CREATING LINKAGES AND ELIMINATING BARRIERS

The Strategic Community Investment (SCI) Report
Executive Summary

**A Report Presented to the City of Atlanta
Department of Planning and Community Development
Office of Housing by APD Solutions**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report that follows, known as the Strategic Community Investment (SCI) report, contains an extensive inventory and analysis of Atlanta, Georgia's residential real estate. The SCI report is based on "windshield" survey field data specifically collected for this report, as well as supplemental economic and demographic indicators from a variety of public and third-party sources. The SCI report documents the conditions of Atlanta's residential properties, in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the city's housing market on the neighborhood level, and to generate strategies for the purpose of attracting investment and development in areas where such change can have the greatest positive impact.

In recent years, the city of Atlanta has seen decidely uneven growth and development. Some parts of the city have flourished, while others have declined. Powerful macroeconomic forces and a tumultuous real estate market have brought instability to many once-growing communities. This report was designed to assist the City of Atlanta decision makers in their efforts to formulate plans for equitable growth and development across Atlanta. The authors of the following report believe that a key strategy for initiating equitable growth and development is to work towards the stabilization of neighborhoods that are currently struggling. More specifically, a main objective of this report is to identify "tipping point neighborhoods"—areas where small changes might dramatically alter the state of a neighborhood for good or ill. In accordance with the City's Comprehensive Development Plan, the precise documentation of Atlanta's 258 residential neighborhoods can help target intervention or stabilization efforts into specific areas. To this end, the SCI Study will support the Mayor's vision to target communities for investment in order to spur interest from the private development community, and create a model for neighborhood stabilization and revitalization across the city. The recommendations contained within the SCI report reflect the broad desires and goals of the City of Atlanta, but remain grounded within existing economic and political realities.

OUTLINING THE STUDY

This report is broken into several sections. First, an executive summary will broadly describe the contours of the report and its findings. Secondly, the necessary context for the report is provided in the form of a broad overview of Atlanta, its neighborhoods, the strengths and weaknesses of the city's housing market, and pertinent issues surrounding residential investment and neighborhood revitalization. Next, a guide on using the report outlines the tools that are contained within it and a series of recommended actions for interested parties to take. Then a description of the methods used to determine and gather necessary data will precede an overview and analysis of the study's findings. This will include the classification of neighborhoods for the purpose of targeting investment, and a series of related planning and policy recommendations for the City's consideration.

ATLANTA AT A GLANCE

The city of Atlanta is the commercial and transportation hub of the Southeast, and the urban center of an area of nearly 6 million people, with a strong corporate, governmental, and entrepreneurial presence. It possesses a uniquely green and tree-lined urban setting, a temperate climate, and a relatively low population density. Atlanta is also a city of neighborhoods, and a patchwork of vibrant and diverse communities that are constantly developing, changing, and affecting one another.

Home prices in the Atlanta metropolitan area are significantly lower today than in the year 2000, making it only one of four major metro areas where prices are below 2000 figures (CoreLogic RealQuest, 2012). The effects of the collapse of the U.S. housing bubble and the recession of the late-2000s have left many Atlanta neighborhoods full of foreclosed and vacant residential properties. The significant decline in home values along with an increased pool of renters caused by the foreclosure crisis has made Atlanta a prime target for investors. Banks and investors are keeping the vast majority of foreclosed and vacant properties off the market for now, posing a major constraint against goals of stabilizing struggling neighborhoods.

Residents, policy makers, investors, employers, lenders, realtors, developers, visitors, and other parties invariably have very different perspectives on any given neighborhood. In Atlanta, there is only limited coordination between these parties in directing and establishing investments, programs, and initiatives. As strategies and tactics are developed and evaluated to stabilize and grow Atlanta's struggling neighborhoods, it is essential to encourage collaboration between these parties, and to try to generate understanding and empathy for the perspectives of many diverse stakeholders in these communities.

DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMICS, AND HOUSING

According to the United States Census Bureau, Atlanta's estimated 2011 population was 432,427, with a density of 3,188 persons per square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Atlanta's population grew by 0.8% from 2000 to 2010. In 2010, the city's racial makeup was 54% Black, 38.4% White, 3.1% Asian, 0.2% Native American, 2.2% some other race and those from two or more races made up 2.0% of the population. Hispanics of any race made up 5.2% of the city's population. Atlanta's median household income from 2007 to 2011 was $45,171, with a per capita figure of $35,453. 22.6% of the city's population was living below the poverty line in 2011. From 2007 to 2011, 7.6% of Atlanta residents were foreign born, and 10.5% spoke a primary language other than English in their homes. The median value of an owner occupied home in Atlanta from 2007 to 2011 was $228,000, and the homeownership rate was 47% in the city, with 53.9% of total housing units located in multi-unit structures. From 2007 to 2011, 87.3% of Atlanta residents had at least a high school degree, and 46.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As part of the SCI report, multiple data sources were referenced to gather information on Atlanta's neighborhoods. These sources included new information generated by the "windshield" survey identifying the existing conditions of Atlanta's residential real estate. As a supplement to the "windshield" survey, information was collected from the U. S. Census Bureau, CoreLogic Real Quest, Fulton and DeKalb Tax Digest, Atlanta Police Department, Georgia Department of Education, Neilson-Caritas, Atlanta's Department of Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs, and Metrostudy. The following summarizes some of the most significant citywide findings:

EXISTING CONDITIONS OF HOUSING

CITYWIDE CONDITIONS SNAPSHOT

Category	Number	Percentage
Parcels		
Total Parcels Citywide	160,207	100%
Residential Parcels	143,888	89.8%
Non Residential Parcels	16,319	10.2%
Survey Totals		
Surveyed Structures	125,022	86.9% of Residential Parcels
Surveyed Lots	9,664	6.7% of Residential Parcels
Unsurveyable Parcels	9,202	6.4% of Residential Parcels
Structures*		
Total Structures	125,022	100%
1-2 Unit Structures (Single-Family)	123,327	98.6
3+ Unit Structures (Multi-Family)	1,695	1.4%
Structure Occupancy (Tenure)		
Occupied Structures	117,048	93.6%
Vacant Structures	7,974	6.4%
Total Vacancy		
Vacant Structures and Vacant Lots	17,638	-
Citywide Vacancy Percentage	-	12.3%
Structure Condition (Percentages based Surveyed Property totals of 125,022)		
Good	97,623	78.1%
Fair	22,362	17.9%
Poor	2,498	2.0%
Deteriorated	1,352	1.1%
Not Visible	1,187	0.9%
Vacant Lot Condition (Total 9,664)		
Good	1,237	12.8%
Fair	6,175	63.9%
Poor	1,329	13.8%
Not Visible	923	9.5%

Source: APD Solutions Field Evaluation

Within the city of Atlanta's 143,888 residential parcels, there are 125,022 residential structures, of which approximately 6.4% appear to be vacant or abandoned (APD Solutions, 2011-2012). Of the 12.3% total residential parcels (structures and lots) in the city that are vacant, large numbers are concentrated in a few neighborhoods, with many of these comprising a loose "band" that stretches from Northwest to Southeast Atlanta. 1-4 unit structures comprise 99.2% of residential structures in the city, with structures having 5 or more residential units making up the remaining 0.8%. However, the structures within the remaining 0.8% contain 52,243 total housing units averaging 53.3 units per structure.

Atlanta's housing stock has a mean age of 44 years (DeKalb County Tax Assessor's Office, 2011) (Fulton County Tax Assessor's Office, 2011). The average percentage of blight observed among residential parcels in a neighborhood is 2% and the average percentage of residential properties with code issues is 3%. According to the "windshield" survey, 69% of the city's residential lots and structures were defined for the purposes of this study to have "curb appeal," meaning that they appear to be in fair or good condition when viewed from the sidewalk or "curb."

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMICS

Our research reveals the median mortgage payment in the Atlanta was $1,853 per month (CoreLogic RealQuest, 2012). The analysis of property valuation from July 2011 to June 2012 indicated that the average neighborhood saw a 19% appreciation in residential properties. The analysis also revealed vast differences in residential appreciation across neighborhoods. On the neighborhood level, a 45% overall loss of value was observed for residential properties over that time period. Housing starts on the other hand are on an overall upswing, with a 22% increase over the same time period. Distressed assets in the city were significant in number with the average Atlanta neighborhood having 9% of its residential properties either in the foreclosure process or advertised for sale by a bank or lender at a depressed price, with some neighborhoods as high as 34% (CoreLogic RealQuest, 2012). The positive side of the equation reveals the average residential real estate transaction value by neighborhood from July 2011 to August 2012 was $225,483, with averages ranging as low as $86,630 and as high as $1,810,330. Residential ownership in the city averaged a rate of 52% on the neighborhood level with some neighborhoods seeing highs of 90% and lows of 0%.

The extent of "community commerce" production in Atlanta was measured to average $24 million by neighborhood (Nielsen Claritas, 2012), meaning that there are 24 million dollars in retail sales on an annual basis in the mean Atlanta neighborhood. The average number of retail/commercial businesses in an Atlanta neighborhood is 21, indicating average annual sales of $1,142,857 per business. Our analysis shows that the majority of this revenue is concentrated in the north and east of the city, leaving many neighborhoods in the South and West underserved by retail, and their residents forced to travel beyond the locality to meet much of their demand for goods and services. There were 91 building permits issued in the average Atlanta neighborhood over a recent five year period (city of Atlanta Planning Department, 2012).

QUALITY OF LIFE

When comparing the average commute time between Atlanta's communities, 37% of neighborhoods contain residents that face daily commute times of 30 minutes or more (CoreLogic RealQuest, 2012). Atlanta's green spaces are numerous, as seen by the fact that 87% of residential parcels enjoy a half mile or less proximity to parks or walking trails (City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation Department, 2012). Pedestrians in the city can access sidewalks for only 40% of parcels frontages (APD Solutions, 2011-2012). While the proximity of green space to residential properties in the city is encouraging, the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure is worrisome, as is the fact that 34% of Atlanta neighborhoods are only accessible by one or two modes of transportation. The average Atlanta neighborhood sees 310 instances of violent or property crime per year (City of Atlanta Police Department, 2012).

USING THIS REPORT SYNOPSIS

The anticipated result of the SCI report is two-fold, first to inform stakeholders and investors about the current conditions of the city's housing stock, and second to help move them from a place of inaction to one of directed and strategic activity. Investors are individuals or entities that bring resources to bear and put them at risk in an effort to enhance a community, while stakeholders are interested parties that affect or can be affected by the circumstances in the community. Because the report contains a vast amount of information about the city's neighborhoods, it can be used by these parties in many different ways.

Neighborhoods exist on a continuum of investment quality or "health" that is a reflection of the investment decisions that people make there. Every neighborhood is built to fulfill a vision or need, but over time, investment and disinvestment can move any place up or down the continuum. Disinvestment occurs when risk-averse investors and stakeholders avoid places that are seen as having poor investment quality. "Community Investment" describes the asset or value based contributions made by public and private entities, along with community coalitions, to coordinate and target resources to improve a community. As a community moves down the continuum, a mix of public/private investment and local activism becomes critical, and the public sector must be strategic in where it targets its limited resources.
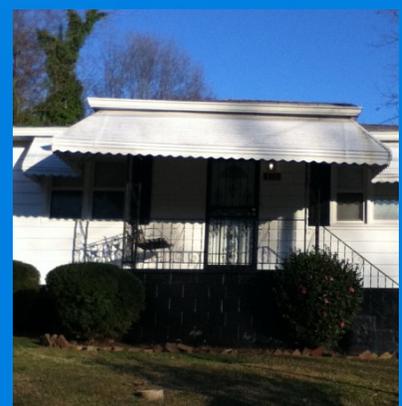
The result of the research and analysis conducted by the APDS team is a series of tools for stakeholders and investors to use: maps, graphs, tables and recommendations. These tools are intended to help these parties understand conditions in different parts of the city, identify the factors that make a difference in a neighborhood, and determine how their decisions and investments can impact these factors. These tools include:

a) **Neighborhood Wave Tool** - provides insight into the neighborhood factors that most effectively influence the investment quality of a neighborhood.

b) **Neighborhood Typology Heat Map** - shows the current conditions of each neighborhood along a continuum.

c) **Tables and Maps** – indicates the Target Areas of Opportunity/TAOs and the Tipping Point Neighborhoods that are recommended for investment and activism.

d) **Neighborhood Factor/Recommendation Tactic Matrix** - recommends specific tactics for improving different neighborhood factors.

With these tools, an interested investor or stakeholder can use the data and findings of the SCI report in a number of ways. Our recommended process begins with the identification of a desired neighborhood for evaluation. After a neighborhood is identified, the user can identify the factors affecting investment quality that are most important to them, and then examine the community's location on the continuum and the assessment of its current conditions along their chosen factors. Next, the user can compare the investment strength of the neighborhood with other areas to determine which specific factors are important in shifting the neighborhood's investment quality. Finally, the stakeholder/investor can use those factors to identify recommendations and related best practices in order to create initiatives for neighborhood improvement. It is ultimately hoped that the tools and processes contained within the SCI report will facilitate activity that positively transforms targeted neighborhoods for the benefit of the entire city.

METHOD OF APPROACH SYNOPSIS

A key desired outcome of the SCI report is the direction of strategic investment into neighborhoods where small changes can potentially have a major positive impact. To lay the groundwork for this strategy, so-called tipping point neighborhoods had first to be identified. The process leading to this determination began with the selection of criteria for evaluating and ranking neighborhoods. This was followed by the collection and analysis of data on the existing conditions of Atlanta's residential real estate, the selection of specific neighborhoods to be targeted for investment and growth based on a number of criteria, and the creation of relevant policy and planning recommendations.

In order to provide a clear and accurate picture of both positive and negative trends affecting the city of Atlanta's housing stock, APD Solutions (APDS) collected comprehensive and objective data on every accessible residential parcel within the city limits in a process that began in December 2011 and ended in August 2012. The next step was to break this information down to the neighborhood level, examining the current state of housing in each of Atlanta's communities. The research involved a total of 258 neighborhood areas. Some of those areas were assessed to be largely industrial or vacant and therefore not all of the 258 neighborhoods ended up as part of the final neighborhood typology ranking - to be discussed later on in the report. This exhaustive, detailed description of the conditions of the city's housing stock should be valuable in helping the city of Atlanta optimize its policy and planning priorities, and in turn build a better Atlanta for all of its residents. Organizing this data by neighborhood also serves to satisfy demand among various local and regional parties for detailed and granular comparative information on Atlanta's housing conditions.

In order to determine what information needed to be gathered through a citywide field survey and additional data collection, APDS held focus groups representative of many different stakeholders to determine what neighborhood "factors" should be used to evaluate neighborhood quality. The 25 factors that were ultimately chosen were derived from an initial list of 100.

NEIGHBORHOOD DATA COLLECTION

Central to putting together the information for these 25 factors was APDS' visual or "windshield" field survey of ever accessible residential parcel in the city of Atlanta, which was conducted based on the observations of a team of approximately 50 individual surveyors. This information includes property tenure, lot and structure condition, the presence of sidewalks, identification of code issues, and other criteria deemed relevant for the evaluation of existing conditions. The surveyors collected all of the aforementioned information in the field using a proprietary application that was installed on mobile Apple devices.

In addition to the "windshield" survey, additional information on neighborhood and property-level factors was collected from a wide variety of public and third-party sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, CoreLogic RealQuest, Fulton/DeKalb County Tax Digest, Atlanta Police Department, Georgia Department of Education, Nielson-Claritas, Atlanta Parks Department, Metrostudy, and others. Together, the "windshield" survey and additional sources of information yielded a total of 41 data points for every parcel and 84 data points for each city neighborhood.

The assembled city, neighborhood and parcel-level findings were converted into two sections, or phases, of information. Phase I contains information from the "windshield" survey, concerning the economic challenges and opportunities related to the physical conditions of structures and lots throughout the city, while Phase II contains information and attributes concerning neighborhood quality of life, condition, amenities, investment, and demographics.

INVESTMENT AREA INDICATORS

Atlanta's citywide metrics are helpful in providing context for neighborhood-level findings. The SCI report focuses on relevant data that is aggregated at the neighborhood level. This prospective provides a platform for the purposes of evaluating neighborhoods utilizing 25 factors compiled from the "windshield" survey and supplemental data collections. These factors were grouped into the following five assessment categories: Quality of Life, Condition, Amenities, Investment, and Demographics. The factors were combined to create a rating for each Atlanta neighborhood and were compiled according to the following categories:

A) Quality of Life
- A1: Crime Incidences
- A2: Average Commute
- A3: Housing Expenses
- A4: Community Commerce
- A5: Community Identity

B) Condition
- B1: Curb Appeal
- B2: Age of Housing Stock
- B3: Vacancy
- B4: Code Issues
- B5: Blight

C) Amenities
- C1: Number of Retail/Commercial Businesses
- C2: Quality of Public Education
- C3: Transportation Options
- C4: Access to Green Space
- C5: Presence of Sidewalks

D) Return on Investment
- D1: Property Appreciation/Depreciation
- D2: Public Subsidies
- D3: Permit Issuance
- D4: Level of Distressed Assets
- D5: Average Real Estate Transaction Value

E) Demographics/Diversity
- E1: Population Growth
- E2: Owner-Occupancy
- E3: Presence of Diversity
- E4: Educational Attainment
- E5: Income

SCORES AND RANKINGS

Every neighborhood was given a positive or negative score for each of the 25 factors, ranging from -5 to +5. These factors were then weighted based on the findings of a survey given to real estate professionals, builders, property owners, homeowners, renters, lenders, and civil servants. The sum of these weighted scores generated a final score for each neighborhood, with the final results placed along the following scale of neighborhood typologies:

- **Exceptional Investment Area (+39 to +50)**
- **Strong Investment Area (+26 to +38)**
- **Stable Investment Area (+13 to +25)**
- **Trending Investment Area (0 to +12)**
- **Transitional Investment Area (0 to -12)**
- **Vulnerable Investment Area (-13 to -25)**
- **Declining Investment Area (-26 to -38)**
- **Fragile Investment Area (-39 to -50)**

Since these eight typologies were formulated using 25 different factors, it is difficult to describe any of them in overly broad terms. However, certain characteristics emerge that are common to the majority of neighborhoods within the different typologies.

With generally high scores across the board, neighborhoods in an Exceptional Investment Area tend to stand out particularly for their strong community identities and extremely low incidences of vacancy and code issues, as exemplified by areas like Poncey-Highland. These investment areas tend to be clustered roughly around Piedmont Park, with the Cabbagetown neighborhood as a notable outlier to the south. Strong Investment Area neighborhoods tend to lie adjacent to the Exceptional ones and they also stretch northwest along I-75 to Underwood Hills and north along Highway 400 towards North Buckhead. Stable Investment Area neighborhoods vary tremendously in their characteristics. They do tend to have much greater recent building permit activity and presence of sidewalks than those in typologies ranked below them, as represented by neighborhoods such as South Tuxedo Park, and are spread out throughout much of the northern and eastern areas of the city.

The remaining investment area typologies can be found throughout all areas of the west and south of the city, with a sprinkling of Trending and Transitional Investment Area neighborhoods in Northern Atlanta. The Trending area neighborhoods tend to fall close to the middle of the grouping of neighborhood factors, with the Boulevard Heights neighborhood being exemplary to this rule. Transitional Investment Area neighborhoods also hold a median position in many categories. Though slightly below Trending a reason an overall basis, the Cascade Heights neighborhood proved to be representative of this typology. Among the most discernible differences are between Trending and Transitional Investment Area neighborhoods. Trending neighborhoods tend to have noticeably shorter commute times, higher housing costs, higher projected incomes and educational attainment levels among residents.

With respect to public education, neighborhoods in Vulnerable Investment Areas tend to have the lowest rankings of the group of typologies as well as reasonably low rates of vacancy and code issues despite poor rankings in many other areas. The Boulder Park neighborhood typifies a Vulnerable Investment Area neighborhood. Declining and Fragile Investment Area neighborhoods are fairly similar in many ways, in that they both represent communities experiencing the worst overall position rankings among the 25 factors. The advantages that Declining areas tend to have over Fragile ones are that, they include stronger neighborhood identities, have better access to green space, and present lower incidences of vacancy and blight. The Adamsville neighborhood represents an example of a community within a Declining Investment Area, while Almond Park is representative of a Fragile Investment Area neighborhood, though it has unusually high access to green space for its typology.

NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGY HEAT MAP

Legend

Typology Classification

- Exceptional
- Strong
- Stable
- Trending
- Transitional
- Vulnerable
- Declining
- Fragile
- No Data Available

Source: APDS Field Evaluation Data
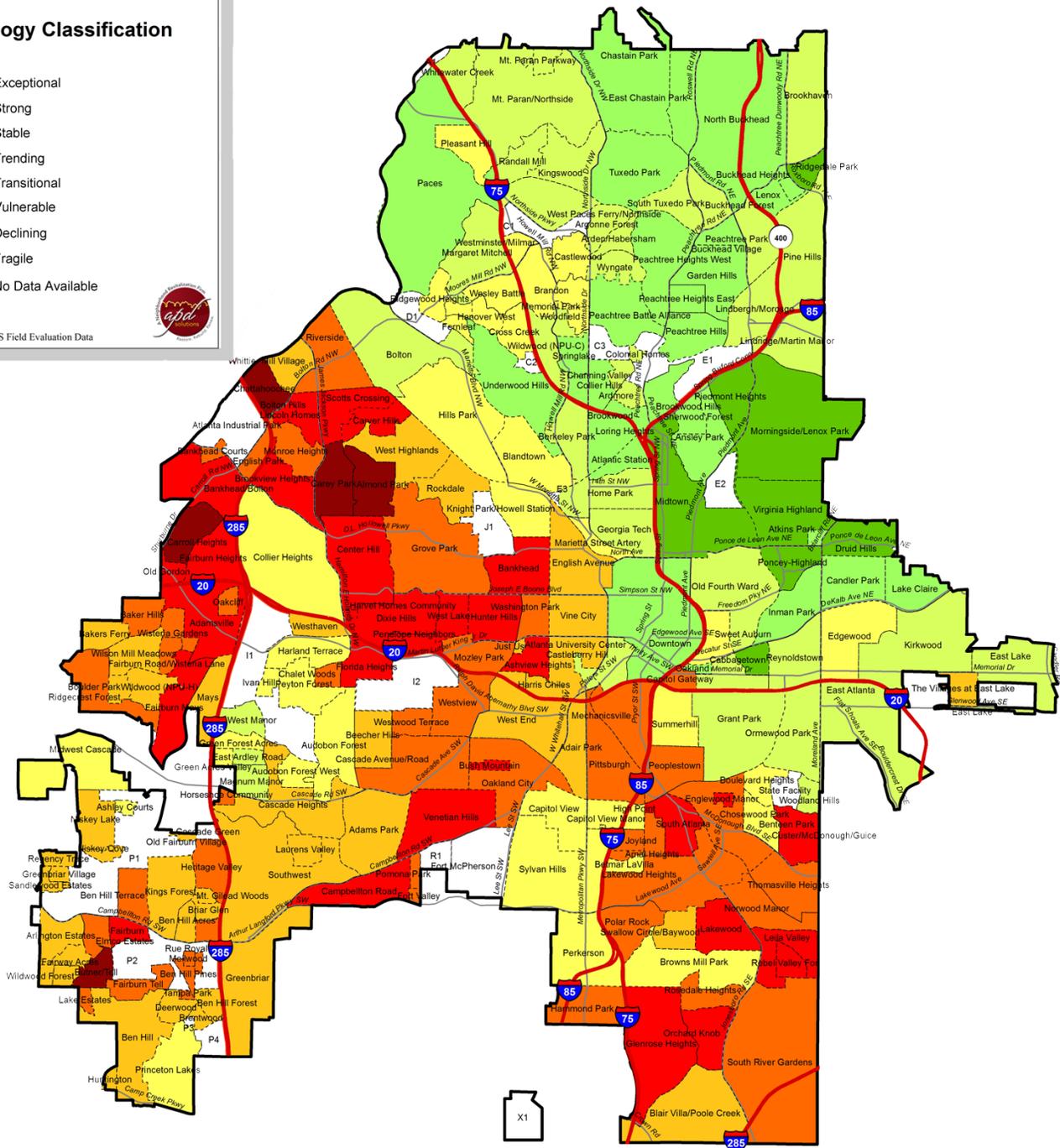
* Residential properties that were surveyed in these areas not identified by a neighborhood name were too few in numeric proportion to be represented by a typology, however these properties were included within the overall city-wide statistical measurement of existing conditions.

Source: APDS Field Evaluation Data

NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGY RANKINGS & SCORES

KEY

- ● Exceptional
- ● Strong
- ● Stable
- ● Trending
- ● Transitional
- ● Vulnerable
- ● Declining
- ● Fragile

Neighborhood Name	Typology	Neighborhood Name	Typology	Neighborhood Name	Typology	Neighborhood Name	Typology
Cabbagetown	●	The Villages at Castleberry Hill	●	Old Fairburn Village	●	Pomona Park	●
Poncey-Highland	●	Mt. Paran Parkway	●	Cascade Heights	●	Amal Heights	●
Virginia Highland	●	Wyngate	●	West Highlands	●	Hammond Park	●
Morningside/Lenox Park	●	Kingswood	●	Greenbriar	●	Mellwood	●
Midtown	●	Georgia Tech	●	Sandlewood Estates	●	Rue Royal	●
Piedmont Heights	●	Woodland Hills	●	Adair Park	●	Rosedale Heights	●
Ridgedale Park	●	Brookhaven	●	Westhaven	●	Oakland City	●
Druid Hills	●	Whitewater Creek	●	Mt. Gilead Woods	●	Wisteria Gardens	●
Buckhead Village	●	Arden/Habersham	●	Southwest	●	South River Gardens	●
Springlake	●	Colonial Homes	●	Laurens Valley	●	Chosewood Park	●
Brookwood Hills	●	Bolton	●	Briar Glen	●	The Villages at Carver	●
East Chastain Park	●	West Manor	●	Fairway Acres	●	Cascade Avenue/Road	●
Sherwood Forest	●	Berkeley Park	●	Swallow Circle/Baywood	●	Pittsburgh	●
Lenox	●	Ardmore	●	Kings Forest	●	Norwood Manor	●
Atlantic Station	●	Mt. Paran/Northside	●	Ben Hill Forest	●	Monroe Heights	●
Collier Hills	●	Magnum Manor	●	Bakers Ferry	●	Thomasville Heights	●
Ansley Park	●	Edgewood	●	Brentwood	●	Oakcliff	●
Atkins Park	●	Blandtown	●	Blair Villa/Poole Creek	●	Fort Valley	●
North Buckhead	●	Princeton Lakes	●	Niskey Cove	●	Mechanicsville	●
Channing Valley	●	High Point	●	The Villages at East Lake	●	Joyland	●
Peachtree Hills	●	Westover Plantation	●	West End	●	Baker Hills	●
Inman Park	●	Capitol View	●	Regency Trace	●	English Park	●
Candler Park	●	Marietta Street Artery	●	Wilson Mill Meadows	●	South Atlanta	●
Oakland	●	Audobon Forest	●	Ben Hill	●	Englewood Manor	●
Buckhead Heights	●	Capitol View Manor	●	Rockdale	●	Hunter Hills	●
Downtown	●	Brandon	●	Deerwood	●	Harvel Homes Community	●
Loring Heights	●	Boulevard Heights	●	Adams Park	●	Old Gordon	●
Peachtree Battle Alliance	●	Hanover West	●	Wildwood (NPU-H)	●	Brookview Heights	●
Chastain Park	●	Fernleaf	●	Huntington	●	Campbellton Road	●
Garden Hills	●	Pleasant Hill	●	Vine City	●	West Lake	●
Underwood Hills	●	Hills Park	●	Harris Chiles	●	Bankhead	●
Brookwood	●	Westminster/Milmar	●	English Avenue	●	Glenrose Heights	●
Lake Claire	●	Castlewood	●	Niskey Lake	●	Carver Hills	●
Tuxedo Park	●	Ridgewood Heights	●	Greenbriar Village	●	Ashview Heights	●
Peachtree Heights East	●	Sweet Auburn	●	Ben Hill Acres	●	Fairburn Heights	●
Peachtree Heights West	●	Collier Heights	●	Ridgecrest Forest	●	Bolton Hills	●
Paces	●	Ivan Hill	●	Atlanta University Center	●	Lincoln Homes	●
West Paces Ferry/Northside	●	Ashley Courts	●	Westview	●	Orchard Knob	●
Old Fourth Ward	●	Audobon Forest West	●	Elmco Estates	●	Bush Mountain	●
Ormewood Park	●	Woodfield	●	Heritage Valley	●	Fairburn Mays	●
Grant Park	●	Harland Terrace	●	Lake Estates	●	Lakewood	●
Margaret Mitchell	●	Benteen Park	●	Boulder Park	●	Custer/McDonough/Guice	●
Wildwood (NPU-C)	●	Betmar LaVilla	●	Riverside	●	Florida Heights	●
Peachtree Park	●	Green Acres Valley	●	Capitol Gateway	●	Rebel Valley Forest	●
Argonne Forest	●	Knight Park/Howell Station	●	Chalet Woods	●	Penelope Neighbors	●
Collier Hills North	●	Wesley Battle	●	Polar Rock	●	Fairburn	●
Randall Mill	●	Perkerson	●	Ben Hill Terrace	●	Center Hill	●
South Tuxedo Park	●	Sylvan Hills	●	Westwood Terrace	●	Adamsville	●
Castleberry Hill	●	Peyton Forest	●	Tampa Park	●	Venetian Hills	●
Memorial Park	●	Midwest Cascade	●	Fairburn Road/Wisteria Lane	●	Dixie Hills	●
Home Park	●	Browns Mill Park	●	Mozley Park	●	Bankhead/Bolton	●
Lindbergh/Morosgo	●	Summerhill	●	Washington Park	●	Scotts Crossing	●
Pine Hills	●	Green Forest Acres	●	Meadowbrook Forest	●	Leila Valley	●
Buckhead Forest	●	Cross Creek	●	Peoplestown	●	Carroll Heights	●
Kirkwood	●	Arlington Estates	●	Bankhead Courts	●	Almond Park	●
East Atlanta	●	Beecher Hills	●	Grove Park	●	Carey Park	●
East Lake	●	Whitter Mill Village	●	Horseshoe Community	●	Butner/Tell	●
Lindridge/Martin Manor	●	Mays	●	Fairburn Tell	●	Chattahoochee	●
East Ardley Road	●	Just Us	●	Ben Hill Pines	●		
Reynoldstown	●	Wildwood Forest	●	Lakewood Heights	●		

Many of these tipping point Investment Areas are contained within a clearly discernible swath of the city, reaching from Northwest to Southeast Atlanta. Current trends of investment, population growth, and new building permits show development pressure steadily moving south and west, but there are also significant barriers forestalling much of this potential development. The interstate highways that cut through the heart of the city, and the Westside industrial corridor that still separates much of the north and east of the city from the south and westside. These constructs of the built environment form the two most significant barriers cutting many of these tipping point communities off from areas that are observed to have higher levels of investment and development. Significant numbers of vacant, blighted, and foreclosed residential properties exist in and around these tipping point areas, symptomatic of disinvestment, threatening further decline in these promising neighborhoods and undermine the potential for investment and growth.

Many of these Trending and Transitional Investment Areas are adjacent to or in close proximity to thriving areas. One prominent example is Vine City/English Avenue's adjacency to Downtown. The pronounced differences between areas can be explained to a significant degree by the barriers and lack of strong linkages between them. Eliminating these barriers and strengthening linkages between more economically robust neighborhoods and tipping point communities are keys to moving them in a positive direction. Ultimately, 47 neighborhoods were selected as Targeted Areas of Opportunity (TAO) for the city. Of the 47 targeted areas, the Trending and Transitional Investment Areas would be recommended as a starting point in the prioritization of efforts designed to direct investment and revitalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the SCI report's data collection and analysis, and subsequent selection of TAOs, a number of recommendations to the City can be made. These recommendations include four overarching strategies and fourteen specific tactics within these four strategies. Also, comparable examples of best practices similar to the tactics described have been identified. These best practices can be referenced and investigated when considering implementation and planning. In many cases, these recommendations should be interpreted as ways to enhance existing programs and policies rather than reinventing the wheel.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS — POLICIES, PLACES, PEOPLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Policy Strategy: The City should work towards the enactment of ordinances and legislation at both the local and state levels that promote and ensure the improvement of housing conditions throughout the city. These policies should reflect specific local contexts, and create conditions that encourage various stakeholders to affect investment and development in targeted neighborhoods.
Policy Strategy Tactics:
1. Maintain an effective Vacant Property Registration System and Database
2. Concentrate Housing Dollars and Code Enforcement in Priority Areas
3. Establish a Vacant Property Receivership/Conservatorship Program
4. Promote a Neighborhood Agenda at the State Legislature

Place Strategy: Addressing the physical and aesthetic condition of residential properties must be central to any program that targets Atlanta neighborhoods. The problems of vacant, abandoned, and physically distressed properties and insufficient physical infrastructure are at crisis levels in parts of the city, discouraging investment and the demand for housing, depressing property values, harming service provision and devastating neighborhood commerce.
Place Strategy Tactics:
1. Promote Purchase-Rehab Lending
2. Implement the Use of a Smart Rehab Code
3. Enhance Neighborhood Gateways
4. Improve Pedestrian Mobility

People Strategy: The City should work towards the attraction or retention of various groups in targeted neighborhoods in the hope of bringing commitment and resources to those areas. This can be done through the development of initiatives focused on making these neighborhoods places where existing residents want to stay and new residents want to live.
People Strategy Tactics:
1. Establish a Targeted Workforce or Employer-Assisted Housing Initiative
2. Encourage Linkages Through Community Engagement
3. Create a Collaborative Culture between Non-profit and For-Profit Developers

Partnership Strategy: Working cross-sectoral partnerships between public, private, and non-profit groups must be established as part of coherent long-term housing strategies that reflect a shared vision for housing and community development in the city of Atlanta. Without proper coordination and consensus building, different entities too often make decisions that conflict with or offset one another, not supporting any larger goal or strategy for the city.
Partnership Strategy Tactics:
1. Facilitate Stronger Collaboration between Community Development & Economic Development Initiatives
2. Train Industry Professionals on New Strategies, Incentives and Marketing Approaches
3. Collaboration with Public and Private Utility Provider

THE CONSULTANT TEAM

APD Solutions (APDS) is a for-profit national neighborhood revitalization firm providing services and strategies that impact community development. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, the firm enjoys a stellar reputation and a long history of creative success in communities. As a small minority-owned business enterprise, the company's mission is to design strategies and assemble partners that influence socially responsible housing activities and investment in the communities it serves. APDS' team has an extensive track record of working in neighborhoods that have experienced blight and neglect. The team's experience includes neighborhood and urban planning, project management, real estate development of in-town and inner-city neighborhood properties, property management, asset management and REO property disposition, strategic planning/marketing/sales of REO for numerous hedge funds and asset managers, and the implementation of more than a dozen Neighborhood Stabilization Programs for local government clients. APDS currently manages neighborhood-based development projects nationwide. For this project, the APDS team is comprised of internal staff and a chosen subcontractor, The Collaborative Firm (TCF). The Collaborative Firm played a vital role as part of the team and provided assistance in the data collection and analysis process, which was influential in the project analysis. Based in East Point, Georgia, TCF offers a unique blend of expertise in land use planning, program management, real estate development, and public involvement, which was influential in the project analysis.

Creating Linkages and Eliminating Barriers
The Strategic Community Investment (SCI) Report

Executive Summary
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Presented by APD Solutions
271 17th Street, Suite 2250
Atlanta, Georgia 30363

404.921.3131 | www.APDSolutions.com