

01

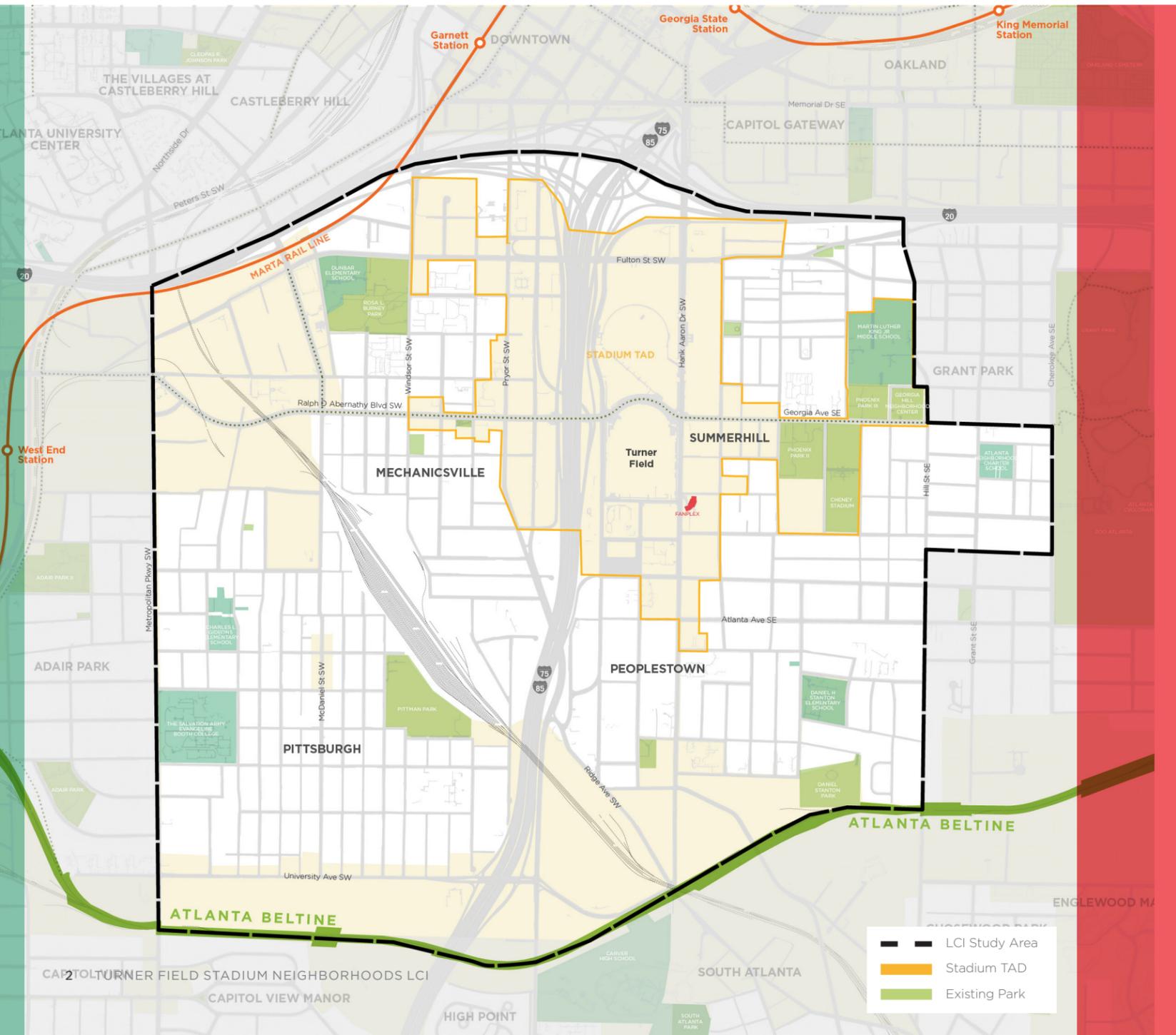


An Historic Opportunity

Not Your Typical LCI
An Historic Opportunity
The LCI Process

“The neighborhoods have been living for years with things that were put on them, I believe it’s time for the neighborhoods to have a say in what comes next.”

— CARLA SMITH, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 1



01 | 01 NOT YOUR TYPICAL LCI

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is a program by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), a regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro area in Atlanta. The LCI program awards planning and implementation grants on a competitive basis to local governments and nonprofit organizations for the enhancement of communities by reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality by better connecting homes, shops and offices.

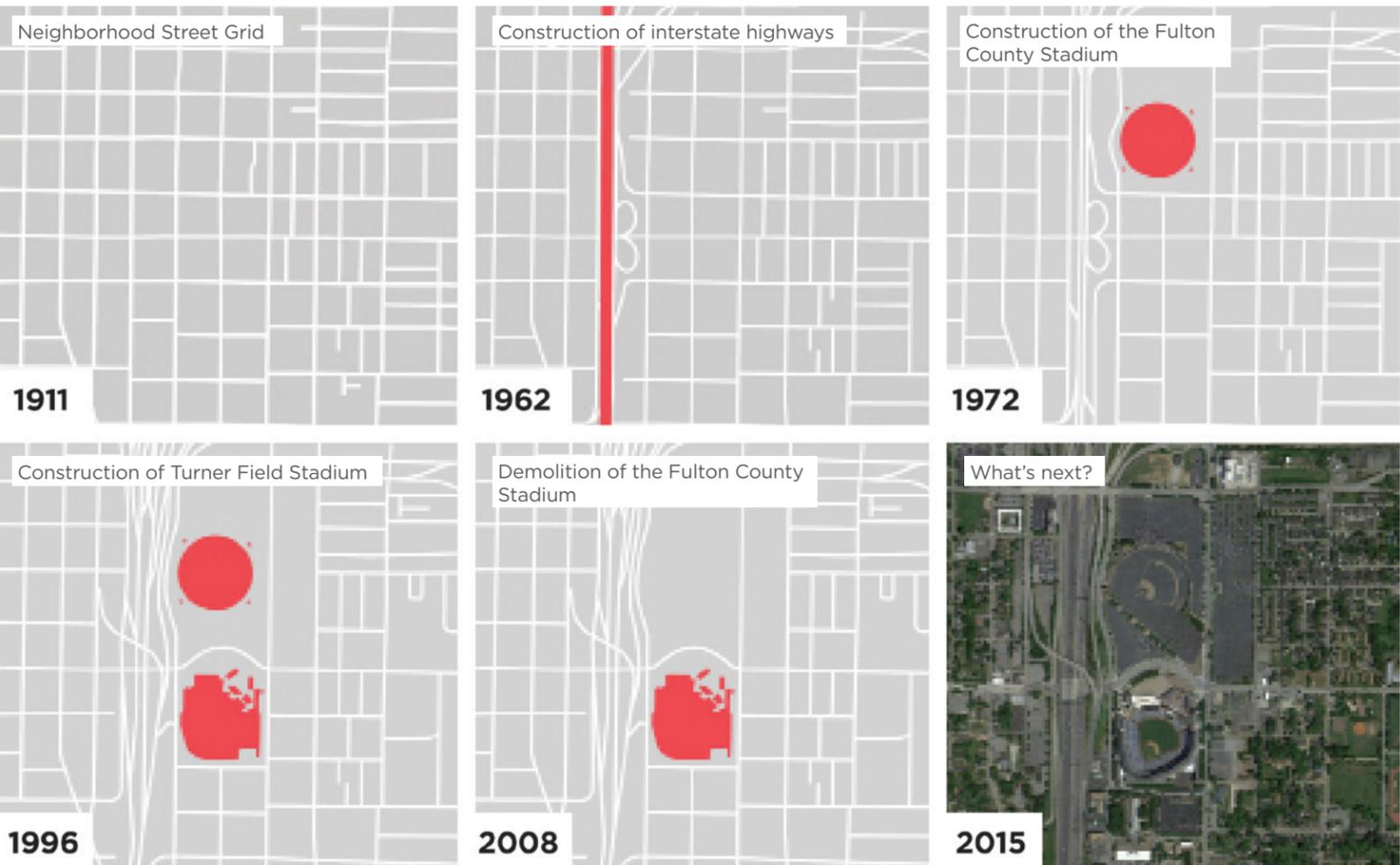
The Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods LCI is not your typical LCI project. The Turner Field LCI is located at the bullseye of the Atlanta Region and is at the intersection of some of Atlanta’s most ambitious plans. Noting this importance, the ARC awarded this LCI the most funding for a single project since its beginning 20 years ago.

The Study Area, located southeast of Downtown Atlanta, is approximately 1,340 acres encompassing all or portions of the Summerhill, Peoplestown, Mechanicsville, Pittsburgh, and Grant Park neighborhoods. In addition, it includes all of the Stadium Tax Allocation District (TAD). The Study Area is home to an estimated 13,604 residents and 5,693 households, this represents 3% of the overall population and households in the city of Atlanta.*

With the Braves playing their final season downtown and the City actively negotiating the sale of the property, this is a highly anticipated community plan with the potential to reshape the south side of Atlanta. The LCI public engagement process reached over 1600 community residents and stakeholders and provided the critical feedback needed to build a bold plan that benefits everyone.

Not only does the LCI study area include Turner Field and the 1996 Centennial Olympic Stadium, it encompasses several of the city’s historic neighborhoods that have been negatively impacted by the stadiums and urban renewal projects of the last half century.

**Resident and household estimates from Nielsen. See Appendix: Housing Market Analysis Baseline for demographics overview.*



Depiction of the changes in the urban fabric of the core area (defined as the Turner Field stadium site and its surroundings lots).

“The Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods area provides a confluence of opportunities for catalytic redevelopment that includes the re-purposing of the stadium, redevelopment of the acres of parking lots managed by the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority (AFCRA), adjacent underutilized and vacant land and major corridors including Hank Aaron Drive, Georgia Avenue, Ralph David Abernathy Road, and

Pryor Street. This will also provide opportunities to enhance the character of the existing neighborhoods. The plan will strive to increase civic space, improve the environment, minimize the impact of storm water, provide housing options and employment, have the density to support all modes of transportation, and a mix of land uses.” — TURNER FIELD STADIUM NEIGHBORHOODS LCI REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

01 | 02 AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

Urban Renewal

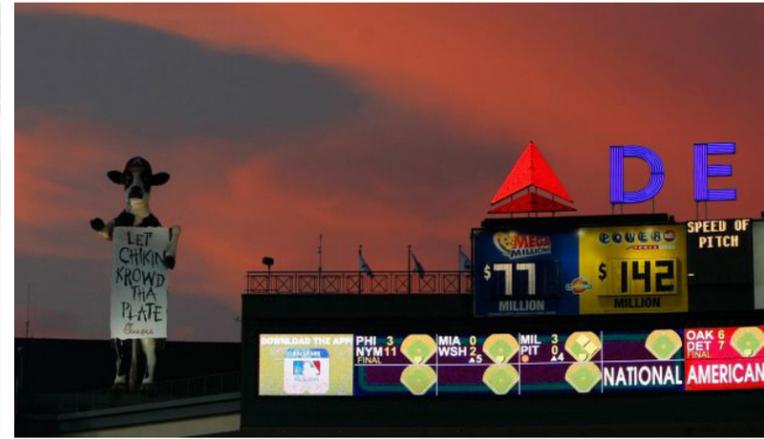
The history of the Turner Field does not begin with the development of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. Rather, it stretches back to the days of thriving neighborhoods and commercial districts lining Capitol, Georgia, Washington and Fulton streets – some even rivaling Peachtree in stature. Yet suburbanization and white flight, structural racism manifest in practices like red-lining, and shifting priorities on where to spend municipal funds were especially concentrated in neighborhoods around Downtown, bringing accelerated decline in property conditions and living standards. Blight led to the establishment of the Rawson-Washington urban renewal area in 1957, triggering the demolition of hundreds of homes and the associated displacement of thousands of residents. This memory is still alive with many who live here today.

Although slated for public housing, Rawson-Washington proved more valuable for regional transportation. In 1962, construction of the east-west and north-south interstates claimed most of the land.

The interstates were quickly followed by a stadium for the transplanted Milwaukee Braves (1966). As parking grew, the street grid was lost and community coherence eroded. By the time the city decided to pursue the Olympic Games in 1987, the stadium was outdated. After a brief second life as an Olympic venue in 1996, it was imploded a year later to become surface parking lots to the Braves’ new home at Centennial Stadium.



Historic photo at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Capitol Avenue



From left to right: Hank Aaron hitting home run #715; Chick Fil-A cow; Centennial Stadium construction; Muhammad Ali lighting up the cauldron; Fulton County Stadium implosion.

From the Games to the Ted

The 1996 games represented a watershed moment for Atlanta. Over two million visitors came to the city as well as many new residents attracted by the economics of preparation. Public space improvements and venue construction ushered in a period of public investment not seen since the construction of MARTA in the 1970s. For a moment, the sight of two major stadiums functioning together suggested the emergence of a new global city.

Yet Atlanta was subtly criticized for over-commercialization and private funding of venues that stood in contrast to the tradition of publicly funded grand civic architecture of the Olympics. To some observers, the plan to convert Centennial Stadium to a baseball field compromised the purity of its purpose. The debate over the stadium's name also created controversy with many feeling that Hank Aaron, whose record-breaking home run in 1974 put Atlanta on the major league baseball map, was slighted.

Nevertheless, Turner Field became an icon to a younger generation of Atlantans who remember it not for the Games and the Braves, but for the giant Coke bottle and the tomahawk-chopping Chick Fil-A cow.

When exactly Turner Field became "The Ted" is open for debate, but it is now unquestionably part of Atlanta's cultural identity. It also became the focus of a tax allocation district (TAD) in 2006 designed to help fund parking decks on the existing lots to release land for mixed-use development - something that the adjacent neighborhoods had wanted since before the Olympics.* Subsequent work by Invest Atlanta and Georgia Tech reinforced the idea that The Ted and environs could represent a new era in city building in Atlanta. This was the foundation that the entire LCI process was built upon.

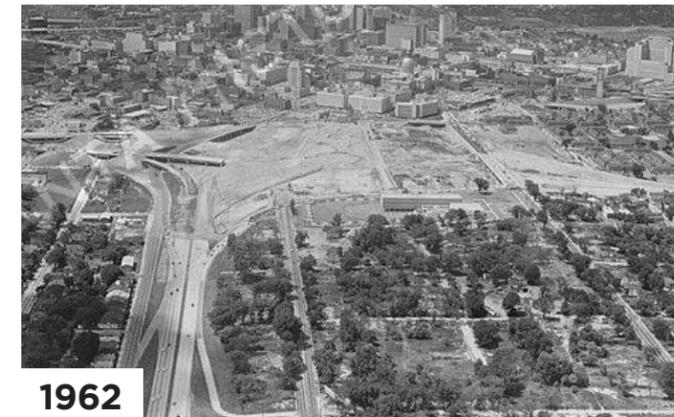
*See Chapter 3: Five Neighborhoods, Revisiting the Neighborhood Plans for more information on the Stadium TAD.



1950



1960



1962



1964



1965



1967



1996



2009

The core area overtime.

“I really believe this LCI is very special. We don’t have many more opportunities to get it right and to help Atlanta continue to grow and become the city that we all dream it should be.”

– DAN REUTER, ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Arriving at the LCI

On November 11, 2013, the president of the Atlanta Braves announced that the organization would build a world-class stadium in Cobb County a “short distance from Downtown Atlanta” to be ready for the start of the 2017 season. While the cost of necessary improvements plus an impending lease expiration date were primary driving forces behind the move, the Braves acknowledged that their fan base would be better served by the more northerly location. It was stated that current deficiencies at The Ted, like the lack of convenient transit, played into their decision.

The announcement took much of the city by surprise. Some believed that discussions over improvements to the stadium and future development on the surface parking lots were progressing. That it was simply a matter of redoubling negotiations to keep the Braves downtown. But the incentives offered by Cobb County could not justifiably be matched by the city. Plus, the property adjacent to the stadium could not be legally transferred to Braves ownership – one of their key negotiating requests - without an open bidding process which might put the possibility of that ownership at risk.

Mayor Reed accepted the decision and said in a statement the following day that Turner Field would be demolished after the Braves exit. The mayor’s vision for the future – building “one of the largest developments for middle-class people that the city ever had” brought the discussion back full circle to the original best intentions for urban renewal. The process that emerged, however, was nothing like the steps taken to redevelop urban land in the 1950s.





Mayor Kasim Reed at the Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods LCI kickoff meeting held at FanPlex, 2015.

Community members participating in one of the visioning workshop held at FanPlex for the LCI Study Area, 2016.

Six months after the Braves' announcement another news release caught the attention of the city. A consortium of developers and Georgia State University had prepared a plan for the conversion of Turner Field and the adjacent parking lots into an athletic campus containing college football and baseball venues and other university facilities. While a remarkable proposal, it also mobilized residents of Summerhill, Mechanicsville and Peoplestown to take action to form a coalition (The Turner Field Benefits Coalition) that could have a voice in further development of the GSU plan.

In December 2013, Atlanta City Council adopted a resolution, sponsored by City Councilwoman Carla Smith, to create a taskforce to make recommendations for commercial and residential development, public safety and transportation opportunities in the vicinity of Turner Field. The task force was charged with identifying issues currently facing the neighborhoods and providing recommendations that will promote a vibrant and

“The relocation of the Braves Baseball team... provides an opportunity to develop, through extensive community engagement, a shared vision and plan for the neighborhoods.”

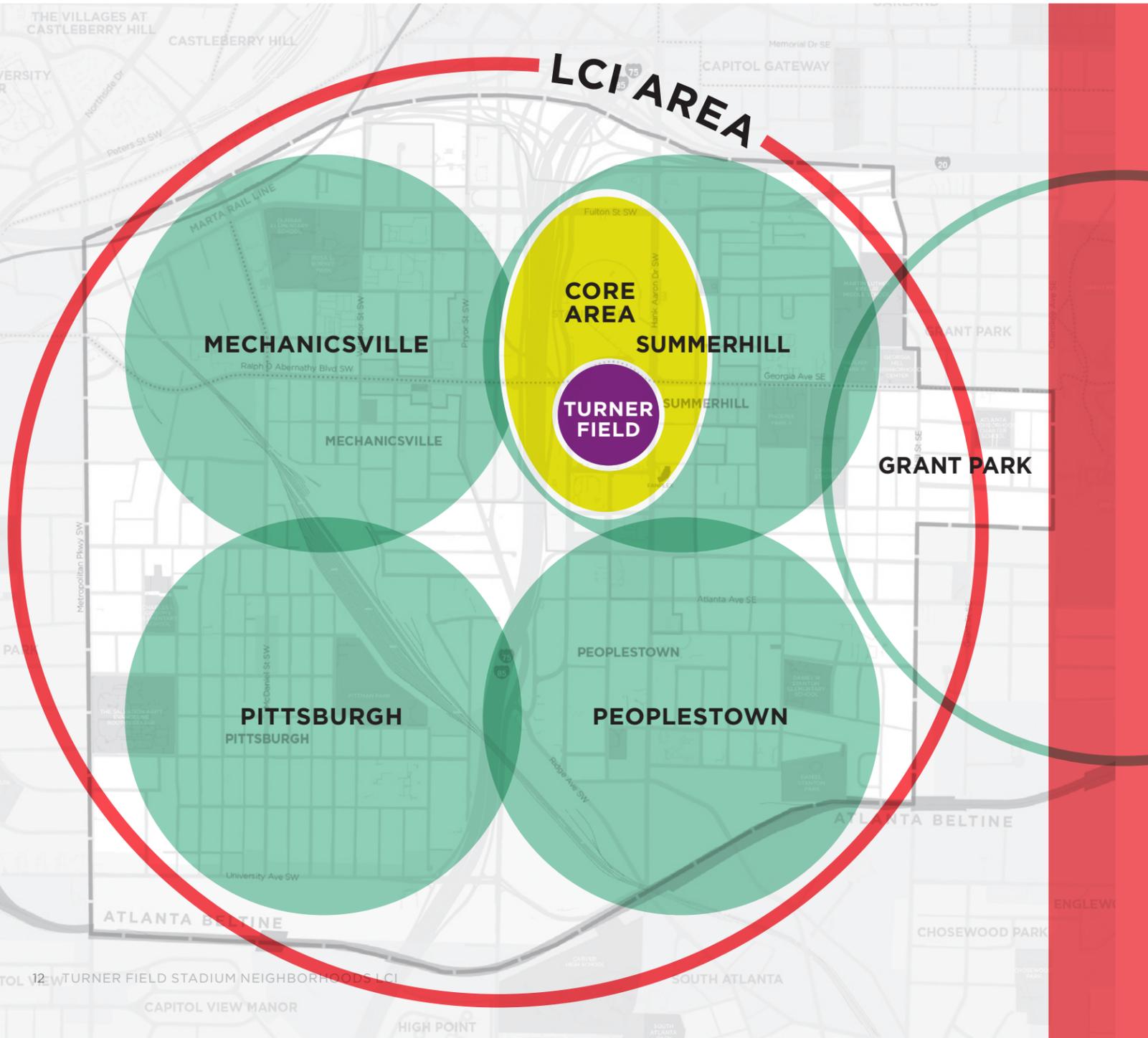
—TURNER FIELD STADIUM NEIGHBORHOODS LCI REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

safe community, with sustained economic development after the Atlanta Braves leave Turner Field in 2017. The Task Force held its kick-off meeting on July 2014. Their initial recommendation was to update the Summerhill, Mechanicsville, and Peoplestown redevelopment plans.

At the December 2014 Task Force meeting, the Department of Planning and Community Development presented information about the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative program and the recently submitted grant application that included Turner Field, the parking lots, and all or portions of five neighborhoods, instead of focusing on the updating neighborhood redevelopment plans.

The ARC awarded the grant on February 2015. Additional funds were provided by the City of Atlanta and Invest Atlanta with matching funds from Anne E. Casey Foundation and support from the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority.

1 Kickoff Workshop, 2 Charettes,
 9 Focus Groups, 5 Neighborhood
 Meetings, 1 Festival, 1 Open House
1600+ Participants



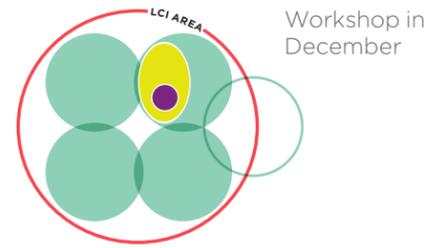
01 | 03 THE LCI PROCESS

In June 2015, the City of Atlanta released a request for proposal to select a planning team for the Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods LCI. After a competitive bidding process, a team lead by Perkins+Will was selected to conduct an extensive and engaging community-driven LCI process. Following the work spearheaded by Councilmembers Smith, Sheperd, and Winslow, the planning team embarked on an eight-month community engagement journey in which a broad range of ideas were exchanged, bold dreams were fostered and consensus on the future of the stadium neighborhoods was found.

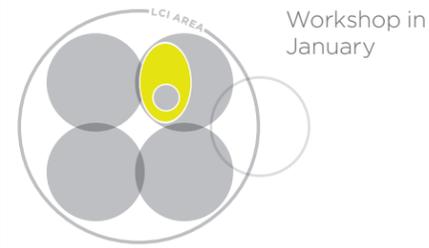
Starting with a kick-off public meeting in **December 2015**, the planning team shepherded several public workshops, neighborhood meetings, focus groups and interviews (details of which can be found in the Appendix). The process, which took the team to every corner of the LCI study area and engaged over 1600 community residents and stakeholders, was carried out in collaboration with the **Project Management Team** and the **Core Team** who acted as sounding boards from the beginning and provided critical feedback needed to build an LCI plan to benefit everyone.

We believe a great city is a diverse, complex environment shaped by multiple voices over time.

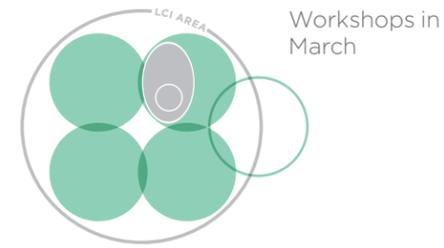
(1) LCI Kickoff



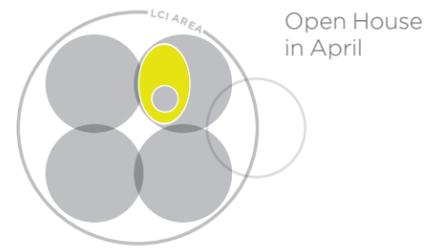
(2) Core Area Visioning



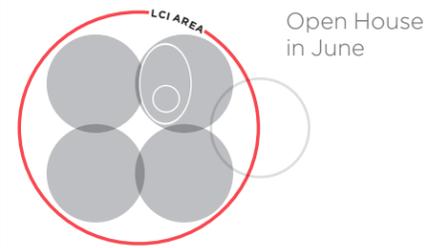
(3) Neighborhoods Visioning



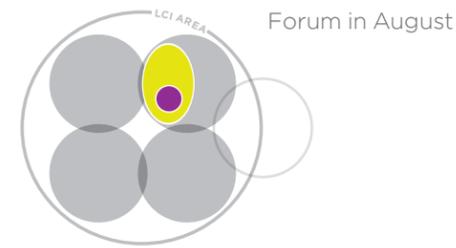
(4) Celebrating at Atlanta Streets Alive



(5) LCI Projects Open House



(6) Key Opportunity Forum



The LCI process was organized in response to the unique characteristics of the Study Area which is composed of five neighborhoods and a catalyst project of regional significance. As seen in the graphic above, the planning team provided the space to articulate the challenges and opportunities each neighborhood faces with the redevelopment of Turner Field, as well as an avenue to focus on the catalyst site, defined as the core area in this plan.

In **January**, the Core Area Visioning Workshop took place and more than 250 participants gathered for an interactive exercise that focused on Turner Field and its surrounding parking lots.

In **March**, public workshops were conducted in Peoplestown, Summerhill, Mechanicsville, Pittsburgh and Grant Park neighborhoods. Activities centered on Transportation, Land Use, and Cultural Assets.

The common themes discovered during these workshops formed the foundations for the plan recommendations and design concepts which were

presented back to the community in the following months.

In **April**, the planning team unveiled the core area design concepts to 400+ visitors at Atlanta Streets Alive.

In **June**, the community provided final feedback on the projects proposed for the LCI as a whole. Transportation, development and open space initiatives were vetted through an Open House format, as residents and stakeholders shaped an inclusive vision for the area.

Input was also provided through online tools such as the Stadium Neighborhoods LCI's website*, social media, and Neighborland's interactive platform*. Atlanta Public Schools also conducted an extensive survey that included 1100 students in the area. See details in the Appendix.

Lastly, the Draft TFSN LCI Plan was released in **July** and was available for review and comment for a month.



FanPlex Panoramic View

The draft plan was presented by the Office of Planning staff at the August NPU V and W meetings. A Resolution to adopt the plan was introduced by Council members Smith, Winslow and Sheperd. A public hearing was held September 12th prior to the adoption of the plan.

*www.stadiumneighborhoods.com

*<https://neighborland.com/stadiumneighborhoods>

THE VENUE

The LCI process greatly benefited from the generosity of the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority by using FanPlex as the primary venue for public engagement. The building was staged to act as a living design lab with four stations called LEARN, WISH, SHARE, and ASK which framed a continuous two-way dialogue between stakeholders and the planning team.

Grocery Store!
A real one!

Green space with
great family features
ie. playgrounds, work out
stations etc.

Major investment
in eradicating
poverty + support
programs for children
0-17

A commercial area
much like Emory
with nice dining, shopping
entertainment

A community
garden
+
urban farm
on every block

Fishing
AREA
Local

A COMPREHENSIVE
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
PLAN TO CAPTURE
STORM WATER!

To HAVE A
COMMUNITY
BASED CARE

No more
Dead, Battered

ED
ds

Diverse community!
Young/old
all races, religions, orientations
poor / less poor
Keep economic diversity

I WISH FOR A
FUN
PLANNING PROCESS

OLYMPICS WAS A
GREAT CATALYST
FOR ATLANTA TEARING
DOWN THE HOME
IRRESPONSIBLY.

I WISH FOR...

Major investment in eradicating poverty and support programs for children 0-17.

Never having to drive again!

Fresh grocery stores and other businesses that cater to healthy living.

I wish for neighborhood development that creates pride in the area and desirability for visitors and potential homeowners.

A streetcar down Georgia Ave and Capitol Ave, ultimately connected to the existing network.

I wish for greater safety in my neighborhood. I want to feel safe.

I think it would be great if there was a MARTA station, small stores, a park, and a supermarket. I also want a Braves museum.

any store
more stadiums

A neighborhood
center like Krog
Street Market or Ponce
de Leon Market

No more sports venues,
but can repurpose as housing
or retail on ~~many~~ offices