



THE BUCKHEAD
COUNCIL OF
NEIGHBORHOODS
P.O. Box 11934, Atlanta, GA 30355

The Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Board Meeting

February 7, 2013

Peachtree Presbyterian Church

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

	Full Name	Neighborhood/Organization	Email Address
1	Yolanda Adrean	City Council District 8	yadrean@atlantaga.gov
2	Andrea Bennett	North Buckhead, Chair NPU-B	andrea0599@gmail.com
3	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
4	Charles Cobb	Brandon	Ccobb22@yahoo.com
5	Chief Kelvin Cochran	Fire Chief of Atlanta Fire Rescue	unknown
6	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennedelk@mindspring.com
7	Jim Elgar	Loring Heights	jimelgar@gmail.com
8	Tom Gordon	Ardmore Park	tgordon@mindspring.com
9	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
10	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
11	Shelly Lang	Robb Pitts office	unknown
12	David McArthur	Peachtree Heights East	drmcArthur@bellsouth.net
13	Kirk Oppenlander	Chastain Park	oppie@mindspring.com
14	Garth Peters	Memorial Park & Buckhead	gpeters@thebuckheadcoalition.org
15	Robb Pitts	Fulton County Commission #2	unknown
16	David Ross	Peachtree Battle Alliance	dross1102@bellsouth.net
17	John Schaffner	Buckhead View	jfschaffner@gmail.com
18	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bobschneider@me.com
19	Marsha Sims	Argonne Forest	tomandmarsha@comcast.net
20	Harriet Thomas	Robb Pitts office	unknown
21	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
22	Mary Anne Walser	Channing Valley, Mt. Paran-N'side	mwalsen@kw.com
23	Debra Wathen	Paces	6wathens@bellsouth.net
24	Dan Whisenhunt	Buckhead Reporter	danwhisenhunt@reporternewspapers.net
25	Caroline Young	Northside Neighbor	cyoung@neighbornewspapers.com

Representation by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Attendees
1 Ardmore Park	Tom Gordon
2 Argonne Forest	Marsha Sims
3 Brandon	Charles Cobb
4 Channing Valley	Mary Anne Walser
5 Chastain Park	Jim King, Kirk Oppenlander
6 Collier Hills	Barbara Kennedy
7 Garden Hills	Bob Schneider
8 Historic Brookhaven	Glenn Delk
9 Loring Heights	Jim Elgar
10 Memorial Park	Garth Peters
11 Mt. Paran-Northside	Mary Anne Walser
12 North Buckhead	Gordon Certain, Andrea Bennett
13 Paces	Debra Wathen
14 Peachtree Battle Alliance	David Ross
15 Peachtree Heights East	David McArthur
16 West Paces Northside	Tom Tidwell

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BCN 2012/13 Officers (Executive Committee)

Office	Officer	Neighborhood	E-mail
Chairman	Jim King	Chastain Park	jimking@mindspring.com
Vice-Chairman	Tom Tidwell	West Paces Northside	tom@tidwell-law.com
Secretary	Gordon Certain	North Buckhead	gcertain@comcast.net
Treasurer	Barbara Kennedy	Collier Hills	bar2010@aol.com
Communications	Bob Schneider	Garden Hills	bschneider@gardenhills.net
Member at Large	George Mirgorod	Pine Hills	gmirgorod@comcast.net
Member at Large	Ann O'Connell	Mt. Paran Northside	annoconnell1@bellsouth.net
Parliamentarian	Glenn Delk	Historic Brookhaven	glennedelk@mindspring.com

BCN Standing Committees

Committee	Chair	E-mail
Executive Committee	Jim King	jimking@mindspring.com
Communications Committee	Bob Schneider	bschneider@gardenhills.net

BCN 2012/13 Liaisons

Topic	Liaison	E-mail
Education	Leslie Churchill	lschurchill@bellsouth.net
Membership	(Open)	
Neighborhood Governance/Topics	Kathy Collura	KathyCollura@bellsouth.net
Parks	Gordon Certain	gcertain@comcast.net
Property Taxes	George Mirgorod	gmirg@me.com
Public Safety	Barbara Kennedy	bar2010@aol.com
	Tad Linder	tlinder@lindersecurity.com
	Kim Kahwach	KAJensen@bellsouth.net
Redistricting	Jim King	jimking@mindspring.com
Transportation, Development and Infrastructure	Diane Cox	brookwoodcivic@gmail.com
	Ron Grunwald	rgrunwald@bellsouth.net
	Deborah Wathen	6wathens@bellsouth.net
	Kristy Gillmann	kristygillmann@gmail.com

I. Welcome & Introductions

Jim King called the meeting to order at about 6:40 PM. The attendees introduced themselves. A quorum was not present.

II. Approval of January Minutes

Minutes for the January meeting were not approved due to the absence of a quorum.

III. Admit New Member Neighborhoods

No neighborhoods asked to be admitted to BCN.

IV. Guest Speaker – Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, Atlanta Fire Rescue

Chief Cochran, in his third appearance with BCN, reported on the “tremendous accomplishments” that have been attained during the past three years.

When Cochran first briefed us, he spent his time advising us of service brownouts and closing of stations. In his second appearance, after returning from his service in FEMA for the Obama administration, he briefed us on the department’s strategic plan. This presentation was more upbeat, dealing with the realization of some of the goals set out in the strategic plan and the establishment of new ones. Rather than repeat Cochran’s presentation here, the reader is encouraged to review the presentation at http://nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/2013_Cochran_Presentation.pdf.

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Among his observations:

- Any emergency which is not a law enforcement emergency is one that citizens expect Fire and Rescue to respond to and to have the capabilities needed to respond.
- Fire and Rescue staffing is at a 20 year high.
- When current recruits finish training later this year every truck will have full staffing of four firefighters from now on.
- Blackouts and brownouts have been eliminated.
- Fire and Rescue resuscitated 44 people, saving their lives, and helped to deliver 80 babies.
- Goals this upcoming fiscal year (FY 2014) include the regaining of ISO Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating, which will reduce insurance rates of Atlanta residents. Also, Fire Station 21 (Roswell Road) is to be refurbished.
- In FY 2015, the department is proposing to replace Fire Station 26 (Moores Mill and Howell Mill Road) with a new station.
- In FY 2016, the department is proposing a new fire station somewhere in the Peachtree Battle Avenue area.
- In FY 2017 they are proposing replacement of Fire Station 27 (Northside Drive), a challenge because of an investment of about \$250,000 in refurbishing it.

Chief Cochran extended an invitation to all of us to participate in the next "Citizens Fire Academy" starting in April.

V. Guest Speaker – Hon. Robb Pitts, Fulton County Commissioner

Commissioner Pitts has also briefed BCN several times.

Pitts said the 2013 Fulton County budget was passed 5-2 (he didn't vote for it). He said there had been false rumors about that budget: that balancing that budget would involve cuts to Grady Hospital, arts and libraries. That didn't happen. He said he didn't support the budget for three reasons: he felt the county's management (middle and up) was still "top heavy"; it included raises for only three employees, all of whom worked for County Commissioners; and that \$17 million in debt service for Grady Hospital had been rescheduled from 2013 to 2014 (making 2014 even harder to balance).

Pitts handed out the county's FY 2013 General Fund Budget (www.nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Fulton_FY2013_Budget.pdf).

- An animal control contract is being considered for a company called LifeLine. The current vendor will stay on until March 1 or until a contract is signed with LifeLine.
- The Board of Registration and Elections (which does not report to the County Commission) is being reviewed the Secretary of State. The Board is composed of two members recommended by each political party and the Chair is selected by the County Commissioners. The Board's chair and another board member recently resigned. Mary Norwood, selected as the Republican replacement, was approved. Pitts favors Mary Carol Cooney (active in the League of Women Voters) as Chair.

Pitts reported that for years "there has been some satisfaction, real or imagined, with the Fulton County Commission, and that is particularly true of some of our northside legislators, representatives and senators". He said the effort to recreate Milton County was on the back burner for now, but is not dead. Several pieces of legislation have been introduced and more are coming. In the recent election, the Fulton County Delegation came under the control of Republicans (a one-vote majority in both the House and Senate delegations), giving them control of legislation affecting the county. Pitts said "their goal now is to retool Fulton County" because it is "dysfunctional, taxes are too high, and the government is bloated". He said those charges are false.

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- As for “dysfunctional”, he said that there are disagreements on the county commission just as there are on in city councils and in the state legislature. He said Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s bond ratings would recognize if the county was dysfunctional, but Fulton’s bond rating is AA. He said it should be AAA but isn’t because of Grady Hospital and MARTA.
- He said the “bloated” charge is related to the trend to bring unincorporated areas into new municipalities which should reduce county staffing. He said a reduction of approximately 1,000 employees has occurred. He repeated he thinks the county is still a little “top heavy” but not at the worker level.
- As for taxes being “too high”, he said Fulton has the lowest tax rate of all of the counties in the metro area. There hasn’t been a tax rate increase in Fulton in 12 or 13 years. In fact, taxes have been lowered, he said.

He said, tell us what’s wrong and he will lead the charge to fix it.

As for restricting and converting his “at large” seat to a new district in North Fulton: Pitts said the premise that if Fulton has “a board of commissioners of Fulton County that is made up of a majority of the commission being from North Fulton County, it will be a better county government – I totally reject that.” He said he is interested in good quality elected officials, not where they live or their party affiliation. He thinks it is very difficult to get an answer from people about what they mean. Pitts distributed a document showing the proposed district racial composition:

nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Piitts_Proposed_Districts.pdf

Pitts outlined the three bills introduced so far in the Georgia Legislature (see nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Pitts_News_Release_State_Legislation.pdf):

- Increase Fulton’s homestead exemption, in steps over time, from \$30,000 to \$60,000. This will cut county revenues if millage rates remain unchanged. He said Fulton already has the highest homestead exemption in Georgia—no other county is that high. He said the change would be a “devastating” loss of \$50 million over two years since another part of the bill would “cap” the millage rate.
- The next bill deals with employees being in “unclassified” versus “classified” service. Unclassified workers “serve at will of bosses, with no protection”. He said the bill would move all remaining classified workers to unclassified. (This apparently deals with civil service employment designation.)
- The third bill is the structure of the county commission. Currently there are five single-member districts covering the county plus one “at large” seat and “at large” one chair. The proposal is to change the existing “at large” seat to a geographical district seat. Pitts opposes the proposed change as well as the current system. He prefers a seven member “at large” council with a chair and six commissioners. Each of the six would meet residency requirements to live in one of six different geographical districts.
- Pitts also expects another bill to affect the Library Board, perhaps making them appointees of the cities and county commission.

Glenn Delk asked, besides the sheriff and the court system, what are the essential services provided by Fulton County. Pitts said there are three constitutionally mandated services:

- Health and human services (health clinics, senior citizen services)
- Criminal justice system (sheriff, courts, district attorney, etc.)
- Libraries

Glenn noted that about \$150 million in the budget does not appear to be related to these three areas.

Jim King said the argument is that only constitutionally-mandated services be provided. Robb responded by asking, “Pick out the ones you don’t want to have done.” If you don’t money spent on Arts, get a law to say so. Robb added that if the county can’t afford to provide certain services, those services may get pushed off on the cities to pay for.

Gordon Certain asked how county services break down in broad groupings. This response was provided by email: nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Pitts_2013_General_Fund_Expenditures.pdf.

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Glenn asked, hasn't Fulton argued that the state should take over Grady and MARTA – if that happened, wouldn't that help Fulton? **Pitts** said, yes. And if it happened, he would have no problems with it. He pointed out that MARTA is the only such system with no state help. He added the state takeovers are not going to happen.

Yolanda Adrean asked about "non-agency" accounts. This breakdown of "Non-agency accounts" was provided by email: nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Pitts_Non-Agency_General_Fund.pdf.

Glenn said that there appeared to have been a significant drop in municipal services provided by Fulton County now that new cities have taken over unincorporated areas, yet the county work force has only dropped by 1,000, implying it should have dropped more.

Gordon commented that it looks like the annual deficit is now about \$80 million. Robb said reserves were used to cover that shortfall, something that they have been doing for years which he opposes. Gordon noted the reserve would be gone after just one more year. Robb agreed, adding that in 2014, in addition to the Grady debt services coming back, increased health cost because of Obamacare on part-time workers, and pension costs, we are going to be having some huge problems.

Robb had earlier cited the possibility of a Fulton Commission dominated by a Northside majority. Jim King speculated that if there were six districts, three would be south of Midtown and three north of Midtown. Assuming that is the case, how do you get a commission dominated by the Northside? It doesn't seem to follow.

Glenn added that to be fair, proponents of these Fulton-related bills should have also been invited to BCN to explain the other side of this legislation.

Robb encouraged everyone to consider the facts, take a position and contact their legislators. He said that if revenues are reduced there will be very difficult questions about what to cut.

VI. Committee and Liaison Updates

- **Communications Committee** – No report.
- **Education** – **Tom Tidwell** reported that there was an application for a proposed new charter school in north Atlanta, "Northside Classical". **Andrea Bennett** said she had received a document about the school that she would share: nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/Northside_Classical_Charter.pdf.

Glenn Delk reported that Rep. Ed Lindsey submitted HB 123, the Parent and Teacher Empowerment Act, which could have an impact on Buckhead. It provides that if a majority of parents or faculty at any school vote to do so, they can elect to petition the school board to be granted charter status. It might, for instance, have given parents at North Atlanta the ability to "opt out" when they were dissatisfied with the school administration earlier in the school year.

Gordon Certain distributed a report from Stanford University entitled *Poor ranking on international test misleading about U.S. student performance* (news.stanford.edu/news/2013/january/test-scores-ranking-011513.html). Gordon summarized the reports saying that some international tests, including some that were cited by Glenn Delk in previous BCN meetings, provide a distorted view of actual US student accomplishment. For instance, Finnish students are supposed to be really outstanding in mathematics as compared to US students. But if the test stressed algebra rather than fractions, US students would be ahead of the Finns.

Generalizing from those details, Gordon went on to say, that when we consider educational issues we need to consider all sides of the debate, not just one. Glenn said he wasn't trying to just present one side. Gordon responded that we haven't heard the other sides and suggested to **Jim King** as chair that BCN try to seek a balance. A lot of detailed back and forth followed. ... Dave Ross interrupted, suggesting we move on and saying that it is important to have both sides of all of these

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issues, but that this (one-on-one) isn't helpful. Jim asked that those having suggestions about educational speakers make their suggestions to him or Gordon.

- **Executive Committee** – Did not meet. No report.
- **Membership** – No Report.
- **Parks** – Gordon Certain reported on the Park Commissioners quarterly meeting. A park planner has been hired by the city. A grant has been received for 15 APD officers to patrol the Beltline trails starting June 1. Beltline will observe regular parks hours (6am to 11pm) – those hours will not apply to the GA 400 Trail. The new Watershed Ordinance applies to city parks. A copy of DPRCA 2013-2017 Strategic Plan is available for review and will be emailed to BCN – see nbca.org/BCN/Minutes/DPRCA_Strategic_Plan.pdf.
- **Property Taxes** – No Report.
- **Public Safety** – No Report.
- **Redistricting** – No Report.
- **Transportation, Development and Infrastructure** – Yolanda Adrean said that signage on Northside infrastructure work will be improved. The Sandy Spring Gateway project has slowed down a lot. Expensive road realignment work related to the project is being reviewed.

VII. Old / New Business

Email Voting – Voting for bylaws revisions for email voting is being done on paper ballots.

Charter Schools – Covered above.

VIII. Community Concerns – No Report.

IX. Announcements – None.

X. Next Meeting – March 14, 2013

XI. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 PM.

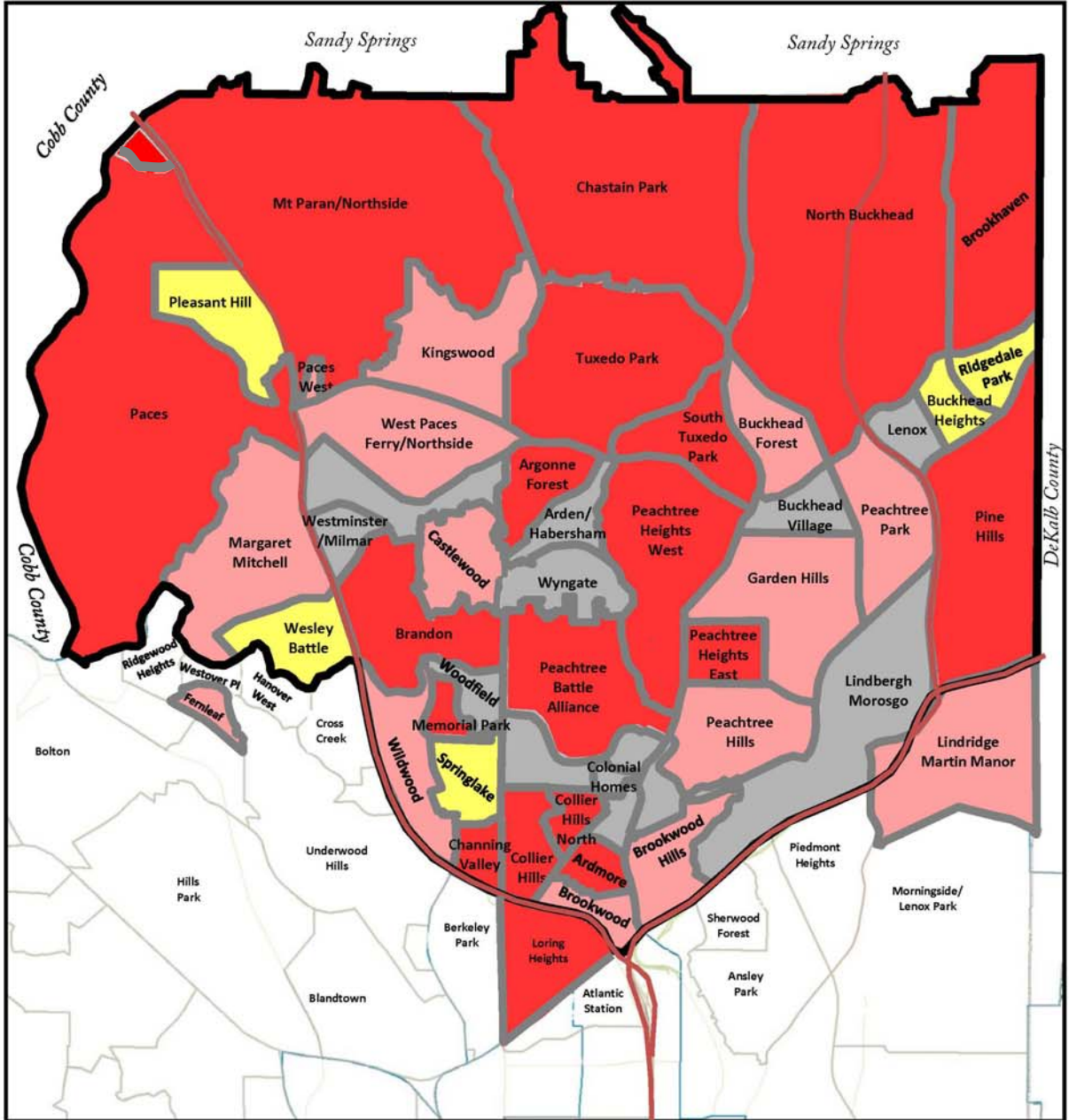
Note: *The opinions expressed by the speakers and individual neighborhood representatives in these minutes do not necessarily represent those of BCN or its member neighborhoods.*

Prepared by Gordon Certain
BCN Secretary
March 9, 2013

BCN's web page is at www.BuckheadCouncil.org

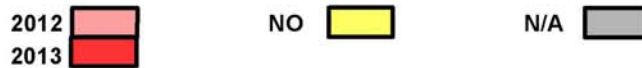
Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods

Paid Membership as of 03/08/13



LEGEND

Paid Membership as of 03/08/13



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BCN Organizational Status as of 3/11/2013																						
	Neighborhood	BCN Dues					Representation at BCN Board Meetings															
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2008 3 meetings	2009 12 meetings	2010 11 meetings	2011 11 meetings	2012 12 meetings	2013										
											Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Arden/Habersham																					
2	Ardmore Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	67%	91%	92%	83%	✓	✓									
3	Argonne Forest				✓						33%		✓									
4	Brandon				✓	✓						✓	✓									
5	Brookwood		✓	✓	✓			17%	45%	82%	58%											
6	Brookwood Hills			✓	✓			8%		45%	25%	✓										
7	Buckhead Forest	✓	✓	✓	✓		100%	75%	100%	18%	42%	✓										
8	Buckhead Heights							8%														
9	Castlewood	✓	✓		✓			17%		27%	8%											
10	Channing Valley					✓				18%	8%	✓	✓									
11	Chastain Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	✓	✓									
12	Collier Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		67%	82%	91%	200%		✓									
13	Collier Hills North			✓	✓	✓		8%	9%	27%	50%	✓										
14	Fernleaf				✓						42%	✓										
15	Garden Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓			75%	91%	63%	75%		✓									
16	Grant Estates	✓	✓	✓		✓	100%	83%	82%													
17	Historic Brookhaven	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	33%	58%	91%	63%	75%	✓	✓									
18	Kingswood	✓			✓		33%	8%	9%	9%												
19	Lindbergh									9%												
20	Lindridge Martin Manor	✓	✓	✓	✓		33%	25%	55%	9%	8%											
21	Loring Heights			✓	✓					82%	75%	✓	✓									
22	Margaret Mitchell	✓	✓	✓	✓			33%	64%	91%	50%											
23	Memorial Park	✓	✓	✓	✓		67%	58%	91%	91%	75%	✓	✓									
24	Mt. Paran-Northside	✓	✓	✓	✓		100%	75%	55%	82%	75%	✓	✓									
25	North Buckhead	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	✓	✓									
26	Paces	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	67%	58%	55%	72%	67%	✓	✓									
27	Paces Battle									18%	17%											
28	Paces West	✓	✓					7%		9%	8%											
29	Peachtree Battle Alliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	83%	64%	72%	67%		✓									
30	Peachtree Heights East	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	67%	50%		63%	83%		✓									
31	Peachtree Heights West	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	33%	25%	73%	63%	100%	✓										
32	Peachtree Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓		100%	75%	45%	36%	42%											
33	Peachtree Park	✓	✓	✓	✓		67%	83%	55%	36%	58%											
34	Pine Hills		✓	✓	✓	✓	33%	8%	91%	91%	92%	✓										
35	Pleasant Hill																					
36	Ridgedale Park	✓	✓	✓			100%	58%	73%	18%												
37	Springlake		✓	✓					55%	18%												
38	Tuxedo Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	67%	75%	73%	63%	25%	✓										
39	Wesley Bohler	✓	✓					17%	9%	9%												
40	West Paces Northside	✓	✓	✓	✓		67%	67%	64%	82%	58%	✓	✓									
41	Wildwood			✓	✓		33%		27%	72%	67%											
42	Wyngate										8%											
Totals		26	28	28	30	10	Avg:16	Avg:16	Avg:18	Avg:19	Avg:18	18	19									