



Five Neighborhoods

Redefining Success
Revisiting the Neighborhood Plans
Neighborhood Identity
Issues, Assets and Opportunities

“The city is like a great house,
and the house in its turn a
small city.”

LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI, *ON THE ART OF BUILDING*



03 | 01 REDEFINING SUCCESS

Chapter 2 postulated that success for the core area may be defined by the perfect convergence of community vision, market reality and the site’s DNA. While success in the neighborhoods is not independent from success in the core, it is more nuanced and reliant on a web of well-functioning connections. Like an individual that needs the security of shelter, the respite of nature, the fulfillment of an occupation and exposure to culture, a neighborhood needs similar elements to function successfully in the life of a city. Only when shelter, nature, opportunity and culture are present and thriving can a neighborhood be considered complete enough to support its residents. This was the lens through which the planning team approached each of the five stadium neighborhoods.



Five Connections for
a neighborhood that
lead to success

CONNECTIONS TO EACH OTHER

The architect's quote on the preceding page could not be more applicable to the analogy between an individual and a neighborhood. Families are made up of individuals with shared resources and outlooks, with common personality traits and sometimes differing opinions that lead to conflict. Like families, neighborhoods also have shared resources and a sense of common purpose even with plurality and diverging opinions among residents.

The strength and stability of a neighborhood lies in the connections it can enable between each of its residents, between residents and their environment, and to world beyond.

CONNECTIONS TO SHELTER

The single most important characteristic of a neighborhood is the fact that many people call it home. When shelter becomes scarce or inaccessible, the ability of a neighborhood to support itself is severely compromised.

The LCI has the potential market to drive demand for about 200 new units of housing annually to 2020 (see Appendix). The question is whether connections to this and other housing can be maintained for existing residents or those of limited means. Programs and policies like financial incentives and maintenance assistance are crucial to preserving housing for all household income levels.

CONNECTIONS TO NATURE

Parks were once indispensable for providing fresh clean air to cities choking in smoke. Today parks encourage physical activity and enable a beneficial psychological connection to nature.

The LCI area is fortunate to have several large neighborhood parks that contain a wide variety of passive and active recreation sites, as well as smaller pocket parks and community gardens. Grant Park is also within walking or biking distance to much of the area. The challenge will be to encourage residents to embrace all parks as their own, to improve connections to those parks, and to replace redundant facilities with a greater mix of programs and landscapes.



CONNECTIONS TO OPPORTUNITY

Access to education or a good job is a cornerstone of social stability and individual self-worth. Without opportunity, life can devolve into simple existence which can lead to social problems like crime, poverty, inadequate housing, poor diet, etc. When neighborhoods provide opportunity, however, they are defended and maintained.

This LCI is unique in that it can provide multiple connections to opportunity through development in the core (university and commercial), through Beltline development, through intensifying light industrial uses in the rail corridor, and through capitalizing on the proximity to Downtown and heavy rail, thus to major employment centers in the region.

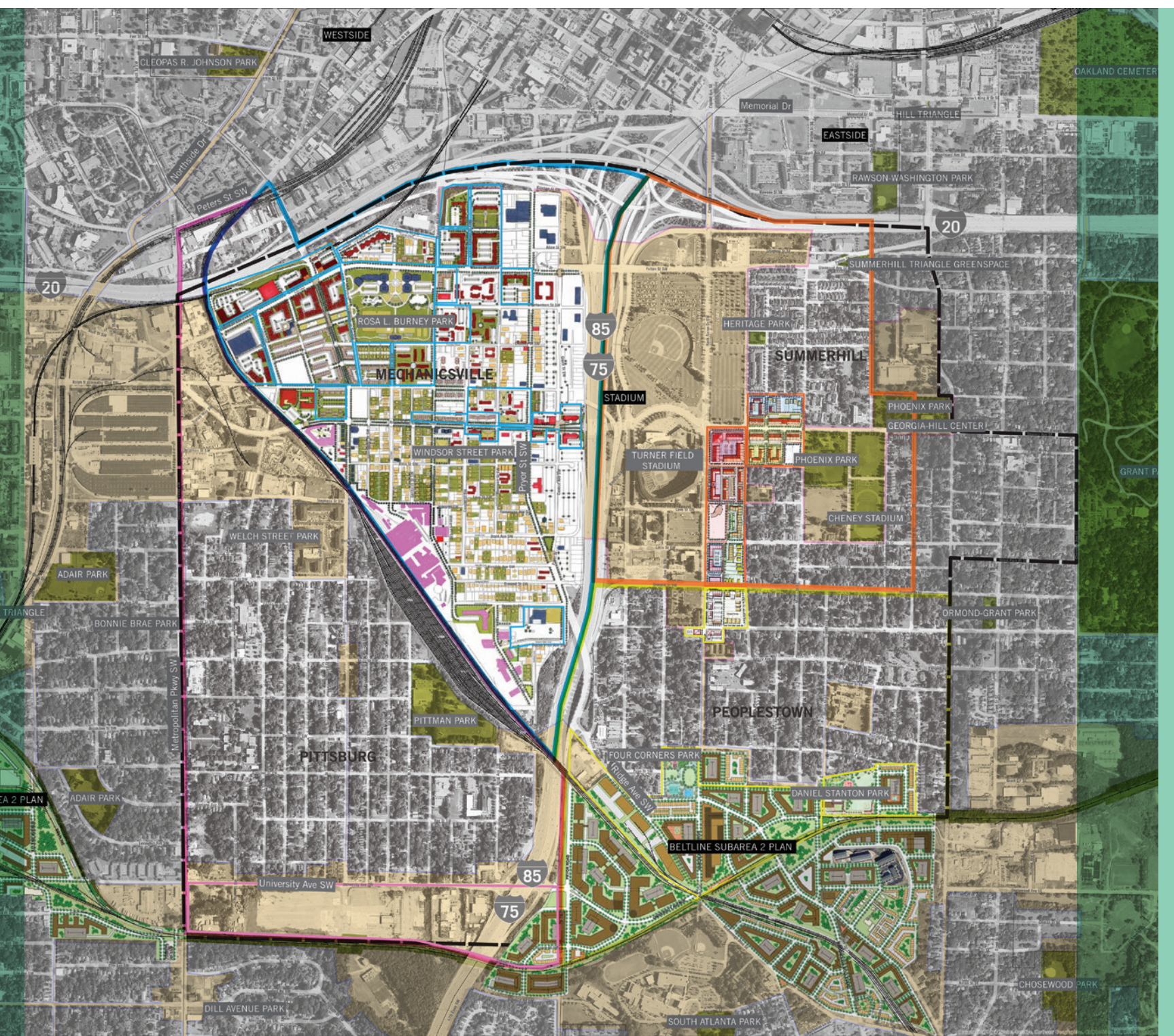
CONNECTIONS TO CULTURE

Every neighborhood comes together at least once a year to celebrate community and reacquaint residents with each other and with shared aspirations. This happens through festivals, block parties, carnivals, clean-ups, gallery walks or any number of events that bring people together formally or informally.

The departure of the Braves means that one cultural asset will be gone. The arrival of GSU however means there is an opening to create more cultural touchpoints than existed before. The LCI process began this transition through the convening of an arts focus group which should live on by organizing individual efforts in each neighborhood and act as a bridge to new happenings in the core.

“A lot of Atlanta was built during the last generation and it took on the attributes of people’s aspiration of that time.”

— TIM KEANE, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



03 | 02 REVISITING THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

Years of urban renewal, declining fortunes and demolition have split the once holistic near south side into neighborhood silos, each with a defensive front toward the city beyond its borders. Individual Community Redevelopment Plans, in addition to the Comprehensive Development Plan, are the official policy documents to guide their futures. This LCI is a platform to change the status quo and provide further guidance on policies and recommendations.

The planning team took the process to each neighborhood to discuss three things: how the core area development could benefit the neighborhood residents; how the neighborhoods could be better connected to each other while retaining their identities; and how LCI projects could be the basis for new investment. Informational presentations and lively dialogue resulted in a better sense of neighborhood priorities, from public safety to walkable streets to local services. The team encouraged participants to think holistically again, and to take on the task of updating their individual plans using the LCI as their point of departure.

The LCI will provide the foundation for future efforts to update individual neighborhood redevelopment plans.

Opposite page: Previous plans for the LCI Study Area

The **Mechanicsville** neighborhood in partnership with the Enterprise Foundation was the beneficiary of a 2004 Annenberg Foundation grant to update their pre-Olympic redevelopment plan. Done in concert with the HOPE VI redevelopment plan for the Atlanta Housing Authority's McDaniel-Glenn property, the Mechanicsville CRP Update is the most recent official policy document on record. Since then, much of the land identified for large-scale redevelopment has been cleared or improved, and incremental redevelopment advanced through the efforts of SUMMECH, the local community development corporation. Even though the 2004 CRP Update is more similar to an LCI than either Summerhill or Peoplestown, this effort represents a much needed invigoration of Mechanicsville's planning landscape.

**MECHANICSVILLE
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
UPDATE**

Pittsburgh is in the final stages of completing their most recent planning document, *Preservation of Pittsburgh*. Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Pittsburgh has had more follow-up efforts since their initial urban redevelopment plan was completed in 2001.

Preservation of Pittsburgh integrates prior plans and related planning for Beltline Subarea 1 into one comprehensive document that has specific recommendations for housing, economic development and transportation as well as standards for urban design and sustainability. Community engagement centered on a week-long design charrette with a resident leadership team providing ongoing guidance. This plan will be adopted by City Council over the next few months.

**PITTSBURGH
COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

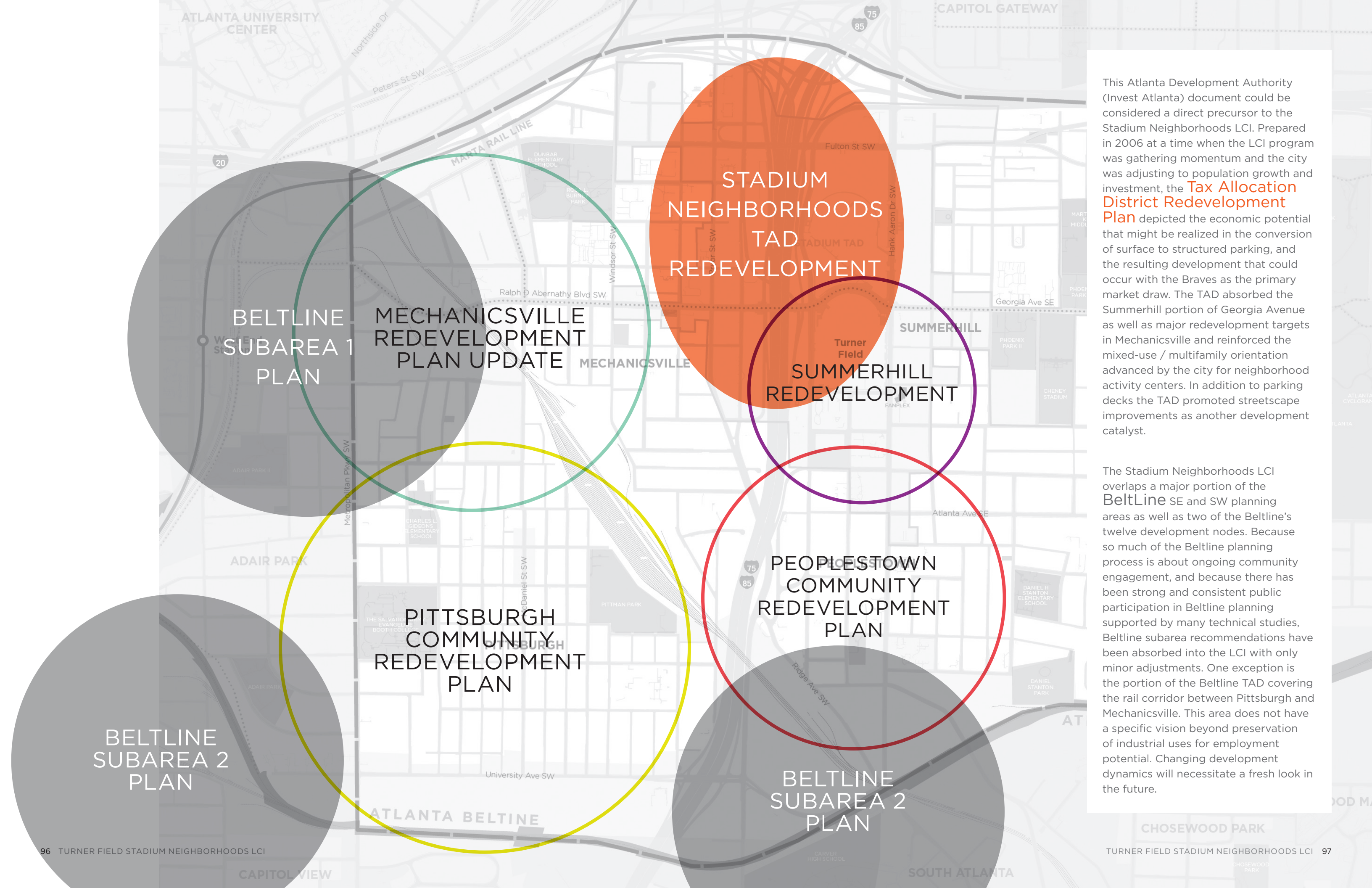
**SUMMERHILL
REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN UPDATE**

**PEOPLESTOWN
COMMUNITY
REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN**

Summerhill is dominated by Turner Field and related parking, and so most of the recent planning for the neighborhood has been dictated by conversations over the future of the stadium. The most recent city-adopted plan on record is the 2006 update to the 1993 pre-Olympic urban redevelopment plan. This document paralleled the 2006 Stadium TAD Redevelopment Plan and set in motion CDP land use and quality-of-life zoning changes, most significantly the MRC-3C that governs development on the Turner Field parking lots. The plan recommended housing redevelopment projects throughout the neighborhood.

More recently, Park Pride worked with the Summerhill neighborhood to prepare a parks vision plan. The primary recommendations include significant improvements to Phoenix Park II and III, renovation of Heritage Park, major new parks in the Turner Field redevelopment, and a green connection spanning I- 75/85. These vision plan elements are integrated into the LCI.

Like Summerhill, **Peoplestown** was impacted by Olympic planning and the Stadium TAD. The 2006 update to the 1996 Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) is similar to the Summerhill update in that it proposes land use and zoning changes to reflect the importance of a new vision for Hank Aaron Drive. However, Peoplestown also includes a major portion of Beltline Subarea 2 and the CRP update reflects that planning precedent by factoring in mixed-use / transit oriented development as well as light industrial flanking the active railroad corridor. Beltline planning continued with the 2009 Peoplestown Parks Master Plan which led to major improvements to DL Stanton Park. Additional park projects were validated by the LCI process and are reflected in the action plan.



STADIUM NEIGHBORHOODS TAD REDEVELOPMENT

SUMMERHILL REDEVELOPMENT

PEOPLESTOWN COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

MECHANICSVILLE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

BELTLINE SUBAREA 1 PLAN

BELTLINE SUBAREA 2 PLAN

BELTLINE SUBAREA 2 PLAN

This Atlanta Development Authority (Invest Atlanta) document could be considered a direct precursor to the Stadium Neighborhoods LCI. Prepared in 2006 at a time when the LCI program was gathering momentum and the city was adjusting to population growth and investment, the **Tax Allocation District Redevelopment Plan** depicted the economic potential that might be realized in the conversion of surface to structured parking, and the resulting development that could occur with the Braves as the primary market draw. The TAD absorbed the Summerhill portion of Georgia Avenue as well as major redevelopment targets in Mechanicsville and reinforced the mixed-use / multifamily orientation advanced by the city for neighborhood activity centers. In addition to parking decks the TAD promoted streetscape improvements as another development catalyst.

The Stadium Neighborhoods LCI overlaps a major portion of the **BeltLine** SE and SW planning areas as well as two of the Beltline's twelve development nodes. Because so much of the Beltline planning process is about ongoing community engagement, and because there has been strong and consistent public participation in Beltline planning supported by many technical studies, Beltline subarea recommendations have been absorbed into the LCI with only minor adjustments. One exception is the portion of the Beltline TAD covering the rail corridor between Pittsburgh and Mechanicsville. This area does not have a specific vision beyond preservation of industrial uses for employment potential. Changing development dynamics will necessitate a fresh look in the future.

“My favorite thing about my neighborhood is the public library”

— ANNETTE WRIGHT, PEOPLESTOWN RESIDENT



03 | 03 NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Atlanta is a city of neighborhoods forged by early settlement and streetcar infrastructure, hardened by urban renewal and sometimes uncontextual developments. Consistent with national trends that plagued inner cities in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the five stadium neighborhoods experienced common challenges that drove them to a heightened sense of self-awareness and preservation. Direct representation in the city’s planning processes through the NPU system was productive, but it also meant that while each neighborhood got a degree of personal attention, it encouraged them to turn into silos.

It is now critical for the neighborhoods to think beyond their borders, to a future of collaboration and partnership with core institutions and businesses. Much of the dialogue at the individual neighborhood workshops probed the challenges and opportunities with becoming Stadium Neighborhoods while preserving their core identities which made them so resilient in the past.

By affirming their individual identities each neighborhood can move toward a common purpose as The Stadium Neighborhoods in the future.

Summerhill

Summerhill is the oldest stadium neighborhood of the five, having been established immediately after the Civil War. While freed slaves were some of the earliest settlers, the neighborhood evolved into diverse mix of African-Americans and whites - particularly the Jewish immigrant community that was critical in founding institutions like Piedmont Hospital and Rich's. Those who know Summerhill know it was also once home to icons like Mayor Sam Massell and builder Herman Russell.

Today, Summerhill's cultural identity is linked to the Olympics and Braves baseball, with Hank Aaron's record-breaking achievement still as fresh as it was in 1974. Despite the burden of game day congestion, Summerhill residents identify with cheering fans and fireworks over Turner Field as much as they do with front porches and families. They are also proud of their superb view of Downtown and their Olympic legacy monuments.

It will be important in the future to support art installations like Living Walls and restore or recontextualize the Olympic monuments including Turner Field which many residents consider a work of art. Festivals are also a big part of Summerhill's character, and places like Phoenix Park and FanPlex will be essential to keeping the Summerhill community together, involved and energized.

Georgia Avenue was once the commercial center of the neighborhood. Its revitalization will bring much needed services.



Showcase of Summerhill's culture and identity as seen by various residents and visitors. Instagram #summerhillatl



Showcase of Peoplestown's culture and identity as seen by various residents and visitors. Instagram #peoplestown

Peoplestown

Peoplestown owes its name to the Peoples family, whose large land holdings were developed in the 1880s into an early streetcar suburb centered on the Capitol Avenue line. Like other Atlanta neighborhoods, Peoplestown was racially segregated with African-Americans occupying more modest homes in the eastern half and whites living in the blocks bound by Little to the north and Kendrick to the south. With the construction of Interstate 75/85 the prestigious Washington Street area was heavily impacted by demolition; and environmental issues on industrial land along the rail lines in the southern end of the neighborhood further affected Peoplestown's fortunes.

Perhaps because of this, resilience and community spirit drives Peoplestown's identity today. The center of the neighborhood is unquestionably Four Corners Park and the adjacent Emmaus House, where much of the civil rights activism and community self-help was anchored. McGruder's Grocery and DH Stanton Park along the BeltLine also fill an important cultural and recreational role in this core.

Short of achieving the kind of transformation associated with the Beltline buildout, the most important projects in Peoplestown have to do with realizing the Parks Vision Plan and strengthening Hank Aaron Drive as the neighborhood's signature street. Providing a place where residents can express themselves, like a portion of the brownfield land along Boynton Avenue, will be important to maintaining the heart of this community.



Pittsburgh

The Pegram Shops of the Southern Railway played a formative role in two LCI neighborhoods. As the largest locomotive servicing facility between Washington DC and New Orleans, Pegram provided the area with good paying jobs as well as abundant coal smoke, inspiring the name Pittsburgh after the Smoky City of steel. However unlike its neighborhood Mechanicsville, Pittsburg was literally and figuratively the “other side of the tracks” where houses were smaller and incomes lower.

As a result of its relative isolation, Pittsburgh developed and maintained the trappings of a small town complete with a main street (McDaniel), dense housing, small lots, factories, schools, and several institutions including two seminaries and Clark College. This richness carries through to the neighborhood’s identity today, compounded by the BeltLine, the Kroc Center and the major redevelopment opportunity at the Annie E. Casey University Avenue site.

Pittsburgh probably contains more small-scale cultural interventions than any other LCI neighborhood. This includes garden plots, murals, folk architecture and the like. Combined with the narrow streets and small blocks it gives the feeling of a tight-knit place even though many of the properties are boarded up or in disrepair. Improving McDaniel Street to focus the neighborhood’s energy and identity will help it evolve with a sense of purpose, much as Carroll Street does for Cabbagetown.



Showcase of Pittsburgh’s culture and identity as seen by various residents and visitors. Instagram #pittsburghatl

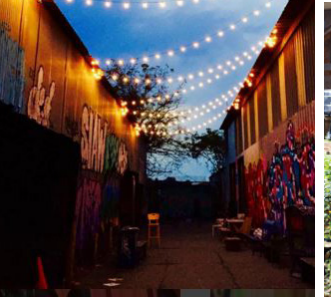


Mechanicsville

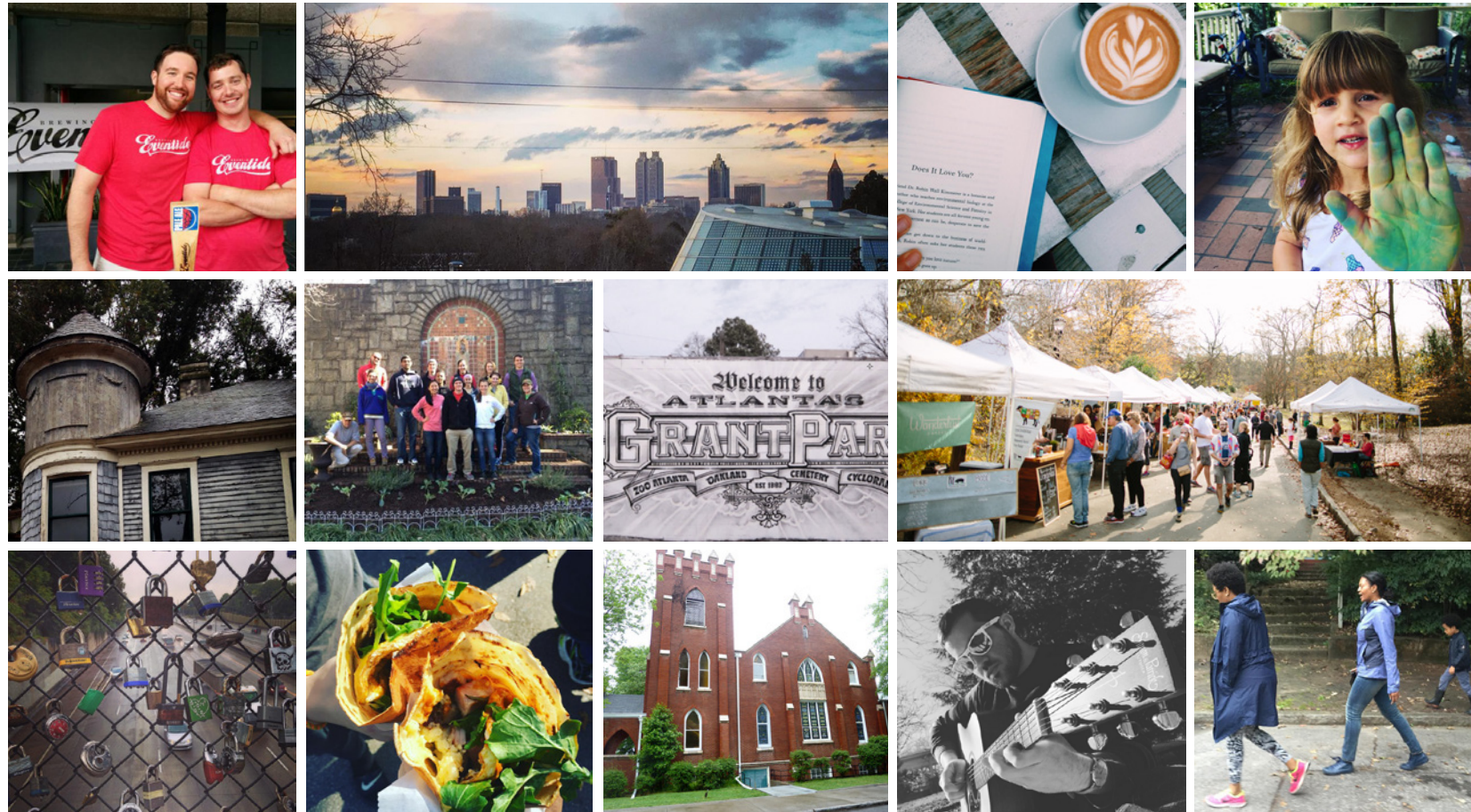
Also indebted to the railroad for its name, Mechanicsville was able to claim Pegram Shops as its own. Its residents formed the bulk of the shops' skilled workforce and consequently the neighborhood was more wealthy and diverse than Pittsburgh. Mechanicsville also had Pryor Street as the equivalent to Washington and Capitol, with a similar population of middle-class Jewish immigrants.

Interstate construction and stadium parking claimed almost as much of Mechanicsville as Summerhill. Added to this was the blighting effect of outdated public housing. Most of Mechanicsville's residents now identify with the history of the shops and workers, and with the remaining historic buildings along Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard.

Yet the Dunbar Center, Rosa Burney Park and the new mixed-income conversion of AHA's McDaniel Glenn is adding another emerging dimension to Mechanicsville's identity. The loft renovation of several warehouse buildings plus the planned Atlanta Lettuce Works urban farm is taking the culture of Mechanicsville in a new direction. Linking these developments to the neighborhood's industrial history will distinguish it from its LCI partners.



Showcase of Mechanicsville's culture and identity as seen by various residents and visitors. Instagram #mechanicsville



Showcase of Grant Park's culture and identity as seen by various residents and visitors. Instagram #grantparkatl

Grant Park

Only a small portion of Grant Park is included in the LCI planning area. Those familiar with Atlanta however know that Grant Park is one of the earliest suburban expansions in the city, and that it was at the forefront of the neighborhood revitalization renaissance of the 1980s and 1990s. The character and identity of the neighborhood is inseparable from its namesake park, Atlanta's Zoo and from the historic homes and architecture, many of which are marked with the Grant Park Neighborhood Association sunburst.

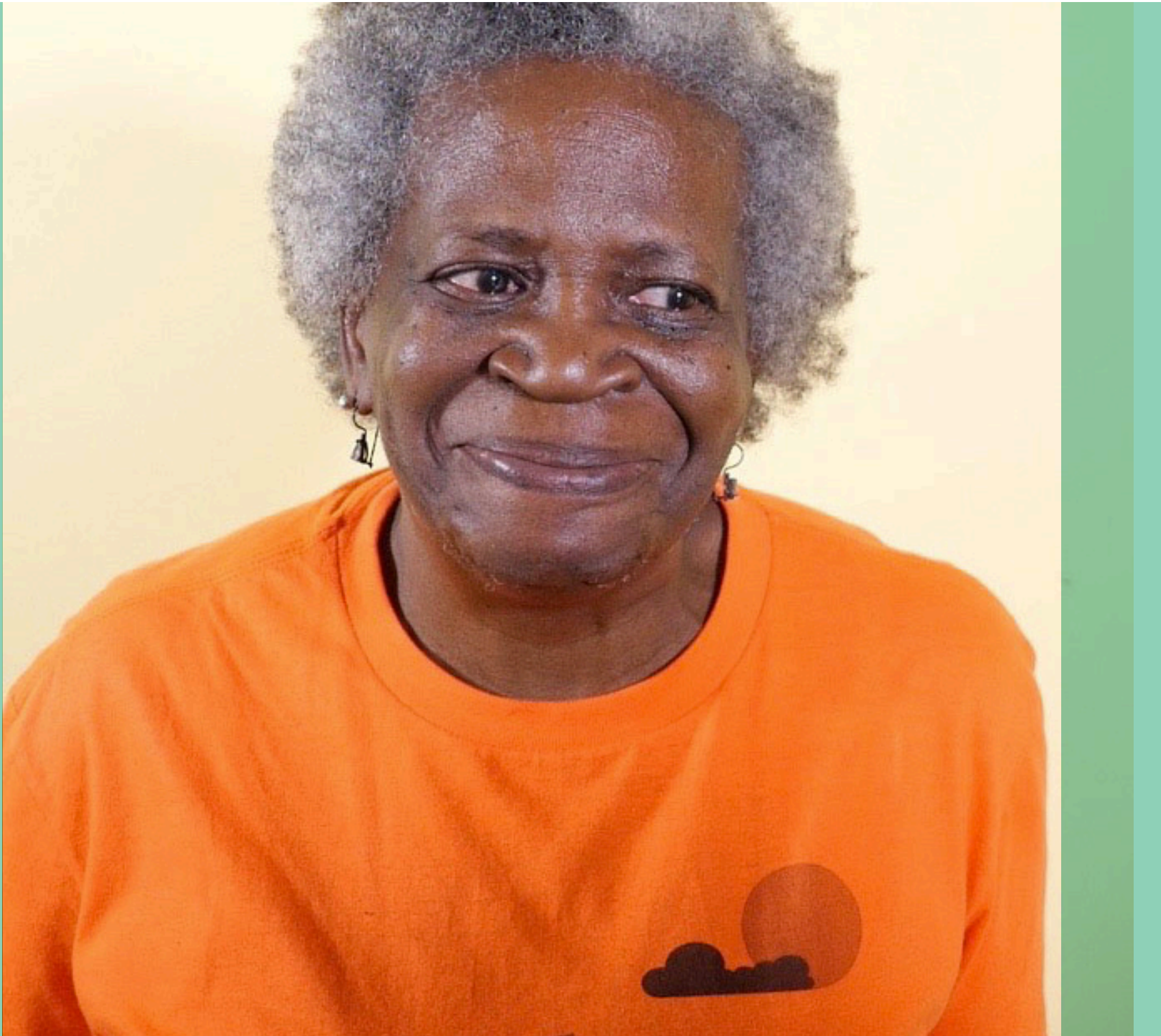
Grant Park is also the only LCI neighborhood to extend north of I-20, with the result that many residents claim Memorial Drive restaurants and Oakland Cemetery as their own. Yet new events like Farmer's Market and institutions like the Neighborhood Charter School are expanding what Atlantans think of when they think of Grant Park

Far from needing to cultivate an identity, Grant Park has so many cultural resources that it can afford to share them with other LCI neighborhoods. Grant Park stakeholders can be active participants in the transformation of Georgia Avenue retail district; and the GPNO can continue to support the Grant Park Conservancy so that it can expand its efforts on the park's natural and historic landscapes, benefitting the entire LCI area.



“I would like to see this neighborhood going back to the original state that it was before 75, the Olympics and other things. Peoplestown, Mechanicsville and other neighborhoods were within walking distance and people interacted.”

— YASIN OFUNMUYIWA EFUNDELE, SUMMERHILL RESIDENT



03 | **04** ISSUES, ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

Three months of public commentary took place before the planning team invited individual conversations with each neighborhood. During that period there was an outpouring of thought ranging from expressions of anxiety to hopes for more resources and better security, to questions regarding the LCI process, efficacy and development timeline. Many of these themes were echoed in the neighborhood workshops and a host of new ones were raised.

The maps on the following pages aggregate neighborhood comments and suggestions into three categories – transportation / connectivity, land use / development, and open space. These categories remained consistent across all neighborhood workshops, using the early input as the point of departure. While many conversations included topics and recommendations that were part of prior plans, the participants all reoriented themselves to the new reality of a dense and dynamic core and what that meant for their neighborhood's evolution.

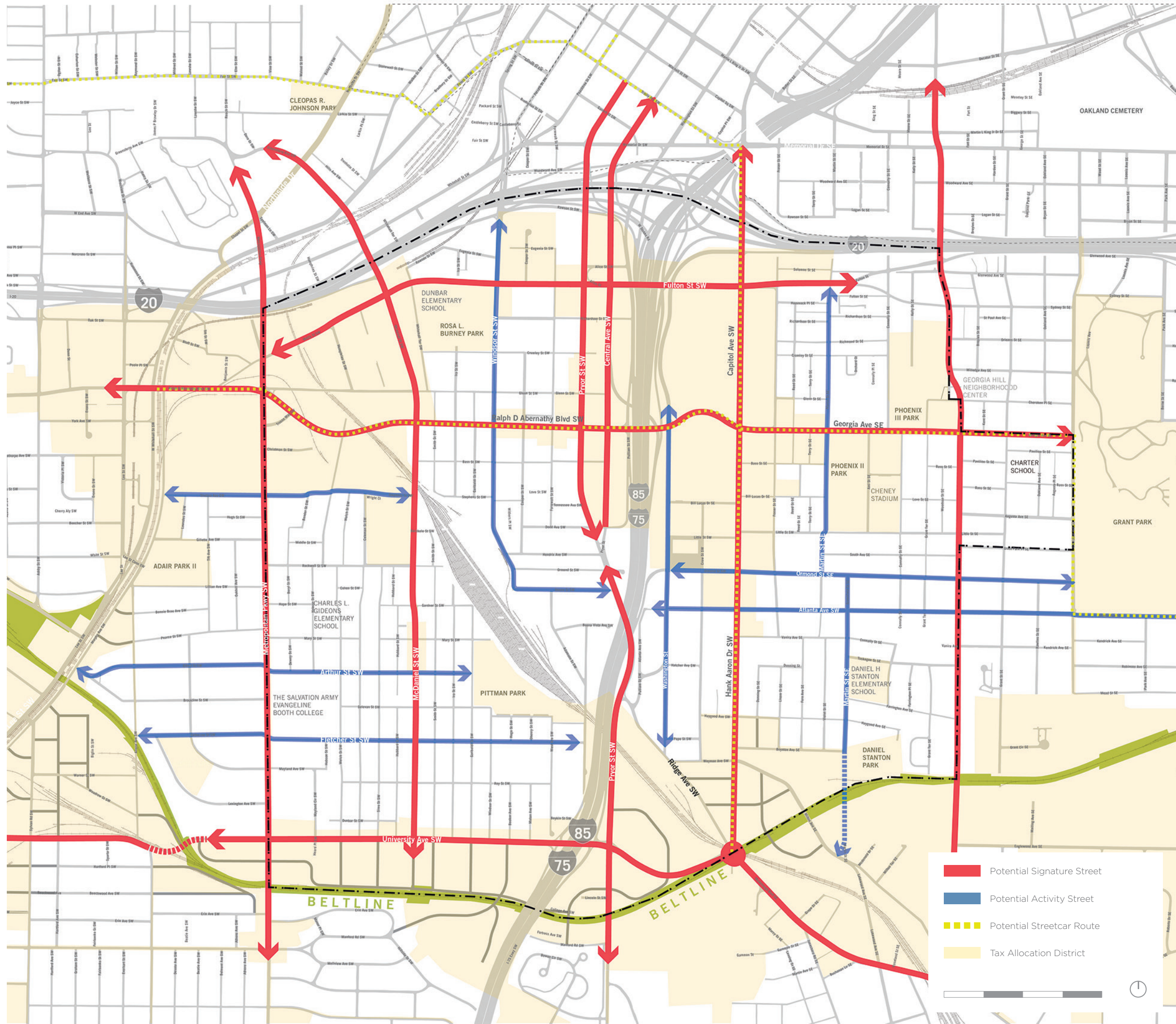
Enhancing connectivity between neighborhoods and back to the core area was paramount in the minds of stakeholders..

activity st
vs
signature st

Neighborhood Suggestions Transportation

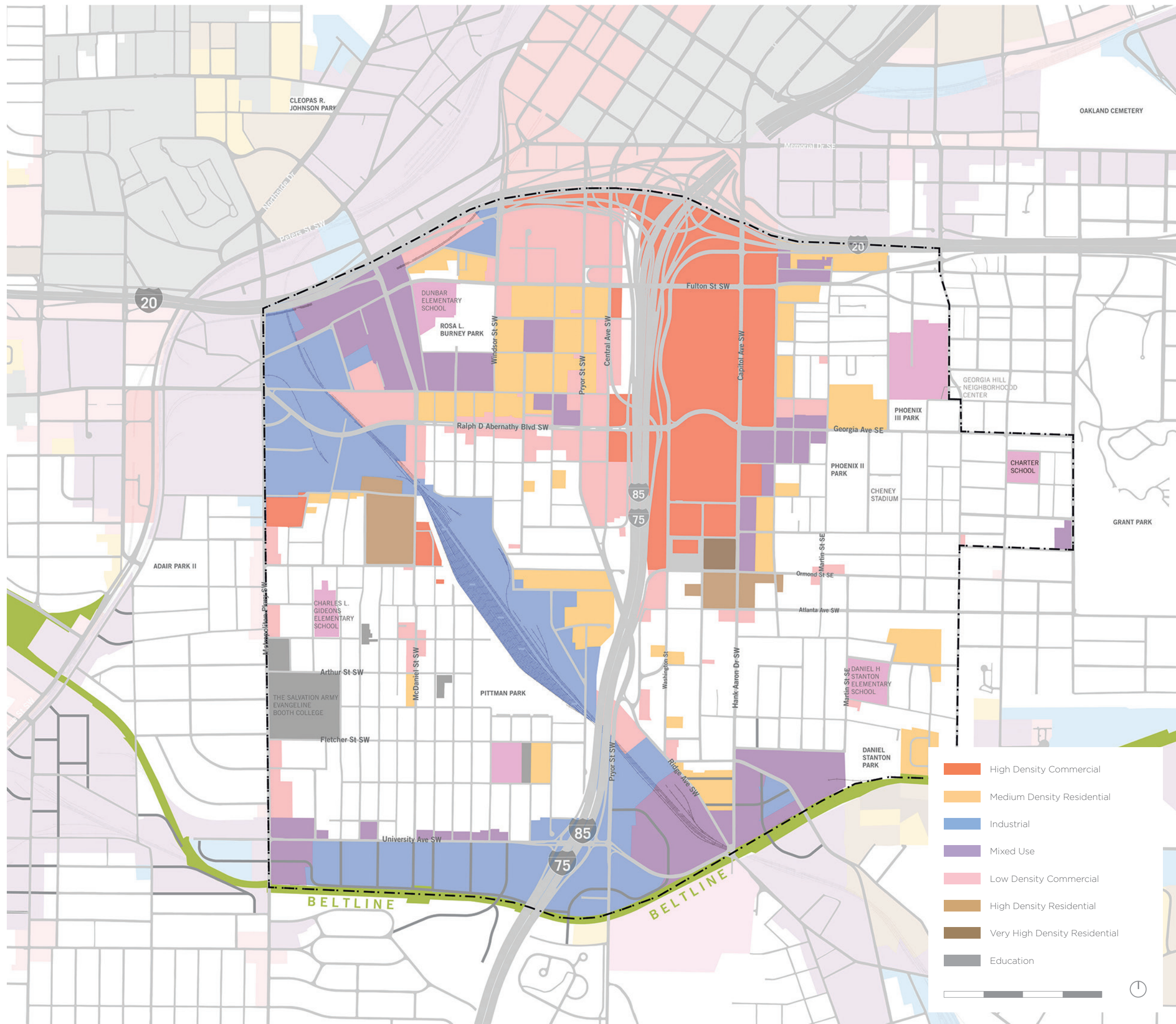
- Need traffic calming around Stanton Elementary in Peoplestown
- Support for two-way conversion of Atlanta Avenue
- Use Peachtree/West Peachtree as a model for Pryor/Central
- Address unsafe vehicular patterns at Spring Street underpass
- Add streetscapes to Glenn Street (Mechanicsville) and Garibaldi Street (Pittsburgh)
- Improve RR crossing at Fortress Street
- Better bike/ped connections to Capitol View library
- General pedestrian safety
- Transit/Streetcar should go down Milton Avenue and not Hank Aaron Drive to BeltLine
- Arthur Street, Fletcher Street and Shelton Avenue were identified as secondary streets to be considered for streetscape improvements at a later phase
- Reestablish McDaniel Street as a neighborhood commercial street

LCI Study Area Connectivity Analysis Map used by the planning team during the neighborhood workshops for feedback and discussion.



Neighborhood Suggestions Land Use and Development

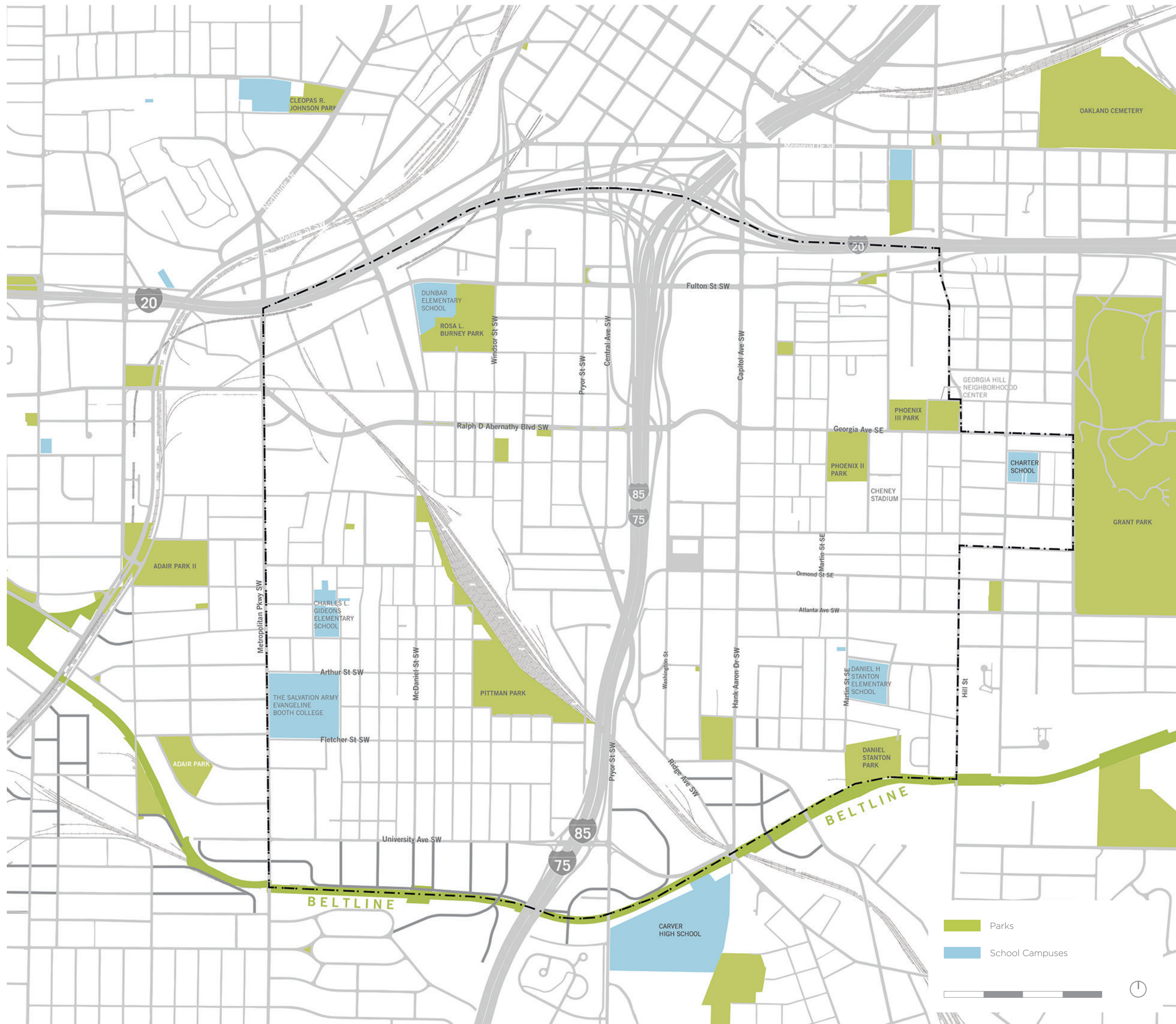
- Rehabilitation of Georgia Avenue storefronts a priority
- Medium-density mixed-use/residential in Summerhill north of Fulton
- More housing, possible grocery store in Mechanicsville north of Fulton
- Include neighborhood retail in future development along Pryor Street
- Preserve “grand houses” along Hank Aaron
- Improve/redevelop low density housing along Grant Way in Peoplestown
- Redevelop industrial north of Shelton Avenue in Pittsburgh into loft / entertainment district



LCI Study Area Future Land Use Map used by the planning team during the neighborhood workshops for feedback and discussion.

Neighborhood Suggestions Open Space

- Need community recreation center in Peoplestown
- Art/sculpture park at Boynton Avenue site
- Clean/improve overgrown parcel along Fortress Street
- Pittman Park needs improvement - better lighting, parking and cameras
- Activate back edge of Pittman Park with street or greenway
- Coordinate use of vacant land adjacent to Cheney Stadium with APS
- Prioritize BeltLine access
- Improve street connectivity to Stanton Park



LCI Study Area Open Space Network Map used by the planning team during the neighborhood workshops for feedback and discussion.