

ATLANTIC STATION INFLUENCING GENTRIFICATION OF OTHER COMMUNITIES?  
Analyzing the Effects of Upscale Mixed-Use Neighborhoods in Metro Atlanta Areas  
Jalen Carlyle

**ATLANTICSTATION**

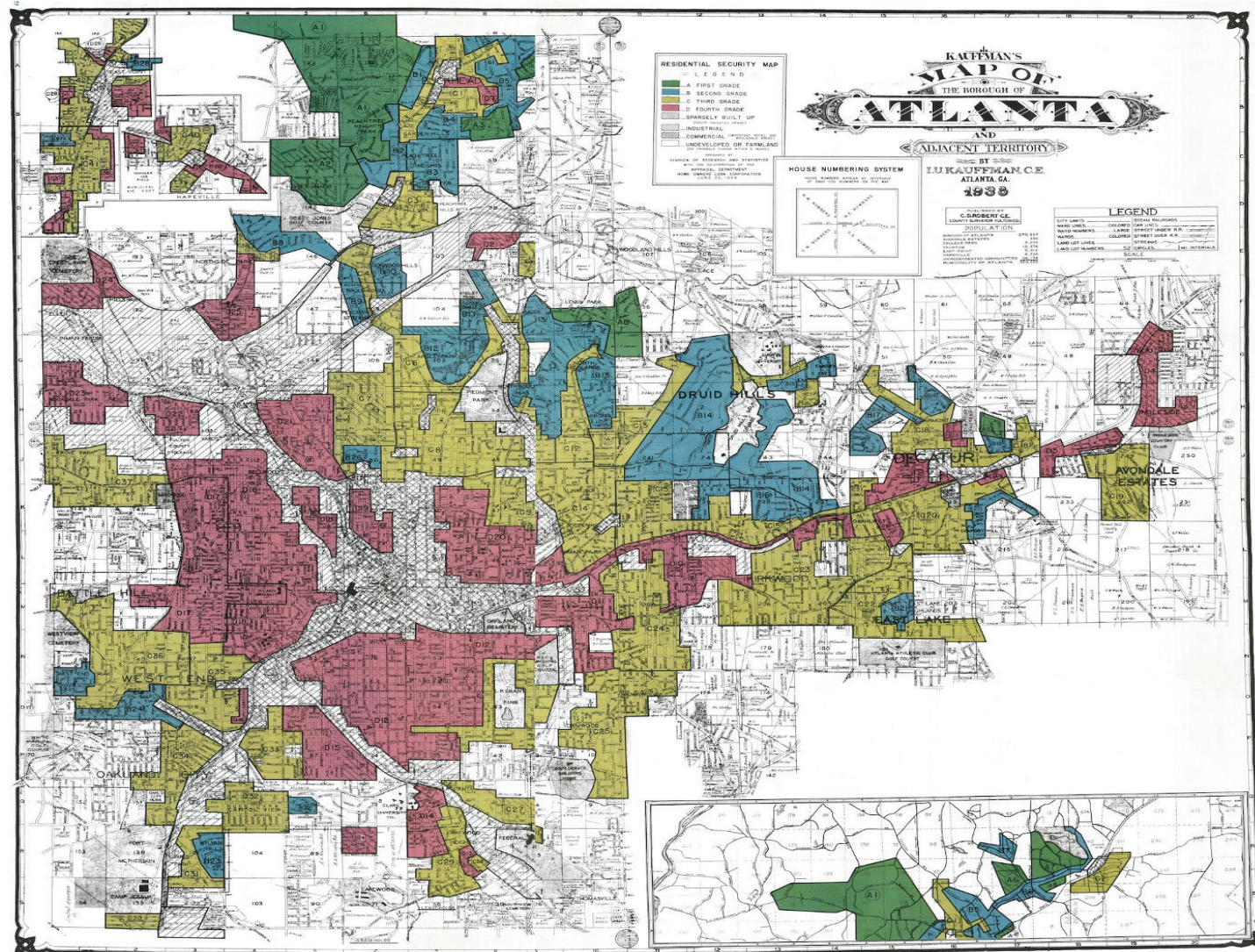
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# ATLANTIC STATION INFLUENCING GENTRIFICATION OF OTHER COMMUNITIES?

## Analyzing Affects of Upscale Mixed-Use Neighborhoods in Metro Atlanta Areas

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Map of the City of Atlanta (1938) color-coded to represent the grades for neighborhoods. Source: Home Owners Loan Corporation

### INTRODUCTION

The history of African Americans in Atlanta is synonymous with the history of Atlanta itself, "From the early days of slaveholding until today, when the last five mayors of Atlanta have been African Americans, the story of the largest

southern city can be told through the experiences of its largest ethnic minority," (NPS). For decades African Americans have made up a majority of the Atlanta population; however, (as pictured above), there have been numerous attempts to

gentrify heavily populated Black areas. This map identifies different neighborhoods and their "grade" based upon residential security. "The red swaths identify each area with large African-American populations as being a "hazardous place to underwrite mortgages." This is what was known as redlining, and it was perfectly legal for many years," (Darin Givens). These maps listed the percentage of black residents in each neighborhood, and of all of the neighborhoods classified as "best" or "still desirable," the population was 0%; and right above the epicenter of this map, is what is known today as Midtown's "Atlantic Station."

### CONTEXT

Even before desegregation took place African Americans created their own opportunities in businesses, publications, and sports. "Evidence of successful businesses was most noticeable in Sweet Auburn, now known as the Sweet Auburn Historic District, a one-mile corridor that served as the downtown of Atlanta's black community," (NPS). Businesses flourished throughout the 1930s and 1940s, including restaurants, hotels, and nightclubs where Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington performed. The city of Atlanta has always been a place where African-Americans could thrive, financially, socially, and even politically. However due to recent developments these aspects of our lives are now coming into question.

### ATLANTA'S POPULATION SHIFT

"Although gentrification has expanded the city's tax base and weeded out blight, it has had an unintended effect on Atlanta, long a lure to African-Americans and a symbol of black success. For the first time since the 1920's," (Shaila Dewen). The black percentage of the city of Atlanta's population is declining and the white percentage is on the rise. "There could be a time in the not-too-distant future when the black population is below half of the city population, if this trend continues," said William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution, a Washington research group. Mr. Frey did not know how correct he was, In the year of 2020 the percentage of the Black population dropped to 47%. This is versus about 62% in the year 2000, 5 years before this statement was made.

Atlanta, Georgia - Overview	2010 Census		2000 Census		2000-2010 Change	
	Counts	Percentages	Counts	Percentages	Change	Percentages
Total Population	420,003	100.00%	417,936	100.00%	2,067	0.49%
<b>Population by Race</b>						
American Indian and Alaska native alone	988	0.24%	765	0.18%	223	29.15%
Asian alone	13,188	3.14%	8,045	1.92%	5,143	63.93%
Black or African American alone	226,894	54.02%	257,223	61.55%	-30,329	-11.79%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific native alone	132	0.03%	172	0.04%	-40	-23.26%
Some other race alone	9,317	2.22%	8,257	1.98%	1,060	12.84%
Two or more races	8,369	1.99%	5,193	1.24%	3,176	61.16%
White alone	161,115	38.36%	138,281	33.09%	22,834	16.51%
<b>Population by Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)</b>						
Persons Not of Hispanic or Latino Origin	398,188	94.81%	399,231	95.52%	-1,043	-0.26%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin	21,815	5.19%	18,705	4.48%	3,110	16.63%
<b>Population by Gender</b>						
Female	211,035	50.25%	210,552	50.38%	483	0.23%
Male	208,968	49.75%	207,384	49.62%	1,584	0.76%
<b>Population by Age</b>						
Persons 0 to 4 years	26,789	6.38%	26,783	6.41%	6	0.02%
Persons 5 to 17 years	54,621	13.00%	66,636	15.94%	-12,015	-18.03%
Persons 18 to 64 years	297,254	70.77%	283,863	67.92%	13,391	4.72%
Persons 65 years and over	41,339	9.84%	40,654	9.73%	685	1.68%

Census for the City of Atlanta 2000-2010. Source: US Census Bureau

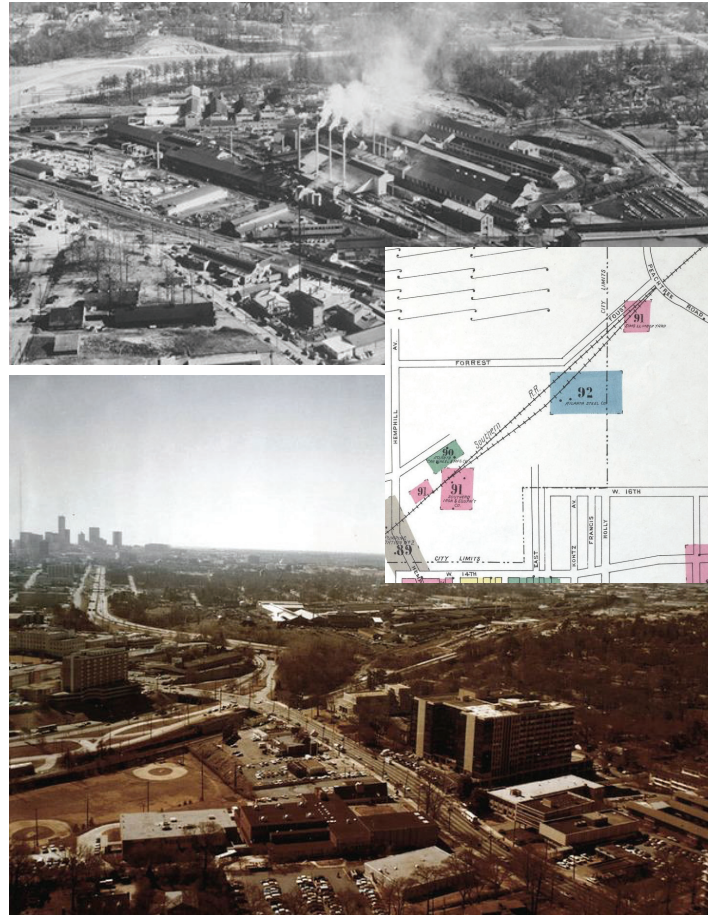
The AJC analysis said Atlanta's population grew by more than 71,000 since 2010:

- New white residents accounted for just over 50% of them
- 23% were Hispanic or Asian
- Only 9% of the city's new residents were African American (11 alive).

The change has introduced an element of uncertainty into local politics, which has been dominated by blacks since 1973, when Atlanta became the first major Southern city to elect a black mayor. "It's certainly affecting local politics," said Billy Linville, a political consultant who has worked for Ms. Franklin. "More white politicians are focusing on possibly becoming mayor and positioning themselves accordingly, whereas in the past they would not have. The next mayor of Atlanta, I believe, will be African-American, but after that it may get very interesting." (NY Times).

## ATLANTIC STATION

Atlantic Station was originally a steel company with a large steel mill, dating back to 1901 when it was founded as the Atlanta Hoop Company with 120 employees, and which produced cotton bale ties and barrel hoops. In 1998, Jacoby Development purchased the complex for about 76 million USD, tore down the complex, cleaned up the site and built Atlantic Station in its place.



Atlantic Steel Mill  
Source: Atlantic Station

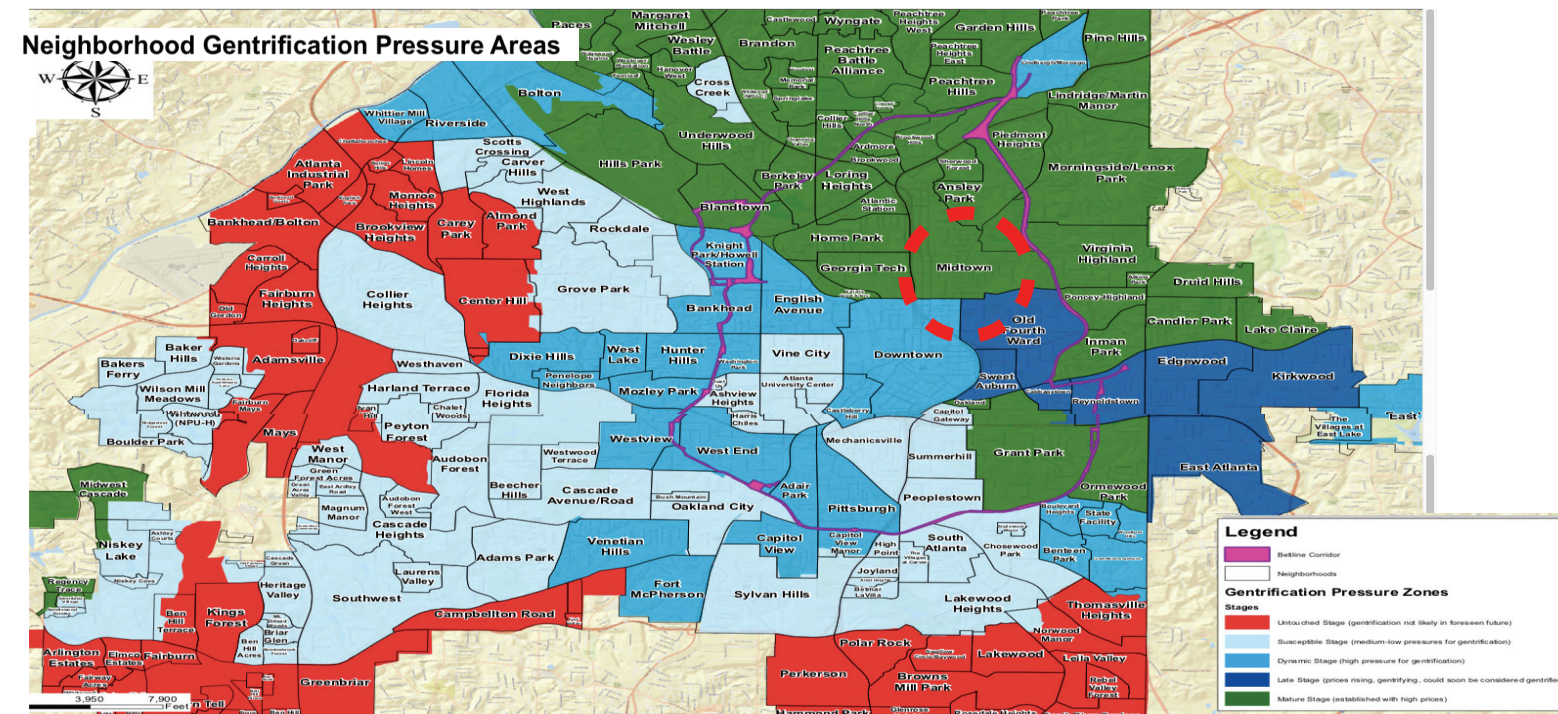


Atlantic Station Master Plan  
Source: Buildings

Atlantic Station's original design of the space was intended to include 15 million square feet of retail, office, residential space as well as 11 acres of public parks.

"Housing has also mushroomed in places where it had not previously existed. The most ambitious project, Atlantic Station, a shopping and residential district on the site of a former steel mill near downtown, will have more than 2,000 units. Loft prices start at \$160,000," (Shaila Dewen). Housing developments such as these are impacting communities throughout the city. Even the Old Fourth Ward, the once elegant black neighborhood where Martin Luther King Jr. was born, is now less than 75 percent black, down from 94 percent in 1990, as houses have skyrocketed in value and low-rent apartments have been replaced by new developments. There are displacements being caused by these intended "problem solutions" that are not being addressed. Another Midtown development, The Atlanta Beltline is also a factor.

Atlanta Beltline has triggered property value increases. "Median sales prices in Beltline neighborhoods such as Adair Park and Westview ballooned by 68 percent between 2011 and 2015, per the study." Dan Immergluck also sounded the alarm in an interview with CityLab, asserting that the Beltline's current trajectory could lead to the "economic and possibly racial resegregation of the city." (Atlanta Curbed). The effects these projects have had on the community is unquestionable, however the true problem lies in what these developments are doing to those outside of the city, in neighboring communities. Half a decade ago, news spread of the next Atlantic Station coming to South Metro-Atlanta (Henry County), in a development that would become known as **Jodeco Crossings**.



Atlanta Gentrification Pressure Map  
Source: AtlantaGov

## THE INFLUENCE

Jeff Grant and his partners have owned over 150 acres of land in south Henry County since 1985. At one point, one of the partners lived on it, but other than that, the land acres has remained untouched. Grant is a Henry County native and plans on turning this into the same type of intensive mixed-use projects seen commonly in Atlanta, less than 30 miles north. "That piece was bought more for the beauty of it. It wasn't really bought

or true speculation," Grant said. "Now that things have evolved the way they have, I guess we were lucky in a good sense." After Jodeco Crossings was first proposed there was a halt on the project. "County commissioners denied the annexation request earlier this month, and stated that they wanted to keep the development under the county's control instead of the city," (Henry Herald). Several Henry



**Breaking News...Jodeco Crossings the Atlantic Station type open air mall goes before the Henry County Zoning Advisory Board November 12th!!! Take a look at the proposed site plan submitted!!! Atlanta's New South our time is now....Elton Alexander!!!**

Atlantic Jodeco Crossings Sketch Rendering  
Source: Because We Care Atlanta South

County residents spoke against it expressing concerns about having infrastructure and transportation fixes in place before proceeding with the development. When the project was originally proposed in 2015, a development of regional impact review was completed by Georgia DCA and the Atlanta Regional Commission. Though the concept site plan and proposes uses have undergone revisions since then, the recommendations from the project's traffic impact study should still be valued and local governments look for funding to implement the recommendations. "The traffic study estimated that 34,317 new daily vehicle trips will be generated by the development," (Moving Henry Forward). The study recommended several road improvements and intersection projects to support the additional traffic on surrounding roadways.

## BRIDGES AT JODECO

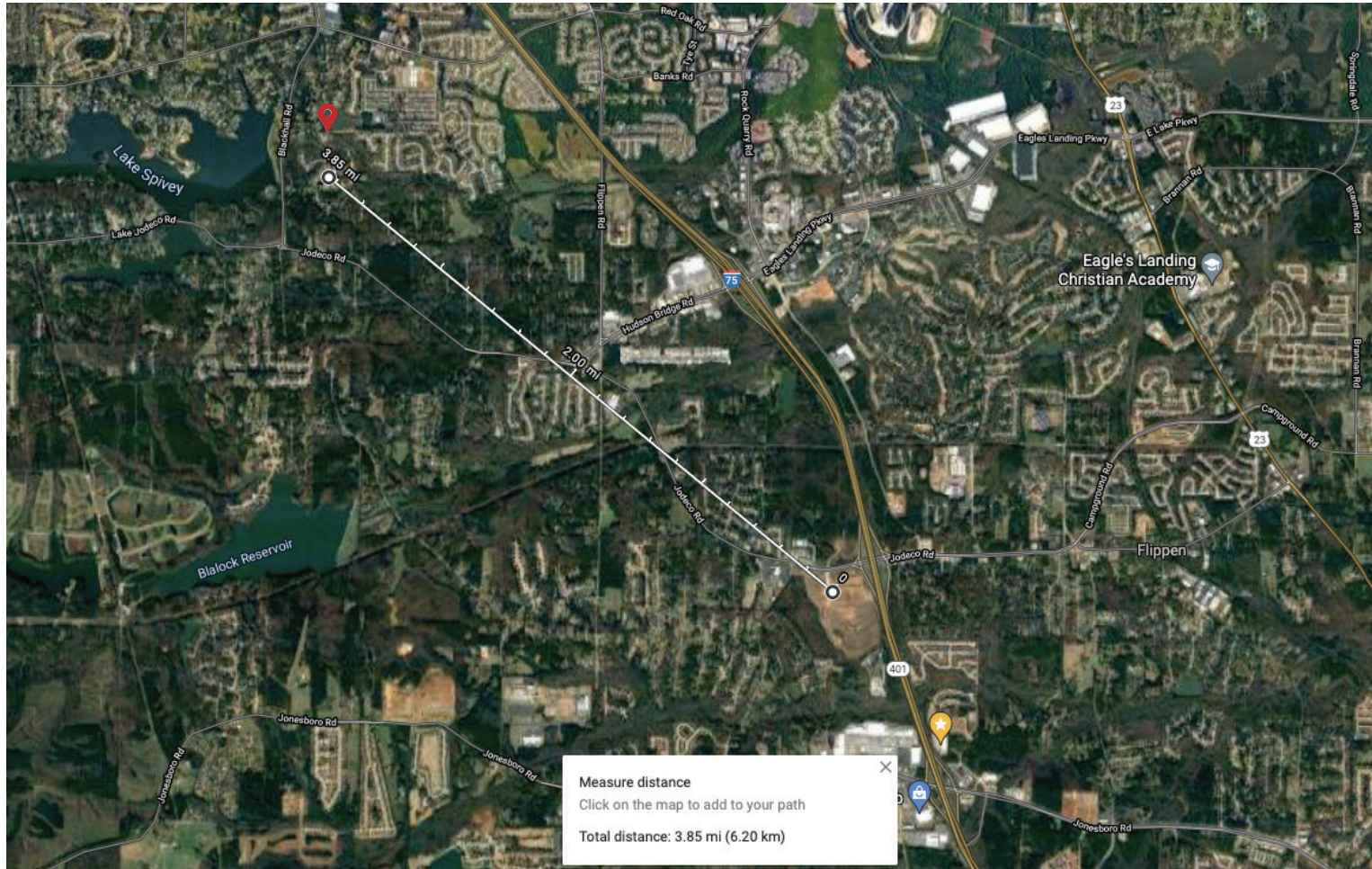
Now entitled Bridges at Jodeco, the project's residential components are expected to include: 300 apartment units, 176 single-family lots, 90 townhomes, as well as 52.4 acres of commercial space. Jodeco 158 is not the only firm planning mixed-use in the Metro Atlanta area. Other developers are eyeing mixed-use as well.



Bridges at Jodeco Site Map  
Source: LPC Retail



Bridges at Jodeco Site Plan  
Source: Moving Henry Forward



Distance From Bridges at Jodeco to my Home  
Source: Google Maps

## CLOSE TO HOME

The intended site for Bridges at Jodeco is actually less than 4 miles from my home, and is only 5,000 feet from my former high school. Because of the close proximity this project has to myself, my family, and my friends, I am witnessing first hand the effect of a high-end development project within a community. A number of former classmates, as well as their families, have had to move due to increases in costs of living, as well as fear of Henry County becoming a second Atlanta.

"I chose to live in Henry County because of the peace and quiet that it offered, but still the short commute it provided to downtown. If I wanted to live downtown, I would have moved downtown." Lil Patterson (former neighbor) states. Ms. Lil had been a member of our community since before I was born, and now with this new development in progress, she felt she had no choice but to leave. It is not just people who are being forced out of the community either, it's businesses as well.

Prior to the construction phase of the mixed-use development beginning, there were several road improvements and intersection projects conducted to support the additional future traffic on surrounding roadways. These "road improvements" however, created extreme problems for certain business/customer relationships. For example, a locally owned gas station located along Jodeco Road, that originally you would have driven directly into, now required an additional 1,000 feet of road to access. This of course led to a decline in business because on the other side of I-75 were gas stations not requiring this additional effort. The local store lasted for less than a year after the road construction before closing down. "BIG GOVERNMENT WINS, SMALL BUSINESSES LOSE" read a banner which they hung over the front of the store.

## INTERSECTION SOLUTIONS

Intersection improvements recommend by the project included the following:

- Install a traffic signal, with appropriate turn lanes, at Jodeco Road and the western parallel connector
- Install a traffic signal, with appropriate turn lanes, at Jodeco Road and Chambers Road
- Add turn lanes at Chambers Road and Mt. Olive Road (west)

(Moving Henry Forward).



Chevron Gas Station Oct. 2012  
Source: Google Maps



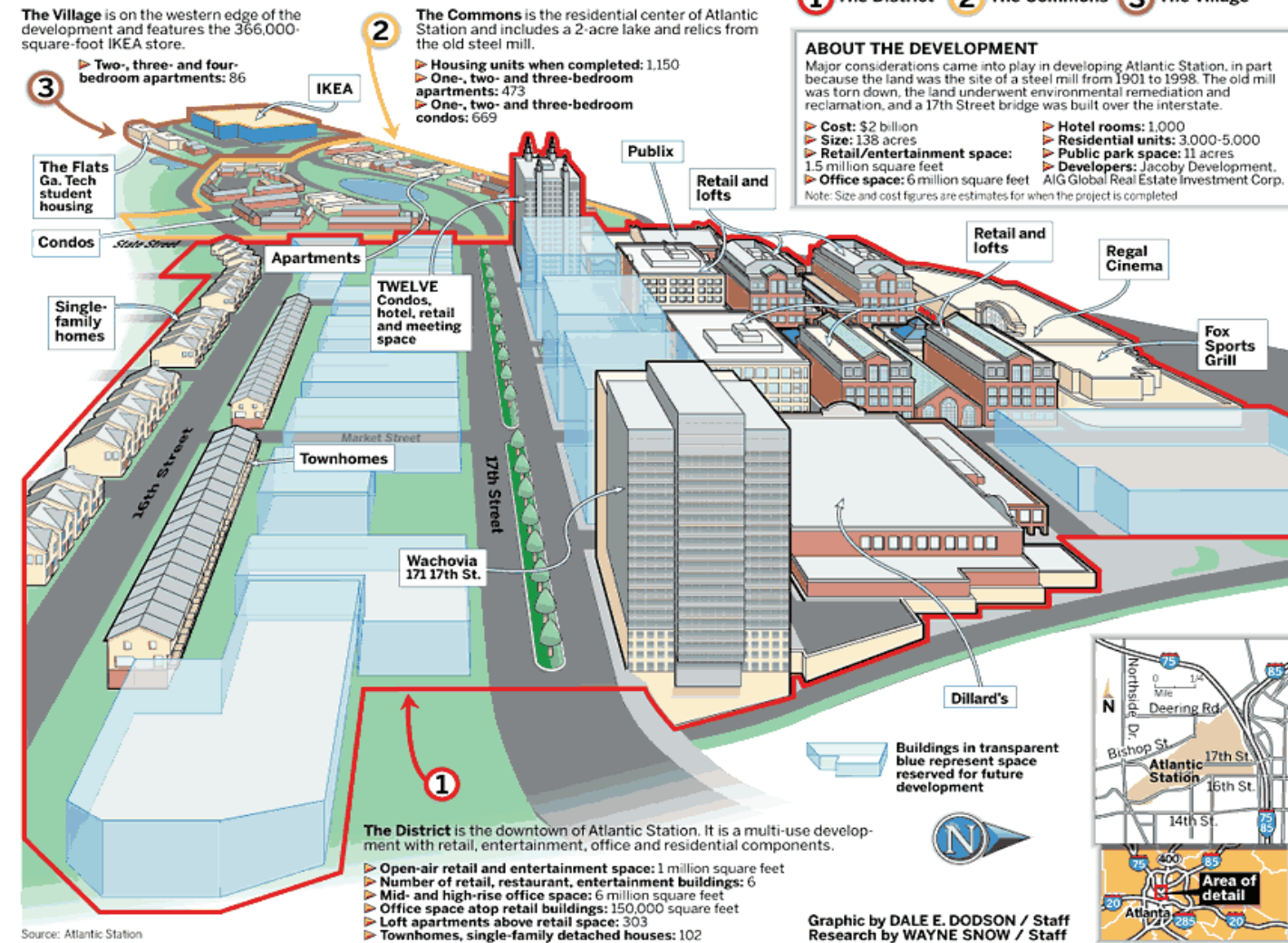
Chevron Gas Station Oct. 2015  
Source: Google Maps



Chevron Gas Station Feb. 2021  
Source: Google Maps

# Atlantic Station: A city within the city

Atlantic Station will formally take its place among Atlanta landmarks Thursday. The multi-use project is on land reclaimed from the old Atlantic Steel site and is intended to be a place where Atlantans can live, shop, work and play. Along with the Georgia Aquarium and the expansion of the High Museum, it is one of three major projects to come to fruition as 2005 comes to a close.



Atlantic Station Plans  
 Source: ScholarBlogs



Atlantic Station Courtyard  
 Source: The Connor Group



Atlantic Station Green-roofs  
 Source: Curbed Atlanta

## MOVING FORWARD

Moving forward, the most important factor in the design of mixed-use developments will be the extent to which the resultant environment supports walking, bicycling, and mass transit as viable choices for travel within a 100-mile radius of home. "The question you should be asking every time a new mixed-use project is evaluated is this: "Can the people who live and work here sustain their lifestyles for travel between home, work, and leisure destinations within 100 to 500 miles either by walking, biking, taking the bus or train, or using a shared car?" (Buildings). Most large American cities provide this opportunity through pre-existing urban patterns and transportation infrastructure; however, while a city-like pattern of development can be replicated in the suburbs and in greenfield sites, construction of new mass-transportation infrastructure is expensive and cannot be afforded by most privately financed mixed-use development projects. Today's mixed-use centers need to focus on links to the larger urban core and nearby neighborhoods. Transit needs to be a major component of mixed-use plans, in addition to neighborhood-focused offerings, such as dry cleaners, cafés, and grocery stores, all located within a few-block radius.

"Perhaps one of the most notable factors fueling the trend toward redevelopment of urban sites is the realization that more makes the city better, while less of everything is better in suburbia," (Buildings). Developers are realizing that it's easier to get economically sustainable, mixed-use projects approved in existing cities than in automobile-oriented suburbs. More restaurants, shops, residents, and jobs make urban environments more dynamic and attractive. "More importantly, density increases the viability of mass-transportation systems and innovative transportation models, such as car sharing - all of which reduce dependency on personal automobiles for daily needs," (Buildings).

## CONCLUSION

Although these solutions are considerate toward the residents of the new community, what about those who lived there before? These developmental phases are bringing uprooting and unemployment to communities. Instead of exploring methods to benefit the new neighbors, and businesses, let's propose some solutions for the existing businesses.

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## “Just Green Enough” Pocket Park

### CONTEXT

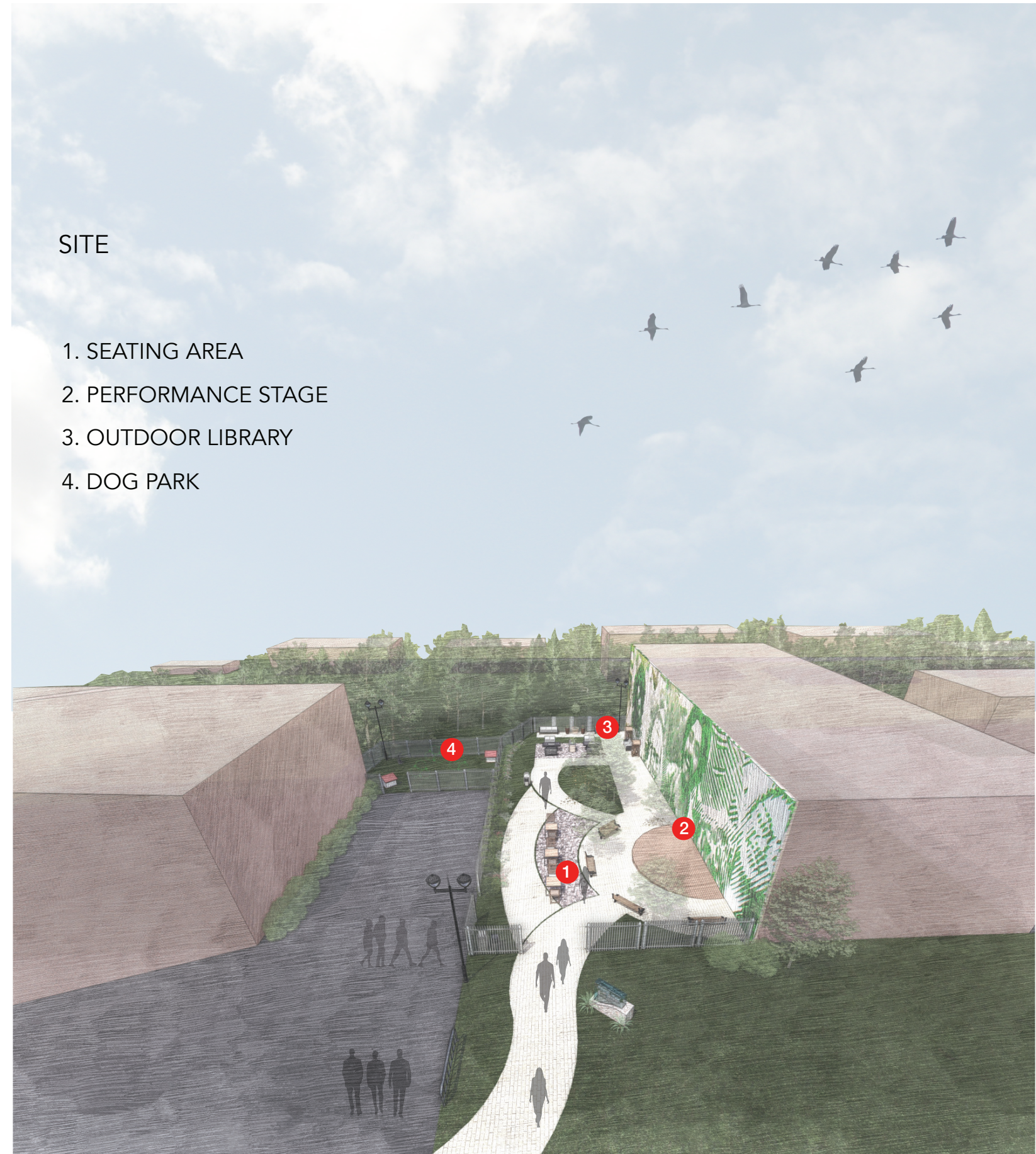
Pocket parks are small, outdoor spaces, usually located in an urban area surrounded by commercial buildings or houses on small lots and provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members.

Successful “pocket parks” have four key qualities: they are accessible; allow people to engage in activities; are comfortable spaces and have a good image; and finally, are sociable places. (NRPA)

Researchers Winifred Curran and Trina Hamilton have offered a solution to green gentrification through the term **“just green enough.”**

### SITE

1. SEATING AREA
2. PERFORMANCE STAGE
3. OUTDOOR LIBRARY
4. DOG PARK





## MOVING FORWARD

*Bringing engagement, and sustainability to an already existing business instead of ripping out a piece of the community and replacing it*

Pocket parks have a number of benefits of including: reclamation of vacant lots once filled with weeds and trash, and providing a safe place for kids to play and the community to gather

Building park space is not about having the most square-footage, but rather building civic activism and feelings of community belongingness," (Shannon Lee).

These spaces are usually classified as neighborhood parks, and need to be designed with many activities in mind. They can be used as play areas, for taking lunch breaks, or even for small events; One goal I had for the space was to not only be used as a park, so a free outdoor library was also incorporated



Dog Park

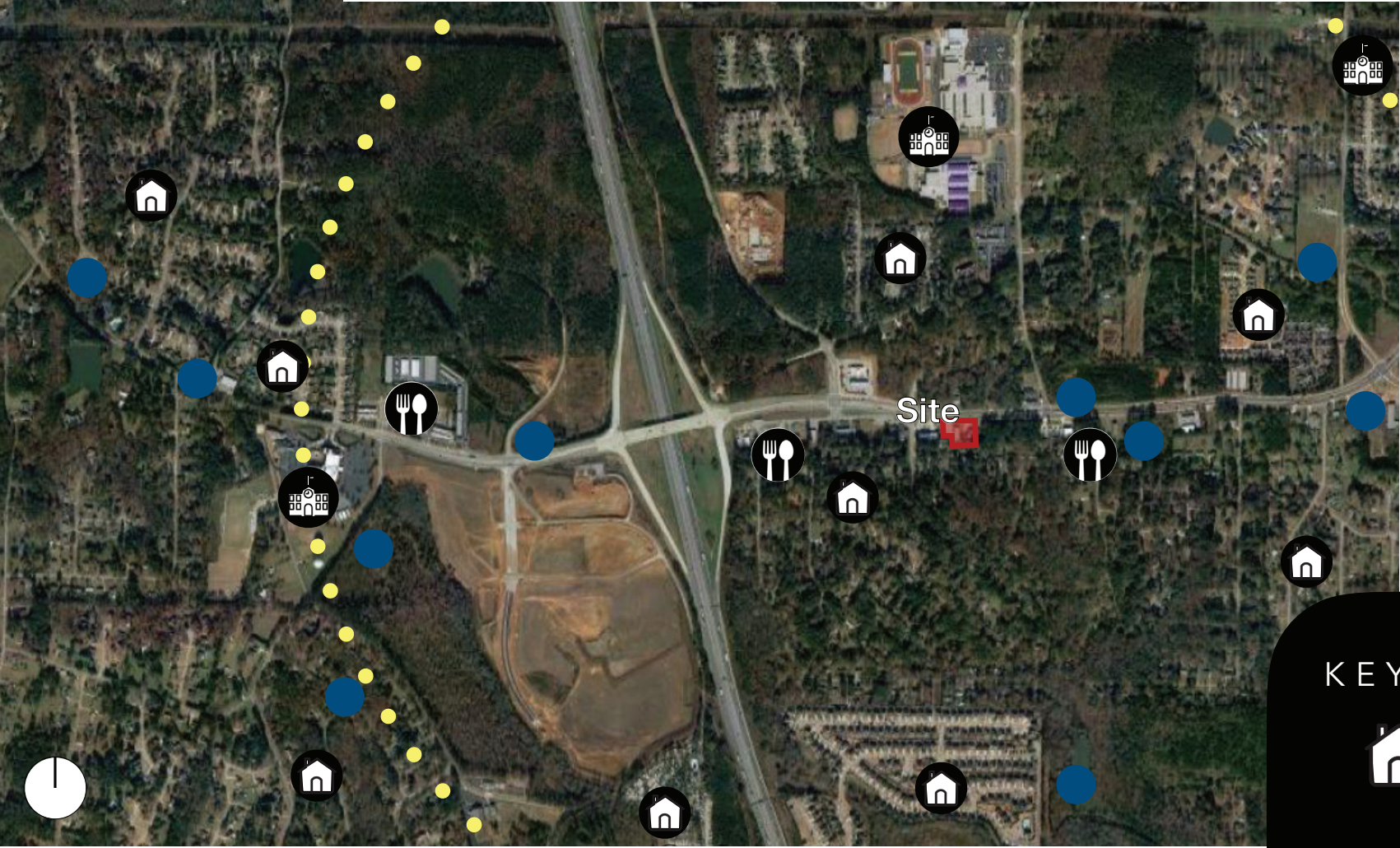


Gathering Space & Stage



Outdoor Library







Little Free Library



*"Some scholars have argued that building small and scattered parks in lieu of large iconic green spaces, combined with strategies to protect affordable housing, can lead to "just green enough" outcomes wherein low-income communities can still enjoy the benefits of the new green city."*

- Alison Blake

**KEY**

 Residential Spaces	 Educational Spaces	 Dining Spaces
 "JGE Pocket Park" Proposed Site	 1 mile radius	 "JGE Pocket Park" Possible Future Sites

**Educational Spaces**



Eagles Landing High School



Flippen Elementary School



Community Christian School



Eagles Landing Middle School

# STAYING LOCAL



Native Rosella

## Plant Life

Ground-cover plants provide protection of the topsoil from erosion and drought. In an ecosystem, the ground cover forms the layer of vegetation below (UGA Cooperative Extension).

## Vegetation

Both Oak and Pine Trees, found in McDonough, GA, reduce water pollution by absorbing fertilizer nutrients, and other trace contaminants in soil. (NAPARCD).

## Support

"Just Green Enough" would be located in close proximity to a number of local businesses, would contain a mural wall for local artists, and a performance stage for local musicians and bands to perform!



Live Oak Trees



Pine Trees



Mini Angel's Trumpet 'Alba'



Local Businesses



Local Artists



Local Performers