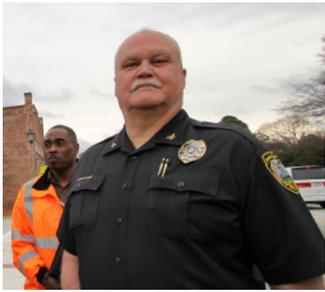


# AARP Active Living Workshop: *Avondale Estates, GA*

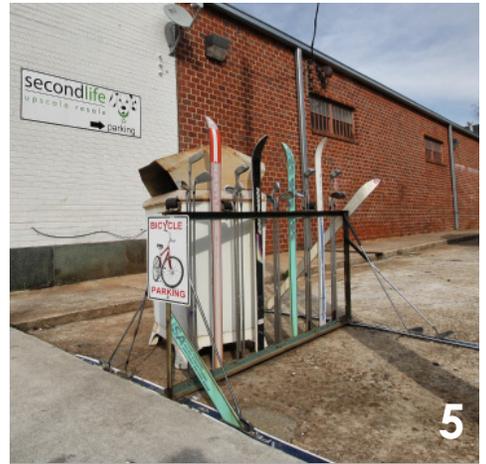
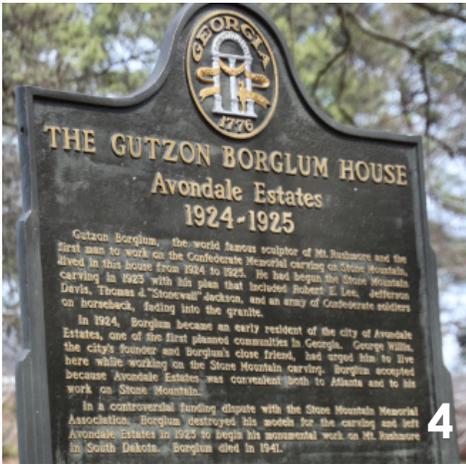
Walkable and Livable Communities Institute  
March, 2013



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# Celebrate Avondale Estates!



1. & 2. Avondale Lake, a natural space that attracts families and people of all ages. A safe place as there is a lot of activity and houses watch over the park.
3. Celebrate the Bridle Path that is open and the neighbors and volunteers that help keep it maintained and safe.
4. Many historic homes are located in Avondale Estates, including the Gutzon Borglum house, the world famous sculptor of Mt. Rushmore. As the plaque states, he chose to live in Avondale Estates in 1924 because it was convenient both to Atlanta and to his work on Stone Mountain. This still holds true today; continue to take advantage of regional connections.
5. Acts of love are happening, showing that bicyclists are encouraged to come into town by providing bicycle parking.
6. Avondale Estates has highly engaged and active residents, including new residents John and Diane Pomberg, who located to Avondale Estates in 2012 from Iowa to be closer to their grandchildren. Family, proximity to Atlanta and an age friendly community attracted them to Avondale Estates.

# Toward a More Walkable, Prosperous Future

We have applied advanced engineering to move more cars and to move them faster. The result is streets that accommodate cars and that deter people from active transportation. Land settlement practices—strip centers, cul-de-sacs, poorly sited schools, and single-use zoning—compound the problem, producing auto dependency. Our auto dependency is furthered by development patterns that have changed the form of communities from walkable, transit oriented, street grid systems to strip and single-family development accessed by regional automobile corridors. Level of Service focuses on vehicle mobility at the expense of all other modes. We generally do not consider acceptable Levels of Service for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

Various trends are changing the projections for future travel demands; that is, they are changing our understanding of the type of transportation systems people will want and need in the future. Aging population, rising fuel prices, growing traffic problems, increasing health and environmental concerns, and changing consumer preferences are all increasing demand for walking, cycling and transit.

The benefits of supporting active transportation, and thus improving walkability and livability, are numerous. They improve health and reduce health-care costs. Less parking is needed. They help alleviate pressure on roadways that are nearing saturation and have very little “grow room.” They are the lowest-cost way to reduce vehicle-miles-traveled and thereby keep motorized traffic moving smoothly. Beyond that, more than 25 percent of all trips people take are within walking distance and 60 percent are within bicycling distance. Having the option to walk or bike – or move naturally – makes sense.

In fact, study after study shows that walkable, bikeable, and livable communities are also healthier communities, not only in terms of individual health, but also environmental and economic health. Consider that:

- A study published in the Journal of the American Planning Association in 2006 found that for every five-percent increase in walkability, a community could expect more than a 30-percent increase in

“physically active travel” and nearly a quarter-point reduction in individual body mass index, which is a common indicator for obesity and health. The increase in walkability also was correlated with more than a five-percent reduction in air pollutants that are associated with vehicle travel.

- Analysis published in Preventive Medicine in 2010 indicates that installing sidewalks on all of a city’s streets would increase physical activity enough to offset weight gain in about 37 percent of the population, leading to health-care savings that could repay the cost of installing the sidewalks.
- A study published by CEOs for Cities in 2009 shows that in 13 of 15 housing markets evaluated, a one-point increase in a neighborhood’s WalkScore ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)) increased homes values as much as \$3,000.

Other benefits noted through observation and reported by numerous government entities, independent researchers and non-profit organizations include protection of natural and cultural resources, increased economic development, reduction in crime and violence, opportunities for social connectedness and community building, reduced sprawl and infrastructure costs, and transportation equity. Factors improving walkability include:

- Nearby land uses, such as retail shops located near offices and housing, and schools located within neighborhoods.
- Street connectivity, ideally in a fine-grain grid without unnecessary cul-de-sacs.
- Road widths that contribute to slower vehicle speeds. Vehicle speeds affect walkability and livability: the wider a road or a vehicle travel lane is (or appears to the driver to be), the faster the driver tends to travel. The faster cars are traveling, the less safe and comfortable a person feels walking or bicycling next to them.
- A sense of security and “eyes on the street.” This feeling of comfort is created by orienting the homes and buildings toward the street, and providing trans-

## Participants of the A.L.W.



parency—occupied buildings and homes with windows and doors at the street level—so occupants can watch over the street.

Further, when cities and towns provide equitable access to a complete transportation system, they send the message that people—not just cars—belong. No matter one's age, income, ability, or mode of transport, the place works and the benefits are tremendous.

Given all this, it is very promising that Avondale Estates, GA is embarking upon this process to develop better streets that include active transportation as a key component to paving a more livable community; more prosperous future.

### Executive Summary

Sponsored by AARP, and funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Grantmakers in Aging, Pfizer Foundation and the City of Avondale Estates, the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute—led by Dan Burden and Samantha Thomas—facilitated an Active Living Workshop on March 11, 2013 in Avondale Estates, GA. The Active Living Workshop aims to help communities identify how to improve economic vitality and social equity by addressing obstacles to active transportation.

Participants were guided through an educational

presentation and discussion of best design practices, took to their feet during a walking audit and collaborated during interactive sessions to identify the area's assets and opportunities. The primary goal of the workshop was to engage the community in transportation decision-making by walking together to evaluate existing conditions. Based on this evaluation, workshop participants determined next steps for encouraging active living. This report provides a summary of findings from the Active Living Workshop and provides recommendations to improve walkability and livability.

Key recommendations include:

- Improve overall support for active living by installing and fixing crosswalks, filling in sidewalk gaps, adding bike lanes, implementing a “road diet” on N. Avondale Road/College Ave/Hwy 278, adjusting traffic signals, updating and adding signage, and accommodating users of all abilities.
- Capitalize on the vacant 20 acre property by first reviewing and revising zoning ordinances, and then creating a plan for the area to establish a truly pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use village that will help revitalize the entire area.
- Implement the strategies prioritized by the workshop participants as part of the Recommendation and 100-Day Challenge section described later in

# Key Concepts

**Active Transportation:** Also known as non-motorized transportation, this includes walking, bicycling, using a wheelchair or using “small-wheeled transport” such as skates, a skateboard or scooter. Active modes of transportation offer a combination of commuting options, recreation, exercise and transportation. (See Victoria Transport Policy Institute, [www.vtpi.org](http://www.vtpi.org).)

**Aging in Place:** Also called “living in place,” this is the ability to live in one’s home safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income or abilities, in a familiar environment, with opportunities to participate in family and other community activities. (See National Aging in Place Council, [www.ageinplace.org](http://www.ageinplace.org).)

**Charrette:** [pronounced, “shuh-RET”] A collaborative session to solve urban-design problems that usually involves a group of designers working directly with stakeholders to identify issues and solutions. It can be more successful than traditional public processes because it focuses on building “informed consent.” (See [www.walklive.org](http://www.walklive.org).)

**Complete Streets:** Roads that are designed for everyone, including people of all ages and abilities. They are accessible, are comfortable for walking and biking, and include sidewalks, street trees and other amenities that make them feel “complete.” (See National Complete Streets Coalition, [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org).)

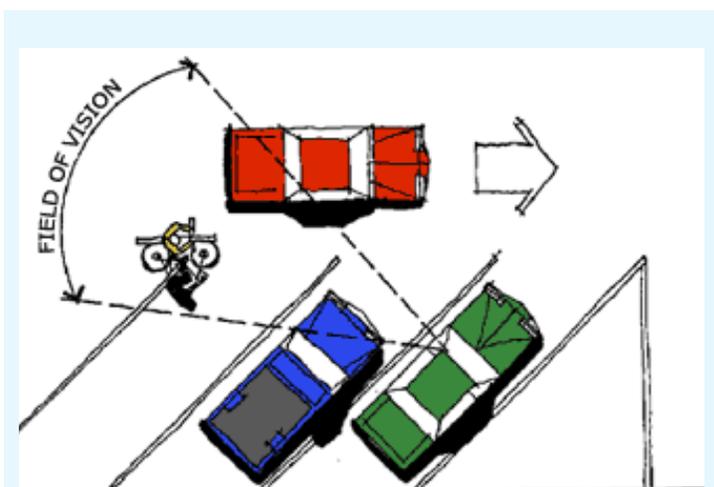
**Head-Out Angled Parking:** Also called “back-in” or “reverse” angled parking, this is arguably the safest form of on-street parking. It offers multiple benefits, including creating a sight line between the driver and other road users when “un-parking.” Additionally, head-out parking allows the driver to load their trunk from the curb, instead of adjacent to the travel lane. And for drivers with young children, seniors or others who need extra help, the open car doors direct passengers to the safety of the sidewalk behind the car, not into traffic. Getting into a head-out angled spot is simple—a driver signals their intention, slows, pulls past the spot and then backs into it, which is roughly equivalent to making only the first maneuver of parallel parking. (Watch a brief video about head-out angled parking at [www.walklive.org](http://www.walklive.org).)

**Livability:** In the context of community, livability refers to the factors that add up to quality of life, including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and culture, entertainment and recreation possibilities. (See Partners for Livable Communities, [www.livable.org](http://www.livable.org).)

**Median Crossing Island:** A short island in the center of the road that calms traffic and provides pedestrian refuge. They can be six to 12 feet wide and 20 to 80 feet long. They should be landscaped with low, slow-growth ground cover, and tall trees without branches or leaves at ground height that help motorists see the islands well in advance but don’t obstruct sight lines.

**Sharrows:** A “shared roadway marking”—usually paint—placed in the center of a travel lane to alert motorists and bicyclists alike to the shared use of the lane. They help position bicyclists away from the opening doors of cars parked on the street, encourage safety when vehicles pass bicyclists and reduce the incidence of wrong-way bicycling.

**Safe Routes to School:** A national program to improve safety and encourage more children, including children with disabilities, to walk, bike and roll to school. The program focuses on improvements through the five E’s: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation. (See National Center for Safe Routes to School, [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org).)



Above: This diagram from the City of Northampton, MA illustrates one of the benefits of head-out angled parking: a driver’s ability to see oncoming traffic as they pull into the travel lane from their parking spot.

**Road Diet:** On an overly wide road that has too many vehicle travel lanes to be safe, lanes can be removed and converted to bike lanes, sidewalks, a buffer between the travel lanes and sidewalks, on-street parking, a landscaped median or some combination thereof. A common road diet transforms a four-lane road without bike lanes into a three-lane road (one travel lane in each direction with a center turn lane or median) with bike lanes and street trees. (See Project for Public Spaces, [www.pps.org/reference/rightsizing/](http://www.pps.org/reference/rightsizing/).)

**Sidewalks:** With some exceptions, sidewalks, trails, walkways and ramps should be on both sides of streets. Where gaps exist or ramps are missing, fix them on a priority basis, working out block-by-block from schools, medical facilities, town centers, and other areas where people should be supported in walking and biking. Sidewalks in people-rich areas should be at least eight feet wide and separated from the curb by a zone that can accommodate planter strips, tree wells, hydrants, benches, etc.

**Street Trees:** Street trees not only provide shade and a nice environment, but also help protect people walking and bicycling. When placed within four to six feet of the street, trees create a vertical wall that helps lower vehicle speeds and absorb vehicle emissions. They also provide a physical buffer between moving cars and people. On streets with a narrow space between the sidewalk and curb, trees can be planted in individual tree wells placed between parking stalls, which further reduces travel speeds. Depending on the species, they should be spaced 15 to 25 feet apart.

**Traffic Calming:** Using traffic engineering and other tools designed to control traffic speeds and encourage driving behavior appropriate to the environment. Examples include street trees, bulb outs, medians, curb extensions, signage, road diets and roundabouts. Traffic calming should encourage mobility for all modes.

**Walking Audit:** Also called a “walking workshop,” this is a review of walking conditions along specified streets conducted with a diverse group of community members. Participants experience firsthand the conditions that either support or create barriers to walking and biking. (See more about walking audits, see the Walkable 101 series of resources at [www.walklive.org](http://www.walklive.org).)

## Roundabouts, Mini Circles and Rotaries

**Roundabouts:** Modern roundabouts navigate cars around a circulating island, usually 50 to 135 feet in diameter. They are ideal for collector and arterial roads, on Main Streets, and at freeway on-off ramps. They eliminate the need for cars to make left turns, which are particularly dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. Properly designed, roundabouts hold vehicles speeds to 15 to 20 mph and reduce injury crashes by 76 percent and reduce fatal crashes by 90 percent compared to signalized intersections. (See <http://www.iihs.org/research/topics/roundabouts.html>.) Roundabouts also can increase capacity by 30 percent by keeping vehicles moving. When installing roundabouts in a community for the first time, take care to make roadway users comfortable with the new traffic pattern and to educate them about how use roundabouts properly. (See the educational video at <http://bit.ly/fhwasafetyvideo>.)

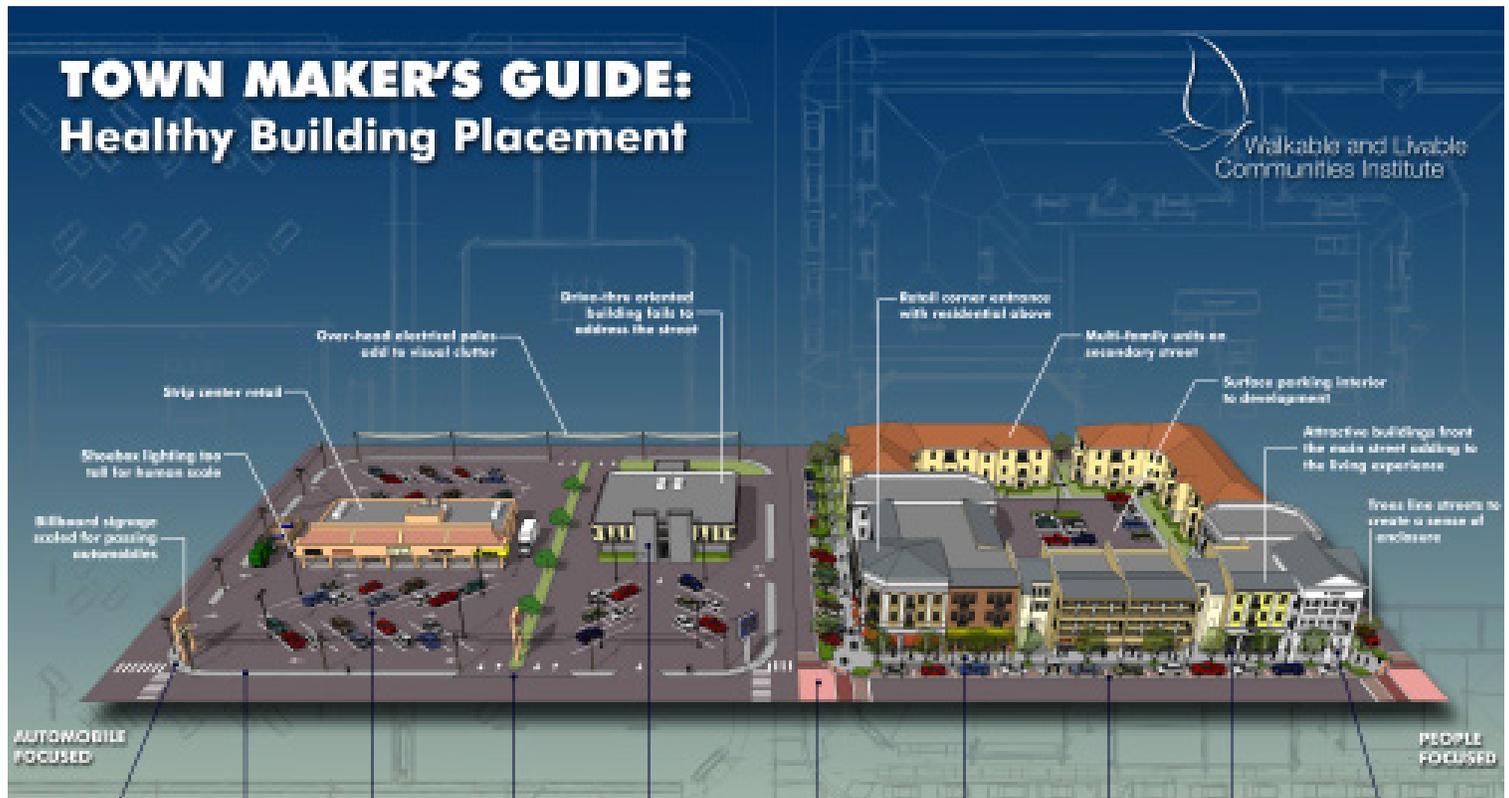


*A modern, single-lane roundabout in San Diego, CA calms traffic, improves safety, and supports people walking and biking, all while carrying about 25,000 vehicles per day.*

**Mini Circles:** Often used in neighborhoods, these intersections navigate vehicles around a small island—eight to 15 feet in diameter—that can be either lightly domed or raised. If raised, they should be visible from hundreds of feet away, creating the feeling of a small park in the neighborhood. They should be designed to reduce speeds to 15 to 18 mph at each intersection.

**Rotaries and Traffic Circles:** These can be as big as football fields and might include stop signs and signals. Rotaries can be cumbersome and complicated and often induce higher speeds and crash rates. Many rotaries in North America and Europe are being removed and replaced with modern roundabouts.

# Key Concepts



In the past, cities were weakened as land-use failed to integrate transportation with land which led to a devalued or compromised set of land uses and roadways. For instance, with roads designed for high speeds, developers cannot develop a village that is enjoyable. This, then, increases the number of miles people drive, so more roads are built to handle the resulting traffic to more distant places. The opposite effect is also true. If the developer builds too many land uses with driveways, roadway capacity and safety degenerates, roads and intersections are widened, and land is further devalued. As roads are widened, people drive farther to distant shopping, and central town parcels are abandoned. By working together, traffic is better handled and balanced, land use goes up in value, people have places to live and town economies heal and eventually thrive. Additionally, when we place a person at the center of the design scale, we end up with land that retains its value, less costly infrastructure and safer conditions for all users. The graphic above shows the different forms that are generated by using an automobile as the design vehicle (left) versus placing a person at the center of the design scale (right). For a full-resolution copy of the Town Maker's Guide to Healthy Building Placement, visit the Resources section of [www.walklive.org](http://www.walklive.org).



# Avondale Estates, GA

*“What is the city but the people?”*

William Shakespeare



*Residents and elected leaders care and are engaged in their community's future. Pictured above Mayor Rieker and community advocates who participated in the full-day Active Living Workshop.*



Avondale Estates is promoted as a “small town—in town”- a close-knit community that values tradition while embracing new opportunities. Located seven miles from downtown Atlanta, Avondale Estates is a community with a rich history and strong identity. The city is recognized on the National Registrar of Historic Places as the only documented “planned” city in the Southeast, founded in 1924 by George Francis Willis. He modeled and named the city after Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of Shakespeare, and created a lasting identity reinforced by the Tudor-style architecture. The sense of identity through the city’s preservation of its architectural achievements is well established, but the city could use more infrastructure support for modern day active transportation, opportunities for social engagement—places people can gather—and access to a local grocery store or pharmacy. During the workshop, it became apparent that the next stop for Avondale Estates should be to honor the past and plan for the future; a future that demands a built environment that supports aging in place, new housing options, mixed-use commerce, and streets that support all users and thus improves the walkability and livability of the community.

The historic “bones” for a great, thriving downtown are in place, but Avondale Estates is still a diamond in the rough because the greater Central Business District (CBD) is being treated as a space for motorists to pass through, rather than a place to come for enjoyment and enterprise. At the heart of the problem is Highway 278—the City’s “main street,” also known as Avondale Road/College Avenue. The state highway bisects the city at its most vulnerable point, significantly dampening the desire to walk from the neighborhood into the Central Business District. Avondale Estates, like many communities in America, suffers from the effects of the poorly designed—only built for vehicles—highway that has broken street connectivity, creating a barrier between commercial and residential districts. The Central Business District has a nearly ideal block form of about 300 to 400 feet, but vehicle speeds need to be brought down and destinations need to be created to make walking and bicycling convenient and accessible to all.

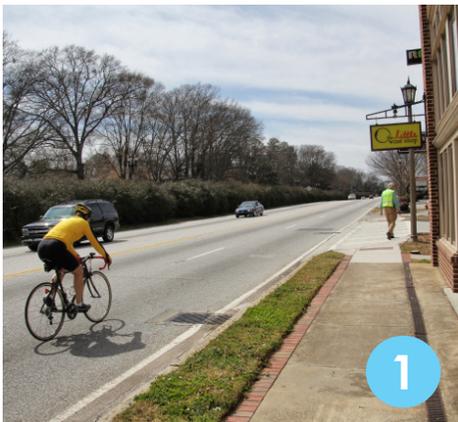
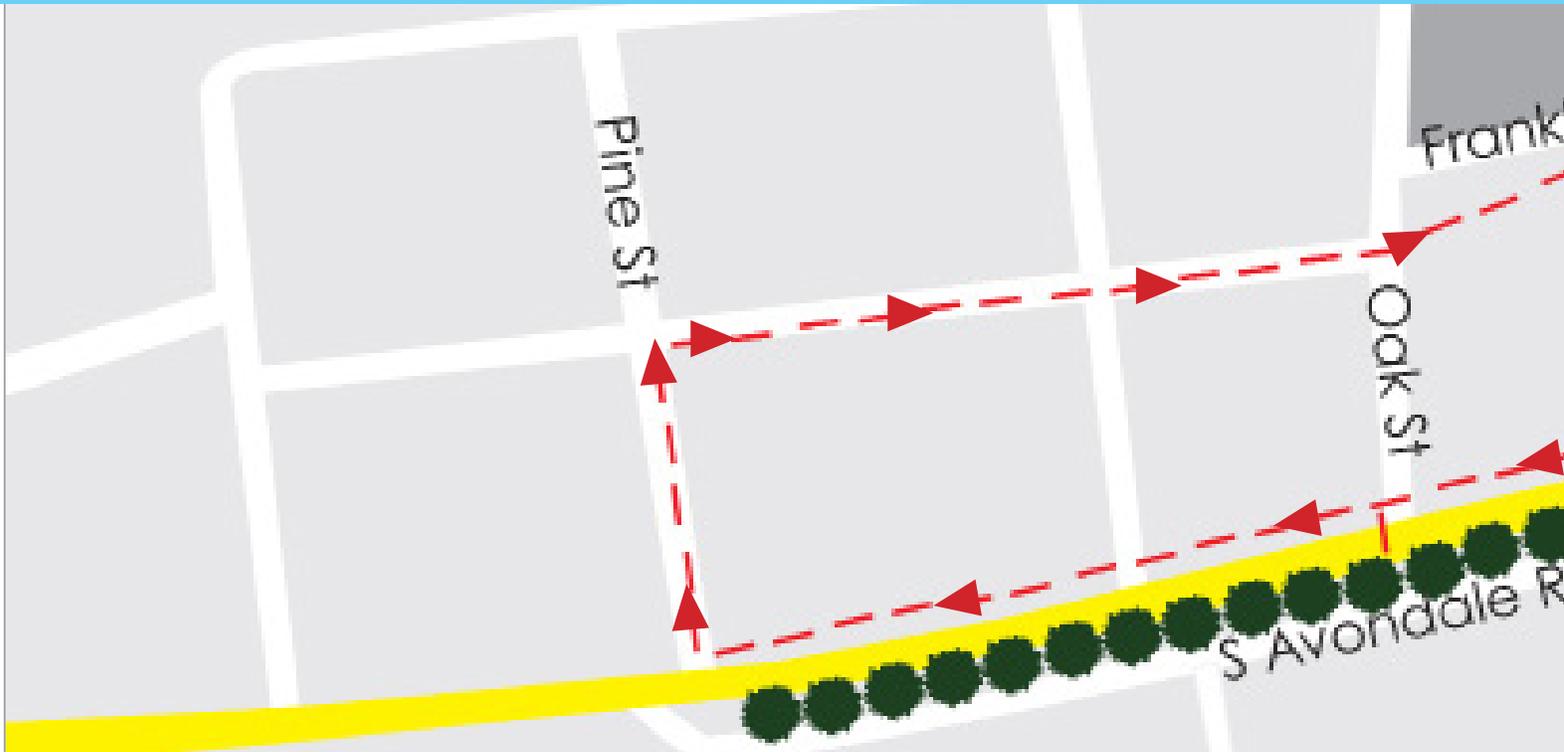
Avondale Estates has two MARTA rail stops located on either end of the city, less than a mile from the Central Business District. During the walking audit, it became apparent that traveling west on N. Avondale Road (College Ave/ Highway 278) the street becomes a walkability desert—not a comfortable place to walk to access transit or anything else by foot.

The Central Business District’s historic built form of grid block structure is a major asset to the community. The city also has a number of well-placed parks like Lake Avondale, multiple pocket parks, and a system of very well placed connector trails—or Bridle Paths—connecting the residential neighborhood from east to west. These green spaces are assets to the community, however only several Bridle Paths and pocket parks remain maintained and open, but there is evidence that the community is ready to build off of these assets and opportunities. Combining the city’s planning achievements with architectural treasures, Avondale Estates is an ideal city to continue to market its historical designation by restoring its historic path network, as well as modeling from it to support new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Highway 278 can no longer be seen or treated as a divider; it is time to capitalize on the city’s unique character both of built form and active and civically engaged residents to strengthen connections from the neighborhood to Central Business District; to the PATH, a regional bicycle trail; and to the MARTA rail stops.

The walking audit route focused on N. Avondale Road/College Avenue/Hwy 278 from City Hall off Clarendon Avenue to Pine Street. The route took participants down Pine Street into the emerging arts district. From there, participants walked along Franklin Street, demonstrating a mini-circle on Locust Street. Participants envisioned a new town village with a MARTA “light” station and a bicycle network that connects to the PATH at the 20 acre redevelopment opportunity. The route continued up Center Street ending back on Franklin Street, which was the “B” side of the iconic Tudor-Style building block along N. Avondale Road.

Participants learned during the audit how N. Avondale Road/College Avenue/Hwy 278 could be transformed into a vibrant street with a “road diet” and a roundabout at the intersection of N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue. Throughout the audit, participants observed missing sidewalks, or inadequate crosswalk treatments, long waits for “walk” signals, the absence of street furniture, and a general lack of pedestrian scale caused by buildings being sepa-

# Existing Conditions Summary of Key Findings



rated from the streets by large parking lots.

The WALC Institute assessed existing conditions with workshop participants. In general, downtown areas and neighborhoods that aim to improve the ability for people to walk, bicycle, socialize and “age in place,” need to address the following:

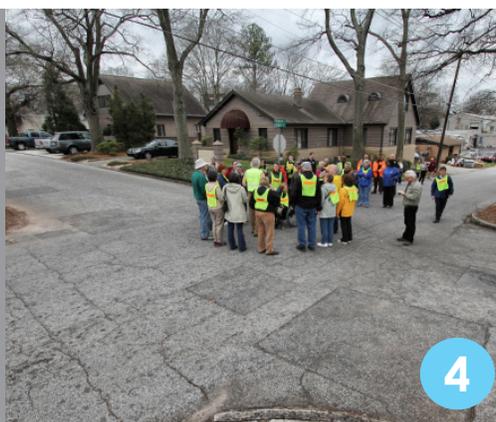
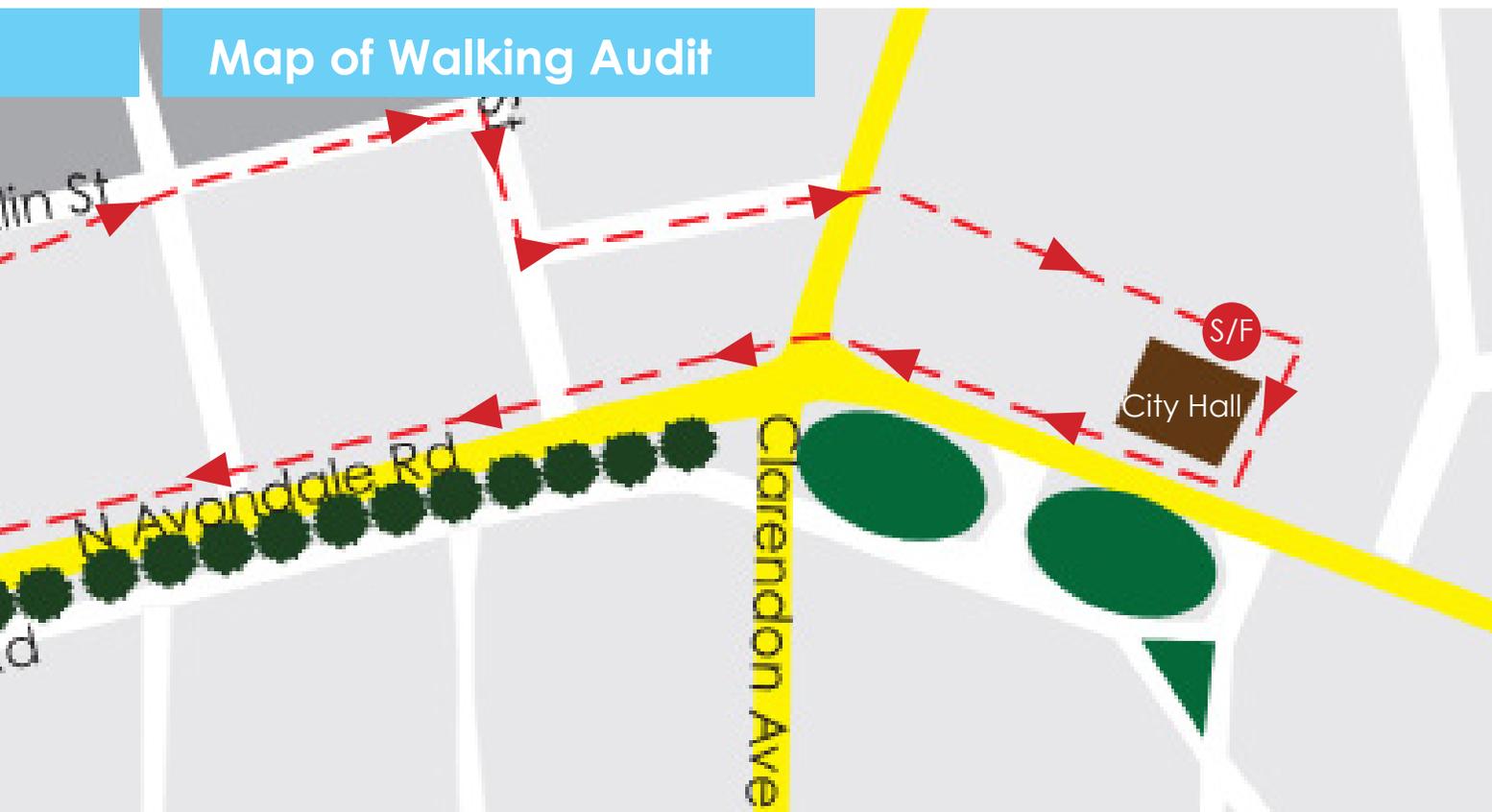
**1) Incomplete Streets.** As the image shows complete streets are missing. Streets that are inclusive of all modes of transportation not only improve conditions for existing businesses, but are a proven method for revitalizing an area and attracting new development. Adopting a local Complete Streets resolution, would provide significant support for implementation of Complete Streets projects. Also, in 2012, Georgia state Department of Transportation board adopted a

Complete Streets policy, which should be used to help leverage changes to accommodate all users along Hwy 278 through Avondale Estates.

**2) Streets that are Fat.** N. Avondale Road is an ideal candidate for a road diet. A road diet involves road conversion measures to right-size travel lanes and to remove excess lanes from streets. The remaining space is used for bike lanes, transit-stop bays, sidewalks or on-street parking. A road diet can improve the performance and safety of the corridor and encourage active transportation and economic vitality. To begin the shift, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and businesses along the corridor need to be involved and at the table.

**3) High Vehicle Speeds.** Destinations—places where

## Map of Walking Audit



people wish to gather—require low, safe vehicle speeds. Like many other places across the county, vehicle speeds in Avondale Estates have crept up over time. This has been the result of focusing public investments and built environment designs on vehicle flow and driver efficiency, to the exclusion of people walking, biking or using other active modes of transportation. By utilizing different design treatments, transportation engineers can move traffic more efficiently but at lower and safer speeds. This is good for businesses and encourages all modes.

**4) Numerous Conflict Points.** Signalized intersections often have significant turning volumes, which conflict with pedestrian and bicycle movements. To add to this complexity, many of the intersections along N. Avondale are missing crosswalks, curb-cuts, and properly timed pedestrian signalization. Roundabouts offer safer, more convenient intersection treat-

ments than signals. Street treatments that the community came to vision and are recommended are a roundabout at the intersection of N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue and a mini-circle at Locust and Franklin Streets. Details are found on pages 32 and 39.

**5) Lack of Place.** Avondale Estates has a strong and unique identity, with Tudor-Style architecture, green spaces, proximity to rail, an emerging arts scene, and civic minded residents. However, the Central Business District and N. Avondale corridor are lacking outdoor seating, grocery stores, pharmacies and other amenities that are needed to create places to socialize and ensure that residents can meet their daily needs in the community.

# N. Avondale Road at Clarendon Avenue



## **LACK OF ADA COMPLIANCE**

Ramps need attention in many locations. ADA accessibility should be integrated throughout the streetscape.

## **NEED FOR RIGHT-SIZED STREET, TO ENCOURAGE 20 TO 30 MPH SPEEDS**

The current posted speed is 35 mph. This stretch of block has strong building form and on-street parking sending the right visual cues that support a lower target speed.

## **PLACEMAKING: NEED FOR STREET FURNITURE AND STREET SCAPING**

The existing buildings form a strong sense of place, but opportunities for people to linger are absent. Street furniture and other amenities such as garbage and recycling cans, bicycle racks, plantings, signage and wayfinding, and benches should be added.

## **STRONG BUILDING FORM**

The current development is scaled to people with buildings that honor, look over and front the street.



**COMPLEX INTERSECTION**

Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue create a complex intersection due to many turning movements and the absence of marked crossings, signage and other pedestrian infrastructure.

**COMPLETE STREETS ARE MISSING**

Our streets need to be designed to support all users. Currently, motorist behaviors are aggressive towards cyclists who are on the road.

**WIDE TURNING RADII**

Wide turning radii at pedestrian crossings encourage high-speed conflicts.

**PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ABSENT**

Pedestrian crossings are absent from two sides of this major intersection. The built environment should reflect access for all modes of transportation.

# N. Avondale Road at Pine Street



## **SIDEWALK MISSING**

Sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure are absent on Pine Street and throughout the up and coming arts district.

## **DRIVEWAY COMPLEXITY**

Driveways are a danger to pedestrians and to bicyclists. The wider the entry and the higher the speed of entry or exit, the greater the risk involved. Avondale has many driveways that allow too-fast entries, and exits and are designed without regard to people on foot or a wheeled user.

## **COMPLEX INTERSECTION**

Avondale Road and Pine Street create a complex intersection due to many turning movements and the absence of marked crossings, signage and other pedestrian infrastructure.

## **NEED FOR RIGHT-SIZE SIDEWALKS**

This section, like many other sections of sidewalk along Avondale Road, is too narrow and lacking an edge. Tripping hazards and other obstacles to mobility exist when the walk-talk zone is too narrow.

to sub-urban.



**NEED FOR A  
DEFINED EDGE  
AND STREET  
TREES**

Tree-lined streets create a sense of enclosure to protect pedestrians and reduce vehicle speeds.

**LACK OF NATURAL  
SURVEILLANCE**

The present development is scaled to cars with buildings set back from the streets. This design fails to honor the street or watch over people.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR  
LINER BUILDINGS**

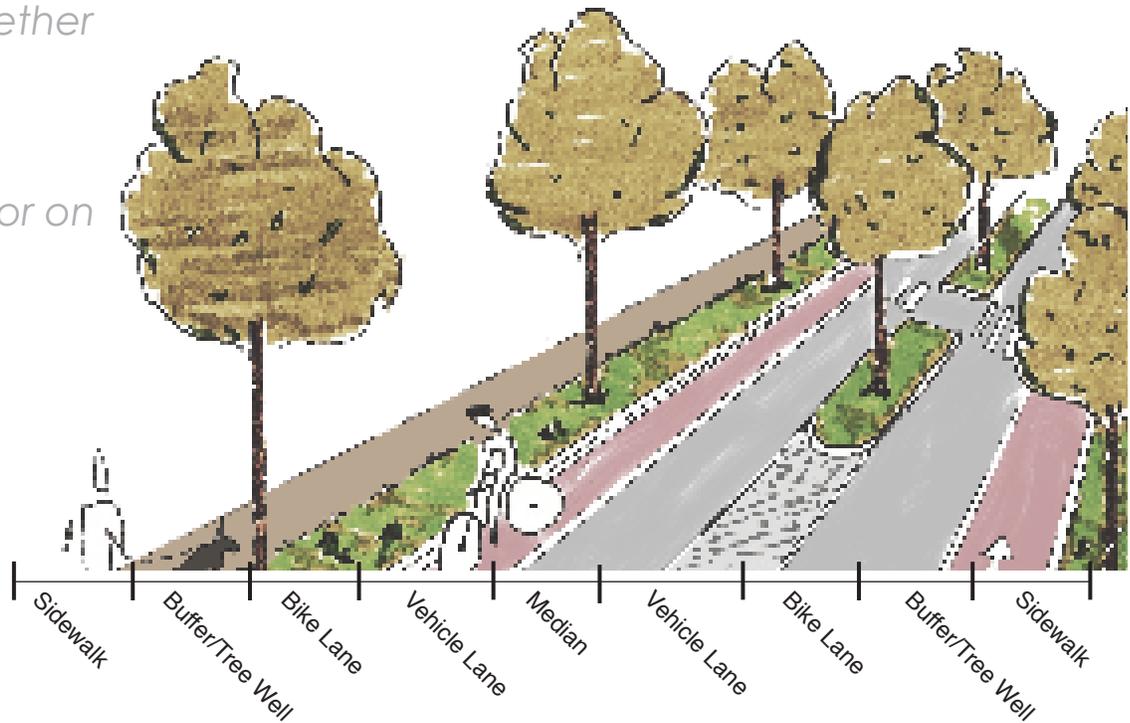
Liner buildings transform a setback to a village. Buildings that front the street create a sense of enclosure and place "eyes on the street" that helps to support active modes of transportation and economic development.

**NEED FOR ON-  
STREET PARKING**

Off-street parking takes up three times more space than on-street parking. On-street parking visually narrows streets and brings down traffic speeds, while providing the most sustainable and affordable parking.

# Key Findings, Recommendations & Next Steps

A Complete Street is a street designed for safe, comfortable and convenient travel for all users, whether they choose to travel by car, bicycle, public transportation, or on foot.



## Trees:

Tall trees of a species appropriate for the area are spaced 15 to 25 feet apart. The vertical wall helps calm traffic and encourages lower vehicle speeds.

## Buffer:

If the buffer includes trees, they should be set back from the curb at least four feet and the total buffer should be at least six feet.

## Bike lane:

To function well, bike lanes should be at least six feet wide.

## Wide stripes:

Mark bike lanes with thermoplastic stripes eight to twelve inches wide.

## Median widths:

Medians typically are six to eight feet wide, but can vary to allow for landscaping, maintenance and adequate "refuge" for pedestrians crossing.

## Vehicle lanes:

Lane width analysis indicates that narrower lanes are associated with lower crash frequencies. Ten foot travel lanes reinforce a 25-35 mph design speed.

# 1 Endorse a Complete Streets Policy

A Complete Streets policy ensures choices are available to the community by making walking, bicycling and taking public transportation convenient, easy and safe. Changing policy so that transportation systems consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users means that people of all ages and abilities are included in the planning and design processes.

Land use and transportation policy can either contribute to or detract from community building. When thoughtfully integrated, land use and transportation policies and strategies can jointly preserve and even enhance natural and cultural resources and create better built environments that are walkable, livable and sustainable. Regardless of a policy's form, the National Complete Streets Coalition has identified ten elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets Policy.

- Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
- Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, and automobiles.
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.

- Is understood by all agencies to cover all roads.
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
- Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
- Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.

## Resources

*Rural by Design* by Randall Arendt

*The Timeless Way of Building and A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander

*Sprawl Repair Manual* by Galina Tachieva

National Complete Streets Coalition at <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/resources/>

## 2 Encourage 20 to 30 MPH Speeds with Right-Size Streets

### About Right-Sized Streets

Fewer than one-third of drivers drive the speed limit on urban and suburban arterials. Rather, drivers tend to travel at the road's "design speed." Therefore, road design should be consistent with the "target," or desired, vehicle speed.

A general practice in the transportation profession has been to set design speeds higher than the target speed. It is now recognized that such actions tend to induce greater speeds, which can cause a significant rise in crashes, especially to the most vulnerable roadway users. Urban area design speeds should match the desired target speed. A lower target speed is a key characteristic of thoroughfares in walkable, mixed use, traditional urban areas. The following are design features that have been found to affect operating speeds:

- **Horizontal and Vertical Curvature** — A tight curve radius has a greater impact on reducing operating speed than any cross-section or roadside element.
- **Sight Distance** — As sight distance decreases, so do operating speeds.
- **Street Trees** — Street trees in planting strips have a traffic-calming benefit.
- **Lane Widths** — Narrower lane widths are associated with lower speeds.
- **Total Roadway Widths** — Narrower roadway widths are associated with lower operating speeds.
- **Access Density** — Higher density of access points is associated with lower operating speeds.
- **Signal Density** — Higher signal density is associated with lower operating speeds.
- **Median** — Roadways without medians have lower speeds than roadways with medians.
- **On-Street Parking** — On-street parking leads to lower speeds, due to side friction between moving and passing vehicles.
- **Curbs** — Speeds appear to be lower on streets with curbs than streets without curbs.
- **Pedestrian Activity** — Speeds are lower on roadways with higher pedestrian activity.

- **Roadside Development** — Speeds are lower in residential areas than commercial areas. Building setbacks also influence speed.

Wide travel lanes encourage faster driving. Adding a colorized bike lane, higher intensity crosswalk markings and increased signage can assist all modes in recognizing the parts of the street, other users and how to respond. The goal should be to reduce traffic speeds so that there is less speeding between traffic lights and improve corridor efficiency through new intersection treatments. Roundabouts, mini circles and traffic calming features can move cars through an area with lower speeds but improved efficiency.

Also known as the "desired operating speed" of a street, "target speed" is the speed desired on the roadway to ensure that all modes (vehicular traffic, transit, freight/delivery, pedestrians and bicyclists) can operate efficiently, effectively, safely and with enjoyment. Designing to a target speed means including only those design elements that best reflect the function of the roadway and its land uses.

Major arterials have the poorest walking conditions, due to higher traffic volumes, high traffic speeds, wider streets, and complex intersections.

Selection of an appropriate target speed is based on a number of factors and reasonable driver expectations. Factors include:

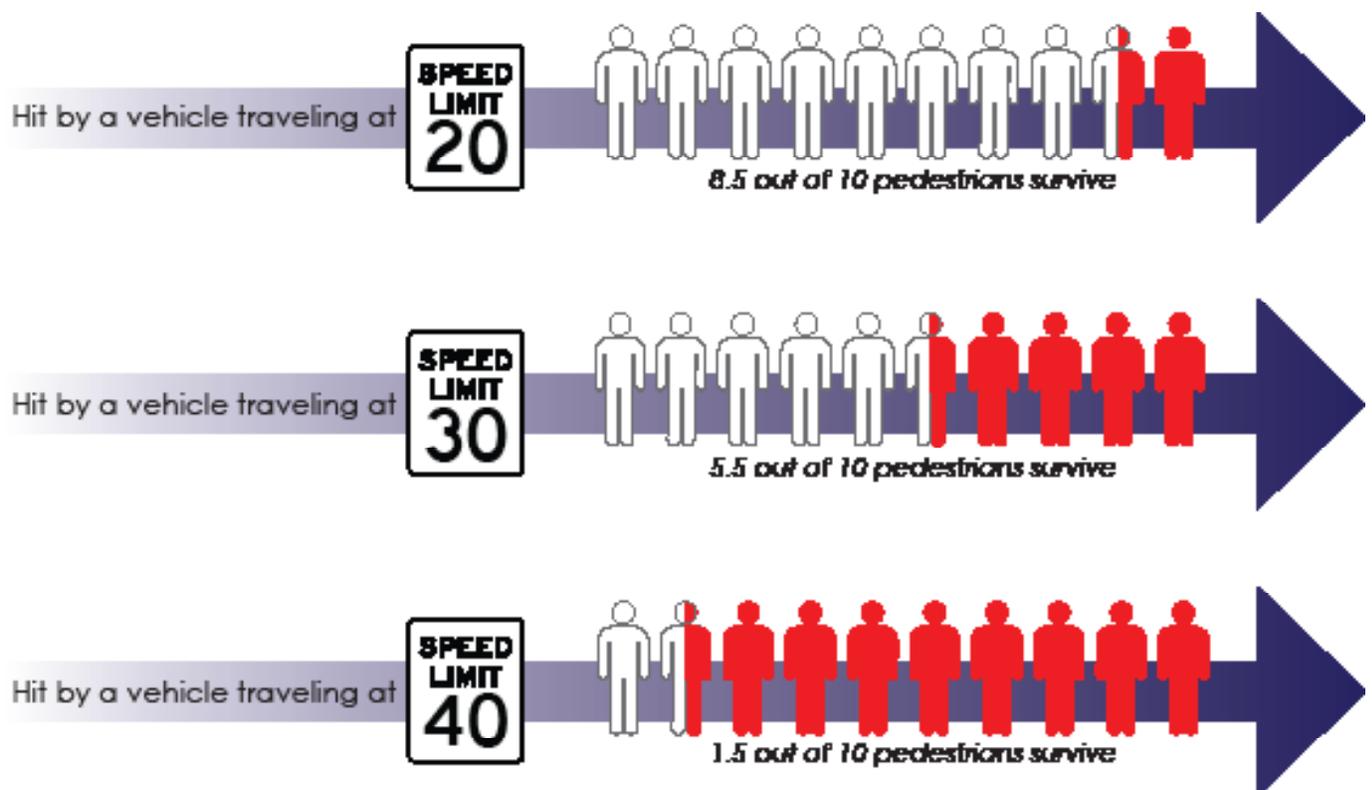
- transition from higher- to lower-speed roadways
- terrain
- intersection spacing, access to adjacent land
- type of roadway median
- presence of curb parking, and
- level of pedestrian activity.

A person's decision to walk is influenced by many factors, including distance, perceived safety and comfort, convenience, and visual interest of the route. Pedestrians feel exposed and vulnerable when walking directly adjacent to a high-speed travel lane. Vehicle noise, exhaust and the sensation of passing vehicles reduce pedestrian comfort. Factors that improve pedestrian comfort include a separation from moving

## Safety in Numbers

traffic and a reduction in speed. In walkable urban environments, a buffer zone that improves pedestrian comfort can be achieved through furnishings, landscaping, bike lanes and on-street parking.

The graphic below shows a pedestrian's likely survival rate if hit by a vehicle traveling 20, 30, 40 miles per hour.



Source: *Smart Transportation Guide, Planning and Designing Highways and Streets that Support Sustainable and Livable Communities*. Chapter 6. Designing the Roadway

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/mobility/pdf/smartransportationguidebook2008.pdf>

### 3 Address Fat Streets: Adopt a Road Diet

#### About Road Diets

In 1999, Dan Burden and Peter Lagerwey coined the term “road diet” to explain road conversion measures to right-size travel lanes and to remove excess lanes from streets. A road diet typically involves converting an undivided four-lane roadway into three lanes made up of two through lanes and a center “two-way left-turn” lane. But road diets have been completed on roadways comprising more lanes, and the number of lanes after the intervention can vary. What is constant is that the reduction of the number of lanes and/or lane width allows the roadway space to be reallocated for other uses such as bike lanes, pedestrian crossing islands, buffered sidewalks, and parking.

A road diet can improve the performance and safety of the corridor and encourage active transportation. Benefits include:

- Decreasing the number and width of vehicle travel lanes for pedestrians to cross, therefore reducing the multiple-threat collision.
- Improving safety for bicyclists when bike lanes are added and also creating a buffer space between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Providing the opportunity for on-street parking, which buffers pedestrians and vehicles and enhances retail success.
- Reducing rear-end and side-swipe collisions.
- Improving speed limit compliance and decreasing collision severity when collisions do occur.

When excess lanes are removed and lane widths are narrowed to 10 feet, the existing right-of-way can be re-allocated to support more modes. Sometimes, this can be done by simply moving the paint and conducting an educational campaign. Drivers base their travel speed on what feels comfortable given the street design and collisions tend to increase with higher travel speeds. So reducing the width and number of lanes has an effect both on speeds and collision rates. In general, the wider the road in front of us, the faster we tend to drive. And the faster a car is going, the more severe the injuries in a collision.

Reconfiguring a roadway for lane reductions depends on the current configuration, user needs, desired operational and safety outcomes. The majority of four-lane roadways were built or widened to accommodate peak vehicle traffic volumes, but for the remaining 22 hours each day, they are underutilized. On these four-lane roads with excess capacity, motorists notice that there are empty lanes in their direction. Speeds are often higher than the posted speed limit and

*Sometimes a road diet can be as simple as just moving the paint.*

dangerous conditions are created when cars stop in travel lanes waiting to turn left or right and a last-minute lane change by another motorist hoping to preserve momentum, creates a serious rear-end collision. Four lane undivided highways also have blind spots created by multiple lanes of traffic.

Additionally, 4-lane undivided highways are particularly dangerous to pedestrians because of the potential for multiple-threat crashes, in which one vehicle stops and screens the pedestrian, while another motorists continues on in the other through lane. The pedestrian and motorist cannot see each other, but because the motorist in one lane has stopped to allow the crossing, it does not necessarily mean that the motorist in the next lane can see the pedestrian or will respond in the same way.

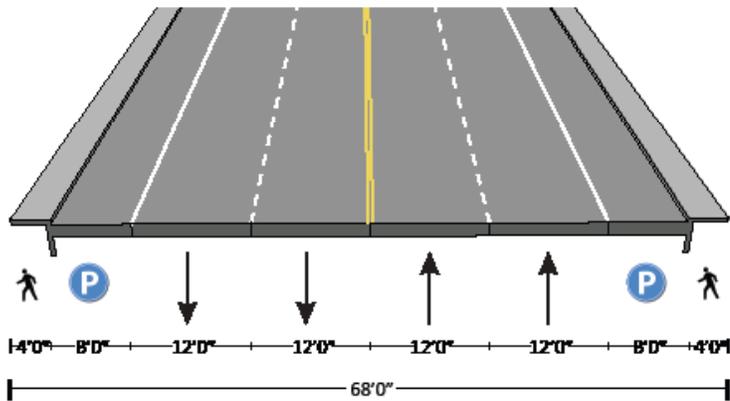
Road diets have been successfully implemented on streets carrying a wide variety of average daily traffic volumes. Roads with 8,000 to 15,000 vehicle trips per day are generally considered to be good candidates for road diets. If a roadway does not provide sufficient infrastructure for alternative forms of transportation, a road diet may create the extra space needed to provide or improve infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, or transit riders. Roadways in areas with surrounding land uses that attract pedestrians, cyclists, visitors, and residents are also good road diet candidates. These can include historic streets, scenic drives, main streets, schools, an entertainment district. Because a complete street can be provided within the existing right of way after removing or narrowing vehicle travel lanes, road diets are less expensive than widening roads, have fewer negative im-

pacts on adjacent properties, and interrupt traffic for less time during the conversion than a road widening project would. Road diets may also be considered if the following conditions exist:

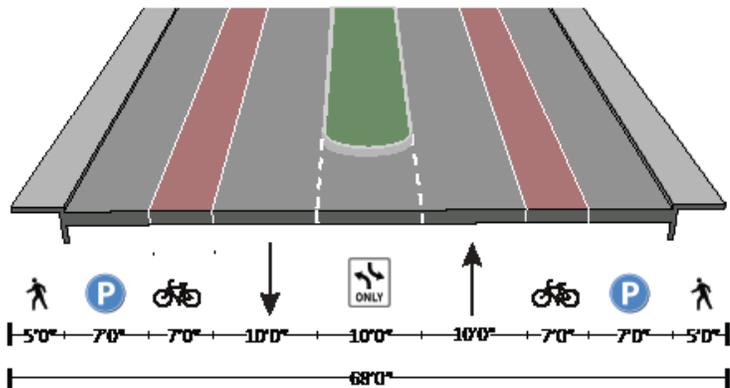
- A high number of left-turning movements
- Roads with safety issues or high crash rates
- Availability of transit

- Proximity to schools or hospitals
- The road diet features will better integrate with adjacent roadway segments
- Support of the community is in place

Before Road Diet

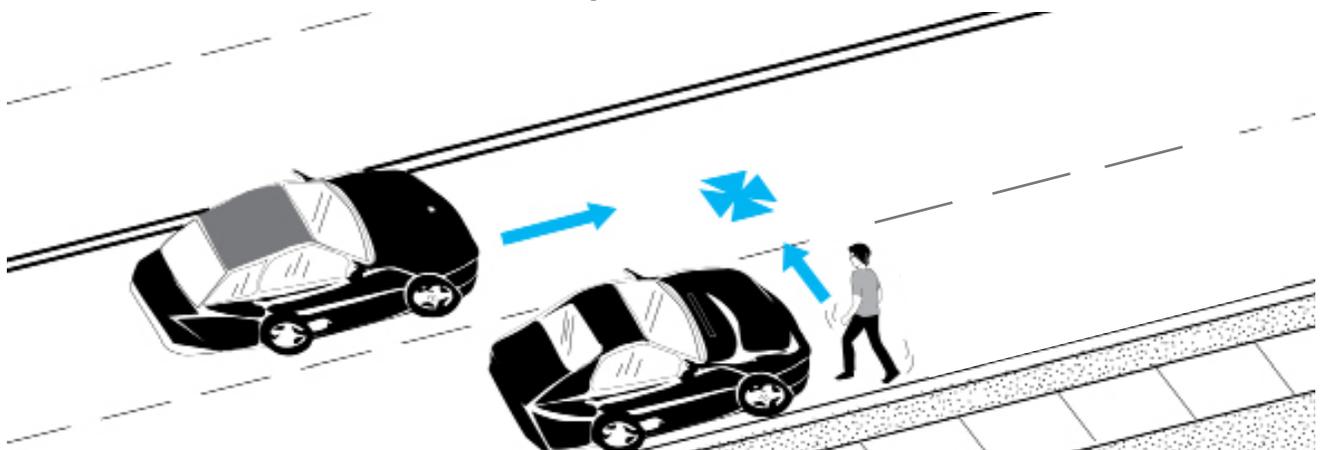


After Road Diet



A road diet re-allocates the existing right-of-way to better support all modes of transportation: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit and freight/delivery. After a road diet, one vehicle travel lane in each direction allows a prudent driver to set the prevailing speed for all cars following them. On-street parking and comfortably wide bike lanes create buffers of two kinds: between motorists and the edge of the road, and between pedestrians and moving traffic. The center lane can be used for left turns, pedestrian crossing islands or delivery bays.

The illustration below shows the danger of “multiple threat” crashes on multi-lane roadways. Four-lane undivided highways are particularly dangerous to pedestrians because of the potential for multiple-threat crashes, in which one vehicle stops and screens the pedestrian, while another motorist continues on in the thru lane. The pedestrian and motorist cannot see each other, but because the motorist in one lane has stopped to allow the crossing, it does not necessarily mean that the motorist in the next lane can see the pedestrian or will respond in the same way.



## Candidate Location

### For a Road Diet in Avondale Estates

Traffic numbers show that N. Avondale Road is a good candidate for a road diet as a means of improving support for active modes of transportation, increasing safety for all roadway users, and enhancing the area's sense of place and economic development opportunities. To achieve a road diet, however, Georgia Department of Transportation needs to be at the table.



**N. Avondale Road (Hwy 278).** Traffic volumes here don't seem to warrant so many vehicle lanes, and the abundance of residences and activity on the streets creates a demand for easy crossings and calm traffic.

Start in sections; a road diet can be done as a mid-range project from the intersection at Clarendon Avenue to Pine Street. The road diet would transform this section of N. Avondale Road from 4 travel lanes and a center turn lane to two travel lanes—the eastbound lane would be 11 feet and westbound lane would be 10 feet— with a 10 foot colorized center turn lane. The remaining right-of-way would be reallocated to include a 5 foot bike lane with a 4 foot buffer with the remaining space used for parallel parking. The 9 feet of buffered bike lane also acts as a transition lane. If the city can work with property owners, head-out angled parking can be achieved. Learn more here: <http://www.walklive.org/project/videos/>



*Best practice: colorized center turn lane, which allows for emergency vehicles to safely and efficiently navigate the road.*

## 4 Choose Safer Intersection Treatments for All Users

### About Modern Roundabouts

Modern roundabouts increase safety, reduce delays at intersections, and reduce crashes, traffic delays, fuel consumption, air pollution, construction costs and maintenance costs. Roundabouts enhance the beauty of intersections and effectively control speeds. Compared to signalized intersections, studies show that roundabouts provide a:

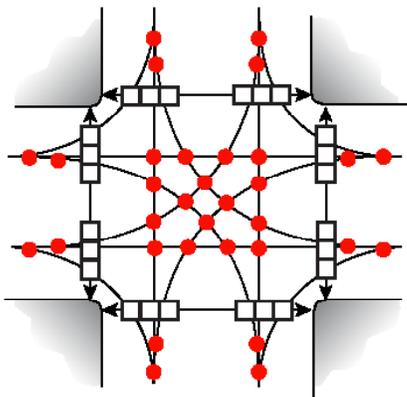
- 90-percent reduction in fatal crashes
- 75-percent reduction in injury crashes
- 30- to 40-percent reduction in crashes involving pedestrians

Roundabouts are inherently safer because they reduce the number of points of conflict within the intersection, as shown in the illustrations.

Also, when designed properly, roundabouts result

in safe vehicle speeds--between 15 and 25 mph, depending on the size and objective of the roundabout--which increases drivers' ability to judge and react to other vehicles and pedestrians. The slower vehicle speeds also are one of the keys that make roundabouts work for pedestrians: drivers are more inclined to yield as required when they're already going slowly. Despite the slower speeds, though, roundabouts tend to increase traffic efficiency--sometimes by as much as 50 percent--because they keep traffic flowing.

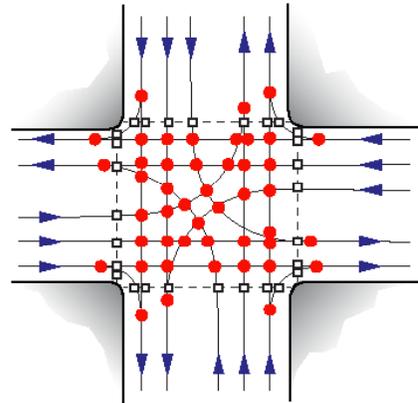
Roundabouts also reduce environmental and noise impacts, and require much less maintenance and repair than signalized intersections. In some places, including the Bird Rock neighborhood of San Diego, CA, single-lane roundabouts successfully carry 25,000 vehicle trips per day.



Conflicts at a conventional intersection with single lanes in each direction

- 32 vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts
- 24 vehicle-to-person conflicts

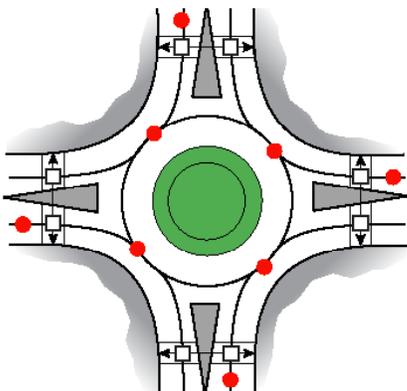
*The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute and Alternate Street Design*



Conflicts at a conventional intersection with double-lanes and left-turn lane in each direction

- 46 vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts
- 28 vehicle-to-person conflicts

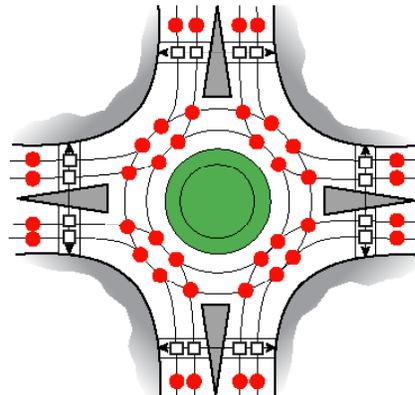
*The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute and Alternate Street Design*



Conflicts at a single-lane, modern roundabout

- 8 vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts
- 8 vehicle-to-person conflicts

*The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute and Alternate Street Design*



Conflicts at a double-lane, modern roundabout

- 24 vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts
- 16 vehicle-to-person conflicts

*The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute and Alternate Street Design*

## 5 Focus on Placemaking

Place-based planning shifts the focus of all planning and investment decisions away from individual projects and towards a more holistic approach to solving mobility and community design issues. A focus on “place” creates a dialogue to which everyone can contribute, as opposed to a discipline-driven processes that can be both complex and intimidating. A focus on place unites disciplines and residents alike to partner together to achieve shared goals. By bringing many disciplines together, place-based planning produces solutions that collectively solve multiple problems with greater results at lower costs. The goal is to restore confidence and create pride in community and neighborhoods. Most importantly, place-based planning allows a community to maintain its identity while confirming a unified vision.

Place-based planning allows everyone to contribute. It involves residents and stakeholders working side by side with subject matter experts. Since placemaking engages the local stakeholders in identifying their values, their sense of important places and their ideas on how to evolve key concepts, it steers future growth from formulaic growth that tends to erode a community’s sense of place. Place-based planning helps communities protect who they are and use future growth to reinforce their vision.

Placemaking is a resident-driven planning process where the community is the expert in defining the vision. Subject matter experts use their skills to facilitate the planning and design processes. A richer, more livable plan results since it goes beyond modern smart growth planning. In this way, grassroots input informs the experts on what the town wants to become, instead of the experts informing the town on what they should become.

### *The Power of 10*

Place based planning begins with the Power of 10 – a tool where stakeholders assess the assets and under-performing places within the core area. Through a combination

of presentations, small group work sessions, mapping exercises, and group conversation, workshops lead to a plan that stakeholders support. During the process, stakeholders identify the best, worst, and highest opportunity places. Then, they think through how to create substantive physical and social connections between existing spaces, the strategic creation of new places, and how energy can be generated by creating a network of destinations.

The Power of 10 is a concept that founder Gary Toth and his team at Project for Public Spaces (PPS) uses to initiate place-based planning. A community needs a number of great places in order to enliven it. The Power of 10 offers an easy framework that motivates residents and stakeholders in how to revitalize central villages. It shows that by starting efforts at the smallest scale, a community can accomplish big things. The concept also provides something tangible to strive for and helps communities visualize what it takes to thrive. At the heart of the Power of 10 is the idea that any great place needs to offer at least 10 things to do or 10 reasons to

**Placemaking is:** *Community-driven* *Ever changing*  
*Function before form* **Inclusive** *Culturally aware* *Transformative*  
**Visionary** *Focused on creating destinations* **Multi-disciplinary** *Inspiring*  
**Adaptable** *Flexible* **Context-sensitive** **Collaborative**

be there. This could include a place to sit, playgrounds, art, music, food, historical or cultural experiences, and people to meet. Building on the Power of 10, the community moves into a deep place-based planning process that draws on multiple talents across many disciplines in order to plan and design to the community vision. Learn more at: [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)



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A project is more likely to succeed if motivated individuals set a course to accomplish their goals immediately. Early successes provide the hand and toe-holds needed to pull the group from one achievement to the next. With this in mind, the following opportunities are arranged to allow for immediate wins that show a genuine commitment to supporting active modes of transportation and livability in Avondale Estates.

# Short-Term Projects

## Enhance Crossings

High-intensity crosswalk markings benefit all. Different materials can be used to make crossings more visible day and night. In some parts of Avondale Estates, right, crosswalks that are hard to see are dangerous, as they send conflicting messages to pedestrians and motorists. More-visible markings would send a message that pedestrians should be expected here.



*In some locations, such as N. Avondale Road and Oak Street, enhancing crosswalks is only a matter of applying ladder-style markings with new paint.*



*Best practice: a ladder-style crosswalk marking is very visible and can be a cost-effective solution.*

## Add Crosswalk Markings

Almost all crossings in a downtown core should be well marked. During the walking audit it was noted that the intersection of N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Ave is missing crosswalk markings on two sides. Evaluate each crossing location and condition. Where needed, repaint crossings that are faded or forgotten.



*N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Ave. are missing crossings on two sides of the intersection, sending a sign that pedestrians are less welcome.*



*Crossings can be formed to fit the character of place and add to the identity, as seen in Decatur, GA.*

## Update Wayfinding

Throughout the study area, updated wayfinding is a critical need. Conduct a signage and wayfinding study to improve connections within the Central Business District down Avondale Road to the MARTA station, as well as to PATH. Install attractive signage that easily directs walkers, bicyclists, and motorists to destinations.



*Current wayfinding is out-of-date.*



*Draw on community identity and assets as seen in Gainesville, FL (left) or London (right)..*



# Short-Term Projects

## Right-Size Bike Lanes

Clarendon Avenue heading into the neighborhood is overly wide, with the travel lane measured at 15 feet. Narrow the vehicle travel lanes on Clarendon to the recommended 10 to 11 feet and use the remaining space for a five to seven foot bike lane. Or allow for parallel parking and mark the road with a sharrow.



*There is plenty of lane width to reallocate road space to accommodate bicyclists.*



*Driver vigilance is increased with bold edge stripes and bike lanes, while bicyclists feel welcome, safe, and included.*

## Add Bike Lanes

Many bicyclists were observed riding through Avondale Estates. A bike lane with buffer should be placed heading eastbound on S. Avondale Road and westbound on N. Avondale Road. Bike lanes should be added on Clarendon road to connect the neighborhood to the Central Business District; to the regional bicycle trail, PATH, and; to the Dekalb Farmer's Market off Laredo Drive.



*S. Avondale Road is wide enough to support a colored bike lane heading eastbound.*



*Best Practice: Colored bike lanes with a painted buffer in Boston, MA.*

## Trim Abelia Hedge

The current abelia hedge hides pedestrians and reduces driver's sight distance and ability to see pedestrians at the intersection of Avondale Road and Oak Street. In order to provide safe crossings and intersections for all users, the hedges should be trimmed to 3 feet for a distance of 300 feet in both directions from the intersection.



*The abelia hedges block sightlines for both pedestrians and drivers at key intersections.*

## Adjust Signal Timing

It was observed that signal timing was very long and favored the vehicle at the intersection of N. Avondale Road and Oak Street and N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue. Signalized intersections often have significant turning volumes, which conflict with pedestrian and bicycle movements. In many cases, roundabouts offer safer, more convenient intersection treatments than signals. Long-term, a roundabout is recommended at the N. Avondale/Clarendon intersection. In the meantime, it is recommended that signal timing is adjusted to support and encourage all modes of transportation. Intersection control devices are critical if walking, bicycling and motoring are to work, and work together. People who cross at intersections, when they are signaled to do so, are most predictable. Drivers appreciate predictable and compliant behavior. When intersections become so complex and challenging that signals are added, there is often ample justification to go beyond conventional standards to address the needs of people walking and bicycling. To improve livability and pedestrian safety, signalized intersections should:

- Provide short signal cycle lengths, which allow frequent opportunities to cross major roadways, improving the usability and livability of the surrounding area for all modes.
- Be automated for inclusion of walking cycles, so that signals recall to WALK during the cycle, minus the clearance interval.
- Provide pedestrians with push buttons in convenient locations where the automatic recall of walk signals is not warranted.
- Ensure that signals detect bicycles.



*Current signalized intersections have long waiting times for pedestrians and bicyclists trying to cross.*



*Signals should recall to WALK during the cycle and instruct pedestrians on crossing times.*



*Bicycle detection symbol helps position bicyclists correctly at intersections.*

# Mid-Term Projects

## Install Mini Circles in Neighborhoods

Mini circles can help calm traffic and enhance the sense of place in neighborhood locations and along smaller streets. Consider replacing stop signs with mini circles in important places like at the intersection of Locust and Franklin Street.



*Intersections like Locust and Franklin are good candidates for mini circles, as walking audit participants envision.*



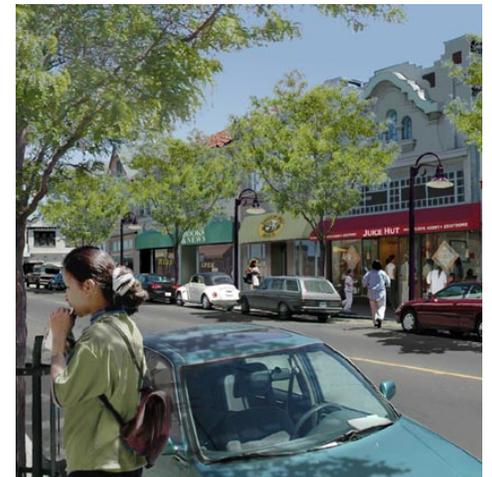
*All planned improvements should honor the community and add to the sense of place, as seen in Holland, MI*

## Add On-Street Parking

We have harmed many communities in America by insisting that we need massive amounts of off-street parking. Off-street parking takes up three times more space than on-street parking. On-street—parallel or head out angled—parking is recommended for N. Avondale Road. In order for head out angled parking to be implemented the city would need to work with property owners to gain access to right-of-way. On-street parking visually narrows streets and brings down traffic speeds, while providing the most sustainable and affordable parking. Speeds are brought down even more when tree wells are used to provide a canopy to the street. It also frees up land that can be redeveloped with the proper uses to support the community. On-street parking belongs on center city streets, serving as a buffer between pedestrians and moving cars as a natural traffic calming tool. But the primary reason for maximizing parking on street is to help civilize streets that were overbuilt for speed.



*Off-street parking takes up three times more space than on-street parking.*



*On-street parking is safer, more cost efficient and the amount of asphalt is reduced.*



*Motorists leaving a spot can see bicyclists, other motorists and pedestrians with head out angled parking.*



*Tree wells can green the street, provide shade, slow street speeds, and provide inset parking. It also creates a sense of enclosure to calm streets.*

# ADA: Make the Community Accessible for All

It was hard to find complete blocks along N. Avondale Road after Center Street that were barrier free. Paths of travel need to be accessible to all. According to the *2010 American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design*, “A ‘path of travel’ includes a continuous, unobstructed way of pedestrian passage by means of which the area may be approached, entered, and exited, and which connects the area with an exterior approach (including sidewalks, streets, and parking areas).” Avondale Estates should map out all the barriers to travel and set a regular budget to make changes in support of people of all abilities. There are many places to begin. Opportunities include:

- Provide two ramps per corner
- Keep ramps as wide as the crossings
- Reduce crossing distances for pedestrians through curb extensions, right sized travel lanes and refuge islands
- Widen sidewalks
- Retrofit driveways to include level landings
- Provide residents advice and support for repairing worn or uplifted sidewalk locations
- Remove obstacles from sidewalks, add sidewalks, and enforce barrier free routes of travel through neighborhoods and business districts
- Lead an accessibility audit. Disability Awareness Starts Here, DASH, has information on leading accessibility audits and other educational and advocacy tools that can help communities improve access for people with all abilities. <http://dashproject.org/>



*A crumbling driveway and lip on sidewalk ramp make traversing this landscape more difficult for a wheeled user.*



ADA compliance is greatly improved through the use of curb extensions.

## Reduce Driveway Widths

Too often, driveways are treated like roads, where cars are encouraged to move fast through the space. Where driveways cross sidewalks, though, the sidewalk should be safe and comfortable for people using it. As you move down Avondale Road towards Sam’s Crossing walking conditions significantly deteriorate with missing sidewalks and driveways that are overly wide, which puts people and cars in conflict with each other for longer periods than necessary.



*An example of an overly wide driveway is the Historic Waffle House. This driveway could be narrowed significantly—to support a slower right-hand turn and to allow only one car in either direction to turn in or out at a time.*



*Where both a lane in and a lane out must be accommodated, a median like in the image to below, from Clearwater, FL, can help keep people safe.*

# Mid-Term Projects

## Utilize Mid-block Crossings

On N. Avondale Road at Center Street there is a path with steps on the hedge side. This is an unmarked crossing that sends the wrong message to pedestrians, below left. Midblock crossings should be considered along N. Avondale Road at appropriate locations that help make connections from the neighborhood to the business district. Midblock crossings are used between intersections, typically when blocks are long, or in other locations where speeds are higher than desired, or where sight distances



*This location of N. Avondale Road is representative of many of the conditions found throughout the area; land uses create a “desire line” where people naturally want to cross. Extra vehicle lanes and poor yielding behaviors make it even more hostile.*

are poor. Pedestrian refuge islands are one of the best tools to simplify crossing wide streets. Used with curb extensions, they get pedestrians out beyond parked cars and other visual obstructions. Crossing islands are used on all categories of streets, and they have their highest return on investment when they create more courteous yielding behaviors by motorists. Well designed crossing islands achieve yielding rates above 80 percent.



*Many other tools, like pedestrian signs, Rapid Flash Beacons, or raised crossings, are used to improve yielding behavior.*

## Right-Size Sidewalks

The most common sidewalks in Avondale Estates’ Central Business District are built too narrow, with no buffer and lack of street furniture. Sidewalks are missing at Sam’s Crossing and in the Central Business District. It will take time to correct these and other problems and build sidewalks that support active living, but it must be done. Build an assessment of the city into the Pedestrian Master Planning process.



*This block has strong building form, now bring additional life to the buildings by adding seating and more green and shade with tree wells.*



*Right-sized sidewalks help places come alive.*

## Celebrate and Connect the Arts District

Avondale Estates has an emerging arts district with many sought after shops and art spaces. The area is mostly nondescript and fails to celebrate the arts district as an important part of Avondale Estates and the greater region. Thus, as a first step to celebrate and promote the district, make it part of the wayfinding program to be developed and implemented. But go beyond that: engage local artists in creating public art. Brand the area and apply sidewalks and street treatments that tell people they are arriving as in the examples below. Also, install a mini circle at intersections like Pine and Franklin Street to calm traffic and create a sense of arrival.



# Mid-Term Projects



## Turn “B” Streets into “A” Streets with Alleys, Plazas, Paseos

Primary streets in a downtown core are the “A” streets, and in too many places, the “B” streets are left only for parking and deliveries, which doesn’t produce revenue or contribute to a sense of place. In Avondale Estates, there are many opportunities to convert B streets into places where walking trips are important, commerce can take place and people will feel more safe parking.

Reinvestment in alleys, in spaces between buildings, and in other public space brings added value to all buildings and homes in a town center. Placemaking, like interior

*Above: Could these back entrances someday be restored to a storefront, by turning this “B” street into a people-friendly “A” street with an alley, plaza or paseo? Below: How can these spaces be rejuvenated to spur new activity with a pocket park or civic plaza? A water fountain? Converting the one-way?*

decorating, must create a strong, compelling sense that makes time spent in these spaces rewarding and memorable. Consider the public and private realm of a town center as a public/private partnership. Places can be funky and relaxed, but they must be thoughtful, sensitive to place, and maintained.

Plaza spaces must be carefully crafted to bring about proper levels of enclosure, transparency, human scale, complexity, imageability and comfort. See illustrations on the opposite page for examples.





*Above: An “alley” in Asheville, NC has become a people-rich place. Below left: In Vancouver, British Columbia, a nicely landscaped walkway draws people to a “B” street. Below right: a former “B” street in Santa Cruz, CA enhances security on the sides of buildings that otherwise would be neglected, helps keep streets connected, and provides economic development opportunities.*



# Long-Term Projects

## Ensure that Development Honors the Street

Buildings that front and honor the street also enhance walkability by shifting the focus from a vehicle-scale to pedestrian-scale, by providing “eyes on the street.” Places where buildings sit back, away from the street, and where off-street parking is placed between the buildings and the sidewalks, cause surrounding properties to devalue. Cities should adopt “build-to” requirements, instead of setbacks to create a true village environment. Liner buildings transform a setback to a village. Even national chains will adapt to build-to requirements.



*Setback buildings fail to honor the street or watch over people. It also does not complement Avondale Estates’ historic Tudor-style architecture.*



*Liner buildings transform a setback to a village.*

## Transform Vacant Spaces

This 20 acre vacant lot is prime for development. This space, with patience, vision, and planning can be transformed into a true town village that connects the historic and residential districts with complementary mixed use housing and commercial spaces, green spaces, and transit options that honor the street and honor Avondale Estates. It is vital that the city and community work together to develop a strong vision of what they would like this area to become and then work to update all codes and ordinances so the right developer is attracted. During the walking audit, participants discussed the idea of working more closely with MARTA to see if a “MARTA Light” stop could be built in partnership as the rail line runs through this space.



## Transform the Intersection of N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue

At N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue is an opportunity to enhance the sense of arrival and sense of place as people using all modes of transportation pass City Hall and enter the Central Business District core, through the transformation of the intersection to a modern roundabout.

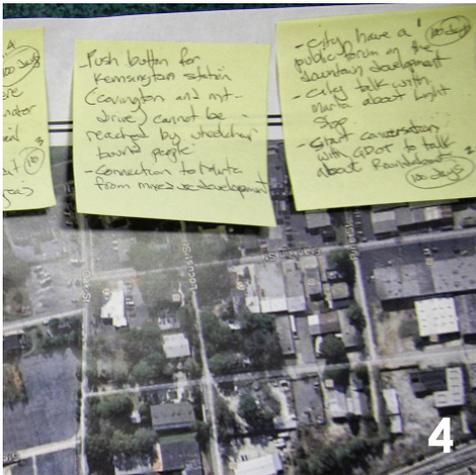
The benefits of modern roundabouts discussed on page 27 of this report. Given the operational difference, though, between a roundabout and a signalized intersection, consider an educational campaign that will allow local drivers to become familiar and comfortable with roundabouts. By bringing people together to work toward a shared vision, effective community engagement also has the power to build social capital. Social capital refers to “the social networks and interactions that inspire trust and reciprocity among citizens.” A community with a high level of social capital is characterized by a culture of neighbors knowing each other, interest and participation in local politics, high rates of volunteerism and diversity in social connections. These characteristics foster a sense of community, engender trust, enhance innovative problem solving and increase the likelihood that stakeholders will support financial investments in community projects.



*The conceptual photo vision to the right illustrates what a modern roundabout could look like in the existing right-of-way at N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue. A traffic study would determine feasibility; any such study should be undertaken by an engineering firm with strong experience in designs for modern roundabouts in downtown or main-street settings.*

During the Active Living Workshop participants worked together to begin to form a new vision for their city; a vision where streets are seen as public spaces that support healthy lifestyle choices, commerce, aging in place. The following pages capture their ideas and next steps.

# Visioning Together

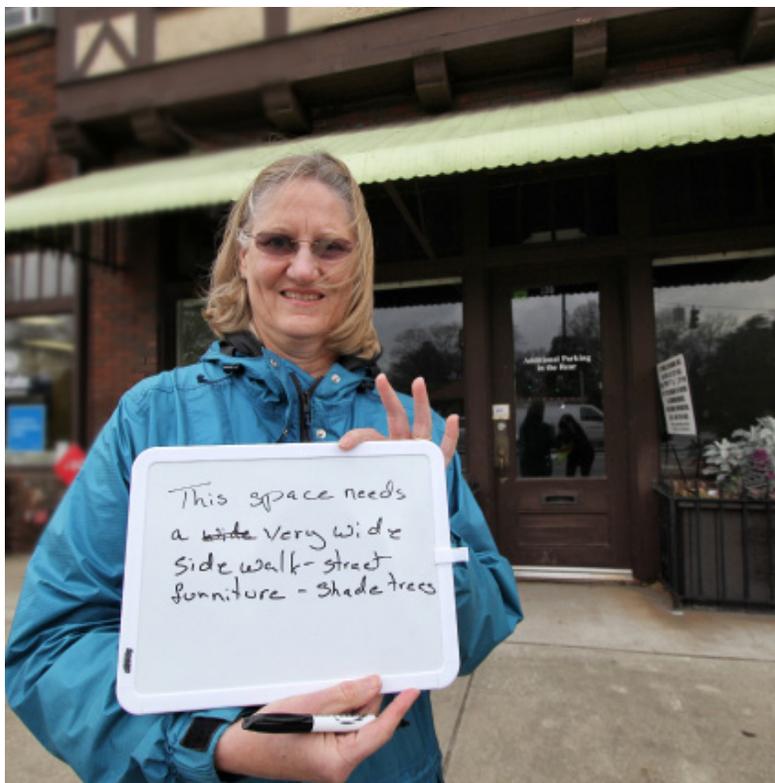


Following the walking audit, participants worked in tables to discuss next steps. Ideas included:

1. Promote a Sunday Ride to the Farmer's Market.
2. Trim the abelia hedges at key crossings to 3 feet to allow for visibility. "We should not only trim the hedges, but make topiaries out of them and we could make them a trolley car; it used to be a trolley car line, after all!"
3. Get key stakeholders and partners who were not present at the workshop—Avondale Estates' Downtown Development Authority and Historic Preservation Committee—informed and on board; start a conversation with GDOT to see what the process would be for a roundabout.
4. Have a public forum with the City every 100-days to stay informed on initiatives and where "we" are at.
5. Reopen former horse paths—or Bridle Trails—that are community connectors in the residential neighborhood.
6. Review of the comprehensive plan and zoning are necessary.
7. The closing talk circle brings out many new levels of inspiration and individual commitment. From the Mayor Pro Tem, Terry Giager, sharing he may now run for another term to individuals raising a hand to volunteer in any capacity.

## It's Our Canvas; Our Community!

During the walking audit, participants were invited to write down ideas, opportunities and solutions they envisioned that would help make Avondale Estates more walkable and livable.





# A Photo Vision of N. Avondale Road and Clarendon Avenue Intersection



*Avondale Estates will enrich the charm of its center, and the lives of its people, making its legacy buildings a focal point for walking, social engagement and added pride of community. In the immediate foreground, the intersection shrinks in size and complexity -- note an attractive mini-circle that slows traffic and keeps it flowing naturally. At the very center of N. Avondale Road a full size roundabout brings down traffic speeds and noise, ends long traffic queues, and makes it easier to park and un-park. A well chosen center piece to the roundabout accents landscaping.*

*With the increased quiet created by the roundabout, outdoor eating can again be popular and pleasant. The rebuilt intersection removes unwanted storage lanes, and permits large vehicles to make their turns with less intrusion on corners. Overhead wires are removed, allowing visual accent to be on a stronger sense of place, and an enrichment of community character. Finally, color is added to the greater intersection area, with a lightly rumbling brick treatment ... truly a town that restores its former self.*

“

*Parts that we love about our town require economic vitality. We want people to come to our town and this creates a shift. People think of Avondale as a speed strip; we think of it as a place.”*

- Jane Royall  
Resident, Avondale Estates

## The Significance of 100 Days

*Focusing on a 100-day action plan allows you to accomplish the following:*

- Identify critical concerns and prioritize them
- Motivate others with reasonable goals and tasks
- Ensure that milestones are met
- Keep the group motivated
- Build confidence with early wins
- Confirm that you are working with the right people
- Build on successes
- Schedule review and refinement of mission, goals and tasks

## How Does Change Happen?

A project is more likely to succeed if motivated individuals set a course to accomplish their goals immediately. Early successes provide the hand- and toe-holds needed to pull the group from one achievement to the next.

The 100-Day Challenge sets goals that can be accomplished within 100 days to show a genuine commitment to active living. All change begins by asking one question: What can I do? Each of us shapes the built environment we find ourselves in, either through active participation in decision making, or by leaving decisions up to others.

Quality of life is directly affected by the quality of the built environment, especially the completeness of our transportation systems. Streets are attractive and safe for all users, or they are not. Streets encourage a variety of transportation options, including walking and bicycling, or they limit choices. And your community either encourages aging in place or contributes to social isolation.

- You recognize that what you are doing is not working
- You form a group to generate ideas, build support and learn
- The group sets a vision and the mission, goals and tasks to support this vision
- You share this vision with others, along with the specific goals and tasks that guide activities
- You do something and you encourage others to do something
- You share your successes with others and this motivates them
- Encouraged that change is possible, others join the group in moving the movement
- You refine your mission, goals and tasks to keep them current

**The following conditions help determine an active living project's success:**

- Leadership: Leaders who inspire collaboration to identify and accomplish goals.
- Motivated Teammates: Individuals with a can-do spirit who are eager to work together.
- Actionable Strategies: Identification of the tasks in support of a goal, with individuals to take on specific tasks and a time frame for completion;
- Early Successes: Projects that allow for immediate successes to keep the group motivated and to build confidence.

Eight-Step Process for Leading Change	
<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Establishing a Sense of Urgency</b> Identify and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities
<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Creating the Guiding Coalition</b> Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort Encourage the group to work as a team
<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Developing a Change Vision</b> Create a vision to help direct the change effort Develop strategies for achieving that vision
<b>Step 4:</b>	<b>Communicating the Vision</b> Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies Teach new behaviors by the example of the Guiding Coalition
<b>Step 5:</b>	<b>Empowering Broad-based Action</b> Remove obstacles to change Change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision Encourage the risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities, and actions
<b>Step 6:</b>	<b>Generating Short-term Wins</b> Plan for visible performance improvements Create those improvements Recognize and reward [those] involved in the improvements
<b>Step 7:</b>	<b>Never Letting Up</b> Use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision Hire, promote, and develop [those] who can implement the vision Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes, and change agents
<b>Step 8:</b>	<b>Incorporating Changes into the Culture</b> Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and organizational success Develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession

# 100-DAY Challenge

## Setting the wheels in motion: 100-DAY Challenge

Partner with Sunday Ride— who are “Good Neighbors Making Good Neighborhoods”— to create a “Better Block” demonstration project to promote community connections; from the residential side into the Central Business District. The “Better Block” project model is a demonstration tool that encourages communities to engage in rapid urban revitalization projects. Projects include creating pocket parks, outdoor dining areas, farmer’s market venues, painting crosswalk markings, or even boarded windows to depict more positive images of what could be in the community. A demonstration project is aimed at making spaces more social and people-friendly. Transforming under-utilized spaces into vibrant places takes vision, collaboration and leadership that will lead to positive, permanent changes for the community.

Working with Sunday Ride leaders Carol and Tom Brooks, who attended the workshop, as well as other individuals, begin to plan the “Better Block” project, which can include a Sunday Ride route to PATH and the Dekalb Farmer’s Market, as well as, transferring the hub location for the ride to be on the block of Clarendon Avenue to Center Street. This would allow for economic revitalization and attention to place as both sides of the block—the “A” and “B” sides—can be transformed into lively social spaces filled with outdoor dining, seating, a mini-farmer’s market, art, modeled painted bike lanes or sharrows, and a new strengthened community spirit through partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

Learn about Better Block at:  
<http://www.betterblock.org>



*Imagine, this space being converted to a more inviting public realm with a Sunday Ride event. Insert image: Better Block OKC organized a “come-on-out” for the Millennial Generation in Oklahoma City.*

## Additional Next Steps:

### Next Steps:

#### 1-30 DAYS

- Share report with workshop participants and begin the discussion of moving from action to implementation by beginning to form action plans.
- Share this report and start the conversation with GDOT about ways to work together to improve the safety and efficiency for all users on N. Avondale Road/ Hwy 278 .
- Engage and share the report with the Historic Preservation Committee, Business Association, and Downtown Development Authority.
- Begin to include Complete Streets Language in Master Plan update.

#### 31-60 DAYS

- Engage City Commissioners by presenting report to them.
- Engage business and property owners in the conversation of revitalizing the N. Avondale corridor by making roadway and street scaping improvements and investments.
- Engage health professionals and the medial field.
- Engage youth and families in creating a built environment that supports active living.
- Form a committee to research and review Complete Streets initiatives and polices.

#### 61-100 DAYS

- Working with City Commissioners and staff, begin drafting a Complete Streets Policy.
- Create a Public Forum to be held every 100 days to share progress on initiatives and celebrate successes.

# Concluding Thoughts & Acknowledgments

## A Message From Dan Burden

### Towards Implementing a More Walkable, Prosperous Future

We must change the way we approach transportation planning to ensure our communities are desirable places to live, learn, work, and play. In general, streets in Avondale Estates are over-built for cars and under-built for people. Some streets have unnecessary or overly wide vehicle travel lanes, to the detriment of adjacent businesses and people using other modes of travel. Additionally, sidewalks have no buffer between people walking and the cars passing by them and have been poorly maintained. Land-use and transportation decisions appear in many places to be out of sync with each other. We can, and we need, to do better.

Our future planning needs to recognize the need and significance of moving away from a car-centered way of planning. Residents and stakeholders of Avondale Estates recognize that integrating transportation and land use planning improves safety, protects resources, improves health, encourages living in place, and provides opportunities for residents to interact.

The good news is that the challenges we face are opportunities. It is critical to remember that our communities are incredibly dynamic and ever changing, so this work takes patience, collaboration and vision. This technical report provides guidance as the community takes steps towards a walkable, livable, healthier and happier community. In Avondale Estates, immediate next steps include organizing with workshop participants,

additional stakeholders and elected leaders to share the report findings.

The energy, passion and leadership is there. It is time to act; to take charge in forging new understandings and relationships that will propel Avondale Estates into a key destination for livability within the greater Atlanta region and the state of Georgia. Continue to educate and engage residents as they are the best experts that we can ask when planning how a place should be designed or used; we want and need their input. The Active Living Workshop was a step to help the community evaluate their streets based on sociability, accessibility, uses, and safety. It brought the community together to articulate and build confidence in the value of their own observations about how a place is working or not working and to take ownership in their vision for a better street; a stronger place; a more livable community. Working with the City of Avondale Estates—City Planner and Community Development Officer Keri Stevens, Mayor Rieker, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Giager, City Manager Clai Brown, and Chief of Police Gary Broden—Atlanta Regional Commission Lifelong Communities—Laura Keys and Ian Sansom—AARP—Jeanne Anthony—AARP Georgia, and many other partners, Avondale Estates residents are sure to complete their 100-Day Challenge and continue to create a community that fosters a high quality of life.



Walkable and Livable  
Communities Institute



# 100 Day Action Plan: Walkability Assessment 2013



Task	May	June	July	August	September	Next 100 Days
Walkability Report on Website						
Core Group Assembled						
BOMC Meeting						
Boards and Commissions						
DeKalb County Transportation	Met May 8th- Support Given					
GDOT						
Vision		Develop w/Core Group				
Communicate Vision						
Crosswalk Markings		Funded	Funded			
Signal Timing: Meet w/ GDOT		Discuss w/GDOT				
Engage Property Owners						
Engage Health Professionals						
Engage All Members of the Community: Youth, Families, Older Adults						
Tactile Urbanism Project: Discussion w/Core Group					Maybe October during AutumnFest	
Complete Street Policy Research/Policy Public Forum (Quarterly)						
Determine Next Steps Based on Progress						
Possible Other Project:						
Sunday Ride to Farmer's Market						