



DECATUR 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Comments from the “Going Mobile” Community Academy
October 7, 2010

Summary of Ideas

Please note that an asterisk (*) indicates a project that is already included in the City of Decatur’s Community Transportation Plan.

Transportation Network

- Provide a transportation network that avoids simply displacing problems somewhere else (i.e., traffic and speeding) in favor of one that respects the needs of the overall city.*
- Design a transportation network that serves most vulnerable users, especially the elderly and children.
- Break-up the “super-blocks” in Downtown, East Decatur Station, and the East Lake MARTA station area as new development occurs.
- Explore options to connect dead-end streets where such would benefit Decatur’s overall transportation network.
- Maximize use of the existing pedestrian network by focusing on maintenance, including:*
 - Trimming landscaping obstructing existing sidewalks.
 - Regularly restriping faded crosswalks and repairing broken signal equipment.
 - Repairing broken or buckled sidewalks.
 - Providing adequate lighting that is compatible with its setting.
 - Installing street trees (where space exists) to provide shade, buffer pedestrians from cars, and psychologically narrow streets.
- Expand enforcement of existing traffic laws to minimize the negative impacts of drivers on bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and the overall quality of life in Decatur, including:*
 - Targeting speeders, especially on Scott Boulevard, Church Street, Clairemont Road, Candler Street, DeKalb Avenue, and other problem corridors.
 - Focusing on drivers who disobey pedestrian or bicycle-friendly laws, especially stopping for pedestrians at crosswalks, yielding to pedestrians at right-turns, or sharing the road with bicyclists.
- Expand the use of mid-block pedestrian crossings in commercial or mixed-use areas to improve pedestrian access and calm traffic.
- Improve non-vehicular connections across the railroad.*

- Reconfigure the intersection of Atlanta Avenue at College Avenue, the CSX tracks, Howard Avenue, and Olympic Place.*
- Use vacant lots, stream corridors, easements, and similar means to establish links in the pedestrian and bicycle network, especially in historic single-family neighborhoods where redevelopment is unlikely. *(Partially)
- Establish pedestrian, vehicular, and bicycle connectivity between adjacent parking lots.
- Implement the bicycle network found in the City’s Community Transportation Plan.*
- Provide a bicycle network that allows bicyclists of all experience levels to use it, not just those who are comfortable riding in or near traffic.
- Encourage the use of existing or new alleys for inter-parcel access and service.
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Traffic Issues

- Reduce the negative impacts of “cut-through” traffic on city streets.*
- Make better use of unused pavement along existing streets by converting it to landscaping, pedestrian space, on-street parking, or similar non-vehicular uses. *(Partially)
- Implement “complete street” concepts on major corridors:
 - Scott Boulevard*
 - Church Street*
 - Clairemont Avenue*
 - College Avenue*
 - Commerce Drive*
 - Howard Avenue*
 - South Candler Street*
 - North McDonough Street*
 - East and West Ponce de Leon Avenue*
 - West Trinity Place*
 - Sycamore Street
- Make westbound left turns on College Avenue easier by slowing vehicular speeds or installing signals.
- Consider the use of roundabouts to manage traffic and improve aesthetics.*
- Minimize the use of speed bumps and humps, which can create problems for bicyclists and emergency vehicles, in favor of other interventions.
- Ensure that interventions intended to manage traffic do not have a negative impact on bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit riders.
- Establish a consistent driver experience for Church Street to avoid surprising those unfamiliar with it.*
- Provide improved “cross-town” connections on major streets by minimizing stop-and-go traffic for those driving the speed limit (i.e., if somebody is driving slowly, the traffic signals should be timed so they can get from one side of the community to another without hitting many red lights).
- In conjunction with the previous idea, incorporate a dedicated pedestrian crossing phase into all traffic signals.

Parking Issues

- Promote a “park–once” environment in commercial and mixed–use areas.*
- Expand the use of shared parking facilities, especially for existing facilities that currently sit empty for a large part of the day.*
- Maximize the use of existing public parking.*
- Minimize the negative impacts of commuter or retail/restaurant parking on streets abutting Decatur’s commercial and mixed–use areas.*
- Make getting zoning approval for shared parking a simple process.
- Provide financial incentives for strategies that make the most efficient use of parking resources and discourage parking that sit empty most of the time.*
- Address public safety perceptions and realities that encourage some to park as close as possible to their destination, rather than using shared parking facilities or walking to them.
- Recognize that on–street parking spaces in commercial areas are a valuable resource and maximize their benefit to Decatur’s merchants.*
- Implement on–street parking on Commerce Drive.*

Transit

- Establish a user–friendly Decatur shuttle serving the city’s neighborhoods and commercial districts with frequent service.*
- Avoid transit options that could negatively impact the quality–of–life in Decatur.
- Explore partnerships with existing transit providers, such as the CCTMA or MARTA, to implement shuttle service in Decatur, rather than starting a new system.
- Encourage the use of existing transit by concentrating pedestrian–friendly development around Decatur’s existing MARTA stations.*
- Seamlessly integrate Decatur’s bicycle and pedestrian system with existing MARTA stations.*
- Incorporate user–friendly technology into existing and future transit, such as real–time bus/rail tracking, smart phone payment and scheduling applications, and similar tools aimed at making transit use effortless.
- Increase awareness of existing transit service.*
- Provide quality waiting areas at highly–used stops for existing or future bus/shuttle service. Elements could include lighting, benches, schedules, or shelters within an aesthetically pleasing format that reflect the identity of Decatur and its neighborhoods.*
- Match proposed transit facilities to existing and future funding capacity to ensure that the system is sustainable over the long–term.

Raw Comments

Transportation Network

- Railroad crossings complicate transportation/connection options
- MARTA rail lines and bus connections provide good connections
- At edge of city limits we are less connected
 - even though we have Avondale and East Lake at each end
 - still walkable but not as well connected
 - southside of Avondale station is “scary,” northside is better connected
- Better education needed with options between central and south Decatur
- Candler Street feels unsafe
- Sycamore Street is more of a thoroughfare
- Church Street from 78 is a big problem
- Atlanta Avenue is big/crazy intersection
- Ability to bike to work is good
- Walking from or through neighborhoods is very good
- Maintenance/walkway issues in certain areas
- Kudzu/poison ivy in certain areas for walking
- Church/Forkner/Medlock intersection issue
 - dead zone dangerous
 - roundabout might be a good solution
- Decatur is most connected at MARTA stations: train/bus
- Decatur is least connected
 - between neighborhoods
 - pedestrian/car crossings of train tracks
 - is enforcement of laws balanced?
- Speed issues with pedestrians
- Provide accommodations for the elderly
- Provide easy flow for traffic needing to only pass through Decatur
- Network lacking between Clairemont/Downtown to Emory Commons
 - shortish distance, but doesn’t feel safe
 - North Decatur from Emory to Clairemont
- Good connectivity in Downtown, dimly lit streets (Church Street)
- Good network for cars, not good for peds and bikes
- Would ride bikes if safer to get there
 - Clairemont outside/edge of Decatur
- Develop the multi-use paths and routes
 - should be primary focus of transportation plan
 - options for bike/walk destinations (many are on edge of city, need to work with neighbors in Dekalb)
- Currently connected: Downtown, Oakhurst
- Not currently connected: railroad (north-south connection), outside of city

- Complications
 - must drive to some places (North Decatur, Emory, YMCA)
 - intimidating intersections
 - mid-block crossing—no crosswalk
 - anywhere on Commerce or Scott
- Balance
 - more walkability/bikeability
 - more active transportation
 - circulator
 - mid-block crossings
- Need connections across town, not just to Downtown
- Railroad as barrier
- Need better bike/transit connection between Downtown and Oakhurst
- Speeding traffic is a barrier to pedestrian connectivity (College, Ponce west of post office, Church, Candler, Clairemont, Scott, etc.)
- Comfortable connections for bicyclists and kids
- Traffic dispersed because of alternate streets
- Sidewalks and pedestrians (+)
- Bike lanes (-)
- Poor crosswalks
- Dangerous areas with limited lighting: Church, E Ponce, Candler, Commerce/Trinity-Ponce
- More pedestrian friendly: depot area, East Howard by Dairy Queen
- More connectivity needed: Great Lakes, Glennwood Estates
- Current connectivity: three MARTA stations and buses, PATH bike lane, Safe Routes to School, Cliff shuttle, sidewalks, connected trails
- Need connectivity
 - more bike lanes
 - in-town bus loop, circulator bus to connect neighborhoods
 - connections between dead-end streets, especially in Oakhurst
 - better buffer from streets to sidewalks
- Complications:
 - railroad crossings are hazardous for bikes and peds
 - reduced MARTA routes waste time
 - less likely to bike or walk due to dangerous streets
 - left turns are difficult

Traffic Issues

- Church Street
 - the way it is designed makes it dangerous
 - not enough time to react, too abrupt
 - backs up during crunch
 - bump hazardous to bikes

- roundabout might improve situation
- Cares are not yielding to bikes or pedestrians
- Bikers are not feeling safe with the way streets are designed
- Car not necessarily obeying or recognizing traffic calming measures
- Issue with trying to make certain streets commercial with more throughput
 - contradictory—all streets need to be calm
- More roundabouts—slower speeds
 - Commerce and Church
 - Commerce and Ponce to slow speeds
 - all streets designated as residential should be the approach
- Congestion putting traffic into neighborhoods
- Parking for Glenlake Park causing u-turns, speeding issue
- Church Street traffic calming does work, could work better with other median changes like trees, possible bumpouts for parking
- Consider removing cut through streets
- Need better crosswalk: signage, white marking or brick, better and more ramps
- Perception of ped safety as important as actual safety
- Narrowing of Church at Glenlake is distracting in current form
 - do like that it slows traffic
 - feel safer on sidewalk where there is on-street parking
- City-wide reduction of speed limit
- Use brick or cobbles on street surface to slow traffic
- Close Ponce between Commerce Streets on weekends/nights
- Distinctions: paving/markings, on street—commercial, traffic signals, crosswalks designated, bike lane—not required residential, speed
- Calming: bicycle obstacles—bulbouts
- Church Street
 - need turn lane
 - continued need for on-street parking? replace with bike lane
 - not more pedestrian friendly
- Church Street traffic calming
 - not legible, no visual approach clues
 - does not slow traffic enough
 - could be narrower and have sharrows
 - not everyone is familiar with it
 - does slow traffic
- High speeds: Scott Boulevard and Clairemont sidewalks not used as it could be
- State highway: crosswalks/signalization not efficient, need striping, ped button not located in safe locations
- Make all crosswalks automatically change so you don't have to push the button

- Ped crossing safety locations: Scott Boulevard, no turn on red not honored by motorists
- Clairemont functions as arterial
- Church Street serving as local and collector, speed limits not consistent
- Traffic calming options: granite curbs, narrow lanes
- Conflict between state/city
 - can state designations be moved to slow traffic?
 - West Ponce has been removed in front of mayor's home
- Decatur is used as a cut through: Clairemont, Commerce, Coventry
- Make Scott walkable, Clairemont walkable with traffic calming
- Decatur streets should be safe and walkable whether is high percent business or high percent residential
- Traffic calming
 - not aesthetic, but good at slowing speeds
 - more roundabouts, slow speeding
 - narrow the streets but make it aesthetically pleasing
 - Scott Boulevard is outrageous, slow the traffic!!!
- Traffic calming on Clairemont should not divert traffic onto Ponce Place

Parking Issues

- Better use of parking and parking decks, more education about what is available
- If you can't park next to where you want to go, then not inclined to drive in
- Parking appears available but not "shared"
 - bank lots example
 - need to explore sharing more
- Weekend—shared parking with businesses and night parking
- Secure parking decks
- Offer residents free parking in decks
- Residential parking stickers for street parking
- Shared parking
 - residential mix with commercial has impacts to surrounding neighborhoods (R-60)
 - get county parking lots available to residential parking i.e. next to Decatur High School
- Changes to encourage use of MARTA: safety, encourage use of Cliff commuter buses
- Alternative route from Decatur to other parts of Atlanta via Emory to Lenox/ Buckhead
- Too much capacity (ex: Commerce), slow traffic with on-street parking, no four-lane roads needed
- Talk to Emory about deck next to Artisan, put meters inside the deck
- Better signage for available parking and decks

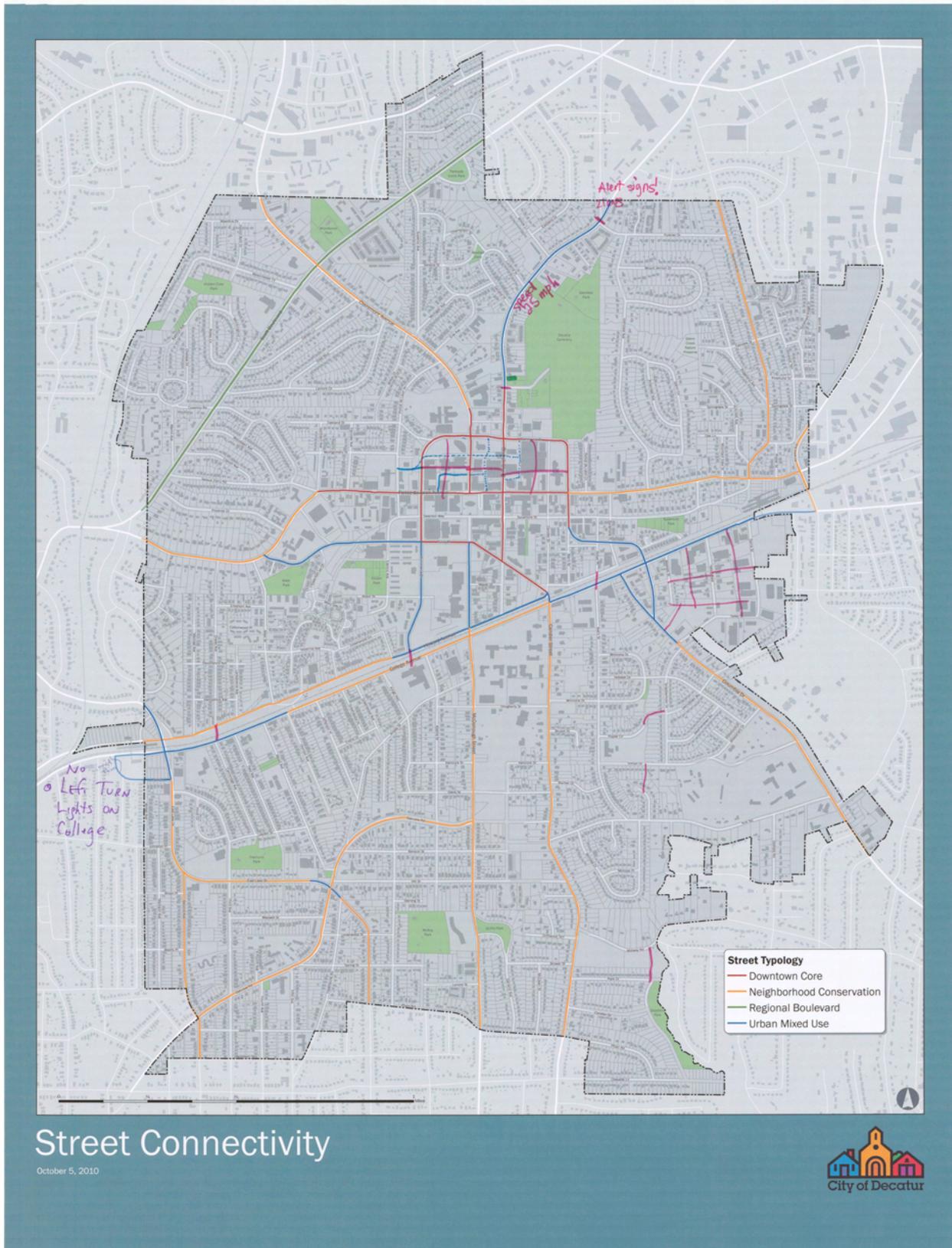
- Car trip reduction
- Reduce car trips by providing more basic needs in town
- Need more shared parking and a shared parking ordinance
- Empty parking lots at night and on weekends, underutilized parking
- Residential vs. business parking conflicts
- Need more parking turnover and parking for non-residents
- Better parking signage, advertise existing free parking
- Not enough on-street parking (mid-day, evening dinner time)
- Need options when on-street parking not available
- Parking deck dark—safety issues after hours
- How far are you willing to park from your destination?
- Free parking alternatives needed/advertised
- Free parking in decks for residents
- Better use of existing parking decks and lots/shared parking
- Parking designations for residents on residential streets needed
- Parking garage/shared parking, centrally located
- Resident only designation in some neighborhoods
- More shared parking, tax incentive to encourage it?

Transit

- More frequent than MARTA, every 15 minutes is good
- We could use going from one side of city to another side
- From neighborhoods to downtown
- Internal circulator
 - if dependable and on time, would use
 - connect areas with Decatur
 - need connections from East Lake station
 - connection to healthcare, grocery stores, city services
 - connect all the schools
 - connect to Edgewood/Kirkwood areas
 - retirement areas need intracity loop
 - outlying residential areas need more connections
 - minimal costs to encourage participation
- Ten years out: transit shuttle between neighborhoods and into downtown
 - perimeter parking, then pay to use shuttle
 - free to residents—students or seniors
- Convert Avondale and East Lake MARTA parking to mixed-use development
- Change bus stigma with a theme oriented shuttle (ex: Georgia Tech trolley)
- How to pay for shuttle?
 - SPLOST
 - fundraising with Festival
 - street vendors
- Run shuttle only during designated times to cut cost

- suggestion box for times feedback
- Need common communication point such as online
- Encourage transit use by reducing travel time to regional destinations
- Circulator could be like a Decatur BeltLine, around city and to Emory, but more frequently than Cliff shuttle
- High speed rail link to Atlanta
- Shuttle funded by local businesses or Downtown Business Association?
- MARTA is not convenient, buses are not utilized and empty (Clairemont, Scott)
- Cliff shuttle highly/medium utilized during peak hours
- Is there a need for an internal circulator system?
- Could contract with Cliff shuttle to serve as circulator when not used to capacity
- Don't want transit options passing in front of homes/not on residential streets

Street Connectivity Map Comments

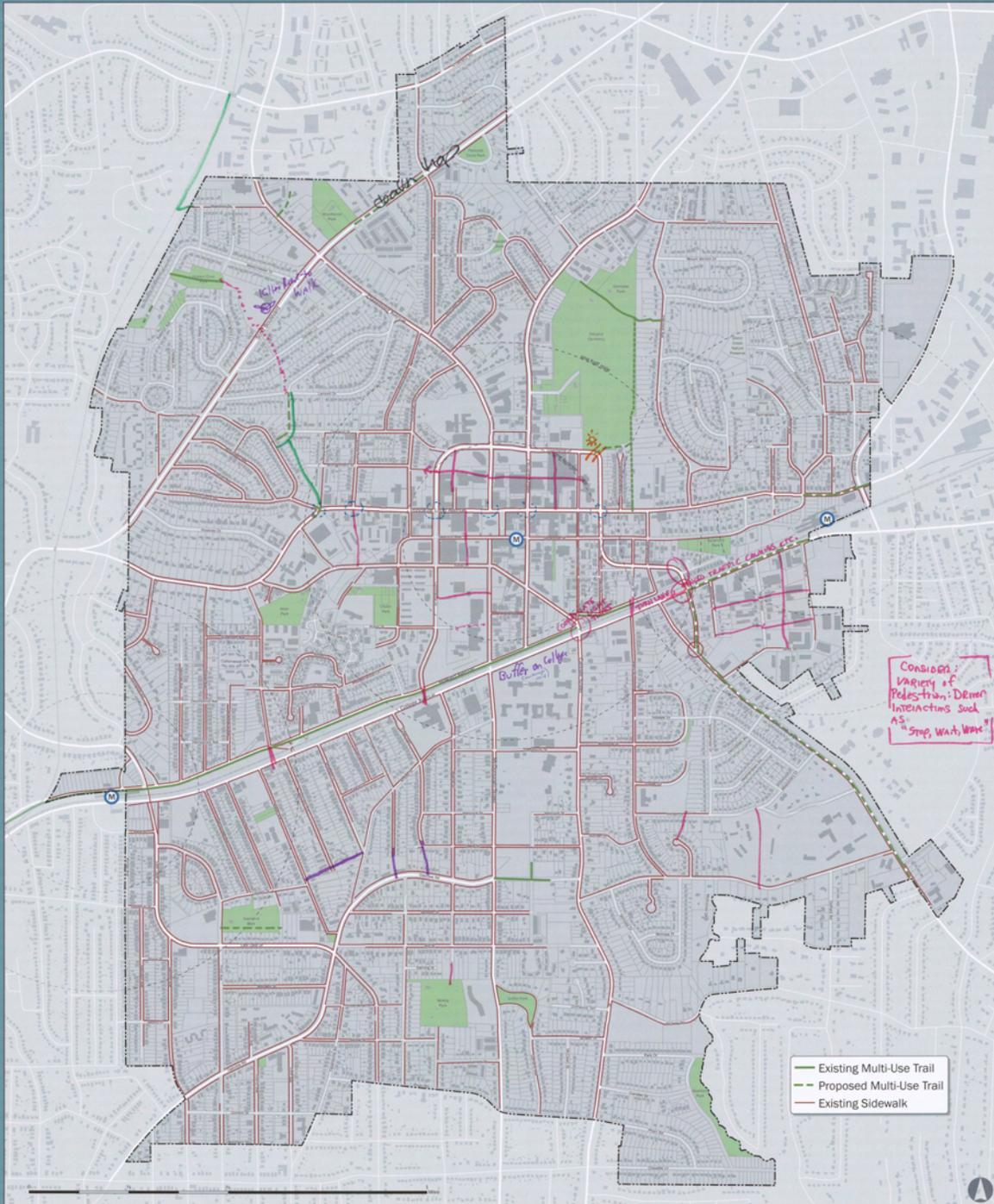


Street Connectivity

October 5, 2010



Pedestrian Connectivity Map Comments

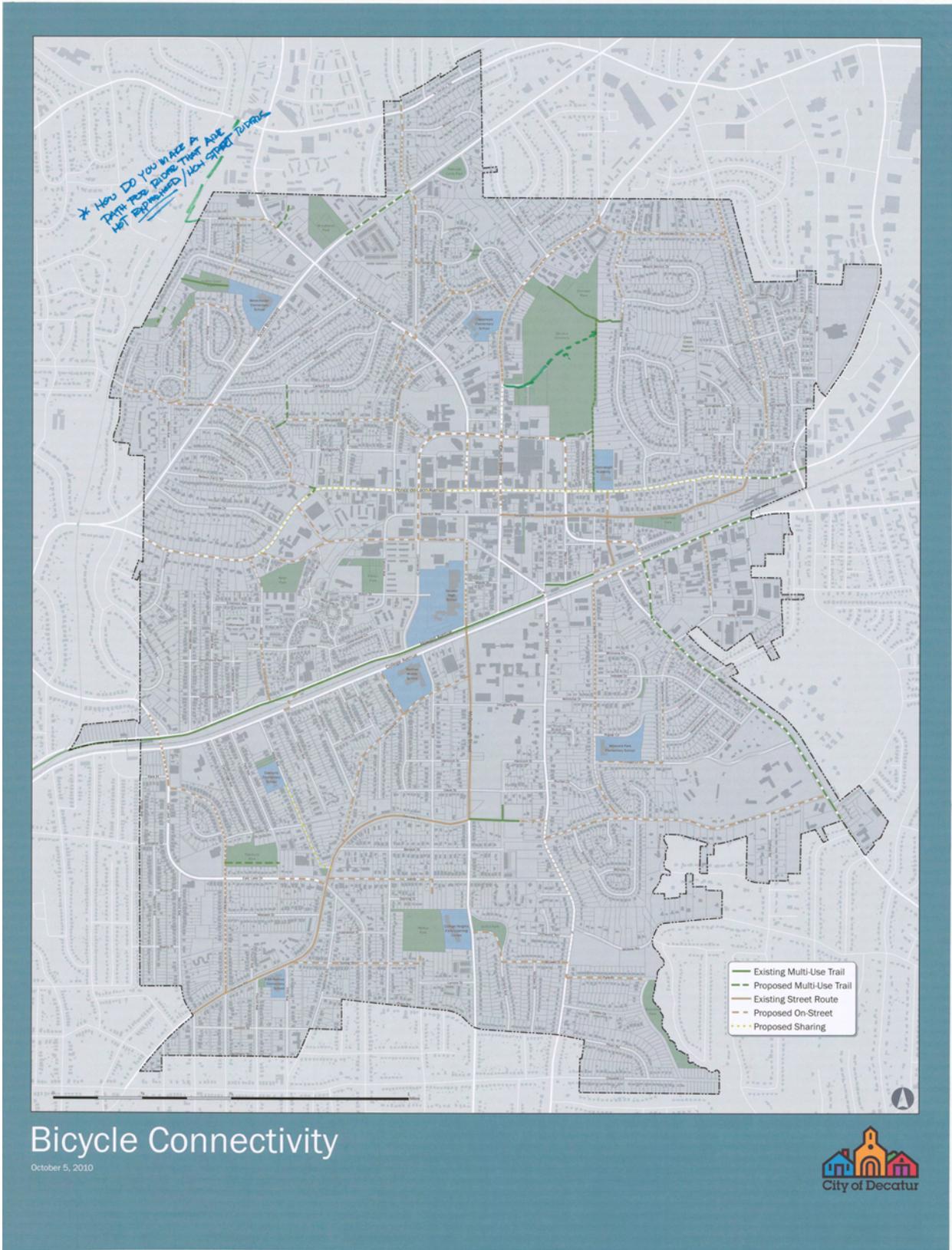


Pedestrian Connectivity

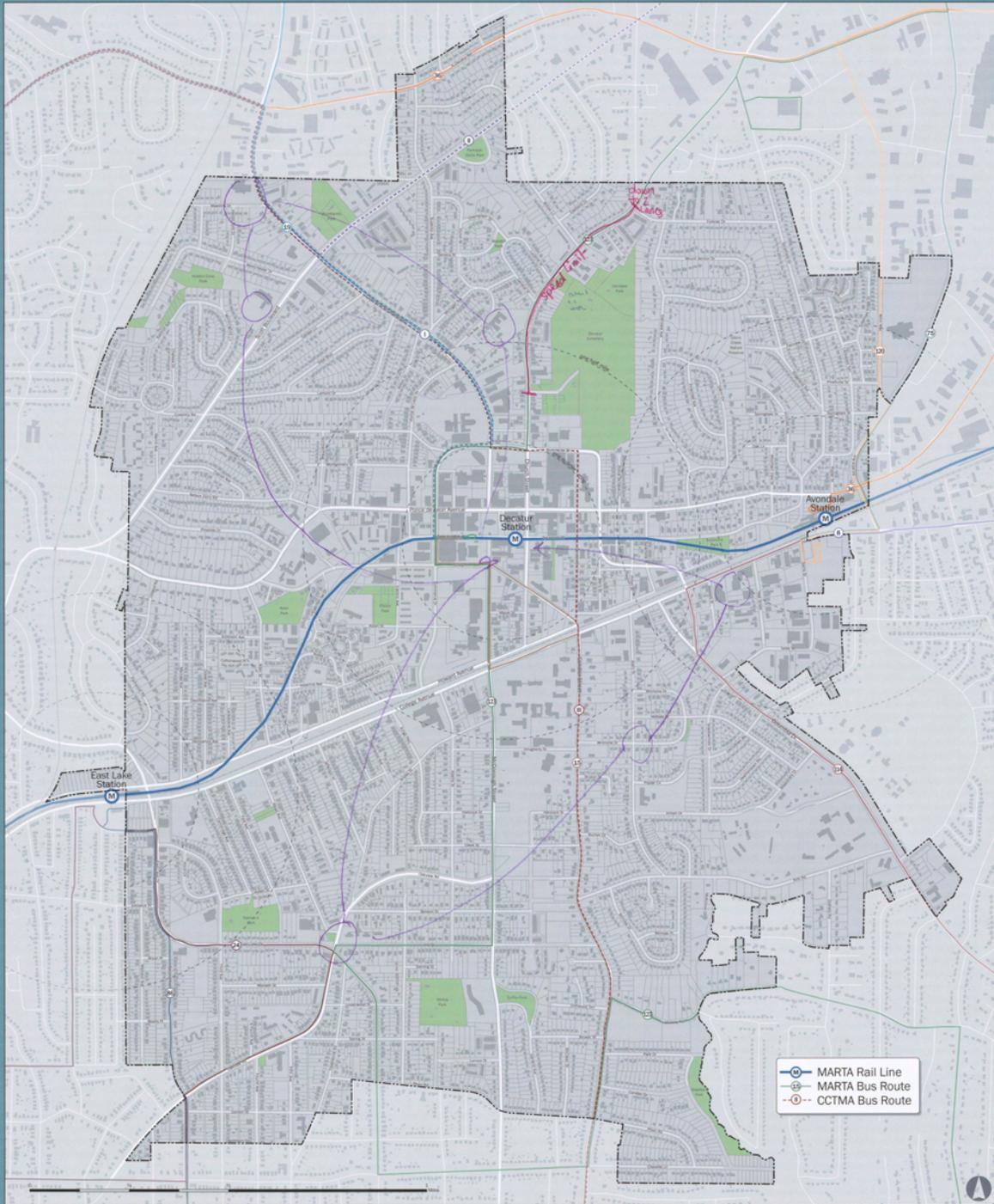
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Bicycle Connectivity Map Comments



Transit Connectivity Map Comments



Transit Connectivity

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