

# Kirkwood

NEIGHBOR

[www.HISTORIC-KIRKWOOD.org](http://www.HISTORIC-KIRKWOOD.org)

## Lanta Gras: Community Through Music

Everyone is welcome at the 2nd annual Lanta Gras Parade on Jan. 28! The family-friendly event starts at 12:00 noon on the corner of Hallman and Kirkwood roads. The parade will circle around Bessie Branham Park, turn south onto Kirkwood Road, and end in the downtown village, where the Mardi Gras festival begins.

The brass bands that are marching — Kebbi Williams and The Wolfpack, Black Sheep Ensemble, and Wasted Potential — will also play a set or two at The Kirkyard, The Pullman, and Le Petit Marche. In addition, krewes will provide festive style and energy. They will all start lining up at 9:30 AM on Hallman.

Lanta Gras is a parade with purpose. It's organized by a 501(c)(3) non-profit (of the same name) with the mission to build community and opportunities for children through the common bond of music. Their goal is to establish a program offering brass and percussion musical instruction to middle and high school youth within our greater community of 30317: Kirkwood, East Lake, and Edgewood. Thanks to the proceeds from the inaugural parade in 2016, they have purchased many of the instruments needed to outfit their first instructional band.

Atlanta's own Orpheus Brewing joins as a Founding Chiefs sponsor for 2017. Four of the Orpheus brews will be available for purchase, as well as event T-shirts, with proceeds going directly to Lanta Gras' mission.

Lanta Gras is also generously supported by Atlanta



photo by Bryan Pearson

City Councilmember Natalyn Archibong. The Kirkwood Neighbors' Organization (KNO) and the Kirkwood Business Owners Association (KBOA) have offered their enthusiasm and support, too. Many of the businesses located in downtown Kirkwood have pledged a percent of their revenues. Lanta Gras thanks in particular The Kirkyard, The Pullman, and KNO for last year's donations and their continued commitment this year.

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Interested in adding a krewe to the parade, volunteering, or making a tax-deductible donation to Lanta Gras? Contact **Andy Greene** at [lantagrass@gmail.com](mailto:lantagrass@gmail.com) or **619-846-4570**

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Kirkwood Neighbors' Organization (KNO) is a racially and economically diverse civic organization devoted to the revitalization of Atlanta's historic Kirkwood community.

KNO meets on the 10th of each month at 7 pm at the Turner Monumental A.M.E. Church, 66 Howard Street NE.

Everyone is welcome!

#### 2017 KNO Officers

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**Comments? Story Ideas? Advertising Questions?**  
Your comments about this newsletter or story ideas are encouraged. Please contact the Editor.

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**Kirkwood Neighbors' Organization (KNO)**  
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**All KNO and NPU-O meetings & neighborhood events**

affecting your neighborhood. You can participate in public debate regarding policy, legislation, and planning affecting Kirkwood and our neighbors.

Though the city doesn't always follow the recommendations of NPU-O and its member communities, they consider them seriously and

factor them into city government's decision-making.

In addition to voting in local elections and participating in the Kirkwood Neighbors Organization (KNO), this is one of the most effective actions you can take to affect what happens in *your* neighborhood and city!



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# NPU-O: Your Connection to City Government

If you're concerned about Kirkwood and the impact of City of Atlanta government on our neighborhood, regularly attending NPU-O meetings is valuable. Neighborhood planning units — NPUs for short — are a unique part of Atlanta government: No other American city has them. They serve as a critical pipeline between city government and neighborhood residents in *both* directions.

### History of NPUs

The late Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, concerned about neighborhood isolation from government processes that affect them, founded the NPU system in 1974 as representative citizen advisory councils that make recommendations to the mayor and City Council on zoning, land use, legislation, and other issues related to planning and city government.

The 28 NPUs provide direct citizen input to City of Atlanta government and enable the city to distribute important community- and city-related information.

### What They Do

NPUs are officially designated by the City of Atlanta to advise on what we want — and don't want — in our neighborhoods. That includes matters such as zoning, public safety, housing, community facilities, social

NPU-O meets at **6:30 PM** on the **fourth Tuesday of each month** (except December) at **Branham Recreation Center**, 2051 Delano Dr., at the intersection of Delano Drive and Norwood Avenue

and recreational programs, traffic and transportation, environmental quality, and green spaces and parks.

NPUs also raise city government's awareness of neighborhood needs and recommend solutions. They're a way to have input into how our tax dollars should be spent and other legislative matters. The bylaws for our NPU describe its purpose well.

*NPU-O may recommend to the City of Atlanta or to any City department or any private or governmental entity or official any action, plan, or policy affecting the livability of the neighborhoods, including but not limited to land use, zoning, housing, community facilities, human resources, social and recreational programs, traffic and transportation, environmental quality, open spaces, and parks.*

*NPU-O may also assist City agencies in determining priority needs for the neighborhoods and may review items for inclusion in the City budget and make recommendations relating to budget items for neighborhood improvement.*

Jackson also ensured that the NPUs provided a critical opportunity for citizens to participate actively in the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). This document

is the city's neighborhood and collective vision for improvement, development, zoning, and land use. It's the basis for long-term planning in the City of Atlanta and also serves to guide much of the budget process for short- and medium-term spending, particularly regarding facilities and infrastructure.

### NPU-O Meetings

Kirkwood shares NPU-O with East Lake, the Villages of East Lake, and Edgewood neighborhoods. Membership is open to anyone at least 18 years old whose primary residence is within NPU-O. Any corporation, organization, institution, or agency which owns property or has a place of business in NPU-O can also participate.

By attending meetings, you'll learn far more about the city's plans for Kirkwood, and well in advance of other sources. Expect monthly public safety reports by Atlanta Police Department Zone 6, Fire Rescue Station #18, and MARTA police, along with city legislative updates and discussions with council staff and council members.

Most importantly, you'll have the opportunity to speak your opinion and vote on issues and city government policies directly

# Cars vs. Bikes at DeKalb Avenue Planning Meeting

by Carl Holt

While attending the Renew Atlanta public meeting on the DeKalb Avenue Complete Street project held Nov. 17, I couldn't help but notice that the same issue arose at GDOT's Peachtree Road safety improvement plan meeting: Cars vs. bikes reared its ugly head among the many who live along the roadway that connects Decatur and Downtown Atlanta.

Faye DiMassimo, general manager of Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Program, encouraged attendees to "erase" the current roadway and re-imagine what's inside the right-of-way with the help of a PowerPoint animation. The Complete Street proposal offers improvements to operations and safety, including removal of the reversible (contraflow) lane, left-turn movements, resurfacing

from the city limits to Hurt Street NE, and a smart traffic signal corridor.

DeKalb Avenue has higher crash rates than most streets in the city: 964 crashes over five years — five of those were fatal with one involving a pedestrian. The crash data shows the contraflow lane contributes to those higher-than-normal rates. Many residents who spoke at the meeting echoed this sentiment. They shared stories of being involved in crashes or nearly getting hit head-on because vehicles weren't using the contraflow lane correctly.

Complete Street planning gets more difficult west of Inman Park/Renoldstown MARTA station, where the MARTA tracks transition to an aerial structure to accommodate CSX's Hulsey Intermodal Yard. There's little room to the south of DeKalb Avenue to

add features, so Renew Atlanta raised the question of whether to implement bicycle improvements along parallel streets to allow for protected left turns on DeKalb at Krog, Boulevard, and other intersections, or to implement bicycle facilities along the entire DeKalb corridor and forego those turn lanes at key intersections.

Those in favor of Complete Street stressed the need to address how to incentivize cycling and other transportation alternatives — to not focus on just moving cars but on moving *people*. They say the project isn't about removing a vehicle travel lane to make bike lanes. That view leads to resentment between drivers and cyclists to the point where they become blind to each other's needs. Rather, the big picture is to provide better safety and flow for all modes of transportation.

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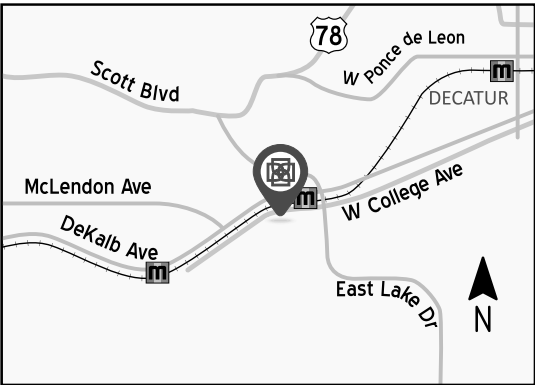


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# New Website and Funding Campaign for Kirkwood’s Historic Clay Cemetery

by Earl Williamson

The new and growing Clay Cemetery website at [www.claycemetery.org](http://www.claycemetery.org) offers information about the history of the cemetery, the land around it, and the Clay family who founded Kirkwood Baptist Church. All of the extensive material Kirkwood Neighbors Organization (KNO) has collected over the last eight years will ultimately be accessible on the site.

Photos for a good deal of the grave markers are available, and they will be added to until all the stones are fully documented online. The Chicora Foundation’s “Preservation Assessment for Clay Cemetery” will soon be joined by the cemetery’s master document, parcel survey, ground penetrating radar (GPR) results, and individual biographies for many of those buried here.

KNO hopes you all enjoy the website and will provide feedback on what will help *you* in using it to learn more about this historical site — dating to 1824 — and the history of Kirkwood that surrounds it.

Moreover, we hope that you will visit the cemetery itself soon and share it with the many others in Kirkwood and metro Atlanta, supporting the preservation of this valuable historical resource.

The restoration needs of Clay Cemetery have reached the point where fundraising must become part of our activities, one we hope you understand the need for.

- Restoration and installation of Clay Cemetery’s historic link fencing and cast steel posts (circa 1938).
- Restoration and re-construction of the two largest markers in Clay Cemetery: The 8-foot Margaret Dunn 14-piece monument (1899) and the 8-foot Gertie Dunn 10-piece marker (1921).
- Beginning restorative period plantings using species of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

We hope you will be able to participate generously. Tax-deductible contributions to the ongoing restoration may be made through the website or by a check payable to “Clay Cemetery - KNO.”



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[www.historic-kirkwood.org](http://www.historic-kirkwood.org)

page 5



# Major Projects Will Impact Future of Memorial Drive

by Greg Giuffrida,  
Memorial Drive Corridor Executive

This will be an important year for making the Memorial Drive corridor more safe, efficient, and inviting for current and future residents.

The Imagine Memorial study was commissioned in 2014 by Councilmember Natalyn Archibong to study and integrate a wide range of past plans for improving Memorial Drive. So far, that effort has resulted in my position of a new full-time planning role, unprecedented engagement and coordination among public and private partners, and opportunities to permanently improve the infrastructure of this essential corridor.

This year we expect major developments on three major projects, all

of which will benefit Kirkwood in particular.

### Corridor Traffic Operations Study

Through engagement with the Imagine Memorial transportation committee, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) committed \$130,000 to a study collecting new data and creating new traffic modeling to test alternatives that make Memorial Drive safer and improve the performance of certain bottlenecks like Moreland Avenue and Boulevard. A primary aim of the study includes exploring the impact of converting the reversible lane into a center turn lane.

These results are expected near the end of January or in February. Although the study will not result in changes, the information is crucial to informing a wide range of current and

future GDOT projects.

### Imagine Memorial LCI Plan

The Memorial Drive Corridor Executive, in coordination with Memorial Drive stakeholders and Central Atlanta Progress, has applied for \$40,000 in planning funds from the Atlanta Regional Commission. These funds will be used to hire a consultant to work with the community on updating, revising, and conducting additional community engagement on the original Imagine Memorial study from Georgia Tech.

The goal is to gain adoption of the study as a new Livable Center Initiative (LCI) plan. The LCI program makes communities eligible for federal funding to build projects that promote

*continues page 7*

# Go Native with Plants, Trees, and Shrubs!

by Greg Levine,  
Trees Atlanta

I was walking with a friend one recent night, and we stopped at a beautiful house with a nice yard. He asked me what I thought of the yard, knowing I am an opinionated plant lover and greenspace advocate. I said the yard looked picture-perfect, but I didn't like it.

I started to count the varieties of plants including grasses, shrubs, annuals, and trees: about 15 species total, and not a single one was native to our area — and not even natural to Georgia. The yard looked great, yet not one plant was where it was meant to be in the universe. It was plain sad to me.

I see this type of artificial, non-native landscape everywhere. Although

Georgia has thousands of native plants — including hundreds particular to our very own Piedmont Forest region — the majority of plants in most of our yards are from lands far, far away.

### The problem?

Many of these non-native plants are invasive when installed in our climate. Examples include:

- English ivy
- Privet
- Mimosa
- Tree of heaven
- Most wisteria
- Some honeysuckle

Every time we plant one of these, we push out a native plant far better suited to growth where we live and far less difficult to care for. Native plants require no herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers to grow well.

When we plant with

non-natives, we force our native birds, mammals, bugs, and lizards to adjust to a foreign environment. Many don't survive the change, so we end up having fewer bird, animal, plant, and tree varieties, and we approach dysfunctional monocultures far less sustainable of life. Not to mention the visual boredom.

### Take action!

Inventory your yards and gardens to identify the exotic and non-native plants around your home ... the invasive, evergreen, and common ones such as those already mentioned, the vincas, and most Oriental plants. Then replace them with some Georgia natives or, even better, those Georgia plants native to our own Piedmont region.

### Georgia Native Plant Society

[www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org)

GNPS holds annual fall plant sales at their propagation area inside Stone Mountain Park, located near the walking trails parking lot. Entrance fees into the park are waived for shoppers; just tell the guard at the gate you are there for the sale.

### Trees Atlanta

[www.treesatlanta.org](http://www.treesatlanta.org)

Their annual native plant sale is in October at the Carter Center, 453 Freedom Pkwy. NE, 30307. It features over 1,500 of the best native plants available, including 200 species of trees, shrubs, native perennials, and tree-friendly vines. They have fruit and nut trees, too — persimmon, pear, plum, walnut, pecan, and other native edibles.

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## Imagine Memorial: Updates

*continued from page 6*

more walkable communities, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, streetscapes, bike lanes, and more.

Pending approval of the award in late January, there will be multiple opportunities for Kirkwood residents to get involved and offer their input.

### Trolley Trail

The Trolley Trail project is not specifically on Memorial Drive, but it fits within the Imagine Memorial study's wider goals of building better pedestrian and bike networks across

Memorial Drive neighborhoods.

Councilmember Archibong is working with the City Department of Public Works, PATH Foundation, and residents to finish the existing Trolley Trail along Woodbine/Arkwright all the way to the future BeltLine Eastside Trail in Reynoldstown. This will mean residents on the east side of Moreland Avenue will soon have a completely protected walking and biking trail to the BeltLine.

Stay tuned for more public meetings.

### Want to Learn More?

Those of you who regularly attend

KNO and NPU-O meetings may have heard updates on these various projects from me. For those who can't attend meetings, however, a redesigned website provides relevant updates, announcements, and informative articles on the Memorial Drive efforts.

For more information,  
[www.memorialdriveatl.com](http://www.memorialdriveatl.com)

Or contact Greg Giuffrida  
[ggiuffrida@atlantadowntown.com](mailto:ggiuffrida@atlantadowntown.com)  
404-895-3082