



ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER

NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

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Studio Overview

The following report was produced as a part of Georgia Tech's *Red Line Corridor* planning studio. Initially, the goal of this studio was to explore the possibility of transit-oriented development (TOD) in underserved communities along the southern portion of MARTA's Red Line. However, the scope of the studio was expanded to include communities on Atlanta's Westside that have also been subject to severe disinvestment. At the end of a selection process, four areas were selected for in-depth study and planning:

- **English Avenue**
- **Atlanta University Center**
- **Fort McPherson / Lee Street**
- **East Point, GA**

While each of these areas has a unique history and set of needs, they also share common challenges. These challenges include a lack of connectivity, and low levels of both private and public investment. But these challenges are only a part of the story. The goal of this studio isn't to simply point out what's *wrong* with the studied communities -- it's to point out what's *right*, and to leverage these strengths to overcome any weaknesses that may exist.

Background

The Atlanta University Center (AUC) is a neighborhood on the Westside of Atlanta, anchored by six Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The first HBCUs in the area were Atlanta University, Clark University, and Morehouse College, which were all formed shortly after the end of the Civil War. Spelman College and Morris Brown College followed in 1881. The Interdenominational Theological Seminary (1958) and the Morehouse School of Medicine (1975) are the most recent additions to the AUC. And in 1988, Clark and Atlanta University merged to become Clark-Atlanta University. Morehouse, Spelman, Clark-Atlanta, and the Morehouse School of Medicine are active members of the AUC Consortium, an organization that facilitates cooperation and resource-sharing between schools.

AUC Institutions



Clark Atlanta University

Formerly Atlanta University (founded 1865) and Clark College (1869), Clark Atlanta University was formed in 1988 and is a historically black doctoral research institution.



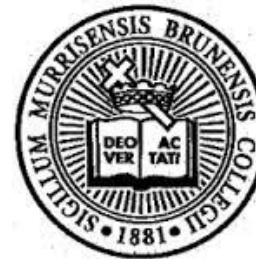
Morehouse School of Medicine

Founded in 1975, Morehouse School of Medicine is a private medical school that became independent from Morehouse College at its inception.



Interdenominational Theological Center

Founded in 1958, the ITC is a consortium of six historically black Christian denominational seminaries that collectively create this professional graduate school of theology. The ITC is currently not a member of the AUC, but is an important part of the community.



Morris Brown College

Founded in 1881, Morris Brown is a historically black coed liberal arts college associated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Currently not a member of the AUC.



Morehouse College

Founded in 1867 as the Augusta Institute, Morehouse College moved to Atlanta and changed its name to Atlanta Baptist College in 1879. By 1913, it was officially named Morehouse College and is today a private four-year liberal arts institution for men.



Spelman College

Founded in 1881 as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, Spelman College is a four-year historically black liberal arts college for women.

AUC Alumni

Historically black colleges and universities offer opportunity to African-American men and women who were not welcomed at other colleges in the past despite their intelligence, work ethic and passion. The AUC institutions have graduated countless students who have gone on to make a difference in the world. Prominent alumni include political leaders, authors, activists, and artists.



*James Weldon
Johnson, Atlanta
University 1894*



*Regina Benjamin,
Morehouse School of
Medicine 1980-1982*



*Martin Luther King, Jr.
Morehouse - 1948*



*Spike Lee, Morehouse
1979*



*Maynard Jackson,
Morehouse 1956*



*Marian Wright Edelman,
Spelman 1960*

Surrounding Neighborhood

The residential neighborhoods that surround the AUC campuses have been profoundly shaped by the history of public housing in Atlanta. Three large public housing projects were located in the immediate vicinity of the AUC: University Homes, John Hope Homes, and Harris Homes. All of these projects have since been demolished. Mixed-income housing projects have been built on the Harris and John Hope sites. A third mixed-income project is planned for the vacant University Homes sites. Outside of these redevelopment sites, many housing issues still exist. Vacant land is abundant, and many homes are in poor physical conditions.



Above: Plan for the University Homes Project; Left: John Hope Homes, built in 1938, now replaced by the Villages at Castleberry Hill

Recent challenges

Despite their historic importance, several schools in the AUC are currently experiencing financial difficulties due to declining enrollment. This seems to be related to national trends: HBCUs across the country are also suffering from low enrollment. However, Morris Brown College has had a particularly troubled history in recent years. In 2002, Morris Brown lost its accreditation, and left the AUC consortium. In early 2015, the college declared bankruptcy. Invest Atlanta, the City of Atlanta's economic development agency, has purchased most of the Morris Brown campus, and few students remain. Invest Atlanta has yet to announce any potential plans for the land.



Frederick D. Jordan Hall (top) and Gaines Hall (bottom) were two of the Morris Brown properties sold to investors to mend financial woes. GTAS Properties LLC and Invest Atlanta now own Jordan Hall and Gaines Hall respectively.



CURRENT CONDITIONS

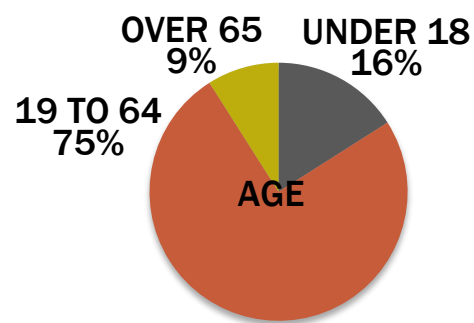
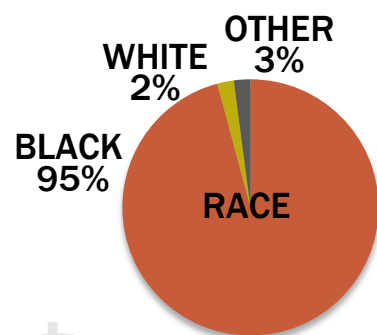
Current Conditions:

Demographics

Demographics

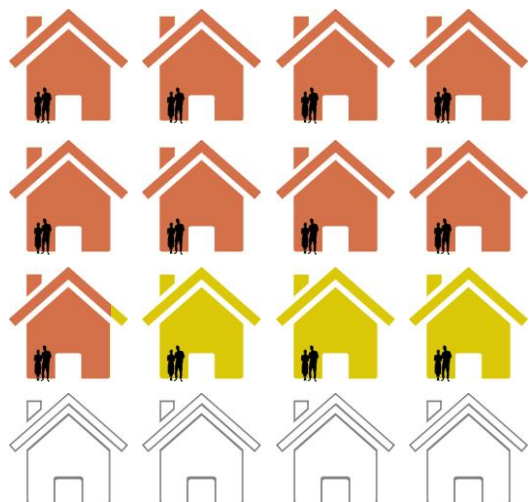


23,970
TOTAL RESIDENTS



\$20,848
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

13.49
PERSONS/ACRE



72%

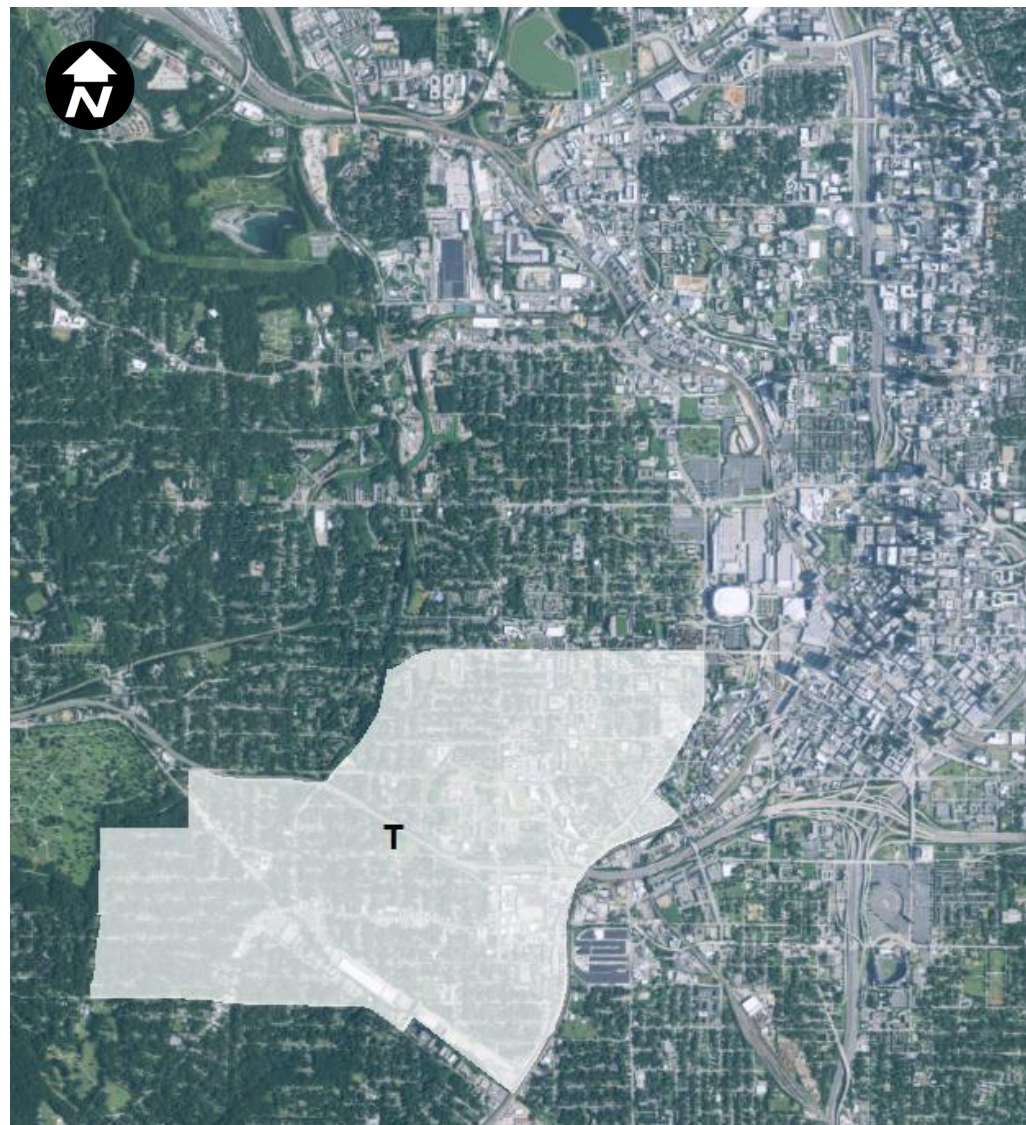
RENTER-
OCCUPIED

28%

OWNER-
OCCUPIED

26%

VACANCY RATE



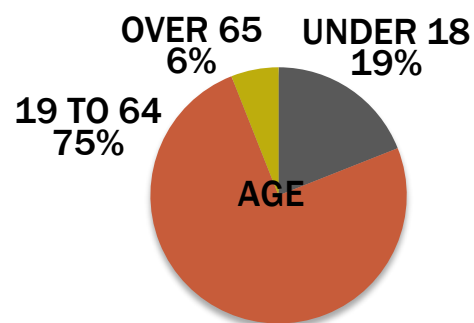
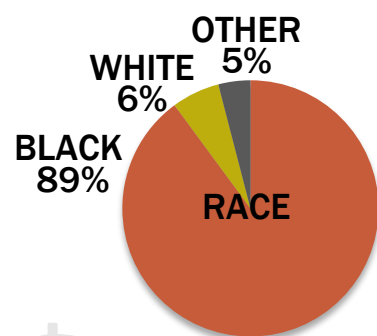
Source: US Census 2010

Demographics



6,148

TOTAL RESIDENTS



21,844

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

7.3

PERSONS/ACRE



85%

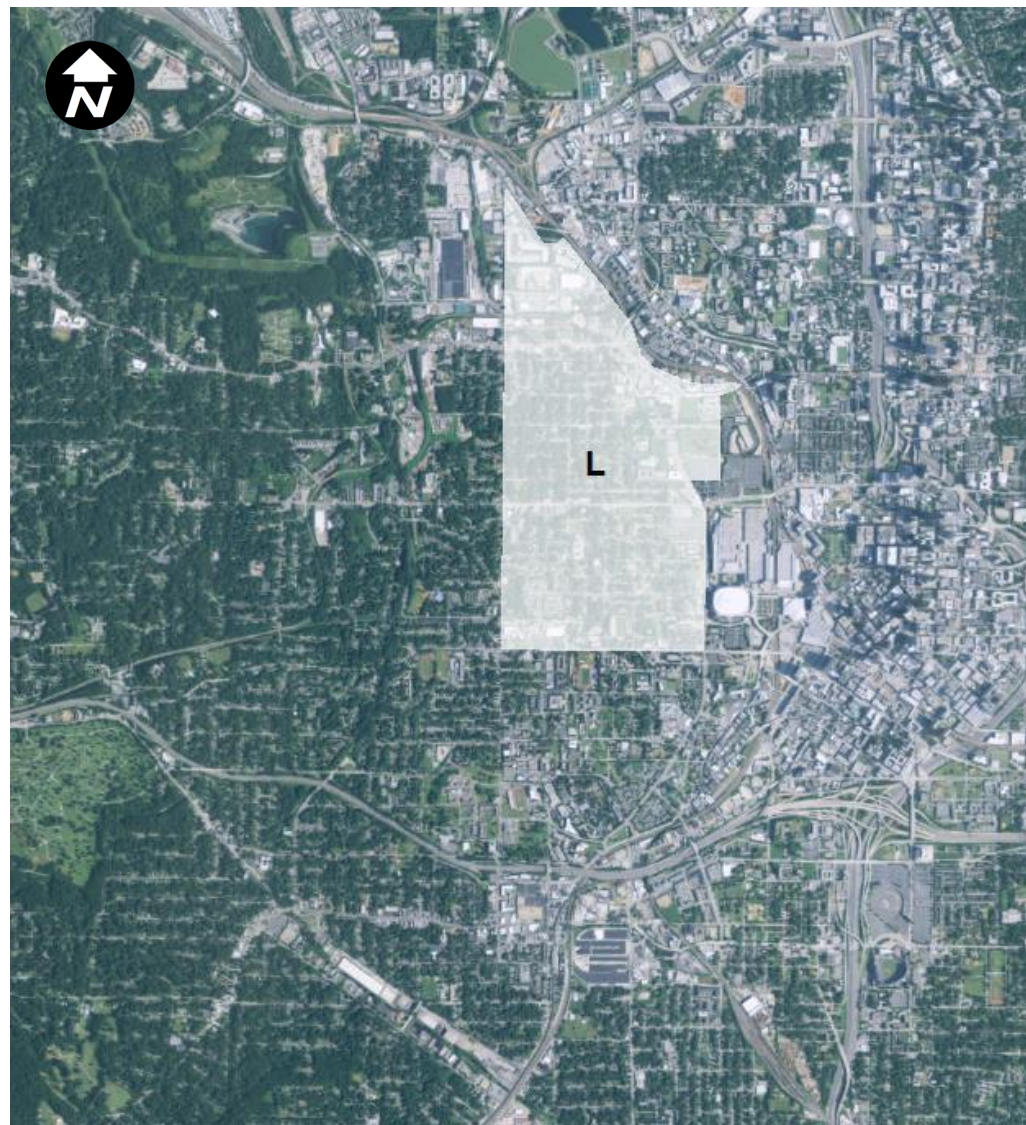
RENTER-
OCCUPIED

15%

RENTER-
OCCUPIED

43%

VACANCY RATE



Source: US Census 2010

College & University Enrollment



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
2,567



MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE
329



INTERDENOMINATIONAL
THEOLOGICAL CENTER
450



MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE
35



MOREHOUSE COLLEGE
2,200



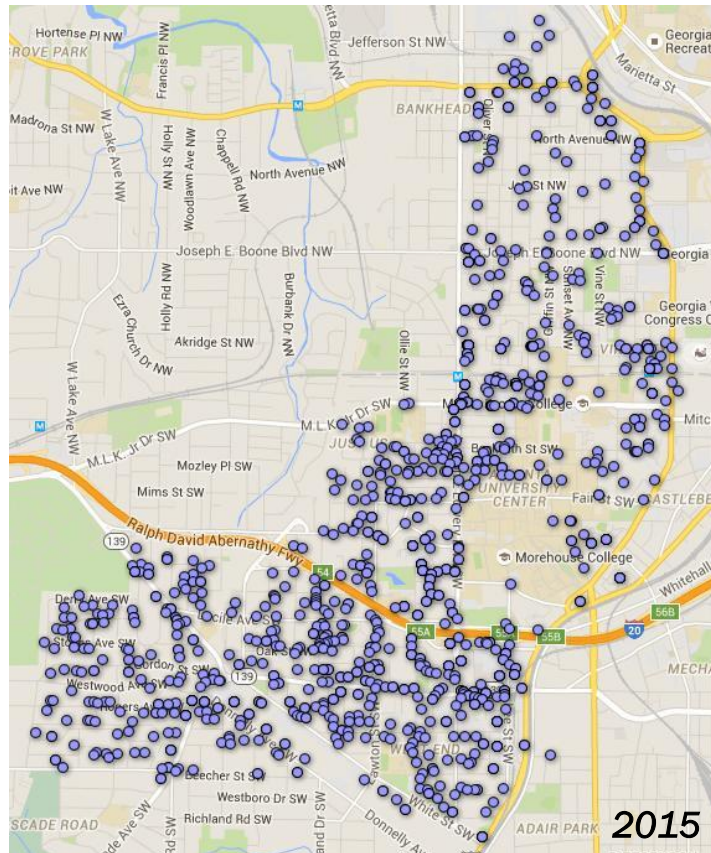
SPELMAN COLLEGE
2,135

Current Conditions:

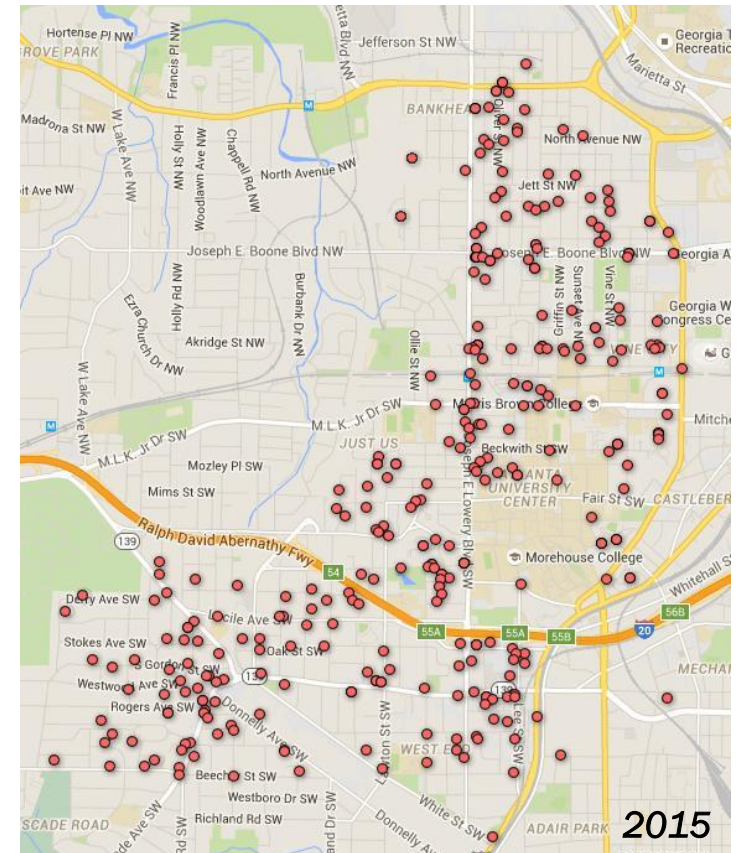
Public Safety

Violent Crime in NPUs T & L

Public safety is one of the biggest concerns for residents and stakeholders of the AUC area, which experiences a considerable amount of crime. High poverty rates, prevalence of vacant and underutilized housing, and lack of street lighting are contributors to this problem. Drugs and vandalism specifically are among the most common issues. The perception and reality of criminal activity affect the desirability for the neighborhood as a place to live, work and play.



523 VEHICLE LARCENIES
641 NON-VEHICLE LARCENIES
335 AUTO-THEFTS
53 NON-RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES
334 RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

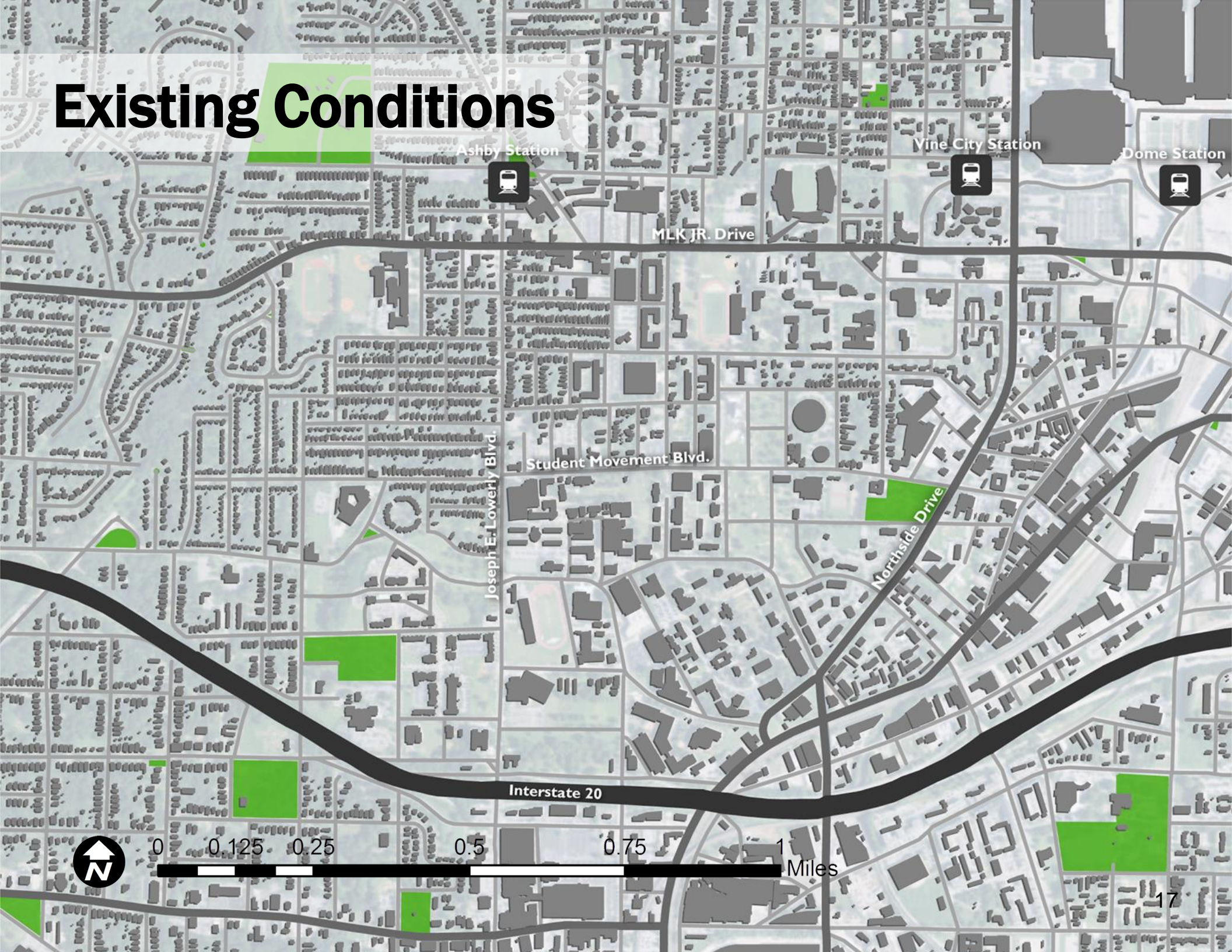


153 AGGRESSIVE ASSAULTS
8 HOMICIDES
6 RAPES
21 COMMERCIAL ROBBERIES
161 PEDESTRIAN ROBBERIES
19 RESIDENTIAL ROBBERIES

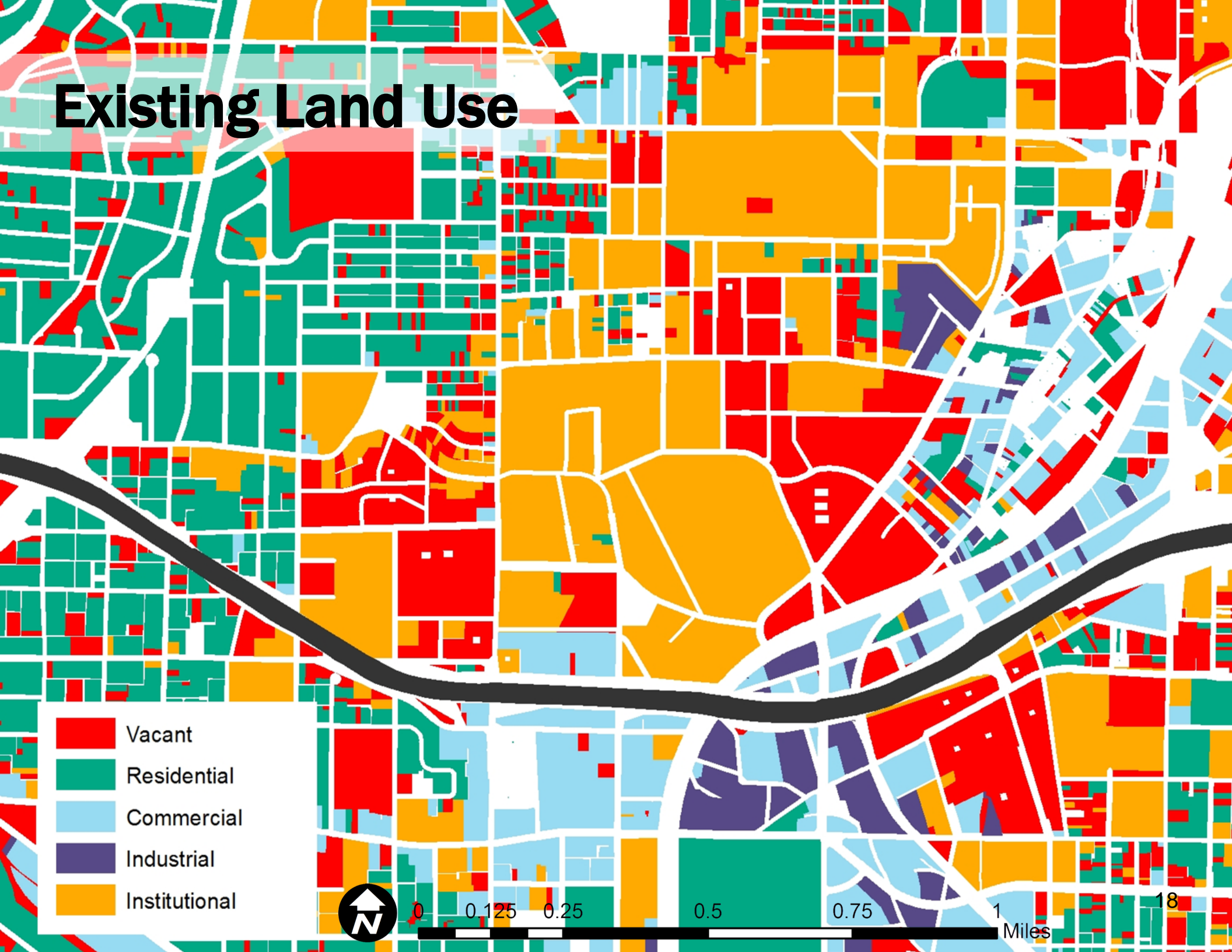
Current Conditions:

Land Use and Building Stock

Existing Conditions



Existing Land Use



- Vacant
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles



The University Center Development Corporation (UCDC) operates in a converted single-family home, helping the AUC blend into the residential setting.



The Westside Village is a recent development that brought quality housing and a Wal-Mart to the neighborhood.



The AUC has several vacant and underutilized buildings, presenting an opportunity for adaptive reuse where structural integrity allows.



The historic architecture on the AUC campuses is an asset to the community.



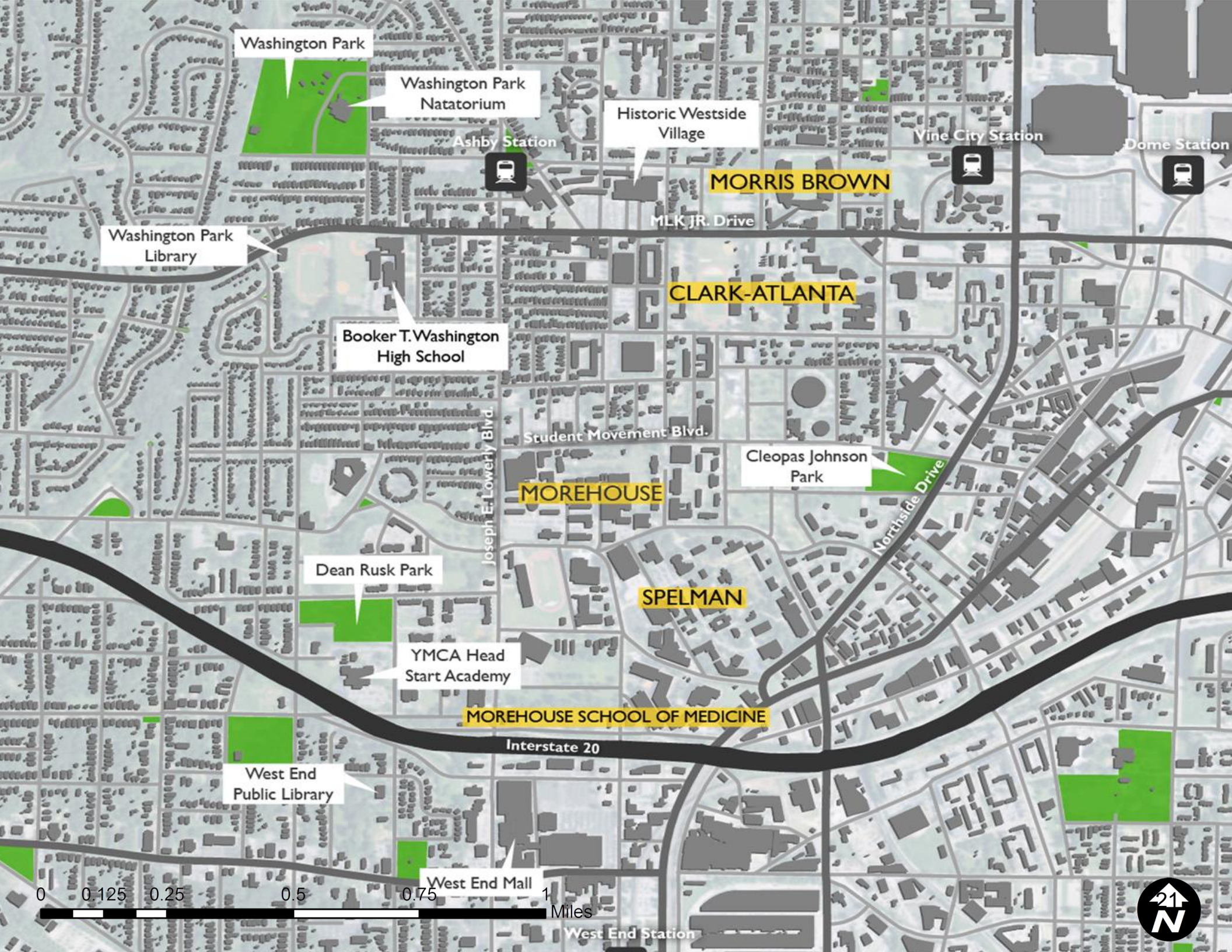
In addition to the universities, the area has two elementary schools and a high school, pictured here.



The neighborhood's main street, MLK Jr Drive, features narrow building facades, each with their own unique character.

Current Conditions:

Community Assets



Washington Park

Washington Park
Natatorium

Historic Westside
Village

Ashby Station

Vine City Station

Dome Station

MORRIS BROWN

MLK JR. Drive

Washington Park
Library

CLARK-ATLANTA

Booker T. Washington
High School

Student Movement Blvd.

MOREHOUSE

Cleopas Johnson
Park

Northside Drive

Dean Rusk Park

SPELMAN

YMCA Head
Start Academy

MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Interstate 20

West End
Public Library

West End Mall

1 Miles

West End Station

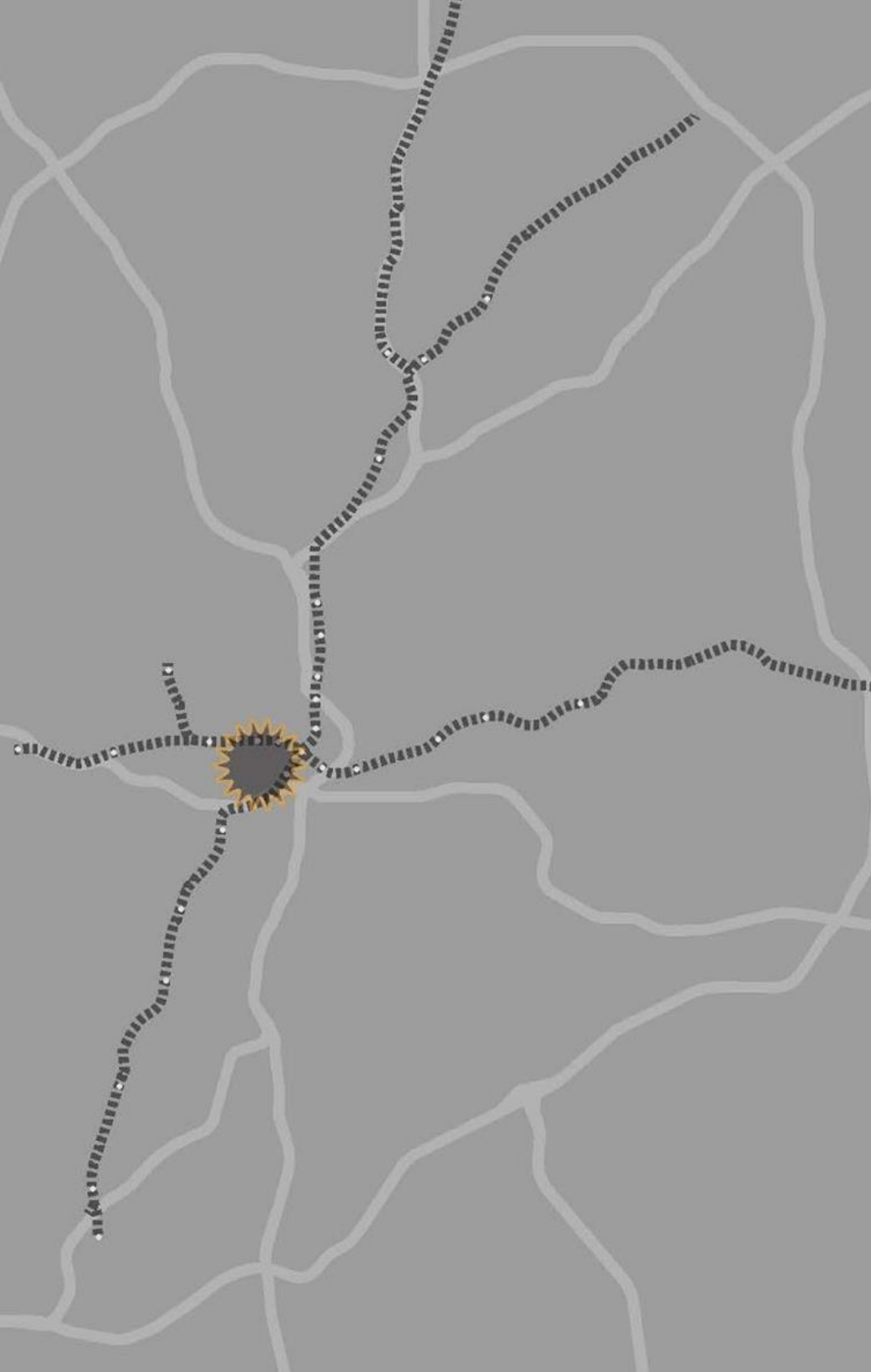


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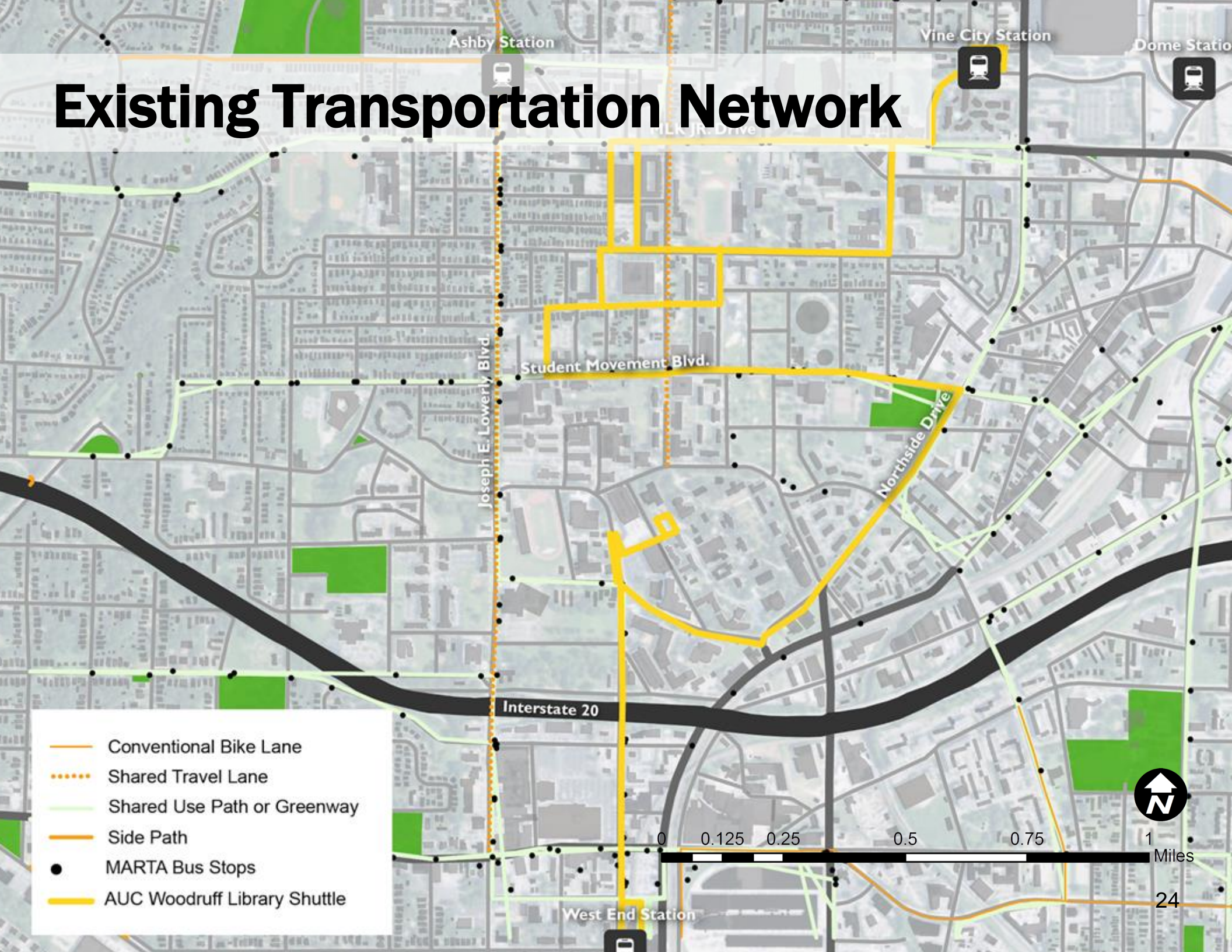
Transportation

Context

AUC is located in the heart of Atlanta, just west of the central business district. It is easily accessible via the blue, green, gold, and red transit lines or I-20 and I-75/I-85.



Existing Transportation Network



Key Characteristics of the transportation network

Walking

Sidewalks are available on major roads, and throughout campuses where there is no vehicle access. However, the quality of the sidewalks leaves much to be desired. Sidewalks on major roads are often narrow, with overgrown brush creeping into the sidewalk.

Biking

There are several quiet neighborhood streets that are comfortable for biking. Steep hills can pose a challenge in some locations. The major corridors do not have bike facilities, with the exception of sharrows on Lowery Blvd. Bike parking is scarce. Bike lanes are planned along MLK Jr Drive and a trail running east-west from the Westside BeltLine trail to downtown is planned and funded.

Driving

This neighborhood includes four heavily trafficked state roads: MLK Jr. Drive, Lowery Boulevard, Northside Drive, and I-20. These roads are arterials primarily design for through movement. Within these roads, the street grid is disjointed with many t-intersections and can be confusing.

Transit

The area is served by MARTA rail Blue and Green lines via Ashby and Vine City stations. In 2013, weekday average boardings for Ashby and Vine City stations were 1,791 and 821 respectively. Bus service is also available along Lowery Boulevard, MLK Jr. Drive, and Fair Street, which goes from Ashby Station to Boulevard Granada via Lee Street. The bus stations are marked with signs, but most do not have shelters or seating.



Several instances of pedestrian and/or bike connections that could be easily reopened to improve connectivity



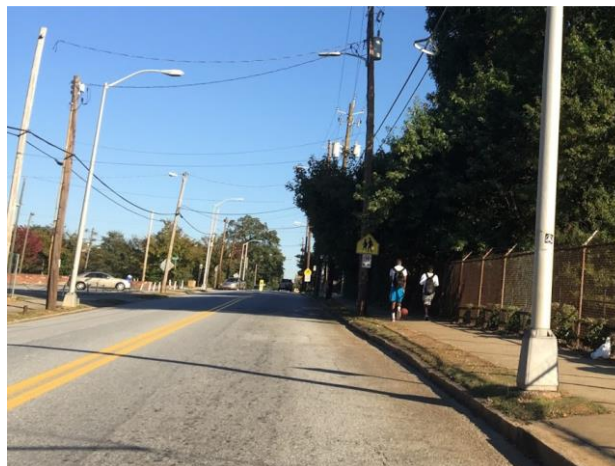
Many streets operating under capacity and could be retrofitted as bicycle boulevards or shared use plazas



With its extra capacity and robust structural design, the Lee Street bridge could be transformed into a gateway with space for walking and biking



Some bus stations at major intersections have shelter, seating, schedules and trash receptacles to make the wait more comfortable



Hills pose a challenge to biking



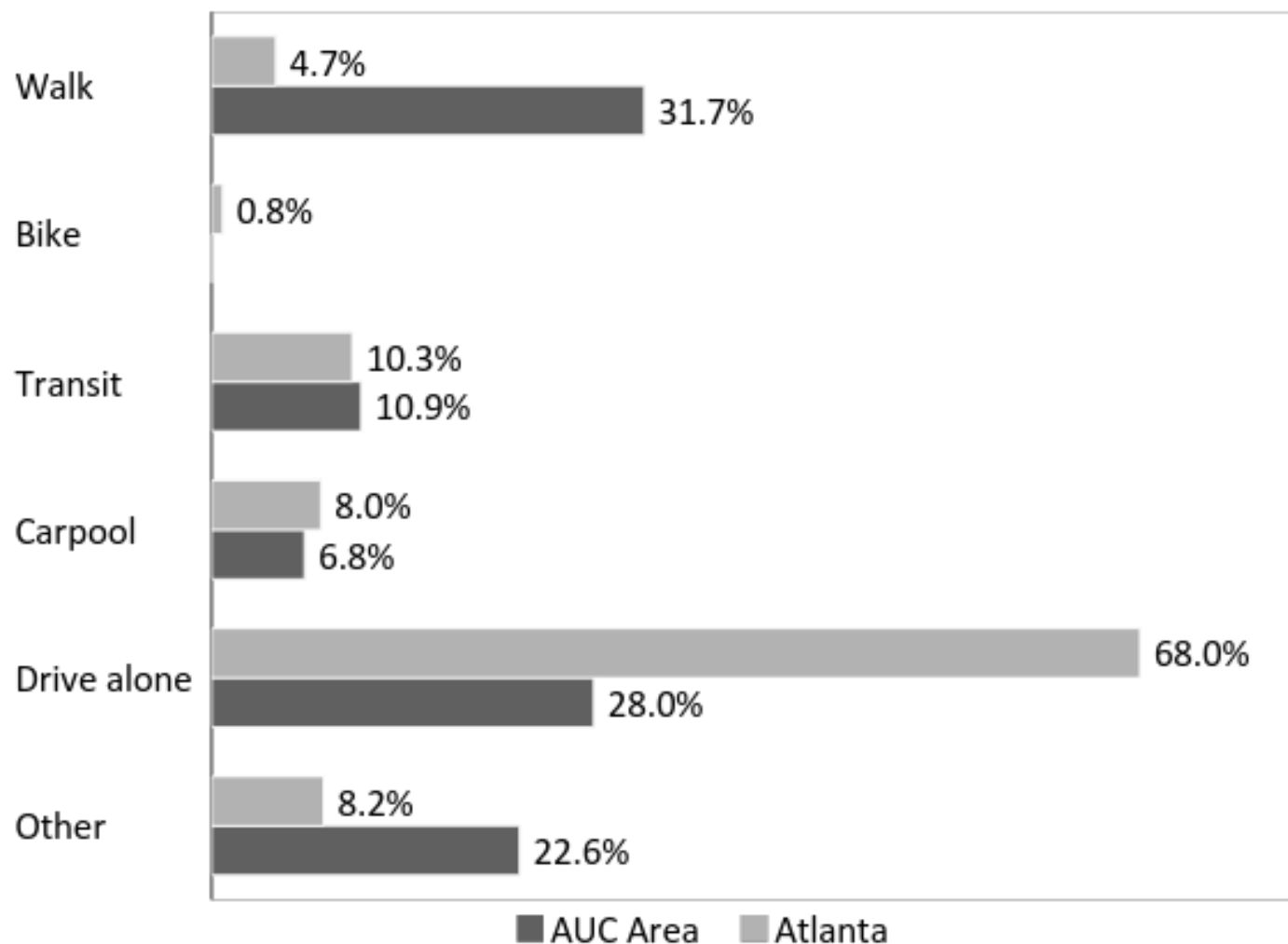
AUC runs a shuttle that circulates from Vine City MARA, through AUC, and to West End MARTA

Commute Mode Share

The area has a very high share of residents commuting on foot.

The area has a relatively low share of single-occupancy vehicle commuters.

The census data reports no bike commuting, which is a missed opportunity given the mix of land uses and proximity to the central business district.



Source: US Census Bureau ACS,
2013 5-year estimates

Traffic volumes (AADTs)

Low AADTs on MLK Jr Drive and Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard represent opportunities for more complete street design.

Northside Drive has more traffic than other roads in the area. To the south, traffic dissipates onto other roads.

Lowery Boulevard carries high vehicle traffic relative to its three-lane design. It experiences a relatively high amount of congestion around rush hour.



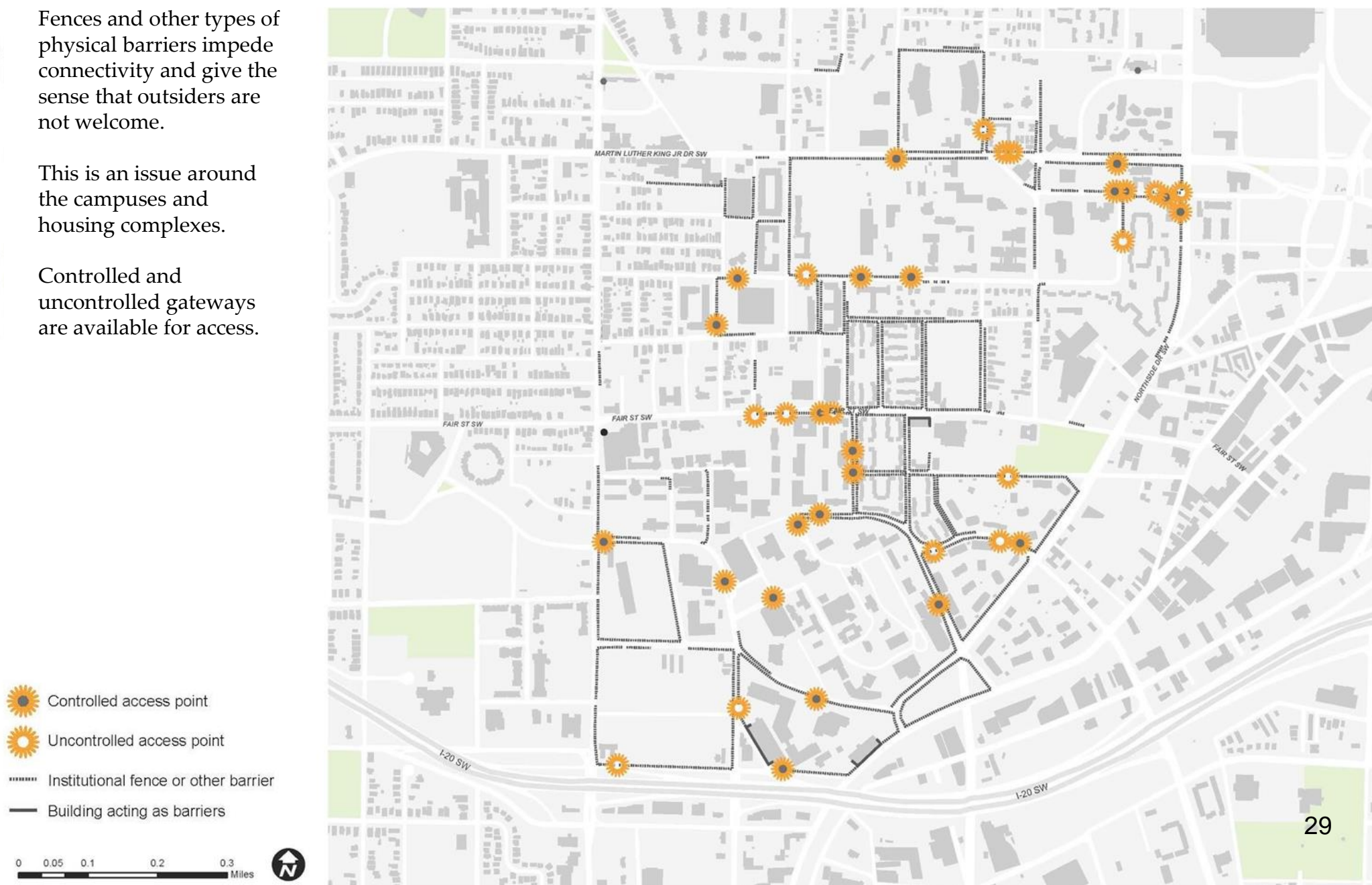
Source: GDOT 2014

Barriers and Gateways

Fences and other types of physical barriers impede connectivity and give the sense that outsiders are not welcome.

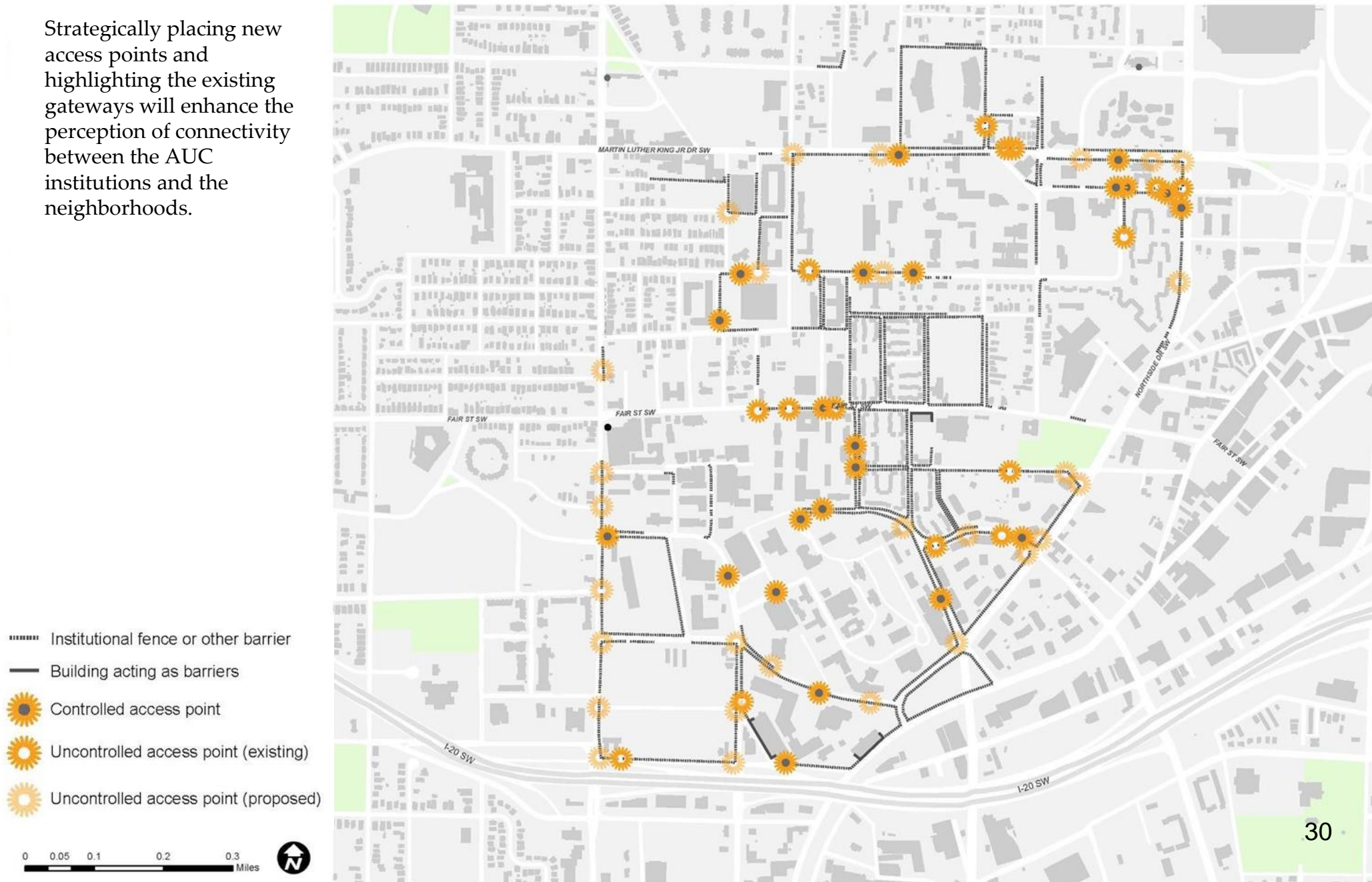
This is an issue around the campuses and housing complexes.


Controlled and uncontrolled gateways are available for access.



Barriers and Gateways... what could be

Strategically placing new access points and highlighting the existing gateways will enhance the perception of connectivity between the AUC institutions and the neighborhoods.



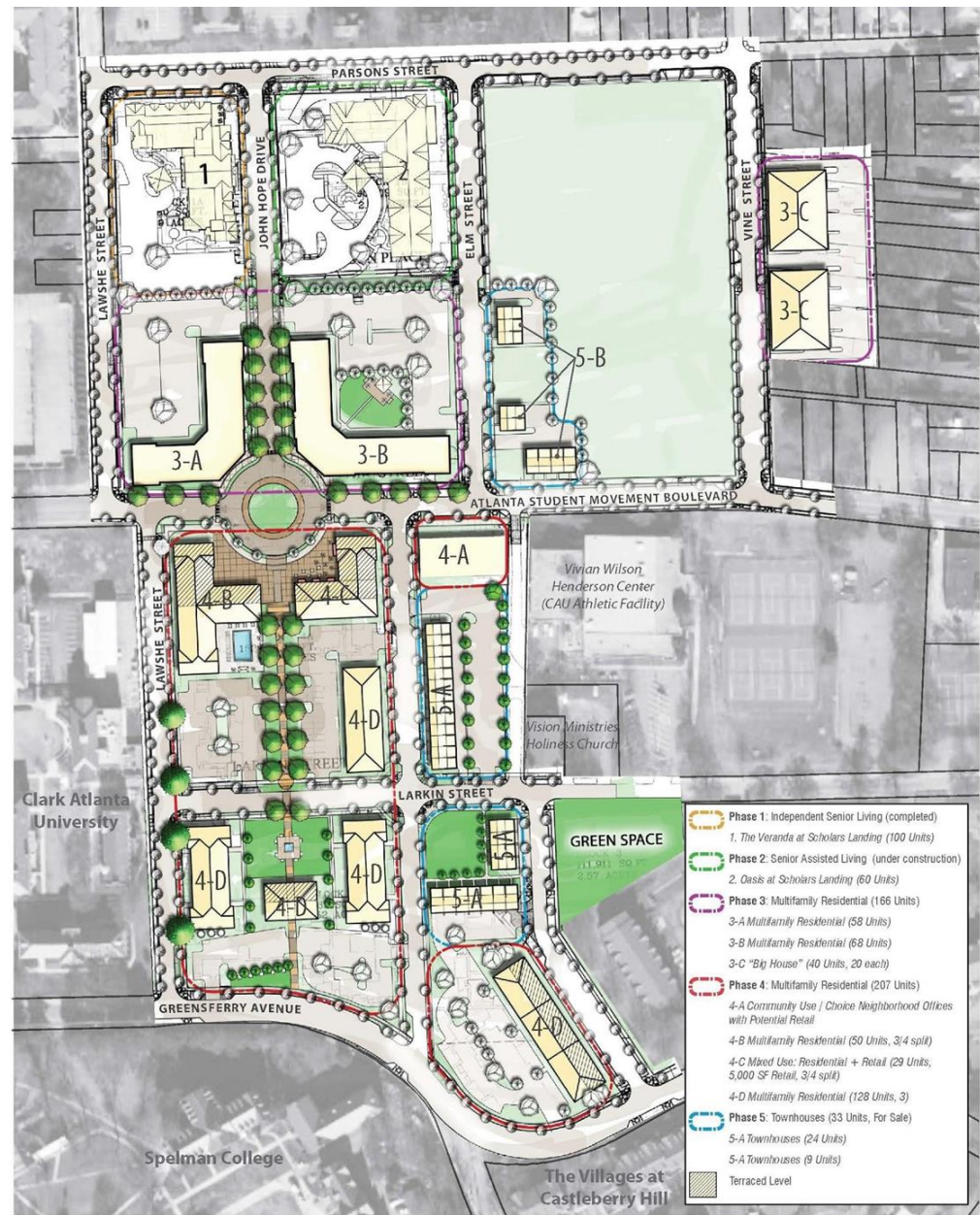


A detailed map of the Atlanta University Center area. The map shows various streets, including Washington Blvd, Ashby, and Martin Luther King Jr Dr SW. Key landmarks include Washington HS, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta University Center, M.A. Jones, Cleopas R. Johnson Park, CollegeTown, Dean Rusk Headstart Academy, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Villages at Castleberry Hill. Numbered locations 1 through 13 are marked on the map. A large, bold text overlay reads "PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES".

PREVIOUS PLANS AND STUDIES

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

The Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan was funded by a 2010 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant (CNPG). It's focus is twofold: a neighborhood plan for AUC, Vine City and Ashview Heights, and a concept plan to redevelop the former University Homes site into "Scholar's Landing." Development partners are The Integral Group and McCormack Baron Salazar. The first two phases were completed in 2013 and 2015, including two housing facilities for seniors. In 2015, the City of Atlanta was awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant for Scholar's Landing and neighborhood improvements. Implementation includes "cop on the block" program, which will bring a handful of Atlanta police officers into the neighborhood as homeowners, with responsibilities to be an active member of the community. As implementation continues, the development team should coordinate closely with AUCC and the AUC schools to maximize community benefit.



ECODISTRICTS INITIATIVE

Atlanta University Center and Vine City are currently in the midst of the EcoDistricts Target Cities program, a two-year initiative that aims to strengthen community ties while reducing the site's impact to the environment. The initiative involves the five college of the AUC Consortium, EcoDistricts representatives, neighborhood organizations, and the City of Atlanta. This group represents the major leaders in the district, and hopefully will continue to convene following completion of the project. The following list highlights potential outcomes of the initiative:

- **Recycling.** A streamlined recycling program would reduce the amount of waste produced by the residents and businesses of this area. In addition, this area has a lot of blighted homes and vacant lots that have accumulated waste and debris. A recycling program could help clear some of that material.
- **Stormwater management.** The study area is in the Proctor Creek Catchment and is highly urbanized, so there is a high proportion of impervious surface. The community would like to see the universities educating residents about water issues, a transformative park/stormwater management solution like Old Fourth Ward Park, and development of a green infrastructure network.
- **Solar panels.** Solar energy could be one solution to reducing dependence on the grid. Underutilized parking structures or undeveloped parcels could be good candidates for a solar farm in the area.

ATLANTA BELTLINE / ATLANTA STREETCAR PLAN

Phase 2 of the Atlanta Streetcar Plan includes a route along Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard from Northside Drive to Lowery Boulevard. Phase 3 includes an extension of that line from Lowery Boulevard to the Westside BeltLine trail.

ATLANTA BELTLINE MASTER PLAN FOR SUBAREA 10

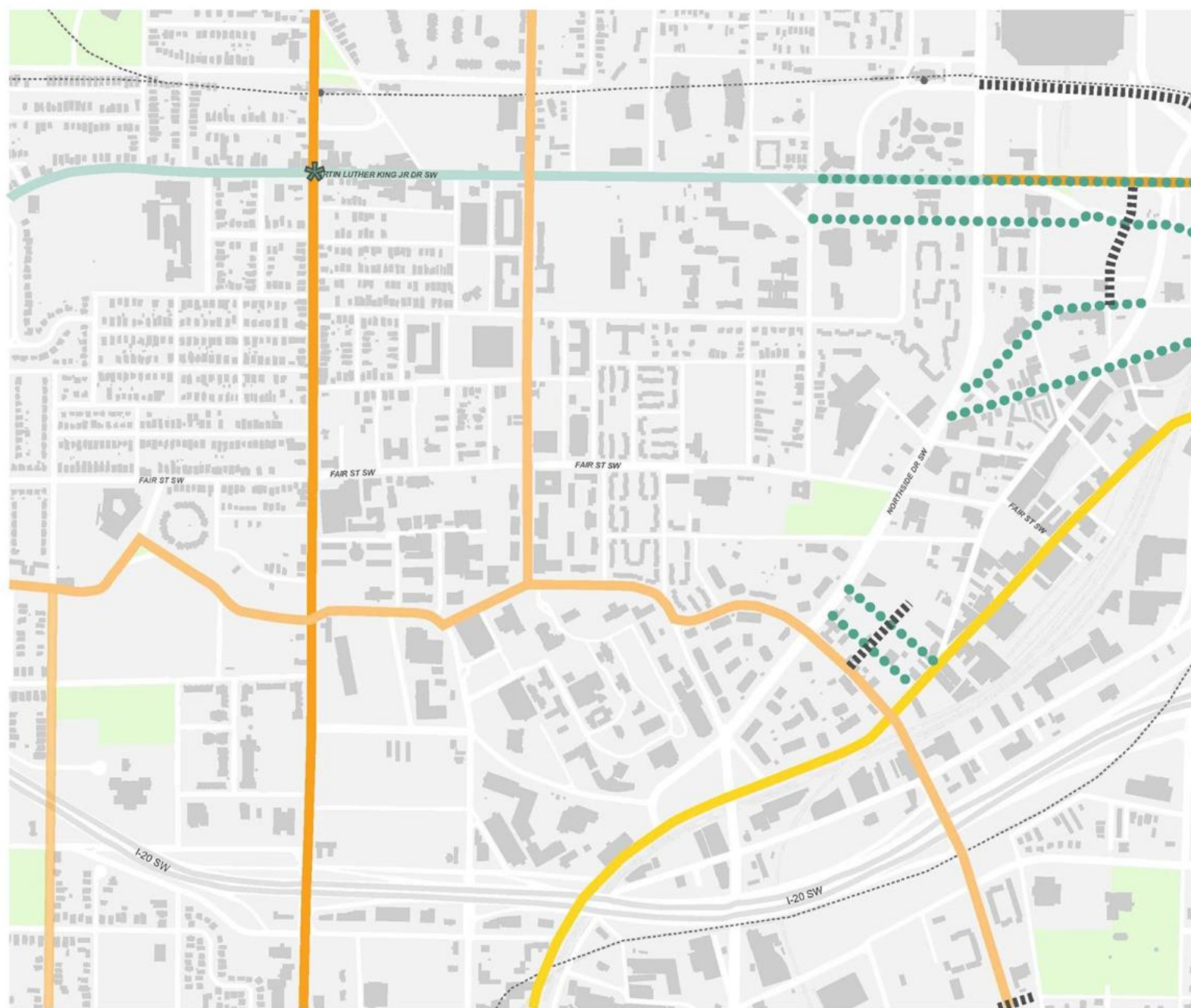
Atlanta BeltLine Inc. published master plans for the “subareas” around each of the trail segments. Subarea 10 reaches from the BeltLine to just east of the intersection of MLK Jr Drive and Lowery Boulevard. The plan emphasizes access to parks and open space, and identifies nodes for dense, mixed-use development.

NORTHSIDE DRIVE STUDY

GDOT is currently working on a study of Northside Drive to determine what the community would like to see on the corridor. Through the creation and convening of Citizen Advisory Committees, they hope to identify a vision and goals to inform future improvements along the corridor. GDOT is doing this to try and focus on the communities than has been done in the past.

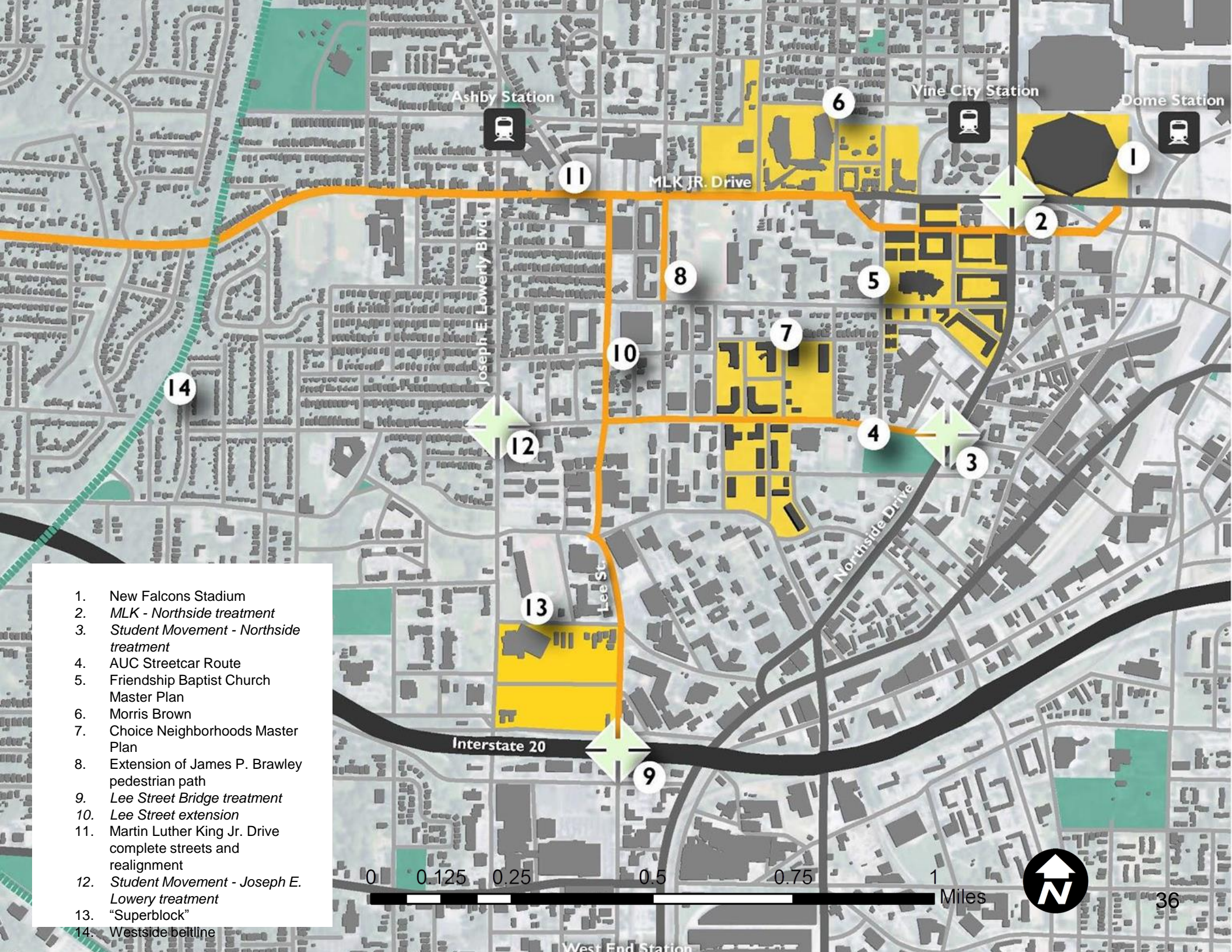
CONNECT ATLANTA PLAN AND CYCLE ATLANTA 1.0

Connect Atlanta Plan is the city's comprehensive transportation plan, adopted in 2009. In 2013, the city adopted Cycle Atlanta 1.0, a bicycle plan supplement to the Connect Atlanta Plan. The Connect Atlanta Plan had several recommendations for the area, shown in the map to the right. Cycle Atlanta recommends bike lanes on MLK Jr Drive.



An architectural rendering of a city street scene at dusk. On the left is a modern brick building with large arched windows and a vertical sign that reads 'AUN'. In the background on the right is a historic brick church with Gothic-style architecture. The street features a crosswalk with white stripes, a green-painted bike lane, and a car with its headlights on. Pedestrians, including a person with a bicycle, are shown in silhouette. A street sign for 'Park St' with a left arrow is visible. The word 'FUTURE?' is overlaid in large, bold, black letters in the center of the image.

FUTURE?



1. New Falcons Stadium
2. *MLK - Northside treatment*
3. *Student Movement - Northside treatment*
4. AUC Streetcar Route
5. Friendship Baptist Church Master Plan
6. Morris Brown
7. Choice Neighborhoods Master Plan
8. Extension of James P. Brawley pedestrian path
9. *Lee Street Bridge treatment*
10. *Lee Street extension*
11. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive complete streets and realignment
12. *Student Movement - Joseph E. Lowery treatment*
13. "Superblock"
14. Westside beltline

Future development & recommendations

1. NEW FALCONS STADIUM

A new football stadium is under construction. The stadium has focused a lot of city attention on the westside, and resulted in the Westside Future Fund. The new stadium resulted in disconnecting MLK Jr Drive from downtown Atlanta.

2. MLK - NORTHSIDE TREATMENT

MLK Jr Drive is going to receive a complete streets redesign in the coming years. With the rerouting of MLK Jr Drive to Mitchell Street, the existing intersection of MLK Jr Drive and Northside Drive should become a major gateway into AUC.

3. STUDENT MOVEMENT - NORTHSIDE TREATMENT

Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard is the heart of the AUC campuses, and the entrance into the street from Northside Drive should be a major gateway, with accommodations for transit, walking, and biking. With Cleopas Johnson Park directly to the southwest, this can also be a space for recreation.

4. AUC STREETCAR ROUTE

Phases 2 and 3 have sections of streetcar going through Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard from Northside Drive to the Westside BeltLine Trail.

5. FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH MASTER PLAN

Friendship Baptist Church, displaced by the new Falcons stadium, is constructing a new church and several housing facilities in the near the southwest corner of the Mitchell Street/Northside Drive intersection. The plan includes construction of several new streets to reinforce a logical street grid.

6. MORRIS BROWN LAND

Morris Brown recently sold most of its land to Invest Atlanta and Friendship Baptist Church for \$10.8 million to settle its bankruptcy issues. There are currently disputes between the new owners and Clark Atlanta University, who originally gave the land to Morris Brown for educational use only. This land presents an opportunity for community-serving development.

7. CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN

Two senior living facilities have been recently constructed, and a \$30 million dollar choice neighborhoods grant from HUD will catalyze further mixed-use, mixed-income development, with townhouses, apartments, single family homes, offices for choice neighborhoods housing and AUCC, and community-serving retail.

Future development & recommendations

8. EXTENSION OF JAMES P. BRAWLEY PEDESTRIAN PATH

There is currently a very vibrant plaza/walkway running north-south from Spelman college up through the Morehouse and Clark Atlanta campuses. We proposed extending this activity with enhanced space for walking and biking north toward MLK Jr Drive and into Vine City.

9. LEE STREET BRIDGE TREATMENT

With extra capacity and a robust structure, there is opportunity to transform the Lee Street bridge, making into a gateway similar to the 5th Street bridge at Georgia Tech.

10. LEE STREET EXTENSION

To reestablish connectivity through AUC, we recommend extending Lee Street north through the campuses to MLK Jr Drive. This will relieve some pressure from Lowery Boulevard and make it easier to navigate for all users.

11. MLK JR DRIVE COMPLETE STREETS REDESIGN AND REALIGNMENT

The City of Atlanta is currently planning a complete streets redesign of MLK Jr Drive, with street beautification and space for walking and biking. Because the street is being rerouted along the current Mitchell Street alignment due to the Falcons stadium, there is an opportunity to reimagine the stretch of MLK Jr Drive from Mitchell Street to Northside Drive as a linear park, with ample space for walking and biking while still accommodating vehicle access and parking.

12. STUDENT MOVEMENT - JOSEPH E. LOWERY TREATMENT

The City of Atlanta is currently planning a complete streets redesign of MLK Jr Drive, with street beautification and space for walking and biking. Because the street is being rerouted along the current Mitchell Street alignment due to the Falcons stadium, there is an opportunity to reimagine the stretch of MLK Jr Drive from Mitchell Street to Northside Drive as a linear park, with ample space for walking and biking while still accommodating vehicle access and parking.

13. “SUPERBLOCK”

Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Morehouse School of Medicine each own a portion of the largely vacant block to the southwest corner of the AUC area. They are interested in developing the block as a tech hub, with restaurants, housing, offices, research space, maker spaces, and business incubators.

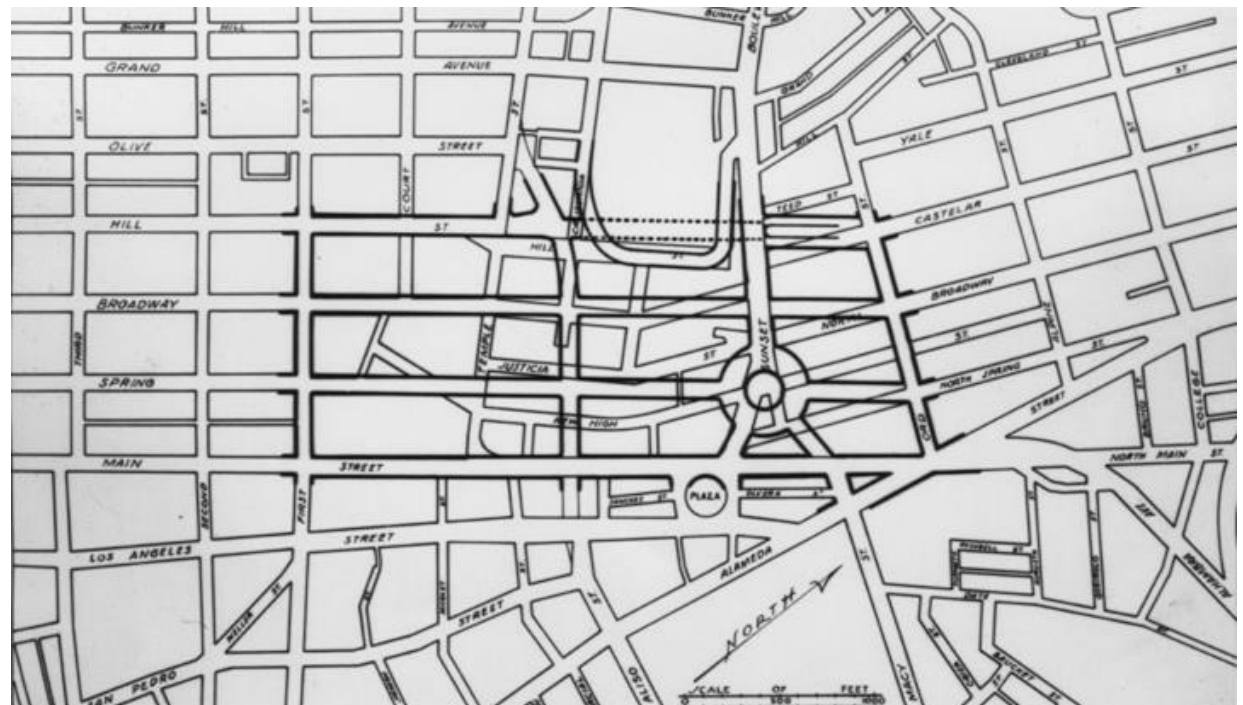
14. WESTSIDE BELTLINE

Atlanta BeltLine Inc. is currently underway with the design of the Westside Trail, which will run to the west of the AUC area. This will catalyze further development and attract more visitors.

Lack of connectivity makes travel time consuming and confusing. The fragmented street grid is one element of this issue. Many intersections end into a “T” intersection, leading to confusion and an longer travel distance and times. There are several intersections where the City should consider realignment to reaffirm a logical street grid. A consistent street grid with square blocks help limit the distance one must travel, making walking and biking quicker and more convenient.

The figure contains three diagrams illustrating different street grid patterns:

- Portland (and Covington):** A regular, rectangular grid pattern with uniform street spacing.
- Goodbye Square:** A grid pattern where the streets are irregular and curved, deviating from the standard rectangular layout. A red dashed line highlights a specific path through the grid.
- Savannah, GA:** A grid pattern featuring larger, irregular blocks and streets that are not perfectly rectangular, showing a more organic layout.



Street grid

Intersections to consider for realignment:

Lee Lane SW, Westview Dr SW,
Greensferry Ave SW

Brown St SW, Wellborn St SW

Euharlee St, Brown St SW, Fair St
SW

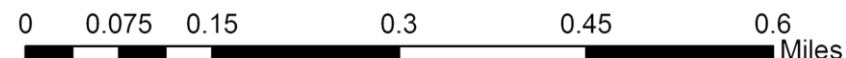
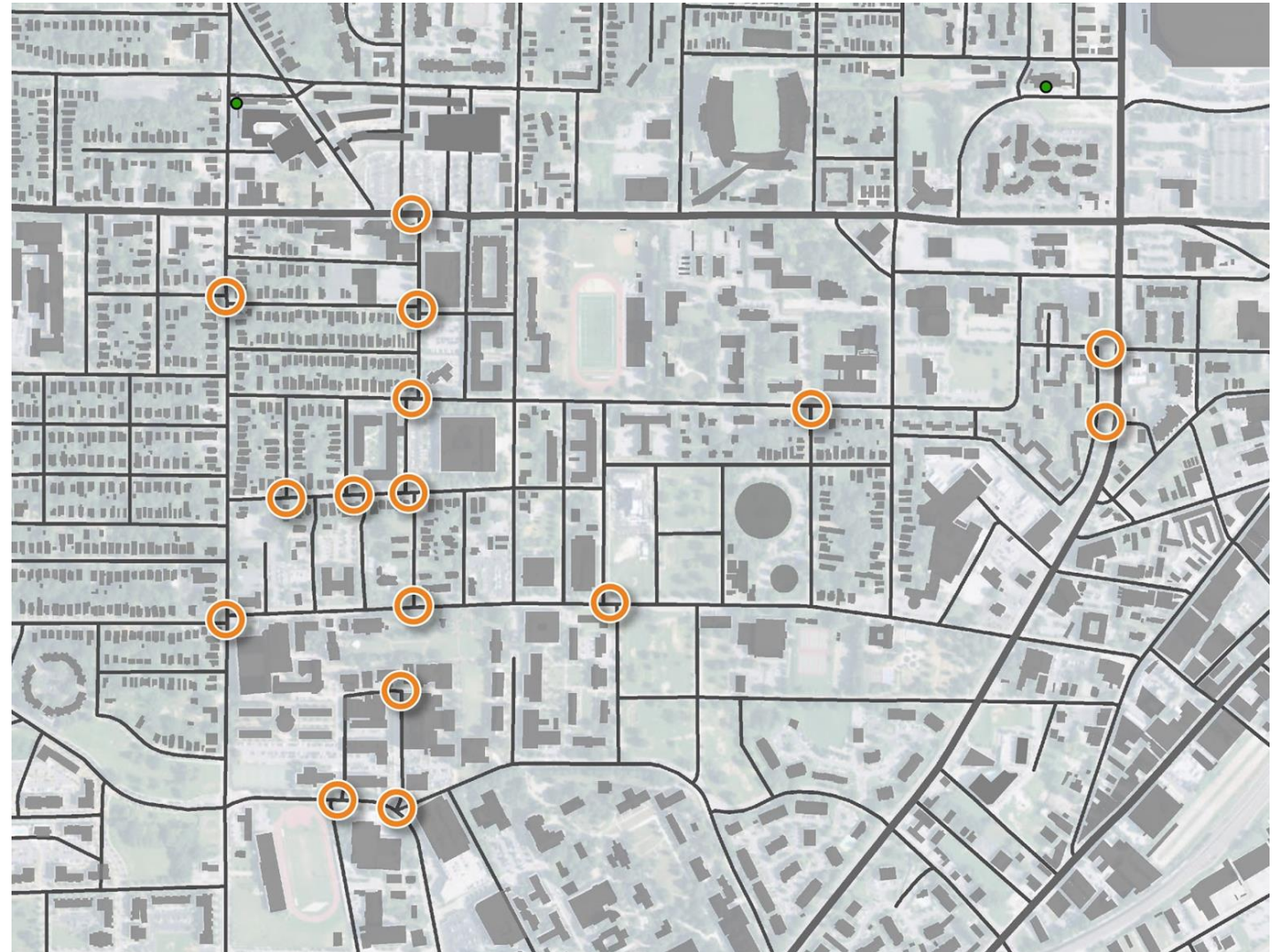
Paschal Blvd SW, Milton St SW,
Parsons St SW

Lawshe St SW, Fair St SW

Paschal Ave, Paschal Blvd SW,
Beckwith St SW

Washington Pl SW, Mitchell St
SW, Joseph E Lowery Blvd SW

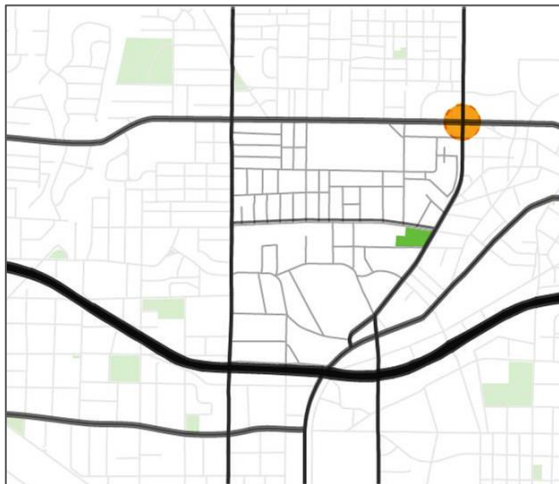
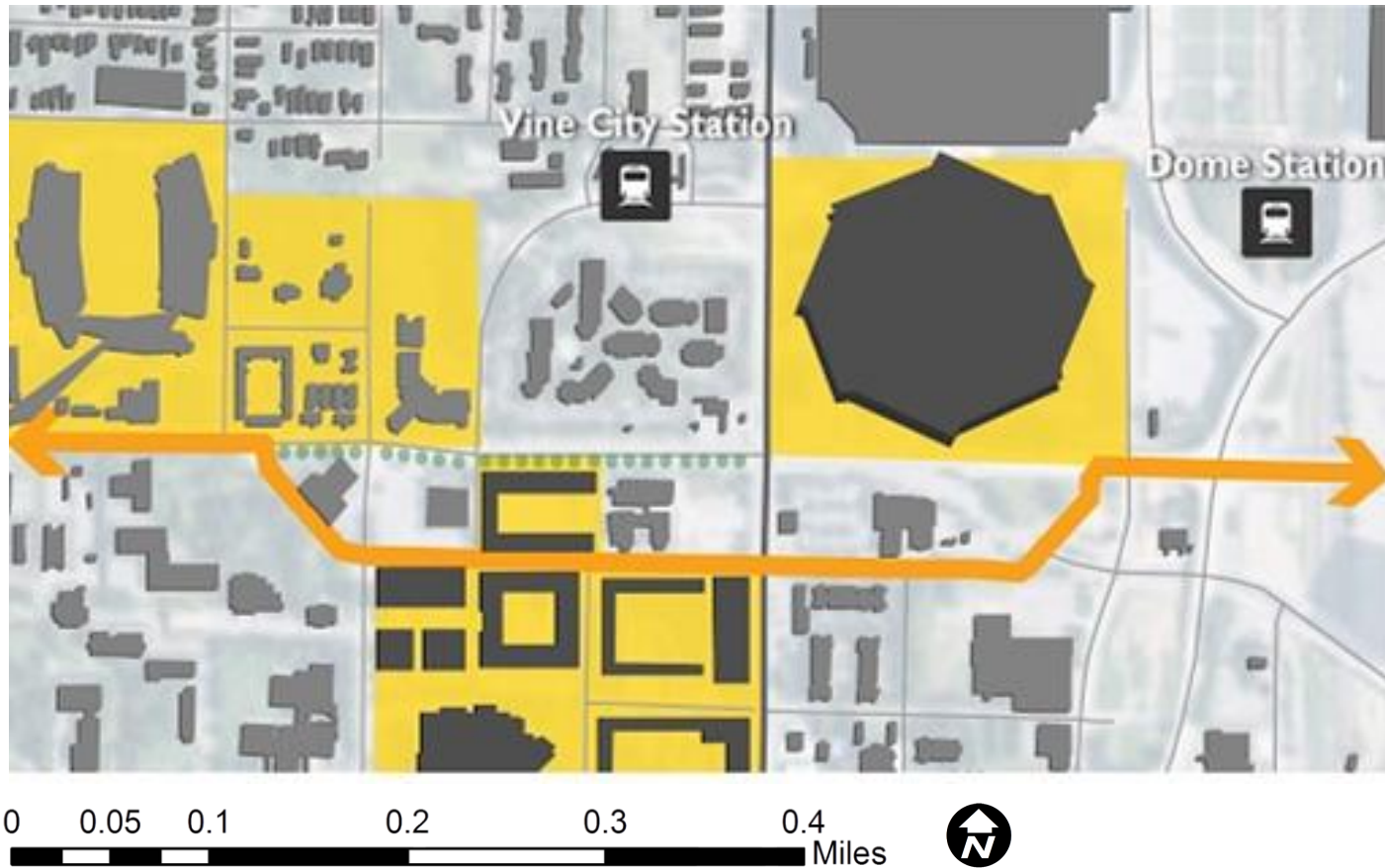
Euharlee St, Brown St SW, Fair St
SW



MLK Jr Drive Realignment

The new Falcons stadium disconnects MLK Jr. Drive between the westside and downtown. The proposed reroute would direct traffic onto what is currently Mitchell Street, in order to go around the new Falcons stadium to get into downtown..

The city should consider a road diet for the leftover segment of MLK Jr. Drive as a side street for access and parking, widening the sidewalk to form a linear park with wayfinding and gateway signage, enhanced tree canopy, seating, street lighting, and bioswales.



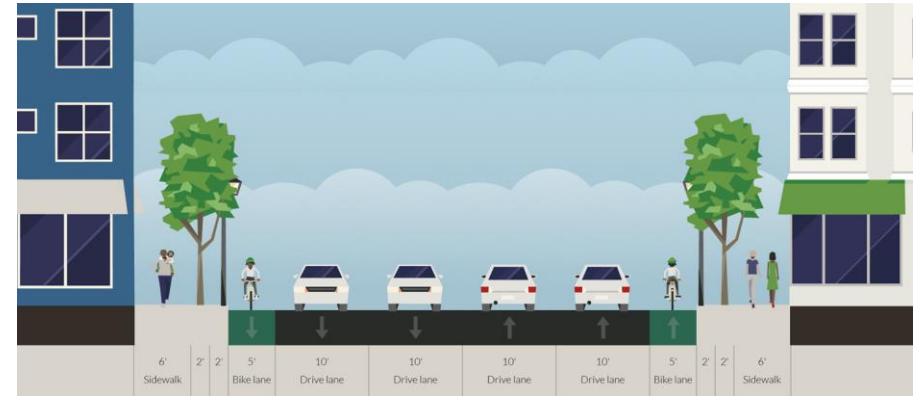
MLK Jr Drive Realignment

PROPOSED MLK JR DRIVE (EXISTING ALIGNMENT)



This section of old MLK Dr (MLK will be rerouted onto current Mitchell St) is currently 85 feet wide, including sidewalks. With the assumed decrease in traffic volumes, lane totals can be reduced to one in each direction at 10 feet a piece with a 7 foot parking lane on the southern side. A four foot tree lined buffer could be constructed on the north to separate a ten foot wide cycle track. Wide sidewalks will line both sides of the section, with a fifteen foot planting strip/park separating the sidewalk from the roadway on the southern side. Ample lighting, shade, and signage should also be installed to create a place that feels safe and inviting.

PROPOSED MLK JR DRIVE (PROPOSED ALIGNMENT)



If MLK is rerouted onto Mitchell St, there will need to be 70 feet across to provide enough room for travel lanes, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Four travel lanes are proposed at ten feet wide each. Five feet bike lanes are also proposed on each side of travel. Sidewalks will be ten feet wide each, including room for landscaping, trees, and proper lighting infrastructure.

MLK Jr Drive Realignment

This image faces west along MLK Jr Drive at its intersection with Northside Drive. There is appropriate bus stop infrastructure installed but with poor sidewalk widths and surface conditions along with unnecessarily wide travel lanes, extremely limited pedestrian crossings, and non-existent bike infrastructure.

With the proposed reroute, this segment could be repurposed to bring wider sidewalks with interesting surfaces, increased tree canopy, seating, lighting, and open space that can be used for recreation or events like tailgating for the nearby Falcon's Stadium. Signage identifying the area, such as a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, as well as for the nearby AUC campuses would increase that visual connectivity between the neighborhood and the AUC.

Existing



Proposed concept



Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard

Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard, previously named Fair Street, is the main east west corridor running through the heart of the AUC campuses. Similar to MLK Drive, we analyzed the current lane width and traffic volumes and came up with two proposals for Fair Street. Our proposal recommends scenario 2, which adds streetcar and a two-way cycle track.

The Woodruff Library Shuttle currently runs across Fair Street and although we have proposed to slightly alter the path to increase connectivity to the Ashby MARTA station, Historic Westside Village and Joseph E. Lowery, the shuttle will still run down the street. Currently, Fair Street is two lanes wide with a 12' and 16' lane. The sidewalks are fairly narrow averaging around 6' wide in various sections.

The second scenario is having a shared space on the road so that pedestrians and cars share the space equally and traffic is calmed by slowing the speeds.

The third scenario is turning Fair Street into a transit corridor. The streetcar's route will cut directly through the AUC campus and out towards the Atlanta Beltline and back. Currently with such wide lanes, scenario three is possible and there is space on the northern side of the street for a two-way cycletrack separated from the road with narrow landscaped buffer.



Existing



**Scenario 1:
Shared Space
(Source: NACTO
Urban Street
Design Guide)**

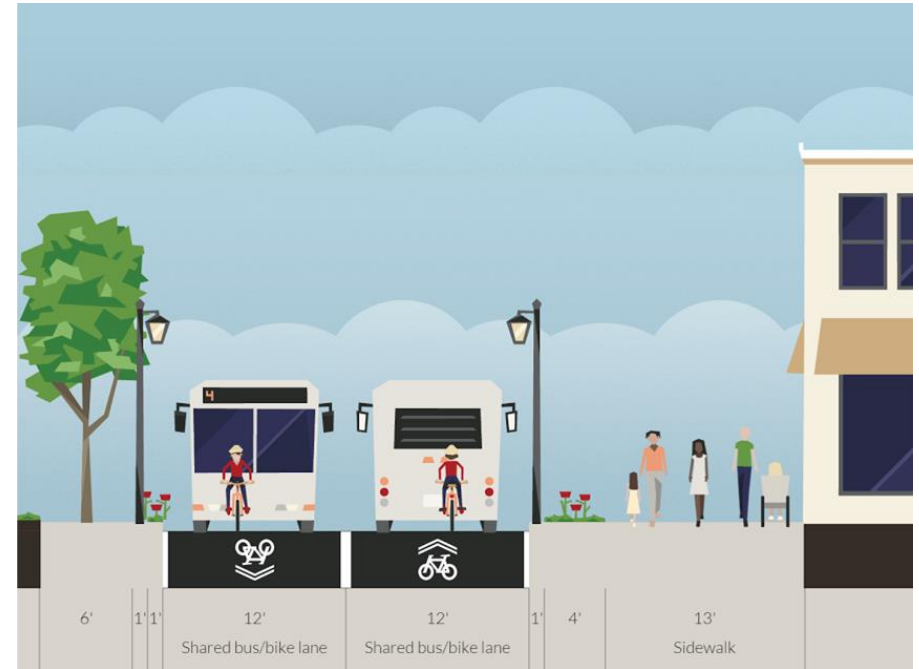


**Scenario 2:
Transit corridor
(Precedent from
Portland, OR)**

Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard



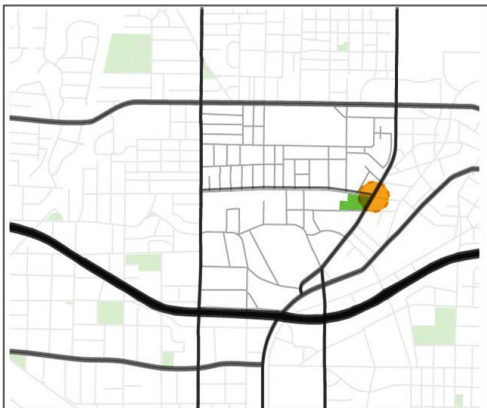
Proposed with streetcar: Phases 2 and 3 of the Atlanta Streetcar System Plan currently show streetcar routes along Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard from the Westside BeltLine Trail into downtown. If the city implements that plan, Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard should have a two-way cycle track so the streetcar tracks do not inhibit bike connectivity or safety.



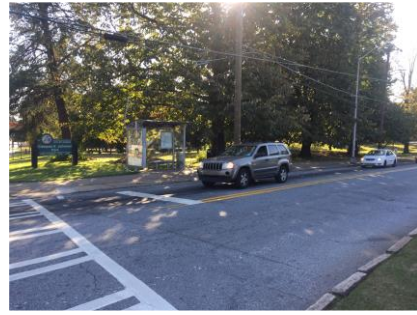
Proposed with bus transit: Until streetcar is implemented, the city should treat this as a priority walking and biking street with transit accommodations. This recommendation shows wider sidewalks with a planting strip and street lighting. There should be two one-way lanes, each with shared-lane markings.

Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard

There should be a clear gateway into AUC at the Northside Drive intersection. Here, visitors and residents will be welcomed in with gateway and wayfinding signage. An added entrance into Cleopas Johnson Park would activate the park. This rendering shows the streetcar is shown in Phase 2 of the Streetcar system plan, along with a two-way cycle track.



Existing



Proposed concept

Northside Drive

Northside Drive has been the subject of many studies and debates over the past decades. It is a state route, and GDOT has often treated it as a reliever for the downtown connector, emphasizing mobility over access. This approach has divided the adjacent communities from one another and negatively impacted the public realm due to heavy traffic during rush hour or events. The current Northside Drive study represents a departure from GDOT's reputation as an agency that does not give enough consideration to the communities around its roads. The emphasis on engagement suggests better community outcomes may arise from future projects. Northside Drive acts as a barrier between AUC and Castleberry Hill. GDOT should consider adding Bus Rapid Transit to Northside Drive, along with sidewalks enhancements and bicycle infrastructure to make it more approachable. Adding a separated bike facility is more appropriate given current traffic volumes and speed. This plan recommends right of way acquisition along the corridor to make alleyways running parallel to the street for biking, vehicle access and parking (as shown in scenario 2), or parking protected cycle tracks on either side (as shown in scenario 3). As interim measures, GDOT could help calm traffic by adding landscaped medians where appropriate, and curb bulb outs at intersections to shorten crossing distance.



Northside Drive

Existing



Scenario 1: Downtown main street



Scenario 2: Boulevard



Scenario 3: Bus rapid transit corridor



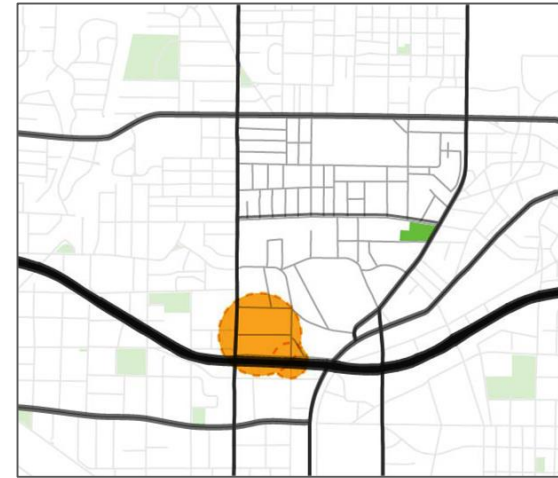
Note: scenarios 2 and 3 would require significant ROW acquisition, but would have a more transformative effect on the adjacent neighborhoods than scenario 1.

Lee Street and the “superblock”

On the southern side of the AUC near I-20, Lee Street has strong potential to link south toward West End. In order to capitalize on this opportunity, the AUC, City, and DOT should coordinate signage to ensure visitors can find their way no matter what mode they are using. A transformation of the Lee Street bridge would welcome users into the area, and make that node a place where people want to stay and linger.

The street currently is four lanes wide with two northbound and two southbound lanes entering and leaving the AUC campus. The current sidewalks are around 9 feet wide. The existing intersection of Lee Street and Park Street does not work well for people on foot, bike or car.

The first concept considered for this corridor would include widening the street into the land owned by Morehouse School of Medicine and Spelman College to add room for parking-protected cycle tracks, with one travel lane in each direction. The second recommended scenario is a compromise for the automobile and pedestrian by reducing the street by only one lane and not two. The third scenario would have three lanes (one northbound and two southbound) with a two-way cycle track on the western side of the street, next to Park Street United Methodist Church. This scenario would eliminate street parking.



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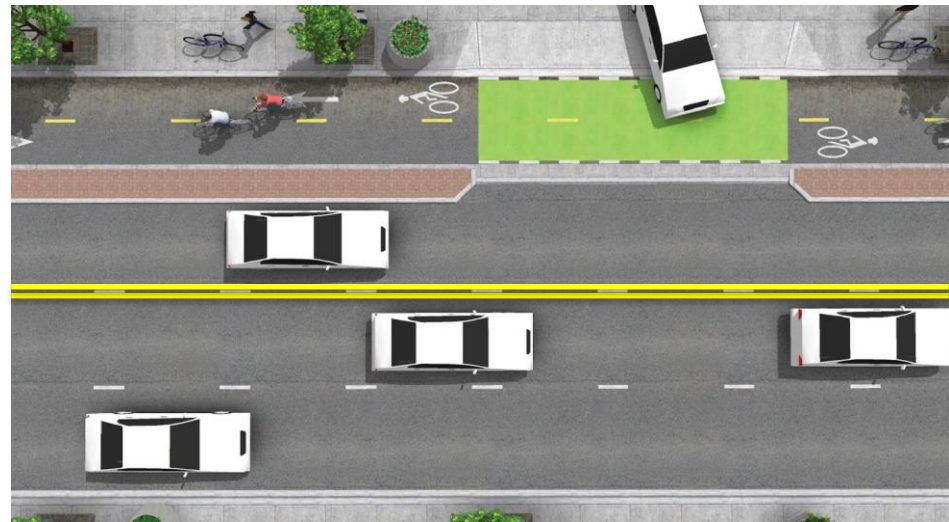
Scenario 1: Two way with parking and protected bike lane



Existing



Scenario 2: Two-way with protected cycle track



Lee Street and the “superblock”

Proposed

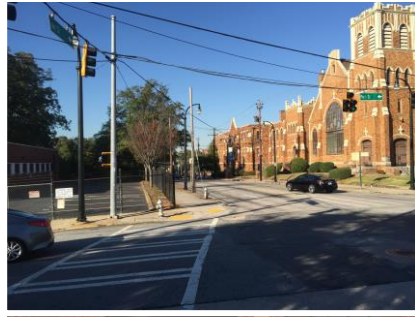


Lee Street and the “superblock”

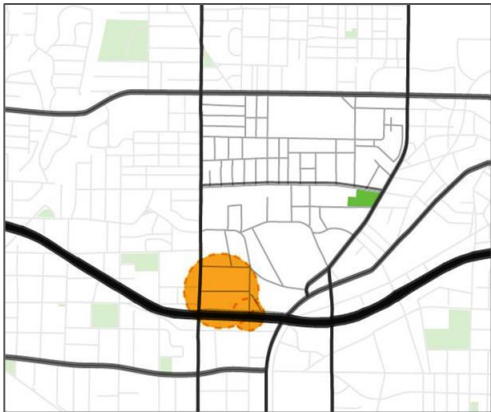
Proposed changes:

- Two-way cycle track with landscaped buffer
- Restriped crosswalks and better curb bulb outs where appropriate to minimize crossing distance for pedestrians
- Attractive lighting
- Gateway signage
- Mixed-use development with ground floor retail and outdoor seating

Existing

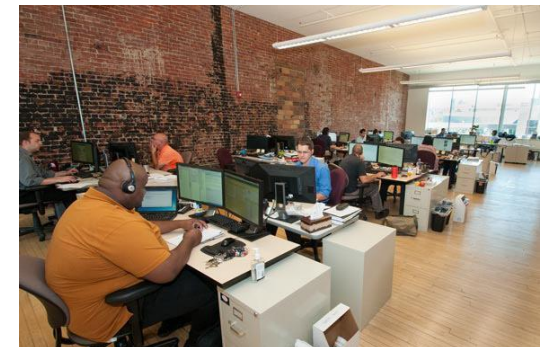


Proposed concept



Lee Street and the “superblock”

The block in this area bounded by West End Ave, Lee Street, Park Drive, and Lowery Boulevard is primed for development, previously named the “superblock.” Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College each share a portion of this 20 acre block. The universities have shared vision of the space becoming an activity center, commercial node and research hub similar to Tech Square. Morehouse recently built Ray Charles Performing Arts Center on the current northwestern corner of the superblock, other than that there are a handful of vacant buildings. It is a prime location for new restaurants, bars, and public space that could be used by AUC students, staff and neighborhood residents. This would be a place that helps to attract students to stay in the neighborhood following graduation. New development would include housing, research labs, open space, restaurants, a university hub including a book store and café, and offices. Business incubators and maker-spaces could help teach professional skills to students and community members.



Morris Brown land

Morris Brown recently sold most of its land to Invest Atlanta and Friendship Baptist Church for \$10.8 million to settle its bankruptcy issues. The acquisition includes several historic buildings. Where possible, it would be ideal to do adaptive reuse with these buildings to minimize carbon footprint of construction and retain a historic character.

There are currently legal disputes between the new owners and Clark Atlanta University, who originally gave the land to Morris Brown for educational use only. This dispute may take some time to settle, but at time of writing it is likely that three of the buildings will need to be used for some kind of “educational” use. This could include community education like cooking classes or workshop development.

This land presents an opportunity for community-serving development. With the Eco-District initiative and need for healthy food options in the area, it would make sense for that thread to continue into the Morris Brown land development. Potential uses include a co-op kitchen, a community garden, special event space, a recycling center, a bike co-op, community day care, a health clinic, plazas for community festivals, or farmers markets.



Signage and Wayfinding

Although the Atlanta University Center is one of Atlanta's most prestigious and historical centers for African-American education, the average driver passing by on a side street or interstate would be unaware of the presence of the AUC. Appropriate signage and wayfinding markers would be one way for Atlanta to easily draw attention to and honor the great traditions currently in place at the AUC. Appropriate signage could range from large scale, stone, rock, or brick entry way signs at the entrances of the campuses so smaller, more subtle signage pointing towards specific buildings and points of interest (also referred to as wayfinding). The following are intersections that signage could be installed:

- Lee St SW & Park St SW
- Joseph E Lowery Blvd SW & Westview Dr SW
- Joseph E Lowery Blvd SW & The Atlanta Student Movement Blvd
- Martin Luther King Jr Blvd SW & James P Brawley Dr
- Northside Dr SW & The Atlanta Student Movement Blvd
- Northside Dr SW & Spelman Ln SW



Signage, fresh paint would make the underutilized bridge on Morris Brown property over MLK Jr Drive more appealing and serve as an acknowledgement of the neighborhood.



Standardized signage within campuses, pointing to areas of interest like Castleberry Hills, MARTA, Historic West Side Village, or historic sites.



Brick signage with wide, well lit pedestrian infrastructure welcome visitors and residents into campus (University of Louisville)

Bicycle Friendly Universities (BFUs)

The American League of Bicyclists awards Bicycle Friendly University (BFU) status to universities to recognize outstanding efforts at campuses across the country and to lend suggestions to universities who could be doing more. BFU status helps raise awareness about biking on campus, and lets others across the country know that the school cares about sustainable and healthy transportation.

The 5 E's & How to Apply

The program is based on 5 E's: education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement and evaluation. A good bicycle network relies on attention to each of these areas.

Universities fill out the application, which asks questions about each of the five E's like, "Does your school have a bicycle master plan?" and, "What portion of the staff, faculty, and students commute by bike?" When the American League of Bicyclists responds, they not only report on whether they will issue an award or not, they also provide suggestions for how the university can make improvements. Currently, none of the AUC schools have BFU awards. They should consider applying to gauge their own progress, work toward improvements, and eventually receive designation as a bronze, silver, gold, platinum, or even diamond BFU.

For more information on how to apply, visit:

<http://bikeleague.org/league-vocabulary/bicycle-friendly-university>



There are currently two BFUs in Atlanta: Georgia Tech and Emory University. The AUC schools could look toward those campuses for precedents. For Georgia Tech's recent Campus Bike Master Plan, they developed this bike trip heat map based on data from the Cycle Atlanta mobile app.

Community Garden & Demonstration Center

It is likely that a new urban garden will soon move to the area. This will present opportunities for weekly farmers markets and gardening demonstrations. In the event that an urban garden develops, the AUC institutions should find ways to work with it, through volunteer programs for students interested in agriculture, cooking, education, or other related fields.

Urban gardens not only bring healthy food options. They can also create an engaging and safe atmosphere for children. Urban farms often have programs like summer camps or workshops for kids. There is potential for AUC students to work with an urban farm, both learning from them and transmitting knowledge back to others in the community.



Strengthening ties between APS & AUC

One of the persistent problems in the neighborhoods surrounding the AUC is the performance of its public schools. Poor school performance is a problem for the children attending these schools, but the effects don't end there. Because residential location choices are often driven by area schools, subpar schools may prevent the AUC area from retaining middle-class residents, including staff and recent graduates.

The AUC has the potential to become a transformative catalyst for improving K - 12 educational outcomes on Atlanta's Westside. Universities across the country have joined forces with local schools to improve the quality of education. This collaboration can take the form of curriculum development assistance, enrichment programs for elementary students, and opening up opportunities for high schoolers to attend college courses, among other things.

AUC institutions are already engaged with local APS schools in some ways, but efforts should be made to expand this engagement whenever possible.



Booker T. Washington, the High School that serves the neighborhoods around the AUC.