



CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN CONNECTING PARKS, PATHS, AND PUBLIC SPACES LCI STUDY

FINAL REPORT - JUNE 2025

POND

ARC
Atlanta Regional Commission



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This visionary plan embodies the spirit of collaboration and partnerships within the City of Stone Mountain. Connecting Parks, PATHS, and Public Spaces reflects the community's shared dedication to creating places that connect people, enhance everyday experiences, and celebrate the unique character of Stone Mountain. We are deeply grateful for the time, insight, and commitment of:

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We are grateful for the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative for their partnership on this study. This effort has been in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, and the Federal Highway Administration.

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies of those of the Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or guideline.

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Finally, a special thank you to every partner, interviewee, and participant whose invaluable input has fueled this transformative vision.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Stone Mountain Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study presents a bold yet achievable vision to transform Stone Mountain into a more connected, equitable, and vibrant community. Led by the City of Stone Mountain and funded through the Atlanta Regional Commission's LCI Program, this plan is rooted in the belief that great places emerge where history, creativity, and access meet. The study re-imagines Stone Mountain's future by building on its unique assets of walkable streets, historic charm, and proximity to regional amenities—while addressing pressing challenges such as economic disconnection, aging infrastructure, housing affordability, and shifting mobility needs.

It builds on recent momentum generated by the City's Comprehensive Plan, PATH Foundation projects, and earlier LCI efforts. It aligns land use and transportation decisions to support equitable development and downtown vitality, prioritizes public spaces, pedestrian safety, and multi-modal connectivity, and identifies catalytic sites and implementation tools for phased transformation. The planning process engaged hundreds of residents, business owners, local artists, and institutional stakeholders through public workshops, pop-ups, online surveys, and focused discussions. **The resulting vision emphasizes welcoming gateways that reflect local identity; safer streets and crossings for people of all ages; revitalized public spaces that support gathering, culture, and small businesses; stronger trail and greenway connections to nearby parks and regional systems; and equity-driven growth that centers affordability and local voices.**

Four catalytic sites were identified to kickstart visible transformation, including new plaza spaces, trail connections, public art zones, and neighborhood gateways. A robust placemaking strategy outlines near-term projects that enhance the pedestrian experience, encourage activation, and reflect Stone Mountain's creative identity. The mobility framework proposes improved crossings, expanded trail access, and safer sidewalks along key corridors such as Main Street and Second Street. The affordable housing and economic analysis presents strategies to address housing needs, mitigate displacement, and support inclusive economic development.

A detailed phasing and funding strategy ensures that the vision can become reality. It includes a tiered implementation strategy spanning the near- and long-term, a matrix of recommended projects and responsible partners, a funding toolkit combining federal, regional, and local resources—including SPLOST, ARC-LCI, SS4A, and PATH Foundation support—and a 90-day action plan identifying quick wins to build momentum. This plan is more than a roadmap—it's a launchpad. With a clear vision, strong community support, and ready-to-go priorities, Stone Mountain is well positioned to build a more connected, creative, and equitable future.

List of Abbreviations

ADA — Americans with Disabilities Act

ARC — Atlanta Regional Commission

CIP — Capital Improvement Plan

DDA — Downtown Development Authority

DOT — Department of Transportation

FTA — Federal Transit Administration

GDOT — Georgia Department of
Transportation

GIS — Geographic Information Systems

LCI — Livable Centers Initiative

LIHTC — Low-Income Housing Tax Credit

MPO — Metropolitan Planning Organization

PATH — PATH Foundation

PMT — Project Management Team

RAISE — Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and
Equity

RCN — Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program

SPLOST — Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SS4A — Safe Streets and Roads for All

TIP — Transportation Improvement Program

TOD — Transit-Oriented Development



**City of Stone
Mountain LCI**
CONNECTING PARKS, PATHS
AND PUBLIC SPACES



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- INTRODUCTION
- PROJECT PURPOSE
- PLANNING PROCESS



● INTRODUCTION

The City of Stone Mountain is home to a rich array of local and regional amenities that attract both residents and visitors. From the historic downtown and the iconic Stone Mountain Park to vibrant local businesses, the area offers a unique blend of cultural, recreational, and economic assets that define its character and vitality.

The Stone Mountain LCI: Connecting Parks, Paths, and Public Spaces study focuses on strengthening the ties between these key destinations. By enhancing walking and biking connections, activating public spaces, and improving access to parks and trails, the project aims to create a more cohesive, vibrant, and welcoming community core. This effort is part of the Atlanta Regional

Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program, which provides competitive planning grants to help communities reimagine themselves as vibrant, walkable places with expanded mobility options, healthier lifestyles, and stronger access to jobs and services.

Through this study, Stone Mountain is building on its historic strengths to create a more connected, accessible, and thriving community for current and future generations.



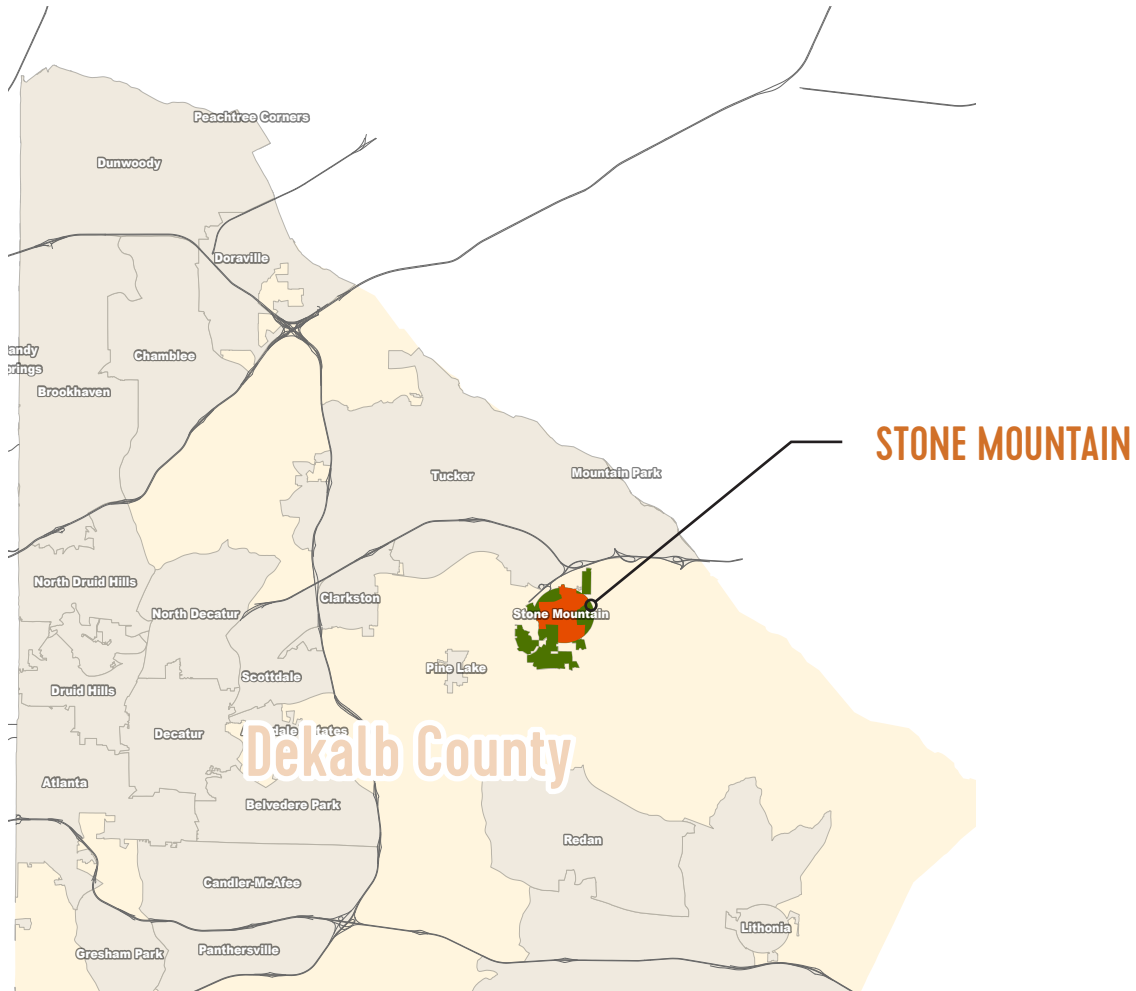


Figure 1: Regional Context Map



● PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Stone Mountain connectivity study is to develop a comprehensive, user-friendly network that seamlessly links the neighborhoods, parks, and public gathering spaces within the city of Stone Mountain. This initiative is rooted in the vision of enhancing accessibility, encouraging active transportation, and strengthening the relationship between Stone Mountain park and the surrounding community. One of the central objectives is to eliminate the current half-mile gap in the PATH trail through the city center. Closing this gap is critical to creating a continuous, accessible corridor for pedestrians and cyclists that supports recreation, commuting, and tourism.

To support this vision, the project team undertook a detailed evaluation of the existing transportation networks, recreational infrastructure, and community needs analysis. This assessment identified key areas in need of improvement to better serve a diverse range of users. These priority needs include expanding and upgrading bicycle facilities, increasing the availability and convenience of parking, enhancing sidewalk connectivity, improving pedestrian crossings, and investing in park amenities that infill recreation needs. Together, these enhancements aim to create a more cohesive, inclusive, and welcoming network that reflects the needs and aspirations of Stone Mountain's residents and visitors.



●●● PLANNING PROCESS

The project process for Connecting Parks, PATHS, and Public Spaces placed community voices at the heart of every phase. Guided by a commitment to inclusion, innovation, and collaboration, the process combined a deep research into Stone Mountain’s unique context with consensus building around a bold vision for connectivity and vibrancy.

Through site analysis, public space evaluations, design alternatives evaluation, and strategic prioritization, this effort aimed to create lasting impact—shaping a more accessible, welcoming, and thriving city for all.



LEARN

The project team during this phase reviewed the existing site context and held the first round of public engagement to gather input from locals and residents. This groundwork helped identify physical barriers, opportunities for enhancement, and areas where connectivity could be improved.

EVALUATE

The project team assessed infrastructure and identified gaps, barriers, and high-potential areas through the evaluation phase. The team overlaid this information with the community feedback findings to prioritize interventions that align with community needs and support a more integrated, functional network.

DESIGN

During the design phase, the project team translated earlier findings and community input into actionable concepts aimed at improving connectivity across the city. These concepts were refined through additional feedback and technical analysis, ultimately leading to a set of prioritized recommendations.

ILLUSTRATE

This phase includes the compiled final designs and strategies into the final report. This phase focused on clearly presenting the proposed improvements, making the vision easy to understand and ready for implementation. The report serves as both a roadmap for future development and a tool for communicating the project’s goals to stakeholders and the broader community.

Figure 2: Project Process Diagram



- PROJECT GOALS
- UNDERSTANDING PRIORITIES
- PROJECT FRAMEWORK



GOALS AND FRAMEWORK



GOALS

Following a detailed assessment of existing infrastructure and the first round of public engagement, the project team identified a clear set of goals to guide the planning process for the project. These goals reflect both the physical needs of the area and the aspirations of the community, ensuring the final recommendations are grounded in local context. The resulting framework—**Connect, Align, and Activate**—captures the core objectives of the effort and provides a clear roadmap for improving access, mobility, and quality of life across the city.



CONNECT

The project aims to strengthen connections within the City of Stone Mountain by improving access between neighborhoods, parks, downtown, and Stone Mountain Park. By creating a more walkable and bike-friendly environment, the initiative fosters greater mobility and encourages community interaction across all age groups and abilities.



ALIGN

A key goal is to realign and complete the PATH trail through the city, closing the existing half-mile gap in the regional trail network. This alignment not only enhances the continuity of the regional multi-use path, it has the opportunity to spur economic activity and attract visitors to create a more vibrant, active downtown core.



ACTIVATE

The project seeks to activate underused public spaces and corridors by connecting them with improved infrastructure, signage, and amenities. By linking and activating local services, schools, parks, and commercial areas, the plan promotes everyday use, increases foot traffic, and encourages economic and social vitality throughout the city.



● UNDERSTANDING PRIORITIES

Through site observations, community meetings, stakeholder discussions, city staff input, and an online survey, it became clear that different users had distinct priorities for improving connectivity.

Residents consistently highlighted the importance of linking neighborhoods to local amenities such as schools, shops, and parks. Sidewalk improvements emerged as a key priority, reflecting a broader desire for safer, more walkable communities. In addition to infrastructure, residents also expressed interest in activating community parks through enhanced programming and events, aiming to foster vibrant, well-utilized public spaces.

Bicyclists emphasized the need for safer on-road routes that are distinct from existing trail networks. Their focus was on creating continuous and protected connections that enable travel between regional destinations, employment centers, and local businesses.

Business owners were primarily concerned with improving access and visibility, particularly from major regional corridors and amenities. They recognized that better connectivity not only enhances customer access but also supports broader economic vitality and foot traffic to commercial districts.

Each group also had a strong desire to close the regional trail gap. Whether for walking, biking, or general access, the completion of this trail is seen as a critical backbone to the connectivity network of the city. By addressing the trail gap, the community noted this would offer a safe, continuous, and accessible route that serves recreational users, commuters, and businesses alike. The trail gap represents both a physical and symbolic disconnect, and addressing it is viewed as essential to unifying the broader system.

To address these diverse yet interconnected needs, the framework recommendations were organized into regional and local priorities, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive strategy for improved mobility and access.



FRAMEWORK

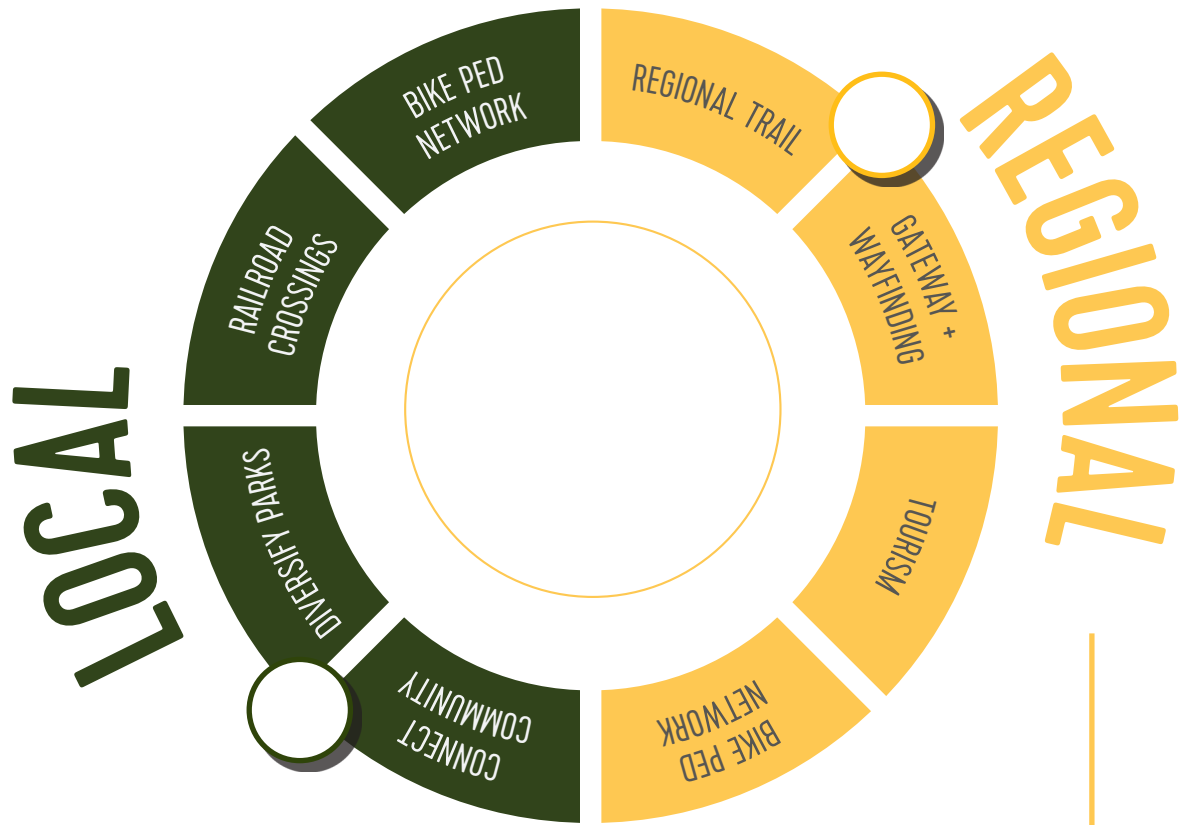


Figure 3: Priorities Diagram

LOCAL GOALS

Foster a safe, connected, and vibrant village that supports community life and active mobility.

REGIONAL GOALS

Enhance regional linkages while cultivating a connected, vibrant hub for community life and visitor engagement





REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Enhance regional linkages while cultivating a connected, vibrant hub for community life and visitor engagement.

Stone Mountain Park draws over 4 million visitors annually, making it one of the most popular attractions in the southeast. Home to the world's largest exposed granite outcrop, Stone Mountain Park is both a natural wonder and a site of historical controversy as a former Confederate monument. Currently, the PATH trail terminates just before the City of Stone Mountain along James B. Rivers Memorial Drive, leaving a gap of less than a half-mile that needs to be closed to complete the connection. For regional priorities, connecting to Stone Mountain Park and finishing the trail is a primary need.

1. CLOSE REGIONAL TRAIL GAP

A continuous PATH trail alignment is needed through downtown Stone Mountain to complete a key regional connection.



2. GATEWAY AND WAYFINDING

Consistent signage and wayfinding are needed to help visitors navigate the city and locate local amenities more easily.



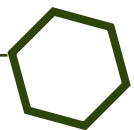
3. BRING VISITORS INTO COMMUNITY

Improved connections and public amenities are needed to better draw visitors into the community and support local economic opportunities.



4. PRIORITIZE BIKE/PED NETWORK

A streamlined bike and pedestrian network is needed to connect key destinations and ensure safe, convenient travel for all users.



LOCAL PRIORITIES

Foster a safe, connected, and vibrant village that supports community life and active mobility.

Stone Mountain is an historic community with approximately 6,500 people outside the Atlanta region. At the local scale, the city should focus on strengthening day-to-day connections that directly impact residents, businesses, and visitors. Sidewalk networks, park access, and street crossings are key to creating a safer and more vibrant environment. These local priorities ensure that all parts of the community are better connected, welcoming, and accessible for everyone.

1. IMPROVE EAST / WEST CONNECTIONS

Additional railroad crossings and enhanced intersections are needed to better connect neighborhoods and improve access across the rail corridor.



2. CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS

More sidewalks, signage, and safe routes are needed to connect neighborhoods throughout the community.



3. DIVERSIFY PARKS

There is a need for different types of parks and upgraded amenities to better serve diverse community interests and uses.



4. PRIORITIZE BIKE/PED NETWORK

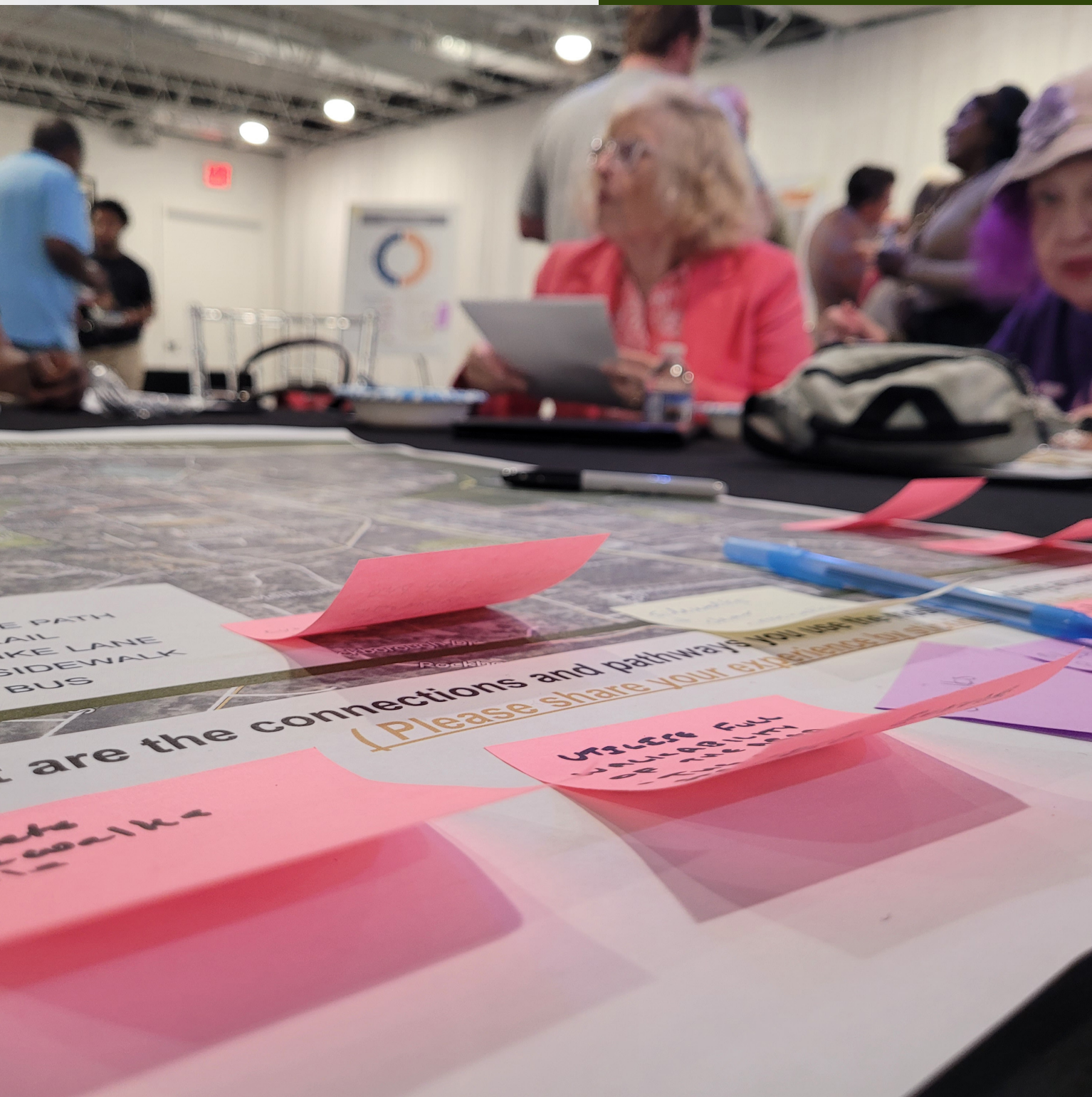
The bicycle and pedestrian network needs enhancements to link neighborhoods with nearby parks, schools, and local businesses.





PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

- CITY UNDERSTANDING
- SITE UNDERSTANDING
- COMMUNITY NEEDS



● COMMUNITY PROFILE

Stone Mountain is a vibrant and diverse community of approximately 6,500 residents. With a median age of 34.4, the city is younger than the national average, bringing fresh energy and a rising workforce to the region. More than 80% of residents identify as Black or African American, shaping the city's rich cultural fabric and sense of identity.

Despite 15.3% of the population living below the poverty line, Stone Mountain demonstrates remarkable resilience. The community boasts a median household income of \$49,661 and a high school graduation rate of 87.6%—exceeding the state average and underscoring a strong commitment to education and upward mobility.

The city's workforce is anchored by key industries such as healthcare, education, social services, retail, and administrative support. Stone Mountain stands out for its higher-than-average concentration of professionals in community and social services, reflecting a deeply rooted spirit of care, service, and local impact.

Together, these characteristics position Stone Mountain as a dynamic community with deep cultural roots, a growing and resilient workforce, and a strong foundation for future opportunity. By building on its strengths and fostering inclusive growth, Stone Mountain is poised to continue shaping a vibrant and connected future for all who live, work, and visit.



6,455
POPULATION

\$49,661
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

1.7 Sq. Miles
LAND AREA

87.6%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

2,824
HOUSING UNITS

34.4
MEDIAN AGE

80.57%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN

36.6%
LIVE IN MULTI-FAMILY UNITS

Figure 4: Community Snapshot





HISTORY

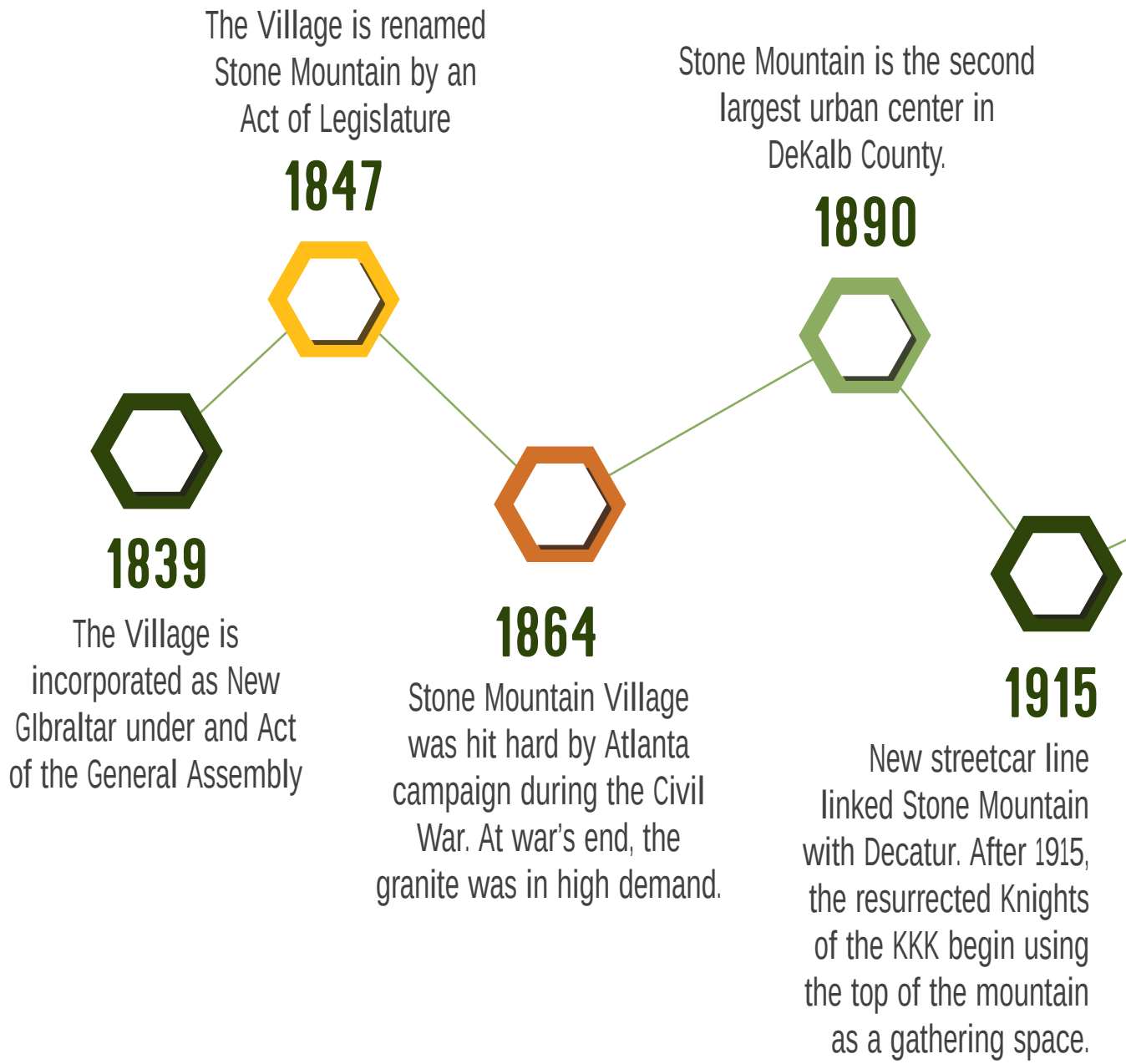


Figure 4: Historical Timeline

The State of Georgia purchased the mountain and surrounding land to establish the park. The purchase would end the use of the mountain by the KKK. A field on the west side of the mountain remained a focal point of the Klan rallies that included parades through the 1980s.

Stone Mountain Village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a rare surviving example of a historic railroad town.

1958



1962

Due to a push by the Stone Mountain Women's Club to revitalize and rehabilitate the village, a City Plan was created.

2000



PRESENT

New streetscape installed including new sidewalks, landscaping and public art that reflects the city's unique history. A new City Hall building has also been constructed and the community continues making improvements to the historic Village.



EXISTING PLANS

We understand that this plan is not starting from a blank slate. The City of Stone Mountain has several existing plans that directly impact the scope of this project. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the planning context, the project team reviewed these plans to ensure this effort builds upon and complements previous work.



STONE MOUNTAIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Stone Mountain Comprehensive Plan was originally published in 2021. The plan was prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to guide the growth and development of Stone Mountain for the next 20 years. The plan highlights land use, economic development, transportation, housing, natural resources, and community facilities.

Key Takeaways relevant to this plan include:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Needs and Challenges

- Lack of identity, aesthetically pleasing gateways
- Untapped potential for more parks, rec facilities and community spaces
- Lack of playgrounds in parks
- Parking for Downtown vs. Park users

Recommendations:

- Enhance community image at key corridors and connecting points
- Create gathering spaces to brand the village center as a community space
- Redevelop public facilities into functional spaces.
- Renovation of Historic Train Depot and Gateway Program underway
- Pavilion property as community gathering space

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Needs and Challenges

- Improvement and expansion needed for sidewalk network
- Limited safe pedestrian crossings throughout city
- Right of way infrastructure needing repair

Recommendations

- Improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- East Mountain Street Sidewalk Project — Completed in 2018
- Restoration of granite curbing and PATH expansions and connections within Village — completion set for 2026

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Needs and Challenges

- Untapped opportunities for additional natural/passive greenspace and parks
- Impervious surfaces

Recommendations:

- Explore opportunities for stream restoration
- Item to create greenways along existing streams was marked as “cancelled” in the Record of Accomplishments



CITY OF
STONE MOUNTAIN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2021 UPDATE

Adopted by Stone Mountain City Council – October 28, 2021





STONE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

The Stone Mountain Village Forward Master Plan was completed in October of 2020 by the City of Stone Mountain. The plan's main purpose was to revitalize the Downtown with special focus on pedestrian accessibility, economic development, public spaces and community engagement.

Key Takeaways relevant to this plan include:

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- Streetscape,
- Stone Mountain Park
- Walkable

Opportunities:

- Small urban spaces/lots
- Four city parks can be upgraded

Relevant Key Principles:

- Improve Traffic Mobility: Develop a Safety & Mobility Program (pg.100)
- Create Attractions

TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Street Network Enhancements
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements, Public Transit Options, Parking Facilities
- Implementation Plan

PUBLIC SPACES AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

- Developing parks, and recreational facilities
- Improve existing public spaces and amenities
- Implementation Plan



DEKALB COUNTY TRAIL AND GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

DeKalb County is currently working on a Trail and Greenway Master Plan to connect residents and visitors with a countywide network of interconnected trails and greenways.

Key Takeaways relevant to this plan include:

GOALS

- Accessibility
- Cross-county interconnectivity
- Align with local and regional ped-shed efforts
- User knowledge (accessible trails map)

PLAN STRATEGIES

- Identify gaps and barriers pertaining to access
- Coordinate with neighboring municipalities to identify opportunities for future connectivity
- Enhance the pedestrian experience by connecting greenways to streets and recreational spaces
- Routine maintenance
- Create an implementation plan for project phases
- Identify potential funding sources



● SITE UNDERSTANDING

Stone Mountain has unique characteristics. The downtown core extends about one-half mile along the railroad tracks. The core is surrounded by five parks, multiple neighborhoods, two schools, and the most visited state park in Georgia. The area is served by a bus line and the regional PATH trail that ends just outside of town. The full analysis is located in the appendix and a summary of the important findings are summarized below.

PARKS: There are 5 local parks, 1 state park, and a new park site within the site area. All parks are evenly distributed around the city but access is limited. All parks have similar amenities and characteristics. All parks would benefit from activation and access improvements.

NATURAL SYSTEMS: There is one creek and floodplain running along with west side of the city. This waterway runs north / south diving neighborhoods. The existing natural systems run along Veterans Park and McCurdy Park and provides opportunity for trails and connections to nature.

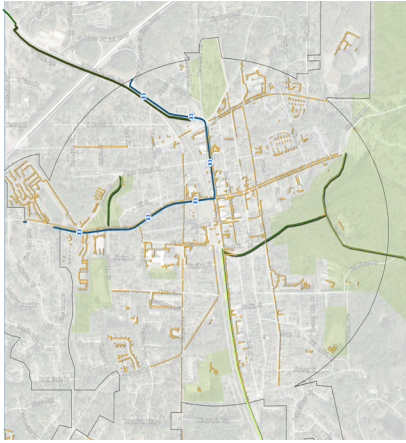
TRANSPORTATION: There are significant sidewalk and ADA deficiencies in the City. The bus system runs and connects Stone

Mountain to the regional network. Route 119 operates East/West between Kensington and Indian Creek stations. The route runs along Main Street and Mountain Street through the city of Stone Mountain. The area is easily accessible by car and has access to major highways. Pedestrian and cyclist trips are high throughout the main roads of Stone Mountain; particularly Manor, Ridge, and Main St.

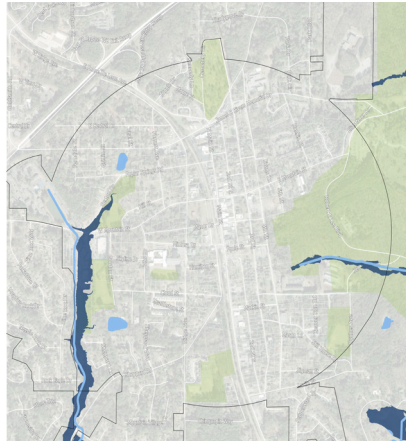
TRAILS AND BIKEWAYS: The Stone Mountain Trail gap is from roughly James B Rivers Memorial Drive to Poole Street. There is a dedicated bike lane on Main St starting at Poole Street to Boggs Street. The bike lane currently ends just as it is entering the heart of downtown.

LAND USE: The majority of the area is single-family residential with the Main Street corridor used for mixed-used development. There is commercial zoning on the northern most and southern most edges of the study area.

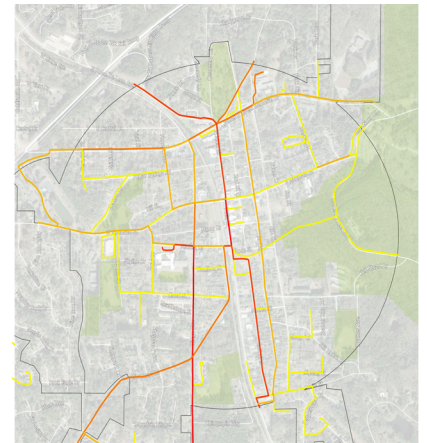
DOWNTOWN: The core of downtown has historic railroad town character and an enhanced streetscape that runs approximately 2 blocks. There are a variety of local businesses and residents throughout the downtown.



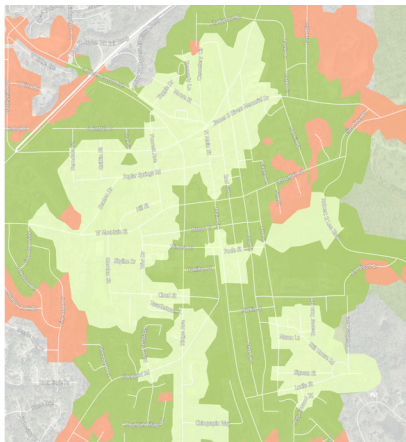
Overall Transit



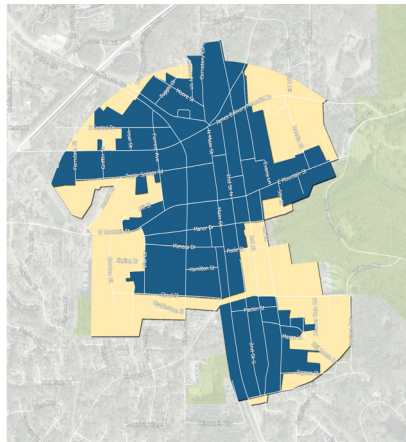
Floodplain and Waterways



Bike Activity



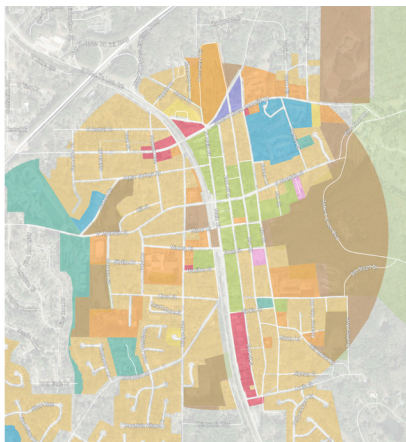
Walking Distance Time



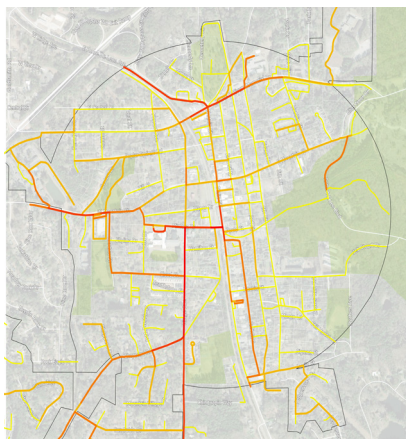
Historic



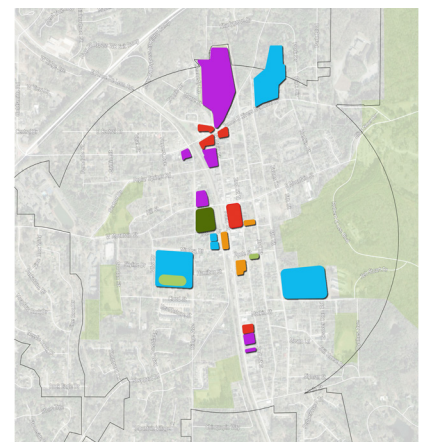
Park Type



Land Use



Pedestrian Activity



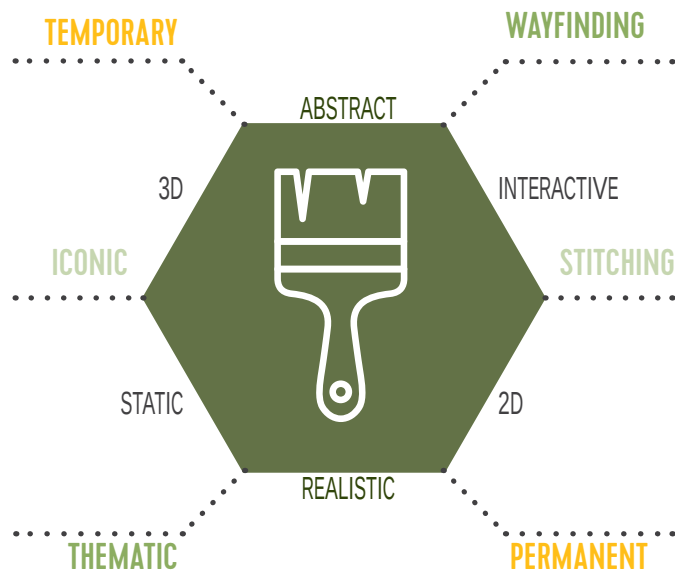
Downtown Amenities

Figure 5: Existing Conditions Maps

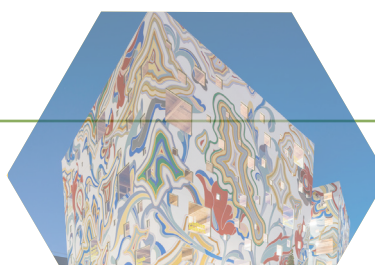
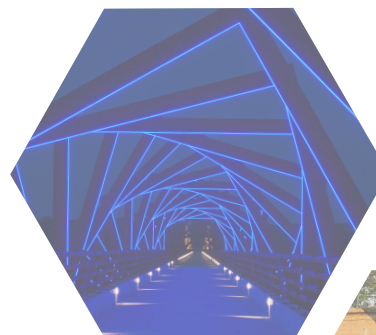


● PLACEMAKING

Stone Mountain already features a few existing art and placemaking elements, primarily clustered around Main Street. These include murals, statues, and wayfinding signage. Introducing new art installations can further strengthen Stone Mountain's character and identity. Public art can take many forms, and can be multiple things at once. A diagram of the different components of placemaking are illustrated below.



For this plan, the project team engaged with local artists to understand the current placemaking landscape, challenges, and opportunities. See the Appendix for a more comprehensive placemaking analysis and precedents that inspired the recommendations of this plan.



● COMMUNITY NEEDS

● ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Our team implemented a comprehensive outreach approach to ensure that diverse community input shapes the project outcomes. Input from a diverse range of residents, businesses, local stakeholders, and visitors has shaped the primary aspirations for the project, reflecting the goals of enhancing connectivity, strengthening identity, and fostering an inclusive environment in Stone Mountain.



The team put on a series of fifteen events over the course of seven months. Engagement started with identifying stakeholders to join monthly meetings to direct the plan and recommendations to ensure it is meeting community needs. The stakeholders represented a variety of perspectives in the community from business owners, city council, schools, etc.

The engagement process was highlighted at the first open house which allowed community members to drop in and learn about the project and provide feedback. An online survey was launched and flyers were distributed to local businesses.

Over the next six months, the survey was available for members in the community through the website as well so information could easily be found by the residents. Reminders were posted on the city's website as well so information could easily be found by the residents. During this time there were four pop up events and multiple canvassing events, reaching community members who were less likely to attend a dedicated public meeting. The findings from the engagement tasks are summarized in the pages below. The full engagement summary is located in the Appendix.

OUTREACH PROCESS

Our team designed a multi-layered engagement process that was intentional, inclusive, and iterative—allowing community voices to shape every phase of the plan. This approach ensured that the final recommendations were grounded in lived experiences, responsive to real concerns, and embraced by a broad cross-section of stakeholders.



Figure 7: Community Engagement Process





OUTREACH OVERVIEW

KEY ACTIVITIES

Each activity was designed to reach everyone within the community and give all residents and visitors the opportunity to provide input on the plan. The full list of activities are shown below.

WEBSITE

The website was open for the full extent of the project. The website provided background on the project, event information, hosted the survey, and had a location for comments.

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP (PAG)

The City of Stone Mountain defined a list of stakeholders representing community activists, residents, business owners, and city council to review the plan bi-monthly and ensure project drafts reflected community needs.

OPEN HOUSE

Two Open House events were held during the project. The events were informal drop-in events that allowed people to drop in and review the plan, goals, and provide feedback on needs from the community.

POP-UP EVENTS

Multiple pop-up events were held to meet the community where they are and ask for their input on the plan during regularly scheduled community events.

ONLINE SURVEY

The survey was open from September XX - March XX and received XX responses. The survey collected feedback for the goals and project needs throughout 6 months.

CANVASSING

During the project multiple unique groups such as: senior homes, schools, churches, and local businesses were approached to have them take the survey

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Multiple businesses and property owners that would have major impacts to their property for this process were contacted by the city to solicit feedback and address concerns.



ENGAGEMENT EVENTS SUMMARY



Figure 8: Community Engagement Outreach

● COMMUNITY INSIGHTS UNCOVERED

Throughout the project participants representing both regional and local perspectives shared their ideas. Common themes emerged from the community that are reflected in all recommendations.



SAFETY PRIORITIES

Identified specific hazardous areas (Ridge Road to Rockborough, Shephard Ave) that required immediate attention



CHILD MOBILITY CONCERNS

Uncovered critical safety issues affecting children's walkability to schools and parks, particularly for Stone Mountain Elementary students that live within the radius of the one mile, no bus zone



CONNECTIVITY GAPS

Documented specific barriers preventing east-west neighborhood connections and access to community assets



ADA COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Highlighted accessibility challenges for wheelchair users and families with strollers that would have been overlooked in conventional planning



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Discovered opportunities to better connect Stone Mountain Village to park visitors, offering economic revitalization possibilities



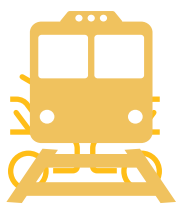
● SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

Areas to connect were discussed throughout the course of the project. Specific key locations that were brought up by the community were:



SOUTHERN NEIGHBORHOODS

Southern neighborhoods not connected and to be included.



RAILROAD

The railroad bisects the community in half and is unsafe to cross. People cross at all locations around downtown and there are no connections in the Southern part of the community. From Mimosa to Palmer Road (over a mile long) there is no connection across the railroad. Need crossing enhancements.



TOURISM

Tourism major component of economy. Community wants tourists to support local business.



PARKS

Community is happy with the number of parks within community but they want more activation and programs for parks. A gathering place near downtown is desired. Excited about potential for greenspace at Baptist Lawn. Park connections need to be enhanced. Sidewalks, crosswalks, and site amenities need to be added along routes for the community to feel safe and allow kids to walk to parks. Particularly Leila Mason Park is very disconnected from the residents.



STREETS

The primary streets mentioned by community that need improvement and are important connectors for Stone Mountain include: Lucile Avenue, Sheppard Road, Ridge Street, 4th Street, Mimosa, and Ridge Road. James B Rivers and Mountain Street were also identified as major regional connectors that need to be safe for all modes of traffic, in particular cyclists.



INTERSECTIONS

James B Rivers and Main Street Intersection is dangerous.



DOWNTOWN / MAIN STREET

The core of downtown is an important part of the community. Local business are vital and the community needs to be better connected to downtown. Main Street needs infill and support for activity.



- OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS
- PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
- CATALYST SITES



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The key regional goal is to connect the regional destinations through the city of Stone Mountain. Goals from the community that relate to the regional plans include adding gateways, connecting to businesses, and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

1. Close the Regional Trail Gap

Close the critical gap in the regional trail network through downtown to create safe pedestrian and bicycle access to Stone Mountain Park and other key destinations. This will enhance regional mobility, attract trail users into the community, and support local businesses through increased foot and bike traffic.

2. Establish Gateway Features and Wayfinding

Develop clear, consistent wayfinding signage and gateway features that orient visitors, highlight local amenities, and reinforce the city's identity as an historic destination. These improvements will help visitors navigate the area with ease and encourage deeper engagement with the community's assets.

3. Bring Visitors into the Community

Strengthen physical and visual connections between regional trails, transit, and key gathering areas to draw visitors deeper into the community. Enhance amenities such as seating, shade, and public art to create a more inviting experience, increase opportunities, and generate economic activity that benefits local businesses.

4. Prioritize a Safe Connected Bike/Ped Network

Invest in closing key gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network to ensure safe, comfortable, and continuous travel for all. Prioritizing multi-modal corridors will support regional connectivity, provide equitable access to local destinations, and encourage active transportation options for both residents and visitors.

The main findings centered around regional goals were focused on the downtown core and directing people to Stone Mountain Park.





Figure 9: Regional Priorities Map

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

Stone Mountain has a clear opportunity to strengthen local connectivity and community life through targeted infrastructure improvements. While regional initiatives focus on linking major destinations, Stone Mountain's local opportunity lies in connecting neighborhoods, filling small gaps, and creating a more walkable, and vibrant community.

1. Improve East/West Connections

The railroad is the greatest barrier to east–west connectivity within the community, cutting off neighborhoods from key destinations such as Main Street, parks, and schools. Addressing this challenge is a top priority. By introducing new crossings, improving safety at existing intersections, and upgrading surrounding infrastructure, the city can begin to repair this divide.

2. Connect Neighborhoods

Expand and complete the sidewalk network to link residential areas with parks, schools, local businesses, and civic amenities. Combine this with improved wayfinding to help residents and visitors navigate the area more easily. These investments will not only enhance day-to-day mobility, but also foster a stronger sense of connection between neighborhoods, promote walkability, and reinforce a shared community identity.

3. Diversify Parks

Currently, the existing parks offer similar layouts and amenities, which limits their functionality for a broad range of residents. By introducing a wider range of programs—such as fitness classes, cultural events, youth activities, and nature-based workshops—we can activate existing parks and make them more dynamic and responsive to community needs. This approach brings life to underutilized spaces, encourages regular use, and ensures parks serve a broader range of interests and residents.

4. Build a Community Bike/Ped Network

Create a continuous, safe, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle network that connects neighborhoods to key destinations such as parks, schools, and commercial areas. This network will prioritize both ADA accessibility and diverse users, ensuring safe routes for people of all ages and abilities. By prioritizing corridors that connect the local routes, we can support a variety of needs while promoting healthier lifestyles, reducing car dependency, and improving overall mobility across the community.

Connecting neighborhoods is essential to creating an inclusive, accessible environment where all residents can enjoy the full range of amenities the city has to offer.



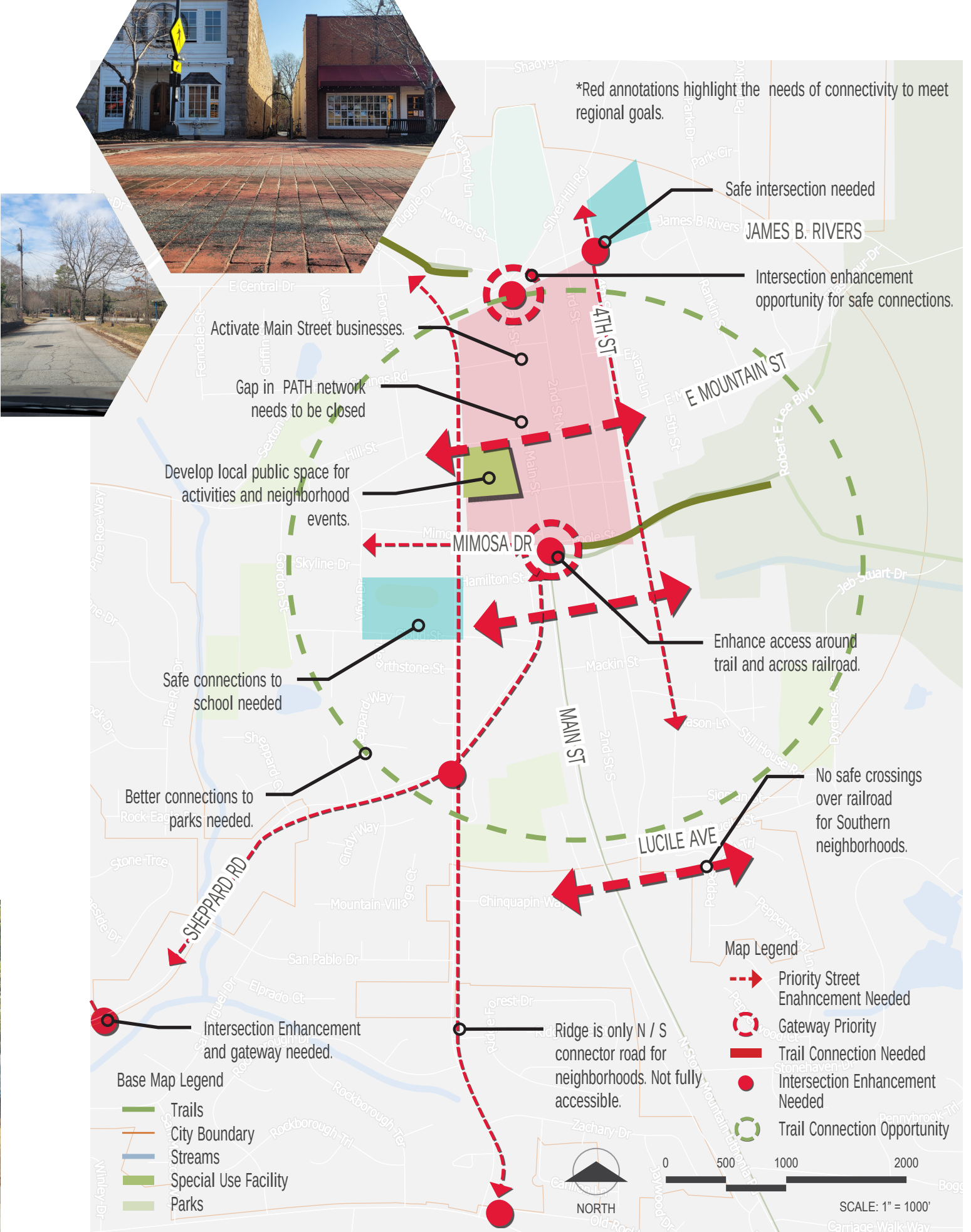


Figure 10: Local Priorities Map

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect the vision to create a more connected, welcoming, and vibrant community. The plan prioritizes the completion of the PATH trail through downtown to finalize a critical regional link, alongside targeted improvements to local street networks to establish a safe, comfortable, and continuous system for pedestrians and cyclists. Additional recommendations include the implementation of gateway features and wayfinding signage to enhance city identity and navigability; the extension of Main Street's active frontage to catalyze economic and social activity; and the introduction of new railroad crossings to address longstanding access barriers in the southern portion of the city. Park enhancements focus on programming, small-scale expansion, and strategic activation to better integrate recreational assets into the urban fabric. Together, these recommendations serve as a comprehensive framework to guide future investments, promote equitable access, and foster a more connected and vibrant Stone Mountain. Each recommendation is illustrated in Figure 11.

1

PATH

The final segment of the PATH trail needs to be completed through downtown Stone Mountain. The recommended alignment to connect this regional amenity is via 2nd St.

2

Local Street Connections

While many streets within Stone Mountain have some existing walking infrastructure however, there are no comfortable and fully connected networks along the major corridors. We've identified key primary connector roads to create an interconnected system, including a local park loop for residents.

3

Gateways / Icons

Approaching downtown, there is limited branding and identity that signals arrival to Stone Mountain. Introducing gateways along the main corridors, paired with wayfinding and signage, would strengthen the city's identity and guide people to major amenities

4

Activity Street

Extend the Main Street character beyond its current limits to enhance identity and vibrancy throughout the downtown area.

5

Southern Connection

The southern portion of the city is heavily bisected by the railroad, with no public crossings from Mimosa Drive to Palmer Drive. Opportunities exist to either create a public crossing just south of Lucille Avenue or build a pedestrian bridge at Lucille Avenue. This would improve access between neighborhoods, parks, and the broader community.

6

Regional Connections

Residents, visitors, transit riders, cyclists, and commuters heavily use James B. Rivers Drive and Memorial Drive to access the city, downtown, parks, and businesses. While these roads are multi-modal in design, they are not fully connected or safe for all users. Enhancements are needed to complete a safe, accessible system.

7

Parks

The new special-use park facility will be a catalyst for activating downtown. For other parks in the community, the priority should be on programming, small park expansions, and activation strategies. Strengthening the connections between parks, gateways, and downtown is key to meeting community needs.

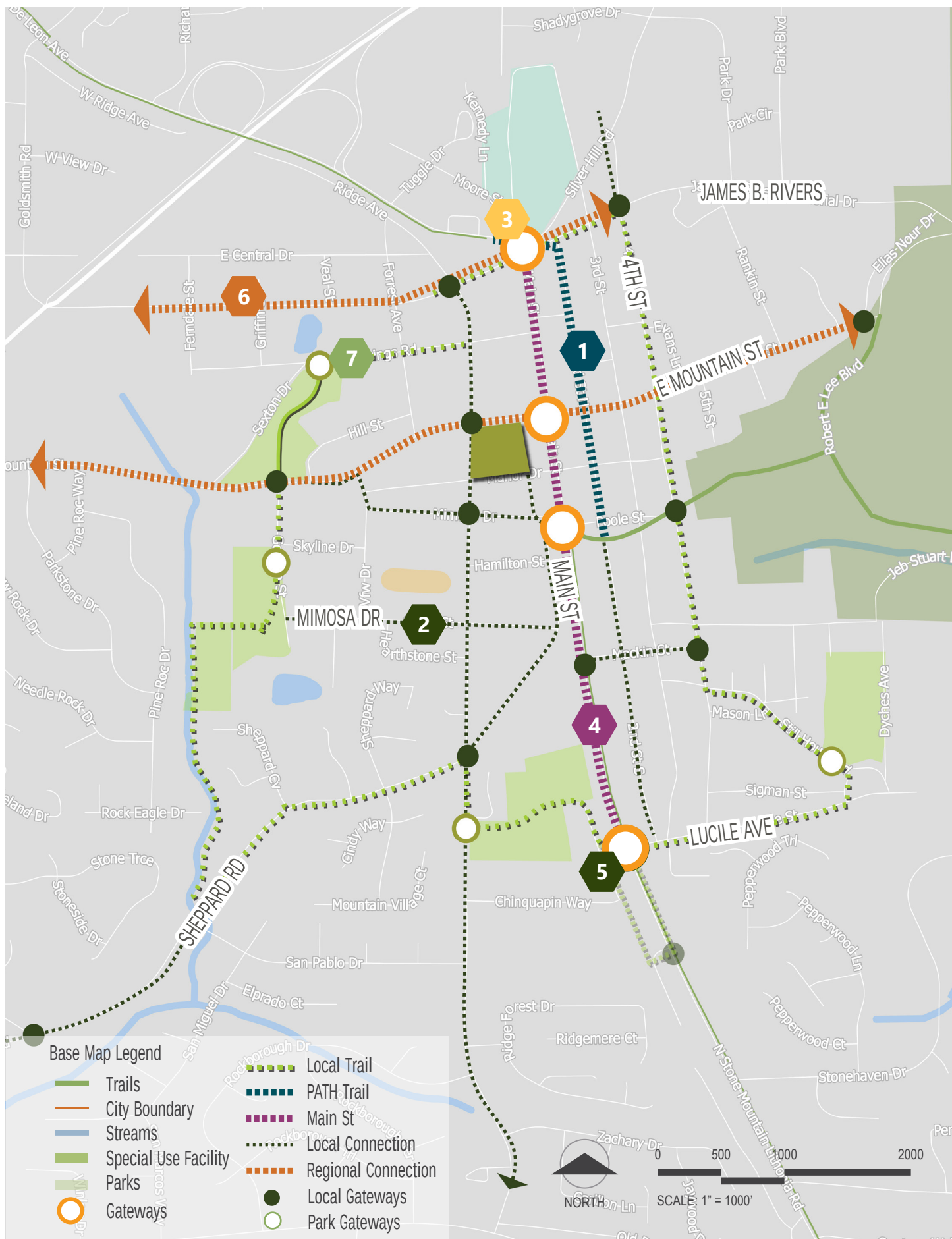


Figure 11: Overall Recommendations Map

● SITE DESIGN ELEMENTS

The proposed site design elements are flexible and adaptable to the local, cultural, and ecological contexts across the City, ensuring they reflect the unique needs of the Stone Mountain community. The core connectivity recommendations are designed to link the community to key destinations, strengthening access and mobility. The site design approach centers around 10 primary components that can be implemented across different locations. These key elements include:



Sidewalk Enhancement: Improved sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and signature streets to enhance walkability and safety.



Bike Facilities and Trails: Bike lanes, trail connections, and bike-friendly streets to encourage alternative transportation.



Bus Facility: New and improved bus stops and transit areas to strengthen public transportation access.



Safety Enhancement: Pedestrian safety features, traffic calming measures, and intersection improvements.



Signage / Kiosks: Wayfinding signage, kiosks, and gateways to improve navigation and highlight key areas.



Gateways: Signature entry points and gateway markers to establish a sense of place and arrival.



Art: Murals, sculptures, asphalt art, and interactive public art to celebrate local identity.



Site Amenities: Seating, planters, shade structures, and small-scale improvements to enhance comfort.



Landscape: Pocket parks, trailheads, green infrastructure, and access to water features.



Streetscape Improvement: Overall streetscape upgrades supporting development opportunities and vibrant public spaces.

KEY ELEMENTS METRICS

Design Element		Cost	Impact	Difficulty	Notes
Sidewalk Enhancement		\$\$\$	High	Med	ADA enhancements, new walkways
Bike Facility		\$\$	High	Med	Bike lanes, bike racks, trails, trail heads
Bus Facility		\$\$	Med	Med	New bus stops
Safety Enhancement		\$\$\$	High	Med	Mid-block crossings, raised intersections
Signage / Kiosks		\$	Med	Easy	Wayfinding elements
Gateways		\$\$\$	High	Med	Icons
Art		\$	High	Easy	Murals, pavement art, sculptures
Site Amenities		\$	Med	Easy	benches, trash receptacles
Landscape		\$	Low	Easy	planting beds, trees, buffers
Streetscape Improvement		\$\$\$\$\$	High	Hard	full roadway improvement

Figure 12: Key Elements Metrics

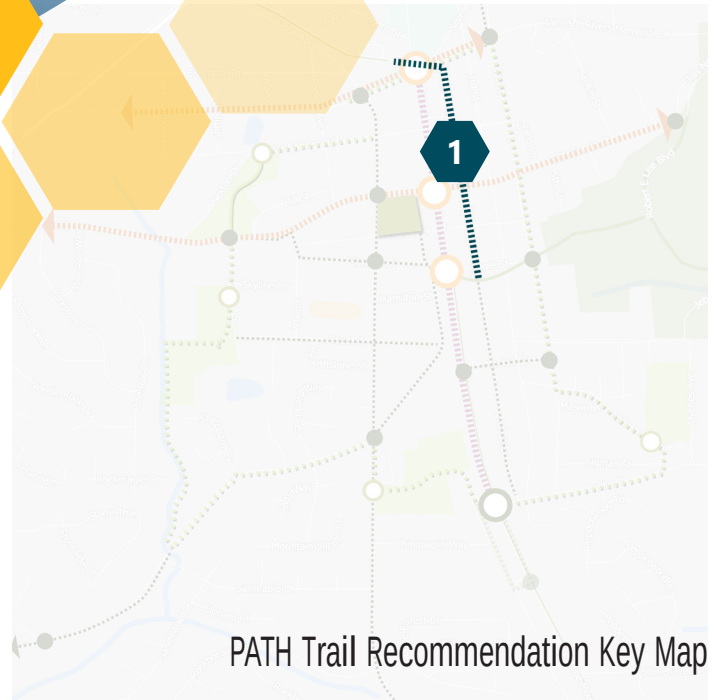
LEGEND

- **COST:** Price range item will cost to implement.
- **IMPACT:** Level of impact item will have on a given site. For example: large murals will have more of an impact than bench seating along a streetscape.
- **DIFFICULTY:** Level of difficulty it will take to implement the item. Items requiring more partnerships, coordination, and larger construction will require more work to accomplish.



PATH ALIGNMENT

1



PATH Trail Recommendation Key Map

The key recommendation in this plan is to close the regional trail gap. The half mile gap that runs through the City of Stone Mountain is the last disconnect to the state park. The four primary alignment alternatives to meet the community goals are Ridge Avenue, the Railroad, Main Street, and 2nd Street. All options have limited available right-of-way to add bike or pedestrian infrastructure. The full evaluation report is located in the Appendix. The lead recommendation is the 2nd Street alignment due to the proximity to Stone Mountain, access to Main Street, and available ROW for trail improvements.

The design, reflects a street level multi-use path along one side of the street by converting the street to one-way road, and using the space from the other travel lane for the dedicated walkway/bikeway. This option would incorporate a roll over curb or pavement separation to allow cars to pass in the walkway and allow for commercial deliveries while keeping the trail disconnected from vehicles.

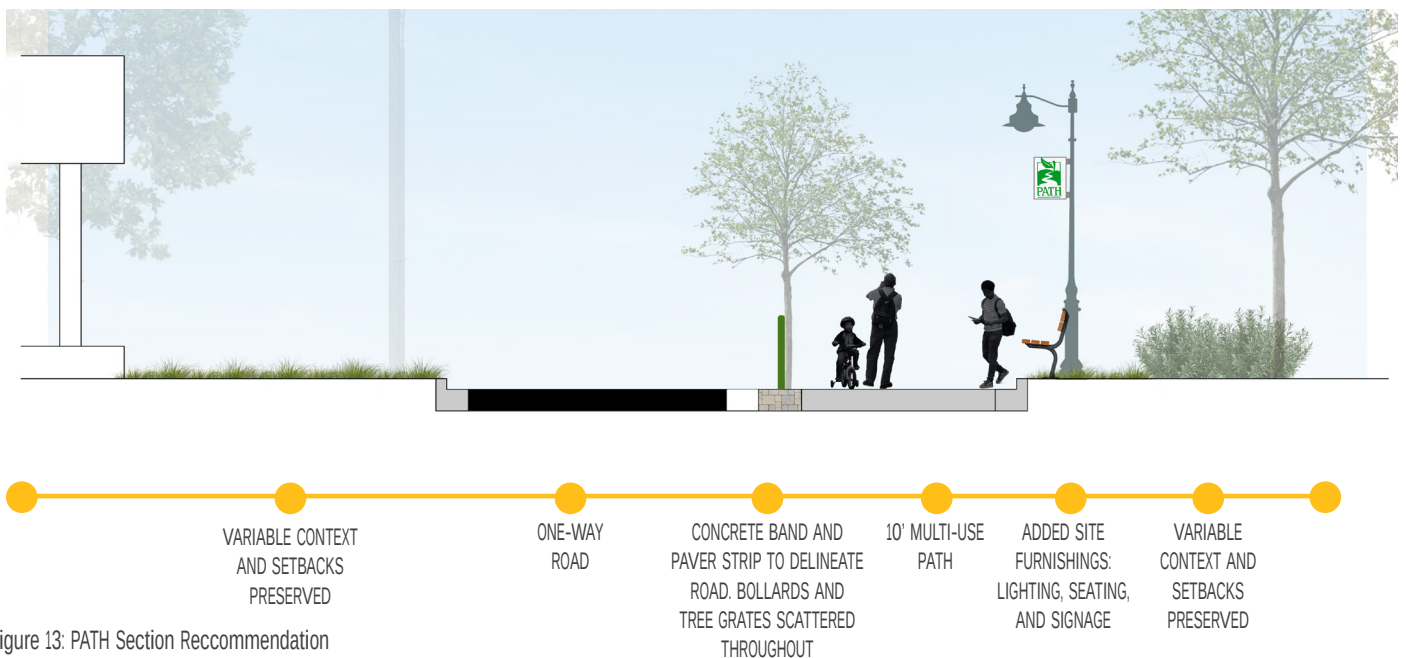


Figure 13: PATH Section Recommendation

2ND STREET ALIGNMENT

The recommendation transforms the remainder of 2nd Street up to James B. Rivers into a single-lane one-way only street. By doing this, we are able to eliminate traffic safety concerns as well as develop a 10-foot multi-use path with a small buffer.

There are multiple built obstructions on both sides of the road such as retaining walls, large trees, utility poles, and buildings which make using the ROW less desirable. By placing the path on the east side of the street, we are able to avoid the majority of major utility lines and property impacts. The road in some locations will need to be shifted to allow for the large MUP on the east side of the road. The goal is to have a continuous path on the same side for the whole stretch of road to meet community goals.

This design would keep the trail and the street on the same level and incorporate a roll over curb or paver band to allow for passing cars and deliveries for Main Street businesses. This allows for a fully disconnected trail, safe for all users while allowing for diverse transportation needs. Enhanced paving materials, added crosswalks, bollards, tree grates, traffic calming features, and clear signage would all be incorporated into the design to enhance safety and functionality for all.

Crossing enhancements will need to be made at all cross streets for either option. Gateways and signage will also be needed at the trailheads on either end of 2nd Street and there is a greater opportunity for gateway parks as visitors are entering into the city. Each trailhead has become a catalyst site and details of the new alignment are shown on the following pages.

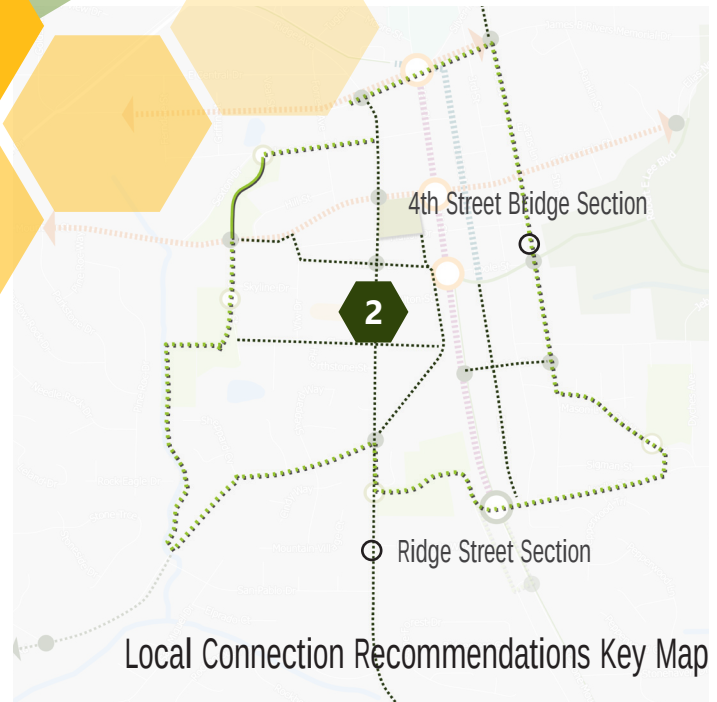


Figure 14: Second Street Alignment Recommendation



LOCAL CONNECTION

2



Many streets within Stone Mountain currently offer only basic infrastructure and do not provide safe, accessible, or continuous pathways for people walking or biking. To address these gaps, the planning team has identified several key connector roads that are essential to building a more integrated and user-friendly network. These corridors form the foundation of a proposed local network designed to link neighborhoods with parks, schools, and key community destinations.

To enhance walkability and ensure accessibility, all identified local streets should include at least one primary sidewalk with a minimum width of 6 feet. These sidewalks should incorporate features that support a comfortable and inclusive pedestrian experience, including regular tree canopy for shade, ADA-compliant curb ramps, and site furnishings such as benches and waste receptacles.

In addition to local street improvements, a major recommendation of the plan is the creation of a Green Loop—a continuous, citywide multi-use path that links key public spaces. The proposed loop, should be a minimum of 8 feet wide to safely accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. This loop not only supports active transportation and recreation, but also strengthens connections between Stone Mountain's parks and public spaces, encouraging more frequent use and easier access. Primary design recommendations include a green sidewalk band that can create an identifiable route for users to follow.

Each of these routes connect closed off neighborhoods, allowing them greater access to community amenities. Together, these improvements will create a safer, more enjoyable network that promotes healthier lifestyles, reduces car dependency, and fosters a stronger sense of community through better connectivity across the city.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS: RIDGE STREET



ADDED SITE FURNISHINGS: LIGHTING, SEATING, AND SIGNAGE

CONSISTENT ADA COMPLIANT 6' SIDEWALK THROUGHOUT STREET

MINIMUM 2' PLANTING STRIP BUFFER WHERE POSSIBLE

EXISTING 2 LANE ROAD

VARIABLE CONTEXT AND SETBACKS PRESERVED



PROPOSED CONDITIONS: 4TH STREET



ADDED SITE FURNISHINGS: LIGHTING, SEATING, AND SIGNAGE

EXPANDED 8' MULTI-USE PATH

PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITY ON BRIDGE

EXISTING 2 LANE ROAD

VARIABLE CONTEXT AND SETBACKS PRESERVED

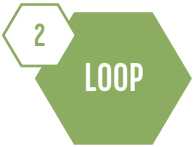
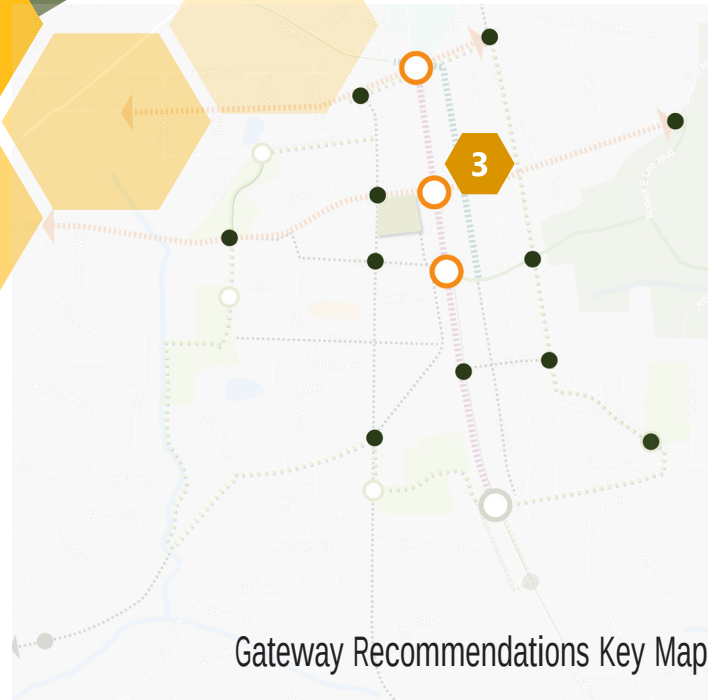


Figure 15: Local Street Sections



Gateway Recommendations Key Map

Gateway sites establish first impressions and set the tone for the community experience. Multiple gateway opportunities along Main Street will welcome visitors into the City of Stone Mountain, clearly defining entry points and enhancing the City's sense of arrival. Thoughtfully designed gateways highlight local identity, contribute to wayfinding, and create memorable experiences for residents and visitors alike.

KEY GATEWAY FEATURES INCLUDE:

Landmark Structures- Create iconic gateway markers, using distinctive sculptural elements or landmark signage that reflect local culture, history, and character.

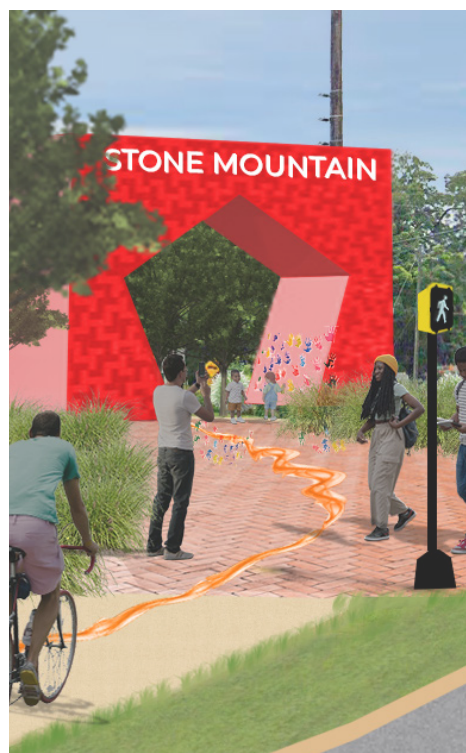
Enhanced Landscaping & Streetscape- Incorporate vibrant landscaping, public art installations, and consistent streetscape elements to strengthen visual appeal and continuity at critical entry points.

Pedestrian friendly Design- Prioritize safe, attractive pedestrian spaces around gateway locations to foster welcoming environments and active community use.

Consistent Branding & Wayfinding- Integrate cohesive city branding and clear directional signage to reinforce identity and improve navigability, guiding visitors seamlessly into the heart of Stone Mountain.

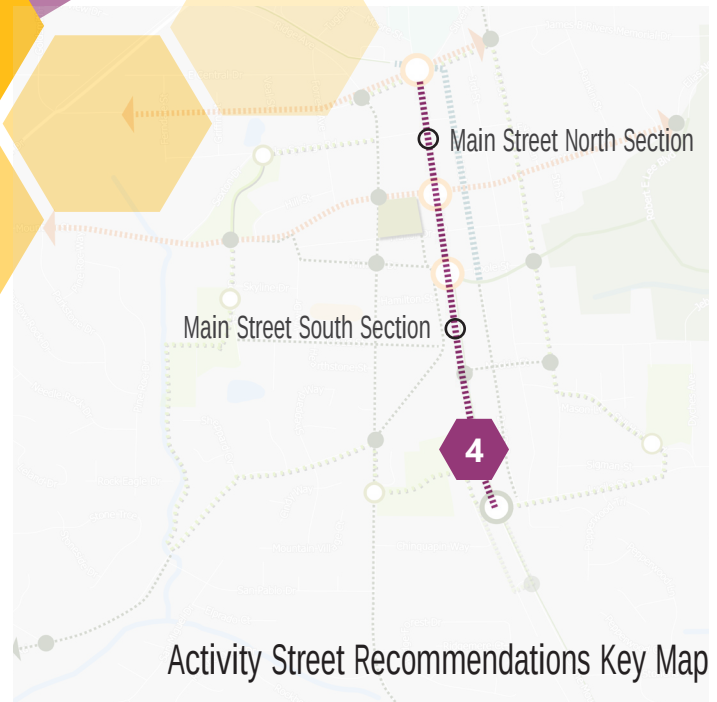


Gateway Treatment Precedents



ACTIVITY STREET

4



Activity Street Recommendations Key Map

The Activity Street design recommendation reinforces and enhances the distinct character and identity of Stone Mountain's Main Street corridor. Designed with community vibrancy at its core, these recommendations emphasize placemaking and foster social interaction, while also prioritizing safety, accessibility, and visual appeal. This recommendation centers on extending the unique character and energy of Main Street beyond the heart of downtown, continuing along the corridor toward James B. Rivers Drive and Lucile Avenue. By building on the success of downtown, this extension can strengthen the identity of the entire Main Street corridor and create new opportunities for economic activity and community engagement.

The Activity Street concept includes strategic enhancements such as widened sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, interactive public art installations, street trees, and amenities such as seating, lighting, and wayfinding elements. These improvements are designed to support local businesses, encourage foot traffic, and create inviting spaces that enhance community connections.

By reinforcing a pedestrian-oriented environment and supporting mixed-use activity, this recommendation encourages foot traffic and helps local businesses thrive. It also creates a stronger connection between the historic downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, making the entire area feel like an extension of Main Street. In doing so, the Activity Street concept celebrates Stone Mountain's cultural heritage while shaping a more connected, inclusive, and lively city center for residents and visitors alike.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS: MAIN STREET SOUTH



ADDED SITE
FURNISHINGS:
LIGHTING, SEATING,
AND SIGNAGE
+
PLACEMAKING
EXAMPLE - BIKE RACK
ARTWORK

MINIMUM 6'
ADA COMPLIANT
SIDEWALK WITH
BRICK DETAIL

EXISTING BIKE
LANE WITH
ADDED VERTICAL
SAFETY ELEMENTS

EXISTING 2 LANE
ROAD

EXISTING BIKE LANE WITH
ADDED VERTICAL SAFETY
ELEMENTS

PROPOSED CONDITIONS: MAIN STREET NORTH



ADDED SITE
FURNISHINGS:
LIGHTING, SEATING,
AND SIGNAGE

MINIMUM 6' ADA
COMPLIANT SIDEWALK
WITH BRICK ADDED
THROUGHOUT STREET,
EXISTING TREES PRESERVED

EXISTING 2
LANE ROAD

EXTENDED MAIN STREET CONDITION

PLACEMAKING
ARTWORK OR
SIGNAGE

MINIMUM 6'
ADA COMPLIANT
SIDEWALK WITH
BRICK DETAIL

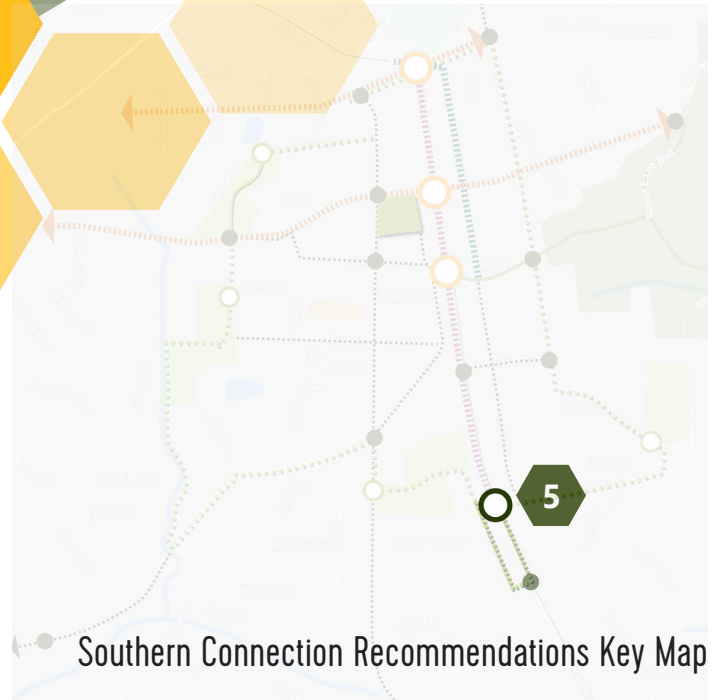
4

ACTIVITY

Figure 16: Activity Street Recommendations

SOUTHERN CONNECTION

5



There is a significant need to enhance connectivity between the east and west sides of the railroad in the southern area of the city. Residents currently face considerable barriers that limit safe and convenient access to key amenities and community resources. There is over a mile gap from Mimosa Drive to Palmer Drive that leaves the neighborhoods disconnected. To address this critical connectivity gap, the recommendation is to implement a phased strategy:

Phase 1- On Street Pedestrian Link:

Initially, the recommendation is to establish a mid-block crossing at the intersection of Lucile Avenue and Main Street and turn the existing private railroad crossing into a public crossing to allow people to easily connect across the railroad. An easement along the railroad and an minimum 8 foot wide trail would then need to be designed to connect Main Street to Randolph Medlock Park. Design elements for this new trail alignment include: clearly marked crossings, sidewalk improvements, pedestrian-friendly lighting, and enhanced wayfinding signage. This phase provides immediate relief by improving safety and convenience, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle usage, and initiating stronger community interactions.

Phase 2 – Dedicated Pedestrian Bridge:

In the second phase, it is recommended to construct a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad. This infrastructure improvement will significantly enhance safety, create seamless east-west connectivity, and further bridge the gap over the railroad. The bridge would also allow for a more direct route for the community. The bridge will reunite neighborhoods, ensuring equitable access to parks, businesses, and schools, and greatly improve the overall quality of life for residents.

Implementing this phased approach ensures immediate benefits while laying the groundwork for long-term enhancements in local growth, community integration, and economic vitality. Over time, this approach lays the groundwork for sustainable growth and investment, ensuring that infrastructure enhancements are coordinated with land use planning, commercial development, and transit accessibility. By phasing implementation, the city ensures that all residents gain reliable and equitable access to the city's amenities now and in the future.

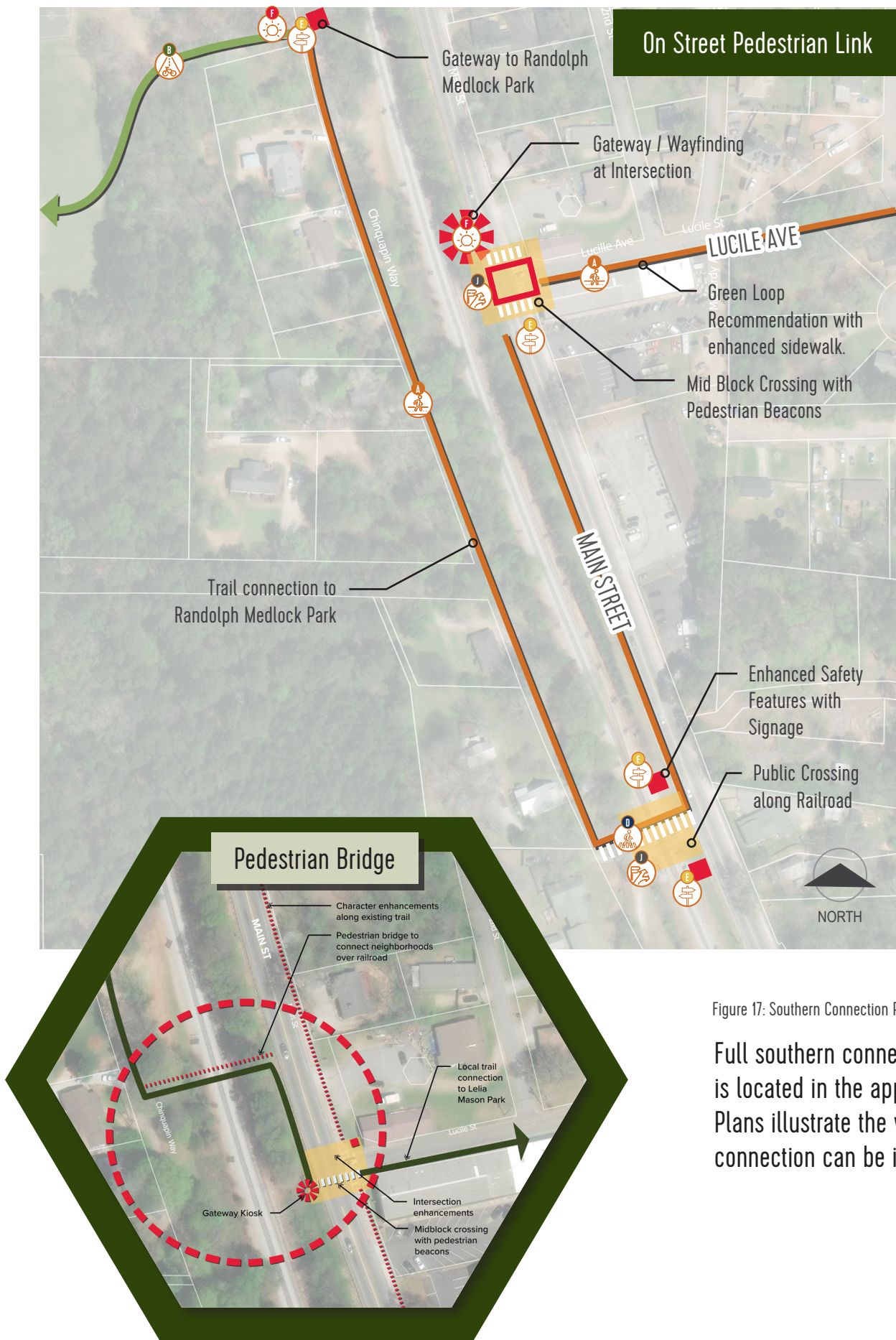


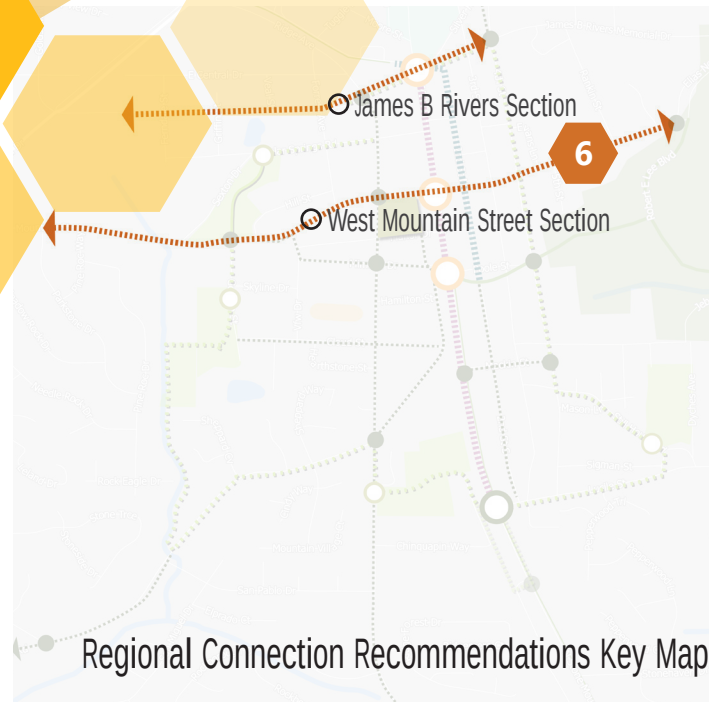
Figure 17: Southern Connection Plans

Full southern connection analysis is located in the appendix. Plans illustrate the ways each connection can be implemented.



REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

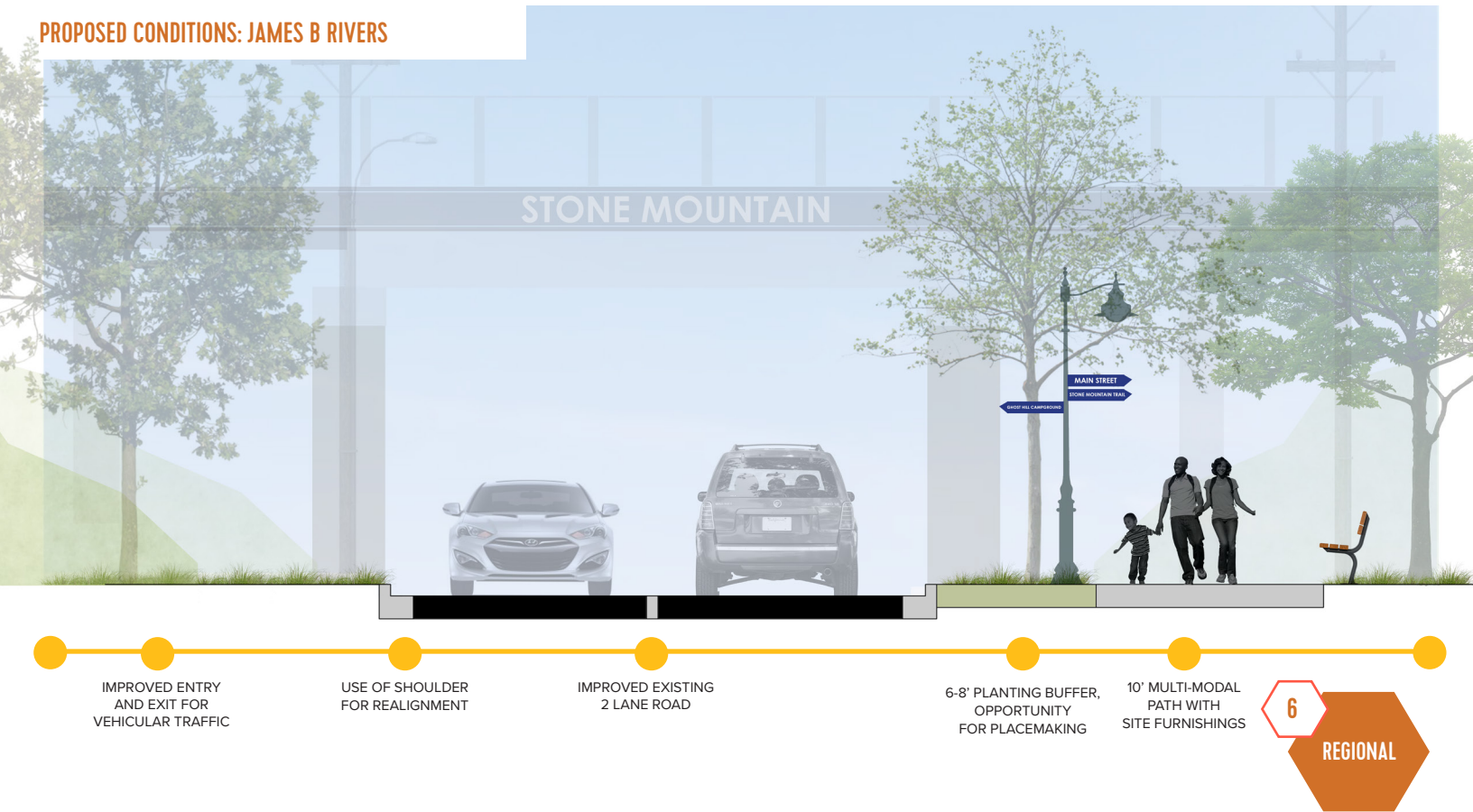
6



James B. Rivers Memorial Drive and Memorial Drive are key corridors providing vital links to the city center, downtown amenities, parks, and local businesses. These strategic routes currently face significant connectivity and safety challenges due to incomplete infrastructure, limiting their effectiveness as multi-modal transportation corridors.

To enhance these critical corridors, improvements should focus on creating comprehensive, integrated streetscapes that safely accommodate buses, cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles. Key improvements include expanded sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, clear pedestrian crossings, street trees, enhanced lighting, and transit amenities. By transforming James B. Rivers Memorial Drive and Memorial Drive into truly complete streets, the city will not only boost mobility and accessibility but also support community vibrancy, local economic growth, and overall regional connectivity.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS: JAMES B RIVERS



PROPOSED CONDITIONS: WEST MOUNTAIN STREET

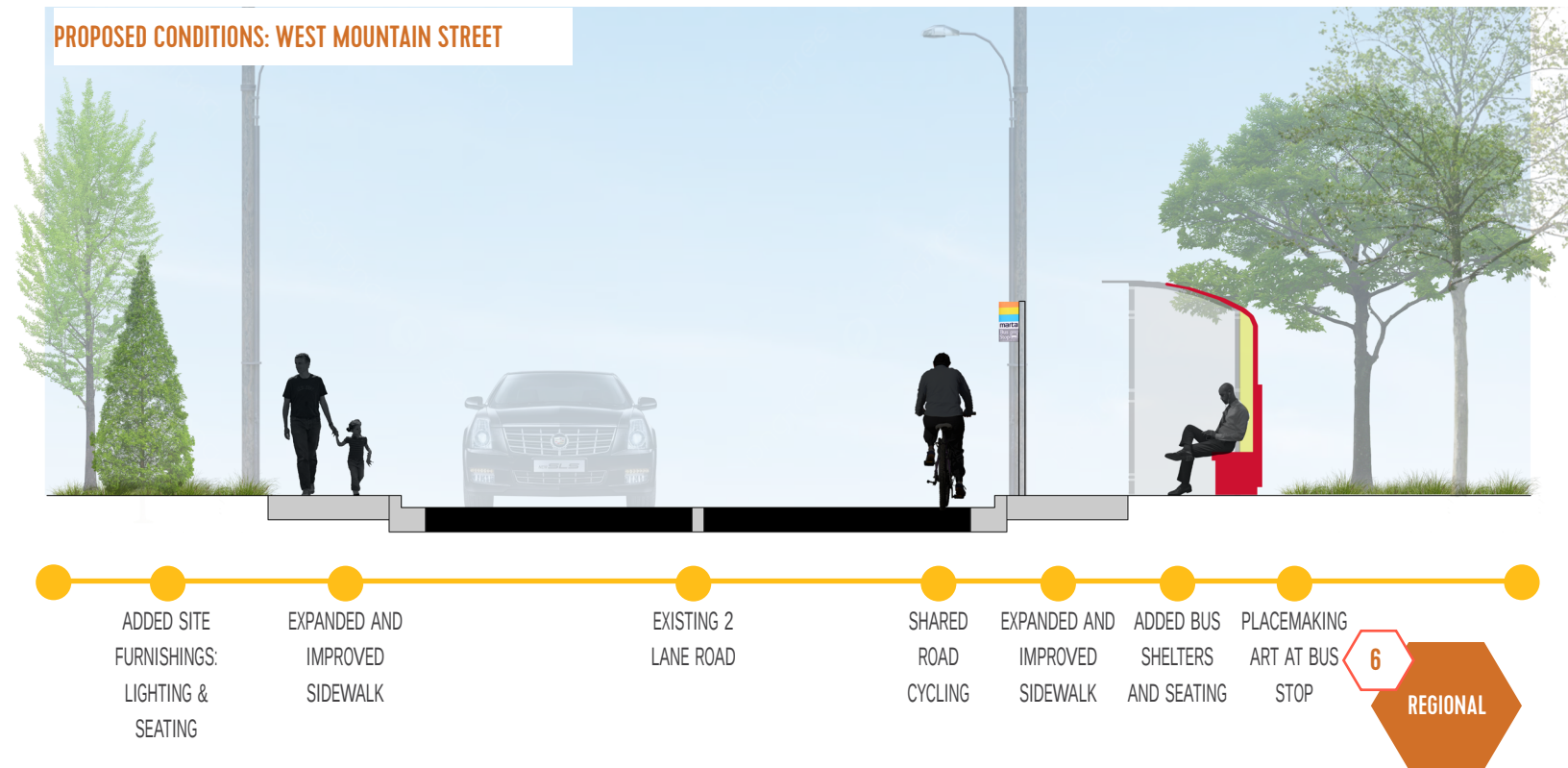
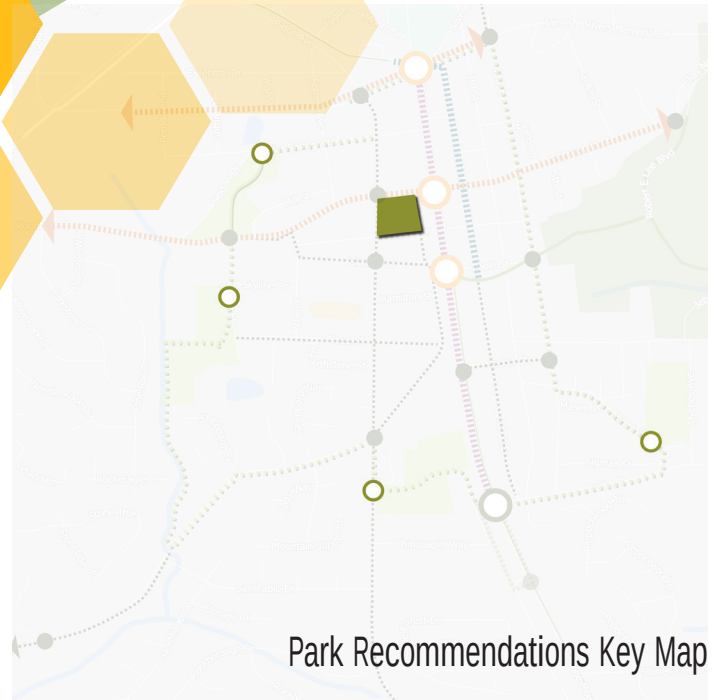


Figure 18: Regional Street Cross Sections

PARKS

7



Parks and public spaces are essential to enhancing community well-being, promoting social interactions, and providing vibrant gathering areas for residents and visitors alike. The recommendations outlined here focus on transforming parks throughout Stone Mountain into more inviting and accessible destinations through enhanced programming, improved entryways, and thoughtful infill of new amenities.

Enhanced programming aims to activate existing parks with diverse events and recreational activities, enriching the community experience. Upgraded entryways will improve access and visibility, ensuring that parks are welcoming to everyone. Strategic infill initiatives will introduce amenities that are currently lacking, such as community facilities, seating, and flexible spaces for gatherings.

The only proposed public space to add to the community is the proposed Baptist Lawn special-use facility. This notable project is envisioned as a vibrant centerpiece for downtown Stone Mountain. This transformative project will blend versatile outdoor meeting spaces, dynamic event areas, mixed-use retail opportunities, and inclusive community amenities into one cohesive destination, reinforcing the downtown district as a hub of community and economic vitality.

An example of recommendations for each part is illustrated in figure 18. For additional details on existing parks, their facilities, and opportunities, please refer to the Appendix.

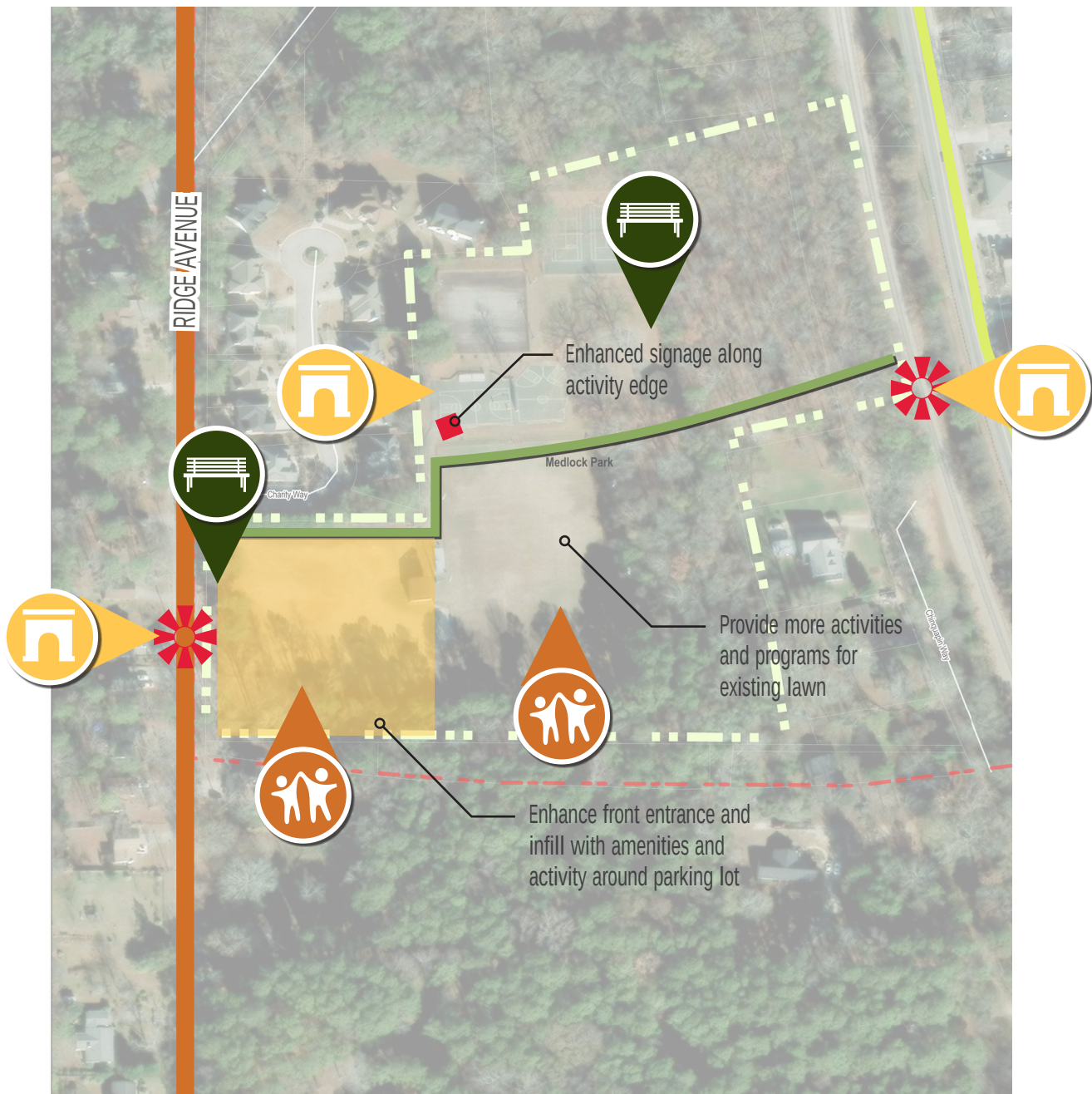


Figure 19: Park Recommendations



PROGRAMMING

Include activities such as community events, fitness classes, youth programs



ENTRYWAYS

Increased access and arrival to each park that contains pedestrian connections, and access enhancements.



INFILL

Includes adding supplemental amenities such as site restrooms, and vegetation to enhance existing park elements



● CATALYST SITES

Catalyst sites are strategically chosen properties or areas that have the potential to spark broader revitalization and economic development. The catalyst sites were chosen due to their location along the primary corridor of Stone Mountain and due to their overlap in recommendations for the city. The catalyst sites are all located along Main Street and are gateways into the community. The catalyst sites are illustrated in figure:

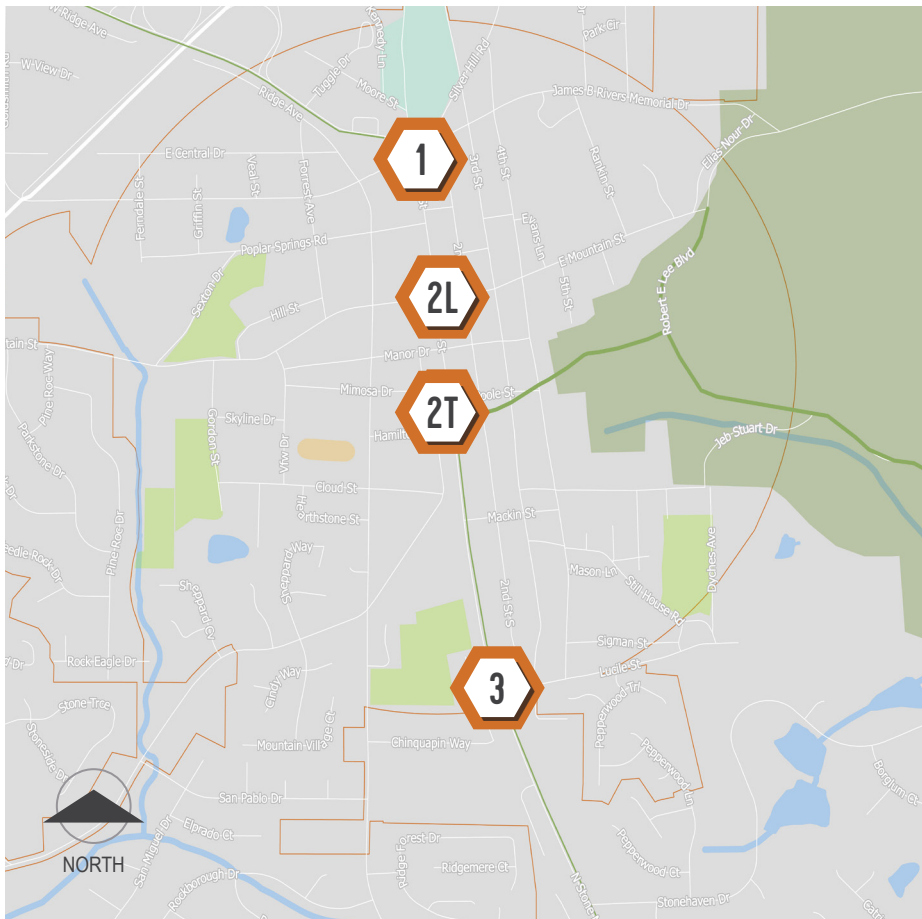


Figure 20: Catalyst Site Location Map

GATEWAY - The gateway catalyst site is located at the front door to the City. Located at the intersection of James B. Rivers and Main Street, this Catalyst site needs safety enhancements, infrastructure improvements, and signage to direct visitors where they need to go.

MAIN STREET LAWN - The Main Street Lawn catalyst site is located along Mountain Street and Main. In front of the heart of downtown this site focuses on directing travelers and connecting across the railroad.

MAIN STREET TRAIL - The Main Street Trail catalyst site needs major safety and infrastructure enhancements. This area is located at the edge of downtown and at the PATH trailhead.

SOUTHERN CONNECTION - This catalyst site will provide access over the railroad to better connect the southern communities.

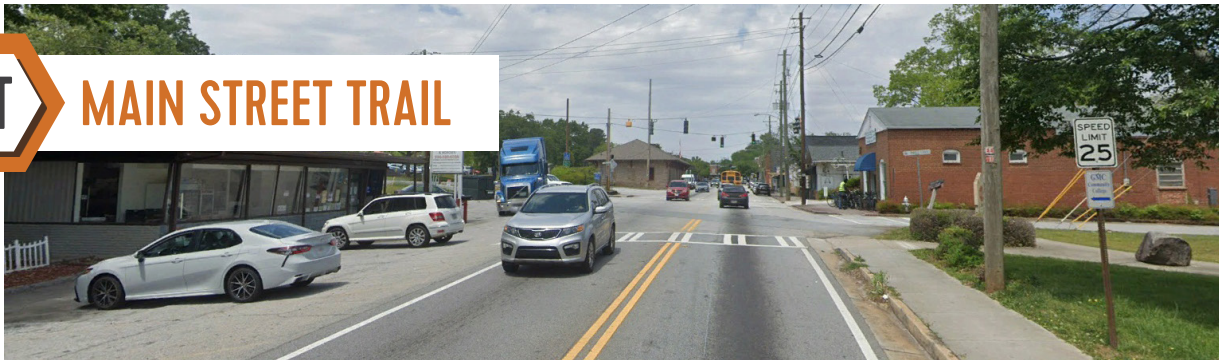
1 GATEWAY



2L MAIN STREET LAWN



2T MAIN STREET TRAIL



3 SOUTHERN CONNECTION



Figure 21: Catalyst Sit Existing Conditions



THE GATEWAY CATALYST SITE

The intersection of James B. Rivers Drive and Main Street serves as the primary gateway into Stone Mountain but currently functions as one of the area's most problematic and unwelcoming entry points. Prioritizing vehicular flow, the existing five-point intersection poses significant safety challenges for pedestrians and bicyclists and lacks the infrastructure needed to support a vibrant, connected downtown. The proposed catalyst plan reimagines this space as a safer, more inviting, and pedestrian-oriented entry into the city.

Key recommendations include:

- Reconfiguring the intersection into a traditional four-point layout by closing Silver Hill Road.
- Adding enhanced intersection improvements
- Developing a gateway park in old Silver Hill Road
- Aligning the PATH trail through the intersection.
- Implementing intersection enhancements at 2nd Street

The Gateway catalyst site is the front door to the City of Stone Mountain. The intersection is heavily trafficked and unwelcoming. Since it is a five point intersection the crosswalks, signal timing, and lack of pedestrian infrastructure make this a hectic entry into the city. The recommendations for this intersection is to turn it into a traditional 4 point intersection. By closing off Silver Hill Road,

a gateway park would be created that would allow for signage, art installations, and pedestrian infrastructure to connect the northern Stone Mountain Neighborhoods to the core of the city. Extending Main Street character to James B. Rivers is also essential to expanding the downtown opportunities and creating a sense of identity at the front door of Stone Mountain.

This important site aligns both streetscape enhancements along James B. Rivers, the PATH trail along 2nd Street, and intersection improvements that come together to create the grand entry into the city. The proposed catalyst plan reimagines this intersection to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety and to establish a welcoming, attractive gateway.



Figure 23: The Gateway Catalyst Perspective

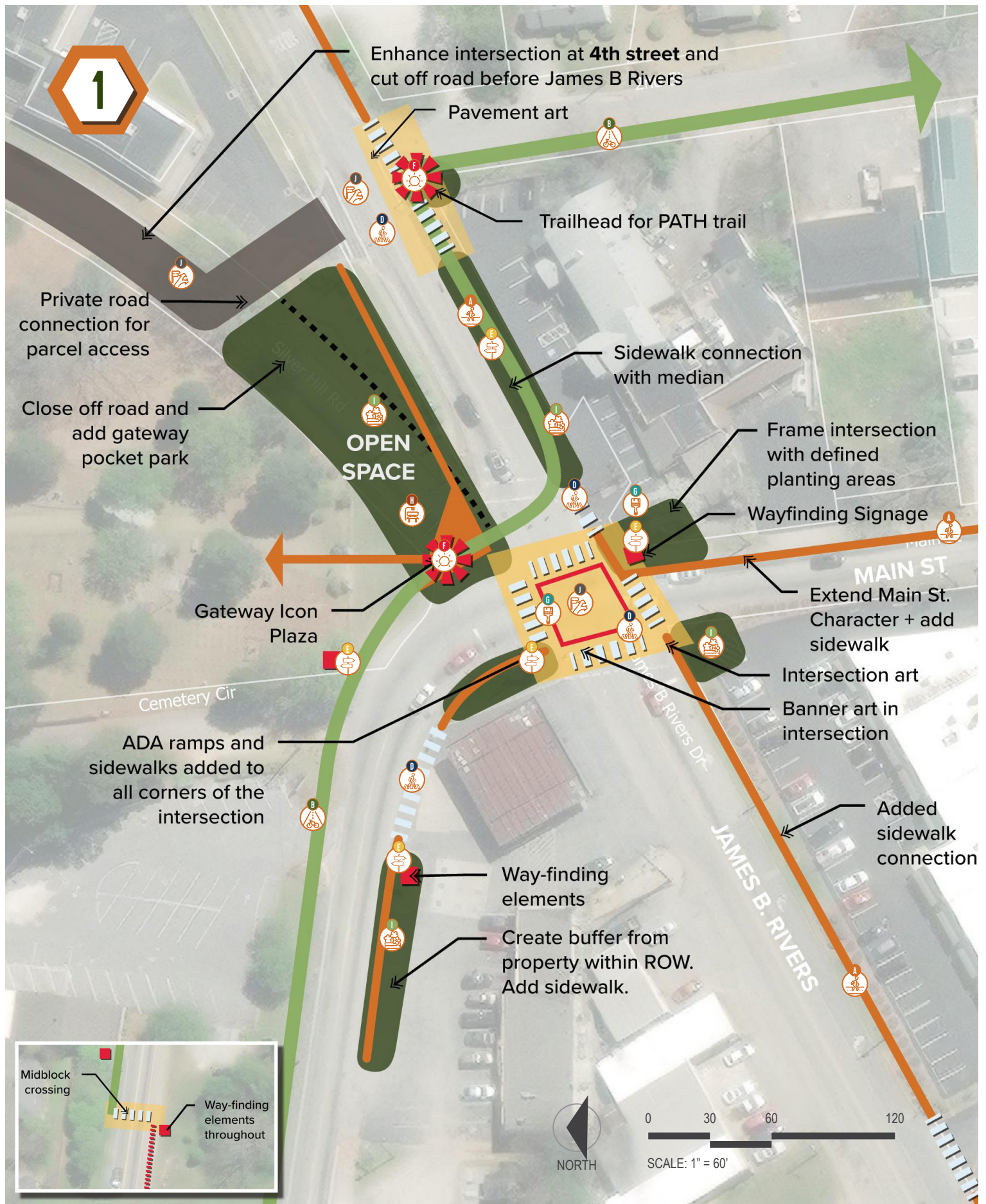


Figure 22: The Gateway Catalyst Plan

MAIN STREET LAWN CATALYST SITE

This catalyst site is at the intersection of West Mountain Street and Main Street. Currently, the area is dominated by wide expanses of concrete, lacks aesthetic appeal, and offers limited east–west connectivity—particularly across the adjacent railroad. One key challenge is the lack of safe, accessible passage to the Baptist Lawn, a significant public space located just west of Main Street, which remains disconnected from the rest of downtown due to rail barriers.

The proposed enhancements for this intersection aim to transform it into a more cohesive, welcoming, and functional community node. A raised intersection with decorative pavers and high-visibility crosswalks will improve pedestrian safety and signal entry into a distinct area of the city. Redesigned street parking, including curb bump-outs and landscape framing, will calm traffic while enhancing curb appeal. The sidewalk network will be widened and extended to better support foot traffic and ADA access. Additionally, a formal gateway will be introduced at the entrance to the Stone Mountain Trail near the Baptist Lawn, providing a visual anchor and improving connections between green space, trail users, and the downtown core.



Figure 25: Main Street Lawn Catalyst Perspective

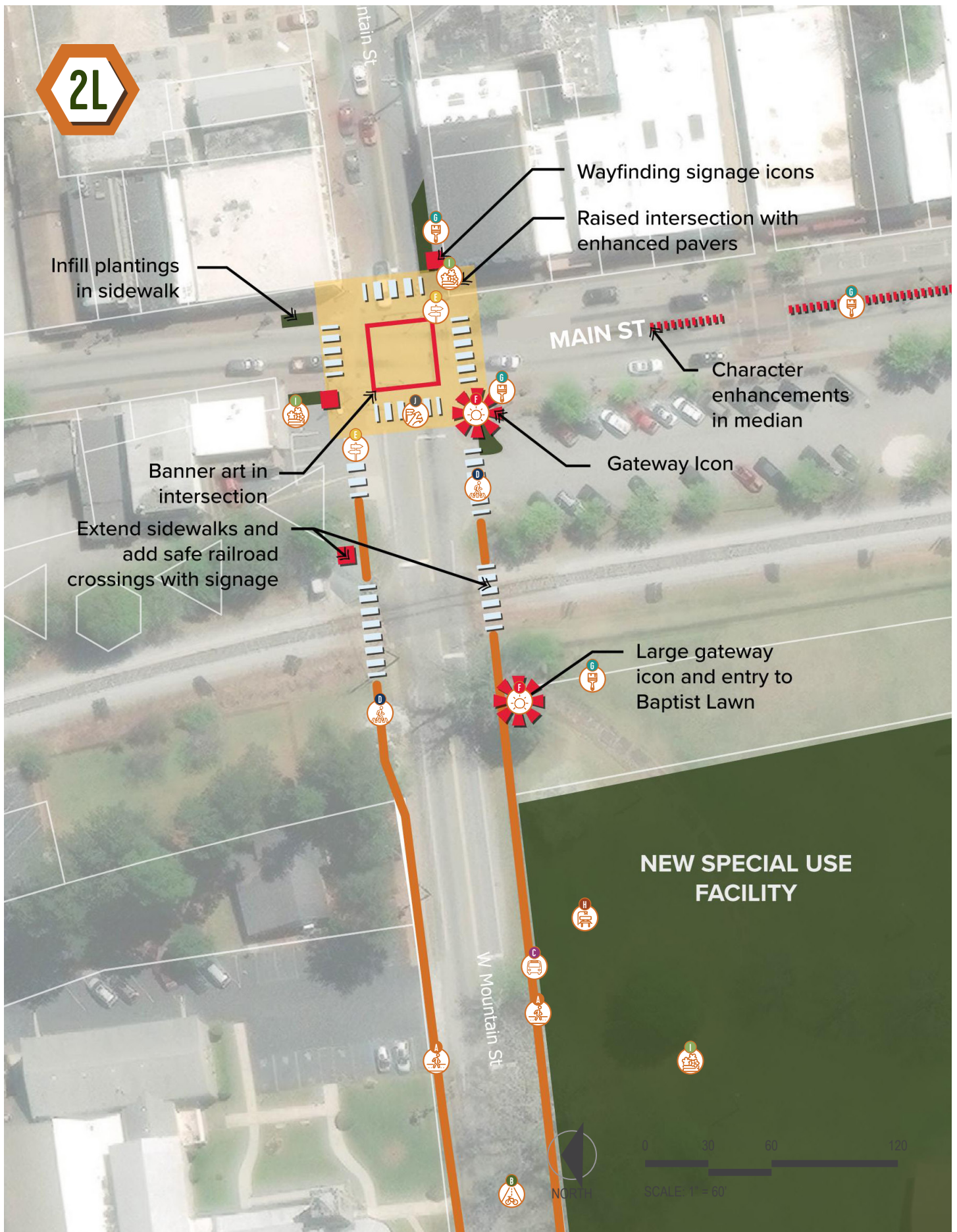


Figure 24: Main Street Lawn Catalyst Plan

MAIN STREET TRAIL CATALYST SITE

This catalyst site is located at the intersection of Mimosa Drive and Main Street, marking the transitional edge of Stone Mountain's historic downtown character. The area is dominated by large expanses of asphalt and parking is located right in the intersection. At present, the PATH trail abruptly ends at a corner, directing users into an unsafe crosswalk with no connecting sidewalk. Despite these challenges, the surrounding businesses are active, and a public parking lot is located nearby, presenting an opportunity for transformation. The proposed improvements aim to redefine this intersection as a people-centered space and a welcoming gateway to the Stone Mountain Trail. Key recommendations include elevating the intersection, enhancing infrastructure across the railroad, and realigning parking to improve safety and circulation for all modes of travel.

This newly reclaimed space will be transformed into a community-focused entry plaza—a vibrant node that supports public art, flexible seating, and opportunities for small business activation such as pop-up markets or outdoor dining. By expanding

the footprint of the trail gateway from a single corner into a larger gathering area, the site can accommodate users arriving from multiple directions, inviting them into downtown and encouraging longer stays. The introduction of a gateway park here will reinforce Stone Mountain's identity as a trail-friendly, walkable destination and will support the broader goals of community integration, economic vitality, and placemaking.

Through these targeted improvements, this site becomes more than just a trail endpoint—it evolves into a civic destination that connects people, places, and experiences in downtown Stone Mountain.

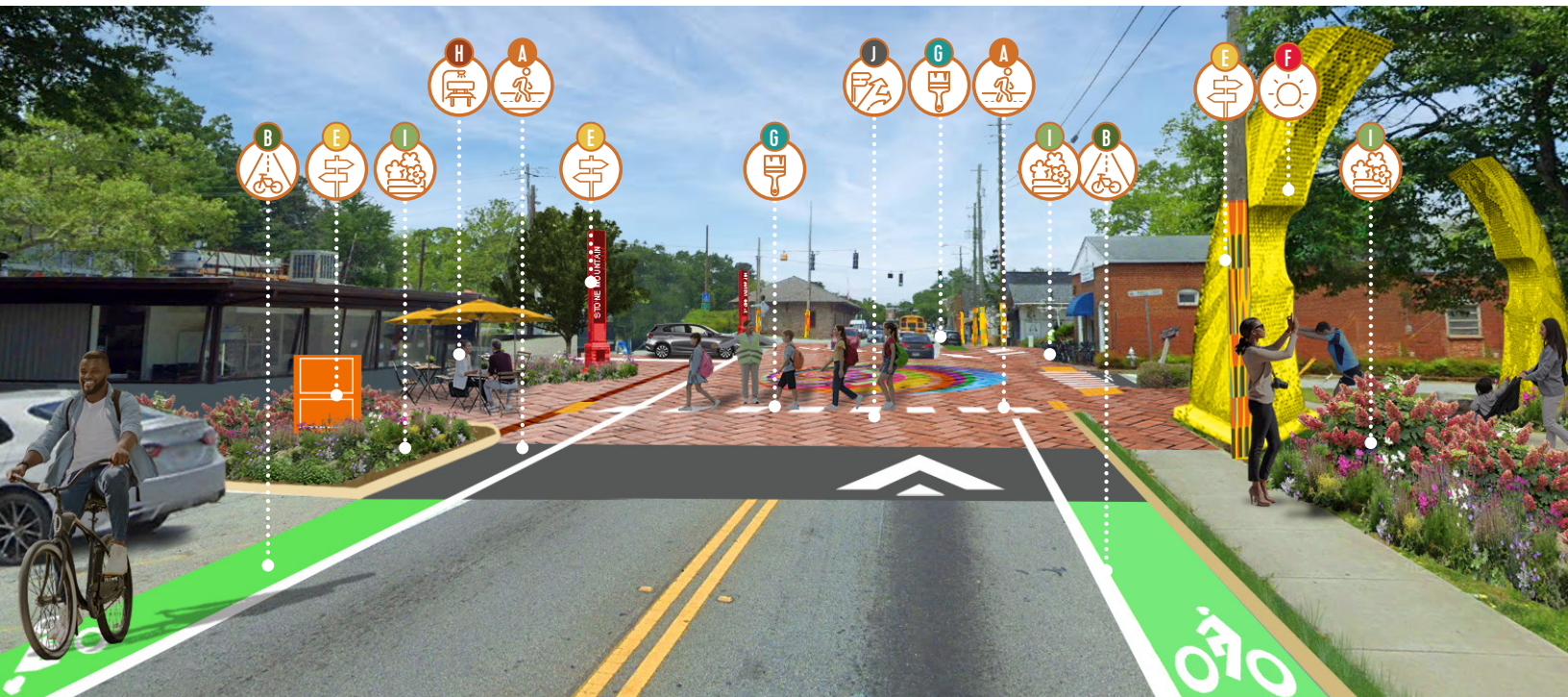


Figure 27: Main Street Trail Catalyst Perspective

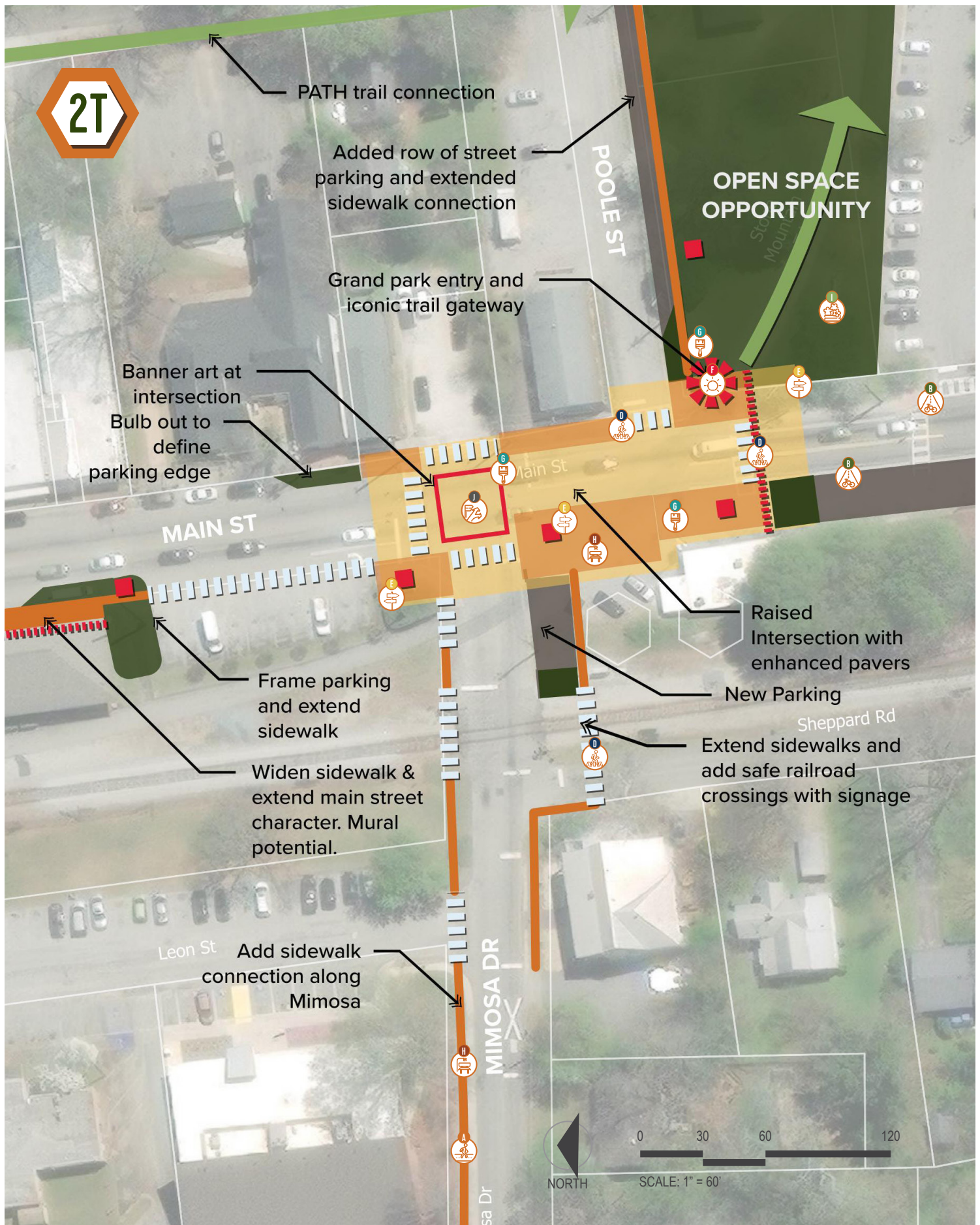


Figure 24: Main Street Trail Catalyst Plan

SOUTHERN CONNECTION CATALYST SITE

This catalyst site is the southern entrance to Stone Mountain on Main Street. The Southern Gateway is a critical catalyst site that addresses a significant gap in connectivity between downtown Stone Mountain and the southern neighborhoods. Currently, there are no public crossings between Mimosa Drive and Palmer Drive, severely limiting access for residents. Improving this connection is essential to achieving equitable mobility, community integration, and better access to public amenities such as parks and trails. This intersection is also an opportunity to connect to Leila Mason Park as well as Randolph Medlock Park.

Two potential design solutions have been identified for this site. The first option involves constructing a pedestrian bridge over the railroad, offering a direct and uninterrupted link between neighborhoods and downtown. While this solution would serve as an iconic structure and provide high-quality access, it requires

substantial investment and longer implementation timelines. The second option proposes converting an existing private rail crossing into a public one, which would be more cost-effective and could be implemented more quickly. Although this option would require pedestrians to detour slightly and might be affected by passing trains, it would still provide safe, on-street connectivity across the tracks.

Regardless of the chosen option, both scenarios recommend implementing a midblock crossing and new pedestrian signals along the adjacent corridor. These improvements would be paired with extended sidewalk infrastructure leading to the nearby park, further enhancing access and walkability in the area. Ultimately, the preferred solution will depend on available funding, but both approaches aim to significantly improve southside connectivity and better integrate all parts of Stone Mountain into the city's broader pedestrian and trail network.



Figure 29: Southern Connection Catalyst Perspective

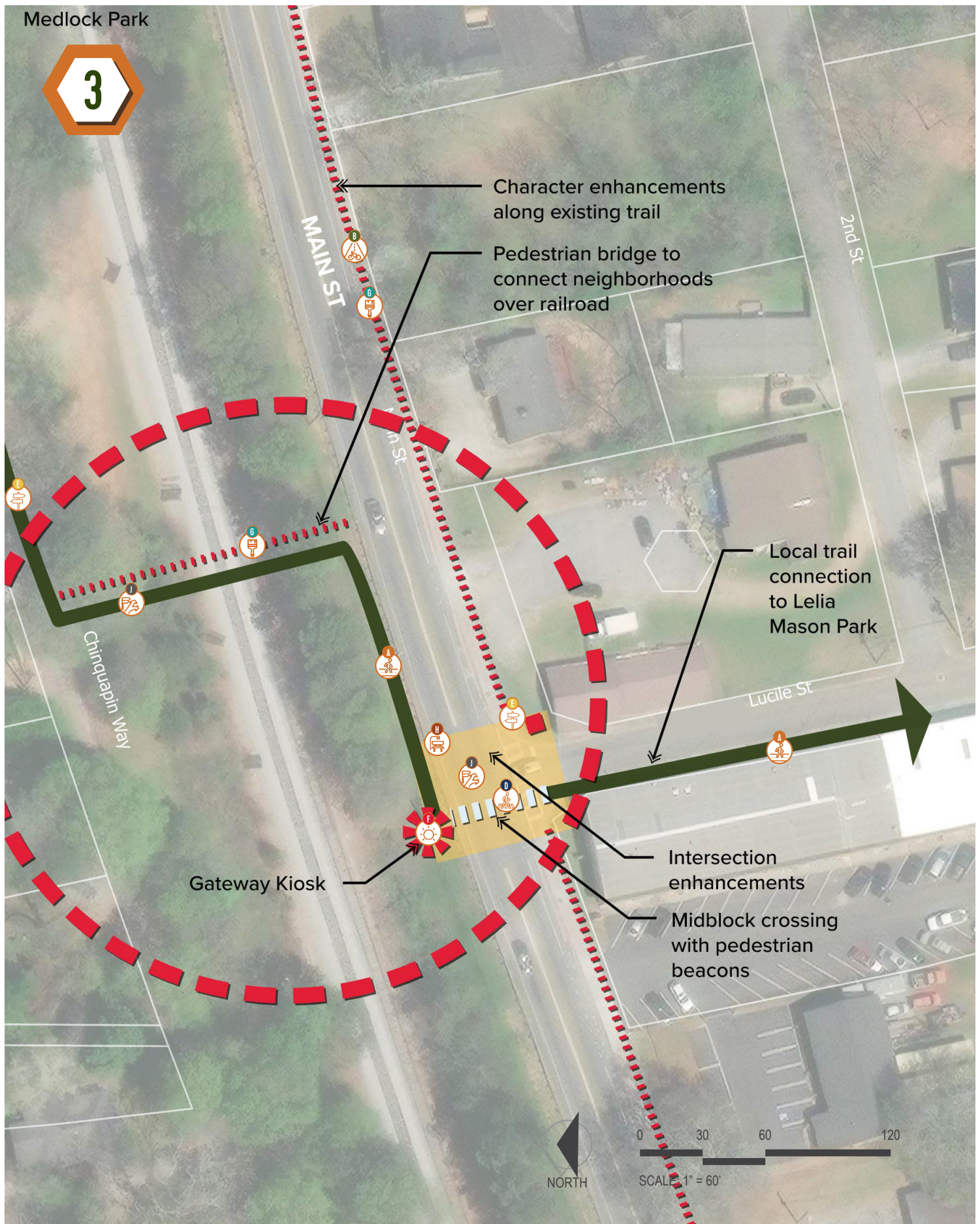


Figure 28: Southern Connection Catalyst Plan



IMPLEMENTATION

- ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
- IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT
- IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



IMPLEMENTATION

FROM VISION TO ACTION

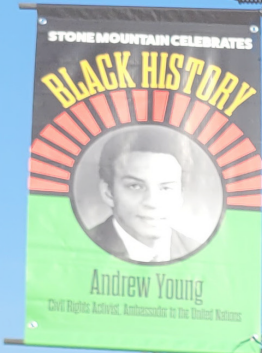
From the very start of this study, this project was approached as more than a planning document—it was designed to be a blueprint for action. Implementation was embedded into the process, with each recommendation shaped by feasibility, community capacity, impact and funding alignment.

In Stone Mountain, implementation is not just about building sidewalks or painting murals. It is about building partnerships—forming strong connections between public agencies, community leaders, regional allies, and funding entities to bring bold ideas to life.

This chapter outlines the framework for turning vision into results. It reflects a collaborative, strategic, and layered approach, grounded in early engagement with key partners including the City of Stone Mountain Mayor and Council, the Downtown Development Authority, the PATH Foundation, and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

Together, we identified priorities that are not only visionary—but implementable—and aligned them with real funding pathways. The result is a toolkit of catalytic projects, phased investments, and funding strategies that are ready for activation.





PHASING STRATEGY

The key implementation recommendations identified through the study are central to advancing the city’s goals around economic revitalization, community connectivity, and creative placemaking. These locations were selected not only for their visibility and potential impact, but also for their ability to serve as demonstration zones—showing what is possible when public space is activated with intention.

To guide investment and ensure a scalable and strategic transformation, each site has been organized into one of three implementation tiers



TIER 1

The James B. Rivers and Main Street intersection—Catalytic Site 1—represents a prime opportunity for early, high-visibility improvements that can build momentum and signal change. This site is ready for quick wins such as ADA-compliant upgrades, branded crosswalks, and a sculptural gateway that reflects community identity. These interventions are designed to elevate pedestrian safety, increase visibility of the corridor, and set a strong precedent for subsequent phases. Potential funding sources include the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program, ARC's LCI Quick-Build Funds, and the Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative.

TIER 2

This tier includes a cluster of projects that strengthen community connections and enhance key gathering spaces. It includes Catalytic Site 2 (Mimosa Gateway + Baptist Lawn), Site 3 (West Mountain & Main), and Site 4 — Phase 1 (Lucile Crossing), along with PATH Trail Phase 1 along 2nd Street. Together, these projects focus on creating safer crossings, completing trail gaps, activating the public realm through art and programming, and reinforcing links to nearby parks, neighborhoods, and schools. These efforts will be supported by funding from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), PATH Foundation, AARP Challenge Grant, and ARC's LCI Infrastructure program.

TIER 3

The third tier encompasses more complex, capital-intensive projects requiring detailed design, engineering, and multi-agency coordination. These include Catalytic Site 4 — Phase 2 (Lucile Bridge Connection) and PATH Trail Phase 2, which extends the loop and introduces a safe rail crossing. These investments aim to overcome long-standing physical barriers, increase equitable access, and create long-term infrastructure that supports community growth and resilience. Strategic funding opportunities include the RAISE Grant, Reconnecting Communities Program, partnerships with GDOT and CSX, Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), and local/private partnerships.



This phased approach allows Stone Mountain to capitalize on early successes in the core while building momentum for broader connectivity and placemaking improvements across the study area.



KEY PARTNERS & IMPLEMENTATION ROLES

The success of this plan depends on deep collaboration. Public realm improvements do not begin and end with city limits—they extend across property lines, into neighborhoods, through business districts, and into the lives of residents, visitors, and workers alike. To deliver meaningful and lasting impact, implementation must be rooted in intentional, cross-sector partnerships.

In Stone Mountain, this means bringing together the leadership of the city and Downtown Development Authority, the creativity of local artists and nonprofits, the expertise of regional agencies like ARC and PATH, and the passion of community stakeholders. These partnerships help unlock funding, coordinate across jurisdictions, and align vision with capacity.

A robust partnership model blends public, private, and nonprofit entities—each bringing critical resources, insights, and long-term commitment to the table. Whether it is securing federal funding, activating a public plaza, or maintaining new infrastructure, partnerships are the engine of implementation. Adopting a Champion—Cheerleader—Regulator model, roles are clearly defined to support collaboration and clarity in project delivery.

To support clarity and collaboration, this plan adopts a Champion—Cheerleader—Regulator model to define implementation roles:



THE TOOLKIT: FUNDING, PROGRAMS, & LEVERAGE:

To support the vision outlined in the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), Stone Mountain must pursue a layered funding strategy that combines public, private, and nonprofit resources. While capital projects may be supported through traditional infrastructure grants, a broader approach requires creative financing, policy tools, and community partnerships.

This toolkit outlines diverse funding mechanisms that can support both immediate projects and long-term activations across Stone Mountain's parks, paths, and public spaces:

01



GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS:

The City, DDA, and partners such as ARC and PATH can channel local, state, and federal grants for specific placemaking projects, including crosswalk murals, trailheads, public art, and plaza activation.

02



DEVELOPER / PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

Local businesses and real estate developers may support public realm improvements through cost-sharing agreements, sponsorships, or contributions to a placemaking fund.

03



ZONING / DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS:

Future overlay districts and zoning updates could require or incentivize developers to contribute to success—such as through streetscape improvements, public art, or open space.

04



TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF):

If adopted, a TIF District or Tax Allocation District (TAD) could fund long-term public realm projects, particularly around downtown or future redevelopment areas.

05



REVENUE-GENERATING ACTIVITIES:

Seasonal programming, events at Baptist Lawn, or art markets can generate local revenue to support placemaking, programming, and maintenance.



100-DAY ACTION PLAN

The following action steps are designed to guide the first 100 days following the completion of the study. These early actions are critical to transforming the strategy from a visionary document into real momentum—helping the City of Stone Mountain shift from planning to implementation with clear roles, visibility, and collaboration.

Launch the Stone Mountain LCI Strategy

Publicly unveil the strategy at a community event and online. Create a dedicated webpage, share key visuals, and build awareness through social media to generate excitement and connect partners to the plan.

Establish the Project Advisory Group

Transition the Project Advisory Group (PAG) into an ongoing Committee. Re-engage members, define roles, and host a kickoff meeting to identify short-term priorities and support early implementation.

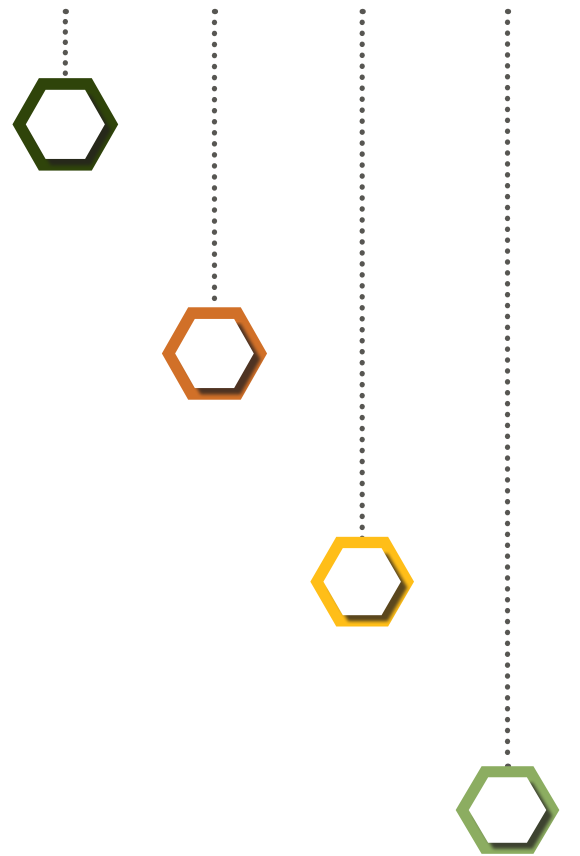
Implement a Pop-Up Activation

Identify and begin work on a quick-build project—such as activating Baptist Lawn or a key intersection with seating, art, or shade. Focus on visibility, community engagement, and low-cost implementation.

Launch a Programmatic Pilot with Local Partners

Collaborate with local organizations (e.g., Art Station, DDA, community nonprofits) to host a cultural or recreational event aligned with the LCI goals—such as a temporary trail activation, arts event, or neighborhood walk.

2 WEEKS 4 WEEKS 8 WEEKS 12 WEEKS



The following pages detail the implementation matrix. Categories are as follows:

- General Recommendation
- PATH Recommendation
- Catalyst Recommendation

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

To move from vision to action, the Implementation Matrix outlines a comprehensive list of projects organized by tier, timeline, funding potential, and implementation partners. This matrix is both a roadmap and a management tool, designed to guide city staff, stakeholders, and funding partners through the rollout of priority projects. Together with the 100-Day Action Plan, this matrix provides a clear foundation for phased, impactful, and implementable change.

Action #	Action Name	Recommendation Category	Timeframe	Description	Champion	Partners	Funding Source
1	Launch Trail Plan + Web Portal	General Recommendation	Short 	Launch public-facing LCI page; summarize plan highlights and priority projects	City of Stone Mountain	ARC, Consultants	ARC LCI
2	Formalize the current Project Advisory Group (PAG)	General Recommendation	Short 	Formalize stakeholder group to guide implementation strategy of the plan.	City of Stone Mountain	Council, Staff	Local Budget
3	Submit SS4A & AARP Grants	General Recommendation	Short 	Apply for priority grants for short term implementation.	City of Stone Mountain	ARC, Consultant	SS4A, AARP
4	ADA Sidewalk Accessibility Assessment	General Recommendation	Short 	Coordinate with ARC to determine whether sidewalk ADA compliance data is already available through the REVAMP program. If data is unavailable or incomplete, fund a citywide assessment focused on sidewalk connections to public facilities, schools, libraries, churches, and parks.	City of Stone Mountain + DeKalb County	DeKalb County, Schools, Local Churches, Community Organizations	CDBG, ARC LCI, TAP
5	ADA Assessment on Sidewalks Near Public Facilities	General Recommendation	Short 	Fund a comprehensive ADA accessibility audit of sidewalks connecting to public schools, libraries, parks, and churches. Prioritize upgrades where needed.	City of Stone Mountain	DeKalb County, ARC, ADA Consultants	CDBG, ARC LCI, TAP
6	Comprehensive Plan Update	General Recommendation	Medium 	Update the Comprehensive Plan to reflect LCI goals, catalyst site priorities, and updated land use recommendations.	City of Stone Mountain	Consultants, ARC	ARC LCI, Local Budget
7	Adopt Maintenance Partnership Template	General Recommendation	Long 	Standardize maintenance plan for art, benches, signage.	City of Stone Mountain	City Departments	Local Budget
8	Lighting and Safety Audit for Neighborhoods Corridors	General Recommendation	Medium 	Develop a lighting improvement plan focused on enhancing pedestrian visibility and safety in historically underserved southern Stone Mountain neighborhoods.	City of Stone Mountain	DeKalb County, Local Utility Providers, Neighborhood Groups	CDBG, Local Budget, REBC

Action #	Action Name	Recommendation Category	Timeframe	Description	Champion	Partners	Funding Source
9	Citywide Public Art Activation	General Recommendation	Long 	Establish an annual plan and funding stream for public art installations across parks, gateways, and civic sites.	City + Art Station + Arts Council	Local Artists, Schools, Nonprofits	NEA, AARP, Local Budget
10	Citywide Temporary Art Series	General Recommendation	Medium 	Host a rotating public art installation program in parks and civic spaces to engage emerging artists and seasonal themes.	City + DDA + Arts Organizations	Local Businesses, Tourism Bureau, Arts Council	Local Budget, Sponsorships, NEA
11	Activate Parks with Event Programming	General Recommendation	Medium 	Develop a year-round schedule of cultural and recreational programming to activate underutilized parks and build community identity.	City + Parks & Rec + Community Groups	Art Station, Local Schools, Nonprofits	AARP, CDBG, Sponsorships
12	Develop Gateway Signage and Wayfinding System	General Recommendation	Long 	Design and install branded gateway elements and wayfinding signage at city entrances and trailheads to improve identity and connectivity. LCI Study funds can support planning and design, but signage implementation should be coordinated with larger transportation or trail projects to be eligible for capital funding.	City + Consultants + Tourism Partners	ARC, Local Artists, Visitor's Bureau	ARC LCI, Local Budget, Sponsorship, Trail or Road Project Budgets
13	Establish Placemaking Reserve Fund	General Recommendation	Long 	Dedicate annual budget or % of project funds to maintain and activate spaces.	City Council	Finance Department, Council	TSPLOST
14	Close PATH Trail Gap via 2nd Street Alignment	PATH Trail on 2nd Street	Medium 	Implement the preferred trail alignment along 2nd Street by upgrading to a one-way street and developing a 10 foot wide multi-use path with buffer landscaping. Coordinate with the County to align with SPLOST priorities and ensure Complete Streets compliance.	City + PATH Foundation	PATH Foundation, ARC, DeKalb County	PATH Foundation, ARC, DeKalb County, TAP, SS4A, County SPLOST
15	Public Art Along PATH Trail	PATH Trail on 2nd Street	Long 	Install artistic trail markers, utility box wraps, and benches with local artwork along the 2nd Street PATH Trail.	City + PATH + Art Station	Local Artists, Community Groups	PATH Foundation, NEA, Local Budget, County SPLOST
16	James B. Rivers Intersection Improvements	Catalyst Site 1: James B. Rivers & Main	Short 	Fund Final Design study and construct raised crosswalks, ADA ramps, and branded streetscape. Improvements should incorporate Complete Streets principles and explore bicycle facility options if feasible.	City of Stone Mountain + GDOT	GDOT, ARC, Local Contractors	GDOT, ARC, Developers, Property Owners, DeKalb County SPLOST, SS4A

Action #	Action Name	Recommendation Category	Timeframe	Description	Champion	Partners	Funding Source
17	Silver Hill Road Closure on JBR	Catalyst Site 1: James B. Rivers & Main	Medium 	Connect Silver Hill Road to the north of 2nd Street and close the intersection with JBR to enhance safety. Evaluate multimodal network impact and include bicycle/ pedestrian accommodations per Complete Streets requirements.	City of Stone Mountain + GDOT	GDOT, ARC, Local Contractors	GDOT, ARC, Developers, Property Owners, DeKalb County SPLOST
18	Public Art at Catalyst Site 1 — James B. Rivers	Catalyst Site 1: James B. Rivers & Main	Medium 	Incorporate permanent sculptural or mosaic elements into the raised intersection design to create a unique entry landmark.	City + Local Artists	DDA, Local Artists, Schools	Bloomberg Asphalt Art, AARP Challenge
19	Mimosa Gateway Trailhead Activation	Catalyst Site 2: Mimosa Gateway	Short 	Add curb extensions, high-visibility crossings, signage + mural gateway	City + PATH + Local Artists	PATH, Local Artists	TAP, AARP Challenge, Asphalt Art
20	Public Art at Catalyst Site 2 — Mimosa Gateway	Catalyst Site 2: Mimosa Gateway	Short 	Install a trailhead mural and artistic signage highlighting community history and nature themes.	City + Art Station Theater	Artists, Trail Groups, Community Members	NEA Our Town, AARP Challenge
21	Prioritize Baptist Lawn as Event Space	Catalyst Site 2: Mimosa Gateway	Medium 	Design and activate the Baptist Lawn as a pilot special facility for events, markets, and festivals as a model for other sites.	City + DDA + Community Partners	Community Groups, Artists, Parks	AARP, CDBG, Local Budget
22	Design for West Mountain Median + Signage	Catalyst Site 3: West Mountain & Main	Medium 	Design median enhancements and historic signage node.	City + DDA	Consultants, ARC	ARC LCI, REBC
23	Public Art at Catalyst Site 3 — West Mountain Median	Catalyst Site 3: West Mountain & Main	Medium 	Add interpretive signage and sculpture series reflecting Stone Mountain's cultural legacy and community values.	City + Consultants + Arts Council	Community Groups, Arts Nonprofits	ARC LCI, Private Donations
24	Connect Southern Neighborhoods to Main and Medlock Park	Catalyst Site 4: Lucile & Southern Neighborhoods	Short 	Add a pedestrian crossing to connect Southern neighborhoods with a direct access to Main.	City of Stone Mountain	ARC, Consultants	Local Budget, ARC LCI
25	Pursue Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant	Catalyst Site 4: Lucile & Southern Neighborhoods	Medium 	Fund study of bridge/underpass across CSX rail line.	City + ARC + PATH Foundation	ARC, PATH	Federal Grant Programs
26	Construct Protected Railroad Crossing at Lucile	Catalyst Site 4: Lucile & Southern Neighborhoods	Long 	Design and construct a safe pedestrian bridge or grade-separated crossing at Lucile to reconnect southern neighborhoods with parks and downtown.	City + GDOT + CSX	GDOT, CSX, PATH Foundation, ARC	Federal Grant Programs, i.e. RAISE
27	Public Art at Catalyst Site 4 — Lucile / Southern Neighborhoods	Catalyst Site 4: Lucile & Southern Neighborhoods	Long 	Install community-designed art panels or a storytelling wall near the proposed pedestrian bridge to reflect neighborhood voices.	City + PATH + Local Youth Groups	Schools, Artists, Nonprofits	Federal Grant Programs, Local Fundraising