Action Requested/Required:

- ☐ Vote/Action Requested
- ☑ Discussion or Presentation Only
- ☐ Public Hearing

Report Date: _____
Hearing Date: _____
Voting Date: _____

Department: Community Development **Presenter(s) & Title:** Bethany Watson, City Engineer

Agenda Item Title:

Discussion on Hickory Flat Highway Gateway Concept Plan

Summary:

Discussion on the attached Hickory Flat Highway Gateway Concept Plan as developed by the Downtown Development Authority. The DDA approved this plan at their July 17th meeting and is requesting approval from City Council.

Budget Implications:

Budgeted? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ **N/A**

Total Cost of Project: _____ Check if Estimated ☐

Fund Source: General Fund ☐ Water & Sewer ☐ Sales Tax ☐ Other: _____

Staff Recommendations:

HFH Concept Plan

Reviews:

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Attachments:

HFH Concept

CANTON

HICKORY FLAT HIGHWAY

GATEWAY CONCEPT PLAN

JUNE 2025

MODERN MOBILITY partners

PDP
PRACTICAL DESIGN PARTNERS

Est. 1834

CANTON

GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL

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Shawn Tolan, Mayor Pro-Tempore, Councilmember Ward 2

Travis Johnson, Councilmember Ward 1

Sandy McGrew, Councilmember Ward 1

Bryan Roach, Councilmember Ward 2

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Corey Shupert

Raul Cifuentes

Brooke Schmidt

Lee Oliver

Jennifer Hughes

Carmen Slaughter

Cory Wilson

Cover Image Source: Google Earth. Canton, GA. 34°13'50"N 84°29'25"W. Retrieved from https://earth.google.com/web/search/Hickory+Flat+Highway,+Canton,+GA/@34.23099562,-84.49062004,264.19914335a,709.68242434d,35y,0h,0t,0r/ on March 13, 2025.

Back Cover Image Source: Homes.com. Canton. Retrieved from https://www.homes.com/local-guide/canton-ga/?dk=g46cs2we4c3sx&tab=2 on March 13, 2025.

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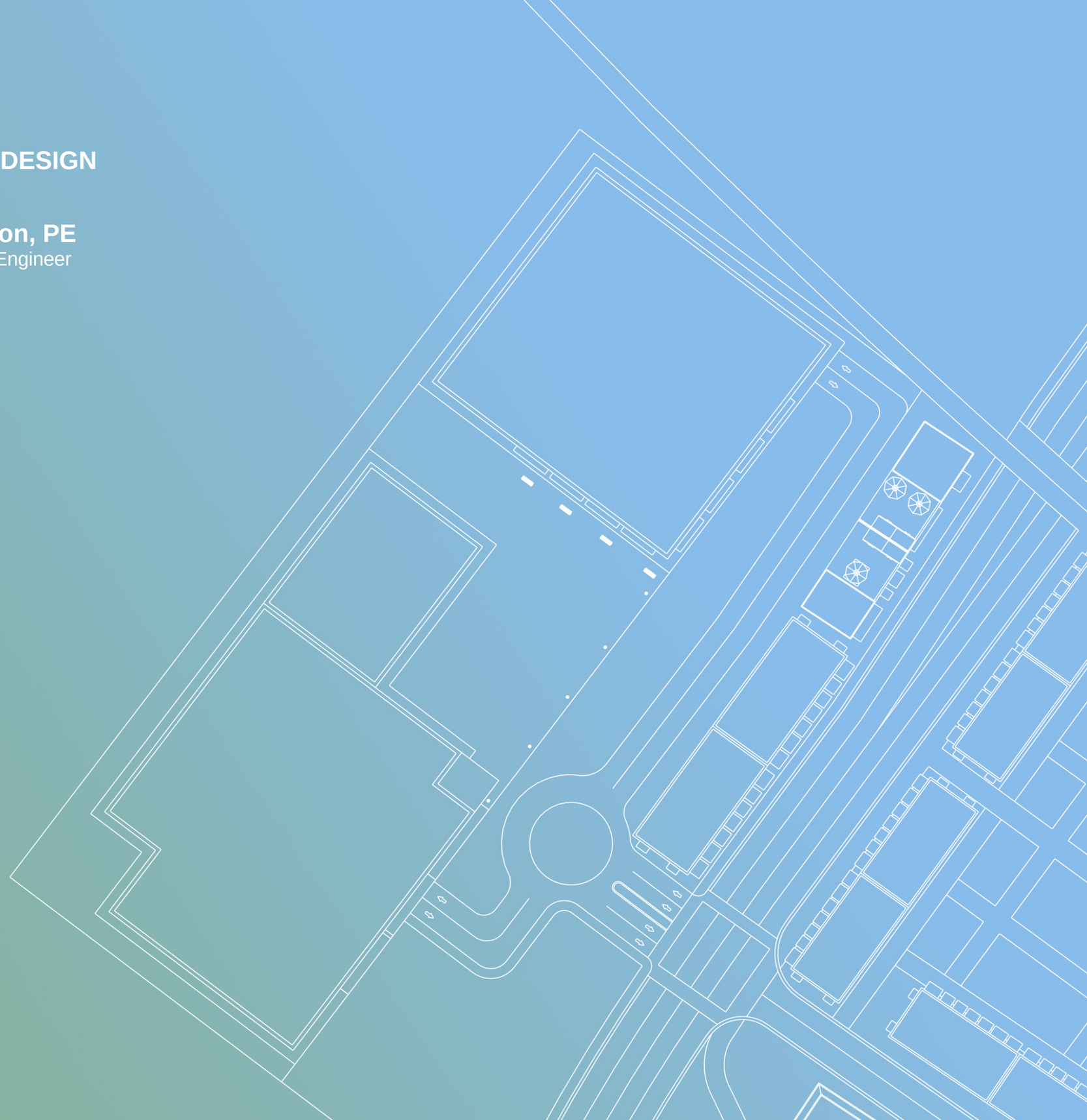

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Image Source: Homes.com, Canton.Retrived from https://www.homes.com/local-guide/canton-ga/?dk=jnwtewne6xkjs&tab=2 on May 9, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Plan Overview

The Hickory Flat Gateway Concept Plan (HFGCP) was developed by the City of Canton and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) between April 2024 and June 2025. This timeline is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The HFGCP reviews the development and mobility potential for the Hickory Flat Highway corridor, shown in **Map 1**. This study was initiated to address the following:

- The 2023 Transportation Master Plan's (TMP) recommendation to install a roundabout at the intersection of Marietta Road and Hickory Flat Highway;
- The DDA's purchase of a key redevelopment property, 203 Marietta Road (referred to in this document as "the DDA site"), shown in **Figure 2**; and
- The study area's importance as a key connector between I-575 and Downtown Canton.

HFGCP is informed by the findings and recommendations from previous planning efforts described in **Alignment with Other City Efforts**. Building on these efforts, this plan presents recommendations for:

- Transportation improvements to aid in the movement of people using all modes through the corridor;
- Placemaking elements to welcome people into the city, the Sunnyside neighborhood, and Downtown Canton; and
- Identification of redevelopment opportunities along the corridor, especially the DDA Site.

Figure 2: DDA Site

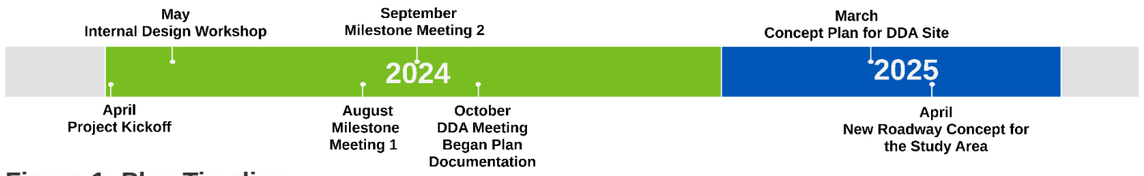


Figure 1: Plan Timeline

Map 1: Study Area and DDA Site

Alignment with Other City Efforts

The development of the HFGCP was guided by the City's Core Tenets and the TMP vision, shown in **Figures 3** and **4**, respectively. This plan makes recommendations for revitalizing the adjacent neighborhood by creating residential and retail spaces, multimodal connectivity, and connections to recreation.

This plan is informed by the findings and recommendations from the TMP, the City's 2024 Downtown Master Plan (DMP), 2045 Comprehensive Plan, and previous community involvement efforts with the Sunnyside community.

- Creating Great Neighborhoods
- Sustaining Our Natural Environment
- Celebrating the Diversity of Our Community
- Connecting Citizens to Parks and Recreation
- Advancing Regional Economic Success
- Improving Infrastructure for Future Demands
- Enhancing Historic Downtown Canton
- Leading with Excellence

Source: City iof Canton, GA.

Figure 3: Canton's Core Tenets

"Provide the residents and visitors of City of Canton a plan that outlines safe access and enhanced connectivity to neighborhoods, recreation facilities, local businesses, and natural resources today, while envisioning future transportation solutions that ensure sustainability and implementable action steps."

Figure 4: TMP Vision

Image Sources:
Figure 5: Modern Mobility Partners. (2024).
Figure 6: City of Canton, GA. Sunnyside - Marietta Road Community Initiative. https://www.cantonga.gov/government/departments/community-development/sunnyside
Figure 7: Explore Canton. Sunnyside shines bright with new mural, (2024). Retrived from https://explorecantonga.com/blog/sunnyside-shines-bright-with-new-mural/ on May 9, 2025

Downtown Master Plan

The DMP proposes 43 recommendations for revitalization and redevelopment in Downtown Canton, which is located north of the HFGCP study area. These recommendations include transportation projects and redevelopment concepts as well as policy recommendations. The redevelopment concept for Downtown covers projects that pertain to placemaking, public spaces, potential redevelopment, repurposing and preservation. A rendering of this concept is shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Concept for DMP

Sunnyside Neighborhood

The Sunnyside neighborhood is adjacent to the study area to the east and south. This neighborhood has also been the focus of several placemaking initiatives. Key efforts include:

- The Marietta Road Community Initiative, which aims to promote commercial and residential investments on Marietta Road through community involvement and a shared vision, such as the banner shown in **Figure 6**;
- The Sunnyside Mural Project to create a vibrant mural to symbolize the community's vibrancy, shown in **Figure 7**; and
- Harmon Park Renovation and community outreach efforts.

Figure 6: Wayfinding for Sunnyside

Figure 7: Sunnyside Mural

Transportation Master Plan

The HFGCP is the byproduct of two projects first recommended in the City's 2023 TMP, TMP-5 and TMP-14. The location of TMP recommendations overlapping and near the study area are shown in **Map 2** and **Table 1**. TMP-5, the Marietta Road/Hickory Flat Highway intersection project, has led to the current study, the HFGCP. The bridge portion of TMP-14 is in design at the time of this study. The remaining overlapping projects were considered while developing recommendations for the study area and DDA site.

Table 1: Overlapping TMP Projects

TMP ID	Type	Project Name	Timeframe
5		**Marietta Road / Hickory Flat Highway*** Install roundabout with driveway for future connection.	Short-term
6		**Cherokee Street Traffic Calming** Install traffic calming such as speed cushions or chicanes.	Short-term
14		**Marietta Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements*** Install pedestrian improvements along the corridor including a pedestrian bridge over Canton Creek.	Short-term
25		**Rail with Trail**** Trail adjacent to the railroad starting at the Mill at Etowah and following the railroad south and southwest to the proposed trail on Chattin Drive.	Long-term
30		**The Mill Trail** Off-road trail connecting the Mill on Etowah to Harmon Park.	Short-term
55		**Marietta Street Bridge**** Rating less than 80. Fair condition.	Short-term
64		**Marietta Road Safety Improvements**** Reconfigure the intersection of Marietta Road and Marietta Highway, and addressing driveway placement at that intersection.	Long-term
68		**West Marietta Street Safety Improvements**** Reconfigure the intersection to handle the traffic leaving the shopping center on Tritt Lane and neck down of Marietta Highway from two lanes to one.	Short-term
69		**Hickory Flat Road Extension**** Roadway extension to reduce pass-through traffic through Downtown to Riverstone Parkway.	Long-term

** These projects are directly addressed by the HFGCP.*

*** Planning for these projects is furthered by the HFGCP.*

Map 2: TMP Projects

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Transportation and Recreation

The study area covers segments of Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Road, which are the main connector to Downtown from I-575.

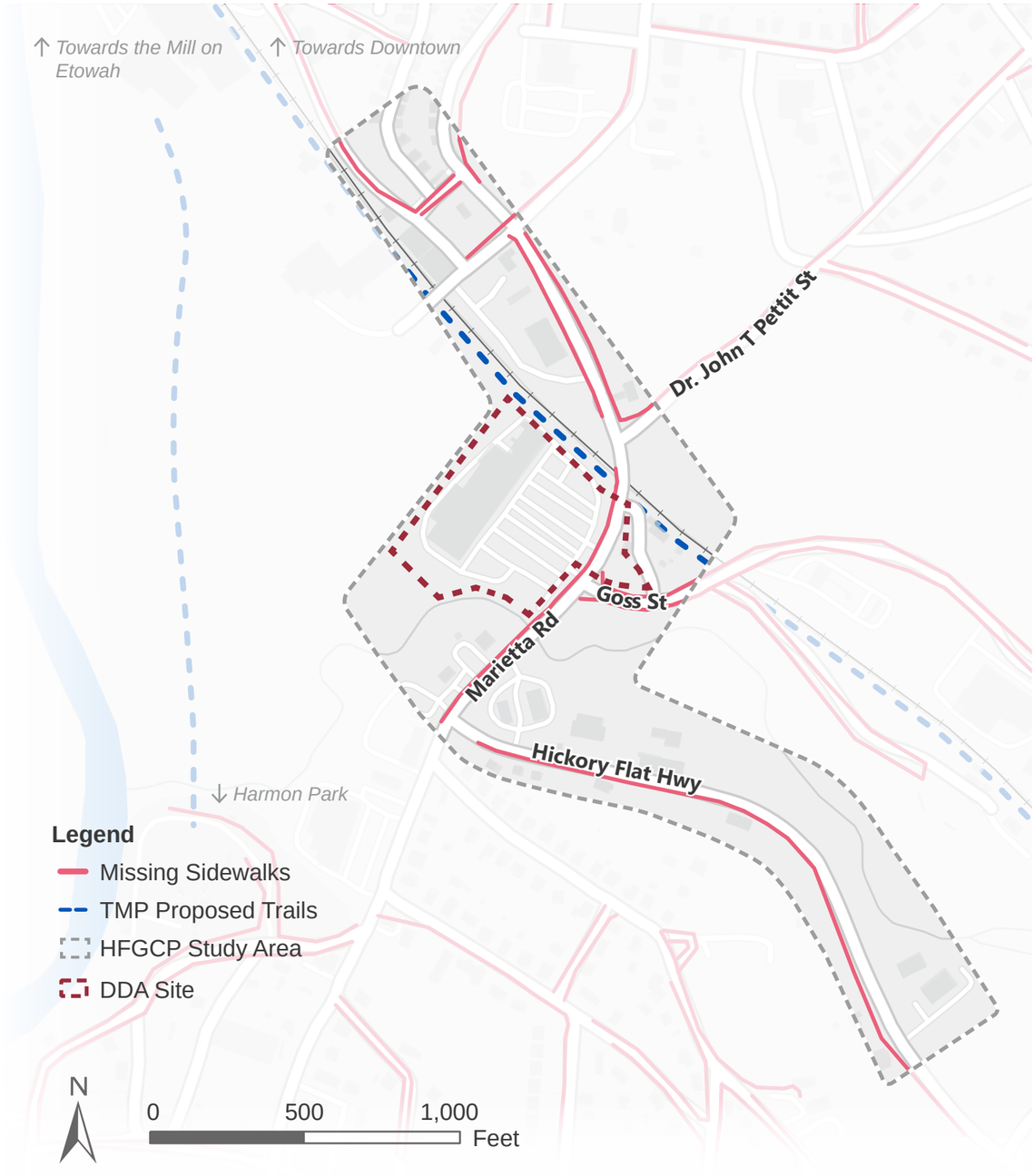
Hickory Flat Highway has wide travel lanes, which encourage higher travel speeds for drivers and reduce pedestrian comfort and safety. The pavement on Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Road is in generally good condition.

There are sidewalks on at least one side of the road throughout most of the study area, but they abruptly end at some locations and often cross wide driveways or intersections at others. This leads to conflicts for both pedestrians and drivers. **Map 3** shows the locations of missing sidewalks in the study area.

Canton has no dedicated bike infrastructure, though there are some multi-use trails in the city, primarily in parks. The TMP recommended additional multi-use trails based on a public desire for more bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Two of these proposed trails would help connect the study area to Downtown Canton and the Mill on Etowah, and other parks and trails facilities elsewhere in the city including Harmon Park only 500 meters away.

Canton Creek, a tributary of the nearby Etowah River, flows through the study area. Both the creek and river offer a multiplicity of recreational activities such as fishing, floating, and canoeing.

The public spaces proposed for the HFGCP aim to connect these future trails, waterways, and existing sidewalks to facilitate broader multimodal connectivity to the rest of the city.



Map 3: Sidewalks, Planned Trails, and Nearby Recreation Sites

Zoning

Most parcels along Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Road in the study area are zoned as General Commercial (GC), as shown in **Map 4**. This zoning allows clustered commercial development to form along the city's transportation arteries. However, these large commercial zones do not currently facilitate mixed-use development, which would support the city's goal of vibrant and connected neighborhoods. Further, this zoning allows for uses and development that is disconnected from the character of the nearby historic downtown, as shown in **Figure 8**.

Downtown Canton, which starts in the northern portion of the study area, is zoned as the Central Business District (CBD). These parcels encourage development that welcomes pedestrian activity, such as by facilitating a mix of land uses and allowing engaging storefronts abutting the street. The study area also has a handful of Light Industrial (LI), Residential (R), and special use parcels, including the DDA site.

Vacant and undeveloped parcels do not generate economic activity nor do they serve as community assets. These low-activity lots can sometimes burden the community by creating a perception of blight and lack of maintenance.[1] In addition, industrial parcels in the study area are incongruent with the economic and community activities of Downtown and the residential uses nearby in the Sunnyside neighborhood. When possible, infill redevelopment of these sites and roadside placemaking can improve experiences for residents and visitors in the study area and Downtown Canton.

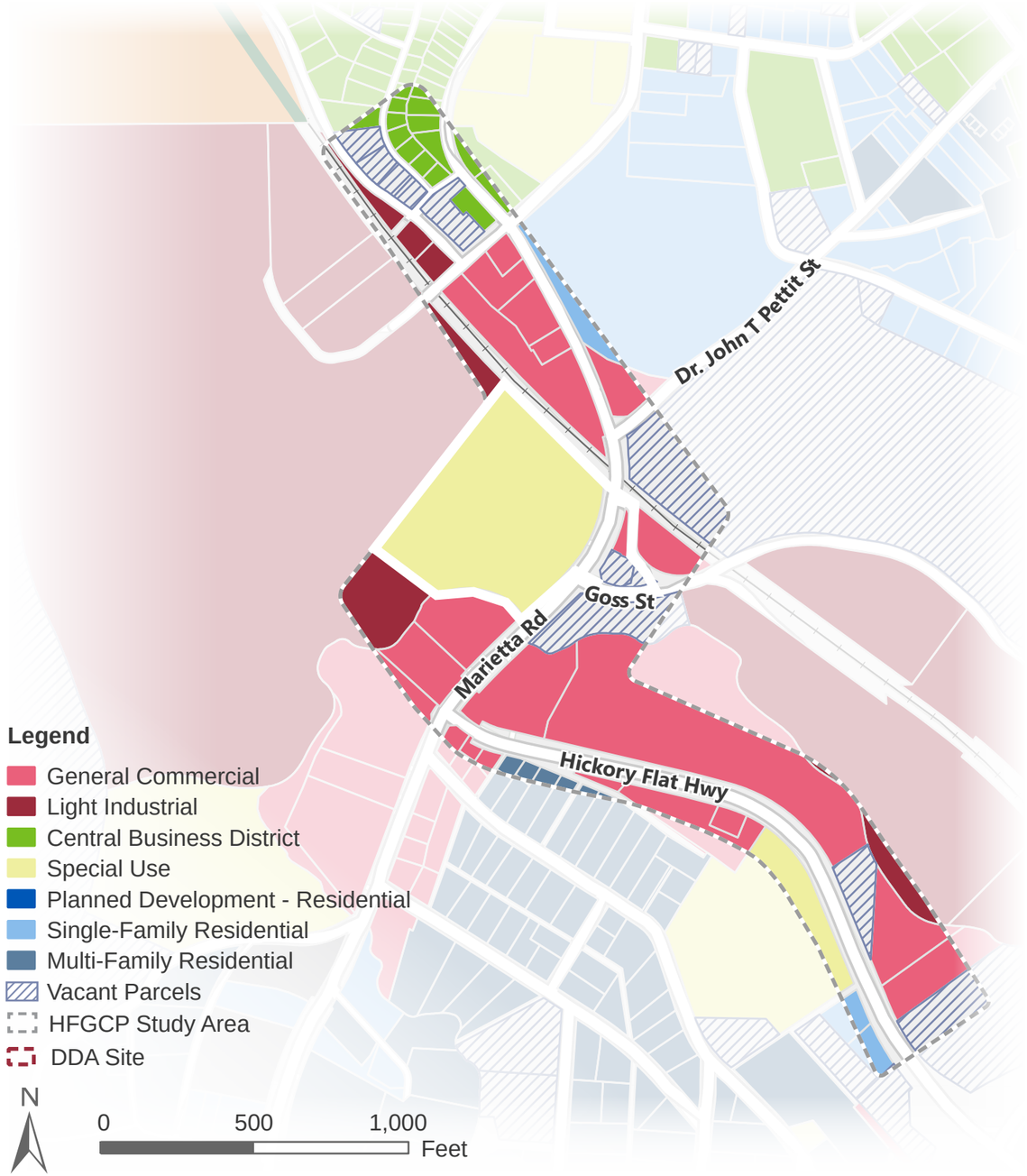
Hickory Flat Highway, Looking West

East Main Street in Downtown, Looking West

Figure 8: Comparison of Land Use Character Along Hickory Flat Highway and Downtown

[1] *Smart Growth America. Economic Diversification Roadmap: Land Inventories and Leveraging Underutilized Parcels. (2023). https://smartgrowthamerica.org/economic-diversification-roadmap-land-inventories-and-leveraging-underutilized-parcels/*

Image Source for Figure 8: Google Street View. 161 Hickory Flat Highway. (May 2024). Retrieved from https://www.google.com/maps/@34.2281514,-84.4894983,3a,90y,280.38h,105.09t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1sWMTquCgroLX3Dplmm3JSfA!2e0!6shttps:%2F%2Fstreetviewpixels-pa.googleapis.com%2Fv1%2Fthumbnail%3Fcb_client%3Dmaps_sv.tactile%26w%3D900%26h%3D600%26pitch%3D-15.09015009239593%26panoid%3DWMTquCgroLX3Dplmm3JSfA%26yaw%3D280.3814478729937!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDUxMy4xIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D on May 15, 2025.



Source: Canton Open Data Portal, Canton Zoning Parcels, 2024

Map 4: Zoning

Character Areas

In the Canton 2045 Comprehensive Plan, the city defined future land-use planning based through character area planning. This helps the city craft development strategies based on the unique needs of the area and desired outcomes, as opposed to traditional planning, which guides development based on land-use only.

The HFGCP study area includes three distinct character areas, shown in **Map 5** and described further in **Figure 9**. These character areas provide a basis for the HFGCP study area to develop mixed-use and infill properties at densities and in styles consistent with the existing neighborhood character.

Downtown / Urban Center

Character: Dominated by commercial uses and local government functions in the core. Industrial-related land uses lie to the west.

Land Use Diversity: Greatest diversity, compatible uses include commercial, residential, mixed use, institutional, and recreational.

Strategies: Encourage use diversity, improve accessibility for all visitors, promote a pedestrian friendly, compact core.

Historic Area / Traditional Neighborhood Stable (HTNS)

Character: Possesses a sense of neighborhood identity and a well-established and maintained housing stock.

Land Use Diversity: Medium density residential, institutional, recreation, parks.

Strategies: Protect historic structures. Promote infill development at neighborhood scale. Increase pedestrian infrastructure and parks.

Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Area (TNRA)

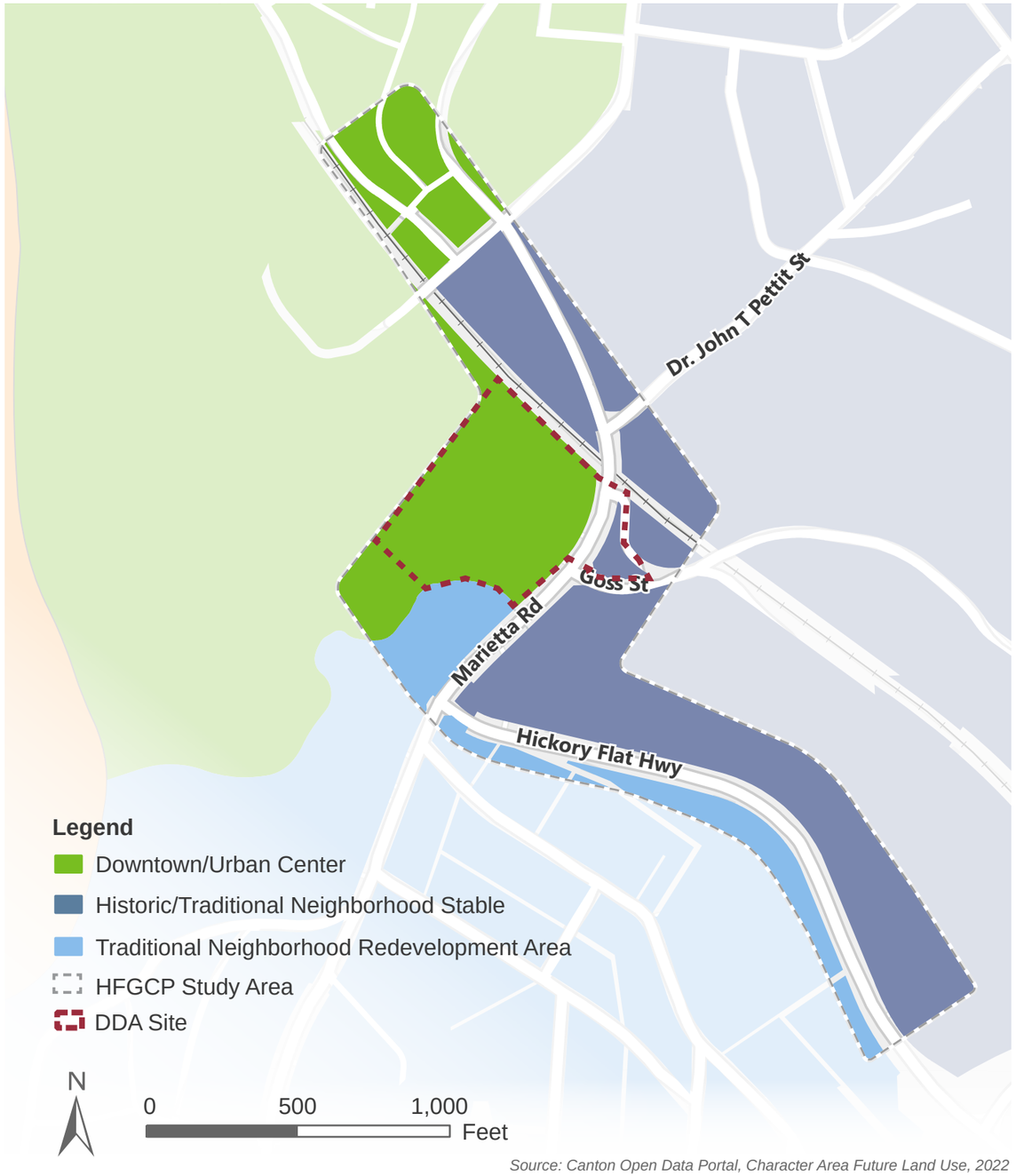
Character: Older neighborhoods with homes or structures that have declined due to lack of investment. May also have vacant land.

Land Use Diversity: Medium density residential, institutional, recreation, parks, neighborhood-level commercial.

Strategies: Encourage smaller lot sizes, neighborhood-level commercial, interconnected streets, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Source: Canton 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Figure 9: Canton Character Areas in HFGCP Study Area



Source: Canton Open Data Portal, Character Area Future Land Use, 2022

Map 5: Character Areas

Development Challenges

Topographic Challenges

Much of the study area's terrain is level, but there are some significant slopes near Downtown and the residential neighborhood adjacent to Hickory Flat Highway, as well as along Canton Creek. The study area's topography is shown in **Map 6**. Such changes in topography can make development more expensive and challenging. In addition, Downtown Canton is at a much higher elevation than the HFGCP study area, making it more difficult to provide suitable transportation connections between the study area and Downtown, especially for people walking and biking.

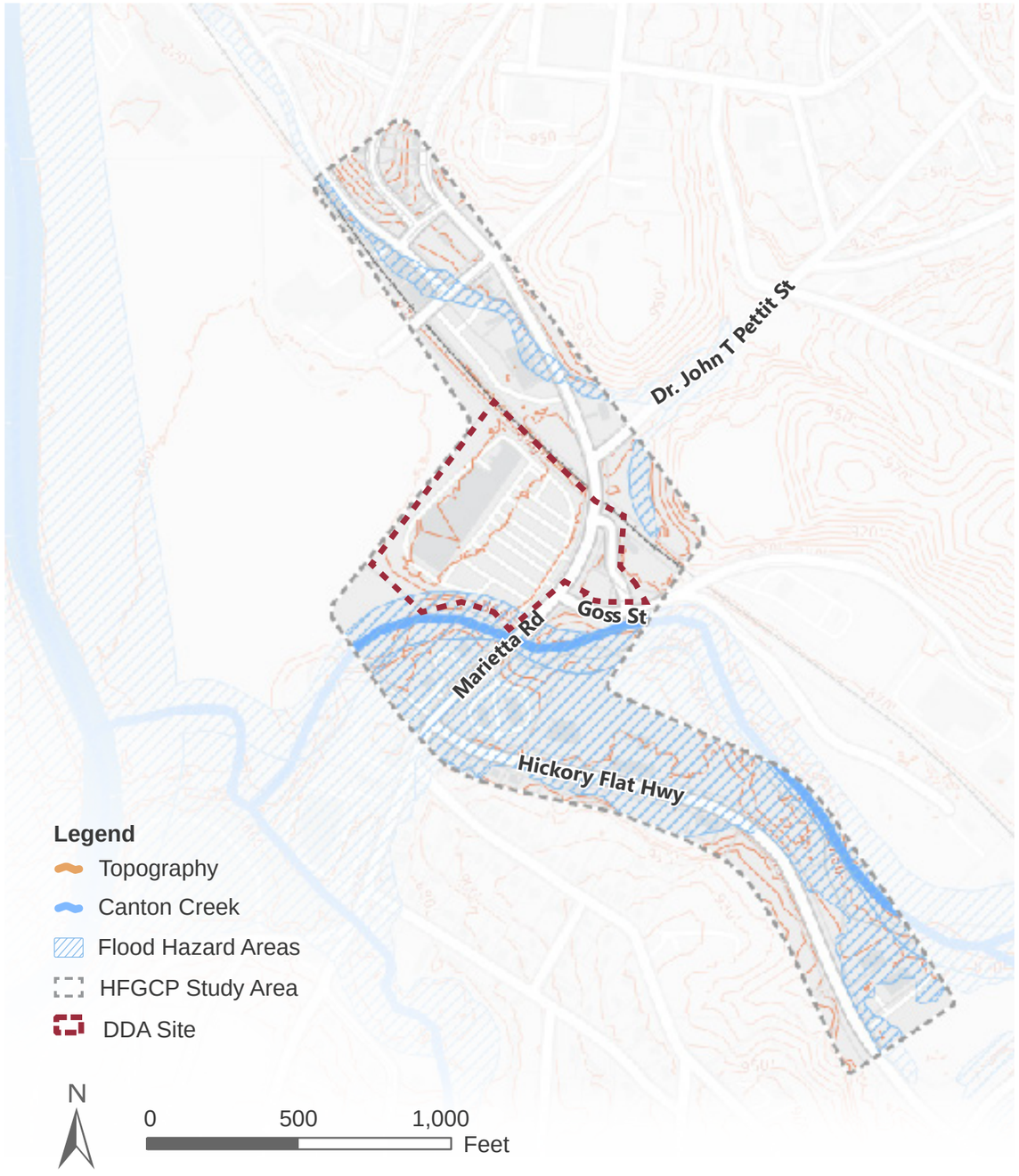
Flooding Challenges

Most of the study area falls into a flood hazard zone because of Canton Creek and the nearby Etowah River, shown in **Figure 10**. Flood hazard zones have a 1% or more chance of flooding. Any buildings constructed here are considered high-impact development and, therefore, require special permits from developers and flood insurance for tenants and owners.

This potential for flooding makes much of the study area risky for development, as shown in **Map 6**. However, there are lower-impact ways to improve sites in these flood hazard zones in the study area, such as multi-use trails or floodable parks where flooding will lead to minimal property destruction. Even when developing for low-impact uses, flood risk mitigation strategies, such as the deployment of green infrastructure and planting of native vegetation, should be considered and incorporated into all developments in flood hazard areas.

Figure 10: Someone Overlooking the Etowah River

Image Source:
Figure 10: Homes.com, Canton.Retrived from https://www.homes.com/local-guide/canton-ga/?dk=t37nzwv9z60l1&tab=2 on May 9, 2025.



Source: Canton Open Data Portal, Flood Hazard Zones, 2019

Map 6: Topography and Flood Hazard Zones

A Gateway to Downtown

The Hickory Flat Highway corridor is the gateway to Canton's Downtown but the lack of wayfinding markers and placemaking element do not reflect this to visitors and residents alike. **Figure 11** depicts the road conditions coming in on the Hickory Flat Highway from the I-575 exit going toward Downtown via the Marietta Road.

As one enters HFH from the I-575 exit, there are no signs to indicate this corridor leads to Canton's downtown. The wide lanes allow for speeding beyond posted speed limit. There are no sidewalks on one side of the road and the wayfinding markers inviting people to the Sunnyside neighborhood are barely visible. Currently, HFH ends at the intersection with Marietta Road. As one turns West onto Marietta Road here, again, there is no indication that this road leads to the downtown. The road in front of the DDA site lacks tree canopy, and there are no sidewalks on the DDA site-side of the road. At the end of the DDA site, Marietta Road intersects with Railroad Street. A trail connection was recommended for this site in the TMP.

Figure 11: Road conditions on Hickory Flat Highway (traveling from I-575 to intersection of Marietta Road and Railroad Street). The map numbers (1-6) correspond to the street view locations shown (left to right).

Image Source: Google Earth. Canton, GA. 34°13'40"N 84°29'17"W. Retrieved from https://earth.google.com/web/@34.22799245,-84.48815973,262.49891288a,1091.77414269d,60y,0h,0t,0r/data=CgRCAggBQgIIAEoNCP_____wEQAA on May 15, 2025.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

This chapter describes recommendations for transportation improvements to the HFGCP study area. In line with Canton's Core Tenets, the recommendations are intended to create a safe and connected transportation network to better serve the community. The roadway and transportation recommendations included as part of the HFGCP are shown and listed in **Figure 12**.

1. Three roundabouts, one at each of these three locations:
   - The intersection of Marietta Road and Hickory Flat Highway;
   - The intersection of Marietta Road and Dr. John T Pettit Street;
   - The intersection of Marietta Road and Railroad Street;
2. Realign and widen the existing portion of Marietta Road between the two roundabouts to improve traffic movement and safety;
3. Extend Goss Street to reach the new Marietta Road realignment;
4. Add sidewalks and a shared-use path along the corridor; and
5. Improve traffic flow at Marietta Street and Railroad Street.

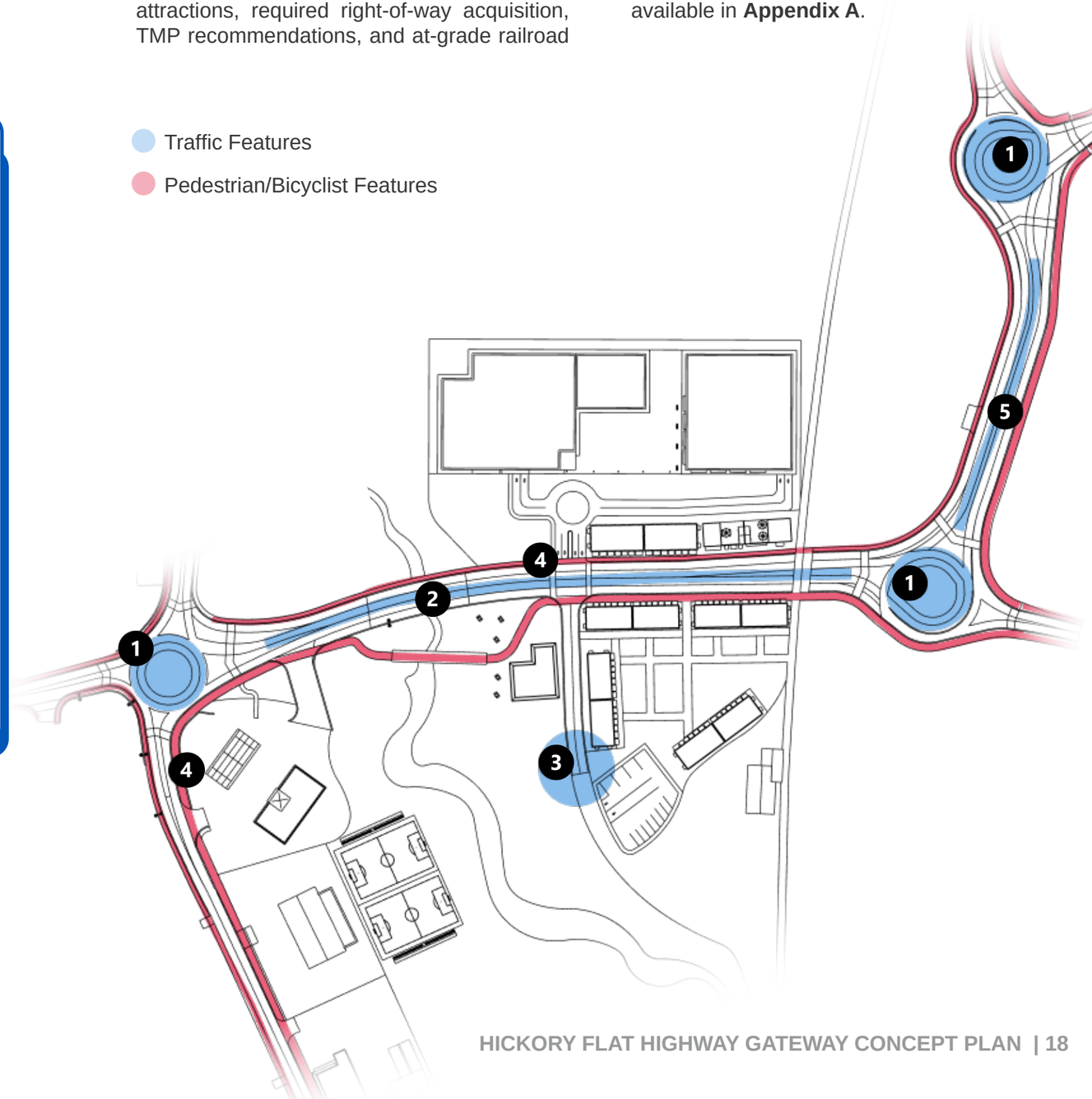
Figure 12: Roadway Concept Features

Roadway Concept

The project team identified new roadway concepts for the study area during a half-day design workshop held at city hall in May 2024. Factors such as parcel ownership, connectivity to Downtown and local attractions, required right-of-way acquisition, TMP recommendations, and at-grade railroad crossings were considered to design and eventually select the new roadway concept. This concept and detail views of the concept are shown on the following pages in **Figures 13** through **15**. This roadway concept is also available in **Appendix A**.

Traffic Features

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Features



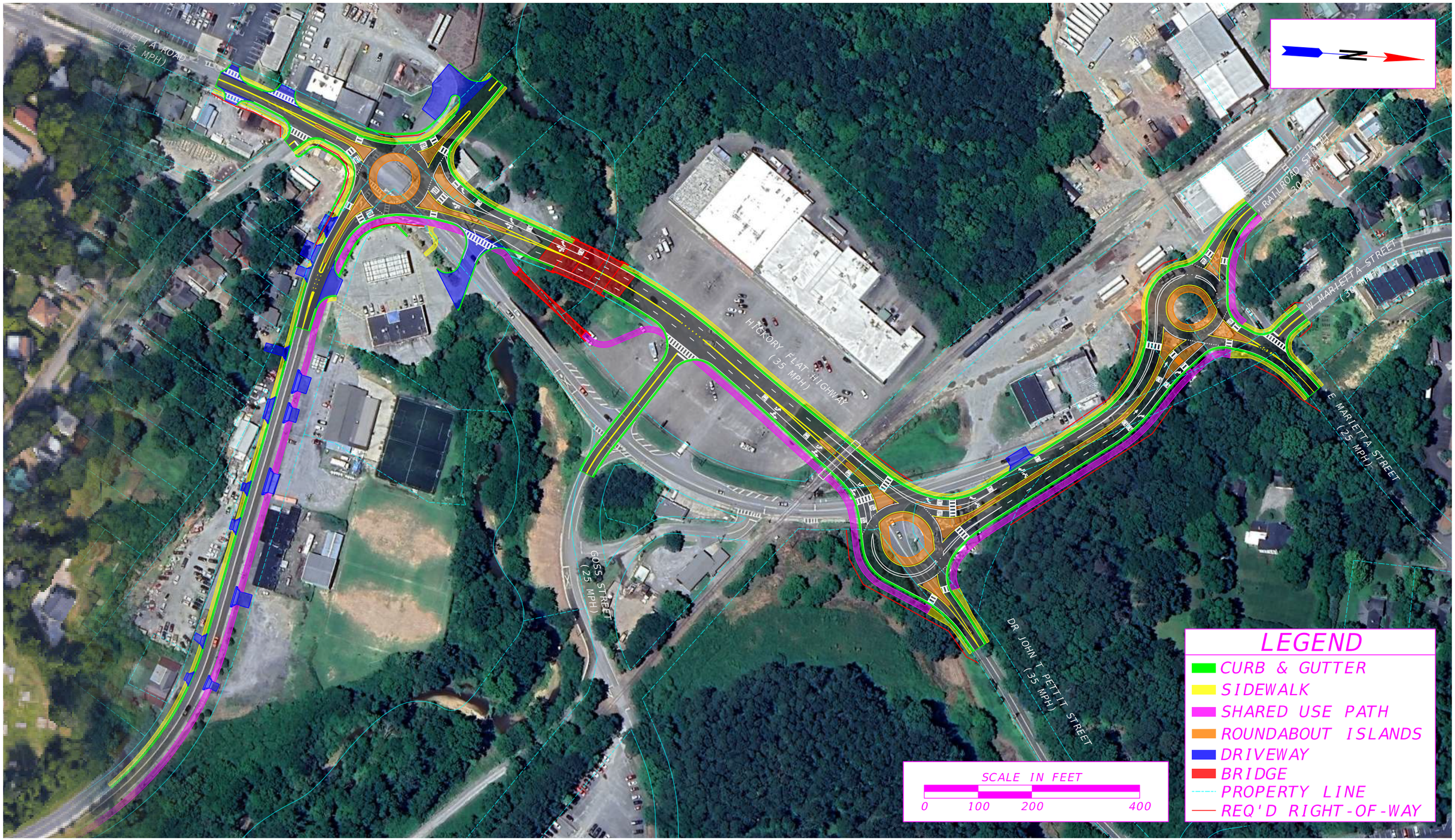


Figure 13: Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Street Roadway Concept

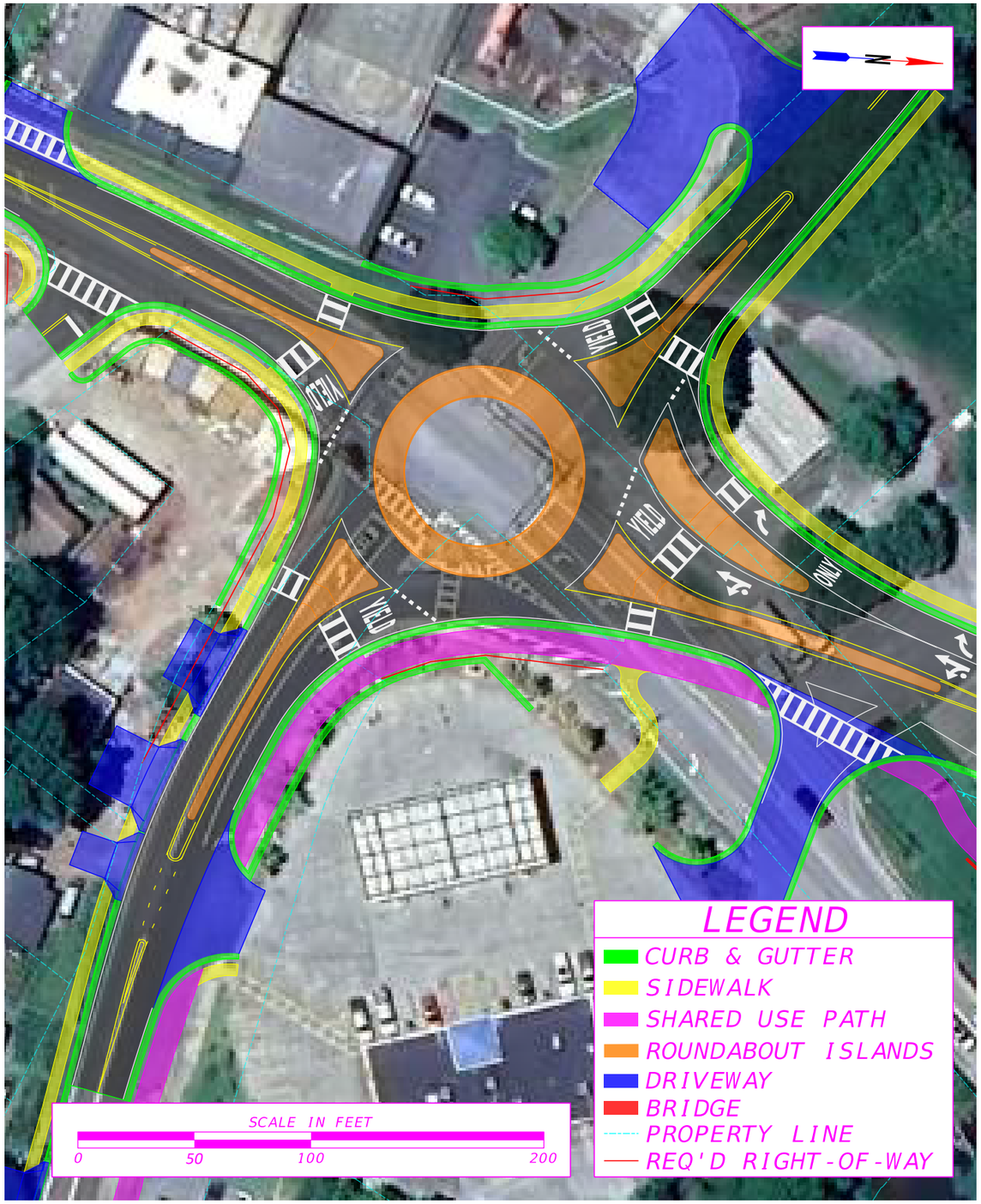


Figure 14: Roadway Concept - Hickory Flat Highway and Marietta Street Intersection

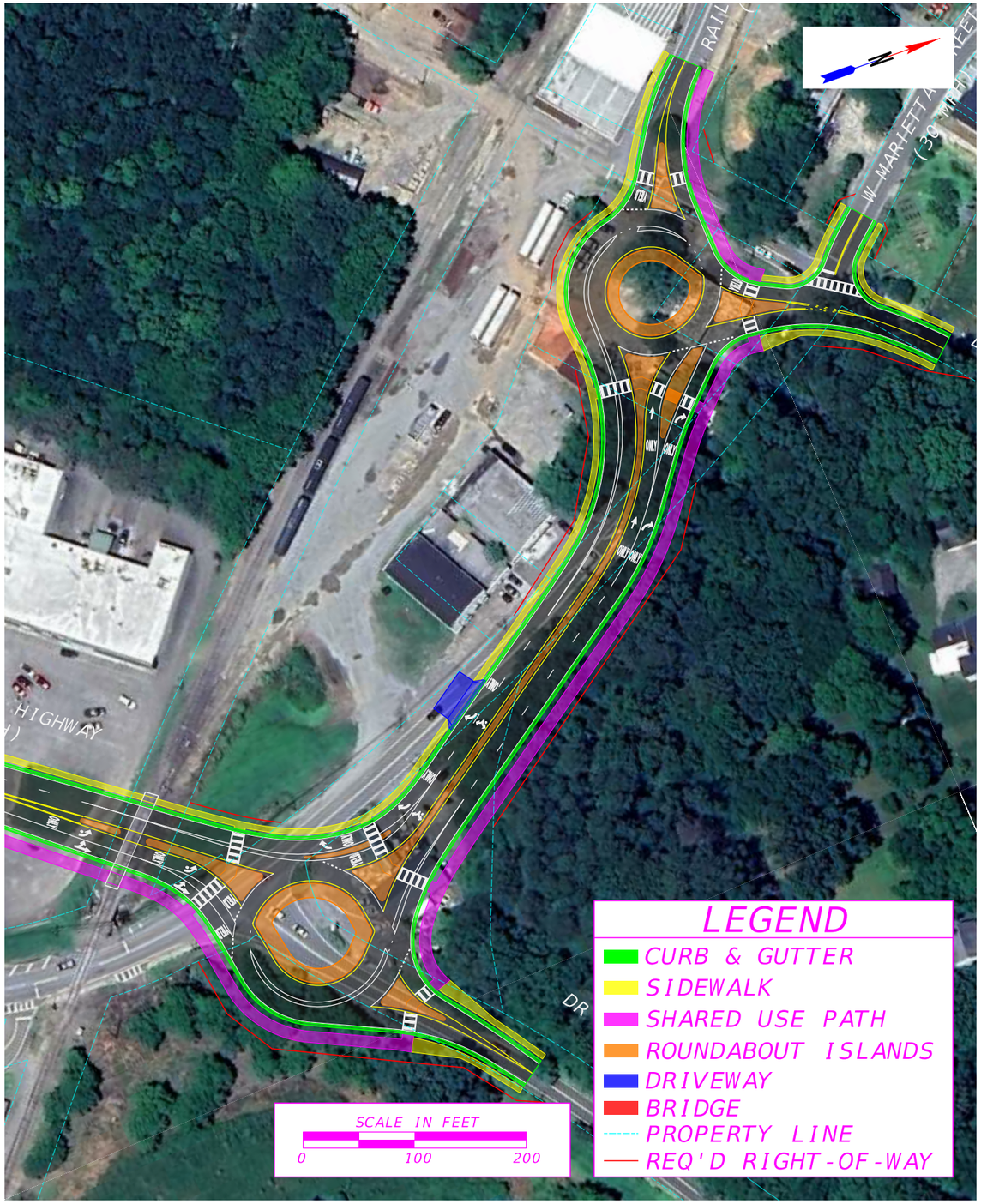


Figure 15: Roadway Concept - Marietta Street Mobility Improvements

DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN GUIDANCE

Recommendations for this plan were supported by the development of comprehensive design policies and a cohesive design palette. These recommendations are further informed by a review of relevant case studies to ensure that this plan is contextually grounded and align with the best practices.

Development Policies

- Transportation improvements to connect to Downtown.
- Public space that leans into the existing environmental terrain.
- Redevelopment patterns that allow for creative new uses.
- Multi-use trails that connect residents and visitors with nature.
- Retail and commercial uses that preserve the character and charm of the community.
- Public art that highlights local artists and connects the Sunnyside community.
- Anti-displacement strategies to create economic opportunities for existing residents.
- Activation events to activate public space.

Figure 16: Development Policies

Transportation

Development policies affecting the city's transportation system, shown in **Figure 16**, were selected to align with the existing TMP projects and priorities. These should improve connectivity within the HFGCP study area and to Downtown; make the corridor safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers; and help make Canton more climate resilient. These should also offer connections beyond the study area, such as to nearby Harmon Park. This document discusses the roadway design created to align with this vision, discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

In addition to the roadway reconfiguration, other changes were recommended for the study area. These recommendations include improving:

- Placemaking along the highway;
- Sidewalk connectivity;
- Traffic calming; and
- Wayfinding towards Downtown.

Figure 18: Reduced speed limit as road improvement

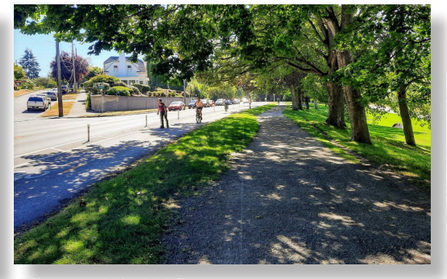


Figure 19: Urban tree canopy

Figure 20: Connected sidewalks

Figure 21: Innovative wayfinding that attracts pedestrians and bicyclists.

Image Sources:
Figure 19: USDOT Federal Highway Administration. Retrieved from https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/noteworthy-practice-booklet-speed-management/case-study-7-noteworthy-speed on May 15, 2025.
Figure 20: The Urbanist. Op-Ed: Correcting the Narrative about Seattle's Tree Ordinance.(2023). https://www.theurbanist.org/2023/11/07/op-ed-correcting-the-narrative-about-seattles-tree-ordinance/on May 15, 2025.
Figure 21: San Antonio Report. (2019). Retrieved from https://i0.wp.com/sanantonioreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SABG-sidewalk-with-trees-photo-by-Bill-Barker.jpeg?fit=1200%2C900&ssl=1 on May 15, 2025.
Figure 22: Sidewalk Wayfinding Mural Pilot Project. Retrieved from https://bloomingtonrevivalists.com/resources/sidewalk-wayfinding-mural-pilot-project/on May 15, 2025.
Figure 23: RSM Design. Retrieved from https://rsmdesign.com/work/beacon-park-irvine-ca on May 15, 2025.
Figure 24: Jason Thorne. (2024). Retrieved from https://mastodon.social/@JasonThorne/113110683148304234 on May 15, 2025.

Redevelopment

Three alternatives for the DDA site were presented. The selected alternative forms the basis of the site concepts discussed in the next chapter. Some of the redevelopment strategies included are:

- Concentrate density along the corridor adjacent to the roadway;
- Reduce surface parking;
- Hide parking behind or under the development;
- Build with higher density; and
- Create missing middle housing and build various housing typologies.

Retail/Commercial Use

The plan aims to encourage retail and commercial use of the site. Some strategies to enable this include:

- Lean into the existing community character and create third places for community connection;
- Retail uses, like breweries or coffee roasters, that match the existing light industrial uses along the corridor;
- Maintain existing businesses like ethnic grocers and local bakeries;
- Create incubators and opportunities for existing and new businesses; and
- Fund micro-grants for business landscaping and beautification.

Anti-Displacement

The aim of this plan is to create placemaking and wayfinding opportunities while ensuring that redevelopment does not unintentionally result in displacement of current residents and business owners. Strategies for anti-displacement include:

- Create a funding source to help local businesses and residents;
- Use forgiveable loans to keep local businesses open during project construction;
- Give preference to existing local businesses when redeveloping commercial sites, including the DDA site;
- Community land trusts; and
- Assistance with property taxes and home repair for legacy residents.

Public Spaces

Welcoming public spaces are essential for revitalizing this site. Public spaces can be used for recreation and community events, as well as building climate resilience. This plan identifies the following strategies to enable this:

- Build inclusive spaces for all ages that highlight natural resources;
- Build multiple creek access points, including space for fishing and a “beach front;”
- Include walking paths and ample seating; and
- Include green infrastructure like a floodable park, rain gardens, and bioswales.

Image Sources:
Figure 25: Becca Dwyer Design. Painting My First Utility Box in Vista. Retrived from https://www.beccadwyer.com/blog/painting-a-utility-box on March 13, 2025.
Figure 26: Homes.com, Canton.Retrived from https://www.homes.com/local-guide/canton-ga/?dk=wfeymbr48b0v1&tab=2 on March 13, 2025.

Public Art

Public art can be used as a traffic calming measure and as a way to foster community identity. Strategies for using public art inlcude:

- Create a visual identity to signal that visitors are approaching Downtown Canton;
- Painted crosswalks and intersections;
- Add a stop on the downtown sculpture tour;
- Paint utility boxes;
- Partner with the cultural arts commission and History Cherokee to create historic art series with storytelling; and
- Include placemaking or landmark art pieces.

The neighborhood of Sunnyside has been investing in public art, including a mural in Harmon Park. Bringing public art to the corridor will make it a more inviting place.

Figures 22: Painted Utility Box

Activation Events

As the city invests in the infrastructure to support these placemaking and wayfinding projects, it will be important to keep the community involved and create programming to support the use of the redeveloped DDA site. This plan encourages the city and DDA to host community events to activate the public space and connect to Downtown, such as:

- Outdoor concert series, invite local guests and partner with The Mill;
- Outdoor movies on the green or tailgates for sports games;
- Annual 5k/10k race that starts at the DDA site and ends Downtown; and
- Multicultural festival or Hispanic Heritage Month celebration.

Figures 23: First Friday in Downtown Canton

Design Palette

The design palette developed for the HFGCP includes modern and vibrant design elements that foster a welcoming atmosphere for the study area while maintaining a cohesive look and feel in all aspects of the built environment. **Figure 24** shows the factors considered in creating this design palette.

- Inviting and safe pedestrian walkways with buffer from roadway.
- Creative crosswalk designs that contribute to traffic calming.
- Multi-use building façades with natural and industrial elements.
- Bright lighting for roadway users and pedestrians to ensure safety.
- Vibrant streetside vegetation compliant with city's plant guidelines.
- Unique bicycle parking that are both functional and artistic.
- Trash receptacles that integrate seamlessly in public spaces.
- Modern and comfortable public seating options.

Figure 24: Design Palette Considerations

Sidewalks

Currently, the study area lacks sidewalks in several places, and there is no buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Adding buffers will make walking a safer experience on the Hickory Flat Highway corridor. A separate pedestrian bridge will also make crossing over the creek safer.

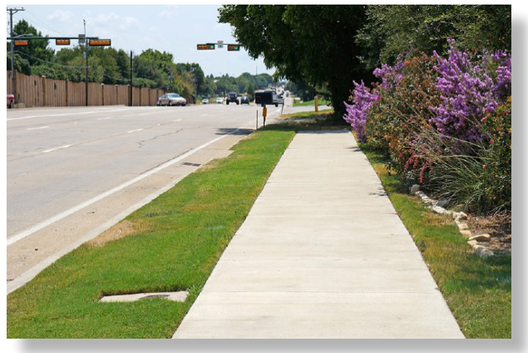


Figure 25: Sidewalk with Buffer

Figure 26: Pedestrian Bridge Example

Image Sources:
Figure 25:Cross Timbers Gazette. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.crosstimbersgazette.com/crosstimbersgazette/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/20155673_10154910278644397_7574876010882540673_n.jpg on May 15, 2025.
Figure 26: True North Steel. (2021). Retrieved from https://truenorthsteel.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Pedestrian-Bridge-8-wide-x-30-span.jpg on May 15, 2025.

Crosswalks

Crosswalk design can contribute to traffic calming as well as placemaking. This can be achieved through a number of design elements as highlighted in **Figures 29**.

Figure 27: Clear markings for crosswalks

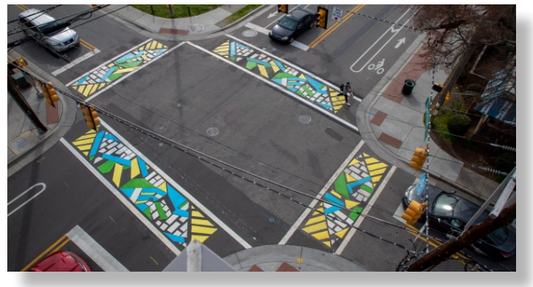


Figure 28: Painted crosswalks

1. Reduce pedestrian exposure through raised crosswalks.
2. Pedestrian-activated signalized high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK).
3. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), pedestrian activated mid-block crossing, and median with vegetation.
4. Painting crosswalks and intersections to increase visibility and promote placemaking.
5. Continuous sidewalk design through the intersection to emphasize pedestrian space.

Figure 29: Crosswalk Design Elements

Bicycle Parking Design

Bicycle parking, especially in retail locations, can provide safe and secure locations for bicycles and encourage visitors to choose biking to get to places. These can also become artistic additions to the streetscape.

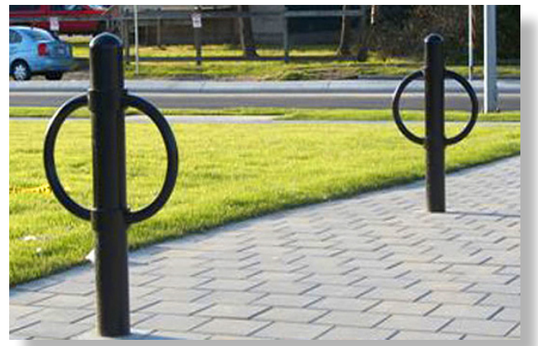


Figure 30: Functional and Artistic Bicycle Rack Designs

Image Sources:
Figure 27: Long Beach. Retrieved from https://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/go-active-lb/media-library/images/mobility-toolkit/toolkit_ped-refuge-island.jpg on May 15, 2025.
Figure 28: Go Chapel Hill. (2020). Retrieved from https://gochapelhill.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/200204_new_crosswalk_008.jpg?w=640 on May 15, 2025.
Figure 30: Inhabitat. (2014). https://inhabitat.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2014/08/Bike-Bollards-Sidewalk.jpg; and Retrieved from https://i.pinimg.com/736x/f6/c6/24/f6c624ab5879e38ca6a5e83bf61a6388.jpg on May 15. 2025.

Street and Sidewalk Lighting

Curved lamp post designs and pedestrian-scale lighting are recommended to increase the light exposure radius of the street light in the study area. These can include solar options for energy efficiency.

Figure 31: Curved Lamp

Street Vegetation

All street side vegetation needs to comply with city and GDOT guidelines. Acceptable species include: Sauce Magnolia, American Elm, Flowering Dogwood, Crape Myrtle, Floride Anie Tree, Chaste Tree, Treeform Wax Myrtle, and Eastern Red Bud.

Trash Receptacles

Trash receptacles placed in the study area should match other street furniture and design elements.

Figure 32: Example of a Suitable Trash Receptacle

Public Seating Space

Benches and other street furniture that match other design elements should be placed in publlic spaces to increase comfort for visitors.

Figure 33: Suitable Bench for Sidewalks

Building Facades

Building facades play a key role in activating a public space. Some strategies that enable this include:

- Including dining, retail, residential, and hotel space;
- Having open areas for public events;
- Reusing abandoned properties to create entertainment districts and parks; and
- Encouraging and programming for mixed-use development.

Figure 34: Parson's Alley, Duluth

Figure 38 shows Parsons Alley in Duluth, an example of public space with adaptive reuse of abandoned properties to create an entertainment district which includes retail and park in the center.

Figure 39 shows Halcyon, in Forsyth County, which is a mixed-use development with residential space, retail, restaurants, a food hall, and open space with seating for public recreation and gathering.

Figure 35: Halcyon, Forsyth County

Floodable Parks

Parks can be designed to serve as critical flood resilience infrastructure. Floodable parks such as Rodney Cook Sr. Park, shown in **Figure 36**, use recreational spaces to provide functional hydrological infrastructure by including basins that can retain water in case of flooding. Native plants can help improve stormwater retention and aesthetics of the open space.

Figure 36: Rodney Cook Sr. Park, Atlanta

Image Sources:
Figure 31: Retrieved from https://cdn.locomotive.works/sites/6128fce261c40200a6dbaa4c/content_entry612d10e005122d00c09d8ab2/61804719e95d4b007cdcde59/files/New_Maryland_2.JPG?1666284645
Figure 32:American Playground Company. Retrieved from https://www.americanplaygroundcompany.com/slated-wood-32-gallon-trash-receptacle-with-liner-and-lid on May 15, 2025.
Figure 33: Urban Land Products. Outdoor Benches. Retrieved from https://urbanlandproducts.com/outdoor-bench-urbanland-products/ on May 15, 2025.

Image Sources:
Figure 34: The Atlanta Journal Constitution. Duluth wins award for Parsons Alley design. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.ajc.com/news/local/duluth-wins-award-for-parsons-alley-design/KhxXNS4Pb7wK9cyavwXZBK/on May 15, 2025.
Figure 35: Forsyth County. Halcyon has six new openings. (2020). Retrieved from https://forsythcounty.com/local-news/82665-halcyon-has-six-new-openings on May 15, 2025.
Figure 36: National Recreation and Park Association. How a Stormwater Park Is Revitalizing a Historic Atlanta Neighborhood. (2022). Retrieved from https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2022/april/how-a-stormwater-park-is-revitalizing-a-historic-atlanta-neighborhood/ on May 18, 2025.

Case Studies

This section presents projects, plans, and studies comparable to the HFGCP study area. More detail about each of these case studies is available in **Appendix B**.

Indian Trail LCI

Gwinnett County, Georgia

Part of the Gateway 85 CID, this project received money from ARC's LCI program to develop into a more pedestrian-friendly area with a mix of uses beyond the existing industrial and commercial uses.

This case study is a good comparison to HFGCP because it is also within metro Atlanta, mostly industrial but looking to convert into mixed uses, along a major roadway (Indian Creek Road), abuts an interstate (I-85), and is located along a major waterway (Beaver Ruin Creek).

Some of this project's recommendations that are relevant to HFGCP include:

- Establish pedestrian connections in areas where there is evidence of pedestrian use but limited facilities, as shown in **Figure 37**;
- Convert existing large parking lots and low-density land uses into mixed use plazas and developments that support pedestrian activity and aging in place, as shown in **Figure 38**;
- Adapt existing uses in the long run to be more walkable and less vehicle oriented, even if they see high traffic in the present; and
- Add public amenities, such as parks and trails, to make the most out of existing uses and increase a sense of community and connectivity.

Figure 37: Beaver Ruin Creek

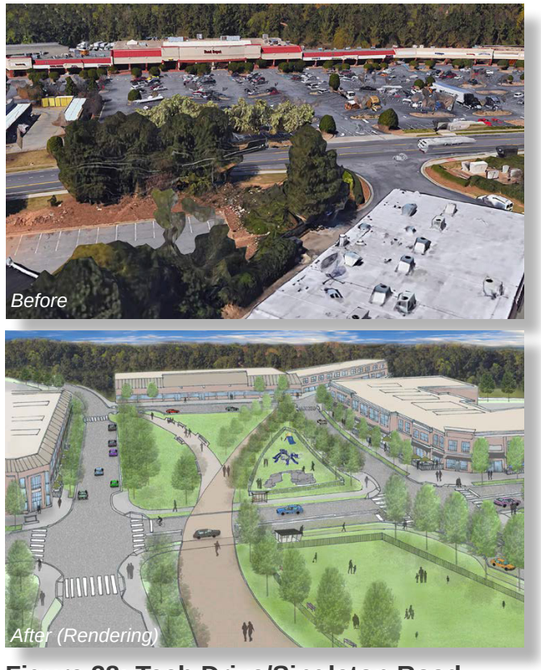


Figure 38: Tech Drive/Singleton Road

North Branch Framework Plan

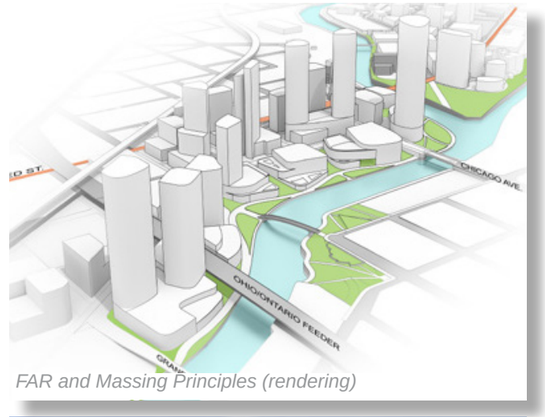
Chicago, Illinois

The North Branch Framework is a land use plan focused on revitalizing the North Branch industrial corridor in Chicago as part of the Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative. The goal of the Framework is to maintain the corridor as an important economic engine and job center for the city, provide better access for all transportation modes, and build upon the area's unique natural and built environment.

While this project is in a much larger and more densely population urban area than Canton, the land use and neighborhood character make it a good case for the HFGCP. The North Branch neighborhood is a historically industrial area that has access to major expressways, the Chicago River, and some existing public transportation facilities. There are many distinctive, historical buildings in the area that add to its historic charm and character.

Some of this project's recommendations that are relevant to HFGCP are shown in **Figure 39** and include:

- Create a Tax Increment Finance (TIF)/Tax Allocation District (TAD) district so that the district may raise necessary funds for the project area's improvements;
- Connect to existing transportation routes and create new connections for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Take advantage of the district's unique geography to create pedestrian-friendly spaces and activities, including paths along the river; and
- Utilize floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to strategically maximize density and open space.



FAR and Massing Principles (rendering)

Wetland Park and Boardwalk (rendering)

North Branch Loop Trail Concept (rendering)

Figure 39: North Branch Framework Concept Renderings

Grandview Heights Goodale West Area Plan

Grandview Heights, Ohio *(Columbus metro)*

Goodale West is a mostly industrial corridor of Grandview Heights that is immediately adjacent to civic facilities, greenspace, and residential neighborhoods. The city wishes to convert existing industrial and commercial uses to a mix of uses that promote transportation accessibility, safety, and community.

The Goodale West Area Plan presents a vision for the neighborhood that transforms it from an automobile-centric industrial area, as shown in **Figure 40**, into a pedestrian and bike friendly corridor. There is an existing, active railroad track that is being explored as part of a Rails to Trails study. The community did not want too much density in the area but were supportive of pedestrian and bicycle-friendly projects.

Some of this project's recommendations that are relevant to HFGCP are shown in **Figure 41** and include:

- Ground level retail in all new buildings to activate the street/potential trail;
- Linear parks along the potential trail and major roadways;
- Move parking away from big lots and into plinth-level parking for new development or onto the street to create more opportunities for street-level business activation and to aid in traffic calming; and
- Have a variety of building facades and materials to create an eclectic and visually interesting neighborhood feel.

Figure 40: Existing Industrial Features

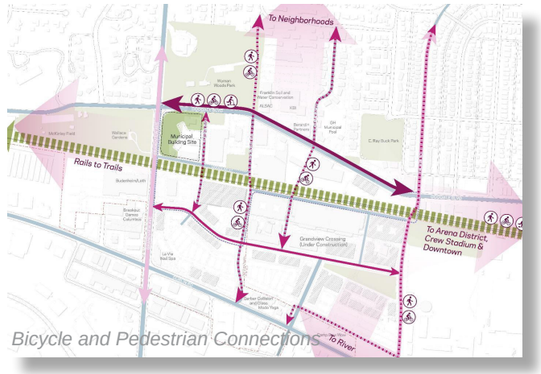


Figure 41: Goodale West Concepts

Andrews/Oakland Corridors

Wilton Manors, Florida *(Fort Lauderdale metro)*

Andrews Avenue and Oakland Park Boulevard are multi-lane "stroads." They are not safe for pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists, and they are fronted by low-density commercial and light industrial uses with large surface parking lots.

Declining and dilapidated commercial building stock, along with high costs for street overhaul, make Andrews Avenue a prime corridor for economic development. The morphology of the street makes safety interventions necessary. Oakland Park Boulevard is a similar street that is slightly more residential, but still has several surface parking lots, limited or dilapidated pedestrian amenities, and heavy vehicle traffic.

Some of this study's recommendations that are relevant to HFGCP are shown in **Figures 42** and **43**, and include:

- In 2015, the city's Complete Streets ordinance designated both roads as "context sensitive corridors," allowing for flexibility in road design, including travel lane reductions and mid-block crosswalks.
- Andrews Avenue
  - Attract diverse, minority-owned businesses to the corridor.
  - Take advantage of the existing waterway and encourage new development that accentuates it.
  - Better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to neighboring streets.
- Oakland Park Boulevard
  - The Walmart proposed along this road should be constructed in a way that reduces surface parking and maximizes accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - There is willingness from the region and the state to transform this road into a major transit corridor.

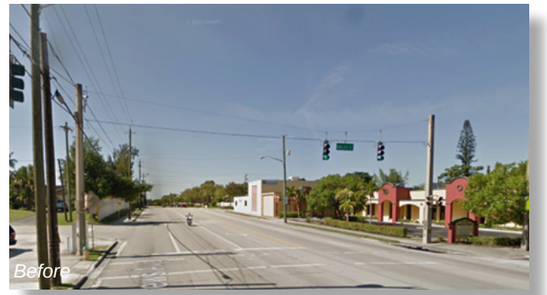


Figure 42: Andrews Avenue Crosswalk

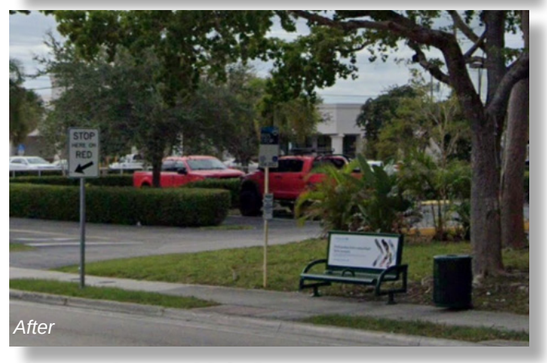


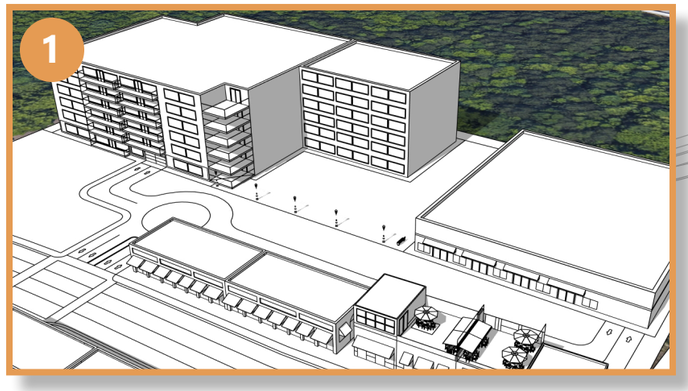
Figure 43: NW 29th Street Bus Stop

SITE VISION

Through a review and analysis of past planning efforts, community priorities for the DDA site, and precedent studies, a set of recommendations were identified to create a redevelopment concept for the Hickory Flat Highway corridor and the DDA site.

The concepts for redevelopment and placemaking build upon the roadway concept for the corridor. These concepts feature new residential and retail buildings, improved circulation, third spaces, and opportunities for building community identity.

Figure 44 shows the recommended layout of the study area under this plan.



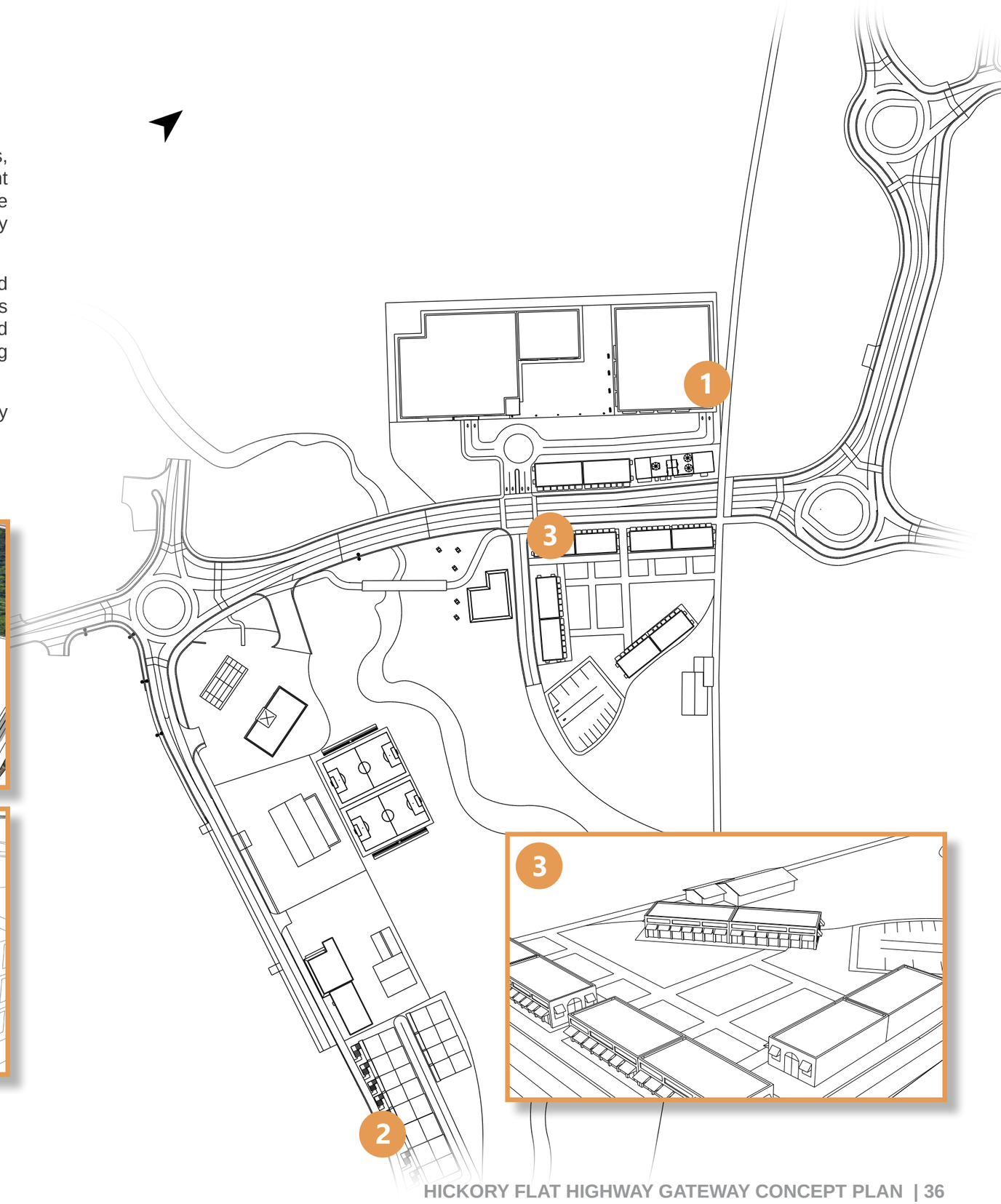


Figure 44: Site Plan for the Study Area

Plan Elements

Circulation

Based on the roadway concepts, the circulation plan for this site was crafted. **Figure 45** shows how pedestrians, bicylists and drivers will move within and around the DDA site. Througout the site, walkability will be a top priority. Conflicts with vehicular traffic will be minimized through the use of continous sidewalks, artistic crosswalks, cramble crossings. and roundabouts. Connections to planned TMP projects will also be established.

Figure 45: Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic movement at the DDA site.

Redevelopment

This plan proposes dense development along the Hickory Flat Highway corridor. This includes residential townhouses along Hickory Flat Highway on undeveloped and low-density parcels, and multi-use buildings in the DDA site. The plan also proposes retail establishments along Marietta Road and along the shared use path. Additionally, a city-owned public space on the abutting site south of the realignments is being proposed.

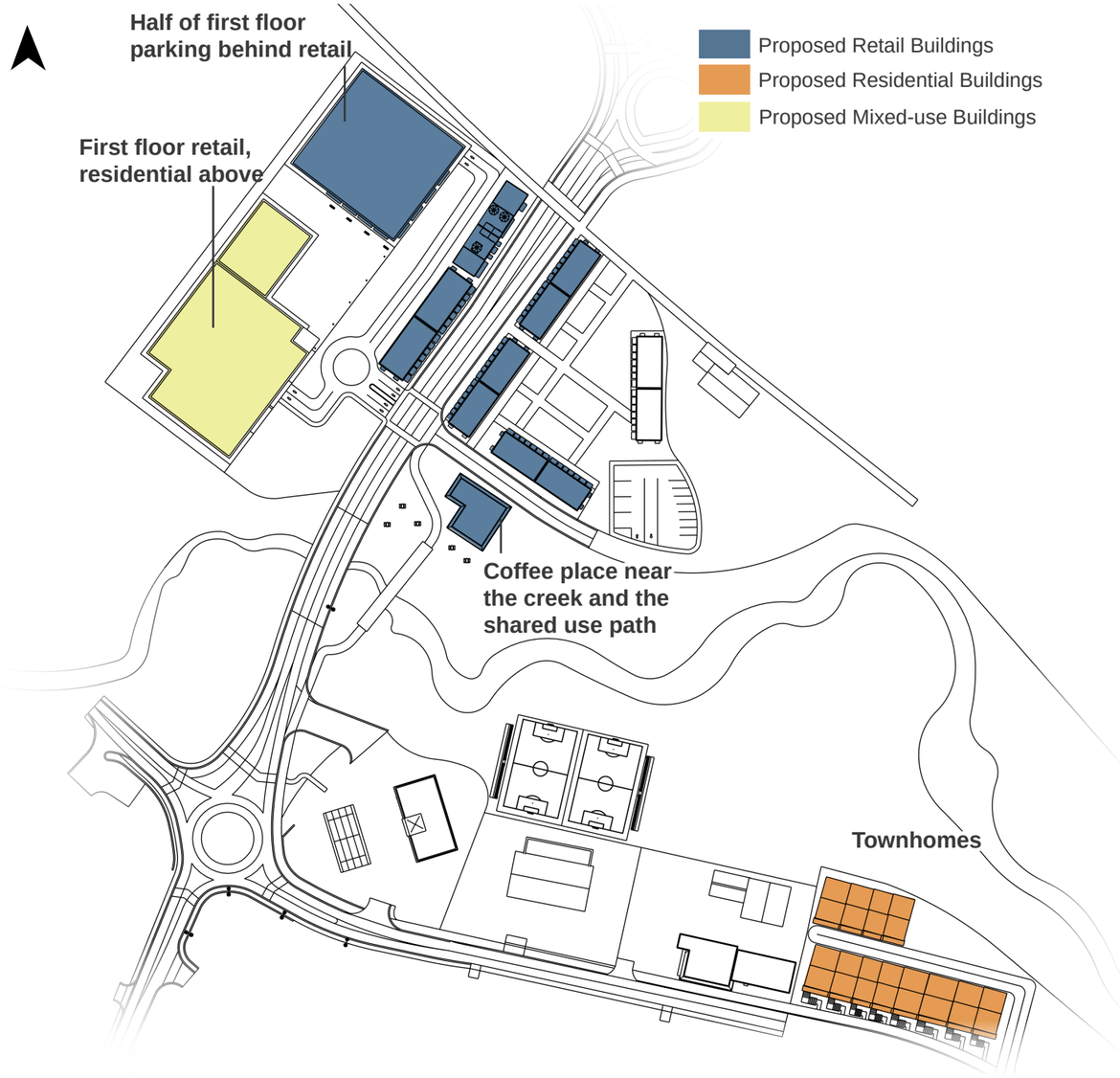


Figure 46: Redevelopment in the Study Area

Wayfinding

Art and signage can be used as wayfinding markers along Marietta Road and Hickory Flat Highway to invite people to the DDA site and the downtown.

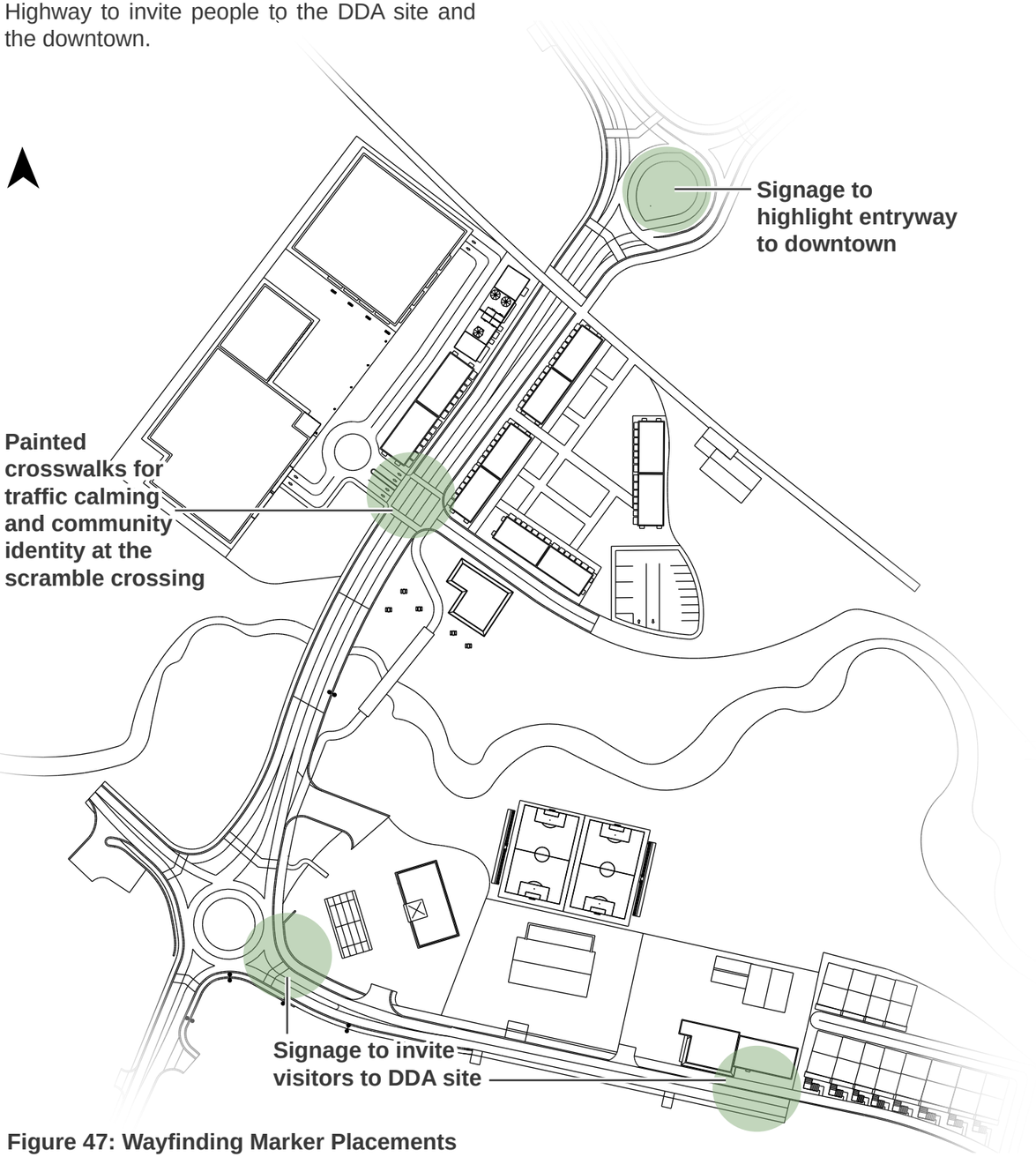


Figure 47: Wayfinding Marker Placements

Public Gathering Spaces

This plan recommends multiple third spaces for the residents of Canton. Within the DDA site, the open space provides opportunities to host events and public gatherings as well as outdoor market and dining options. Similarly, creating a trail along the creek offers opportunities for recreational activities such as hiking and fishing. The soccer field within the study site will also be retained.

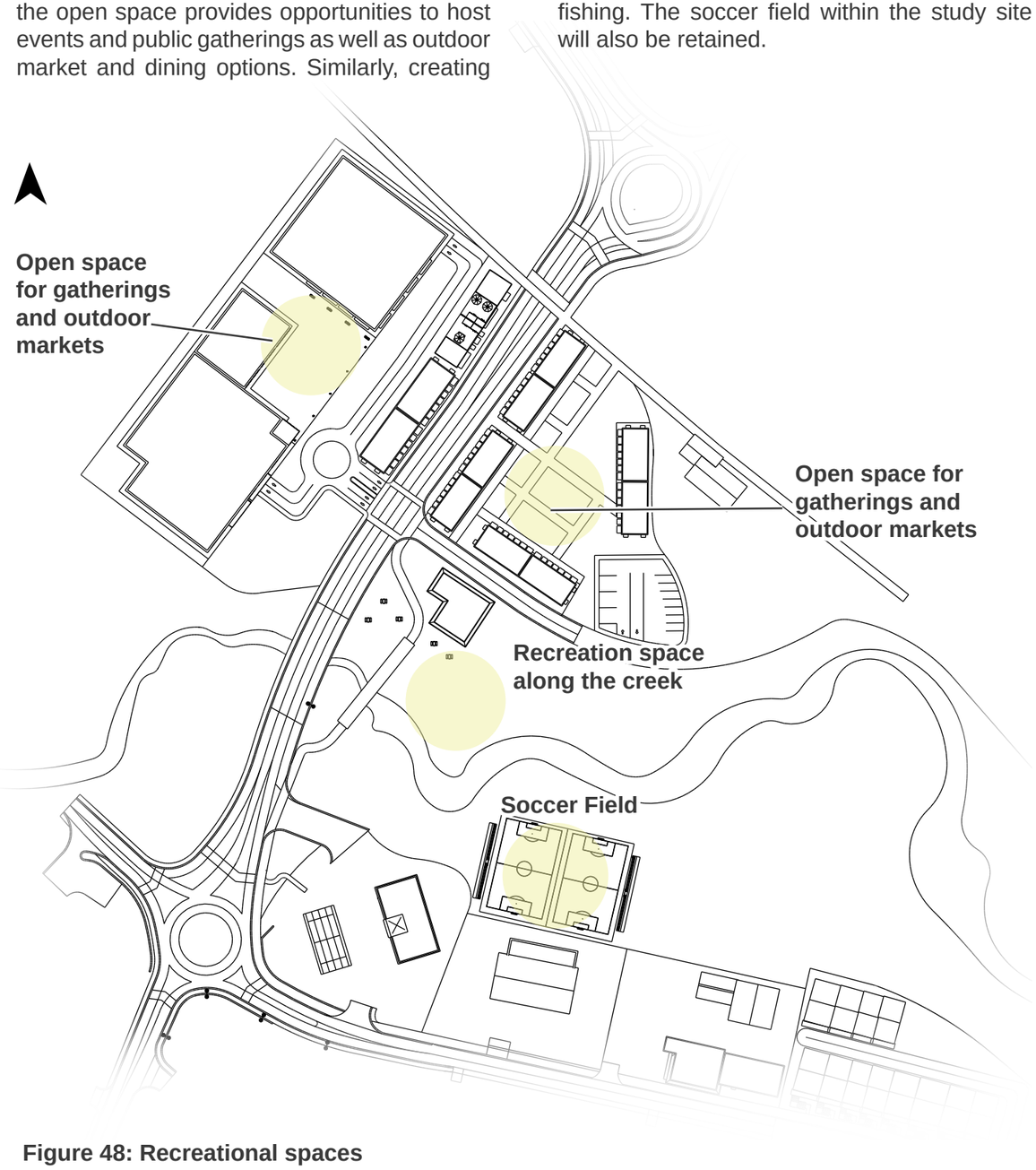


Figure 48: Recreational spaces

Site Concepts

Hickory Flat Highway

This rendering in **Figure 49** illustrates Hickory Flat Highway after implementation of this plan's roadway concept, placemaking elements, and proposed townhomes. This vision for the study area, aligns with the city's Core Tenets by:

- Creating new residential buildings (townhouses) along the highway. This development can support the city's aim to make great neighborhoods;
- Installing pedestrian-scale streetlights to makethe neighborhood safer; and
- Connecting existing and planned trails and other recreational spaces through the shared use path along Hickory Flat Highway. This also supports the city's vision of creating sustainable transportation options and provides a connection to the downtown for users of all modes of transportation.

Figure 49: Hickory Flat Highway (Rendering)

DDA Site

This rendering shows a view of improvements at the DDA site looking from Marietta Road. Site features are listed in **Figure 50**. This rendering shows what the site might look like after redevelopment based on the proposed concept of mixed-use residential and commercial purposes. The open green spaces can be used for gatherings or can be converted into outdoor markets.

1. Mid-rise residential building with first floor for retail and parking use;
2. Buildings for retail use;
3. Roundabout driveway for traffic calming;
4. Pedestrian scramble crossing;
5. Open green spaces for public gathering and outdoor retail opportunities; and
6. Connections to TMP projects.

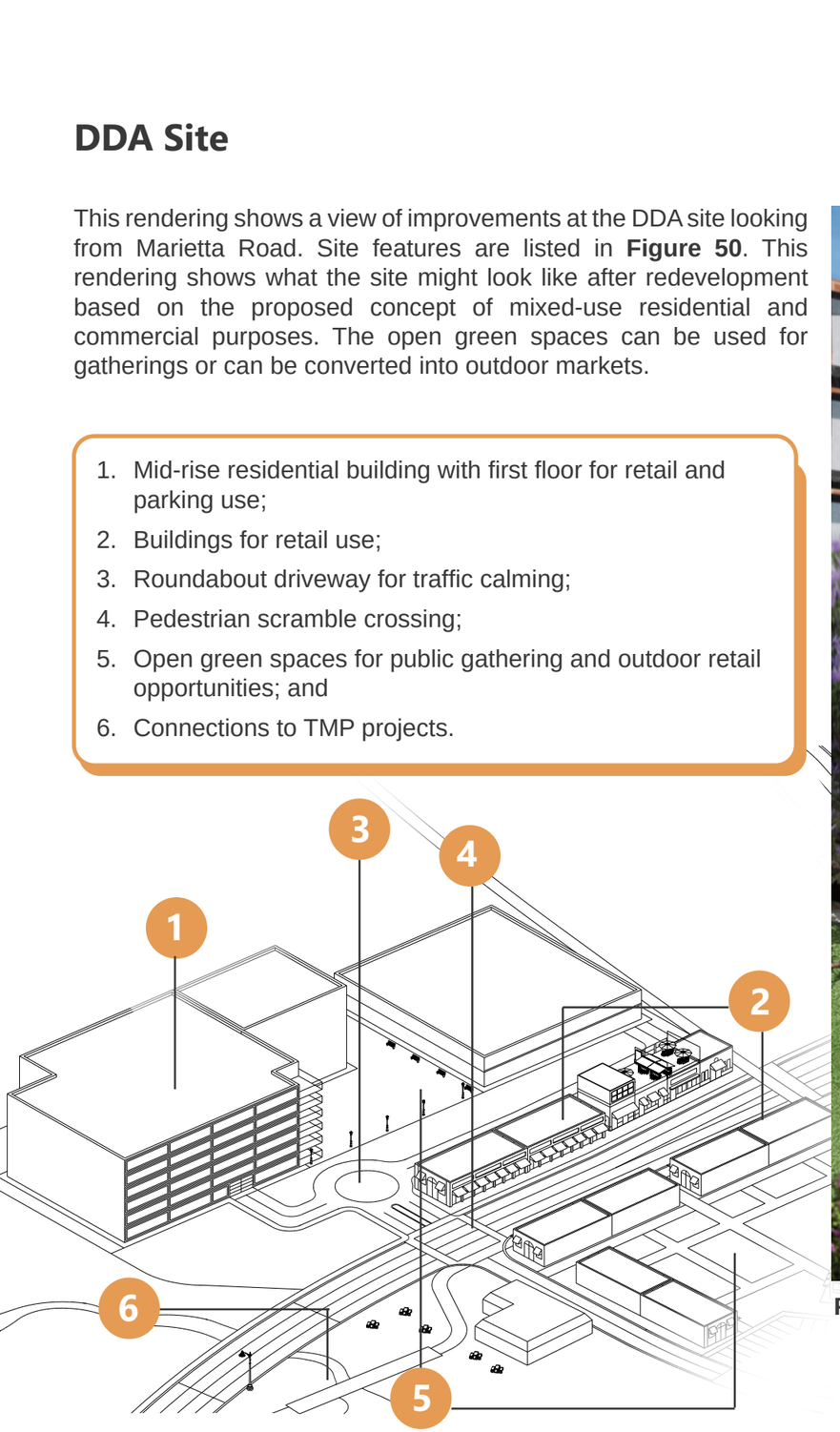


Figure 50: DDA Site (Rendering)

110 Academy Street

Canton, GA 30114

www.cantonga.gov