

Howell Mill Road Safety Audit Report, 7-28-2015 DRAFT

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RSA Overview

Included in this document is the final report and recommendations for the July 2015 pedestrian-focused Road Safety Audit (RSA) of the Howell Mill Road corridor. The boundaries for this RSA are Northside Dr. and Marietta St. on the south side and Collier Rd. on the north side (see figure 1).

The RSA was conducted by PEDS in conjunction with the City of Atlanta. The audit team met on July 28th, 2015 to conduct field work and discuss the recommended treatments included in this report.

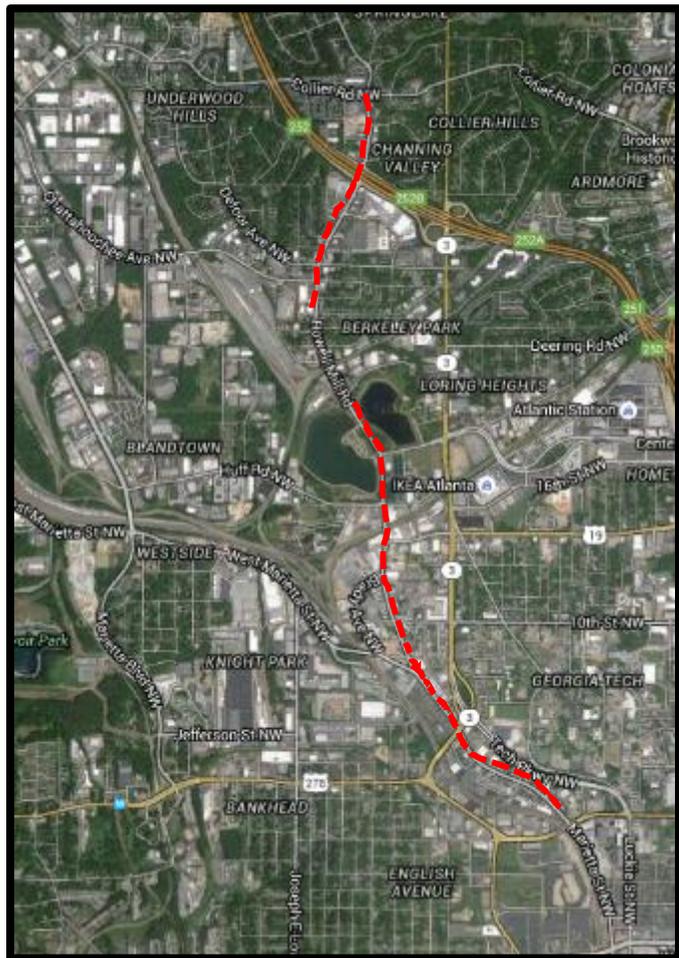
This segment of Howell Mill has between three and five lanes, and a road width of approximately 30-50 feet. The road is widest primarily in the northernmost section, north of 17th Street.

The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour throughout, in spite of the required maximum speed of 25 mph that applies to the section of the corridor from Marietta and Northside Drive to Howell Mill and 14th Street.¹

Traffic volumes vary significantly on Howell Mill between the southernmost and the northernmost segments of the corridor. The Average Annual Daily Traffic is 18,800 for the southernmost segment and 33,000 for the northernmost section, according to GDOT 2014 statistics.

MARTA bus routes 1 and 12 run through this corridor. The highest rates of pedestrian injury and fatality along this segment are between Brady Avenue and 17th Street and surrounding the I-75 intersection.

Figure 1. Howell Mill RSA Parameters



¹ A citywide ordinance requires that all roadways within 2.5 miles of Five Points Station must have a maximum speed limit of 25 mph.

The goal of this audit was to identify areas along the corridor that are unsafe for pedestrians. Field analysis and subsequent discussion about findings and opportunities for improvement eventually resulted in the report and recommendations written below.

Priority Recommendations

Priority recommendations include one general recommendation for the whole corridor along with specific recommendations for the following three locations:

- Howell Mill & Marietta St.
- Howell Mill & Brady Ave.
- Howell Mill & 17th St.

Reduce Curb Cuts along Entire Corridor

Howell Mill has a number of curb cuts that are either too wide or simply no longer necessary. These curb cuts reduce safety for pedestrians on sidewalks and need to be closed or tightened to no more than 12 feet where possible. Particularly problematic areas include, but are not limited to:

- o Delia's Chicken Sausage stand, NE of Marietta St. & Northside Dr.
- o Braxton Automotive Group, NW of Verner St. & Howell Mill
- o Just Brakes, SE of Bellemeade Ave. & Howell Mill
- o Arby's, NE of White St. & Howell Mill
- o Dunkin' Donuts, NW of Ridgeway Ave. & Howell Mill
- o Havoline Express Lube, NE of Channing Dr. & Howell Mill
- o Fellini's Pizza, SE of Collier Rd. & Howell Mill (figure 2)



Figure 2

Howell Mill & Marietta St.

Marietta St. makes a dangerous 3-point intersection where it divides at a fork into West Marietta St. and Howell Mill (figure 3). The RSA team recommends that a roundabout at this intersection is the optimal treatment to improve safety (figure 4).

A few other reconfiguration options exist. A minimalist and less preferable option would be to install a marked crosswalk in front of Arden's Garden, just south of the intersection. Another option would be to extend the corner (at the Octane parking lot) further into the intersection, eliminate right turns from Howell Mill onto Marietta St., and create a triangular plaza or parklet inside of the intersection.

Figure 3. Howell Mill & Marietta St.



Figure 4. Suggested Roundabout Treatment²



Howell Mill & Brady Ave.

The intersection of Howell Mill and Brady Avenue is a particularly dangerous one because of the very long and skewed crosswalk that lengthens crossing distance, the wide curbs on both ends of the crosswalk that enable vehicles to turn easily without slowing down, and the large driveway at the end of Brady Ave. that adds another vehicle outlet that is difficult to see from the crosswalk (figure 5).

The RSA team recommends converting twelve feet on each side of Brady Ave. to bike lanes and reducing the crosswalk to 20 feet across.

The team also recommends reducing the driveway on the north side of Brady to 24 feet and narrowing the curbs on the west side of Howell Mill to eliminate wide angle turns. Additionally, signals and marked crossings on all three legs of the intersection would further enhance pedestrian safety.

Figure 5



² <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/safety/roundabouts/>

Howell Mill at 17th St. and from Huff Rd. to Trabert Ave.

Figure 6



17th Street is a major East-West connection for the city and needs to be improved accordingly. The RSA team suggests that narrowing the curb on the southeast side of this intersection will greatly improve pedestrian safety by reducing vehicle turning radius (figure 6). A “Stop for Pedestrians” sign should also be added (and combined with other sign posts where possible) just north of 17th St. for southbound traffic on Howell Mill.

Figure 7



The east side of Howell Mill lacks a sidewalk between Huff Rd./Hemphill Ave. and Trabert Ave. (figure 7). The RSA team suggests cooperation with Water Works in order to install an easement on the east side of Howell Mill that would push back the fence and provide more space for sidewalk.

upgrading the guardrails surrounding the reservoir

Moreover, the sidewalk that does exist in this segment along the west side of Howell Mill is in need of some improvements (figure 8). The RSA team recommends replacing and



Figure 8

and moving them closer to the curb as a buffer between Howell Mill and a future multi-use trail along this segment of sidewalk. Because this may be a long-term project, the team suggests that a necessary interim project would be to fix the guardrail where crashes have occurred and damaged it. Also, street trees would be a beneficial safety and aesthetic addition in the grassy buffer between the sidewalk and the curb along the west side of Howell Mill at the future

Waterworks Park.

Cost of All Priority Recommendations

Table 1. Treatment Costs

Treatment	Average Cost	Number/Distance	Total Cost
Concrete curbing	\$17.00 per linear foot		
Roundabout	???		
Bike lanes	\$130,000 per mile		
Driveway Reduction	???		
Curb Narrowing	???		
Striped Crosswalk	\$8.50 per linear foot		
Stop/Yield Signs	\$300 each		
Concrete Sidewalk	\$32 per linear foot		
Guardrail Repair & Movement	???		
		TOTAL	

Other Action Steps

The RSA team also composed a list of action steps in addition to the priority recommendations described above. Some of these action steps refer to the corridor as a whole, and some reference individual intersections and crossing.

The following recommendations apply to the entire corridor:

- Rebuild the sidewalk all along the corridor. Figure 9 shows some examples of broken sidewalk. Areas in need of repair include, but are not limited to:
 - o North of Northside Dr. (on east side of Marietta)
 - o Spot on Ridgeway Ave. & Howell Mill (in front of Taco Bell)
 - o 9th St. (on west side of Howell Mill)

Figure 9



- Ensure a 7-foot minimum clearance on all signage and tree limbs
- Replace 35 mph speed limit signs with 25 mph speed limit signs from Marietta & Northside Dr. to Howell Mill & 14th St. in order to conform with city code of < 2.5 miles from Five Points Station
- Trim all bushes along sidewalk to ensure clear pedestrian passage (particularly the holly bushes south of Hampton St. on Marietta St. and NW of Morris St. on Howell Mill)

- Propose a walk-through with MARTA to determine the safest and most effective placement of bus stops all along the corridor. Certain areas have stops placed in very short proximity to each other and may be unnecessary. Additionally, many of the MARTA bus stop signs on Howell Mill are faded and need to be replaced.
- Remove illegal benches
- Consolidate street signs at intersections so there are not multiple poles each containing one sign. Consider posting signs on utility poles, etc.
- Improve shade by adding street trees along the corridor. This could perhaps involve working with Trees Atlanta after project completion.

The following recommendations apply to specific intersections and crossings:

Marietta & Northside Drive

The intersection of Marietta St. and Northside Dr. is heavily congested and is regularly backed up by traffic. The RSA team suggests organizing a traffic study for this intersection. Additionally, the team recommends that Marietta be converted from four to three lanes, with a middle turn lane and added bike lanes. An increased green phase time for traffic along Marietta and a decreased green phase time for traffic along Northside Dr. would also help to reduce congestion.

Figure 10



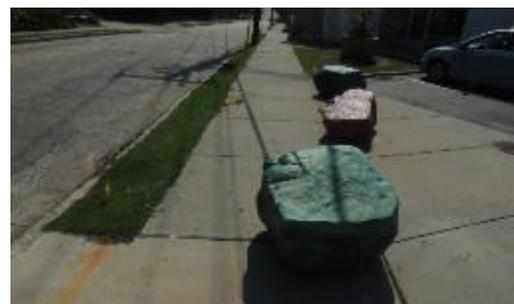
Marietta & Hampton St.

Plans are currently underway for the west side half of Tech Parkway to become dedicated to just pedestrians and bicyclists. As such, the RSA team recommends designing Hampton St. as a pedestrian/bicycle passage from Tech Parkway to Marietta St. A Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon on the south leg of the Marietta/Hampton intersection would improve safety for pedestrians. Also, it would be beneficial to work with the PATH Foundation and Georgia Tech on signage between Tech and the Marietta/Howell Mill corridor.

8th St.

The RSA team recommends moving the painted boulders out of the sidewalk on the southeast side of the intersection of Howell Mill and 8th St. These decorative pieces, just outside of Bocado Restaurant’s parking lot, are a sidewalk obstruction (figure 11).

Figure 11



9th St.

The crossing at 9th St. would be much safer for pedestrians if the intersection were not skewed and if a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon were installed. The RSA team recommends both of these treatments at this location.

10th St.

The crossing on the west side of 10th St. is currently 43 feet across. The RSA team recommends installing a bulb-out on the northwest side of 10th St. in order to shorten this distance and make the crossing easier and safer for pedestrians.

Other necessary improvements around this intersection include fixing the broken pole along the sidewalk on the west side of Howell Mill just north of 10th St., removing the barbed-wire fence in the same general location, and clearing bushes in front of the MARTA sign in order to improve visibility.

Figure 12



11th St.

The crossing at 11th St. would also benefit from a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon. The most suitable location for the beacon would need to be determined by comparing pedestrian volumes between the two sides of 11th St., but it would likely be most useful if placed where the southernmost part of 11th St. faces directly across from La Fonda Cantina.

Brady Ave.

Bike accommodations in the *Cycle Atlanta Phase One Study* indicate only shared lane markings from Marietta north to 14th St. Brady Avenue serves as an alternate route with separate Right of Way for people on bikes. The RSA team suggests a potential partnership with the Westside Provisions District development to allow people on bicycle to connect between Brady Ave. and 14th St. on their internal streets.

14th St.

The *Cycle Atlanta Phase One Study* proposes, among other recommendations, adding buffered bike lanes on Howell Mill from 14th St. north to Huff Rd. Each of the two buffers would be 2.5 feet. The RSA team, however, suggests that the buffers be removed from the *Cycle Atlanta* proposal in order to make room for sidewalk improvements immediately north of 14th St. on the west side of Howell Mill. This would leave an additional five feet of road to work with.

Huff Rd.

At this intersection, the RSA team recommends tightening up the slip lane on the west side of Howell Mill in order to shorten the crossing distance to the pork chop island. Additionally, the west leg of the intersection needs a new pedestrian signal head.

Trabert Ave.

In the future, the Atlanta BeltLine Trail will cross Howell Mill at this intersection and run parallel to Trabert Avenue. The RSA team recommends considering the installation of a signal here as part of the BeltLine Trail extension of Trabert Ave.

Forrest/Morris St.

The bus stop at this intersection is currently placed at the widest segment of the road. Moving the stop north to where the road segment is narrower and installing a mid-block crossing there would make crossing Howell Mill safer for pedestrians.

Bowen St./Berkeley Ave.

This intersection has street signs that have been bent or knocked over (figure 13). These need to be replaced.

Garraux St./Antone St.

The RSA team recommends upgrading the existing crosswalk at Antone to a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon. Advance crossing signage is currently quite far away from the crosswalk and should be moved closer. Also, there is a “No U-Turn” sign on the sidewalk on the west side of Howell Mill that is an obstruction for pedestrians. This sign needs to be moved off the sidewalk.

Verner St.

The bus stop near this intersection is not located at a controlled crossing. The RSA team suggests moving it north, as close as possible to the Chattahoochee Ave./Holmes St. traffic light.

Defoor Ave./Bellemeade Ave.

The Cycle Atlanta *Phase One Study* includes protected bicycle lanes on Howell Mill only as far north as Chattahoochee Ave. The reason cited for determining Chattahoochee Ave. as the end point for this corridor (which really extends to the Interstate 75 interchange) is that significant design challenges along this segment would require costly changes to travel lanes and streetscape. By improving curb cuts at the Bellemeade intersection, however, these challenges could be significantly decreased and the bicycle lanes could be more appropriately extended to Defoor/Bellemeade in order to connect with the existing bicycle route there.

Figure 13



The crosswalks at this intersection also need to be repainted.

White St.

The RSA team recommends unskewing the cross walk at this intersection. A “Stop for Pedestrians” sign on the south side of the intersection would help to protect pedestrians from northbound and right-turning traffic. The bus stops that currently exist at Dunkin Donuts could also be consolidated with the bus stops at White St.

Ridgeway Ave.

Bus stop #902046 in front of Taco Bell could be removed. It is in close proximity to other bus stops and essentially unnecessary.

Channing Dr.

The RSA team suggests installing a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon and a curb bulb-out at the Channing Dr. intersection in order to decrease the crossing distance and improve pedestrian safety.

