



Natural Neighborhood Descriptions

Included in the Natural Neighborhood descriptions below are additional clarifications of *Theme*, *Collections* and *Symbolic Trees*. *Theme* refers to the overall unifying or dominant idea of the neighborhood. *Collections* are groupings of plants that provide additional clarification and both strengthen and expound upon the theme. Last, the *Symbolic Trees* are thread trees that exemplify the theme by occurring frequently within the neighborhood. These trees have been selected for adaptability to local conditions.

Clear Creek: Stream Restoration and Water Gardens

This portion of Clear Creek, at the upper reaches of the Peachtree Creek watershed, is degraded and highly modified. Piedmont riparian and wetland plantings will define this segment, as well as the extension of water gardens and habitat-rich bio-swales alongside the urbanized Ansley Mall stretch of Clear Creek.

Theme: The role and importance of plants in managing rainwater in an urban environment; considers aesthetics and functionality and includes “natural” and structural methods.

Collections:

- Stabilizing streambanks using tree species such as black willow, silky dogwood, and elderberry
- Demonstration of “raingarden” with appropriate species, including swamphaw, green ash, and Virginia sweetspire
- Plants appropriate for varying water levels including bald cypress, alder, and green ash

Symbolic Trees:

- Silky Dogwood
- Green Ash

Piedmont Park: Conservancy Landscapes – Compliment Piedmont Park and the North Woods Plan

The Arboretum will compliment the heritage landscape patterns of Piedmont Park and support the objectives of the park’s North Woods Plan. The open fields and groves of large shade trees – the legacy of the 1895 Exposition and Olmsted Brothers plan – will be conserved and extended. Where the North Woods Plan shows enhancements to Clear Creek, the Arboretum proposes a water garden, highlighting and dramatizing the power of plants to cleanse, heal and provide beauty.

Theme: A continuation and tribute to the Olmsted brothers’ tradition and design style – stately specimen trees and creating spaces with trees and shrubs.

Collections:

- Stately trees (powerful presence, big, bold, beautiful) – various oaks, hickories, tulip poplar, and elms
- Evergreen – hollies, arborvitae, mountain laurel, and anise
- Promenade – pruned/trained species – hornbeam, beech, and sycamore
- Highlight different sizes of trees (canopy, subcanopy, understory) both as part of forest structure and their use in landscape design – white oak, blackgum, and chalk maple or redbud

Symbolic Trees:

- American Holly
- Southern Red oak

New South: Atlanta's Cultural Landscape Expressed

As home of the city's Old Fourth Ward, Martin Luther King National Historic District and Center, the Carter Center, Freedom Parkway, and City Hall East, this neighborhood will celebrate the rich palate of plants enjoyed by its residents. Plants are selected to reflect a variety of species, both native and exotic, that have become symbolic of the South – southern magnolia, dogwood, azaleas, and crape myrtles.

Theme: Southern culture as expressed in plants typically associated with the South.

Collections:

- Traditional southern landscape plants from different eras (i.e., Antebellum, Building Boom, modern horticultural style) - azaleas, southern magnolia, spiraeas, hydrangeas, etc
- Traditional African American vernacular landscape characterized by early 20th century landscape style, such swept yards, like the one in the Atlanta History Center
- Tribute to MLK and Jimmy Carter:
 - Symbolizing peace with tea olive, Dove tree, and flowers such as gardenia and sunflower
 - Symbolizing justice with rudbeckia and other plants symbolizing understanding, equality, and freedom
- Historic Trees (offsprings of significant historic trees – see www.historictrees.org)

Symbolic Trees:

- Southern Magnolia
- Flowering dogwood

Hulsey Yard: Reclamation Landscape and the Pine Ridge

Located on the sub-continental divide, and long used as a rail yard, this neighborhood has the opportunity to showcase bio-remediation through the use of nitrogen fixing plants, and express the natural pattern of pine ridges found throughout Georgia.

Theme: Highlights the natural divisions and connections of the land as demonstrated by the sub-continental divide; features characteristic ridge-top species.

Subtheme: reclamation/remediation – human damage brought back to nature

Collections:

- Phytoremediation plants remove toxins from soil – an example includes legumes such as Robinia hispida and Amorpha
- Pine Ridge – plants adapted to exposed, dry areas; species include shortleaf pine, Virginia pine, blackjack oak, post oak, and native blueberries

Symbolic Trees:

- Shortleaf pine
- Blackjack oak

Urban Forest Corridor: *Urban Forest (Extended Gracefully and Educationally)*

As neighborhood anchors, the Tree's Atlanta headquarters and Southside High School provide landmarks, as well as land on which to promote urban horticulture through street tree plantings and trials. The demonstration/education elements of the new Trees Atlanta facility will be continued along the BeltLine. This would also be a logical home for a Beltline Arboretum nursery.

Theme: The focus is on street trees, highlighting the heritage of old survivors, the concept of The Urban Forest, and the role of trees in revitalizing neighborhoods, while demonstrating best trees and planting methods for urban streets.

Collections:

- Street trees – collections of different sizes/shapes related to what areas best for planting each, i.e., under powerlines, in areas with limited soil, etc – elms, trident maple, crape myrtle, and bald cypress
- Best urban planting applications

Symbolic Trees:

- Crape Myrtle
- Elm

Entrenchment Creek: *Riparian Landscape Memories*

This neighborhood is defined by the two upstream headwaters of Entrenchment Creek, which eventually flows southeast to the Atlantic coastal plain. Both upland and lowland environments are present. Plantings are reflective of coastal plain plant communities and include gateways defined by bald cypress.

Theme: Trees that are typical of coastal plain plant communities, both those species exclusive to that area and those that also occur in the piedmont

Collections:

- SE native evergreens – southern magnolia, hollies, bays, longleaf pine, pond pine, spruce pine, cabbage palm, dwarf palmetto, and needle palm
- Denizens of coastal swamps – pond and bald cypress, and water tupelo
- Coastal Oaks – live, laurel, darlington, running, etc

Symbolic Trees:

- Sweetbay Magnolia
- Bald Cypress

Southern Way: *Plants of the Piedmont Uplands*

The plantings reflect the varied terrain of the Beltline corridor and the geography of the surrounding Piedmont. The flat eastern end is planted with sourwood, hawthorn and redbud; the ravines of the central portion are home to pawpaw, Florida maple, and beech; while the elevated western end features hickory, oak and pine.

Theme: Piedmont upland forest types (mesic to submesic as opposed to ridges and bottomlands of other Natural Neighborhoods)

Collections:

- Upland/slope forests (submesic) – species include white oak, post oak, mockernut and pignut hickories, sourwood, blackgum, chalk maple, redbud, and loblolly pine
- Ravines (mesic) – species include beech, umbrella magnolia, red mulberry, pawpaw, and florida maple
- Open habitats/savannas – scattered oaks & hickories with sumac, hawthorn, wild plums (note: this is a recently discovered historic landscape type that's all but lost)

Symbolic Trees:

- White Oak
- Beech

Murphy's Crossing: *Agricultural Landscapes*

The plantings in this neighborhood build on Atlanta's regional identity and agricultural heritage. The collections focus on the redevelopment of the farmers' market heritage site and building, and include representations of orchards, fields, windbreaks, and plantations. Specific plants may include pecans, peaches, and apples. There may be an opportunity to feature important field crops (cotton, soybeans, peanuts, corn) and/or community gardens.

Theme: Georgia's agricultural past upon which our modern landscape was built.

Collections:

- Orchard/Fruit – peach, apple, blueberry, muscadine – in modern varieties, heritage varieties, native parent species/forms (blueberry, muscadine)
- Nut crops – pecan, walnut

Symbolic Trees:

- Pecan
- Peach

Warehouse Row: *Landscape of Motion*

This narrow right-of-way segment between rows of warehouses and the stretch of trail that follows the road uses a palette of plants selected for their distinctive shape, foliage and color. They respond to the heightened sense of movement that light rail travelers and bicyclists will have as they pass through the corridor. Plants may include dawn redwood, ginkgo, and yucca.

Theme: Featuring a variety of plants whose color, texture, form, etc has high visual impact that can be appreciated while passing at faster-than-walking speed.

Subtheme: Plant evolution, particularly highlighting species that have existed for a long time.

Collections:

- Varied forms and shapes – bald cypress, red cedar, elm, ginkgo, tulip poplar
- Foliage size/texture/shape- catalpa, windmill palm, bigleaf magnolia, dawn redwood
- Color – forest pansy redbud, saucer magnolias, golden raintree, crape myrtle
- Primitive trees and their forms – palms, magnolia, gymnosperms

Symbolic Trees:

- Dawn Redwood
- Ginkgo

West Connection: *Teaching Landscape - College Core/University Center*

The numerous proximate colleges, universities and schools of this neighborhood – Spelman, Morehouse, Morris Brown, Clark Atlanta University, and Washington High School, among others – provide partnership opportunities, and can connect Atlanta’s citizens to the teaching and research efforts of these institutions. Topics, themes and supporting plantings might relate to ethnobotany, medicinal plants, bio-remediation and plants as contributors to urban health.

Theme: The relationship of people over time with the plants around them and the various uses made of them.

Subtheme: demonstrations of different types of plant structure – leaf types and arrangements, fruit, flower, bark

Collections:

- Plants used for food and beverages – serviceberry, oak, hickory, blueberry, sassafras
- Plants used for medicinal purposes – eastern redcedar, willow, black walnut
- Plants used in the household, such as fiber, dye, etc: hemlock, sumac, American holly
- Plants used for woodworking – pine, hickory, ash
- Plants used in ceremonial/belief systems – yaupon, buckeye, American plum

Symbolic Trees:

- Sassafras
- Eastern Redcedar
- American Chestnut

The Quarry: *Stone-based industry of Georgia and rock outcrop plant communities*

The Bellwood Quarry, a large granite surface mine, is the largest proposed addition to Atlanta’s park system. With its dramatic cliffs and elevation change, there is a grand opportunity to create an arboretum theatre. Plant collections represent the rock outcrop communities of Georgia, particularly the granitic outcrops endemic to the Southeast piedmont and found in greatest abundance in Georgia.

Theme: Rock outcrop plant communities and designed landscapes they inspire.

Collections:

- Southeastern granitic outcrops – winged sumac, winged elm, sparkleberry, and Georgia oak

- Other outcrops from Asia and other areas of North America
- Ornamental rock gardens – sedums and other appropriate plants

Symbolic Trees:

- Georgia Oak
- winged sumac

The Gap: Transformed Trees ‘Connecting People, Disconnecting Nature’

The role of the railroad in Atlanta’s history and development is interpreted in this neighborhood. Tree selection is based on wood products, manufacturing, and the transformation of trees in the region into railroad ties and framing lumber. A side effect of this is that, while railroads serve to connect people, they disconnect natural areas and create large expanses of vulnerable edge communities.

Theme: Railroads created Atlanta, have transformed the city and its landscapes, and have contributed to the subsequent industrialization and economic and population growth.

Collections:

- Plants used for railroad materials
- Georgia’s Wood Products – the timber industry has been significant in post-agricultural Georgia for export, building materials, and pulpwood – primarily pines (slash, loblolly, and longleaf in particular)
- Edge species – these are typically early successional species – sweetgum, tulip polar, red maple, and sumacs

Symbolic Trees:

- Pine
- Sweet Gum

Waterworks: Whimsical Green, Art, and Water Trees

Collections at this high point in the city feature plants of exotic shape and texture, and revolve around the theme of water play. Plants may include monkey puzzle, corkscrew willow, sky rocket junipers and plants whose names suggest a whimsical association with water (water oak umbrella magnolia, golden raintree).

Theme: The variations of forms and manipulation of tree growth, focusing on the whimsical, combined with the opportunity to play with the water feature (though out of reach).

Collections:

- Natural forms – corkscrew willow, monkey puzzle tree, Harry Lauder’s Walking Stick, Devil’s walkingstick, and Italian cypress
- Manipulated forms – pruning, training – i.e., sycamore, osage orange, and hollies
- Man-made forms – genetic manipulation (cultivars) – eastern redcedars, hornbeams, tulip poplars, weeping yaupon, and weeping winged elms

Symbolic Trees:

- River birch

- Winged elm
- Chinese Fringe Tree

Confluence: *Native Georgia Riparian Landscape*

This is the largest and most intact natural neighborhood along the BeltLine. In this area, the trail is sited along the forested creek margins of Tanyard, Piedmont and Clear Creeks. The focus is on augmenting the Piedmont bottomlands by planting maples, ash, willow, tupelo, magnolias, and cypress.

Theme: Piedmont Riparian/Bottomland communities and the importance of bottomlands for water quality, flood prevention, wildlife habitat, etc.

Collections:

- Wetlands – swamps and marsh – alder, willow, elderberry, swamp tupelo, green ash, red maple
- Floodplains (seasonally inundated) – sycamore, river birch, boxelder, cottonwood, overcup oak
- Stream edge – musclewood, florida maple, willow oak

Symbolic Trees:

- Musclewood
- Sycamore