



RIVER DISTRICT MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

City of Rome, Georgia

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1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Rome's River District Multimodal Analysis and Redevelopment Plan process seeks to introduce policies and projects to support future investments in the area by guiding the development of a multimodal transportation network that facilitates walking, bicycling, transit-use, and effectively manages vehicular parking and traffic demands. A district within the regional destination for shopping, entertainment, employment, and medical care that is Downtown Rome, this project will consider the creation of a multimodal hub within Downtown that encourages the development of new all-day destinations.

The project is guided by the following goals:

- Provide a land use and redevelopment plan and develop it with public input.
- Create metrics to measure conformity to goals of projects and policies
- Maximize available centralized and shared parking spaces whether public or private without eliminating development opportunities.
- Ensure safe, accessible, convenient pedestrian and bicycling facilities throughout the area and connect them with existing, adjacent networks.
- Ensure that the River District is an attractive gateway, is convenient, and remains an asset to the community.

PLANNING AND POLICY BACKGROUND

Various local policies will shape and support the development and maintenance of Rome's River District. In order to gain a better understanding of the planning and policy context of the district, the following were reviewed:

- Downtown Rome Master Plan - 2012
- Rome Comprehensive Draft Plan - 2008
- Rome 2016-2040 LRTP - 2015
- Rome Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan - 2015
- Trail Facilities Plan - 2008
- Rome Uniform Land Development Code (ULDC) - 2015
- ULDC Parking Requirements - 2016
- Draft Downtown Rome Parking Management Procedures Report - 2017
- Unified Planning Work Program – 2017/2018

The following plan summaries form the existing planning framework that is the basis of the policies, programs, and projects recommended in River District Multimodal and Redevelopment Plan.

Downtown Rome Master Plan - 2012

The Downtown Rome Master Plan identifies the adjacent River District as a key opportunity in that it was underutilized with a high rate of vacant buildings, undeveloped land, and uninviting streetscapes. As the River District undergoes its own master planning effort, the Downtown Plan provides an excellent precedent with recommendations to increase development and to create welcoming streetscapes that take advantage of the District's assets, including its river views, its potential for an arts district, and access to a growing walkable and economically vibrant community.

Rome Comprehensive Plan – 2018 Update

Of areas immediately within or surrounding the River Arts District, the plan identifies the following constraints and shortcomings:

- Wayfinding and visual cues that provide a sense of arrival are lacking
- Improved streetscapes on streets feeding into Broad Street
- 5th Avenue features drastic underutilization with high vacancy levels and poorly maintained building facades
- Public gathering spaces are not well maximized along riverfront

Within the recent comprehensive plan update, a map of “character areas” was created that would specify land uses, development patterns, and measures that could be taken to achieve each character area's goal(s). The district is classified as “urban,” and Turner McCall Boulevard and Shorter Avenue corridors are classified as “gateway corridors.”

The urban character area prescribed low, medium, and high density residential uses; commercial; industrial; public/institutional; parks; and mixed-use. The plan prescribes a Walk Score of at least 70 for all urban areas (a Walk Score of 70 means that an area is “very walkable” and most daily errands can be achieved by foot). Development patterns include infill development on vacant and under-utilized sites, affordably priced housing, variety of housing types, and a maximum building height of 4-5 stories. The plan anticipates that measures such as updating development regulations to match desired development pattern, incentives for redevelopment, access control measures, increasing transit service, and creating streetscape requirements can further this character area's goals.

Gateway corridors are frequently traveled roads that serve as the “gateways” into Rome. The goals of this character area are to beautify those roads with appropriate landscaping and screening, prioritize measures to reduce traffic congestion, and emphasize redevelopment along these corridors versus new, greenfield development. No land uses are prescribed –land uses that the nearby character areas prescribe are appropriate. Prescribed development patterns include improvement of sidewalk and street appearance, and consolidation of driveways and creating inter-parcel connections between parking lots to aid with congestion reduction. The plan recommends measures such as access management, increasing transit service, creating streetscape requirements, and signage and wayfinding standards.

Rome 2016-2040 LRTP - 2015

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), developed by the Rome-Floyd County Planning Department, was adopted by the Rome-Floyd County MPO's Transportation Policy Committee in 2016. The main goals of the LRTP emphasized:

- A connected and expanded active (bicycle/pedestrian) transportation system,
- The provision of more transportation options for Downtown Rome,
- Ongoing maintenance of the road network and transportation facilities,
- Completing the bypass around the south side of Rome,
- Integration of transportation and land use policies, and
- Collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.

Rome Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan - 2015

The Rome Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan created an implementation strategy for a robust bicycle, pedestrian, and trail network. With the goal of providing residents and visitors access to the benefits of walking and biking, the following targets were set by the MPO:

- Achieve Bicycle Friendly Community designation by 2018 (not yet reached as of June 2018)
- Achieve Walk Friendly Community designation by 2018 (not yet reached as of June 2018)
- Double the number of people actively commuting by 2020
- Create 27 new miles of on-street bikeway network, and create another 45 miles of trail network.

The community identified the following primary infrastructural needs:

- An expansion of the trails and greenway networks,
- Increased instances of buffered bicycle lanes, and
- An increase in the number of shared-use side paths along vehicular roadways.

They also identified several programmatic needs: improved wayfinding signage, a trail user etiquette campaign, and a pedestrian and cyclist safety campaign. The plan made a series of infrastructural, managerial, design, programmatic, and policy recommendations aimed at reaching these design outcomes.

Trail Facilities Plan - 2008

The Trail Facilities Plan was completed by the Rome-Floyd County Planning Department in 2008. The Plan contains a clear set of goals emphasizing development, connectivity, accessibility, and civic coordination. It also features an existing conditions report, the creation of trail typologies and design guidelines, and establishes wayfinding and signage standards. It concludes with a recommendation for 20 specific trails to be expanded, improved, or created anew, along with suggestions for 12 trailhead facilities and 4 canoe and water trail facilities.

Rome Uniform Land Development Code (ULDC) - 2015

The Rome-Floyd County Uniform Land Development Code, originally adopted in 2001 and last revised in 2015, contains guidelines for all developments within the county's jurisdiction. Its purpose is to regulate the use of land; location and use of buildings and other site improvements; and the construction of public facilities and private improvements related in any way to the development of land.

ULDC Parking Requirements - 2016

There is no off-street parking requirement for non-residential uses within the CBD, or for residential units with three or fewer dwelling units on a property. The code also allows split/shared parking space requirements by land use. Both of these practices are associated with the construction of fewer parking spaces per unit of developed land, and are vital for the shaping of healthy, walkable urban streetscapes.

Downtown Rome Parking Management Procedures Report (DRAFT) - 2017

The Downtown Parking Management Report assesses existing practices and determines the need for any changes in approach to improve the parking experience in Downtown Rome. The report included substantial stakeholder engagement, ordinance review, observations of parking conditions, and a catalog of existing assets including wayfinding.

Key challenges and solutions identified by the report are included in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Parking Challenges and Solutions

Challenge	Solutions
On-street parking free of charge (despite fees associated with off-street parking facilities) reducing efficiency of the overall parking	Implementation of parking fees system-wide and increased enforcement to ensure compliance, using technology as feasible to assist in efficient implementation.
Parking segmentation caused by designating parking for permit holders	Shared parking strategy that does not designate parking spaces in structures, allowing employees to park during work hours, and visitors to use the same spaces during evening hours
Community concerns that parking time limits are too short	Minor time-limit extensions recommended; paired with a pricing strategy that would allow for more effective use of on-street facilities
Limitations in existing parking management infrastructure	Use of key technologies including parking pay stations, pay-by-phone services, and license plate recognition tools to support enforcement
Wayfinding challenges for visitors and customers looking for parking	Adding signage and enhancing signage visibility to facilitate access to parking facilities and to create a more pedestrian friendly environment for drivers post parking

LEARNING FROM PEERS

Rome is unique in its set of opportunities and constraints, however many other cities have revitalized their downtowns' riverfronts and adjacent warehouse districts. Exploring particularly successful examples of these efforts will provide Rome with a set of best practices, useful tools, and

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general inspiration. This section highlights such examples from the following communities that have been identified as identified as peer cities for this study:

- Lowell, Massachusetts
- Des Moines, Iowa
- Asheville, North Carolina

Figure 2: Peer City Key Characteristic Comparison

	Rome, GA	Lowell, MA	Des Moines, IA	Asheville, NC
Population				
City Population (2016)	36,400	110,500	215,000	87,500
Population Density	1,200 per sq. mi.	8,000 per sq. mi.	2,600 per sq. mi.	2,100 per sq. mi.
Transportation Mode Share				
Drive Alone	81.8%	74.7%	82.5%	74.1%
Carpool	10.0%	8.8%	7.4%	8.9%
Transit	0.5%	3.4%	2.2%	1.4%
Walk	1.0%	6.9%	2.9%	5.0%
Bike	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	1.4%
Other	6.6%	5.9%	4.9%	9.2%

Lowell, MA

Formerly a thriving manufacturing economy and the country's largest textile production center, the once densely populated city of Lowell suffered severe population loss and urban decay in the post-industrial era. Today, Lowell is proud to be one of the fastest growing cities in New England and an otherwise slowly growing section of the nation.

Like Lowell, Rome was once a manufacturing town with a textile focus and dependence on its rivers for energy and inspiration. Today, these two cities are similar in their semi-dense urban form, their housing of educational and medical institutions, and their vision of the role that water access could play in their future prosperity.

Bringing About Change

Much of the development effort in Lowell over the last decade has been centered on attracting young professionals and welcoming small, new businesses into downtown. To this end, the city has rebranded, presenting itself as an affordable alternative to nearby Boston, about an hour's drive away.

Though open to the vitality offered by new populations and employers, the city has been very careful to nurture and support its existing population. This has manifested in an established recent history of highly effective public engagement strategies to improve the quality and acceptability of Lowell's development.

In Lowell's effort to reinvigorate its once thriving downtown, city officials and developers alike expressed their belief that neither housing nor employment opportunities alone were sufficient to achieve the community's goals. Peer analyses revealed that healthy downtowns demand around-

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the-clock activity. As a result, development must be programmatically mixed-use, correctly scaled, inclusively accessible, and economically productive. One stand-out project in particular, the Hamilton Canal Innovation District, checks all of those boxes and has been welcomed by the community as it gets underway.

Multimodal Development District Example – Hamilton Canal Innovation District Plan (2015)

As an element within the comprehensive master plan “Sustainable Lowell 2025,” the Hamilton Canal Innovation District Plan focuses on what is arguably the city’s premier development opportunity: 15 acres of waterfront land perfectly situated in the heart of Lowell. The plan aims to transform this riverfront from vacant, underutilized land into a vibrant, mixed-use, walkable, productive, transit-oriented neighborhood.

Calling for partnerships between local businesses, large employers, and city government - the plan claims the riverfront as the city’s innovation and entrepreneurship district. The plan aims to develop housing benefitting workers at the new employment cluster as well as public space and recreational offerings – all a short walk from local transit and regional commuter rail. The University of Massachusetts - Lowell is leading the charge by locating their new Innovation Hub at this site.

Hamilton Canal Innovation District Vision - Image from ICON Architecture



Source: ICON Architecture

Key Takeaways

The Right Ingredients: Much of Lowell’s revitalization success can be attributed to city-wide rebranding and outreach, public-private investment partnerships, transit focus/integration, affordability, and a focus on natural and historic assets. Rome is in a position to utilize these same elements to its advantage.

Connectivity: A focal strategy of the Hamilton Canal Innovation District Plan is to use the project not as an isolated development initiative, but to operationalize the connective nature of the waterway and link multiple development projects within the city. If during the planning process, the City of Rome sees the connective tissue between the district and the rest of the city, the River District could become a catalyst for revitalization well beyond its borders.

Des Moines, IA

In 1990, the Book of Lists ranked the City of Des Moines as the 12th worst place to live in the US. Taking this unfavorable review to heart, Des Moines has focused on establishing a unique sense of place. These efforts have unquestionably paid off: since 2010, while the rest of the state of Iowa has stagnated, Des Moines has experienced a 6% growth in population. Much of this growth concentrated in and around downtown and along the Grand Avenue corridor. Wanting to leverage this growth as an opportunity to reshape commuting behavior, make streets safer and healthier, and to ensure that businesses share in the growth, Des Moines invested heavily in “complete streets” to make the most of the public right of way. This included adding bike lanes, wider sidewalks, extensive landscaping, and the creation of a highly successful pilot strategy and public outreach campaign.

Like Des Moines, Rome has historic assets that were nearly paved over during the rise of the automobile in the 20th century. Uncovering these assets is key to Rome’s resurgence as it has been for Des Moines. Sometimes, planners and civic activists must go back in time to remember how cities work at their best and showcase what makes them places to love and identify with. The revitalization of the River District could be Rome’s chance to learn from its own successful past, much as Des Moines has, and continue a transformation from neglect to admiration.

Bringing About Change

Des Moines’ rapid progress was brought about by several highly effective planning strategies.

- **National Perspective:** Having national experts assess existing conditions within the city to identify which corridors would best benefit from walkability, bicycle, and reconfiguration interventions. Planners presented a set of project recommendations for the city, many of which were pilot-tested over the course of a 12-month impact study.
- **State Support:** The State of Iowa strongly supported the benefits of building/resurrecting walkable communities. Hosted by the Healthiest State Initiative, the Iowa Walking College is a six-month educational program where fellows explore ways to improve walkability through online and face-to-face interactions with the public and with governing officials. These fellowships are awarded to community change agents working in public health, development, planning, transportation, economics, and education.
- **Complete Streets:** Available on the Complete Streets Des Moines [website](#) is an exhaustive list of policies, guidelines, recommendations, presentations, design strategies, and available financial awards that both Des Moines and other cities can use to best implement their complete street plans. Not just talking the talk, Des Moines has managed to integrate complete streets practices and philosophies into all avenues of city life. Advocacy groups, businesses, schools, political entities, development agencies, parks enthusiasts, and many other sectors within society all feature complete street rhetoric on their websites and within their campaigns. The resulting pride in the public right of way will prevent complete streets practices from being a passing fad. Rather, it will ensure

sustainability and cement these ideals of public health, safety, equity, and place-making within the character of the city itself.

Multimodal Development District Example – East Grand Avenue Complete Streets Conversion Project (2017)

The Grand Avenue Project is a two-year pilot to provide access for all street users (pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists) while also increasing safety, improving public health, and promoting businesses along the Grand Avenue corridor – Des Moines’ signature street.

To reach these goals, the project calls for protected bike lanes, improved signage and pavement/crossing markings, and a reduction in through travel lanes from six to four. The corridor includes green conflict-zones to better alert drivers to the presence of bicyclists. Bus stops include raised islands for increased visibility and passenger safety while boarding and alighting.

Though the pilot project will last two years, reconfiguration and marking of the street is scheduled to take place in just three short months. This is possible because the project uses low-cost, temporary construction materials to give the City time to test and assess how well these Complete Street concepts function in practice. The pilot period will allow the public time to really experience the new configuration and to then provide valuable feedback on what works and what does not. If acceptable after the two-year pilot, more permanent solutions – with raised medians, for example, or landscaping, improved lighting, and top-of-the-line pavement quality – will then be broadly welcomed.

Grand Avenue Temporary Street Reconfiguration



Source: City of Des Moines, Iowa

Key Takeaways

Test it Out First: There is no perfect formula for reinvigorating city streets. Running pilot tests allows cities to figure out what combination of upgrades and design models work best for them before committing to something more financially burdensome. In addition to being a wise strategy

for winning public support, temporary projects allow cities to integrate significant change and innovation at a particularly fast rate.

For Rome, this could be especially useful as the City has not conducted extensive street or neighborhood redesigns. A similarly framed pilot would smooth out the adjustment period.

Asheville, NC

‘America’s Happiest City’ is a nickname that Asheville enjoys today due to its more recent arrival on the social, economic, and political stage of North Carolina and the larger southeast region. However, looking at the city during the 70s and 80s, this rise to prominence may have seemed unlikely, as downtown was in a state of vacancy and disrepair.

The once bustling main street through the city became the domain of “Closed” signs and boarded up windows. City residents left the urban fabric of downtown for the suburban living patterns typical of much of later 20th century America. However, as tastes changed, Asheville could trade on its past to invite a new generation with a new aesthetic – one more interested in the variety brought by small businesses, a denser more compact environment, and the arts. Today, downtown Asheville is highly walkable, has a vibrant arts scene, ongoing development and redevelopment, an effective transit network, and above average population growth. No wonder its America’s “happiest city”!

Much like Asheville, Rome has an enjoyable historic downtown, an interest in the arts and music, and walkable/bikeable streets. Rome’s River District is immediately adjacent to downtown and a logical extension of its patterns would expand the sense of “downtown” offering more opportunities to leverage this regional asset.

Bringing About Change

Over the past three decades, Asheville’s downtown revitalization has been guided by a diverse and active group of stakeholders comprising small businesses, local residents, real estate investors, historic preservationists, and city officials. These stakeholders have worked together to agree on which elements of Asheville’s unique character should be the focus of development efforts. The primary emphases were: historical preservation of Asheville’s built environment, strong support for local artisans and entrepreneurs, and access to the city’s beautiful natural environment. In making these assets the focus of urban revitalization efforts, Asheville has cultivated a *let’s rebuild together* attitude in which residents, artists, small business owners, and civic leaders – feel empowered to use their skills to create the place they proudly call home.

Multimodal Development District Example – River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (2016)

In April 2014, the City submitted an application to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to fund six interconnected transportation/development projects through the TIGER VI Program. In November 2014, the US Secretary of Transportation visited Asheville to announce that Asheville was granted a \$14.6 million federal award to support these projects aimed at transforming the city’s River Arts District. These funded projects together form the River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (RADTIP). Construction began in 2016 and will wrap up in 2020.

RADTIP entails the construction of a 2.2 mile segment of the Wilma Dykeman Riverway, a larger 17- mile multi-modal corridor in Asheville following the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers. In

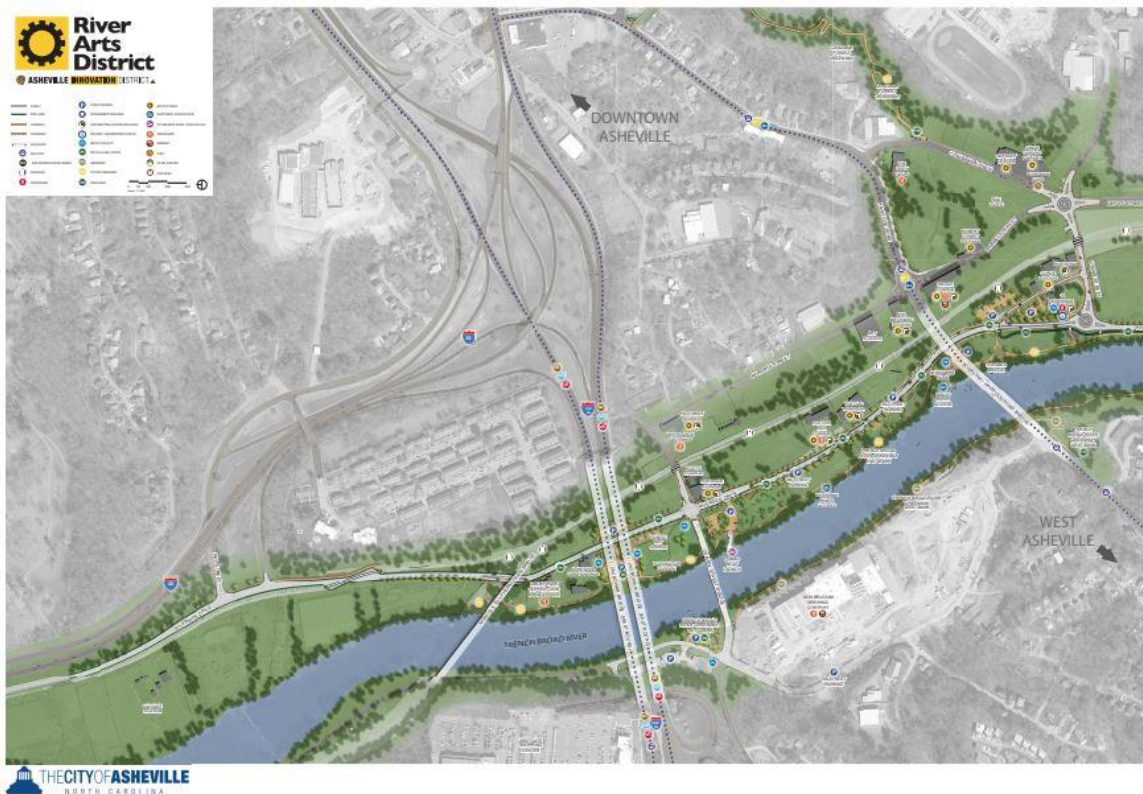
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addition to improved intersections and bridge reconstruction, development plans include roadway improvements, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways, on-street parking, and storm water improvements. There is also a strong focus on public art as a unifying theme across projects that links development efforts to the overall character of the River Arts District.

The project is overseen by the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission, which consists of 14 members appointed by various public councils, chambers of commerce, and boards of commissioners within Buncombe County. Each appointing body must ensure that 50% of their appointees are owners of riverfront properties or businesses. This requirement ensures that commission members equally represent personal stakes in the project's success.

Asheville, North Carolina's River Art District Transportation Improvement Project Master Plan



Source: City of Asheville, North Carolina

Key Takeaways

Management Matters: When projects are overseen by committees with personal stakes in the outcome, the end result is likely to be more acceptable to a broader swath of the community. In Asheville's case a strong downtown organization coalesced development energies around a few key themes – this allowed potentially contentious redevelopment plans to be framed in an overall vision for the city. In the riverfront redevelopment, requiring that half of commission owners be economically tied to project success harnessed energy which may have been used to oppose change to instead propel change forward. Simply put, key stakeholders are far less likely to oppose projects they help create.

Create an Identity: Asheville used the unique character of its downtown to create an identity – to tell a story – which residents and key stakeholders could easily understand and which

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channeled development energy and allowed for a cohesive feel in downtown and adjoining redeveloped areas that celebrated small businesses and the arts and culture.

Rome has an equally charming downtown environment and strong leadership from the business community. Redevelopment of the River District should look to Asheville's success in expanding its downtown energy to adjacent districts and corridors.

2 THE RIVER DISTRICT TODAY

In order to provide recommendations that effectively support a multimodal transportation network that accommodates growth and development in the River District, it is critical to understand the existing land use and transportation network conditions. This provides an understanding of the mobility options community members have at their disposal, and helps with the identification of network gaps that may exist.

TRAFFIC AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Parking

The River District is not currently in the parking enforcement district of Downtown. According to data received from the Downtown Development Authority, parking availability is generally good.

Currently, on-street parking in the River District is used for the existing local businesses and as occasional overflow during large events. As the rights of way are relatively narrow, there is relatively little on-street parking available. There are approximately 70 on-street parking spaces. Controls are limited and not adequately signed. Payment is not required.

Figure 3: River District On-Street Parking

Street Segment	Block Faces	Spaces	Regulation
West 3 rd St by Tennis Center	NW	20	None
North 5 th Ave - Bale to West 3 rd St	NE / SW	33	2hr 8a – 6p
Avenue A – North 5 th to Turner McCall	E	~15	2hr 8a – 6p

The majority of parking in the district is off-street. Most businesses have parking lots. Floyd Medical Center has a parking deck with pedestrian bridge located just north of the district on Turner McCall Blvd with access from W 8th Street. The largest private parking lots in the District are referenced below:

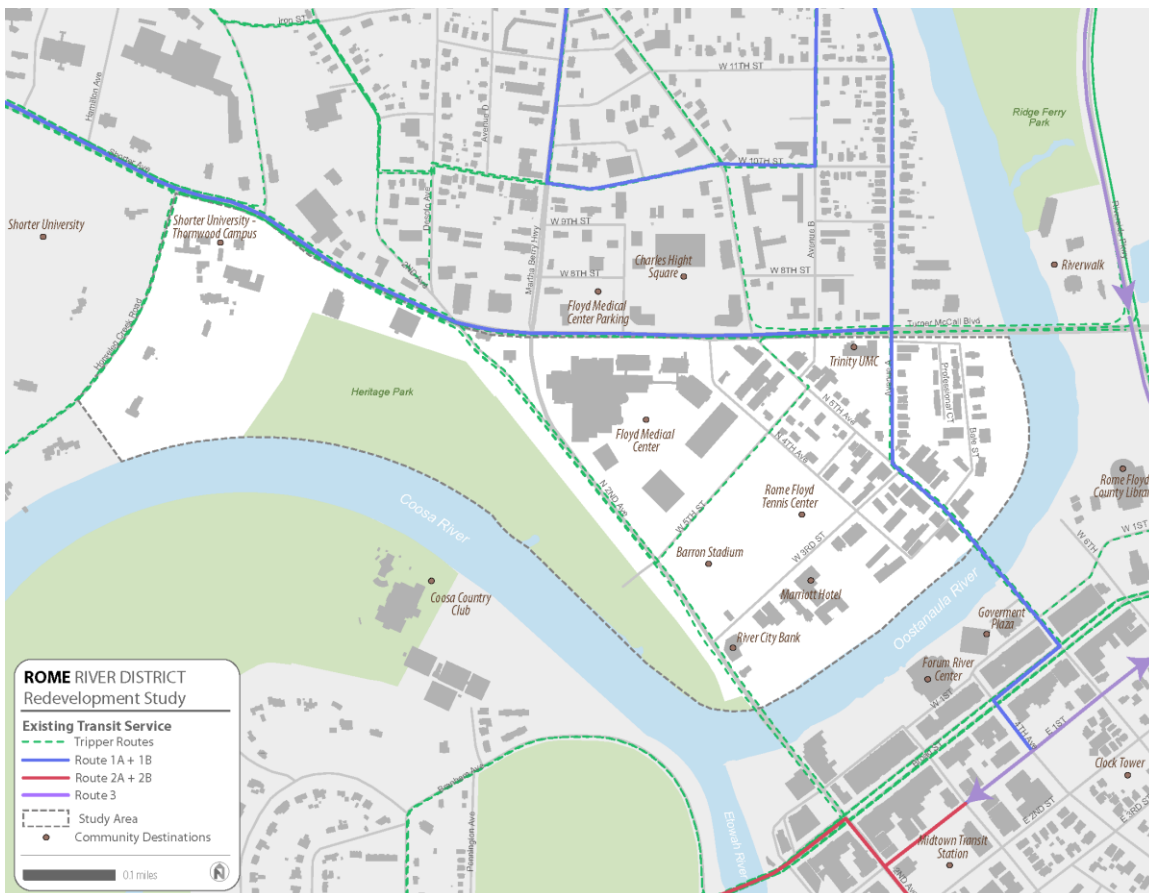
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Figure 4: River District Major Off-Street Parking

Entrance(s)	Owner	Type	Spaces	RegulationA
West 5 th St, North 4 th Ave, Turner McCall	Floyd Medical Center	Lot	900	Visitor/Patient
North 4 th Ave	Floyd Medical Center	Garage	240	Employee
West 5 th St (SE)	Floyd Medical Center	Lot	130	None
West 3 rd St	Barron Stadium	Lot	110	None
Turner McCall Blvd	Gymnastics Center	Lot	100	None
Turner McCall Blvd	American Legion	Lot	100	None
West 5 th St, Avenue A, Turner McCall	Trinity United Methodist	Lot	340	None
Bale St	Professional Court	Lot	60	None

Transit Network

Figure 5: Existing RTD River District Service



The Rome Transit Department (RTD) provides weekday fixed-route service, paratransit service, and tripper service during peak hours (primarily to serve schools) within Rome's city limits. Fixed route services tend to operate in clockwise (A)/counterclockwise (B) pairs as noted below:

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- **Route 1 A/B:** Provides coverage for northwestern Rome, with connections to destinations such as Walmart West, Redmond Regional Medical Center, and Shorter University.
- **Route 2 A/B:** Serves communities south of the Etowah River, with service to Walmart East, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and the Floyd County Health Department.
- **Route 3:** This service serves the northeastern neighborhoods of Rome, east of the Oostanaula River, connecting riders to State Mutual Stadium, Berry College, and Mt. Berry Square Mall.

These routes serve the community from 5:40 am to 6:30 p.m., running hourly along the designated routes. The system is largely fixed stop and long-standing riders are aware of the stop locations, but there are some areas lacking bus stop signs. RTD is currently working on a project to ensure that all official stops have signage.

Largely to serve Rome's primary and secondary school students, RTD operates twenty-six tripper trips throughout the City during each morning and afternoon peak period. The general public is allowed to ride these buses but few currently do so likely due to lack of awareness and potentially lack of interest. The public has access to Tripper route information via Rome/Floyd County Planning Department's online GIS map.¹

As seen in Figure 5, RTD Route 1 is the only fixed-route service operating directly within the River District, traveling along Turner McCall Boulevard, Avenue A, and N 5th Avenue to downtown. However, RTD's Midtown Transit Station is a short distance away in downtown on East First between Second and Third Avenues. Here, all fixed-route services meet, allowing for transfer opportunities.

Pedestrian Network

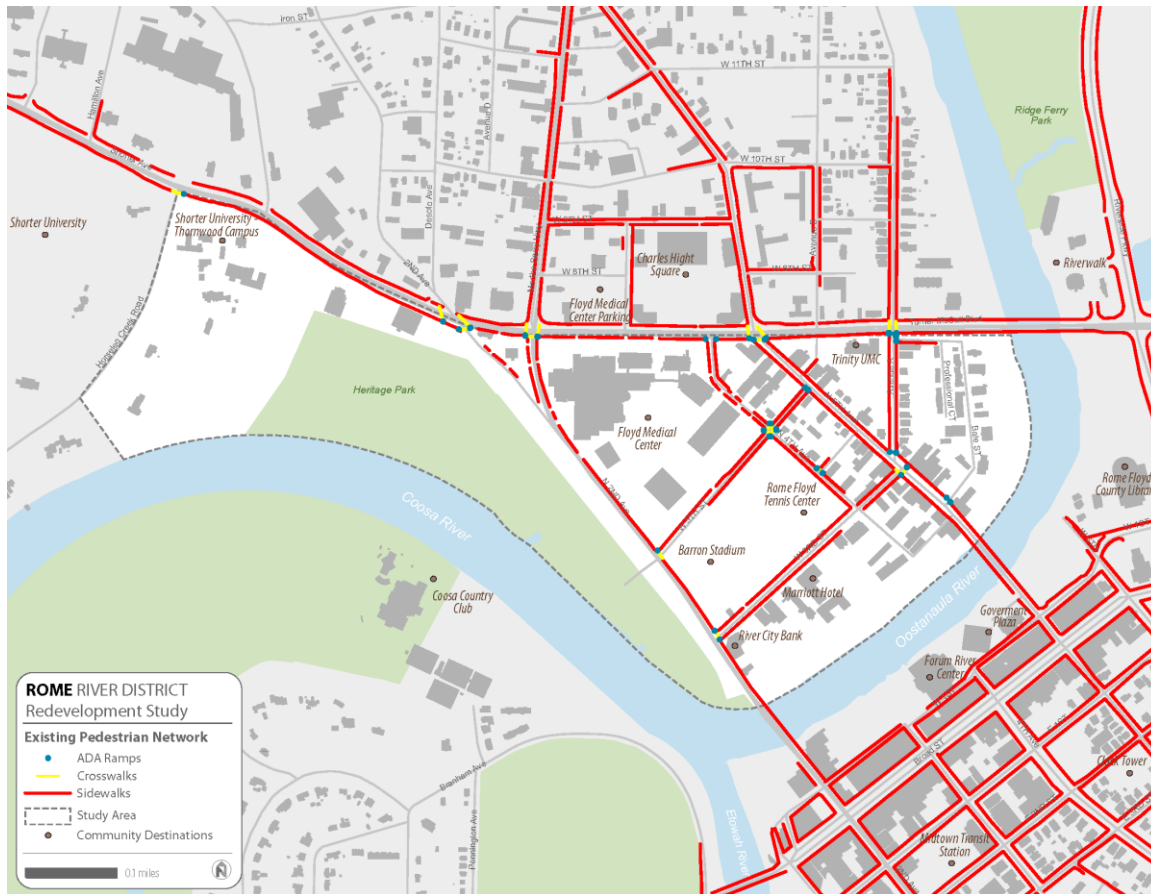
Within the River District area, most streets appear to have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Key corridors that are missing sidewalk facilities appear in the northeast corner of the district, particularly Bale Street. Additionally, many intersections have no crosswalks, and satellite imagery shows that existing crosswalks are in need of painting or other measures to improve visibility. A recently completed pedestrian bridge is a valuable asset linking downtown with the core of the River District. Future pedestrian planning should focus on funneling people to and from this bridge. Figure 6 shows the existing pedestrian network in the City of Rome.

¹<https://romefloydgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c87e8e58db204e768e310b3e6e557ea0>

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Figure 6: Existing Pedestrian Network



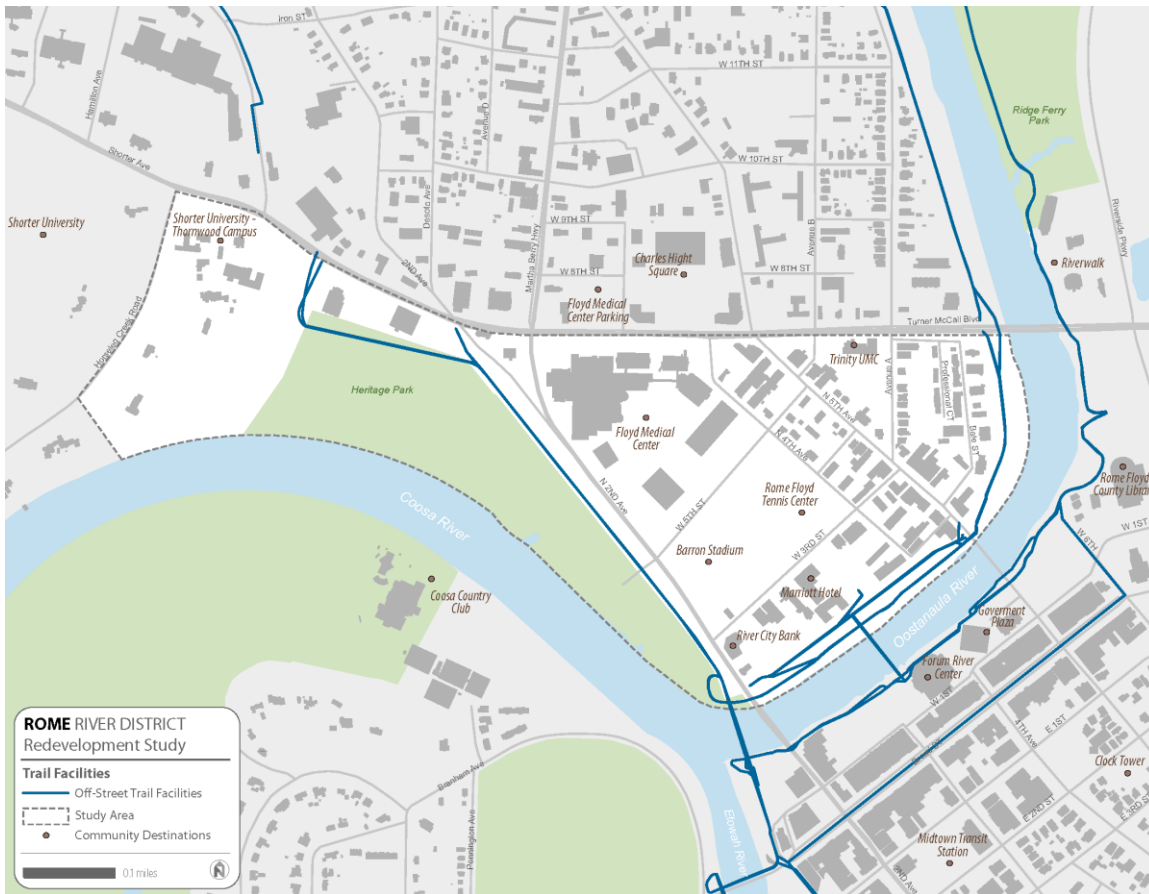
Bicycle Network

Compared to peer cities in the southeast, Rome has a decent existing bicycle network which takes advantage of levees and river frontage to provide low-stress alternatives to riding on unprotected city streets. This makes for a comfortable riding experience for bicyclists of all ages and ability levels and is a tremendous asset for the community as it forms the basis for a much broader city and county-wide bicycle network. Figure 7 shows the existing pedestrian network in the City of Rome.

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Figure 7: Existing Bicycle Trail Network



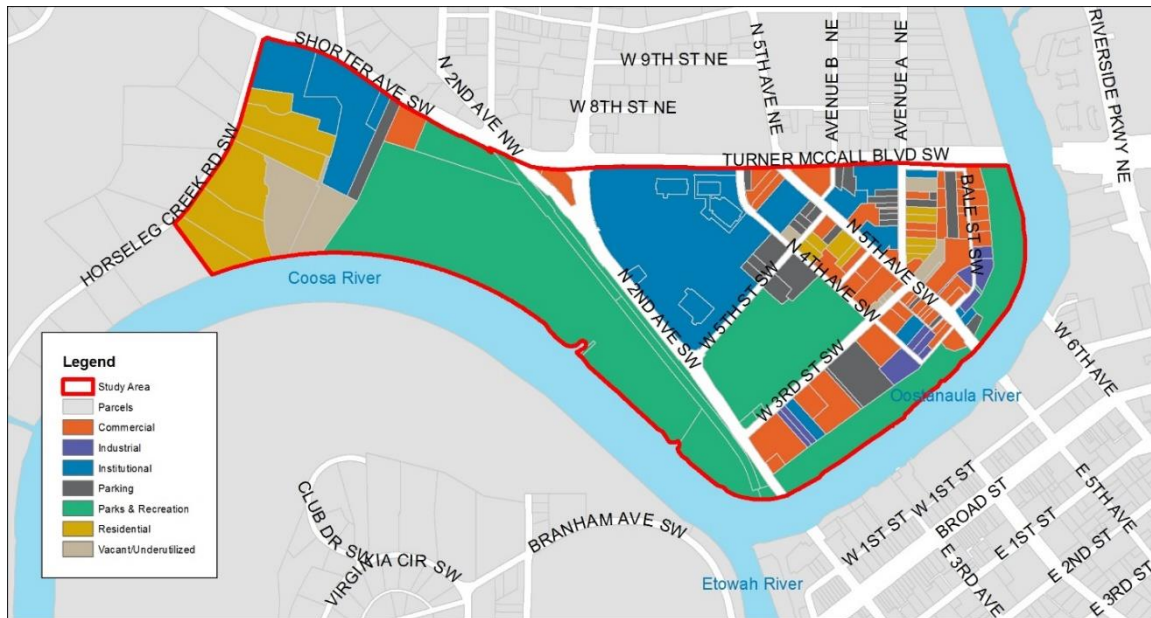
LAND USE

The 157-acre River District is made up of 151 land parcels. The top three individual land uses in terms of area are parks and open space (34%), medical (15%), and single-family residential (9%). The high percentages of parks and recreation come from Barron Stadium, the Rome-Floyd Tennis Center, Heritage Park, and the open space along the Oostanaula River where the Oostanaula Levee Trail is located. The high percentages of medical uses is due to the Floyd Medical Center campus, Kindred Hospital, and Harbins Clinic facilities, as well as other medical offices located within the district. Combined, Parks and Recreation (43%) and Institutional (23%) make up the largest land use groups, accounting for two-thirds of the land in the district.

Vacant and underutilized land makes up a small percentage of the District. There are four true vacant parcels, and five underutilized parcels. In this context, “underutilized,” means parcels that have buildings that appear to be vacant and ripe for redevelopment or new development (depending on the condition of the buildings), or for housing a temporary use.

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Figure 8: Existing Land Uses in River District



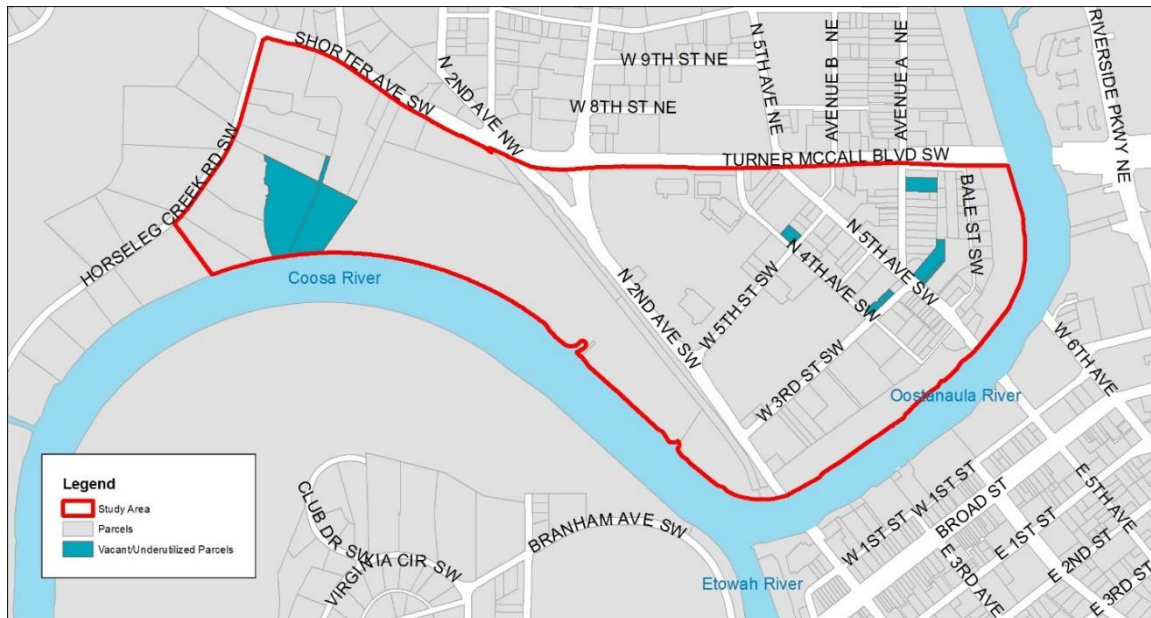
Half of the district's commercial uses are office uses. These include banks, lawyers' offices, and private medical offices. 44% of the commercial lands in the district are consumed by retail uses. They primarily include antique and salvage shops, a screen printer, a gun and pawnshop, an auto parts store, a car dealership, a hair salon, a weight loss clinic, a bookstore, and auction and appraisal companies. What is notable is the lack of food and beverage establishments in the district. There is one parcel in the entire district with a food and beverage outlet, the Foundry Growler Station at 255 N 5th Avenue, which does not sell any food. As for hotels, there is one: the Courtyard Marriott Hotel on W 3rd Street, across from Barron Stadium and the Rome-Floyd Tennis Center.

Figure 9: Existing Land Use Statistics in River District

Land Use	Parcels	Total Area (acres)	% Total Area
Residential	15	15.110	10%
Commercial	54	18.744	12%
Industrial	10	2.930	2%
Institutional	19	35.850	23%
Parking	29	9.717	6%
Parks/Recreation	15	67.371	43%
Vacant/Underutilized	9	7.354	5%

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Figure 10: Vacant and Underused Parcels in River District



Also notable is the lack of residential in the district. There are some single family houses, some that have been converted to commercial uses, but as for the rest, it is unclear if they still serve residential purposes or are vacant. The lack of multi-family in the district is also apparent: the only non-single family detached housing options are three duplexes along Avenue A.

Industrial land makes up less than 2% of the district. These lands contain automotive and manufactured goods repair shops, printers, light manufacturing, and studios. They are located along Bale Street, and along the Oostanaula River.

Existing Buildings

There are 111 known buildings within the district, most of which are office (23%) and retail or other commercial buildings (31%). Notably, there are few residential buildings – 14% of buildings are residential, with most of those being single family homes located along Horse leg Creek Road. The remainder within the core of the district are duplexes and other single family homes, some of which may be vacant. Out of the 117 buildings in the district, only nine are thought to be vacant; of course, this number may be higher or lower depending on what further studies of the site yield.

Information about the age of 78 of the 111 buildings was found using real estate records and news archives. The majority of buildings (55.1%) are between the ages of 41 and 78 years old, or built between the years 1940 and 1977. The four buildings built in the last decade are the Floyd Medical Center campus and the Courtyard Marriott Hotel across from Barron Stadium. The district's older buildings are located along N 5th Avenue, Avenue A, and Horse leg Creek Road.

Information concerning sale dates was found for 70 of 111 buildings. In the last 5 years, 23 buildings have been sold: some have since become new businesses, and some have been sold to developers or investors. The district does not lie within any of the City of Rome's five historic districts.

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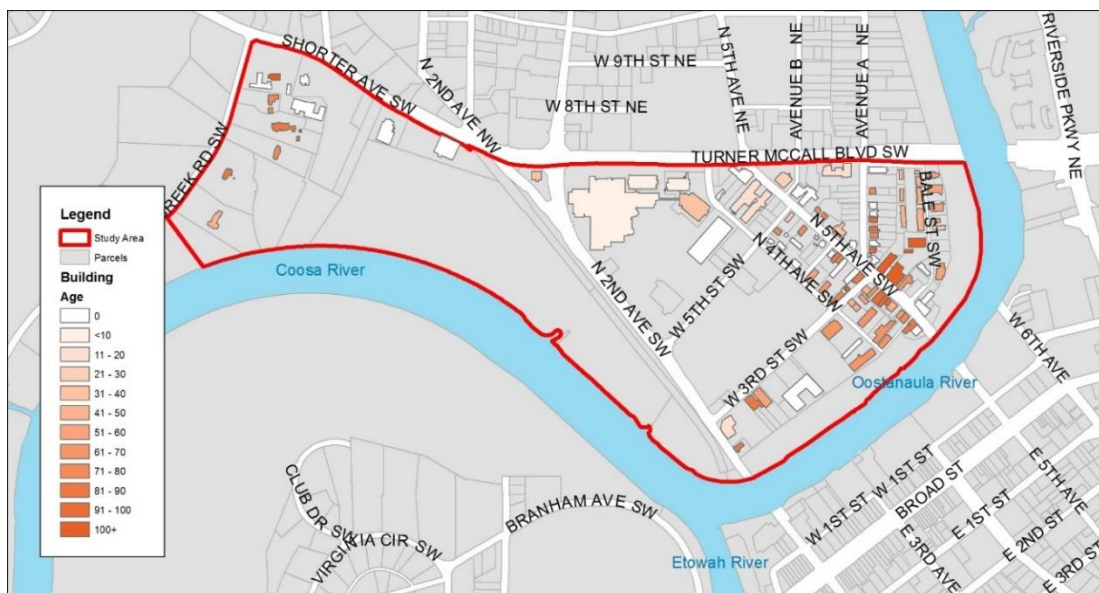
Figure 11: River District Building Types

Use Type	Number	Percent
Retail/Other Commercial	36	31%
Office	25	23%
Single Family Residential	14	12%
Medical Office	9	8%
Light Industrial	6	5%
Religious	6	5%
Academic	5	4%
Other ²	10	9%
Total	111	100%
Vacant	9	8%

Figure 12: Age of Buildings in River District

Age	Number	Percentage
10 or fewer	4	5%
11-50	23	30%
51-100	47	60%
More than 100	4	5%
Total	78	100%

Figure 13: Building Age and Distribution in River District



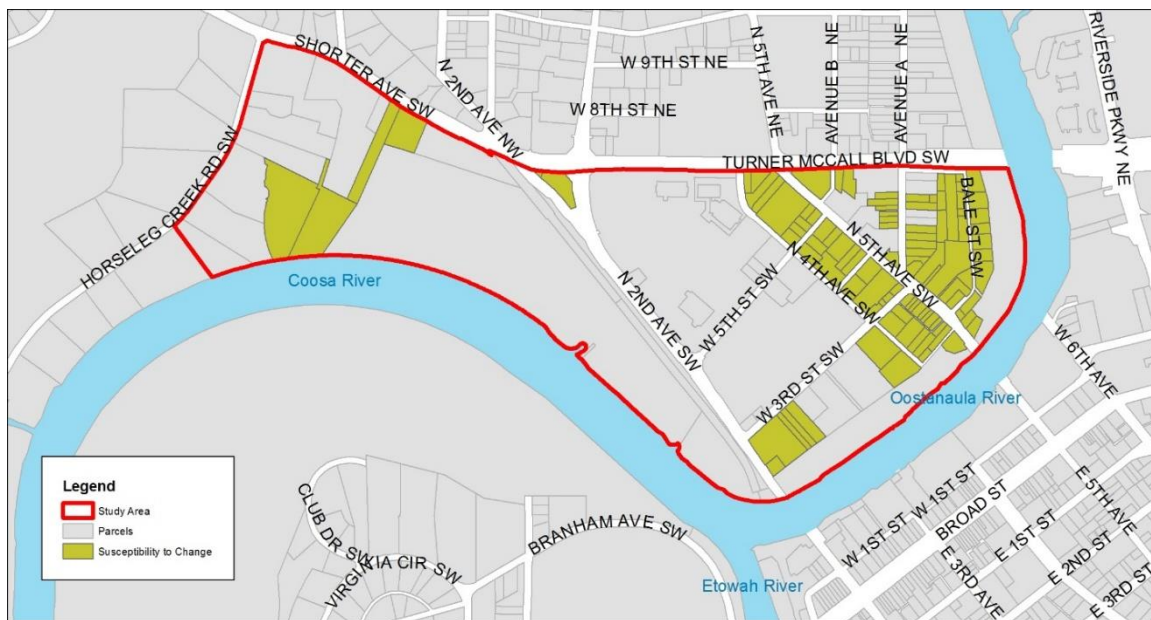
² Duplex, Warehouse, Food & Beverage, Hotel, Parking Dec , Recreation, Rehabilitation, Studio

Ownership

Ownership can influence how a plan develops – understanding who owns which lands and how much of it informs susceptibility to change. The City of Rome is the top landowner, owning 15 parcels (10% of the total) and 66.48 acres (42% of the total), most of it parks and recreation facilities. The Hospital Authority of Floyd County owns only seven parcels, but with almost 21 acres (13% of the total). The remaining parcels are held by private individuals and trusts, non-profit and tax-exempt organizations, and corporations.

It can be assumed that developed lands owned by churches, schools (including colleges and universities), hospital systems, and the City and County are unlikely to change drastically in use or form in the coming decade. This accounts for about two-thirds of the lands in the district – therefore, any recommendations within this plan will assume that the other third of land in the district will experience change in the next decade.

Figure 14: Parcels in River District Susceptible to Change



Future Land Use

The future land use map does not make any major changes to the River Arts District's land use mix, with the exception of removing industrial parcels, and adding mixed use along N 5th Avenue and along a portion of Avenue A.

In the latest comprehensive plan update, specific land uses and design guidelines are proposed, as well as appropriate zoning designations. Lands designated for commercial use are recommended to house office and retail uses, however they may contain whatever uses that are allowed under CC – Community Commercial, GHC – General Heavy Commercial, CBC – Central Business Commercial, NOC – Neighborhood Office Commercial, and OI – Office Institutional zoning districts. Institutional lands would most likely contain government offices, libraries, schools, places of worship, and other places owned/operated by the city or county government. To fulfill those uses, the comprehensive plan allows any zoning district that allows any of those uses by-right. The Parks future land use is defined as land owned by the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation

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Authority, and any other lands that are privately owned but are open to the public for recreational use. Specific uses are parks of all kinds and recreational facilities, and any zoning district that permits parks is allowed. Lastly, mixed use is defined by the comprehensive plan as a mix of residential and commercial development, the exact mix of which is dependent on the market and the needs of the surrounding areas. The plan specifically recommends a residential density of 5-14 units per acre that can be contained within townhomes, stand-alone apartments and condominiums, and above-retail apartments and condominiums. Within Rome, a height limit of 5 stories is prescribed, although the UMU – Urban Mixed Use zoning district allows structures of up to 100 feet, which can equate to 10 stories, depending on floor-to-ceiling height. Five stories was prescribed as to preserve the historic quality of the downtown and surrounding areas.

Figure 15: Future Land Use in River District

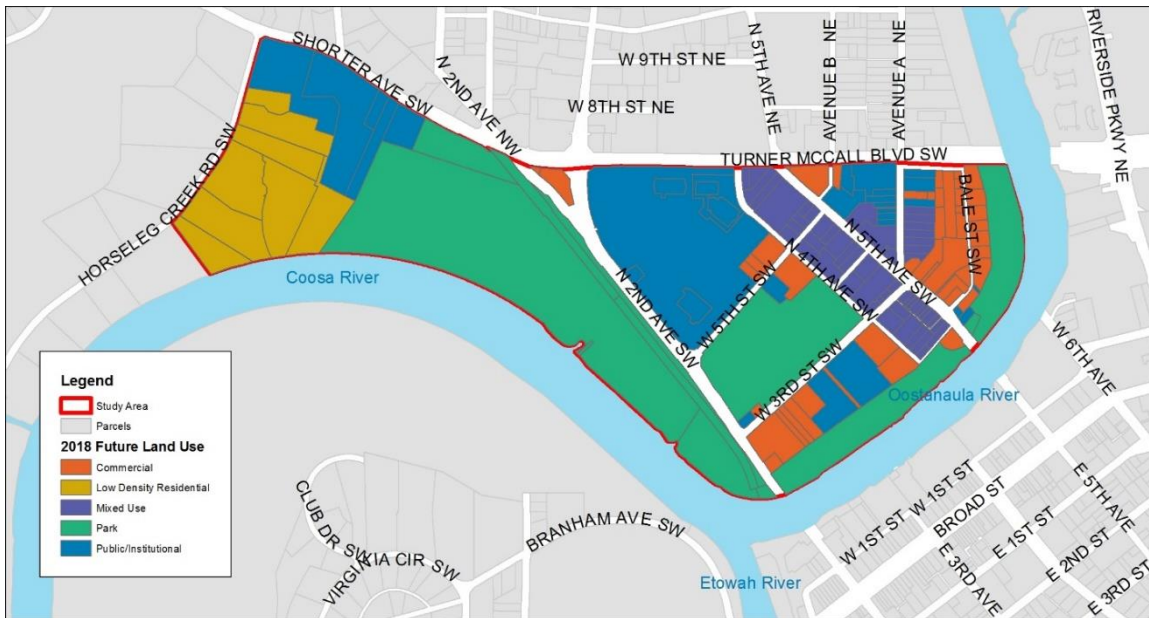


Figure 16: Future River District Land Use Statistics

Land Use	Total # Parcels	% Total Parcels	Total Area	% Total Area
Low-Density Residential	8	5.37%	18.73	11.93%
Commercial	46	30.87%	16.53	10.53%
Institutional	31	20.81%	41.120	26.19%
Parks/Recreation	13	8.72%	67.27	42.85%
Mixed Use	51	34.23%	13.02	8.29%

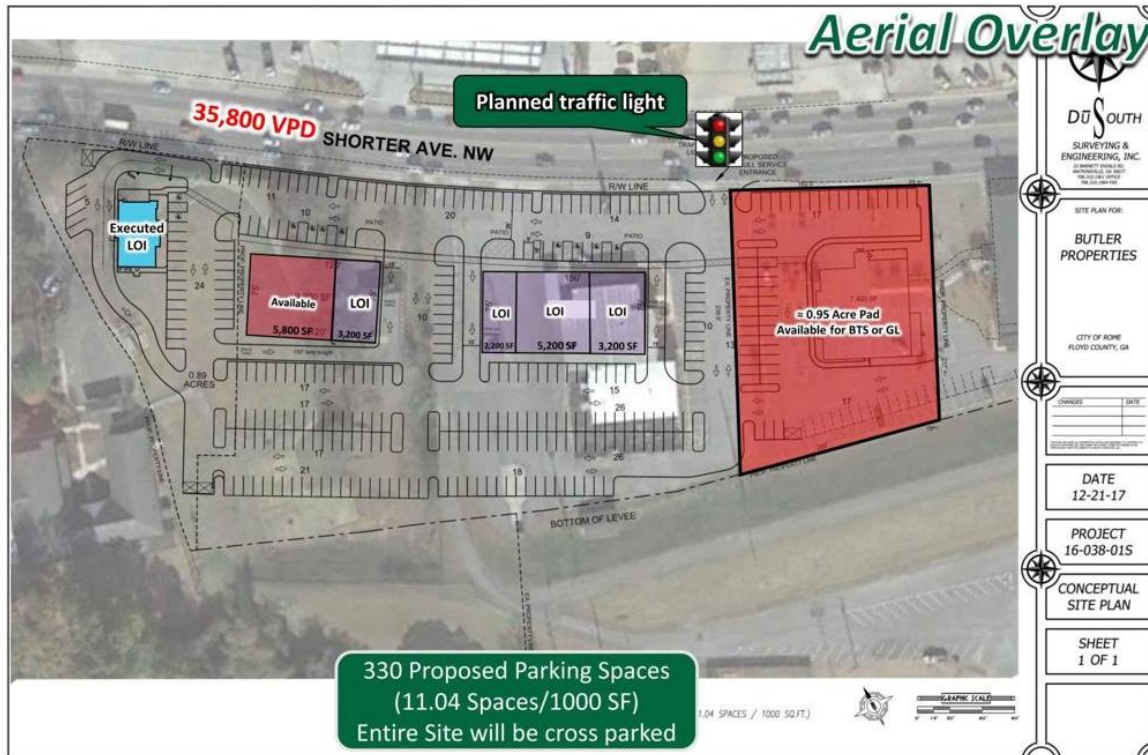
Recent, Ongoing, and Future Developments

In 2014, the building at 252 N 5th Avenue was redeveloped into a co-working space, Maker village, a 13,000 square foot warehouse space for artists, entrepreneurs, and startups.

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The current combined parcels of 5 Shorter Avenue, 7 Shorter Avenue, and 105 Shorter Avenue will be the site of a strip center development with 330 parking spaces Properties. The sale of the properties is expected to close in 2018.

Shorter Avenue Shopping Center Parking Plan



Source: http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/business/plans-for-shorter-avenue-shopping-center-still-moving-forward-german/article_fb8acf64-15c8-11e8-9d6d-b7da61aecb35.html

3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Multimodal Traffic Study and Redevelopment Plan was informed by a number of stakeholder and public outreach efforts. These efforts were intended to provide the project team with valuable insight and guidance from various local sources, including key municipal staff, local residents and employees, and business owners and managers with a stake in the district. The Project Team that oversaw this process consisted of staff from Rome/Floyd Planning, the Downtown Development Authority, Rome/Floyd Public Works, and city leadership.

The stakeholder outreach activities conducted for this plan Outreach efforts included:

- Project Team Meetings
- Project Advisory Committee Meetings
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Workshops

Project Team Meetings

The Project Team met for roughly bi-weekly phone calls. They also had two physical meetings - each one prior to the Project Advisory Committee Meetings (see below). In addition to general project management tasks, the Project Team was responsible for confirming the goals of the study.

Project Advisory Committee Meetings

The Rome River District Multimodal Traffic Study and Redevelopment Plan was advised by a Project Advisory Committee, which held two meetings over the course of the planning process.

Stakeholder Interviews

A selection of key stakeholders for the area were identified by the Project Team. These individuals were interviewed to gain valuable input on the area's needs. In total, 12 stakeholders provided input, including local business owners and managers, people who have lived and/or worked in the district, and representatives of Floyd Medical Center, the City of Rome, and other local businesses and institutions.

Public Workshop

The Project Team held public workshops October 19th-20th, including a "Walkshop" on October 19, 2018 (see map in Appendix E) that provided participants and team members with an opportunity for a more hands-on engagement while on a walking tour of the district. The public workshops gave the project team the opportunity to inform the public on the scope and progress of the project to date, review initial findings and conclusions. This outreach also provided citizens with a forum to express issues and concerns, and share local knowledge, insight, and ideas with the Project Team.

4 FRAMEWORK PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIOS

Two future land use scenarios were developed concurrently with the Rome-Floyd/Cave Spring 2040 comprehensive plan update:

- Future Year (2035) Baseline
- Future Year (2035) Urban Mixed Use

Both scenarios follow the vision and guidelines set forth in the plan for the Town Center character area, which includes the River Arts District. Each scenario considered developments already in the City's pipeline, and created recommendations based on the City's vision for the district becoming an extension of the thriving downtown area.

The 2035 Baseline Future Development Scenario is a lower-density scenario that is based on the current zoning in the area, and mimics existing development patterns already established in the area. The Community Commercial (C-C) and Office Institutional (O-I) zoning districts do not allow for a lot of density and don't permit a wide range of uses by-right. However, if lower density is desired by the City, the Baseline Scenario is an excellent starting point.

The land-use and infrastructure development assumptions associated with the 2035 Baseline Future Development Scenario can be found in Figure 17 and Figure 18.

Figure 17: Land Use Program in Baseline Scenario

Land Uses	Metrics (Units, Square Footage)
Residential Townhouses Multi Family	76 dwelling units 240 dwelling units
Office	108,000 square feet
Retail/Commercial	181,140 square feet

Source: TSW, August 2018.

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Figure 18: River District Baseline Scenario Land Use Program



The 2035 Urban Mixed Use Development Scenario expands upon the ideas developed for the Baseline Scenario and adds more density. This scenario considers the rezoning of the affected parcels to Urban Mixed Use (U-M-U). Having these parcels rezoned would allow the city to create even more density, and accommodate more by-right uses than the current zoning allows. This scenario adds more commercial space (specifically, retail and office space) than the Baseline Scenario, introduces a flats-over-townhome residential product, and provides space for an active park that can be used for community events, and as a tailgating spot and overflow parking for events at Barron Stadium.

The land-use and infrastructure development assumptions associated with the 2035 Urban Mixed Use Future Development Scenario can be found in Figure 19 and Figure 20.

Figure 19: Land Use Program in Mixed Use Zoning Scenario

Land Uses	Metrics (Units, Square Footage)
Residential Townhouses Multi Family	72 dwelling units 237 dwelling units
Office	179,100 square feet
Retail/Commercial	226,910 square feet

Source: TSW, September 2018.

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Figure 20: River District Urban Mixed Use Scenario Land Use Program



Both scenarios include the following improvements at two key intersections within the district:

New Traffic Signal at North 2nd Avenue and West 5th Street

The new traffic signal, replacing the side-street stop sign control on the West 5th Street approaches to North 2nd Avenue will help improve vehicle flows as well as improve safety for pedestrians at the intersection. Without a traffic signal, vehicles turning either direction onto North 2nd Avenue must wait for a gap created by signals at West 3rd Street or at Turner McCall Boulevard. With such heavy traffic volumes, particularly due to peak period surges associated with hospital shift changes, vehicular delays can be more than one minute during the PM Peak period today. With additional trips on West 5th Street in the two development scenarios, this delay would worsen substantially in the future without a traffic signal to give an exclusive phase to vehicles on West 5th Street.

The signal provides several benefits to the district including:

- Improved access for motorists who may be employees, patients, or guests of Floyd Medical Center, especially those who may be leaving the area. The new signal creates a safe opportunity to make a left turn onto North 2nd Avenue or to cross into Heritage Park.
- Improved access for motorists who are turning left into the park from North 2nd Avenue. The existing traffic flows nearly continuously at peak times leaving only minimal gaps long enough for vehicles to make the turn. Queues on westbound North 2nd Avenue result from this and further erode the vehicle LOS.

- Creates access to Heritage Park for pedestrians and bicyclists who currently have no safe way to enter the park from the middle of the River District.
- Makes it easier for guests and patrons to use the parking in Heritage Park for big events in the District such as those at Barron Stadium.

Reconfigure West 3rd Street/North 5th Avenue/Avenue A Intersection

Currently this intersection has an offset configuration that requires separate and inefficient traffic signal phasing (or “split phasing”) for the West 3rd Street and Avenue A approaches to the intersection. This creates confusion and traffic congestion. Today, with Avenue A not feeding directly across the intersection to West 3rd Street, vehicles making left turns would collide on North 5th Avenue if both left turns occurred simultaneously. Each side of the intersection therefore requires a separate phase and must operate independently, or in a “split phase” manner. This results in delays for all approaches to the intersection, as well as complicated crossings for pedestrians who must cross streets with poor sight lines and uncertainty as to where vehicles could be coming from.

Given the existing building layout, there is no alternative within the existing bounds of the intersection. The zone is not large enough for a roundabout. Re-aligning the complicated offset intersection of Avenue A, North 5th Avenue, and West 3rd Street eliminates the conflicting movements from each leg of the intersection, allowing for more efficient phasing of the traffic signal. It is recommended that when the building currently inhabited by Ingram Glass (in the northwest quadrant) is redeveloped, the City should purchase right of way sufficient to enable Avenue A and West 3rd Street to act as one street from a signal timing perspective. This change will become increasingly important as the District develops and travel demand along these corridors increases. By re-aligning the intersection, there is an opportunity for much more conventional signal phasing and pedestrian crossings. With a traditional four-way traffic signal phasing, the operations become much more efficient, potentially reaching a 40% improvement in overall delay.

TRAFFIC IMPACT

Three scenarios were analyzed to determine the extent to which the project may affect the surrounding transportation environment during weekday morning (AM) and evening (PM) peak periods:

- **Existing Conditions** – This scenario represents current traffic conditions and the existing roadway network.
- **Future Year (2035) Baseline Scenario** – Year 2035 conditions including development projects (and associated trip generation estimates) within the district that can be achieved under existing zoning regulations.
- **Future Year (2035) Urban Mixed Use Scenario** – Year 2035 conditions including development projects (and associated trip generation estimates) within the district that can be achieved under new zoning regulations.

Because background vehicle traffic is forecast to have no growth on streets through the district, there is no “No Build” future year scenario.

Figure 21: Alternatives Evaluated

Alternatives for Analysis	
Name	Major Elements
Existing Conditions	Traffic Conditions
Baseline Scenario	Development under existing zoning regulations, realigned intersection of Ave A, N 5 th Ave, and W 3 rd St, new signal at intersection of N 2 nd Ave and W 5 th Street
Urban Mixed Use Scenario	Development under updated urban mixed use zoning regulations, realigned intersection of Ave A, N 5 th Ave, and W 3 rd St, new signal at intersection of N 2 nd Ave and W 5 th Street

The following five study intersections were evaluated under each alternative scenario:

- N 5th Avenue /Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)
- Avenue A/Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)
- N 5th Avenue/W 3rd St – Avenue A
- N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 5th Street
- N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 3rd Street

Intersection Level of Service Analysis

Both signalized and unsignalized intersections were evaluated using methods set forth in the Transportation Research Board's *Highway Capacity Manual* (2000). Level of Service analysis, commonly known as "LOS" is a qualitative description of quantitative motor vehicle traffic flow based on factors such as motor vehicle speeds, travel times, and levels of delay at intersections. Transportation engineers describe six levels of service ranging from LOS A (i.e., best operating conditions for motor vehicles) to LOS F (worst operating conditions for motor vehicles). Intersection levels of service for motor vehicles are based on the average amount of delay experienced by drivers traveling through the intersection. As described below, different methods are used to assess signalized and unsignalized (stop-controlled) intersections.

Existing Conditions LOS Results

Peak hours were calculated for each intersection during the typical AM peak period (7:00 to 9:00 AM) and the typical PM peak period (4:00 to 6:00 PM). All intersections with the exception of the North 5th Avenue/West 3rd Street/Avenue A intersection have a morning peak between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM; its peak is 15 minutes later (7:45 to 8:45 AM). In the PM peak, the two intersections on Turner McCall Boulevard have a peak between 4:30 PM and 5:30 PM. The three other intersections have their PM peaks 15 minutes later (4:45 to 5:45 PM).

The weekday AM and PM peak hour intersection levels of service under existing conditions are shown in two were identified as having a potential for congestion delays. These locations are:

- Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)/N 5th Avenue – N 5th Avenue is one of two major arterials that cross the river and connecting downtown with the western neighborhoods of the city.
- N 2nd Avenue (Route 101)/W 5th Street – This route both connects downtown with the western neighborhoods and may serve as a cut-through for knowledgeable travelers bypassing occasional congestion the downtown bypass (Turner McCall Blvd).
- During the weekday AM peak hour, the intersection of North 2nd Ave (GA 101) and West 5th Street operates at a poor LOS as the stopped delay along West 5th Street approaches its capacity at the intersection. In the PM peak hour, West 5th Street also approaches its capacity. In the PM peak hour, the intersection of North 5th Ave and Turner McCall Blvd (GA 20) operates at poor conditions (LOS D) due to heightened congestion along the westbound, northbound, and southbound approaches.

Figure 22: Existing Weekday Peak-Hour Intersection Level of Service

Intersection	Control Type	AM Peak		PM Peak	
		Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
N 5th Avenue /Turner McCall Blvd (GA 20)	Signal	16.6	B	37.2	D
Avenue A/ Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)	Signal	11.7	B	14.5	B
N 5 th Avenue/W 3 rd Street - Avenue A	Signal	16.1	B	18.9	B
N 2nd Avenue(GA 101)/W 3 rd Street	Signal	4.8	A	7.9	A
N 2nd Avenue(GA 101)/W 5th Street	SSSC ³	26.4 (WB)	D	29.9 (WB)	D

³ SSSC – Side Street Stop Controlled

Vehicle Trip Generation Results

The following section describes the trip generation estimation of daily and weekday AM and PM peak-hour trips generated by the project. The analysis includes the vehicle trip reduction analysis and adjustments based on the nature of mixed-use development, a multimodal network, and accessibility.

Figure 23: Trip Generation Estimation under Baseline Scenario

ITE Land Use Code & Rates	Project	Project Trip Generation			
Use	Units/Rooms/ksf ⁴	AM		PM	
		In	Out	In	Out
Townhouses and Multi-Family (Low-Rise)	316 units	110	18	20	103
Retail	108 ksf	150	92	405	439
Office	181 ksf	24	81	84	49
Unadjusted Total Vehicle Trips		285	191	509	591
Trip Reduction (%)		3%	5%	12%	10%
Adjusted Total Vehicle Trips		271	178	428	513

Figure 24: Trip Generation Estimation under Urban Mixed Use Scenario

ITE Land Use Code & Rates	Project	Project Trip Generation			
Use	Units/Rooms/ksf	AM		PM	
		In	Out	In	Out
Townhouses and Multi-Family (Low-Rise)	309 units	168	27	32	166
Retail	226 ksf	164	101	483	524
Office	179 ksf	24	80	82	48
Unadjusted Total Vehicle Trips		356	208	597	738
Trip Reduction (%)		4%	7%	12%	10%
Adjusted Total Vehicle Trips		337	189	503	641

Vehicle Trip Distribution and Assignment

The trip distribution and assignment of project-generated vehicle trips were developed based on the following:

- The existing and planned roadway network in proximity of the River District
- The existing proportion of vehicle traffic into and out of district intersections based on May 9th, 2018 traffic counts.

⁴ ksf – 1,000 square feet

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In addition, vehicle trip distribution and assignment patterns were determined based on land use distribution throughout the entire project site, considering the placement of residential uses, non-residential uses, and key access locations to these uses that would be made by residents, employees, and visitors.

Year 2035 Baseline Scenario LOS Results

With the help of the new traffic signal and realigned intersection to allow for optimized signal phasing, during the weekday AM and PM peak hours, no study intersection would operate at unacceptable LOS conditions and the increase in vehicle trips associated with the district development would not unduly exacerbate conditions to degrade delays at these intersections. The intersection of Turner McCall Boulevard and North 5th Avenue would continue to see LOS D conditions in the PM Peak. This LOS is primarily due to left-hand turns from the east and west, where westbound vehicles wait for up to 24 more seconds than under existing conditions to turn onto North 5th Avenue heading south.

Detailed LOS scores for each intersection in the 2035 Baseline Scenario are provided in Figure 25.

Figure 25: Baseline Scenario Weekday Peak-Hour Intersection Level of Service

Intersection	Control Type	AM Peak		PM Peak	
		Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
N 5th Avenue /Turner McCall Blvd (GA 20)	Signal	17.5	B	39.9	D
Avenue A/ Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)	Signal	13.1	B	19.6	B
N 5 th Avenue/W 3 rd Street - Avenue A	Signal	16.1	B	18.1	B
N 2nd Avenue(GA 101)/W 3 rd Street	Signal	7.2	A	12.8	B
N 2nd Avenue(GA 101)/W 5th Street	Signal	4.3	A	8.8	A

Year 2035 Urban Mixed Use Scenario LOS Results

During the weekday AM and PM peak hours, no study intersection would operate at unacceptable LOS conditions and the increase in vehicle trips associated with the district development would not unduly exacerbate conditions to degrade delays at these intersections. Again, in the PM Peak Period, the intersection of Turner McCall Boulevard and North 5th Avenue would continue to see LOS D conditions. The westbound left-turn onto 5th Avenue is significantly delayed, however, with extensive delays on this movement possible. Detailed LOS scores for each intersection in the 2035 Urban Mixed Use Scenario are provided in Figure 26

Figure 26: Urban Mixed Use Scenario Weekday Peak-Hour Intersection Level of Service

#	Intersection	Control Type	AM Peak		PM Peak	
			Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
1	N 5th Avenue/Turner McCall Blvd (GA 20)	Signal	16.9	B	53.2	D
2	Avenue A/Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)	Signal	13.2	B	19.3	B
3	N 5 th Avenue/W 3 rd Street - Avenue A	Signal	16.3	B	19.5	B
4	N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 3 rd Street	Signal	7.3	A	14.1	B
5	N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 5th Street	Signal	5.3	A	12..0	B

5 STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City of Rome's River District Multimodal Traffic Analysis and Redevelopment Plan process seeks to introduce policies and projects to support future investments in the area by guiding the development of a multimodal transportation network that facilitates walking, bicycling, transit-use, while effectively managing vehicular parking and traffic demands. This process brings together the development of changing land uses and investment for a dynamic and supportive transportation network that serves the needs of the community.

The River District is a sub-district within Downtown Rome, itself a regional destination for shopping, entertainment, employment, and medical care. The goal for the city is that it will become a multimodal friendly location that encourages the development of new all-day destinations. These Street Design Guidelines will provide an opportunity to contextualize the roadways of the River District, to ensure that road design supports a thriving community rather than simply ushering vehicle traffic through the area.

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

This street design guide will follow a form-based approach, which involves designing the form of the street to meet the modal use and character intended for it. This builds on complete street design ideals of creating streets that accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes of transportation appropriately, which have been adopted by Georgia's Department of Transportation. While this idea seems simple, it is not traditionally how streets have been designed. More frequently, street design is driven by national standards – unrelated to the local context – and determined by counts of vehicles that happen to be using a particular street at a particular time. The form-based approach is more intentional and holistic, aimed at meeting the goals of a community, rather than simply facilitating vehicle movement. This form-based approach is critical for the fulfillment of Rome's goals for the River District.

This holistic approach accounts for the unique conditions and contexts of streets within the River District. Even in a small area like this, streets will support different land uses presenting different constraints and providing differing levels of impact on each mode of transportation. In this report, we will use design considerations tailored for each street to match the specific land use aspirations of each street within the River District. The street typologies identified in this guide classify streets using these criteria:

- **Function:** Street Function defines the design of the roadway (or the area between two curbs) for mobility and access. Differing street functions within the District balance the needs for regional trips, local trips, and trips of all kinds conducted by alternative modes.
- **Context:** Context describes the character of each street in terms of building form and ultimate use. Context informs the design of the space between the building and the edge of the curb – walkway, parking, greenspace, etc. In the River District, the Framework Plan represents the community's vision for future land uses, and the context is typified

primarily by commercial, mixed use, and urban-style residential developments. These locally focused land uses will require a different roadway design than, for example, what will serve the Floyd Medical Center – a regionally significant destination.

- **Modal Emphasis:** Roadways in existing communities are typically constrained by development – they can't get bigger without tearing something down. Cities therefore have limited space with which to appease all modes and tradeoffs must be considered. To avoid overwhelming the public and decision makers with options, a modal emphasis is used because it helps reconcile tradeoffs so that all modes have a safe and connected way – if not necessarily the same way – to travel between destinations.

ELEMENTS OF THE STREET

Streets seem simple, but can be quite complicated, with sidewalks, trees, driving lanes, outdoor dining, transit stops and parking all vying for space within the limited right-of-way. To bring some order to these elements and to make design discussions easier, we identify the zones that make up the street's right-of-way, described below and depicted in Figure 27.

- The **vehicle zone** provides space for moving traffic. This includes cars, bicycles, buses, motorcycles, e-scooters and the like. The vehicle zone is present in every street – even in streets without cars.
- The **buffer zone** is a floating zone which separates pedestrians from moving traffic in the vehicle zone. It fosters a safe and comfortable walking environment comprised of two primary components:
 - The **access zone** includes elements between the curb and the vehicle zone, such as parking spaces and space for doors to open or pedestrian bulb-outs at intersections or bus stops or parklets (parking spaces converted to seating or greenspace). This zone serves transitional and stationary uses and need not be present in every street (no need if there is no parking for example), but must be present if the amenity/curb zone is less than three feet.
 - The **amenity/curb zone** is located above and adjacent to the curb and provides space for amenities such as lighting, trash receptacles, café dining, bench seating, planters, trees, bicycle racks, etc. This zone may be limited to three feet if an access zone is present.

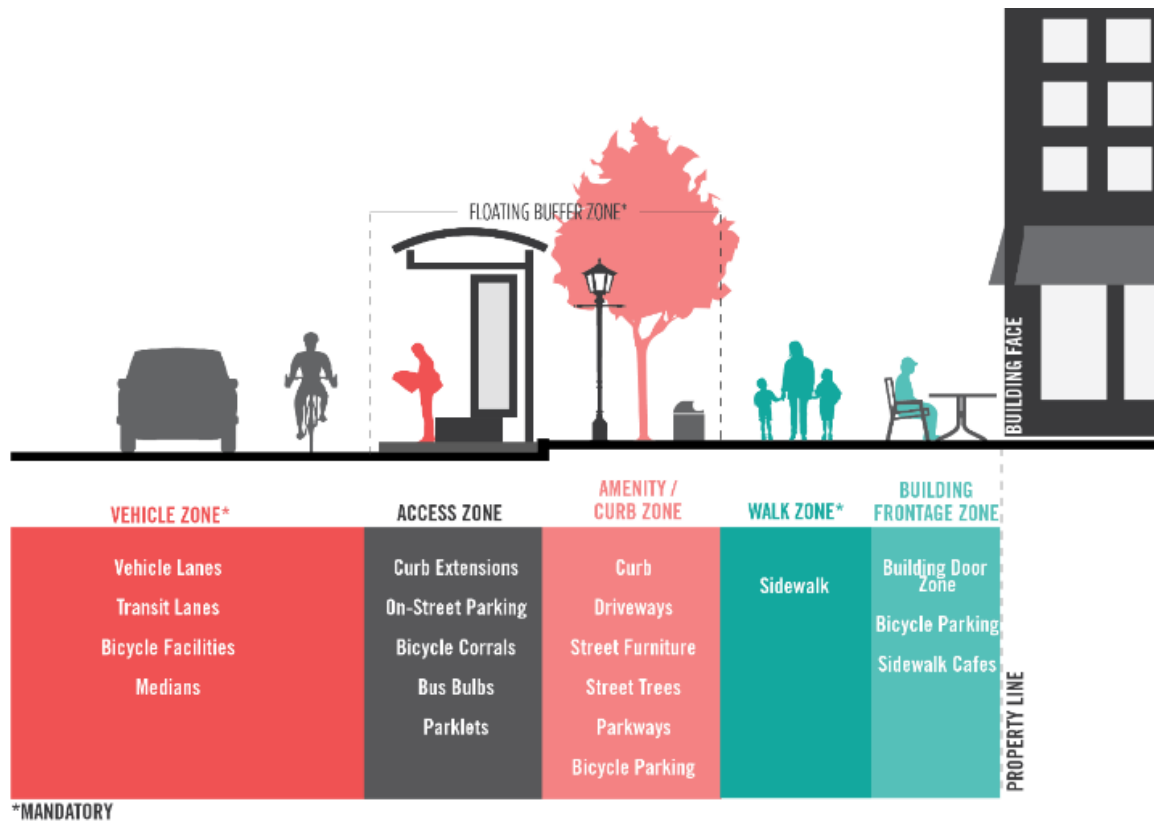
A buffer zone should be present on every street, but may include elements of only the access zone or amenity/curb zone, if not both.

- The **walk zone** provides appropriate space for pedestrian traffic to travel without obstruction. It is a sidewalk zone clear of any other elements, and is present in every street. By law (Americans with Disabilities Act), this space must be a minimum of three feet wide and in a continuous line to accommodate wheelchair users.
- The **building frontage zone** complements building uses by serving entryways, or providing space for sidewalk dining or retail spaces. It is within the public right-of-way and immediately adjacent to the building facade, and need not be present in every street.

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Figure 27: Elements of the Street



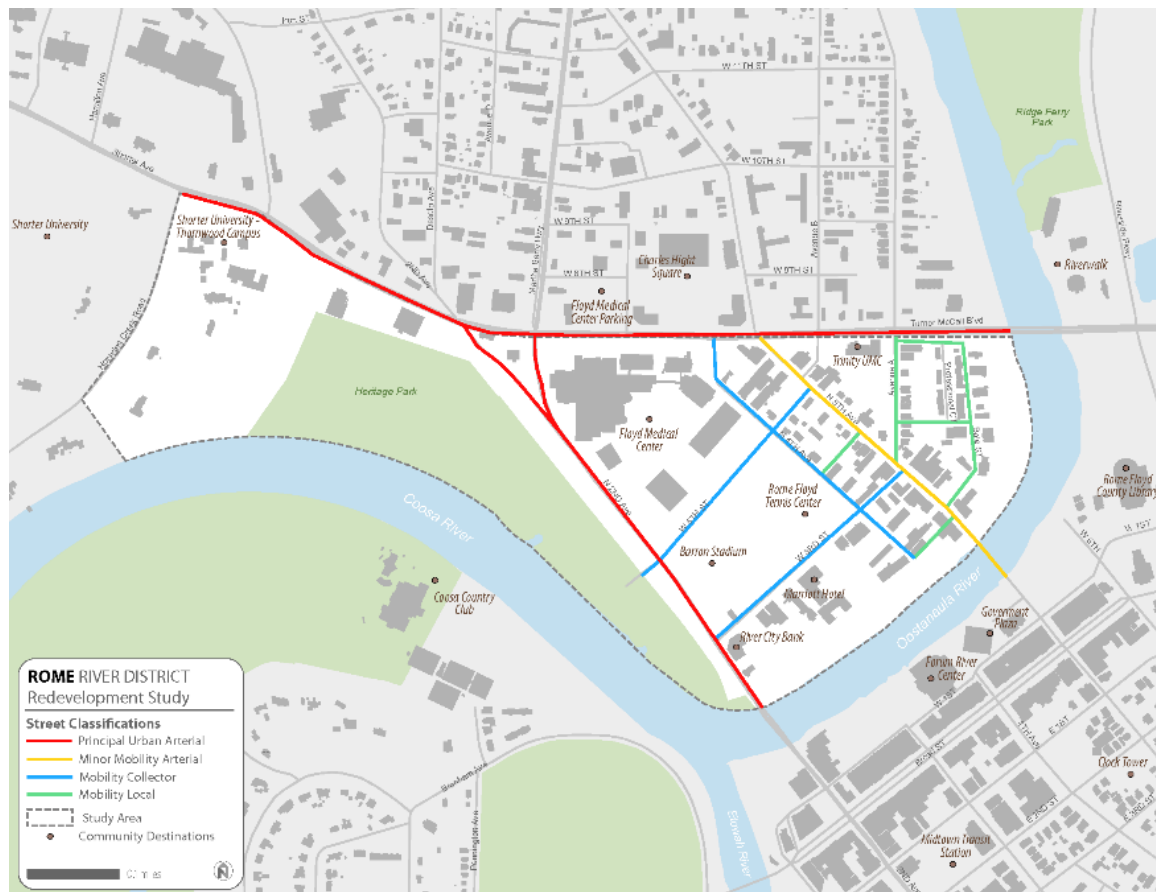
STREET TYPOLOGIES

The typologies outlined below provide an overview of the intent of each street type in terms of serving the local community.

Figure 28 provides a visual of how these typologies interact within the River District's roadway network.

Figure 29 provides a list of recommended dimensions for each street element (as applicable) based on the street typology. These dimensions are intended to be a guide for typical sections, but may not always be feasible within a given right-of-way. For streets where right-of-way constraints preclude these dimensions, tradeoffs will need to be considered in alignment with the goal of the streets role in the District. Each street typology is defined, and paired with a sample cross section.

Figure 28: River District Street Typologies



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Figure 29: Recommended Street Element Dimensions

Street Typology	Vehicle Zone			Access Zone	Amenity / Curb Zone	Walk Zone	Building Frontage Zone (Min)	Total Sidewalk Width	Total Right-of-Way Width
	Through/Left Turn Lane	Outside Lane (max)*	Bicycle Lane**	Parking Lane		Clear Walk (Min)			
Principal Urban Arterial	10'	11'	5-7'	7-8'	6-7'	8'	1'	15-16'	63-68'
Minor Mobility Arterial	10'	11'	5-7'	7-8'	3-5'	6'	1'	9-11'	52-59'
Mobility Collector	10'	10'	5-7'	7'	3-5'	5'	1'	9-11'	50-56'
Mobility Local	10'	10'	-	7'	3-5'	5'	1'	9-11'	45-49'

*Outside Lane refers to a travel lane that is adjacent to the curb. The outside lane may exceed 11' where severe crowning, depression, or other geometric characteristics are present.

**The 7' bicycle lane includes a 2' buffer on one side

Principal Urban Arterial

Principal Urban Arterial Streets carry the bulk of regional trips through the River District. These streets serve Floyd Medical Center directly and provide connectivity from Downtown to Turner McCall Boulevard and from there to destinations in the City of Rome and beyond. Within the River District, North 2nd Avenue and Turner McCall Boulevard are classified by this typology.

As seen in Figure 30, North 2nd Avenue is currently very auto oriented, with sidewalks on only one side and with extremely limited crossing opportunities. High volumes of traffic at high speeds make it an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians. In order to make the street more comfortable, we recommend amenities such as street trees, and that sidewalks be widened using existing right of way as seen in Figure 31. North 2nd Avenue is also discussed below with regard to the West 5th Street crossing. The design team is aware that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is moving rapidly toward a widening of North 2nd Avenue using a draft design which does not consider any of the above treatments. The City of Rome should encourage GDOT to reconsider the design in an effort to maintain existing lane widths and instead expand the buffer and walk zones for both aesthetic and safety reasons.

Figure 30: Existing Principal Urban Arterial Cross Section – North 2nd Avenue



Figure 31: Proposed Principal Urban Arterial Cross Section – North 2nd Avenue



Minor Mobility Arterial

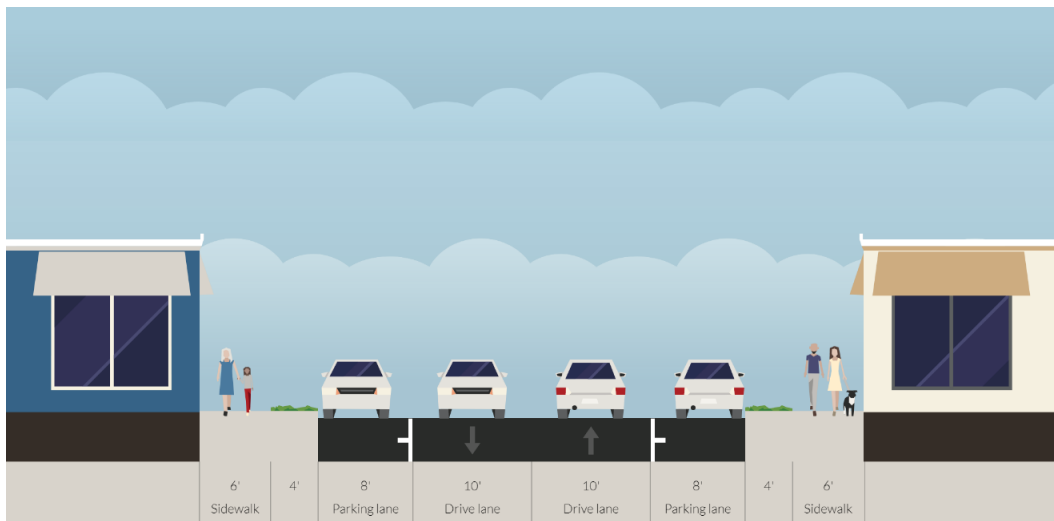
One Minor Mobility Arterial, North 5th Avenue, serves the River District. This street brings regional traffic through the center of the District at slower speeds than the Principal Urban Arterials. From a design perspective following the vision for the District, the goal of North 5th Avenue is to provide regional access to the existing and future commercial and mixed-use land uses, while also providing access to regional thoroughfare Turner McCall Boulevard.

Currently, as seen in Figure 32, the corridor can be very wide (its width varies over a short span of a few blocks) and is designed to serve vehicular traffic passing through the area. Repurposing the right of way to increase the buffer zone with parking and improved pedestrian amenities will help create a walkable environment that in turn fosters community and supports local businesses. See below at Figure 33 for a proposed alternative. Additional crossing opportunities described in more detail in Section 7, further improve connectivity.

Figure 32: Existing Minor Mobility Arterial Cross Section – North 5th Avenue (West of Avenue A)



Figure 33: Proposed Minor Mobility Arterial Cross Section – North 5th Avenue (West of Avenue A)



Mobility Collector

Mobility Collectors focus on providing mobility within the River District and provide access to its existing and future commercial and residential land uses. These streets will emphasize traffic calming designs that foster the walkability and bikeability necessary for a thriving commercial area. West 3rd Street, North 4th Avenue, West 5th Street, and Avenue A are all identified as Mobility Collectors for the River District.

Like North 5th Avenue, some of these Mobility Collector streets have vehicular zones that detract from the buffer and walk zones. See below at Figure 34 for a visual. At no impact to vehicular travel – including congestion and travel times, this right of way should be repurposed to take full advantage of the right of way to achieve the community’s goals of creating a walkable/bikeable district. Traffic calming strategies such as narrow lanes or street trees – make on-street biking more comfortable as well.

Figure 34: Existing Mobility Collector Cross Section – West 3rd Street

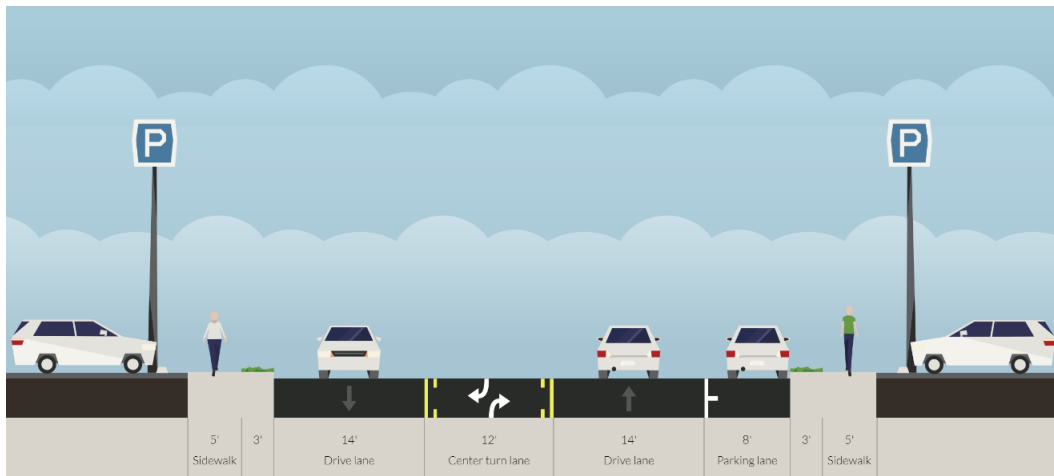
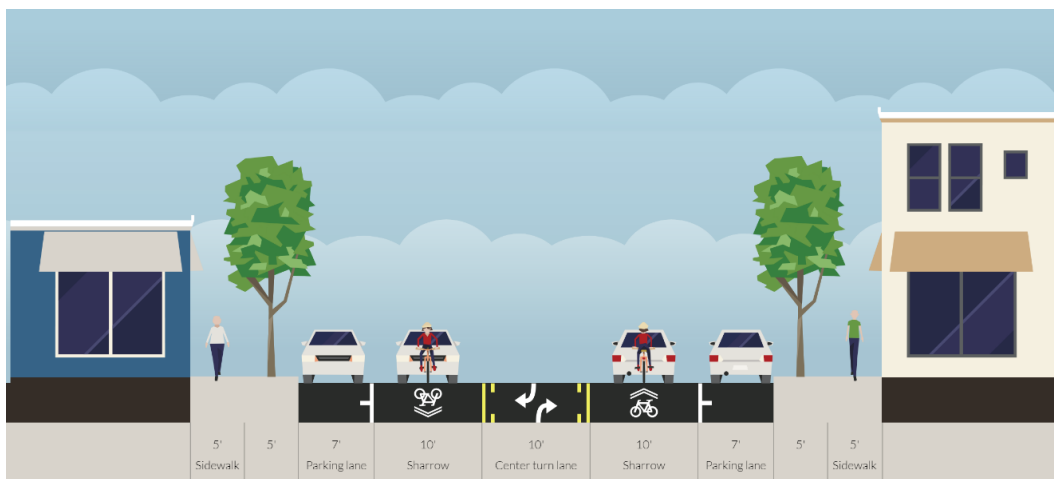


Figure 35: Proposed Mobility Collector Cross Section – West 3rd Street



Mobility Local

Mobility Local streets provide mobility primarily for traffic with local destinations for example those serving the residential developments proposed for the River District. These streets are typically designed to slow traffic considerably further facilitating multimodal connectivity to other local destinations such as shops, restaurants or employment. The West 4th Street Loop connecting to North 5th Avenue behind the levee, and Bale Street typify Mobility Local streets.

Bale Street, in particular, provides significant potential for change – currently lined with industrial uses, preliminary plans propose the corridor to become primarily residential. The existing roadway is narrow, serving two-way travel lanes. Without designated sidewalks, the space between businesses and the road is often used by parked vehicles. The redevelopment of this corridor provides the opportunity to reimagine the street into a corridor that serves a residential community (see below at Figure 37 for a visual).

Figure 36: Existing Mobility Local Cross Section – Bale Street



Figure 37: Proposed Mobility Local Cross Section – Bale Street



6 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Stakeholder engagement efforts (described in Chapter 3) spanned the length of the study process, providing various stakeholders the opportunity to inform the project team of their first-hand perspectives of issues and concerns, and to advise and guide concepts and solutions as they emerged. What follows is a summary of issues identified by project stakeholders, further analysis of each issue, and potential avenues of approach for solutions that could be applied.

Issue: Intersection Delay

Stakeholders noted that the sense of gateway to downtown is important at key downtown intersections, and expressed concern about congestion at major gateway intersections. The weekday AM and PM peak hour intersection levels of service under existing conditions are shown in two were identified as having a potential for congestion delays. These locations are:

- Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)/N 5th Avenue – N 5th Avenue is one of two major arterials that cross the river and connecting downtown with the western neighborhoods of the city
- N 2nd Avenue (Route 101)/W 5th Street – This route both connects downtown with the western neighborhoods and may serve as a cut-through for knowledgeable travelers bypassing occasional congestion the downtown bypass (Turner McCall Blvd).

Although all study intersections operate at acceptable LOS conditions (i.e., LOS D or better) during weekday peak hours, two were identified as having a potential for congestion delays. These locations are:

- Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)/N 5th Avenue – N 5th Avenue is one of two major arterials that cross the river and connecting downtown with the western neighborhoods of the city
- N 2nd Avenue (Route 101)/W 5th Street – This route both connects downtown with the western neighborhoods and may serve as a cut-through for knowledgeable travelers bypassing occasional congestion the downtown bypass (Turner McCall Blvd).

Figure 38: Existing Weekday Peak-Hour Intersection Level of Service

#	Intersection	Control Type	AM Peak		PM Peak	
			Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
1	N 5th Avenue/Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)	Signal	16.6	B	37.2	D
2	Avenue A/Turner McCall Boulevard (GA 20)	Signal	11.7	B	14.5	B
3	N 5th Avenue/W 3rd Street - Avenue A	Signal	16.1	B	18.9	B
4	N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 3rd Street	Signal	4.8	A	7.9	A
5	N 2nd Avenue (GA 101)/W 5th Street	SSSC	26.4 (WB)	D	29.9 (WB)	D

Solution:

As the project envisions the future for development and multimodal travel in the River District, special consideration should be made for block size, as this will impact the density and efficiency of the roadway network. Smaller blocks create opportunities to distribute traffic, and lessen bottlenecks resulting in congestion.

Issue: Future Parking Network

Downtown Rome has developed rapidly and is becoming increasingly popular, raising fears among stakeholders of a shortage of parking. As Downtown competes with suburban-style development typically ringed with large amounts of free parking, business leaders feel the need to increase the supply of free parking. The Downtown Development Authority's Parking Committee recently called for a decrease in parking management, an increase in the availability of free parking, and significant investment in parking wayfinding. A recent report indicated that a "paradigm shift" was required in thinking about downtown parking including a large increase in the number of free parking spaces which would spill over into the River District.

Solution:

Any parking investments should be considered with caution so that they do not contradict the results of the study from 2017 and remain consistent with municipal trends which use small parking fees to encourage efficient use of parking spaces and to defray the significant costs of providing parking. Furthermore, the advent of autonomous vehicles within five years could have a dramatic impact on parking and major investments in parking facilities should consider the likelihood of lower future utilization.

Issue: Transit

Very few locations in Floyd County have the population density and other characteristics⁵ that could support robust fixed-route transit service. Rome, however, is one place that does, with demand suited for service levels ranging from "on-demand" where passengers arrange service pick up to "fixed route" with 15-minute headways. Only Route 1's alignment immediately intersects the River District directly, but the district is served within a half-mile walk by Routes 1A and 1B, Route 2A and 2B, and Route 3 (see Figure 5), each of which run at a frequency of once per hour. However, analysis indicates that the district has strong enough transit propensity to support transit service as frequently as every 15 minutes near Floyd Medical Center and along Broad Street (a major activity corridor within walking distance of the district), and generally every 30 minutes throughout most of the rest of the district.

Solution:

Treating the River District as a multimodal hub, and branding it as such, could facilitate more favorable and sustainable mode choices and mobility behavior. In other words, this area is primed for a high percentage of the vehicular trips generated by the District to be made by buses rather

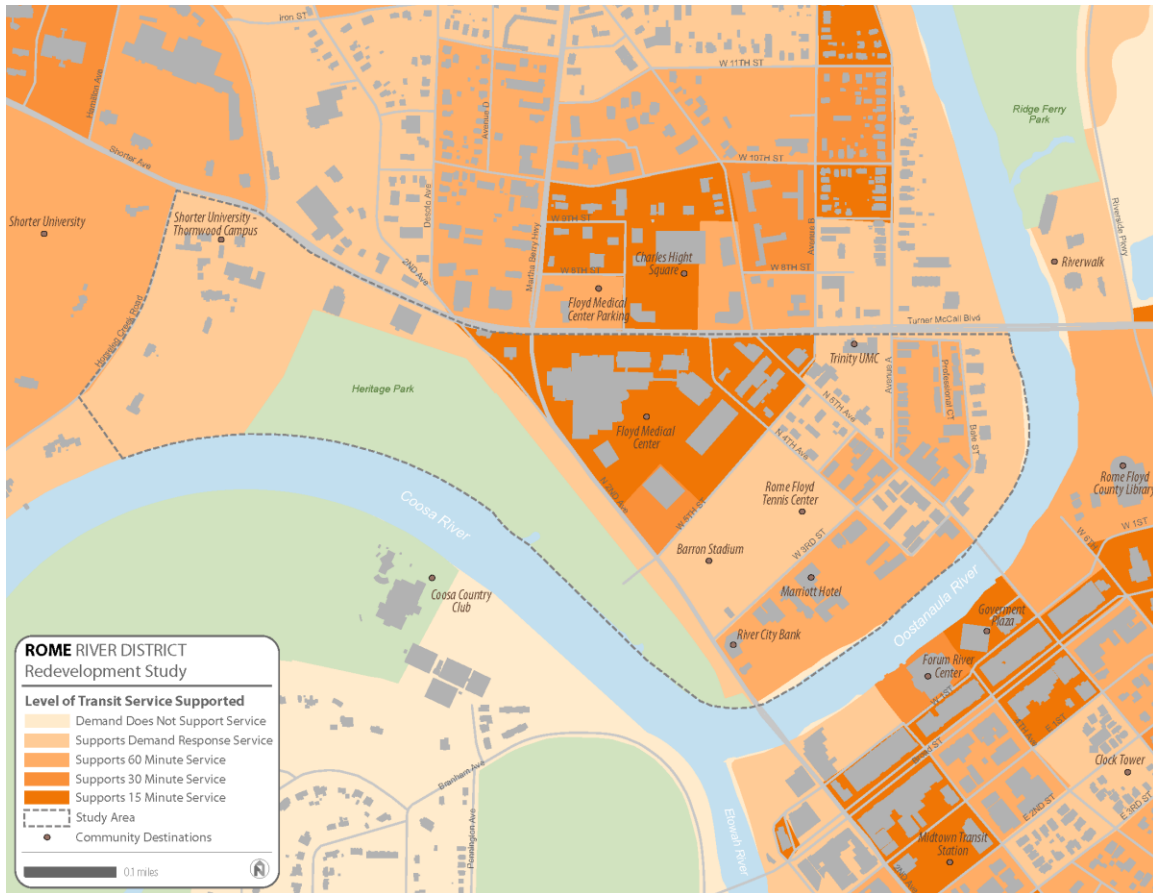
⁵ In addition to population and employment density, national research shows that certain population groups have a higher propensity for transit use (largely driven by lack of access to mobility alternatives) than the overall population. In addition to access to a vehicle, this difference in transit propensity correlates to race, annual income, citizenship status, and language spoken at home.

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than cars. As several Tripper Routes bisect the District – along Turner McCall Boulevard, N 2nd Avenue, and W 5th Street – and connect with the fixed routes, better utilizing these Tripper vehicles and restructuring the nature of Tripper trips would make available the capacity needed to improve frequency beyond every 60 minutes in what turns out to be a high transit demand area.

Figure 39: Existing District Transit Propensity



Issue: Poor Pedestrian Environment

The River District's poor pedestrian environment and poor pedestrian access was among the most common and pressing issues identified by stakeholders of every type at every outreach function. In particular, stakeholders noted that most corridors in the River District lack lighting and attractive landscaping, and that crossing opportunities are limited – creating a less than inviting environment for walking.

Solutions:

Mid-block crossings allow the pedestrian network to be more useful as they limit travel distances and support desire lines (paths that pedestrians would like to travel were there not barriers like busy streets). Such treatments would be particularly helpful on long corridors with few signalized intersections such as W 3rd Street, W 5th Street, N 4th Avenue, and N 5th Avenue.

Street trees and landscaping, add visual interest, provides shade, and softens environments dominated by hardscapes. Northwest Georgia has a beautiful native tree canopy and many of

Rome's residential neighborhoods take advantage of this creating inviting and calming streetscapes. Commercial areas, however, have relatively few trees and tend to be dominated by parking in lots or on street. This exacerbates the impact of the region's hot summers and tends to hurry people through outdoor spaces pushing them indoors. With the exception of the far western edge, the River District is nearly devoid of trees and landscaping – this is in stark contrast to the rest of the region.

Issue: Bicycle Network

Historically, the core of the River District served automobile uses exclusively, and the resulting lack of dedicated bicycle facilities means that few people are willing to ride. In addition to a less-than-friendly street layout, the district has many curb cuts and car parking areas which create more points of conflict between motorists and bicyclists. Another barrier is N 2nd Avenue, a busy thoroughfare with no comfortable bike-friendly crossings.

The bicycle network does benefit from the levees and the pedestrian bridge (which is also open to people riding bicycles), but despite this it is heavily limited by the presence of additional barriers. The main challenge with the levees is the complexity of the grade change between the river, the top of the levee and the levee's landside, which exacerbates a lack of connection between River District streets and the levee⁶.

Solutions

Allocating and clearly defining part of the right-of-way for bicyclists would create safe space for bicyclists and encourage more to consider this mode of travel. Also, as the transportation revolution brought about by smart phones, improved battery technologies, and equipment logistics improves, a bicycle network could be used by more than traditional human-powered bicycles. E-bikes, electric scooters, and other battery-powered personal mobility devices allow local travel without breaking a sweat but their successful (and safe) implementation depends on rights of way that consider their needs.

Issue: Traffic Safety

Traffic collisions of any type are a threat to the safety of all users, and the efficiency of all modes. Between June 2012 and November 2017, a total of 54 collisions occurred within the River District. Cumulatively, these collisions resulted in 15 injuries (severity unspecified), and no fatalities. While there has been no recent record of bicycle/pedestrian/motorist collisions resulting in physical injury or death, as the district develops and more pedestrians and bicyclists are present, care should be taken to ensure the safety of all users.

Solutions

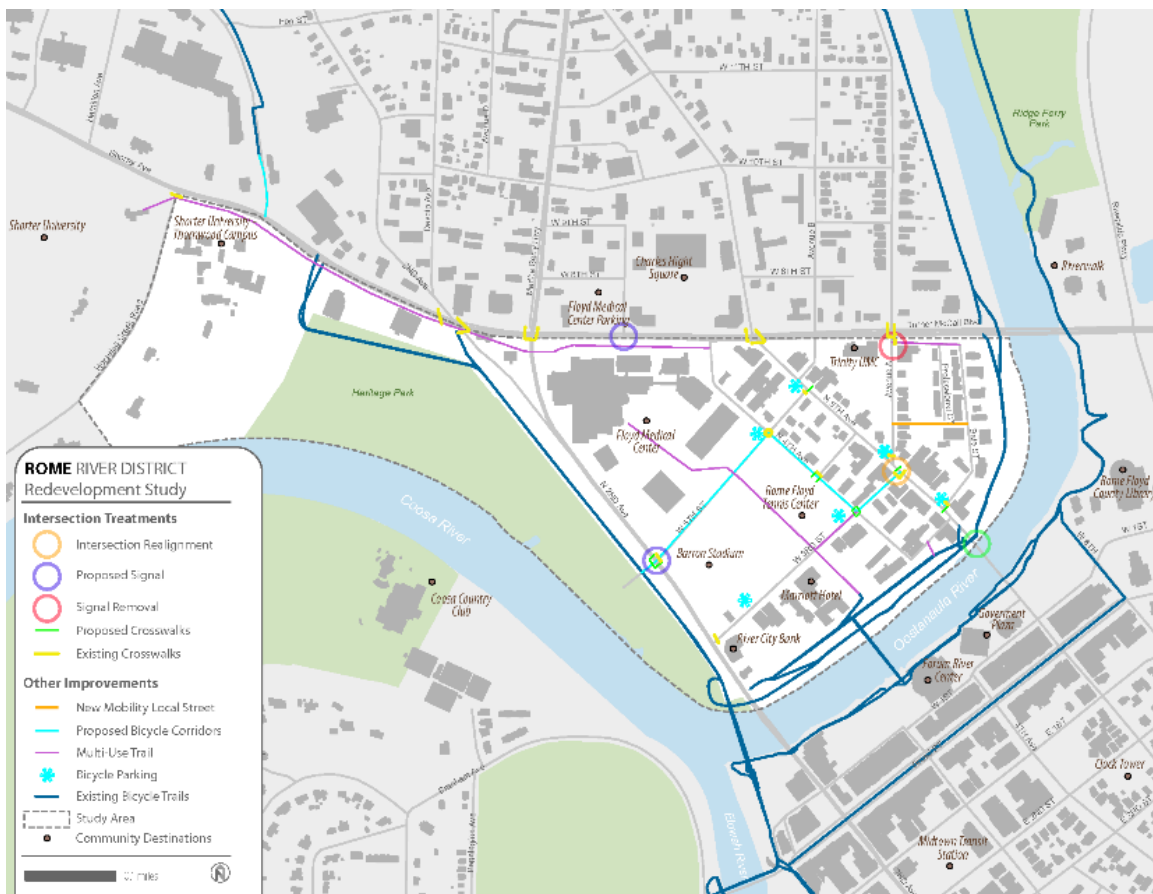
In general, traffic calming and slowing vehicle speeds of all drivers will tend to reduce anti-social driving behavior. Furthermore, if drivers are trained by traffic signal timing that they cannot speed up to make the next light, they will be less likely to speed and tailgate.

⁶ The levee trails are accessible at Turner McCall Boulevard, N 5th Avenue, the pedestrian bridge, and the Robert Redden Bridge at the rivers' confluence

7 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The transportation network solutions described in the following sections can all be found in the map in Figure 40.

Figure 40: Recommended Transportation Network Changes



STREETS AND TRAFFIC

Roadway design is not the only transportation tool for bolstering vibrant and livable districts, the other tools including traffic control, parking, and active transportation amenities are also valuable for re-imagining how to move through a district and in the process create someplace to linger and enjoy rather than just pass through.

Traffic Control

Traffic control, whether all-way stop-signs or a signalized intersection, provides traffic calming benefits by segmenting a direct path and stopping users or slowing them down to allow others to enter the network. Multimodal network connectivity is significantly improved for bicyclists and pedestrians when major thoroughfares such as North 2nd Avenue can be safely crossed. Below are two recommendations and rationales for why they are needed.

New Traffic Signal at North 2nd Avenue and West 5th Street

The signal provides several benefits to the district including:

- Improved access for motorists who may be employees, patients, or guests of Floyd Medical Center, especially those who may be leaving the area. The new signal creates a safe opportunity to make a left turn onto North 2nd Avenue or to cross into Heritage Park.
- Improved access for motorists who are turning left into the park from North 2nd Avenue. The existing traffic flows nearly continuously at peak times leaving minimal gaps long enough for vehicles to make the turn. Queues on westbound North 2nd Avenue result from this and further erode the vehicle LOS.
- Creates access to Heritage Park for pedestrians and bicyclists who currently have no safe way to enter the park from the middle of the River District. Indeed there is no way for pedestrians to access the park from the District except for along the levee bridge bypass (itself only accessible from the pedestrian bridge and the ramp near the new Courtyard Marriott) or the sidewalk along Turner McCall.
- Makes it easier for guests and patrons to use the parking in Heritage Park for big events in the District such as ball games at Barron Stadium.

Reconfigure West 3rd Street/North 5th Avenue/Avenue A Intersection

Currently this intersection has an offset configuration that requires separate and inefficient traffic signal phasing (or “split phasing”) for the West 3rd Street and Avenue A approaches to the intersection. This creates confusion and traffic congestion. Given the existing building layout, there is no alternative. It is recommended that when the building currently inhabited by Ingram Glass is redeveloped that the City purchase right of way sufficient to enable Avenue A and West 3rd Street to act as one street from a signal phasing perspective. This change will become increasingly important as the District develops and travel demand along these corridors increases.

Bale Street Repurposing and Removal of Traffic Signal at Avenue A

The existing intersection between Bale Street and Avenue A abuts the intersection with Avenue A and Turner McCall Boulevard and creates a complicated five way intersection. The relatively low

volume of vehicles using the intersection and the layout of the intersection, warrant exploring alternative ways of using this right-of-way. The east-west connection between Bale Street and Avenue A is recommended to be reconsidered to serve as a multi-use path with welcoming trees and landscaping to for pedestrians and bicyclists serving the planned residential communities, consistent with the proposed urban mixed use redevelopment outlined in the River District Redevelopment Plan. The limited existing traffic does not warrant the extra signalization, creating the opportunity for the right-of-way to serve as a multi-use facility. Alternatively, the intersection could be made into a right turn only design for vehicles traveling from Bale to Avenue A, or the facility could be left as is.

Traffic Calming

Traffic is calmed by adding “texture” to the ROW. This disrupts a driver’s environmental certainty, forces them to pay attention, and to slow down and drive more cautiously. Street parking is an important tool because:

- Parked cars narrow the lane slightly, boxing drivers in more than they would otherwise be, and
- Because of uncertainties such as another car pulling out of a parking space or a driver opening a door, a driver is less likely to speed in order to provide time to react to sudden changes.

5th Avenue Bridge

Currently, the bridge for North 5th Avenue consists of narrow sidewalks and four very wide travel lanes which encourage speeding but offers motorists no real benefit as there are traffic signals westbound at West 3rd Street and Turner McCall and eastbound at Broad Street. This configuration creates an undesirable walking environment and strongly weakens the spatial link between Downtown and the commercial activity on North 5th Avenue in the District. Adding street parking would slow traffic crossing the bridge, while simultaneously adding a layer of protection to the sidewalks making walking feel safer. It would also provide some valuable parking for the commercial uses – all at virtually no cost to the city. There are examples of parking on bridges in Atlanta – the Jackson Street Bridge over John Lewis Freedom Parkway is one and the bridges over the Gulch and near Georgia State University are others – as well as in Greenville, South Carolina – the Main Street bridge over the Reedy River.

PARKING

It’s no secret that parking can be critical to the success of any development and planning initiative. As the River District develops and competes more with suburban-style development typically ringed with large amounts of free parking, the “paradigm shift” noted for Downtown Rome will need to be continued into the River District. The ULDC Parking Requirements for the CBD has already introduced some elements of this shift that should allow the River District to act more as a mixed-use district from a parking perspective.

Parking Requirements

The parking requirements noted in the ULDC already encourage lower parking requirements within the Central Business District (CBD). In the ULDC, there is no off-street parking requirement for non-residential uses within the CBD, or for residential units with three or fewer dwelling units on a property. This practice is associated with the construction of fewer parking

spaces per unit of developed land, and are vital for the shaping of healthy, walkable urban streetscapes.

These parking requirements can encourage limited parking in the area. Further reductions in residential parking requirements (beyond that for residential units with three or fewer dwelling units or reductions from the 1.25 spaces per dwelling unit as noted in the ULDC) can even encourage car-lite or even car-free living within not only the River District, but downtown Rome as well.

Shared Parking

The rapidly changing dynamics associated with vehicle ownership, usage, and the ever developing prospect of autonomous vehicles demands close attention to parking needs. Shared parking strategies can help make parking investments more efficient by reducing parking surpluses and taking advantage of the varying demand peaks of different uses within a district.

As with the limited parking requirements, the ULDC also provides a starting point for encouraging shared parking within the River District. A denser River District will allow shared use of parking of a variety of users. Opportunities exist to address the parking needs of users such as Trinity United Methodist Church, which currently has a parking lot that provides 340 parking spaces on the northern edge of the River District and remains vacant most of the week (outside of its peak Sunday period). By taking advantage of the excess weekly parking capacity currently available at the church, this parking could be monetized by the church outside of its own Sunday peak needs, and priced for other parkers in the River District as new users are introduced to the area.

TRANSIT

Improvements to the transit framework of the River District could take advantage of parking and encourage fewer vehicular trips on both sides of the river. While more traditional service can continue to be offered through RTD, transit propensity of the area will likely increase with further development necessitating more extensive service to the River District.

Roman Chariot Enhancements

The existing Roman Chariot service offered downtown offers some limited on-request service to Carter Barron Stadium, but is otherwise primarily contained to the Broad Street corridor. Expansion to the Roman Chariot, particularly to Floyd Medical Center could provide a direct link between the River District's current largest employer and downtown Rome. Even without further development of the River District, expansion of the Roman Chariot has the dual impact of providing a link for Floyd Medical Center employees and visitors to downtown as well as to allow downtown Rome to take advantage of the parking areas in the River District that are currently underutilized, allowing for some parking relief to downtown facilities. Funding opportunities for this expansion may be available by partnering with Floyd Medical Center to defray costs to the City. Further savings may be seen with further investigation or even piloting of autonomous shuttles between Downtown Rome and the River District.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian Network

Building Frontage Zones

The building frontage zone is described simply as the space between the pedestrian thoroughway and the building line. The location and design of building frontages are a key factor in the walkability of a street. Often, in auto-dominated environments, building frontages are set far back from the sidewalk (think of plazas or “big box” retail), creating space used for parking lots. This design contributes to an environment that is undesirable to pedestrians as destinations are hidden behind parking moats which are themselves very challenging and uncomfortable to cross.

In a walkable urban context, building frontages should directly abut the sidewalk, allowing for an active frontage zone serving a variety of uses – space for building doors to open, café seating, outdoor displays, retail spaces, etc. For this reason, NACTO complete street design guidance recommends that building frontages be located along streets rather than across parking lots. NACTO complete street design guidance further recommends that color, texture, landscaping, and other techniques be used to soften hard surfaces and bring human scale to building frontages; and that blank walls should be avoided, as they are undesirable.

Remove Setbacks from West 3rd Street and North 4th Avenue

Plans for future mixed use and commercial development within the district present an opportunity for key corridors to be transformed into desirable and active urban streets, unlike other auto-dominated commercial corridors in the city (e.g. Shorter Avenue). This is particularly true on West 3rd Street and North 4th Avenue.

It is critical that new developments along these corridors be located directly along the sidewalk, and not behind surface parking or other undesirable setbacks, to maximize the opportunities to treat the frontage zone as useable public space, and that frontages be designed to maximize human scale and comfort.

Crosswalks

Where crosswalks are marked, high-visibility crosswalk styles should be used. NACTO guidance suggests that high visibility markings be used at any locations where greater motorist warning is considered beneficial, or where pedestrians may not be expected to cross (such as mid-block locations), or where there are substantially higher pedestrian crossing volumes. High-visibility crosswalk styles typically fall into one of three general categories:

- Transverse (Solid, Standard, Dashed)
- Longitudinal (Continental, Ladder)
- Diagonal (Zebra)

High-Visibility Crosswalk Styles



Source: [sfbetterstreets](https://sfbetterstreets.com/)

NACTO guidance suggests that ladder, zebra, and continental crosswalk markings are more visible to approaching vehicles and have been shown to improve yielding behavior, and therefore are preferable to standard or dashed markings.⁷

GDOT has adopted the ladder crosswalk design as its preferred high-visibility crosswalk style. GDOT also requires crosswalks to be at least 8 feet wide, or at least the width of the approaching sidewalk if the sidewalk exceeds 8 feet. Approaching sidewalks are also required to be free of obstruction to allow pedestrians to move freely across the intersection.⁸

Applicability to the District

At a minimum, GDOT crosswalk standards should be followed at necessary intersections along GDOT operated Turner McCall Boulevard and North 2nd Avenue. These intersections include:

- Turner McCall Boulevard/5th Avenue
- 2nd Avenue/5th Street (at new traffic signalization)
- 2nd Avenue/3rd Street (at existing traffic Signalization)

Other intersections deemed appropriate for marked crossings should follow the NACTO standard, which is similar to the GDOT standard but provide more visibility. Most notably, this includes the intersections along North 5th Avenue.

HAWK Signals

HAWK signals are “High intensity Activated CrossWalk” beacons and are relatively new in the traffic control toolbox. They are on-demand and provide flashing red, full red, and flashing yellow signal lights alerting drivers to a pedestrian crossing. Stop bars are provided where cars are to stop as if at a traditional traffic signal.

A HAWK signal should be installed at the crossing of the levee along North 5th Avenue to allow safe passage. Currently the nearest pedestrian crossing south of West 3rd Street/Avenue A, is along West 1st Street, well outside of the district, and on the opposite side of the Oostanaula

⁷ <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersection-design-elements/crosswalks-and-crossings/conventional-crosswalks/>

⁸ <http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/DesignManuals/TrafficOps/GDOT%20Pedestrian%20and%20Streetscape%20Guide.pdf>

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River. Improving pedestrian connectivity in this area will be increasingly necessary as the River District builds out and especially if parking is provided along the 5th Avenue bridge.

HAWK Signal



Traditional Traffic Signals for Pedestrians

On heavily used roads where drivers may not be familiar with the area, such as Turner McCall Boulevard, traditional traffic signals should be used to stop traffic and allow pedestrians safe crossing. Observationally and anecdotally, there is high demand for a pedestrian crossing between Floyd Medical Center and Keelway Drive, a driveway providing access to the Madison Retail Center (Publix). There is a heavily used Rome Transit Department bus stop at this intersection as well as a travel “desire line” between the Publix and dining options on the north side of the street and Floyd Medical Center. The pedestrian overpass does not serve local pedestrian traffic – it only serves drivers parking in the garage and there is no access between the street and the pedestrian bridge. A new traffic signal, would provide an opportunity for a pedestrian crossing, as well as facilitate vehicular traffic into and out of the Publix center. This new traffic signal would need to be approved by GDOT and should be timed in coordination with the signals at Martha Berry and North 5th Avenue to minimize disruption to motorists.

Sidewalk Needs

Because everyone is a pedestrian at some point on every trip (wheelchair users are considered pedestrians as well), walking is the most important mode of transportation. For this reason,

quality sidewalks are the foundation of multimodal streets planning, providing desirable dedicated space for pedestrian travel.

In an urban environment, sidewalks function as integral components of a pedestrian-friendly transportation network where pedestrians can experience safety, comfort, access, and efficient mobility. Additionally, sidewalks in mixed-use and retail environments support placemaking and economic development through inclusion of streetscaping, sidewalk cafés, benches, transit stops, etc. High-quality sidewalks and crossings work together to link land uses in a community and make walking not just safe, but attractive for many trip types (work, school, recreation, errands).

Applicability to the District

As a rule, quality sidewalks should be added to both sides of every street unless there is a compelling reason to exclude them. In less desirable situations, such as North 2nd Avenue, sidewalks should be designed with increased focus on safety and aesthetics to include sufficient distance from the roadway, benches for pedestrians to rest, and street trees to provide shade.

Bicycle Network

Bicycle Wayfinding (Signage and Sharrows)

Wayfinding (directional signage) plays an important role in ensuring that bicycle riders can navigate the network options that may be available to them. Because riding a bicycle can be a strenuous physical activity, users have little tolerance for wayfinding errors when trying to figure out where to go. This is particularly true of new riders, who may not have adequate knowledge of the network. The most common bicycle wayfinding tool is signage. Bicycle wayfinding signs are typically placed at or near important destinations, at bike network intersections, or other key decision making points.

Another important communication tool, although not intended for navigation, is shared-lane markings, commonly referred to as “sharrows.” These are in-road markings used to communicate to both motorists and bicyclists that the street is part of the bicycle network even without the presence of striped bicycle lanes. Sharrows should typically only be used for providing short connections to or from the wider bicycle network on streets where ROW restrictions preclude dedicated bicycle facilities. They should never be considered a substitute for separated facilities where those facilities could reasonably be placed.

According to NACTO, to be most effective, sharrows must be located on bicycle boulevards, or on similar low-volume, traffic-calmed, shared streets with a designed speed of 25 mph or less. Sharrows are never appropriate on streets that have a speed limit over 35 mph.⁹

⁹ NACTO Urban Street Design Guide <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/bikeway-signing-marking/shared-lane-markings/>

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Example of Bicycle Wayfinding Signage



Sharrows Marking a Neighborhood Greenway



Applicability to the District

Wayfinding signage will be particularly important to guide riders travelling along North 5th Avenue to the levee trails network. In addition, both North 4th Avenue and West 5th Street are candidates for sharrows.

Bike Parking

Bicycling as a primary form of transportation is becoming more popular as a cost-effective, environmentally friendly and healthy way to travel. The expansion of bicycle infrastructure such as protected bike lanes and trail connections opens up bicycling to many more potential riders but a lack of supporting end-of-trip facilities can lead to frustration, insecurity, and uncertainty once a rider has reached a destination. One example is the lack of convenient, adequate access to bicycle parking that is safe, secure, and conveniently located. Bicycle racks mounted in the pavement deter theft and allow bicyclists to lock their bikes to secure dedicated spaces out of the pedestrian through-way.

Applicability to the District

Bicycle parking facilities should be located in easily accessible, well-lit, and attractive locations close to main building entrances and points of high pedestrian traffic to promote active surveillance. Sufficient space should be allowed to accommodate bicycles, a potential shared bike solution – including e-bikes, and e-scooters.

Critically, care should be given to provide ample quality bike parking options on North 5th Avenue at or near the West 3rd Street intersection, which could be a focal point for the neighborhood and serve as a “mobility hub.” Other important locations are near:

- Entrance to Barron Stadium
- Intersection of North 5th Avenue and the levee crossing (just west of the bridge)
- Intersection of North 5th Avenue and West 5th Street
- Intersection of North 4th Avenue and West 3rd Street
- Intersection of North 4th Avenue and West 5th Street

Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails, more commonly referred to as shared-use paths, are pathways within a public right-of-way or easement that are designed to accommodate two-way non-motorized users, but are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or a barrier. Users of shared use paths typically include people riding bicycles and walking, as well as joggers, skaters and skateboarders, and scooter riders, to name a few.

Rome’s existing trails are largely focused along rivers and creeks, and are an excellent base from which to continue a citywide multi-use trail system. Below are two segments that should be considered in tandem which would connect West Rome to Downtown.

Horseleg Creek and Shorter University

The River District is a key connection between Downtown and West Rome and to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access, the City should work with Shorter University to extend the Oostanaula Levee Trail to its campus. From the University campus, an off-street 10-foot wide nature path could be built along Horseleg Creek to Alto Park Elementary School beyond Billy Pyle Road which

would provide residents of West Rome a safer and more beautiful way to walk and/or ride bicycles to Downtown and the River District.

Shorter Avenue and Turner McCall

Currently it is very difficult to access the Floyd Medical Center and the River District from the west. A 14' wide bi-directional multi-use path should be built along the south side of Shorter Avenue and Turner McCall Boulevard between Horseleg Creek Road and North 4th Avenue with a very clearly marked crossing at North 2nd Avenue. This connection is critical both for pedestrian safety of those going to and from the Medical Center but also provides a wider link between the pedestrian bridge over the Oostanaula and all points west of Shorter University.

TDM AND EMERGING MOBILITY

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and emerging mobility trends can significantly enhance infrastructure and policy initiatives to provide more fully integrated solutions for the River District. While these recommendations can be implemented for the River District itself, they have more wide-ranging impacts that can assist not only Downtown Rome and other nearby areas, but all parts of Rome as well.

Tripper Services

Promotion of and improvements to the Tripper services currently offered by RTD to employees and residents nearby Downtown and the River District could enhance existing RTD service in the area. Current Tripper information available on the RTD website is somewhat difficult to understand and route maps as well as clearer, up-front, information regarding the morning and afternoon service times, as well as the service's availability to all users could encourage more nearby employees and residents to take advantage of the existing service.

Shared Mobility Devices

Shared and personal mobility devices such as bikeshares, e-bikes, e-scooters, and others continue to provide local residents more flexible mobility options throughout the country. Even in Georgia, bikesharing and e-scooters have been introduced in communities ranging in size from Atlanta, Macon, and Savannah to Carrollton, Woodstock, and Athens, further enhancing mobility options for residents, employees, and visitors of those communities.

In addition to considering the local policy impacts of permitting companies that support the sharing of these devices, the expansion of these services has required municipalities to reconsider who uses bicycle infrastructure as e-bikes and e-scooters become more prevalent options for users. In most communities, users of the devices utilize their local bicycle as well as sidewalk infrastructure. This may require an examination of local policies governing who and what may use bicycle and sidewalk facilities.

8 GETTING IT DONE

The primary goal of the River District Multimodal Analysis and Redevelopment Plan is to create a district that seeks to introduce policies and projects to support future investments in the area by guiding the development of a multimodal transportation network that facilitates walking, bicycling, transit-use, and effectively manages vehicular parking and traffic demands. Developing the River District will require a sustained commitment over the coming years. This section includes specific recommendations to implement and fund the solutions identified as a part of this plan.

Cost Estimates

The recommended major capital facility improvements by category and potential costs¹⁰ are shown in Figure 41.

Figure 41: Cost Estimates of Major Capital Facility Improvements

Type	Treatment	Estimated Cost
Signalizations	New traffic signal at N 2nd Avenue/W 5th Street intersection	\$200,000
	Reconfiguration of N 5th Avenue/W 3rd Street/Avenue A intersection	\$420,000 ¹¹
	HAWK signal on N 5th Avenue between Oostanaula River Bridge and Bale Street intersection	\$100,000
Multi-Use Paths	N 3 rd Avenue Multiuse Path connecting Heritage Trail connection (adjacent to the Marriott Courtyard Hotel) to Floyd Medical Center via the Rome Floyd Tennis Center and Barron Stadium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$84,000 (asphalt)▪ \$205,000 (concrete)
	W 3rd Street Multiuse Path from the Marriott Courtyard Hotel to N 4th Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$17,000 (asphalt)▪ \$41,000 (concrete)
	Multiuse Path from Avenue A to Bale Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$17,000 (asphalt)▪ \$41,000 (concrete)
	Shorter Avenue/Turner McCall Boulevard Multiuse Path from Hospital Circle to Horseleg Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$160,000 (asphalt)▪ \$385,000 (concrete)

Funding

There are many funding sources that can be used to support the River District Multimodal Analysis and Redevelopment Plan's implementation, including leveraging existing resources; local, regional, state, and federal grant funding opportunities; private funding; and partnership

¹⁰ Cost estimates based on comparison with the Atlanta Regional Commission's Cost Estimation Tool

¹¹ Includes right-of-way acquisition, reconfiguration of intersection, and traffic signal improvements

opportunities. While many of these funding sources are competitive—particularly the public grant sources—many cities have been very successful at competing for grant funds. By matching projects to the funding sources for which they are best suited (and for which they can be most competitive), the City can continue to use a variety of funding mechanisms to build projects and implement new programs.

This section is organized into public funding sources and private funding sources. The public sources are further categorized into local, regional, state, and federal programs.

Public Funding Sources

Public funding sources include local, regional, state, and federal funds and grant opportunities. The regional, state, and federal sources are distributed through regular funding competitions, and the amount available in a given year depends on a wide range of factors. It is expected that some of the projects identified will be competitive for public funding given the benefits they provide to specific communities and their focus on improving comfort and safety.

Private Funding Sources

Private funding sources are increasingly used to supplement public funds, particularly in areas that are experiencing a great deal of growth and development. While private funding is most often the “last dollar in” for a project—rather than the seed money for an improved pedestrian crossing, for example—leveraging private investment is a powerful way for cities to implement more projects and build stronger partnerships with community members.

As the River District builds out, partnerships with local businesses can generate support and funding for projects in specific places or as a part of larger neighborhood initiatives. Projects funded through public-private partnerships may include green streets and pedestrian plazas, pedestrian tunnels, bike share programs, and multi-use trails. Working proactively with corporate stakeholders, such as Floyd Medical Center—which often occurs as a part of large redevelopment projects or within the scope of a specific community benefits agreement—can also lead to a partnership for funding bike projects.

Non-profit organizations, community groups, and advocacy organizations also offer funding for bike infrastructure projects in the form of grants. For example, the PATH Foundation is an advocacy group that administers funding for a variety of bike network projects, including shared-use paths, trails, and protected bike lanes.

Finally, a number of national foundations have begun to play important roles in supporting pedestrian infrastructure improvements and programming. National foundations that have funded urban health and active transportation investments in the recent past include the following:

- Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Sustainable Cities and Initiative for Global Road Safety, respectively, grants aim to tackle climate change at the city and local level and reduce traffic deaths and injuries.
- The Kresge Foundation has supported planning (not construction) for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Outside the Box is a grant program funded by Redbox and managed by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) in partnership with the Project for Public Spaces to

support libraries and their communities in carrying out free, fun events in the public right-of-way to activate spaces.

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds projects and research related to the health impacts of active transportation and the built environment.
- Southwest Airlines' Heart of the Community Program grants provide financial and technical assistance to local community partners who seek to bring new life to public spaces and transform them into vibrant places that connect people and strengthen communities.
- The Surdna Foundation's Sustainable Transportation Networks and Equitable Development Patterns Grant supports efforts to boost sustainable transportation networks.

Development Fees

Some jurisdictions have implemented impact fees that can be used to fund various types of infrastructure. For example, a fee may be adopted for each peak hour vehicle trip that is generated by a new residential project. In most cases, this funding is combined with funds from other projects to establish a pool of money to construct the improvements that are on an adopted project list which can include projects that serve many travel modes. As part of approval for new projects, the City could require developers to fund or build infrastructure in right-of-way adjacent to their project.

Business Improvement Districts and Community Benefit Districts

Infrastructure can be funded as part of a local benefit assessment district, which is based on the concept that those who benefit from a service should help to fund it. One common example is the Business Improvement District (BID), where business owners pay directly into a common fund to provide improved infrastructure, support operations to maintain clean and safe streets, and enhance wayfinding and placemaking elements in the district. These districts may fund bike improvements along with ongoing maintenance, placemaking, and landscaping projects.