

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Michael Smith, Public Works Director

Date: October 7, 2020

Subject: **Chamblee Dunwoody Road Complete Streets Considerations**

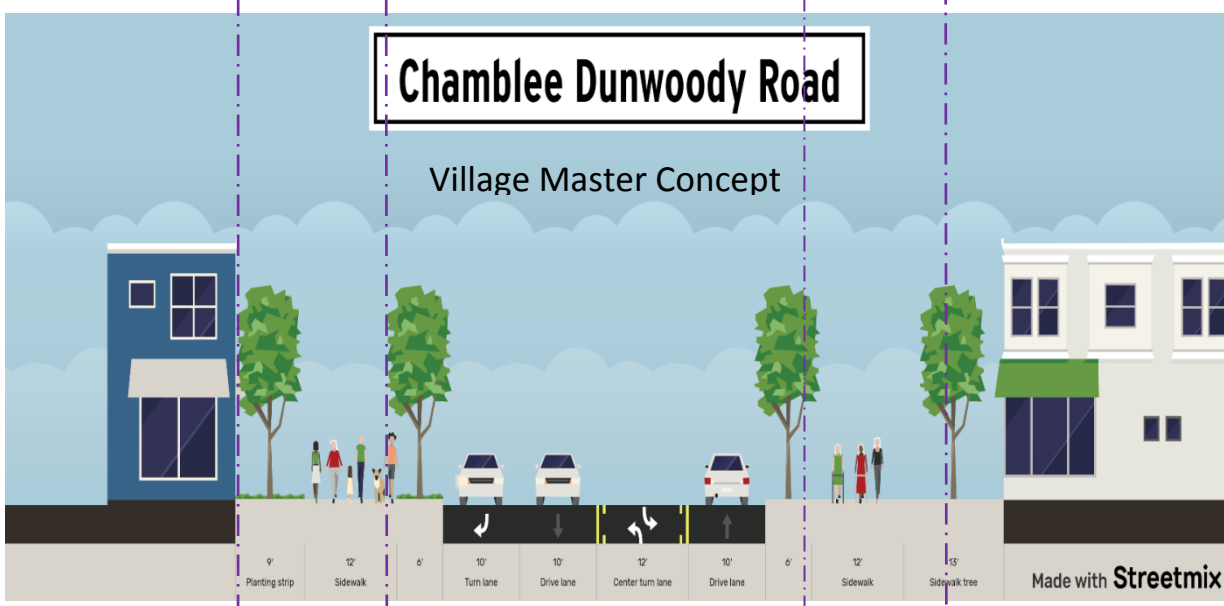
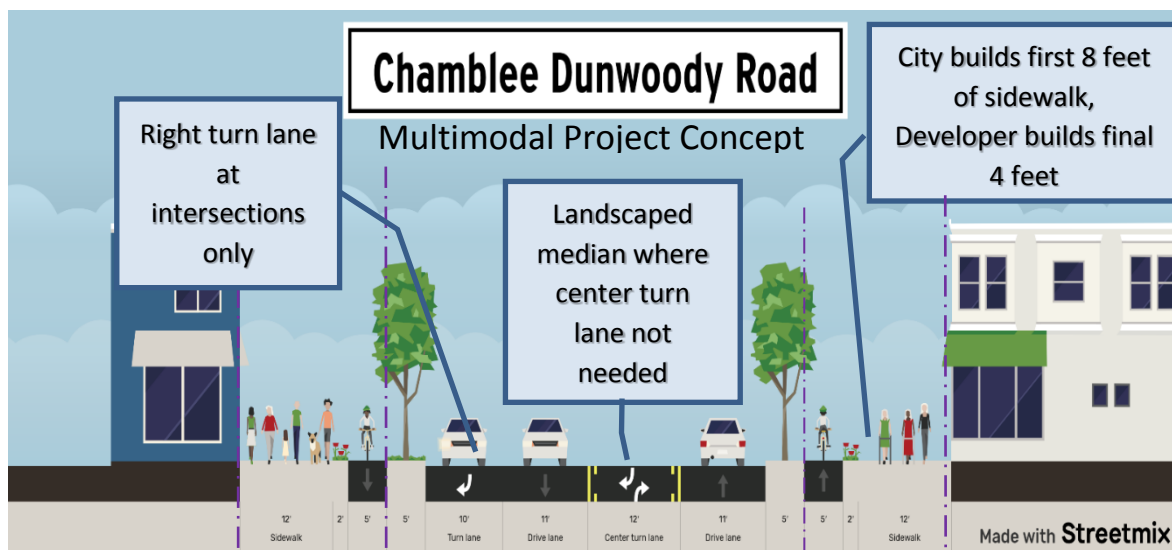
Concurrent with the development of the updated master plan, Public Works has been working with a transportation consultant to develop plans for pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Chamblee Dunwoody Road between Womack Road and Roberts Drive. This project was recommended in the original Dunwoody Village Master Plan and in the city's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. In 2016, the Atlanta Regional Commission awarded \$200,000 in federal funding for the scoping or conceptual phase of the project. Concept plans are being finalized for public input in November and, having analyzed the Chamblee Dunwoody corridor in detail, the recommendation of the Chamblee Dunwoody Road design team is to modify the aspirational cross section shown in the proposed Village Master Plan to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.

Comparison of Concept Plans

The Dunwoody Village Master Update memo to Council states the following in reference to the proposed cross sections for Chamblee Dunwoody Road and Mount Vernon Road:

"The goal of these proposed changes is to provide clarity, ensure adequate and safe spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists, and slow traffic to be consistent with the character of an urban village. The updated designs are aspirational and will need to remain flexible as funding is available to implement them, given the varying width of rights-of-way, unique conditions at intersections, and other site conditions."

Recognizing that the master plan needs to be flexible based on site conditions, the primary difference between the aspirational design in the master plan and the proposed design for Chamblee Dunwoody Road corridor is the separation of bicycles and pedestrians for safety reasons discussed in the next section. The graphic below comparing the two concepts shows that the design for the roadway is essentially the same and both concepts include a tree buffer along the roadway and 12-foot sidewalks. To stay within the existing right of way as much as possible, the total width of the city improvements proposed in the Chamblee Dunwoody project design is 85 feet versus the 100 feet shown in the master plan concept. The project design recognizes the desire to minimize impacts to the farmhouse at Mount Vernon Road and the old railroad section house.



The Village Master Plan concept includes a landscape area on the side of the sidewalk bordering private property. The graphic in the master plan suggests that this would be an area planted with trees similar to the landscape strip adjacent to the road. However, because the master plan also calls for building shopfront with a maximum setback of 10 feet along Chamblee Dunwoody Road and Mount Vernon Road, this area designated as landscape on the master plan street concept will function as a transition area as outlined in the proposed zoning. The transition area may be occupied by additional sidewalk, building façade, porches, terraces and landscaped areas so the landscaping component will typically not be continuous. Additionally, the proposed zoning requires buildings to be built to the back of the sidewalk or to include outdoor dining, seating, plazas or landscaping in the 10-foot setback zone.



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Safety Consideration

The Chamblee Dunwoody Road design team recommends separating the bicyclists from the pedestrians for the safety of the pedestrians as well as the cyclists. Shared use paths, as shown in the aspirational master plan concept, are most suitable for off road facilities and along roadways with infrequent driveways and side streets¹. This guidance is based on data that the majority of bicycle crashes occur at intersections and driveways². In the core of the Village, driveways are frequent and are spaced less than 200 feet apart on average.

Additionally, the city's vision for the Village has long been to create an environment that encourages high pedestrian traffic. As pedestrian traffic increases, conflicts will increase between pedestrians and cyclists if they are sharing the same space. The proposed zoning for shopfront with pedestrian entering and exiting onto the sidewalk will make these conflicts more likely. Other elements, such as outdoor dining, will also tend to encroach on the usable area of the proposed path even when located on the outside edge of the public sidewalk (see example pictures below).

Examples from other Cities

As part of the Village Master Plan public involvement process a survey was conducted and respondents were asked what other town district most embodied the characteristics they would like to see in Dunwoody Village. The two top examples receiving over 60% of the total votes were Canton Street in Roswell and Dresden Drive in Brookhaven.

Canton Street, as shown below, is a two-lane facility with sidewalks that become somewhat narrow where outdoor dining and other street elements are present. The street's primary



transportation function is to provide access to the businesses and residences in the immediate vicinity. State Route 9 is a parallel road that carries the through traffic around the Canton Street area. By contrast, Chamblee Dunwoody Road in addition to providing local access to the Village is used by Dunwoody residents for many trips through the Village from neighborhoods and Austin Elementary School on the north side to Perimeter, Georgetown and neighborhoods on the south side. This dual function is reflected in the traffic volume for Chamblee Dunwoody Road which is 60% higher than

the volume on Canton Street.

1. AASHTO. *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Washington DC, 2012.
2. Hunter, W. W., J. C. Stutts, W. E. Pein, and C. L. Cox. *Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Types of the Early 1990's*. FHWA-RD-95-163. Federal Highway Administration, Washington DC, 1996.



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The Canton Street example shows how even with wider sidewalks the street frontage can quickly become congested and make it difficult for bicycles and sidewalks to share the same space.

Dresden Drive in Brookhaven, as pictured below, is also a two-lane road with similar traffic to Canton Street. Here again the wider sidewalk becomes more constricted as it interacts with the shopfront. In this location, an on-street bike lane is provided for cyclists.



As a final example, the City of Decatur just recently completed a streetscape project on Commerce Street with a design that is very similar to the design proposed by the Chamblee Dunwoody design team.





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In these pictures from the completed project, the designated area for bicycles is on the left, a street tree and fixture zone separate the bicycles from the sidewalk which is located along the shopfront. The character of the development along Commerce Street is similar to what is envisioned in the new zoning for Dunwoody Village and the function of the roadway is similar to Chamblee Dunwoody Road. The traffic volumes on Commerce are closer to Chamblee Dunwoody than the other two examples and the roadway serves trips to downtown Decatur as well as trips from one side of the downtown to the other.

RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the Dunwoody's complete streets policy and the city's transportation plan, the Chamblee Dunwoody Road design team recommends a design that provides facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit users. It is most appropriate to separate the cyclists from the vehicles and the pedestrians based on the proposed future zoning for shopfront, the existing vehicle traffic volume, and anticipated higher pedestrian traffic in the future.