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Activating the Edge Defragmenting the City of Atlanta

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Allison Marie Summers entitled "Activating the Edge Defragmenting the City of Atlanta." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture, with a major in Architecture.

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Activating the Edge
Defragmenting the City of Atlanta

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Abstract

Connecting the fragmented urban landscape through the tactical activation of the drosscape, "in-between" spaces, separating communities within the urban fabric.

American cities are currently experiencing a period of deindustrialization, factories are moving out of the traditional city center and into the suburban landscape, taking employment opportunities and people with them. The result is a horizontal urbanization that creates conditions of fragmentation and increased separation between communities within the city. Borders and boundaries between communities become increasingly more defined, generated by physical, geographical, political, social, cultural, and economic differences.

Strongly defined separations between communities within an urbanized area can bring to light the inequalities and disparities of the city. Historically, when big moves are made in the infrastructure of a city, the underprivileged citizens are often the victims of dispossession and predatory practices. The result is increased unrest, which often leads to protests and in some cases revolutions. The distinction between borders and boundaries along communities and the treatment of such zones needs to be further explored.

In addition to the social implications of urban sprawl, as cities expand horizontally, landscape is wasted along the way. Coined as "drosscapes" by Alan Berger, these wasted landscapes provide opportunities to design connections within the urban fabric while minimizing the dispossession of land that often occurs when redeveloping urbanized areas, "design within the margins." The activation of drosscapes that separate communities and emphasize the fragmentation of the urban landscape offers a new opportunity for design.

By focusing architectural interventions along the border zones between communities, greater interaction and connectivity can be promoted within the city. This thesis proposes taking advantage of the leftover spaces that result from horizontal sprawl, by transforming them into zones of integration and increased communication within the urban fabric.

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Chapter One | Circumstance

In order to design for the fragmentation of the city, an understanding of why it happens is necessary. There are many contributing factors to the horizontal urbanization of a city, but two of the most influential are the ebb and flow of the economy and the deindustrialization of the city.

1.1 | Capitalist Success and Capitalist Crisis

The highs and lows of the national economy play a huge role in the growth of the urban landscape. Capitalism is based on "the perpetual need to find profitable terrains for capital surplus production and absorption." The factors that influence the success of this economy include the availability and afford-ability of labor forces, manufacturing facilities, natural resources, and the availability of the consumer market.[1] When the economy is limited by one of these factors it faces a crisis and each factor within the system is also affected. The relationship between capitalism and surplus product leads to urbanization.

The period of expansion in the United States after the Great Depression and WWII is a great example of this process. As WWII was coming to an end, there was a concern that a recession would occur again with the capital surplus that the economy was experiencing. As a means of stabilizing the economy after the war, the suburbs and highway systems that run across the United States today were introduced. The creation of the suburbs "played a critical role in helping to absorb the

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[1]Harvey, David. Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution, 5-6. New York: Verso, 2012.

Figure 1.01 Atlanta Aerial 1949 *(Aerial Survey, Atlanta, Georgia, 1949)*

Figure 1.02 Atlanta Aerial Present-Day *(Google Maps)*

surplus in the post-war years."[2] The highs and lows of the capitalist economy have an affect on the intensity of horizontal urbanization.

Another more recent example of this process is the economic recovery after the housing market crash in 2008. The economy was experiencing a period of excess, which in turn led to a period of recession. The crash not only affected the United States, but it was also felt on a global scale requiring the recovery from the crash to follow suit and act on a global scale as well. China began rapidly developing their countryside, making use of global resources and providing global employment opportunities. The rapid urbanization that is still occurring in China today helped stimulate the capitalist economy enough to reduce the effects of the housing market crash.[3]

The ebb and flow that follows a capitalist economy influence the urbanization of landscapes. The negative results of stimulating the economy through construction and urbanization however, are typically associated with the forced relocations of communities and the dispossession of land in areas where expansion and renovation are sited to occur.

1.2 | *Deindustrialization and Drosscape*

The deindustrialization of the American city has also played a key role in producing urban sprawl. Factories and manufacturing plants as they expand their operations, move out of city centers and farther into the

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[2]Harvey, Rebel Cities, 9.
[3]Harvey, *Rebel Cities,* 59.

suburbs, affecting the role of the city as the source of employment. Agglomerations outside of the city form and horizontal expansion increases. A key contributing factor to the sprawling condition of Atlanta, Georgia is just this. Fulton County, where the city of Atlanta is located, experienced a 26% decrease in manufacturing opportunities from 1977 to 2001, while areas 70+ miles out experienced a 300% growth.[4] The rapid transition in employment opportunities, as related to manufacturing, had a large effect on the horizontal expansion of the city. As the manufacturing plants and job opportunities relocated, so did the people. New communities began forming as a result, creating multiple, separate town centers, rather than one single city center. Along with this expansion comes the wasted, in-between landscape, the drosscape. Drosscapes are classified as the marginalized areas within a city that occur primarily from two processes, the first being rapid horizontal urbanization (sprawl), and the second being leftovers from previous economies and industries (IE. Deindustrialization).[5] The result is a fragmented urbanization, consisting of multiple nodes rather than one specific city center.

As space becomes more limited from increased urbanization and community separations become more defined, exploring the activation of drosscapes within the city becomes more important. Drosscape "asks designers to consider working in the margins,"[6] as a way of reconnecting the fragmented landscape of the current American city.

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[4]Berger, Alan. Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America, 47. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2006.
[5]Berger, Alan. Drosscape, 12.
[6]Berger, Alan. Drosscape, 241.
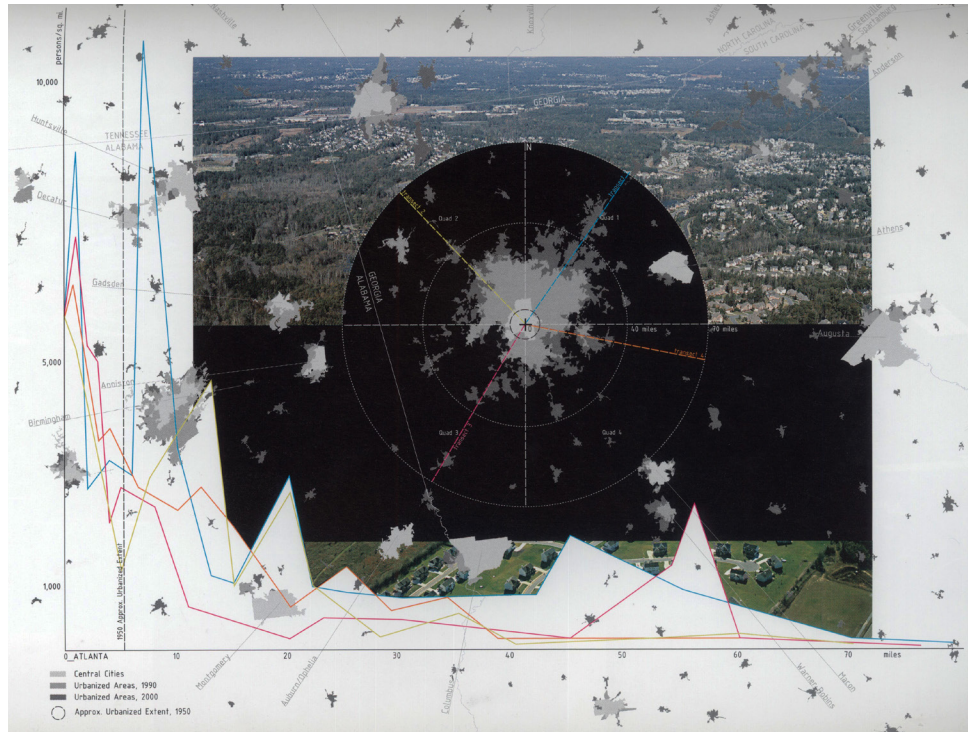
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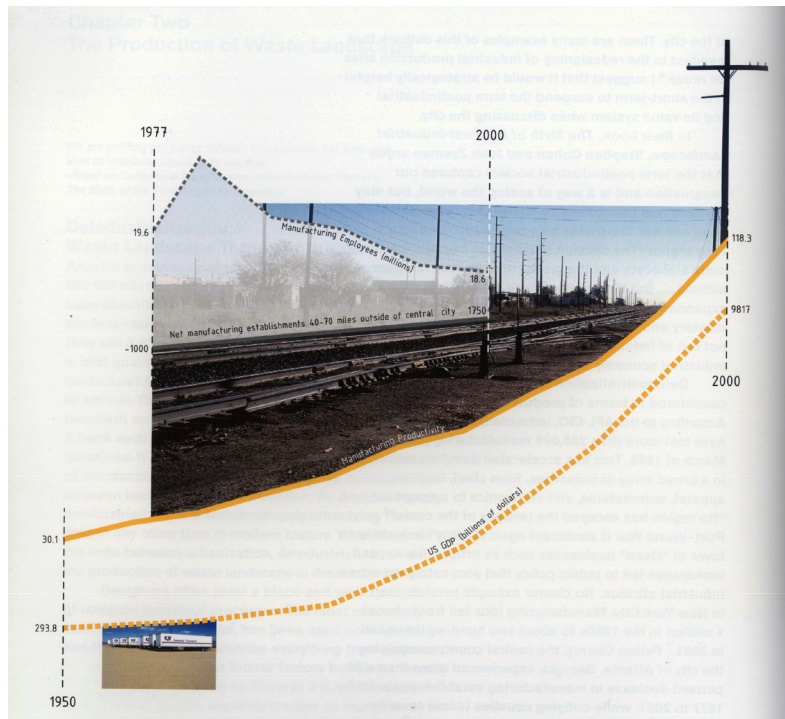
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1.3 | The Fragmented City

What makes the city interesting is its ability to bring together large numbers of people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Understanding the social implications of this assortment of cultures coexisting in one region, as well as the impact urbanization has on these communities, is essential.

Increased horizontal urbanization is a cause of the increased fragmentation of the city. The more distinguished and separated the nodes of the city become, the more defined and strongly articulated the borders and boundaries between them become as well. The factors contributing to these borders are economic, political, social, cultural, and sometimes geographical, empowering some and depriving others.[7] Understanding this separation of wealth and social class within the urban fabric and the consequences of this separation is integral to the exploration of the drosscape that has developed along with the divide.

Richard Sennett compares borders and boundaries within the urban fabric to the structure of cell walls and membranes. The cell wall represents a "boundary," where there is no potential for interaction. The membrane represents a more porous condition, the "border." The border, while maintaining a defined space for a community, allows for a greater interaction between neighboring spaces. The borders/edges of these communities are zones of interaction, where a unique mixing of cultures and people can occur.[8] Clearly defined borders allow for

[7] Brillembourg, Alfredo, Hubert Klumpner, Michael Contento, and Lindsey Sherman. "Trans-Borderlands: Activating the Plasticity of Urban Border Space." *Trans 18: Politics* (2011): 98-107.

[8] Sennett, Richard. "The Architecture of Cooperation." In *Instigations Engaging Architecture, Landscape and the City: GSD 075 Harvard University Graduate School of Design,* edited by Mohsen Mostafavi and Peter Christensen, 233-238. Baden: Lars Müller, 2012.

more visible inequalities, and bringing to light these disparities can lead to social unrest within the city. A present day example of this is the rioting that took place in both St. Louis and Baltimore, revolving around racial and cultural issues of inequality. What finally triggered the violent protests in Ferguson, St. Louis, was the shooting of Michael Brown, a teenage black male, by a white police officer. In Baltimore, it was the story of Freddie Gray, who died while being detained by police officers. But the huge economic gap and stark difference in living conditions between communities directly adjacent to one another within the city is part of what allowed the tension to build in the first place.[9]

The city of Atlanta presents similar conditions to those of St. Louis. Within the city, the adjacency of the affluent citizens, most of whom living on over $600,000, to the underprivileged, most of whom living on $20,000 or less, is a strongly visible border. The need to promote a greater connectivity between communities and people of different economic, racial, political backgrounds is evident in the current conditions of the urban environment.

As cities develop, common, shared spaces and goods develop as well. While the government can provide the public goods and service, such as parks and transportation, only the community can truly create the common spaces. The common spaces are produced through social, cultural, and political means without "the logic of market exchanges and market valuation."[10] A great example of a well-established

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[9]Sanchez, Ray. "Why Ferguson Touched a Raw, National Nerve." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 29 Nov. 2014. http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/29/us/ferguson-national-protests/.
[10]Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 72.

Figure 1.05 Protests in Baltimore (*Etienne* T*oussaint)*

Figure 1.06 Police in Ferguson (*Washington Post)*

common is the local Parent Teacher Association of a public school system. The PTA is developed as a result of the public good, the school, but is established and defined through social means. It enhances the quality of life in an area and strengthens the community as a whole.[11] Where the problem occurs is in the real estate development of the city. The city begins to market neighborhoods and districts for the character created over time by a community, beginning the process of gentrification. Less affluent residents are relocated, through dispossession and predatory practices, to neighborhoods farther outside of their original communities.

The historical consequences of dispossession within urbanized area is increased discontent and risk of protests and revolution. An extreme example of this process can be seen through the social consequences of Haussmann's plan for Paris. Haussmann developed an urban plan that redefined the city, with wider boulevards, cafes and boutiques, all at the expense of the people actually residing within the city. Residents in the way of development were relocated to other areas. All was well until the economy turned and the Paris Commune rose up. The Commune gained much of its support from those evicted from their homes in the name of Haussmann's Paris, and led a revolution on the city.

An example a bit closer to home is the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s and 70s in the United States. As the suburbs were being established,

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[11] Ibid.

the quality of life in the city was ignored. The construction of this new infrastructure brought to light the discrepancies and inequalities experienced between communities. This ultimately led to rioting in the city, the "white flight" out of the city, and finally the reformed housing act of 1968. Forcibly relocating communities does not solve the problem of the city, it just relocates it.[12] A closer look needs to be taken at the condition of border spaces between the different nodes and communities within the urban fabric.

[12]Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 18.

Chapter Two | The Gateway to the South
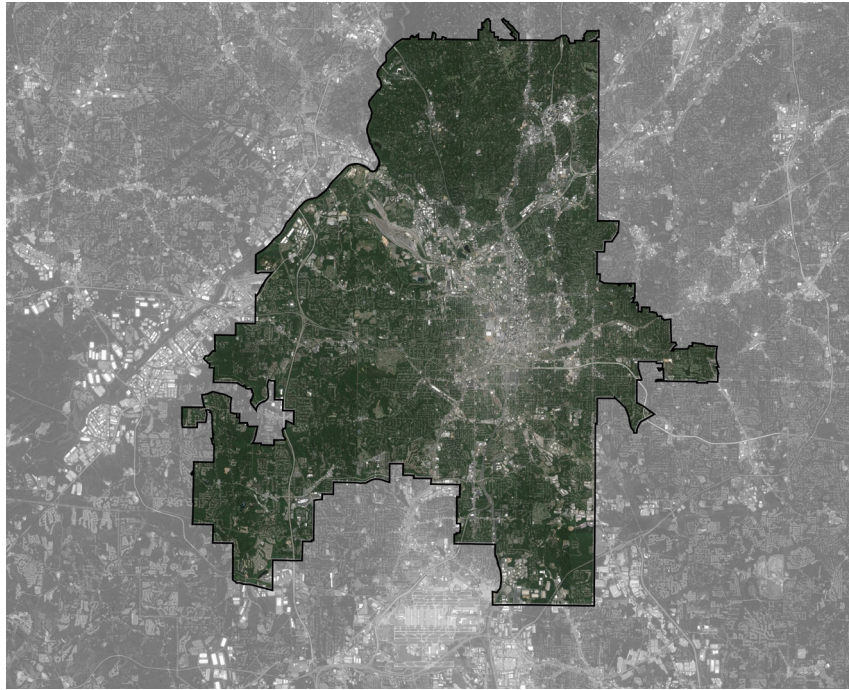
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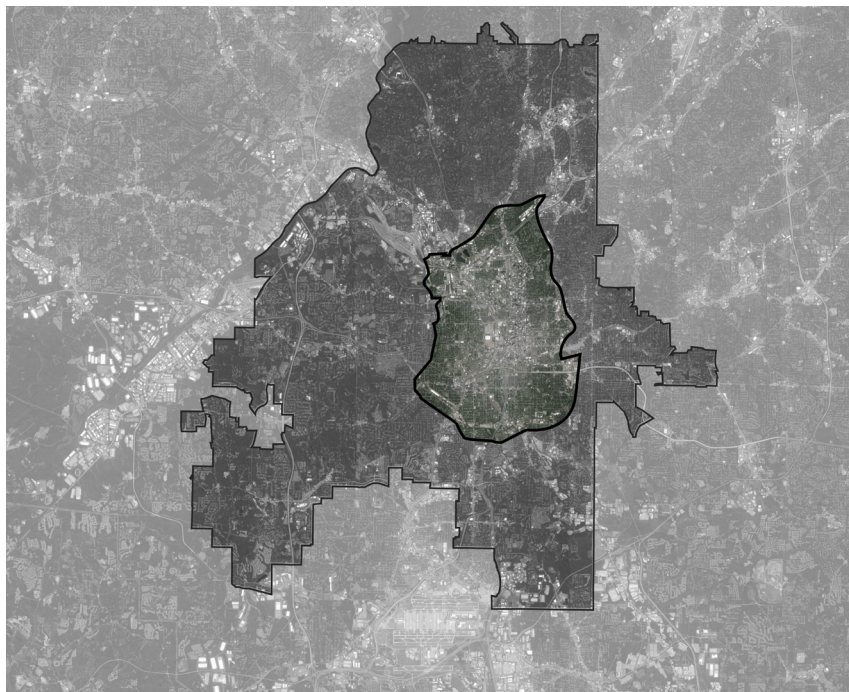
Figure2.02 Atlanta BeltLine Region *(Google Maps)*

As a means of exploring the opportunities presented by urban border conditions, the focus of this thesis will be on the city of Atlanta, and more specifically the neighborhoods within the BeltLine area. The city is characterized by a period of rapid growth and expansion, establishing a fragmented condition within the urban fabric. The result is a city of neighborhoods and the "random juxtaposition of entities that have nothing in common except their existence (Koolhaas)."

To understand the separation of communities within a city it is important to understand the historical conditions that assisted in the establishment of the boundaries in the first place. The following is a brief history of the major events that transformed the city of Atlanta, from its creation in 1837 to the current condition of the city today.

2.1 | A History of Industry

In 1837, at the intersection of four rail lines, the city of Atlanta, Georgia was established. Considered the "gateway of the south," the city of Atlanta has a rich history of rapid urbanization. The identity of Atlanta became the transportation hub of the southern region of the United States, moving goods from the east coast inland to the rest of the United States. As the city expanded and grew into what it is today, major development occurred first along these rail lines, with industrial and economic success as its driving factors.

By the year 1880, just under 200 different manufacturing industries
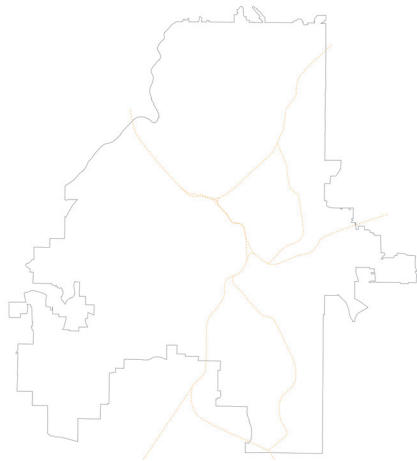
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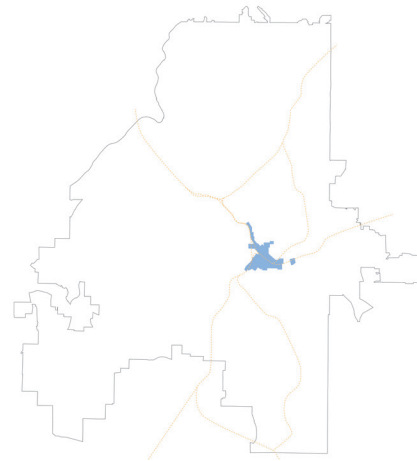
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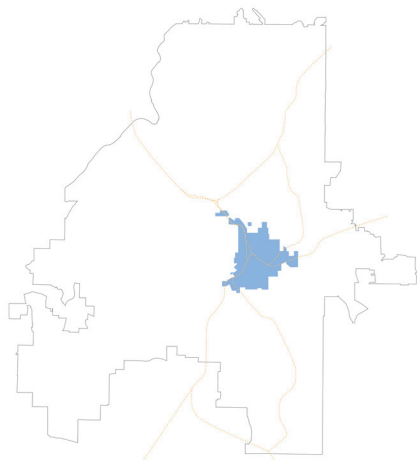
Figure 2.05 Atlanta 1911 *(Andy Ambrose)*
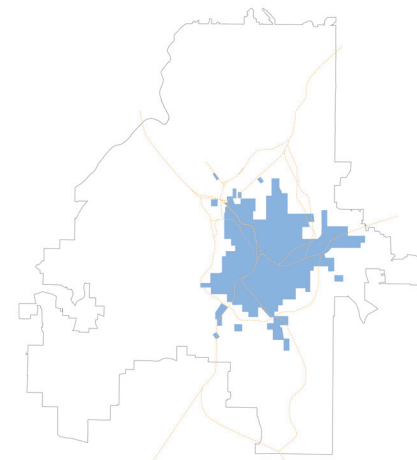
Figure 2.06 Atlanta 1934 *(Andy Ambrose)*
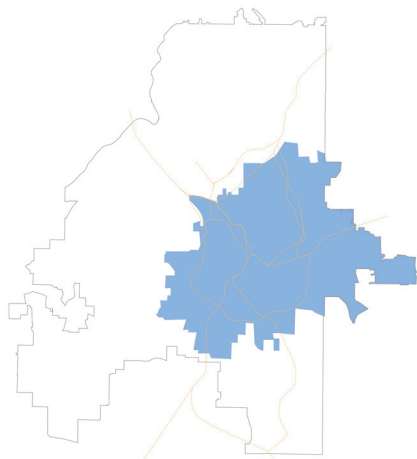
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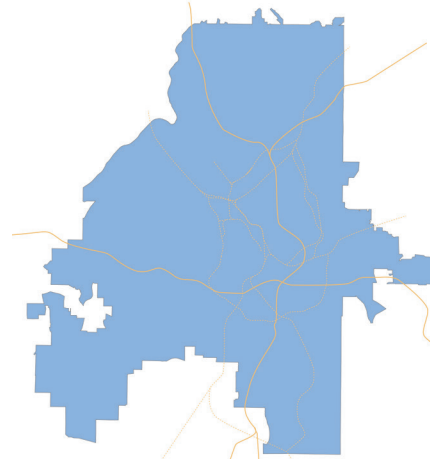
Figure 2.08 Atlanta Present-Day *(Andy Ambrose)*

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were located within the city. The industries varied, but a majority of focus was on cotton production, depending on the rail line system to transport the raw cotton material from outer lying regions to the city. The majority of employment opportunities at this time were in the manufacturing plants and factories, as well as the rail line companies. These new job opportunities, in addition to the end of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery in the United States, led to a major rate of growth in the population of the city. Increasing from 9,500 residents before the War to over 37,000 in 1880, a 291% change over the course of twenty years.[1]

This influx in population encouraged the establishment of neighborhoods within the urban fabric. This rapid development contributed to the initial fragmentation of Atlanta, with economic, social, and cultural factors establishing the borders. Segregation laws in the United States were a contributing factor to the fragmented development process within the city. A majority of the neighborhoods within the city were completely segregated, with all black and all white communities. The black communities were typically located in the undesirable spaces within the city. W.E.B. Du Bois he described the spatial placement of black communities within the city as being, "stretched like a great dumbbell across the city, with one great center in the east and a smaller one in the west, connected by a narrow belt."[2] Businesses developed in a similar segregated fashion, with majority

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[1]Heath, Ellen, and John Heath. "Changing Demographics and Unprecedented Growth." *Planning Atlanta.* Ed. Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga. Washington, DC: APA Planners, 2014. 27-39. Print.

[2] Ambrose, Andy. Atlanta: An Illustrated History. Athens, GA: Hill Street, 2003.

white businesses located on Peachtree Street and majority black businesses located on Auburn Avenue.

2.2 | *The Automobile Effect and Integration*

As the car became an essential commodity to the everyday American, the city began to expand and people began to spread out into the suburban landscape. This expansion brought to light the inequalities and living conditions of the lower class citizens within the city. In 1954 it was discovered that many residences within the Atlanta city limits fell into the classification of "dilapidated," and 75% of these homes were found in predominately African American communities.[3] The concept of urban renewal and social justice is brought to the forefront and those found living in poor conditions were relocated.

One of the first cases of relocation within the city was seen as African American families began to move into Peyton Forest, a predominantly white community. As a result of this process, racial barriers were established to prevent further expansion into the neighborhood. Civil Rights activists challenged this action and were successful in removing the barrier. This was a turning point for equality in housing opportunities, but resulted in an acceleration of "white flight" from the cities and ended up establishing a more segregated neighborhood.

In 1966, 67,000 people were relocated in preparation for the construction of the expressway and highway systems, I-75, I-85, I-20,

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[3]Heath, Ellen, and John Heath. "Changing Demographics and Unprecedented Growth." *Planning Atlanta.* Ed. Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga. Washington, DC: APA Planners, 2014. 27-39. Print.

and I-285 that currently run through Atlanta. The people displaced were predominately poor African American families, and were relocated to neighborhoods farther away from downtown.[4] Farther away from the employment opportunities, social services, and the communities they helped define. The relocation promoted the segregation of neighborhoods and communities.

As a result of this extreme separation between communities and social classes, race riots begin. Seen in cities across the United States, these riots displayed the social unrest beginning to build against the establishment of segregation. It ultimately led to the "white flight" and in Atlanta assisted in further establishing borders within the city.

Violent riots began in black neighborhoods. The first was in Summerhill, a community with long standing issues involving overcrowded housing, a lack of recreational facilities, and high unemployment rates. The trigger for the riot was a shooting in the neighborhood. A week later, a three-day riot was triggered in the Bedford Pine community. This time triggered by an incident where a white male shot and killed a 16-year-old black male walking down the street.[5]

The true turning point in the segregation issues of Atlanta was a result of the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., an Atlanta native, in 1968. Over 200,000 people arrived in the city to mourn this loss. As tragic as this event was, it reinvigorated the emphasis on social justice within Atlanta, especially towards black

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[4] Ambrose, Andy. Atlanta: An Illustrated History. Athens, GA: Hill Street, 2003.
[5] Ibid.

rights. Which led to the first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, elected in 1974. Jackson placed an emphasis on grassroots movements within the city and established the New Planning Units system.[6] The system divided Atlanta into 24 neighborhoods with the goal of increased community participation in planning and political processes, in a hopes of correcting the social and economic inequalities affecting the city.

2.3 | Atlanta Today

Atlanta presents an urban condition that highlights the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty. With the separation of the two caused by a number of physical barriers, including the major highway that runs through downtown. The Southwest corner of the BeltLine region is characterized by low land values, a median income typically under $20,000, and predominantly black communities. While the Northeast corner is characterized by higher land values, a median income typically over $70,000, and predominantly white communities.[7]

Borders within the urban fabric are defined by a number of different variables and porosities. Including economic, cultural, social, political, and physical differences. Within the Atlanta BeltLine there are 26 different neighborhoods, all ranging in values and characteristics. The physical boundaries of each neighborhood being typically defined by a major road or highway.

As a means of promoting connectivity and integration within the

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[6]Ibid.
[7]"Atlanta, Georgia." City Data. October 27, 2015, http:/www.city-data.com/city/Atlanta-Georgia.html.

fragmented urban context, this thesis will focus on the programming of residual, border spaces within the city.

2.4 | *The BeltLine Development*

Currently, as a way of promoting connectivity on a transportation level, the city of Atlanta is undergoing a project to redevelop an unused rail line, the BeltLine. The project began as a thesis project from a student at Georgia Tech, Ryan Gravel, in 1999. Gravel "re-imagined (the BeltLine) as a transit corridor tying together forty-five communities encircling downtown Atlanta."[8] The concept was taking the forgotten BeltLine rail and converting it into a system of recreational greenways connecting the park space throughout the city. It caught traction, first at a grassroots level, then with Mayor Shirley Franklin, the city council, and most importantly the director of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), James Langford. By the year 2006, the BeltLine Development Project was well underway.

To understand the excitement and energy behind the BeltLine project, it is important to look at national trends in the United States. In 1986, the Rails-to-Trail Conservancy was established, with the goal of bringing a better quality of life to cities nationwide through the redevelopment of underutilized rail lines.[9] What began with a little under two hundred trails sprouted into over 1600 by the year 2013, the most notable projects being the Katy Trail in Dallas and the High Line in New York

[8]Garvin, Alexander. "Atlanta's BeltLine: The Emerald Necklace Shaping the City's Future." *Planning Atlanta*. Ed. Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga. Washington, DC: APA Planners, 2014. 204-216. Print.

[9]"Rails-to-Trails Conservancy." *Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 May 2016. http:/www.railstotrails.org/.

City. The BeltLine project falls into the category of connectivity within the city, establishing a twenty-two-mile-long loop around the city center.

In addition to the Rails-to-Trails program is the Trust for Public Land. The TPL was established in 1972 "to protect land in and around cities and to pioneer land conservation techniques."[10] To date, the program has been involved in well over 5000 projects, ranging from small scale urban gardens to larger urban wilderness greenways. The significance of James Langford's involvement in the initial stages of the BeltLine was great. Langford advocated for the development, helped raise funds, and hired the surveyors to take an initial inventory of the state of the BeltLine rails, making his involvement crucial in the projects transition from idea to action.

Even with the help of Langford, Mayor Franklin, and the city council, the BeltLine would be nowhere without the support of the community. Early on in the design process public participation was utilized. Barbara Faga, a landscape architect from EDAW Inc. (now AECOM), conducted over 120 public development meetings about the BeltLine project. In order to promote participation in these meetings, the Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) were used. The NPUs already have a system for community meetings and function very efficiently in making decisions that affect the neighborhood, by absorbing the system already set in place the BeltLine Development experienced no huge issues in

[10]Garvin, Alexander. "Atlanta's BeltLine: The Emerald Necklace Shaping the City's Future." *Planning Atlanta*. Ed. Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga. Washington, DC: APA Planners, 2014. 204-216. Print.

getting people to participate, which is typically an issue in similar cases. According to Kevin Burke, in an interview, the only moments of negativity and skepticism were in the areas of lower income individuals, who were worried about issues of dispossession and gentrification that a project like the BeltLine might bring. These residents live on a fixed income and an increase in taxes was worrisome proposition, many of whom still recovering from the foreclosures that resulted from the housing market crash in 2008. However, relocation due directly to the development of the BeltLine has not been seen.[11]

The BeltLine project encompasses a 22-mile transit loop, a 33-mile trail system, and over 1000 acres of parkland, new and restored, surrounding downtown Atlanta. Currently, recreational trails are in use along the north and east corridor of the BeltLine, "it is becoming the place where residents of every ethnicity, income level and social class encounter one another, skate, jog, sit on benches reading books, picnic, or just wander."[12] The goal for completion of the entire project, including the proposed streetcar system is the year 2030.

This thesis project aims to take advantage of the momentum created by the BeltLine Development, focusing the design proposal on the streetcar transit stations along the rail line.

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[11] Burke, Kevin. "Atlanta BeltLine." Telephone interview. 14 Feb. 2016.

[12]Garvin, Alexander. "Atlanta's BeltLine: The Emerald Necklace Shaping the City's Future." *Planning Atlanta.* Ed. Harley F. Etienne and Barbara Faga. Washington, DC: APA Planners, 2014. 204-216. Print.

MARTA Rail Lines | Completed

Proposed Site
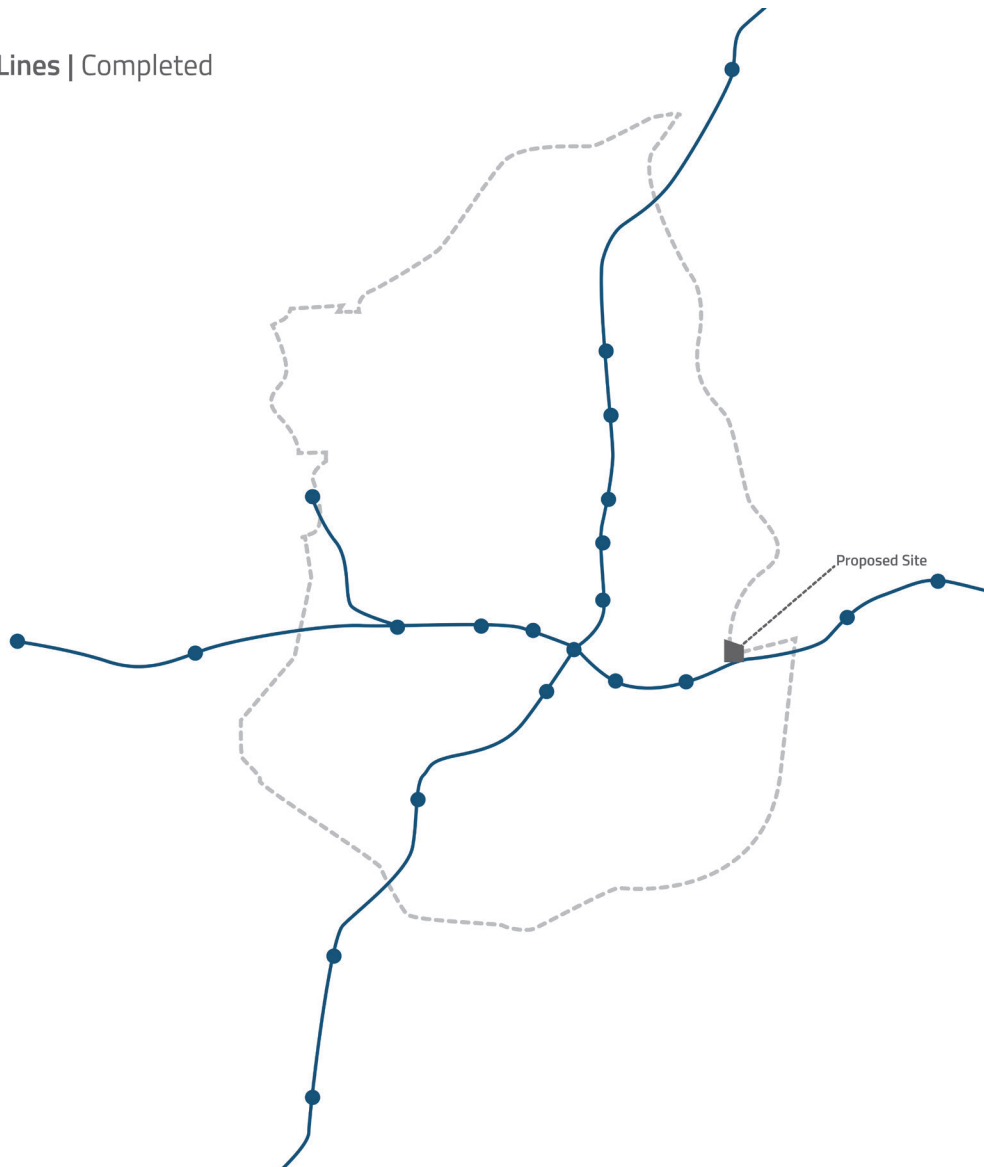
Figure 2.09 MARTA System, existing *(MARTA)*
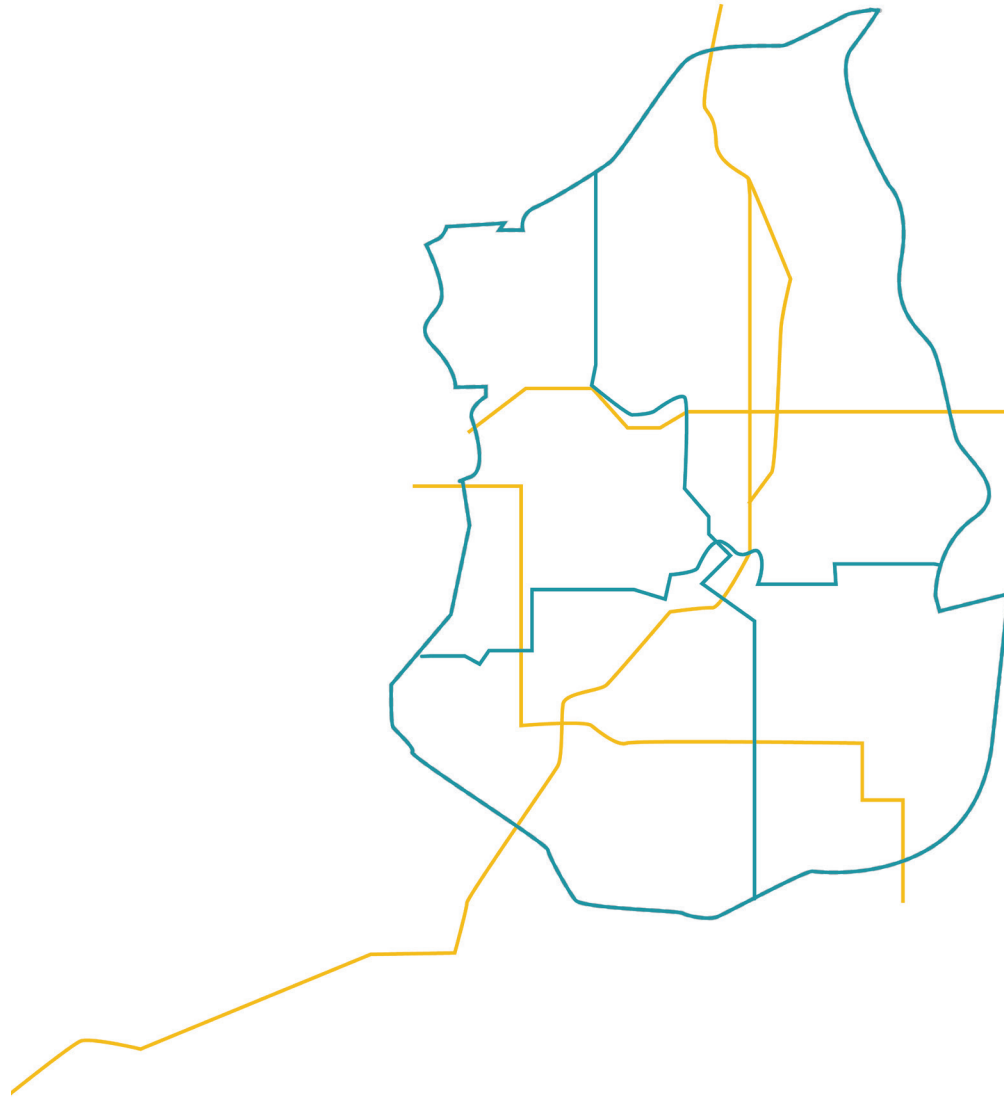
Figure 2.10 BeltLine System, proposed 2030 *(BeltLine)*

Figure 2.11 BeltLine, Current Conditions

Chapter Three | Community Connectivity
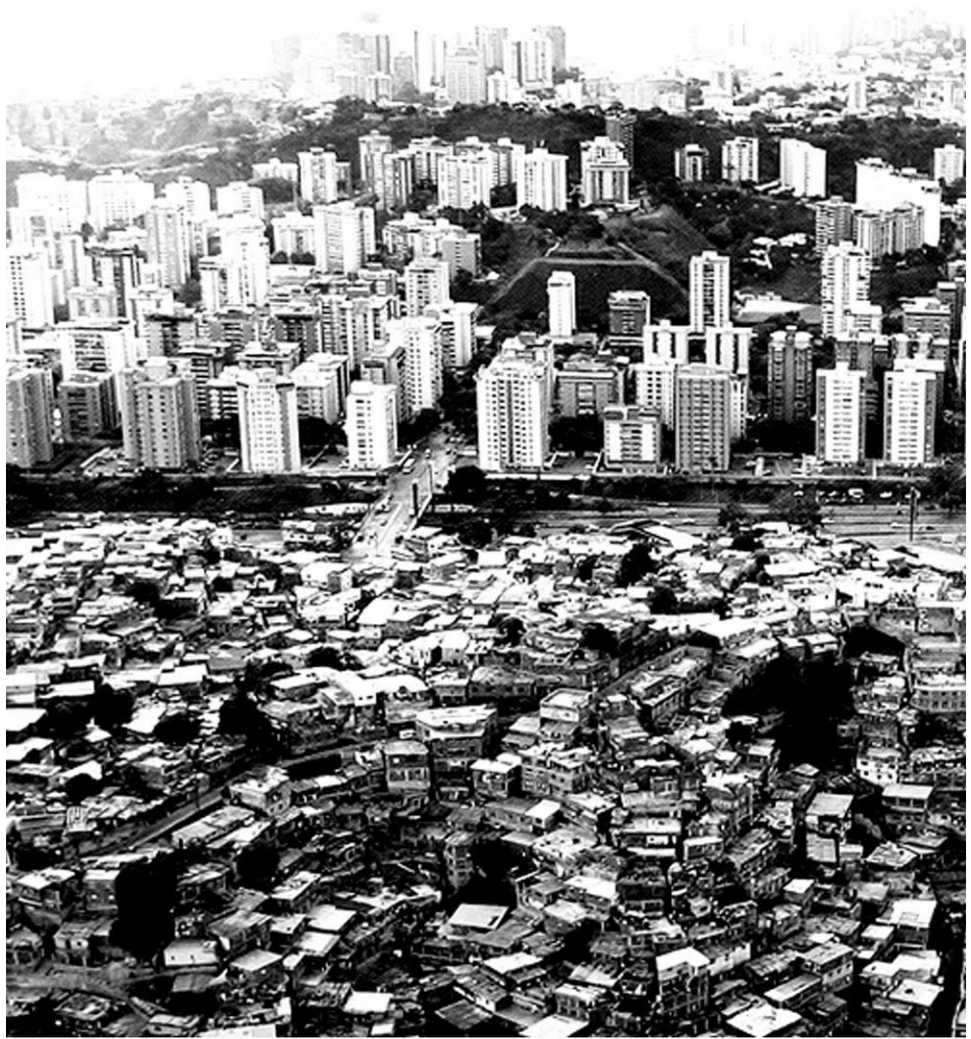
Figure 3.01 Caracas, Venezuela (*Maria Espino)*

The separation of communities and the fragmentation of the city is not an effect that is limited to the United States, it is a global issue. Socially, people typically migrate towards the familiar, and when speaking about neighborhoods in the city the familiar can be economic, cultural, political, racial, religious, etc. The gaps and disparities between communities become more clearly defined as the city develops and expands. Architects worldwide have proposed interventions and designs to challenge this separation inherent to the city.

The following case studies range in levels of intensity, from interventions in the slums of Venezuela to proposals for cities in the United States. What they have in common is a level of commitment to the community. Design as a way to enhance the quality of life, the connection to the city and the community as a whole.

3.1 | Urban Think Tank

Caracas, Venezuela is a city defined by extreme wealth and extreme poverty, with one of the largest slum developments in the world. It is defined by a series of borders, with the economic border being the most visible. The architecture and design firm, Urban Think Tank, focuses its work on engaging the impoverished communities of Caracas, with many of their projects located in the slums. Their work is largely based on finding what the community needs to make life easier and strengthen the community, "bridging the gap between top-down

planning and community organizing."[1]

The Metro-Cable, or the Teleferico para Transporte Masivo Interurbano, project in particular addresses the need for transportation in and out of the slum developments. It is difficult to travel through the slums to the city center of Caracas, where the goods, services, and employment opportunities exist. Urban Think Tank identified the issue of mobility through the slums as something that had a great effect on the lives of the people in the community, stating, "the answer to a divided city is integration, and there is no integration without transport connections."[2]

An interesting component of this project is the navigation and level of involvement with the politics of the city that Urban Think Tank engage in. Caracas is a highly polarized city, with two mayors, a major economic gap between the wealthy and the poor, and a distinct separation between communities. In fact, an early project commissioned to Urban Think Tank in 2008 was taken back from the firm and given to the contractor when the architects refused to join the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, who were in power at the time. The story behind the Metro-Cable is similar. Conference talks started in 2001 on ways to improve the quality of life in the slums of Caracas. In these early stages ideas of private ownership rights vs. communal ownership rights to land, among other things were argued, but what was agreed upon almost unanimously was the importance of infrastructure. In the year 2006, Urban Think Tank was brought in to pitch the Metro-Cable

[1] "Metro Cable." Urban Think Tank. Web. 08 Dec. 2015. http:/u-tt.com/project/metro-cable/.

[2] McGuirk, Justin. "Caracas: The City is Frozen Politics." *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture.* N.p.: n.p., n.d. 139-74. Print.
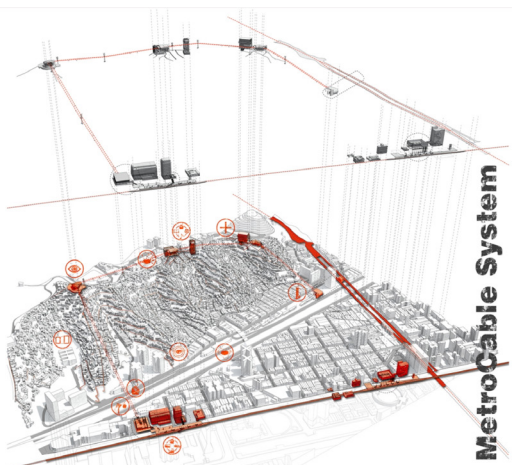
Figure 3.02 Exploded Axon of the Metro Cable System *(Urban Think Tank)*

Figure 3.03 Metro Station *(Urban Think Tank)*

Figure 3.04 Metro Station Entry *(Urban Think Tank)*

project to Mayor Barreto. The project would connect the barrios to downtown Caracas and make what was a forty-five-minute commute take just five. After realizing the significance of the project, Barreto attempted to remove the firm from the project as a means of keeping all the credit. However, Mayor Chavez stepped in and in 2007 the firm was commissioned the design for the Metro-Cable project.[3]

After surveying the site, working with the community, and consulting experts, Urban Think Tank proposed the implementation of the cable car system. To avoid relocating the community that this new transportation system is intended to help, the metro is elevated and travels above the slums. The stations are located throughout the city and also act as cultural centers, providing the community with shared public spaces. The project was completed in 2010, and currently moves over 1200 people an hour, successfully connecting "pieces of the city that were socially and psychologically worlds apart."[4]

3.2 | Learning from Tijuana

The border between the United States and Mexico is defined by extreme wealth and extreme poverty, and is the zone that architect Teddy Cruz focuses much of his work and research on. Cruz takes inspiration from the innovation of those living in poverty, specifically the reuse of materials and the informal construction of housing and spaces.[5] These projects focus on changing the way the government

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Cruz, Teddy. "How Architectural Innovations Migrate Across Borders." Filmed June 2013. TEDTalk video, 13:14. Posted June 2013. http://www.ted.com/talks/teddy_cruz_how_architectural_innovations_migrate_across_borders.

approaches design for the community, making the actual architectural aesthetics not the center of discussion, because according to Cruz "social change and the creation of a more equitable city are not a question of good buildings. They are a question of civic imagination."[6] As a result, much of the work of Estudio Teddy Cruz is architectural acupuncture, small-scale and low budget style projects that bring issues of social and economic importance in the community to the attention of the public.

Border Fence is a photographic representation of the border between the United States and Mexico. Along the bottom is an 89-foot-long image of the actual border wall that separates the two countries. Along the top are images of the landscape that lives along the wall, from the favelas in the poor regions of Mexico to the mansions in the wealthier neighborhoods of the United States. This art installation brought to light the disparity between communities living adjacent to one another.

Another project challenging the status quo for community architecture is a small scale affordable housing project designed in collaboration with Casa Familiar. Casa Familiar is an NGO that handles social services in San Ysidros, a small border town outside of San Diego. The project includes multiple residential scales, including small apartments, single family homes, live-work artist units, and elderly housing. In addition to the residential programming is the public dimension, with collective kitchens, informal markets, and community workshops at the center of the complex and base levels of buildings. The diversity in programming

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[6] McGuirk, Justin. "Tijuana: On the Political Equator." *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture.* N.p.: n.p., n.d. 259-84. Print.

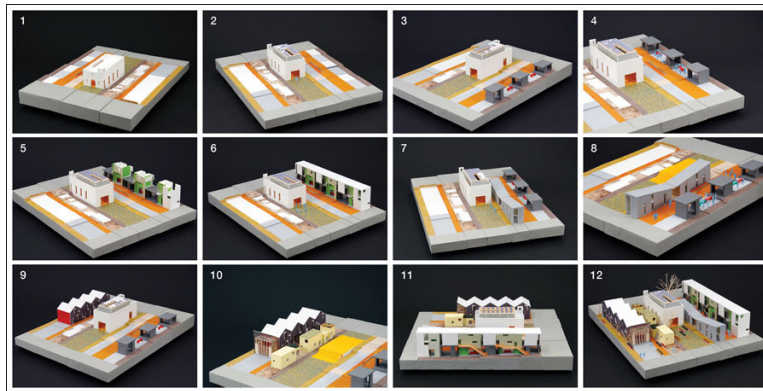Figure 3.05 Border Fence Installation *(Estudio Teddy Cruz)*

Figure 3.06 Model Explorations *(Estudio Teddy Cruz)*

takes influence from the multi-use of buildings and residences in Latin American cultures.[7] Influence is also taken, from the incremental construction methods typical of favela homes as an added element of afford-ability in design. The purpose of much of Cruz's work is giving the people control over their city. It is about developing places with the community in mind over the private interest economic gain.

3.3 | Incredible Edible and The Language of Food

A great way to engage communities and encourage interaction is by catering to a common interest. Incredible Edible is a community initiative that does just that. Created in Todmorden, a small town in northern England, this initiative takes the common language of food as a starting point for engaging the community on a deeper level. The thought process leading to food is explained best by co-founder, Pam Warhust:

> "Can you find a unifying language that cuts across age and income and culture that will help people themselves find a new way of living, see spaces around them differently, think about the resources they use differently, interact differently? Can we find that language? And then, can we replicate those actions? And the answer would appear to be yes, and the language would appear to be food."[8]

Calling the process "propaganda gardening," vegetables, herbs, and

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Warhurst, Pam. "How we can eat our landscapes." TED. May. 2012. Lecture.

other edible vegetation is plants all over the small town, in front of the town hall, the dentist office, the grocery store, etc. The vegetation engages the everyday routine. It starts a conversation and encourages the community to relate to one another on a subject that everyone has a basic knowledge. In addition, is the educational component, which occurs on multiple scales, from small signs indicating what each plant is to vocational classes that educate individuals on farming techniques. And finally the Incredible Edible project engages the town on an economic level, allowing the community to sell the vegetables and plants produced in local restaurants and farmer's markets. In addition, a large tourist force has resulted from the project, and the shops and restaurants that participate profit from this new market. The project engages the public on three levels, "a community plate, the way we live our everyday lives; a learning plate, what we teach our kids in school and what new skills we share amongst ourselves; and business, what we do with the pound in our pocket and which businesses we choose to support."[9]

What is interesting about this project is the way that it engages everyone in the community over a common interest. Adopting the slogan "If you eat, you're in," the project does not discriminate based on demographics such as age, culture or income levels. It establishes a common interest to connect over, and as urban planning has proven time and again it is hard to promote connectivity across demographics with a common interest to initiate the conversation.

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[9] Ibid.

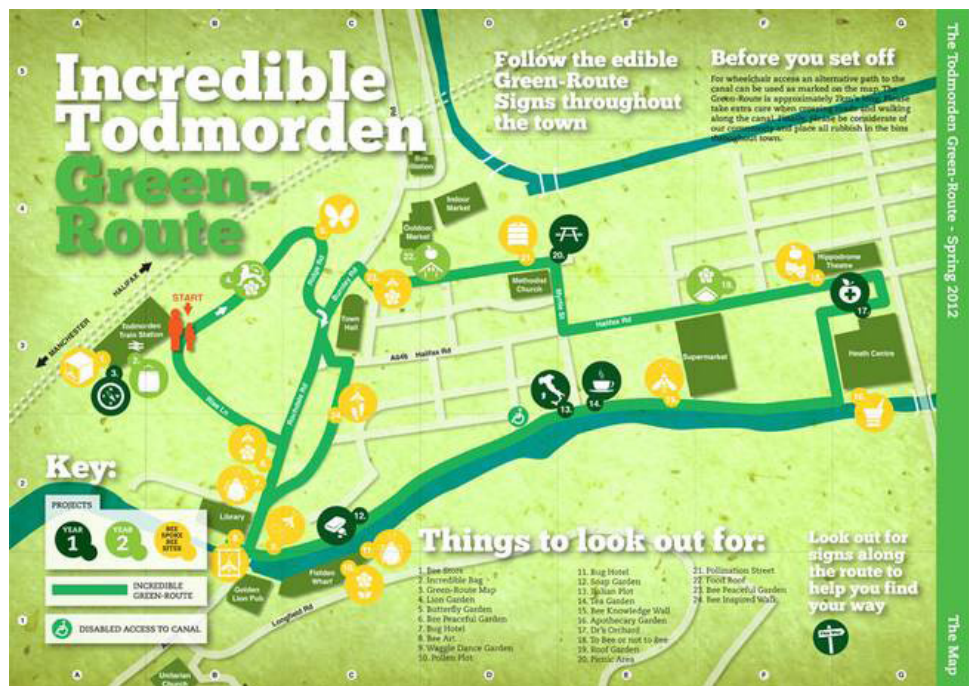Figure 3.07 Incredible Edible Garden *(Incredible Edible Todmorden)*

Figure 3.08 Incredible Edible Green-Route Map *(Incredible Edible Todmorden)*

Chapter Four | Designing Community

Figure 4.01 Restaurant Perspective

The social life of the city today revolves largely around the everyday consumer. Trips are choreographed around running errands, casual encounters occur over shop stalls and restaurant tables, little of the life of the city happens without some sort of monetary exchange. What is missing are the moments of deeper connection within the urban landscape that occur between these consumer interactions. Spaces that interject themselves into the everyday life of the city and function independently from the consumer are necessary to create a complete and holistic urban design.

This thesis project proposes the critical examination of the vacant land in Atlanta in relation to the spatial disparities within the city. By analyzing the neighborhoods along the BeltLine development project and the borders that are established around them, this project takes a critical look at how design can begin to engage and connect the city.

4.1 | the DNA of the BeltLine

The way a neighborhood changes over time is an important factor in understanding the communities as they exist today. As neighborhoods age, people move out or move in and economic climates change. To better understand the socio-economic history of the area surrounding the BeltLine, the transitions of these neighborhoods from 1970-2010 were mapped (Figure 4.02). The data for this mapping project comes from the Longitudinal Tract Data Base (LTDB). Created at Brown, the LTDB compiles census data from 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010.

It applies the 2010 census tract zone to the data, allowing for easy comparison.[1]

The analysis involved twelve different sections of the census data to determine the condition of the census tract neighborhood in question. These factors fell into three basic categories: income, education, and property. From these factors, the status of the area was determined, elite, middle class, or struggling. Within the three categories, the community transitions were then also determined, upgrading, stable, or downgrading. Tracking the data changes though the five different census years made the trend of each census tract visible (Figure 4.04).

The map (Figure 4.02) shows the communities categorized based on socio-economic changes in the census data. The solid colors depicting a stable condition, the lines an upgrade in condition, and the dots a downgrade. Making visible the areas struggling in contrast to those thriving.

4.2 | Site Selection, Program and Connectivity

Designing to promote connectivity within the city requires a program typology that addresses the needs of the existing community. The strategic placement of certain building typologies within the urban fabric can have the power to promote inclusivity and connectivity between bordering communities. With the parameters of designing within the marginalized spaces of the city, the program of this thesis

[1] Logan, John R., Zengwang Xu, and Brian Stults. 2014. "Interpolating US Decennial Census Tract Data from as Early as 1970 to 2010: A Longitudinal Tract Database" The Professional Geographer 66(3): 412–420.

Neighborhood DNA
Along the Atlanta BeltLine

Legend

- Elite, Stable
- Middle Class, Stable
- Struggling, Stable
- Downgrade
- Upgrade
- ----- BeltLine
- —— Atlanta City Limits
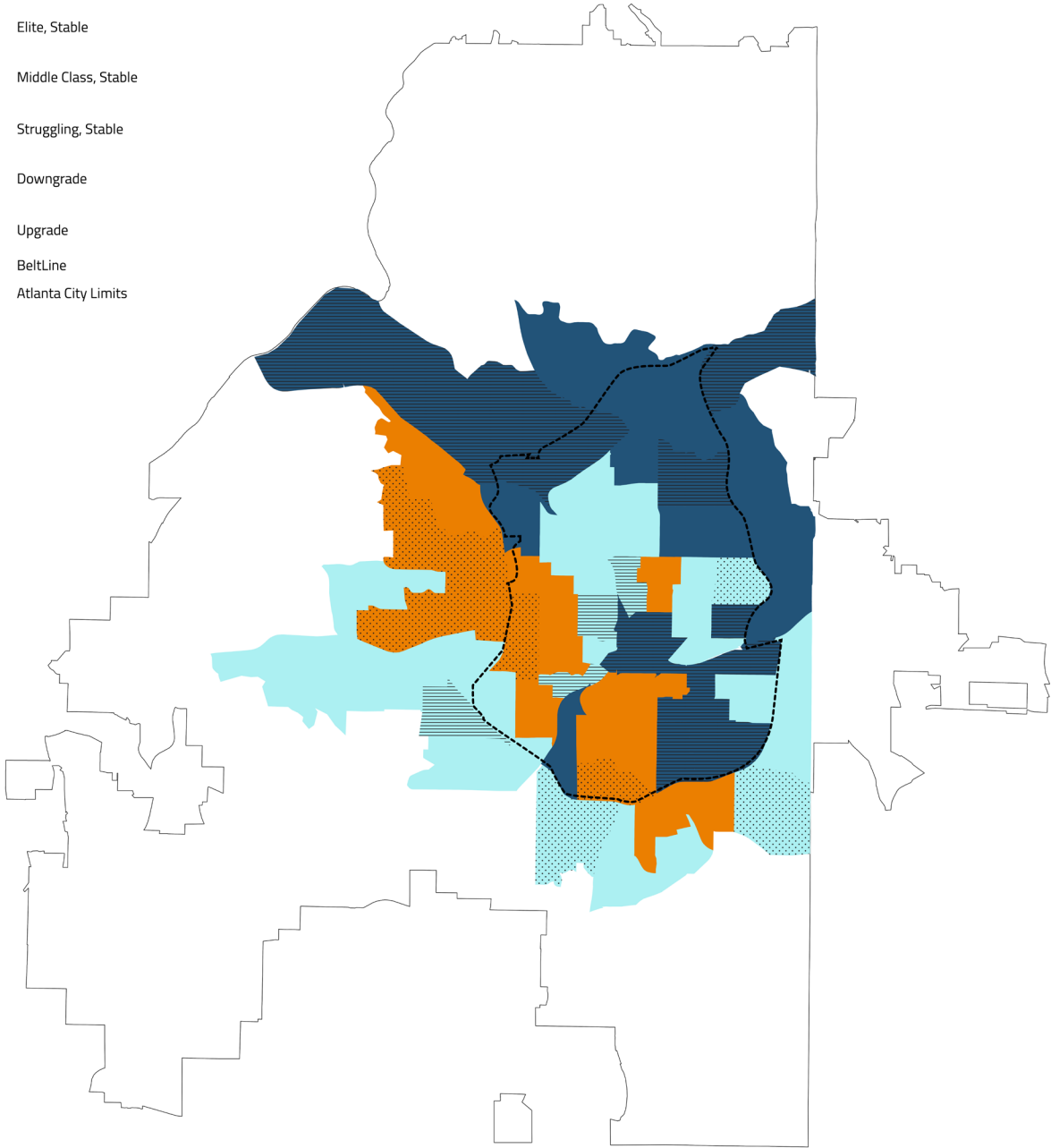
Figure 4.02 Neighborhood DNA *(LTDB)*

High School Education   1970   1980   1990   2010

Unemployment Rate   1970   1980   1990   2010

Poverty Rate   1970   1980   1990   2010

Housing Owned
vs. Rented   1970   1980   1990   2010

Figure 4.03 Census Data Matrix *(LTDB)*

42

Neighborhood DNA
Along the Atlanta BeltLine
Transitions from 1970–2010

elite

middle class

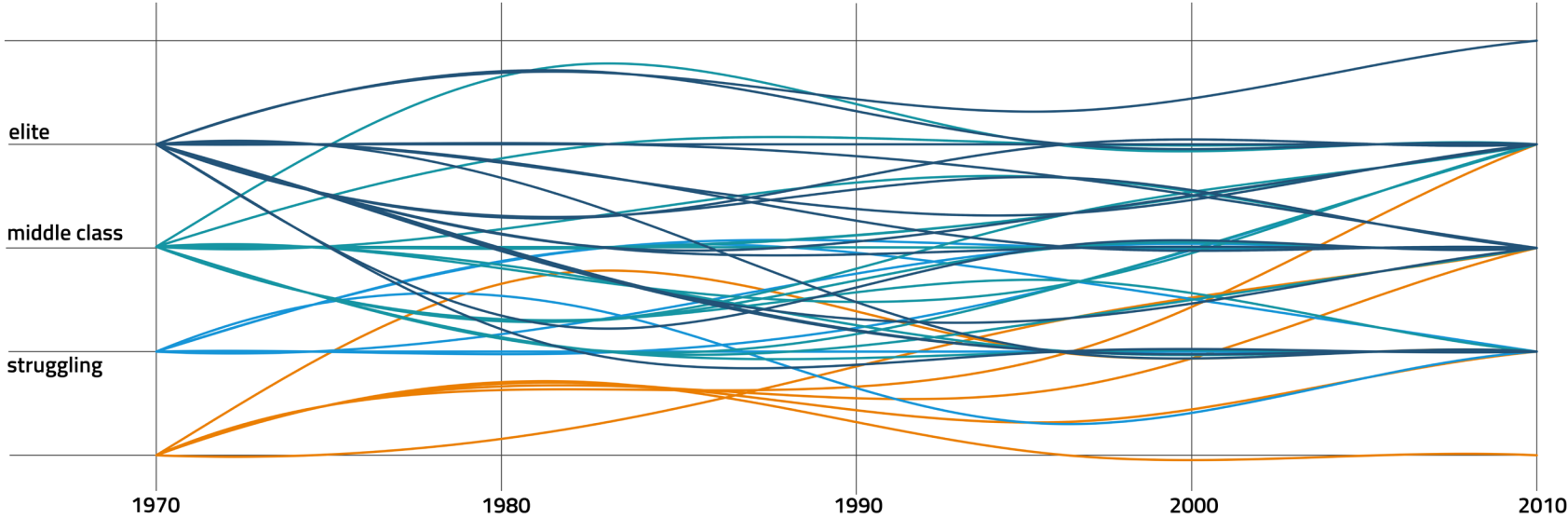struggling

1970   1980   1990   2000   2010

Figure 4.04 Neighborhood DNA Transitions *(LTDB)*

will have a level of flexibility to work within the changing urban context.

In a study done over three years, by the Knight Foundation and Gallup, it was found that factors attracting and attaching individuals to a community were related with the emotional and social aspects of a place. The importance of community attachment is the influence it has on the economic growth, overall well-being, and longevity of a place.

The study, "The Soul of the Community," was conducted on twenty-six different communities across the United States. Participants were surveyed on the ten domains of community attachment; basic services (community infrastructure), local economy, safety, leadership (elected officials), aesthetics, education, social offerings (opportunities for social interaction and citizen care), openness (how welcoming the community is), civic involvement (volunteering, voting), and social capital (social networking between residents). Of these ten factors, the three that scored the highest on level of importance to the individual were social offerings, openness, and aesthetics. Social offerings described as "places for people to meet each other and the feeling that people in the community care about each other." Openness described as "how welcoming the community is to different types of people; families with young children, minorities, and talented college grads." And finally, aesthetics being described as "the physical beauty of the community including the availability of parks and green spaces."[2]

What is interesting about the study is that regardless of the

[2] "Soul of the Community." Knight Foundation. Ed. Paula Lynn Ellis. John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Jan. 2010. Web. 09 May 2016. http:/www.knightfoundation.org/sotc.
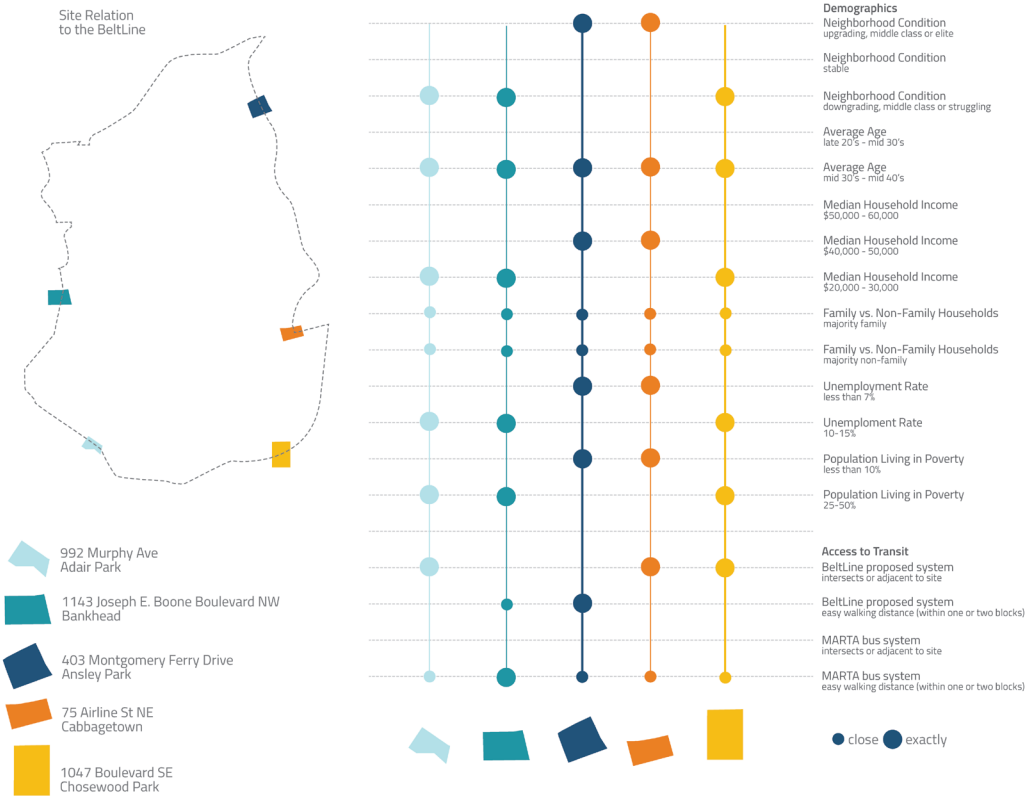
demographics of the person, regardless of age, income, or race, the same aspects were priorities in the level of attachment felt by an individual to a community. There are needs to survive and needs to thrive. The "Soul of the Community" study proves that the needs to thrive are what attach people to a community. You can find the basic survival needs, such as shelter, food, water, almost anywhere, but the things you need to thrive are what really attach you to a community or a place. Establishing spaces in the urban landscape that relate back to these key aspects and provide opportunities for spontaneous interaction is essential in creating holistic communities.

The program this thesis will explore will consist of three different elements, the marketplace/restaurant, educational classrooms, and community garden, covering three essential aspects of a strong community; aesthetics and social connectivity, education, and local economy (Figure 4.05).

Using the map of neighborhood DNA, five sites were selected along the proposed BeltLine streetcar loop to further develop. The sites chosen were located in Chosewood Park, Adair Park, Bankhead, Ansley Park, and Cabbagetown (Figure 4.06). The criteria used to choose these sites included access to existing transit, the MARTA system, demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods, and the socio-economic borders that defined the surrounding communities.

Connectivity from lower economic neighborhoods to downtown Atlanta
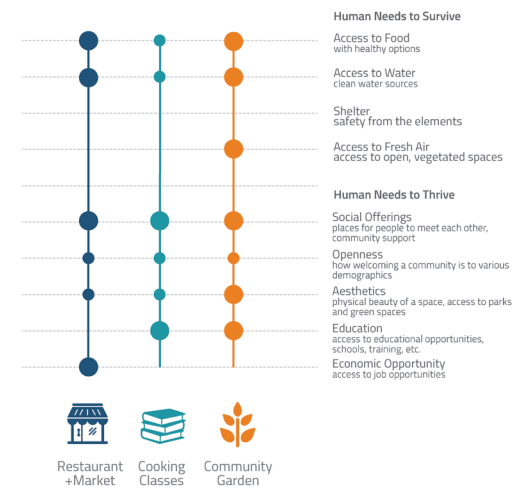
Site Considerations

Program Components

Site Relation
to the BeltLine

992 Murphy Ave
Adair Park

1143 Joseph E. Boone Boulevard NW
Bankhead

403 Montgomery Ferry Drive
Ansley Park

75 Airline St NE
Cabbagetown

1047 Boulevard SE
Chosewood Park

Demographics

Neighborhood Condition
upgrading, middle class or elite

Neighborhood Condition
stable

Neighborhood Condition
downgrading, middle class or struggling

Average Age
late 20's - mid 30's

Average Age
mid 30's - mid 40's

Median Household Income
$50,000 - 60,000

Median Household Income
$40,000 - 50,000

Median Household Income
$20,000 - 30,000

Family vs. Non-Family Households
majority family

Family vs. Non-Family Households
majority non-family

Unemployment Rate
less than 7%

Unemployment Rate
10-15%

Population Living in Poverty
less than 10%

Population Living in Poverty
25-50%

Access to Transit

BeltLine proposed system
intersects or adjacent to site

BeltLine proposed system
easy walking distance (within one or two blocks)

MARTA bus system
intersects or adjacent to site

MARTA bus system
easy walking distance (within one or two blocks)

● close ● exactly

Human Needs to Survive

Access to Food
with healthy options

Access to Water
clean water sources

Shelter
safety from the elements

Access to Fresh Air
access to open, vegetated spaces

Human Needs to Thrive

Social Offerings
places for people to meet each other,
community support

Openness
how welcoming a community is to various
demographics

Aesthetics
physical beauty of a space, access to parks
and green spaces

Education
access to educational opportunities,
schools, training, etc.

Economic Opportunity
access to job opportunities

Restaurant
+Market

Cooking
Classes

Community
Garden

Figure 4.05 Site and Program Considerations
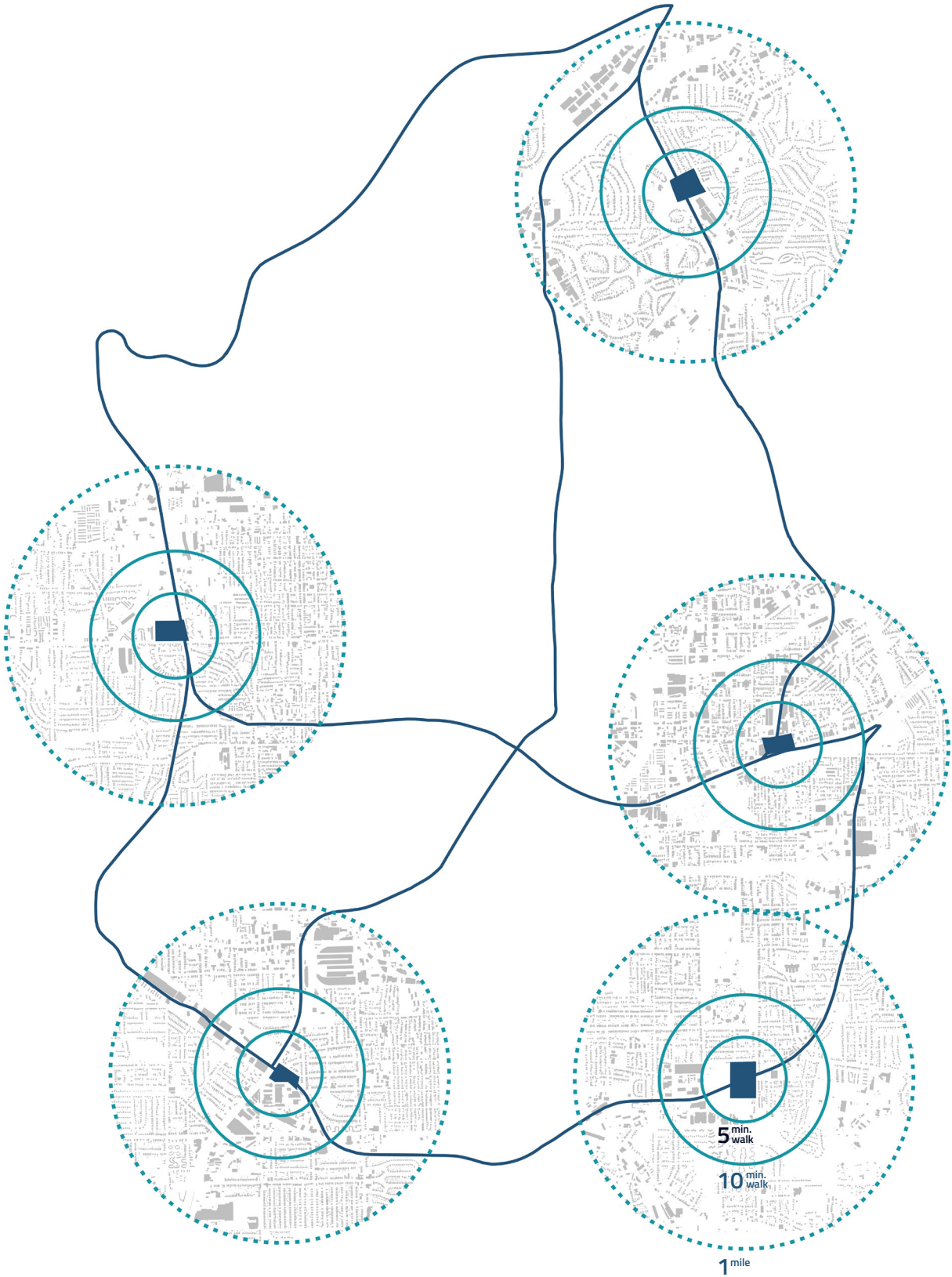
5 min. walk

10 min. walk

1 mile

Figure 4.06 Sites on the BeltLine

Figure 4.07 Ansley Park Station

Figure 4.08 Bankhead Station

Figure 4.09 Chosewood Park Station

Figure 4.10 Adair Park Station

Figure 4.11 Cabbagetown Station

and the BeltLine was an important point as well. The connectivity from the suburbs surrounding the Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Buford Highway, and Campbellton Road were looked at more specifically. The suburbs near the airport are home to a large population of relocated lower income individuals. As a result of the 2008 housing market crash, many individuals and families experienced foreclosures on their homes in neighborhoods closer to the city center and were relocated to less expensive housing options near the airport. The major issue of these relocations is the connectivity to downtown, employment opportunities, and social services. The current commute from the airport to downtown, without access to a car, takes four hours round-trip. Lauren Scott, a relocated Atlantan, tells the story of her day-to-day job hunt. A story typical to many living in similar conditions of a "pervasive and isolating form of extreme poverty," around Atlanta.[3] Struggling to support not just herself, but also her child means paying for childcare, food, clothing, and shelter all while searching for a job, making the commute time to employment opportunities key. As a way to alleviate the public transit issue of Atlanta, the BeltLine streetcar system has been proposed. The hope is that, upon its completion in 2030, the average daily commute of the individual will be improved.

The diagrams following display the typical commute route from the main suburban neighborhoods surrounding the city to the downtown and the connectivity difference made by the BeltLine streetcar system

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[3] Harlan, Chico. "A Long Way to Payday." *The Washington Post* [Washington, D.C.] 29 Dec. 2015: A1+. Print.

(Figure 4.12-4.13). The BeltLine is essential in connecting these different, isolated neighborhoods surround the city to one another, making the stations key locations throughout the city. The focus of this thesis is on designing these locations as community hubs, engaging individuals throughout the city and providing a system of opportunities for interaction.

Out of these five sites, the specific site selected as a more in-depth case study for this project was 75 Airline St NE, in Cabbagetown. The area is up and coming, in the process of being gentrified. A gentrifying area was chosen over a site in a struggling area as a means of working with the market and with gentrification rather than against it. By placing the central hub of activity in this area there won't be the potential of displacement in the struggling neighborhood. This is why the proximity of the site to public transit and the mobile component of the program will be essential. This site is located within an easy walk of the MARTA bus and the proposed BeltLine streetcar system, to be completed in 2030.

4.3 | The Deindustrialization of Cabbagetown

Cabbagetown is among the oldest industrial sites in Atlanta, originally established as a company town for the workers of the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill. The Mill complex was founded in 1881, south of the Hulsey Rail yard, by the Elsas family. The complex included administrative offices, two picker buildings, and storage warehouses. The Elsas

Buckhead

Buford Highway

Bankhead

Proposed Site
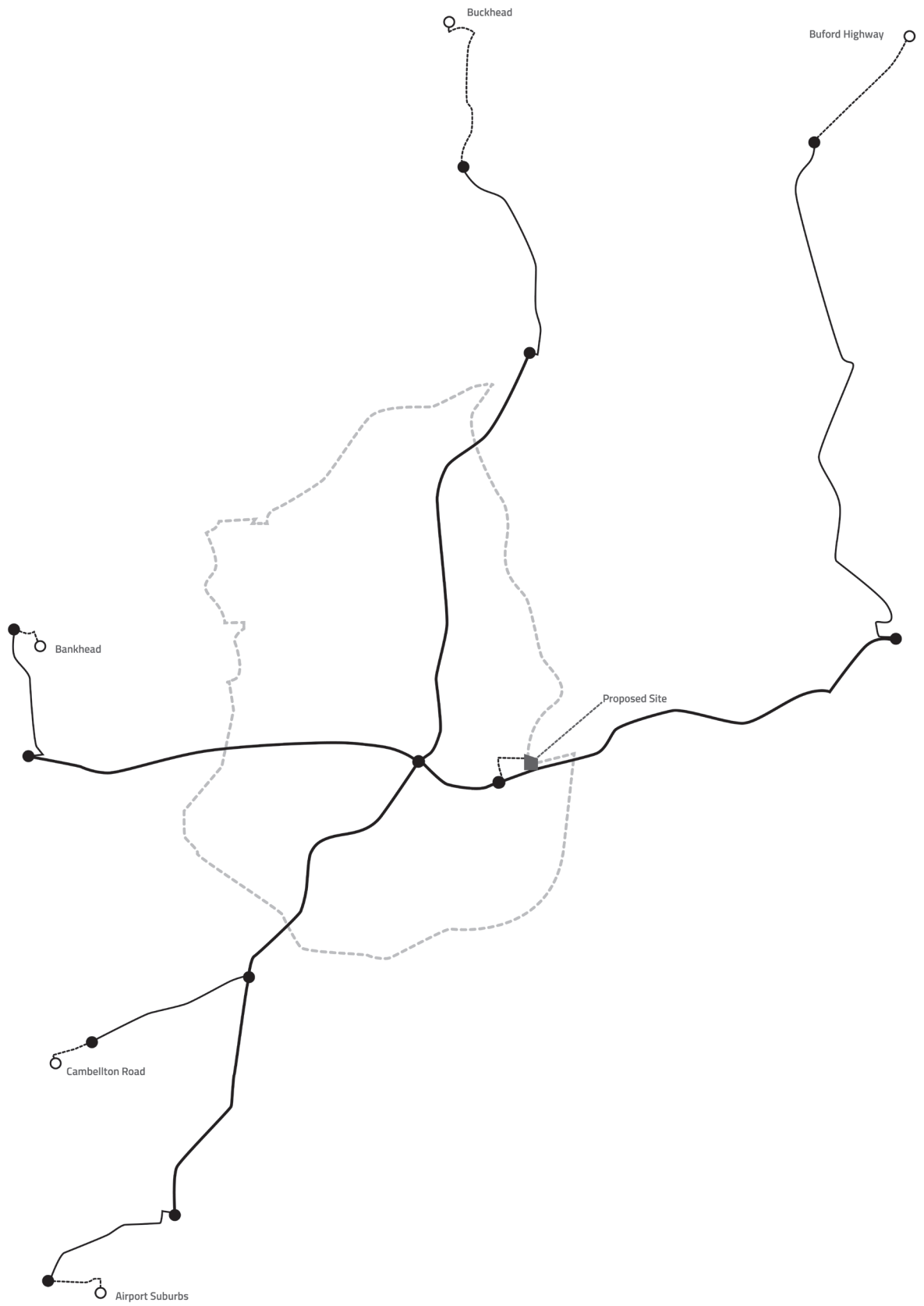
Cambellton Road

Airport Suburbs

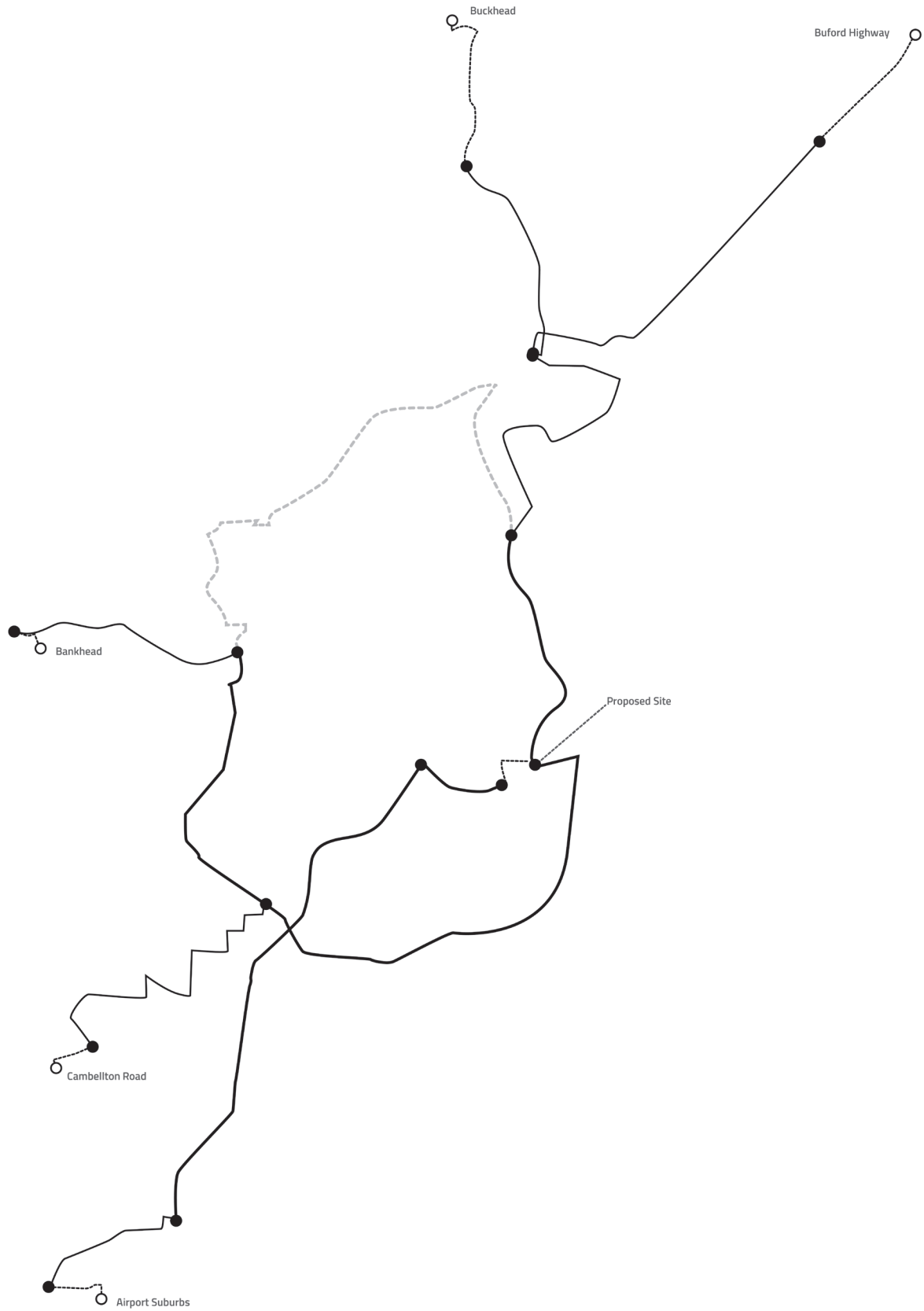Figure 4.12 Suburban Connectivity, Current Condition

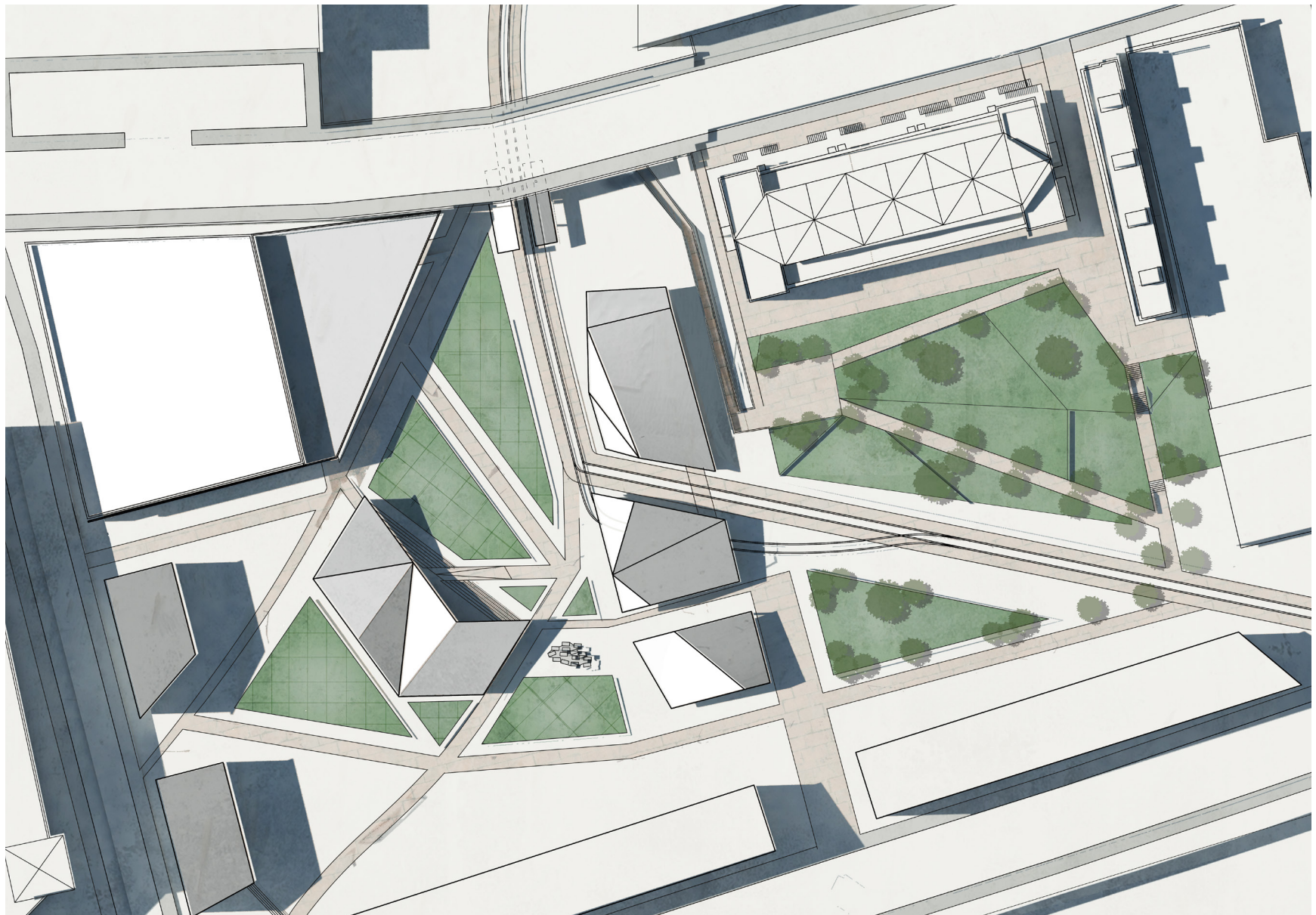Figure 4.13 Suburban Connectivity, Proposed BeltLine

Figure 4.14 Cabbagetown, Proposed Masterplan

family provided many things for the workers, including a public library, healthcare offices, and entertainment venues, creating Cabbagetown, "a tightly knit, semi-isolated community whose lives were anchored to the Mill."[4] The Mill was officially closed in 1977, meaning the relocation of a large number of the Cabbagetown population as job opportunities moved outside of the city. A prime example of deindustrialization in Atlanta, the Mill today has been converted into loft apartment and the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood are slowly changing. The deindustrialization of the area involves not only the change in demographics, but also the conversion of a majority of the surrounding factory and manufacturing buildings into apartments, restaurants, and shops. Seen in Figure 4.20 are the programmatic changes in buildings surrounding the proposed site in Cabbagetown.

The site in Cabbagetown that this thesis focuses on, is located to the north of the Fulton Cotton Mill Lofts, just across the Hulsey Rail yard. The current borders defining the communities surrounding the site are largely socio-economic, furthered emphasized by the deindustrialization process and economic changes over the years (Figure 4.15-4.22). The placement of this site, at the crossroads of five different neighborhoods, provides the opportunity to engage multiple communities and provide the opportunity for interaction.

The borders of this site are also physical, with the Hulsey Rail yard and an elevated MARTA rail line to the south of the site and an elevated

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[4]"Cabbagetown History." *Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association RSS.* Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association, 2016. Web. 09 May 2016. http:/www.cabbagetown.com/cabbagetown-history.

Figure 4.15 Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill *(Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Digital Collection)*

Figure 4.16 Mill Interior Loft, Studio *(Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Digital Collection)*

Figure 4.17 Mill Interior Loft, Living Room *(Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Digital Collection)*

Figure 4.18 Cabbagetown, Carroll Street *(Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Digital Collection)*

Figure 4.19 Historic Cabbagetown Homes *(Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills Digital Collection)*

Building Program Distribution

1911

Present

- ■ Residential (Multi level)
- ■ Residential (Single Family)
- ■ Industrial Site
- ■ Commercial Business
- ■ Commercial Food
- ■ Vacant Buildings
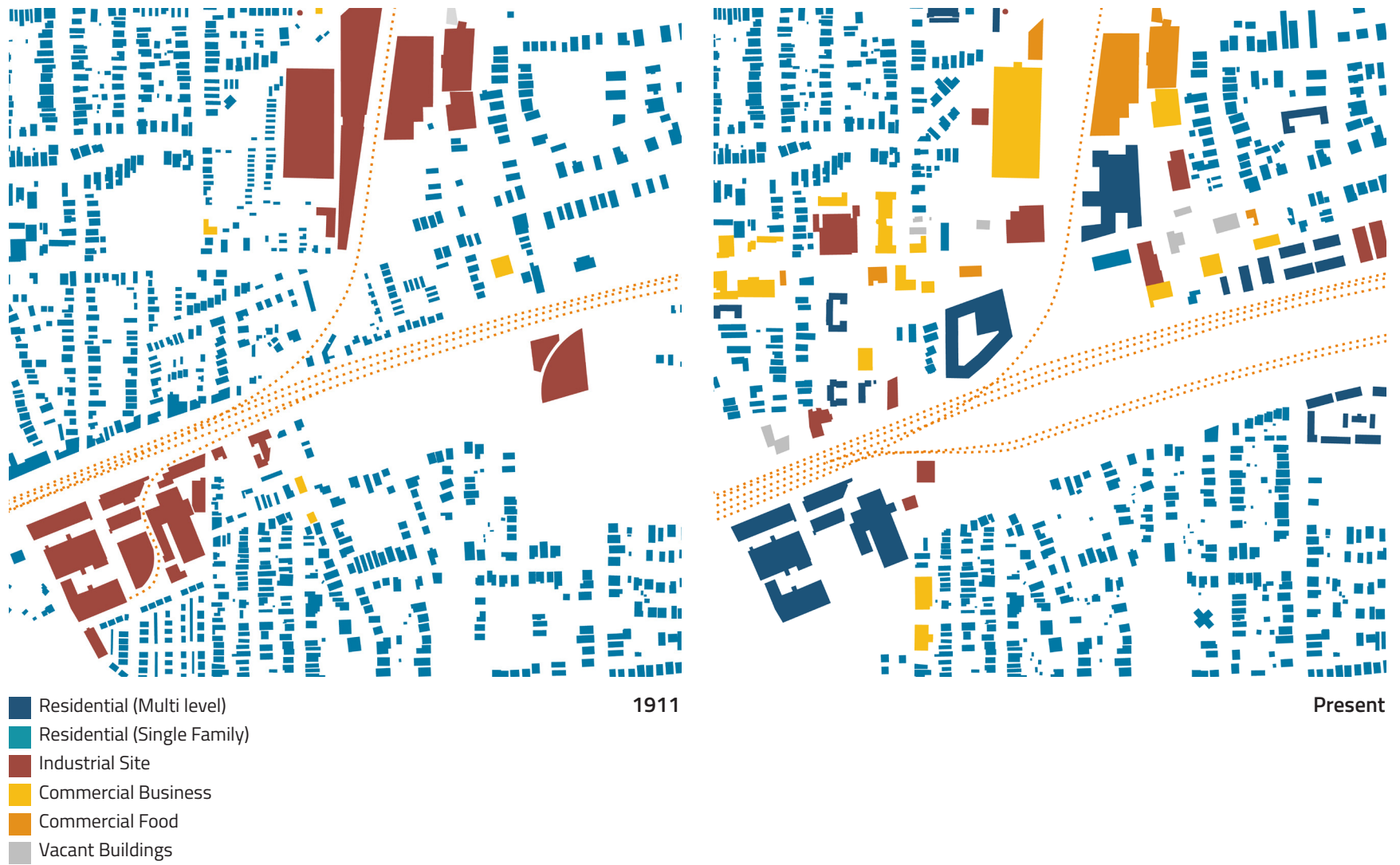
Figure 4.20 The Deindustrialization of Cabbagetown *(Sandborn Fire Insurance Maps)*
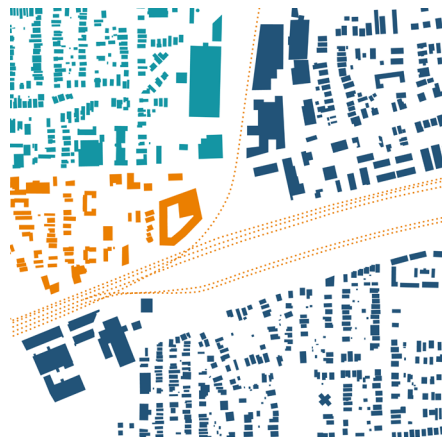
Borders: Race
- ■ Predominately Caucasian
- ■ Evenly Dispersed
- ■ Predominately African American
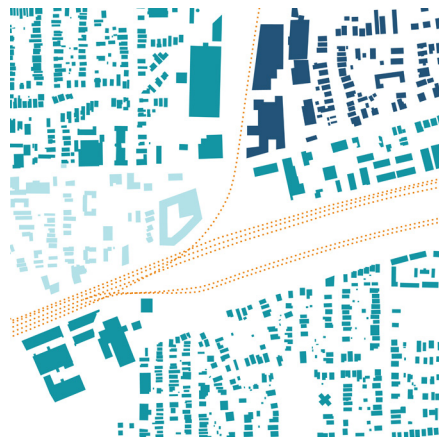
Borders: Age
- ■ under 30
- ■ 30-35
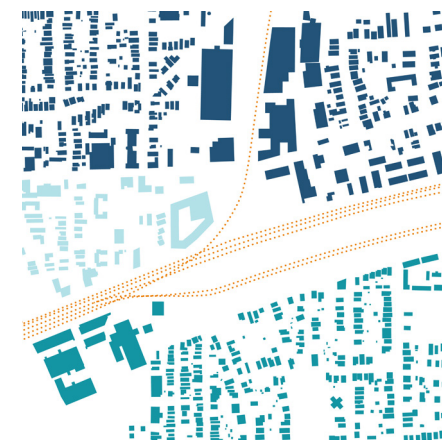- ■ 35-40+
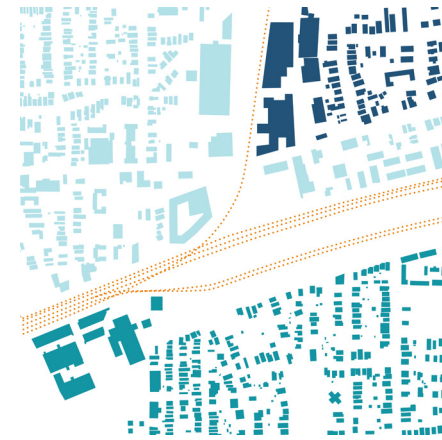
Borders: Education (% graduated high school)
- ■ 70+
- ■ 60-70
- ■ 50-60
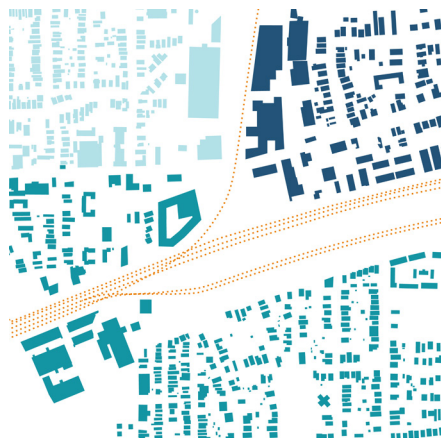
Borders: Population Below Poverty
- ■ Less than 8%
- ■ 20%
- ■ 31%
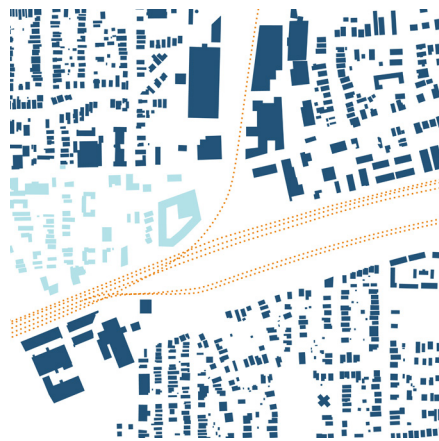
Borders: Unemployment Rate
- ■ Less than 4%
- ■ 20%

Borders: Median Income
- ■ $60,000+
- ■ $48,000
- ■ $33,000

Figure 4.21 Cabbagetown Demographics *(City Data)*

Surrounding Neighborhood Status

Legend

- Elite, Stable
- Middle Class, Stable
- Struggling, Stable
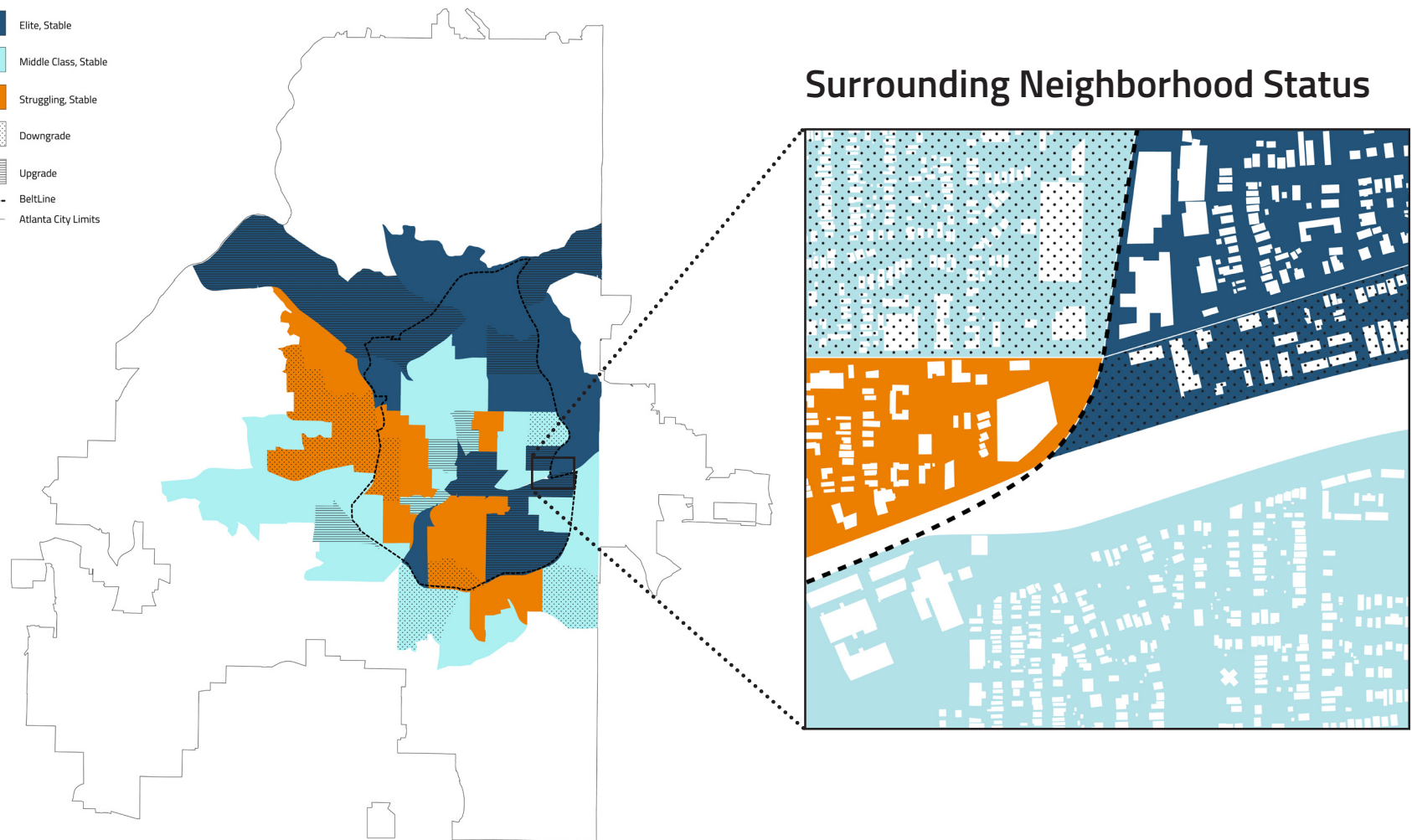- Downgrade
- Upgrade
- BeltLine
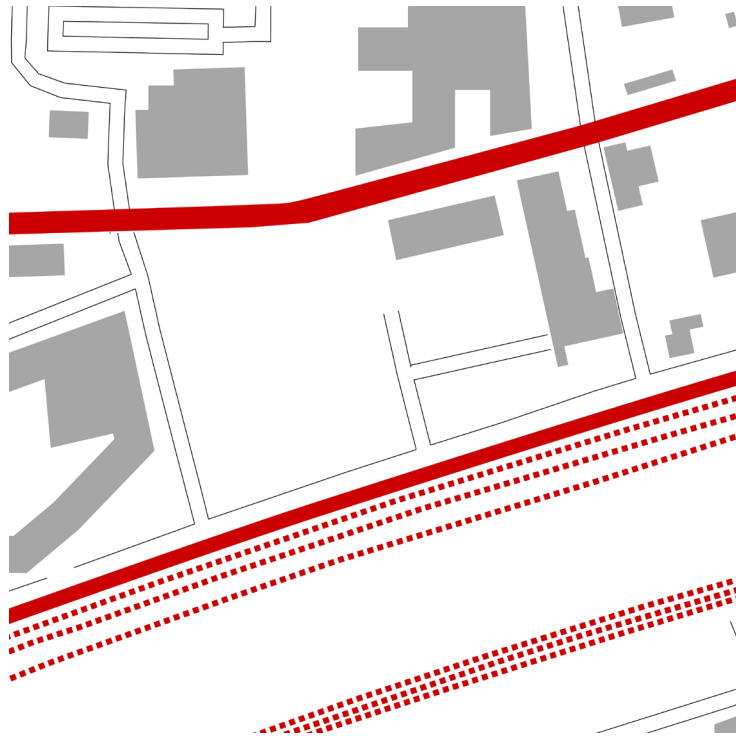- Atlanta City Limits

Figure 4.22 Cabbagetown DNA *(LTDB)*

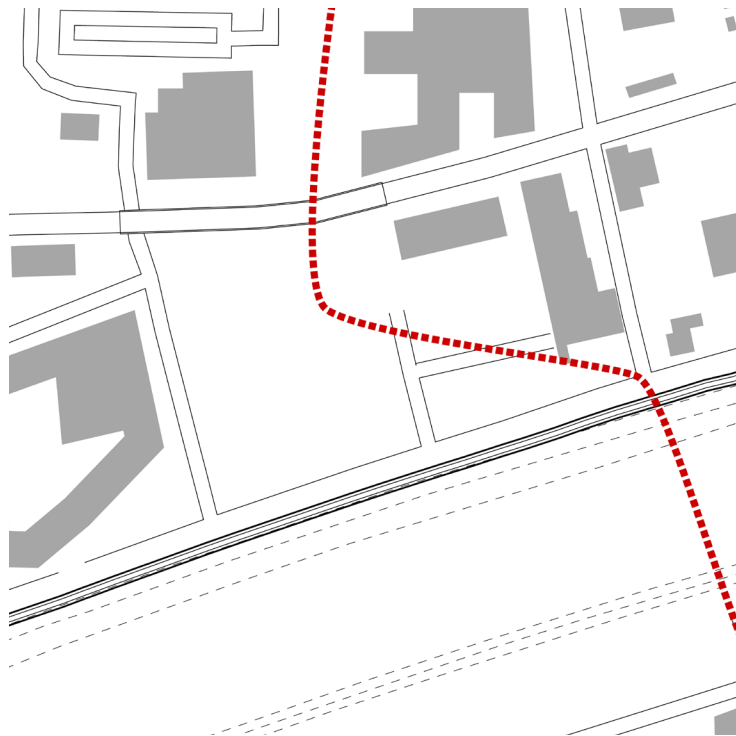Figure 4.23 Physical Borders, Infrastructure

Figure 4.24 Physical Borders, BeltLine

Figure 4.25 Current Circulation

Figure 4.26 Site Gateways

63

street, Edgewood Avenue, to the North of the site (Figure 4.23), providing an interesting opportunity for design.

4.4 | Designing to Engage

The proposed site lies along the proposed BeltLine streetcar rail, with a station located on the actual site. This provides the opportunity to address multiple entry points to the site, from pedestrian trial, streetcar station, and automobile access (Figure 4.26). The site itself is largely vacant, with three existing structures on the northeast corner, two apartments buildings, and one half vacant, half occupied building that is home to a local artist's studio workshop. Located on the site as well are remnants of development, manifesting in a large pile of concrete blocks towards the center of the site. As well as a fence, currently defining the borders of the BeltLine recreational trail.

The area surrounding the site is in the middle of a transition. Young professionals and artists are beginning to move into the neighborhood, attracted by the development resulting from the BeltLine project. In addition to new apartment buildings along the line, is the development of Krog Street Market. In a converted manufacturing complex, the market contains a new restaurant and interior shopping stalls. As the program of these buildings begin to transition into non-industrial uses, the demographics of the area are beginning to transition from an older, land passed down through generations group to the young professional moving to Atlanta. This mix of communities and demographics presents

Figure 4.27 Cabbagetown, Existing Approach

Figure 4.28 Cabbagetown,Proposed Approach

Figure 4.29 Cabbagetown, Existing Edgewood Avenue View

Figure 4.30 Cabbagetown, Proposed Edgewood Avenue View

an interesting opportunity to engage and encourage interaction not just with those arriving by streetcar, but also from the surrounding neighborhoods, establishing a hub of connectivity on the proposed site.

The arts culture of the surrounding area is another important factor. Krog Street Tunnel, adjacent to the south east corner of the site, is home to one of the largest local graffiti spots in the city. Krog Street Tunnel is the link between the site and Cabbagetown, going beneath Hulsey Rail yard. The tunnel is one of the most well-known public art sites in Atlanta, "the constant changing mesh of street art and pedestrians is almost a living embodiment of the city itself... (with) a tendency to mirror the lives of many east side Atlantans as they make their mark."[5]   The graffiti stretches from this tunnel south to the outer wall that separates the historic neighborhood from Hulsey Rail yard and north to the fences currently in place for the BeltLine development on the site. This trail of local art is an important piece in the local culture of the site, and maintaining this aspect became an important part in the final design.

This thesis proposes the addition of a restaurant, culinary classroom space, interior and outdoor gathering spaces, community gardens, additional residential buildings, and parking to the site. Broken down into two sections, the site is defined by more public oriented spaces around the streetcar station and a public-private park on the east side of the site, relating to the residential buildings in place.

[5] Davis, Joeff. "Krog Street Tunnel." Creative Loafing: Atlanta City Guide. Creative Loafing, 2016. Web. 9 May 2016. http:/clatl.com/atlanta/Location?oid=1303331&guide=city.
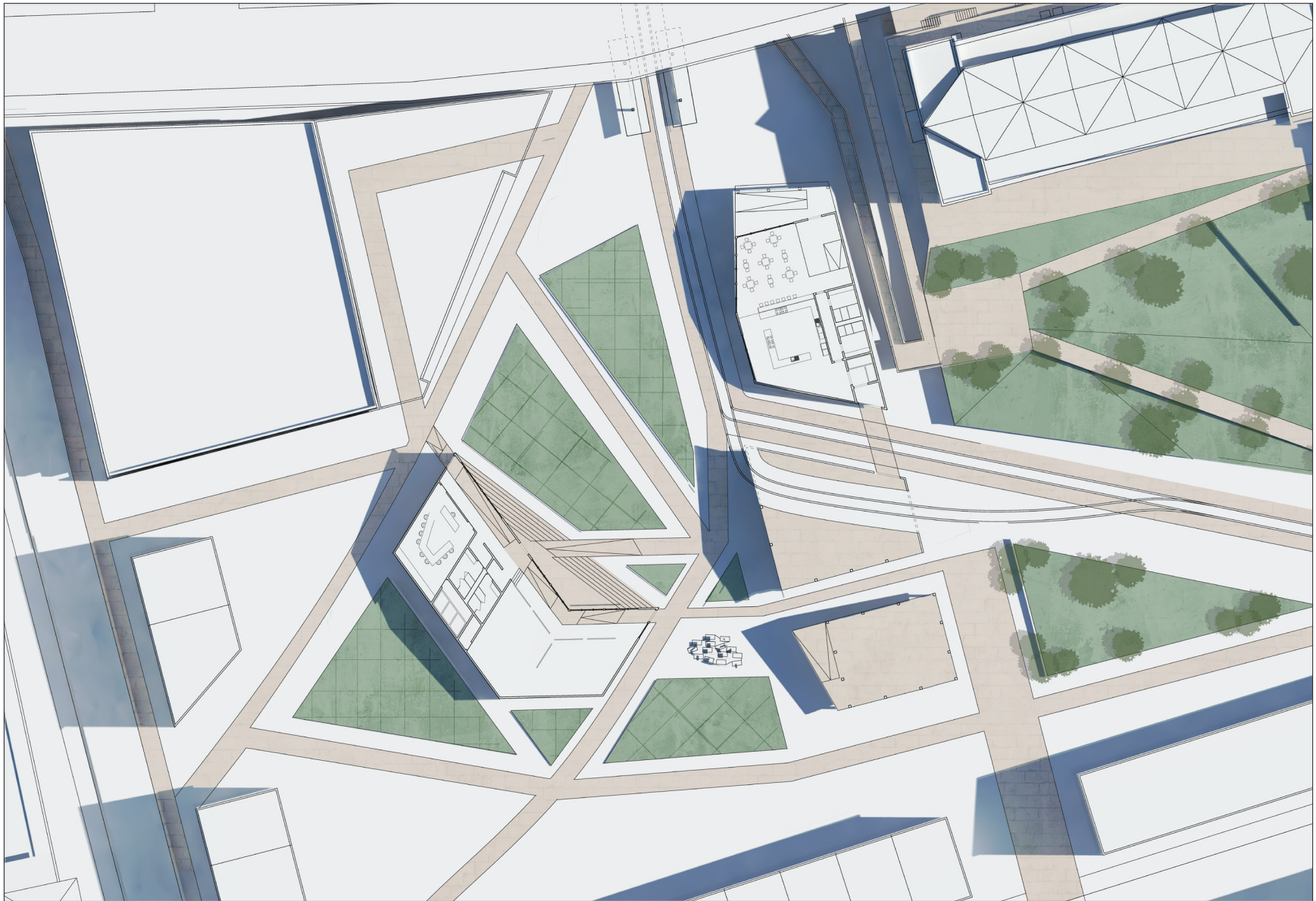
Figure 4.31 Cabbagetown Site Design

With a focus on food and the culinary experience, the objective of this design is to establish opportunities for connection in the everyday. Food is a universal language, as seen in the experience of the Incredible Edible project, it provides an opportunity to engage the individual no matter what the demographic. The community gardens, culinary classroom, and restaurant components relate to the human needs to thrive and survive in a place. The complex promotes community engagement and interaction by setting up these everyday opportunities to connect and share ideas with people you do not typically run into.

Another important aspect to this design is the addition of the mobile food market component. The mobile food market will work with the BeltLine rail system, with streetcars that are loaded with food from the community gardens and restaurant at the Cabbagetown site and then dispersed throughout the BeltLine. The mobile food market provides an economic opportunity as well, allowing members of the community garden to sell their produce to a greater market. Creating a system to relate the five separate station developments along the BeltLine with one another is essential in promoting connectivity everywhere, not just in Cabbagetown.

The development of the main complex on the west side of the site can be broken down into five main steps. The first step (Figure 4.36) was defining the programmatic spatial requirements for a community garden, culinary classroom, restaurant, and mobile food market
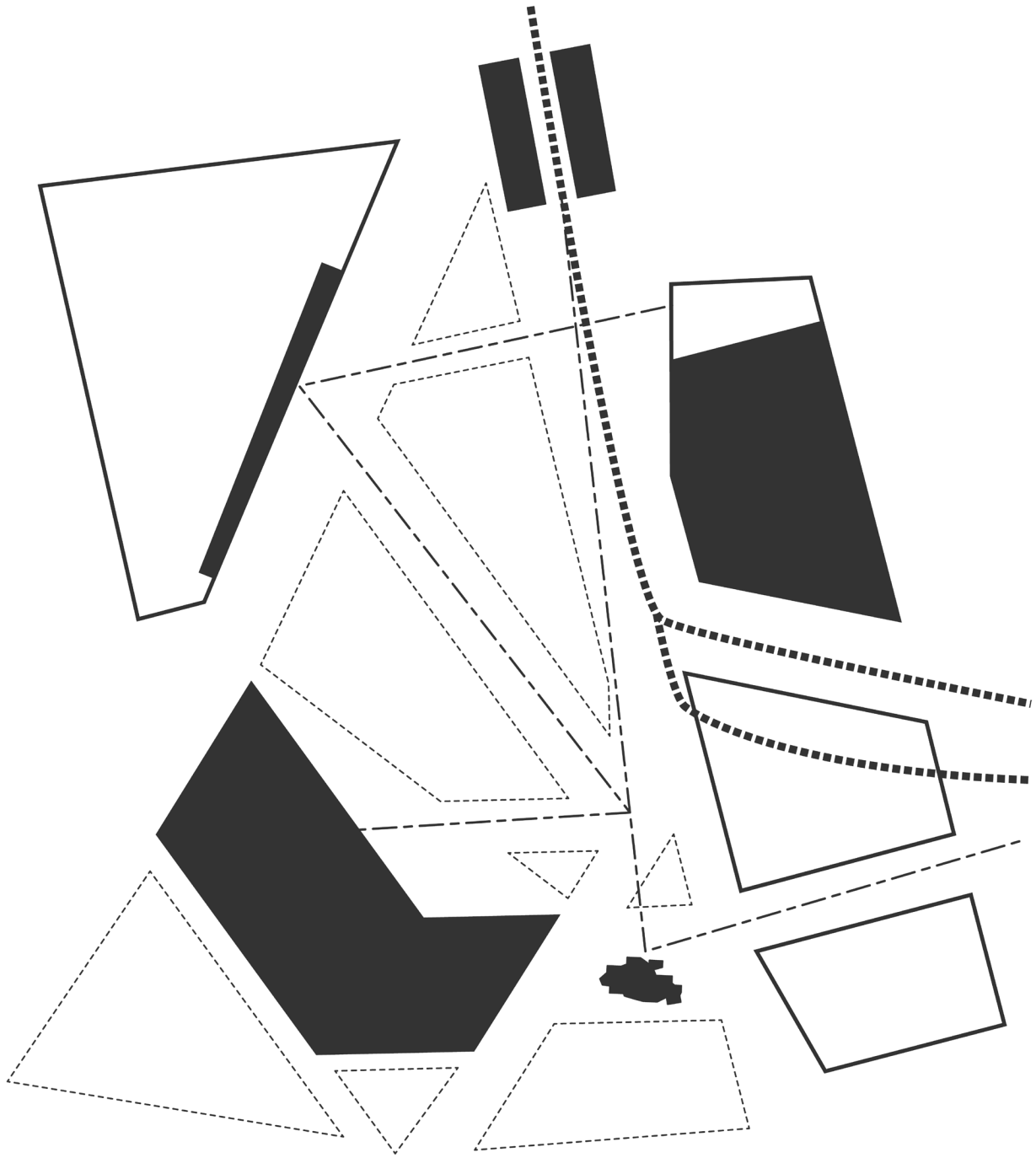
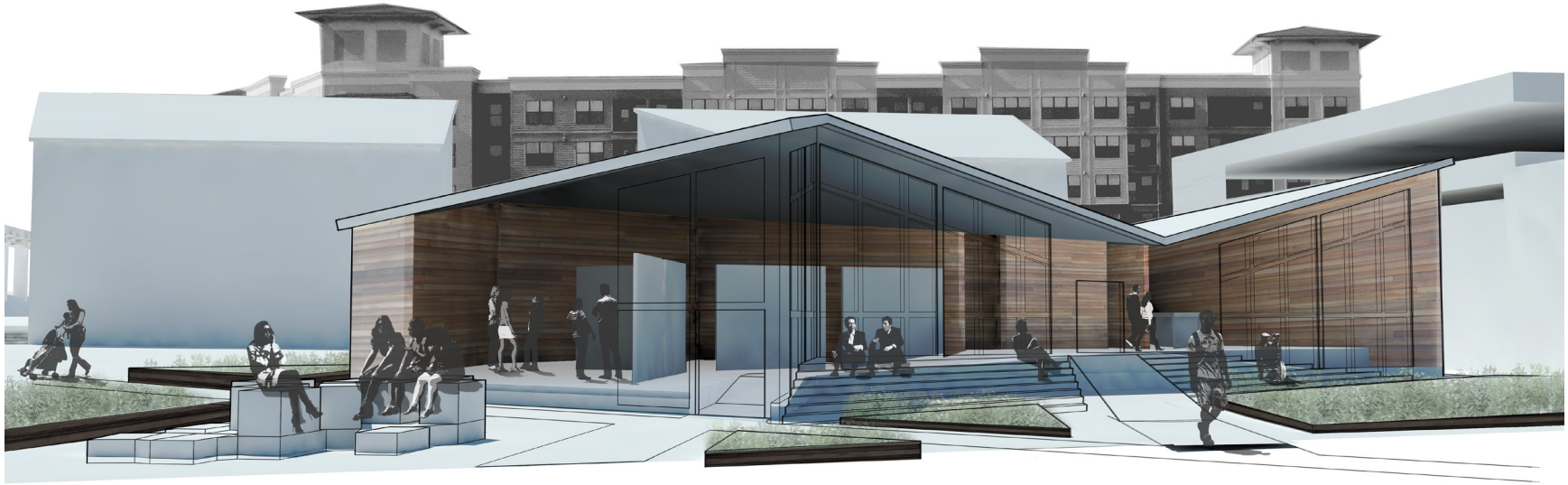Figure 4.32 Cabbagetown Site Parti
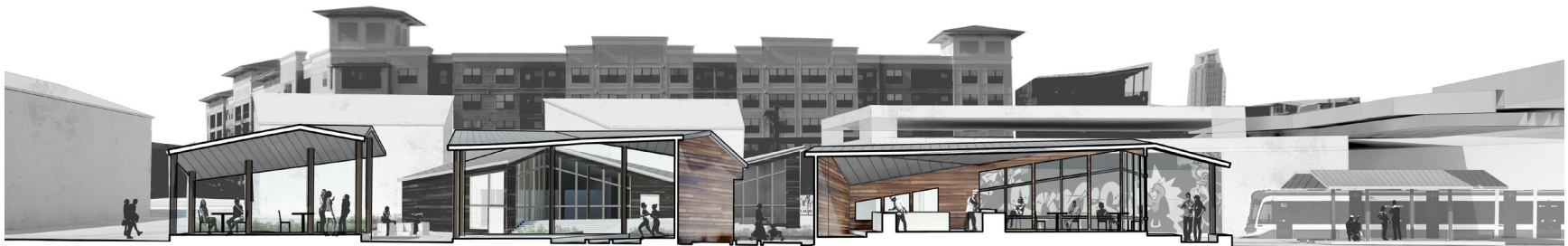
Figure 4.33 Cabbagetown Section Perspective

Figure 4.34 Cabbagetown Section

pavilion. Spatially, the buildings were located along the main circulation route through the site. With easy access to the streetcar station and a relationship to the existing pedestrian ramp onto the site. The most specific spatial requirement was the placement of the community garden. Typically, plants need at least six hours of unshaded sunlight a day,[6] meaning the location of the garden needed to be on the south side of a building or out of the shadow of a building for almost the entire day.

The second step (Figure 4.37) was the creation of the central courtyard space within the complex. The addition of this space establishes an exterior zone where unplanned interaction can occur, providing the "opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way."[7] The way that this experience is created is by setting up edge conditions to the space, more intimately scaled interaction occurs along the edges rather than at the center of a space. Providing areas where a person can see and be seen without being the center of attention is essential in establishing a comfortable environment. The central courtyard space also provides a contained area that meets the requirements of "the social field of vision." Coined by Jan Gehl, the field ranges from 0-325 feet, with normal conversations at 3-10 feet, performances at 100-115 feet, and people watching activities occurring where figures become distinguishable, at 325 feet.[8] Designing to promote comfort in a space and encourage interaction begins with understanding the scale at

[6] McDougall, Kevin. "Useful Links." Incredible Edible Todmorden. N.p., 2016. Web. 10 May 2016. http:/www. incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/resources/useful-links.

[7] Gehl, Jan. Life between Buildings: Using Public Space. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987. 19. Print.

[8] Gehl, Jan. Life between Buildings: Using Public Space. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987. 67. Print.
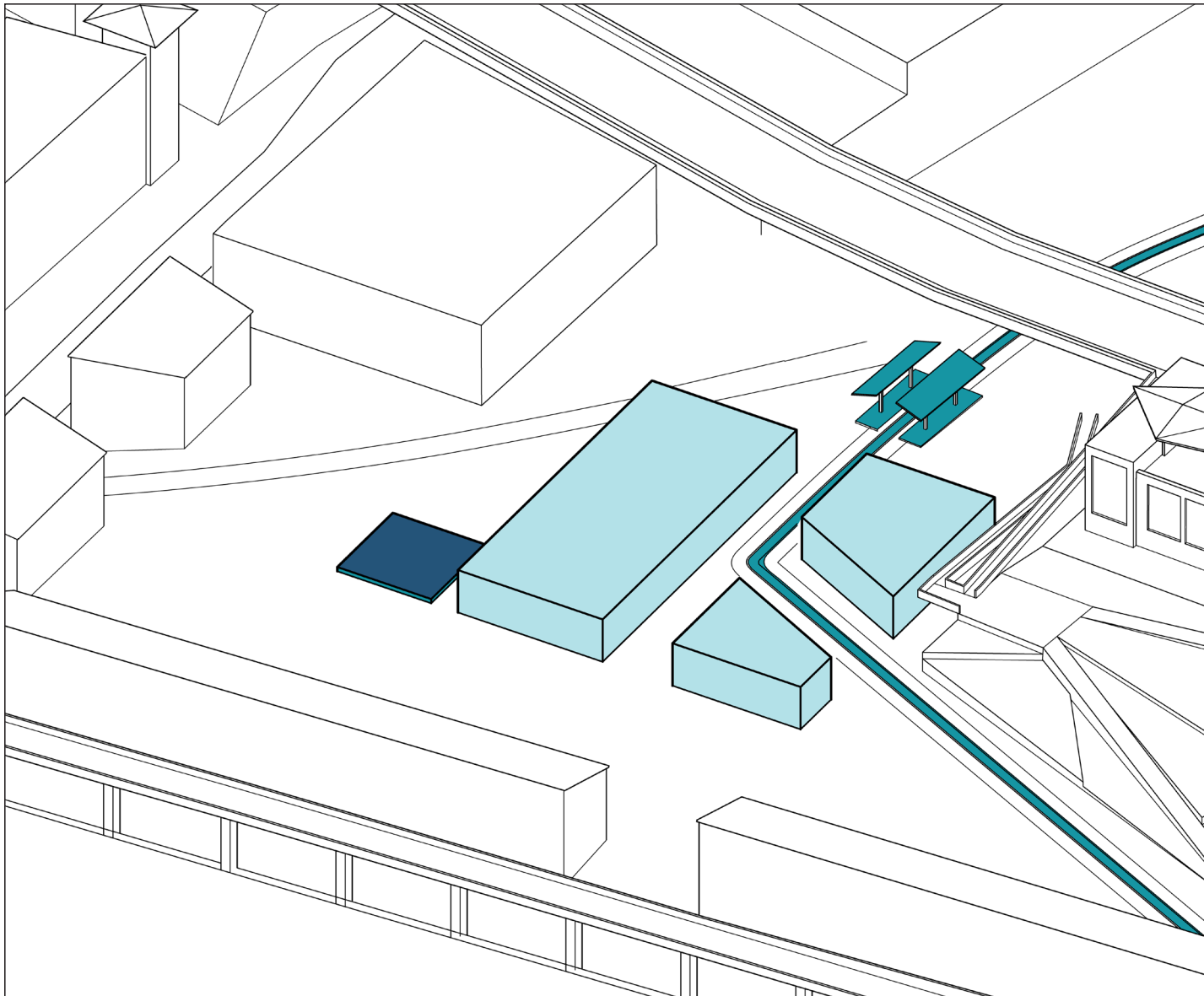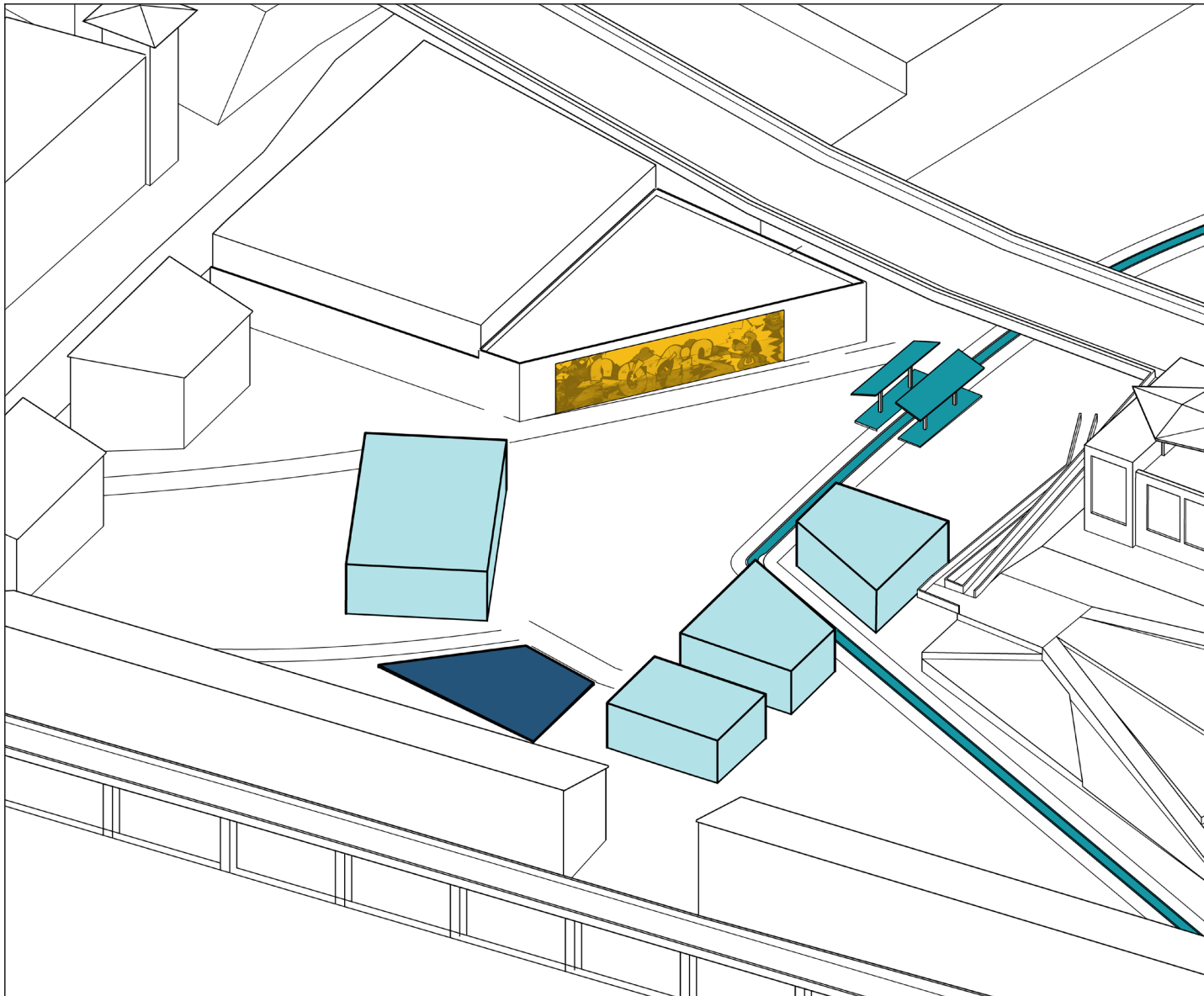
Figure 4.35 Design Development, Step One

Figure 4.36 Design Development, Step Two

which interaction occurs, "if there's something to do, there may also be something to talk about afterward."[9] With the addition of the central space, was the preservation of the existing wall of graffiti on the site. With the intention of establishing a temporary art gallery installation of this wall, local artists and groups will be invited to create a new mural for the site every few months. This engages the community providing it with a stake in the design of the site, and respecting the already established arts culture of Cabbagetown, while creating a backdrop for the central courtyard space.

The third step (Figure 4.38) was a reorientation of the building containing interior gathering space, culinary classroom, and community garden storage space. By reorienting the building into a more "L-shaped" layout, the spaces become more naturally separated, with the culinary classroom located on the west side of the building and the larger interior gathering space locate to the east. Level changes were also created, energizing the circulation of the space and creating a stronger relationship between the interior and exterior. The addition of an exterior porch space relates back to the central courtyard, establishing an edge zone where interaction can occur. The interior gathering space has movable walls, allowing for more intimate spaces to be created depending on the needs of the event, and also has the ability to spill out onto the exterior porch.

The fourth step (Figure 4.39) was the design of the roof line to

[9] Gehl, Jan. Life between Buildings: Using Public Space. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987. 121. Print.
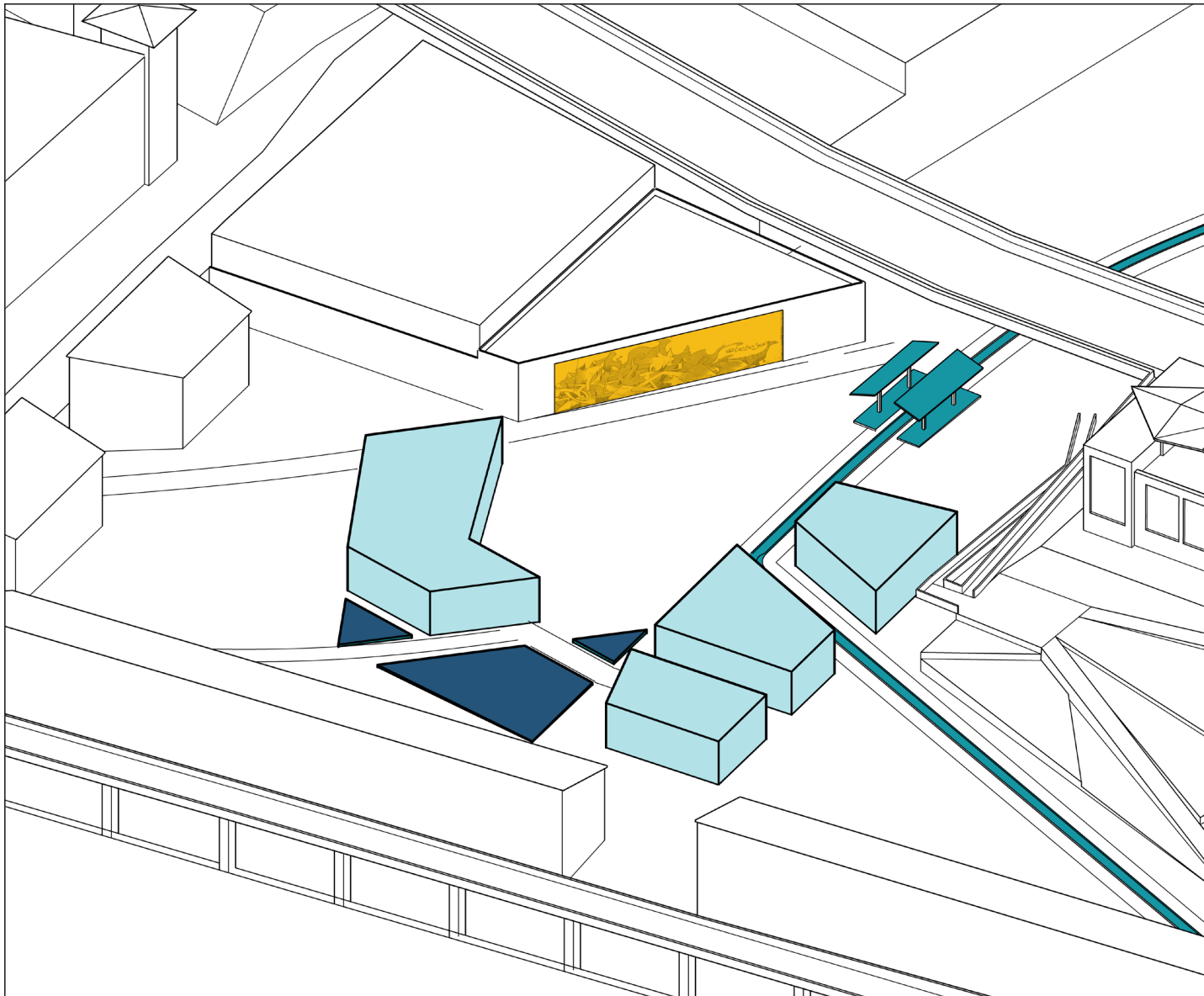
Figure 4.37 Design Development, Step Three

maximize shade and sunlight in relation to the community garden, as well as framing views into the central courtyard space. To preserve the six hours of sunlight the community gardens need to grow produce, the roof line of the complex was designed with peaks and valleys so as to cast the least shadows on these spaces. In addition, views are framed out into the central courtyard space, allowing for visual engagement throughout the complex.

The final step (figure 4.40) was the additional placement of garden spaces in the central courtyard space and the reuse of the remnants of development on the site. The additional garden space helps to define the circulation through the space. As the site is along the BeltLine trial and streetcar rail, the main use of the area is a space to pass through. By defining the circulation paths through the site, the individual is guided through the space and provided with the opportunity to partake in the programming along the way. The concrete blocks currently on the site are proposed to be reused as a public seating area, ending the visual axis from the streetcar station through the culinary complex. Located on the edge of the central courtyard space, it provides another zone for undemanding interaction.
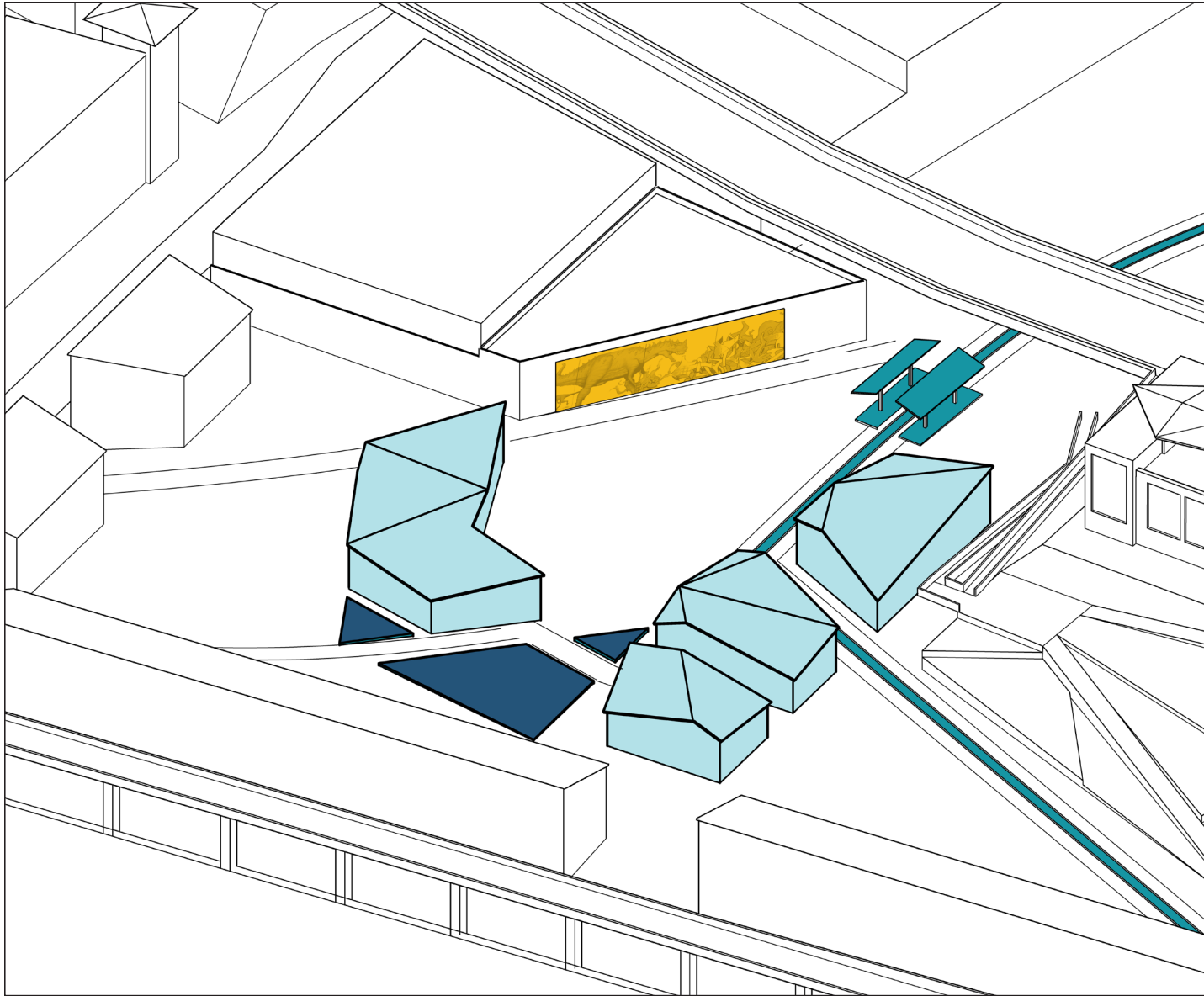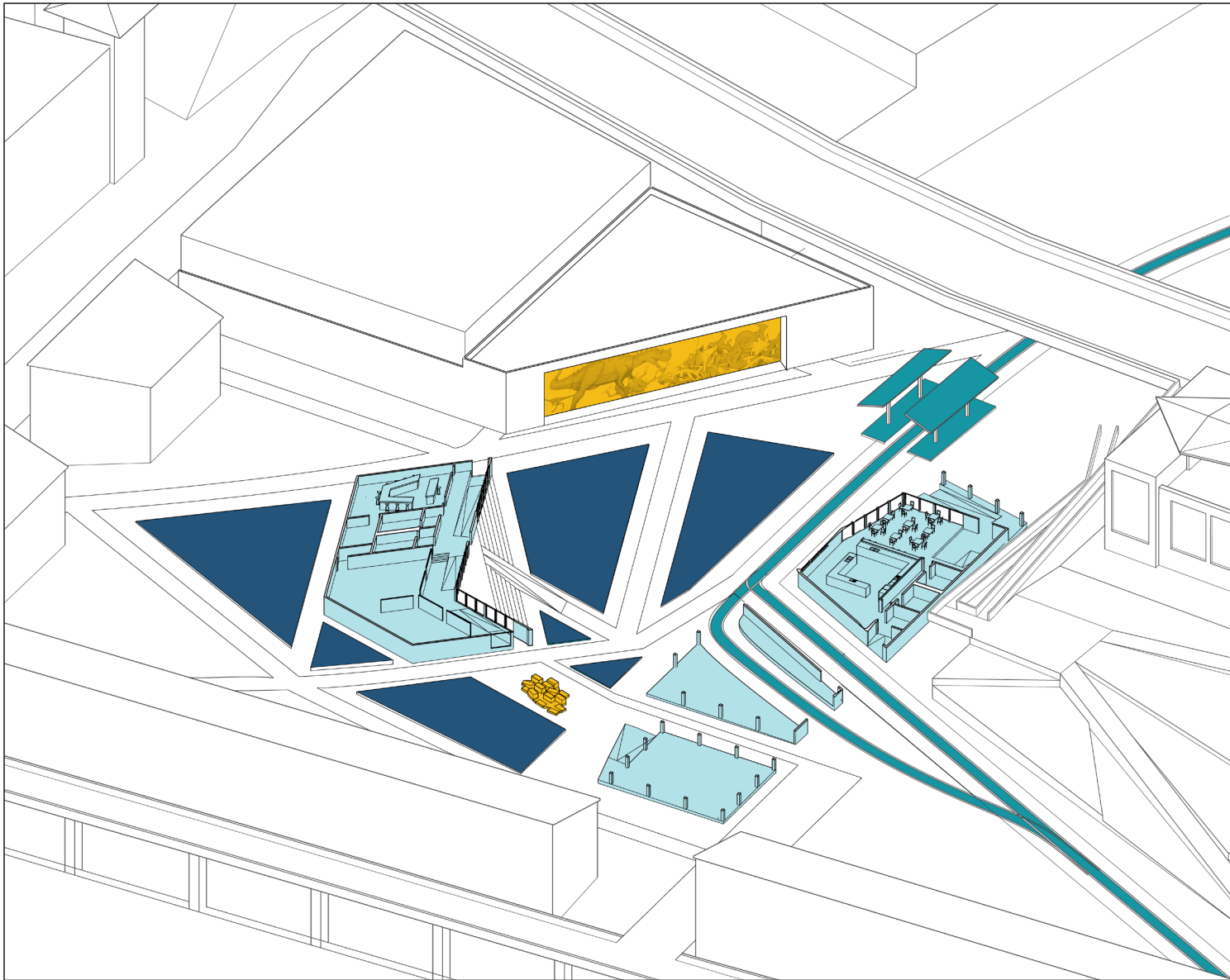
Figure 4.38 Design Development, Step Four

Figure 4.39 Design Development, Step Five

Chapter Five | Conclusion

Strong communities have the ability to stand the test of time, where creating something worth protecting is essential. Establishing a community based on more than the consumer lifestyle is important. It allows the opportunity to learn from one another, to share ideas, to share opinions, and to keep the world moving forward.

The purpose of this thesis project is to start a conversation about the real issues facing the urban landscape today. Figuring out what role design plays in establishing strong community attachments is an essential piece. Design may not be the end all answer, but rather part of the solution. As seen in Caracas with Urban Think Tank or Tijuana with Teddy Cruz, one of the biggest issues facing community development is the political policies and the private interests involved. Asking the question what happens when design orients itself to developing places with the community in mind over the private interest economic gains. Creating a formula for engagement that involves policy revisions, community participation, and design into a solution rather than approaching the issue from one angle.

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Appendix

Activating the Edge | Defragmenting the City of Atlanta

Allison Summers | Thesis Advisors: John McRae, Avigail Sachs, Jennifer Akerman
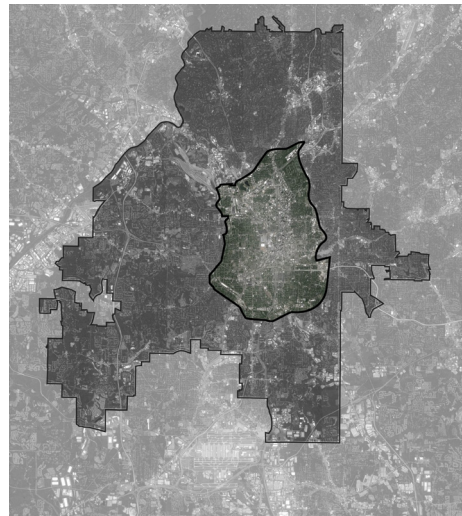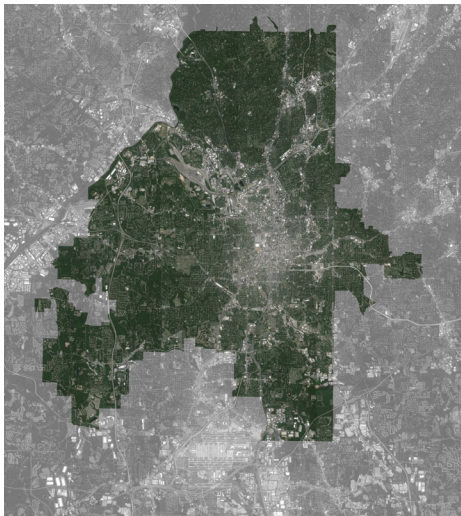
Connecting the fragmented urban landscape through the tactical activation of the drosscape, "in-between" spaces, separating communities within the urban fabric.

American cities are currently experiencing a period of deindustrialization, factories are moving out of the traditional city center and into the suburban landscape, taking employment opportunities and people with them. The result is a horizontal urbanization that creates conditions of fragmentation and increased separation between communities within the city. Borders and boundaries between communities become increasingly more defined, generated by physical, geographical, political, social, cultural, and economic differences.

Strongly defined separations between communities within an urbanized area can bring to light the inequalities and disparities of the city. Historically, when big moves are made in the infrastructure of a city, the underprivileged citizens are often the victims of dispossession and predatory practices. The result is increased unrest, which often leads to protests and in some cases revolutions. The distinction between borders and boundaries along communities and the treatment of such zones needs to be further explored.

In addition to the social implications of urban sprawl, as cities expand horizontally, landscape is wasted along the way. Coined as "drosscapes" by Alan Berger, these wasted landscapes provide opportunities to design connections within the urban fabric while minimizing the dispossession of land that often occurs when redeveloping urbanized areas, "design within the margins." The activation of drosscapes that separate communities and emphasize the fragmentation of the urban landscape offers a new opportunity for design.

By focusing architectural interventions along the border zones between communities, greater interaction and connectivity can be promoted within the city. This thesis proposes taking advantage of the leftover spaces that result from horizontal sprawl, by transforming them into zones of integration and increased communication within the urban fabric.
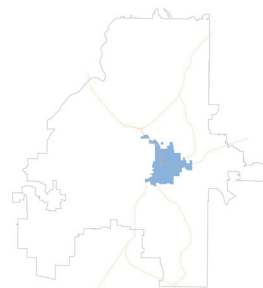

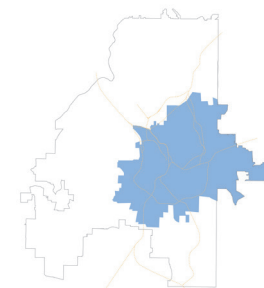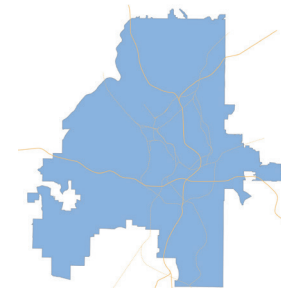## Atlanta Development | The Gateway to the South

Cultural Landmarks | Atlanta
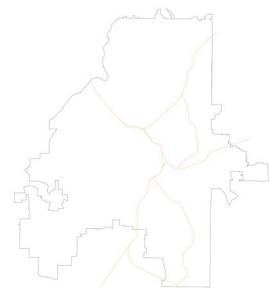
1886 | Established Rail
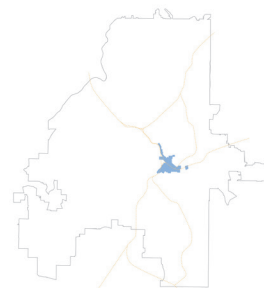
1899

1911

1940

Present | Atlanta City Limits

88

Neighborhood DNA | Atlanta BeltLine

The Atlanta BeltLine Area
Census Data

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2010 |
| High School Education | | | | |

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2010 |
| Unemployment Rate | | | | |

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2010 |
| Poverty Rate | | | | |

| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2010 |
| Housing Owned vs. Rented | | | | |

Legend

- Elite, Stable
- Middle Class, Stable
- Struggling, Stable
- Downgrade
- Upgrade
- - - - BeltLine
- —— Atlanta City Limits
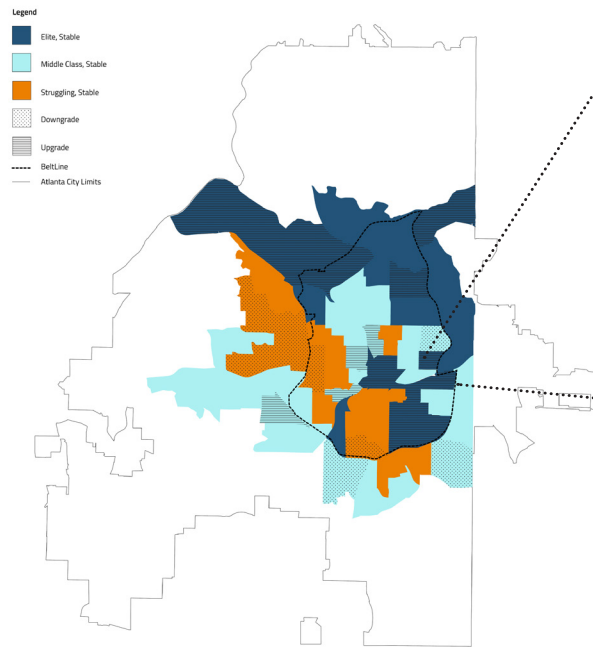
the dna of the BeltLine

The way a neighborhood changes over time is an important task in understanding the communities as they exist today. As neighborhoods age, people move out or move in and economic climates change, the areas surrounding the Atlanta BeltLine are not exception. To better understand the socio economic history of this area, I have mapped the transitions from 1970-2010, using the Longitudinal Tract Data Base. Created at Brown, the LTDB compiles census data from 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. It applies the 2010 census tract zone to the data, allowing for easy comparison.

The map shows the communities categorized based on socio-economic changes in the census data. The solid colors depicting a stable condition, the lines an upgrade in condition, and the dots a downgrade. Making visible the areas struggling in contrast to those thriving.

Neighborhood DNA
Atlanta BeltLine
Transitions from 1970 - 2010
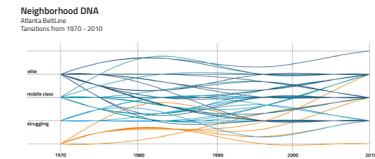
DeIndustrialization | Atlanta Factory Sprawl
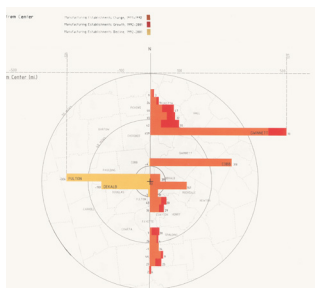
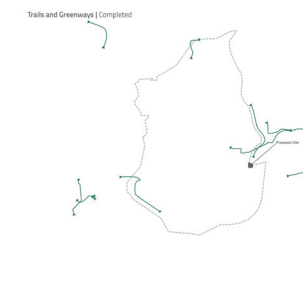**Deindustrialization of Atlanta |** *Drosscape, Alan Berger*

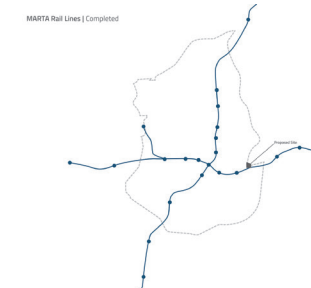**Deindustrialization of Atlanta |** Factories

Suburban Connectivity | Public Transit

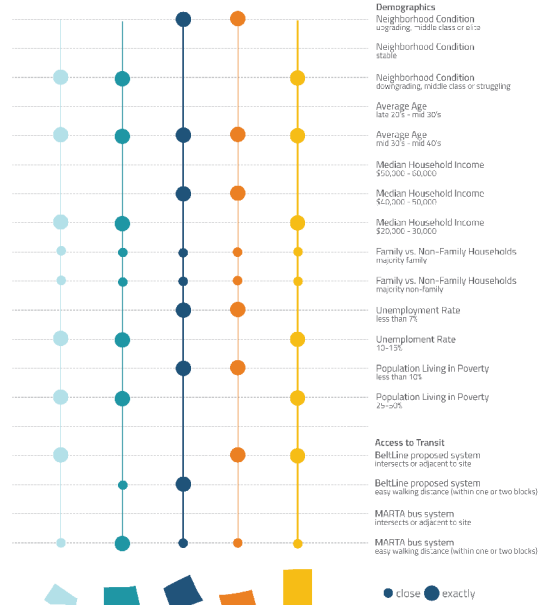**BeltLine Transit |** Proposed, Completion 2030

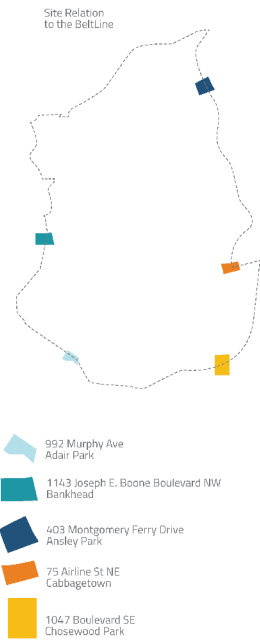**Trails |** Greenways, existing

MARTA | Metro, existing

Site Considerations | Atlanta BeltLine

Site Relation to the BeltLine

Demographics

Neighborhood Condition
upgrading, middle class or elite

Neighborhood Condition
stable

Neighborhood Condition
downgrading, middle class or struggling

Average Age
late 20's - mid 30's

Average Age
mid 30's - mid 40's

Median Household Income
$50,000 - 60,000

Median Household Income
$40,000 - 50,000

Median Household Income
$20,000 - 30,000

Family vs. Non-Family Households
majority family

Family vs. Non-Family Households
majority non-family

Unemployment Rate
less than 7%

Unemployment Rate
10-13%

Population Living in Poverty
less than 10%

Population Living in Poverty
45-60%

Access to Transit

BeltLine proposed system
intersects or adjacent to site

BeltLine proposed system
easy walking distance (within one or two blocks)

MARTA bus system
intersects or adjacent to site

MARTA bus system
easy walking distance (within one or two blocks)

● close ● exactly

992 Murphy Ave
Adair Park

1143 Joseph E. Boone Boulevard NW
Bankhead

403 Montgomery Ferry Drive
Ansley Park

75 Airline St NE
Cabbagetown

1047 Boulevard SE
Chosewood Park

Program Considerations

Human Needs to Survive

Access to Food
with healthy options

Access to Water
clean water sources

Shelter
safety from the elements

Access to Fresh Air
access to open, vegetated spaces

Human Needs to Thrive

Social Offerings
places for people to meet each other,
comm. nity support

Openness
how welcoming a community is to various
demographics

Aesthetics
physical beauty of a space, access to parks
and green spaces

Education
access to educational opportunities,
schools, training, etc.

Economic Opportunity
access to job opportunities

Restaurant +Market   Cooking Classes   Community Garden

Program + Site

The program will consist of three different elements, the marketplace/restaurant, educational classrooms, and community garden, covering three essential aspects of a strong community; aesthetics and social connectivity, education, and local economy. The site selected for this project is 75 Airline St NE, in Cabbagetown. The area is up and coming, in the process of being gentrified. A gentrifying area was chosen over a site in a struggling area as a means of working with the market and with gentrification rather than against it. By placing the central hub of activity in this area there won't be the potential of displacement in the struggling neighborhood. This is why the proximity of the site to public transit and the mobile component of the program will be essential. This site is located within an easy walk of the MARTA bus and the proposed BeltLine streetcar system, to be completed in 2030.
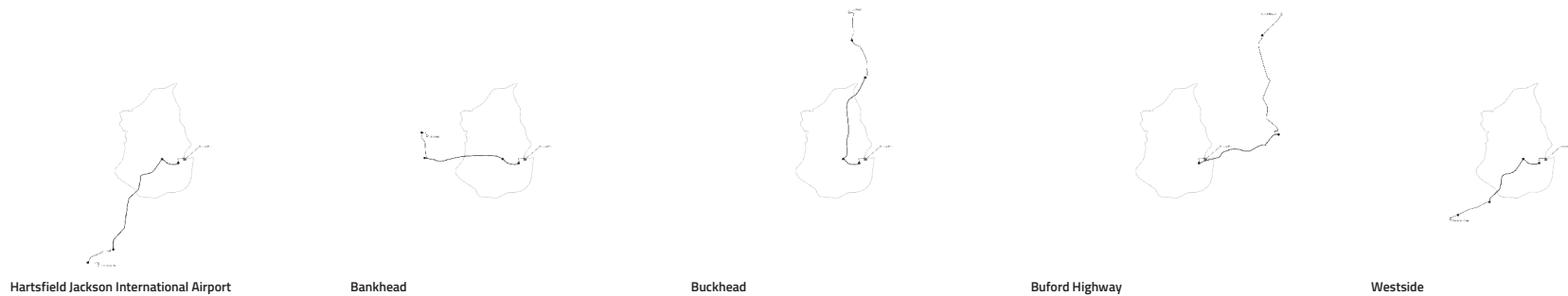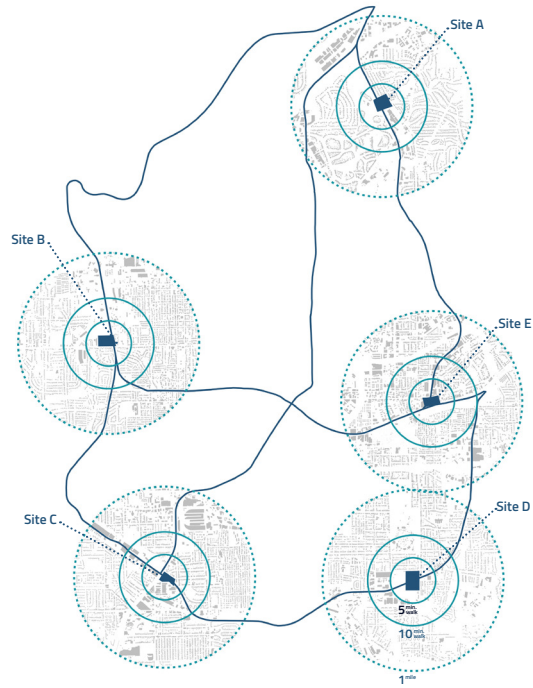

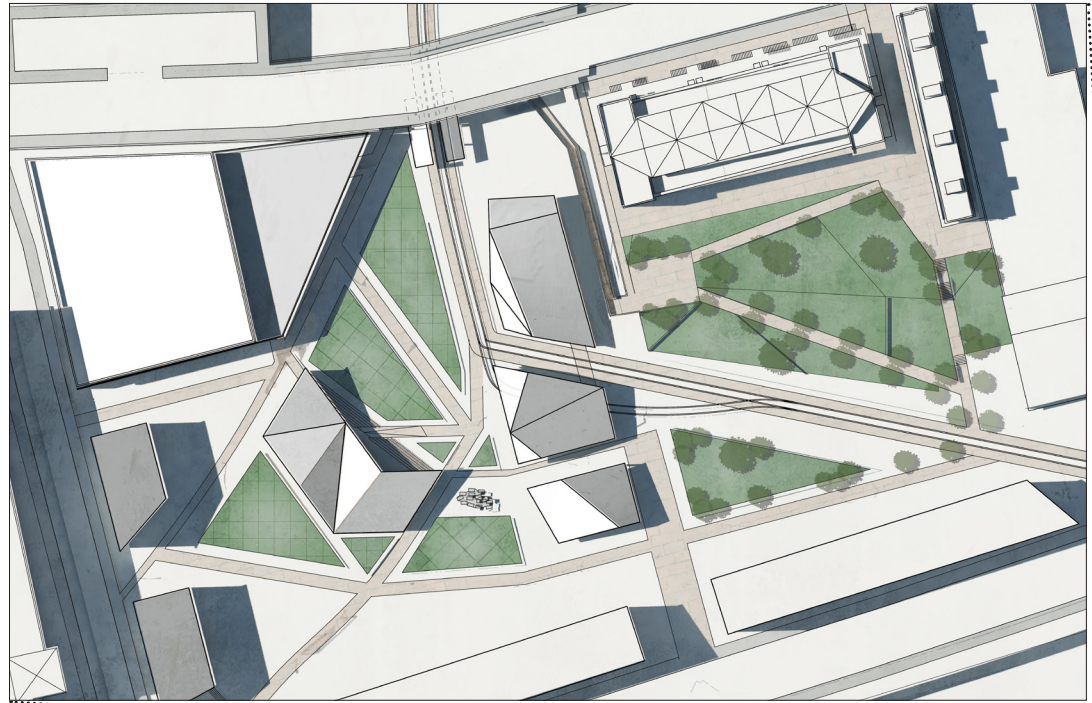Proposed BeltLine Routes

Current Transportation Routes

Suburban Connectivity | Typical Routes

Hartsfield Jackson International Airport

Bankhead

Buckhead

Buford Highway

Westside

Atlanta BeltLine | Transit Station Sites

Site A
Site B
Site E
Site C
Site D

5 min. walk
10 min. walk
1 mile

Cabbagetown Station | Proposed Masterplan

1"=32'-0"

Transit Station Sites | Proposed Masterplans

Site A | Ansley Park Station
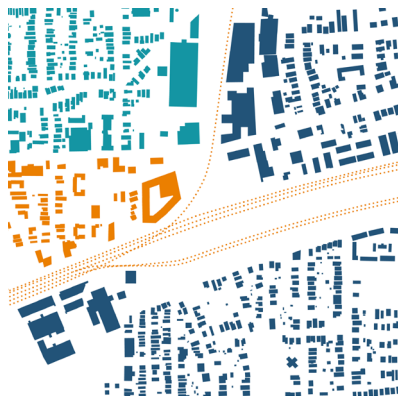
Site B | Bankhead Station

Site C | Adair Park Station
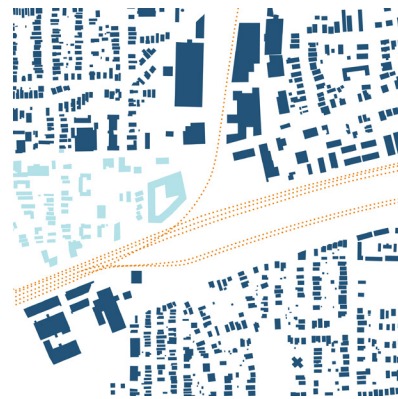
Site D | Chosewood Park Station

Site E | Cabbagetown Station
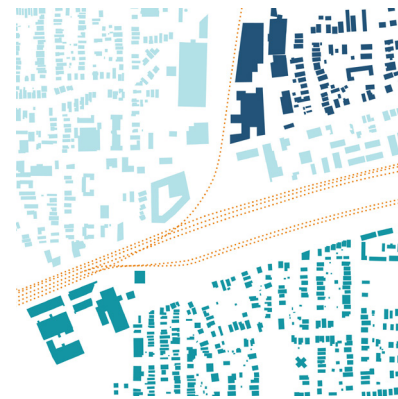
Socio-Economic Conditions | Surrounding Neighborhoods

Borders: Race

- Predominately Caucasian
- Evenly Dispersed
- Predominately African American

Borders: Unemployment Rate

- less than 4%
- 20% +

Borders: Education | % high school graduate

- 70+
- 60-70
- 50-60
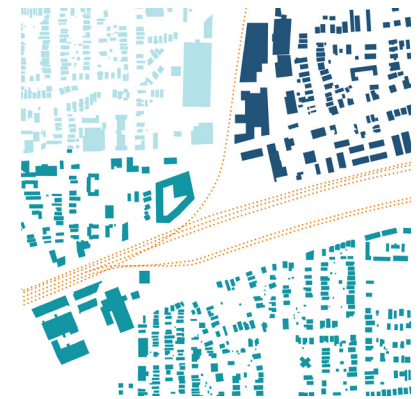
Borders: Population Below Poverty

- Less than 8%
- 20%
- 31%+

**DeIndustrializing Conditions** | Surrounding Neighborhoods

Borders: Age
- ■ under 30
- ■ 30-35
- ■ 35-40+

Borders: Median Income
- ■ $60,000+
- ■ $48,000
- ■ $33,000

Borders: Deindustrialization
- ■ Residential (multi-level)
- ■ Residential (single family)
- ■ Industrial Sites
- ■ Commercial Business
- ■ Commercial Food
- ■ Vacant Buildings

1911

Present

93

Physical Borders | Site

Borders: **Adjacent MARTA Stations** | 1/2mi radius

Borders: **Pedestrian Circulation**
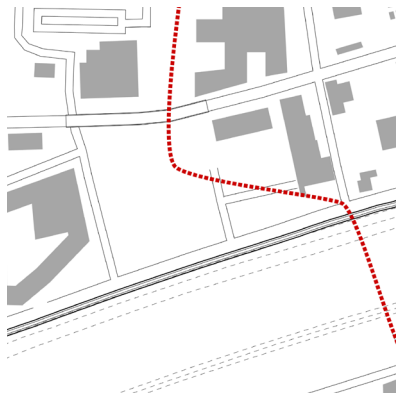
Borders: **Proposed BeltLine** | Route and Station
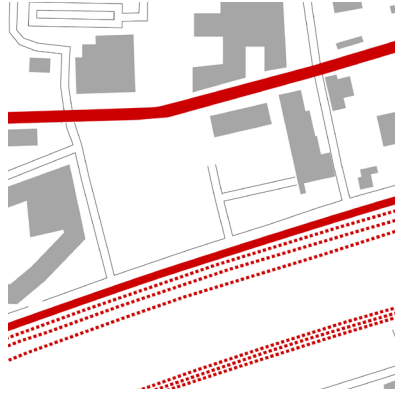
Borders: **Infrastructure** | Elevated MARTA Rail, Hulsey Railyard, Edgewood Ave Bridge

Existing Conditions | Site

02 | Southwest Approach | Existing Condition
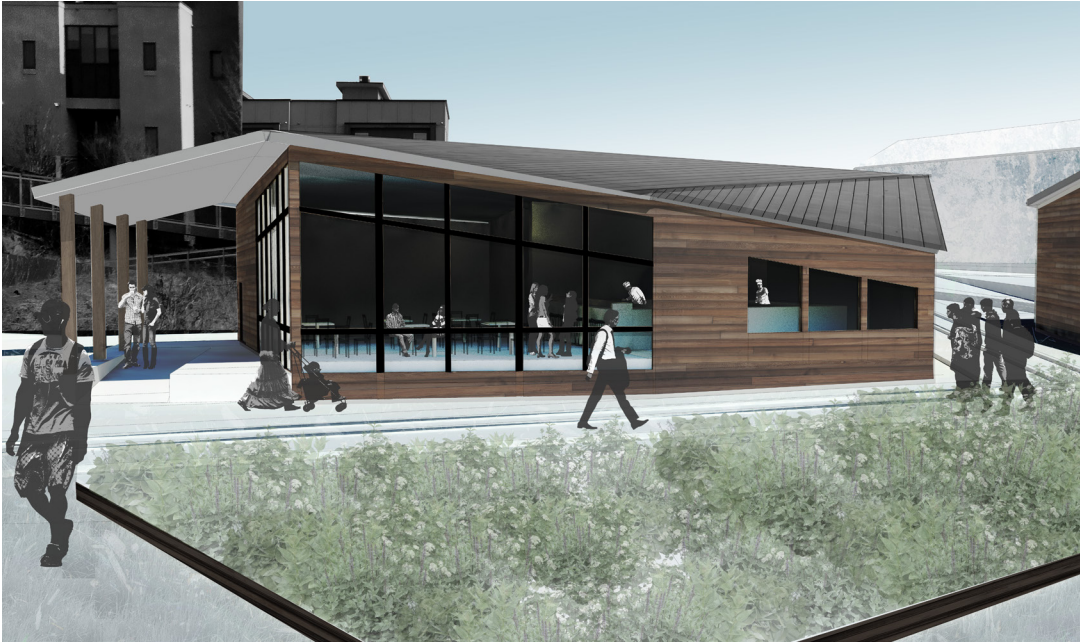

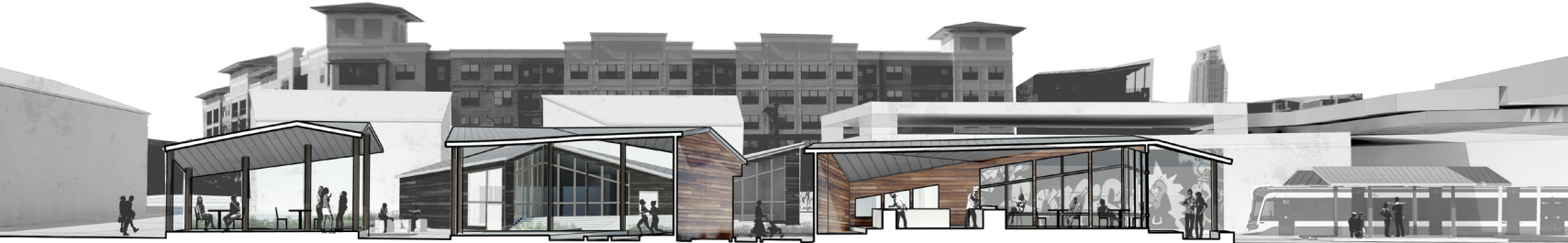**03** | Northeast Approach | Existing Condition

Design Development
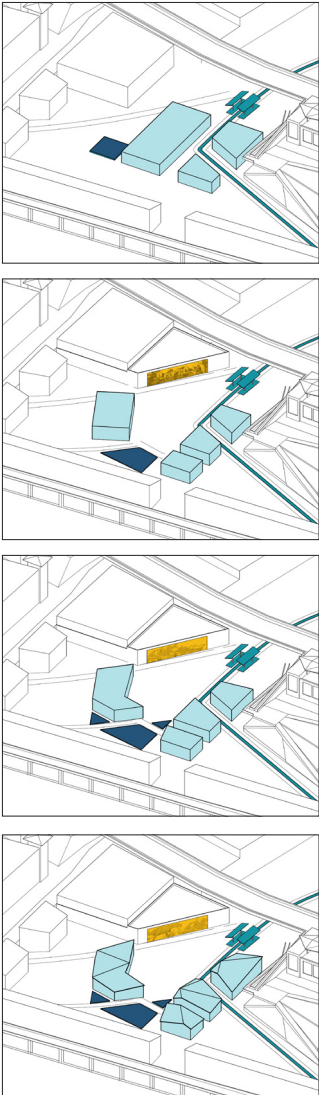
Ground Floor Axon | Cabbagetown Station
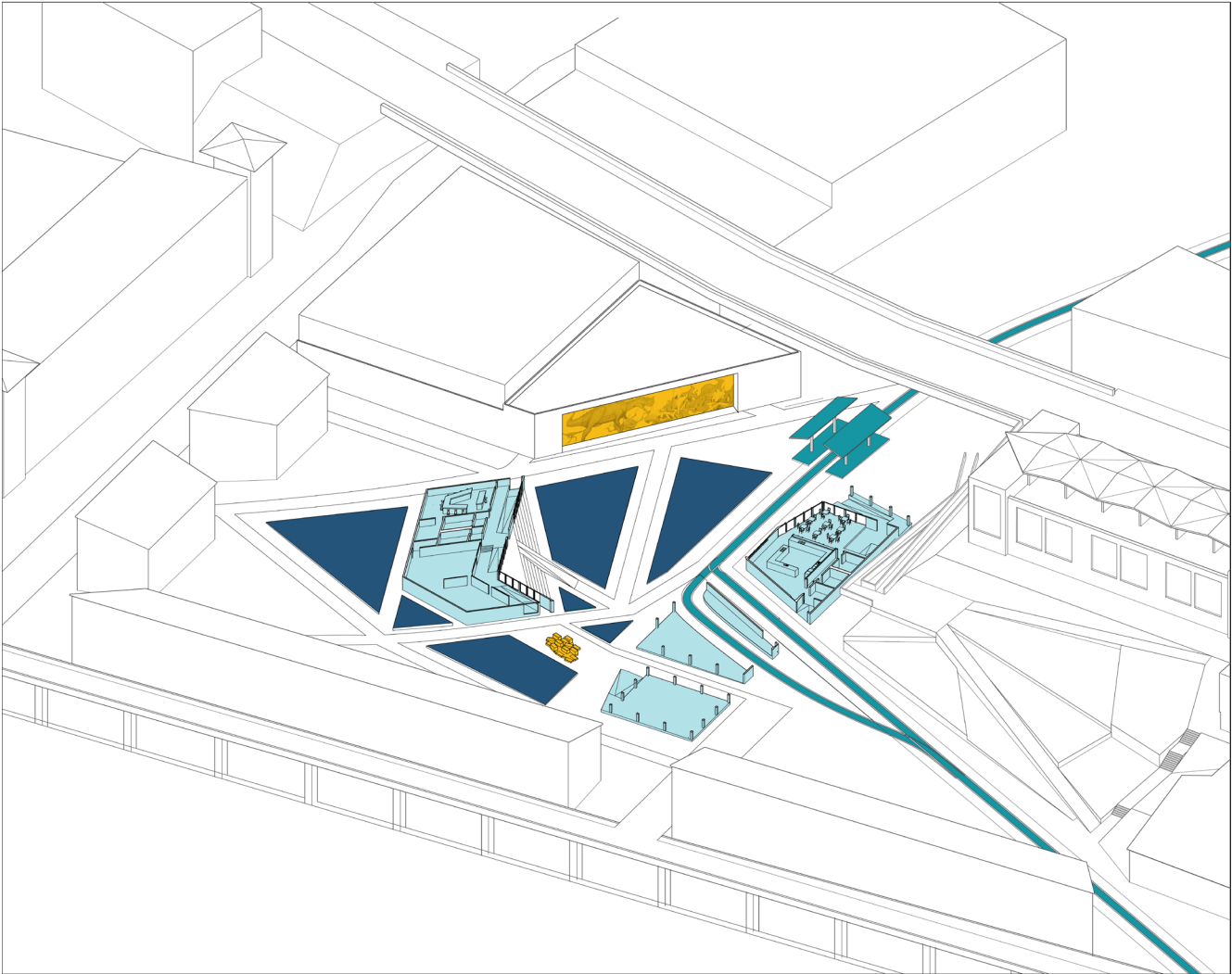
Site Parti | Cabbagetown Station
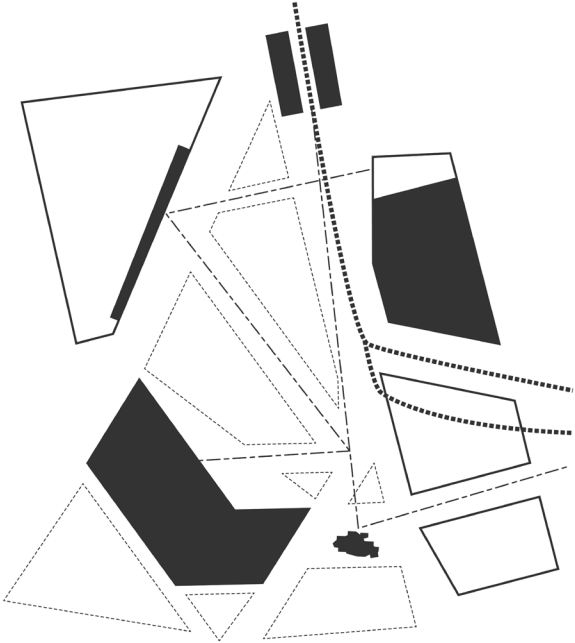
01 | Restaurant Perspective

Section | 1"=8'-0"

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Site Plan | Cabbagetown Station

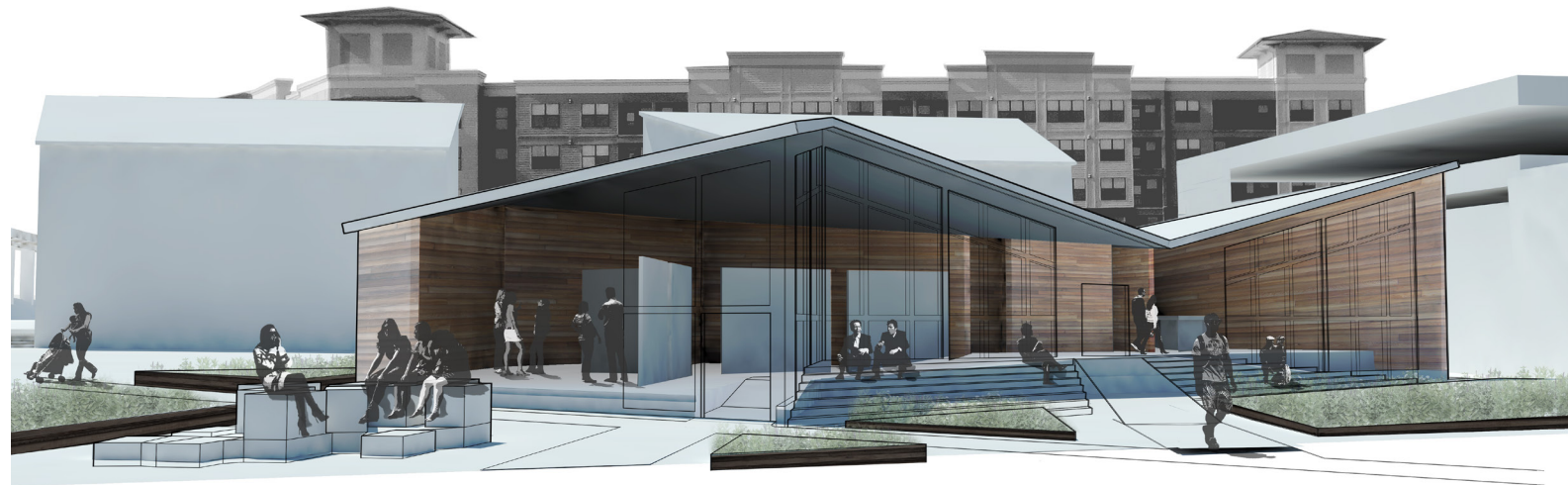[03]

[01]

[04]

[02]

1"=16'-0"
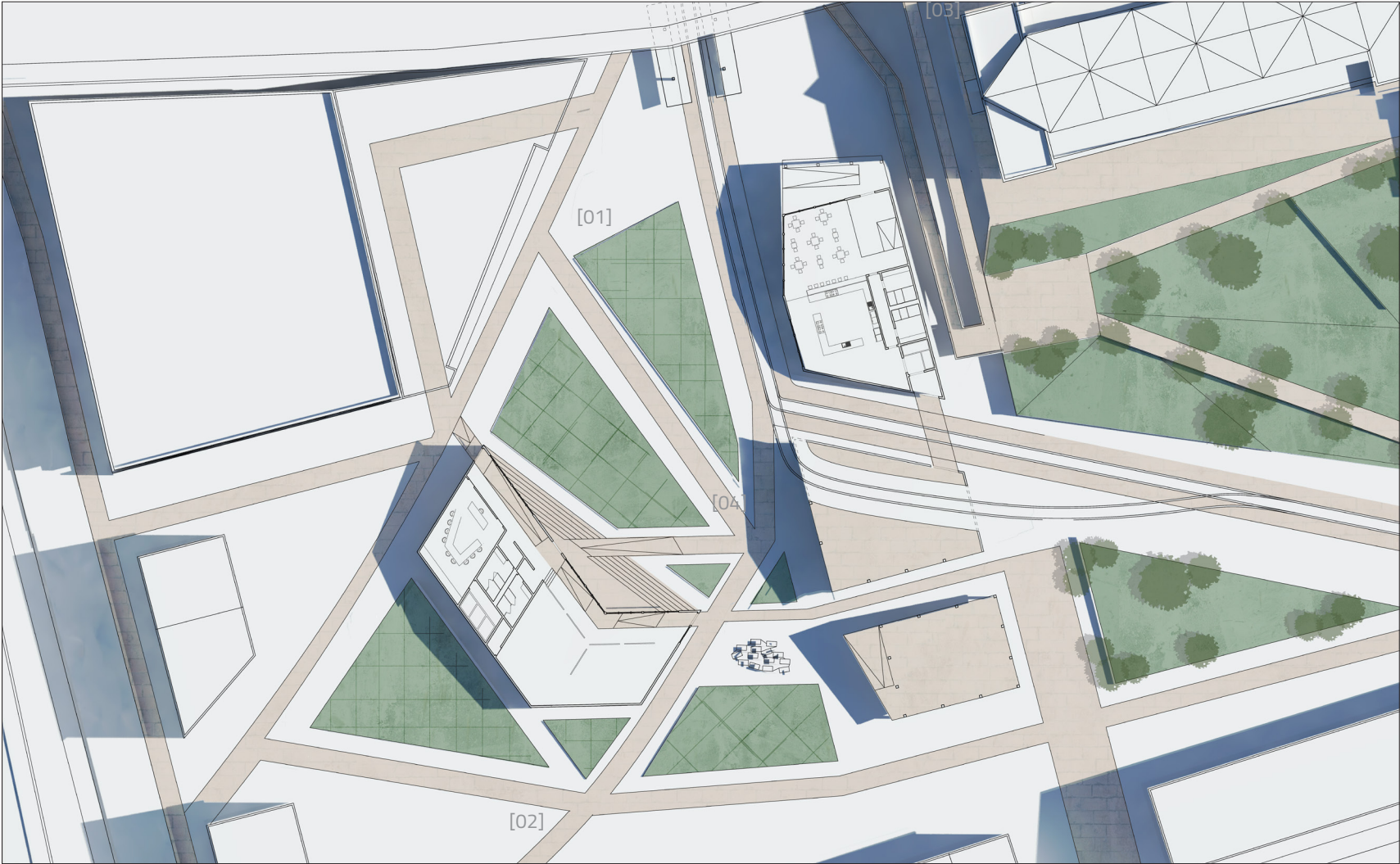
02 | Southwest Approach
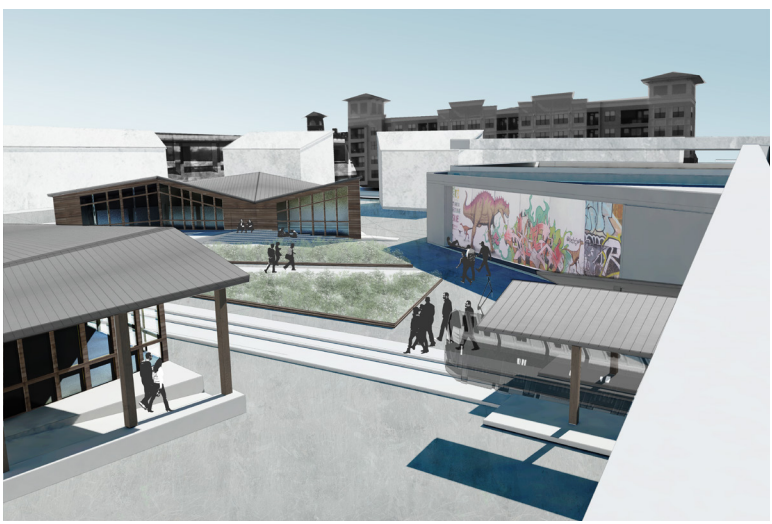
03 | Northeast Approach

03 | Interior Gathering Space | Section Perspective

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Vita

Allison Summers was born in Havre de Grace, Maryland. She went to the University of Maryland and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture degree. Allison went on to receive a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Tennessee.