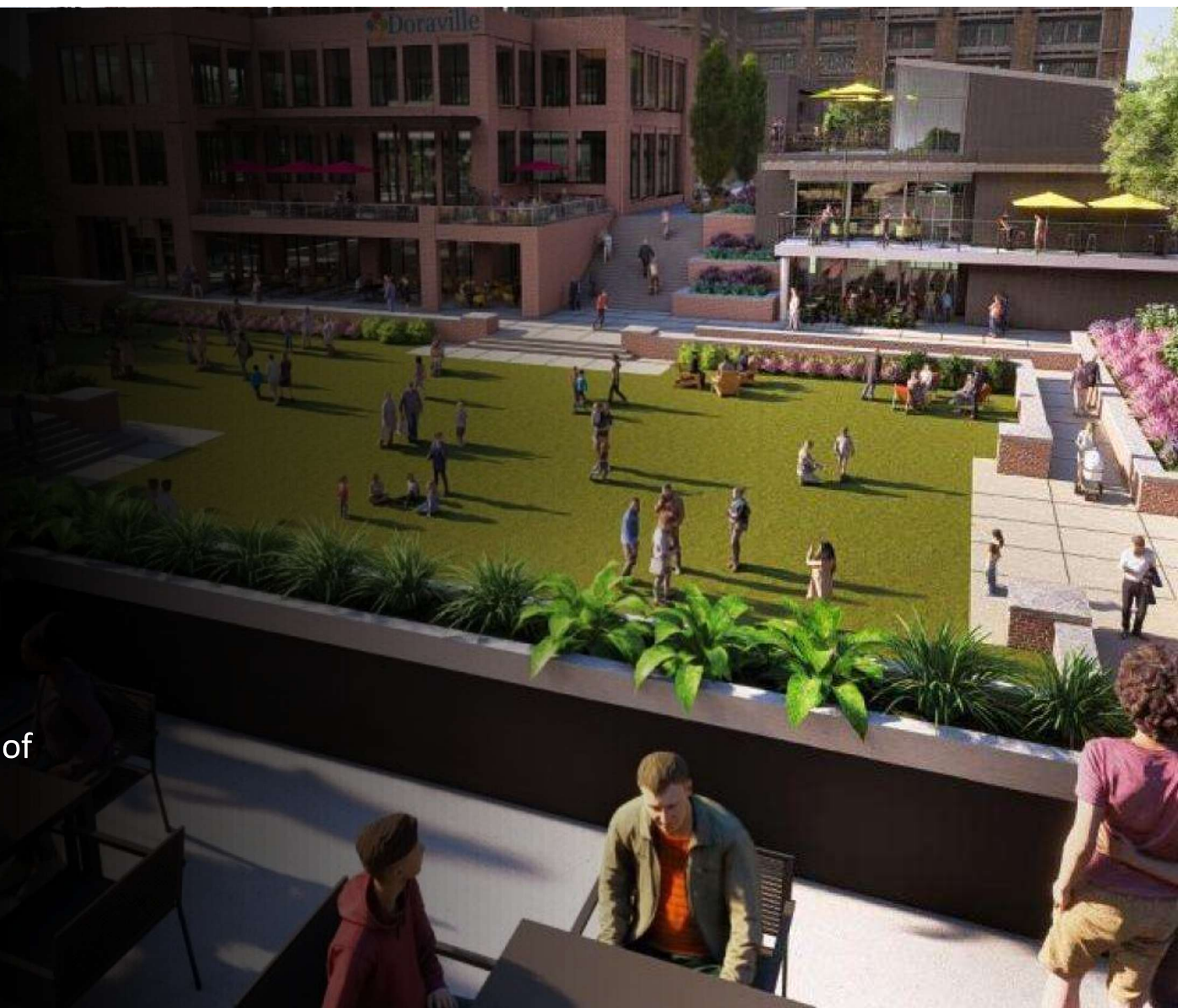




Breaking the Planning Paralysis: Doraville's Comeback Story

Presented by ULI Atlanta, The City of
Doraville, and KB Advisory Group



Who we are

- Lance Morsell, MPA
- Jonathan Gelber, AICP
- Austin Shelton, AICP



Breaking the Planning Paralysis: Doraville's Comeback Story

YOUR GHOST HOSTS:

 **The Ghost of Doraville Distant Past 1940-2020**  **ADVISORY GROUP**

 Jonathan Gelber, AICP, Vice President, KB Advisory Group

 **The Ghost of Doraville Recent Past 2021-2023**  **Atlanta**

 Lance Morsell, MPA, Strategic Initiatives Lead, ULI Atlanta

 **The Ghost of Doraville Present & Future 2024+** 

 Austin Shelton, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development



Doraville's Backstory

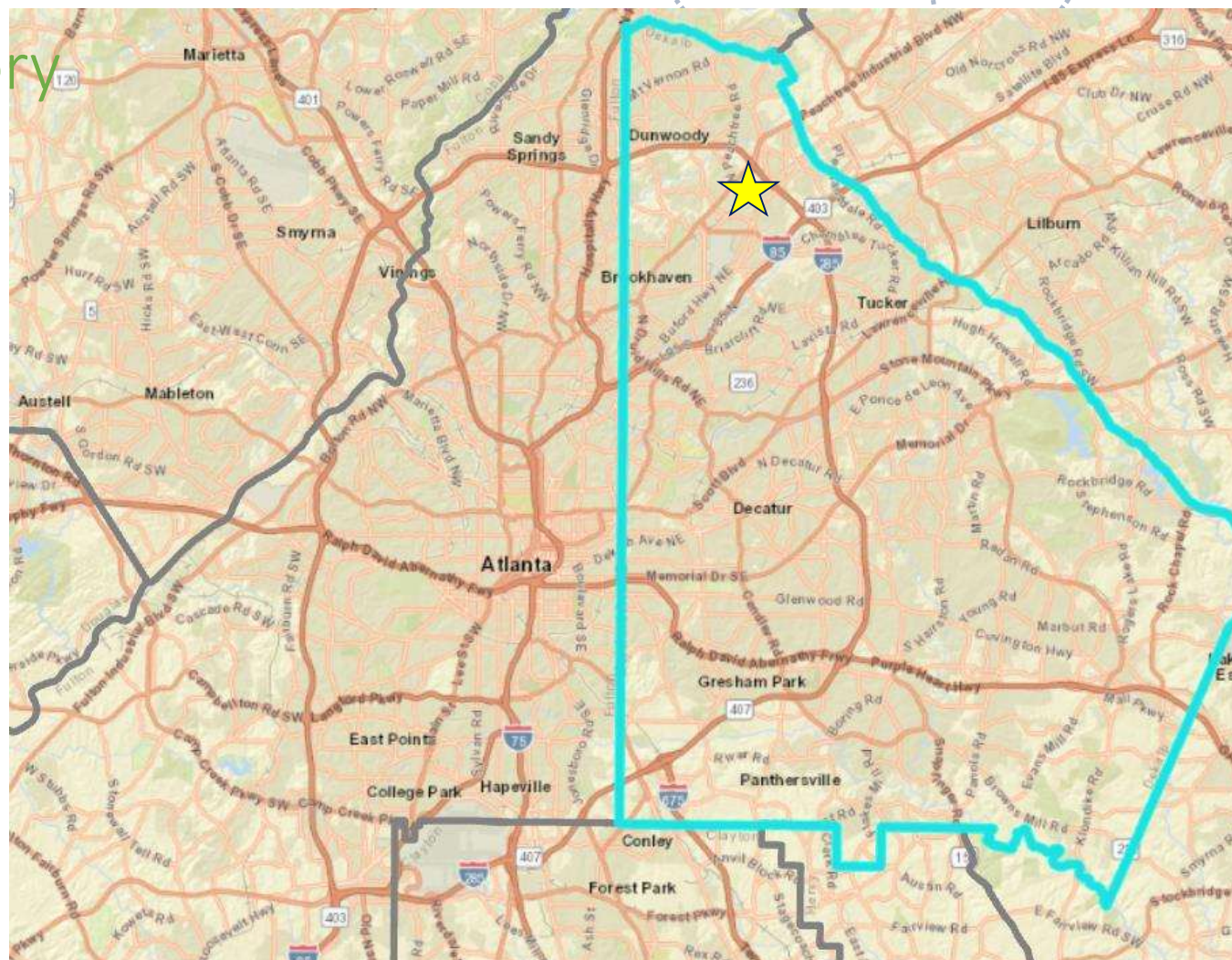
Seven things to know about Downtown Doraville Redevelopment

- 1. Context**
- 2. The Old Days**
- 3. Planning & Opportunity**
- 4. Assembly**
- 5. Complications**
- 6. Development is Hard**

Doraville's Backstory

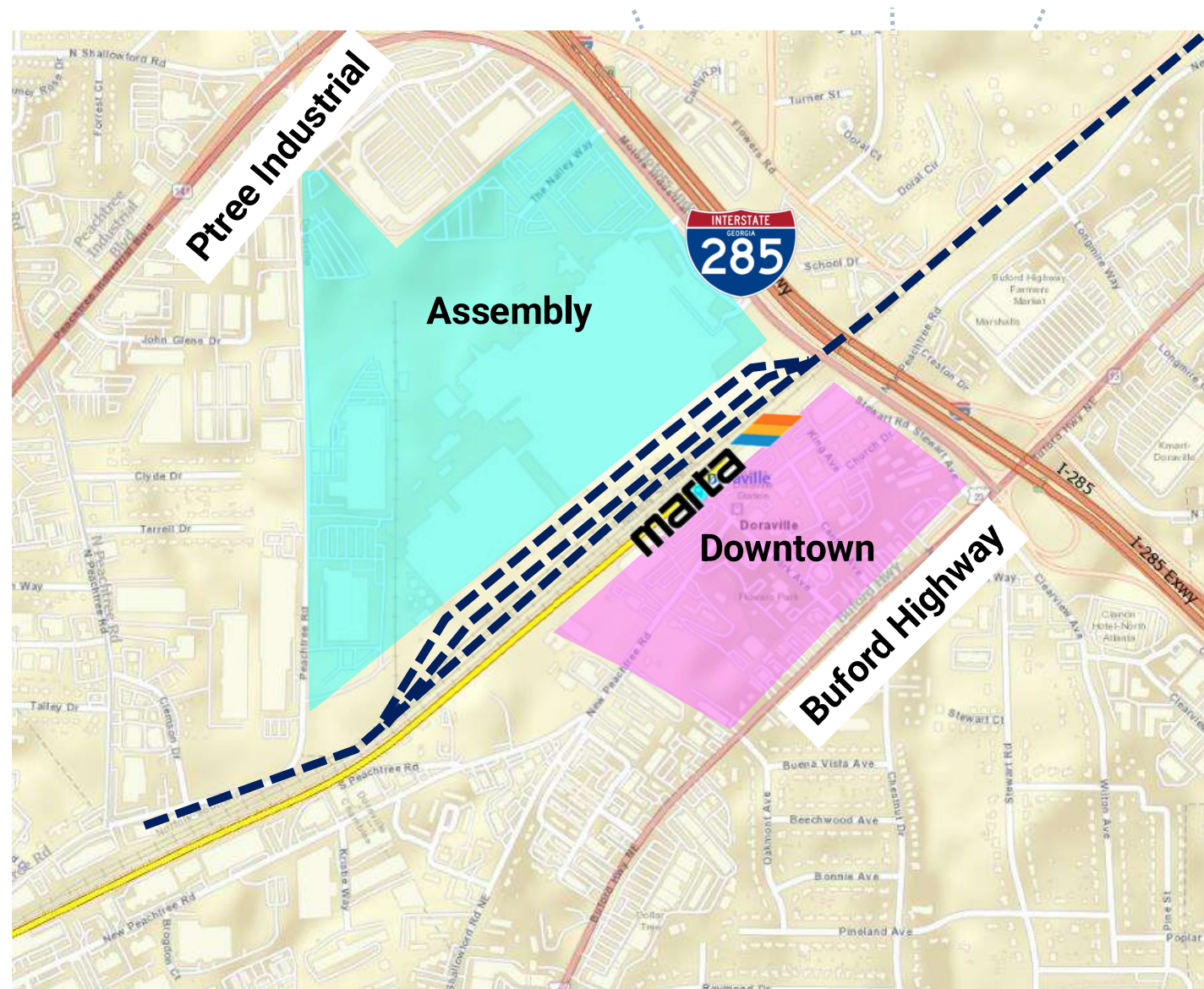
1. Context

- Doraville is a city of around 11,000 people in DeKalb County.
- End of the MARTA Gold Line
- Located at one o'clock on the Atlanta Perimeter.



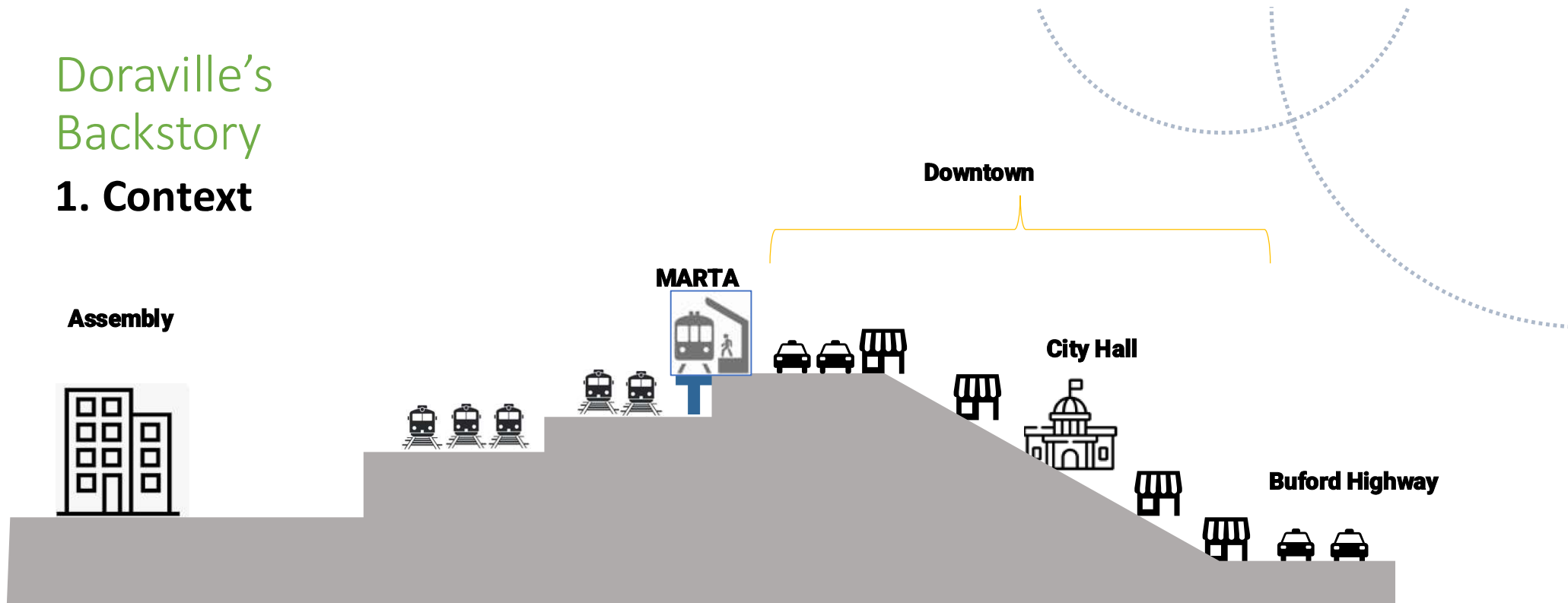
Doraville's Backstory

1. Context



Doraville's Backstory

1. Context



Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days



SPRUCING UP for 1948 opening of GM plant

Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days



Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days

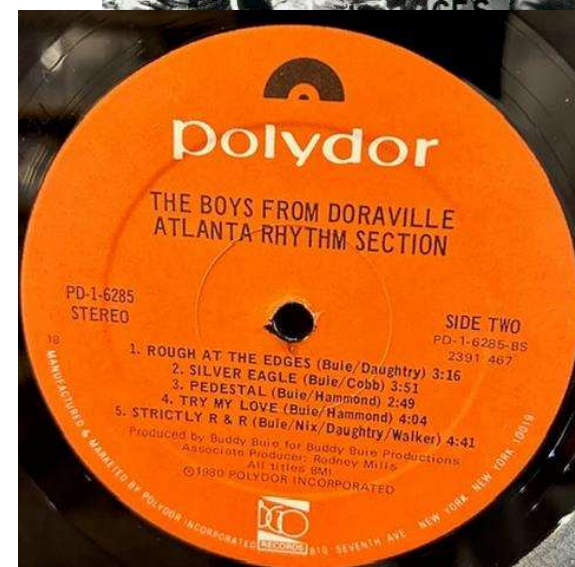
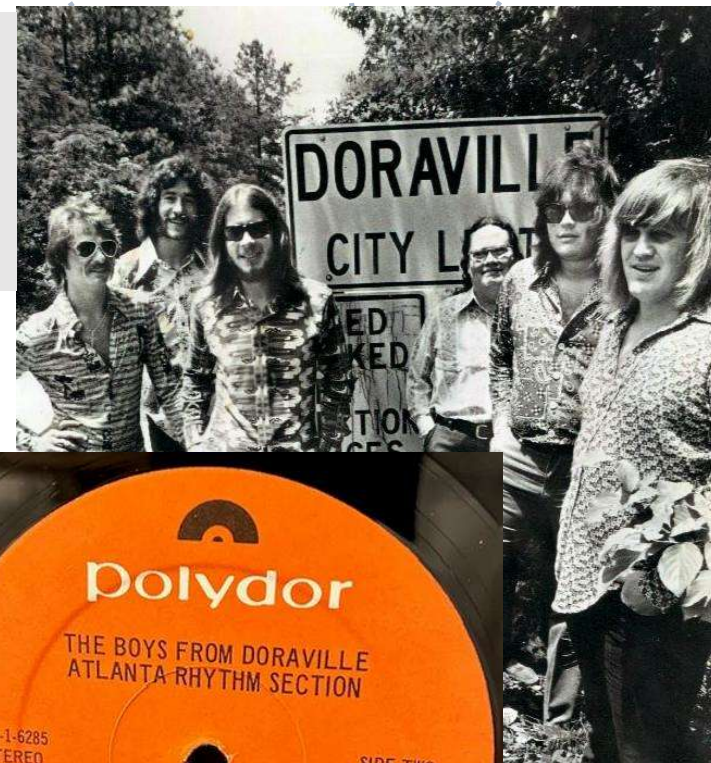
Doraville

Touch of country in the city

Doraville

It ain't much, but it's home

-Atlanta Rhythm Section, "Doraville"



Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days



Main Street in Doraville circa 1949.

(Photo courtesy of John Maloney)

Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days

- 1993: MARTA happens



Doraville's Backstory

2. The Old Days

- **1993 MARTA Happens**
- Artifacts of old downtown grid under MARTA station.
- First LCI Study 2004
- Just 12 years after station opening.



Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

Downtown Doraville has A LOT going for it as a redevelopment Opportunity:

- **City control of land- 14+ acres**
- **MARTA transit already there**
- **MARTA Lots & Decks=TOD opportunity**
- **Assembly site opportunity – 120 Ac.**
- **Large underdeveloped adjacent lots**
- **“Edge City” Location 285 & Buford Highway**
- **Visibility**

Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

- 2004 LCI Plan



Figure 6.3 Illustrative urban form and town center concept

Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

- 2010 LCI Update
- Downtown Side



Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

- 2010 LCI Update
- Visions for Assembly Side



Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

- 2010 LCI Update
- Visions for Assembly Side

Redevelopment Concept A

The proposed block plan can accommodate many different uses that cannot be defined today given the long-term nature of buildout.

Redevelopment Concept A shows how the site could be transformed in a relatively low density scenario of primarily low-rise, surface parked buildings, with a small concentration of mid-rise buildings adjacent to the MARTA station. Such could accommodate the following program:

- 0.5 - 1.0 million sf of Class A office
- 0.5 - 1.0 million of sf research space
- 150,000 - 200,000 sf of retail
- 1,000 - 2,000 housing units
- 14 acres of park space

Of these uses, big box retail could front I-285 near the existing BrandsMart, with mixed-uses and offices closest to MARTA. Housing could occur to the west, where proposed parks would create a quality residential address.

The plan also shows how some streets could be removed to accommodate a sports complex. Such complex could include a recreational center, sports medicine offices, ball fields, and other low intensity facilities. It should not include a major sports stadium.

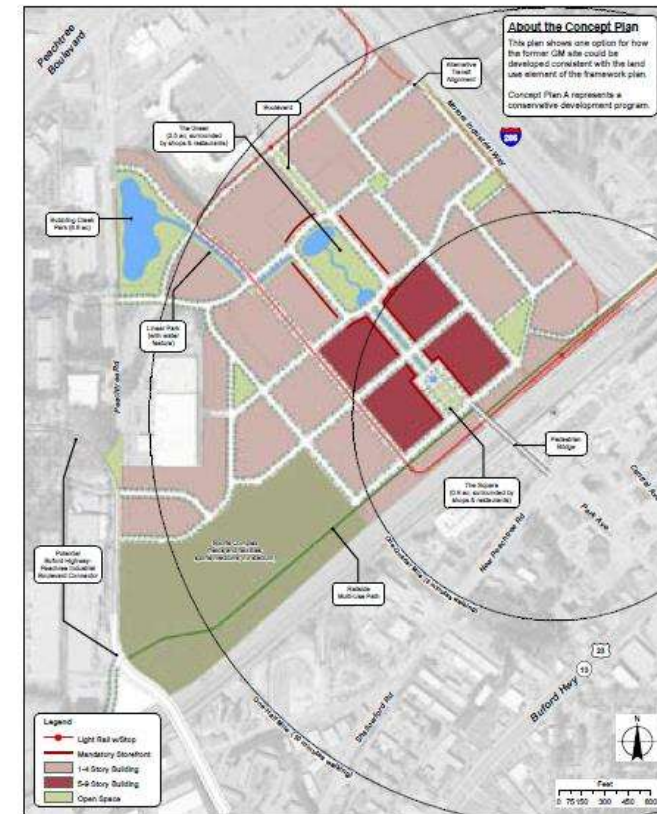


Figure 4.4: Concept Plan A

Doraville's Backstory

3. Planning and Opportunity

- 2015 Doraville Tax Allocation District: Doraville Transit-Oriented Development
- Conceived so both sides of tracks complement each other.
 - Money earned on both sides
 - Money spent on both sides

City of Doraville TAD #1 Boundary Map



Redevelopment Area and TAD Boundary

Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly

- GM Plant Closed 2008
- 120 Acre Redevelopment Opportunity
- Demolished 2015



Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly

Character Examples: Green Neighborhood Streets



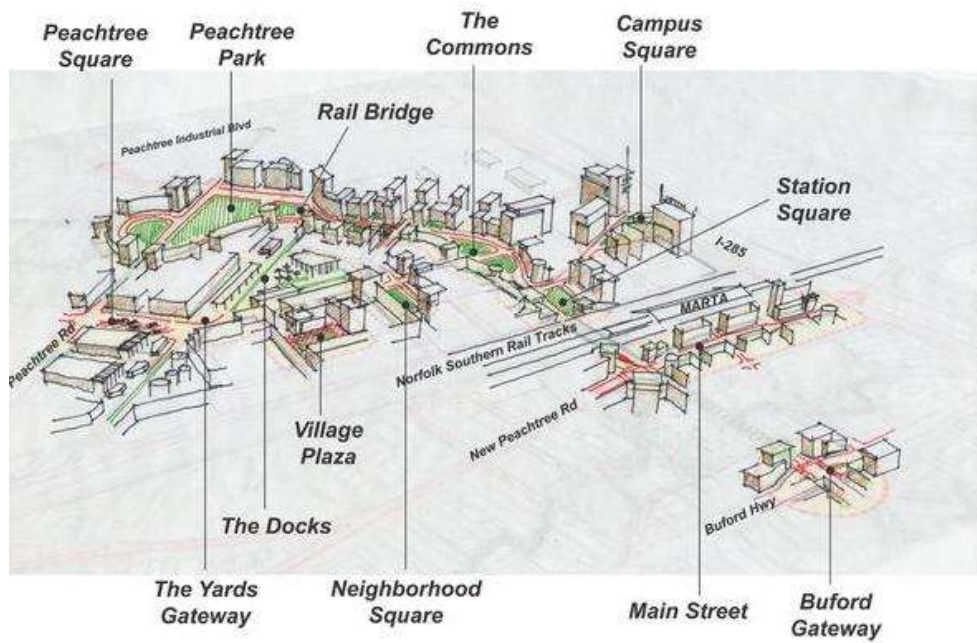
5, 2015

GM Site Redevelopment: Concept Vision

Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly

The Vision: Many Places



Character Examples: The Campus



Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly



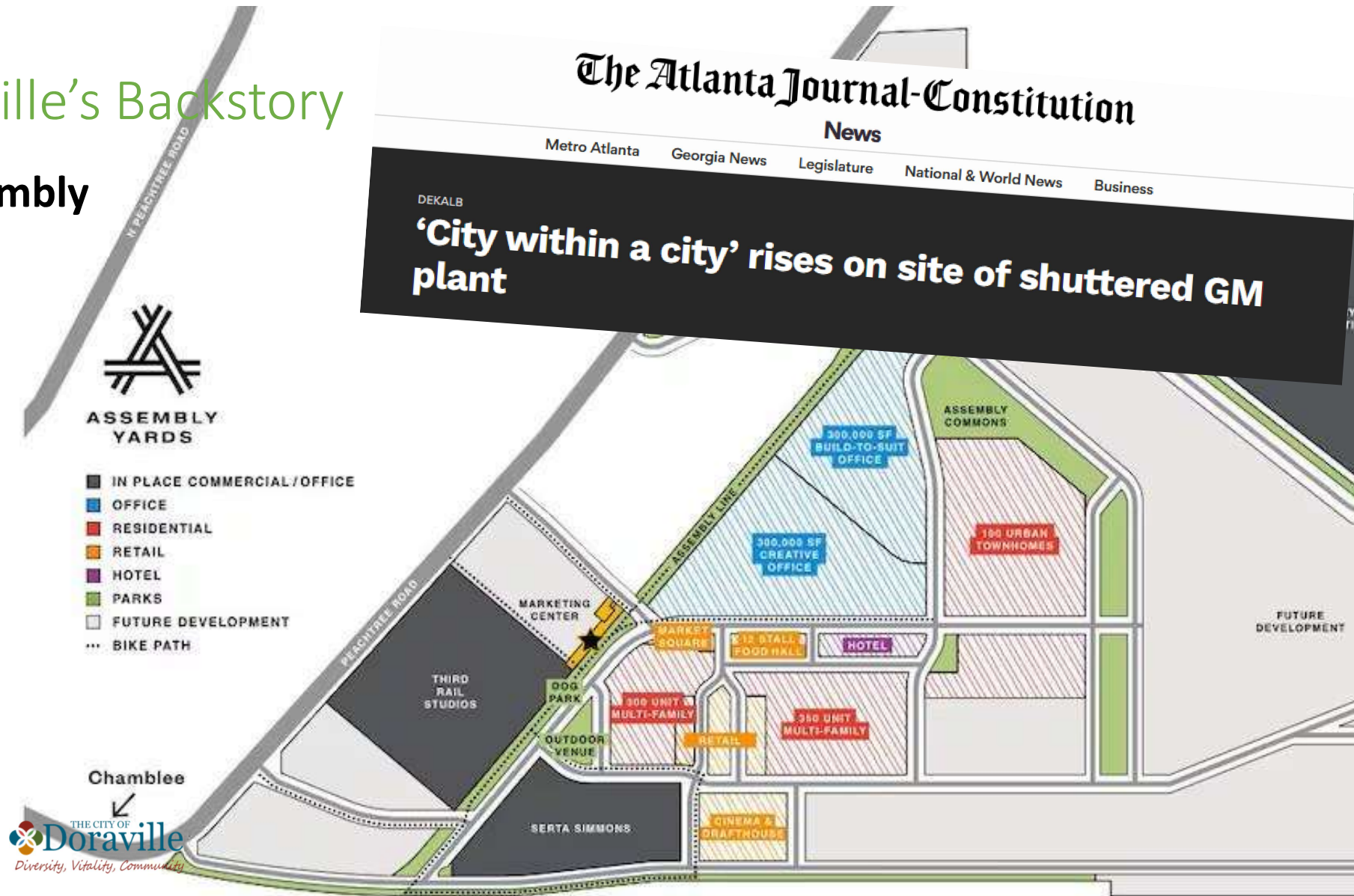
Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly



Doraville's Backstory

4. Assembly





ASSEMBLY
DORAVILLE
USA

Master Plan

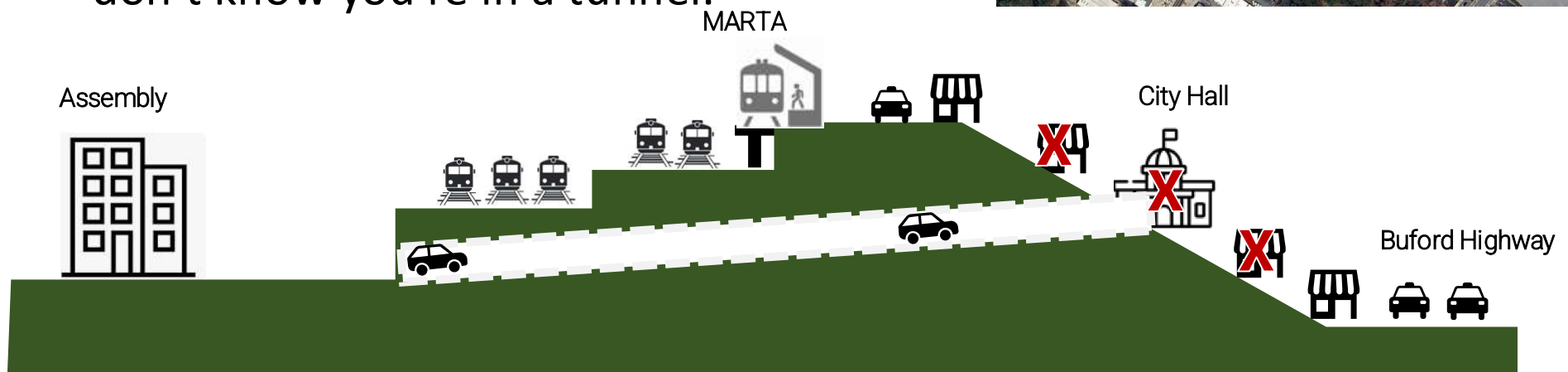
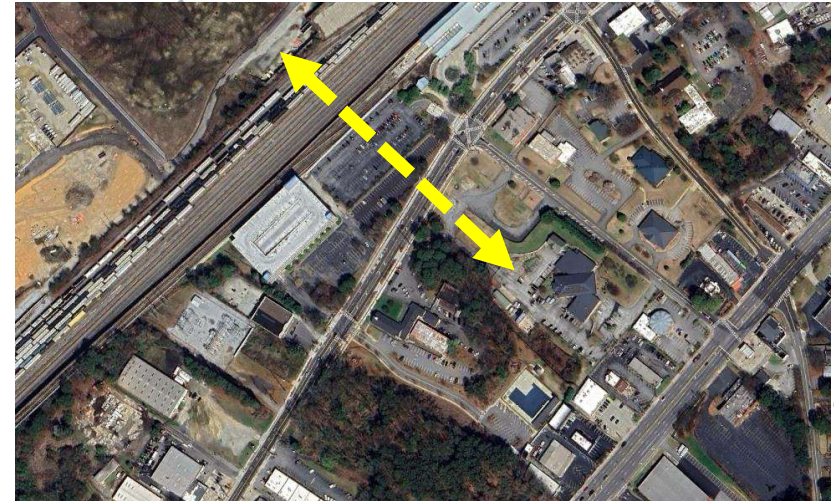


Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications

The “Covered Road” Concept:

- A ¼ mile tunnel designed so well you don't know you're in a tunnel.



Doraville's Backstory

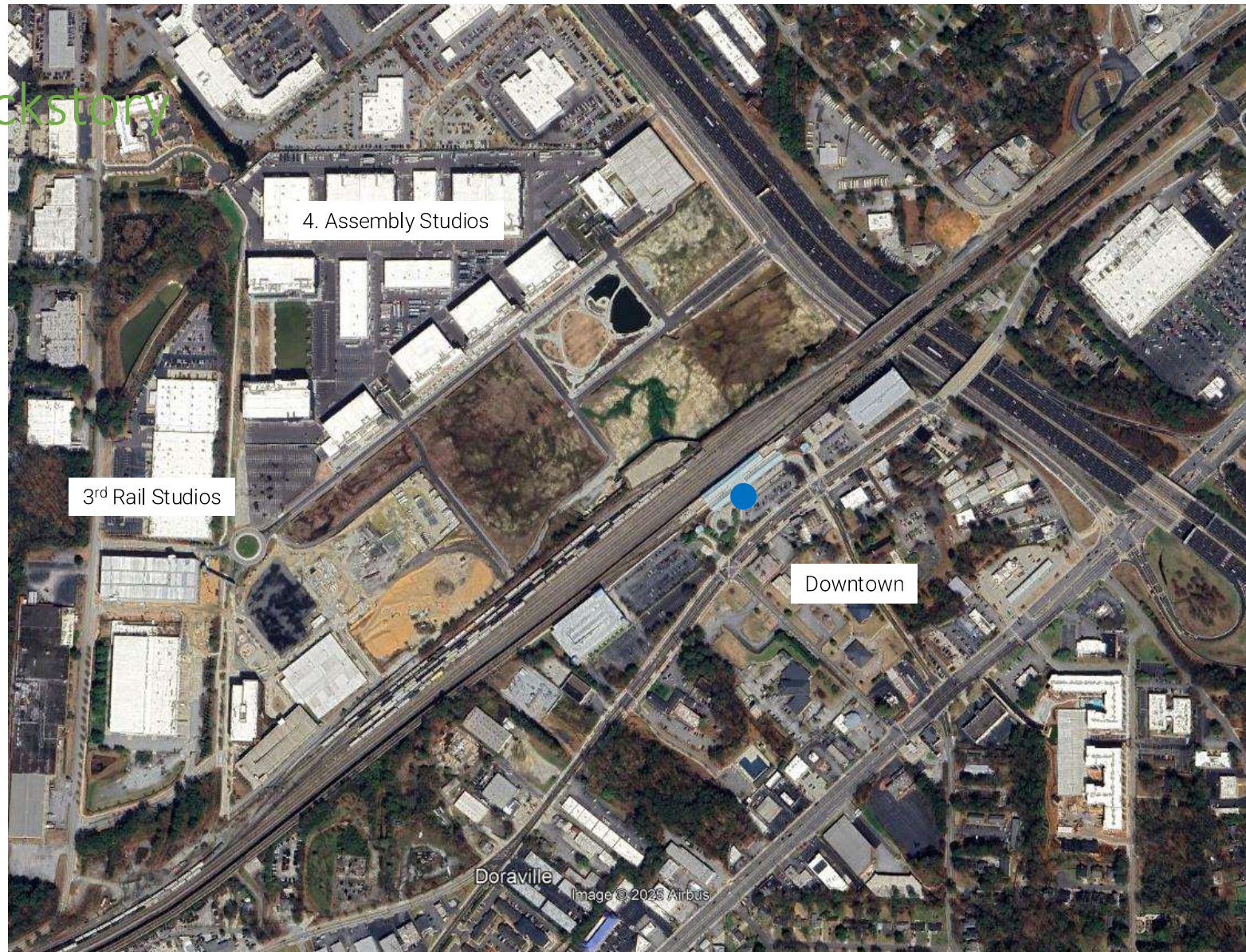
5. Complications

- 2015: TAD on both sides. Money can move back and forth.
- 2017: Doraville and DeKalb sign TAD IGA (agreement):
 - TAD \$ can ONLY be spent on Assembly side;
 - Requires 20% of ANY housing be affordable on BOTH sides;
 - Prohibits use of regular County funds for any infrastructure on both sides.
- 2016: Assembly CID formed- 25 Mils! (Legal max, usually CIDs are 3-5)
- 2017: Assembly SSD formed
- 2017 Assembly CID issues \$53M in bonds backed by CID, SSD, TAD
- DDA Issues \$1.5 Billion in revenue bonds with a 30 yr. term and 35% tax abatement
- 2017: Assembly and Doraville negotiate an IGA:
 - Even if Doraville TAD earns more than needed to pay bonds, excess cannot be used for other purposes.
 - Doraville will not do ANYTHING that changes, reduces or encumbers TAD until bonds are paid.



Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications Today



Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications



Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications

- Today



ASSEMBLY ATLANTA

Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications

- Today



Doraville's Backstory

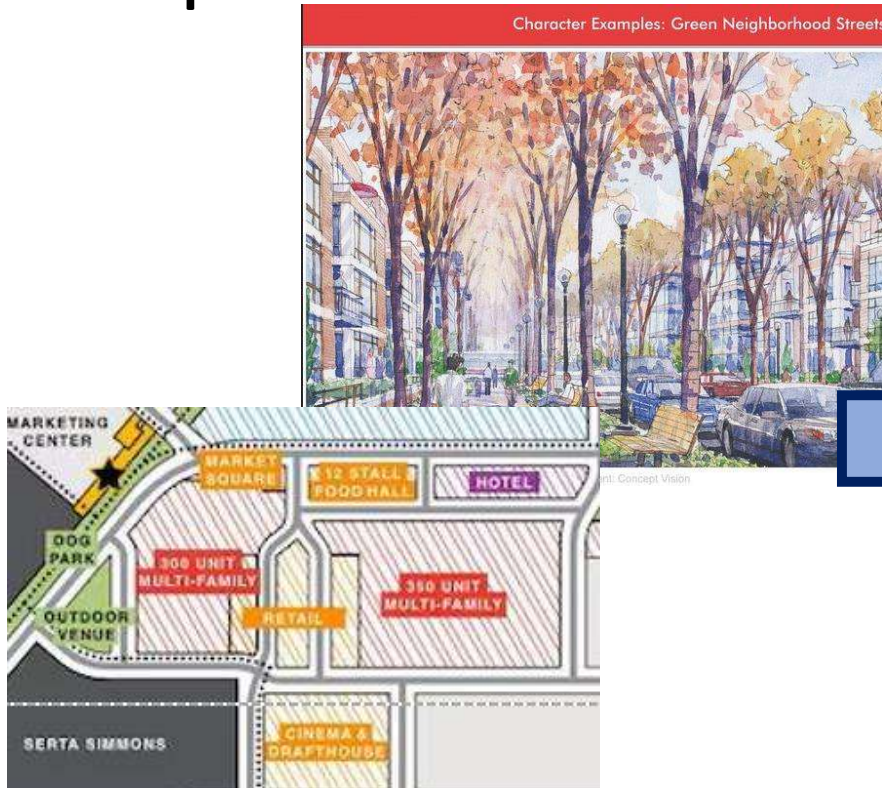
5. Complications

- Today
- The Google street view car is an avatar for public access



Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications



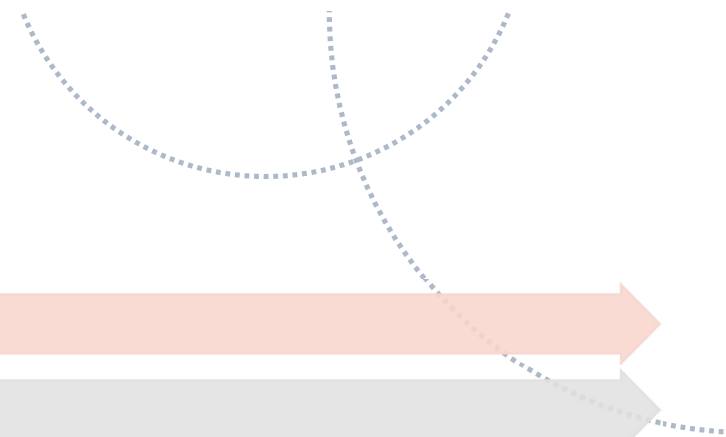
Doraville's Backstory

5. Complications



Doraville's Backstory

6. Development is Hard



Vanilla redevelopment

- Difficult

Infill urban redevelopment

- Even more difficult

Mixed-use

- Even more difficult

Public-private partnership

- Gee whiz

Working with MARTA

- For cryin' out loud!

Working with Railroads

- I can't even...

Complicated terrain

- There goes the budget!

Affordable housing

- Complicated!

Everyone all up in your grill all the time

- “_(ツ)_/”

The Call to Action

*"Help me Urban Land
Institute Technical
Assistance Program.*

You're my only hope..."





THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide

MISSION COMMITMENTS

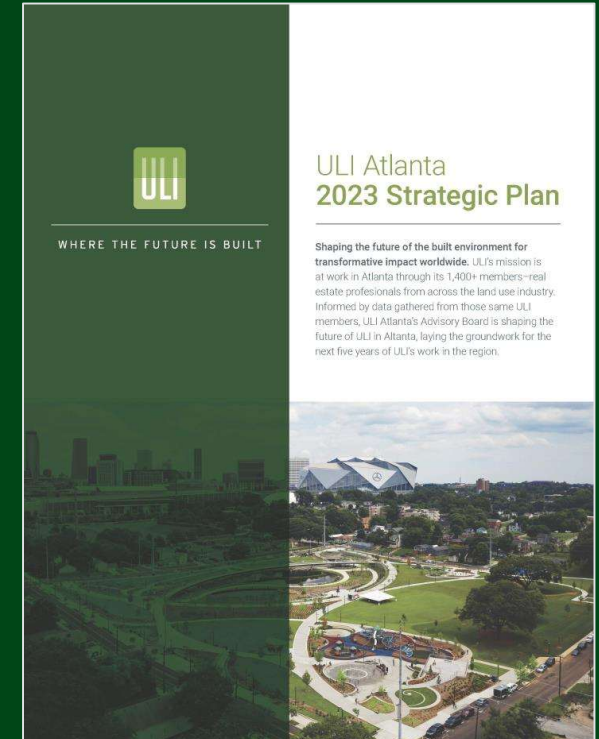
CONNECT active, passionate, diverse members through the foremost global network of interdisciplinary professionals

INSPIRE best practices for equitable and sustainable land use through content, education, convening, mentoring, and knowledge sharing

LEAD in solving community and real estate challenges through applied collective global experience and philanthropic engagement

ULI'S GLOBAL MISSION PRIORITIES

- 1 **Increasing Housing Attainability in Communities Around the World**
- 2 **Decarbonization and Net Zero**
- 3 **Educating the Next Generation of Diverse Real Estate Leaders**



Membership

ULI is the premiere convener of real estate and land use professionals, and we are supported by our members



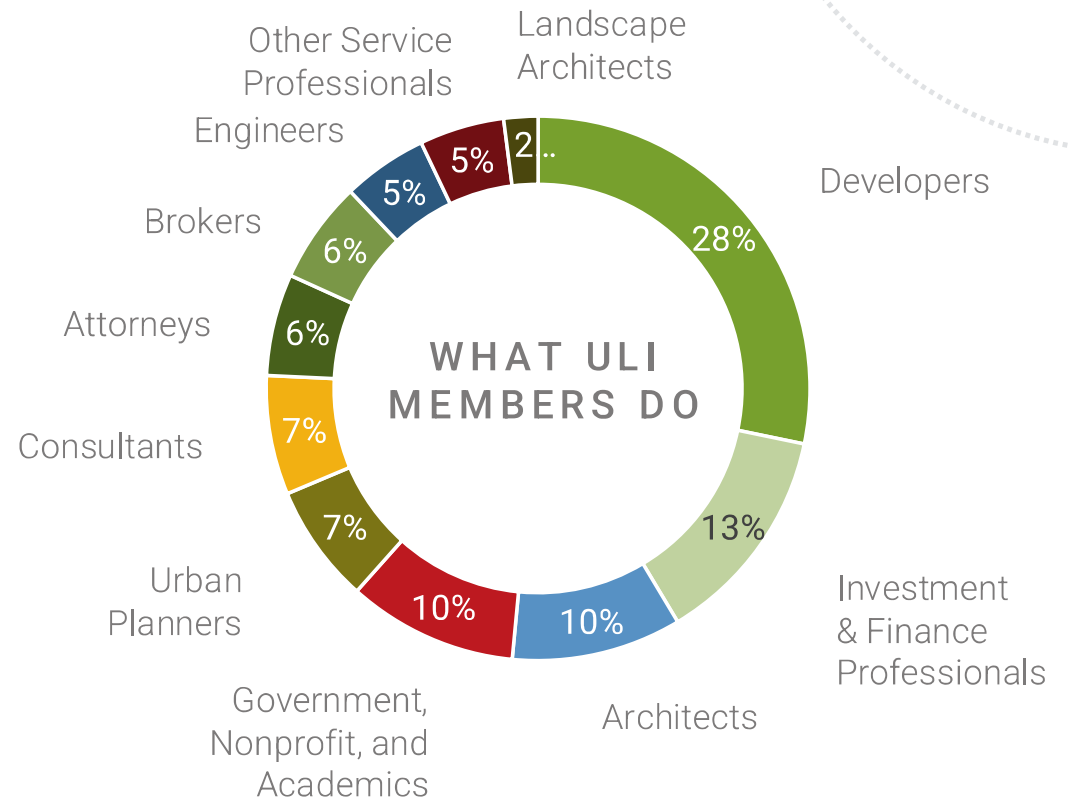
48,000+

Members in more than 80 countries



1,400+

Members in the Atlanta region and broader state of Georgia



SCALE OF PROGRAMMING



ULI ATLANTA'S REACH

500+

Alumni of Center for
Leadership since 2010

175+

Communities and non-profits
serves through our Local
Atlanta based TAPs and
mTAPs

30

Years of hosting our local
Awards for Excellence
program recognizing people,
places, and projects



In Atlanta we like to say that our members are anyone who touches how cities get built and that we are not a think tank but a “do tank” because it's our members who are physically shaping the built environment to advance the aspiration of our global mission.

What the Urban Land Institute does:

- ✓ Convene meetings and events and educational panel discussions
- ✓ Design programs and initiatives that advance our core mission commitments
- ✓ Develop content and case studies that inspire members to integrate big ideas and emerging trends
- ✓ Provides a forum for sharing of best practices with real estate and land use professionals



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

Why a TAP?

- ❑ Assemble a multidisciplinary team of volunteers within our membership who are senior practitioners to serve as panelists
- ❑ Central considerations are market viability and economic realities of community and place
- ❑ We can leverage national and global resources as case studies
- ❑ Utilize local knowledge through stakeholder engagement process to help inform recommendations



Snapshot of Communities and orgs served

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ All Saints' Episcopal Church | ✓ City of Dunwoody |
| ✓ Atlanta BeltLine | ✓ City of Norcross |
| ✓ City of Alpharetta | ✓ City of Tucker |
| ✓ City of Clarkston | ✓ City of Savannah |
| ✓ City of East Point | ✓ City of Doraville |
| ✓ City of Powder Springs | ✓ Clayton Co. |
| ✓ City of Tybee Island | ✓ Fulton Co. |
| | ✓ Hall County |
| | ✓ Invest Atlanta |
| | ✓ MARTA |
| | ✓ Rabun County |

Key Facts

- Program is nearly 30 years old
- 100+ Georgia based TAPs since 1997
- Reports are published w/ client permissions at <https://atlanta.uli.org/resources/reports/>

What a TAP is NOT



ULI is a member-led organization that leverages the intellectual capital of its members to advance ULI's global mission and priorities. As such, ULI's technical assistance work cannot be seen in competition with a service our member leaders can provide. A TAP is not:

- A master plan or other process that can be provided by consultants
- A data collection or analysis intensive study
- Overly focused a single technical or professional field (all panels are multidisciplinary by nature)
- Convened on a site that is not owned or controlled by the client
- Serving a client who is not an active participant in applying for, scoping, organizing, or participating in the TAP process

City of Doraville's TAP Project

Late 2020-Early 2021



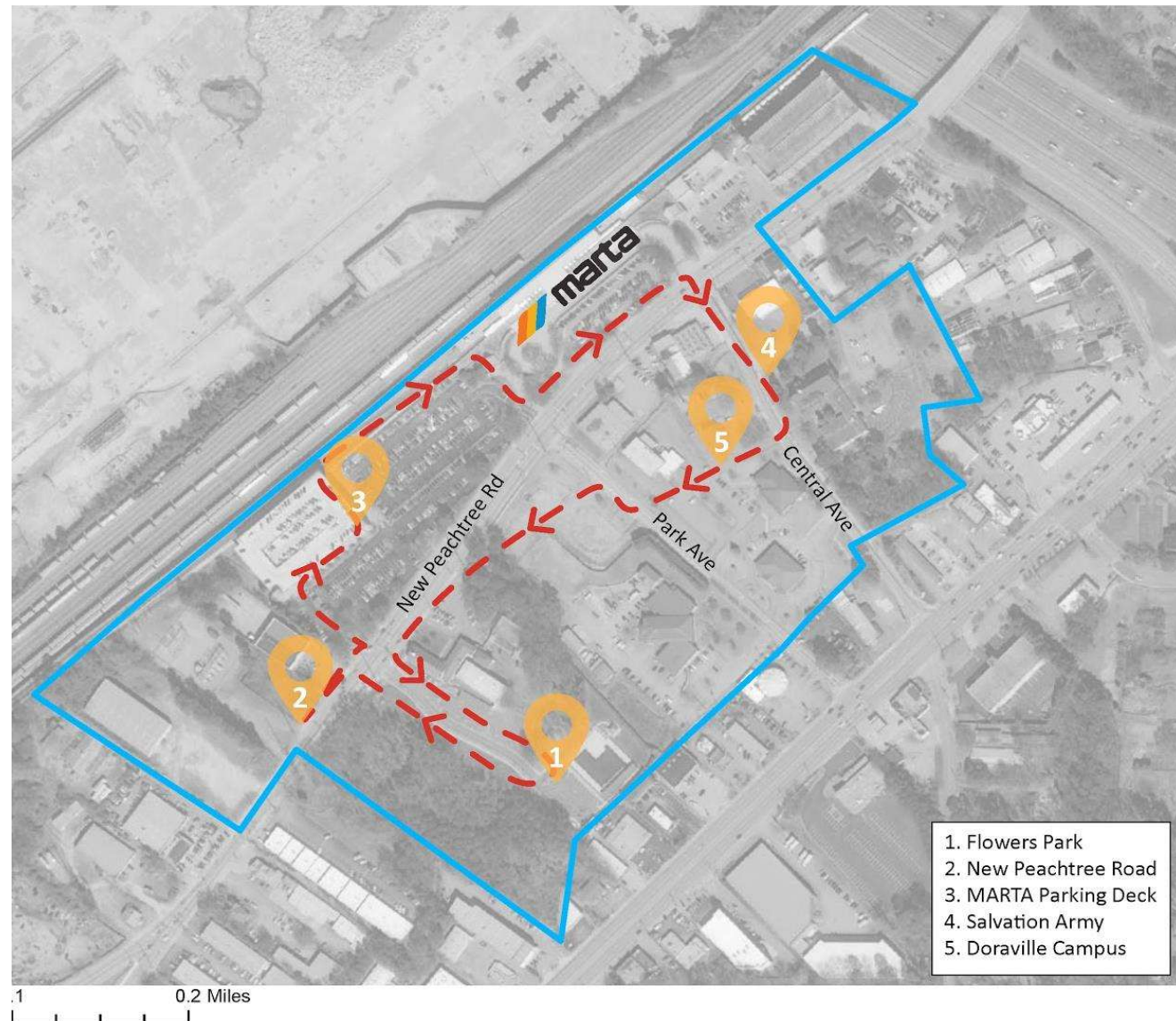
THE SCOPE OF WORK

- 1) Until now, the City has been focusing on redeveloping this site as part of a master-planned development. How can Doraville support a more incremental approach to redevelopment that can still create and enhance the city's image and brand?
- 2) What type of partnership structures (public/private, joint venture, sale/lease, City as developer, etc.) would best support growth of the site?
- 3) How can we create a place that is both an economic driver for Doraville (business-oriented) and a place where people want to live (people-oriented) that can further attract young professionals to the city?



Purpose

To create a vision for Doraville's City owned land that could inform and guide future development and planning.



EVALUATE OPTIONS

Four fundamental redevelopment options

1

Master Developer: City hires fee-based master development manager for horizontal development. RFP development parcels to third-party developers.

2

Hybrid: Master developer for core town center portion (government & mixed use); convey remainder parcels incrementally to private redevelopers subordinate to master plan and development agreement.

3

Ground lease: City retains ownership of all city-owned land, redevelop parcels under long-term ground lease.

4

Public-private partnership: City partners w/ Master developer term as primary tenant, controls portions of overall development.

UNDERSTAND TRADE-OFFS

Carefully consider benefits, limitations, and trade-offs of different levels of control of the project:

1

Ownership Structure: Sell vs. lease vs. hold, public vs. private

2

Sticks: Development Controls

1. Uses (Retail, housing types, office, community)
2. Building heights & densities
3. Design requirements & building materials
4. Streetscapes & infrastructure
5. Tenant mix

3

Wishes: Community Desires

1. Open Space
2. Community Space
3. Affordable & Workforce Housing

4

Carrots: Public Investments

1. Public Space
2. Shared Parking
3. Shared stormwater detention
4. Infrastructure (Roads, site prep, stormwater)
5. Land prep and assembly
6. Direct subsidies and abatements

Short Term (6M)

- Undertake visioning process
- Conduct internal needs assessment
- Conduct a sources and uses mapping analysis
- Commission supportive studies
 - Master plan
 - Market analysis
 - Site & engineering assessment (terrain, street grid, stormwater)
 - Financial status and potential assessment (TAD, CID, SSD, SPLOST, bonding capacity)
 - Economic impact & revenues

Mid Term (6-18 M)

- Evaluate development model(s)
- Hire dedicated staff for DDA and/or hire consultant
- Evaluate financing options
- Complete and assess impact of supportive studies
- Start developer selection process

Long Term (18+M)

- Convey key public parcels to DDA
- Execute redevelopment
 - Issue RFP/RFQ
 - Select development partner(s)



Finalized Recommendations

Maximize Trade Area

Green space, recreation and culture can serve the existing community and set the stage for success

Establish Central and Park Avenues as authentic retail streets

Activate the experience around the town green—with service businesses at the street level east and west of the town green core

Finalized Recommendations Continued

Make "Downtown Doraville" a unique place.
With a distinct character from the Assembly
GM Site

Capitalize not only the aforementioned trade
area but also the physical location i.e. adjacent
to MARTA, easy access to urban
core, Perimeter, and Gwinnett suburbs

In this newly defined downtown area, be
mindful of the existing businesses and
residents who have called Doraville home for
generations



KEY LEGEND

- A MULTI-USE**
 - +/- 200 MULTI-FAMILY UNITS
 - +/- 14,500 SF MIXED USE LOOK & FEEL
- B BOUTIQUE HOTEL**
 - +/- 100 KEYS
- C MULTI-USE**
 - +/- 225 MULTI-FAMILY UNITS
 - +/- 20,000 SF MIXED USE LOOK & FEEL
- D COMMUNITY BUILDING**
 - +/- 10,000 SF / FLOOR
- E RETAIL / RESTAURANT**
 - +/- 3,500 SF / FLOOR
- F COMMERCIAL / RETAIL**
 - +/- 1,000 SF
- G PUBLIC LAWN SPACE**
 - +/- 10,000 SF
- H DORAVILLE MULTI-USE TRAIL**
 - +/- 15' WIDTH
- I COMMERCIAL / RETAIL**
 - +/- 7,000 SF
- J COMMERCIAL / RETAIL**
 - +/- 7,000 SF
- K RETAIL / RESTAURANT**
 - +/- 3,500 SF

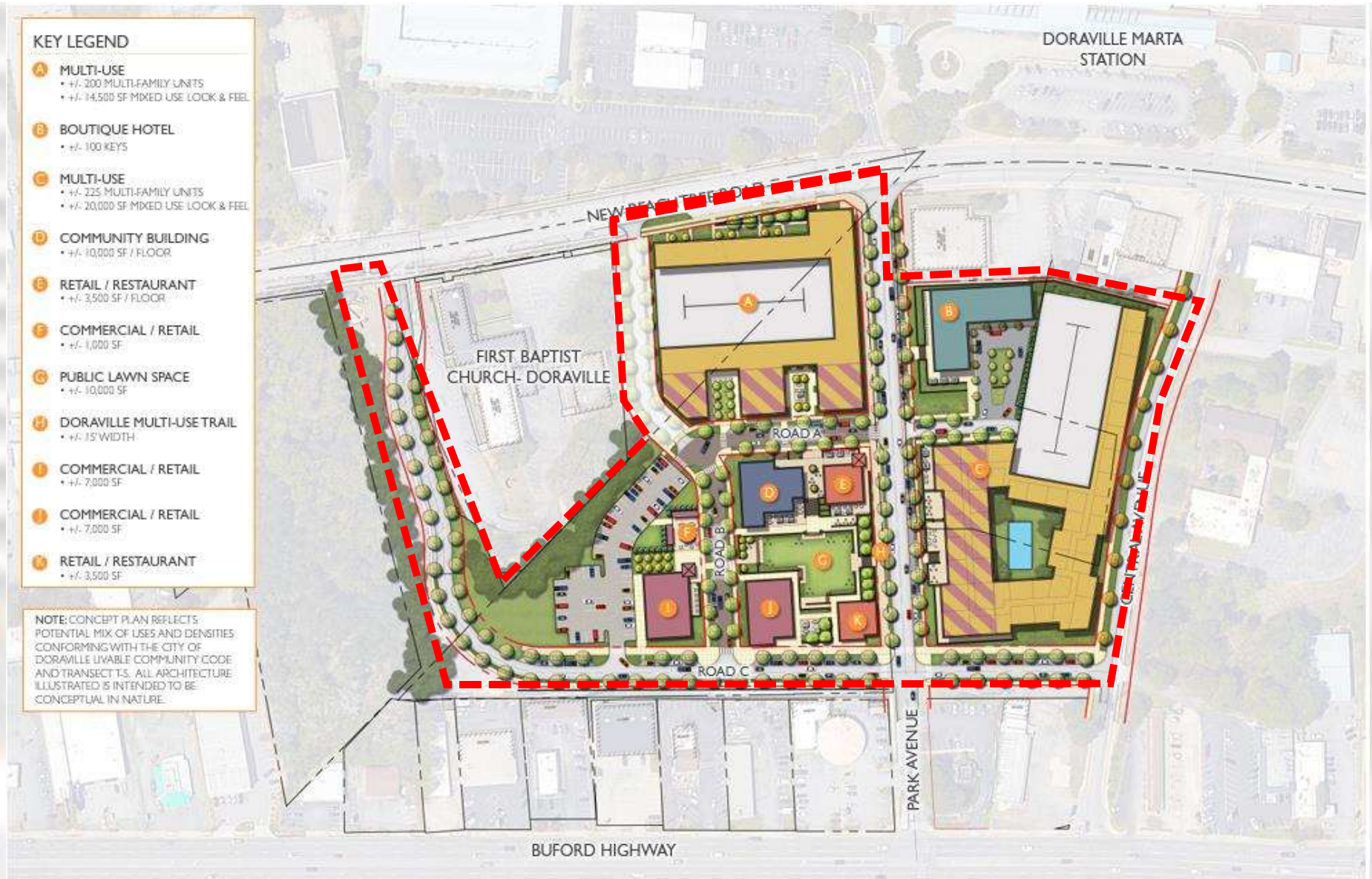
NOTE: CONCEPT PLAN REFLECTS POTENTIAL MIX OF USES AND DENSITIES CONFORMING WITH THE CITY OF DORAVILLE LIVABLE COMMUNITY CODE AND TRANSECT T-5. ALL ARCHITECTURE ILLUSTRATED IS INTENDED TO BE CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE.



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New Peachtree Road

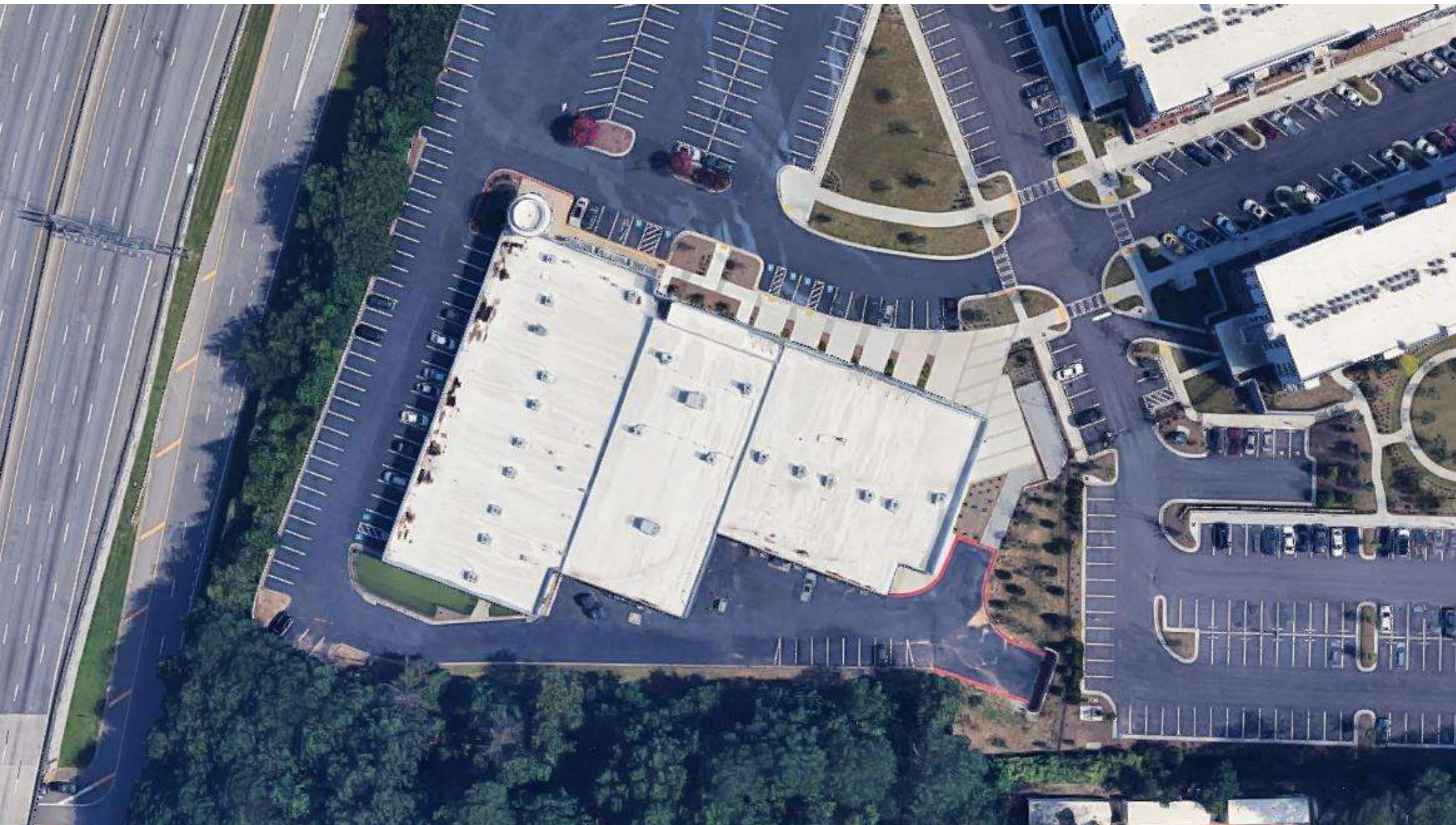
Buford Highway (SR-13)



New Peachtree Road

Buford Highway (SR-13)

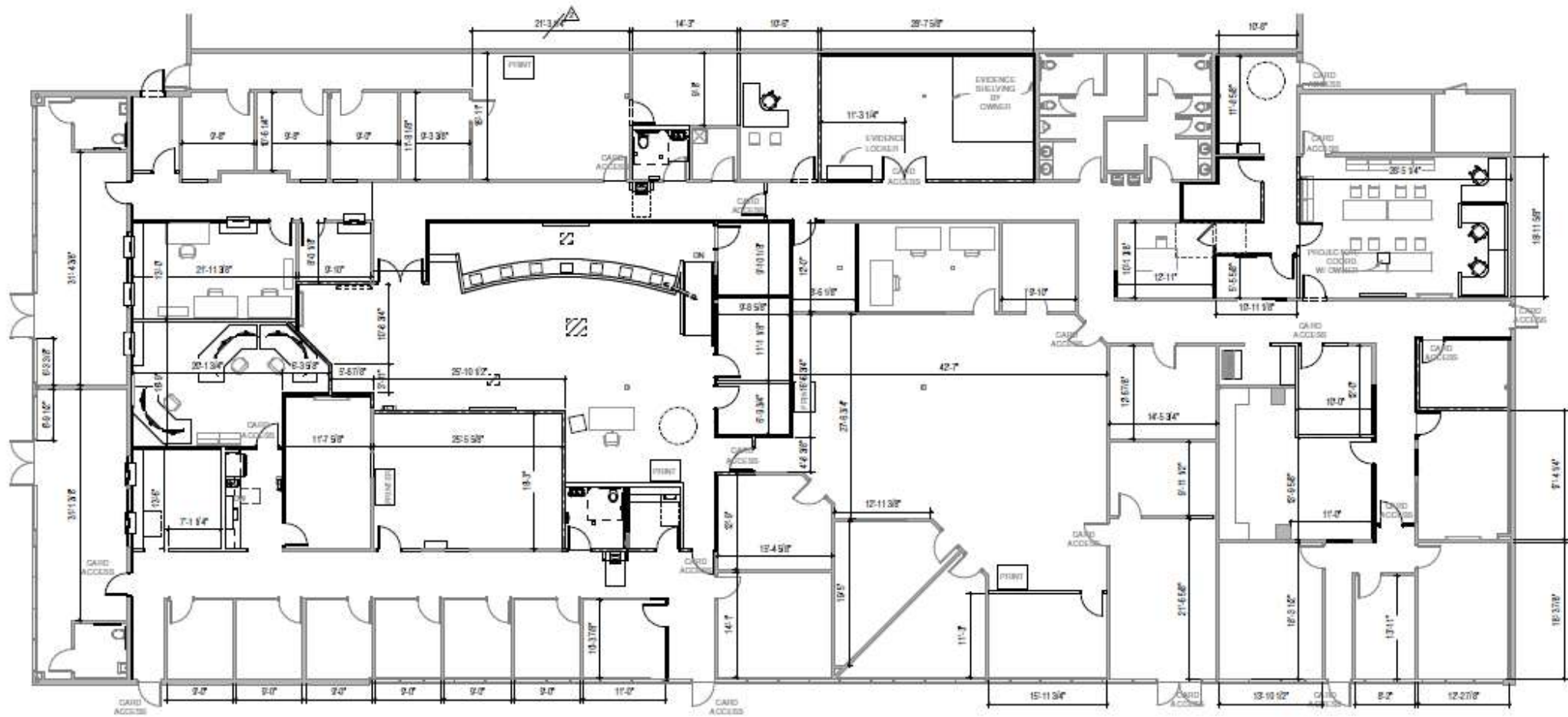














City Hall
Police Department
Municipal Court
Code Enforcement
911 Dispatch
Library
Arts Center

City Hall

Police Department

Municipal Court

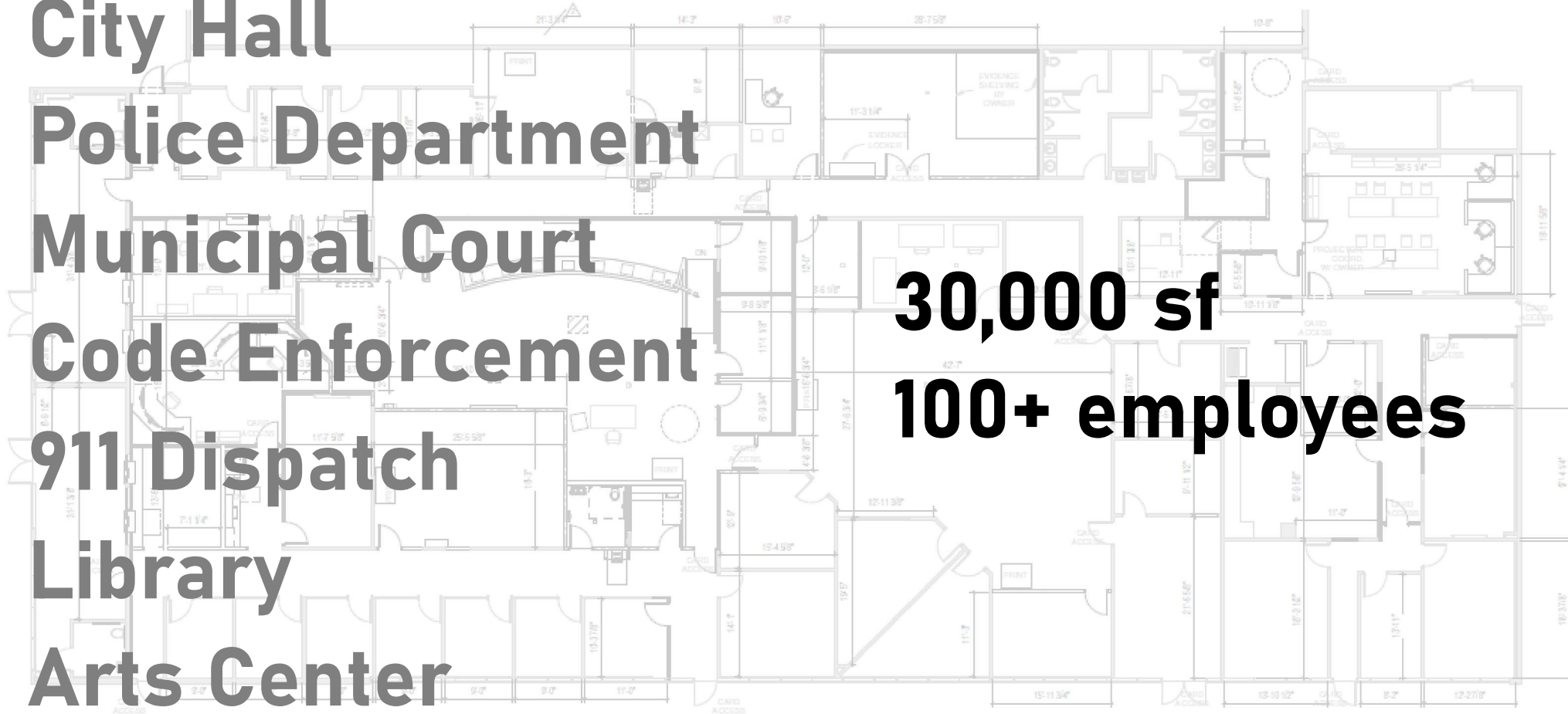
Code Enforcement

911 Dispatch

Library

Arts Center

30,000 sf
100+ employees

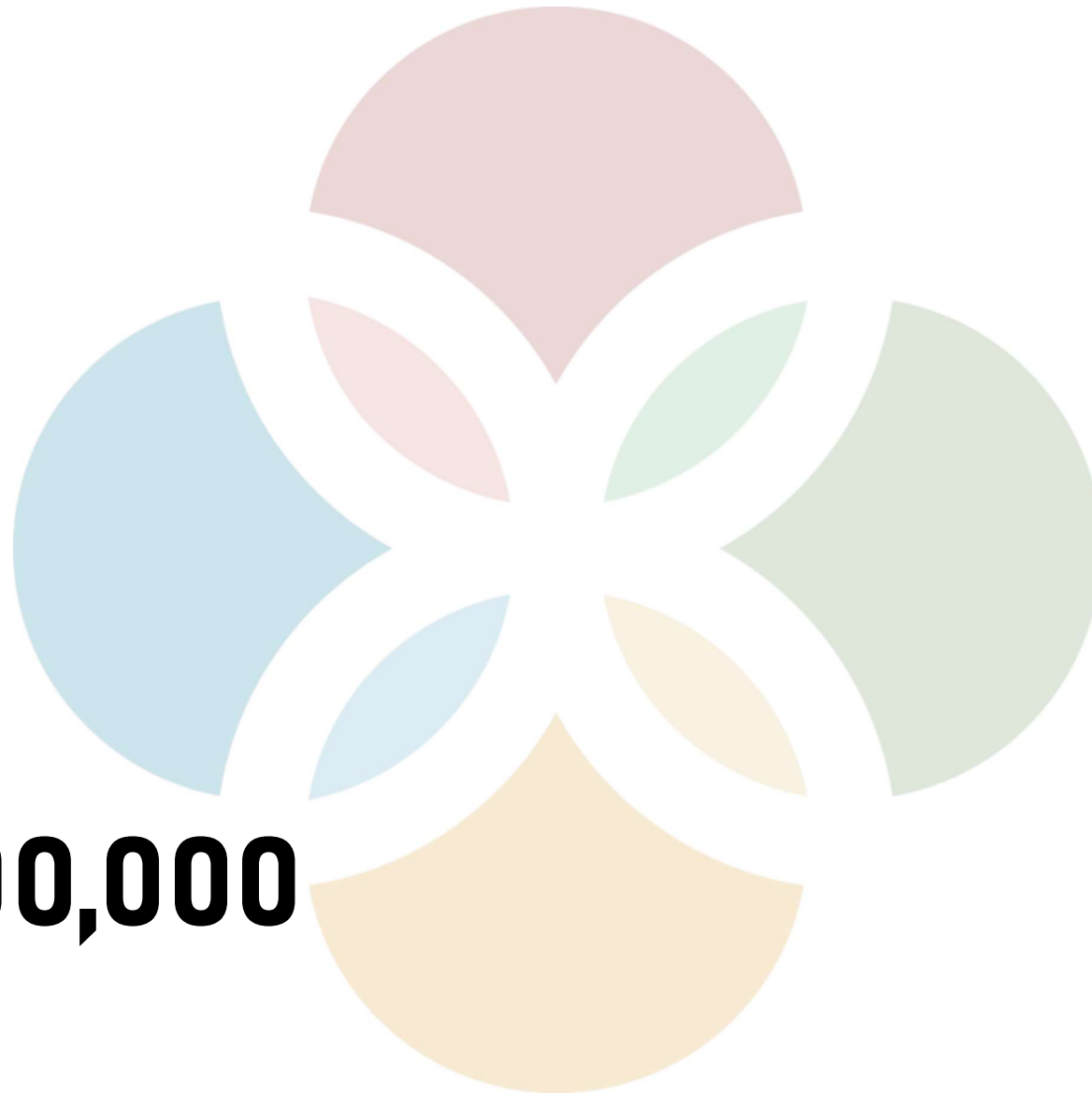


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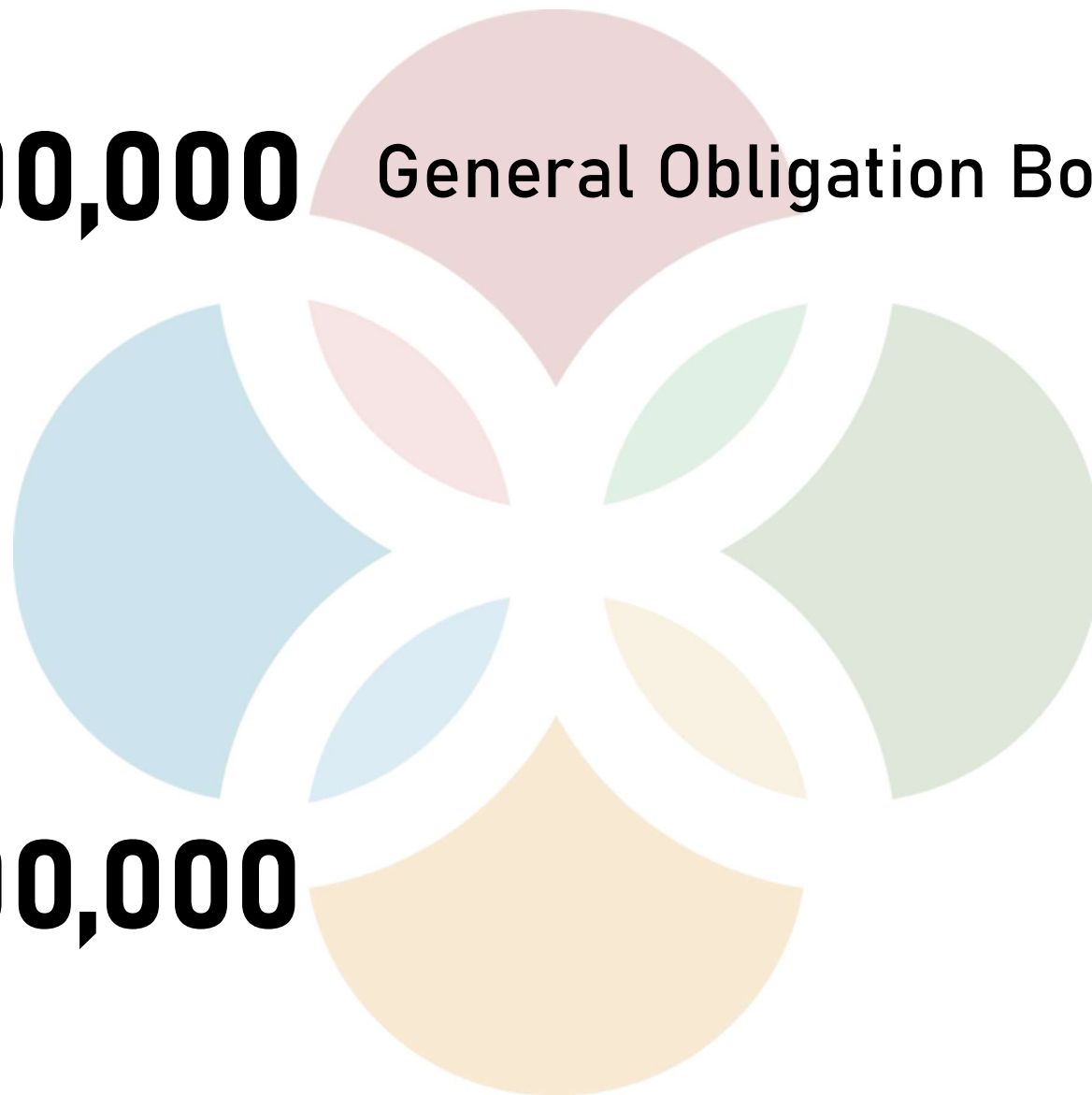


\$36,100,000

\$10,000,000

General Obligation Bond

\$36,100,000



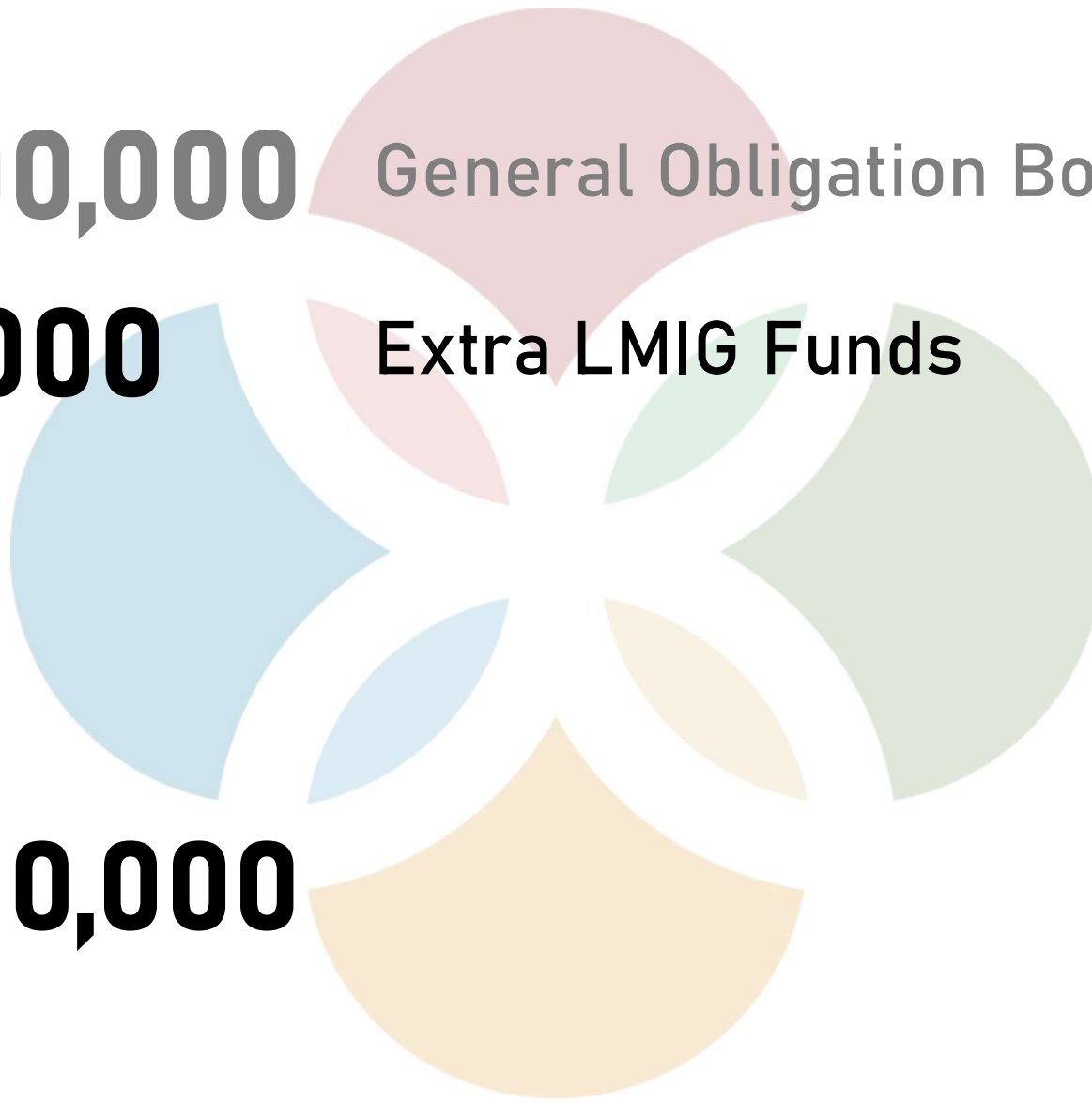
\$10,000,000

General Obligation Bond

\$700,000

Extra LMIG Funds

\$36,100,000



\$10,000,000

General Obligation Bond

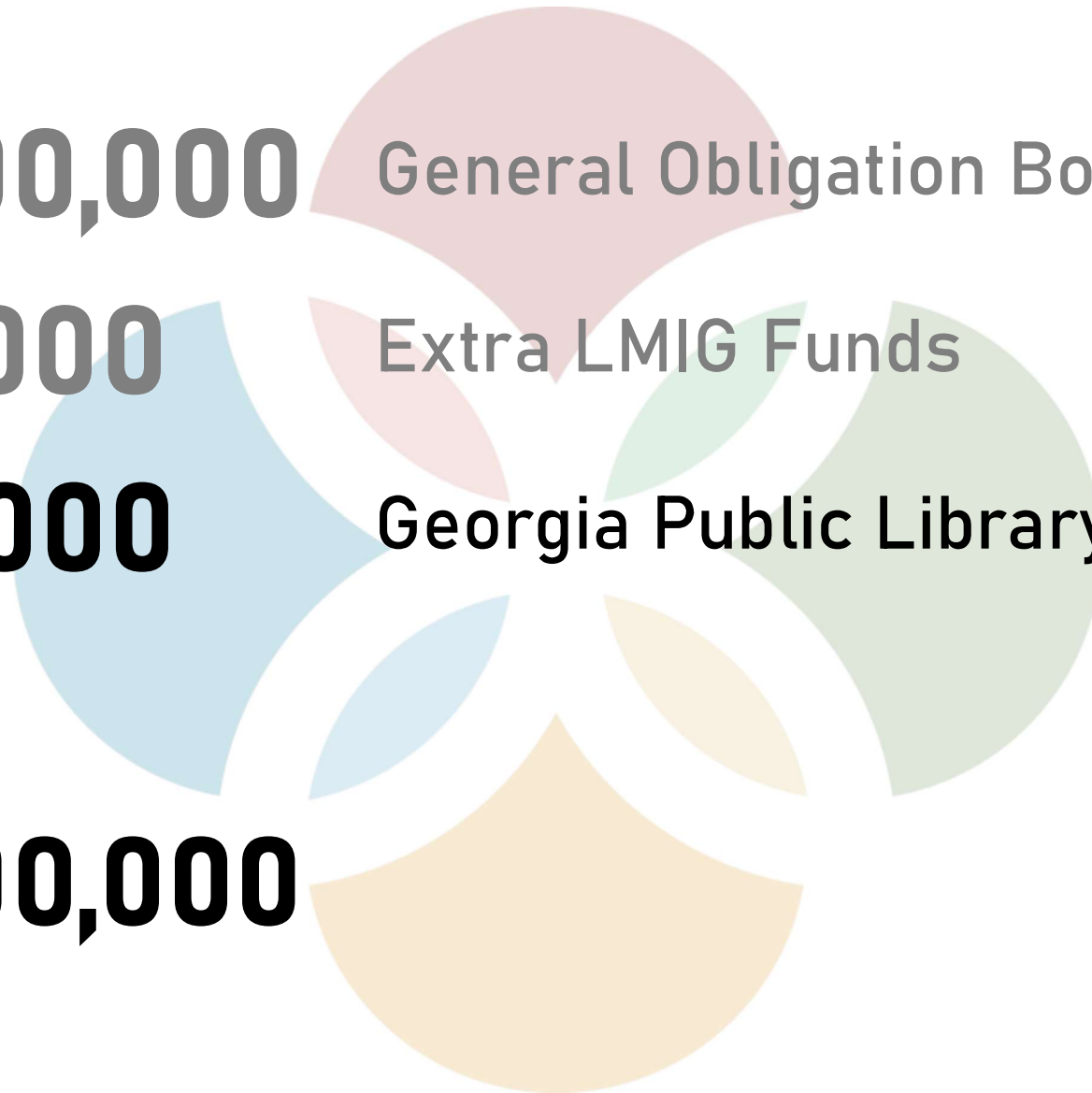
\$700,000

Extra LMIG Funds

\$400,000

Georgia Public Library Service

\$36,100,000



\$10,000,000

General Obligation Bond

\$700,000

Extra LMIG Funds

\$400,000

Georgia Public Library Service

\$25,000,000

Special Service District (SSD)

\$36,100,000



\$10,000,000

General Obligation Bond

\$700,000

Extra LMIG Funds

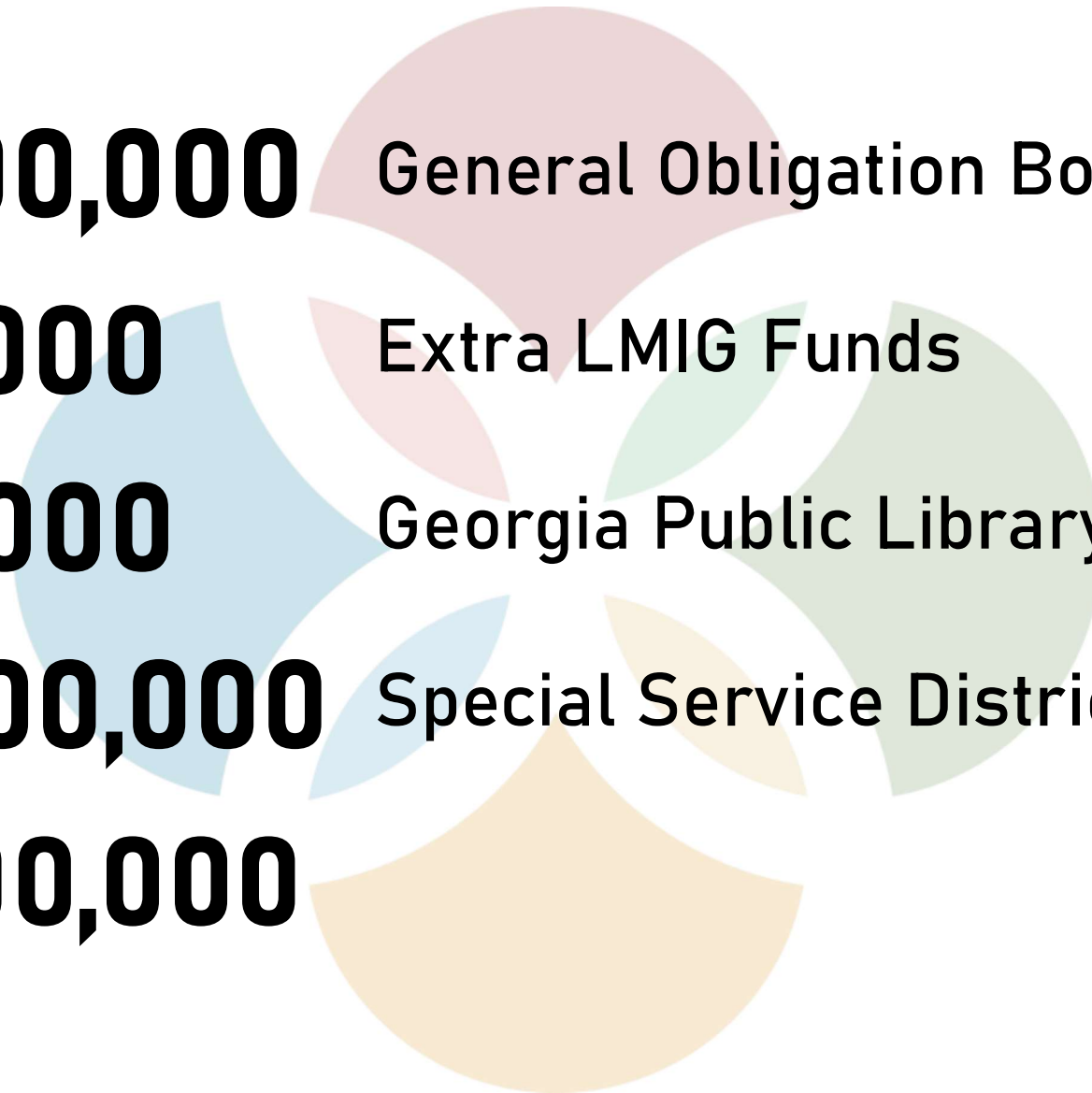
\$400,000

Georgia Public Library Service

\$25,000,000

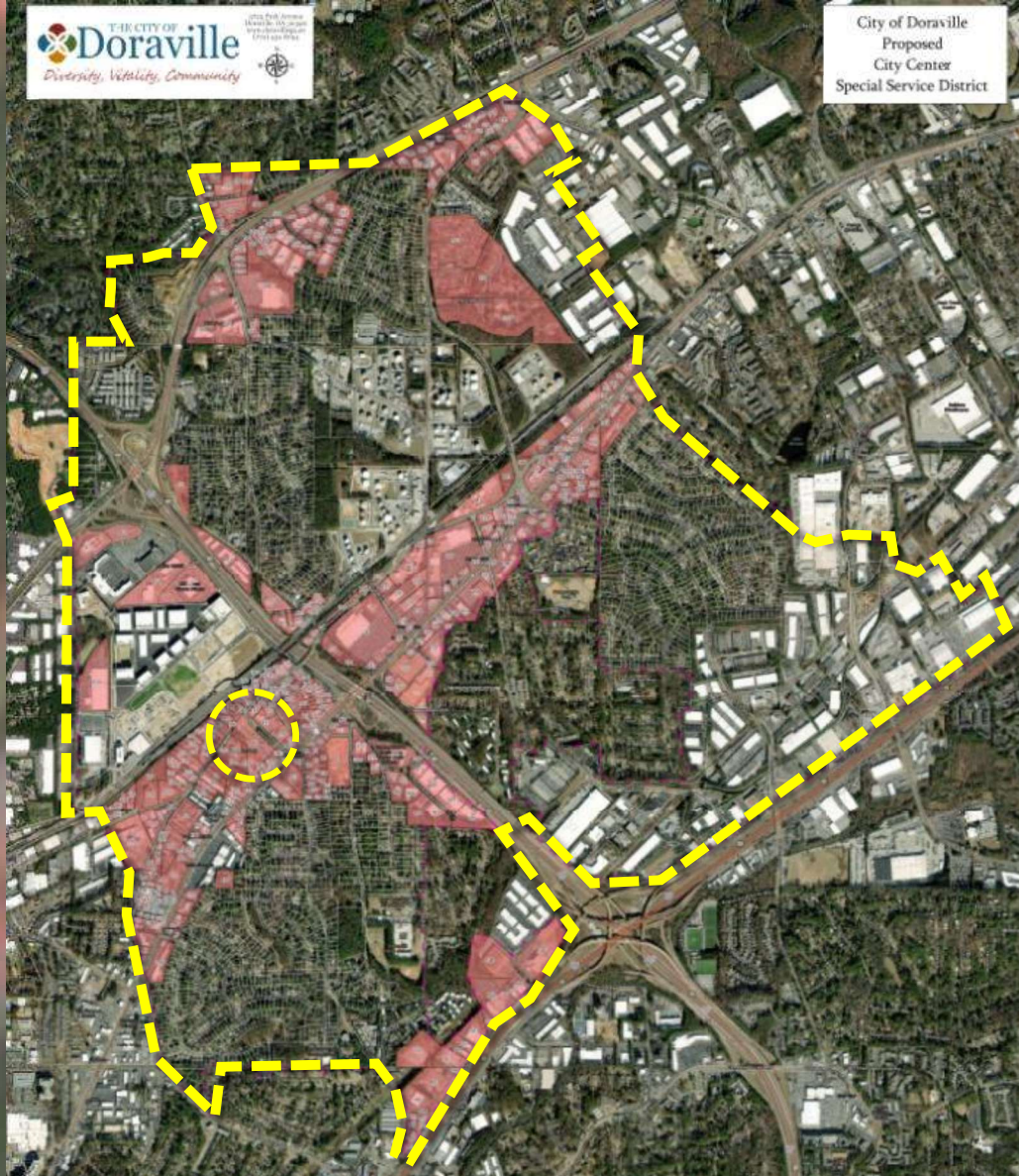
Special Service District (SSD)

\$36,100,000





City of Doraville
Proposed
City Center
Special Service District

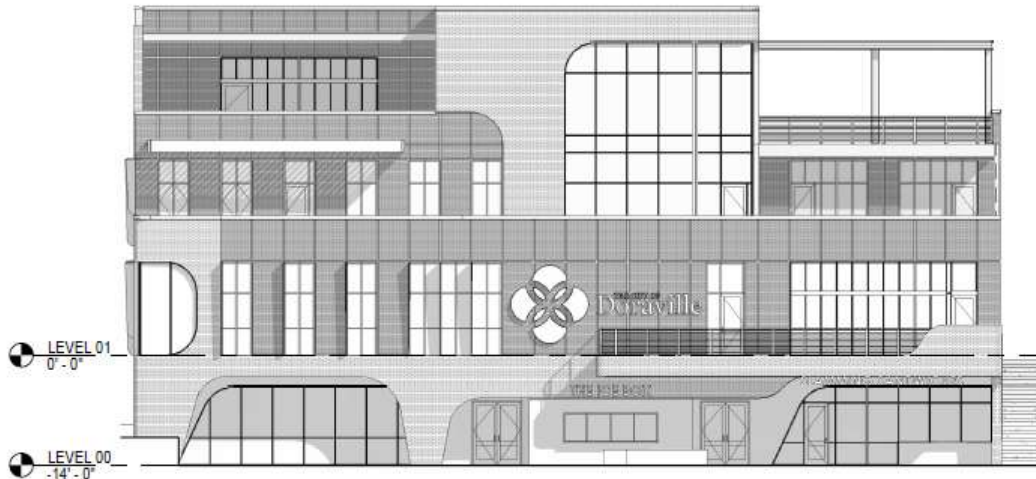




PRESENTATION - NORTH ELEVATION



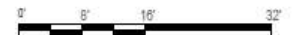
PRESENTATION - EAST ELEVATION



PRESENTATION - SOUTH ELEVATION



PRESENTATION - WEST ELEVATION











ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE

Commercial Real Estate

ATLANTA
BUSINESS CHRONICLE

'Just the beginning': Demolition day arrives in downtown Doraville



Doraville Demolition Day- September 27, 2025



ULI TAP Panel and Doraville City Staff on April 21, 2021, for the project tour.



Q&A

Lance Morsell, MPA
Director
ULI Atlanta

Jonathan Gelber, AICP
ULI Atlanta TAP Committee Member
KB Advisory Group

Austin Shelton, AICP
Director of Planning & Community Development
City of Doraville