# **Clifton Corridor Bike Ped Connectivity Study**

Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Emory University

June 20th | 6-8 PM

## Format

* Check-in and bicyclist type activity
* Welcome & Presentation
* Interactive Table Exercises hosted at each table with participants
* Next Steps

## Summary

The meeting included activities for the 22 attendees to gauge public opinion regarding potential implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities inside and around the Emory Study Area. The main objective of the meeting was to employ collaboration to develop a consensus of major bicycle and pedestrian barriers and opportunities in regions around the Emory study area. The meeting included two activities. The first activity allowed participants to identify what type of bicyclist they consider themselves. The second activity was an interactive discussion aimed to indicate areas of focus for further study.

## Key Takeaways

* 50% of bike riders are interested in biking, but concerned about their safety.
* Separated facilities like a cycle track or multi-use path are preferred, and most participants do not think sharrows or striped bike lanes improve safety
* Ponce de Leon Ave NE, while being a primary east/west corridor, is a significant barrier, due to high car speeds and intersection conflicts
* There should be an emphasis on facility connections to the existing Beltline and PATH trails
* Explore the opportunity to repurpose the existing CSX railroad corridor to a multi-use path

## Potential Corridors to Study

* Church Street from Downtown Decatur to PATH Trail
* CSX rail corridor from Ponce de Leon Ave NE to CDC/Emory
* Artwood Road NE from Ponce de Leon Ave NE to N. Decatur Rd
* Briarcliff Road from Ponce de Leon Ave NE to N. Decatur Rd
* Lavista Road NE
* VA Hospital to PATH Trail connection
* Clairemont Ave/N. Decatur Rd from downtown Decatur to Emory
* Johnson Road from Ponce de Leon Ave NE to Briarcliff Rd NE
* Lullwater Road, utilize the PATH connection (tunnel)
* Oxford Road from The By Way to Emory (non-historic)
* Biltmore Dr from Lavista Road NE
* PATH Trail to Houston Mill Rd NE via possible sewer easement
* North Druid Hills Road from north
* Explore connection to N. Decatur Road from the south
* Haygood Dr. NE
* Starvine Way from PATH Trail to Haygood DR NE

## Attendees

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bill Clark | Druid Hills Golf Club | bclark@gtla.org |
| Dave Peterson | Lullwater Coalition | Dpeterson2atlantabrewing.com |
| Honora Handley | Historic Druid Hills Preservation Alliance | honorahandley@gmail.com |
| Ted Ward | Medlock Park | [Theodore.w.ward@gmail.com](mailto:Theodore.w.ward@gmail.com) |
| Mark Hutcheson | Emory Employee Cycling Network | Mhutch3@emory.edu |
| Sandra Kruger | Olmstead Linear Park Alliance | atlantaolmstedpark@gmail.com |
| Mark Goldman | Friends of Burbanck Park | [mark@markgoldman.org](mailto:mark@markgoldman.org) |
| Jean Welsh | SHARE Druid Hills | jeanvan@jeanvan.com |
| John Franklin | APS Transportation | Jafranklin@atlanta.k12.ga.us |
| Sylvia Smith | Dekalb | Sasmith@dekalbcountyga.gov |
| Anne H. Wallace | DHCA | awallace@tloffices.com |
| Ken Rose | CDC CYCNET | Krose@cdc.gov |
| David Payne | Emory | David.payne@emory.edu |
| John Bugge | Mason Mill Civic Ass’n | eugjmb@emory.edu |
| Tonio Andrade | Decatur Bicycle Coalition | emoryprof@gmail.com |
| Toby Brooks | O.L.P.A. | Toby.brooks@comcast.net |
| Bernando Brown | Dekalb County Schools | Bernando.brown@dekalbschoolsga.org |
| Veena Black | Woodland Hills Neighborhood | Veena\_s\_black@dekalbschoolsga.org |
| Kemberli Sargent | PEDS | kemberli@peds.org |
| Ben Foster | ABC | [ben@atlantabike.org](mailto:ben@atlantabike.org) |
| Elena Parent | State Senate | Elena@elenaparent.com |
| Jason Morgan | City of Atlanta Dept of City Planning | jmorgan@atlantaga.gov |

## Meeting Activities

Bicyclist Type Activity

Participants were asked to indicate which type of bicyclist they were after being given some context. The options were:

* Bold and Fearless
  + I prefer to ride in the roadway and am comfortable riding with high-speed traffic
* Enthused and Confident
  + I can ride in the roadway but sometimes choose to take routes including bikeways or greenways
* Interested but Concerned
  + I would like to ride my bike more but I’m concerned about safety and comfort
* No Way, No How
  + There’s nothing anyone can say or do that will get me on a bike

Presentation & Facilitated Discussion

The meeting began with a presentation from members of the Consulting Team, led by Mike Lobdell of Kimley-Horn. The presentation included the use of five maps developed by the Consultant Team that provided a demographic profile, and described the built environment and travel trend characteristics surrounding the study area. It was acknowledged that there has been hesitation in the past from Historic Neighborhood groups, and that the intention of the Consultant Team is to work together with those groups to create a feasible and agreeable plan for improved connectivity through active transportation.

Participants were then randomly split up into 4 groups, and asked to sit at a table with their group. Each group stayed together through the duration of the exercise. Maps of the study area were provided for each group, and members were asked to debate and discuss potential opportunities and barriers that they found existed to pedestrians and bicyclists, with the help of a facilitator from the consulting team. Each table focused on a different area near the Emory study area, and group rotated after 15 minutes, so that every group could provide input for every location. The four areas to be discussed were:

* Emory area (close surroundings of study area)
* Toco Hills (north of study area)
* Decatur (southeast of study area)
* Atlanta/Highlands (south/west of study area)

To motivate conversation and discussion, the Consultant Team facilitator at each table asked the following questions:

* What/where is your biggest barrier to biking?
* What are 4-5 potential new bike routes to consider?
* What are 4-5 specific places we should look at in the field?
* Any other SWOT observations?

Input has been summarized by location below:

### Table 1 – Decatur

**Barriers:**

* Railroad crossing at Ponce de Leon Ave NE @ Artwood Rd NE
* Too many cars coming into the area
  + Need to limit somehow, maybe more parking lots near outside of campus
* Distracted drivers
* Lack of travel options
* Coventry Rd @ Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* North Decatur Road is dangerous
* Traffic clogged
* Car speeds on Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* Utility companies are tearing up intersections and sidewalks in the area
* Ponce de Leon Ave NE @ Lullwater Rd NE
* Ponce de Leon Ave NE @ Clifton Rd

**Opportunities:**

* HAWK signals
* Separated multi-use trail adjacent to roadway
* Dedicated bike lane on Artwood Rd NE
  + Ponce de Leon Ave NE @ Artwood Rd NE – *contact Tonio Andrade*
* Replace and improve inadequate sidewalks
* Look into bike/ped flyovers at busy intersections
* More transit and complete streets
* Bike activated bike signal on Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* Try to mimic bike boulevards in Portland
* Opportunity for flyovers with the presence of multi-modal sidewalks
* Automated speed enforcement
* Add more signage to bike routes
* Use the CSX rail
* Mimic the High Line in NY
* Coordinate with GDOT to reduce lanes on Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* Could increase parking price to incentivize lower SOV trips
* Lullwater Road is a good connection
  + Would need sidewalk repairs
* Put more midblock crossings, HAWK signals, and refuge islands for pedestrians at busy intersections
* Add more street name labels on maps
* Opportunity and space for creative solutions near the railroad
* Build a bridge for CSX rail line Over Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* Use the railroad and trails to get bikes off the road
* Opportunity to improve the left turn at Lullwater Rd and Ponce de Leon Ave NE
* Emory is buying property on N. Decatur Road to Clairemont Ave
  + Good opportunity to make bike friendly
  + Road is narrow though
* Additional bus lines
  + MARTA is cost driven
* Improve the coordination between MARTA and bike groups
* Improve intersections into Decatur
* Intersections need improvements near park (?)
* North Decatur Road from campus to Haygood Dr NE needs more sidewalk
* Druid Hills needs improved and replaced sidewalks throughout
* Potential Church Street connection from Downtown Decatur to PATH

**Other concerns/things to consider:**

* Keep in mind that people prefer biking on neighborhood streets. People also don’t always need dedicated lanes in neighborhoods. The rule of thumb should be to ask if you would be comfortable having your child ride on it.
* Need more East/West connectivity
* Think about the balance of safety and historic preservation

### Table 2 - Toco Hills

**Barriers:**

* Figure a way around the problem
* North Druid Hills LCI
  + Call for a complete streets improvement
* Lullwater Road
  + Parking is a problem
* Clifton Rd opposition to sharrows because they are not safe on that type of road
  + Clifton Rd is not an opportunity because of ambulances
* There has been a lot of hesitance north of Emory to improve trails
* Tough to travel on N Druid Hills Rd/Clairemont Ave
* Houston Mill Rd NE is a tough road right now
* Clairemont Ave and Houston Mill Rd NE are both very hilly

**Opportunities:**

* Utilize Beltline Connection
  + Buford-Spring connector study (kickoff)
* Look into a physically separated bike lane on Lullwater Rd to avoid high speed vehicles
* Lullwater Rd can become a “bike neighborhood”
* Briarcliff Rd NE and Oxford Rd NE are opportunities
* Connect executive Park to study area
  + Briarcliff Rd NE would need repairs
* Houston Mill Road NE could be an opportunity to improve and widen the road to include bike lane and sidewalk
* The CDC exit/emergency routes could be used as bike/ped routes
* Improve/create sidewalks in North Druid Hills
* Lavista Road is an opportunity for bike/peds
* Find a connection through VA Highlands to Midtown/downtown
* Separate facilities, try to get a cycle track
* Implement pedestrian walk signals - shouldn’t have to push to walk.
* ADA compliant sidewalks
* Pedestrian scramble at busy intersections
* Utilize the powerline easement north of PATH
* Utilize an easement along East Rock Springs Rd
* VA Hospital to PATH is an easy win
* Explore shuttle options in the area
* Lavista Rd NE/Briarcliff Rd NE– *Jeremy Busby GDOT*
* Get counts on Biltmore Drive (John Walker or Liz Johnson)

### Table 3: VA Highlands/Midtown

**Barriers:**

* Road conditions and sidewalks are maintained by the city or county
* No place for bikes on the roads
* Inconsiderate and distracted drivers
* Speeding
* Ponce de Leon Ave NE is a barrier overall
* Leaves on the streets
* No sidewalks, or no ADA compliance on sidewalks
* Erosion of property rights
  + Look at what happened on McLendon Ave NE, from Moreland Ave NE to Ridgecrest

**Opportunities:**

* Study Lullwater Creek Trail
* Conduct a market study along historic routes to see who is using it
* Signage, historic maps, automated speed enforcement
* Easy win, stop sign at The By Way and Lullwater Rd
* Oxford Road is an opportunity
* Be very communicative with the community
  + Collaborate with the South Fork Conservancy anywhere along streams

### Table 4: Emory Study Area

**Barriers:**

* Ponce de Leon Ave NE and Clairemont Ave are state routes
  + However, they are more bike/ped desired
* Superior Ave @ N Decatur Rd is a dangerous intersection
* CSX railroad
  + Buffer issue with the PATH
  + Would be great if this could accommodate a bike/ped route, as it minimally impacts other residents/property owners
* Lullwater Rd intersections
* Clifton Road has a lot of curb cuts near the hospital, which makes it dangerous for bikes/peds, even though there are green lanes
* Houston Mill Rd NE has bad traffic – would be good to have some sort of modal split to relieve traffic; bike/ped path to parallel this road, or an alternate route
* State roads like Ponce de Leon Ave NE and Clairemont Ave are not bike friendly, need upgrades
  + Would be better to use neighborhood streets
* Lullwater Nature Preserve has been historically unwilling to allow bike/ped traffic through via a path, but could be worth approaching again
  + North-side of the preserve is less sensitive and the best candidate for a path

**Opportunities:**

* Lullwater Road
  + Upgrade Lullwater trails
* N Decatur Rd going into campus
  + Mainly the eastern portion, near campus
  + It is flatter than other roads
* Briarcliff Rd NE from Clifton Rd to Freedom Park
* Old Briarcliff
  + There is potential to utilize a connection to Clifton Rd
* Look into connecting PATH Trail through Starvine Way to Haygood Dr. and off-road to N. Decatur Road
  + Starvine Way has limited access with buses
* Implement a light rail line that has a multi-use path beneath it
* Incorporate a trail onto the existing CSX railroad corridor east of Emory
* There is potential for a trail under an intersection at Ponce de Leon Ave NE – underpass
* Create a survey to gauge pent up demands and feelings
* Look into sewer easement opportunities

**Other concerns/things to consider:**

* Consider off-road vs on-road facilities
  + Different types of riders prefer different path types
* Park & bike opportunities

## Next Steps

Mike Lobdell of Kimley- Horn closed out the meeting by leading a brief overview from each facilitator of the different table discussions throughout the meeting. He then opened the floor to questions, and fielded questions from participants. The Consulting Team then outlined next steps in the process, which involve studies of identified corridors for potential feasibility studies.