

2.2 LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

The Lindbergh-LaVista Corridor's unique history, convenient access to employment centers, affordable housing, and strong sense of community is very appealing to many seeking to experience in-town living. Although the Corridor possesses many attributes that current residents and potential in-town dwellers admire; a number of Lindbergh-LaVista Corridor residents expressed a strong desire to witness tremendous improvements in the placement and design of sidewalks, better urban design considerations, and higher development quality; while maintaining the area's affordable, single-family housing. The following reviews existing land-uses, urban design conditions, and future areas susceptible to development.

2.2.1 HISTORY

Both farming and transportation provided the framework in which the entire Lindbergh-LaVista Corridor was settled and developed. The earliest records of settlement in the Lindbergh-LaVista Corridor indicate the area was first settled in the early 1820s by white pioneering farmers and mill workers. In 1823, the humble beginnings of commercial activity commenced when Abraham Chandler built a home, a small store, and a farm near the intersection of present day Cheshire Bridge and LaVista Roads. During this same time, two other recognized settlers, Jerome and Napoleon Cheshire—two brothers—are credited for settling the area due south of Chandler's farmstead. The brothers built small farms on both sides of the South Fork of Peachtree Creek and connected the two farms with a bridge—aptly named Cheshire Bridge. This bridge, in time, became a local landmark and would later pave the way for the route of modern day Cheshire Bridge Road. In 1835, DeKalb County decided it was necessary to facilitate the construction of new road connecting the city of Decatur with Paces Ferry on the Chattahoochee River. After construction, the new road was named Paces Ferry Road, and portions of this road would later become the modern day routes for LaVista and Lindbergh Roads. Very little changed from 1835 to 1870, with most of the area's farming, rural character remaining largely intact.

After the Civil War, agricultural production waned considerably in the South, as business community and government leaders focused extensively on industrialization. Rail played a pivotal role in Southern industrialization efforts and the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line was completed in 1870. A rail stop was included along the rail line in the nearby Rock Spring community, providing opportunities for future development in the area. Also during this time, many farms in the Corridor struggled to make mortgage payments, and many foreclosed on their properties. Most of the land fell into the hands of Mr. Veach, a banker from Adairsville, Georgia. Mr. Veach came to own approximately 5,000 acres of land. Upon his passing, he left to his five children property surrounding the four corners of the Cheshire Bridge and LaVista Road intersection and property running along present day Lenox Road and Woodland Avenue.



Figure 2.2-1: Bungalow housing from the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1914, suburbanization commenced with plans for a garden suburb, Woodland Hills, to be developed on the land owned by Grady Veach. The garden suburb was marketed as a “property of the highest class” with “beautiful forest trees” in real estate advertisements; however the garden suburb failed to materialize fully and remained idle for almost thirty years. In 1921, historical maps included the Woodland Hills suburb. In 1948, three years after the end of World War II, construction once again commenced on both Woodland Hills and Lindridge-Martin Manor—except this time, plans called for some 500 closely spaced, single family detached homes on small lots with GI loans.

During the 1950s, the construction of Interstate 85 greatly improved access into the Corridor and further encouraged more commercial and residential development—including LaVista Park. Towards the end of the 1960s, the entire length of Cheshire Bridge Road contained a number of commercial and retail establishments. A small shopping center was constructed at the northeastern corner of the intersection of Cheshire Bridge and LaVista Roads and some industrial development occurred on Faulkner Road. Towards the beginning of the 1970s, pockets of the Woodland Hills neighborhood entered into a period of steep decline. Partly a symptom of white suburban flight and young families wanting larger homes and larger lots, many of the homes fell into disrepair, were razed, and replaced by apartment buildings. Although residential areas began to decline, the commercial areas did not; many new restaurants opened earning Cheshire Bridge Road the nickname “Restaurant Row” and a number of antique galleries opened to capitalize on the growing antique markets in Buckhead and the northeastern suburbs.

In the 1980s, some gentrification occurred, as a number of childless couples sought affordable residential areas in close proximity to Atlanta’s central business district and the dining, entertainment, and shopping destinations of Midtown and Buckhead. It is also during this time, that adult business started to move into the area and the “Restaurant Row” image quickly faded and the area started to become widely known as a destination for adult entertainment. Today, the Corridor remains one in transition from an urban environment along the northern and western edges to a suburban environment along the eastern edges. Many still find the corridor highly attractive due to the area’s diversity and close proximity to employment destinations.



Figure 2.2-2: LaVista Walk, one of the newer developments located on LaVista Road.

2.2.2 ORIENTATION

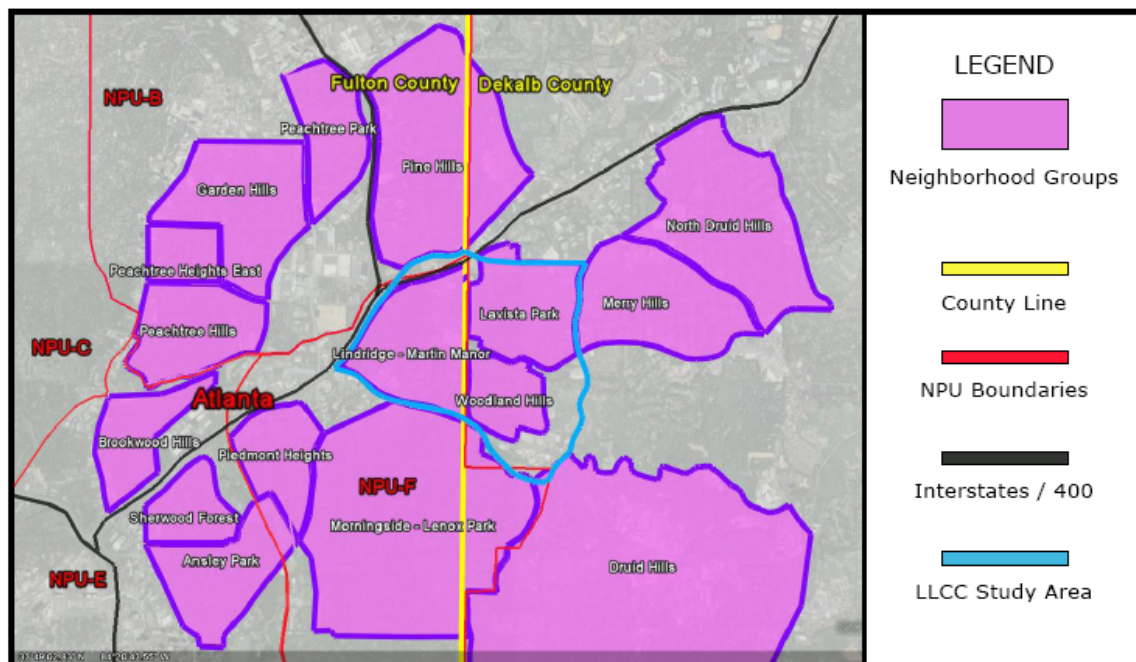


Figure 2.2-3: The Lindbergh-LaVista Study Area in Context Map.

The Lindbergh-LaVista Corridor also features a number of multi-family residential complexes. The multi-family residential complexes can be found along the entire length of Cheshire Bridge Road, in the Woodland Hills neighborhood, as well as near the intersection of Briarcliff and LaVista Roads. The multi-family dwellings may be broadly classified as one of three styles. Firstly, there are older two to three story, single-loaded, "shotgun" apartments with exterior entrances clustered around Lenox Road and Woodlawn just east of Cheshire Bridge Road, and north of the Briarcliff and LaVista Road intersection. Secondly, newer four to five story complexes with interior entries characterized by the Archstone and LaVista Walk developments located near the intersection of Cheshire Bridge, Lindbergh, and LaVista Roads. Third, and finally, the Post complex on the southeast side of the Briarcliff Road and LaVista Road intersection characterizes the sprawling suburban style apartment complex of today.

The Pedestrian Environment



Figure 2.2-8: Some of the sidewalks in the study area are located too close to the road and lack a buffer for safety and ease of mind.



Figure 2.2-9: Some sidewalks are placed too close to the street.



Figure 2.2-10: Some of the sidewalks in the study area lack adequate maintenance.



Figure 2.2-11: Areas such as this one, between a gym and a large apartment complex, lack crosswalks.



Figure 2.4-3 - LaVista Park Master Plan, courtesy of W.K. Dickson of DeKalb County Parks and Recreation, 2005, [http://www.lavistapark.org/PDF/LaVista_Park_Conceptual_Master_Plan_9-23-06\[1\].pdf](http://www.lavistapark.org/PDF/LaVista_Park_Conceptual_Master_Plan_9-23-06[1].pdf)

Woodland Hills

The Woodland Hills neighborhood is southeast of the intersection of Cheshire Bridge and LaVista Rd. It is bordered on the north by LaVista Rd., the east by Briarcliff Rd., the south by a CSX rail track, and the west by Lenox and Cheshire Bridge Rd. No parks exist within the Woodland Hills neighborhood. However, the CSX track is bordered by a 30' greenspace as buffer along its length and a transmission line easement runs northeast/southwest through the western side of the neighborhood. The transmission line easement and CSX track contain unimproved service roads that run the length of each land area. See Figure 2.4-4.



Figure 2.4-4 Looking south from Shepherds Lane toward the CSX track in Woodland Hills neighborhood.