

A photograph of Berkeley Lake with a large tree on the right side. The sun is shining through the leaves of the tree, creating a starburst effect. The lake is calm, and the sky is clear. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

BERKELEY LAKE PEACHTREE INDUSTRIAL SMALL AREA PLAN

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CITY PLANNING STUDIO



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Planning Team

Amy Schutt, MCRP
Empress Henry Logan, MCRP
Olivia Phillips, MCRP
Yihan Li, MCRP
Dylan Apelu, MCRP & MSCE

Special Thanks To

Aaron Fortner, AICP, Studio Instructor
Leigh Threadgill, City Administrator



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ABOUT BERKELEY LAKE

STUDY AREA & BACKGROUND

About Berkeley Lake

Study Area

The area outlined in yellow represents the study area for this corridor plan. It is primarily located along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, where land use is predominantly industrial and commercial. Limited commercial and office developments are present west of Peachtree Industrial Blvd and near key intersections. All research and analyses in this study will focus exclusively on this defined area.

While the planning team does not include the single-family residential area in the plan, we spoke with many residents and took all information into account while creating our recommendations for the study area.



Background

Berkeley Lake was developed in the late 1940s by Frank Coggins, who built the dam that created its 88-acre lake in 1948. Initially a seasonal retreat, it became a year-round community and was incorporated in 1956.

The city has since emphasized environmental preservation and managed growth, with 2011 annexations along Peachtree Industrial Blvd expanding its boundaries and connectivity.

The city retains a small-town, neighborhood-oriented charm, with a strong connection to the lake as a cherished community asset.



DEMOGRAPHICS

About Berkeley Lake

SUMMARY

In comparison with statewide trends, Berkeley Lake exhibits an older age profile, higher educational attainment, higher household incomes, and a greater share of owner-occupied housing. These demographic and socioeconomic characteristics reflect the city's development pattern, housing inventory, and the types of occupations held by its residents.

Income, Employment, and Poverty

Household income levels in Berkeley Lake are substantially higher than statewide figures. The estimated median household income is approximately \$160,500, compared with a statewide median of about \$74,600. The city's poverty rate is under 2%, whereas Georgia's overall rate is approximately 13%. Employment among residents is concentrated in sectors such as professional, scientific, and technical services; health care; finance; and education. These sectors align with the city's higher educational attainment rates.

Population

Berkeley Lake has an estimated population of just over 2,000 residents. Compared with the statewide age profile, the city has a notably older population. The median age is 55.6 years, significantly higher than Georgia's median of 38 years. This difference indicates a larger share of residents in older age groups and a smaller proportion of children and young adults. This age structure informs several other demographic patterns described below.

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Data

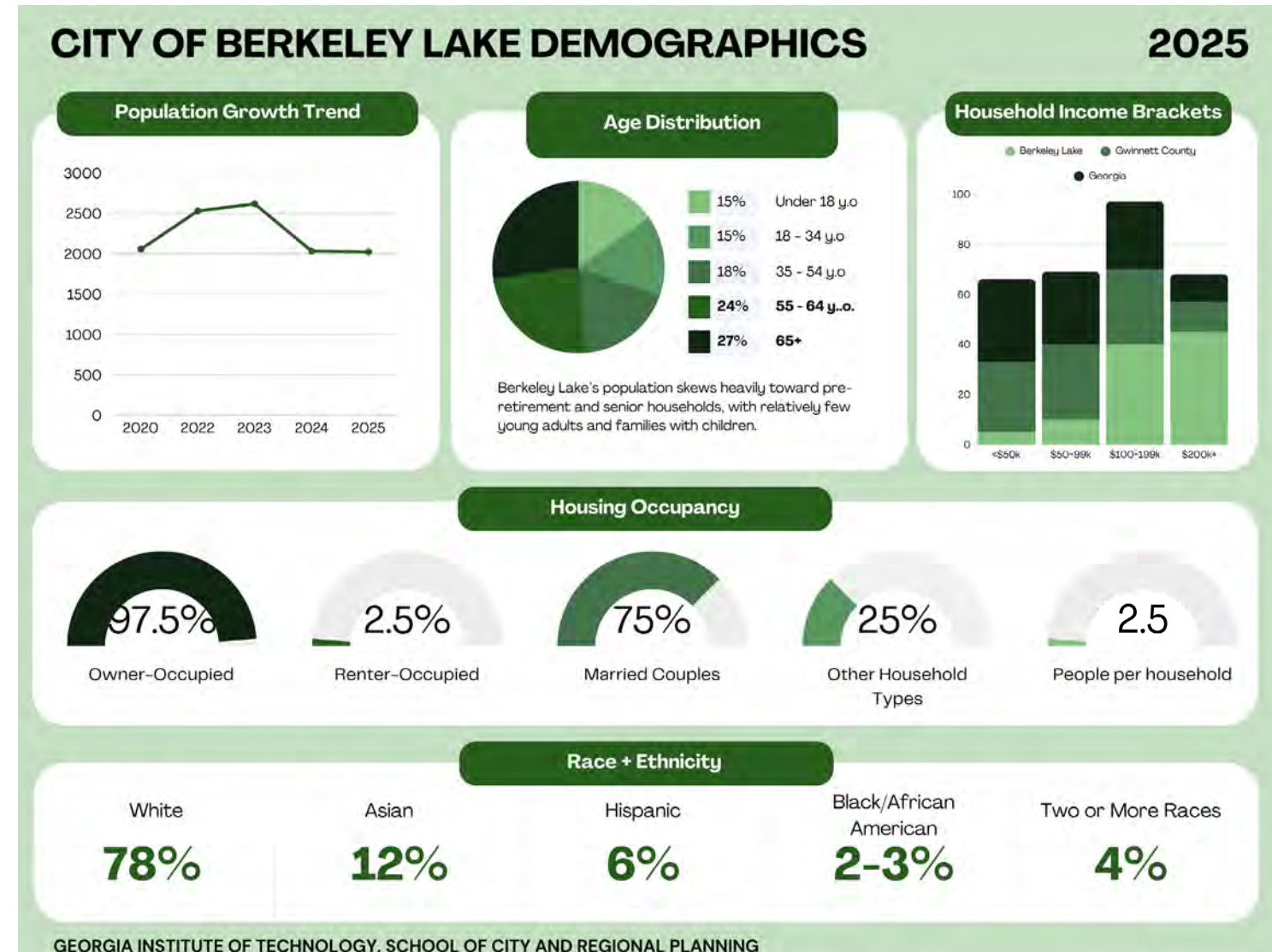
The median age is 55, compared to the state median of 38.

Housing and Household Characteristics

Housing conditions in Berkeley Lake are characterized by high rates of homeownership and predominantly single-family housing. Approximately 97.5% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, which is substantially higher than the statewide homeownership rate. The median home value is about \$674,400, and most housing consists of detached single-family homes situated on wooded or lake-adjacent lots. Average household size is approximately 2.5 persons, and a majority of households are composed of married couples.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic composition of Berkeley Lake differs from statewide distributions. Approximately 78% of residents identify as White (non-Hispanic), while about 12% identify as Asian, which is higher than the statewide share for that group. Black or African American residents make up roughly 2–3%, and Hispanic or Latino residents represent about 6% of the population. Approximately 15% of residents are foreign-born. Together, these figures reflect a demographic profile that is less diverse than Georgia overall, while showing a more pronounced Asian presence than is typical for the state.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

ENVIRONMENT

Existing Conditions

The environment plays a vital role in the city's overall well-being. Within the study area, most parcels are connected to the sewer system, effectively managing wastewater. However, stormwater management remains a significant concern for residents.

The area's stormwater drains into a few retention ponds that ultimately discharge back into the lake, raising the risk of industrial runoff and pollution. This issue imposes substantial annual costs on the city and residents, requiring careful, long-term mitigation efforts.



HOUSING

Existing Conditions

Housing is a pressing issue for Berkeley Lake. In the comprehensive plan, the lack of housing for the aging population is cited extensively. It illustrates that cost-burdened homes in the city more than doubled from 2016 to 2021. Within the plan, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are referenced as an option for residences to "age-in-place" and remain a part of the community as individual housing needs and preferences can change over time.

The comprehensive plan notes the community preference for single-family homes with additional support noted for townhomes and senior housing. Senior housing was strongly supported with community members indicating a desire to see this type of use being located in the commercial areas on either side of South Berkeley Lake Rd NW and on the west side of Peachtree Industrial Blvd (PIB). Support for townhome units was indicated for the area on the southern portion of Peachtree Industrial Blvd. There was no support indicated for multi-family or affordable housing types of residential uses.



HOUSING

Existing Conditions

Community members provided vital input related to preferences for new housing offerings in the study area. The feedback garnered through stakeholder interviews and community meetings was consistent with the community input documented in the comprehensive plan. There is a strong desire to protect the existing single-family homes of the city with strong support for senior housing and moderate support for townhomes along Peachtree Industrial Blvd.

Proposed concepts for multi-family were generally not supported as this use is not currently in the city and many residents note issues and concerns associated with this use. Many community members are concerned that more residences would put a strain on the lake and its amenities. Such concerns include too many boats and a crowded beach. The lake and amenities are managed by a voluntary organization called the Berkeley Lake Homeowners Association (BLHA) in which only members are allowed access to the lake. Interviewees also acknowledged, however, that previously admitted subdivisions into the BLHA have not created an overcrowding problem.

“Whether it is a townhome or single family detached home, many residents are looking to downsize as they get older to a master on the main...”

Aesthetics and the impact to community character also surfaced as a reoccurring concern. Many community members noted a desire for any future apartment development to cater to “higher income” and “luxury” clientele. Many participants noted their concerns about the scale and size of such uses and the fear that this type of development would not fit into the overall aesthetic of the community. Overall, responses to multi-family residential uses is generally negative and not supportive.

Proposed townhome concepts, however, received more favorable support. Many participants noted that such uses can provide a needed housing alternative for those looking to downsize from a large home and property to something smaller. This type of residence can also provide a more affordable opportunity for young families wanting to live in the community.



COMMERCIAL

Existing Conditions

Previous Engagement

The comprehensive plan denotes a strong desire to revitalize the city’s Peachtree Industrial District. Though these spaces were annexed in 2011 to safeguard the city’s financial future, re-imagining this district would give a necessary economic boost to the area. The plan specifically emphasizes mixed-used centers that are complementary to one another and to the stable businesses that already exist.



Vacancies & Turnover

The Peachtree Industrial Blvd corridor of Berkeley Lake is a mixture of county parks and recreation facilities, historic industrial parcels, vacant, office parks, strip retail centers, single use low-density retailers, gas stations, and undeveloped land. Though many of the existing businesses along the corridor are stable, the overall condition of the corridor is an aging, low-density, auto-oriented assemblage of businesses.

The corridor does have a number of vacant parcels, vacant buildings, or vacant retail spaces within larger shopping center properties. This can result in properties that appear to be unsightly or distressed giving an overarching sense of blight or emerging blight in some parts of the corridor. There are no clear emerging factors that would reverse this trend making a strategic plan for the corridor necessary.



TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

Existing Conditions

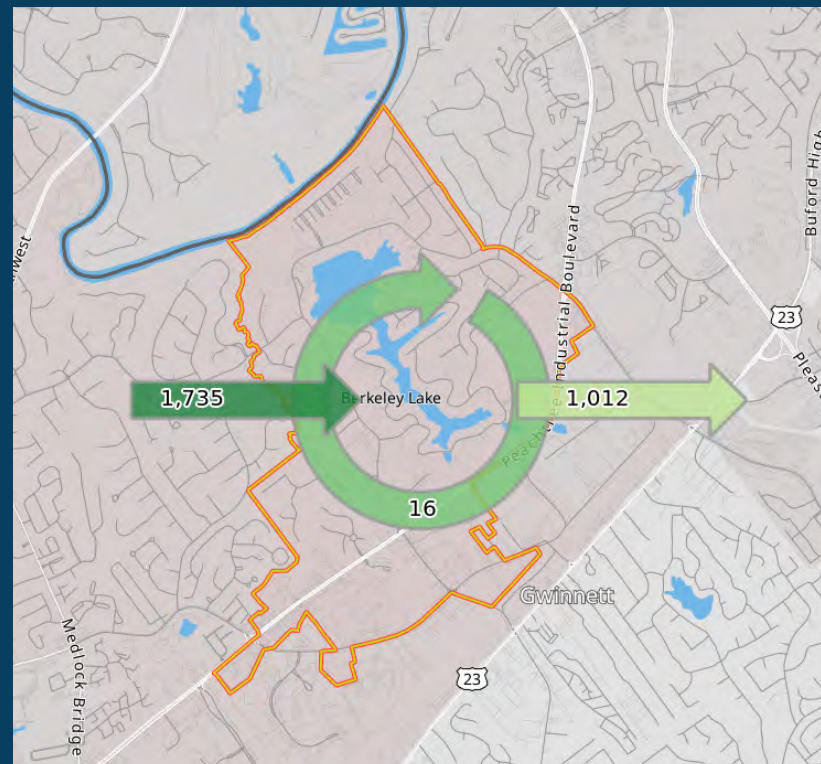
Transportation

Berkeley Lake, like most suburbs in Atlanta Metro, is very car centric with only 1.7% of the population not owning a vehicle and about 49% of the population owning 3 or more vehicles. Peachtree Industrial Blvd, a high-speed (45mph) principal arterial, handles almost all of the traffic in, out, and through the city. South Berkeley Lake Rd and North Berkeley Lake Rd serve as minor arterials or collectors connecting residents to Peachtree Industrial Blvd, Buford Hwy, or Pleasant Hill Rd.



This commuting flow diagram shows that Berkeley Lake attracts more workers than it sends out, with 1,735 people commuting into the city and 1,012 commuting out, while only 16 people both live and work locally. This indicates that Berkeley Lake attracts a significant number of jobs in the city in proportion to its residents.

Given this reliance on inbound commuting, improving transportation connectivity and accessibility remains critical for supporting local businesses. Enhancing roadway performance, pedestrian conditions, and regional access can help ensure that employees can reach the study area efficiently and sustain economic activity.

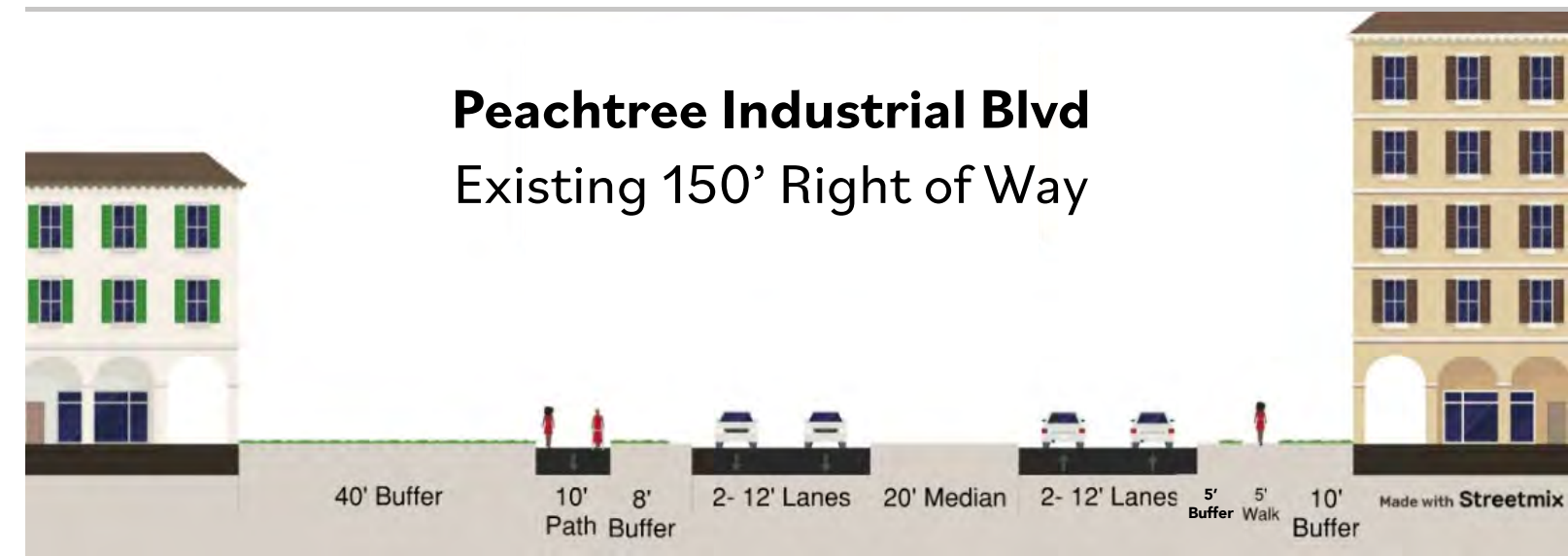


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2023, On The Map

Connectivity

The current industrial and commercial district for Berkeley Lake is all within a 15-minute walk radius. However, the current infrastructure in this district does not provide sufficient walkability or accessibility to commercial or recreational areas. South Berkeley Lake Rd has sidewalks on one side or no sidewalk, which limits walkability to areas like Pinckneyville Park and West Gwinnett Park & Aquatic Center.

Although Peachtree Industrial Blvd has a 10-foot shared-use path and a 5-foot sidewalk, the buffer between the high-speed roadway and the path needs to be increased to provide pedestrians with a sense of safety. Additionally, there is a need for safer crossings across all roadways.



Congestion & Capacity

Peachtree Industrial Blvd is already operating under congested conditions during peak hours. Existing traffic volumes strain roadway capacity, raising concerns that additional development will further exacerbate congestion and delay, even with planned roadway widening by Gwinnett County.

Cut-Through Traffic

Drivers increasingly divert through Berkeley Lake's residential streets to bypass congestion along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. This cut-through traffic threatens neighborhood safety, increases noise and intrusion, and undermines the community's small-town and residential character.

Speed & Safety

High operating speeds and a history of crashes along Peachtree Industrial Blvd create a hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users. Current roadway conditions prioritize vehicle throughput over safety, limiting walkability and access to active transportation options within and around Berkeley Lake.



CURRENT ZONING

Existing Conditions

The non-residential area of Berkeley Lake predominantly consists of light-industrial zoning with a few office-institutional and commercial zones. These areas don't match the character of Berkeley Lake and are beginning to die out or have high tenant turnover. There is a need to revitalize this area by strategically introducing zoning changes to allow for a mix of new and different uses.

The zoning ordinance for Berkeley Lake needs to be updated to accommodate uses that are desired by the community and support uses that can improve the city's overall tax base. For example, the community has expressed strong interest in the development of a retirement community offering both assisted living and independent living options.

However, the current zoning ordinance does not permit this type of facility; it only allows assisted living group homes or nursing homes in areas zoned as office-institutional. The zoning ordinance also lacks provisions for infill development or missing-middle housing types. Missing-middle housing refers to housing types between large, single-family homes and apartment buildings, such as duplexes and townhomes, that are not as common as they once were.

Revisions to key development standards and ordinances would help strengthen the performance and viability of commercial businesses in Berkeley Lake. From a developer's perspective, this area has the potential to become a great amenity to the city with a mix of retail, residential, and recreational areas.

However, the current zoning ordinances present challenges to developers. For example, all uses besides residential are limited to a height maximum of two stories or 40 feet, whichever is less. This standard effectively caps all projects at

two stories, which may not provide the density and flexibility needed to attract high-quality development.

Furthermore, all retail and business uses are concentrated along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, which functions primarily as a thoroughfare for Gwinnett County. This limits opportunities for walkability, placemaking, and the creation of a cohesive commercial identity within the city.

It is also important to promote land uses that are mutually supportive; however, many of the city's commercially zoned areas are currently adjacent to industrial uses, which limits their compatibility. The proximity of industrial uses to residential neighborhoods raises further concerns.

Key Concerns

- Predominance of light-industrial zoning in areas no longer suited for industrial activity
- Lack of commercial uses along Peachtree Industrial Blvd with pedestrian orientation
- Limited zoning flexibility to accommodate senior housing, mixed-use, or neighborhood-serving development
- Height and development standards that constrain feasibility and design quality

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Current Conditions



TOWN HALL #1

Housing

Residents at the first town hall emphasized Berkeley Lake's quiet, wooded character and expressed strong interest in preserving green space, environmental quality, and the city's low-density identity.

Many supported senior housing and downsizing options that allow aging in place, though there was broad concern about townhomes, apartments, and any higher-density housing, especially on the lake side of Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Several residents noted that new development could increase pressure on lake access and HOA amenities.

Commercial

Commercial improvements received more support, particularly small-scale, locally oriented uses such as cafés, delis, coffee shops, and boutiques.

Residents felt the Peachtree Industrial Blvd corridor could benefit from revitalization, but stressed that commercial development should remain low-profile and consistent with the city's natural aesthetic.

Environment

Environmental concerns were prominent, including stormwater runoff, aging septic systems, pollution risks, and impacts to natural habitats. Many residents favored green infrastructure and long-term infrastructure solutions to protect the lake and watershed.

Transportation

Transportation comments focused on the need for sidewalks, safer crossings along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, improved bike paths, and better connections to nearby parks. Traffic and cut-through driving were common concerns, especially if new development increases vehicle activity.

Overall

Overall, the community supports enhanced connectivity, environmental protection, and selective commercial revitalization, while preferring modest, carefully located residential growth that preserves Berkeley Lake's natural and community character.

Key Concerns

- Resistance to higher-density housing, including apartments and townhomes, especially near the lake
- Pressure on lake access, HOA amenities, and shared community resources from new development
- Preservation of Berkeley Lake's wooded character and lake environment
- Stormwater runoff, aging septic systems, and long-term infrastructure capacity

“People chose Berkeley Lake for its quiet, green character.”



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Current Conditions

Poster-session feedback reinforced the desire to preserve Berkeley Lake's natural character while adding more specific guidance on preferred locations and types of development. Residents showed the strongest support for small, locally oriented commercial uses such as cafés, restaurants, or a brewery, primarily at the S. Berkeley Lake Rd/PIB corner.

They emphasized improving and revitalizing existing commercial parcels rather than expanding retail elsewhere, and highlighted the importance of walkable access from neighborhoods.

Housing

Housing comments shifted toward clearer limits. While senior housing and downsizing options remain generally acceptable, many residents expressed firm opposition to apartments, multi-family units, or subsidized/affordable housing, and asked that any new homes be owner-occupied, low-rise, and situated closer to PIB rather than within green corridors.

Concerns about short-term rentals, height, and lake HOA access also emerged more strongly than in the first session.

Environmental

Environmental and infrastructure issues were described in greater detail, including worries about aging septic systems, stormwater impacts near commercial sites, power reliability, and the need to preserve the green buffer and tree canopy along PIB. Residents reiterated that development footprints should remain minimal and environmentally sensitive.

Connectivity

Connectivity concerns became more pronounced, with repeated requests for sidewalks on Lakeshore Drive, improved bike and golf cart access, and safer crossings on Peachtree Industrial Blvd.

Overall

Overall, this session sharpened community priorities: revitalize existing commercial areas, limit residential density, protect green space, and improve safe connectivity.

Key Concerns

- Loss of Berkeley Lake's wooded character and green buffers, particularly along Peachtree Industrial Blvd
- Expansion of residential density beyond what feels appropriate for a small, single-family community
- Introduction of apartment-style or subsidized housing not aligned with community expectations
- Safety and pedestrian issues along Peachtree Industrial Blvd



MARKET ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

Market Opportunities

Berkeley Lake's development market operates within clear and realistic boundaries. This analysis looks at local spending patterns, development trends, infrastructure capacity, and existing regulations to understand what types of development are most likely to succeed, where new uses make the most sense, and what conditions need to be in place for projects to move forward.

This information is intended to support better decision-making. It helps the City and residents evaluate proposals, identify priorities, and focus resources on projects that align with community goals and market realities.

As interest in development emerges, through inquiries, applications, or redevelopment opportunities, this analysis and recommendations section provides a consistent basis for considering how well proposals fit Berkeley Lake's vision.

Market conditions change over time. Population shifts, economic cycles, infrastructure investments, and regulatory updates all influence what is feasible. For this reason, the market analysis is designed to remain flexible and adaptable, ensuring that future decisions are grounded in current conditions rather than outdated assumptions.

01



02



03



04



05



LUXURY APARTMENTS

Market Opportunities

The economic trends that are in play along Peachtree Industrial Blvd are resulting in the existing condition of the road as a primarily low-density commercial use catering to the roadway's traffic volumes, and low-density professional business parks or office buildings. To change this trend, a new asset class of uses is needed. One of the most feasible asset classes that can work with the economics of the area is multi-family development. This report recommends identifying an appropriate location for such a development, on the southern side of Peachtree Industrial Blvd, away from the single-family core of the city.

There are multiple benefits to a multi-family development project along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. As mentioned, this development type is well-suited to pay the market price for commercial parcels along the corridor.

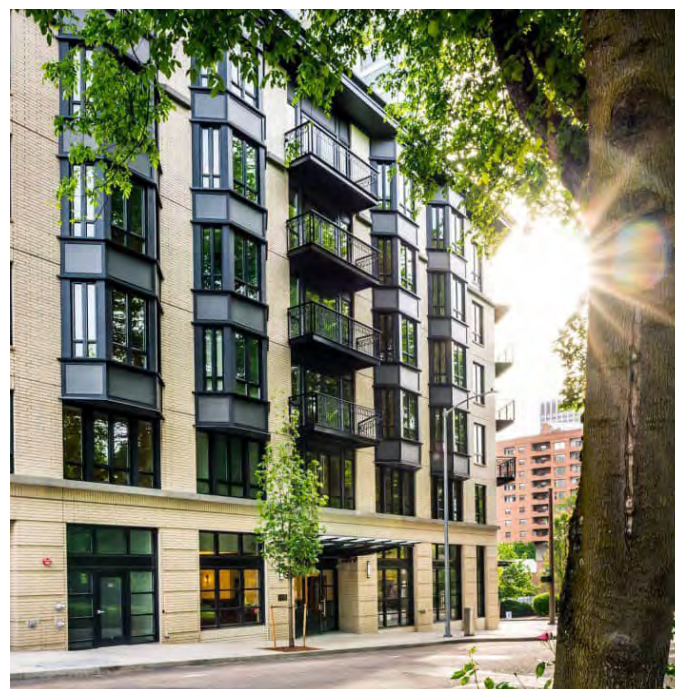
Multi-family developments are sizable enough in their overall investment cost and returns that they can absorb ground-floor commercial and retail uses into the project. In many areas

of Atlanta, it is more feasible for high-quality retailers to be placed within these larger mixed use developments than it is for the same retailer to build their own site and building in the same location.

This kind of development can also be done in a way that provides a high-end product, with high-quality materials, resulting in a much improved built environment for the area.

Key Takeaways

- Market rate and luxury apartments are a fiscal tool. Multi-family development can pay for higher land prices and further results in higher property tax revenue back to the city.
- A modest number of market-rate or luxury apartments helps generate the household base needed to sustain retail and amenities.
- Multi-family development residents would not be eligible to become Berkeley Lake Homeowners Association members and would not have access to Berkeley Lake.



NO LOW-INCOME HOUSING

Any new multi-family development should provide rental rates that are 120% or higher than the Area Median Income (AMI). New units should offer a level of pricing that caters to young professionals, providing an opportunity for this demographic who cannot yet afford a new home to be able to live in the community. Any project that proposes to provide subsidized or deeply discounted rental units would not be supported by the community.

1

CONCERN

Higher-density development will overburden public schools and other public services.

RECOMMENDATION

Any future higher-density development proposal should provide unit types catering to a broad diversity of demographics and stages of life including: singles, young professionals, and active seniors.

2

CONCERN

Higher-density developments will lower property values in surrounding areas.

RECOMMENDATION

The city should require high standards for the quality of the development including exterior building materials and architectural detailing. Prospective developers should provide documentation of their work including high-quality interior finishes and appliances to ensure the property value is increased as a result of the development.

3

CONCERN

Higher-density development will create more regional traffic congestion and parking problems than low-density development.

RECOMMENDATION

Any future higher-density development should only be approved as part of a larger mixed use proposal - providing walkable retail, goods and services, and eateries, along with new sidewalks and pathways that connect to adjacent commercial properties to reduce the need for car dependence.

COMMUNITY HOUSING CONCERNS

4

CONCERN

Higher-density housing caters to lower-income households.

RECOMMENDATION

Any new higher-density development should provide a range of unit types that accommodate 120% of AMI (Area Median Income) or higher. There are incomes that are still higher than the metro average that currently are unable to live in the area due to a lack of inventory.

5

CONCERN

Higher-density development negatively impacts the environment more than low-density development.

RECOMMENDATION

The city should adopt development standards for all new commercial development that requires stormwater runoff to be equal or less than existing conditions, as well as providing for on-site open space and recreation amenities.

6

CONCERN

Higher-density development leads to higher crime rates.

RECOMMENDATION

Any new higher-density development should ensure all of the elevated standards recommended in this section are adhered to. This will attract a high-quality and established developer with a proven record of effective property management.

SENIOR LIVING

Market Opportunities

Berkeley Lake is aging not in a negative way, but in a predictable, demographically-appropriate way. Longtime residents want to remain in the community they've invested in for decades, yet the city's current housing stock doesn't provide many options for those entering their next stage of life. The absence of smaller, accessible, maintenance-friendly homes means that residents who wish to age-in-place often have no choice but to leave the city altogether.

Creating senior housing provides a direct response to this gap. It gives established residents a chance to stay rooted in the community, strengthens intergenerational stability, and allows the city to diversify its housing choices without disrupting its existing character.

Modern senior housing does not mean “institutional.” It means homes designed with foresight:

- Single-level living or the ability to convert to single-level living
- Wider clearances, no-step entries, and accessible bathrooms
- Stacked closets that allow future installation of residential elevators
- Lower counter top heights, lever-style hardware, and smart-home integration
- Small private yards or shared garden courts for low-maintenance outdoor space

These features allow residents to remain independent longer, reduce household upkeep, and avoid the physical strain associated with typical single-family homes. Berkeley Lake can attract developers experienced in senior-forward design, particularly those comfortable integrating universal design elements from the start rather than retrofitting them later. For developers, units in the \$400,000–\$550,000 range are financially workable and align with market expectations in the this area. These homes also appeal to downsizing households who want quality but not excess.



HOTEL

Market Opportunities

Although Berkeley Lake is primarily residential, the broader market area shows sign of hotel demand, even along the Peachtree Industrial Blvd corridor. Local recreation facilities, Pinckneyville Park and the Community Recreation Center, and the West Gwinnett Aquatic Center, host tournaments, events, and youth activities.

The corridor also serves nearby medical, professional, and service-oriented businesses that attract frequent visitors. These travelers often prefer familiar national hotel chains that offer predictable service, easy highway access, and business-friendly amenities.

A chain hotel could be a viable option for this area. Any future hotel should reflect Berkeley Lake's identity and should incorporate natural building materials, generous landscaping, and low-scale architecture to enable the hotel to blend seamlessly with the community's wooded, low-intensity character.

A hotel also offers a low-impact economic benefit. It generates revenue without adding long-term population, does not increase demands on schools, and requires far fewer municipal services than new housing. Visitors staying in Berkeley Lake would support local cafés, restaurants, and small businesses, helping strengthen the commercial corridor.

If thoughtfully sited and designed, a hotel can serve as a quiet, well-screened anchor that brings new economic activity while respecting the natural, serene identity residents value.

Key Takeaways

- A hotel would serve short-term visitors without adding permanent population or affecting neighborhoods.
- A national hotel chain is the most viable option given access, visibility, and business travel demand.
- With clear design standards, a hotel can use natural materials, landscaping, and low-scale forms that reflect Berkeley Lake's wooded identity.



TOWNHOMES

Market Opportunities

As mentioned previously, the city has a housing shortage. Particularly a shortage in the types of housing stock. Townhomes provide an option that fit a variety of needs for current and future residents. Such needs include older residents looking to down-size but maintain an active lifestyle, young families wanting to move to the city, and returning residents.

For example, townhomes can be designed with current residents in mind who wish to age-in-place. Such design elements include stacking closets for a potential elevator shaft, wider doors, lower counters, and more. The city can invite developers who can and are willing to provide such features.

Townhomes are also cost effective for developers and buyers. Based on an estimated cost of \$500,000 per unit (though it's likely they could sell for more), developers could pay for the necessary land and provide neighborhood retail for residents to enjoy.

Key Takeaways

- Townhomes expand housing options for downsizing residents and young families, easing the city's housing shortage without the need for a large number of multi-family developments.
- Supports aging-in-place through design flexibility.
- Financially viable for residents and developers.

WHY CONDOS ARE CHALLENGING

Condo development is desirable yet little of it occurs in metro Atlanta. The primary challenge with condo development is the reluctance of local banks and investors to fund such projects in metro Atlanta. Atlanta buyers are strongly aligned with single-family home and townhome product types and Atlanta renters are strongly aligned with new apartment developments with luxury amenity packages. Condo developments have been gaining traction in areas of Atlanta that contain very high density (Buckhead, Midtown) and along the Atlanta BeltLine (Virginia-Highland) with very little traction in the rest of metro Atlanta.



RETAIL

Market Opportunities

Berkeley Lake's residents value convenience, community, and a high-quality, walkable environment. Small-scale, locally owned shops and cafés can meet daily needs while creating social hubs that reinforce neighborhood identity.

Limited competition from larger commercial centers nearby, combined with an affluent, engaged population, makes the market well-suited for curated retail that emphasizes local character, sustainability, and a personal customer experience.

Key Takeaways

- Meets daily needs at a neighborhood scale.
- Reinforces community identity through place-based retail.
- Supports a curated, low-intensity retail model.



RECOMMENDATIONS



OVERVIEW

Recommendations

The recommendations section translates community priorities, market realities, and existing conditions into clear, actionable guidance for Berkeley Lake's commercial corridor.

Rather than prescribing a single outcome, these recommendations establish a flexible framework to guide future development decisions, public investments, and zoning updates.

Collectively, the recommendations focus on strengthening the Peachtree Industrial Blvd corridor as a functional, attractive gateway to Berkeley Lake while preserving the city's quiet, wooded identity.

Emphasis is placed on environmental stewardship, small-scale placemaking, safe connectivity, and development types that support long-term economic stability without introducing incompatible intensity.

Goals

To ensure the recommendations continue to reflect community priorities and guide future decisions, Berkeley Lake seeks to advance the following goals:

- Foster a healthy and vibrant commercial corridor with occupied, well-maintained, and locally serving businesses.
- Create a connected network of walkable paths linking civic spaces, parks, and commercial areas.
- Protect and enhance greenspace throughout the corridor and along key gateways.
- Encourage new development that consistently reflects Berkeley Lake's design character and buffering expectations.
- Improve pedestrian comfort and safety through better crossings, traffic calming, and human-scaled streets.
- Support steady growth in commercial tax revenue while maintaining neighborhood stability and community character.

PLACEMAKING

Recommendations

Berkeley Lake's distinct identity, defined by its wooded landscape, small-town scale, and community stewardship, creates a strong foundation for placemaking strategies that reinforce its character while thoughtfully enhancing public life.

The following recommendations focus on creating inviting, connected spaces that respect the city's natural assets, respond to community priorities, and build a stronger sense of place around key nodes such as the PIB corridor, the Town Center concept, and the lake-adjacent civic area. Strengthen gateway identity with natural materials, subtle signage, and consistent branding.

Recommendations

- Revitalize key PIB nodes (especially S. Berkeley Lake Rd/PIB) with small-scale local retail, outdoor seating, and upgraded streetscapes.
- Build a connected trail & greenway network with sidewalks, multi-use paths, and nature-based stormwater features.
- Create small plazas and community greens within future Town Center or existing civic areas.
- Preserve and enhance green buffers, native landscaping, and tree canopy across all development zones.
- Support local culture through public art, ecological signage, and spaces for community gathering.

GREEN SPACE

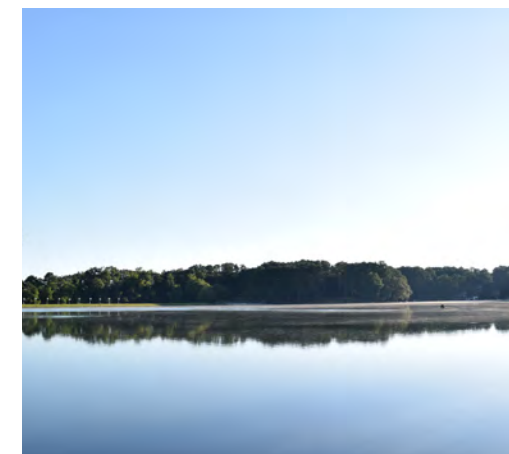
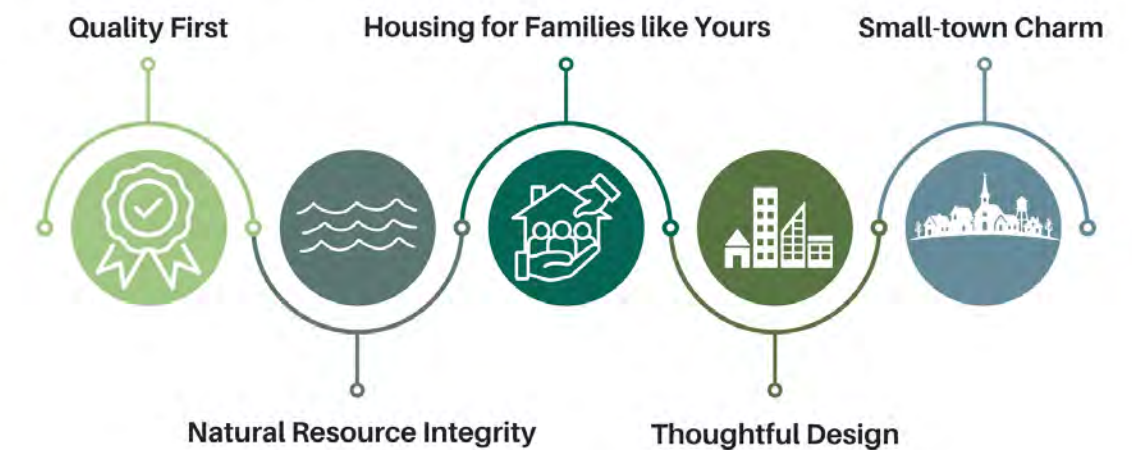
Recommendations

Berkeley Lake's greenspaces are central to the community's identity. These guidelines focus on strengthening and connecting the city's public and commercial-corridor natural areas while preserving the quiet, wooded character residents value.

Recommendations

- Preserve the 73-acre Berkeley Lake Conservancy green space and maintain natural buffers from the streams and the lake watershed.
- Use native plants, bioswales, and nature-based stormwater features in city-managed and corridor projects.
- Restore degraded public areas and remove invasive species where needed.
- Expand sidewalks, trails, and multi-use paths connecting civic areas, the Berkeley Lake Conservancy green space, Pinckneyville Park, and the commercial corridor.
- Add low-impact amenities such as benches, overlooks, and wayfinding, without changing the natural character.
- Create a linear green corridor along PIB with shade trees, planted buffers, and safe pedestrian connections.
- Require greenspace buffers, preserved mature trees, and small public greens in future PIB redevelopment.
- Maintain long-term stewardship plans for public trails, vegetation, and stormwater systems.
- Partner with the HOA and volunteers for conservation activities and habitat enhancement.

VISION & GOALS





CONNECTIVITY & TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations

Peachtree Industrial Boulevard is Expanding

There was a lot of concern from the community regarding increase in traffic in Berkeley Lake due to new developments. Peachtree Industrial Blvd is already overburdened during peak hours and is a high accident area due to it's high speeds. Many community members voiced concern about drivers cutting through the residential area of Berkeley Lake to bypass the traffic along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, others discussed the need to reroute traffic to other roadways.

While Gwinnett County Department of Transportation has plans to increase capacity of Peachtree Industrial Blvd by expanding to three lanes in each direction, this studio focuses on recommendations to provide safer and more accessible connectivity to promote walkability and other active modes of transportation.

Safer Intersections

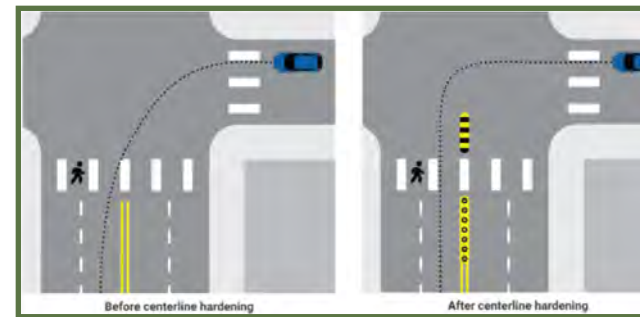
Transform 3-legged intersections to 4-legged intersections at all 4-way intersections along Peachtree Industrial Blvd. A 3-legged intersection can promote jaywalking (unsafe crossings) and discourage walkability as pedestrians need to cross multiple times to get across Peachtree Industrial Blvd.

Whenever possible a pedestrian refuge island should be installed along Peachtree Industrial Blvd and along South and North Berkeley Rd. Pedestrian refuge islands shorten the unprotected crossing of a pedestrian by providing a protected island in the middle of a long crosswalk, such as Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Additionally, the refuge island gives a narrowing effect that slows drivers down when approaching.

Centerline hardening is a proven method that provides a buffer to the pedestrian crossing from left-turning vehicles. This safety device is recommended on roadways with a high volume of left-turn and when a pedestrian refuge island is unable to be implemented due to lane configuration.



PEDESTRIAN ISLAND



CENTERLINE HARDENING

Key Recommendations

- Convert 3-legged intersections at 4-way crossings into true 4-legged intersections
- Install pedestrian refuge islands on Peachtree Industrial Blvd and Berkeley Lake Rd
- Use centerline hardening where refuge islands aren't feasible to protect pedestrians from left-turning vehicles.

Pedestrian Bridges & Underpasses

Pedestrian bridges and underpasses are something that the community voiced as a possibility to cross Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Although the safest option for crossing, these projects are expensive, costing up to \$4+ million. Additionally, they need to be designed in a way that is convenient to pedestrians and cyclists or they will not be utilized.

Pedestrian bridges require ramps or elevators to be ADA accessible which can be costly and difficult to design depending on the topography. Underpasses seem more viable in Berkeley Lake given the topography surrounding Peachtree Industrial Blvd.

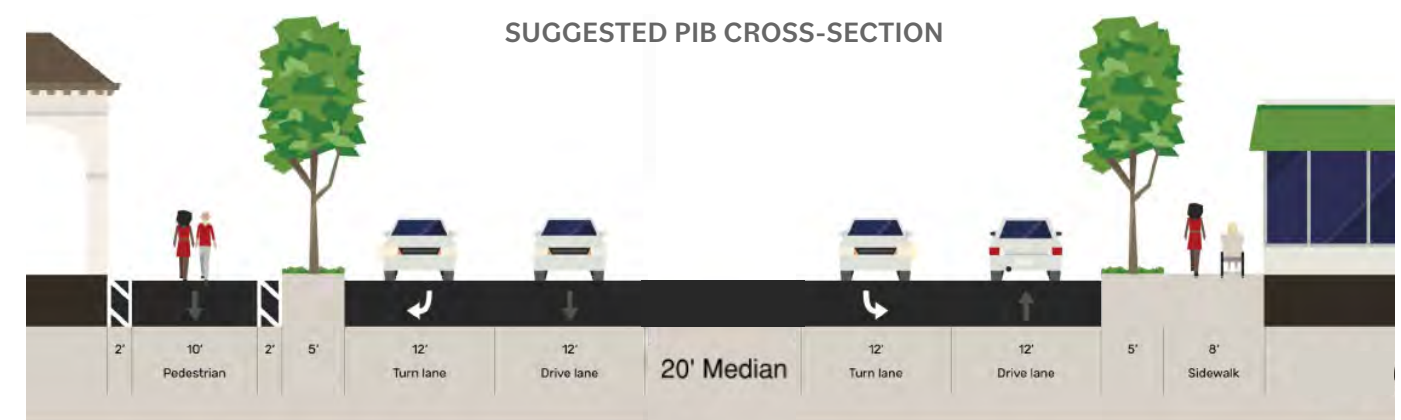
However, ideal locations are often at places that creeks are piped across Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Given this information there is a need to ensure under passings protect the existing creeks and don't cause any harmful runoff.

At town hall meetings, the community requested a multi-modal pathway connecting residential, commercial, and recreational aspects of Berkeley Lake. Although there currently exists a pathway, improvements need to be made to promote walkability and increase accessibility. Standards for pathways should provide comfortable widths to accommodate pedestrians, bikes and golf carts.

The existing ROW's need to be reconfigured to accommodate a multi-modal pathway that is comfortable for all users. The recommended width for the multi-modal path is 12ft, but 14ft is preferred. However, if there are some ROW constraints, the pathway could consolidate to 8ft, but any motorized vehicles such as golf carts would not be able to be bi-directional requiring them to yield and pull over to allow for passing. Additionally, a 2ft shoulder on both sides with an additional 3ft clearance for signage is recommended.

One of the biggest concerns about the existing pathways is the physical separation or buffer from the roadway if built as a side path along a roadway. The recommended basic buffer for a pathway is 6.5ft, with a minimum of 5ft (which includes the 2ft shoulder and 3ft of clearance for signage). However, if the path is along a high-speed major roadway, such as Peachtree Industrial Blvd, a total buffer of 20 ft is recommended.

When conditions are constrained, a minimum of 5ft buffer is required. All other standards regarding slopes, overhead clearance and material should follow standards of ARC and AASHTO.



LAND USE & ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

In order to accomplish some of the above placemaking while still protecting and addressing community needs and concerns, it is recommended that Mixed-Use zoning be adopted, such as a Neighborhood-Scale Mixed-Use zoning district (for the north side of Peachtree Industrial Blvd) and a Corridor-Scale Mixed Use zoning district (for the south side of Peachtree Industrial Blvd) to implement the “Potential Plan” recommendations of this area plan.

ALLOWABLE USES IN THE NEW ZONING DISTRICTS

NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE (North of Peachtree Industrial Blvd)

Non-Residential Uses

Permitted uses for retail, restaurants and eateries, breweries, personal services, professional services and office uses. Uses should only allow parking lots and drive-thru facilities and features to be located to the side or rear of buildings. Non-residential uses should have size limits that ensure the density and scale will be smaller and more compatible with the adjoining neighborhood areas of the city.

Residential Uses

Permitted uses for residential should include cottage court developments with cottage homes (maximum of 12 homes per development), townhouses, and senior housing.

CORRIDOR MIXED USE (South of Peachtree Industrial Blvd)

Non-Residential Uses

Permitted uses for retail, restaurants and eateries, breweries, personal services, professional services, office uses, and hotels. Uses should only allow parking lots and drive-thru facilities and features to be located to the side or rear of buildings.

Residential Uses

Permitted uses for residential should include cottage court developments with cottage homes (maximum of 12 homes per development), townhouses, senior housing, and multi-family housing. Multi-family housing should be required to provide a minimum of 20% of the total project square footage in non-residential uses and should require a special use permit to ensure the project properly addresses issues related to noise, traffic, environmental impact, and buffering for adjacent properties.

As part of the creation of new zoning districts for the focused areas of recommendation of this plan, the following development metrics should be established:

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT METRICS FOR NEW ZONING DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	MIN. AREA	ROAD FRONTAGE	MAX HEIGHT	MIN OPEN SPACE	FRONT SETBACK ¹ (PIB)	FRONT SETBACK ¹ (OTHER)	SIDE SETBACK ²	REAR SETBACK ²
Neighborhood Mixed Use	NONE	50'	45'	15%	30'	15'	10'	25'
Corridor Mixed Use	NONE	50'	65'	15%	30'	15'	10'	25'

(1) For detached, single-family, cottage and townhome lots. Zero (0) feet for all other uses.

(2) Reduced heights and larger buffering requirements would apply to areas that are abutting single-family residential areas

ADDITIONAL ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKING LOTS

- Interior landscaping and exterior landscaping is required for all surface and structured parking.
- No parking lots or structure shall be between a building and a street.

BUILDING FACADES

- 1st/Ground floor of buildings that face a public street and sidewalks shall maintain a minimum of 50% window fenestration for residential uses and 65% of window fenestration for non-residential uses.
- Primary pedestrian entrance must be located on such building facades.
- Building facades visible from public streets or pathways shall incorporate natural or natural-appearing materials (wood, stone, brick, or high-quality modern equivalents such as fiber cement, architectural metal, or glass).
- No single material shall dominate the building façade in a way that is visually monotonous.

BLOCKS & CONNECTIVITY

- Internal street circulation shall be provided for large developments with new public streets or private drives breaking up larger properties into new blocks. Newly created blocks should have block faces that are a maximum of 500 ft. in length.
- When possible, a multimodal pathway shall also be provided for pedestrian accessibility.

SIGNAGE

- Pedestrian wayfinding signs and warning signs are required along multimodal pathways. (See MUTCD for standards)
- Stand-alone (pole) shopping center signs are prohibited.
- Monument signs and building mounted signs shall be permitted.



Supplemental plaque: W16-9p
For advanced warning applications



Combined
wayfinding route
sign - low speed
urban or suburban
roadways



Custom Sign:
Golf Carts use
Ped Signal
(R9-5 variant)



Custom combined pedestrian,
golf cart, and pedestrian warning
signage based on standard MUTCD
warning sign



Path-scale (18 inch) MUTCD
R1-1 Stop Sign - For use at
4-way intersections



Bike Route Sign - For use
along high speed rural
roadways

POTENTIAL PLAN



1

HERON SQUARE

A compact civic greenspace, housing, and retail designed to host informal social activity and strengthen connections between nearby uses.

2

COMMERCIAL

Low-intensity commercial development that supports local businesses and services, designed with strong landscaping, pedestrian access, and buffering from adjacent uses.

3

ADAPTIVE REUSE

The reuse of an existing gas station to support new uses while reducing waste and maintaining corridor character.

4

SOUTH TOWN CENTER

A small, walkable mixed-use area that provides neighborhood-serving retail, dining, and gathering spaces while creating a southern focal point for Berkeley Lake.

5

THE COMMONS

A senior-focused development with senior living and gathering areas centered on preserved greenspace.

The following plan is one scenario based on the needs identified in the market analysis and recommendations.

Given community feedback about placing senior housing along Peachtree Industrial Blvd or South Berkeley Lake Rd for stronger park access, other site arrangements may be equally appropriate. As market conditions evolve or parcels change ownership, this framework can be adapted while maintaining the plan's underlying intent.

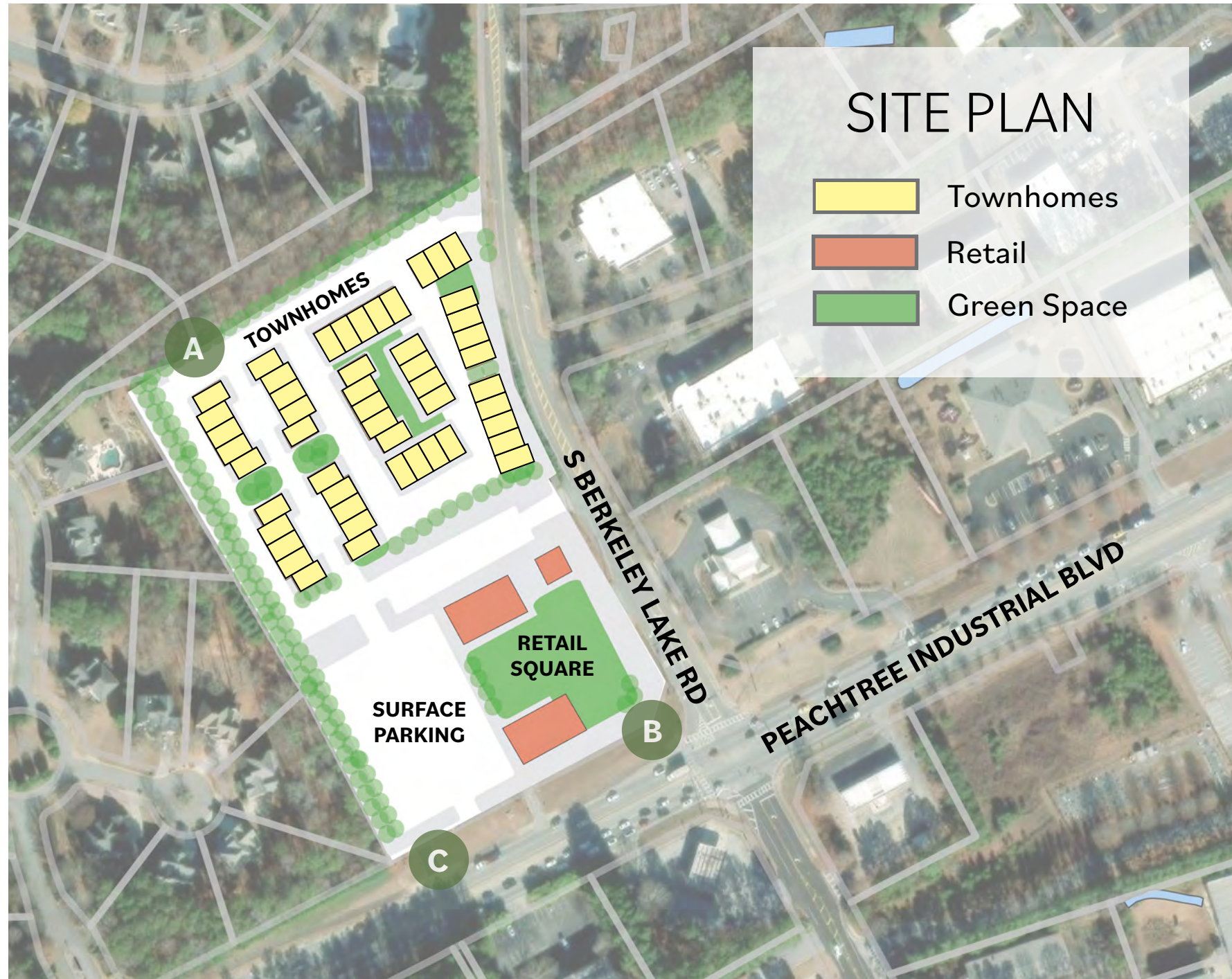
SITE PLAN

- Housing
- Parking
- Retail
- Greenspace
- Hotel
- Buffer/Raw Land



1. HERON SQUARE

Tucked just behind Peachtree Industrial Blvd, Heron Square forms an inward-facing hub centered on daily life and includes retail, housing, and open space. This site is protected from traffic, shaped for connection, and grounded in Berkeley Lake's quiet character.



Palisades Village | Palisades, CA

- A TOWNHOMES**
Medium-density housing
- B RETAIL**
Single-story, small-scale retail
- C SURFACE PARKING**
Parking courts with permeable paving and landscape buffers

SUMMARY

TOWNHOMES

50 UNITS

2 FLOORS

COMMERCIAL

13,600 TOTAL SF

1-2 FLOORS

REFERENCE SITE PLAN



Ardmore Townhomes | Winston-Salem, NC

2. SOUTH TOWN CENTER

Located along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, South Town Center redefines a key frontage as a mixed-use district supporting retail, hospitality, and multi-family housing. The project reinforces the corridor's transition from auto-oriented development to a more walkable, civic environment.



- A RETAIL**
Street-facing commercial bays, framing plaza
- B HOTEL**
Mid-scale hotel, supporting weekend activity
- C Multi-family**
Luxury Market-rate housing to support economic sustainability; 'E' shaped structure is one building, with 2 courtyards, and ground floor retail

SUMMARY

MULTI-FAMILY
1st-FLOOR RETAIL
300 UNITS
5 FLOORS
COMMERCIAL
25,600 TOTAL SF



Beckert's Park | Washington, D.C.



Myrtle Beach Hotel | Myrtle Beach, SC

3. COMMERCIAL

Positioned along Peachtree Industrial Blvd, the site is envisioned as a flexible commercial anchor that activates the corridor and serves local demand.



Reformation Brewery | Woodstock, GA



Monday Night Brewery | Atlanta, GA

COMMERCIAL SPACE

A

Small-format retail pads, framing plaza

GREEN SPACE

B

Tree-lined forecourt that buffers the street, serves as shaded plaza weekend activity

SURFACE PARKING

C

Parking area designed for low-traffic retail and community event use

SUMMARY

COMMERCIAL

21,600 SF

1 FLOOR

REFERENCE SITE PLAN



4. ADAPTIVE REUSE

Once an underused gas station, the site is re-imagined as a neighborhood-scale café and gathering space. By converting a piece of corridor infrastructure into a social node, the project activates a previously overlooked edge of Peachtree Industrial Blvd and supports local business growth.



Brake Pad | College Park, GA



St. John's Signal Gas Station | Portland, OR

ADAPTIVE REUSE

A

Structural retrofit + program conversion; Cafe or coffee shop

GREEN SPACE

B

Permeable landscape + stormwater management zone; currently a community garden; potential for dog park, connecting path between South Town Center and Aquatic Center

SUMMARY

COMMERCIAL

EXISTING SF

1 FLOOR

REFERENCE SITE PLAN



5. THE COMMONS

The Commons applies wellness-oriented design principles to create a continuum-of-care village organized to promote accessibility and daily interaction.



Danielson Grove | Kirkland, WA



Village West Cobb | Marietta, GA

COTTAGES

Cluster of single-story independent cottages for 55+ residents; separate entrance from assisted living

ASSISTED LIVING

Offering wellness, dining, memory care with a 3-story footprint (standard zoning height for single-family buildings)

SURFACE PARKING

Permeable lots located behind primary buildings to reduce heat gain

SUMMARY

COTTAGES

20 UNITS

1 FLOOR

ASSISTED LIVING

100,000 SF


3 FLOORS

REFERENCE SITE PLAN

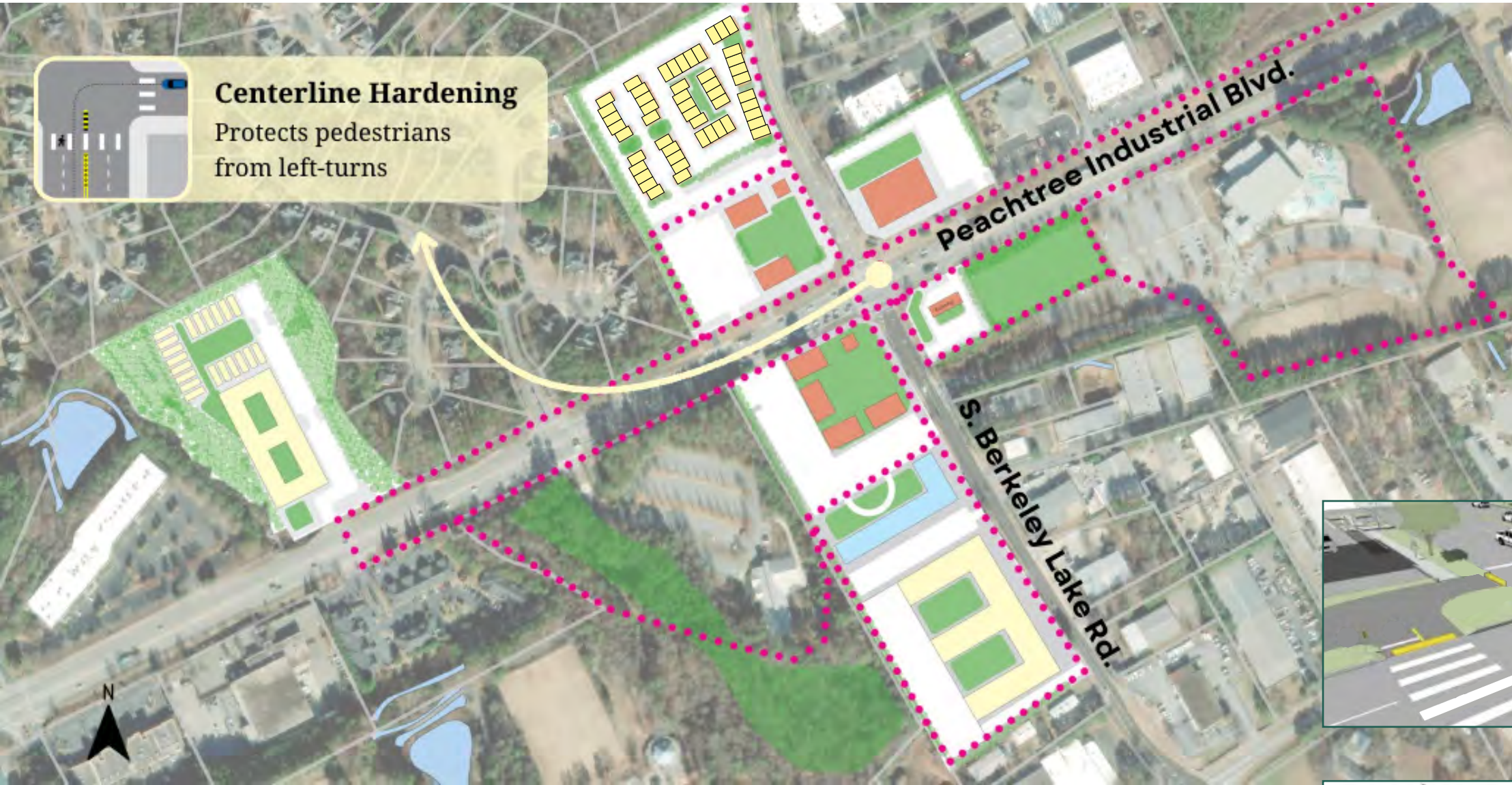


CONNECTIVITY

A multimodal pathway is proposed along Peachtree Industrial Blvd and into each of the newly recommended site developments in this plan. This path would provide an opportunity for biking and walking along the corridor and to and from the new developments.

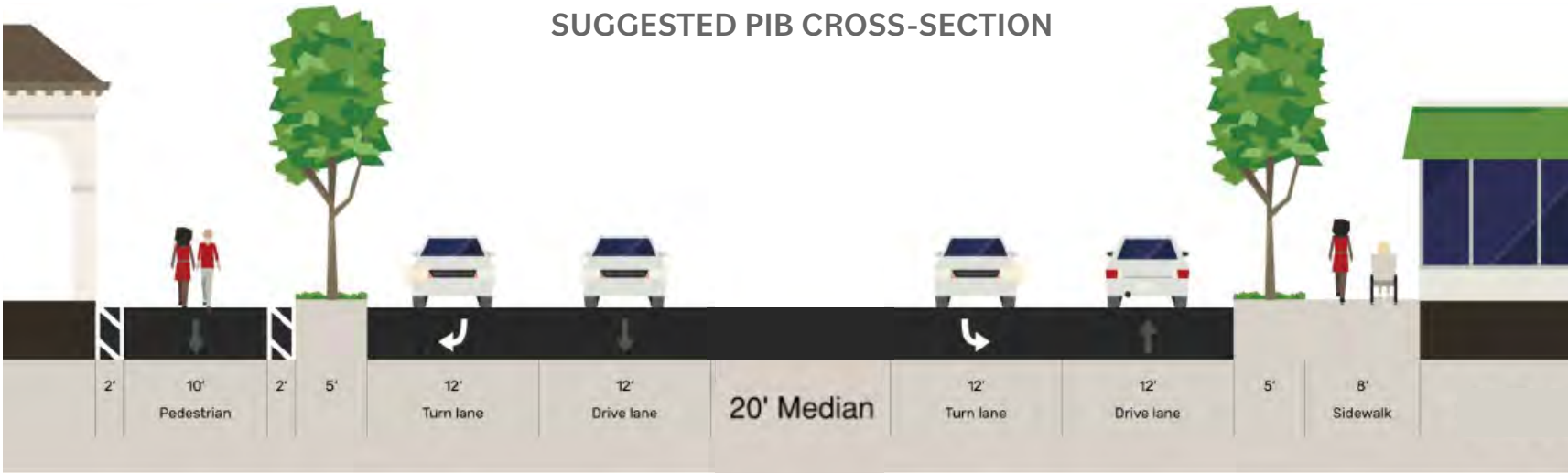


Centerline Hardening
Protects pedestrians from left-turns



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transform existing right-of-ways to accommodate multimodal pathway.
- Pathway standards to provide comfortable width to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, and golf carts.
- Wayfinding signs and warning signs along pathways.





IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the plan outlines the pertinent details that will provide guidance to implement the overall plan. Responsible entities are highlighted, budgets estimated and projected time lines are provided. The result is a broad set of resources that can guide the community towards bringing the plan to life. The time frames assigned to each of the recommendations in the tables of this section are identified as follows:

- **Short-term** - 0-2 years
- **Long-term** - 2-10 years
- **Ongoing**

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME-FRAME	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY
Establish a Small Area Plan Implementation Steering Committee.	Ongoing	BL
Use native plants, bioswales, and nature-based stormwater features in all public and private open space projects.	Ongoing	BL
Preserve the 73-acre Berkeley Lake Conservancy green space and maintain natural buffers from the streams and the lake watershed.	Ongoing	BL
Install a neighborhood branded way-finding signage system.	Short	BL
Rewrite zoning code to implement the plan zoning recommendations.	Short	BL
Rezone Peachtree Industrial Blvd adjacent parcels to Neighborhood Mixed-Use (MU-N) and Community Mixed-Use District (MU-C) from Gwinnett County’s zoning, but with some modifications that align more with Berkeley Lake.	Short	BL
Require greenspace buffers, preserved mature trees, and small public greens in future Peachtree Industrial Blvd development.	Short	BL
Reduce the speed limit on Peachtree Industrial Blvd to 35 mph.	Long	GDOT, GCDOT
Expand sidewalks, trails, and multi-use paths connecting civic areas, the Berkeley Lake Conservancy green space, Pinckneyville Park, and the commercial corridor.	Long	GDOT, GCDOT, BL
Create a linear green corridor along Peachtree Industrial Blvd with shade trees, planted buffers, and safe pedestrian connections.	Long	GDOT, GCDOT, BL

BL - City of Berkeley Lake
GCDOT - Gwinnett County Department of Transportation
GDOT - Georgia Department of Transportation



APPENDIX