

5.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

A thorough understanding of an area's land use and development characteristics is needed before one can determine the appropriate transit solutions required to serve it. This section provides this understanding by examining the corridor's existing and planned land uses, as well as its land use planning policies. Recent real estate and development trends have also been examined to anticipate future development and the role it may play on future transportation needs.

Land use plans and policies have been studied specifically in relation to transit support. The majority of the study area is already supportive of transit, as evidenced by MARTA rail and bus lines and the Cliff shuttle service. Since the purpose of this study is to determine the appropriateness of additional premium transit service, at the level of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), or Heavy Rail Transit (HRT), the land use in the corridor has been examined for its support of these types of transit. When transit support is mentioned it is specifically referring to premium transit support. A description of thresholds used to determine premium transit-supportive land uses is described in *Section 5.2.2*.

5.1 Policy Framework

The Clifton Corridor study area lies within or intersects the Cities of Atlanta, and Decatur, as well as portions of unincorporated DeKalb County. Each of these jurisdictions currently feature elements of transit-supportive land uses and polices in their comprehensive plans. In addition to the three jurisdictions, the land use polices of MARTA have also been examined in this section, in light of the significant influence they may have around station areas. The major role the ARC has on TOD planning in the region is also discussed for its relevance.

When examining the policy framework of the three jurisdictions, the following factors were studied to gauge transit support:

- Community goals, policies, implementation strategies, and short-term action items supporting transit, found within a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- Transit-supportive land uses (mixed-use and higher-density residential – nine units per acre or greater) shown on the jurisdiction's future land use or future development map.
- Support for and experience with TOD (defined as moderate to high density mixed-use development designed with a pedestrian focus within one-quarter mile of transit stops/stations).

5.1.1 DeKalb County

DeKalb County represents more than half (52 percent) of the of the land area in the Clifton Corridor. As a result, the policies, regulations, and decisions of the county will have a significant impact on future transit in the study area.

The county has adopted transit supportive polices and strategies in its most recent comprehensive plan update (*The DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan 2005-2025*). Some examples of these include policies encouraging the strengthening of “pedestrian linkages between residential areas and MARTA stations” and supporting the “expanded

use and improvement of the current MARTA system including express bus service routes, additional park and ride lots, and cross-town links.” Some specific strategies that were identified include constructing new sidewalks in areas served by MARTA, working with MARTA to expand service hours and locations, and working with MARTA to increase ridership by linking station improvements with surrounding community improvements.

In addition to these policies and strategies the comprehensive plan contains a Future Development Map that establishes appropriate land uses in the corridor. The Future Development Map serves as the official guide for decision-makers for rezoning and development procedures. It divides the county into specific character areas. Each character area corresponds to appropriate land uses, implementation measures, and design criteria described in the plan.

The Future Development Map shows a mixed-use “Town Center” character area for the Clifton Road area. The Town Center classification permits a wide variety of land uses including high-density residential and high-intensity commercial. Residential densities up to 60 units per acre are permitted in this category. The map also shows the mixed-use “Neighborhood Center” character area at major intersections throughout the study area. The Neighborhood Center is a smaller scale activity center, with less intense development. It permits residential densities of up to 24 units per acre. A large portion of the study area is shown as either the “Suburban” or “Traditional Neighborhood” character area. These character areas permit low to medium residential densities. Up to eight units per acre is permitted for the Suburban character area and up to 12 units per acre is allowed within the Traditional Neighborhood category.

The combination of high-density mixed-use and higher-density residential future land uses (permitting 12 units per acre and above) represent 28 percent of the study area within DeKalb County. This suggests the Future Development Map supports development at sufficient densities to support premium transit service in numerous locations.

The comprehensive plan is also highly supportive of TOD. TOD has been identified as a land use strategy to be actively pursued and encouraged in appropriate locations. The plan encourages continuing coordination with MARTA to ensure future transit routes and stops are incorporated and reflected in the county’s future land use plans.

DeKalb County has been a strong advocate for TOD, actively planning for this at transit stations within the county. The county has spear-headed numerous ARC LCI planning studies for MARTA station areas including Avondale, Brookhaven, Kensington and the three Perimeter Center area stations. These studies have all recommended TOD for these areas. The county has carried these recommendations over into their land use plans. The plan shows high-density mixed-use future land uses in station areas, with the expressed intent of promoting TOD in these locations.

5.1.2 City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta is the second largest component of the Clifton Corridor Study area, comprising 37% of the total land area. Like DeKalb County, the City of Atlanta also features transit supportive policies and implementation strategies within its comprehensive plan.

The city's most recent comprehensive plan update, the *Atlanta Strategic Action Plan* (ASAP), adopted in April of 2008, promotes increased transit use and TOD through policy and strategy statements. The city clearly states its support for the further expansion of the MARTA rail and bus system. It is a policy of the city to be "committed to the development of mixed-uses around MARTA transit stations in an effort to minimize urban sprawl, to reduce traffic congestion, to provide efficiency in public services, and to encourage the development of self-contained living and working environments. Mixed-use development should be promoted around all MARTA transit stations, as well as future transit stations."

The plan goes on to advocate for mixed-use nodal development at the Buckhead, Lenox, and Lindbergh MARTA stations, maintaining a land use mix with a heavy balance of residential uses. Mixed-use development is also desired for the Bankhead MARTA station. The highest density of development permitted in the city is supported for the Central Business District stations of Garnett, Five Points, Dome/GWCC/Philips Arena/CNN Center, Georgia State, Peachtree Center, and Civic Center.

Increased ridership is encouraged through improved station signage, additional entrances, and connecting non-motorized facilities. The city also seeks to achieve this through the continued placement of mixed-use development and regional entertainment and cultural facilities around MARTA stations. The city leverages land use polices to steer high-density residential development into major arterials and corridors with existing transit service and good access to the rail system.

Atlanta has a proven track record of promoting and planning for TOD that has resulted in the development of nationally acclaimed TOD. When the MARTA system was planned in the late 1970s stations were envisioned to be surrounded by high-density development. This already existed at some rail stations, but in areas where there were no station placement had little influence on changing the existing low-density land use pattern. The true potential of these sites as transit-supportive nodes was lost. The city has recognized this and has been making strong efforts to promote and ensure TOD is being built around stations today. A prime example of this is the successful Lindbergh Station TOD, which boasts 47 acres of current and future mixed-use development. In 2000, the city developed a *Lindbergh Transportation Urban Design Plan*, creating a special public interest zoning district to ensure TOD at this station.

The city has also been involved in TOD planning through numerous LCI studies. These include the station areas of H. E. Holmes, West Lake, Bankhead, Civic Center, King Memorial and other stations in the city center. The city is committed to promoting TOD adjacent to stations and amending land use regulations to ensure this. Within the study area, the map currently features mixed-use, high-density residential or very high-density residential future land uses around the Lindbergh and Inman Park-Reynoldstown stations.

The City of Atlanta maintains a Future Land Use Map as a component of the comprehensive plan. The map features many transit-friendly future land use categories and corresponding zoning codes. With the city's strong commitment to TOD, it's likely to assume changes will be made to reflect transit-supportive land uses in areas planned to be new station areas.

5.1.3 City of Decatur

Land within the City of Decatur is the third largest component of the Clifton Corridor, with 10 percent of the total. Decatur has a reputation as a progressive city employing innovative smart-growth planning practices. Within Decatur's 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update, the city establishes land use policies and strategies supportive of transit and TOD. The city touts a "strong commitment to high-density transit oriented mixed-use development close to the downtown Decatur and Avondale MARTA rail stations".

A major goal of the city is to increase transit ridership over the twenty-year planning period. To do this the city encourages the co-location of mixed-use and higher density residential development with transit facilities.

Decatur recognizes the near 100% build-out conditions within the city, with growth limited to redevelopment and infill. The land use element and maps direct new growth in the form of mixed-use and medium to high density residential development to areas in close proximity to MARTA stations.

In addition to written policies and strategies, the city has actively planned and achieved TOD in station areas. In 2002, the city conducted a LCI study for the Avondale MARTA station promoting the development of TOD in the place of a MARTA parking lot. The city recently undertook an ambitious redesign and reconfiguration of the downtown station to better connect it with the surrounding environment. Visual and physical barriers were removed improving pedestrian flow in and around the station. The aesthetics were also improved making the station more inviting to users.

When the MARTA line was constructed in the 1970s, downtown Decatur was in need of significant reinvestment and rehabilitation. Since then city has been successful in creating a vibrant compact high-density mixed-use environment around the station. As a result it has become a good model for urban centers throughout the Atlanta region.

5.1.4 MARTA

MARTA is a strong proponent of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which includes moderate to high density mixed-use development designed with a pedestrian focus within one-quarter mile of transit stops/stations. MARTA has recently developed *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines*³⁶ to provide direction for developers and local governments on the subject. To develop this document the authority reviewed the best practices of ten other North American transit systems, examining the influence they have had on developing TOD in station areas.

MARTA has numerous TOD projects in various stages of development at rail stations throughout the system. Lindbergh Station, MARTA's flagship TOD, boasts high-rise office buildings, apartments, condominiums, and a significant retail component. MARTA's TOD program has received national acclaim garnering the 2006 Clean Air Excellence Award in Community Development from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In Fiscal Year 2008 it is estimated that TOD contributed \$3.93 million in annual revenue to MARTA.

³⁶ Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority. *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines*. Atlanta, GA: MARTA, 2009.

In addition to the Lindbergh station area, TOD has recently been constructed adjacent to numerous other MARTA rail stations. These include the Twelve Centennial Park mixed-use development (hotel, condo, and retail) adjacent to the Civic Center MARTA station and the Alexan Lenox apartment buildings adjacent to the Lenox MARTA station. The Decatur station features significant amounts of TOD adjacent to the station. Decatur has added numerous TOD projects to the Downtown area in recent decades and continues to add additional development. A recent project, the Artisan Condominiums, only blocks away from the station features high-rise condominiums and ground level-retail.

5.1.5 Atlanta Regional Commission

The ARC has had a strong role in encouraging TOD development throughout the region, in particular through its LCI program. As noted in Section 2, the LCI program utilizes federal transportation monies to fund planning studies designed to integrate land use and transportation planning in small areas.

It can be argued the ARC's LCI program has had the most significant impact on promoting TOD planning in the region, more so than any other program, organization, or municipality. LCI studies have resulted in master plans for at least 11 MARTA station areas including the Brookhaven, Kensington and Avondale stations. These studies have resulted in numerous jurisdictions changing land use policies to support TOD in these areas. If additional transit stations are planned in the area the LCI program should be explored to fund the creation of station area master plans. LCI studies that have been conducted in the study area are shown in **Table 2.6** included in the reviews of previous studies.

The LCI program provides a funding source to develop station area plans for jurisdictions that may not have the resources or staff available to do so independently. The ARC has funded numerous studies in undeveloped areas they determine to be 'emerging activity centers.' In light of this, it is likely to assume new station areas would be prime locations for future LCI studies. Given the agencies strong support for TOD planning and the track record of TOD planning within the four municipalities its likely funding would be approved for these studies.

5.2 Existing and Planned Land Uses

This section presents an inventory of existing and planned land uses within the corridor. It describes the land use composition and geographic distribution of existing and future land uses. It provides a description of key land use categories and their characteristics. The major focus of this analysis has been in relation to potential transit support.

5.2.1 Existing Land Uses

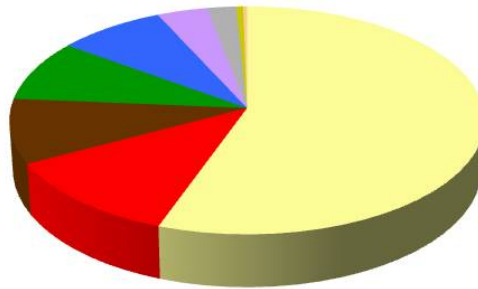
Existing land use data is not available in a common format across the four municipalities in the corridor. In light of this, the ARC's 2007 Land Pro data was used. Land Pro is the ARC's land use and land cover data set developed for regional and cross-municipal planning. This universal source was used for ease in analysis and mapping. It avoids problems that may occur when generalizing land uses across jurisdictions that employ different categories and classification methods.

The ARC creates this data set through a combination of sources including aerial photography, parcel ownership, web-resources and national inventories of

environmentally sensitive lands. The data was spot checked in multiple locations to ensure accuracy. Since the Clifton Corridor is highly developed, little land use transition occurs from year to year in the study area.

An analysis of existing land uses in the study area shows the most prominent land use to be Low to Medium-Density Residential (54 percent). High-density residential, commercial, multi-family residential, park-recreation-conservation, and public-institutional land uses also comprise significant portions. Conversely, industrial, transportation-communication-utilities (TCU), under construction, and undeveloped land uses comprise a small portion, with a combined total of less than nine percent. The distribution of existing land uses is tallied in **Figure 5.1** and shown geographically in **Figure 5.2**. Land uses have been described in their order of prevalence within the study area.

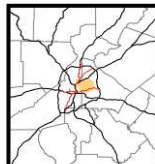
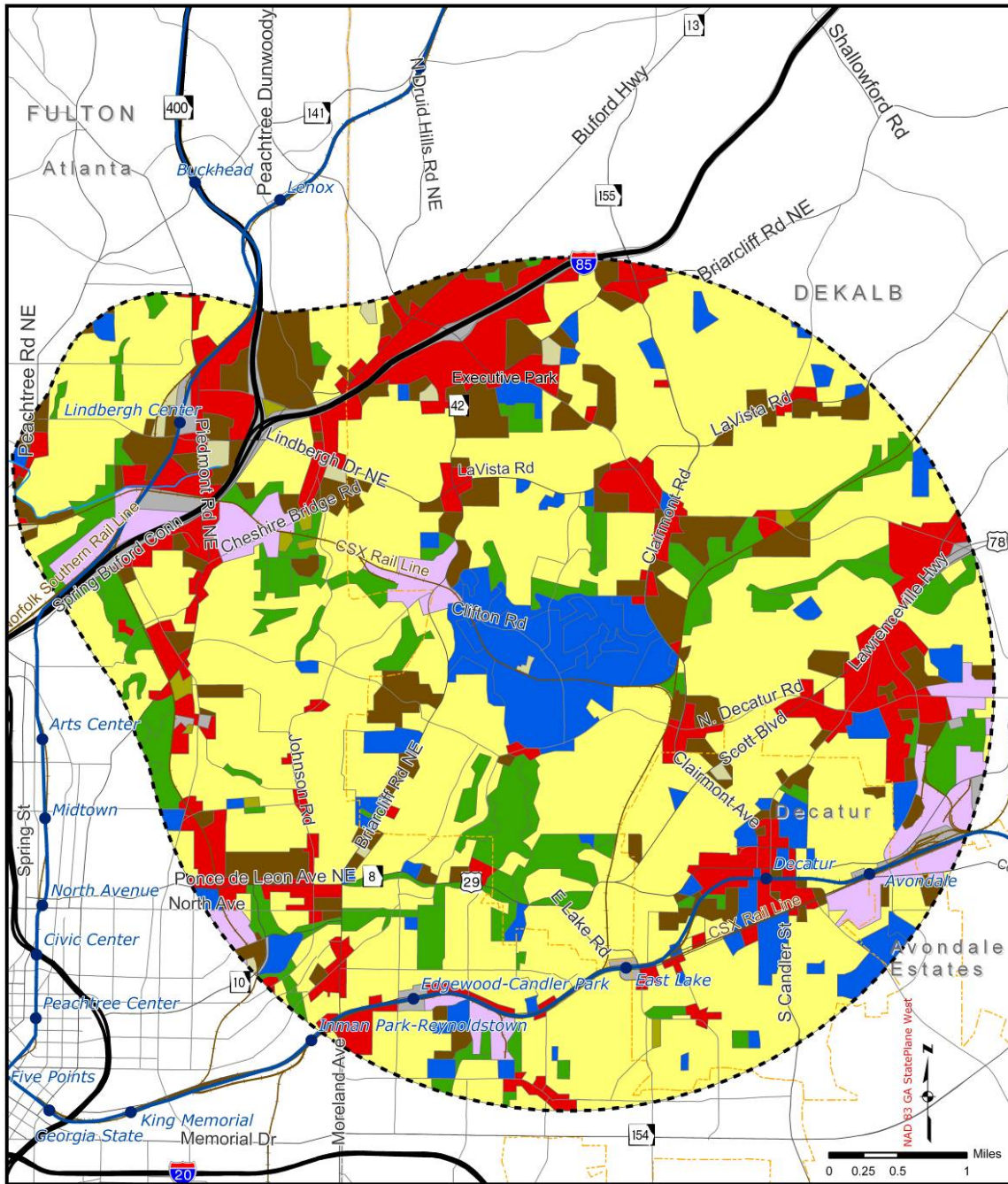
Figure 5.1: Existing Land Use Composition



Existing Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
Low to Medium-Density Residential	11,871	54 %
Commercial	2,500	12 %
Multi-Family Residential	1,940	9%
Park-Recreation-Conservation	1,856	9%
Public-Institutional	1,727	8%
Industrial	812	4%
Trans-Communication-Utilities	479	2%
Under Construction	109	1%
Vacant-Undeveloped	65	0.3%










Source: ARC Land Pro 2007

Figure 5.2: Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use




 Low to Medium-Density Residential (0.2-8 d.u./acre)	 Industrial
 High-Density Residential (greater than 8 d.u./acre)	 TCU
 Commercial	 Under Construction
 Park-Recreation-Conservation	 Vacant-Undeveloped
 Public-Institutional	

Existing land uses are currently at sufficient densities to support transit service through MARTA rail and bus lines. They are also at sufficient densities in the Emory Medical/CDC area to support a specially designated shuttle service, the Cliff. Whether they are at sufficient densities to support additional premium transit is worthy of additional study. Premium transit-supportive existing land uses in the corridor comprise 29 percent of the study area. These include high-density residential, commercial, and public-institutional land uses. Non-transit supportive land uses comprise the balance and include the other nine categories. Transit-supportive land uses are found throughout the study area, although some clear groupings stand out. These are located in the Lindbergh Station, Emory/CDC, downtown Decatur, Executive Park, and DeKalb Medical areas. This suggests additional premium transit service may be warranted to serve areas not currently served, such as the Emory/CDC, Executive Park, and DeKalb Medical areas. The immediate Emory/CDC area contains significant square footages of office/institutional land uses representing major trip generators and is likely the largest potential source of transit ridership in the corridor.

Low to Medium-Density Residential

As previously noted, low to medium-density residential is the most prevalent land use in the Clifton Corridor, constituting 54 percent of the total. These areas are comprised of predominately single-family homes on one-quarter to two acre lots. This represents a residential density of one-half to four dwelling units per acre. Within the study area the vast majority of lots are on the lower side of this range between one-quarter and one-half acre.

This category also includes historic in-town residential areas with predominately single-family homes on lots smaller than one-quarter of an acre. They may also contain a limited amount of duplexes and small apartment buildings. These are largely historic neighborhoods found in close proximity to the city core. They feature a gridded street system and small-scale commercial structures interspersed within residential areas. This land use category includes some of Atlanta's most desirable and affluent historic neighborhoods including Inman Park, Candler Park, Virginia-Highlands, Lenox Park and Morningside. These neighborhoods were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and were originally served by trolley car lines. As a result they are walkable and pedestrian friendly. The higher residential densities and high levels of pedestrian connectivity render these communities transit supportive.

In addition to historic "inner-ring" suburbs, the most sizable portion of this category is comprised of single-family ranch home neighborhoods. These were primarily developed in the mid 20th century, during America's automobile-led suburban expansion. While considered "outer-ring" suburbs in the mid-20th century, these areas have long witnessed the advancement of Atlanta's suburban fringe to outlying counties. These neighborhoods are now considered "inner-ring" suburbs of Atlanta and have recently experienced significant redevelopment pressures. Ranch home tear-downs replaced with much larger infill housing have been common, causing concerns with existing residents over incompatible infill development. The replacement of smaller homes with larger multi-story residences has created issues regarding light, privacy, and visual continuity.

Commercial

Commercial land uses total 12 percent of the study area. These include large shopping centers, office buildings, and strip commercial areas. These areas are found throughout the study area, particularly along the commercial corridors of Ponce de Leon Avenue, Piedmont Avenue, and Cheshire Bridge Road. Large clusters of office buildings are found in downtown Decatur and in the Executive Park office park at the North Druid Hills Road/I-85 interchange. Significant concentrations of retail uses are found at the intersections of LaVista and North Druid Hills Roads (Toco Hills Shopping Center) and Briarcliff and North Druid Hills Roads (Loehmann's Plaza & Target Greatland). North DeKalb Mall, Suburban Plaza, and the Sage Hill Shopping Center are also sizable commercial areas of importance.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family residential is the third most prevalent land use in the study area, comprising nine percent of the total land area. This category includes townhomes, apartments and condominiums. The net density for these areas generally exceeds eight units per acre. Multi-family residential development is found throughout the study area with significant concentrations found near the Lindbergh MARTA station and along Lenox Road in Buckhead. This land use is often found as a buffer between retail uses at major intersections and single-family neighborhoods.

Park-Recreation-Conservation

Park-Recreation-Conservation is the fourth most prevalent land use in the study area, comprising nine percent of the total. This land use type includes parks used for active recreation (ball fields, tennis courts, running tracks, swimming pools), as well natural conservation areas. Golf courses and tracts of forested land over five acres in size are also included in this category. This land use classification features numerous small to medium sized neighborhood parks, widely spread throughout the study area. It also includes major city parks, such as Piedmont Park, Candler Park, and the Freedom Parkway trail and park. In addition, two private golf courses are included, the Druid Hills and Ansley Park Golf Courses.

This category also includes wetlands which comprise only 29 acres of the study area. Wetlands are defined as forested or herbaceous areas where the water table is at, near or above the land surface for a significant part of the growing season in most years. The National Wetland Inventory provides the source for determining these areas. Wetlands are found in only one location in the study area, adjacent and to the west of North DeKalb Mall.

Public-Institutional

Public-Institutional land uses are the fifth most prevalent land use in the Clifton Corridor, comprising eight percent of the total. These areas include schools, universities, hospitals, research facilities, government buildings, religious institutions, and cemeteries. Elementary, middle and high schools are found throughout the study area. Major educational institutions include Emory University, Agnes Scott College, and the Columbia Theological Seminary. There are numerous hospitals in the study area including Decatur Hospital, DeKalb Medical Center, Emory University Hospital, Veterans' Administration (VA) Medical Center, and the Children's Hospital of Atlanta. Major research institutes of national importance include the CDC and the Carter Center.

At the center of the study area, in the immediate Clifton Road area, there is a large concentration of institutional land uses focused on health care and research. Emory's Medical School and School of Public Health in combination with CDC and neighboring medical institutions (Emory University Hospital, Children's Hospital, VA Medical Center, Egleston Hospital for Children, Marcus Autism Center, Wesley Woods Health Center) come together to form a significant medical research center at the heart of the Clifton Corridor.

This large cluster of important institutional land uses has major implications for transportation planning. On September 11, 2001, in the wake of the terrorist attacks, the CDC and Emory University were largely closed. Clifton Road became completely gridlocked. Essential personnel were unable to report for duty at area hospitals and the CDC because all major roads were blocked. This demonstrated the need for improved evacuation procedures, enhanced mobility, as well as more transportation alternatives in the area. The CDC serves a critical homeland security role particularly in the event of a chemical or biological attack. Transportation alternatives providing another access method may serve a critical homeland security purpose. This will be explored in further detail in the Purpose and Need Report.

Sitting at the center of the study area and being such a major land use, Emory University has special importance to transit planning. The Emory Campus Master Plan 2005 Update shows the additional densification of the campus with new buildings in close proximity to existing structures in previously developed areas. This additional development is mainly located near Clifton Road. The plan does not call for the development of existing natural areas. A commitment to the continued design of the campus as a walking campus, in which surface parking lots are 'incrementally restored from car places to people places' is articulated. With the focus placed on the pedestrian and the increased densification of institutional land uses, the campus plan is supportive of transit service.

Industrial

Industrial land uses comprise four percent of the study area. These are found primarily along railroad lines within the study area. This land use is comprised mainly of large warehouse and distribution facilities. The Armour Industrial District adjacent to I-85 is included in this category. Many of these areas, including those adjacent to Zonolite Road and Cheshire Bridge Road have transitioned from solely industrial uses to feature a mixture of retail businesses with direct-sale storefronts. Some former warehouses have also been converted to restaurants and art galleries. Notable land uses include the SweetWater Brewery and the Centennial Farms Dairy milk distribution center.

Transportation-Communication-Utilities

Transportation-Communication-Utilities (TCU) makes up two percent of the study area. It is comprised of transportation, communication, and utility associated land uses. This includes the right-of-way for interstate facilities, as well as MARTA stations and rail yards. Within the study area a major component of this land use type is the right-of-way surrounding I-85 and GA 400. Other major component are the Lindbergh, Inman Park-Reynoldstown, East Lake, and Avondale MARTA stations and the MARTA rail yard located in the Armour Industrial District.

Under Construction

The under construction category includes areas in transition from one land use to another. These are sites that show visible evidence of construction or earth moving activities. This represents a very small portion of the study area, at only one percent of the total. These sites are few and spread throughout the study area. Most of the construction projects have been completed since the LandPro data was collected and reflect new multi-family or institutional uses. Phase One of the Emory Point mixed-use development located on Clifton Road is currently under construction and is described in greater detail in *Section 5.3.2*.

Vacant-Undeveloped

The Vacant-Undeveloped land use category represents urban open space that is free of buildings with no identified use. These areas are free of tree cover and are not designated as parkland. This category represents 0.3 percent of the Clifton Corridor. They occur in a few places in the study area, notably adjacent to the CSX Rail Line between Cheshire Bridge Road and Lenox Roads. The very small acreage associated with this land use indicates the “built-out” nature of the study area.

5.2.2 Planned Land Uses

Future land use plans for the three jurisdictions have been described previously in *Section 6.1*. The section provides a general overview of planned future land uses, by taking a corridor-wide view. To create a holistic view, future land use categories have been simplified across the jurisdictions to create a consistent classification system. This is helpful for ease in analysis and mapping. **Figure 5.3** details the acreages and percentages of these future land use categories. **Figure 5.4** displays the generalized future land uses within the Clifton Corridor.

To develop a working definition of premium transit-supportive future land uses several sources were consulted. These include research conducted by the ITE³⁷, Meyer³⁸, and Pushkarev and Zupan³⁹. Among these sources there is a general consensus regarding the residential density thresholds required to support various forms of transit. The minimum thresholds needed to support the transit technologies of BRT and LRT is determined to be nine units per acre. Large clusters of office, civic, institutional and retail space can also serve as transit-supportive land uses, provided that they are sizable enough. The minimum square footages of contiguous non-residential space required to support BRT or LRT service is determined to be 35-50 million square feet. These thresholds are used when discussing the general transit support of existing and future land uses.

The use of nine units per acre as a threshold for premium transit support is consistent with FTA New Starts ranking criteria. The FTA uses the population density within one half-mile of proposed transit stations to rank the worthiness of projects to receive federal funding. It can be calculated that between seven and 11 dwelling units per acre within the study area rank highly with the FTA and result in a high rating from the agency. From the perspective of the FTA, nine units per acre would score highly as a premium transit-supportive residential density.

³⁷ Institute of Transportation Engineers. (1989). *A Toolbox for Alleviating Congestion*. Washington D.C.: ITE Publication.

³⁸ Meyer, M. (1991) *Improved Public Transit*. Washington D.C.: EPA Publication.

³⁹ Pushkarev, B. & Zupan, JM. (1977) *Public Transportation and Land Use Policy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

Low to Medium-Density Residential comprises the majority of future land uses (57 percent). This category represents residential land use designations permitting up to eight units per acre. Since these fall short of sanctioning the nine units per acre needed for premium transit service they have not been considered as a transit-supportive future land use. The second most common land use is the High-Density Residential type which contains residential categories that permit up to 12, 18, 29, 64, or unlimited numbers of dwelling units per acre. Since this type meets the premium transit threshold, it is considered to be a transit-supportive future land use.

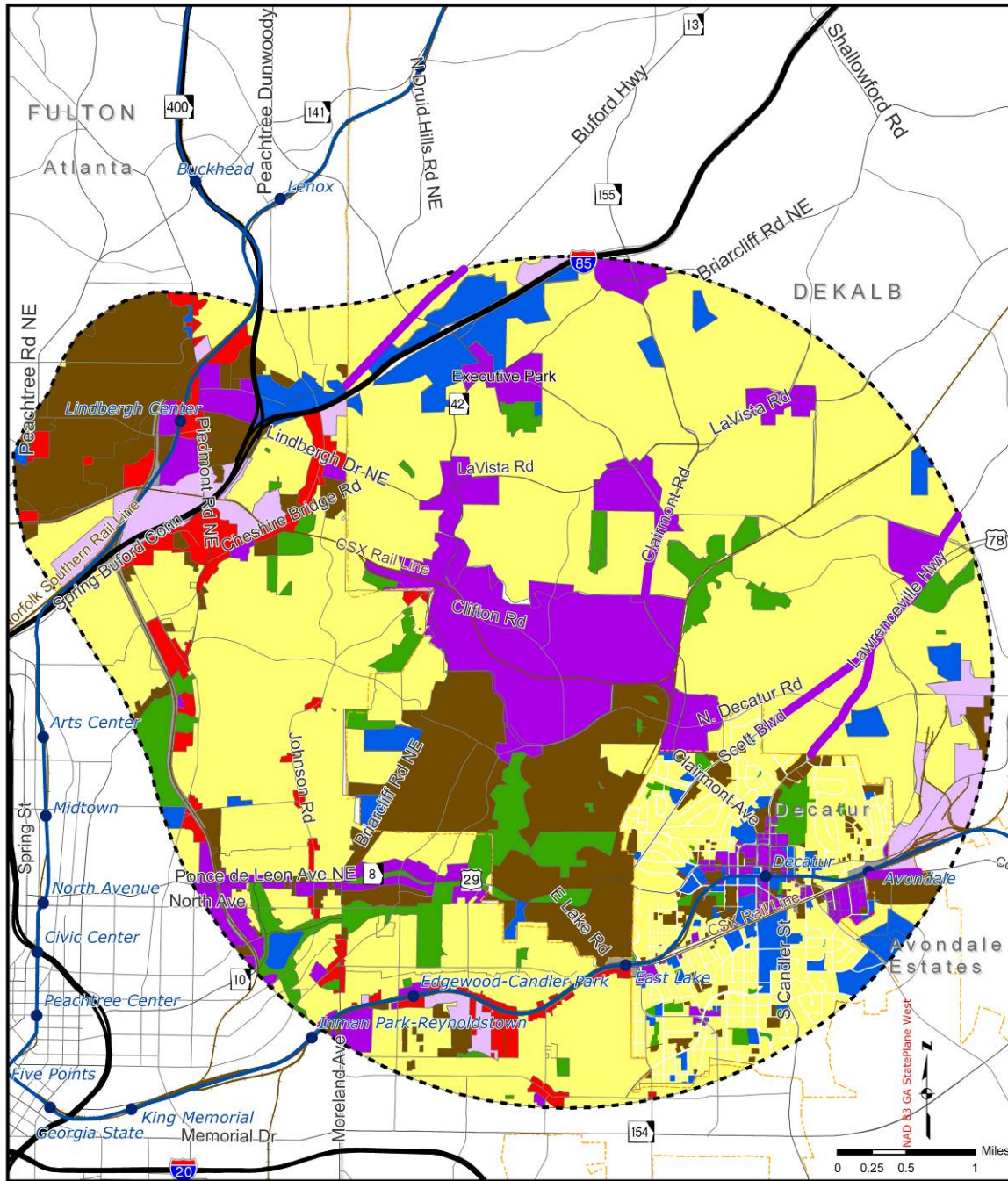
Figure 5.3: Future Land Use Composition



Future Land Use Category	Acres	Percent
Low to Medium-Density Residential	12,155	57%
High-Density Residential	5,680	14%
Mixed-Use	2,371	11%
Park-Recreation-Conservation	1,205	6%
Office-Institutional-Public	1,042	5%
Industrial	719	3%
Commercial	650	3%
Trans-Communication-Utilities	157	1%









Source: DeKalb County, Atlanta, Decatur

Figure 5.4: Future Land Use



Future Land Use

marta  **CLIFTON CORRIDOR**
Transportation Management Association
CCTMA

 Low to Medium-Density Residential (0-8 d.u./acre permitted)	 Industrial
 High-Density Residential (greater than 8 d.u./acre permitted)	 TCU
 Commercial	 Mixed Use
 Park-Recreation-Conservation	
 Office-Institutional-Public	

Comparison between Existing Land Use and Future Land Use Maps

It is important to note that a direct visual comparison between the Existing and Future Land Use Maps may be misleading due to the differing data sources used. This is particularly apparent when comparing high-density residential areas. It is important to note that residential densities shown on the Future Land Use Map represent the maximum densities permitted under future land use designations and do not represent inevitable future redevelopment. This is specifically evident in established historic residential areas, such as Druid Hills, that are shown as high-density residential areas on the Future Land Use Map. Residential densities greater than 8 units per acre are permitted based upon future land use designations, but given the stable and historic qualities of the neighborhoods redevelopment at higher than existing densities is very unlikely.

A comparison of park-recreation-conservation (PRC) areas between land use maps may also be misleading due to differences in scale. The Existing Land Use Map categorizes golf courses as PRC areas, while the Future Land Use Map is a higher-level map that does not show such specificity. This explains the reduction in PRC from existing to future from 9 percent of the study area to 6 percent. It is important to note significant change in PRC areas is not expected. Existing parklands will be preserved in perpetuity and are not proposed for development.

Non-Transit Supportive Future Land Uses

Non-transit supportive land uses comprise the bulk of the study area (67percent). The vast majority of these areas are low to medium-density residential categories. Parks-recreation-conservation, industrial, and TCU land uses constitute the rest. While parks and recreation areas do generate some degree of transit demand, unless they are large regional facilities they often do not serve to draw significant users, particularly in relation to their acreages. Industrial land uses generate employment and a certain amount of transit demand, but in relation to their size they do not generate enough to be considered transit-supportive. TCU land uses in the study area consist exclusively of interstate and railroad right-of-way, which generate little to no transit demand. Non-transit supportive land uses can be found in locations throughout the study area. Due to their insufficient transit-support they are not preferred locations for transit stations.

Transit-Supportive Future Land Uses

Transit-supportive land uses are High-Density Residential and Mixed Use categories, which permit a mixture of multi-family residences, offices, and/or retail. Office-institutional-public and commercial are also included as they generate significant transit demand in sufficient concentrations. Transit-supportive land uses are projected to comprise a significant portion (33 percent) of the study area. They can be found in locations throughout the study area, although three main concentrations are clear. Groupings are found in downtown Decatur, Emory Medical/CDC, and the Lindbergh MARTA Station. The locations of these suggest that premium transit could be supported within the arc formed by these three clusters.

5.3 Development Trends

Development activity and trends are a key indicator of both short-term and long term demographic changes, and thus have a significant bearing on future transit feasibility. Based on public and private data sources, field inspections, interviews with key

development professionals, public officials, and aerial photography, the consulting team developed a snapshot of current and planned development activity and real estate trends in the Clifton Corridor. The results of this are presented within this section.

5.3.1 New Home Sales and Building Permits

New home sales trends are generally a good indicator of household growth. Home sales from ZIP codes which correspond to the Clifton Corridor study area were analyzed using data from SmartNumbers. The average annual number of new home sales in the corridor from 2003-2007 was 495, which represents 0.7 percent of the estimated 62,951 existing occupied housing units in the corridor. In 2005, at the peak of the recent real-estate boom, 711 new homes were sold in the corridor.

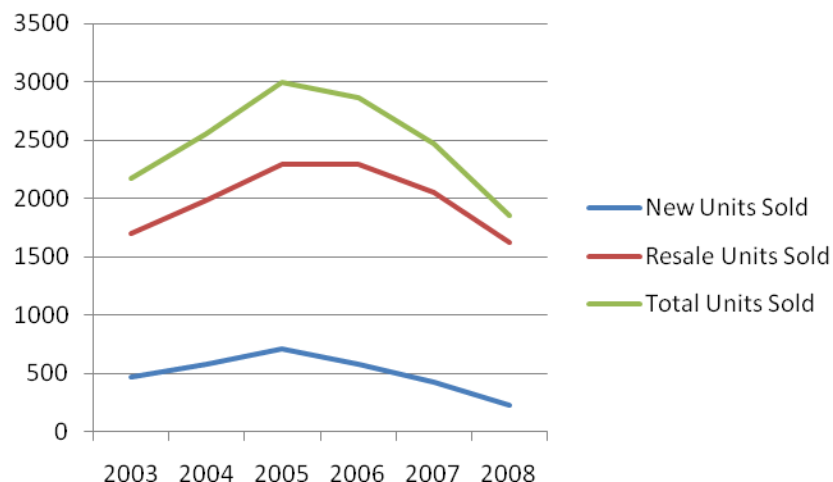
Housing sales data indicates that new homes represent only a small portion of total residential sales activity, peaking at 24 percent in 2005 and declining to 12 percent in 2008 shown in **Table 5.1** and **Table 5.2**. These statistics indicate that the Clifton Corridor is largely built-out, with little remaining undeveloped land, and most development occurring as infill or second-generation redevelopment. In light of this, the area is unlikely to see dramatic population growth in the foreseeable future.

Table 5.1: 2008 Home Sales Volume, 2003-2008

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2003-2008 Average
New Units Sold	465	574	711	576	421	225	495
Resale Units Sold	1,702	1,980	2,285	2,288	2,050	1,625	1,988
Total Units Sold	2,167	2,554	2,996	2,864	2,471	1,850	2,484
% New Homes	21%	22%	24%	20%	17%	12%	20%

Source: SmartNumbers, Atlanta Journal Constitution

Figure 5.5: 2008 Home Sales Volume, 2003-2008



Source: SmartNumbers, Atlanta Journal Constitution

Table 5.2: 2008 Home Sales by ZIP Code

ZIP Code	New Home Sales	New Home Median Sale Price	Existing Home Sales	Existing Home Median Price	All Home Sales	All Homes Median Price	New Home Sales as % of Total
30030	62	\$336,682	474	\$270,200	536	\$279,450	12%
30033	15	\$670,000	392	\$237,000	407	\$239,000	4%
30306	22	\$165,425	273	\$432,500	295	\$415,000	7%
30307	53	\$279,900	77	\$303,000	130	\$287,000	41%
30322 (Emory)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30324	37	\$281,900	288	\$207,500	325	\$212,000	11%
30329	36	\$258,795	121	\$296,000	157	\$296,000	23%
Total Clifton Corridor	225	\$307,312	1,625	\$281,820	1,850	\$282,251	12%
All DeKalb County	1,426	\$228,625	8,399	\$130,675	9,825	\$149,000	15%

Source: SmartNumbers, Atlanta Journal Constitution

Table 5.2 above describes 2008 home sales by zip codes within the Clifton Corridor. The analysis displays the relative affluence of the area, with median home sales well above those of DeKalb County as a whole (\$282,251 versus \$149,000 or 53 percent higher). This suggests the prevalence of upper-income ‘choice’ transit riders and fewer lower-income traditionally transit-dependent households. A high percentage of ‘choice riders’ suggests the need for premium transit alternatives in the corridor with competitive travel times to attract this type of rider.

Table 5.3 below details building permits issued by the three major jurisdictions within the study area over the past five years. Permits are issued for new commercial and residential development, as well as significant alterations to existing buildings. The number of permits issued by jurisdiction shows a steady rate for the past five years indicating a stable level of redevelopment and rehabilitation in the corridor.

Table 5.3: Building Permits, 2004-2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-2008 Average
City of Atlanta	1,221	1,455	1,348	1,254	1,193	1,294
City of Decatur	717	646	778	764	774	736
DeKalb County	2	5	12	11	36	13
Study Area Total	1,940	2,106	2,138	2,029	2,003	2,043

Source: City of Atlanta, City of Decatur, DeKalb County

5.3.2 Major Development Activity

Several major development projects have been proposed in recent years in the Clifton Corridor Study Area. Since 2005, eleven Development of Regional Impact (DRI) applications have been approved in the Clifton Corridor Study Area. Six additional major developments which are relevant to this study were approved, yet they did not require DRI approvals. **Table 5.4** provides a summary of the most recent DRIs and other major developments. These are shown geographically in **Figure 5.6**. A review of these projects indicates that developers have expressed the intent to build the following between 2005 and 2016:

- 12,330 new housing units, replacing 1,856 existing housing units for a net gain of 10,474 dwelling units housing units. (All proposed housing units in major developments are multi-family or townhome units, with the exception of the Northeast beltline with an unspecified number of single-family units);
- 1,446,000 SF of retail space, mostly in a mixed-use context;
- 782,000 SF of office space;
- 920,000 SF of medical and hospital space;
- 400 new hotel rooms;

Almost all of the identified projects are redevelopments of existing properties, requiring significant demolition of existing uses. Thus the net gain in new real estate inventory is somewhat less than the total proposed development. For proposed housing units, three units are being removed from the existing inventory for every ten new units, where replacement is required. For commercial space, roughly 30 to 50 SF of space are being removed from the inventory for each 100 SF of new space. As of this writing, at least five of the seventeen identified projects have reportedly been suspended indefinitely due to currently adverse real estate and financial market conditions. However, new construction continues to occur, albeit at a much slower pace than the previous years. A notable new construction is the phase one of the Emory Point mixed-use development located across from the CDC on Clifton Road. The first phase of construction includes 172 condominium units, 275 apartment units and 93,000 sq. ft. of retail development.

Another major development moving forward is the Housing Authority of Decatur's redevelopment on Commerce Drive. This is located in Downtown Decatur in close proximity to the Decatur Transit Station. Construction has already begun on the replacement of 200 public housing units built in the 1940's with 365 new housing units. These units will be a combination of market rate and public housing for the elderly. They will be developed in mid-rise buildings and cluster homes. Project build-out is expected in 2012.

A significant redevelopment area worthy of discussion is the DeVry University mixed-use redevelopment site. The university recently moved to Downtown Decatur and vacated this 21 acre site located on Arcadia Avenue. The large site is underutilized, currently featuring a two-story, 102,354 sq. ft. office building surrounded by a large surface parking lot. The parcel is currently located in DeKalb County adjacent to the Decatur city limits. The university seeks to have the property annexed in to the city and have it zoned for mixed-use development. The landowners have recently It is anticipated the private market will be interested in developing a neighborhood-oriented mixed-use development, similar to others in Decatur.

Based on existing development patterns, it seems likely that:

- Upon the recovery of real estate markets, the Clifton Corridor will continue to see the redevelopment of aging and obsolete land uses at significantly higher densities, however relatively high costs of land acquisition and demolition will temper the pace of redevelopment.
- The dramatic over-building of in-town condominiums in recent years will have the impact of reducing the demand for high-density residential redevelopment for at least two to five years, if not longer.
- The Clifton Corridor is likely to experience steady but modest real-estate growth through redevelopment over the coming years, largely due to the fact that the area is nearly built out with very little undeveloped land.
- Much of the residential and commercial growth will likely be concentrated in four activity nodes: Lindbergh MARTA Station Area, Avondale MARTA Station Area, Emory Medical Center/CDC, Downtown Decatur and Executive Park.

5.3.3 Potential Redevelopment Areas

Since the study area is largely “built-out” a significant portion of new development will occur through redevelopment. It is highly likely that redevelopment will occur primarily in obsolete or underutilized commercial and industrial areas. **Figure 5.7** illustrates potential redevelopment areas identified from previous studies, especially comprehensive plans and LCIs.

DeKalb County identifies redevelopment corridors in their latest comprehensive plan update. It identifies declining commercial corridors that consist of unattractive, vacant, or underutilized strip-type shopping centers. These areas are in need of aesthetic or functional improvements to stem further economic decline. Major areas include the Scott Boulevard-Lawrenceville Highway and Church Street corridors featuring the underutilized Suburban Plaza and a portion of Clairmont Road. Other corridors identified include East College Avenue and Buford Highway.

LCI studies were also consulted to develop an inventory of these areas. The Avondale and Emory Village LCIs were useful, identifying redevelopment areas within their study areas. They both call for the redevelopment of surface parking areas with additional mixed-use development.

In addition to potential redevelopment areas, **Figure 5.7** also includes potential mixed-use centers. These have been designated by DeKalb County within their most recent comprehensive plan update. These areas are identified as being prime locations for mixed-use redevelopment and increased residential densities. If developed as planned it is likely to assume these areas will exhibit higher-levels of transit support that they do in their current state as a result of additional mixed-use development and higher residential densities.

Figure 5.7 also includes zoning overlay district boundaries in the Clifton Corridor. These are mapped by general type, which include historic districts, residential infill, and redevelopment or other special purpose overlay districts. Numerous historic districts exist within the study area and have unique overlay districts in place to ensure new development or property alterations are in keeping with the historic character of these neighborhoods. DeKalb County has numerous residential infill overlay districts (RIODS) in place to guarantee “tear-down” infill development is compatible with existing

neighborhoods in regards to height, mass, scale, and style. Many overlay districts are put in place to incentivize and/or guide redevelopment to ensure it meets the desires of the community.

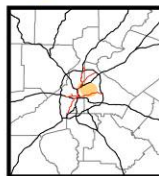
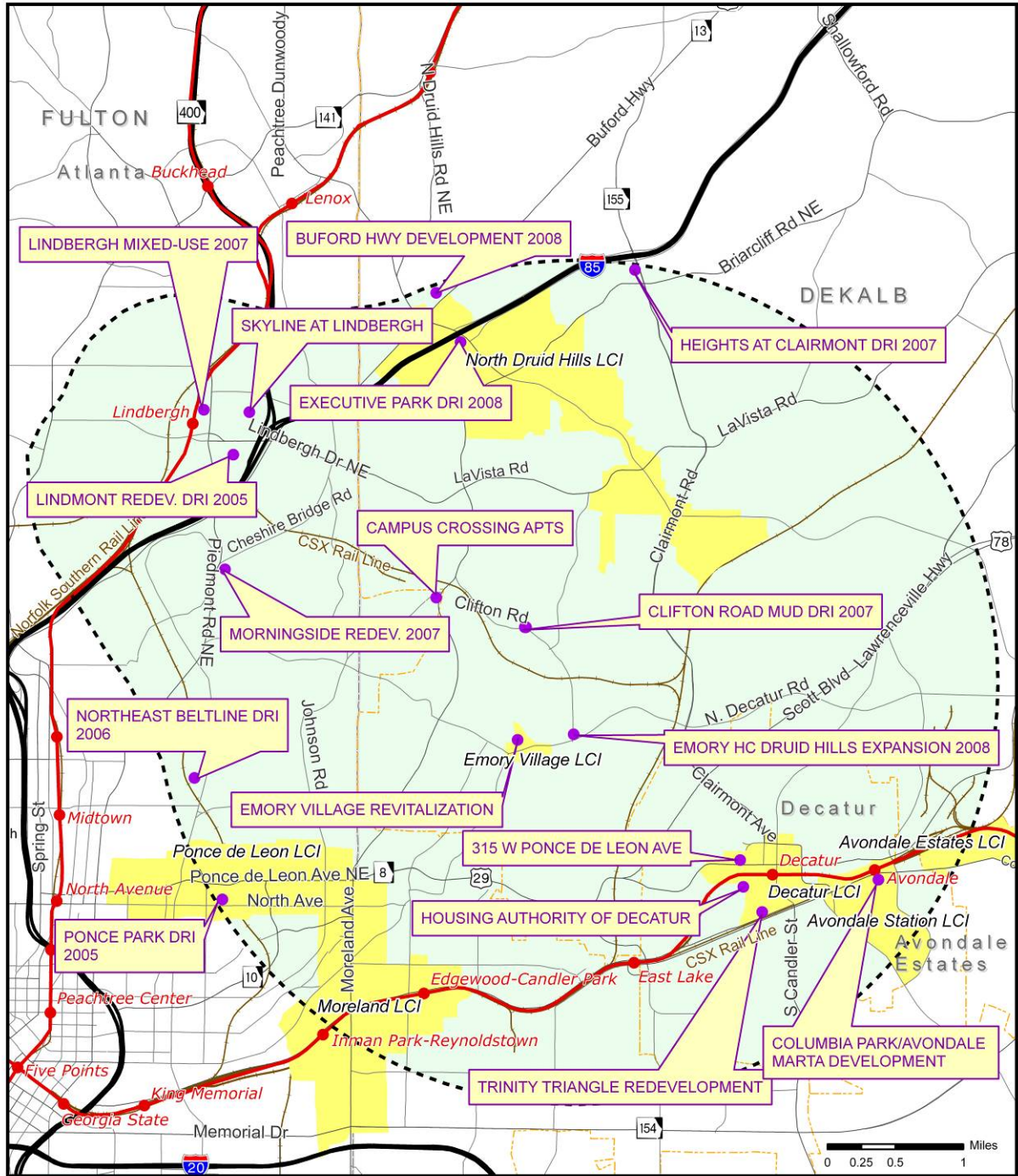
The BeltLine Overlay District is a major redevelopment overlay district in the study area. It has been put in place to ensure redevelopment is pedestrian-friendly and features an interconnected street network to help support future transit service along the proposed line. In relation to future transit support it is important to note that redevelopment in areas governed by historic district or residential infill overlay districts will likely not vary significantly from their existing character, intensity, and overall level of transit support. In redevelopment overlay district areas however it is likely to assume, given the type of regulations in place, these areas will exhibit higher levels of transit support resulting from new mixed-use development with enhanced connectivity and the general increase in the intensity of development typically witnessed in redevelopment activity.

Table 5.4: Summary of Clifton Corridor DRI & Major Development Projects, 2005-2009

Year DRI Filed	Name	Tract	Cross Street 1	Cross street 2	Build Out Yr	Acres	Residential					Commercial					
							MF DUs	SF DUs	TH DUs	Total DUs	Demo DUs	Net New DU	Retail SF (000s)	Office SF (000s)	Med SF (000s)	Hotel Rms	MU SF (000s)
2008	Buford Hwy Development	214.01	Buford Hwy	Curtis	2011	26	1,216		54	1,270	(346)	924	78	40			
2007	Clifton Road Mixed use (Emory Point)	224.02	Clifton	Clifton	2011	50	466		406	872	(100)	772	121		200		
2008	Emory HC Druid Hills Expansion	224.02	Clifton	N Decatur	2013	19	-			-		-			920		
2008	Executive Park	215.02	Briarcliff	N Druid Hills	2016	70	785			785		785	488	580	200	5	
2007	Heights at Clairmont	224.02	Clairmont	I-85	2011	22	715			715	(648)	67					
Not DRI	Emory Village Revitalization Plan	224.02	N Decatur	Oxford Rd	On Hold		182			182	(8)	174	106				
2007	Lindbergh Mixed-Use	94.02	Morosgo	Piedmont	On Hold	15	330			330	(250)	80	52				
2005	Lindmont (AKA Sommerly & Sorelle)	94.02	Piedmont	Lindbergh	2008 (50% as of '09)	20	1,000		390	1,390	(304)	1,086	100				
Not DRI	Skyline at Lindbergh	94.02	Morosgo	I-85	On Hold		220			220		220					
Not DRI	Campus Crossing Apts	224.02	Briarcliff	Johnson Rd	2009		271			271		271					
2008	Columbia Park/Avondale MARTA Development	222	Avondale Marta		On Hold		391		90	481		481	18				
Not DRI	315 W Ponce de Leon Avenue		W Ponce de Leon Ave	Ponce de Leon Place	On Hold	5	218			218		218	72	2			
Not DRI	Trinity Triangle Redevelopment		E Trinity Place	E Howard	On Hold	2.5	210			210		210	10	6			
Not DRI	Housing Authority of Decatur		Commerce Drive	W Trinity Place	2012	8	365			365	(200)	165					
2006	Northeast Beltline		Monroe Dr	10 th Street	2012	80	NA	NA	NA	3,089		3,089	145				
2005	Ponce Park		Ponce de Leon Ave	Glen Iris Drive	2014	22	1,572			1,572		1,572	206	154		13	
2007	Morningside Redevelopment		Piedmont Ave	Cheshire Bridge Road	2010	7	360			360		360	50				
							8,301	-	940	12,330	(1,856)	10,474	1,446	782	920	400	18

Source: ARC, GRTA, City of Decatur

Figure 5.6: DRI and Major Developments

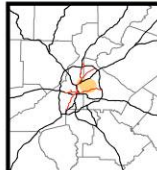
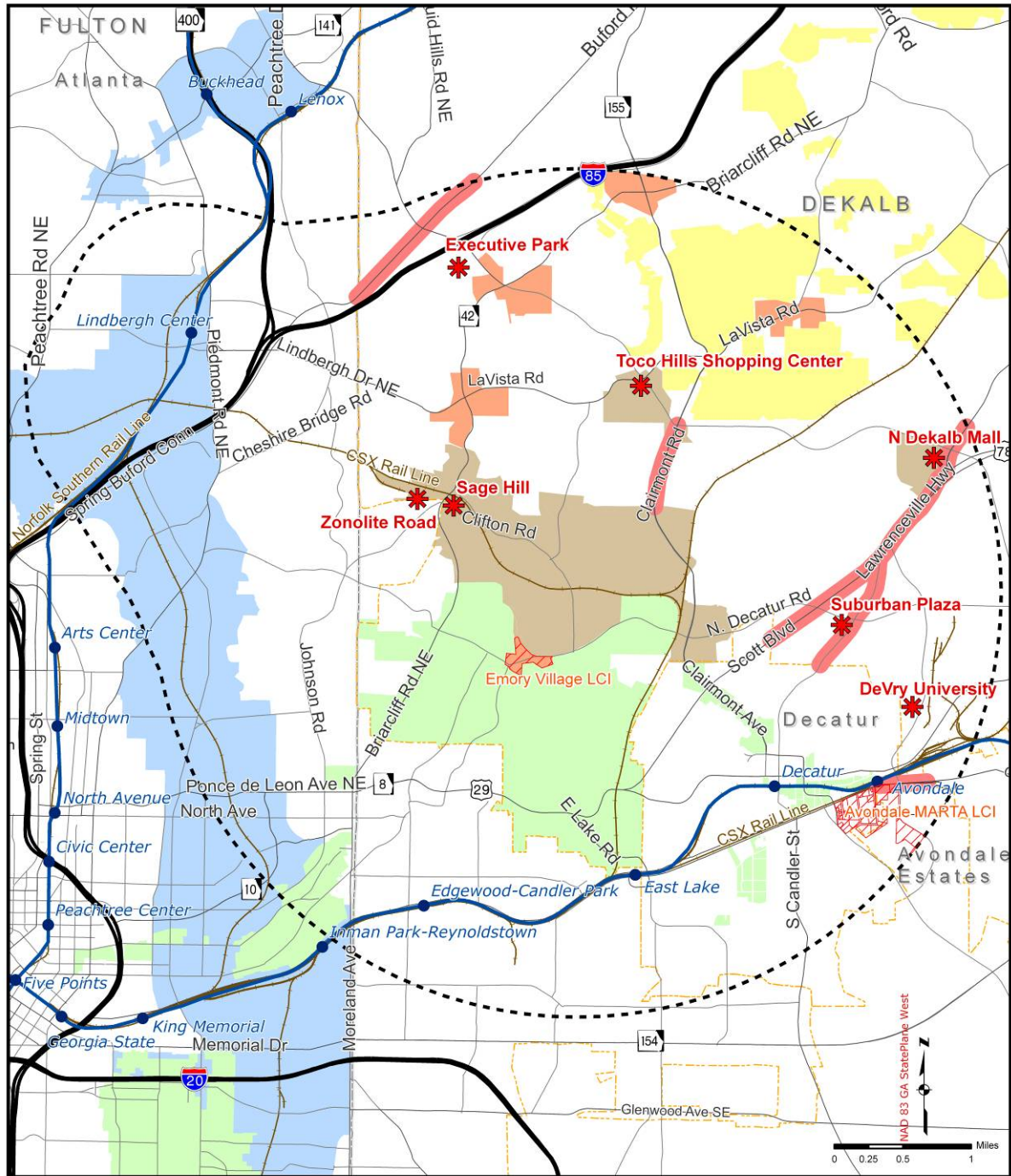


Developments of Regional Impact
and Major Development Projects
2005-2009



- DRI or Major Development
- LCI Boundary
- Clifton Corridor

Figure 5.7: Redevelopment Characteristics



Redevelopment Characteristics

marta  **CLIFTON CORRIDOR**
Transportation Management Association
CCTMA

DeKalb County Designations		Overlay Districts	
	Commercial Redevelopment Corridors		Historic District/Area
	Mixed-Use Town Centers		Residential Infill
	Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers		Redevelopment or Other Special Purpose
Redevelopment Areas			
	Redevelopment Areas Identified from LCI Studies		
	Additional Redevelopment Areas		

5.4 Key Findings

This section describes the key findings and conclusions relating to land use and development policies, existing and future land use composition and development trends in the Clifton Corridor.

- The overall policy framework within the corridor is supportive of additional premium transit service.
- The cities of Atlanta, Decatur and DeKalb County all include transit-supportive policies and future land use designations within their comprehensive plans.
- MARTA has a successful TOD program and a firm commitment to transit-supportive land use policies for its station areas.
- The ARC's LCI program has had a major influence on promoting TOD in the region. This program should be explored for planning TOD at new station areas if service is expanded in the corridor.
- The existing land uses in the corridor are supportive of additional premium transit service due to following factors:
 - Significant amounts of office/institutional space in the Emory/CDC area. The area also contains significant multi-family residential development (nine percent of total) at densities greater than eight units per acre.
 - Historic qualities (short blocks, continuous sidewalks, small set-backs) of many neighborhoods in the study area are also supportive of transit use.
 - Having a mixture of residential and commercial/institutional land uses in the study area is also transit-supportive as transit capacity is better utilized in corridors with both origins and destinations.
- The planned land uses in the corridor are supportive of additional premium transit service due to following factors:
 - Transit-supportive future land use designations (mixed-use, high-density residential, commercial, office-institutional-public) comprise a significant 33 percent of the study area.
 - Increase in density is expected in the three activity centers (downtown Decatur, Emory/CDC, Lindbergh MARTA Station) suggesting premium transit could be supported between these areas.
- An analysis of recent home sales indicates that the study area is built out with little possibility of dramatic population increases. This phenomenon is consistent with ARC's modest population projections for the corridor.
- Recent home sales also show the affluence of the area suggesting the need for premium transit service with competitive travel times to entice 'choice' transit riders.
- Significant new single-family residential development is unlikely. Increased densification through the redevelopment of aging and obsolete land uses with new multi-family and town home is expected.
- All major developments planned for the study area incorporate mixed-uses, almost all with a component of high-density residential indicating future transit support.

- Redevelopment is likely for aging and vacant commercial areas, such as Suburban Plaza and the Scott Boulevard-Lawrenceville Highway and Clairmont Corridors.
- Areas within historic or residential infill overlay districts are unlikely to see significant changes in development character, scale, or levels of transit support. Areas within redevelopment overlay districts on the other hand are likely to exhibit enhanced transit support as a result of increased densification and transit-supportive development regulations (i.e. enhanced pedestrian and street connectivity).