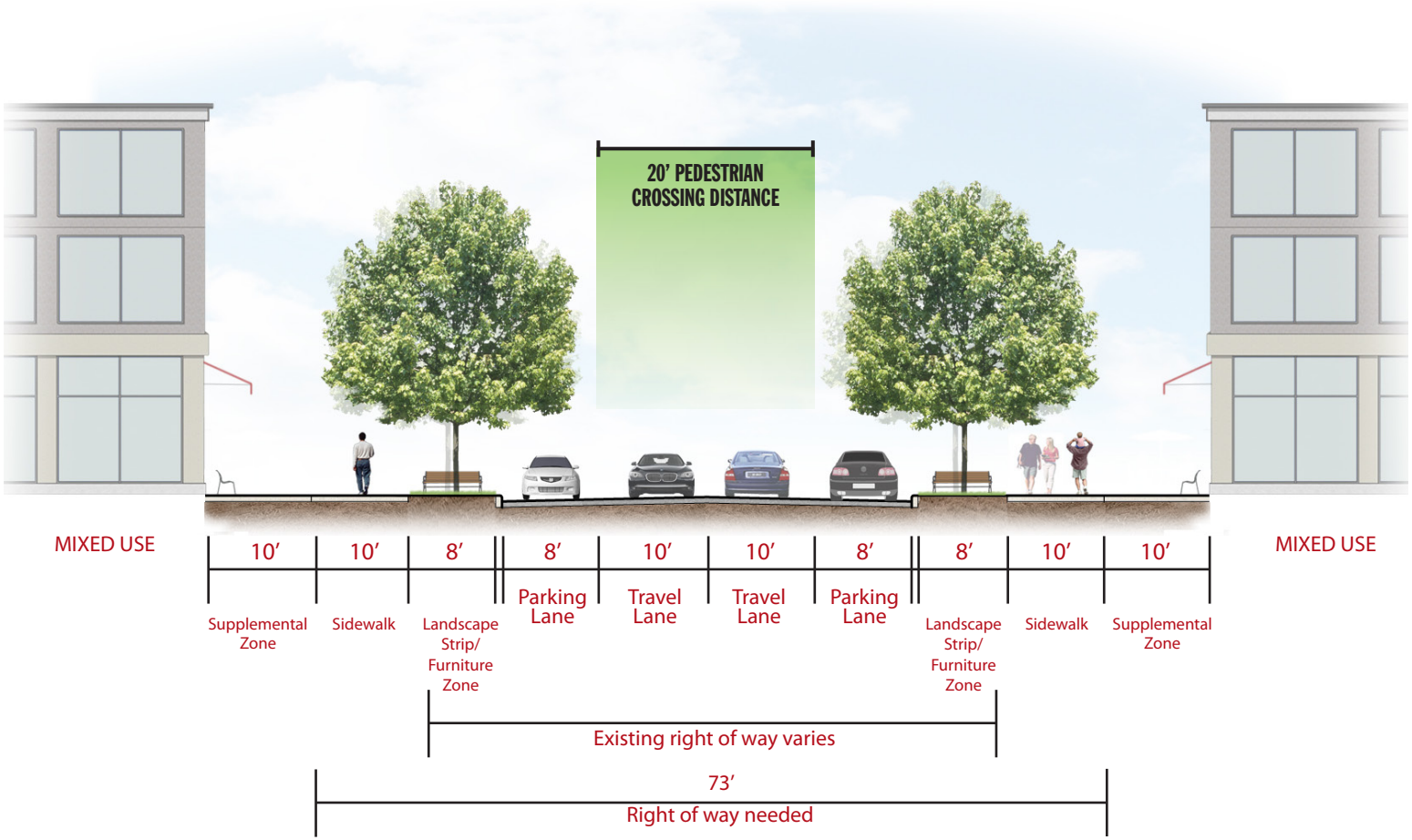


Note:
- Shared lane markings striped on through lanes
- Supplemental zone per zoning code

Proposed 2-Lane With Parking And Path Street Section

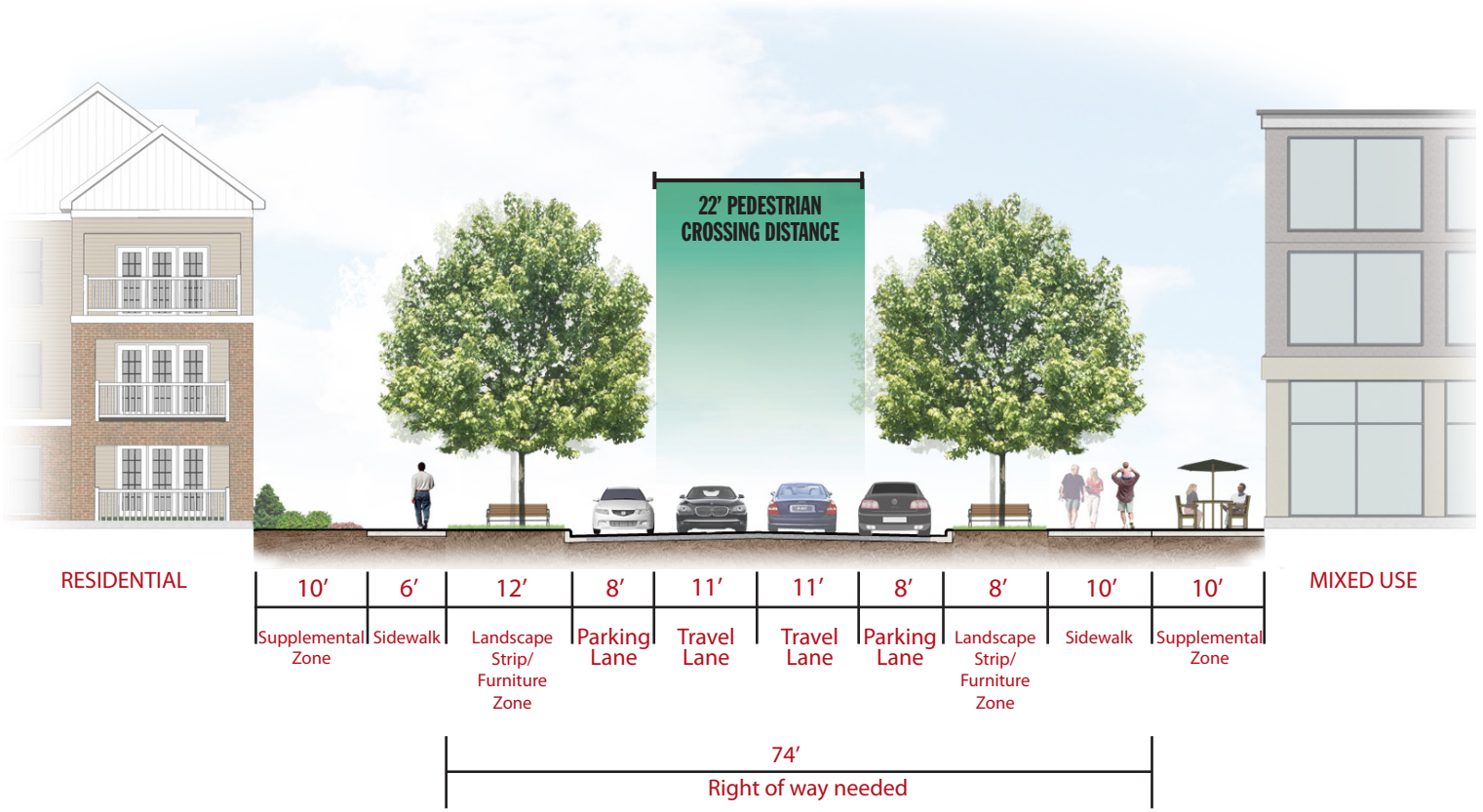


Note:
- Provide left turn lanes where needed
- Parking eliminated at left turn lanes
- Supplemental zone per zoning code



Note:
- Provide left turn lanes where needed
- Supplemental zone per zoning code

Proposed 2-Lane With Parking Street Section



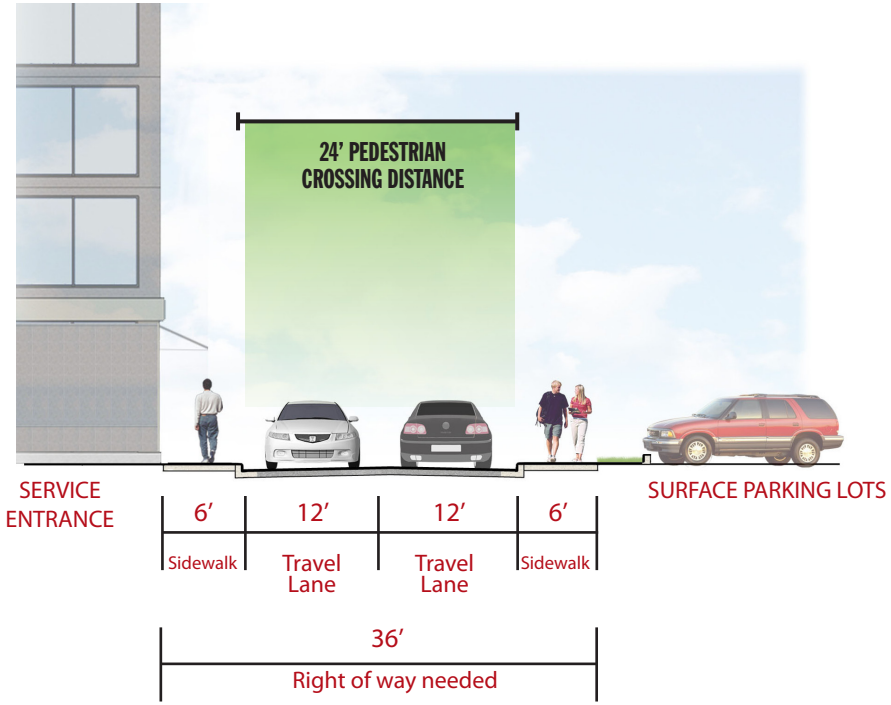
Note:

- Provide left turn lanes where needed

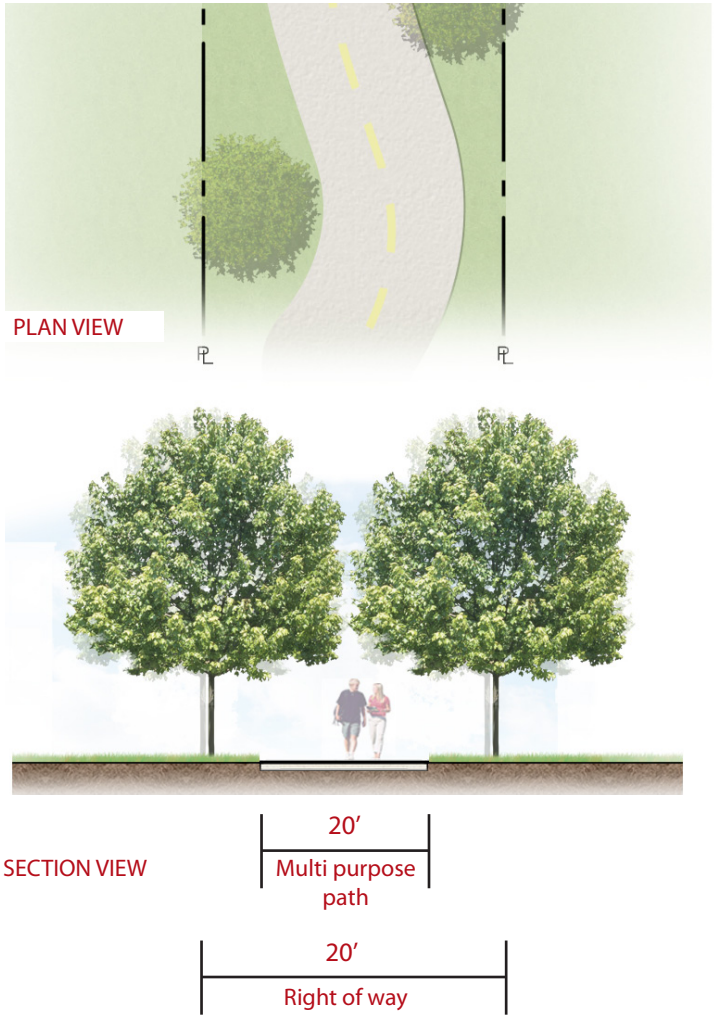
- Shared lane markings striped on through lanes

- Streetscape for mixed use versus residential as shown above

- Supplemental zone per zoning code


24' PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING DISTANCE
SERVICE
ENTRANCE
SURFACE PARKING LOTS
6'
12'
12'
6'
Sidewalk
Travel
Lane
Travel
Lane
Sidewalk
36'
Right of way needed

Proposed Multipurpose Path Section



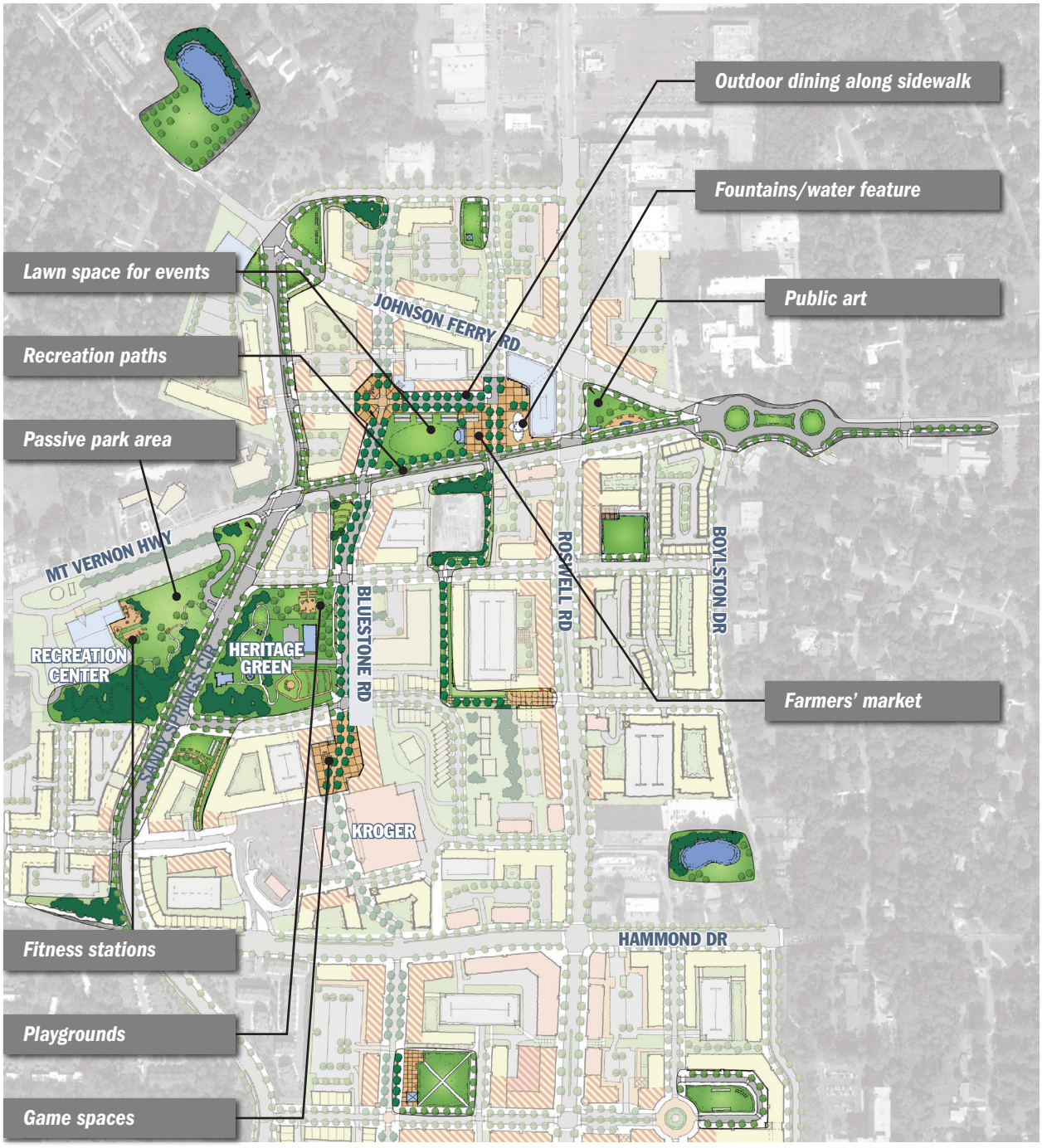
Public Green Space Network

A network of public green spaces will play a key role in City Center's success. Exhibit 23 on page 68 identifies opportunities to create that network, with green spaces that support a variety of activities, in the heart of City Center along Sandy Springs Circle, Mt. Vernon Highway and Bluestone Road. In these locations these activities will collectively have a dramatic impact. Additional areas of green space will be added as redevelopment occurs. More detail on the desired features of priority green space appears below.

A City Green, should form the heart of City Center and a high-profile center of activity, community and identity.

- The City Green anchors the City Center green space network, which is connected by multiuse paths, sidewalks, and pedestrian-friendly streets.
- New housing and dining opportunities on adjacent blocks should integrate green space to create a setting that stays active weekdays, evenings and weekends.
- Public green spaces should be dispersed throughout the City Center, with each of its neighborhoods having at least one signature green space. This broad distribution of green spaces will help attract new investment to more locations, and put park amenities closer to nearby neighborhoods.
- A City Green at the heart of City Center should be versatile enough to accommodate a range of activities, from the farmers' market, festivals, and concerts to quiet relaxation, evening strolls and picnics.
- Numerous opportunities for community interaction, coupled with distinctive design, will help create a new center of identity for Sandy Springs.

Exhibit 23: Green Space Activity Elements



During the planning process, community members identified a series of green space elements they wanted to see in City Center. These opinions took different forms and accommodated diverse activities, from farmers' markets to passive people watching. These elements would attract a broad range of people to City Center, helping keep it active throughout the day and week.

GREEN SPACE ACTIVITY ELEMENTS

Lawn space for events

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Larger and more accessible than Heritage Green (1/2 acre)
- Suitable for concerts, festivals
- Flexible for informal use at other times (Frisbee™, picnics)

Recreation paths

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

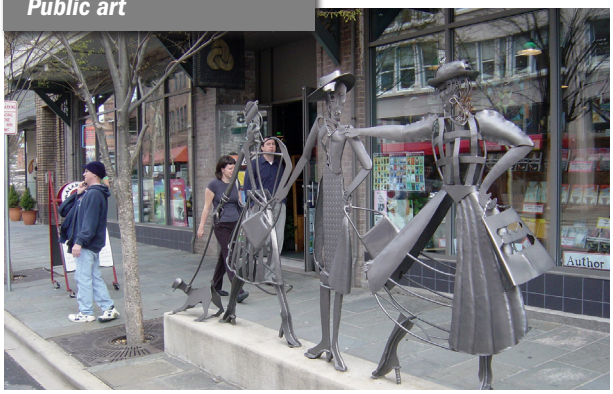
- Multimodal paths for biking, jogging, walking that connect school, library, and parks
- Connections to sidewalks and designated biking streets
- Connections to Sandy Springs and Dunwoody MARTA stations
- Connection to Abernathy Greenway Park and other City parks

Outdoor dining along sidewalks

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- In proximity to sidewalk and near or facing programmed public park/plaza spaces and civic facility
- Active storefronts block to block, with a critical mass of at least four block faces
- Convenient public parking
- Designed to take advantage of views (near and far)
- Shade trees
- Visibility and easy access

Public art



DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Integration directly into public space elements: water features, seating, transit shelters, paving, etc.
- Engagement of local artists/community members in concept and production
- Integration throughout green space network

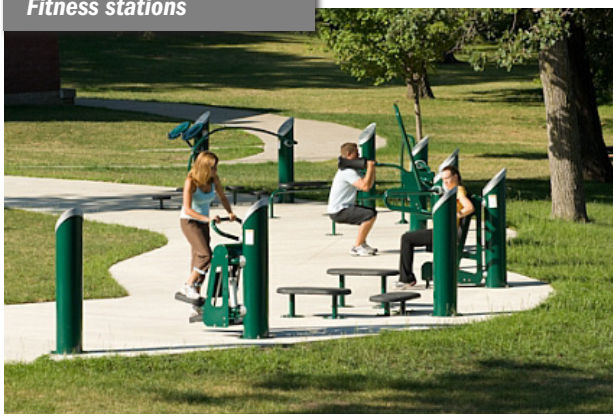
GREEN SPACE ACTIVITY ELEMENTS

Passive park area

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Walking paths
- Quiet sitting areas
- Significant tree canopy
- Gardens and/or natural vegetation
- Dual purpose stormwater ponds

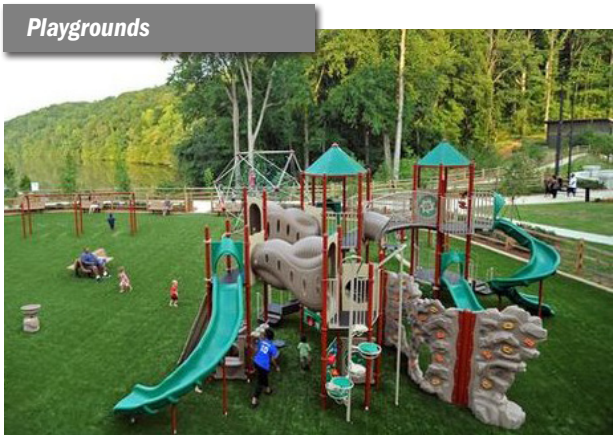
Fitness stations



DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Accessible by sidewalks, multiuse paths and streets
- Located within park areas
- Designed to encourage use by all ages
- Shade trees

Playgrounds



DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Engaging play equipment ("playable art")
- A mix of sun and shade and seating for adults
- Accessible along safe sidewalks and paths
- Near retail and convenient public parking
- Candidate for inclusion in early phases of implementation

GREEN SPACE ACTIVITY ELEMENTS

Fountains/Water Features

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Accommodates play
- Continuing theme in multiple places
- Highlights topography where present
- Interpretive history of original springs
- White noise opportunity to mask traffic noise

Farmers market

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- 1.5 acres to accommodate growth and associated arts events (1 acre today)
- Suitable surface for vehicle and heavy foot traffic
- Shaded areas

Game spaces

DESIRED FEATURES ▶

- Variety of activities appealing to a broad range of people
- Located near dining, retail and event spaces
- Located amidst residential neighborhood

RESOLUTION NO. 2012 - _____

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF FULTON

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2012 SANDY SPRINGS CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN PREPARED BY GOODY CLANCY, DATED DECEMBER 18, 2012; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

W I T N E S S E T H:

WHEREAS, the City of Sandy Springs ("City") is a municipal corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia, and is charged with providing public services to its residents; and

WHEREAS, the City revised its established priorities in 2011 to place a greater emphasis on downtown redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, to further this priority, City Council allocated significant funding in the FY12 General Fund Budget for the preparation of a downtown master plan to help guide the City in its decision-making process regarding public policy and investment in a City center area ("City Center"); and

WHEREAS, the City set a number of goals for the planning process, including: public investment as a catalyst for redevelopment; maximum return on the City's investment; creation of a sense of place; improve walkability; creation of multi-generational appeal for current and future demographics; solve existing problems including lack of stormwater infrastructure, lack of available parking, lack of greenspace/open space, lack of transportation infrastructure, and aesthetics such as overhead utilities; and

WHEREAS, to further these goals, the City issued a request for qualifications ("RFQ") on January 5, 2012 to identify a nationally recognized planning firm to develop a master plan for the City Center and a 10-year update to the Downtown Sandy Springs LCI Study ("Master Plan"); and

WHEREAS, submissions to the RFQ were received on January 30, 2012 and evaluated by a team assembled by the City Manager, resulting in a contract award ("Contract") for the development of a Master Plan to Goody Clancy as the proposer presenting the best approach to meet the needs of the City; and

WHEREAS, Goody Clancy proceeded pursuant to the Contract to assess the City's current plans, to conduct a market analysis, to solicit and input public feedback through a series of public meetings and presentations, and to draft the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan responds to the goals set by the City by: (1) promoting community interaction through a wide variety of activities, walkable streets and convenient parking, and connecting the City Center to surrounding City neighborhoods; (2) expanding green spaces with a network of sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use recreational paths connecting the City Center to surrounding City neighborhoods; (3) inviting spontaneous fun through a destination cultural venue, a concentration of residents, workers and visitors, and an area that invites walking, outdoor dining, recreation and other activities; (4) nurturing unique local identity formed through a walkable setting with zoning and design guidelines that encourage buildings to frame distinctive, attractive address streets and the shared experiences that are enjoyed in the City Center; (5) making the City Center walkable, providing access to transit services and on-street parking, linking activities and destinations within the City Center area; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan represents the aspirations of the City, providing guidance for future development and taking precedence over the current land map governing the area to be known as City Center; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that after adoption of the Master Plan setting the vision for the City, regulatory processes will be evaluated and implemented following the City's processes through the City's Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, such regulatory processes shall include, but not be limited to, creating zoning classification(s) for the City Center area, adopting an ordinance(s) to accomplish the goals set forth in the Master Plan, reserving certain rights-of-ways, and conducting a study of parking areas in the City Center area.

THEREFORE, IT IS NOW RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The City Council adopts the Master Plan presented by Good Clancy as the City's vision for the development of the City Center, in substantially the form attached to this resolution.

2. The City Council authorizes the City Manager and his staff to proceed with the necessary steps subsequent to the adoption of the Master Plan with the goal of implementing the Master Plan in substantially the form attached to this resolution.

3. The City Council authorizes the City Manager to execute any documents and to take any other steps which may be necessary to effectuate the intent of this Resolution.

4. To the extent any portion of this Resolution is declared to be invalid, unenforceable, or nonbinding, that shall not affect the remaining portions of this Resolution.

5. All provisions of City resolutions inconsistent with this Resolution are hereby repealed.

6. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

THIS RESOLUTION is adopted this _____ day of _____, 2012.

_____
Eva Galambos, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Michael Casey, City Clerk
(SEAL)