



# An Overview of Choice Neighborhoods

Georgia Planning Association of APA  
2013 Fall Conference  
*October 10, 2013, Jekyll Island*

**APA  
GA** Young Planners Group  
Georgia Chapter of APA

## Agenda

- What is the Young Planners Group?
- Panel Introduction
- What is Choice Neighborhoods?
- What are the Core CN Goals?
- Typical Planning Process
- Community Participation – CN Stakeholders
- CN Outcomes
  - Neighborhood Transformation Plan
  - Housing Strategies *Jaime Bordenave*
  - Grassroots Initiative *Kwabena Nkromo*



## What is the Young Planners Group?

### Young Planners Group

- NOT AGE RESTRICTED, it is open to emerging planning professionals, students, and experienced planners
- Provides a forum for networking, learning new skills, and above all having fun
- Quarterly newsletters and social meetings
- [www.ypg.georgiaplanning.org](http://www.ypg.georgiaplanning.org)

### Previous events

- End of Summer Social– Braves Game
- Sustainable Planning: What does it mean?
- Historic Fourth Ward Park Tour/Beltline Update
- Sustainable Affordable Housing – The New Trend, 2011 Fall Conference
- Gulch Tour / MMPT Presentation
- Georgia Tech First Friday



## Panel Introduction

**John Skach, AICP, AIA**

*Senior Associate, Urban Collage + Lord Aeck & Sargent*



Introduction to Choice  
Neighborhoods and  
Overall Planning Process

**Jaime Bordenave**

*Founder, President and CEO of The Communities Group*



Housing Strategies

**Kwabena Nkromo**

*Founder and Lead Partner of Atlanta Food and Farm, LLC.*



Grassroots Initiatives in  
the Atlanta CN Area

## What is Choice Neighborhoods?

“The Choice Neighborhoods initiative will transform distressed neighborhoods... into **viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods** by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs... Choice Neighborhood grants will build upon the successes of **public housing transformation under HOPE VI** to provide support for the preservation and rehabilitation of public and HUD-assisted housing, within the context of a **broader approach to concentrated poverty.**”

- **White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)** to support comprehensive transformation
- Built on the **framework of the HOPE VI program**, but focusing on the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhoods as well as a public housing site
- **Five agencies working together** – HUD, Education (ED), Justice (DOJ), Treasury, and Health and Human Services (HHS)

## What is Choice Neighborhoods?

### Grants

- **Planning Grants:** Supports the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans focused on transforming public / assisted housing while improving the surrounding neighborhood and creating positive outcomes for families
- **Implementation Grants:** Supports those communities that have undergone a comprehensive local planning process and are ready to implement their Transformation Plan to redevelop the neighborhood

### In Last three years....

- **Planning:** 47 grants (\$250k - \$300k)
- **Implementation:** 9 grants (\$30mm)



## What are the Core CN Goals?

The Plan must develop or acknowledge strategies for:

- **Housing** – focused on public and assisted housing / mixed income settings
  - Energy efficient, mixed-income
  - Physically and financially viable
  - Requires 1:1 replacement, current residents have the right to return
- **People** – focused on residents, and families in the surrounding neighborhood
  - **Cradle-to-college education**
  - Community and Supportive Services: Health and Safety
  - Mobility and employment
- **Neighborhoods** – focused on the neighborhood as a whole
  - High-performing schools
  - Comprehensive social services
  - Quality parks, recreational facilities and other public assets
  - Improved access to jobs, increased economic development



## How is the CN Area Defined?

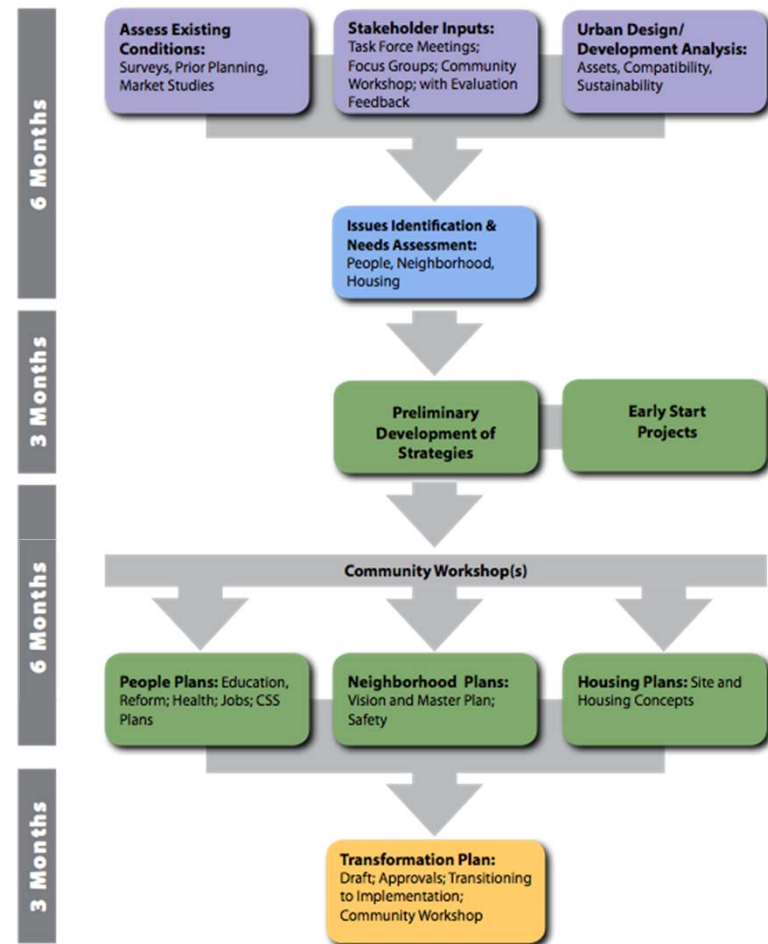
- CN is not defined based on any jurisdiction or neighborhood boundaries
- **HUD's Mapping Tool** : Establishes neighborhood eligibility and helps in assigning points for certain rating factors of the grant application
- **Eligible Neighborhood Threshold:**
  - Poverty Rate: At least 20% of the households estimated to be in poverty
  - Housing Vacancy Rate: At least 1.5 times higher than the city
  - Part 1 Violent Crime
  - Poor Performing Schools
  - CN Area in a Food Desert and Medically Underserved Area
  - Poor walk score





## Typical Planning Process

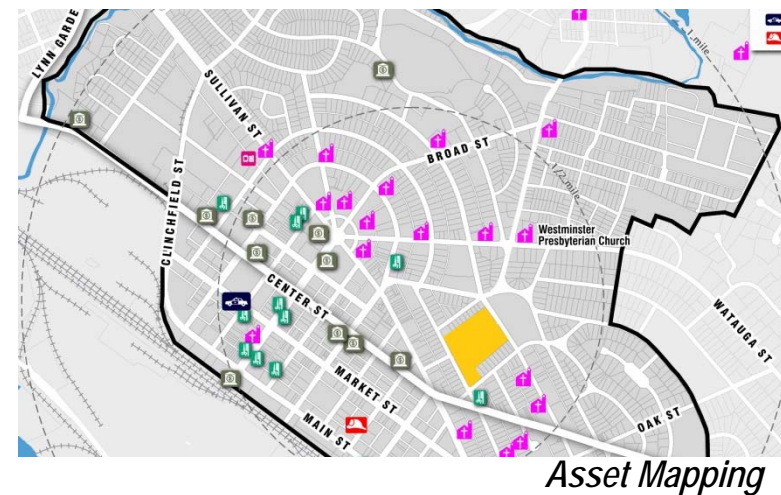
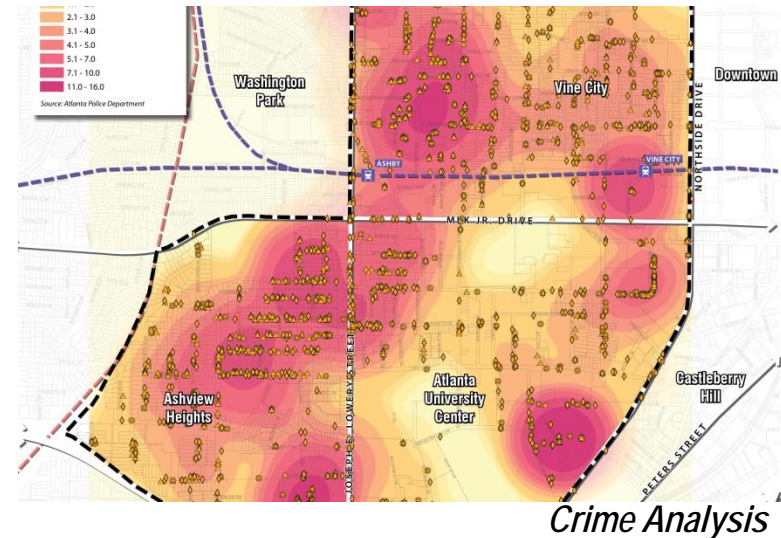
1. Planning Grant Award and HUD Site Visit
2. Research and Data Collection on Planning Context and Market Assessment
3. Identification of Issues, Needs and Opportunities
  - Resident Needs Assessment
  - Other Community Surveys
4. Community Participation
5. Community Visioning / Draft Strategies
6. Neighborhood Transformation Plan
7. Plan Documentation (Measure of Success)



## Research and Data Collection

### List of mapping and research:

- Previous and ongoing planning projects and programs
- Neighborhood history
- CN socio-economic analysis based on Census data and other resources
- Existing physical condition analysis – land utilization, ownership, housing, and public infrastructure (windshield survey and parcel data)
- Identification of blight / distressed areas
- Community assets (developmental, commercial, recreational, educational, and health)
- Crime analysis
- Walkability / accessibility / public transit



## Community Participation

### CN Stakeholders:

- **Planning Grantee** (Housing Authority) leads the overall effort
- **Anchor Institutions:** University/college, Hospital, etc.
- **Steering Committee:** city / county representatives, neighborhood association, PH site leader, local institutions (schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, etc.)
- **Focus Groups:** agencies / organizations related health & wellness, education, safety, economic development
- **Community Stakeholders:** residents of PH site, CN area residents & business owners, community leaders, faith-based institutions, non profit organizations
- **Planning Coordinator**





## Community Participation

### Engagement Tools:

- Regular meetings of CN grantee with the steering committee, focus groups, and community stakeholders
- Presentations, meeting minutes, and summary reports
- Community Outreach
  - CN Website
  - Public workshops / forums
  - Resident Needs Survey & Community Assessment Survey
  - Press releases, mailings, handouts
  - Small community group meetings
  - Web-based community engagement
- Stakeholder capacity-building and knowledge-sharing





## Guiding Principles

- **CLEAR**

The process is easy to understand right from the beginning

- **INCLUSIVE**

Everybody is welcome and encouraged to participate

- **VARIETY**

We'll include lots of different ways for you to join in

- **ACCOMODATING**

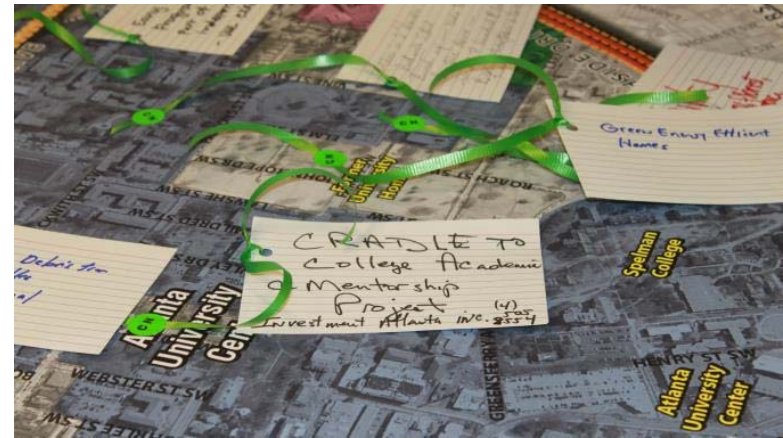
We'll try to consider everyone's busy schedules to make it convenient

- **RESPECTFUL**

There is no right and wrong – everybody has a valid opinion

- **CONSTRUCTIVE**

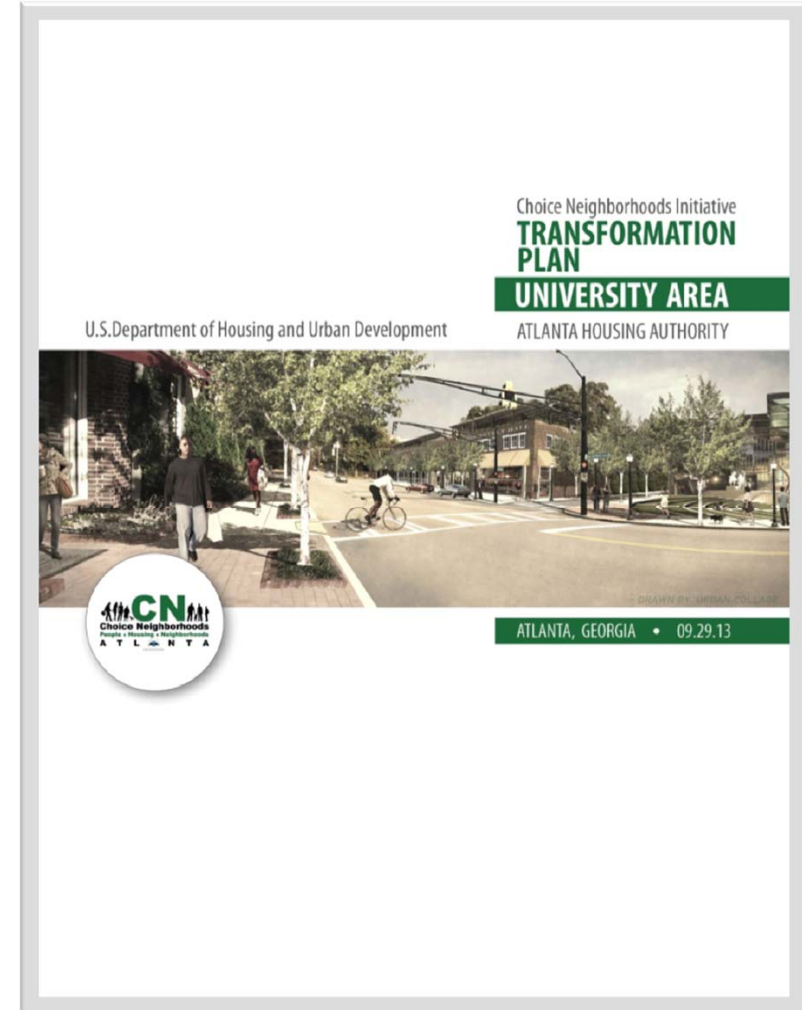
Workshops are to build consensus and to be FUN!



## CN Outcomes

### Neighborhood Transformation Plan

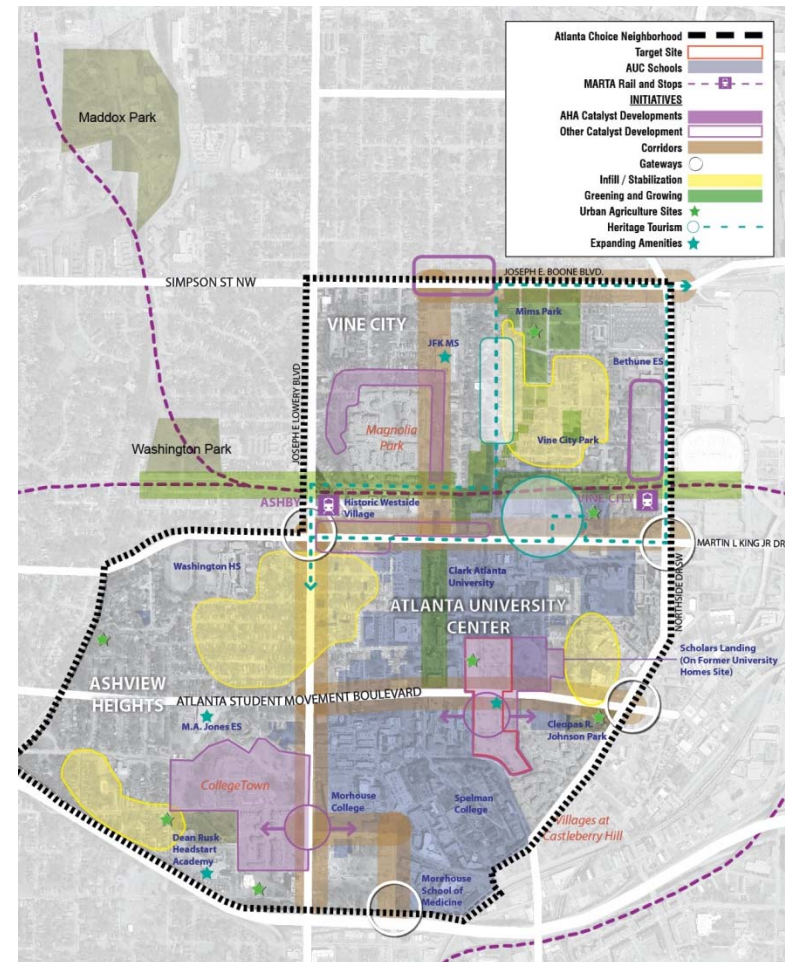
- Executive Summary
- Planning Process
- Neighborhood Context
- Overall Vision for the Neighborhood Transformation
- Neighborhood Plan
- People Plan
- Housing Plan
- Implementing the plan



## Neighborhood Plan Strategies

Coordinate activities related to planning and development of:

- Identification of neighborhood lead
- Neighborhood assets: developmental, commercial, recreational, physical, and social
- Sustainable development (LEED-ND) and infrastructure – sidewalks, corridors and gateways
- Streetscapes and public improvements;
- Transportation access;
- Neighborhood stabilization;
- Public safety measures
- Economic development





## People Plan Strategies

### Implementation strategies related to:

- Relocation and right of return policy
- Supportive services plan
- Identification of the people implementation entity that works collaboratively with the partners
- Education - adult education and literacy, create a world-class cradle-to-career education pipeline
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Health and wellness
- Neighborhood capacity building
- Resident program – supportive service plan, relocation plan and tracking

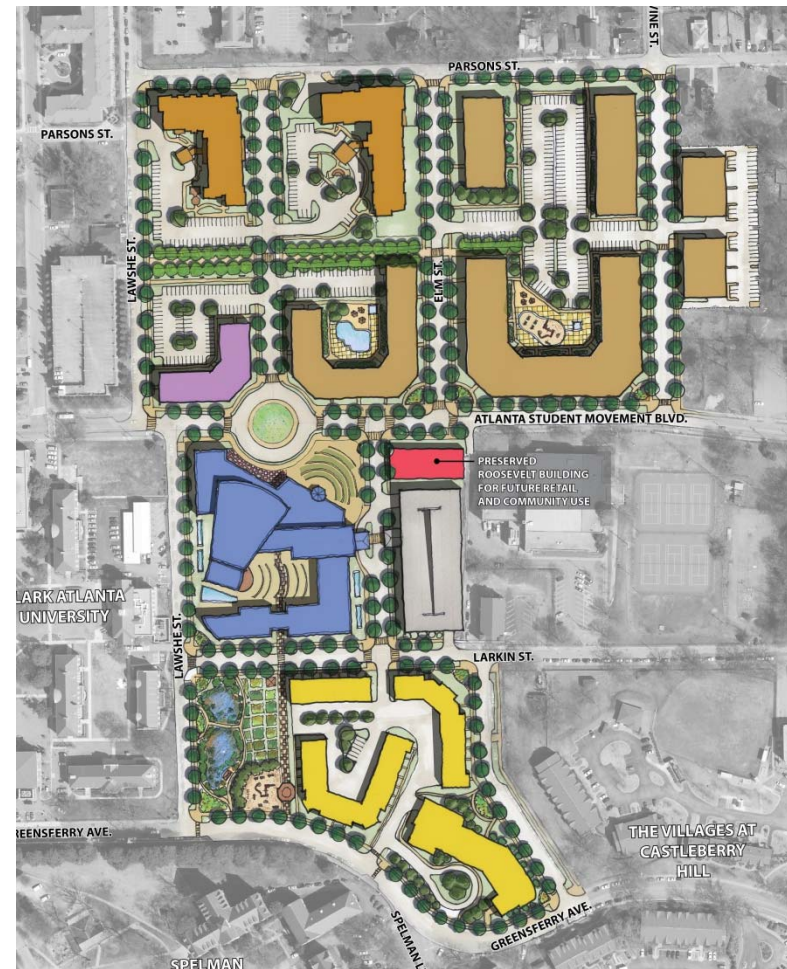




## Housing Plan Strategies

### Implementation strategies related to:

- Identification of housing lead
- Comprehensive housing program
  - Market recommendations
  - Transformation of housing through rehabilitation, preservation, and/or demolition and replacement
- Housing physical plan
  - Target sites master plans
  - Other catalyst housing sites
- Replacement housing plan
- Relocation plan
- Financing and phasing
- Affordable housing preservation
- Fair housing plan
- Green building
- RAD

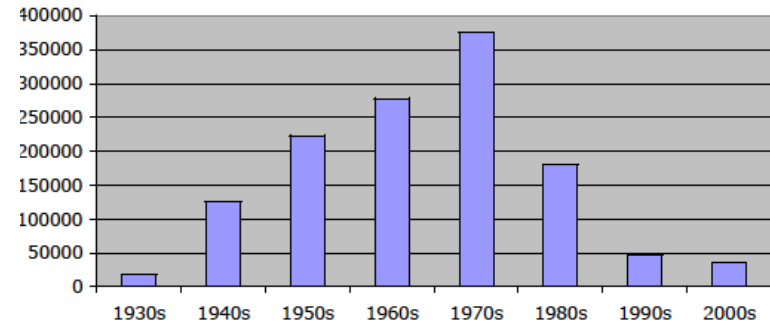


## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Deconcentration of Poverty:

- Typical 1930s public housing site—288 units; 600 projects > 300 units
- Average household income of these 600 projects = \$9,308 per year
- Larger projects have lower incomes
- Strategies include:
  - Multiple smaller sites & projects
  - Mixing of incomes at each site
  - Mixing of tenure
  - In-fill homeownership
  - Tie-ins to economic development and resident case management to address barriers to employability

Development of Public Housing



Average HH Income Correlated to Project Size

Size of Development	Family >70%	Seniors
500+ Units	\$5,428	\$10,981
250 to 500	\$7,297	\$10,480
200-250	\$7,492	\$9,299
100-200	\$9,224	\$9,824
<100	\$12,028	\$10,531

## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Mix of Incomes:

- Target each replacement site with mix of:
  - Returning assisted households (<30% AMI)
  - Affordable rental (40-60% AMI)
  - Workforce housing (60-80%)
  - Market Rate if supported by market study and stage of development
  - Larger sites to include phase(s) of homeownership, also at multiple income tiers
- In-Fill Replacement
- Project-Base RAD vouchers at other existing sites (e.g., newer tax credit developments)

### XVII. Development Tax Credit Rents:

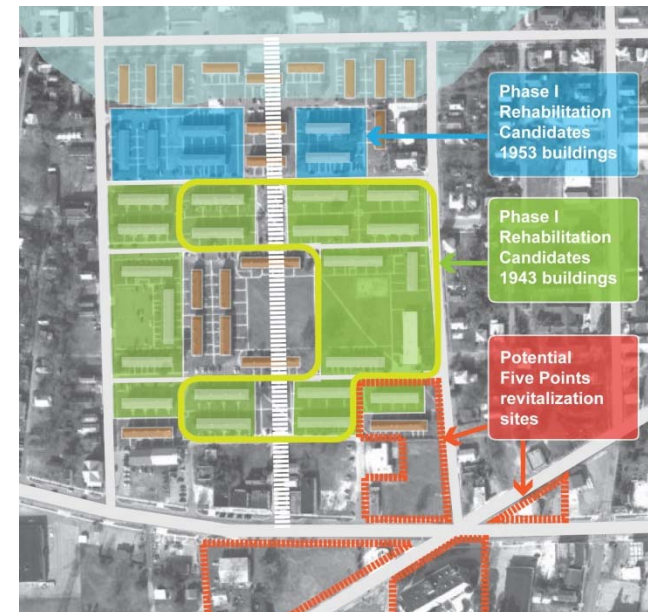
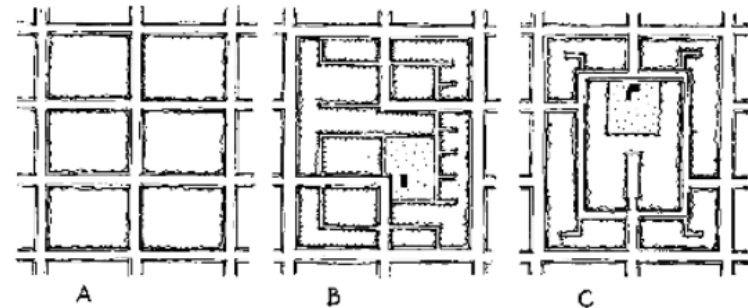
List the maximum applicable affordable housing tax credit rents for the development location:

	0-BDR	1-BDR	2-BDR	3-BDR	4-BDR
30% of Area Median Income	\$0	\$341	\$410	\$0	\$0
50% of Area Median Income	\$0	\$569	\$682	\$0	\$0
60% of Area Median Income	\$0	\$683	\$819	\$0	\$0

## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Address Site Plan Issues:

- Typical “competitive” site requires demolition and new development:
  - Address density
  - Provide adequate parking
  - Remove “super-blocks”
  - Re-knit into neighborhood -connectivity
  - New Urbanism
  - Walkability
  - Address storm water management & flood zones
  - Crime prevention through environmental design
  - Adequate open space and recreation

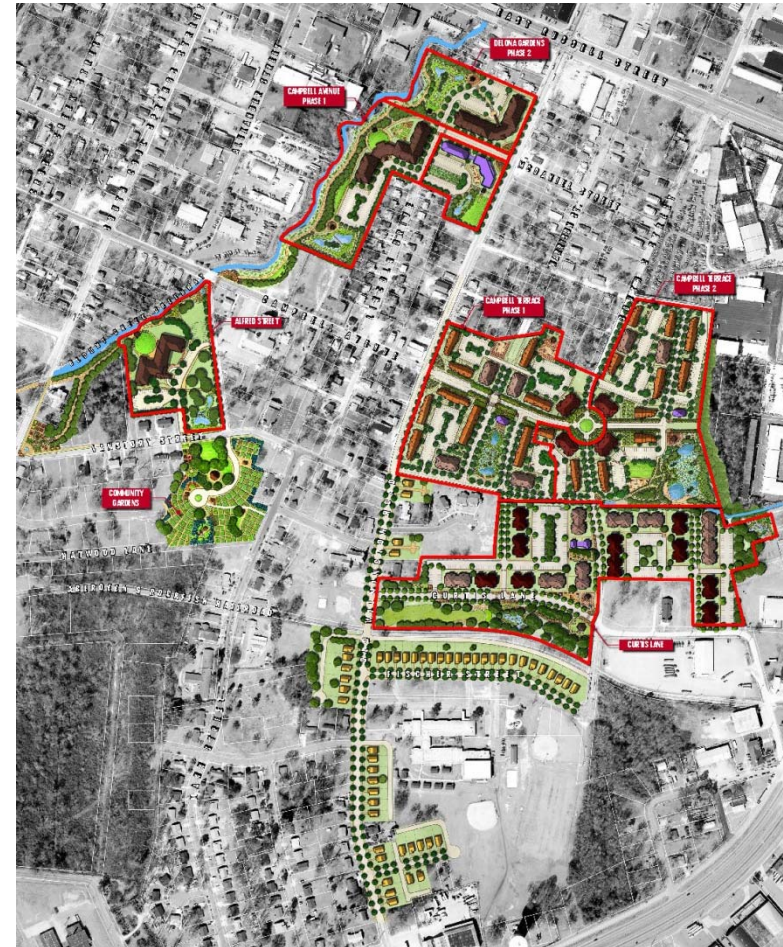




## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Development is Planned in Phases:

- Start development offsite
- Relocation planning is important
  - Coordination with school system
  - Tie-in to supportive services plans
  - Track all households & maintain communications
- Project size and phasing is tied to Funding and Funding Cycles
- Removal of Blight helps show movement
- Demolition can be catalytic
- Plan for critical mass and leverage



## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Site Master Plan:

- Housing Mix
  - Family Rental
  - Senior Rental
  - Homeownership
- CSS Facilities
- Open Space
- Re-connecting to the neighborhood –streets, housing types, services





## Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

### Address non-assisted neighborhood housing conditions:

- Enlist partners—City; Non-profits; Churches; CDCs; Community Land Trusts and Land Banks
- City is vital partner for this element—they have “ownership” of the neighborhood
  - Code enforcement
  - CDBG and HOME funding
- Land assembly is lengthy process—clouded titles; irregular and small lot sizes; “hold-out” owners wanting unrealistic prices



Northside Model Block Conceptual Plan  
INFILL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FEET 0 25 50 75 100 125 150 NORTH  
DRAFT FOR REVIEW DATE: September 10, 2012  
CITY OF SPARTANBURG • SPARTANBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY • NORTHSIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
PREPARED BY: URSAN GILLASE, INC.

## Housing Plan Strategies—Financing

### Multiple Sources Must be Used:

- Choice to be planned “with or without” major HUD grant
- Even with Choice grant, leverage of 2 to 3 times is needed to be competitive
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits is the most critical finance source
  - 9% credits are best, but competitive
  - 4% credits are good, non-competitive, and a lesser resource
  - 4% credits work well with RAD
- Many other sources typically used
  - Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
  - Local waivers: hook-up fees; permits
  - City sources: Transfer tax funds; inclusionary zoning; CDBG; HOME
  - Federal Home Loan Bank Board’s Affordable Housing Program

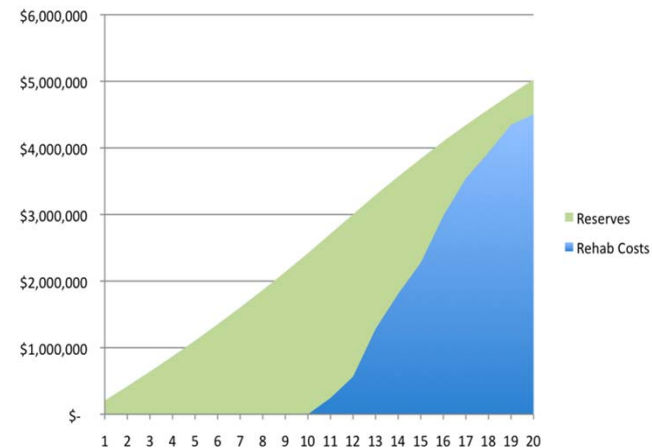
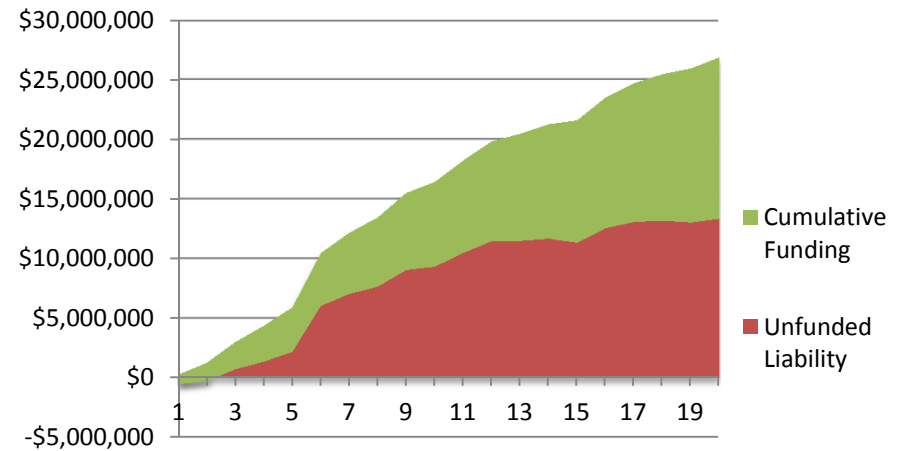
- Public Housing Financing: HOPE VI; Choice Neighborhoods; CFFP; Replacement Housing Factor Funds; Project-Based Section 8; Section 8 Homeownership
- Private mortgage financing
- Tax-exempt bond financing
- Public funding through HUD, Treasury, and State Housing Finance Agencies
- Tax Increment Financing / TAD
- Subordinate financing
- Loan guarantees
- Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)
- Credit enhancement
- Home buyer second mortgage assistance
- Equity investment in low-income, historic, and New Markets tax credits
- Foundation and government grants
- Funding for community services



## Housing Plan Strategies—RAD as New Resource

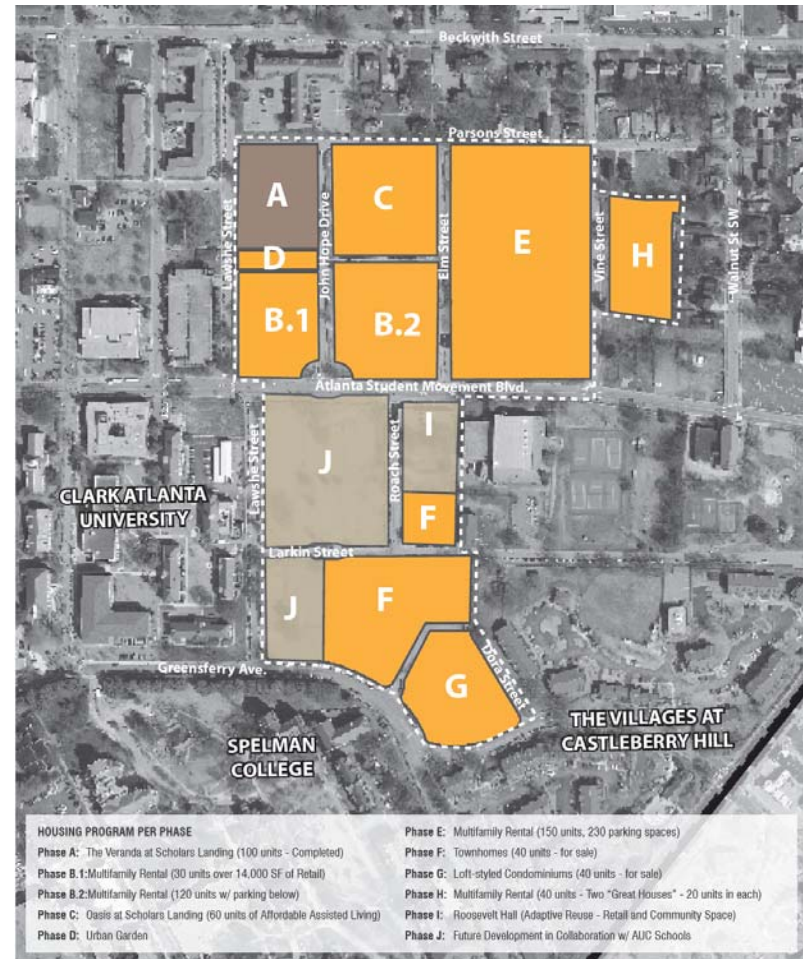
### Rental Assistance Demonstration Program:

- 60,000 units available initially
- Privatizes public housing and can recapitalize existing Project-Based Section 8 assisted housing
- Permits borrowing against property & leveraging
- Much more stable and higher level of subsidy
- Extremely flexible program (in HUD context)
  - Vouchers can be transferred to other sites
  - Can be combined with Choice grant funds on same project
  - Demolition approval from HUD not required



## Implementing the Plan

- Governance structure
- Partners roles and responsibilities, leverage resources
- On-going resident and community participation
- Budget / Financing strategies
- Implementation process and schedule
- Land use approvals and site control
- Data collection and use/performance tracking and management



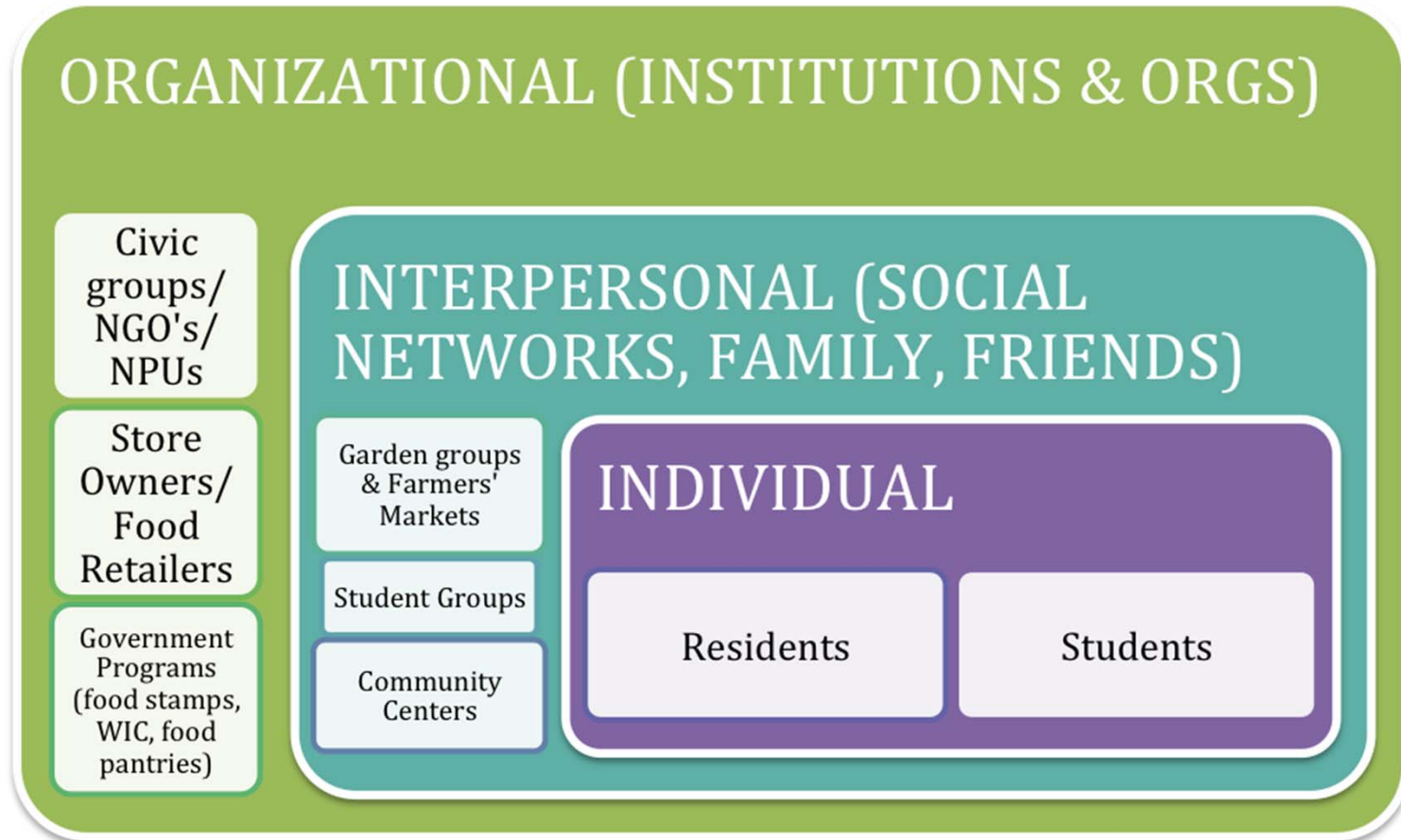
## Grassroots Initiatives

*"It's about providing a 'mustard seed' of community change for the better, if the people have a mind to"*

- Atlanta Food & Farm (AF2) established in 2011
- Planners & project developers for local food & urban agriculture
- Multi-sectoral partnerships --> HUD grant - Atlanta Housing Authority, Urban Collage



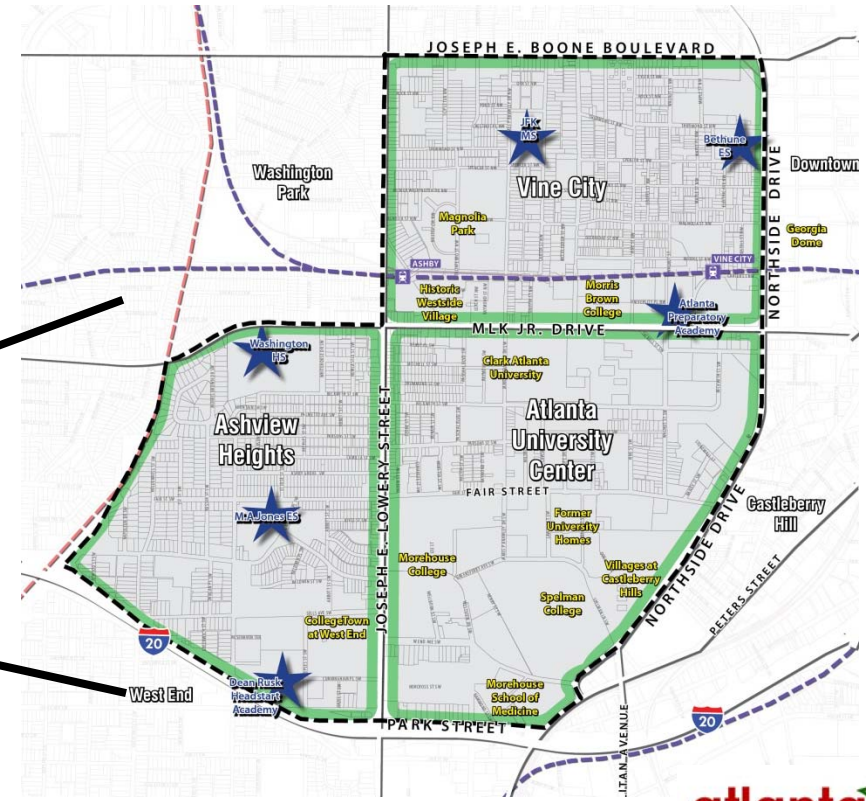
## Socio-Ecological Framework for Assessment



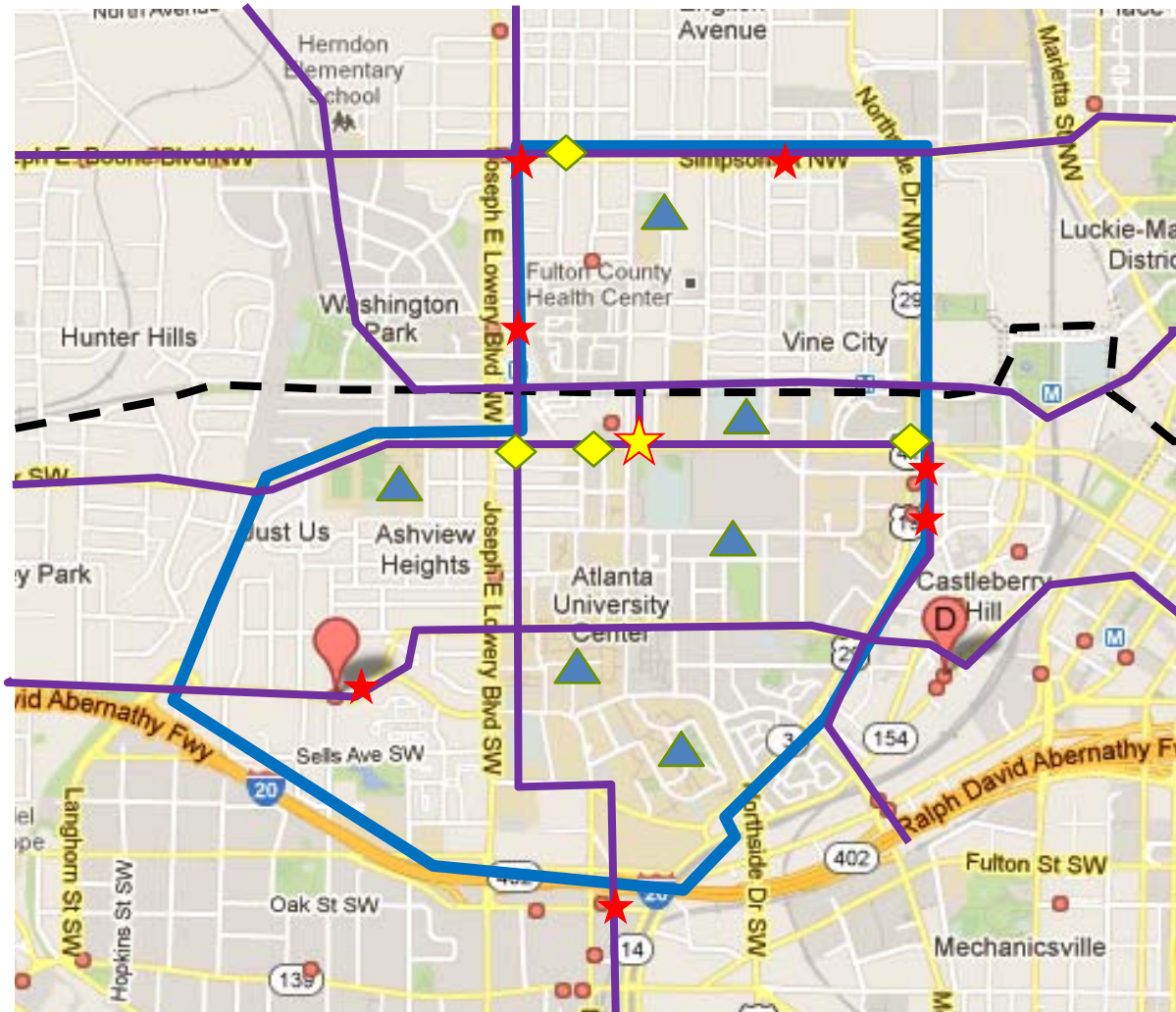


## Geographic Boundary

Three neighborhoods designated as the 'Choice Neighborhoods Atlanta' area:  
Vine City, Atlanta University Center, and Ashview Heights



## Mapping of Community Assets



- ★ **Food sources**
- ▲ **Schools/Colleges**
- ◆ **Restaurants**



Tri-Community  
Food Coalition





## Food Commons ATL “Fertile Crescent”

The *Fertile Crescent* concept is a community-based adaptation of The Food Commons development model.

- Geographic footprint is ~ 6000 acre area in South-West Atlanta (correlates with Atlanta Beltline Project’s subarea planning sections 1, 2, 9, and 10)





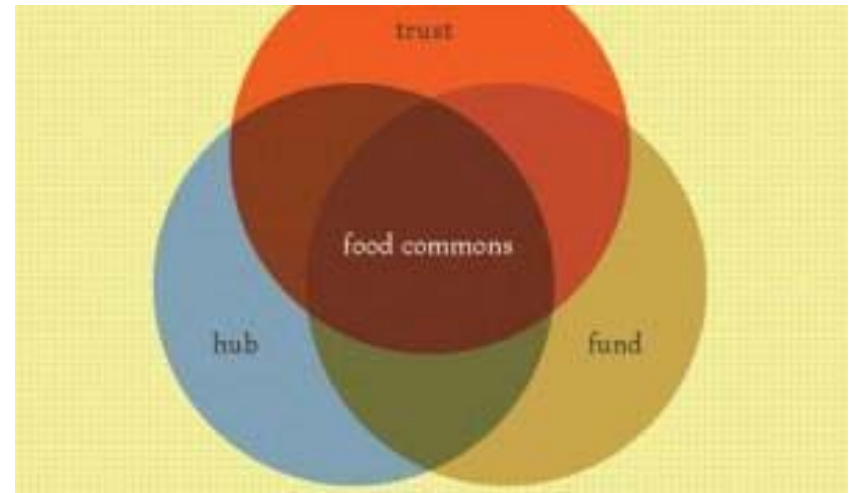
## The Food Commons

Three main components

Food Hub

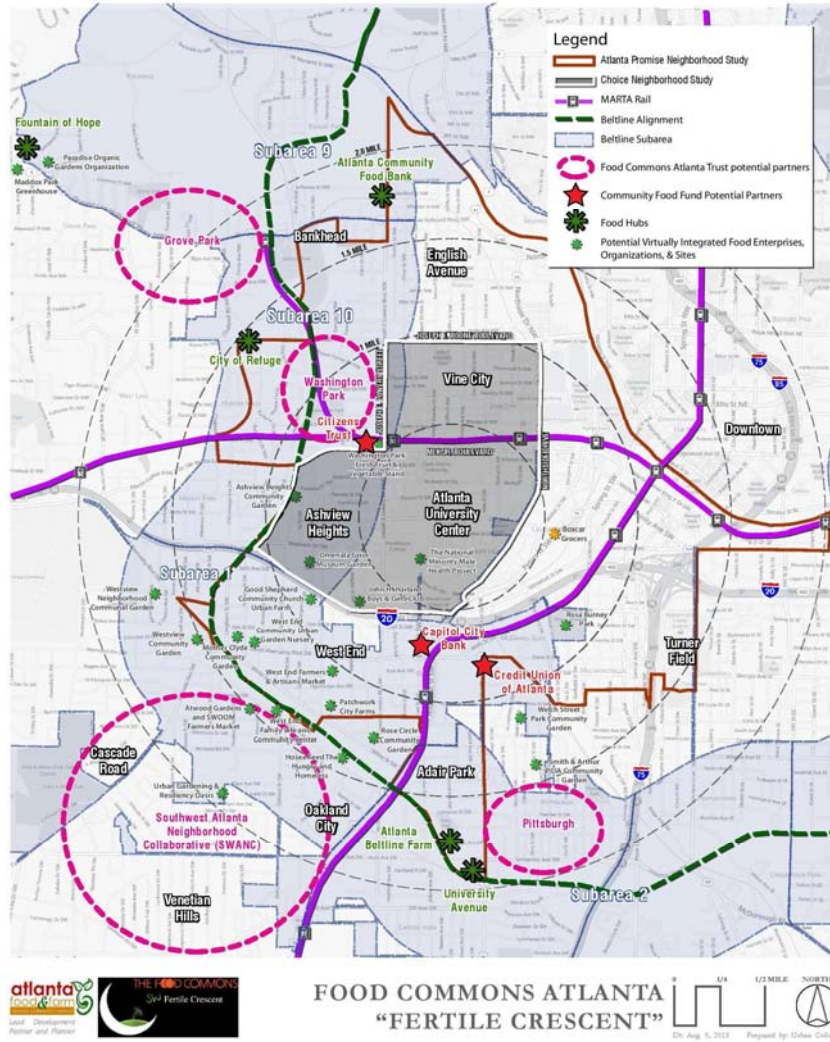
Food Fund

Food Trust



# THE FOOD COMMONS

## Food Commons ATL “Fertile Crescent”



## Atlanta "Fertile Crescent" Neighborhoods

Grove Park	Bankhead
Howell Station	Hunter Hills
Knight Park	Westview
Mozley Park	West End
Washington Park	Adair Park
Just Us Neighbors	Oakland City
Ashview Heights	Mechanicsville
Vine City	Peoplestown
English Avenue	Pittsburgh

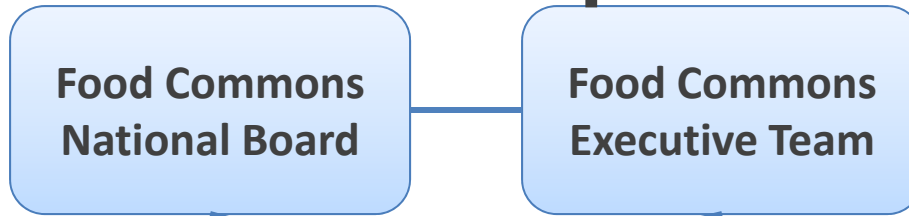


## “Fertile Crescent” Demographics

- These neighborhoods are home to about 55,000 people.
- The specific neighborhoods that are part of the Fertile Crescent area are predominantly low income and African American.
- The median income for a typical community in this area is \$20,848, well under the federal poverty line.



## “Fertile Crescent” Development



**Food Commons  
National Board**

**Food Commons  
Executive Team**

**Fertile Crescent  
Steering  
Committee**

**Subcommittees**

- **Executive Team**
- **Community Food Fund**
- **Food Trust**
- **Food Hub**

C.Shaheed DuBois,  
AF2/Executive Team co-  
Lead/resident

Wanda Whiteside,  
AF2/Executive Team co-  
Lead/resident

Bren Ames, Slow Money

Georgia Community Food  
Fund lead  
Abiodun Handerson,  
AF2/resident

Rob Brawner, Beltline Partnership  
Lili Crymes, Atlanta Community  
Food Bank

Earl Picard, Food Hub co-  
Lead/resident

DeBorah Williams, Mother

Clyde Community  
GPA Fall Conference, Jekyll Island  
Garden/resident

Kwabena Nkromo, AF2/co-Chair/resident  
Colette Joly, AF2/co-  
Chair/resident

Trish O’Connell, Food Trust COLead

Barbara Miller, AF2/Community Food  
Fund lead/resident

Shawn Walton, WeCycle  
Atlanta  
Loki Macias, Food Hub CO-Lead

Gil Frank, Historic Westside Gardens  
John Skatch, Urban Collage  
Katlyn Wilson, Atlanta Mobile Market  
Melanie Wofford, Community

Anthony Muhammad, 4GreenVision Housing Initiatives Corporation

Jon Rosenthal, Farmer D Organics

Chad Angell, City of Refuge

Cheryl Johnson, Georgia State University/resident



## Way Forward

### Initial Scope of Work

#### Food Trust

- Asset survey & related real estate inventory of Fertile Crescent area
- Secure interim partner to hold assets immediately donated to AFC-FC
- Formation of Food Trust (legal organizations & governance structure)
- Raising capital for asset/property acquisition

#### Food Hub

- Feasibility study/research
- Business plan development
- Formation of Food Hub or “vertically integrated spine of food enterprises”

#### Food Bank (renamed “Community Food Fund” by Steering Committee)

- Explore creation of a small grants and/or IDA program
- Partner with existing programs for micro-financing/lending (i.e. Slow Money Georgia)
- Establish a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)