



# BLUE RIDGE ROAD DISTRICT STUDY

Raleigh, North Carolina  
12 April 2012

# Design and Planning Team

## URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

- » Urban Design & Public Process
  - » Maggie Connor
  - Principal
- 

## J DAVIS ARCHITECTS | RALEIGH

- » Open Space, Urban Design & Development Typologies
  - » Larry Zucchini
  - Principal
  - » Neil Gray
  - Principal
- 

## MARTIN/ALEXIOU/BRYSON | RALEIGH

- » Transportation
  - » George Alexiou
  - Principal
- 

## RCLCO | ORLANDO

- » Market & Implementation Tools
  - » Lisa Dilts
  - Vice President
- 

## LONG LEAF HISTORIC RESOURCES | RALEIGH

- » Social, Cultural & Historic Resources
- » M. Ruth Little

# Client and Core Stakeholder Group

## CLIENT

- » Raleigh Urban Design Center, City of Raleigh

## CORE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

- » North Carolina Department of Administration
- » North Carolina Department of Transportation
- » North Carolina State Fairgrounds
- » North Carolina State University
- » Centennial Authority
- » North Carolina Museum of Art
- » Rex Healthcare
- » Blue Ridge Realty
- » Highwoods Properties

# Our Team's Planning Approach

## INVENTORY/ANALYSIS

» December 2011–January 2012

## DESIGN CHARRETTE

» 6–9 February 2012

## REFINE OPTIONS

» February–March 2012

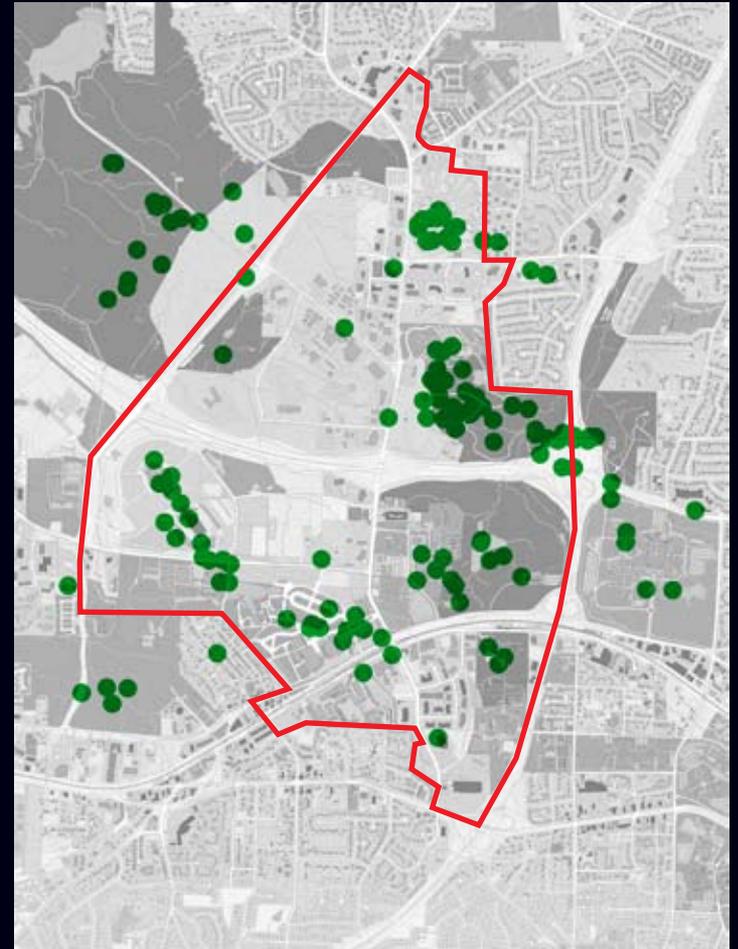
## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT

» April 2012

# Public Feedback from Kick-Off Meeting

## STRENGTHS

- » Cluster of Great Destinations: Fairgrounds, Stadium, RBC Center, NC Art Museum, Arboretum
- » Large Employment Base: Rex and surrounding medical offices, State facilities, NC State Veterinary College Campus
- » Surrounding Open Space: Umstead Park, Schenk Forest, Museum Park and Access to Greenways
- » Regional Location & Access to Major Thoroughfares
- » Future Light Rail Access and Stop at Hillsborough and Blue Ridge Road



# Public Feedback from Kick-Off Meeting:

## WEAKNESSES

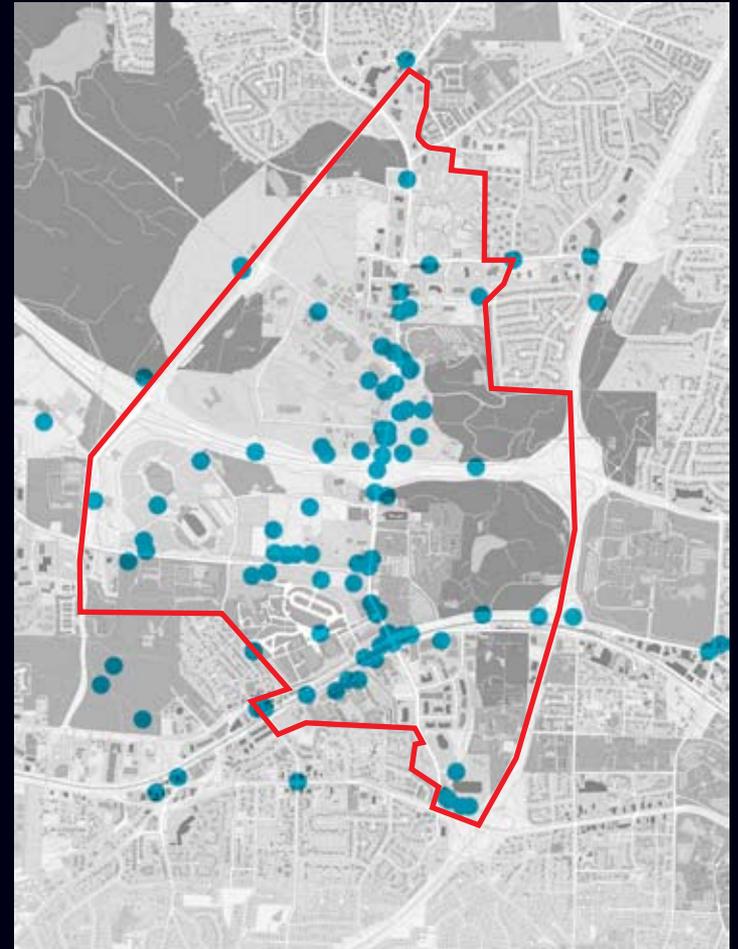
- » Congestion at Major Intersections
- » Lack of Continuous Sidewalks and Safe Pedestrian Connections
- » Lack of Bike Lanes
- » Lack of Bus Services/Transit within the District
- » Motor Fleet Management Garage, Vehicle Yard and DOT Facilities
- » Aesthetics
- » Lack of Streetscaping or Other Landscape Strategy



# Public Feedback from Kick-Off Meeting

## VISIONS

- » Improve Pedestrian Environment
- » Redevelop Unattractive or Under-Utilized Sites: Kmart, Motor Fleet Site
- » Incorporate Public Art within the District
- » Potential Uses: Residential, Mixed-Use, Restaurants, Hotel
- » Increase Public Transportation
- » Make Blue Ridge Road a Destination: Urban Entertainment Zone, Medical District, "Recreational Mecca", Art Corridor
- » Affordable Housing



# Emerging Design Themes



## THEME 1

- » Provide local connections that improve circulation while providing a framework for future development.

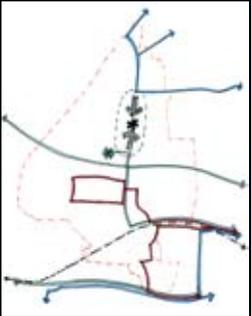
## THEME 2

- » Transform Blue Ridge Road's character while improving its function.

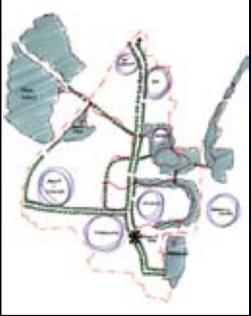


## THEME 3

- » Overcome the "gap" in transit to complete the north-south connection.



# Emerging Design Themes

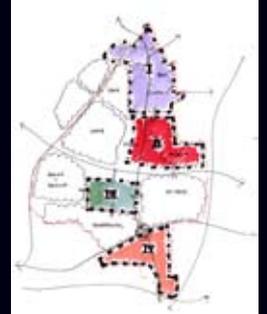


## THEME 4

- » Connect existing natural resources and attractions with an improved network of sidewalks and multi-use trails.

## THEME 5

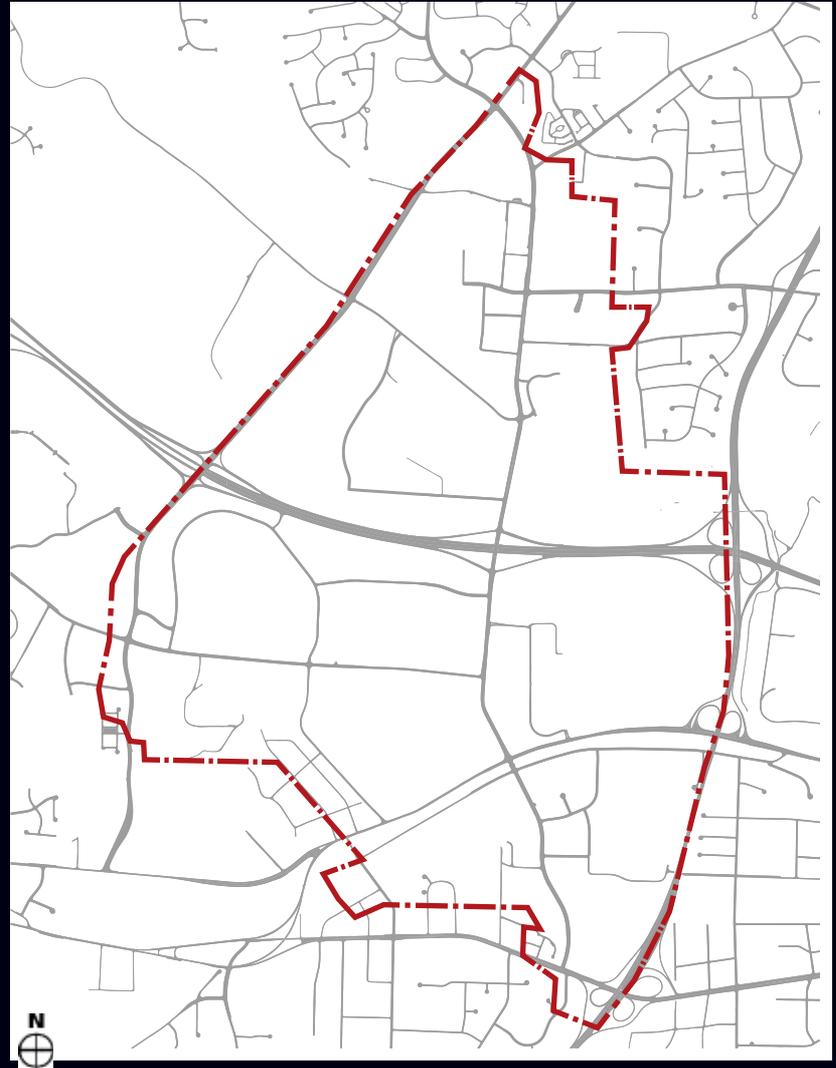
- » Target uses and development patterns to reinforce the idea of distinct districts and character areas.



# Frameworks

# Transportation: Challenges

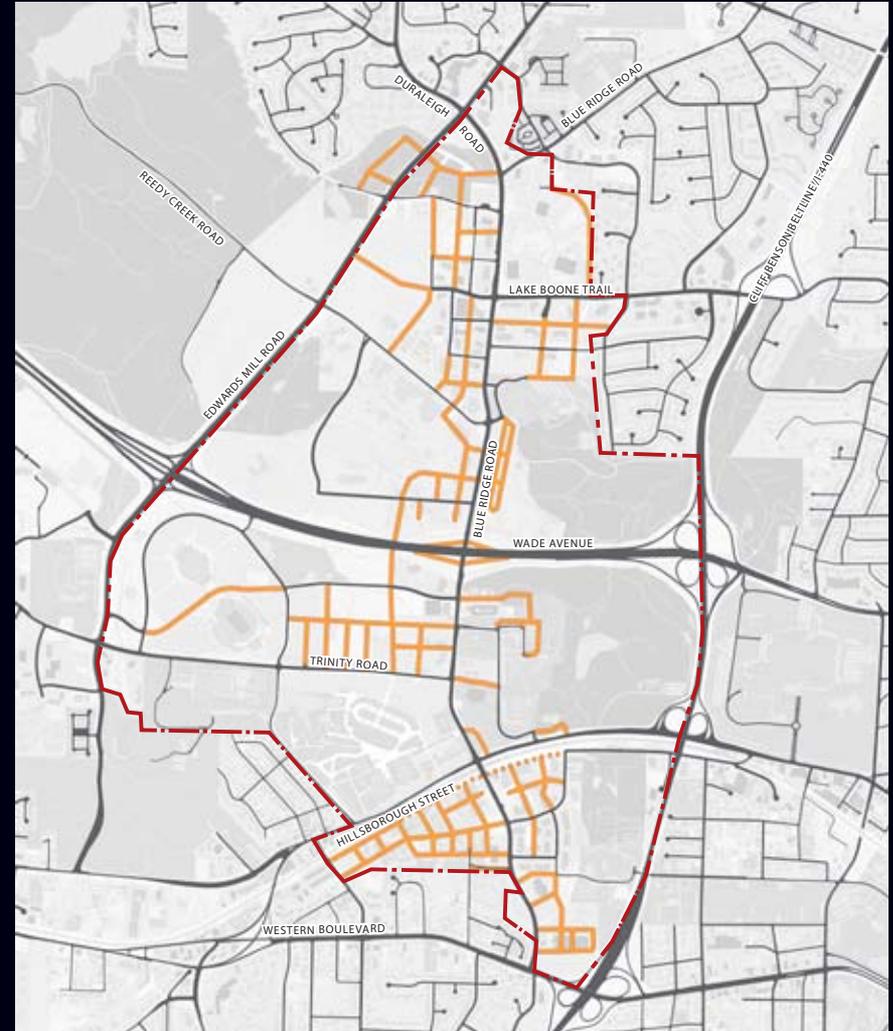
- » Poor local connectivity north to south
- » Limited pedestrian connectivity
- » Dangerous intersections for pedestrians and cyclist
- » Traffic congestion at key intersections
- » Congestion during events



# Transportation: Recommendations

## 4 KEY PROJECTS

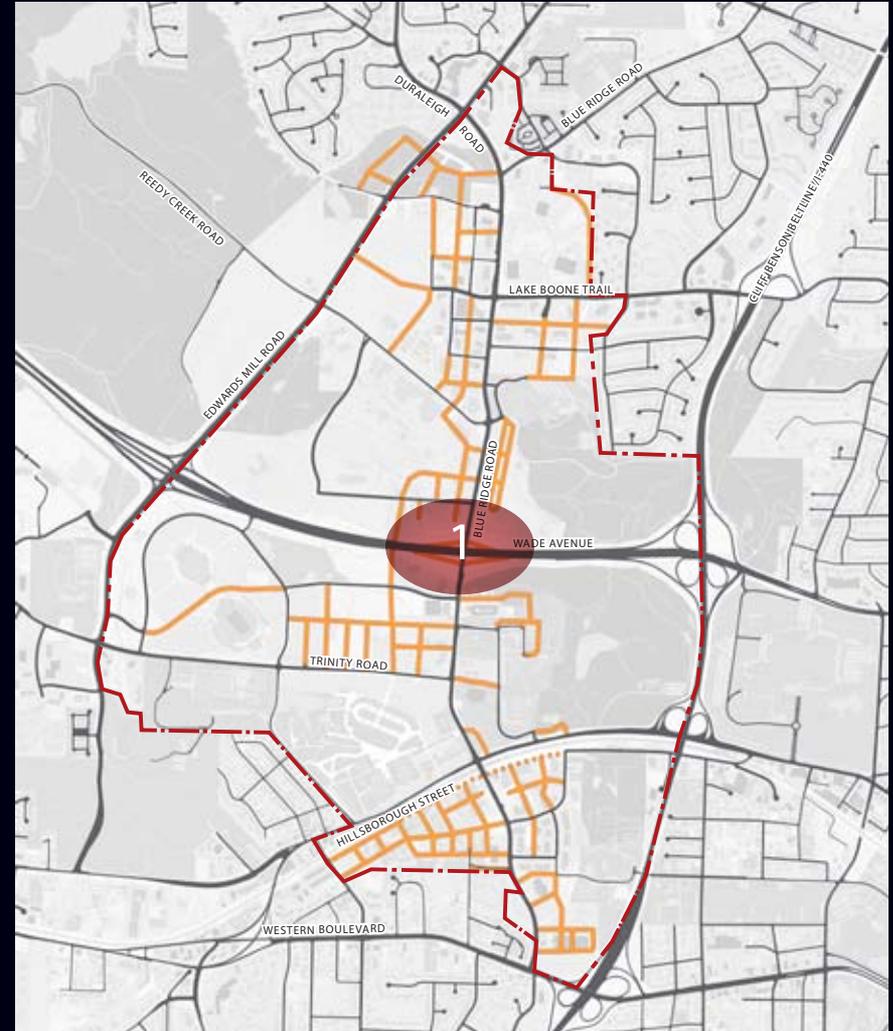
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- » A new connection across Wade Ave.
- » The Blue Ridge/ Hillsborough overpass project
- » Future Light Rail Transit



# Transportation: Recommendations

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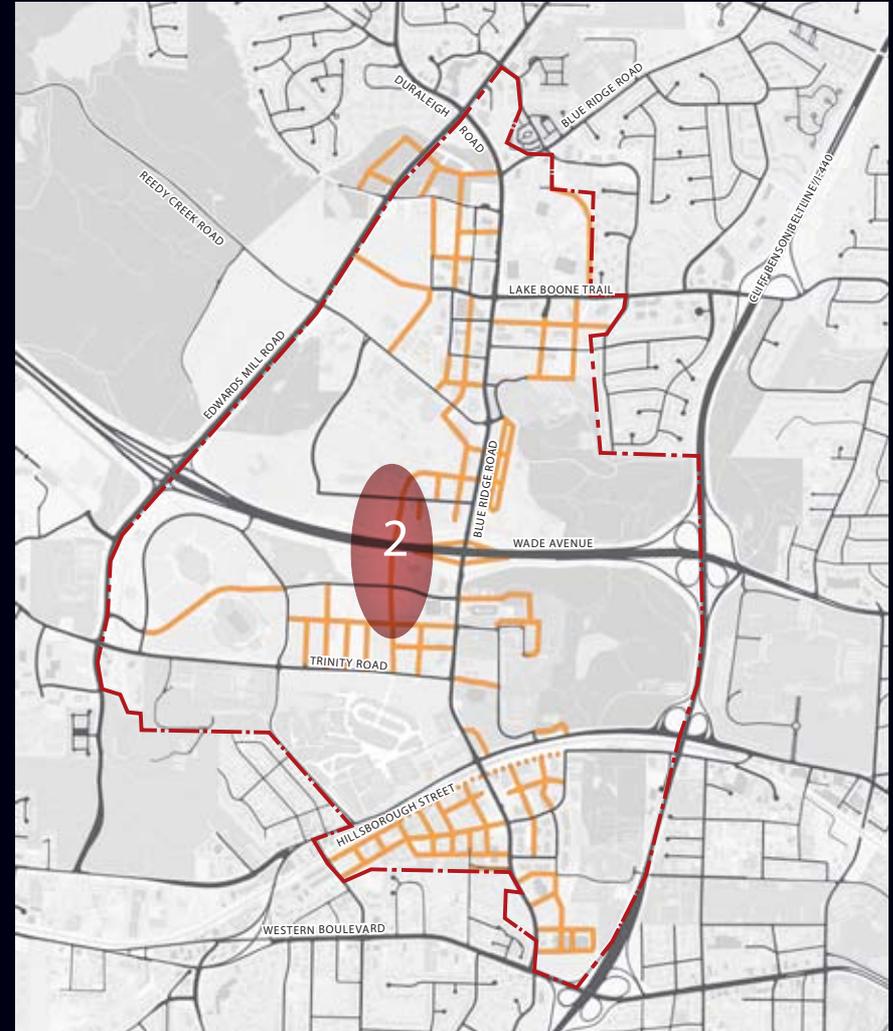
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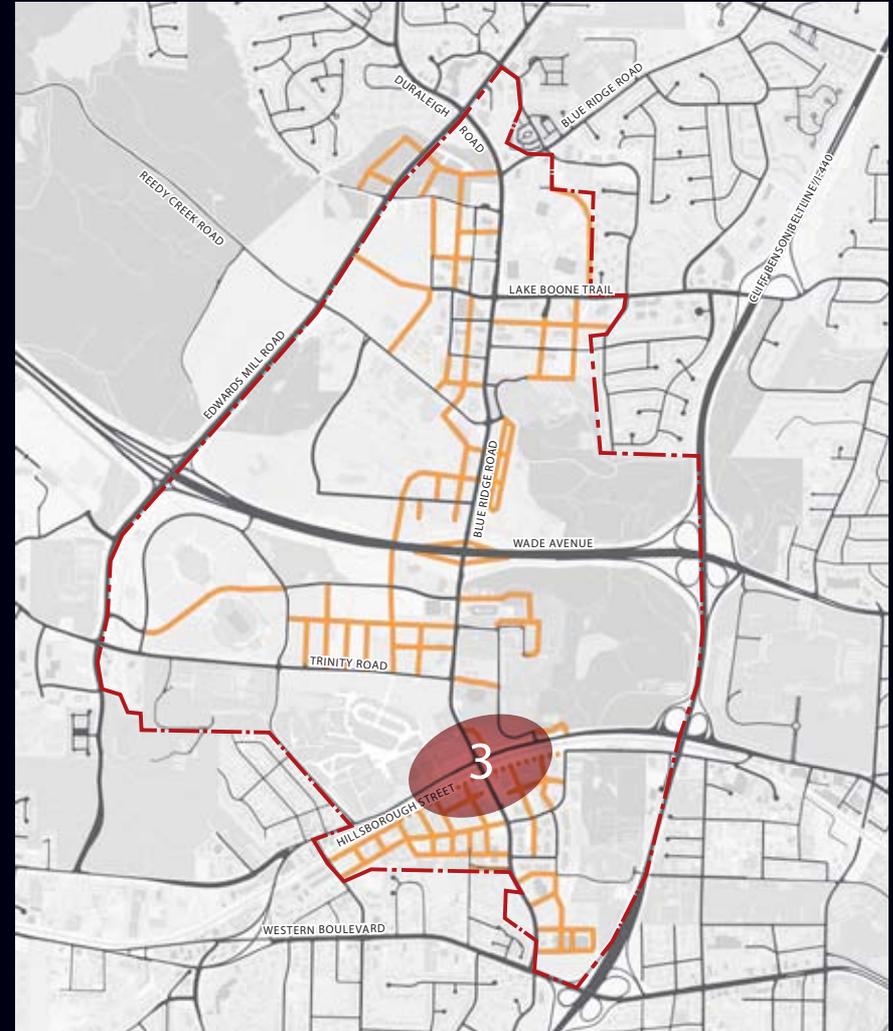
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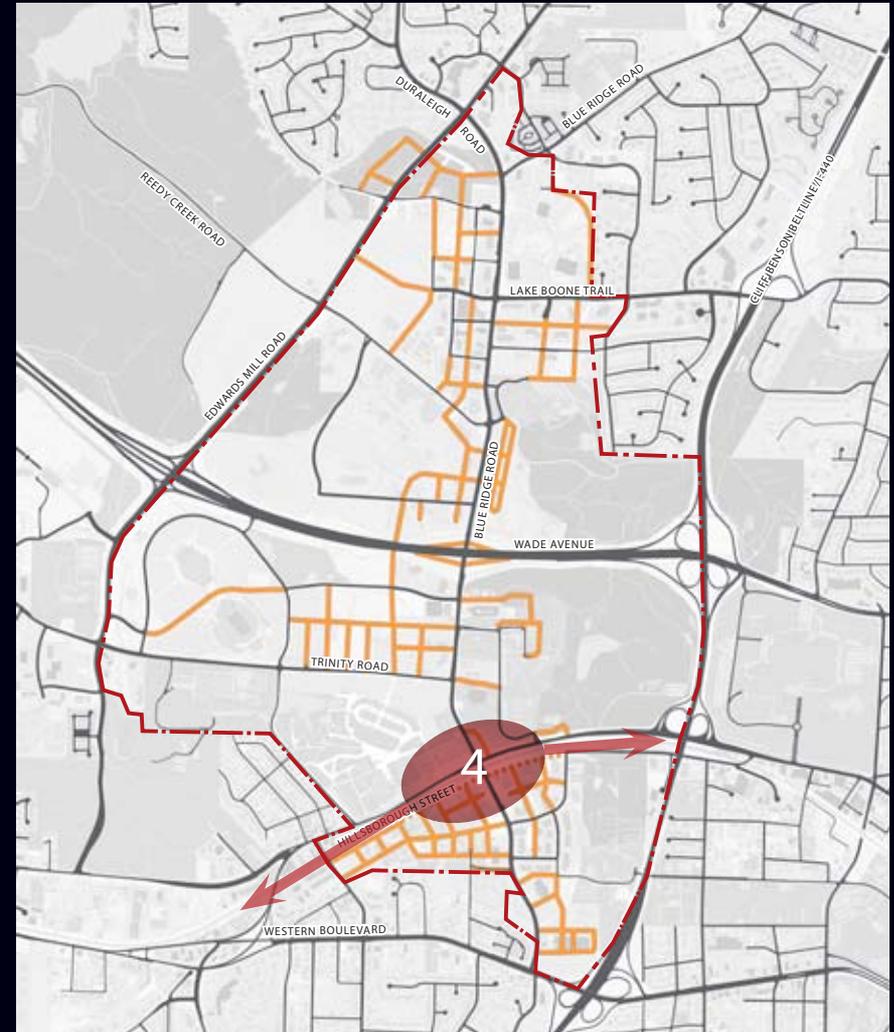
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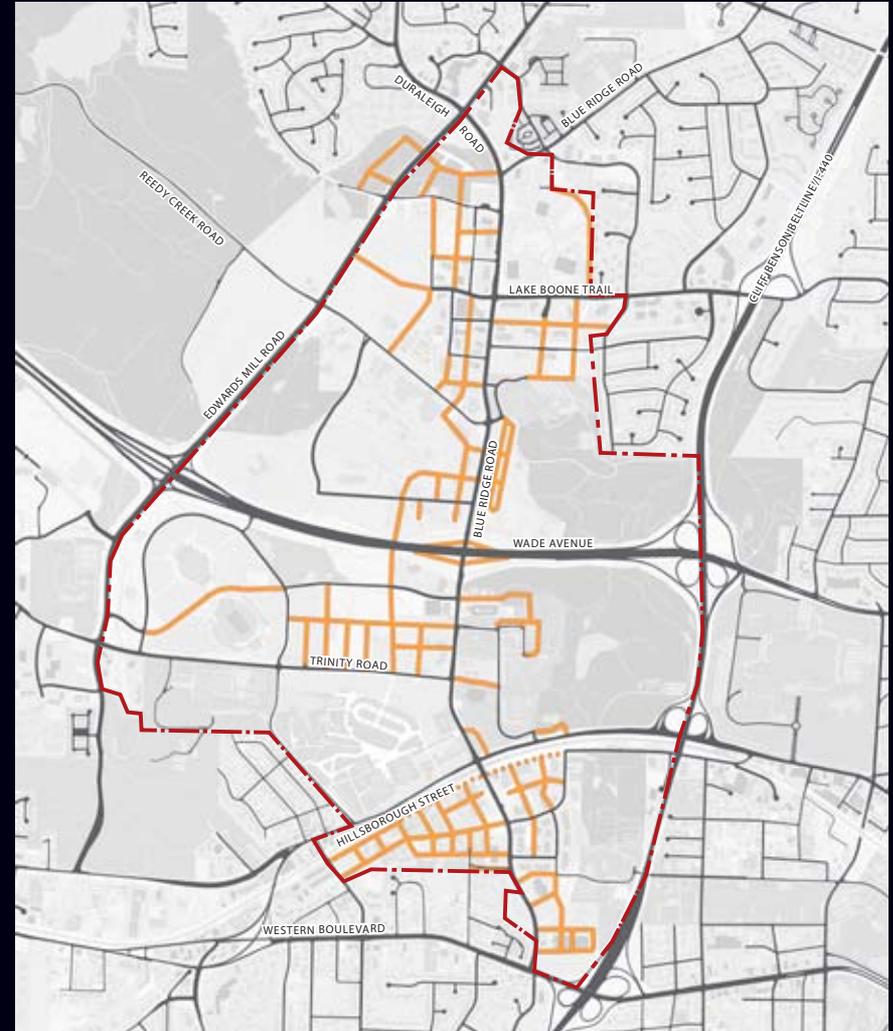


# Transportation: Recommendations

## 4 KEY PROJECTS

- » Improvements to the Wade Ave. bridge
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*Complete secondary network of new streets and connections in concert with development initiatives.*

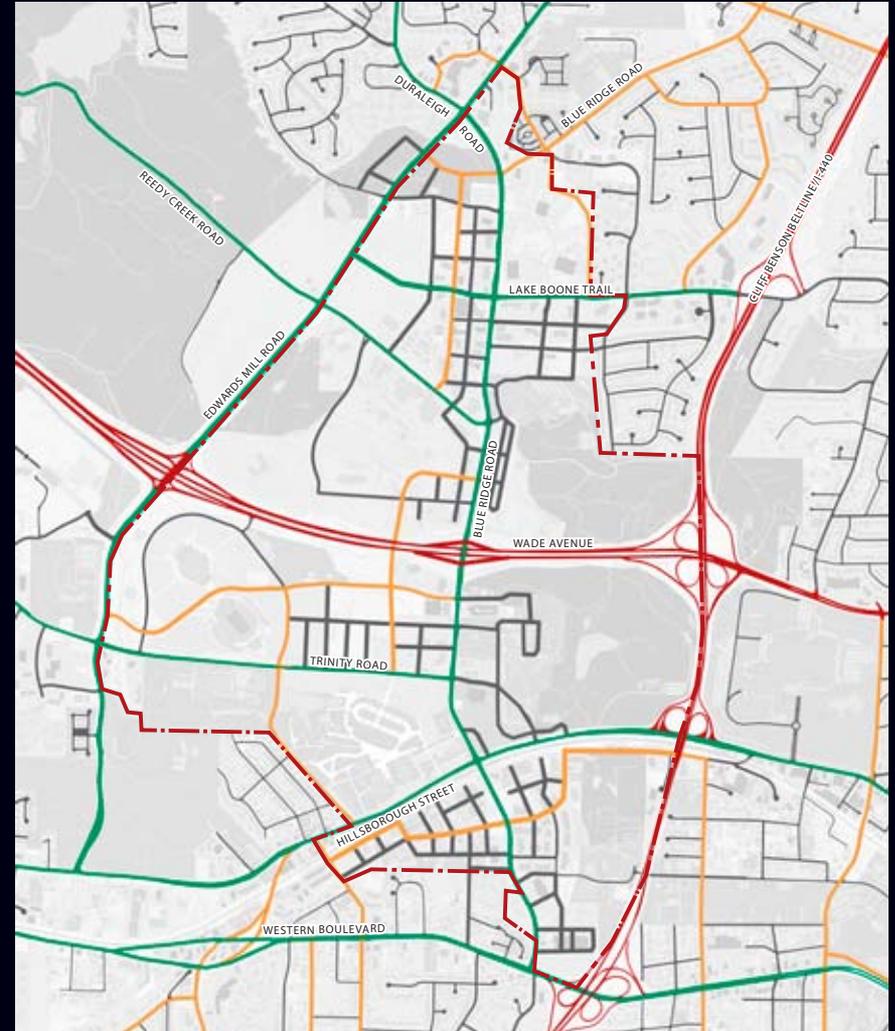


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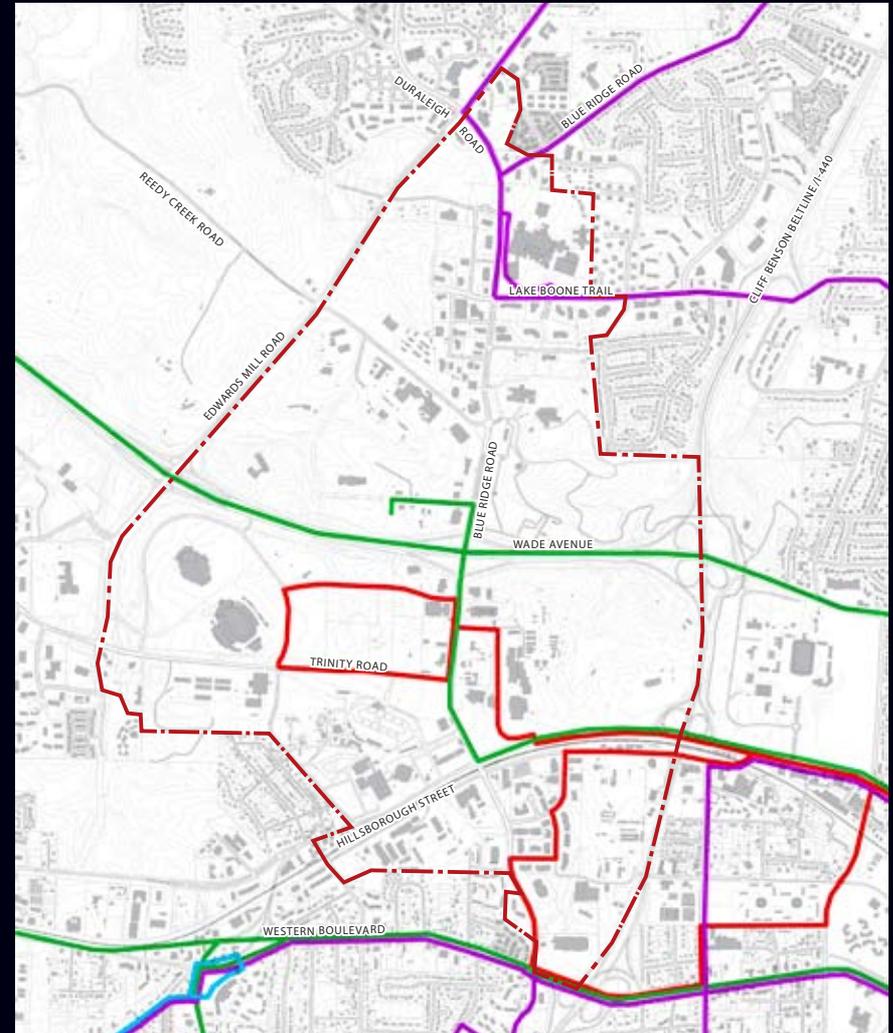
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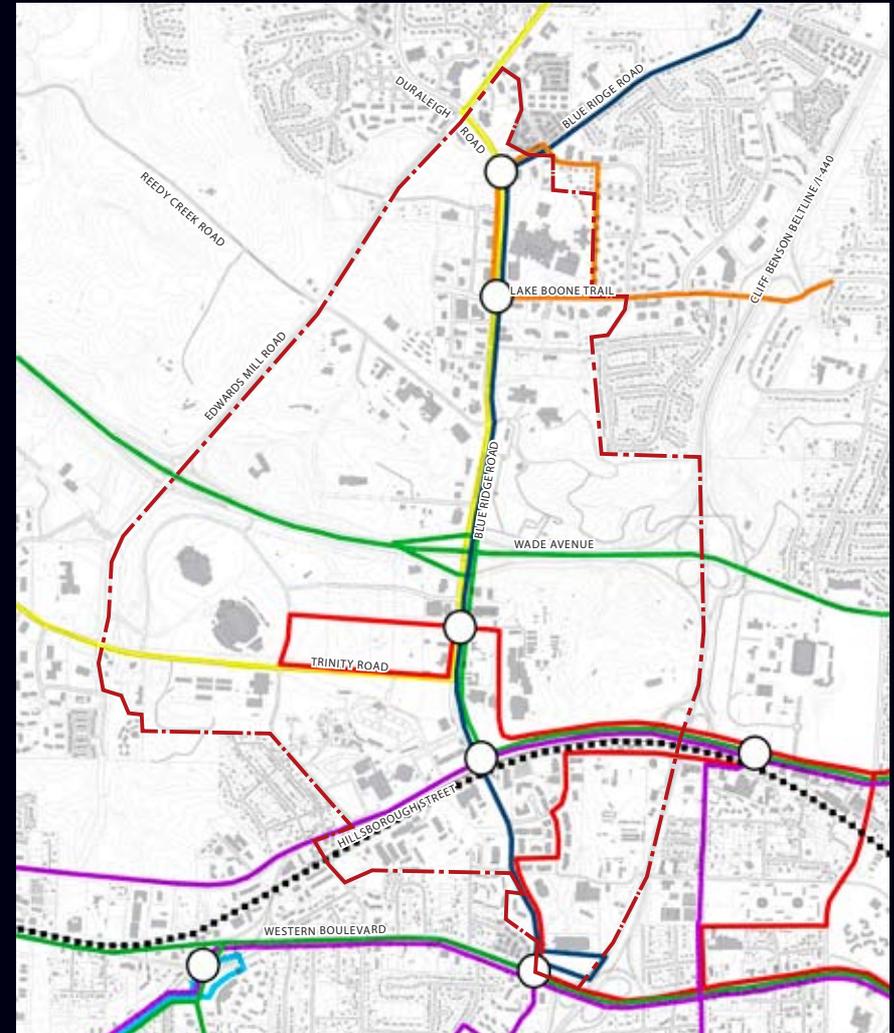
# Transit: Challenges

- » All connections are east-west and are focused on transporting people to or from specific destinations.
- » Lack of transit options to link along Blue Ridge Road, connecting the district north-south.



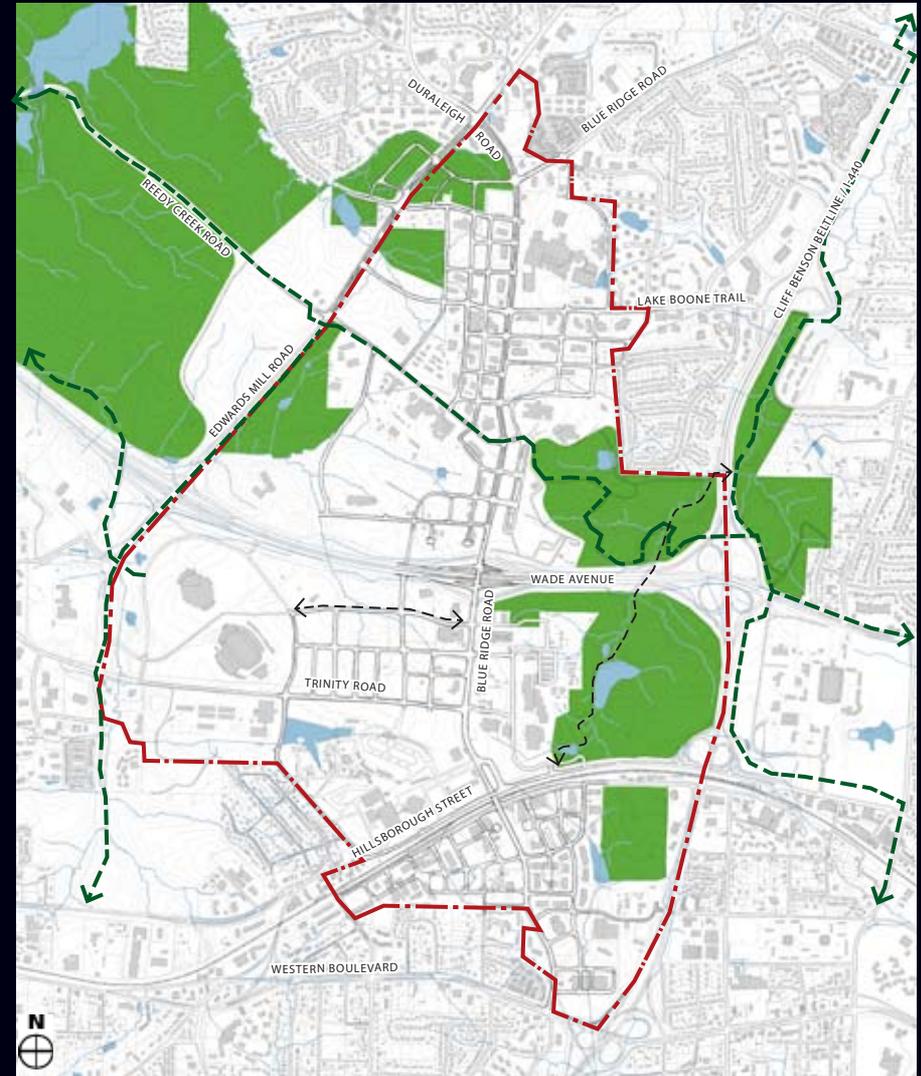
# Transit: Recommendations

- » New or revised service to connect all points along Blue Ridge Road
- » Identify key nodes along the corridor that serve as junctions and transfer points for various services.



# Open Space: Challenges

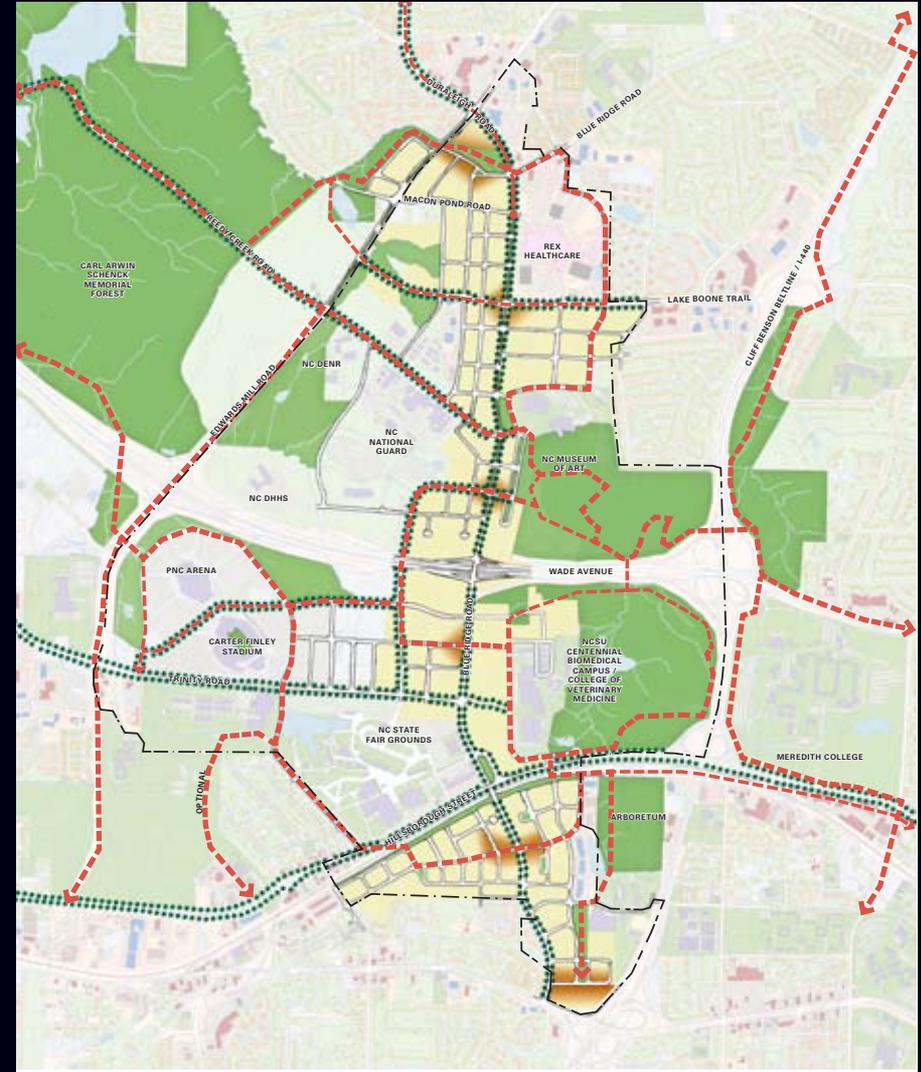
- » Various parks are separated by car-oriented infrastructure
- » Limited pedestrian and bike connectivity
- » Lack of comprehensive open space plan
- » Limited pedestrian connectivity to the greenway system



# Open Space: Recommendations

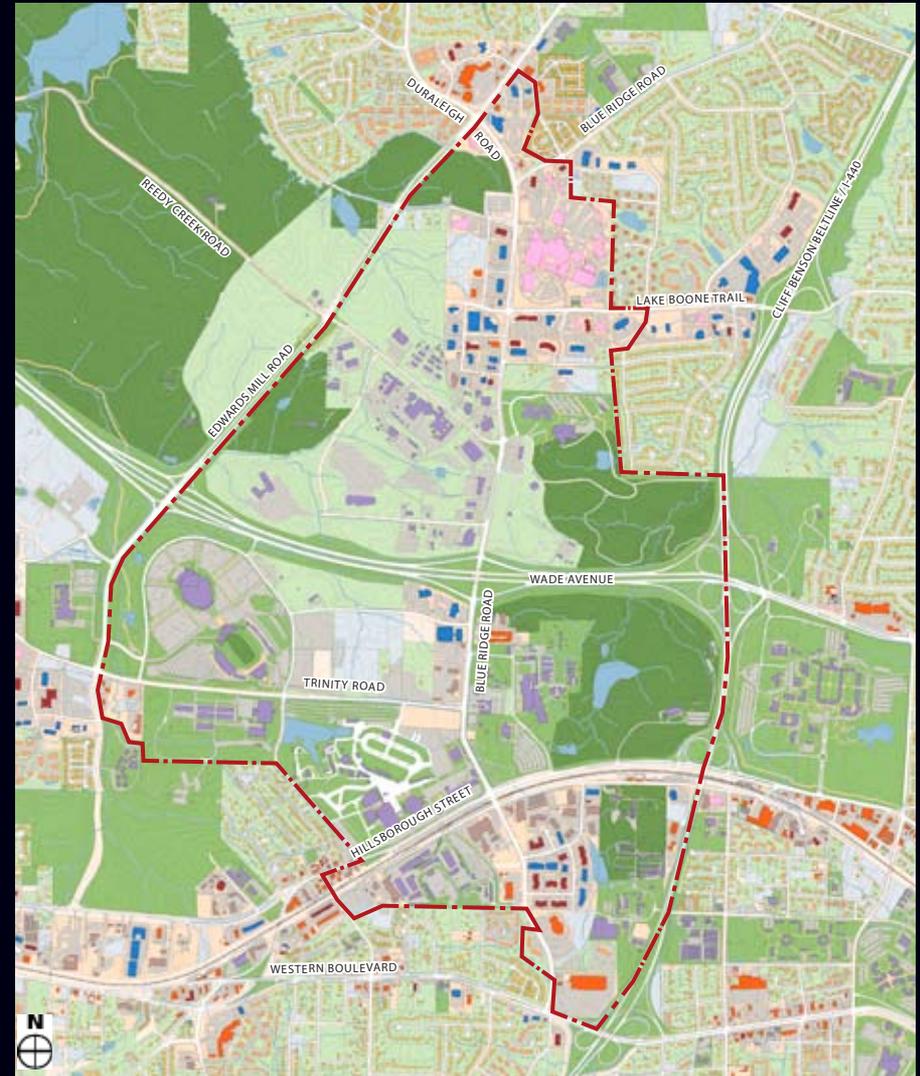
## KEY INITIATIVES

- » Additional greenway linkages
- » A pedestrian loop through the district
- » Improved pedestrian facilities along major thoroughfares like Blue Ridge Road and Trinity



# Development: Challenges

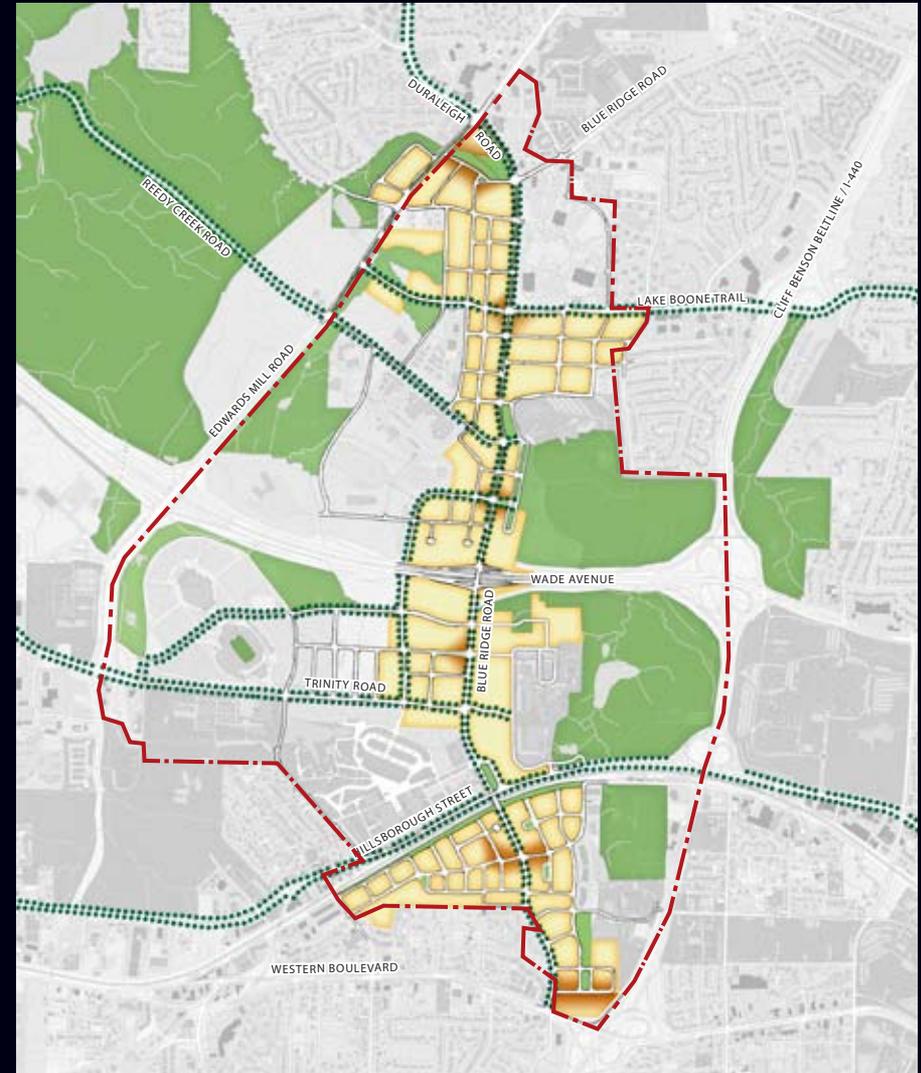
- » The character of development along Blue Ridge Road is anonymous and suburban.
- » Previous zoning and private-market preferences resulted in single-use, car-oriented development solutions.
- » Lack of service, retail, food and beverage options to capture people who regularly visit the district's attractions.



# Development: Recommendations

## KEY INITIATIVES

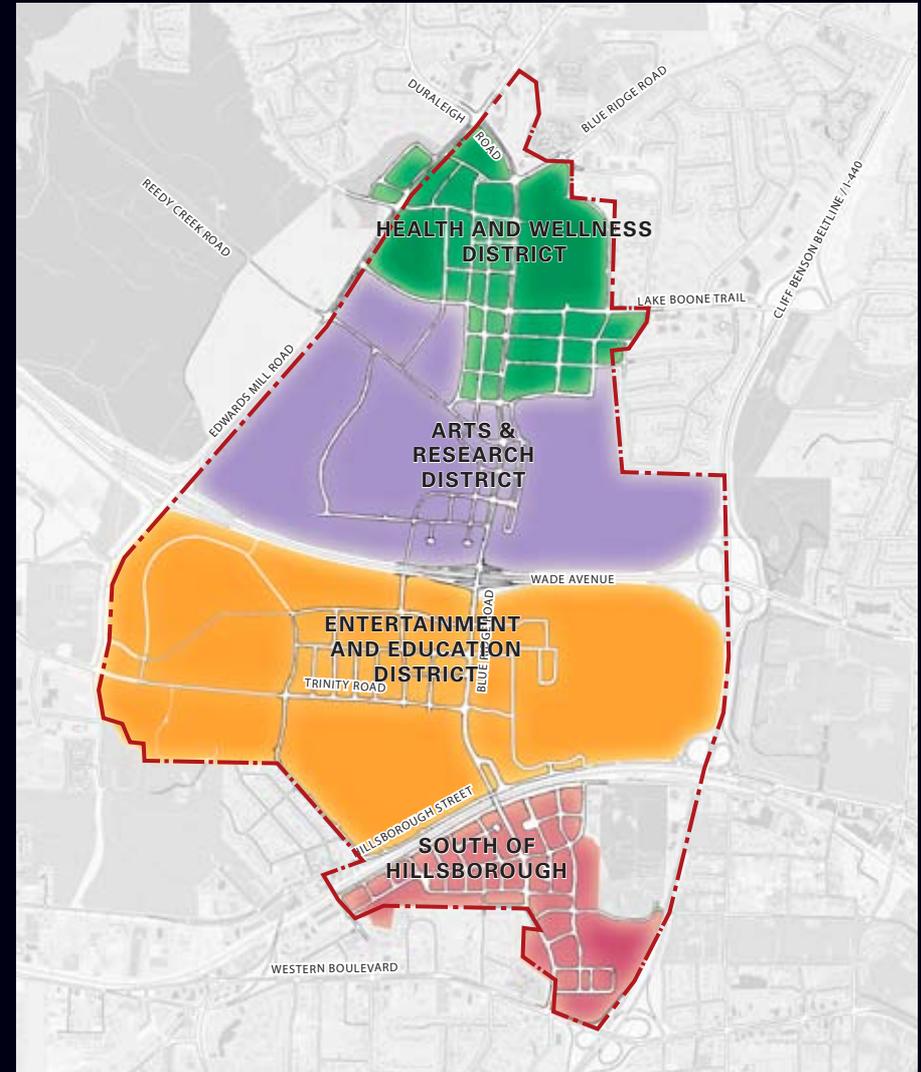
- » Develop around mixed-use nodes in order to create vibrant neighborhoods.
- » Think of the entire area as having four sub-districts - each with its own character related to the primary uses and attractions.
- » Develop each district to be bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly, as well as transit-oriented.



# Development: Recommendations

## KEY INITIATIVES

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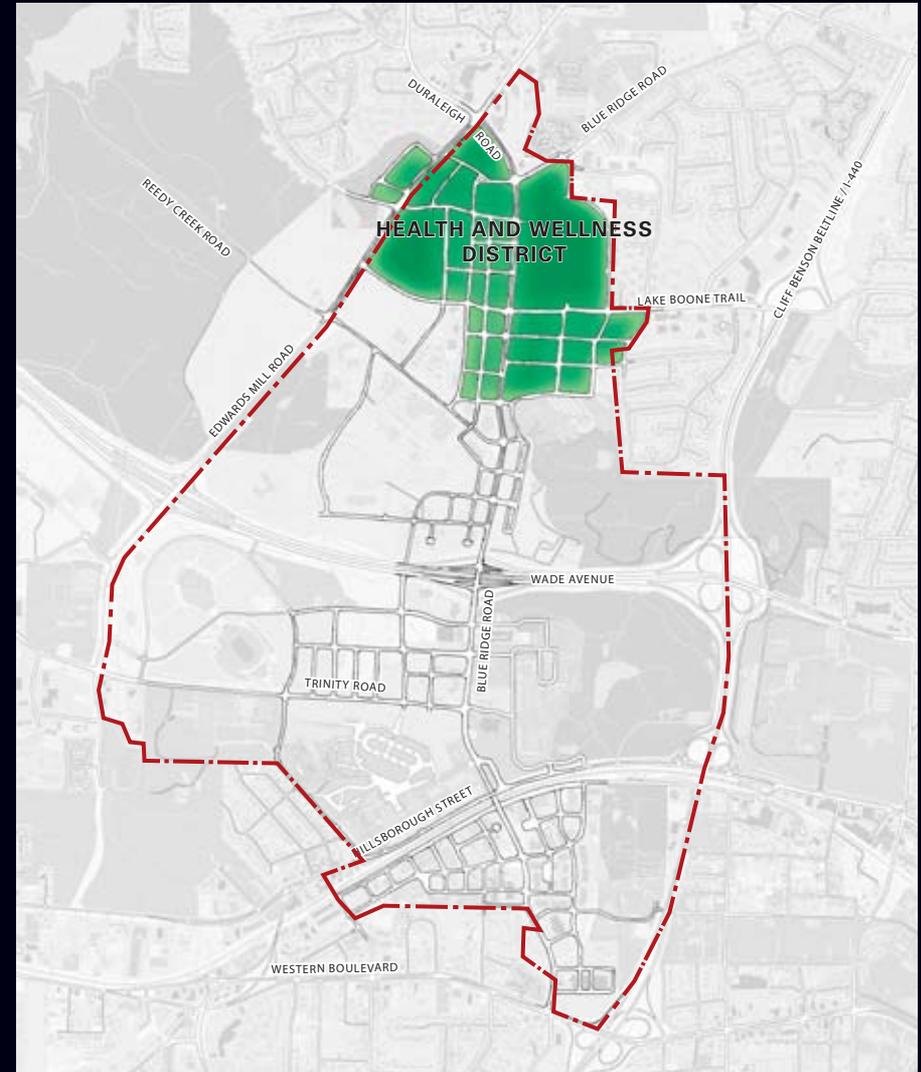


# District Plans

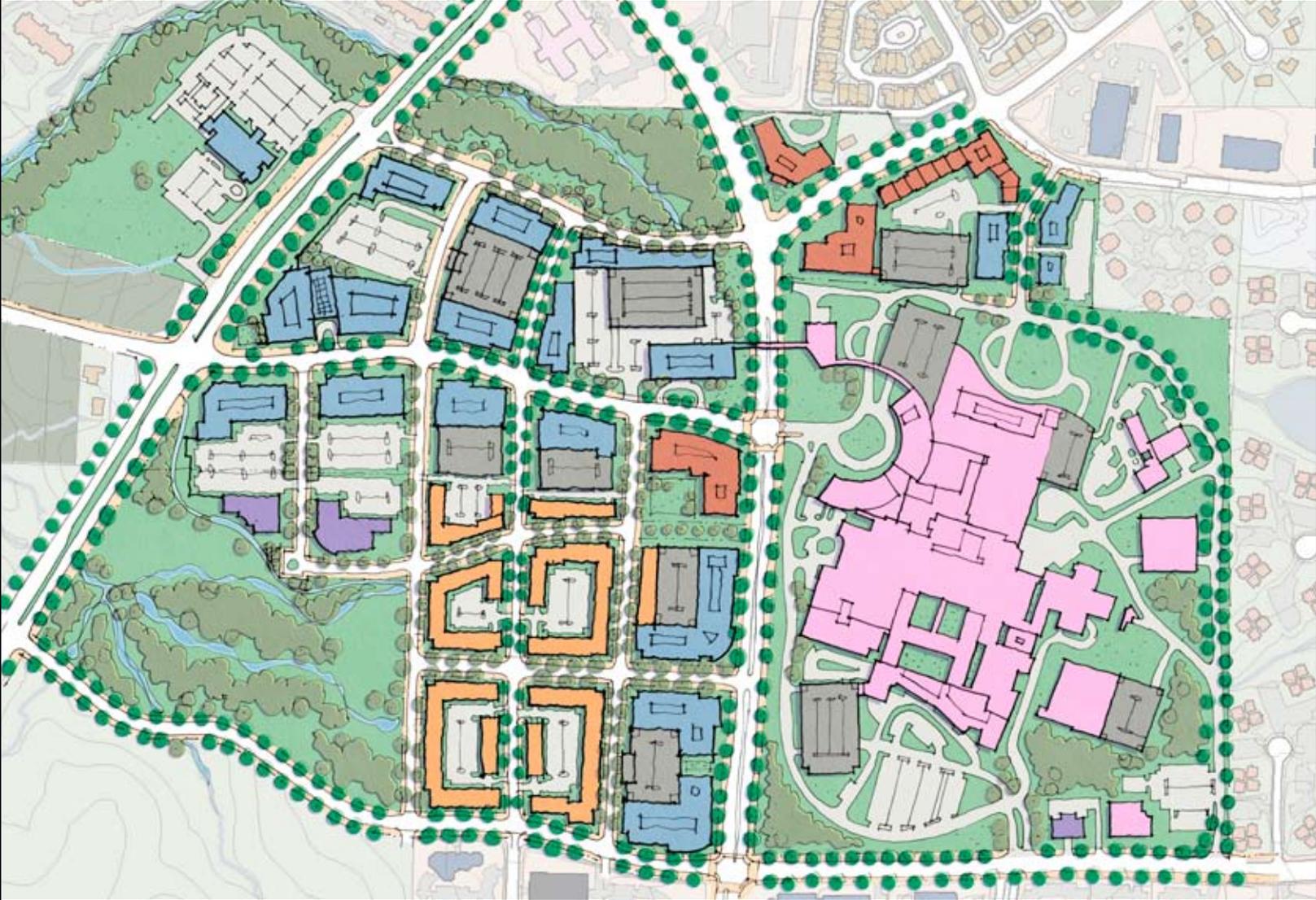
# Health and Wellness District

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- » Development and uses are tied to REX as both an employer and as an important asset.
- » Capitalize on proximity to Schenk Forest and local waterways by providing multi-use trail connections.
- » Attract health and wellness services and businesses to round out mix of uses, such as: alternative medicine, fitness training and facilities, physical therapy, yoga, local/organic restaurants and shops - all in addition to the mix of medical office already attached to this area.



# Health and Wellness District



# HEALTH AND WELLNESS DISTRICT

## ▶ **Hotel – (Mid Term Opportunity)**

- Other sites in the area present a greater opportunity in terms of visibility and access

## ▶ **Office – (Short/Mid Term Opportunity+)**

- Strong medical office location; medical office will have greater demand opportunity in the short term
- Demand for conventional office will grow in the mid term

## ▶ **Retail – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

- Opportunity to provide convenience retail in the short term to existing employees in the area; in the mid term provide additional retail that ties in to the “health village”

## ▶ **Residential – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

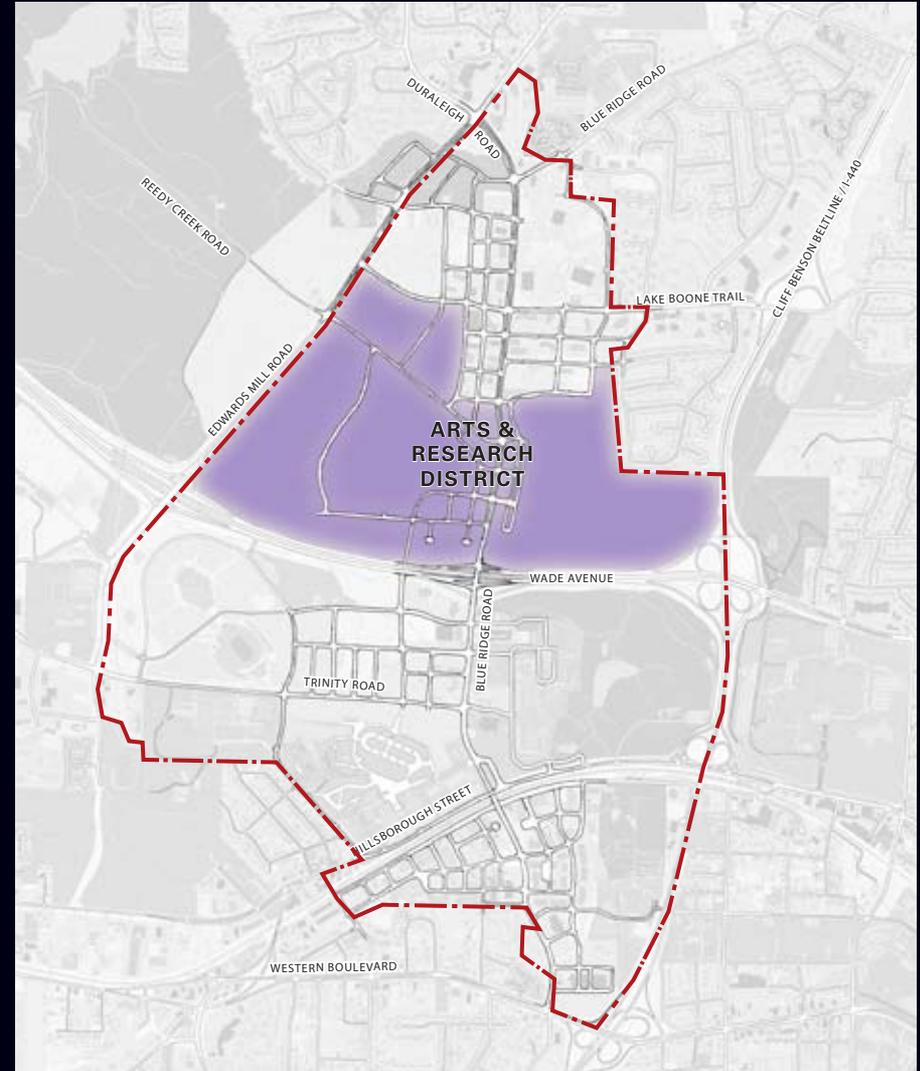
- Significant employment base in the surrounding area makes this an attractive location for residential
- As the “health village” grows, residential for a variety of users (i.e. seniors housing, apartments to accommodate workforce, etc) could be supported



# Arts and Research District

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- » Museum of Art is a core attraction for artist's studios, Performing Arts Center, and a walkable district where every space and streetscape can be an "urban gallery".
- » Existing State research facilities, proposed State office functions form a research campus west of Blue Ridge Road.
- » Mixed-use development on the southern edge capitalizes on visibility and traffic from Wade Avenue.



# Arts and Research District



# ARTS AND RESEARCH DISTRICT

## ▶ **Hotel – (Short Term Opportunity)**

- Excellent visibility, and drive by traffic
- Hotels are actively seeking land in this area
- Regional anchors and employment provide strong support

## ▶ **Office – (Mid Term Opportunity+)**

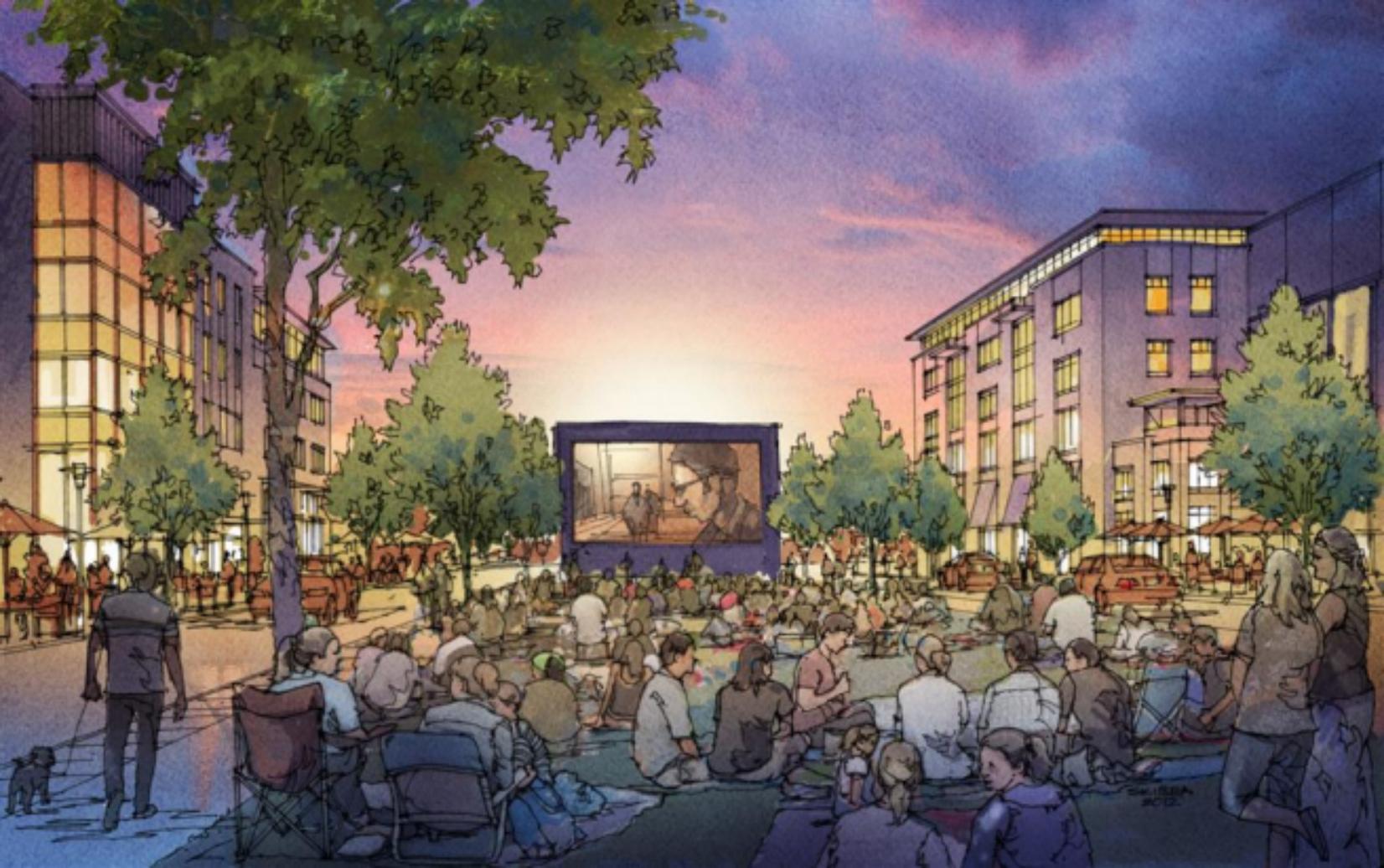
- Visibility and access desired by larger users
- Current rents are not supportive of structured parking; a 25% increase in rents is needed

## ▶ **Retail – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

- Excellent visibility, and drive by traffic
- Wade Avenue and Blue Ridge corner is likely to attract national users
- Potential for structured parking in the next year or two

## ▶ **Residential – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

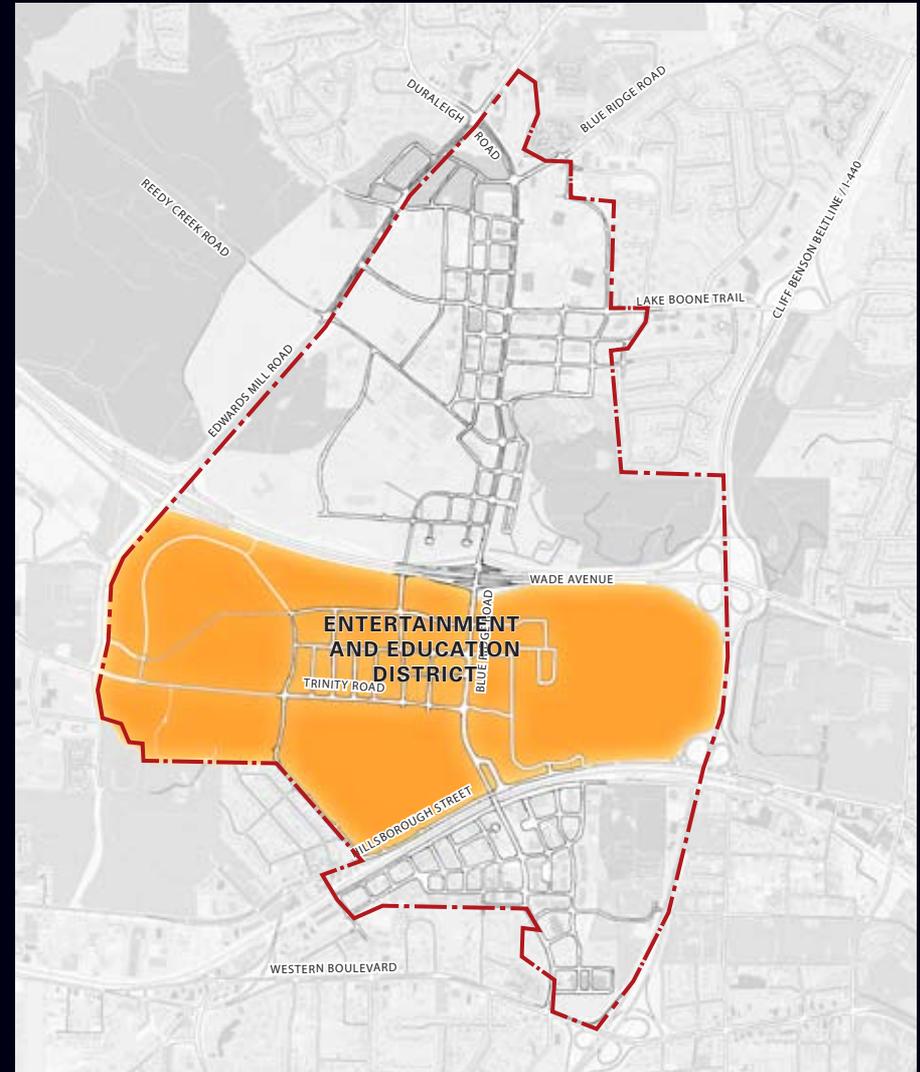
- In-town location, Museum, and potential mix of uses make this an attractive site for housing
- Given the opportunity for other uses and underlying values, greatest level of fit is for multifamily housing



# Entertainment and Education District

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- » The Fairgrounds, PNC Arena, and Carter Finley Stadium become the backdrops for a mixed-use district designed to attract and retain event patrons - bars, restaurants, and sports-related entertainment are a focus, including a practice/public-use ice rink.
- » Offices and support retail are also compatible to provide a year-round population in this district.



# Entertainment and Education District



# ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION DISTRICT

## ▶ **Hotel – (Short Term Opportunity)**

- Strong access
- Presence of Arena and limited competitive supply make this an attractive hotel location

## ▶ **Office – (Mid/Long Term Opportunity+)**

- As the mixed-use district develops it will become an increasingly desirable office location for smaller, professional serving employers
- In the short term, the opportunity for office is more limited to parcels closest to Blue Ridge

## ▶ **Retail – (Mid Term Opportunity+)**

- Arena on its own will not support a significant amount of retail (approx 15k to 20k square feet), however, as additional uses are developed on site and in the surrounding area (particularly residential), the retail opportunity will grow

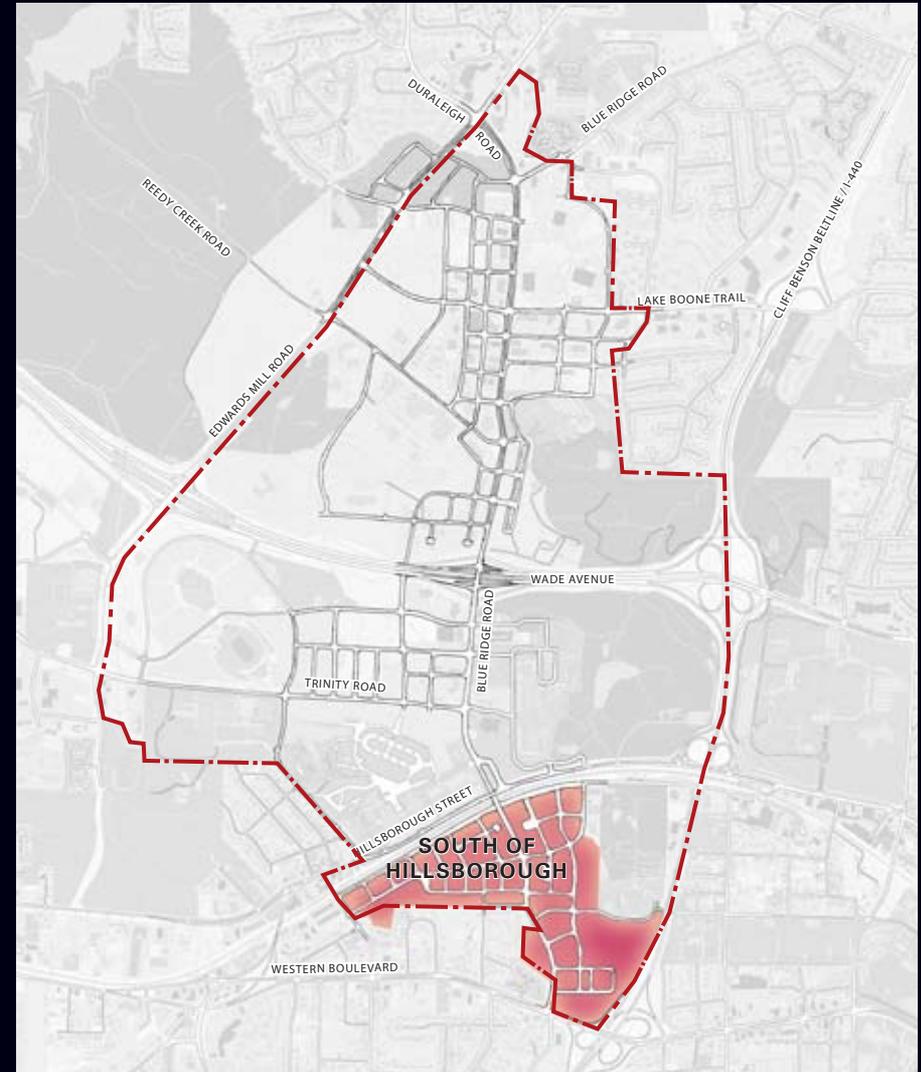
## ▶ **Residential – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

- Proximity to Veterinary School and the overall NC State Campus make this a desirable location for residential

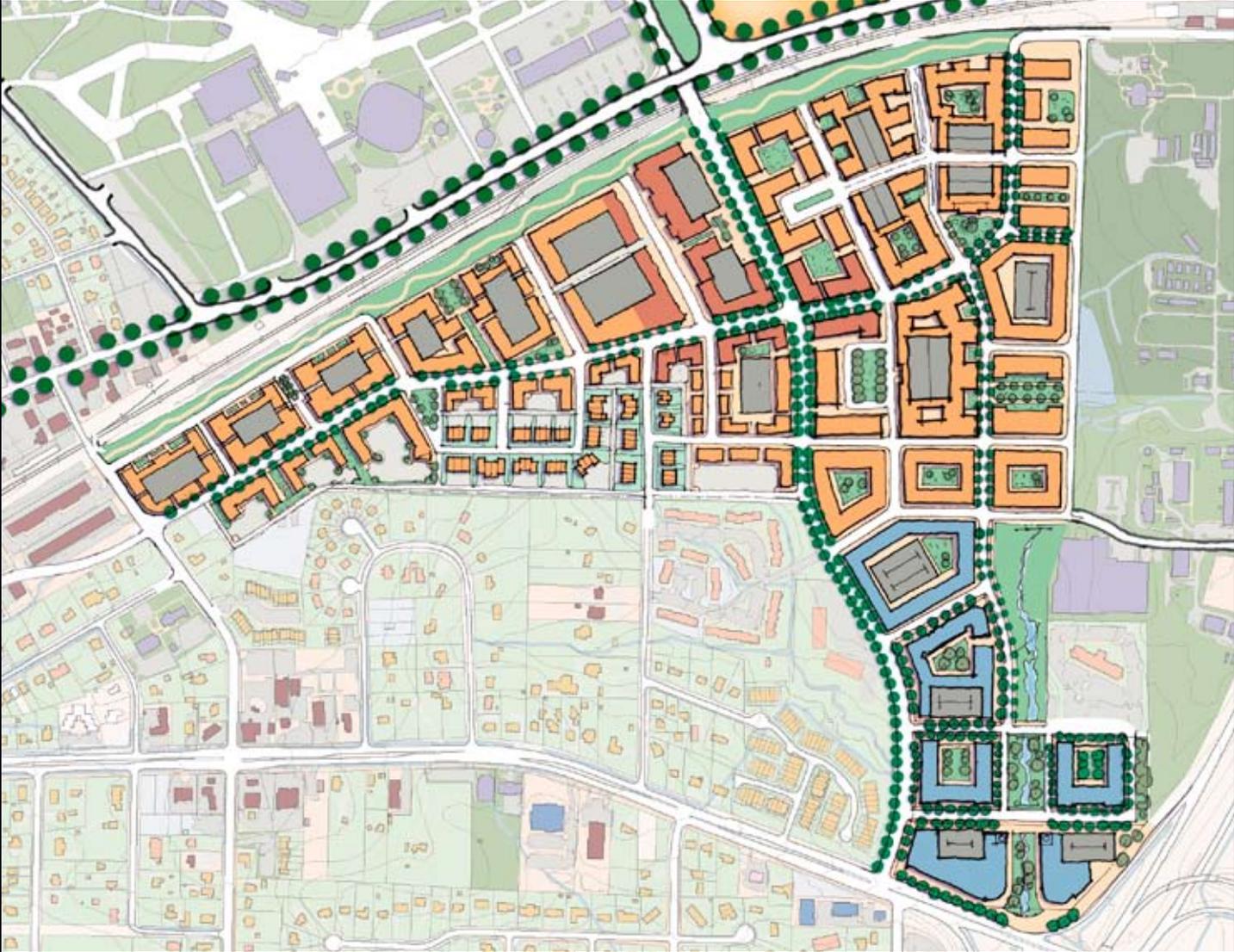
# South of Hillsborough District

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- » Best opportunity for residential development associated with future transit initiatives.
- » Capitalize on linkages to the Arboretum as a neighborhood amenity.
- » Gateway development at Western and Blue Ridge to replace underutilized commercial properties will serve as a southern anchor to the district.



# South of Hillsborough District



# SOUTH OF HILLSBOROUGH DISTRICT

## ▶ **Hotel – (Mid Term Opportunity w/ Transit)**

- While there is demand for additional hotel rooms in the area, other “districts” (i.e. Arts and Research) are a better fit for this use, given access and visibility
- If transit is added, it will significantly strengthen the opportunity for hotel at this site

## ▶ **Office – (Mid Term Opportunity+)**

- Proposed light rail station would have a significant impact on the desirability of this location for office uses
- In addition, there is an opportunity to provide space for smaller, professional serving users in a mixed-use redevelopment of the K-Mart site

## ▶ **Retail – (Mid Term Opportunity+)**

- Opportunity to be integrated in to a mixed-use redevelopment of the K-Mart site
- Users could be a combination of local and national retailers

## ▶ **Residential – (Short Term Opportunity+)**

- Existing residential in the surrounding area to tie in to
- Transit station will further enhance the desirability of this “district” for residential
- Residential could be a combination of rental and dense for-sale

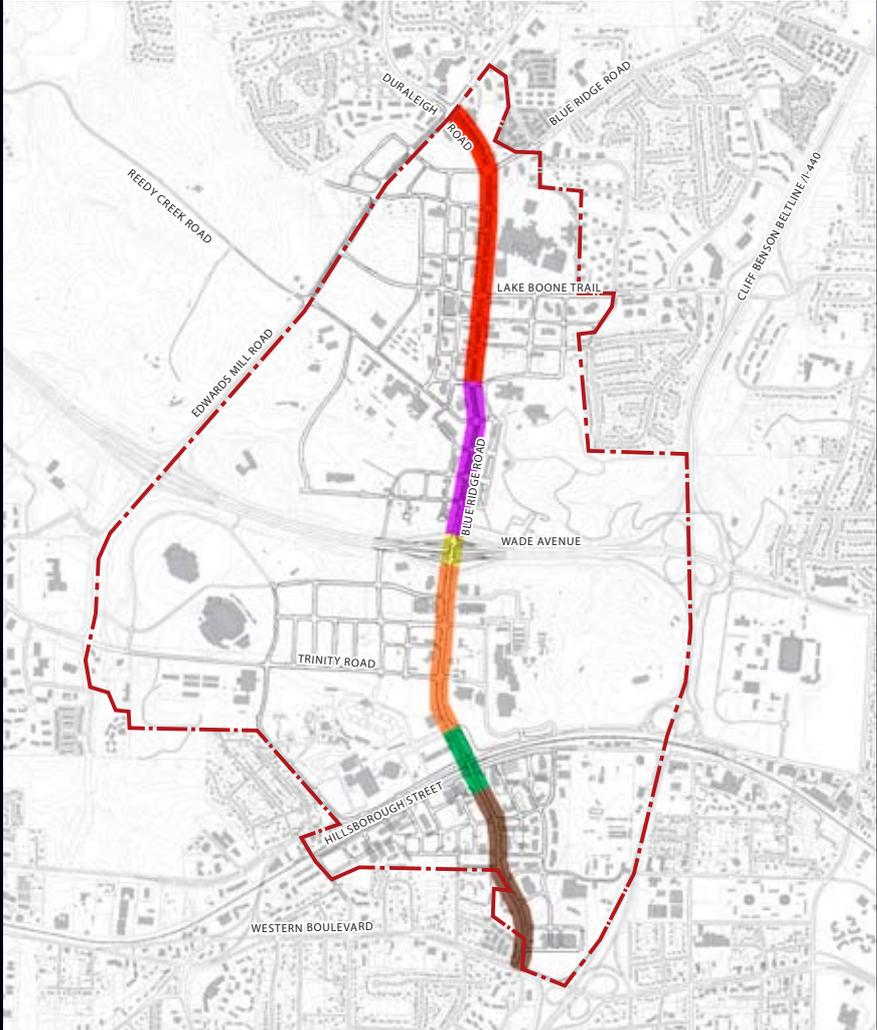


# Implementation

# Implementation: Recommendations

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- » Cross Section improvements to Blue Ridge Road



# Blue Ridge Road: North of Reedy Creek



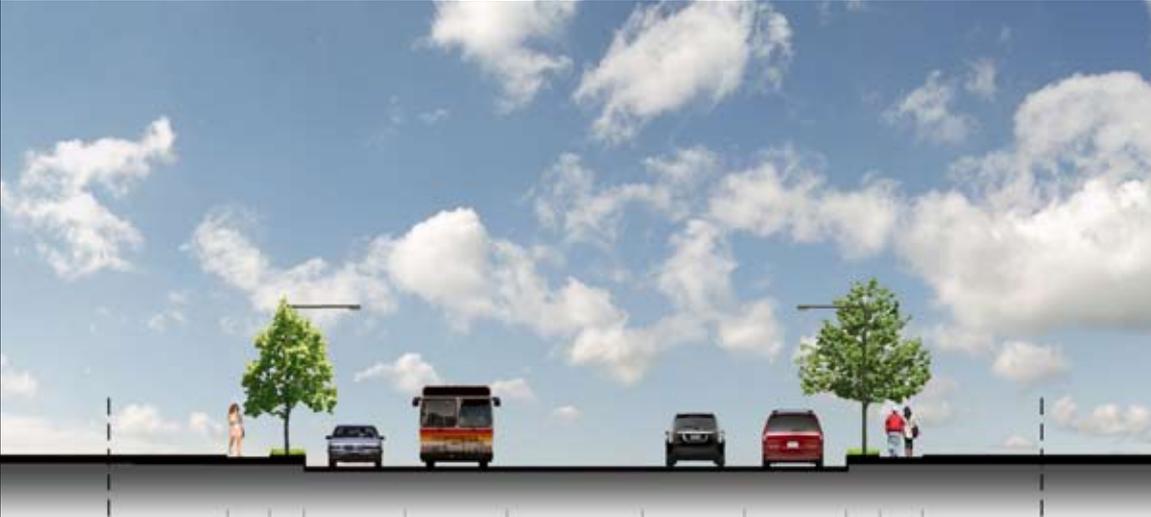
# Blue Ridge Road: Wade Avenue to Reedy Creek



# Blue Ridge Road: Wade Avenue Bridge



# Blue Ridge Road: Hillsborough to Wade Avenue



# Blue Ridge Road: Western to Hillsborough



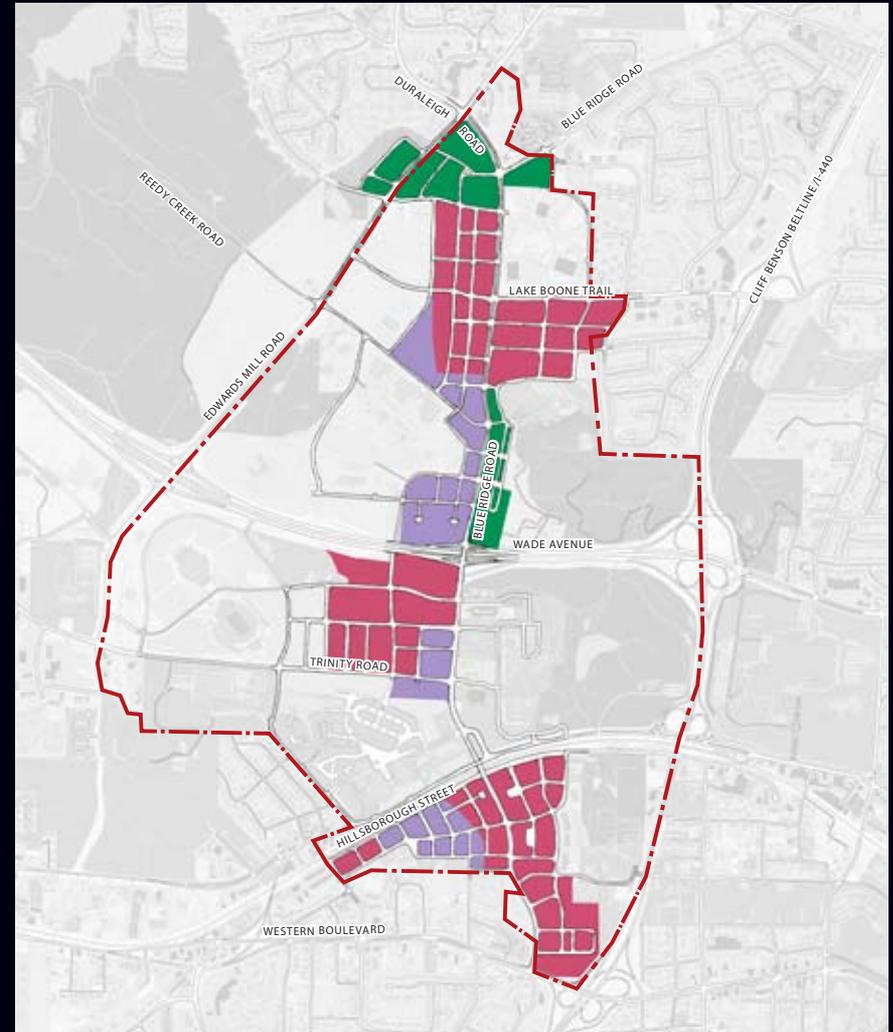
# New Secondary Street: Typical Cross Section



# Implementation: Recommendations

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

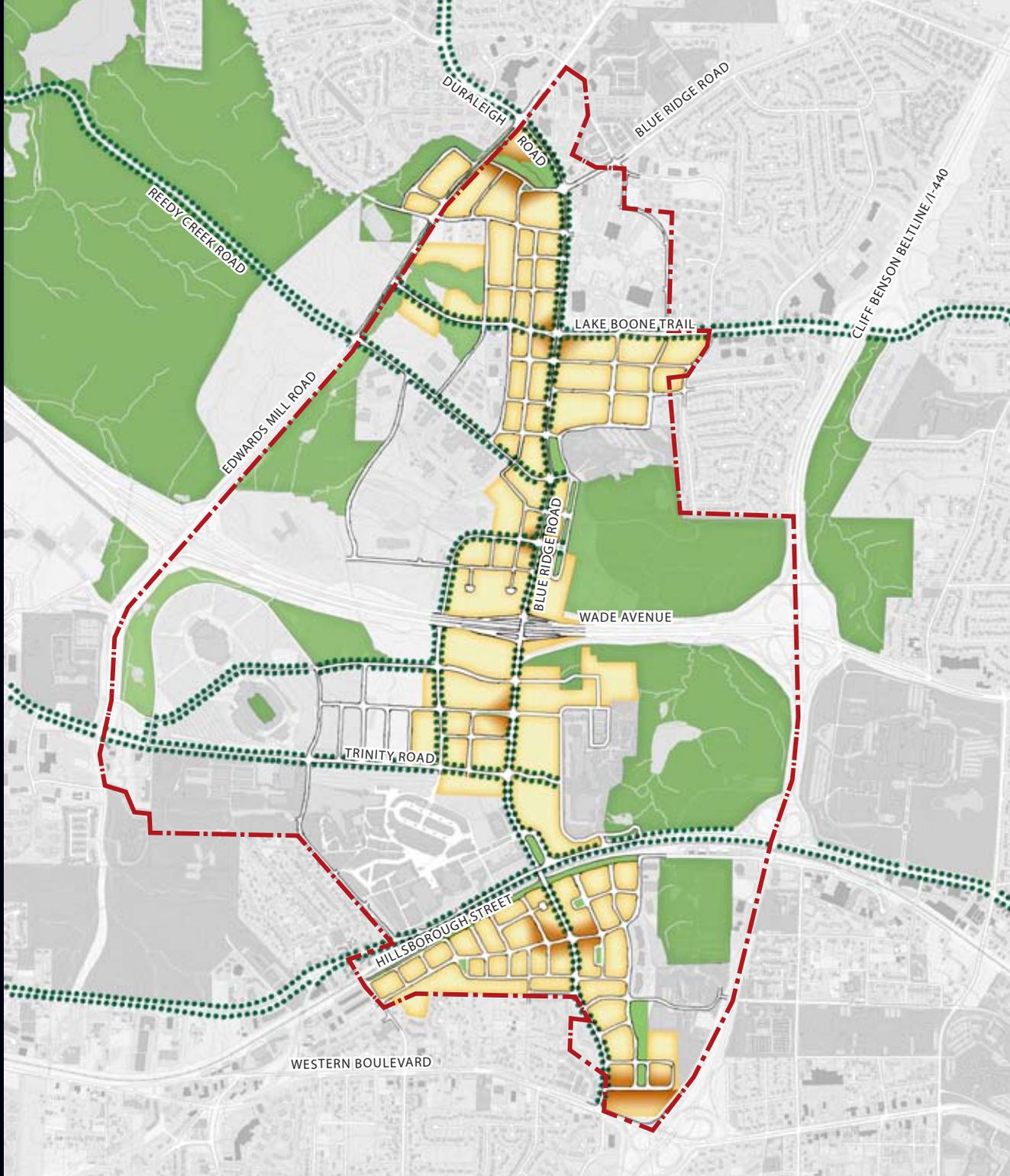
- » Green: Immediate Development opportunities - Available land, market opportunity, and willing land holder.
- » Pink: Market-driven development opportunities - privately held land or land currently in use that may redevelop subject to market forces and entitlements.
- » Purple: Current State Facilities that require relocation of services before redevelopment can occur.



# OVERALL DISTRICT LAND VALUES AND DEMAND OPPORTUNITY

| Land Use                             | Current Estimated Land Value/Acre (Entitled) | Estimated (Additional) Demand Opportunity in Blue Ridge District |                         |                          |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                      |                                              | Short Term (Current to 2014)                                     | Mid Term (2015 to 2019) | Long Term (2020 to 2025) |
| Office                               | \$250k to \$350k                             | 150,000                                                          | 350,000                 | 400,000                  |
| Hotel                                | \$400k to \$600k                             | 600                                                              | 250                     | 300                      |
| Retail                               | \$200k to \$500k                             | 100,000                                                          | 200,000                 | 300,000                  |
| For-Rent Residential                 | \$300k to \$450k                             | 450                                                              | 1,200                   | 1,700                    |
| For-Sale Residential (6 units/acre+) | \$200k to \$300k                             | 750                                                              | 2,000                   | 2,800                    |

Note: These numbers assume land is available to accommodate demand; estimated demand values are for each timeframe; they are not cumulative



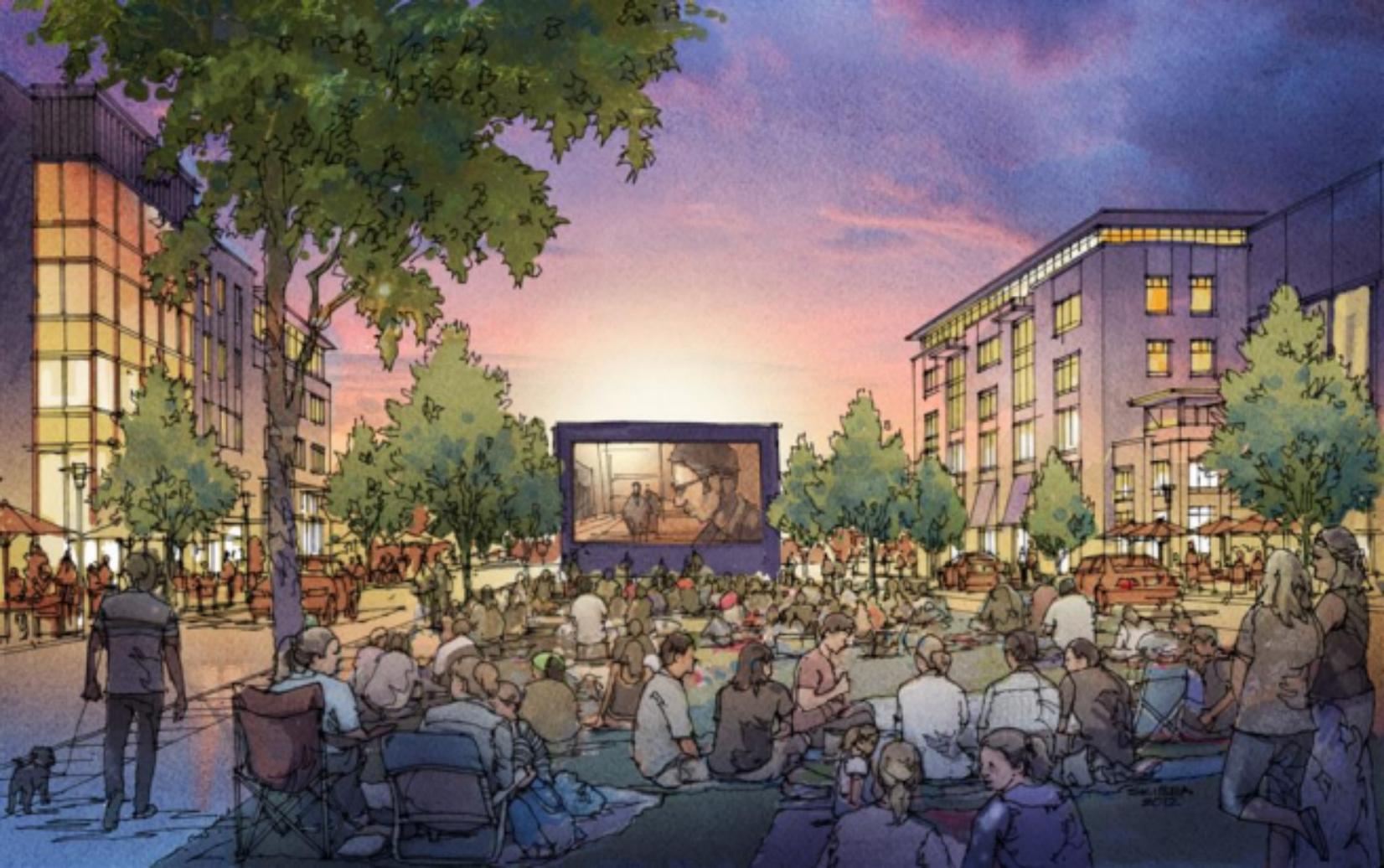


Trinity Rd

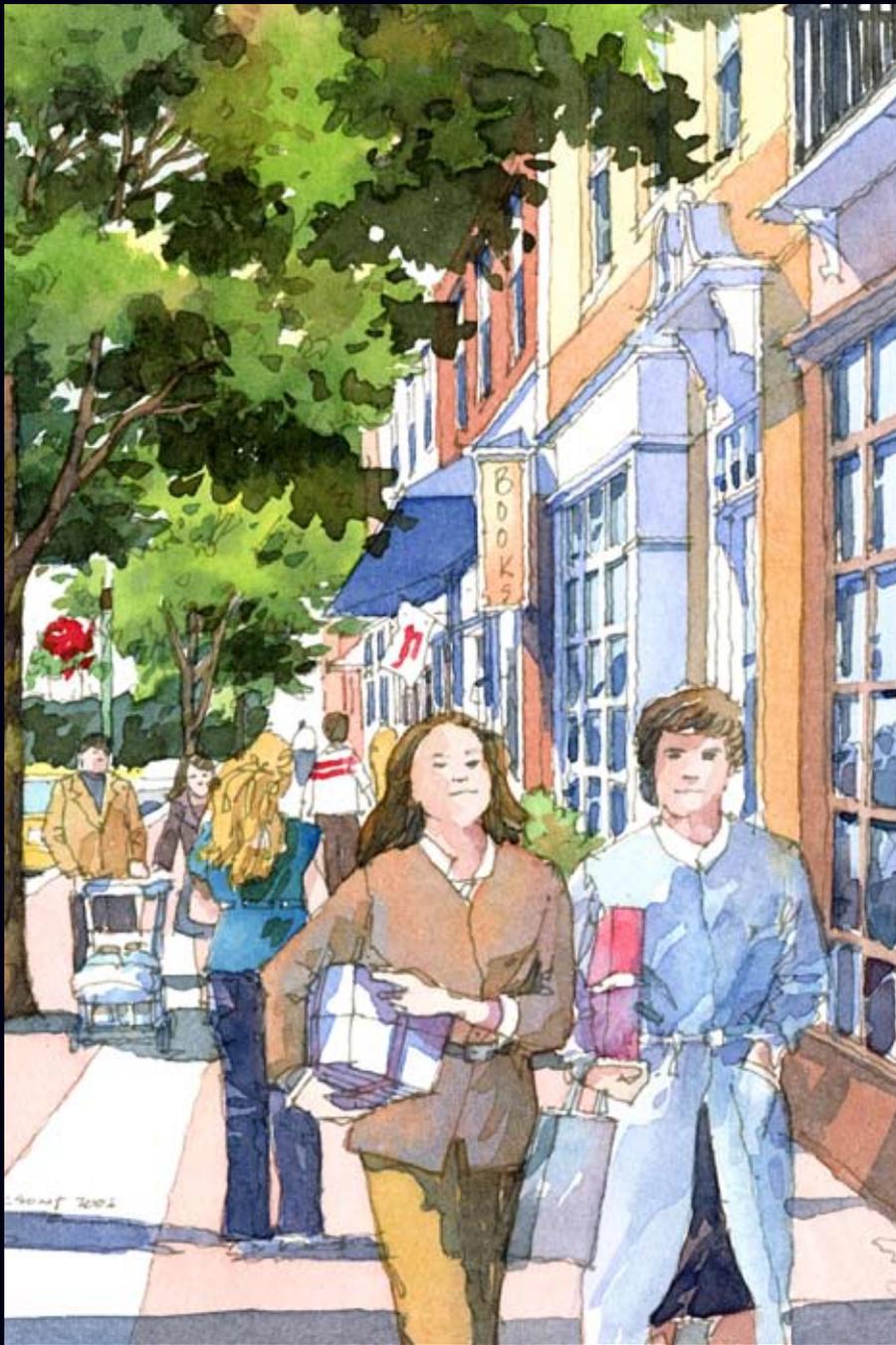












## NEXT STEPS:

Final Report to Stakeholder Group  
May 2012



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