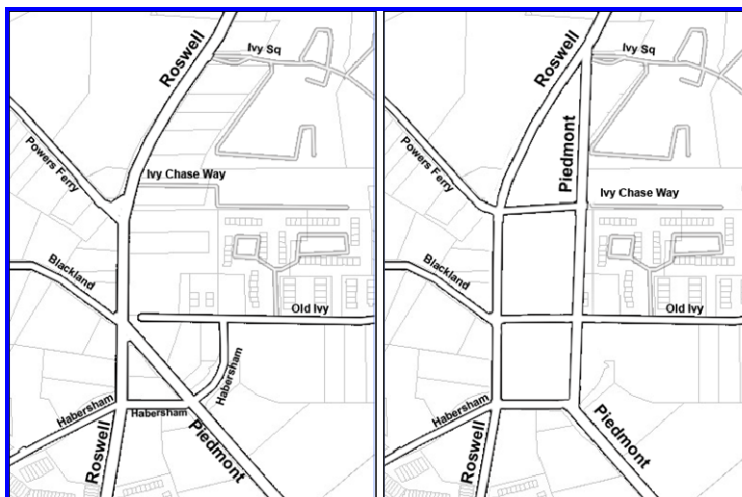


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The “Habersham” bottleneck may be improved with a new street grid – Extending Piedmont to parallel Roswell Road and adding new cross streets may significantly improve the traffic problems which haunt the Roswell-Piedmont-Blackland-Habersham-Powers Ferry intersections. This solution would require the voluntary cooperation of commercial property owners, neighborhoods, the City and the State. This is not a short-term plan and may take ten years or more to accomplish.

With new, medium-density development and greenspace, this new street grid could become a gateway to urban Buckhead. The ultimate configuration, and, in particular, the path of Piedmont, will need to be worked out by the participants and may differ significantly from these diagrams.



Existing intersections (left) and an optional configuration (right)

Connect Atlanta artist's concept of another possible configuration for Roswell-Habersham-Piedmont area. We would prefer the road grid to be shifted slightly to the west to buffer for existing condominiums better.

Fixing “Habersham” has consequences to neighborhood areas – Relocating Piedmont, adding a grid, and fixing the Habersham bottleneck has consequences beyond those intended: Old Ivy Road traffic will become heavier. Drivers who now go miles out of their way to avoid a 15-minute wait on Habersham will adjust their behavior once the problems are fixed. The Connect Atlanta Plan should have built-in improvements for the interiors of the neighborhoods to make this a win-win result, not a win-lose result.

A guaranteed “Residential Buffer” is required for success of a “New Piedmont” plan – The board of the North Buckhead Civic Association finds the idea of a new grid structure for streets in the Piedmont, Roswell, Habersham, Powers Ferry area appealing, but only if certain neighborhood protections are guaranteed.

- If Piedmont is moved east, the residents in existing condominiums need to be guaranteed a buffer. Preferably, the buffer would be one of commercial buildings with acceptable rear yard buffers, as required by ordinances. However, if the street is put next to the condos, we are concerned because there is no ordinance requiring a buffer from the street to the nearby residences – the road can be put immediately adjacent to the residential property lines. So, if relocating Piedmont is to be the premise of the Connect Atlanta Plan, we need legal guarantees to establish a buffer (a distance where the road will not be located) to protect the condo values. If that buffer is invaded, then the City should buy out the condo owners at a

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fair (non-distress) price. Such a deal protecting existing residents should be part of the Connect Atlanta Plan just as much as relocating Piedmont is part of that plan.

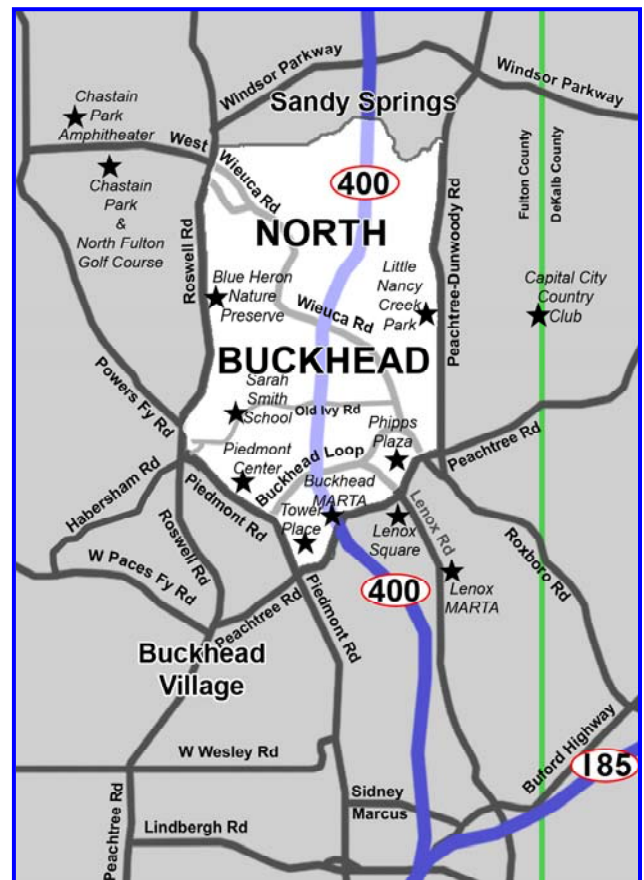
- Height-plane restrictions also need to be ensured so that high-rises aren't erected. Unlike current ordinances, these height-plane restrictions should apply whether or not there is an intervening street. Building heights in the new "grid area" should not exceed a plane extending at a 45° from the lot line residential properties in the area. In other words, to ensure the continued quality of life for existing residential areas, the zoning permitted within our new grid should preclude high-rises. These height-plane restrictions need to be a firm promise in the Connect Atlanta Plan and enacted by ordinance.

Sidewalks and Traffic Calming for Old Ivy – When the Habersham bottleneck is fixed, traffic flow will increase on Old Ivy Road. Old Ivy is the site of Sarah Smith Elementary School. Kids and parents walk to school. Sidewalks on both sides (not just one) of Old Ivy Road, from Roswell/Piedmont to Wieuca Road need to be part of the plan. Traffic calming needs to protect the residential nature of Old Ivy – narrower lanes, landscaping, etc. are needed to slow and calm traffic.

Improved school drop-off required for Sarah Smith – Improved facilities need to be provided for parents in cars who come to drop off or pick up children. Today, the westbound lane of Old Ivy is blocked twice a day by a line of cars waiting to enter Sarah Smith. This line is inconsistent with the concept of a larger volume of traffic on Old Ivy Road and is an existing safety hazard.

Traffic signals need to be considered for Old Ivy's "feeder" streets – Traffic going eastbound on Old Ivy in front of Sarah Smith School, is either local or it ends up (virtually all the time) on Wieuca at Ivy Road or Wieuca at Old Ivy Road. To avoid introducing new bottlenecks at these intersections, new traffic signals should be considered. Traffic flow analyses should be done to consider where the Old Ivy traffic goes once it reaches Wieuca – no doubt, much reaches Peachtree-Dunwoody Road and beyond. The capacity of those roads beyond Old Ivy should be considered, too.

Roswell Corridor Project required – We have a tremendously successful Peachtree Boulevard project. It has made a wonderful improvement to our City and is an investment that will pay for itself many times. A similar project is under way for the Piedmont Road Corridor. It is important for Atlanta and Sandy Springs to jointly undertake a Roswell Corridor Project. Roswell Road is a gateway to Buckhead and a gateway to Atlanta. It is imperative that the City, in concert with Sandy Springs, makes another investment that will pay for itself many times: a beautified Roswell Road. The project should include wider sidewalks, standardized signs, landscaping and lighting, underground utilities, and a uniform development/zoning philosophy. The 25-acre Blue Heron Nature Preserve, on Roswell Road at Nancy Creek, could become a centerpiece of an integrated Roswell Corridor Plan.



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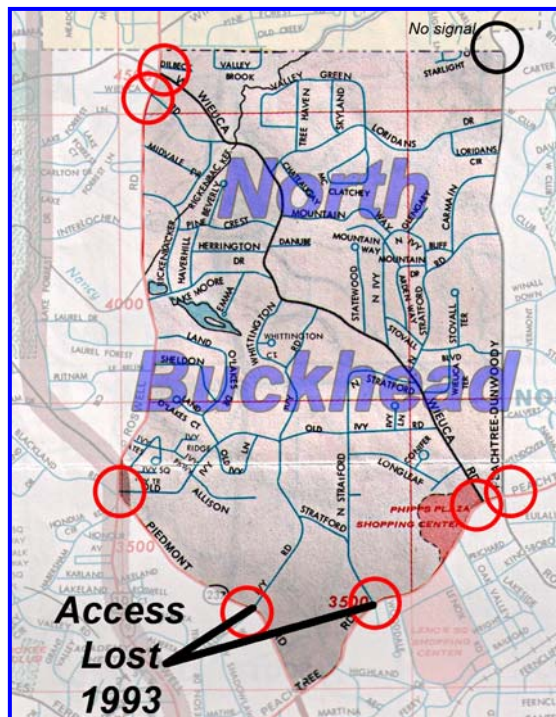
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Wieuca Road and Peachtree-Dunwoody Roads – Attention need to be paid to North Buckhead's two main, purely residential roads. The residential character of these roads and adjoining property needs to be protected – more than 250 single family homes and low-density condominiums front on Wieuca or have their sole access to the outside world through Wieuca Road. Further, it is extremely likely that a new elementary school will be built on Wieuca Road. School children (and parents) will need a calm environment with sidewalks along both sides of Wieuca Road – narrower traffic lanes, landscaping, etc. are needed to slow and calm traffic. A turn lane(s) may be appropriate at the new school.

Both North Buckhead and Brookhaven have some of their limited number of outlets to the outside world at the few intersections on Peachtree-Dunwoody. The City has purchased a new five-acre park on Peachtree-Dunwoody Road and plans are under way to determine how it will be developed – a playground is one of the highest priorities for this park. Traffic calming and pedestrian access to the park are needed for the safety of park users.

Some new traffic signals, sidewalks and probably other amenities will become appropriate on both Wieuca and Peachtree-Dunwoody to enable residents to safely use the new park and elementary school.

Accessibility of North Buckhead diminished by GA 400 & Buckhead Loop – Before the construction of GA 400 and the Buckhead Loop, North Buckhead had freer access points to the “outside world”. The map to the left shows the signalized entrances/exits to and from the neighborhood that existed up until the early 1990s. This reduced accessibility affects both North Buckhead and surrounding neighborhoods.



1973 Map of North Buckhead shows the signalized access points for the neighborhood. Southern access to Peachtree and Piedmont was lost in 1993 with GA 400's construction.

The Buckhead Loop construction was related to the GA 400 project and added a major interchange which services Buckhead and southern Sandy Springs. The Loop added two new access points but they do not connect to the interior neighborhood street grid – thus, the Loop can be considered to be a limited access extension of Lenox Road. The access points on Wieuca and West Wieuca, while providing redundant capacity, serve the same part of the neighborhood and can be regarded as one entrance/exit.

Accordingly, the loss of the two major access points on the southern part of the neighborhood has had a profound impact on neighborhood traffic patterns and the intensity of usage of the remaining entry points. For many, what used to be a quick trip to Lenox Square is now, a more time consuming and much less friendly trip.

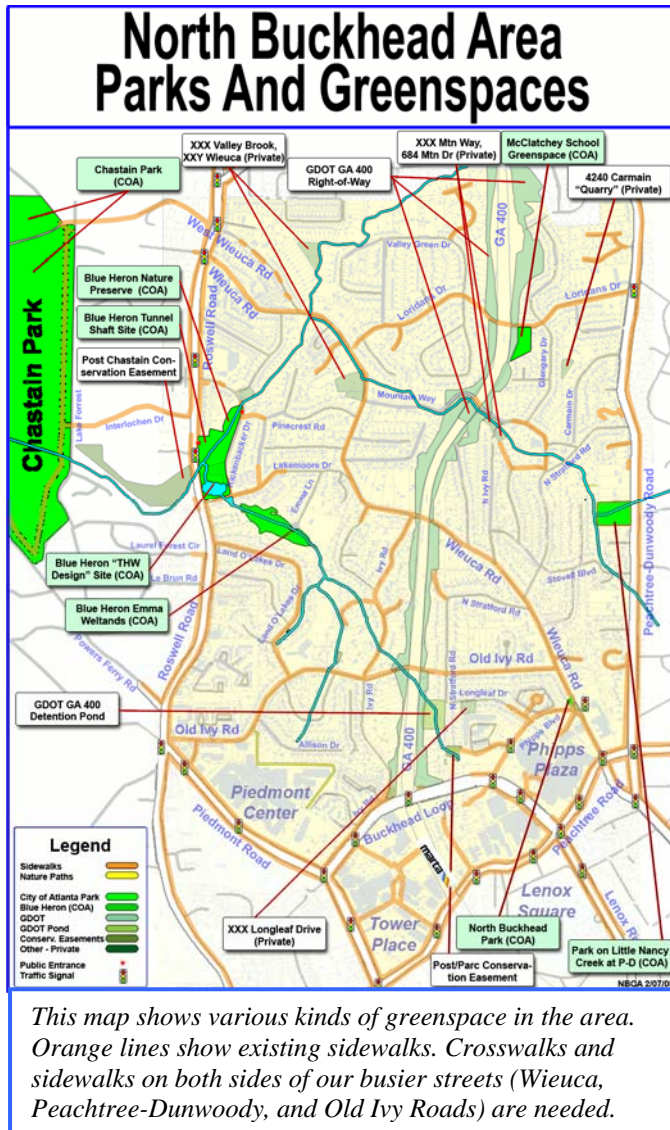
Any road or signalization handling changes in the area should be done carefully to retain the functionality of the remaining points of entry and exit.

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Pedestrian Enigmas must be solved

– Parts of North Buckhead are inaccessible to pedestrians – the Buckhead Loop is especially pedestrian-hostile. Residents of some of North Buckhead's most densely developed areas can't shop at the nearest stores – residents of the Post Stratford apartments can't easily shop at stores and restaurants they can see from their windows. To walk the 400' from the Post apartments to nearby TJ Maxx or Toys-R-US requires a 2/3-mile route, distinguished, in places, by its pedestrian hostility. Park Avenue condominium residents who try to walk to office buildings on Piedmont Road complain they just can't easily reach the buildings they can see.



Many residents of southern North Buckhead live within 2/3-miles of the Buckhead MARTA station, yet there is no practical way for them to reach the MARTA station because of intervening roads and because the city's largest developed neighborhood has no MARTA service except on two of its borders. MARTA (or equivalent) service needs to be provided if there is to be any expectation that most North Buckhead residents will even occasionally abandon their cars.

High-traffic streets pose another instance of being able to see where you want to go but not be able to get there. Sidewalks run the full length of Wieuca, Peachtree Dunwoody and Old Ivy Roads. But that does not make them fully usable; it is often difficult to cross the road to get to the side with sidewalks, especially pushing a baby carriage. To make this problem clear, Peachtree-Dunwoody, carrying 12,000 vehicles a day at about 10 MPH over the posted limit of 35, has a length of 1.4 miles with no stop signs or signalized crosswalks.

Winding Wieuca Road, with 15,000 vehicles a day and a routinely ignored 25 MPH limit, spans two miles with no stop signs or safe crosswalks. The solution is to build more sidewalks and to provide some means for pedestrians to cross our busier roads (stop signs and/or signalized crosswalks.)

High-density Buckhead in particular should become as pedestrian friendly as it is automobile friendly. Further, a public "sense of place" should be provided for pedestrians in urban Buckhead – pocket parks/greenspaces/dog runs – places where pedestrians can feel at ease and welcomed in public. Except for the Peachtree Boulevard and a tiny park behind Tower Place, there are very few first-class places for pedestrians that don't involve being in someone's building or walking on unfriendly sidewalks and driveways. What are all of the people who move into condo high-rises supposed to do with their kids and their dogs? New York City has set aside 25% of its land for public parks; Atlanta has 6% in total and 0% in urban Buckhead.

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Adaptive sensing and signaling technology needed to unsnarl our traffic – Atlanta is currently using technology circa the 1940s to handle its traffic. If the same “advanced technology” were used by Google and Amazon, we would have no Internet commerce; if it were applied to the telephone system, we wouldn't have touch-tone phones. Yet, Atlanta and the state have an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in our streets and intersections and much of the capacity of our roads is lost. Adaptive sensing technology is a proven technology which can and should be used to improve the utilization of our existing roads. After all, we simply don't have the money or the land to build more and bigger roads.

Funding the entire Roswell/Piedmont/Habersham/neighborhood streets solution as a complete package – The Connect Atlanta plan must not allow for a partial implementation of improvements with only business needs addressed and residential needs deferred, perhaps indefinitely. Not only must the high volume roads be fixed, but before their improvements are started, funding for related residential projects should be dedicated and available. A firm allocation of 20% of the overall project budget for the Roswell/Piedmont/Habersham improvements should be earmarked for interior neighborhood needs, shared on both sides of Roswell. Similar projects on other major streets should involve the comparable funding of neighborhood needs.

Traffic volumes destined to grow – Buckhead traffic volumes are far from static. Buckhead has grown rapidly and even if no new projects arise there are already enough approved projects and enough approved high-density zoning in the pipeline to possibly swamp the best laid plans. We are concerned that the initial Connect Atlanta solutions for Buckhead address only today's traffic volumes, not what's coming.

I-85/GA 400 Interchange must be completed – The failure to build a complete I-85 interchange when GA 400 was built causes much excess surface traffic in Buckhead, particularly on Peachtree, Piedmont, the Buckhead Loop, Wieuca, Lenox, and Roxboro Roads. It is absolutely critical to complete this interchange.

West Paces Ferry/Peachtree Road intersection – One intersection well outside North Buckhead is worthy of mention: the West Paces Ferry/Peachtree Road intersection. Currently, east-bound traffic on West Paces Ferry Road is prohibited from turning left onto Peachtree Road and Roswell Road. Instead, traffic is forced to proceed onto East Paces Ferry Road. Drivers unfamiliar with the street layout end up on Piedmont, which is often not what they intended. It would be much better to permit left turns.

Growth Management and Connect Atlanta's Successfulness – There is some limit to how much traffic Piedmont and Peachtree can carry. Similar limits exist for other areas of Atlanta. Development of new density should not be permitted unless realistic, near-term transportation/transit capacity is available and/or a funding mechanism and implementation plan are in place to build out new capacity. In other words, impact fees and increased density-related millage rates should be paid by development that requires new transportation infrastructure or that new density should be deferred. We should not take away the landowner's rights to develop their land, but neither should we let them dump the costs their developments cause on existing residents and existing business owners.

Historically, planning in Atlanta and, in particular, traffic planning in Atlanta, parallels the life experiences of a chronically overweight person who is always dieting but never succeeds. People get fat and stay fat because of their lifestyles – the solution is not buying bigger clothes; rather, they need to eat less and exercise more. Cities get traffic gridlock and keep it in spite of transportation spending because of their lifestyles, too – the solution is not building more and bigger roads, since we have already done that; rather, they need to stop growing uncontrollably and start growing smarter. People need to manage their food intake; cities need to

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manage their growth. So, if Connect Atlanta is to be a successful plan and not a mere resolution, its key tenet must be “managed growth”.

Managed growth means setting realistic traffic volume limits for each area and, within each area, capacity limits for each road. Then, if a developer proposes a development that exceeds those capacity limits, he will not automatically get development permits. If the City comes up with a traffic/transit improvement that promises to expand capacity and permits higher limits, the City should defer permitting any new density until the improvements are ready and the developers seeking permits which require that new capacity should pay for its creation.

Inevitably, the analogy of hefty people and traffic-challenged cities breaks down. A person is a single thing. Atlanta is a metro area – a group of autonomous political entities. Atlanta is just part of the metro body – judging by our problems, we're probably the torso with an enlarged belly and “love handles”; other governments largely control the mouth and the hands stuffing it with food. To a large extent, we don't control our source of food (sprawl), we are just stuck with processing it.

A complete traffic policy must be regional. But, lacking complete control doesn't mean we should do nothing. If we are about to permit the creation of a “jobs magnet” as we have built many times in Buckhead (Piedmont Center, Atlanta Financial Center, Terminus, etc.) we should ask a basic question: where will the workers come from? In the past, a competent analysis would have forecast that, based on demographic trends and housing stock availability, a large portion of Buckhead workers come from other counties. After the fact, this is confirmed by an informal license tag count in Piedmont Center which indicates that most workers are from Cobb County.

So the question is: if we permit new density, would we have enough road/transit capacity to service it? A corollary question: if we don't have enough road capacity and new infrastructure is required, why shouldn't the developers and occupants of new density pay every dime of its construction? Why should the existing tenants and existing residents in other buildings subsidize new density, just so the developer gets rich (in part at the expense of bystanders)? Opponents of this approach might argue that land owners have a right to develop their land and that keeping them from doing so is an unconstitutional “taking”. The answer to this objection is that of course the owner can use his land as he see fit, but when he requires the public to pay huge sums or to experience unreasonable traffic congestion as a result, it is no longer merely a private property rights issue – there are other participants who are involved in the decision making, other participants with the right to say *no*.

To date, the city and other local governments have failed to act to the limit new density and the result is continuing and worsening traffic congestion. They have apparently either been indifferent or they have been stymied by the “property rights” arguments. The attitude of our governments has been that of the unsuccessful dieter: we can eat as much as we want and we will not get fat as long as we make some resolutions and “try”. The time has past to just “try”; we need to get down to insisting on serious planning and meaningful governmental discipline. As we have seen above, there are excellent counter arguments to the “property rights trumps all” line of thought and we must now apply discipline to Atlanta's growth if Connect Atlanta is to be successful and if what remains of our residential and business quality of life is to be preserved.

Draft #3 - March 17, 2008

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