



# ATLANTA'S NEXT UNICORN

INTEGRATING MECHANICSVILLE

**mTAP / CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP, 2020**

Rita Gibson, Nikishka Iyengar, Quill Healey, Wesley Turner, Akash Gaur



# OUTLINE

Our Team

Purpose

History of Mechanicsville

Surrounding Neighborhoods & Development

Current State

Community Feedback

Challenges

Case Studies & Takeaways

Recommendations

Questions

# OUR TEAM

## NIKISHKA IYENGAR

Founder/CEO, The Guild

## QUILL HEALEY II

Owner, Healey Weatherholtz Properties

## RITA GIBSON

Georgia Advancing Communities Together

## WESLEY TURNER

Partner, Krevolin | Horst

## AKASH GAUR

Director of Design & Construction, Legacy Ventures



# Recommendations to revitalize and integrate Mechanicsville

The purpose of this presentation is to lay out the current state of Mechanicsville, along with recommendations and considerations for transforming it to be Atlanta's next unicorn neighborhood.

Our recommendations are based on secondary research and case studies, as well as primary interviews with key stakeholders and feedback from the community.

## PURPOSE



# HISTORY OF MECHANICSVILLE

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During the 19th century, Mechanicsville housed a multiethnic community comprising of working-class blacks and middle-class whites. This area has rich history that is not well known to current Atlantans. Mechanicsville once was a bustling community that bolstered racially, ethnically, and economically diverse group of residence that had easy access to employment opportunities in downtown via streetcar transportation. Many businesses thrived in Mechanicsville like Merita Bakery and the Candler-Smith warehouse. During the 1900's, Mechanicsville was home to two-thirds of Atlanta's Jewish population. In the past 60 years, the landscape changed drastically as a result of segregation, urban flight, political, social, and economic forces.

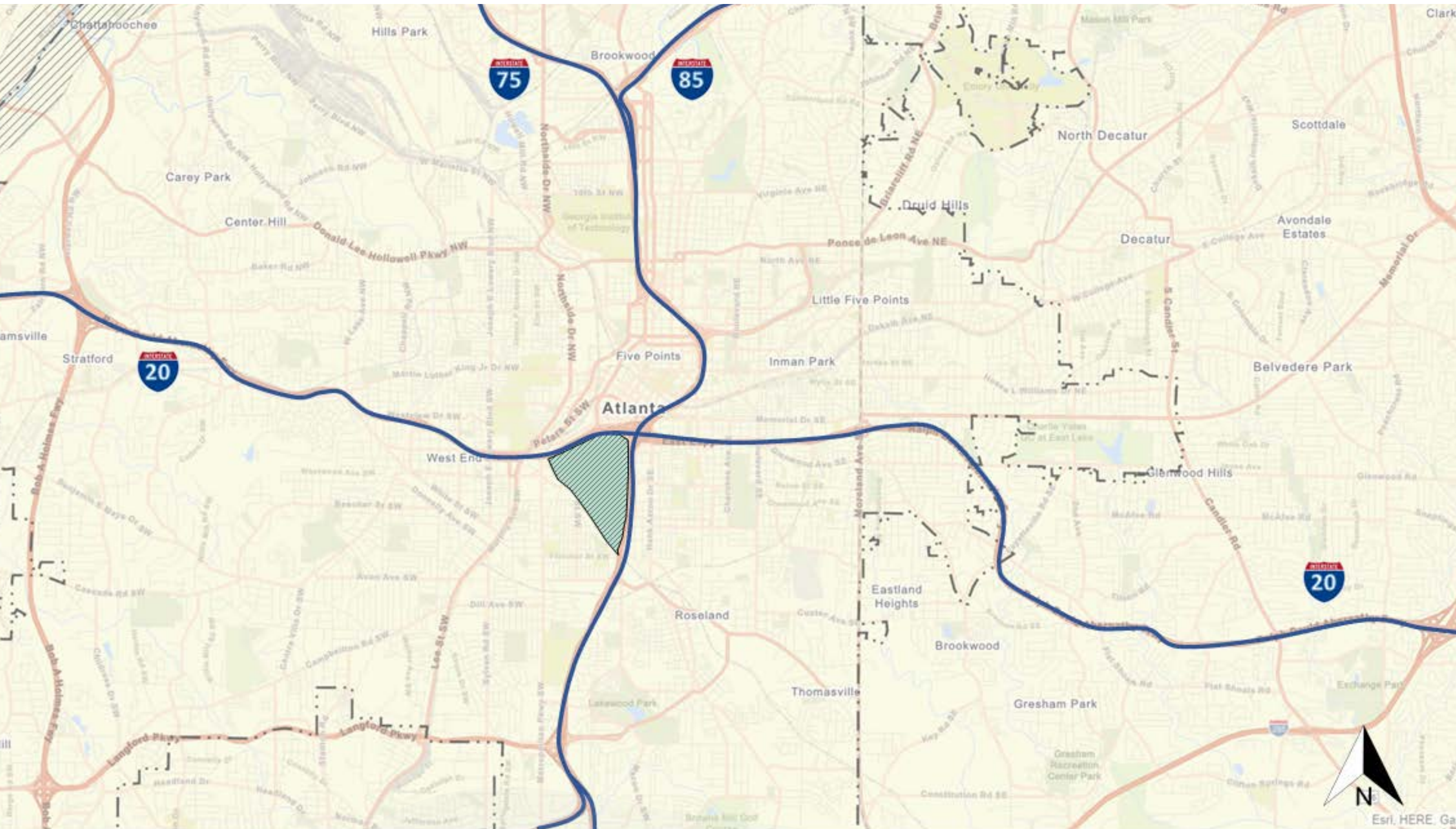
# **CONTEXT: SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS & DEVELOPMENT**



# SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS & DEVELOPMENT

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Mechanicsville sits in the shadow of downtown Atlanta. This neighborhood is in the NPU-V and one of the oldest neighborhoods within Atlanta.

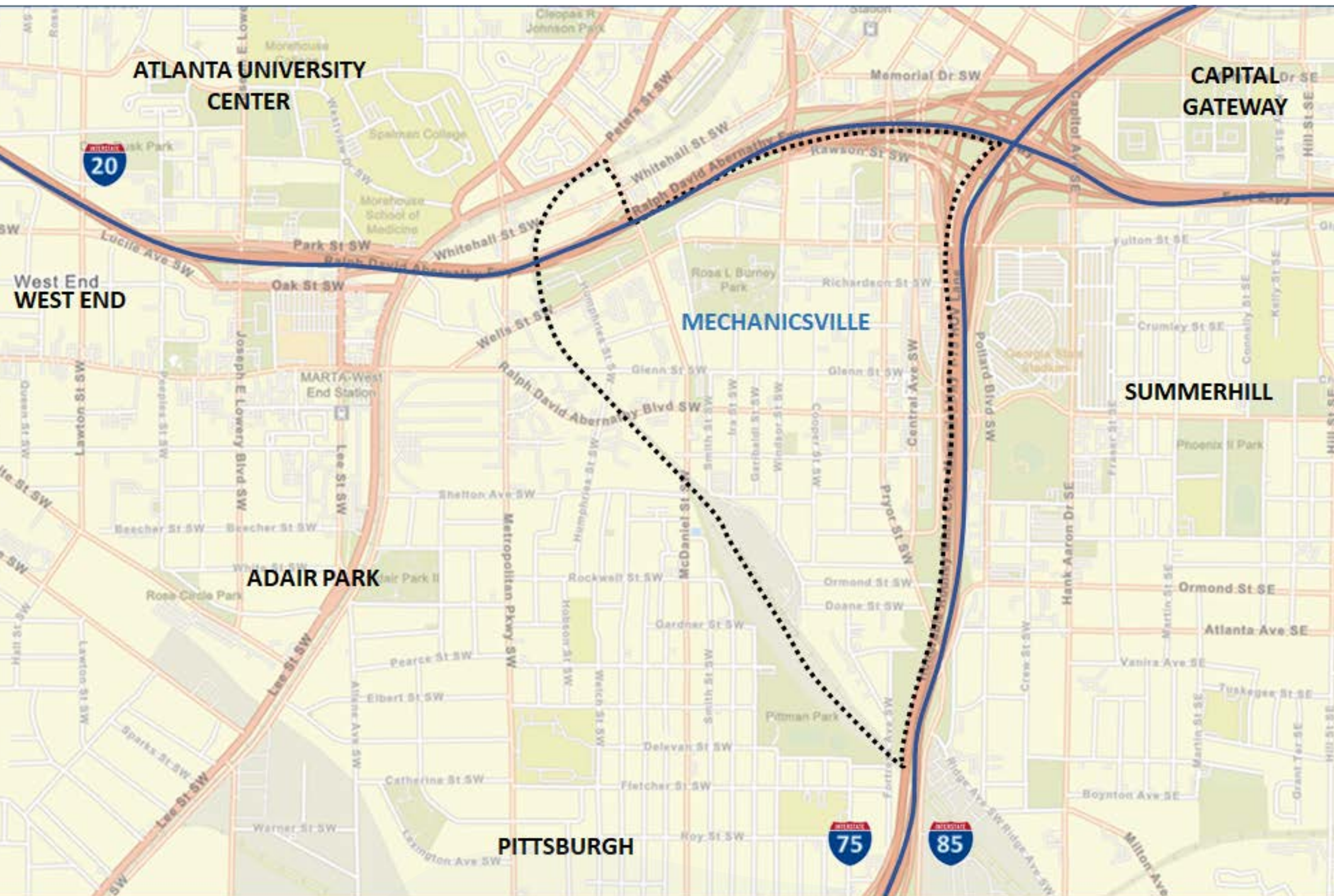


## VICINITY MAP



# SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS & DEVELOPMENT

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Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V) is comprised of Adair Park, Capitol Gateway, Mechanicsville, Peoplestown, Pittsburgh and Summerhill.

## SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

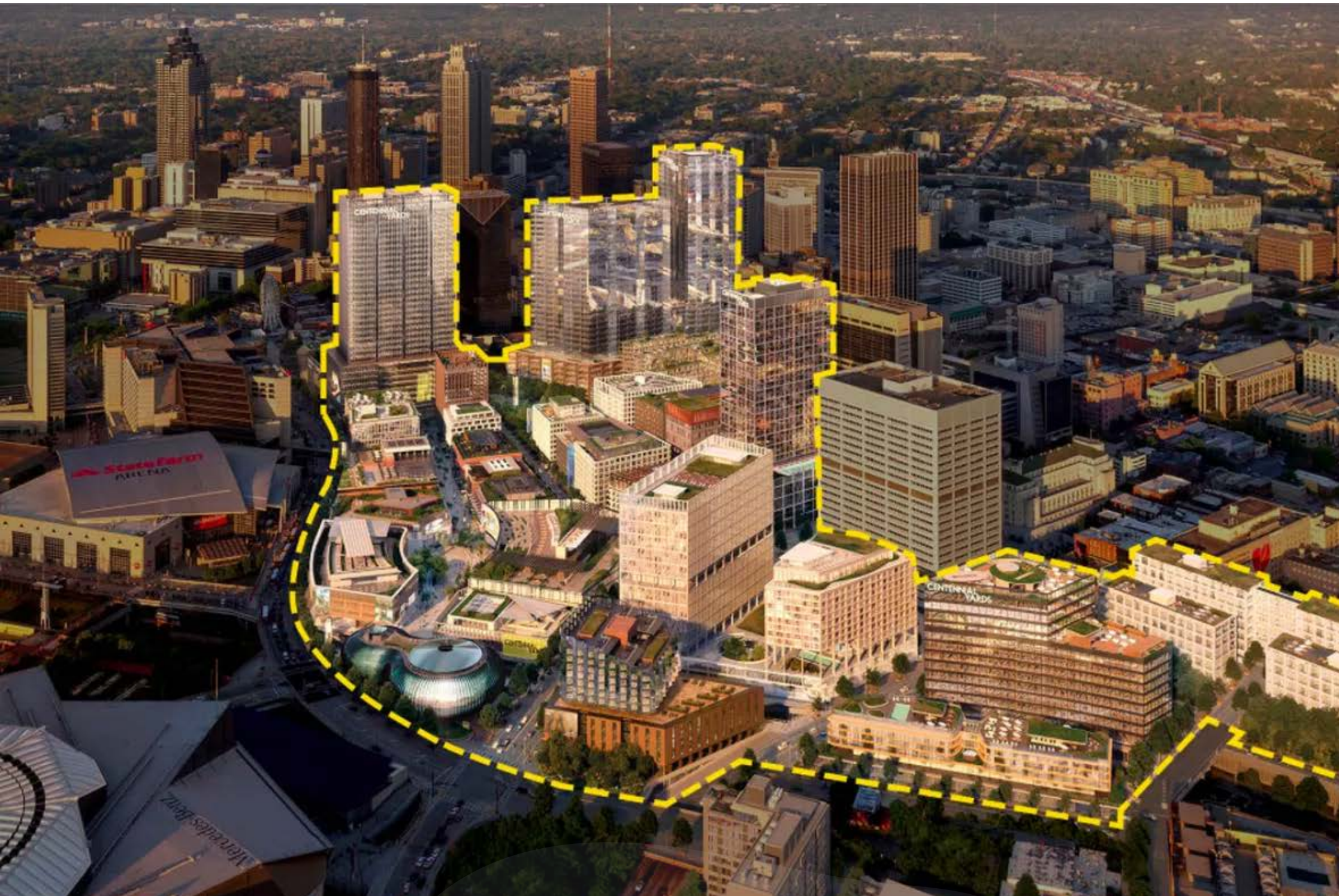




Newport has acquired and plans to redevelop 48 buildings and six parking assets totaling about 13 acres in an 8-block radius in South Downtown Atlanta.

## NEWPORT





50 acres in downtown  
Atlanta planned for 12 million SF  
mixed-use development  
including retail, office,  
residential and hotel by CIM

## CENTENNIAL YARDS





Ongoing redevelopment of The Metropolitan by CARTER. THE MET is a 1,100,000 SF former cotton warehouse on 40 acres now occupied by a wide variety of uses and residents.

# THE MET



## SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS & DEVELOPMENT

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Mixed use development by CARTER, Healey Weatherholtz Properties, and K. King & Co. Development covers about 35 acres and over \$750,000,000 investment in the area.

# SUMMERHILL





Continues to grow. Now has over 53,000 students and is expanding into Summerhill with its renovation of Turner Field into the GSU Football Stadium, future location of their baseball field, construction of a new convocation center for school events and basketball, and more.

**GEORGIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**





A mixed use development on 31 acres led by Columbia Core Partners. Phase 1 investment is estimated to be ~\$26,000,000 delivering workspace for blue collar tradespeople, an artisan wing with studios for sewing and jewelry-making, office space, an indoor amphitheater, a commercial kitchen, and a handful of residences priced at 60 percent of the area median income.

## PITTSBURGH YARDS





Through a \$400,000,000 investment, Elevator City Partners will develop about 12.5 acres into a retail, residential, cultural and office destination with a public greenspace component. Multi-phase and multi-year project.

## WEST END MALL



# CURRENT STATE





- In 2006 The Atlanta Housing Authority, the largest landowner in the community with 41 acres, awarded development rights for the former McDaniel Glen Housing community to the joint venture of Columbia Residential and Summech CDC.
- McDaniel Glen was one of the largest public housing communities in Atlanta.
- The master plan created by the developers included, mixed-use, mixed-income rental and for sale housing, with new infrastructure, streets, streetscape and parks.
- The original master plan consisted of 16 phases with 1100 rental and for sale homes including 155 senior rental units, 658 multifamily rental units and 235 on-site for sale townhomes.
- AHA supported an additional offsite development of 49 for sale townhomes.
- Due to market conditions, in 2014, the plan was updated. Most recently the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the development plans.





- Currently City Views at Rosa Burney is an affordable rental housing development which is currently undergoing a major renovation.
- One amenity in the community is the underutilized neighborhood Park – Rosa Burney Park which is in need of upgraded equipment and landscaping.
- During interviews with staff from Park Pride, it was suggested that the community form a Friends of the Parks Group to determine the future usage of the park and upgrades to the park.
- Park Pride awards small grants to Friends' groups for upgrades. This is one way to have park improvements funded. Park Pride partners with the City of Atlanta Parks Department for larger park improvements.





### Fulton County Juvenile Court



- The Fulton County Juvenile Court and the Mechanicsville Library share a facility on Pryor Road.
- Both the library and the Court have been renovated recently.
- Interviews with the Juvenile Court staff indicated that more amenities – restaurants in the area and other supporting retail – bank branch, services such as juice bar, sandwich shop, etc. would make the area much more attractive for visitors to the court and the library.
- Dunbar Elementary School sits in the heart of the Mechanicsville community.
- The school was the focus of the Philadelphia based Annenberg Foundation's turnaround efforts in the Mechanicsville community. With new development of the Atlanta Housing property,



# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



## How do you want Mechanicsville to evolve?

- More walkable with more sidewalks.
- Less blight.
- Ralph David Abernathy Blvd become commercial corridor
- Overpasses become safer and lit and unhoused individuals no longer gather there.
- More retail

## Where do you shop for groceries?

- Publix and Kroger in Glenwood on Bill Kennedy down Memorial.

## What do you like about Mechanicsville?

- Proximity to downtown.
- Convenience to highway and airport.
- History
- Homes
- Green spaces



# CHALLENGES



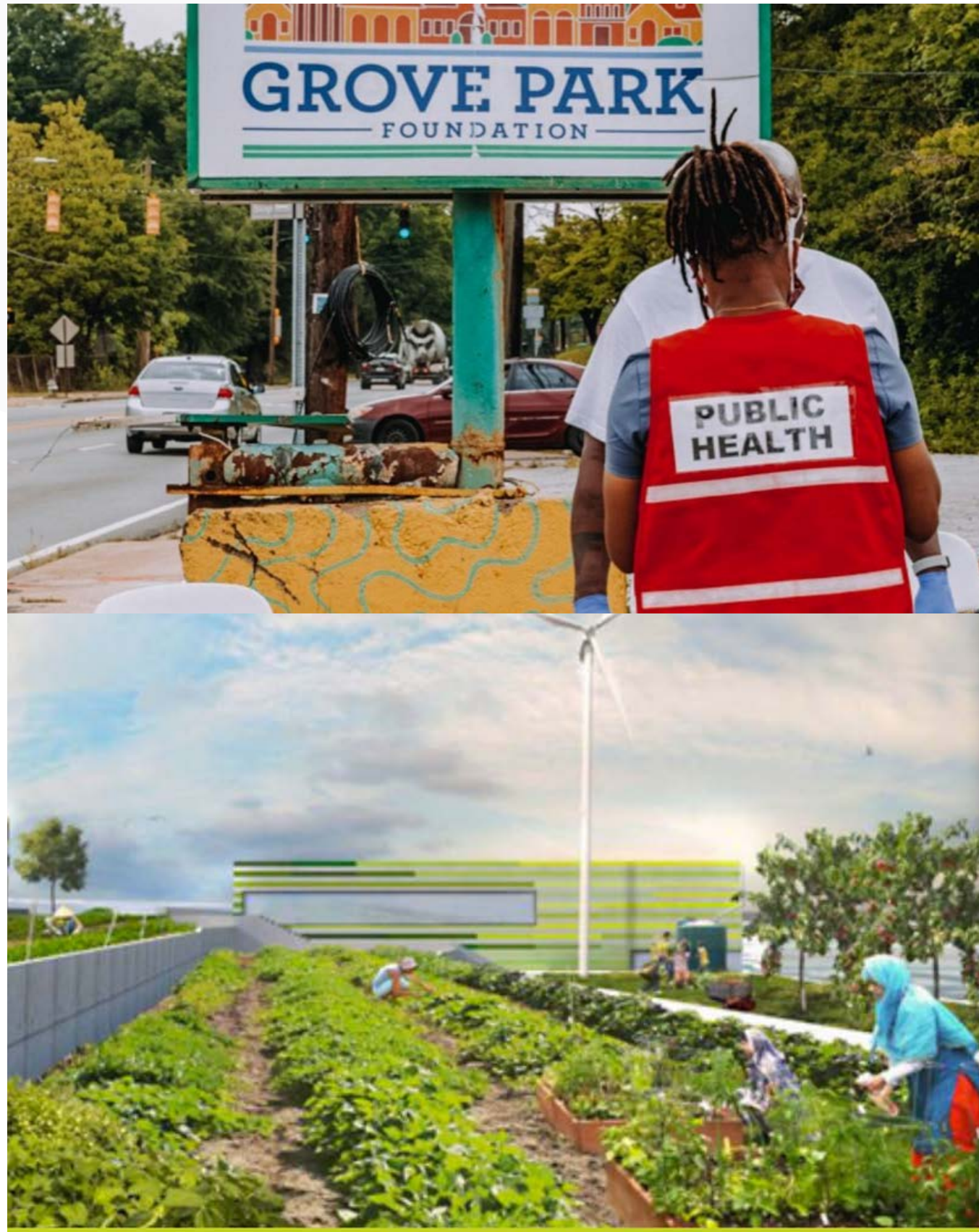
- **CRIME**
- **EDUCATION**
- **VACANT LAND AND HIGHWAY ADJACENT LOTS**
- **BLIGHT**
- **UNHOUSED PEOPLE**
- **NEED MORE MARKET RATE HOME BUYERS**

## **CHALLENGES**



# CASE STUDIES & TAKEAWAYS





## A "Community Quarterback" is Key

- Mixed income, community wellness, and cradle to college education pipeline under a comprehensive neighborhood strategy.
- Case studies East Lake, Bayou District in New Orleans, Meadows Community in Indianapolis, and Birmingham, AL.
- Community quarterback is key and the Purpose Built Communities difference.
- Education pipeline
- Mixed income housing

# PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES





## Community Quarterback: East Lake Foundation

- East Lake Foundation (“ELF”) was and continues to be the lead organization. Their leadership has been the key to their progress.
- Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) through
- Purpose Built Communities, Mixed income housing
- 'Cradle to college' education continuum
- Amenities & Community Wellness
- YMCA connected to Drew Charter School
- First Tee
- Grocery Store (Publix)
- Farmer’s Market & Gardening
- Youth System: developed across varied and overlapping contexts (family, school, neighborhood)

# EASTLAKE



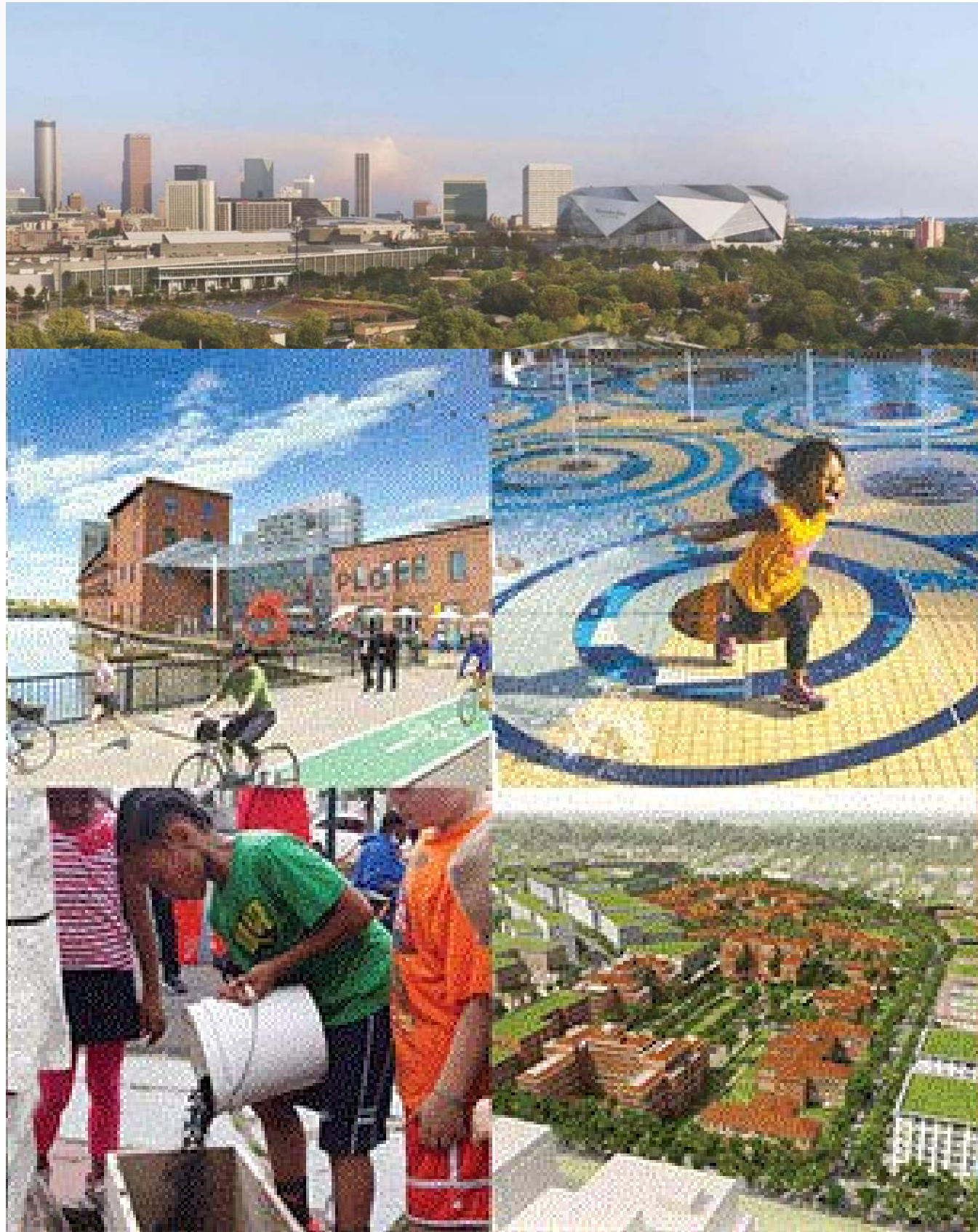


## Partnership between CDCs and CDFIs

- Four community development corporations including Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation formed a collaborative to advocate and plan vision.
- Master development vision created for the area
- New green and public places created.
- Faith based organizations part of the leadership.
- Affordable housing included.
- Financial investment from LISC,
- Enterprise Community Partners, and NeighborWorks America.
- Green street practices and better storm water management.

# CODMAN SQUARE





## Public-private partnership to close social, economic, physical gaps that separate AVE neighborhoods.

- Mixed income housing plan for University Homes
- \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Grant to AHA.
- Urban farm. Truly Living Well relocated its farm to Ashview Heights. Connecting people to healthier foods and providing agriculture based training and jobs.
- Partnership with MARTA Army and adopt a stop program, bike share etc.
- Proctor Creek Watershed: Converted blighted areas into Boone Park West and Cook Park as community assets and an innovative storm water management system improvement.

# AVE ECODISTRICT

## Mixed income redevelopment of old housing project. Entertainment District spurred growth.

- Was “The Scrub” also called Central Park Village. Settled after Civil War by newly emancipated African Americans.
- Partnership between a housing authority (THA) and bank owned community development corporation (Banc of America Community Development Corporation).
- Torn apart by urban renewal.
- Had/has a nationally renowned entertainment district. This spurred initial growth. Residents maintained right to return to redeveloped housing.
- Tax Incremental Financing (“TIF”) funding used. Fell apart during financial crisis. Replaced by grant money.
- Established a community redevelopment area (CRA).THA applied for and got Neighborhood Stability Program (NSP) funds. Benefited from timing of great recession.
- Uses innovative and efficient districtwide approaches for stormwater management and cooling.
- Low income housing tax credits used.



## Creation of sustainable neighborhood development led by public private partnership.

- A consortium of public and private partners led by EcoWorks founded Eco D, a collaborative backbone organization offering structure and process to support the creation of sustainable neighborhood development throughout the city of Detroit, Michigan.
- 9 member Sustainability Committee established to represent community needs and co create plans for future development.

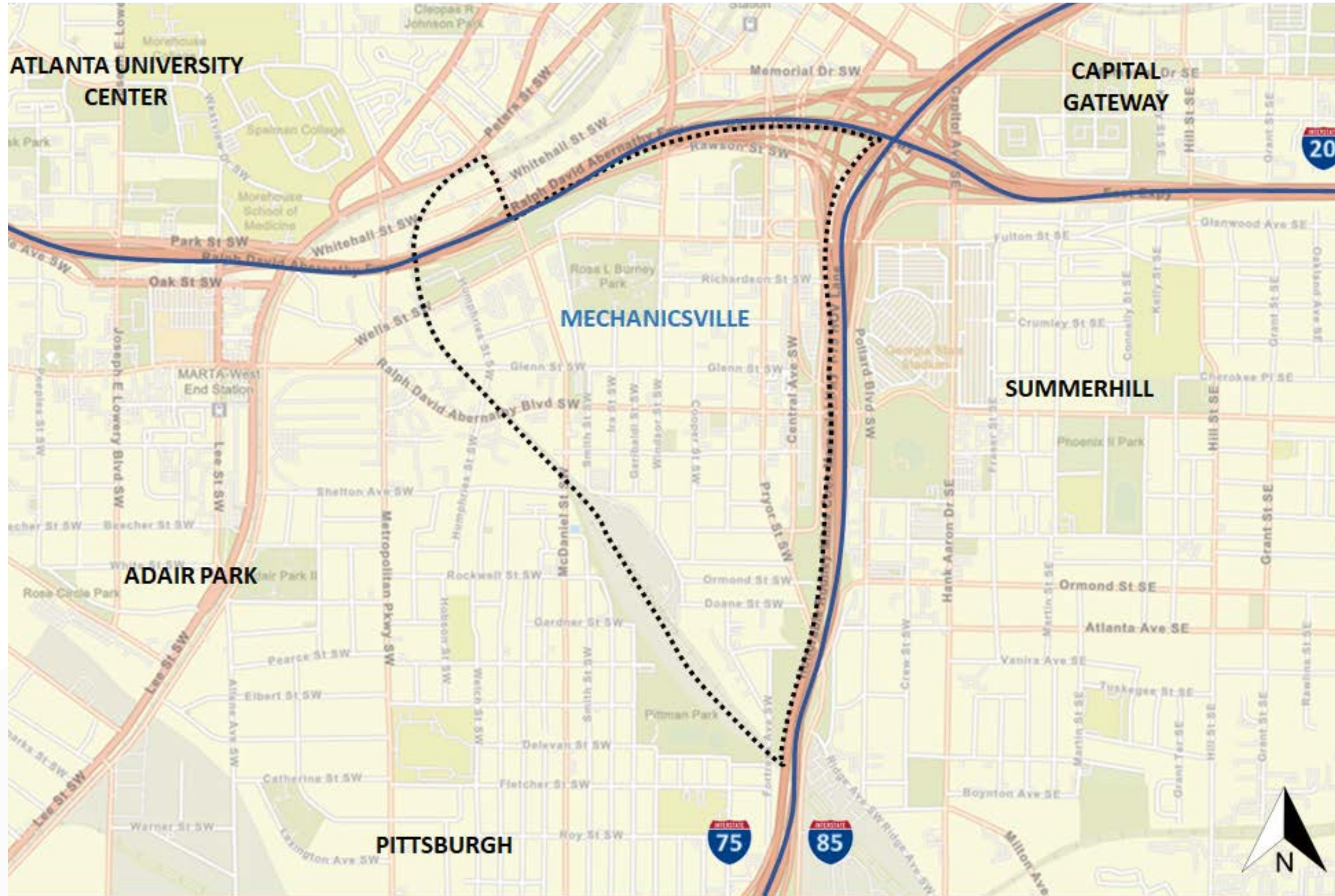
# WEST VILLAGE & HOPE VILLAGE

# RECOMMENDATIONS



1. ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP (“COMMUNITY QB”)
2. IMPROVE AND ADD PUBLIC OPEN SPACES
3. DEVELOPMENT- ATTRACT MIXED INCOME AND MIXED USE  
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLANNING AND PUBLIC PRIVATE  
PARTNERSHIPS
4. CREATE AND IMPLEMENT PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES
5. FOCUS ON COMMUNITY WELLNESS
6. STRENGTHEN K-12 EDUCATION OFFERINGS
7. ENHANCED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS



## Community Quarterback

Leadership identifies, plans and prioritizes projects then pursues public and private sources to fund individual projects

# LEADERSHIP



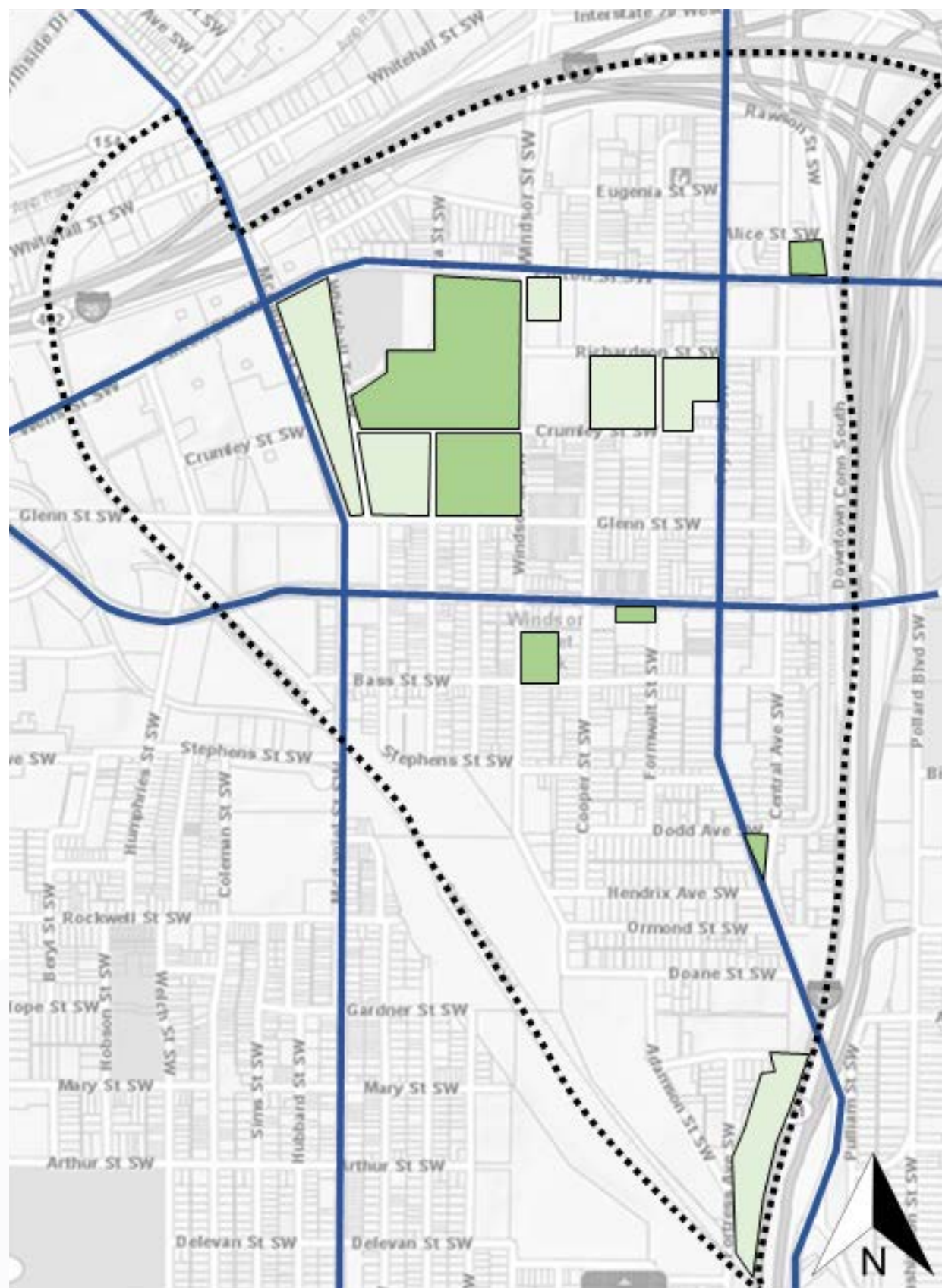


## Green Spaces

- Improve existing parks
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Replant landscape
- New lighting
- Informational and wayfinding signage
- Remove existing barbed wire fencing and replace with more aesthetic boundaries.
- ID new park locations
- Remove fencing parks and vacant lots
- Create urban fruit gardens
- Farmers Market
- Connect green spaces via shaded streets and walking trails

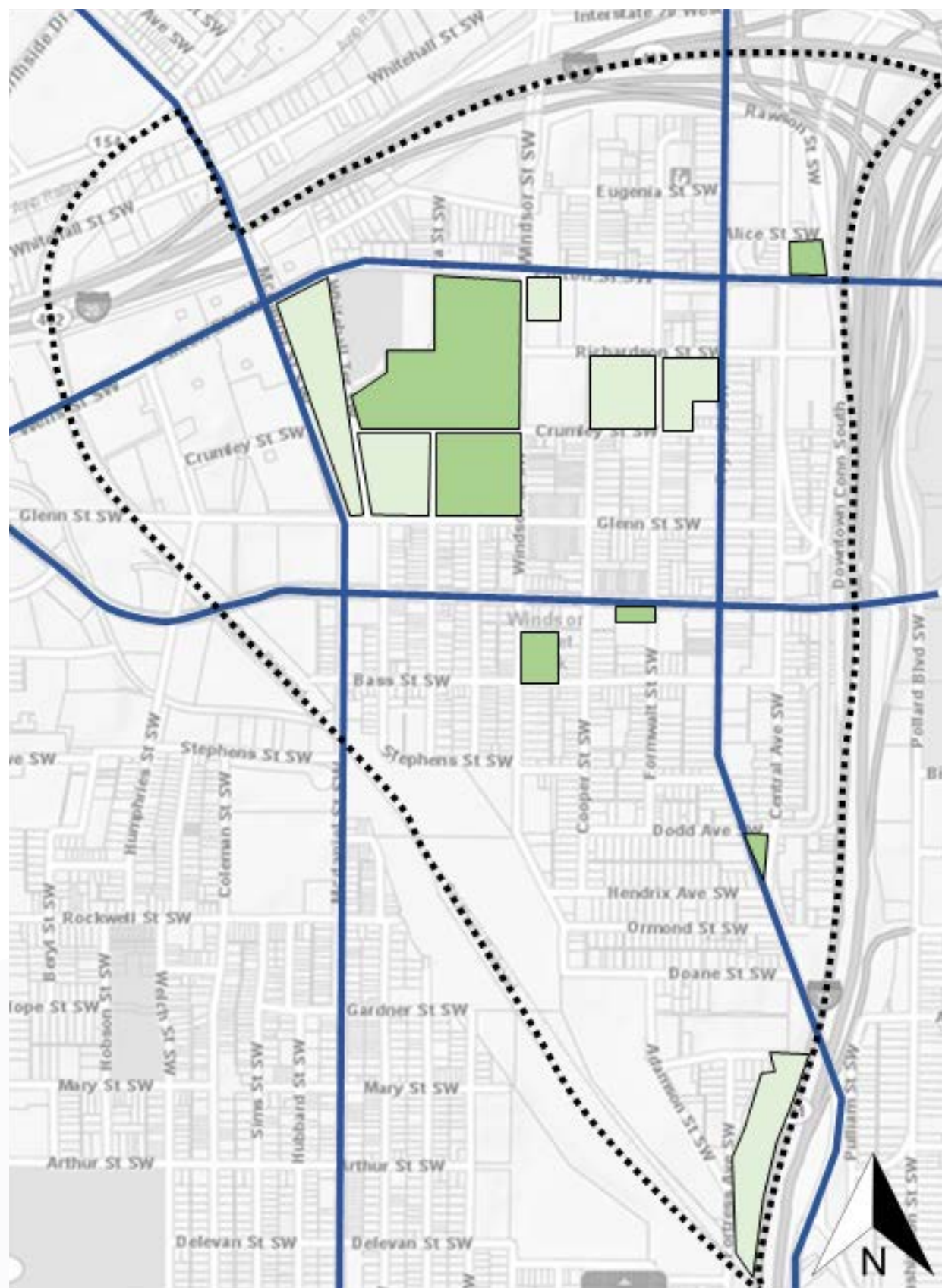
## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



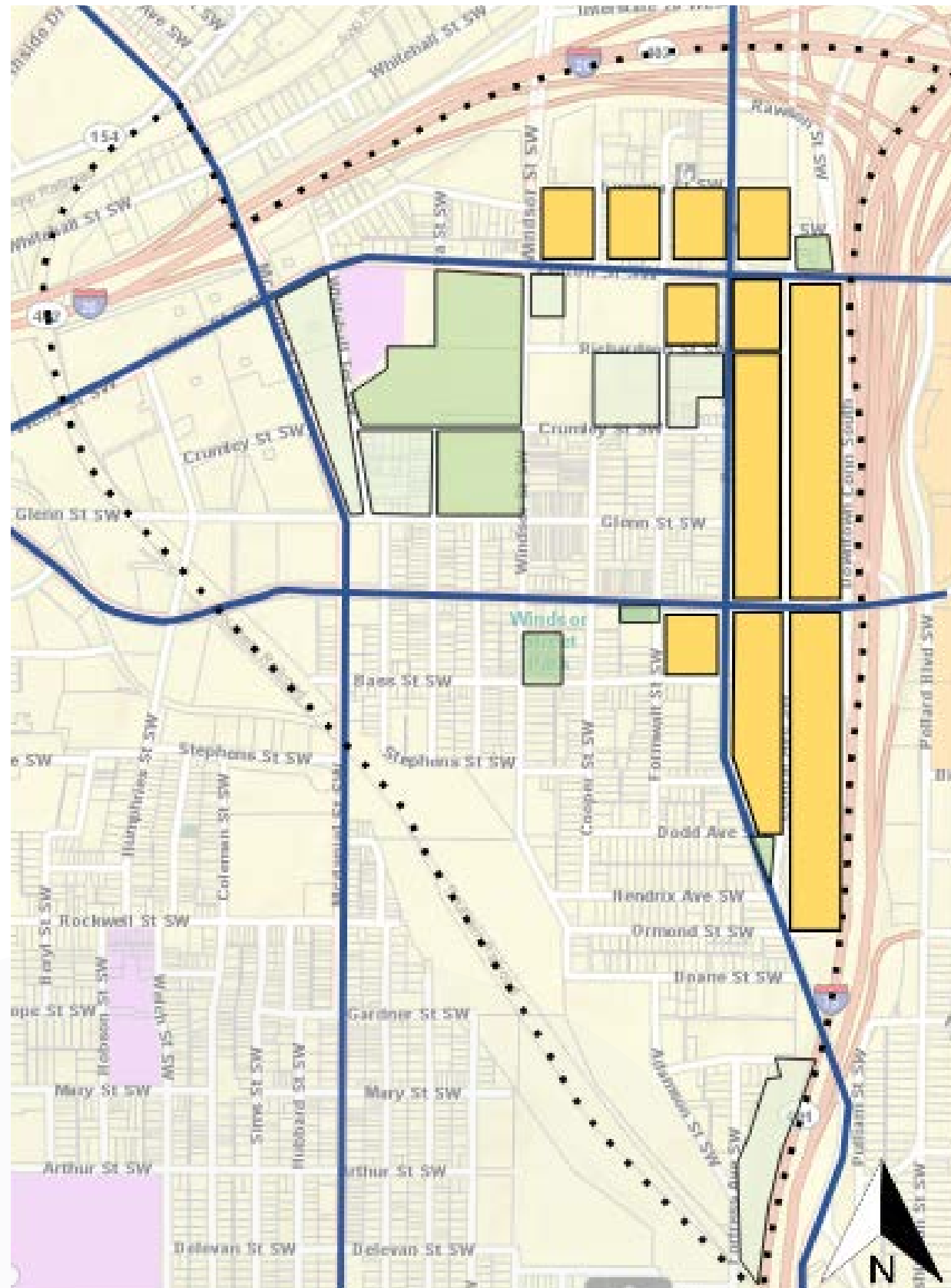


**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**



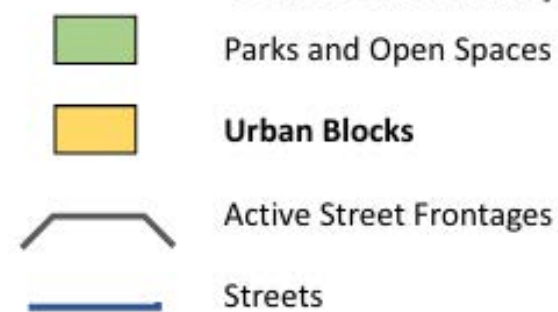


**PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**



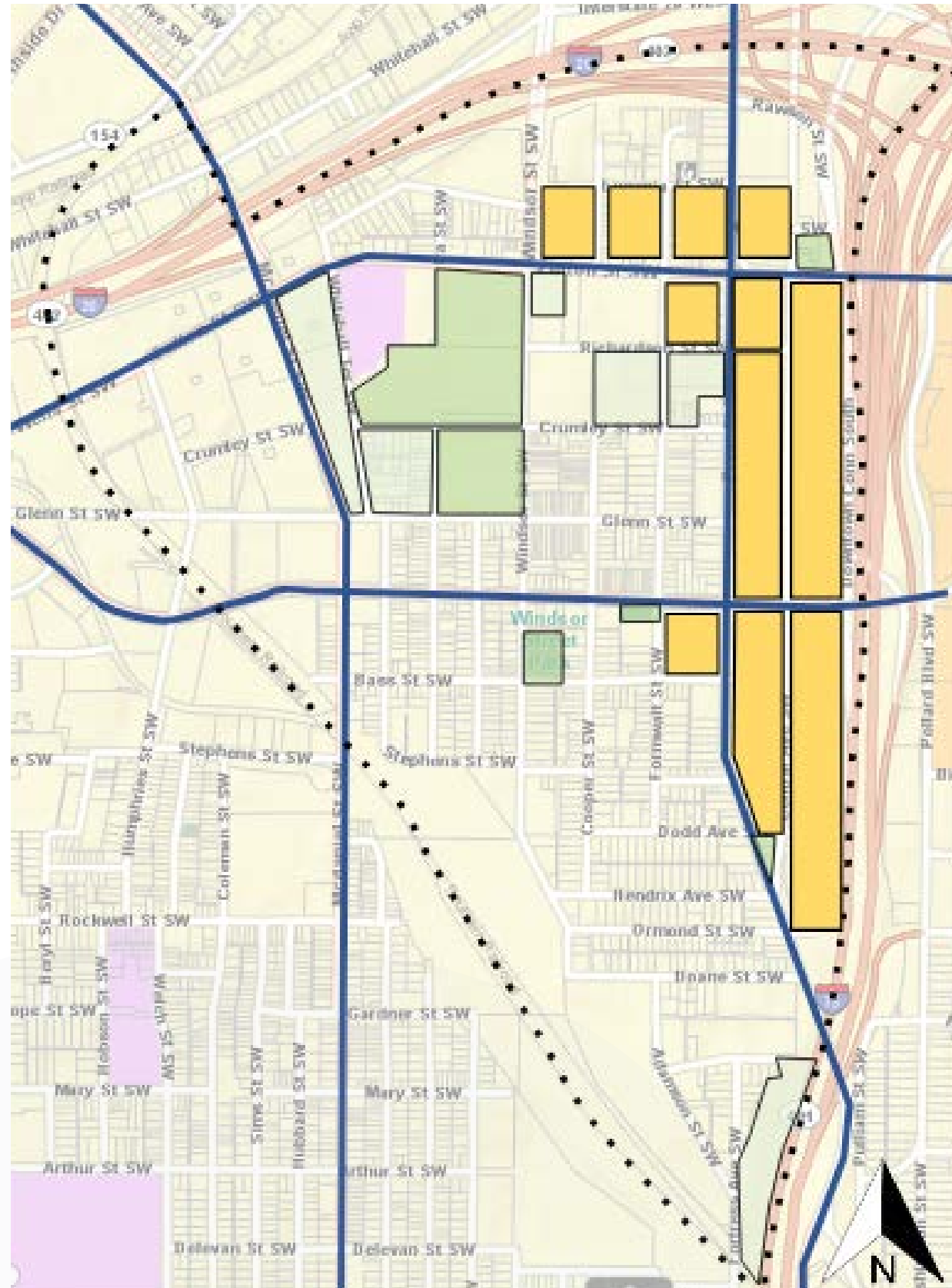
## Urban Blocks

- Opportunity Zones, Mixed-Use Investment Opportunity with potential for further Public Private Partnership
- PRYOR STREET & CENTRAL AVENUE-The parking lots located in between the pair of streets are owned by Fulton County and City of Atlanta entities, mainly the Recreation Authority
- They are located within Qualified Opportunity Zones and right in the heart of the CBD of Mechanicsville.
- Private developer can offer parking underneath eventual development and governmental entity can fund costs of parking deck.
- Mixed-Use zoning designation.



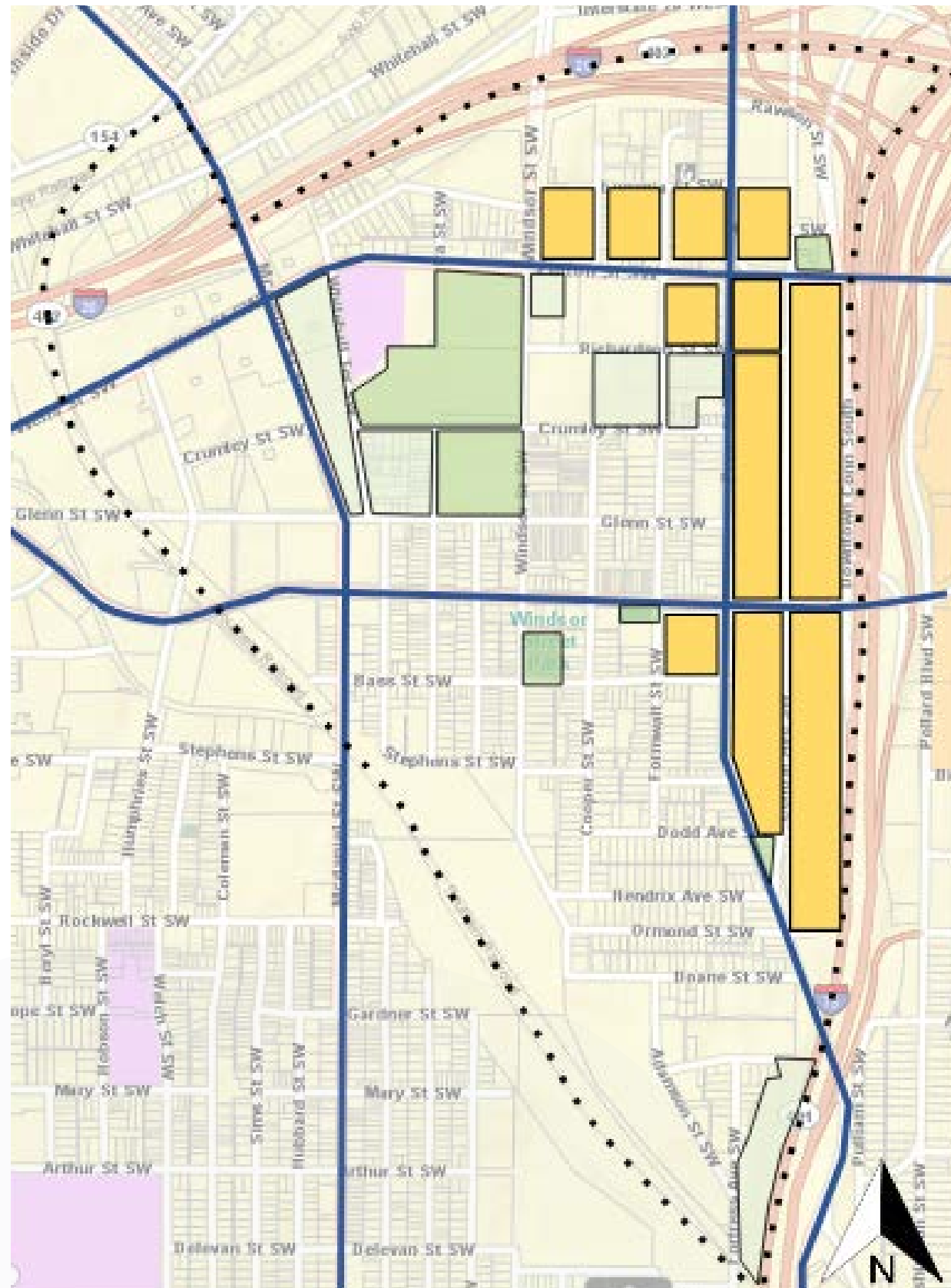
# DEVELOPMENT





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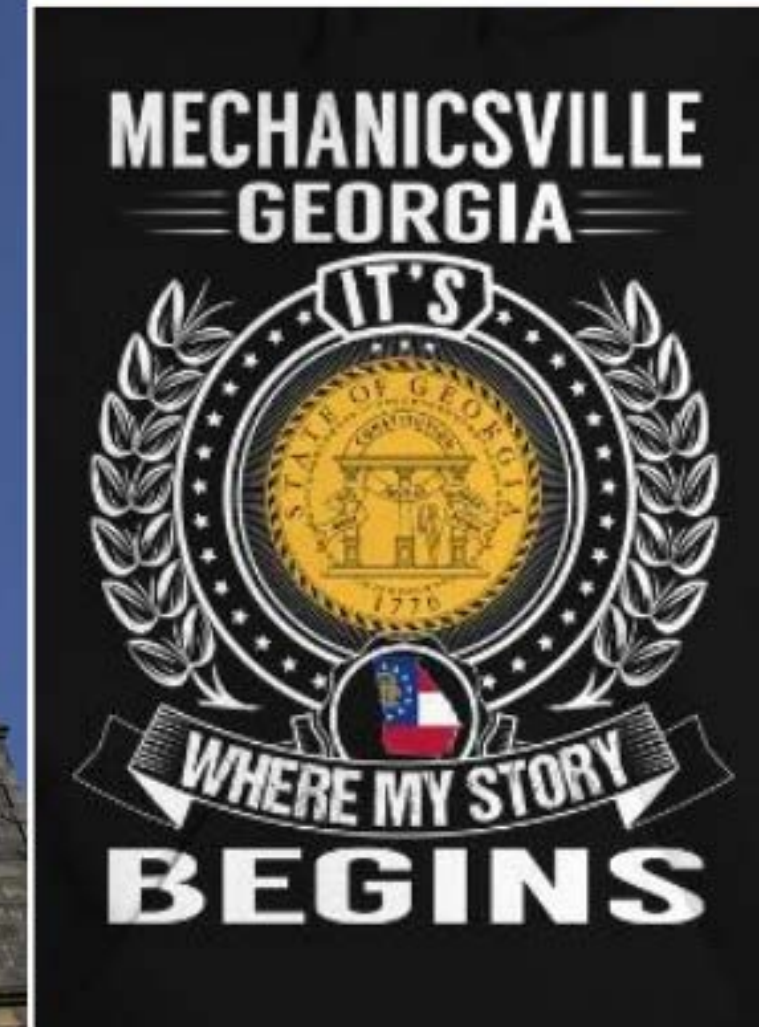




## Main Streets

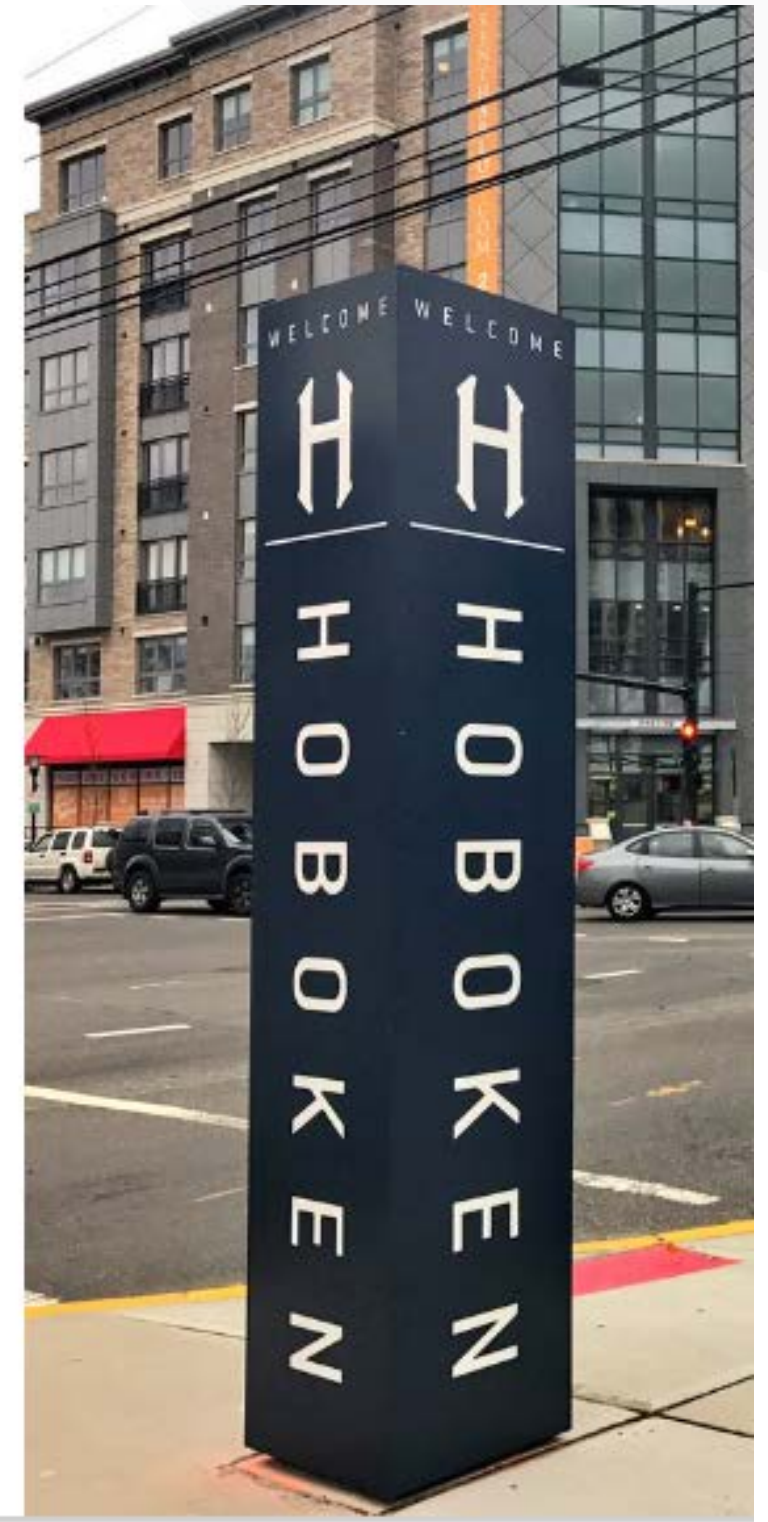
- Major vehicular thorough fare:
  - North South-
    - McDaniel Street SW
    - Pryor Street SW
  - East West
    - Fulton Street SW
    - Ralph David Abernathy Blvd.
- Gateway points:
  - Monument welcome signs at main entrances
  - Branding and Identity through signage

# PLACEMAKING



# PLACEMAKING



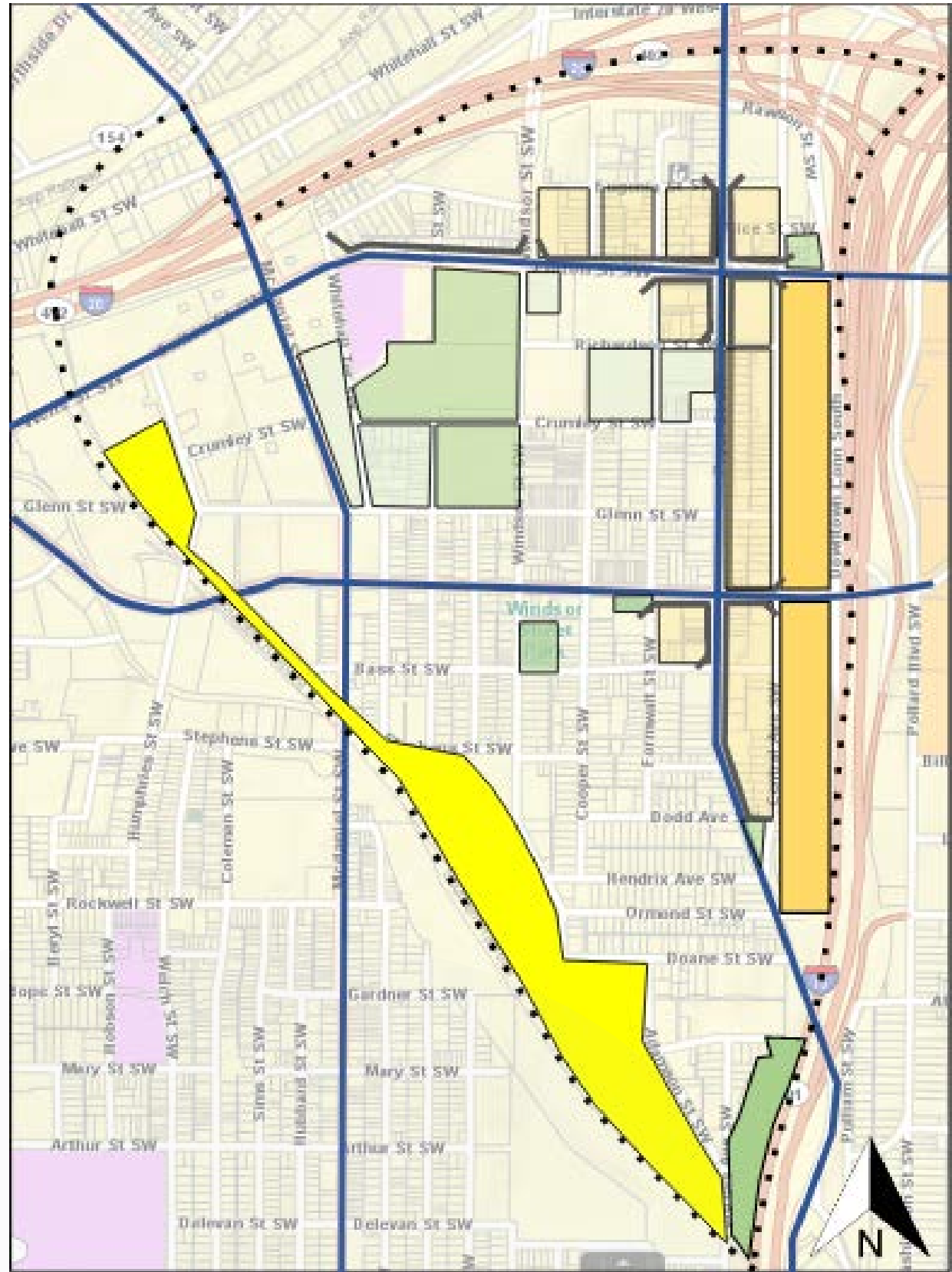


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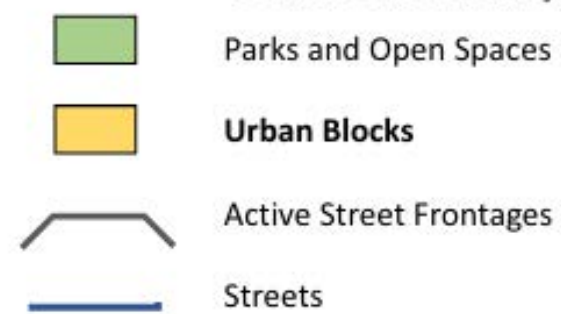
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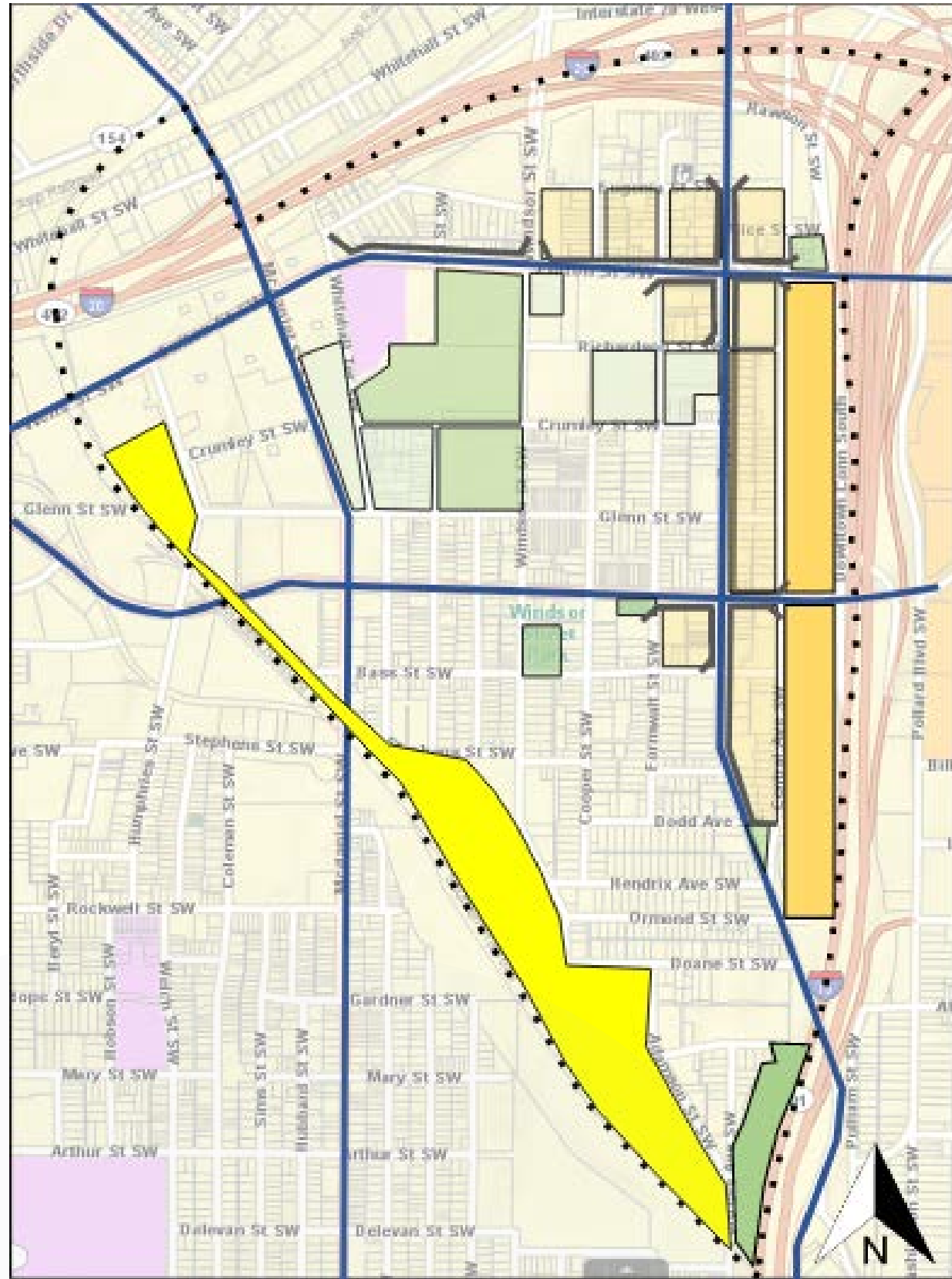
## Development of the Edges

- East Edge
  - Commercial District
  - High Density Office
- West Edge
  - Arts District



**EDGES**

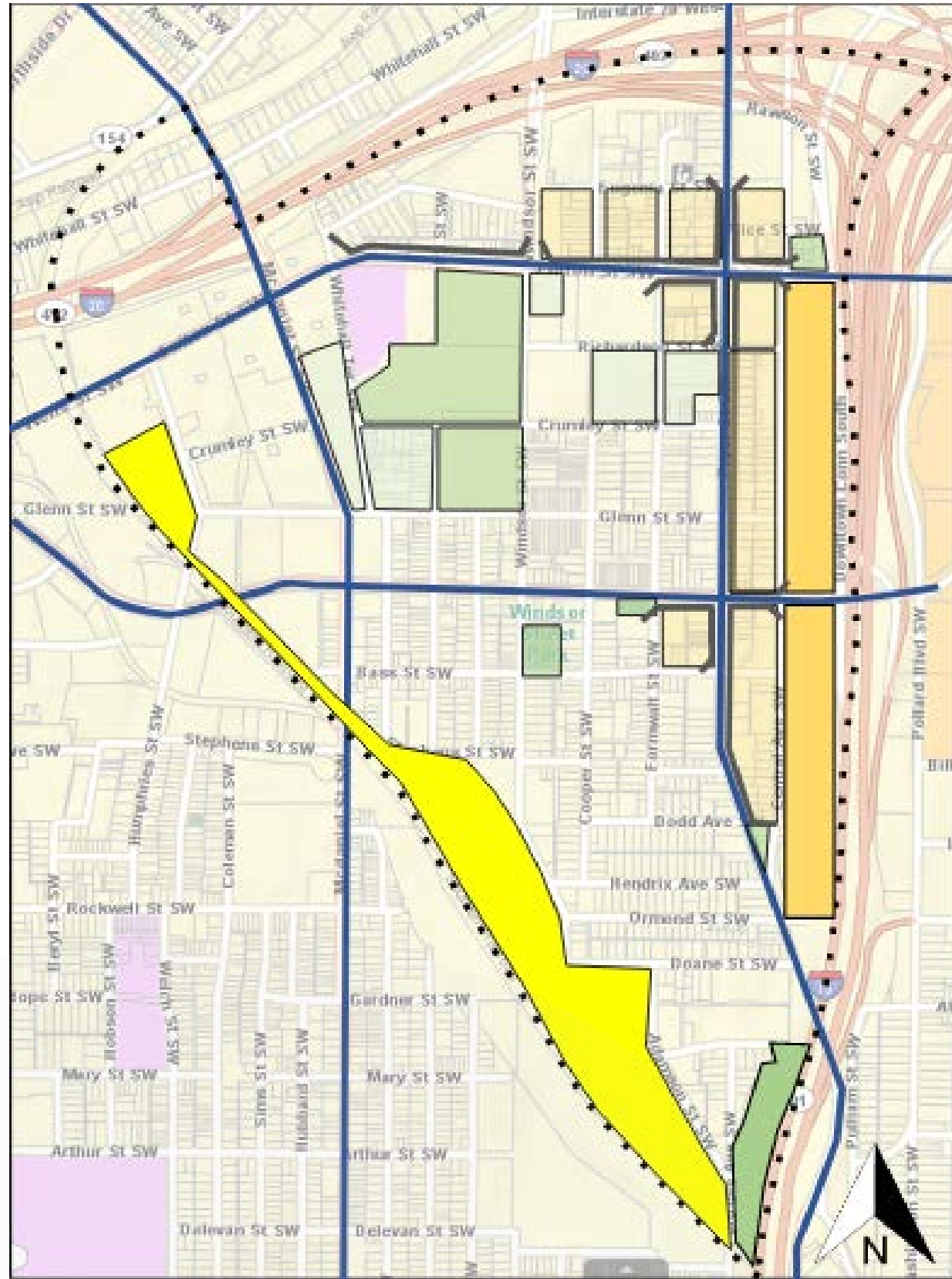




**EDGES**

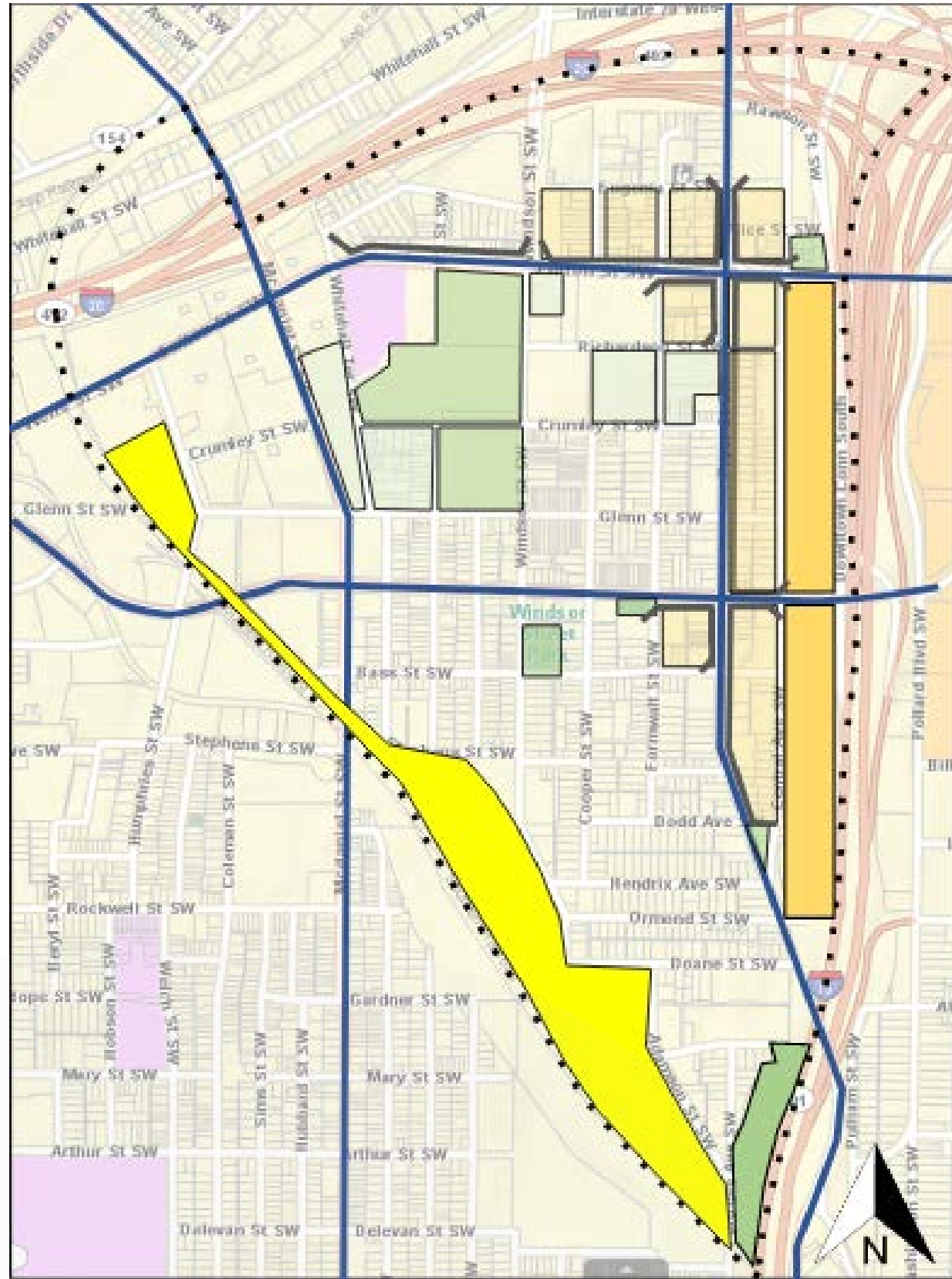






**EDGES**





**EDGES**







## PBC Case Studies and Leadership

### 1. Amenities: Dunbar Community Center

#### a. Youth Sports

##### i. Youth league teams from Mechanicsville

- Example: YBOA or AAU team from Mechanicsville. Create an interactive program with Dunbar and school system. Get financial support. Need a coach. Could unify community.

##### ii. Connection with Dunbar Elementary

b. Programs: Out of school hour programs, nutrition and economic stability.

c. Community Design: green spaces, great sidewalks, street, courtesy patrols, watchful neighbors. Environment of safety and security.

## COMMUNITY WELLNESS



## Cradle to College Education Pipeline

### 1. Amenities: Dunbar Community Center

- a. Purpose Built Communities experience and case studies
- b. Support and Improve existing schools
- c. Leadership could explore charter school and other proven options.
- d. Middle and Upper schools have new facilities. Great asset to promote

# EDUCATION





## Key Points

1. Reference LCI Study
2. Improve and expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities
3. Improve vehicular and pedestrian connectivity
4. Create safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to future beltline
5. Access to transit. (Garnett, West End, BRT Summerhill)
  - a. Wider sidewalks

# TRANSPORTATION

# QUESTIONS