



Existing Conditions Report

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Table of Contents

1.0	Transportation Inventory and Assessment	1
1.1	Transportation System Characteristics	1
1.2	Travel Characteristics.....	1
1.3	Functional Classification and Number of Lanes.....	1
1.4	Parking	3
1.5	Signage.....	6
1.6	Traffic Controls.....	6
1.6.1	Traffic Signals	6
1.6.2	Red Light Camera Program	7
1.6.3	Signal Timing/Interconnect Projects.....	7
1.7	Posted Speeds.....	9
1.8	Traffic Operations/Level of Service (LOS).....	9
1.9	Safety.....	14
1.9.1	High Frequency Intersection Crash Locations.....	15
1.9.2	Segment Crash Rates	17
1.10	Public Transit (routes, service characteristics, and ridership).....	19
1.11	Planned/Programmed Transportation Projects.....	22
2.0	Transportation and Land Use System Assessment.....	25
3.0	Urban Design	25
3.1.1	Existing Land Use	26
4.0	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	31
5.0	Pedestrian Conditions.....	31
5.1	Sidewalk Coverage	31
5.2	ADA Issues	31
5.3	Pedestrian Crossings.....	31
6.0	Bicycling Conditions.....	33
6.1	On-Street Facilities	33
6.2	Off-Street Facilities	33
6.3	Bicycle Parking.....	33
6.4	Connectivity to Nearby Destinations	34
6.5	Summary.....	34

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Functional Classification.....	2
Figure 2	Paved Parking.....	5
Figure 3	Signalized Intersections.....	8
Figure 4	Posted Speed Limit	10
Figure 5	GDOT Count Stations	11
Figure 6	Generalized LOS.....	12
Figure 7	High Frequency Intersection Crash Locations.....	16
Figure 8	High Frequency Segment Crash Locations.....	18
Figure 9	MARTA Route Operating Characteristics	21
Figure 10	Programmed Projects	24
Figure 11	Existing Land Use.....	28
Figure 12	Current Zoning	30

Figure 13 Attractive Streetscapes	32
Figure 14 Keep Moving Sign	32
Figure 15 Signal Control Box.....	32
Figure 16 Bicycle Parking.....	35
Figures 17A and 17B Variable Shoulder Width	35

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Existing Level of Service.....	13
Table 2 Crash Summary Profile.....	14
Table 3 Top 10 High Frequency Intersection Crash Locations	17
Table 4 Top 5 Crash Hot Spots	17
Table 5 MARTA Route Operating Characteristics.....	20
Table 6 Transportation Improvement Program Projects	23

1.0 Transportation Inventory and Assessment

1.1 Transportation System Characteristics

The overall goal of the Downtown Alpharetta Circulation Study is to promote more efficient movement of people and goods originating in, destined for, or traveling through the downtown area. The study seeks to identify strategies for improving traffic flow and circulation, connectivity between activity centers, safety for all modes, and promote the use of alternative modes.

The first step to accomplishing the project objectives is the Transportation Inventory and Assessment. The transportation assessment focuses on existing conditions in an approximately one mile square area within the heart of the downtown area centered between the Milton Street intersections at Roswell and Main Streets. Although the assessment placed special emphasis on the downtown area, it considered the surrounding regional network characteristics to ensure proper consideration of the function and performance of downtown Alpharetta's transportation network relative to the larger regional system.

1.2 Travel Characteristics

The transportation system within the City has been greatly influenced by SR 400; a multi-lane, limited access roadway connecting Atlanta and Dahlonega. Access points along SR 400 in the Alpharetta area have been a catalyst for residential and commercial development all over north Fulton County. The combination of the strong influence SR 400 has on local travel patterns and the fact that most of the local roadways converge close to or within the downtown area generate an abundance of through traffic in the downtown area.

1.3 Functional Classification and Number of Lanes

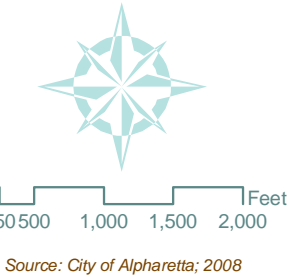
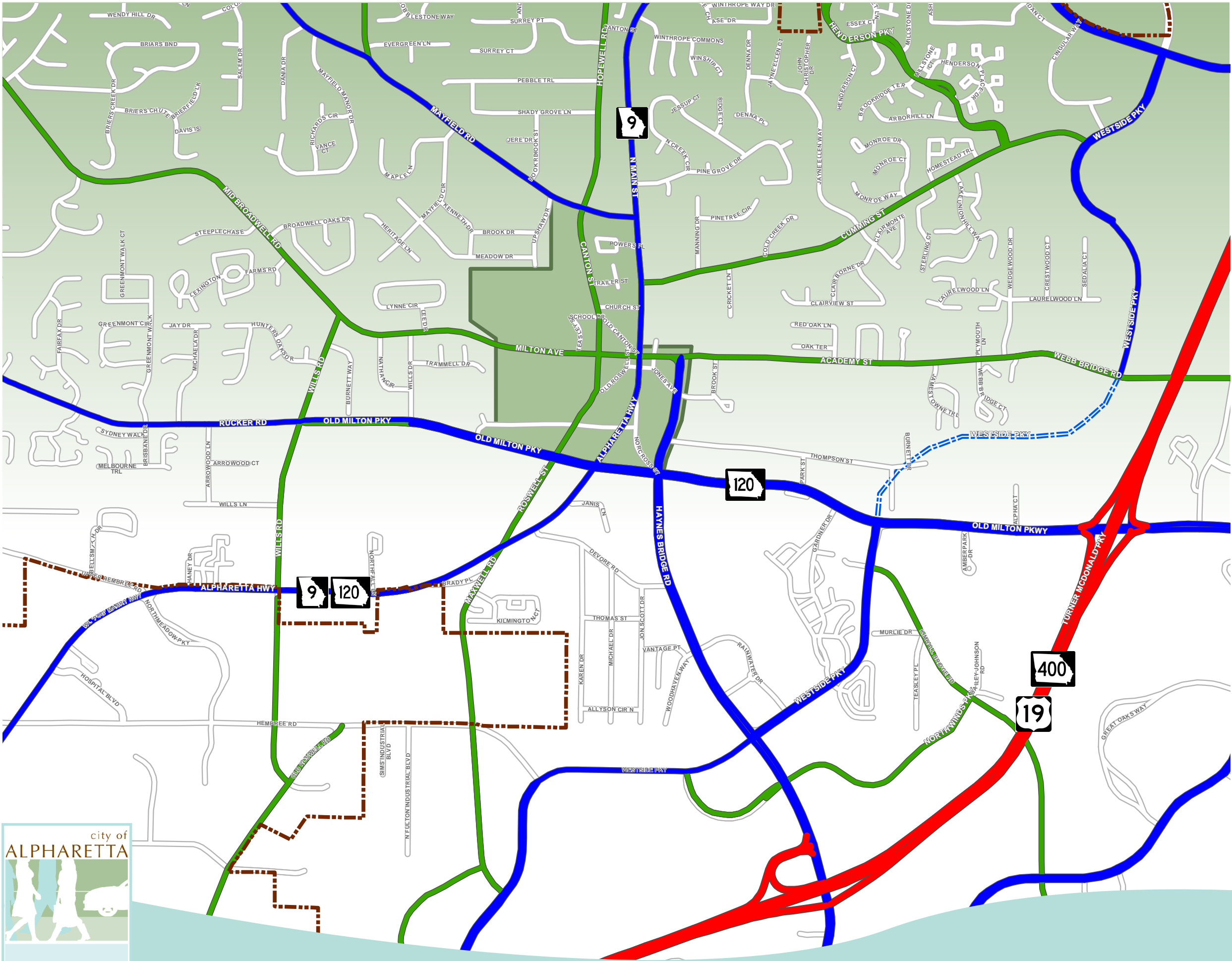
Functional classification is defined as a process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes or systems according to the character of traffic service that they are designed to provide. The functional classifications of major roadways within the City of Alpharetta's roadway network are illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
FUNCTIONAL
CLASSIFICATION

LEGEND

Functional Classification

- Freeway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street
- Under Construction
- Alpharetta City Limits
- LCI Study Area



Interstate Highway, Freeway, Tollway and Expressway

Interstate highways, freeways, tollways, expressways, and parkways provide for the rapid and efficient movement of large volumes of traffic between regions and within one region. Direct access to abutting property is not an intended function of facilities falling into these categories. Design characteristics support the function of traffic movement by providing multiple travel lanes, a high degree of access control, and few or no at-grade intersections.

SR 400 (co-signed with US 19) is a multi-laned, divided, limited access toll facility that is classified as a freeway that connects Dahlonega to Atlanta. SR 400 traverses the City with interchanges at:

- Exit 8 Mansell Road
- Exit 9 Haynes Bridge Road (direct access to downtown)
- Exit 10 SR 120/Old Milton Parkway (direct access to downtown)
- Exit 11 Windward Parkway

SR 400 links Alpharetta to downtown Atlanta to the south and to other Georgia destinations to the north such as Lake Lanier, the City of Gainesville, and the north Georgia mountains.

Arterial

Arterials provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. Arterials within the city of Alpharetta include SR 9 (Main Street), SR 120 (Old Milton Parkway), Rucker Road, and Mid-Broadwell Road.

Collector

Collectors provide a less highly developed level of service at lower speeds for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and distributing it to arterials. The area northwest of the City is served by collectors oriented toward downtown Alpharetta.

Within the study area collectors include Roswell Street/Canton Street, Wills Road, Cumming Street, and Milton Avenue/Academy Street.

Collectors just beyond the study area (largely oriented north-south) include Wills Road, Hopewell Road, Henderson Parkway, Kimball Bridge Road, Old Roswell Road, and Maxwell Road. East-west collectors include Mid-Broadwell Road, Webb Bridge Road, and Northwinds Parkway.

Local

Local roadways consist of all roadways not defined as arterials or collectors. They primarily provide direct access to parcels of land with little or no through movement.

1.4 Parking

An inventory of parking supply within the study area was conducted by field review. Parking within the downtown area primarily consists of angled, on-street parking and surface lots. Parking is free and adequate information regarding restrictions, such as time limits and permit requirements, is provided. One example is the on-street parking along both sides of Milton Avenue, just east of its



Public Parking on Old Roswell Street

intersection with Roswell Street/Canton Street. This parking is regulated with 2-hour limits from 8 AM to 8 PM. Private parking is also provided in association with a number of the retail and commercial establishments, office, institutional, and residential facilities within the study area. Immediately adjacent to the study area, large frontage lots typically characterize the major retail establishments, strip developments, and shopping malls just outside of the downtown area (e.g. along Haynes Bridge south of Academy Street, Westside Parkway, Mansell Road, and the like).

The primary paved parking facilities within the downtown area are illustrated in Figure 2. These facilities include:

1. On Old Roswell Street, just south of Milton Avenue.
2. On South Main Street adjacent to City Hall at the intersection of Main Street and Academy Street. (This parking area extends beyond the rear of City Hall and includes an additional parking area along Haynes Bridge Road just south of the intersection of Academy Street and Haynes Bridge Road).
3. On Roswell Street accessed by a lengthy driveway entrance that continues below grade and is adjacent to a cemetery. This lot is located across from the intersection of Roswell Street and Old Roswell Street.

Overall, in most cases advance wayfinding and/or directional signage is completely absent to direct patrons to parking as well as to major downtown destinations. In other cases, signs are provided, but only in the immediate area of the lot (such as near the entrance). The City parking area located on Roswell Street at Old Roswell Street is a prime example of a facility that could be better advertized using wayfinding signage.

Shared parking within the downtown area appears to be limited and may not be currently used to their full potential. Additionally, some parking lots appear to be underutilized.








Under-utilized parking lot off of Roswell Street

FIGURE 2
PAVED PARKING
FACILITIES

LEGEND





Community Facilities

-  Courthouse
-  Fire Station
-  Library
-  Police Station
-  School

 Paved Parking Facilities

 Alpharetta City Limits

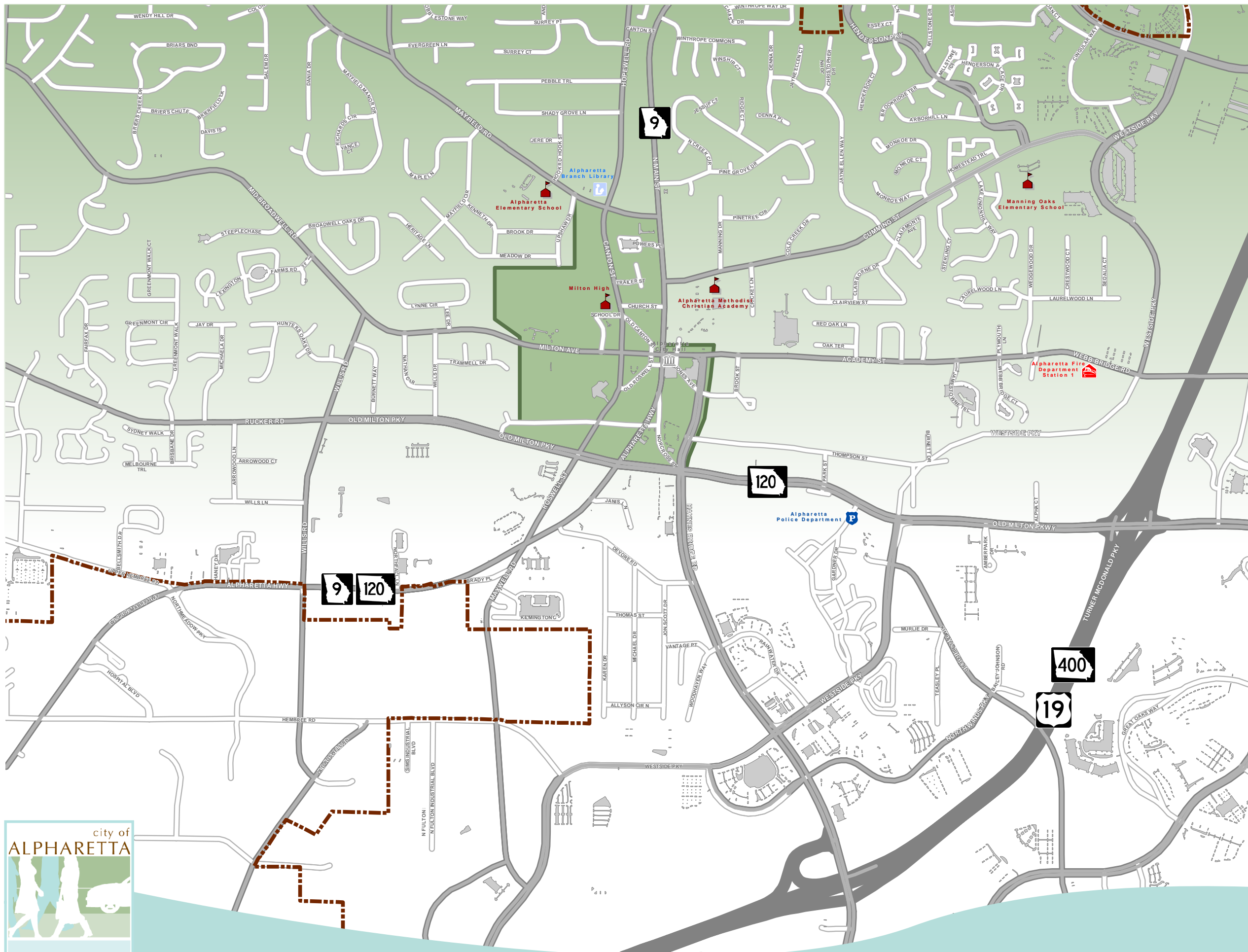
Roadways

-  Freeway
-  Major Roads
-  Local Street
-  LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: City of Alpharetta/URS Field Review; 2008



In 2006, the City approved a redevelopment plan for the approximately 7.5 acres of the city's downtown area adjacent to City Hall (bounded respectively on the east, west and north by Haynes Bridge Road, South Main, and Academy Streets). The plan calls for construction of 80,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space; 40,000 square feet of office space; and 162 residential condominiums, all around a one acre public plaza. Also, the current 13,000-square-foot Alpharetta City Hall will be demolished to make way for construction of a new, 50,000-square-foot municipal building. The development will also include two parking decks. Funds generated by the proposed Alpharetta Tax Allocation District (TAD) will be used to partially fund construction of the two parking decks, the one-acre plaza, and two internal roads.



Kiosk on South Main Street

1.5 Signage

A good signage system can perform multiple functions. On the most basic level, it provides effective information and direction for people to find their way around a downtown, a building complex, park, or other public space. It also has potential as a tool for creating and maintaining an image and providing a sense of place and local pride. Currently, signage within the study area primarily includes signs that:

1. Regulate (post limits, stop, and yield signs)
2. Restrict or limit parking,
3. Identify municipal facilities,
4. Identify the historic downtown area,
5. Inform and educate (e.g. map on kiosk on Main Street, south of Milton Avenue and historic markers)
6. Provide direction to or about public parking lots.

The City is currently performing a street sign inventory. The inventory findings will provide information needed for the development of additional informational and directional signage. Opportunities might exist for further incorporating history or cultural heritage of the City of Alpharetta. Consideration of the placement and location of signage in conjunction with other amenities such as benches, cafes, restrooms, and phones, or places where paths cross, might also serve to create “mini-destinations” or “places-within-a-place”. Continuous signage for both pedestrians and vehicles (i.e., repeated at each point of choice) until the destination is reached, as well as signage from the point of parking that directs patrons to the merchants, as mentioned previously, would also serve to improving the overall travel experience and potentially reduce traffic congestion levels. Signage to identify passenger and commercial loading zones would also add to improved circulation and traffic flow, especially as the downtown area continues to grow as additional development occurs and traffic demand increases.

1.6 Traffic Controls

1.6.1 Traffic Signals

Currently, the City of Alpharetta maintains traffic signals at 115 intersections. A total of 69 signals, or about 60%, communicate with Alpharetta’s traffic control center, located on Hembree Road at the Alpharetta Department of Public Works office. Communications are established as follows:

- 46 signals via direct fiber
- 13 via dialup master or direct dial, and
- 10 via remote systems (connected over the Internet).

The signals within the City are scheduled to be re-timed every two years. The City is currently lobbying the State Legislature for funding related to an Adaptive Traffic Control System. This signal control system relies on sensors and computer software that automatically adjusts signal timing based on real-time traffic flow. The signalized intersections located within the study area are illustrated in Figure 3.

1.6.2 Red Light Camera Program

The Alpharetta Red Light Camera Program was initiated in 2005. The red light camera enforcement system is part of a city-wide safety program operated by the Alpharetta Police Department in an effort to reduce the number of red light violations and intersection crashes. The program employs cameras to capture images of vehicles that cross the stop line and proceed through an intersection after the traffic signal has turned red.



Red light camera enforcement systems are currently in place at the following intersections (the intersections in the study area are shown in *italics*):

- North Point Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road
- *SR 9/Main Street and Academy Street*
- SR 120/Old Milton Parkway and North Point Parkway
- *SR 120/Old Milton Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road*
- Westside Parkway and Woodward Parkway
- North Point Parkway and Mansell Road
- *SR 9/South Main Street and SR 120/Old Milton Parkway*







1.6.3 Signal Timing/Interconnect Projects

In order for traffic signals to be simultaneously programmed and consistently work together, they must be connected. This connection is usually a physical wire that connects the individual control boxes along a specific corridor. By connecting each control box, a signal electrician only needs to upload new data into one control box to give commands to the entire corridor of signals. The City of Alpharetta currently has received grants for signal interconnects for North Point Parkway and Woodward Parkway. The grants will be used to place fiber optic cable along these corridors connecting the traffic signals to the City's Traffic Control Center. This will allow City traffic engineers to control signal timing based on real-time traffic volumes and patterns.

FIGURE 3 SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS





LEGEND

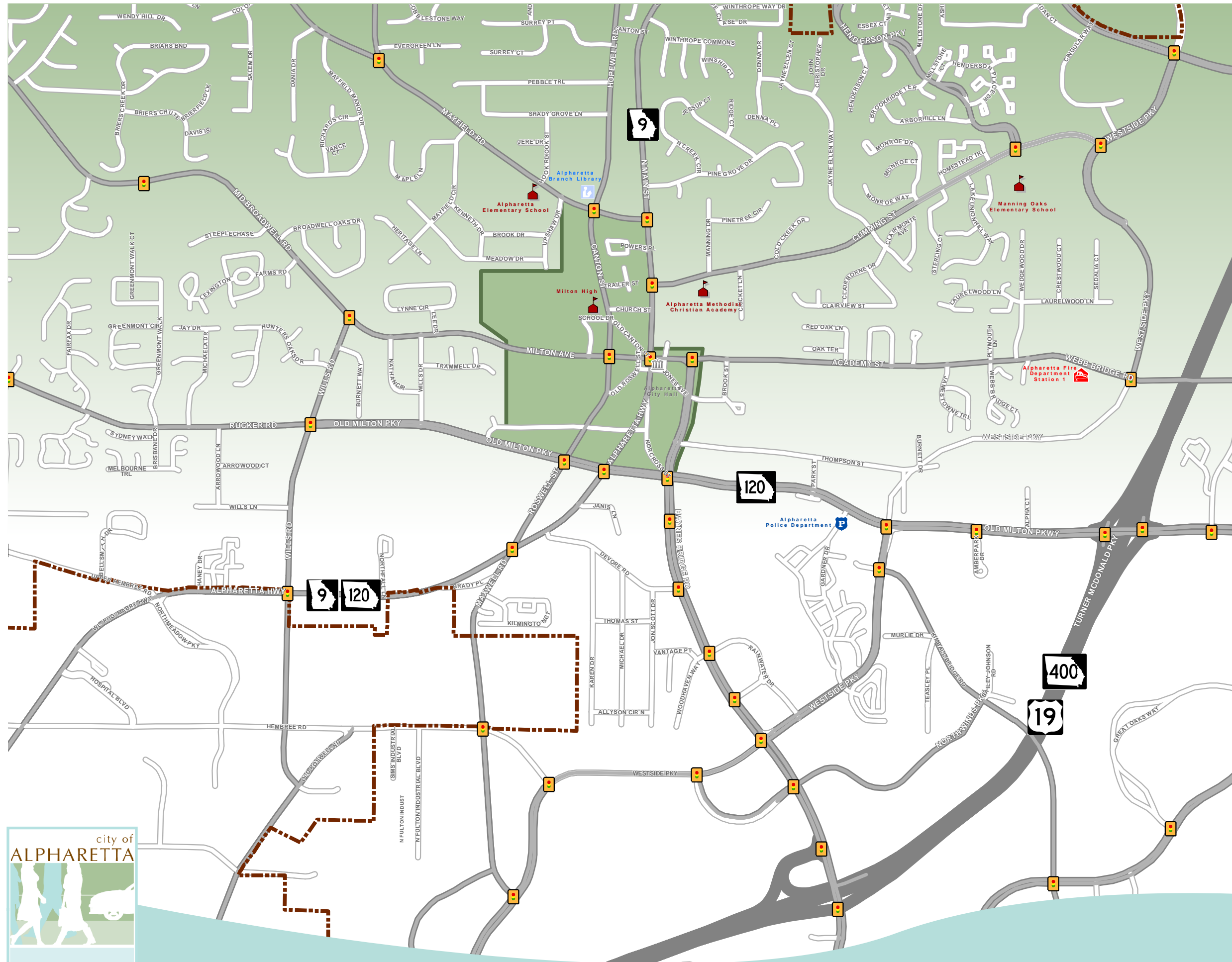
Community Facilities

-  Courthouse
-  Fire Station
-  Library
-  Police Station
-  School
-  Traffic Signals

Alpharetta City Limits

Roadways

-  Freeway
-  Major Roads
-  Local Street
-  LCI Study Area



1.7 Posted Speeds

Posted speed limits within the study area are illustrated in Figure 4. The posted speed limits within the study area are typically set at 25 miles per hour (MPH) along local roadways, 35 MPH along collectors, and vary from 35 to 45 MPH along arterials.

Additional information to consider includes potential issues related to speeding and enforcement may be sought from local and state authorities as a follow up to this assessment, as appropriate.

1.8 Traffic Operations/Level of Service (LOS)

An analysis was conducted to determine and qualify general traffic conditions in and around the downtown Alpharetta Circulation study area. This analysis utilized general Level of Service (LOS) thresholds to assign a letter grade of A, (indicating free-flow conditions) through F, (indicating over-capacity conditions). The LOS thresholds assumes generalized roadway characteristics used for more detailed operational level analysis such as peak to daily traffic ratios, peak directional characteristics, traffic signal spacing, and truck percentages. It is important to note LOS analyses are frequently used for traffic impact studies requested by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) as part of their Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process.

The analysis for this study was conducted by comparing Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) daily traffic counts (factored to Annual Average Daily Traffic) in the study area to the LOS thresholds. Data collected at GDOT traffic count stations employed for this analysis are identified in Figure 5. Due to fluctuating traffic count volumes from year to year, the maximum observed traffic count volume from the years 2003 through 2006 was used for the basis of the analysis. Although the analysis was conducted using daily traffic volumes, the thresholds incorporate aforementioned assumptions (such as peak to daily traffic ratios and peak directional characteristics) and, as a result, estimate LOS during peak conditions.

The results of the LOS analysis are categorized by traffic count locations and are provided in Figure 6 and Table 1.

FIGURE 4
POSTED
SPEED LIMIT

LEGEND

- Posted Speed Limit
- 65 MPH
 - 45 MPH
 - 40 MPH
 - 35 MPH
 - 30 MPH
 - 25 MPH
 - No Data Provided
- Community Facilities
- Courthouse
 - Fire Station
 - Library
 - Police Station
 - School
 - Alpharetta City Limits
 - LCI Study Area

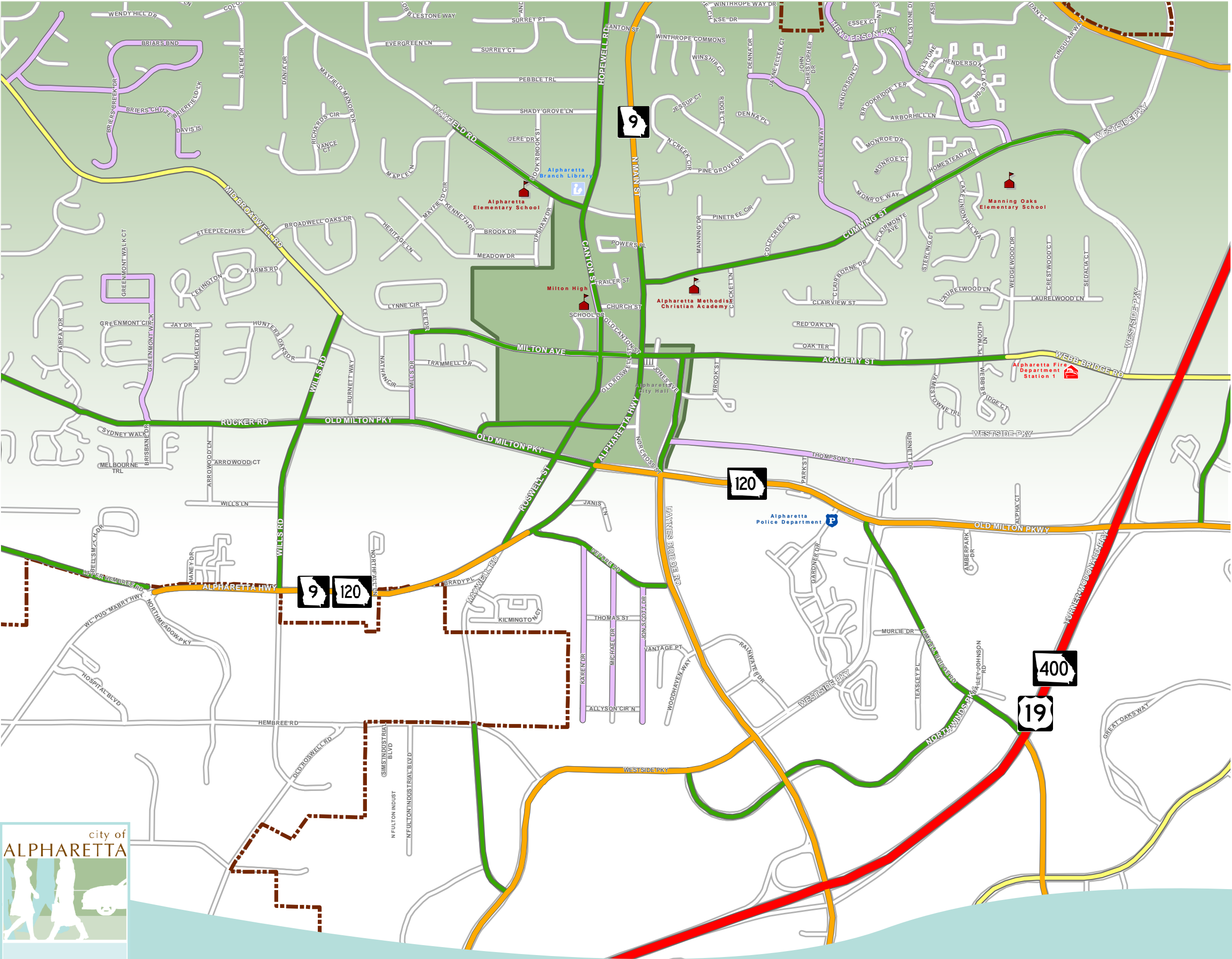
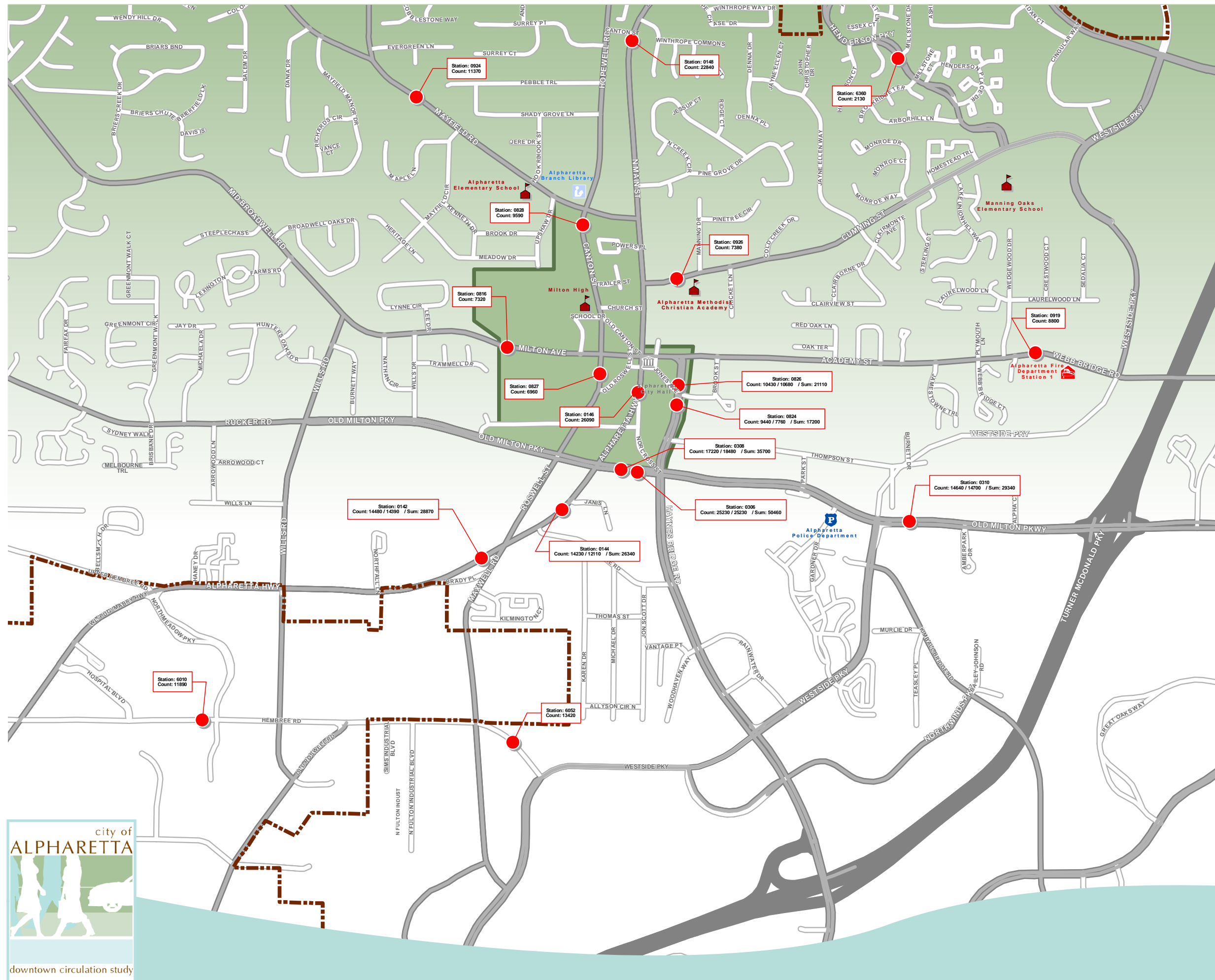


FIGURE 5 STUDY AREA TRAFFIC COUNTS



- ## LEGEND
- GDOT Count Station
 - ▭ Alpharetta City Limits
 - ▬ Roadways
 - ▬ Freeway
 - ▬ Major Roads
 - ▬ Local Street
 - ▭ LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: GDOT 2006

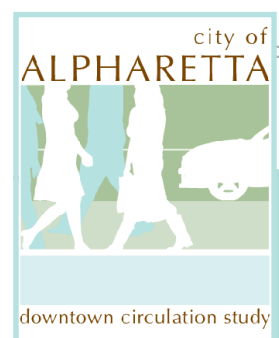


FIGURE 6
GENERALIZED
EXISTING LEVEL
OF SERVICE

LEGEND

Level of Service

- LOS C
- LOS D
- LOS E
- LOS F

Community Facilities

- Courthouse
- Fire Station
- Library
- Police Station
- School

- Alpharetta City Limits

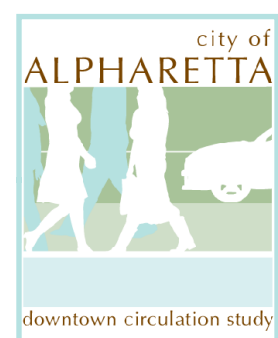
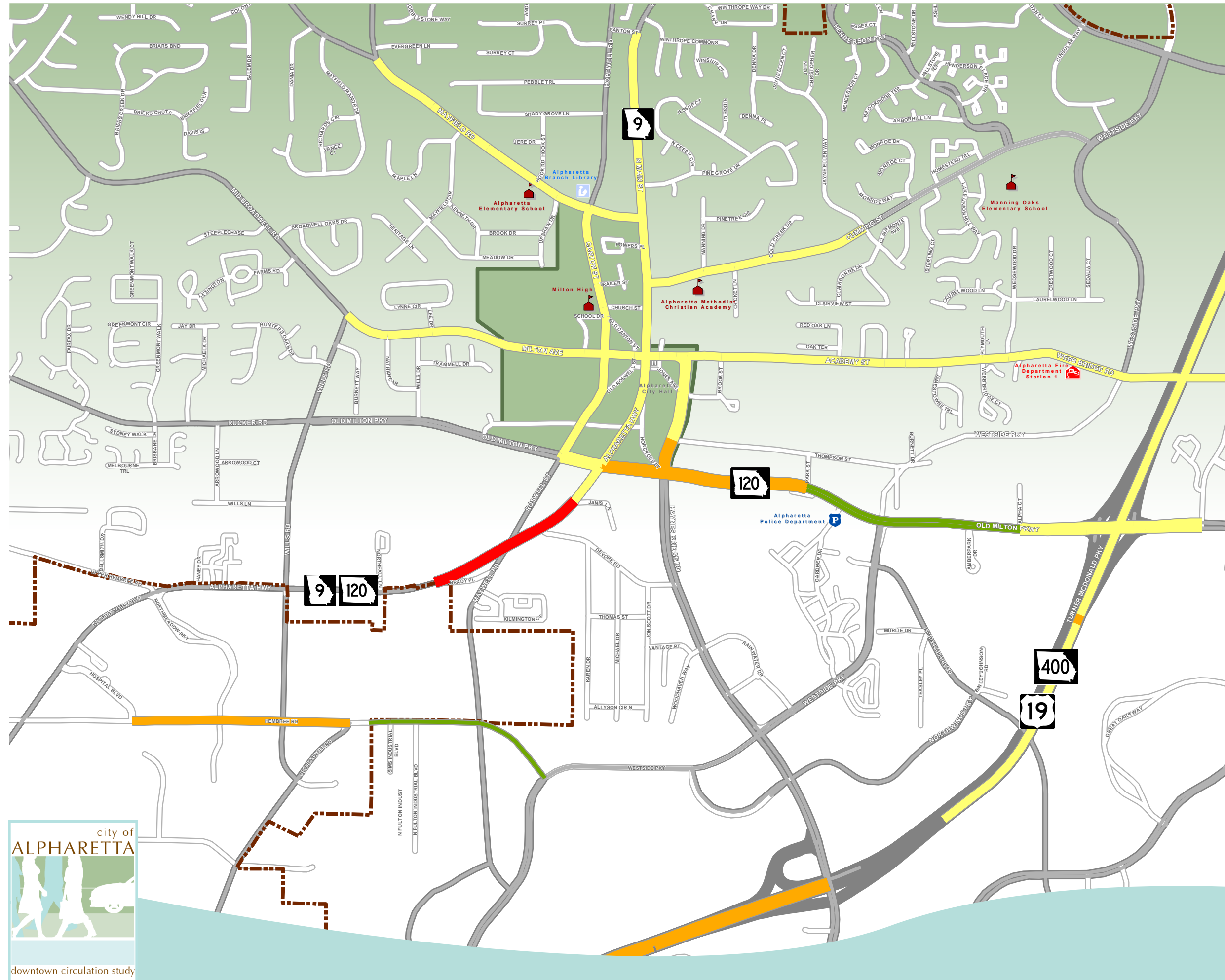
Roadways

- Freeway
- Major Roads
- Local Street
- LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: URS Analysis



URS

Table 1
Existing Level of Service

Roadway	Location	GDOT Count Station	Existing Segment LOS
SR 9/South Main Street	Maxwell Road to Janis Lane	142	F
SR 9/South Main Street	SR 120/Old Milton Parkway to Jones Avenue	144	D
SR 9/South Main Street	Academy Street to Pine Grove Drive	146	D
SR 9/South Main Street	Canton Street to Windward Parkway	148	D
SR 120/Old Milton Parkway	SR 9/South Main Street to Haynes Bridge Road	306	E
SR 120/Old Milton Parkway	Park Street to Kimball Bridge Road	308	D
SR 120/Old Milton Parkway	Thompson Street to SR 400	310	C
SR 120/Old Milton Parkway	Big Creek Tributary to State Bridge Road	312	D
SR 400	Mansell Road to Haynes Bridge Road	458	E
SR 400	Haynes Bridge Rd. to SR 120/Old Milton Pkwy.	459	D
SR 400	SR 120/Old Milton Pkwy. to Windward Parkway	460	D
Rucker Road	Wills Road to North Hickory Trail	810	B
Milton Avenue	Wills Road to North Main Street	816	D
Haynes Bridge Road	SR 400 to Rock Mill Road	823	D
Haynes Bridge Road	SR 120/Old Milton Parkway to SR 400	824	D
Haynes Bridge Road	SR 120/Old Milton Parkway to Academy Street	826	D
Canton Street	Milton Avenue to Trailer Street	827	D
Canton Street	Mayfield Road to Shady Grove Lane	828	D
Webb Bridge Road	Wedgewood Road to Main Street	919	D
Mayfield Road	Providence Road to Canton Street	924	D
Cumming Street	North Main Street to Westside Drive	926	D
Hembree Road	Hembree Parkway to Old Roswell Road	6010	E
Morrison Parkway	Haynes Bridge Road to Old Roswell Road	6052	C

The results of the LOS analysis indicate that the majority of the downtown Alpharetta area currently experiences LOS D during the peak hour. However, inadequate levels of service are observed along segments on SR 9/South Main Street from Maxwell Road to Janis Lane, SR 120/Old Milton Parkway from South Main Street and Haynes Bridge Road, Hembree Road between Hembree Parkway and Old Roswell Road, and along SR 400 between Mansell Road and Haynes Bridge Road.

1.9 Safety

Roadway safety was evaluated through analysis of historic crash data available through GDOT's Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) database. A summary of the characteristics of crashes is presented in Table 2. The summary provides a profile of the severity, harmful event, weather, lighting, collision type, roadway conditions, and event location within the study area. Additionally, the annual average number of crashes occurring at intersections and the segment crash rates period were determined to identify critical intersection and mid-block crash locations within the study area.

Table 2
Crash Summary Profile

Severity	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Non-Fatal Injury	61	55	61	39	216
PDO Crash	245	252	288	107	892
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Injuries	80	77	82	53	292
Harmful Event	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Overturn		1	1	1	3
Other Non-Collision	1	2	1	1	5
Pedestrian	1			1	2
Pedalcycle	1				1
Parked Motor Vehicle	3		2		5
Motor Vehicle in Motion	290	290	335	141	1056
Other Object (Not Fixed)	2	1			3
Deer	1	4	1		6
Median Barrier	1				1
Highway Traffic Sign Post	1				1
Luminaire/Light Support			1		1
Utility Pole		3	2		5
Curb	1	3	2	1	7
Embankment		1			1
Tree	1		2		3
Other Fixed Object	3	2	2	1	8
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Weather	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Clear	203	204	253	109	769
Cloudy	73	71	64	29	237
Rain	29	31	32	7	99
Sleet		1		1	2
Other	1				1
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Lighting	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Daylight	256	257	301	133	947
Dusk	4	6	4		14
Dawn	6	1	7	1	15

Dark-Lighted	38	37	31	11	117
Dark-Not Lighted	2	6	6	1	15
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Manner of Collision	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Angle	86	91	112	44	333
Head On	12	4	6	5	27
Rear End	149	156	165	76	546
Sideswipe - Same Direction	38	36	47	11	132
Sideswipe - Opposite Direction	10	4	8	5	27
Not A Collision With A Motor Vehicle	11	16	11	5	43
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Event Location	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
On Roadway	297	294	336	142	1069
On Shoulder	2	5	3	3	13
Off Roadway	6	7	9	1	23
Median		1	1		2
Ramp	1				1
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Is Crash at Intersection?	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
No	68	93	98	48	307
Yes	238	214	251	98	801
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108
Roadway Condition	2004	2005	2006	2007	Grand Total
Dry	260	256	307	134	957
Wet	44	50	42	11	147
Icy	2	1		1	4
Grand Total	306	307	349	146	1108

Source: GDOT Care Data, 2004-2006 and through July 2007

1.9.1 High Frequency Intersection Crash Locations

The locations of critical intersections within the study area were identified based on crash frequency. Based on the annual average number of crashes occurring during a seven year period, between 2000 through 2006, the following top ten high frequency intersection crash locations were identified as critical intersections (see Figure 7 and Table 3).

FIGURE 7 HIGH FREQUENCY INTERSECTION CRASH LOCATIONS

LEGEND

Top 10 Intersections

Total Crashes

- 48 - 60
- 61 - 84
- 85 - 117
- 118 - 181
- 182 - 240

Community Facilities

- 🏛 Courthouse
- 🚒 Fire Station
- 📖 Library
- 🚓 Police Station
- 🎓 School

Roadways

- Freeway
- Major Roads
- Local Street
- LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: 2000 - 2006 CARE Data

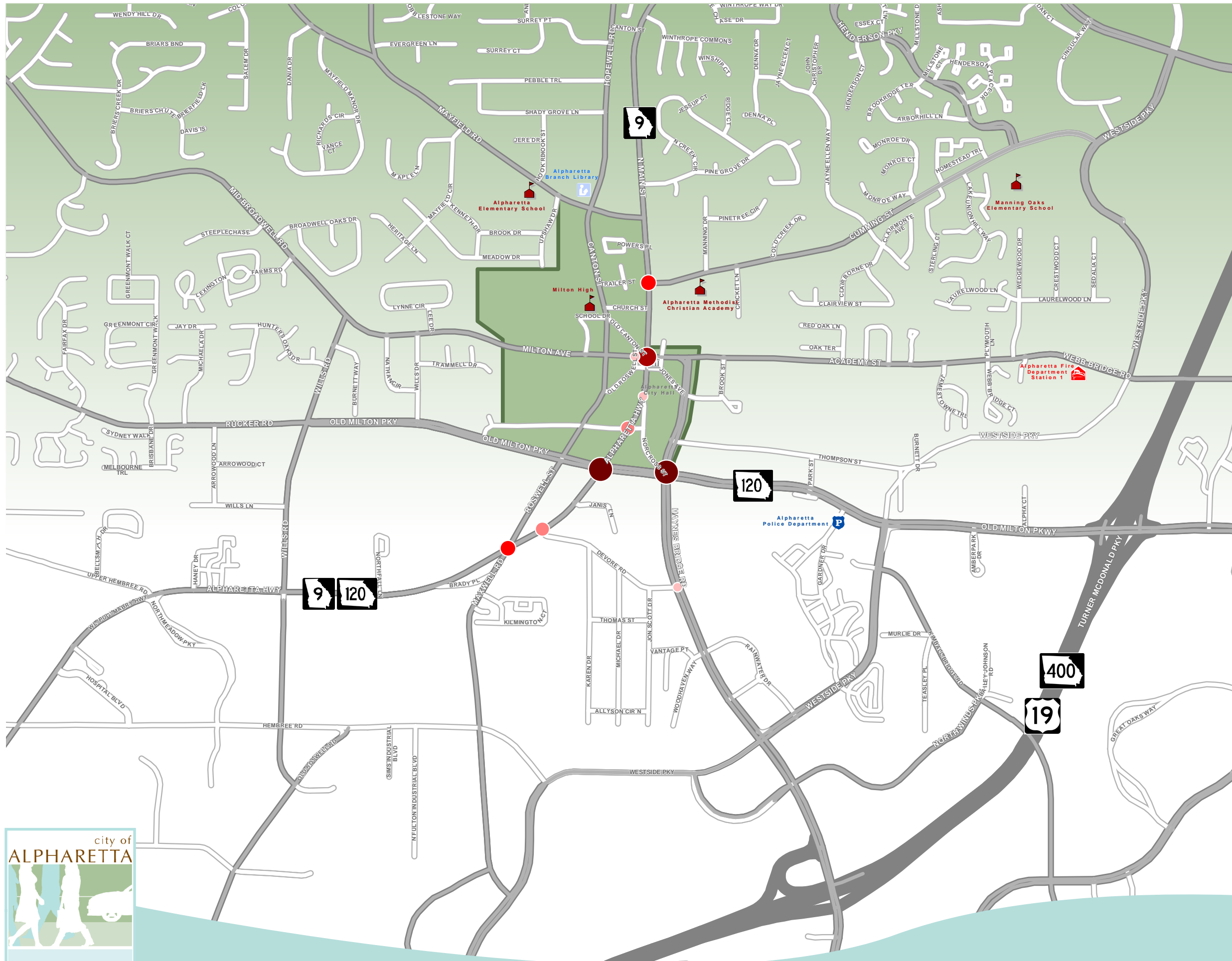


Table 3
Top 10 High Frequency Intersection Crash Locations

Rank	Intersection Location	Total No. of Crashes	Average No. of Crashes ¹
1	SR 120/Old Milton Parkway at Haynes Bridge Road	240	34.3
2	SR 9/South Main Street at SR 120/Old Milton Parkway	227	32.4
3	SR 9/South Main Street at Academy Street	181	25.9
4	SR 9/North Main Street at Cumming Street	117	16.7
5	SR 9/North Main Street at Roswell Street	108	15.4
6	SR 9/South Main Street at Marietta Street	84	12.0
7	SR 9/South Main Street at Devore Road	78	11.1
8	Haynes Bridge Road at Devore Road	60	8.6
9	Milton Avenue at Old Canton Road	59	8.4
10	SR 9/South Main Street at Norcross Street	48	6.9

Source: GDOT Care Database, 2000-2006

¹Average per year over a seven-year period from 2000 through 2006

The largest number of intersection crashes was observed to occur at the intersection of SR 120/Old Milton Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road (240 crashes). As indicated in Figure 7, the higher frequency intersection crash locations, overall, appear to be concentrated at intersections along SR 9/Main Street in the central portion of the study area.

1.9.2 Segment Crash Rates

To determine the non-intersection (segment) crash locations, motor vehicle crash rates were computed. The critical roadway segments, within the study area, showing higher crash rates are identified as “hot spots”. Hot spot locations are listed in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 8.

Table 4
Top 10 Crash Hot Spots
Identified Based on Segment Crash Rate

Rank	Route Name ¹	From/To	Length (miles)	Average Daily Traffic	Crash Rate (Crashes per 100 MVM) ²
1	Roswell Street	South Main St./Old Milton Pkwy.	0.39	1,650	1,887
2	SR 9	Old Milton Pkwy./Milton Avenue	0.31	29,140	927
3	SR 9	Milton Avenue/Cumming Street	0.18	27,330	851
4	SR 9	Brady Place/Roswell Street	0.3	34,170	772
5	Cumming Street	North Main Street/Cricket Lane	0.2	25,930	416
6	SR 120	Haynes Bridge Road/Park Street	0.27	16,270	355
7	Canton Street	Milton Avenue/Mayfield Road	0.32	35,480	322
8	SR 9	Roswell Street/Old Milton Pkwy.	0.4	8,260	291
9	Haynes Bridge Rd	Old Milton Pkwy./Academy Street	0.24	33,810	279
10	Milton Avenue	Wills Drive/Roswell Street	0.62	8,940	275


Source: GDOT Care Database, 2004 -2006 and available 2007 data (July-January)

¹ Locations are approximate






²MVM = Average crash rate in million vehicle miles

FIGURE 8 HIGH FREQUENCY HOTSPOT SEGEMENT CRASH LOCATIONS





LEGEND

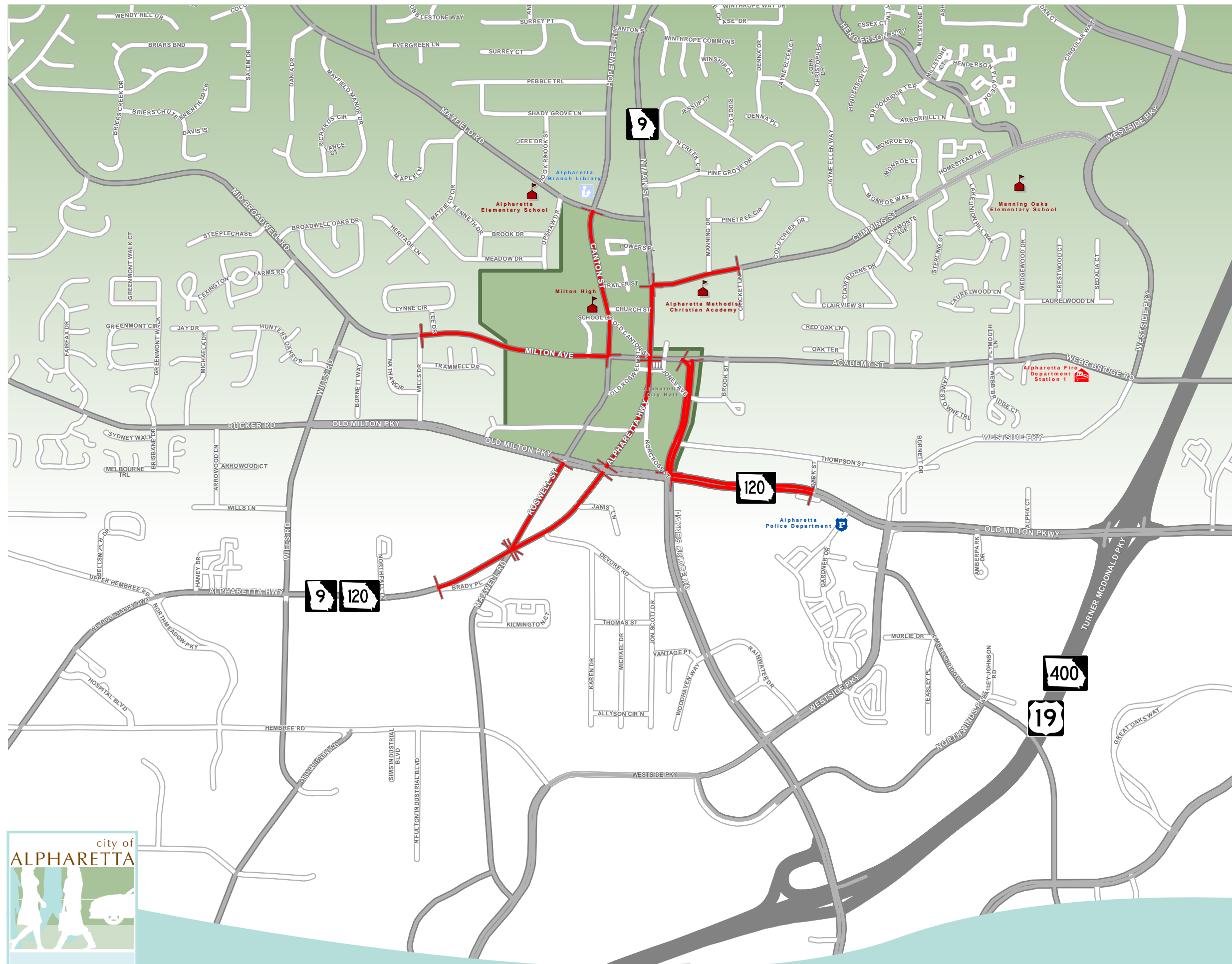
 Top10 Hotspot Segments

Community Facilities

-  Courthouse
-  Fire Station
-  Library
-  Police Station
-  School

Roadways

-  Freeway
-  Major Roads
-  Local Street
-  LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: 2000 - 2006 CARE Data

The highest crash rates have been observed at expected locations within the study area. Specifically, the top three crash locations are SR 9/South Main Street at SR 120/Old Milton Parkway, SR 120/Old Milton Parkway at Haynes Bridge Road, and SR 9/South Main Street at Academy Street. It can be implied these intersections rank high due to the large volumes of turning movements occurring during morning and evening peak hours.

1.10 Public Transit (routes, service characteristics, and ridership)

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) provides fixed route transit service to the City of Alpharetta by means of three bus routes, Route 140, 143, and 185.

Route 140 – North Point/Mansell Road Park/Ride

From the North Springs rail station traveling along SR 400, Route 140 travels to the Mansell Park and Ride lot located at the southwest quadrant of the SR 400/Mansell Road interchange. Major destinations served by this route include the North Point Mall, North Point Market Center, Georgia State University North Campus, Regency Park, and the Chubb Institute.



Route 140 Bus at Park & Ride

Route 143 – Windward Park/Ride

From the North Springs rail station, Route 143 travels along SR 400 to the Windward Park and Ride Lot. The route's full circuit includes a loop along McGinnis Ferry Road.

Route 185-Alpharetta/Holcomb Bridge Road

Traveling southwest to northwest, this route follows SR 400 to Holcomb Bridge Road then turns north along Alpharetta Highway (Main Street within the Alpharetta city limits). Route 185 proceeds due east and crosses SR 400 along Windward Parkway to North Point Parkway. Route 185 serves the Mansell Business Center, Roswell Market Place, North Fulton Regional Hospital, Alpharetta City Hall, and the Windward Park and Ride Lot.

A summary of operating characteristics, including points of interest served and average weekday stop level passenger boardings are presented by route in Table 5 for the purpose of describing current transit utilization. The transit routes with stop locations are illustrated in Figure 9.

Public transportation service to Alpharetta includes Park and Ride lots at Windward Parkway and SR 400 and the SR 400/Mansell Road interchange. These lots provide facilities for commuters to connect with the MARTA bus and rail systems.

The parking capacity of the Windward Parkway Park and Ride Lot is 502 spaces. MARTA bus routes serving this location are: 140 Northpoint/Mansell Park and Ride; 143 Windward Park and Ride, and; 185 Alpharetta/Holcomb Bridge Road.

The parking capacity of the Mansell Road Park and Ride Lot is 438 spaces. MARTA bus routes serving this location are Route 85 Roswell/Mansell Road and 140 Northpoint/Mansell Park and Ride Lot.

Table 5
MARTA Route Operating Characteristics

Route	Major Destinations Served	Days of Operation	Hours of Operation	Operating Frequency (Minutes) ¹	Average Weekday Ridership (2007) ²
Route 140: North Point/Mansell Road Park/Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Woodward Parkway Park and Ride Lot➤ Mansell Road Park and Ride Lot➤ N11 North Springs Rail Station➤ Independence High School➤ South Main and Academy Streets➤ North Point Mall➤ North Point Market➤ GSU North Campus➤ Regency Park➤ Chubb Institute	Mon. – Fri.	6:00 a.m. – 12:30 a.m.	Peak: 15 Off Peak: 20	1,703
		Sat. – Sun.	6:00 a.m. - 12:30 a.m.	Peak and Off Peak: 40	
Route 143: Woodward Park/Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ N11 North Springs Station➤ Woodward Parkway Park and Ride	Mon. – Fri.	5:30 a.m. 8:04 p.m.	Peak: 20 Off Peak: 20	662
		Sat. – Sun.	No Weekend Service		
Route 185: Alpharetta/Holcomb Bridge Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ N11 North Springs Station➤ Woodward Parkway Park and Ride➤ North Fulton Regional Hospital➤ Alpharetta City Hall➤ Roswell Market Place➤ Mansell Business Center	Mon. – Fri.	4:55 a.m. – 1:05 a.m.	Peak: 23-30 Off Peak: 30-37	1,545
		Sat. -Sun.	5:27 a.m. - 12:50 a.m.	Peak: 33-44 Off Peak: 30-47	

Source: MARTA 2008 bus schedules and stop level ridership

¹Where operating frequency varies during peak and off peak periods, it is summarized as a range.

²MARTA Bus Ridership was based on passenger boardings based on August 2007 markup.

FIGURE 9 STUDY AREA TRANSIT ROUTES

LEGEND

Route 140 Ridership

- 0 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 - 60

Route 143 Ridership

- 2 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 - 60

Route 185 Ridership

- 2 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 - 60

Existing Sidewalks

MARTA Bus Routes

- 140
- 143
- 185

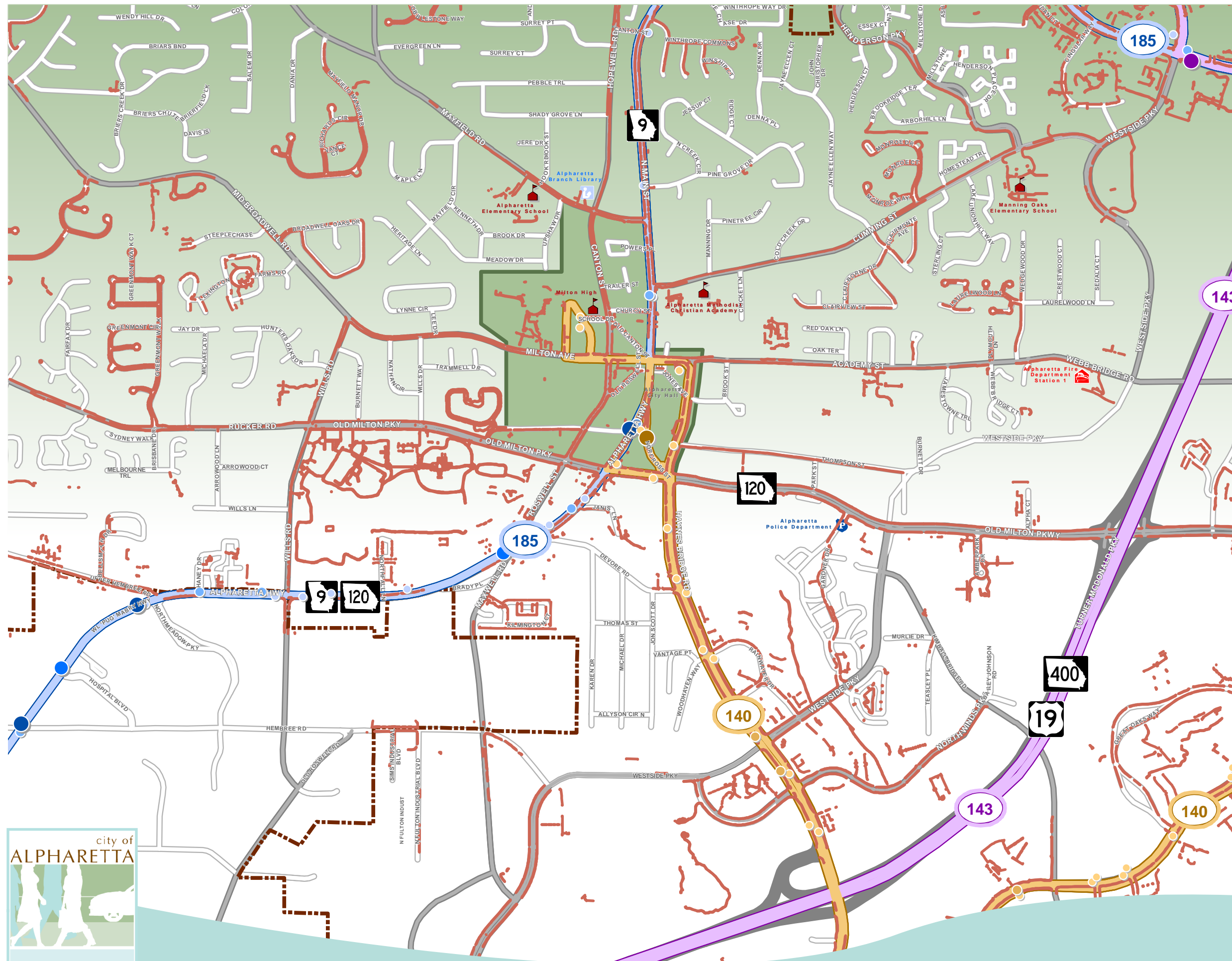
Roadways

- Freeway
- Major Roads
- Local Street
- Alpharetta City Limits
- LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: MARTA; City of Alpharetta



A comprehensive plan helps to set the overall future direction for a municipality. Recognizing the importance of comprehensive planning, the City of Alpharetta has established its own long-range plan for guiding development in the City for the next twenty years. The overall goal of the plan is to accommodate development through the timely, orderly, and efficient arrangement of land uses and public facilities and services that meet the needs of the present and future population of Alpharetta.

To accomplish this, the City, through their Comprehensive Planning efforts, has established guiding principles for transit that include:

- Identifying one or more locations for internal circulator services;
- Providing linkages to connect sidewalks to public transportation; and
- Providing bus shelters to encourage and accommodate use of public transportation.

In addition to the City's comprehensive planning efforts, other organizations have developed plans and policies, with potential impacts to Alpharetta, to address the more overarching regional issues related to transportation. At the regional level, the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is working to create a seamless, multi-modal regional transportation system that relieves congestion and improves air quality for the Atlanta region. The TPB is a joint venture of MARTA, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). The TPB, as part of their development of a comprehensive plan for transit investment in the Atlanta Region, recently put forth "Concept 3", a conceptual regional transit plan that proposes arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along SR 120 through Alpharetta from the City of Dallas in Paulding County to Lawrenceville in Gwinnett County. It also includes a MARTA heavy rail extension from its current terminus at the North Springs Station to Windward Parkway. The TPB's Concept 3 also envisions Freeway BRT service along SR 400 from the proposed Windward Station to Cumming, Georgia.

1.11 Planned/Programmed Transportation Projects

The planned and programmed transportation improvement projects that are part of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the FY 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) were reviewed to identify projects with potential impact to this study. Three programmed projects from the TIP were identified having relevance to the Downtown Alpharetta Circulation Study (see Table 6 and Figure 10).

The Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT's) database was reviewed to identify other projects with potential relevance to the study area. No Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Construction Work Program (CWP), or Fast Forward Congestion Relief projects were identified.

Table 6
Transportation Improvement Program Projects

ARC Number	GDOT Project #	Project Type	TIP/RTP Status	Project Description	Sponsor	Project Length (mi.)	Network Year	Total Cost
FN-067A	721780	Roadway Capacity (Widening from 2 to 4 Lanes)	Long Range	SR 9 (North Main Street) from Academy Street to Windward Parkway	GDOT	1.97	2030	\$16,023,600
FN-067B ¹	721790	Roadway Capacity (Widening from 2 to 4 Lanes)	Long Range	SR 9 (South Main Street) Upper Hembree Road to Academy Street	GDOT	1.7	2030	\$12,318,000
FN-199	0006727	ITS-Smart Corridor	Programmed	SR 9 ATMS Abernathy Road to Forsyth County Line	City of Sandy Springs	12	2010	\$3,500,000

Source: Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan and FY 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Project Lists

¹This project may be listed inaccurately in the RTP and/or TIP.

FIGURE 10 ENVISION6 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROJECTS

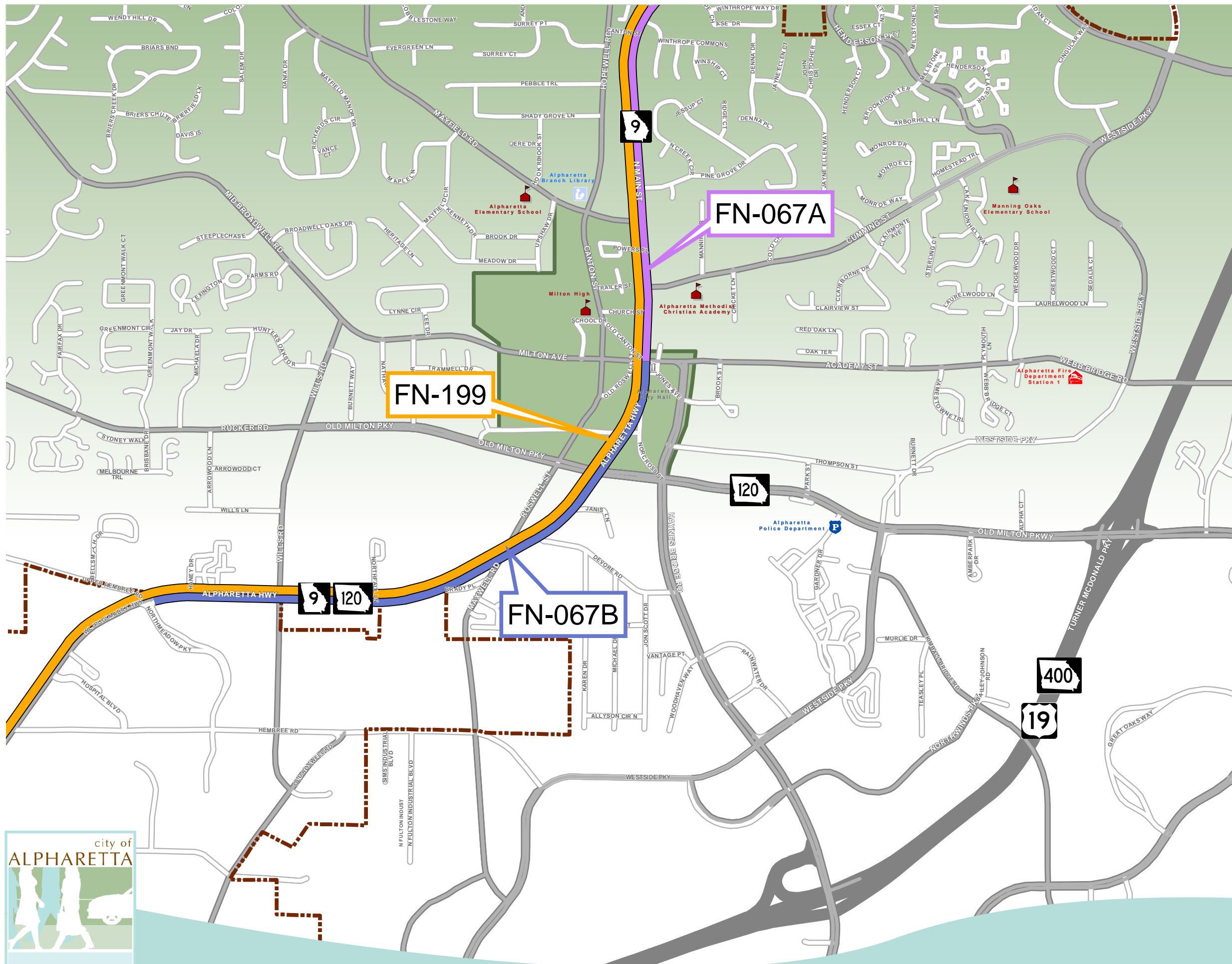
LEGEND

Study Area Envision 6 Projects

- FN-067A
- FN-067B
- FN-199

Roadways

- Freeway
- Major Roads
- Local Street
- Alpharetta City Limits
- LCI Study Area



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: ARC Envision6; 2008

2.0 Transportation and Land Use System Assessment

Alpharetta's progressive and proactive approach to planning and development has been successful in maintaining overall quality of life by attracting and sustaining growth. The City's existing red light camera program and its planned signal interconnect projects are being implemented and provide a means for managing traffic safely and efficiently. Public parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, directional signage, and other amenities are provided to serve the traveling public. Also, the City is well served in terms of the types and number of major thoroughfares within its boundaries. Overall, the inventory of the transportation system indicates a robust network within and surrounding the downtown Alpharetta study area, however some transportation issues and needs, as described in previous chapters, are unmet; thus, opportunities exist for addressing a broad spectrum of transportation issues and needs identified as result of the transportation inventory and assessment:

- Implement strategies for addressing peak hour LOS/congestion
- Improve traffic circulation by consideration of options (e.g. routing)
- Balance the need to accommodate a high volume of vehicular traffic within and through the study area with the needs of the downtown area and of pedestrians, cyclists and transit users
- Enhance connectivity for all modes from downtown Alpharetta to other activity centers within the region
- Consider parking management options such as shared parking, to more effectively manage parking
- Consider promoting better access management strategies
- Provide additional wayfinding/kiosks to direct patrons to parking options and to major downtown destinations
- Consider installing directional signage to advertise area destinations
- Identify means to minimize the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes
- Add transit amenities such as bicycle and pedestrian access, bus shelters, benches, receptacles, service and schedule information at existing bus stop locations
- Consider how transit can better serve the downtown area (e.g. shuttles linking the downtown district with major employment centers and malls)

3.0 Urban Design

The "downtown" of Alpharetta is located at the crossroads of Main Street and Milton Avenue/Academy Street. The historic downtown core borders Main Street from its intersection with Norcross Street on the south to Church Street on the north. The approximate $\frac{1}{4}$ mile stretch of Main Street includes the City Hall, Visitor's Center, several historic 2-story retail buildings, a few smaller one-story retail buildings, and one new retail development built to look like older architecture. Milton Avenue from Main Street to Roswell Street contains a significant block of historic retail buildings; some occupied, some for sale, and some in search of tenants. The strength of the historic downtown core is its two to three blocks of older buildings with strong street presence (buildings at the back of the sidewalk), the attractive downtown streetscaping along Main Street and Milton Avenue, and the continued presence of important civic facilities such as City Hall and the Visitor's Center.

The area along South Main Street from Old Milton Parkway to the intersection of South Main Street and Norcross Street is occupied by more modern retail catering to the driver including a Publix

grocery store, fast-food restaurants, and other retail buildings (new and old) with parking between the roadway and building entrances.

Beyond Main Street are four major land uses:

1. The religious institutions to the northeast of the intersection of Main Street and Academy Street bring a significant number of patrons to the downtown area, but lack good pedestrian connectivity to the shops and retailers on Main Street and Milton Avenue.
2. The former site of Milton High School now accommodates Independence Alternative School and Connected Academy, alternative education facilities for north Fulton County.
3. A large cemetery faces the school site on the south side of Milton Avenue.
4. Southwest of downtown along Marietta Street, two newer residential developments (one attached, one single family detached, but both more dense than traditional residential developments) began the trend of residential redevelopment around the historic downtown, bringing a larger number of Alpharetta residents within walking distance of the historic downtown core.

The remainder of the study area includes a number of transitioning properties. Some properties have transitioned from residential to commercial on more heavily traveled roadways. Several areas along Canton Street near the school site are being transformed into denser residential developments. Low-density (one acre and larger) single family homes throughout the study area are subject to market pressure and potential assembly and/or redevelopment.

In light of the existing historic downtown core and modern development trends and styles, it will be important to identify where and how the historic downtown core can reasonably expand over the next 10-20 years while concentrating on reinforcing the economic health of downtown Alpharetta. Continued enhancement of roadway crossings, the pedestrian environment, and architectural design will be necessary to maintain the historic character of the downtown core. Based on the limited building heights appropriate in historic downtown areas like Alpharetta, consistent building character and avoiding “gaps” along retail/office streets will also be extremely important to sustaining the area.

In the next phase of work, the Team will identify specific development opportunity parcels as part of the downtown circulation strategy. Recommendations concerning the potential development character of those parcels to enhance the downtown area and environment will be discussed.

3.1.1 Existing Land Use

Figure 11 shows the existing land use map which graphically displays by color the current use of each property within the study area as of January 2008. As detailed in the Urban Design Character section above, Main Street is bordered almost exclusively by retail and civic/institutional properties. The block including and to the southeast of City Hall is the subject of a City Center development planned for 2008. The Canton Street area north of Milton Avenue is largely residential including a variety of older single family homes and several proposed and new multi-family residential developments. Main Street Commons, a newer office park is located between Canton Street and North Main Street just south of Mayfield Road.

Milton Avenue includes the old Milton High School site, the Cemetery and the study area’s only light industrial use. South of Milton Avenue, the Roswell Street corridor includes a number of older

homes and buildings that have been converted to small office space. Marietta Street includes some older residences and Victoria Square, a new attached townhome development.

While the study area as a whole includes a mix of civic, retail, office, and residential properties, enhanced walkability and potential for some vertical mixed-use properties could enhance the vitality of the downtown area and build the critical mass necessary for the long term success of downtown retailers.

FIGURE 11
EXISTING
LAND USE

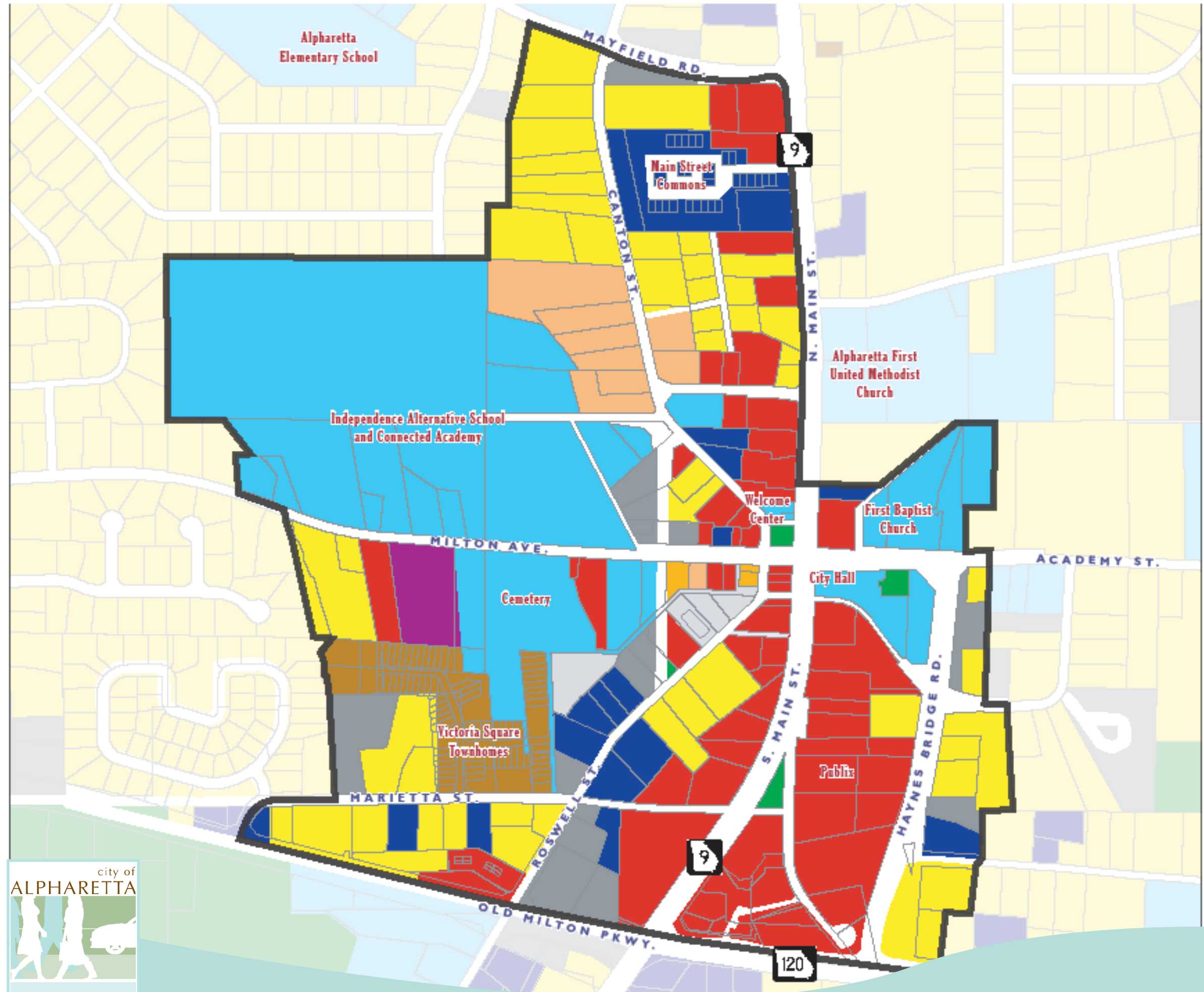
LEGEND

- LCI Study Area
- Retail Sales & Services
- Office Professional
- Light Industrial
- Public Parking
- Parking
- Mixed-Use
- Parks / Recreation / Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Undeveloped
- Under Construction / Proposed Development



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: Urban Collage



3.1.2 Zoning

Current zoning regulations in downtown Alpharetta reinforce the commercial development found on Main Street, Milton Avenue, and Roswell Street. A current zoning map is shown in Figure 12. Residential zoning classifications (R-10 multi-family and R-15 single family) and special use zoning (SU) make up most of the remainder of the study area.

The City of Alpharetta Unified Development Code includes a mixed-use (MU) zoning category within the framework of a development master plan. The district allows greater design flexibility, but includes specific use minimums and maximums for residential, commercial and office retail portions of the development and requires a provision of a minimum of 10 percent of the gross land area for public space. The development code also defines a Central Business District and Historic Business District where other zoning requirements (off-street parking for example) are waived or modified.




In 2005, the City of Alpharetta created a Downtown Incentive Zoning District to encourage development and/or redevelopment of properties in Historic Downtown Alpharetta. The Downtown Overlay was based upon the City's 2003 Downtown Master Plan with the purpose of making Downtown Alpharetta a premiere destination by encouraging a mix of uses (shopping, living, employment, recreation and entertainment) in a pedestrian-friendly environment. The boundary of the Downtown Incentive Zoning District is the same as the Study Area for this effort, with the exception of the exclusions of the First Baptist Church property on Academy Street and properties to the east side of Haynes Bridge Road from the zoning overlay.

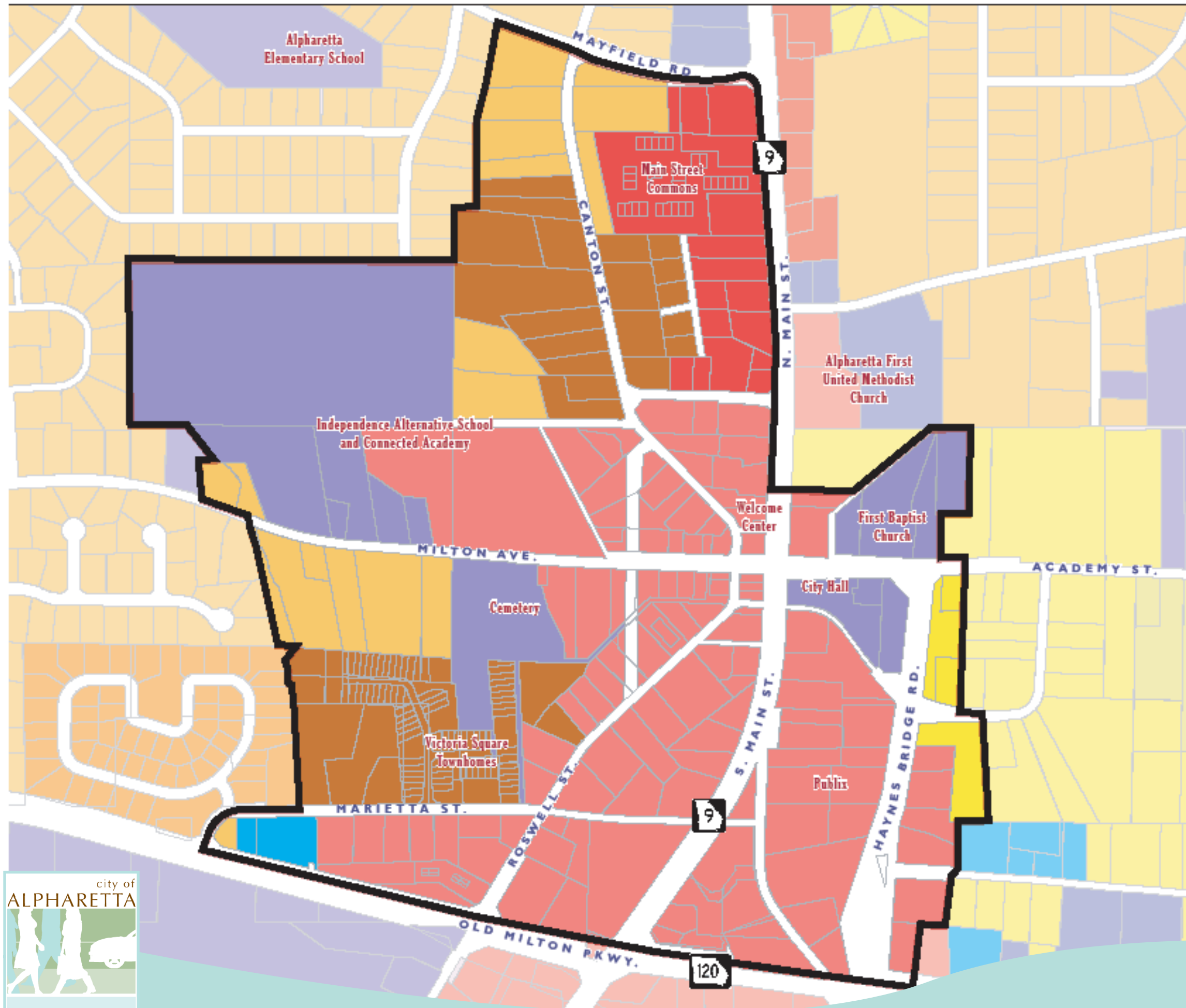
The incentive zoning classification can be elected for a district property at the developer's request (an HD designation is added to the applicable zoning classification). The incentive district allows for increases in maximum building heights, reductions in required setbacks, reduction in parking requirements and increases in residential density over the existing zoning to enhance the mixed-use nature of Downtown Alpharetta. Subject properties and projects who elect the incentive zoning classification incur a reduced number of permitted uses and are subject to greater architectural design guidelines and streetscape guidelines to enhance building character and the pedestrian environment in the downtown area. The downtown overlay also identifies and seeks to preserve specimen trees in the Historic District.

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FIGURE 12 CURRENT ZONING

LEGEND

-  LCI Study Area
-  C - 1 Neighborhood Commercial
-  C - 2 General Commercial
-  O - P Office Professional
-  R - 10M Multi Family Residential
-  R - 12 Single Family Residential
-  R - 15 Single Family
-  SU Special Use



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Source: Urban Collage

4.0 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

To analyze existing conditions for bicycles and pedestrians in downtown Alpharetta, the Team reviewed maps, aerial imagery and conducted site visits to inspect conditions on the ground. In general, longitudinal walking conditions are good; most streets have sidewalks on both sides, while there are isolated examples of sidewalks on one side only. Crossing conditions are more challenging, however. Heavy traffic volumes and continuous turning movements at several intersections make pedestrian crossing a daunting task while a lack of mid-block crossing opportunities along Main Street inhibits circulation between businesses, parking, and transit stops on opposite sides of the street. Bicycling conditions are also very challenging, both within the downtown area and extending out to the principal destinations of Wills Park, the North Point LCI district and the northern terminus of the Big Creek Greenway on Webb Bridge Road. While it is possible to ride in the streets with traffic, there are very limited accommodations for bicyclists who do not feel comfortable doing so.

5.0 Pedestrian Conditions

5.1 Sidewalk Coverage

Most streets in the core study area have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Selected streets in the district immediately bounded by Main, Canton, Roswell, and Old Roswell Streets have attractive streetscape elements including wide sidewalks of brick-like paver stones (Figure 13). A few streets have no sidewalk on one side; these include the north side of Marietta Street between Roswell Street and Wilshire Glen, the west side of Old Canton Street, and the north side of Church Street. Sidewalks on the south side of Milton Avenue give way to commercial driveways between the cemetery and Roswell Street. There are no sidewalks on either side of Marietta Street between Roswell Street and South Main Street. While inconvenient, these gaps do not seriously inhibit pedestrian connectivity within downtown Alpharetta.

5.2 ADA Issues

While a full audit of ADA compliance is not within the scope of this project, it is worth noting that many non-compliant facilities were observed during the Team's site visit, including excessive cross slopes at driveway crossings and the absence of tactile warning strips at curb ramps. The attractive brick and paver-block walkways noted above can induce uncomfortable vibrations for some wheelchair users.

5.3 Pedestrian Crossings

Areas of concern with regard to pedestrian crossing are the continuous turn lanes from eastbound Academy Street to southbound Haynes Bridge Road, and from westbound Old Milton Parkway to southbound Haynes Bridge Road, as well as the high volume of right-turn-on-red movements from westbound Academy Street to northbound North Main Street. The signage reminding the continuous turn movements to "Keep Moving" at these locations create confusion regarding who must yield at the crosswalks. Even though there are advance signs reminding motorists of their legal duty to stop for pedestrians, the "Keep Moving" signs are situated right at the crossing location and seem to undercut the legal duty to yield at that location (Figure 14). It should also be noted that the control cabinet for the traffic signals at the intersection of Academy Street and Haynes Bridge Road inhibits visibility between pedestrians attempting to cross to the southwest divider island and motorists turning south onto Haynes Bridge from eastbound Academy Street (Figure 15).



Figure 13
Attractive Streetscapes



Figure 14
Keep Moving Sign



Figure 15
Signal Control Box

Also of concern is the lack of safe mid-block crossing opportunities along South Main Street. There are signalized crossings at Academy Street and Old Milton Parkway, but no signalized, marked, or enhanced crossings in the 1,800 feet in between. Pedestrians were observed crossing South Main Street at locations along this stretch, often with urgency to catch a bus. Improved crossings in these areas would greatly enhance connectivity within the downtown area, particularly between the parking lots west of South Main Street and any future developments to the east. Crossing improvements could also improve connectivity to the Publix store from the west as well as between bus stops on the west side of South Main and the layover station on Norcross Street.

6.0 Bicycling Conditions

6.1 On-Street Facilities

There were no bicycle-specific facilities along any of the roadways in the core study area. Riders are left to negotiate traffic on the street as allowed according to Georgia law. Given the high traffic volume on the primary roadways in the study area, it is likely that only those experienced with riding in traffic would feel comfortable doing so.

6.2 Off-Street Facilities

The Team did observe several examples of eight-foot wide sidewalks. The Team is uncertain of the history of the sidewalks and if they are intended to serve as bicycle facilities. These sidewalks can accommodate some cyclists, but it is important to note that they are not designed as bicycle facilities; they are wide sidewalks. The minimum width recommended for a two-way pathway is eight feet according to the *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*¹, which allows for such widths only where certain criteria are met, including locations where both pedestrian and bicycle traffic are expected to be minimal (p. 36). Nevertheless, these sidewalks are found along both sides of Old Milton Parkway (west of South Main Street), the west side of Canton Street (between Old Canton Street and Mayfield Road), the north side of Milton Avenue (from Canton Street to the west end of the Independence Alternative School campus), the east side of Roswell Street between Old Milton Parkway and Old Roswell Street, and the east side of Haynes Bridge Road (between Old Milton Parkway and Academy Street). The brick and paver-stone sidewalks described in the pedestrian section above are also predominantly eight feet wide, but it is especially problematic to designate wide sidewalks as bicycle facilities in these areas, given their higher expected levels of pedestrian activity.

6.3 Bicycle Parking

It is worth noting that bicycle parking was not observed by the Team anywhere except at the Alpharetta Public Library and on the campus of the Independence Alternative School. None was observed at retail destinations such as Publix nor anywhere associated with the public parking lots along Old Roswell Street or on the sidewalks of Milton or Main Streets. The bicycle parking at the library was a considerable distance from the entrance and on the day of the field visit was occupied by an abandoned luggage cart (Figure 16). Neither the rack at the library nor the one at Independence Alternative School were of the kind recommended by the Association of Bicycle and

¹ AASHTO, *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington, D.C., 1999. Often referred to as the *AASHTO Bike Guide*.

Pedestrian Professionals², which lend themselves easily to securing both the front wheel and the frame, preferably with a U-style lock.

6.4 Connectivity to Nearby Destinations

The Team was requested to examine bicycle connections from downtown to three destinations: Wills Park, the northern terminus of the Big Creek Greenway (on Webb Bridge Road), and the North Point Mall LCI study area. Access to Wills Park from downtown is relatively good if one makes use of the wide sidewalks along Roswell Street, crosses Old Milton Parkway at the signal, and proceeds west using the wide sidewalk on the south side of Old Milton Parkway. The advisability of using the wide sidewalk will diminish, however, if usage of this route becomes common for either bicycles or pedestrians (see above for discussion of the limitations of eight-foot “pathways”).

Access to Big Creek Greenway along Academy Street and Webb Bridge Road is presently achieved via the riding in the roadway, which is marked with D1-11 (“Bike Route”) and R4-4 (“Begin Right Turn Lane, Yield to Bikes”) signs. A narrow shoulder of variable width (less than what the AASHTO *Bike Guide* establishes as the minimum width for a designated bike lane) is provided on the eastbound lane only and only as far as the bridge over SR 400 (Figures 17A and 17B). This facility designation strategy suffers from the fact that the D1-11 sign is a directional sign, meant for use at decision-making points along a trip, rather than on an intended straightaway. The result of the signage deployed along this roadway may be to alert motorists of the likely presence of bicycles, but is not clear that it actually provides significant wayfinding information to bicyclists.

Access to the North Point Mall is difficult. There is an 8-foot sidewalk on the east side of Haynes Bridge Road from Old Milton Parkway to SR 400, but the problems associated with 8-foot pathways remain a concern. General concerns about the safety of sidepaths (enumerated in the AASHTO *Bike Guide*) are especially acute in this area given the size and frequency of intersections with both commercial driveways and busy roadways along this stretch. Another route possibility is via Roswell Street to Maxwell Road to Westside Parkway and Encore Parkway. There is an eight-foot wide sidewalk along Westside Parkway, but otherwise this route is traversed in the roadway.

6.5 Summary

There is a skeleton of a good network for walking and biking in downtown Alpharetta, but could stand some thoughtful improvements. Sidewalk coverage is almost complete; targeted investments toward maintenance and ADA-compliance upgrades will be necessary to keep the network current with demand and regulatory requirements. Crossing conditions are a concern, especially at locations with heavy continuous turning movements and along South Main Street, where planned redevelopment projects will likely increase pedestrian traffic back and forth. Conditions for bicycling are more problematic. The system of wide sidewalks can serve very low levels of bicycle traffic, but will need careful improvement of either bicycle or pedestrian traffic is to increase measurably. These “pathways” can provide access for light traffic between downtown and Wills Park. Bicycle access to the Big Creek Greenway and the North Point Mall area are both hampered by traffic conditions that many cyclists will find uncomfortable and a lack of clearly designated bicycle facilities.

² APBP, *Bicycle Parking Guidelines*, Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Cedarburg, WI.



**Figure 16 Bicycle Parking
At Alpharetta Public Library**



A



B

**Figures 17A and 17B
Variable Shoulder Width
Along Academy Street**