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Unless otherwise specified, all photos are by ARC staff.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction
In February of 2019, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) announced its call for projects for its Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP), offering planning assistance to local governments and other stakeholders. In May 2019, ARC selected the Old 4th Ward Business Association idea of developing key priorities and initiatives that they can champion and work to implement.

The purpose of this priorities report is to identify key themes and ideas that can be explored further when resources permit. The Old 4th Ward neighborhood has had tremendous success in becoming a great place within the Atlanta region, attracting new residents, and businesses. However, that success has introduced new challenges within the community, and this document is designed to assist the Old 4th Ward Business Association with priority and vision setting to help address those challenges.

The Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, attention, and planning resources on key regional issues. ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro Atlanta area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties, as well as the City of Atlanta. For 60 years, ARC and its predecessor agencies have helped to focus the region’s leadership, attention, and resources on key issues of regional consequence. ARC is dedicated to unifying the region’s collective resources to prepare the metropolitan area for a prosperous future. It does so through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships.

Old 4th Ward Business Association

The Old 4th Ward Business Association represents businesses of all sizes in the Old 4th Ward and works to ensure equal access to business development and opportunity throughout the neighborhood. As the Old 4th Ward neighborhood continues to grow, the Old 4th Ward Business Association aims to leverage incoming investment to benefit marginalized businesses and honor the history of the neighborhood as a diverse and vibrant business district. The Old 4th Ward Business Association maximizes the political voice of businesses in the community, provide programs and services to fill resource gaps for local businesses, and are innovating in connecting large businesses to local needs to foster impactful and community-oriented anchor institutions throughout the neighborhood.

Through monthly networking and educational opportunities, the Old 4th Ward Business Association connects businesses with critical resources, the residential community, and city policymakers and stakeholders.

Community Development Assistance Program

The Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) provides technical assistance to local governments and non-profits across the 10-county metropolitan region to undertake local planning activities that advance the goals of the Atlanta Region’s Plan. The program is to implement the Atlanta Region’s Plan at the local level, provide direct technical assistance to local governments and non-profits, and leverage the entire agency’s intellectual capital to generate actionable and holistic solutions.
These technical assistance projects are to address one or more of the eight regional priority areas. These priority areas include:

- Creative Placemaking
- Green Infrastructure
- Historic Preservation
- Housing Affordability
- Lifelong Communities
- Smart Communities
- Workforce Development
- Access to Healthy Food

**Project Process**

To develop concepts that reflect the community’s thoughts and ideas, and to have champions to lead implementation, ARC and the Old 4th Ward Business Association conducted stakeholder interviews to advise the Project Team. The Project Team initial efforts were to identify key plans and priorities that have been established within past plans as well as conducting an initial data assessment.

After the initial review, the Project Team grouped and shared the plans and priorities and then solicited feedback on those groupings, with stakeholders and the City of Atlanta staff. Based on that feedback, the Project Team identified key themes that were carried through the process. These key themes are:

- The cost of housing is driving new development and is changing the character of the neighborhood
- The identity of the neighborhood is important and is varied throughout the neighborhood
- Zoning and development regulations are a challenge for new development and investment
- The Old 4th Ward has become an entertainment/destination neighborhood in the region, and it has brought those challenges to the neighborhood
- Walkability and providing safe streets should be the main priority

After those themes were established, the Project Team identified strategies and projects that support those key themes that will shape the future of the Old 4th Ward. Some of these key projects are interpreted through illustrations and design recommendations and include an illustrative community map showcasing the improvements. This will be used as a tool for advocacy for the Old 4th Ward Business Association in working with partners on implementation.

An additional process was to conduct a Community Improvement District (CID) feasibility and work plan analysis. This document is a separate deliverable.
The Role of Placemaking

The Old 4th Ward contains examples of the results of investing in placemaking from those recent past plans. The success of the Atlanta BeltLine area and the success of the area around Historic 4th Ward Park shows that investments in making a place leads to change. This is best illustrated by the concept above. Areas that create places, will attract new talent (people) and that leads to businesses wanting to invest in that area, and that leads to creating a stronger place. Making investments in all parts of this cycle leads to a stronger community, and businesses. However, this needs to be balanced to ensure that existing residents and businesses share in the success of the area.

Map 1 Old 4th Ward Regional Location
Past Plans
Over the past 15 years, the Old 4th Ward had many plans developed that have played a role in guiding development and public investments. The following are the key plans that played a role in developing the recommendations and analysis for this process. A Community Map of Projects and Proposals illustrates the recommendations from these and other plans and projects at the end of this chapter.

2008 Old 4th Ward Master Plan
Developed in 2008, the Old 4th Ward Master Plan envisions the Old 4th Ward 25 to 50 years into the future. The key goals of this master plan were to:

- Encourage a diverse and sustainable mix of housing, employment, shopping, and open space.
- Accommodate and encourage smart growth and redevelopment while protecting the neighborhood’s existing character, businesses, and residents.
- Improve the neighborhood’s visual character.
- Reestablish broken connections across the BeltLine, Freedom Parkway, and I-75/85.
- Leverage growth and development along the BeltLine to foster improvements throughout the neighborhood.
- Create a stronger identity and character for the Old 4th Ward.

These community-based goals guided the overall master planning effort. Key land use recommendations from the 2008 Master Plan were to:

- Focus higher density development to promote walking, biking, and transit use within Old 4th Ward,
- Preserve single-family areas and to support appropriate infill housing,
- Promote catalytic redevelopment along the Boulevard Corridor, the Renaissance Park Area, and the Sweet Auburn District.
Atlanta BeltLine Master Plan Subarea 5

The recommendations are intended to reinforce four overarching themes guiding master plans in all of the BeltLine subareas:

- Redevelopment should be at a density sufficient to support public transit;
- Design should celebrate the distinct character of the area through public art opportunities;
- The layout of streets should promote cross-BeltLine connectivity;
- Redevelopment should respect the existing historic context and promote the preservation of historic resources, wherever possible.

The BeltLine Master Plan identifies the Old 4th Ward as a dynamic neighborhood typified by its simplicity and functionality and recommends a heavy industrial influence should emerge in the design of such elements as wayfinding devices and public art within the neighborhood.

The architecture is identifiable as one of the few remaining areas to the east of downtown with warehouses and industrial spaces adjacent to the BeltLine and DeKalb Avenue. Industrial uses were clustered alongside the BeltLine to take advantage of the once-active rail line.

While some of the industrial buildings still house distribution and other light industrial operations, many of these structures have been converted to residential and vibrant mixed-use spaces. The residential portions of the area were primarily comprised of housing built for the mill and factory workers in a simple traditional style called mill housing. Similar housing still exists in the nearby community of Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown. Few of these mill homes still exist in the Old Fourth Ward due to redevelopment.

The rough and unfinished nature of the area has become the draw for many residents, so new development should reflect the original simple style of mill homes. Materials typical of the neighborhood should include a variety of metals, such as oxidized steel, copper, and aluminum, with the addition of rough brick and wood.

Sweet Auburn Retail Strategies

The Sweet Auburn Retail Strategies is an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP). This TAP project identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Sweet Auburn Retail District and provided strategies for the district to implement to strengthen its retail options.

The strengths identified were its authenticity, international recognition, and clear demand drivers. Its location as the birthplace of the Civil Rights movement attracts over 1 million visitors each year which could be an anchor for future development.

The panel identified the weakness, is the fractured ownership, vacant gaps between buildings, easily identified locations for parking, and the perception of safety. The vacant gaps and parking weaknesses contribute to the perception of safety.

Working with the City of Atlanta to clean up vacant lots and program those lots with interim uses could address the perception of safety. Other near-term recommendations are to work on developing a brand for the area, training prospective tenants and property owners on retail and business development strategies that align with that brand of the area, and actively promote commercial retail opportunities in coordination with property owners.
Map 2 Old 4th Ward Plans and Projects

Old 4th Ward Study Area
Creative Placemaking Opportunities
Planned Transportation Projects
Proposed Development Areas
Trails
Historic District

Map Legend:

- Purple line: Old 4th Ward Study Area
- Orange circle with red dot: Creative Placemaking Opportunities
- Red line: Planned Transportation Projects
- Light purple area: Proposed Development Areas
- Green lines: Trails
- Black circles: Historic District

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.
North Avenue Complete Street and Arterial Rapid Transit
This project would repurpose the existing four-lane section of North Avenue NE (from the BeltLine to Bonaventure Avenue NE) to a three-lane section with dedicated bicycle facilities, and shared-lane markings in the two- and three-lane sections of North Avenue NE east of Bonaventure to John Lewis Freedom Parkway NE. MARTA has an Arterial Rapid Transit Project proposed on North Avenue connecting Ponce City Market to the North Avenue MARTA station. This project is expected to be operational by 2025.

Jackson Street Bridge Creative Placemaking Project
The Jackson Street Bridge Creative Placemaking Project is the reallocation of travel lanes for improved public space for bicyclists and pedestrians. This bridge provides one of the most iconic images of Atlanta and attracts tourists and residents to take that perfect picture. With some minor improvements with greenery, seating, and better infrastructure, this signature spot will become an example of creative placemaking in the Atlanta region. (Image courtesy of AECOM)

Ralph McGill Boulevard Complete Street
The Draft BeltLine Sub Area 5 Plan calls for a repurposing Ralph McGill Boulevard NE between Historic Fourth Ward Park and John Lewis Freedom Parkway NE. Ralph McGill Boulevard NE’s existing wide lanes would be repurposed to keep two general-purpose lanes while adding protected bicycle facilities. (Example image provided by ARC)

David T. Howard Middle School
The David T. Howard Middle School was an abandoned Atlanta Public School’s elementary school. The building, which closed in the mid-1970s, is now being transformed into a modern facility fit to hold approximately 1,300 middle schoolers that will be reassigned from Inman Middle School, which is Grady High School’s current feeder school. This project is expected to open in Fall of 2020 to new students. (Image courtesy of Atlanta Public Schools)

760 Ralph McGill
760 Ralph McGill is the address of a 12-acre development site south of Ponce City Market and adjacent to the Atlanta BeltLine and Historic 4th Ward Park. This site was a former Georgia Power equipment yard and is being redeveloped into a mixed-use development. Currently proposed, is office, retail, apartments, and a hotel. Also, the Atlanta's Transportation Plan, and the draft BeltLine Sub Area Plan and existing, call for the extension of Angier Avenue, through the site providing connectivity. (Image courtesy of New City Properties)
Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center
The Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center is a 17-acre site located on the western edge of the Old 4th Ward along Piedmont Avenue. Currently closed, the site is owned by the Atlanta Housing Authority. The proposed redevelopment of the site is expected to cost around $300 million with at least 30 percent of the housing reserved as affordable. Currently, there is no expected completion date.

The Front Porch at Auburn Avenue
The Front Porch at Auburn Avenue is a proposed 4-story mixed-use redevelopment project with 14,000 square feet of retail and 13,000 sf of residential space for rent and 18,600 sf of residential space for sale. Proposed by the Historic District Development Corporation and Hart Lyman, this project will provide infill development on the eastern edge of the area that fills the gaps with new street frontage. (Image Courtesy of CoStar Inc)

Wheat Street Gardens Redevelopment
The Wheat Street Gardens site is a development opportunity within the Sweet Auburn district. For a few years, it was a community garden. There are plans to redevelop the site with a variety of affordable housing options for residents within the community. (Image courtesy of TSW)

Auburn Avenue Creative Placemaking
Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID) are leading the Auburn Avenue Historic and Cultural Information Project, which includes two major components. The first aspect is the installation of 21 new interpretive and 4 gateway signs along Auburn Avenue between Peachtree Street and Old Wheat Street. The second project element is a large mural to the existing bridge underpass at Auburn Avenue and Interstate 75/85. This project, funded in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation, will improve the aesthetic quality of the existing bridge and improve the pedestrian experience, all while reflecting the history and culture of the surrounding community. (Image Courtesy of CAP)
WellStar Atlanta Medical Center Campus & Boulevard Complete Street
WellStar Health Systems is exploring options to reimagine its campus at Atlanta Medical Center. This includes reimagining the facilities and the care model to better serve the area.

The City of Atlanta has proposed a Boulevard to become a multimodal street with improved pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, repaving, and restriping.

Glen Iris Corridor
The Glen Iris Corridor is an important north-south connection within the Old 4th Ward that has seen tremendous growth. The Draft BeltLine Sub Area Plan calls for exploring options to increase the bike and pedestrian connectivity on the corridor. This could be sharrows on the corridor, wide sidewalks, or other options. This project will need further study.

Edgewood Avenue and Streetcar Extensions
The City of Atlanta has plans for a restriping and widening of sidewalks of Edgewood Avenue. The widening of the sidewalks was a selected project of Downtown Decides, a participatory budgeting process backed by Council District 2 and Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District.

Also the More MARTA improvements have the streetcar extending north to Ponce City Along the BeltLine, and south of DeKalb Avenue. This will make the area a hub for transit-oriented development.

Finally, there is a proposal to make Jackson Place an improved alley that is a designated ride-share pick up location with paving, signage, and improved lighting.
CHAPTER 2

Old 4th Ward
Community Diagnostic
The Old 4th Ward Area has always been an area of change. From the Great Atlanta Fire of 1917 to dealing with urban renewal and the development of the Atlanta Civic Center, freeway construction of the 1960s and 1970s, and now leading the City of Atlanta in redevelopment into a walkable neighborhood, change has always happened within the neighborhood.

What is now considered the Old 4th Ward was originally four different neighborhoods, Glen Iris, Bedford Pine, Butler Street, and Old 4th Ward. While these areas are now considered one neighborhood, they each have different identities and challenges.

The name Old 4th Ward comes from the area being 4th Ward of Atlanta until the 1950s when the City of Atlanta changed from a Ward System to a District System for the City Council. The area is one of the oldest areas of the City of Atlanta, developing after the Civil War.
This area is one of rich history. Auburn Avenue became home to Alonzo Herndon’s Atlanta Mutual, the city’s first black-owned life insurance company, and to a celebrated concentration of black businesses, newspapers, churches, and nightclubs. In 1956, Fortune magazine called Sweet Auburn “the richest Negro street in the world”, a phrase originally coined by civil rights leader John Wesley Dobbs.

But Auburn Avenue was not simply a place to do business. Auburn Avenue was home many churches, including Ebenezer Baptist Church, where three generations of Martin Luther King Jr.’s family were pastors, and Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church; The National Association for the Advancement for Colored People (NAACP), the Odd Fellows, the Masons, and the National Urban League maintained offices on Auburn Avenue, which was also home to the nation’s first successful black-owned daily newspaper, the Atlanta Daily World.

In 1980 the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site was established. Now a National Park, it is one of the largest tourist attractions in Atlanta. The park preserves the history and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. It includes the birth home of Martin Luther King Jr., and the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church. In 2011, the Historic 4th Ward Park opened which encouraged redevelopment and reinvestment in the northern part of the Old 4th Ward.
Who is Old 4th Ward?

Over the last decade, the Old 4th Ward neighborhood has experienced steady population growth and demographic change following considerable redevelopment in the area. Between decades of disinvestment and the fallout of the 2008 mortgage crisis, the neighborhood became increasingly depopulated with vacancy rates up to 50%.

In the last decade, major redevelopment projects in the neighborhood including the BeltLine’s East Side Trail and the Historic 4th Ward Park paved the way for luxury commercial and residential redevelopment. These developments spurred considerable demographic change and the re-population of more affluent residents.

Since 2010, the population of the Old 4th Ward increased from 17,085 in 2010 to 22,426 in 2019. Surprisingly, the proportion of all residents of color increased while the proportion of white residents decreased in the same period. This trend goes against the common assumption that the Old 4th Ward is transitioning to be a majority-white neighborhood. Similarly, between 2010 and 2019, the proportion of residents of color in Atlanta increased, though notably the proportion of white and black residents in the city both decreased slightly.

**POPULATION CHANGE**

![Graph showing population change from 2010 to 2015. Data Sources: US Census, BBS Business Analyst]
Comparing income distribution in the Old 4th Ward in 2019 with Atlanta, the percentages of households in most income brackets vary by less than 2%. However, there are a few notable exceptions. In 2019, 14.4% of households in Atlanta made less than $15,000. In comparison, 20.4% of households in the Old 4th Ward made less than $15,000, explained by the concentration of Section-8 Properties along Boulevard. In 2019, 12% of households across Atlanta made more than $200,000 per year, while 5.9% of Old 4th Ward residents were in the same income bracket. Finally, the Old 4th Ward has a higher percentage of households in the $50,000-$74,999 income range than Atlanta as a whole, with 19.3% and 15.9%, respectively.
As of 2019, the Old 4th Ward has a large proportion of residents between 20 and 39. In comparison with population trends across Atlanta, the Old 4th Ward has a much lower proportion of elderly residents and children. In part, this can be explained by the concentration of luxury 1- and 2-bedroom rental properties that have been developed in the neighborhood. These properties are attractive options to a younger, affluent workforce. As members of the 20-39 cohort age, many seek to start families and purchase homes. Given the lower proportion of affordable, single-family homes in the neighborhood, it is likely that many in this cohort leave the neighborhood as they age. This means that much of the neighborhood’s residents are impermanent, raising questions about the neighborhood’s capacity to support aging-in-place.

Home Sweet Home

The population growth in the Old 4th Ward has occurred alongside an increase in the number of housing units in the neighborhood. Between 2010 and 2019, the total number of housing units in the neighborhood increased from 10,533 to 13,509. In this time, the percentage of vacant units decreased from 18.2% to 11.7%. This vacancy rate is below the average vacancy rate in Atlanta, which stands at 15%.

The housing stock in the Old 4th Ward neighborhood primarily consists of luxury apartment complexes with 20 or more units. The majority of residents in the neighborhood are renters, most of whom pay between $1,000 and $2,499 on housing costs each month. Most renters make less than $49,999 per year. The incomes of homeowners are more evenly distributed, but the largest percentage of homeowners in the Old 4th Ward makes more than $150,000 per year.
MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS: RENT V. OWN

Data Source: American Community Survey, 2018.
Moving

The Old 4th Ward neighborhood is centrally located next to downtown Atlanta. It is situated along major transportation routes including I-75 and I-85, and is transected by main thoroughfares including Freedom Parkway, Boulevard, Ponce De Leon Avenue, and DeKalb Avenue/Decatur Street. This location affords residents convenient access to the rest of the city.

From the U.S. Census, 16,964 people commute into the Old 4th Ward neighborhood for work each day, while 6,962 neighborhood residents commute out of the Old 4th Ward for work. Only 325 residents both live and work in the neighborhood. Many residents who commute out of the neighborhood work downtown, while employees who work in the neighborhood commute in from across the metro Atlanta area.

Over 75% of Old 4th Ward residents use a car to get to work. At 70.9%, the vast majority of Old 4th Ward residents drive alone to get to work, while 4.6% carpool. 8.2% of residents walk to work, 5.2% use public transportation, and 2.8% ride a bicycle. 6.4% of residents work from home, and the rest use other means of transportation.

While traffic congestion is an issue throughout metro Atlanta, weekend traffic and public safety issues along Edgewood Avenue are a concern amongst residents and business owners. While Edgewood Avenue has been successful in attracting new business, the weekend public safety issues are becoming a concern and may have impacts on the success of business along the corridor.

Using cell phone data provided by Inrix, ARC analyzed the average travel speed of Edgewood Avenue from Courtland Street to Boulevard. Weekend travel speeds in the early mornings and late evenings have the lowest overall average travel speed in the time-period of July to October 2019. This is a slower speed compared to an average weekday afternoon or morning rush hour. This congestion in the early mornings and late evening is a challenge to both retaining existing businesses and providing adequate public safety to visitors and businesses.

**COMMUTE TIME**

- 26.2% of residents travel <15 minutes
- 47.1% of residents travel 15-29 minutes
- 17.3% of residents travel 30-44 minutes
- 7.2% of residents travel 45-59 minutes
- 4% of residents travel >60 minutes

*Source: American Community Survey, 2018*
Edgewood Traffic Westbound

Edgewood Traffic Eastbound

Source: INRIX Traffic Data, July to October 2019
Development

The majority of land uses within the Old 4th Ward is single-family residential, with commercial, office, and multi-family mostly along the major corridors and Historic 4th Ward Park. Auburn and Edgewood Avenues, have one to two-story small retail establishments with some large senior residential towers. There are vacant lots along Auburn and Edgewood Avenues that are available for infill development.

Within the Old 4th Ward, there are three main anchors of development. The area around Ponce City Market and the Old 4th Ward Park contains the newest and largest developments. As shown in the following maps, this area has large new multi-family units, office space, and retail.

The area at the intersection of Ralph McGill Boulevard, and Boulevard, is anchored by WellStar Atlanta Medical Center. This area is a hub for medical office and has plans for reinvestment by WellStar Atlanta.

The last area is anchored by the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park. This area is along Auburn and Edgewood Avenues. The Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park contains the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and had over 761,000 visitors in 2019.

760 Ralph McGill, is one of the largest redevelopment sites remaining in the Old 4th Ward. At just over 10 acres, the site was a former Georgia Power yard, that is now proposed to be a mixed use development of office, hotel and residential with access to the BeltLine and Historic 4th Ward Park.
Map 4 Existing Office and Retail Space

Source: CoStar Inc

Old 4th Ward Planning Priorities
CHAPTER 3

Moving Forward
During the Steering Committee meeting and interviews, residents, business owners, and government officials, presented a positive view of Old 4th Ward. They were attracted by the culture of the area and its rich history. They feel that there is an opportunity to preserve history and tell the story of Atlanta within the neighborhood. There are some strong business networks within the neighborhood, with great restaurant and entertainment options.

Both business owners and residents stated that the neighborhood needs to hold onto its uniqueness, which initially attracted them to the neighborhood, and that losing its uniqueness will be a detriment.

The location and the walkability of the Old 4th Ward are great assets with the BeltLine and Freedom Park trail located with the area. Being adjacent to Downtown, and Midtown with proximity to the Emory area and Decatur, the Old 4th Ward has great accessibility to the core Atlanta region employment centers.

While the Old 4th Ward has great assets and has seen growth and development, the past few years have introduced some new challenges. Fifteen to twenty years ago, the Old 4th Ward had just over 8,000 housing units. By 2019 that has increased to 13,000 with more projects within the pipeline. This large increase in housing demand has had an increase in housing prices. According to the Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy, the two census tracts that make up the Old 4th Ward have seen an 80.1% and 121% increase from 2013 to 2018 in Home Sales Price Per Square foot respectively. (While this seems high the areas surrounding the Southwest BeltLine have seen prices increases between 200-500%). This increase in housing prices and growth is changing the original neighborhood character from single-family residential and scattered industrial land uses to a denser, more mixed-use neighborhood.

The Old 4th Ward is a desirable place within the region and the city. With it being a desirable place, it is attracting residents from not only metro Atlanta, but also the entire country. This attraction attracts new businesses who want to be near to those residents, which then increases the desirability of the Old 4th Ward. To ensure that the Old 4th Ward maintains itself as a unique, desirable place, the following are strategies and initiatives that the Old 4th Ward Business Association can champion and work with partners on implementation.
Strategies for the Old 4th Ward Business Association

- Promote the identity and history of the smaller neighborhoods that make up the Old 4th Ward
- Balance the single-family character of the neighborhood with enhanced housing options
- Provide daily retail needs with strong commercial corridors
- Promote walkability and safety with both short term and long-term transportation and placemaking projects.
Promote the identity and history of the smaller neighborhoods that make up the Old 4th Ward

What is now considered the Old 4th Ward was originally four different neighborhoods, Glen Iris, Bedford Pine, Butler Street, and Old 4th Ward. While today, they may have other identities or names, the neighborhoods have a rich history and story that needs to be told. Telling the story of the history of these neighborhoods will help ensure future residents know the story of their community and creates a narrative about the history of each neighborhood as a unique place within the city.

Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID) are leading the Auburn Avenue Historic and Cultural Information Project, which includes two major components. The first aspect is the installation of 21 new interpretive and 4 gateway signs along Auburn Avenue between Peachtree Street and Old Wheat Street. The second project element is a large mural to the existing bridge underpass at Auburn Avenue and Interstate 75/85. This project, funded in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation, will improve the aesthetic quality of the existing bridge and improve the pedestrian experience, all while reflecting the history and culture of the surrounding community.
**Balance the single-family character of the neighborhood with enhanced housing options**

With the Old 4th Ward becoming a desirable place within the Atlanta region, housing has become an issue as previously discussed. The City of Atlanta recently adopted zoning reforms to encourage housing diversity within the city. Before 1982, duplexes, triplexes, and other small multi-unit homes and apartments were allowed within the city and exist in many older neighborhoods. From 1982 to 2018, these structures were not allowed to be built in most neighborhoods within the city. In 2018, the City adopted a new MR-MU housing zoning district to allow 4-12 unit developments.

Considering current land values and rental rates the financial feasibility of small-scale projects within the Old 4th Ward would require developments to be closer to the scale of 12 unit developments. While this may seem dense, there are similar examples in the Old 4th Ward and surrounding neighborhoods of historical development. Identifying key parcels that could support this style of development would assist in the development of this housing product.

**Provide daily retail needs with strong commercial corridors**

The service sector is the largest employment sector within the Old 4th Ward. However, most of the newer business establishments are located on the eastern edge of the neighborhood along the BeltLine. The Piedmont, Boulevard, and Sweet Auburn corridors have seen limited new business growth.

Expanding opportunities for retail that supports daily needs will help to ensure that the Old 4th Ward continues to be a great place. Currently, access to grocery stores is limited to the northern edges of the area, with two grocery stores outside of the neighborhood. Developing smaller neighborhood markets will ensure that the neighborhood has healthy options and continue to promote walkability.

Providing markets is only one component of daily retail. Other services such as dry cleaning, barbers and hairdressers, hardware stores, and pharmacies are needed.

Building retail is just one component about developing strong commercial corridors, it needs to be managed well. Getting the right tenant mix and quality is important. To achieve the right mix, each corridor must be managed and coordinated. This involves actively recruiting tenants and directing them to appropriate leasing agents and property owners, and it is marketing the corridors not only for what they are today, but what they can be in the future.
Promote walkability and safety with both short term and long-term transportation and placemaking projects.

Both the Atlanta BeltLine and the Freedom Park Trail provide great assets to build upon for the Old 4th Ward. Providing safe walkable streets will enhance the businesses within the Old 4th Ward. Accommodating traffic is only one goal. Providing safe and intimate streets are key to commercial development. A Community Improvement District may provide some resources to implement changes, but infrastructure investments would be conducted by the City of Atlanta.

An important role that the Old 4th Ward Business Association can play is the role of a champion and advocate of these policies and promote projects to ensure they get implemented. On Map 1, there are already identified transportation projects that the City of Atlanta, Atlanta BeltLine, and Central Atlanta Progress have identified and are moving forward.

Building transportation projects, however, takes time. However, investing in creative placemaking both in the public right of way and privately-owned space within the public realm can meet this goal as well as the other three. Using small scale, low cost projects can provide stronger support for larger investments and provide investments to promote walkability and safety. These investments will continue to promote the Old 4th Ward as a great place within the City of Atlanta.

The Proposed Jackson Street Bridge Creative Placemaking Project is the reallocation of travel lanes for improved public space for bicyclists and pedestrians. This bridge provides one of the most iconic images of Atlanta and attracts tourists and residents to take that perfect picture. With some minor improvements with greenery, seating, and better infrastructure, this signature spot will become an example of creative placemaking in the Atlanta region. (Image courtesy of AECOM)
Strategy Checklist

Promote the identity and history of the smaller neighborhoods that make up the Old 4th Ward

☐ Use placemaking activities to share the history of neighborhoods
☐ Identify Local Stories to document and share about unique places and individuals

Balance the single-family character of the neighborhood with enhanced housing options

☐ Identify parcels that would be appropriate for MR-MU zoning
☐ Work with developers and residents to educate them about the options for MR-MU housing and incorporating good design.

Provide daily retail needs with strong commercial corridors

☐ Match prospective tenants with leasing agents and property owners
☐ Actively manage the commercial corridors with marketing events and branding
☐ Determine what retail needs are needed

Promote walkability and safety with both short term and long-term transportation and placemaking projects.

☐ Advocate for transportation projects that provide for safe walkable streets
☐ Examine opportunities for Creative Placemaking on public right of way and privately owned space
Focus Areas

The Old 4th Ward is one of Atlanta’s largest neighborhoods. These four areas were identified within the stakeholder engagement as areas of attention. By focusing on these areas and implementing the strategies, the Old 4th Ward Business Association, the City of Atlanta, and partner organizations can continue to make the Old 4th Ward a great place. The following renderings illustrate the priorities and action steps and provide a glimpse of the future. These perspectives and illustrations in the focus areas provide a sense of what a continued vibrant Old 4th Ward could look like. These recommendations are only concepts and need to be discussed and studied further with the community and city officials.

The Community Map on the right illustrates the location of these focus areas and planned projects within the Old 4th Ward Area.
Focus Areas

- Auburn Avenue
- Ralph McGill Blvd
- Boulevard
- Edgewood Avenue
- Old 4th Ward Study Area
- Trails
Focus Area 1
Edgewood Avenue

Edgewood Avenue led the resurgences of reinvestment in the southern part of the Old 4th Ward. Currently, it is a great night life destination, that attracts visitors from across the region. This attraction leads to increased traffic and makes the corridor unsafe for pedestrians.

There have been explorations on making the corridor pedestrian-only at times. This is also the main eastern route of the Atlanta Streetcar which will link to the BeltLine.
Focus Area 2
Sweet Auburn

The Sweet Auburn area is located just north of the Edgewood Corridor. This is the home to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Park and contains opportunities for new employment and revitalization of older buildings.

Focusing on rebuilding Auburn Avenue as a commercial corridor was a key goal heard from stakeholders, but it will require partnerships between residents, business owners, and the City of Atlanta.
Focus Area 3  
Ralph McGill Boulevard

Ralph McGill Boulevard is one of the main east-west thoroughfares within the Old 4th Ward. With its varying widths and streetscapes, there is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian experience along the corridor.

The City of Atlanta currently, has planned a transportation project from Peachtree Street to a midblock between Boulevard and Glen Iris to make Ralph McGill Boulevard into a complete street with a protected bike lane.
Focus Area 4
Boulevard Avenue

The Boulevard corridor is the main north-south thoroughfare through the Old 4th Ward. Along the corridor are older apartments, new apartment construction focused for low income, residents, and WellStar Atlanta Medical Center.

Improving pedestrian safety and encouraging new development on vacant lots were opportunities raised during the stakeholder interviews.
Implementation

The ideas and recommendations within this document provide a framework for future planning work. This document should be used as an advocacy document and resource of activities that the Old 4th Ward Business Alliance will work with its planning partners to implement within the Old 4th Ward, and for any strategy there can be a variety of other action items. Future implementation of the ideas and recommendations should be vetted and coordinated with the residents, business owners, and public agencies.

The identified action items are achievable with a focused implementation and the creation of concrete steps for the identified parties. The Old 4th Ward Business Alliance should focus on a few action steps at first to build momentum and then work to tackle larger issues.
Old Fourth Ward Planning Priorities
Improvement District Analysis
August 2020
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to:
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Jared Lombard, Project Manager
Anna Baggett
Rachel Will

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Unless otherwise specified, all photos are by ARC staff.
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Executive Summary

Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have emerged as a successful economic development tool within the State of Georgia. Since the first CID was created in 1988 to improve highway access to the Cumberland area, most activity centers in the Atlanta region have organized a CID to improve their area. Outside of Metro Atlanta, BIDs have been formed to focus on improving business districts. While similar, BIDs and CIDs have different formation rules and processes however, the objective of most organizations is the same, to create a vibrant business district.

CIDs and BIDs allocate their revenue to projects designed and constructed with the business community in mind, the main objective being to make the area more accessible and more appealing for businesses, employees, residents, and consumers. This is achieved by prioritizing projects that enhance property values as well as the greater community at large.

Introduction: What are CIDs, BIDs, and Special Tax Districts?

CID

A CID is a geographically designated, self-taxing district, whose commercial property owners agree and vote to pay an additional tax, over and above the standard imposed property tax assessment. The additional tax dollars raised through the CID are used to finance public improvement projects within the CID boundaries. Examples include transportation and other infrastructure improvements, public safety, and beautification projects. CIDs are comprised of both private and corporately owned commercial properties zoned as office industrial or retail properties. Residential and multi-family properties, including those that generate rental income, are not taxable by a CID.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CID Overview</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxable Property Types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance &amp; Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Millage Rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A BID is similar to a CID in that it is a geographically defined, self-taxing district. However, BIDs are different in that both commercial and residential property owners pay an additional tax to fund improvements within the district’s geographic boundaries. BIDs cannot provide the extent of services that CIDs can such as infrastructure projects. However, unlike a CID, it can use its funds on both private and public property. Examples of a BIDs using funds on private property include blight clean up, façade grants, and property acquisition. Currently, there are only three existing BIDs in Georgia, all outside of metro Atlanta.

### BID Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Differences</th>
<th>Can levy additional tax on residential property and additional fee on business licenses; can use funds on private property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxable Property Types</td>
<td>Real and personal property, both residential and commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance &amp; Administration</td>
<td>Board of directors typically separate from local government; BID can directly hire staff or contract with a management company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical Services</td>
<td>Security &amp; hospitality, beautification, marketing, public space management, and social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Millage Rate</td>
<td>No established limits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special Tax Districts**

Similar to both BIDs and CIDs, a Special Tax District is a self-taxing geographically delineated district that is created to provide supplemental local government services. Unlike a CID, Special Tax Districts cannot finance infrastructure projects, and they can leverage an additional tax on residential property. Because its additional tax cannot exceed 3 mills, a Special Tax District is more financially constrained than a CID or BID. These districts are created and managed by the local government.

### Special Tax District Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Differences</th>
<th>Easiest to create – do not need local enabling acts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxable Property Types</td>
<td>Real and personal property, both residential and commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance &amp; Administration</td>
<td>City Council creates district and manages funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical Services</td>
<td>Cleanliness/Sanitation, aesthetics (i.e. street lights), security (supplemental officers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Millage Rate</td>
<td>3 Mills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 1: Developing a Vision
When a community is planning to develop a CID or BID, they must first develop a purpose and vision for the district and define the goal(s) of the CID or BID. Why is a CID or BID needed? What services should the CID or BID provide? These are questions that should be answered before moving forward in the creation process.

These goals and visions normally come from property owners not local government, however a small area plan may provide information. Property owners may feel as if their area’s infrastructure or services aren’t being sufficiently funded, they may seek to invest extra taxes to fund it. Most often, the goal and visions include a commitment to work continuously and collaboratively as one team to develop economic strategies that will enhance the community.

Step 2 Providing Services
The services provided by each of the district types are supplemental to services already provided by the local government. Services provided by these districts do not replace these services, only work to enhance and/or support them.

CIDs
A CID can help to fund studies and preliminary engineering of desired transporation and infrastructure projects as well as leveraging both state and federal dollars for infrastructure. The CID does not replace city and county infrastructure improvement programs but rather it supplements them by providing a means to advance projects within the area. Because of the CIDs investment in pre-planning and preliminary engineering, when construction money becomes available from federal, state or local jurisdictions to fund a project, a properly functioning CID should have projects that are ready to implement.

CIDs can leverage available resources that individual property owners cannot on their own. There are numerous articles written on how grant funds acquired by the city or county for special programs and/or incentives such as tax abatements can be made available to assist businesses or to recruit new businesses as a result of having a CID.

Once a CID is created and the board is in place, initial identified goals may change since the board has the power to make decisions on behalf of the district.

The projects which have been funded, and are planned, vary from district to district, might include:
- Safety and cleanliness initiatives including sidewalks and streetlights
- Streets and road construction and maintenance
- Parks and recreation areas
- Water and sewer systems
- Public transportation, terminal facilities
- Parking facilities
- Other services and facilities as permitted by law
BIDs

BIDs functions are limited to the advertising and/or promotion of the district, business recruitment and development, sanitation, and mandating design and rehabilitation standards for historically protected buildings within the district. BIDs can provide additional services like street beautification if the BID gives money to local government. BIDs are not bound by the gratuities clause of the Georgia Constitution and therefore, can benefit private property. As mentioned, BID typical services on private property include blight clean up, façade grants, and even property acquisition.

Special Tax Districts

Unincorporated counties have typically employed Special Tax Districts to extend fire services. Other services include sanitation, aesthetics like streetlights, and increased security by funding supplemental officers.

Step 3: Governance and Administration

CID’s are a quasigovernmental entity administered by a Board of Directors. The make-up of that Board is designated by the state and local legislation allowing for CID’s within a jurisdiction. Within each district, there are both elected and appointed board members. The number of each type of board members varies by the size of the CID. The make-up of some metro area CID boards is listed below:

- Cobb & Gwinnett County:
  - 1 appointed by the county
  - The remaining board is elected by property owners

- Fulton County: minimum of 7 board members
  - If more than 50% of the land is in unincorporated Fulton:
    - 2 appointed by County
    - 1 appointed by each municipality in the district
    - The remaining board is elected by property owners
  - If less than 50% of the land is in unincorporated Fulton:
    - 1 appointed by county
    - 1 appointed by each municipality in the district
    - The remaining board is elected by property owners

- City of Atlanta: 9 board members
  - 1 appointed by Mayor
  - 2 appointed by city council President, one is the current chairperson of the finance committee of the city council
  - 6 elected by property owners
**BIDs**
Like CIDs, BIDs are a quasigovernmental entity administered by a Board of Directors. However, BIDs do not require city or county representatives on the governing board and can thus, can have a private board. If the property owners prefer to organize a private board, this decision must be included in the district plan upon formation.

**Special Tax Districts**
Funds and expenditures within a Special Tax District are collected and controlled by the city or the county. In practice, local governments work with Downtown Development Authorities to choose services for the district.

**Step 4: Formation**

**CIDs**
By request, petitions (affidavits) are signed by property owners owning at least 75% of the assessed value of the real property, and more than 51% per capita of all owners of real property within the proposed CID, presented for authorizing ordinance to the governing board of the local municipality in which the proposed CID would be located. The language contained in the petition narrative must include a five-year plan, describing the purposes of the proposed district, the services it will provide, the improvements it will make, an estimate of the costs of those services and improvements, and the maximum rates of property taxes and special assessments that may be imposed within the proposed district. Other information must state how the CID would be organized and governed, and whether the governing board would be elected or appointed.

The owners of commercial property within the community improvement district which constitutes at least 75 percent by value of all real commercial property within the district will be subject to taxes, fees, and assessments levied by the administrative body of the community improvement district, and for this purpose, value shall be determined by the most recent approved county ad valorem tax digest.

As a practical matter, the impetus for creating CIDs has thus far come from interested commercial property owners who by their own volition have organized on a smaller scale to form working groups to initiate the process of creating a CID. Through the commitment and efforts of the smaller working groups, a CID project manager/administrator is identified and hired, a CID attorney is retained, and the solicitation of the requisite number of consents from fellow commercial property owners begins.

The geographical area which defines a CID is determined by the organizers in consultation with the county tax assessor’s office. Once the target area has been identified commercial property owners are asked to sign affidavits agreeing to their inclusion in the district.

After the boundaries have been established the following steps must be completed:
- Commercial property owners within the district are contacted and asked to sign the affidavits with notary affixed
- Certification by the County Tax Commissioner that the percentages of approval have been reached
- County Board of Commissioners and/or City Council passes a resolution consenting to the creation of the district
- Board of directors elected and seated
- Establish the Assessed millage rate
- Collection of assessed funds
- Board identifies projects that the CID will fund.
- Begin steps on identified projects
BIDs
Like the creation of a CID, BIDs are created by petitions, however the support threshold is lower. The creation of a BID requires support from at least 51 percent of the municipal taxpayers of the district proposed for creation or municipal taxpayers owning at least 51 percent of the taxable property subject to ad valorem real and personal property taxation in the district. To enact the proposed BID, the petition must be verified by the city, noticed and approved during a public meeting. BIDs also need a District Plan adopted by the local government. By law the district plan must include “District plan” or “plan” means a proposal adopted by ordinance which includes all of the following:

[A] A map of the district;

[B] A description of the boundaries of the district proposed for creation or extension, such description to be sufficient to identify the lands included, the present and proposed uses of these lands, the supplemental services to be provided within the district, the maximum millage to be levied for providing supplemental services, the proposed time for implementation and completion of the plan, any design and rehabilitation standards which may be mandated for buildings located within each district, and any rules and regulations applicable to the district. Boundaries of any such district shall not include land on which is located telephone central office and switching facilities serving an area exceeding the boundaries of the district; and

[C] Any other item required to be incorporated therein by the governing authority. (OCGA 36-43-3)

Special Tax Districts
The city council defines the boundaries and enacts by local legislation.

Step 5: Financing
Applies to all: Once a district is formed, the board raises funds by setting an ad valorem millage rate on real property, specifically excluding residential property. A Millage Rate is a tax rate that is applied to the assessed value of real estate. Millage rates are expressed not as regular percentages, but in tenths of a penny. For example, a millage rate of 2 mills would mean 2 tenths of a penny.

CIDs
The constitutional upper limit is 2.5% of the assessed value (which is 25 mills), but at least one local law (Cobb County) has placed the ceiling at 5 mills. The City of Atlanta follows the constitutional upper limit of 2.5% (25 mills). The millage rate is placed upon the regular tax bills sent by the Tax Commissioner, later transmits the collected taxes to the CID Board for expenditure in accordance with the purposes of the District.

BIDs
A BID is financed similarly to a CID; however, the property tax is upon real and personal property, both residential and commercial. In addition, there can be a surcharge for business licenses within the area. Funds are collected by the city and passed directly to the district.

Special Tax District
Special Tax Districts are funded by a property tax on non-exempt property, that cannot exceed 3 mills. The funds are collected by the local government and spent within the district.
### CID or BID FORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CID</th>
<th>BID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owners Representation for Formation</td>
<td>Greater than 51%</td>
<td>Greater than 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Valuation for Formation</td>
<td>Owners Representing Greater than 75% of Assessed Values</td>
<td>Owners Representing Greater than 51% of Assessed Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties Eligibility</td>
<td>Private or corporately owned office, industrial, or retail properties</td>
<td>Real and personal property, both residential and commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Security &amp; hospitality, beautification, marketing, public space management, social services, &amp; infrastructure planning &amp; management*</td>
<td>Security &amp; hospitality, beautification, marketing, public space management, and social services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BID and CID Process Outline

Developing a CID or a BID requires a support of the community. The following steps provide a sample outline of the steps needed to organize and create a BID or CID.

- Define Vision and Purpose: Creating and defining a clear sense of place and purpose will result in a strong sense of identity. This will increase loyalty and community enthusiasm.

- Hire Project Director to facilitate the development of the CID and an attorney to give legal advice during the process. Most often during the initial phase of design, until such time funds can be raised to hire a staff, the committee relies on volunteers to help with the day-to-day operation of the proposed CID.

- Conduct a demographic and economic profile of the proposed area to understand area characteristics.

- Contact the county in which the CID is being created to gather information from the tax assessor’s office that identifies owners located within the proposed CID boundaries.

- Create clean database of commercial/industrial properties and map out businesses located within the identified district.
☐ Create list of businesses in the district along with phone numbers and email addresses.

☐ Identify largest business owners in proposed district based on property value and solicit their financial support and for necessary leadership of the initial formation of the CID.

☐ Create Power Point Presentation for meetings that illustrate the vision, purpose and benefits.

☐ Send out Informational letters (See appendix (B and C).

☐ Create Pledge Cards (see appendix [D].

☐ Create Affidavit forms (see appendix [A].

☐ Prepare Media Release

☐ Schedule several fund raisers and invite the largest commercial owners in your district.

☐ Identify key players in the community located within the boundaries to implore their help with getting affidavits signed.

☐ Create marketing materials and strategy relative to the CID’s mission statement, goals and objectives, i.e. brochures, web-page, letters and robo calls to commercial property owners.

☐ Send out mail outs to all the commercial businesses in the district.

☐ Conduct Cold calls to business owners to schedule meetings to discuss and educate constituents in the district concerning the CID.

☐ Identify potential funding sources for CID creation and implementation

☐ Go door-to-door passing marketing materials informing owners about the CID.

☐ Schedule informational meetings and invite commercial property owners and tenants to the events to educate, discuss and get signed affidavits.

☐ Develop a Social Media Strategy

☐ Host multiple receptions for largest owners and other prominent agencies, i.e. schools, churches, etc. to gain financial support and other resources that may be needed to further the project.

☐ Constantly follow up with your Planning Committee to ensure you are on target for agreed upon date of completion. Make boundary adjustments as needed.

☐ Maintain database of signed affidavits.

☐ Submit for Certification by the County Tax Commissioner once the percentages of approval have been reached.
Community Examples

Midtown CID

The Midtown Improvement District (MID) is a public improvement district created to offer enhanced safety, maintenance, and capital improvements in Midtown Atlanta. MID enables commercial property owners to play a pivotal role in implementing the Blueprint, a master plan envisioned by the community and spearheaded by Midtown Alliance. With over four million dollars in annual revenues, MID focuses on the following priorities:

- **Midtown Blue**: Midtown’s 24-hour public safety program works with the Atlanta Police Department to address street crimes, including drug traffic, prostitution, and vandalism.
- **Midtown Green**: Midtown’s environmental maintenance program provides litter control, graffiti removal, and light maintenance to keep Midtown streets clean, inviting, and safe.
- **Streetscape Enhancements**: Cityscape projects provide new sidewalks, improved lighting, trees, and buried utility lines, when possible, along Midtown’s major streets.
- **Transit Initiatives**: Transit options such as ride-sharing programs and shuttle services are administered by Midtown Transportation Solutions (MTS).

Downtown Rome BID

The Downtown Development Authority of Rome, GA formed a BID for the downtown district in 2006. The Rome Business Improvement District offers various programs and grants to support its member businesses. Programs include special events, consistent advertising program, community awareness through safety and preservation, a Broad Street Banner Program, updating a business directory and building inventory, as well as a Public Improvement Program. In addition to its programs, the Rome BID offers façade and sign grants.

Downtown Madison BID

Madison, Georgia is a small town roughly 30 miles south of Athens, Georgia. Its downtown has received state and national recognition for its historic downtown. The city’s vision is to promote the continued development of its downtown as a strong economic engine while preserving the historic integrity and small-town character. As a means of meeting this goal, the city employs a Special Tax District to collect revenues to provide supplemental services within the downtown district. These supplemental services include decorative lighting, streetscape improvements and maintenance, parks and parking, programs and facilities, as well as development and revitalization initiatives.
These are sample projects that a BID/CID could implement.
Old 4th Ward CID/BID Desktop Feasibility

To determine the feasibility of the creation of a CID or a BID for the Old 4th Ward area, a desktop analysis of property tax records was conducted using the 2018 Fulton County Parcel and tax data. A millage rate of 5 mills was used as this is the most common millage rate throughout the region. 1 mill is equivalent to 1/1000th. Applied to taxes, that means 1 mill is equivalent to $1 in taxes per $1,000 in taxable value. If a property has an assessed value of $100,000, and it is assessed a 1 mill tax rate, it will pay $100 in taxes.

Currently there are 262 parcels that would be eligible to pay into a CID within the study area that are not in an existing CID. These parcels currently have an assessed value of approximately $94,492,000. Map 1 illustrates the potential CID properties and their valuation. Using that as the basis and the using a basis of 5 mills of a property tax, the annual revenue to the CID would be approximately $472,000.

That revenue would be equivalent to a medium sized CID in metro Atlanta, that funds a full-time executive director and contracts for security patrols, beautification, conducts planning and minor infrastructure improvements.

To develop a BID, the full boundary of the study could be used. However, to lessen the tax burned on homeowner it is suggested the BID is at 3 main nodes, an Edgewood-Auburn Node, A Boulevard Node, and North Avenue Node. Because a BID can tax residential properties, the number of parcels increases significantly and there is an increase in the amount of revenue. The table on page 13 and Map 2 illustrate the potential BID nodes, properties, and revenue at 2 mills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CID</th>
<th>REVENUE</th>
<th>Millage Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugarloaf</td>
<td>$ 189,437</td>
<td>3.5 Mills [2016]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport South</td>
<td>$ 414,347</td>
<td>5 Mills [2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway Marietta</td>
<td>$ 389,000</td>
<td>5 Mills [2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilburn</td>
<td>$ 212,904</td>
<td>5 Mills [2018]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04W</td>
<td>$ 472,464.45</td>
<td>5 Mills [2018]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESTIMATED OLD 4th Ward CID REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Millage Rate</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Mills</td>
<td>$ 472,464.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Mills</td>
<td>$ 377,971.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mills</td>
<td>$ 283,478.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Mills</td>
<td>$ 188,985.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Mills</td>
<td>$ 94,492.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BID</td>
<td>Properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Auburn/Edgewood</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulevard</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Avenue/Ponce</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revised CID Reasability

After the initial desktop feasibility was completed, the Old 4th Ward Business Alliance requested an additional analysis with 2019 Tax Data on a smaller CID that would encompass the area between Ralph McGill Boulevard to DeKalb Avenue. The area is shown in Map 3 and has an assessed value of $59.1 million with 192 properties. At a 4-mill tax rate, this area would generate approximately $234,000 per year in revenue or at 5-mills; $295,000. This area would be able to provide basic CID services but would be limited in funding infrastructure or full-time staff funded fully by the CID.
Appendix A

WRITTEN CONSENT OF OWNER

STATE OF Georgia
COUNTY OF Fulton

Personally appeared before the undersigned attesting officer, duly authorized by law to administer oaths, came ______________________, who, after first having been duly sworn, upon oath deposes and says:

1. The undersigned is/are the owner/owners, or the authorized representative of the owner, and has authority to bind the owner of the following described real property:

2. All that tract or parcel of land identified as Tax Parcel(s) ________________ on the ad valorem tax records of Fulton County, Georgia, herein referred to as the "Realty" is/are the owner/owners of the Realty described above.

3. The owner does designate ______________________ as the representative of the owner in the taking of all action including, but not limited to, serving as elector, voting for board members, and voting otherwise, as may be allowed or required under the Atlanta Community Improvement District Act ("Act").

4. This affidavit may be relied upon by the Fulton County Tax Commissioner for the purpose of certifying that subparagraphs [a][2][A] & [B] of Section 4 of the Act have been satisfied, and by the city governing authority with respect to the inclusion of the above described Realty within a Community Improvement District ("CID").

5. The undersigned acknowledges that if the above-described Realty is included within the CID, it will be subject to taxes, fees and assessments levied by the CID Board.

6. The owner/owners consent to the creation of a Community Improvement District to include owner’s above-described Realty pursuant to the Atlanta Community Improvement District Act.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has set his/her hand and seal the day and year set forth below.

______________________________ [SEAL]

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this ___ day of ____________, 20__.

______________________________
Notary Public
Appendix B

Example of Informational Email

Date:

RE: CID Formation

Dear Old Fourth Ward Property Owner:

On behalf of the Old Fourth Ward Business Association and _________, we are writing to invite your participation and support in forming the Old Fourth Ward Community Improvement District. As you know, a CID is a self-taxing district that could bring much needed financial resources into the area and potentially solidify the Old Fourth Ward as an attractive option for national and international businesses to locate. The organization and implementation of the CID will bring big improvements to this area that will undoubtedly increase the value of commercial and residential property and bring unprecedented growth and change to the Old Fourth Ward community. You can help.

Atlanta’s Old Fourth Ward is already home to popular tourist destinations rich in history and delicious eateries rich in culture. But, with the work of the Old Fourth Ward Community Improvement District comprised of community partners including inspired commercial and industrial property owners and active business owners, before long Atlanta’s Old Fourth Ward will also will be a cleaner, safer, more attractive, and a pedestrian-friendly community to live, work, and play.

For the past two years, interested commercial property owners and community organizers have been working to better understand the needs of the Old Fourth Ward community and how the formation of a Community Improvement District might benefit the area. While this project is in the latter stages of discussion, your help is needed to make the goal of forming a CID within the Old Fourth Ward area a reality for this community.

As a commercial property owner within the Old Fourth Ward community, we encourage you to get involved in this process now as we work to renew and revitalize the Old Fourth Ward. We want you to play a role in “Building a Better Community for our Future” by committing your support of the Old Fourth Ward CID by signing the enclosed affidavit.

For your convenience and information, we have enclosed several documents to help educate you about the process of forming a CID and the steps you should take to get involved. A member of our planning team will be in touch over the next several weeks to speak with you directly about this effort and to personally invite your support.

We look forward to working with you to continuously improve the Old Fourth Ward community and welcome your participation in this effort. In the meantime, please visit our website at ________________ for more information.
Appendix C

Example of CID Informational Letter

Date:

Name:

Company Name:

Title:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Dear:

The Old Fourth Ward Business Association will host an informational cocktail dinner in support of the Old Fourth Ward Community Improvement District on ______________. The dinner will be held at _________, located at ______________. The purpose of the dinner is to share information about the CID, answer questions and provide updates on the progress toward the CID’s formation.

The proposed CID will bring much needed financial resources to the Old Fourth Ward and, in our case, potentially make our Old Fourth Ward community an attractive option for national and international business location. The formation of the CID will enhance the existing historic beauty of the Old Fourth Ward, increase the value of existing commercial businesses in the area, and expectedly increase the revenues coming into your business.

The CID will help transform and re-affirm the historic value and beauty of the Old Fourth Ward. Once established, the CID, like other successful Atlanta area CIDs, i.e., Buckhead CID, Midtown CID and Downtown DID, will provide much needed enhancements to the community such as security cameras, planters, benches, lighting, and ambassadors.

Already, several commercial property owners have signed affidavits to support formation efforts. Commercial property owners had this to say about their support of the CID:

“_____”

I hope you will join us on __________ for dinner and cocktails. This is an exciting time for the Old Fourth Ward and I am happy to be a part of this community. Please R.S.V.P. via email to ______________ or via telephone to ______________, by __________. You may also contact ______________, at __________ with questions.

We look forward to seeing you at dinner.

Best Regards,
Appendix D

EXAMPLE OF PLEDGE CARD

Pledge Card

Old Fourth Ward
BUSINESS
Association

Company Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
Email Address:

Amount of Pledge:

• $10,000.00
• $20,000.00
• $30,000.00
• Other Amount ___________________________