

# FREIGHT ATL: NORTHWEST

Freight Advisory Task Force

January 25, 2023



Department of  
**CITY PLANNING**



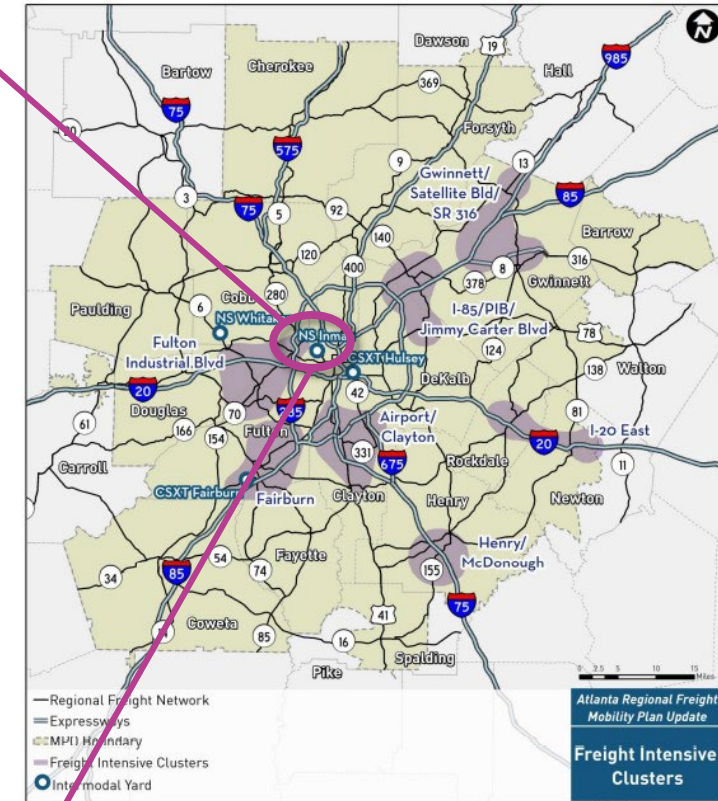
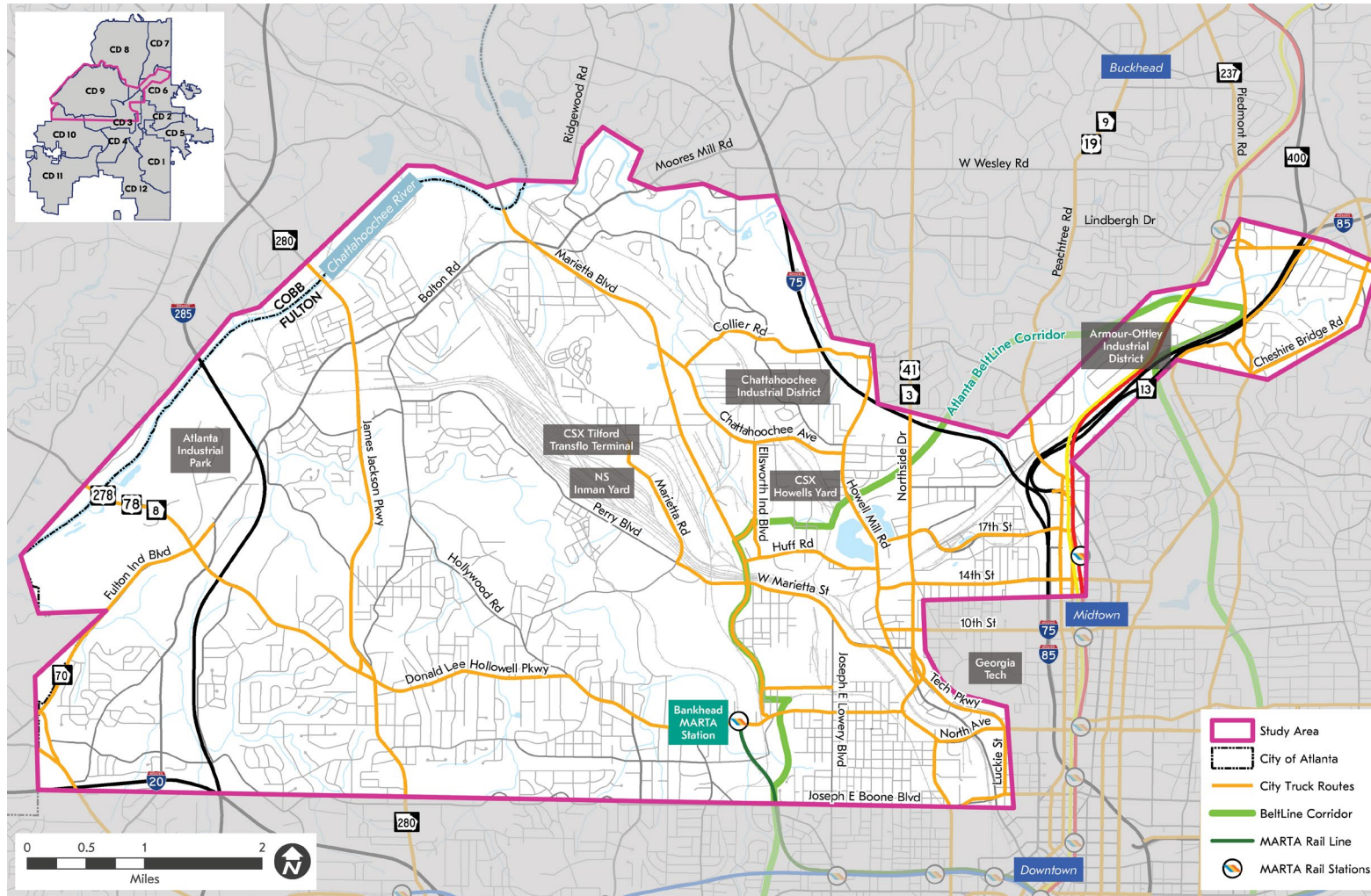
# TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Study Refresher
- Engagement Updates
- Developing Recommendations: Process Overview
- Potential Improvements: Examples of Recommendations
- Next Steps

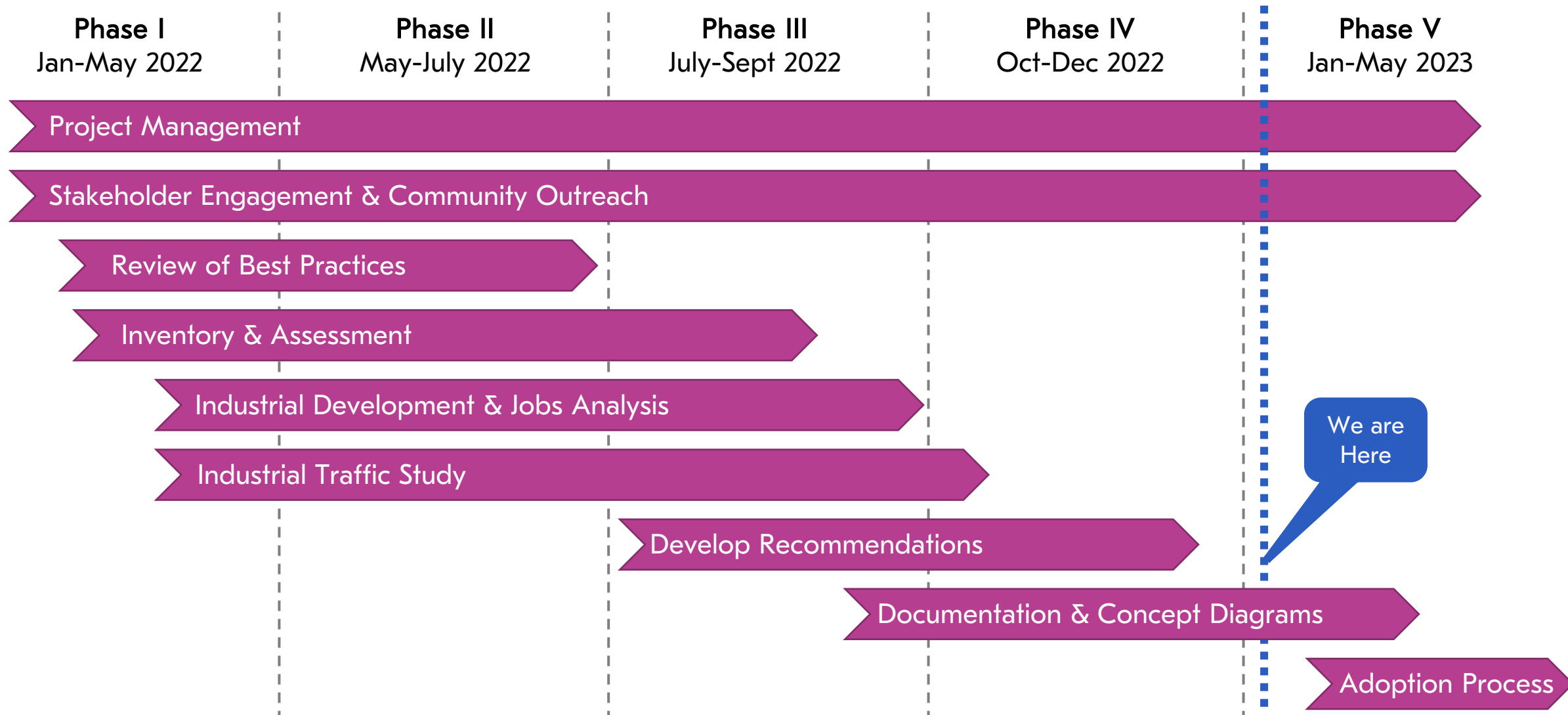
## THANK YOU TO PROJECT SPONSORS:

- The Atlanta Regional Commission
- Invest Atlanta
- Council Member Dustin Hillis (District 9)

# PLANNING CONTEXT



# STUDY SCHEDULE

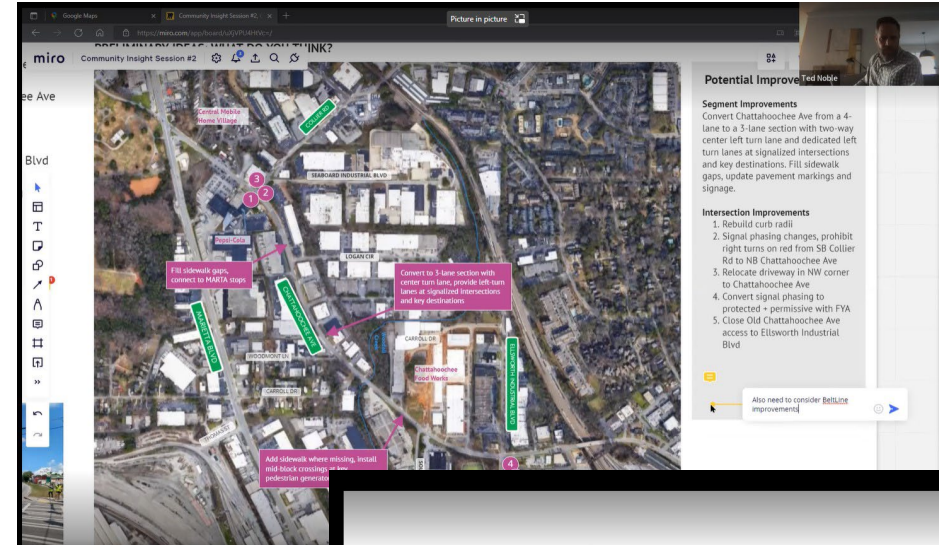




# ENGAGEMENT UPDATES

# COMMUNITY INSIGHT SESSION: VIRTUAL | 9/22

- Small group session to explore potential ideas for three key locations – Bolton Rd, Chattahoochee Ave, and W Marietta St
- Railroads pose several challenges: they run at inconvenient times, shake houses, and may be obstacles to improvements
- Perception that many trucks in the area are just “cutting through” to I-75 or I-285
- Recommendations should consider pedestrians and cyclists, look for opportunities for separated bike lanes



## MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT BIKING, WALKING, TRANSIT

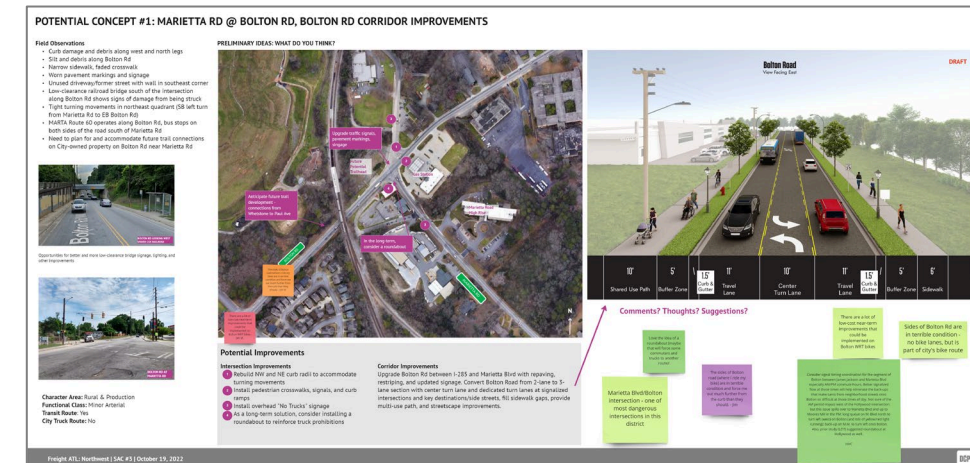
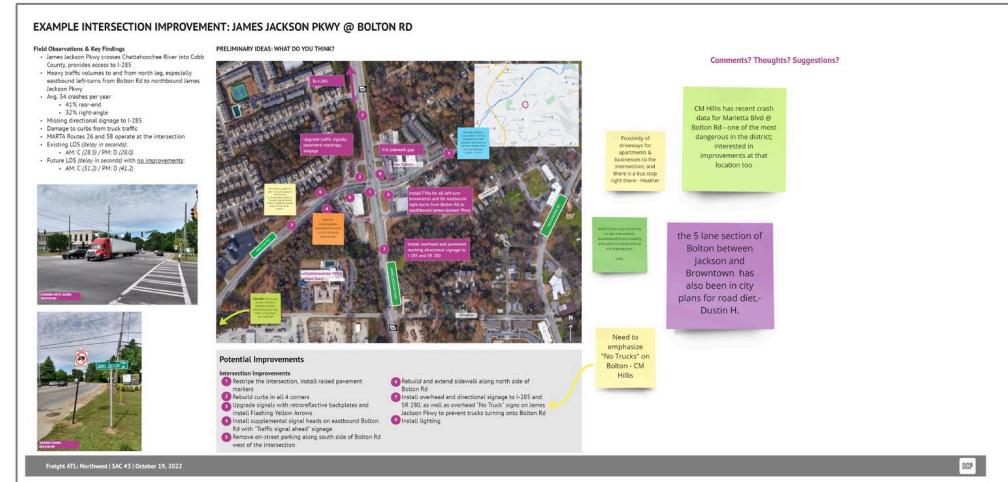
- Missing sidewalk or gaps in sidewalk along key roads, including some truck routes, make it difficult to reach parks and other recreational areas by foot.
- Lack of sidewalk and bike connectivity makes it feel like you have to drive everywhere, even to schools.
- Many bus stops are along roads with no sidewalk and have no waiting areas, benches, or other amenities.
- Some streets have long distances between intersections or marked crosswalks, making it difficult to cross the road.





# STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: VIRTUAL | 10/19

- Safety and mobility, access and connectivity were highest rated factors in prioritizing potential projects
- Support for combination of short-term/lower cost projects as well as longer-term, more complex projects
- Concern for improving bicyclist and pedestrian comfort/safety, especially on roads traveled by trucks
- Suggestions to tie in to/improve access to trails and other amenities (Westside Park, BeltLine, PATH, Woodall Rail Trail)
- Opportunities to leverage/coordinate with projects identified in Capital Improvements Element



# COMMUNITY POP-UPS: 10/26, 11/2

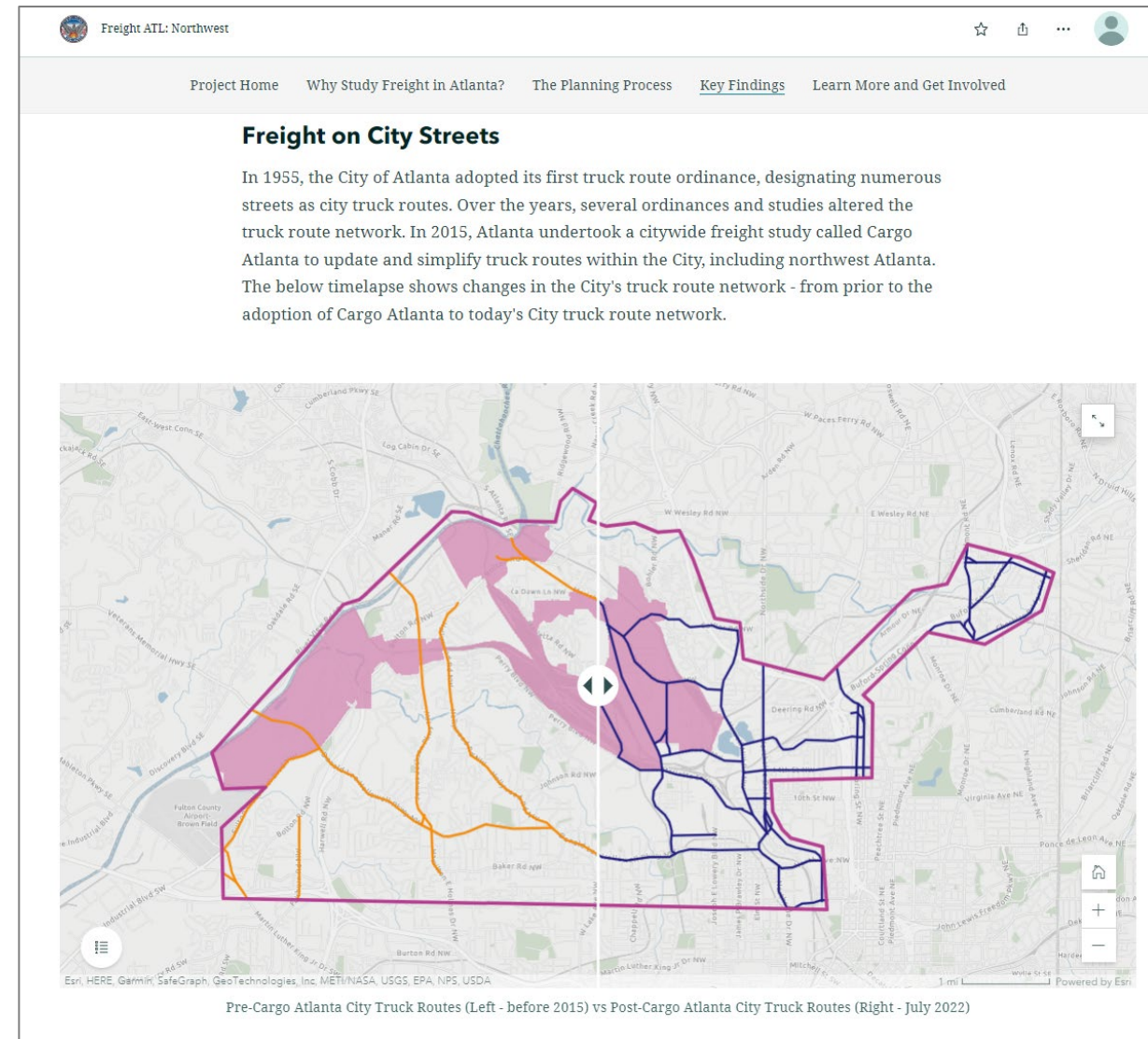
- There should be a more complete sidewalk network and more places for people walking with strollers, dogs, etc.
- Signs (including “no trucks”) often get knocked down and it can take a long time to replace them
- Suggestions to position James Jackson Pkwy as a route that can enable trucks to reach their destinations and relieve Marietta Blvd and Howell Mill Rd
- Support for more sidewalk and mid-block crossings along Chattahoochee Ave, especially near the Works and west toward Collier Rd
- Howell Mill Rd near Defoor Ave is challenging for pedestrians
- Concern about staging of large delivery vehicles (esp. at Carvana on Collier Rd)





# STORYMAP

- Online interactive resource for learning about the process and key findings from Freight ATL: Northwest launched in Fall 2022
- Why Study Freight in Atlanta?
- The Planning Process
- Key Findings
- Learn More and Get Involved



Find the StoryMap on [FreightATL.com](https://FreightATL.com)



# KEY THEMES

- Driver behavior, vehicle size and weight, narrow lanes, lack of separation between sidewalk and travel lanes contribute to discomfort.
- Trucks disrupt or damage residential areas even when local ordinances prohibit them on certain roads; missing or misplaced signs or lack of awareness exacerbate the problem.
- Missing sidewalk, lack of mid-block crossings, missing amenities at bus stops, and lack of connectivity to amenities like trails and parks make people feel they have to drive everywhere.
- Low clearance and weight restricted bridge, narrow lanes, tight turning radii, and poor pavement condition pose safety risks and other challenges, especially for large vehicles.



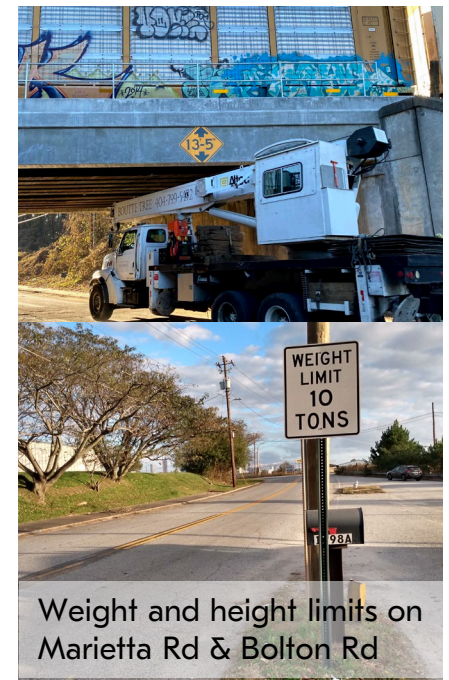
Truck route signs can be confusing, obscured or ignored



Narrow sidewalk with no buffer on Bolton Rd



Missing sidewalk near bus stop along Ellsworth Industrial Blvd

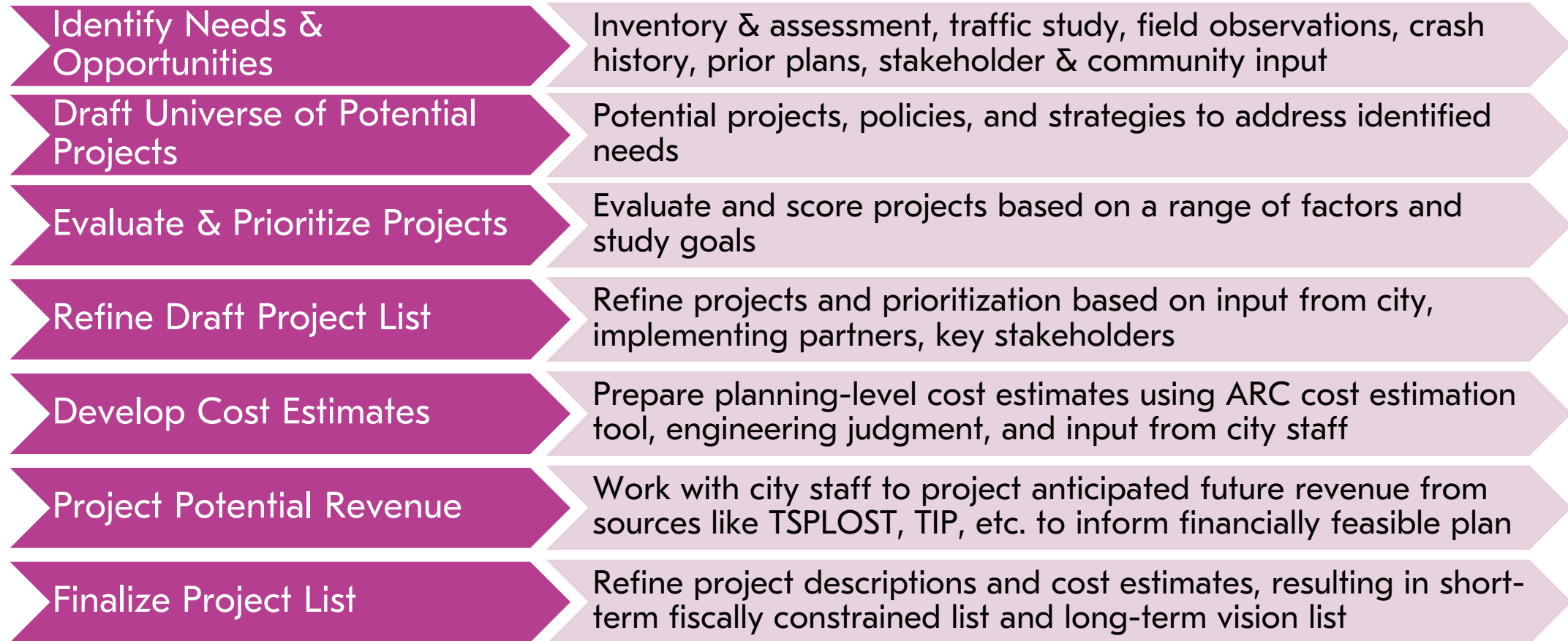


Weight and height limits on Marietta Rd & Bolton Rd



# **DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS: PROCESS OVERVIEW**

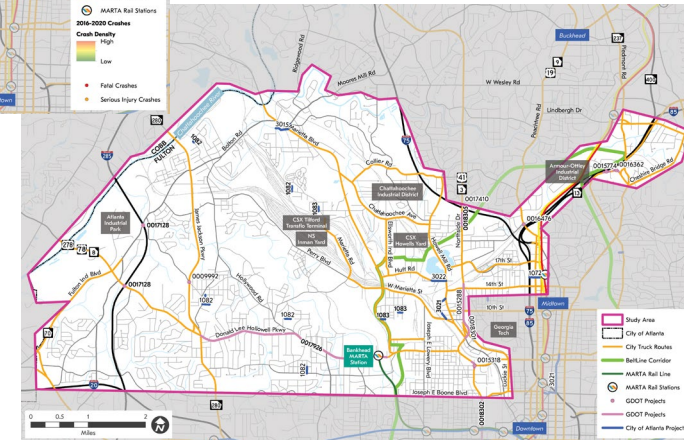
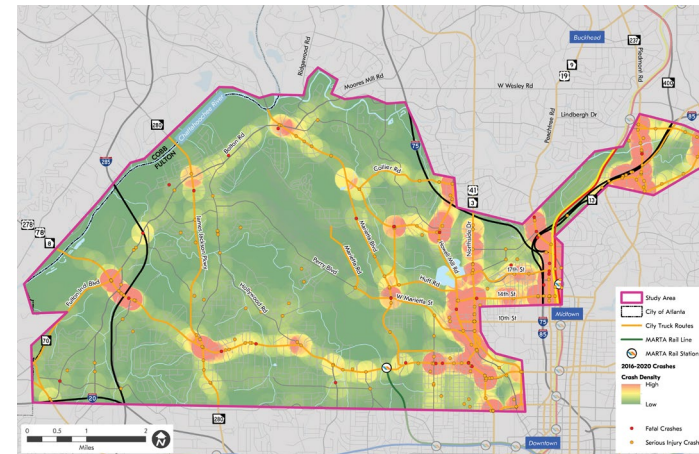
# PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS





# IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PROJECTS: KEY INPUTS

- Ongoing and programmed projects
  - BeltLine & PATH
  - ATLDOT
  - GDOT
  - Upper Westside CID
- Coordination with implementing partners and other agencies
- Recommendations from approved plans and studies
- Findings from inventory and assessment
- Field visit observations
- Crash analysis
- Traffic study findings
- Needs and issues identified from community and stakeholder engagement



# PROPOSED EVALUATION & PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

## Safety & Mobility

- Addresses current or anticipated congestion
- Improves safety along Atlanta's High Injury Network
- Reduces likelihood of crashes

## Access & Connectivity

- Improves first/last-mile freight connectivity
- Improves multimodal facilities and connectivity
- Improves access to or along truck routes

## Economic Vitality

- Increases access to employment
- Supports commercial activity
- Improves access to regionally significant centers of industrial, office, or commercial activity

## Project Readiness

- Consistent with priorities for City capital infrastructure investments
- Potential opportunity for cost sharing
- Project complexity

## Equity & Community Support

- Support from implementing partners and community members
- Consistent with previously adopted plan or study
- Addresses needs in disadvantaged community

## Environment & Public Health

- Anticipated emissions reduction
- Provides options other than driving alone
- Environmental impact



# **POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS: EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

# EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL TYPES OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Roadway &  
Intersection  
Improvements



Workforce &  
Job Access  
Improvements



ITS &  
Technology



Truck Routes



Studies



Signage &  
Wayfinding



Policies &  
Strategies



# POTENTIAL INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Rear-end and angle crashes
- Queuing, congestion, and poor level of service
- Challenges with geometry and limited sight distance



## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- New intersection control – roundabouts
- Upgrade traffic signals
- Traffic signal ahead warning signs
- Signal phasing adjustments
- Lengthen or add turn lanes
- Cut back vegetation to improve sight distance
- Access management improvements – relocate or close driveways

# POTENTIAL INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS *(CONTINUED)*

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Tight corner geometry
- Lack of clear signage
- Worn, damaged, or missing pedestrian facilities



## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

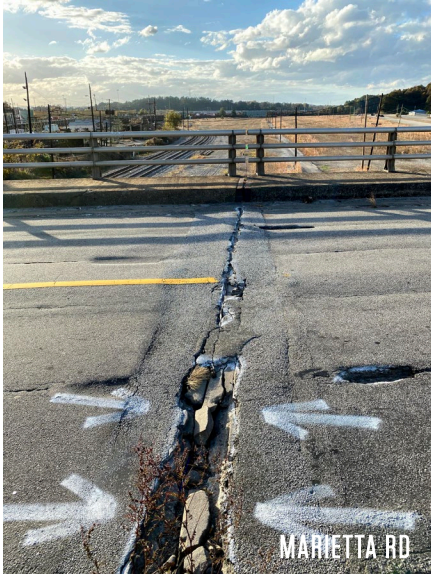
- Rebuild curbs with appropriate radii
- Repair /install curb ramps, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals
- Replace and install pavement markings and striping
- Update and improve signage



# POTENTIAL BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Bridges in poor condition with documented issues are also critical roadway connectors to key freight destinations



## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Replace Marietta Rd bridge over former CSX Tilford Yard and bring up to modern standards for freight vehicles and provide new sidewalk (*City of Atlanta received TIP funding for this project*)
- Repair/replace Marietta Blvd bridge over railroad tracks north of W Marietta St (*could be part of Marietta Blvd scoping study*)

# POTENTIAL WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Truck route and truck prohibition signage are often small, worn, and hard to read
- Truck route and truck prohibition signs have not been maintained consistently with route changes over time
- More wayfinding and route guidance signage could help direct drivers to key/designated routes and interstates



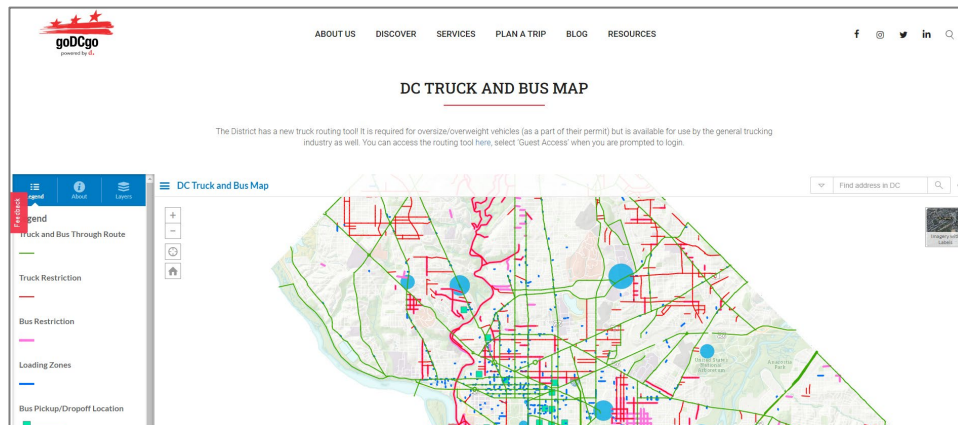


# POTENTIAL WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS *(CONTINUED)*



## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Match signs to City-designated truck routes
- Routinely install “No Trucks” signage on side street approaches to roads where trucks are prohibited
- On major routes and approaches to interstates, consider overhead signage and pavement markings
- Publish web-based map of City-designated truck routes to make it easier for drivers unfamiliar with the area to navigate
- Consider truck route trip planning tool to plan routes for oversized/overweight vehicles



# POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Trucks need to get to I-285 as the dedicated Bypass around Atlanta
- Truck drivers may use the shortest or most direct routes to access interstates
- Prioritizing freight movement along certain corridors could improve efficiency and reduce likelihood of trucks traveling along non-freight routes

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

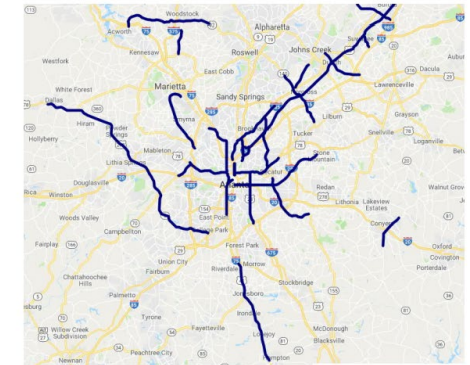
- Coordinate with GDOT to apply for funding to leverage and expand connected vehicle technology to prioritize freight access to I-285 along key corridors



### GDOT Connected Vehicles

#### Current Deployments

- As of 2/5/2021:
  - 654 RSUs licensed and installed
    - DSRC - all channels and ch.180 only
    - DSRC + C-V2X – 6 locations (The Ray Highway)
  - 330 DSRC RSUs being installed and licensed now
  - Future deployments will be DSRC + C-V2X
- Active Pilot Applications:
  - Emergency Vehicle Preemption Pilot: Gwinnett County
  - Transit Signal Priority Pilot: Midtown Atlanta with State Rail and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and Cisco/MARTA
  - In-progress: freight-centered pilots with Georgia Ports Authority in Savannah, GA
  - Incident Responder interchange preemption: Metro Atlanta



# POTENTIAL POLICY AND STRATEGY IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- The study area is home to three high-impact clusters that collectively provide 10,000+ jobs and account for significant gross regional product
- Industrial buildings in Northwest Atlanta tend to be older than in other parts of the city/region and may not meet modern needs
- Over the past 20 years, 36% of all industrial demolitions in the city have been in Northwest Atlanta
- Limited land availability and high demand in growing industrial clusters has led to competition for industrial space and increased rents

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Strengthen workforce development initiatives to improve career pathways for good and promising jobs
- Increase support for industrial businesses through attraction, expansion, and retention efforts, information sharing, and financial and technical assistance
- Support zoning reform so industrial businesses can coexist alongside other uses
- Support high-impact industrial clusters: **distribution and e-commerce, food processing and manufacturing, and video production**



# POTENTIAL TRUCK ROUTE RECOMMENDATIONS

## FACTORS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Street classification
- Direct access to truck routes, interstate highways
- Direct access to industrial districts, freight facilities, etc.
- Future land use
- Network connectivity
- Align with prior plans and adopted legislation

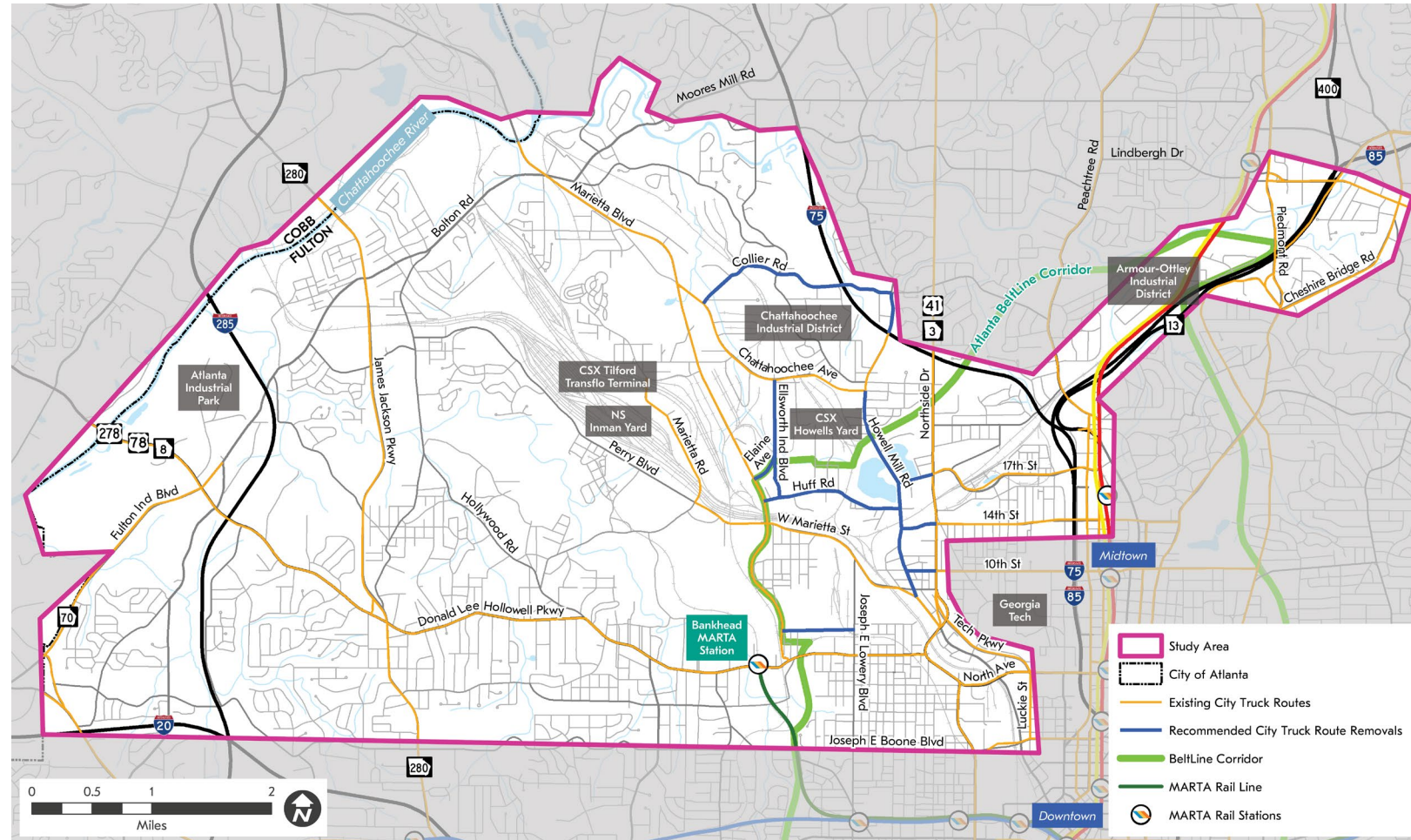
## POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with ARC, GDOT and others to align City-designated routes with state, regional, and national routes while ensuring access to interstates and major freight facilities
- Remove segments that are no longer needed or appropriate based on recent legislation, changing land uses, etc.
- Add truck route layer to ATL GIS Planning Viewer for use in reviewing land use, zoning, and other pending decisions

# POTENTIAL TRUCK ROUTE CHANGES

Consider for removal: —————

- **Jefferson St** between Marietta Blvd & J.E. Lowery Blvd
- **Huff Rd** between Marietta Blvd and Howell Mill Rd
- **Elaine Ave** between Marietta Blvd and Ellsworth Industrial Blvd
- **Ellsworth Industrial Blvd** between Chattahoochee Ave and Huff Rd
- **Collier Rd** between Chattahoochee Ave & Howell Mill Rd
- **Howell Mill Rd** between Chattahoochee Ave and W Marietta St (and spurs to Northside Dr)





# POTENTIAL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Difficult turning from side streets and driveways due to speed, volume of traffic, and number of lanes
- Lack of space for biking and walking
- Uncomfortable to be traveling next to large trucks
- Lack of connectivity to bus stops
- Higher likelihood of angle and sideswipe crashes, frequent lane changes
- Align with prior plans and studies



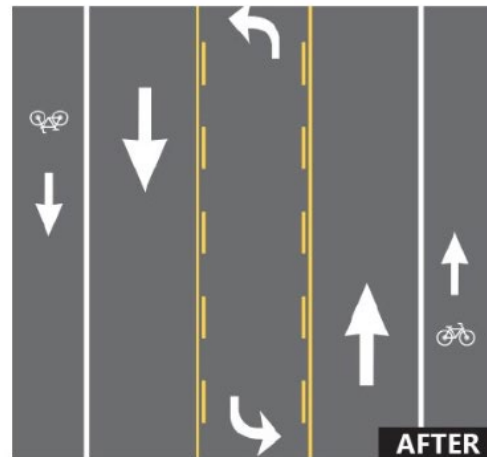
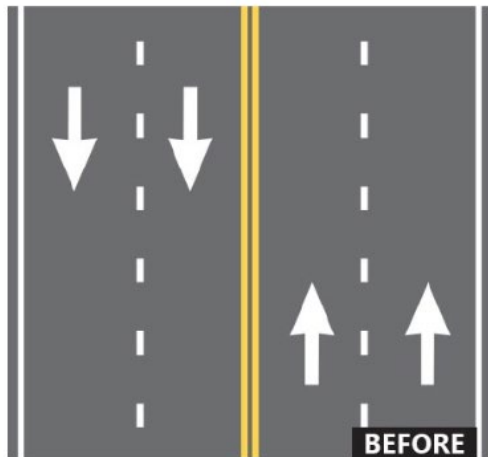


# POTENTIAL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Convert 4-lane sections to 3-lane sections, providing dedicated left-turn lanes at key destinations or side streets
- Provide dedicated space for biking and walking, with buffer from travel lanes
- Midblock crossings at key destinations
- Options to provide short, raised “medianettes” or pedestrian refuge islands
- Streetscape improvements



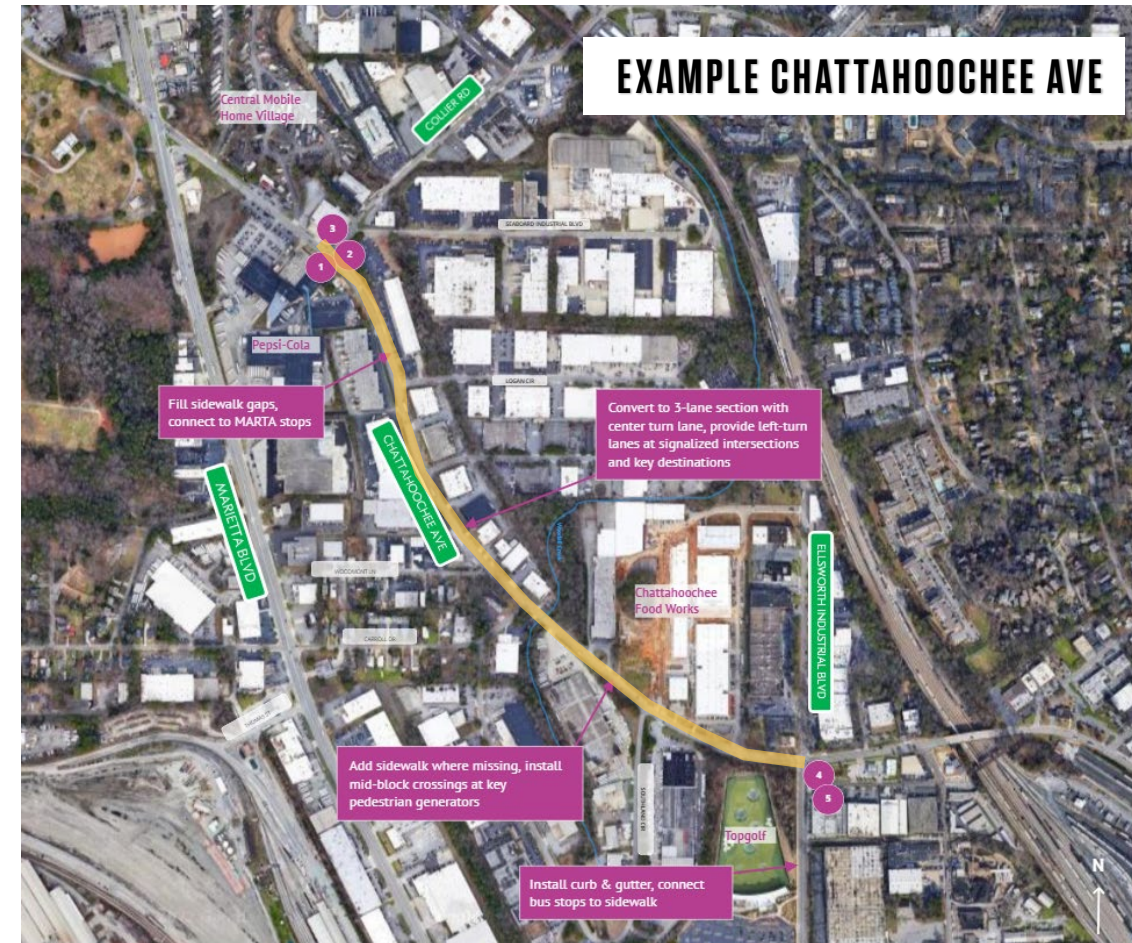
Source: FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures

# CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLE

## BENEFITS

- Reduce rear-end and left-turn crashes due to the dedicated left-turn lane
- Reduce right-angle crashes because drivers turning from side streets only have 2 lanes to cross instead of 3
- Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross
- Traffic calming and more consistent speed
- Opportunity to install pedestrian refuge islands, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, or transit stops

Source: FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures



### Consider at:

- **W Marietta St:** Marietta Rd/Johnson Rd to Marietta Blvd
- **Chattahoochee Ave:** Collier Rd to Ellsworth Industrial Blvd

**NEXT STEPS**



# NEXT STEPS

## TECHNICAL WORK

- Revise technical reports based on comments received, update reports on project website as needed
- Prepare draft recommendations report, post to project website

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Updates to City leadership, Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's)
- **Study Advisory Committee** meeting – February 2<sup>nd</sup>
- **Public review and comment period** – February 2<sup>nd</sup> through March 15<sup>th</sup>
- Update **StoryMap** and **Project Website**
- **Virtual Public Open House** – March 1<sup>st</sup>

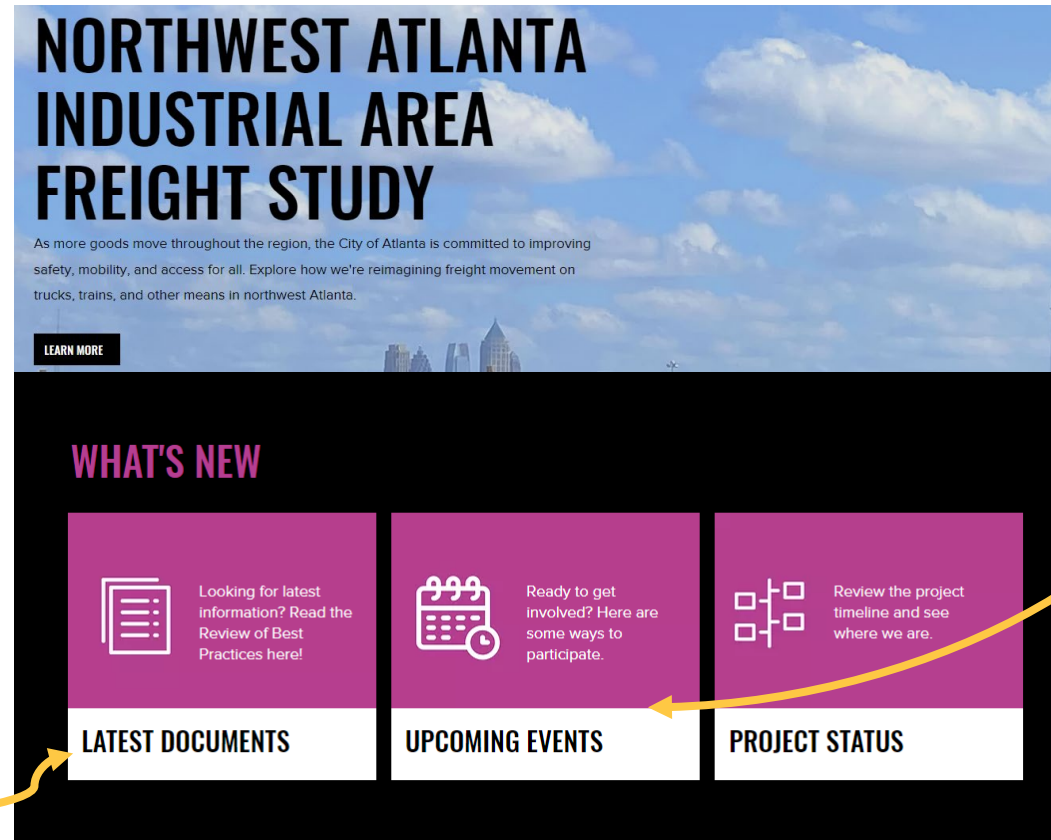
# WEBSITE UPDATES | UPCOMING EVENTS, DRAFT REPORTS

Now available - DRAFT  
copies of technical reports:

- Review of Best Practices
- Inventory & Assessment
- Industrial Development & Jobs

Coming soon:

- Draft Traffic Study report
- Draft Recommendations Report



Upcoming: Virtual Public  
Open House

- March 1, 2023 6-7pm
- Register online

[www.FreightATL.com](http://www.FreightATL.com)

# CONTACT

Email: [FreightATL@AtlantaGA.Gov](mailto:FreightATL@AtlantaGA.Gov)

Website: [FreightATL.com](https://FreightATL.com)

## **Project Manager**

Nate Hoelzel

nhoelzel@AtlantaGA.Gov

404.594.1531

