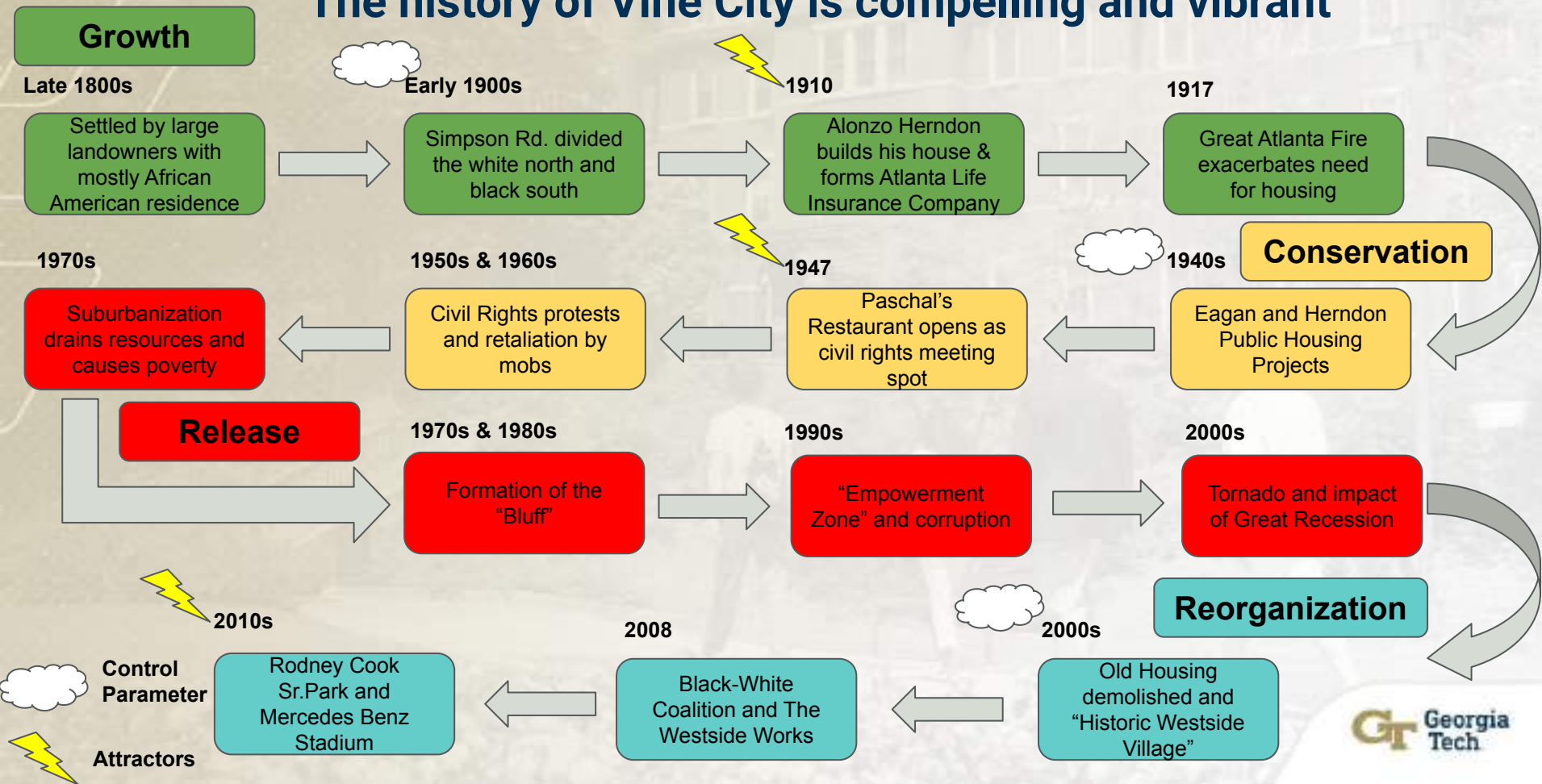


Vine City



Alison Eltz
Le Truong
Samuel Gilstrap

The history of Vine City is compelling and vibrant

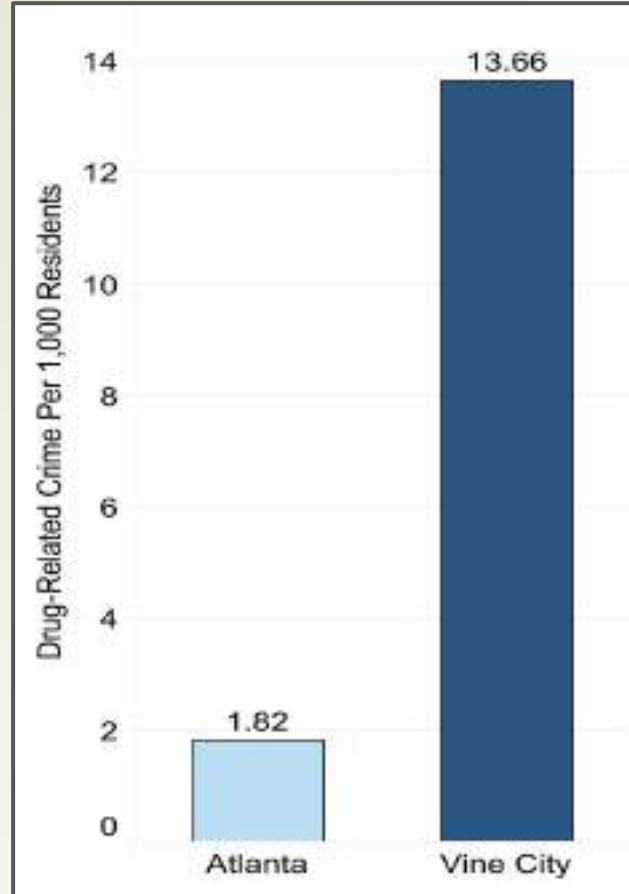
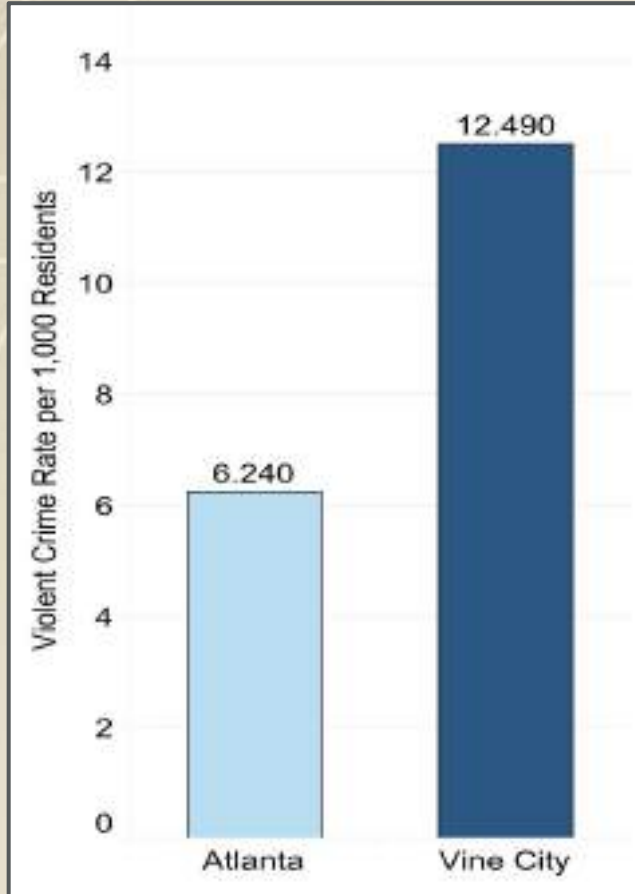


Despite growth in neighborhood change, Vine City remains a very distressed community

- Median household income : \$33,365
- 40% of population below poverty
- Predominantly Black (85.6%)
- Housing is unaffordable for more than 60% of the population
- 48% have no access to a vehicle



Crime is a major characteristic of Vine City



- Because of the image of the Bluff, Vine City is seen as a high crime area
- Vine City's crime rates are high compared to overall crime rates in Atlanta

Vine City lacks access to fresh food

- Vine City has one grocery store, a Walmart that recently reopened after an arson in 2022
- Other options are convenience stores/corner stores
- Residents often garden their own food due to a lack of options



A fire destroyed Vine City's grocery store



Vine City has few grocery options



The Walmart has been rebuilt as a neighborhood market

Vine City does not have a safe environment

- In 2018, high levels of lead were found in the soil
- The EPA has designated the area as a Superfund site, meaning the area's hazardous material requires cleanup due to its dangers to the public health
 - 1,593 of the 2,097 properties in the site have granted the EPA access for sampling and cleanup
- High levels of lead pose health concerns



Soil in Vine City is contaminated



Clean up efforts are underway



Vacancy is high, though it has declined in recent years

- As of 2022, 12% of homes in Vine City sit vacant
 - For reference, in 2022, Georgia's vacancy rate in housing units was 0.8%
- An abundance of vacant housing affects the health of the neighborhood
 - Lowered property values decrease equity for homeowners
 - Blight decreases the likelihood of new homeowners moving into the area
 - There is increased crime associated with vacancy due to the area being unsupervised
- There is also high vacancy in the retail and office spaces in the neighborhood



A row of vacant homes



An abandoned storefront

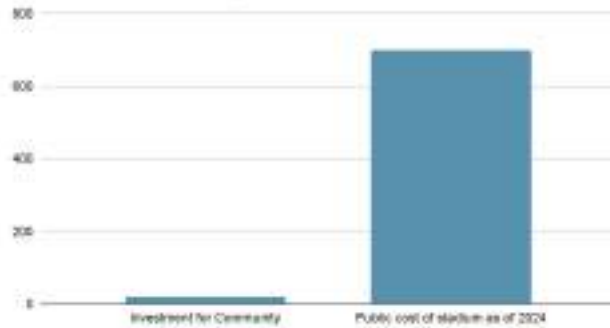
Mercedes-Benz Stadium has some benefits and investments that are useful for the community



- \$20 million dollars total investment
- Westside Works - Provides training and employment
- Westside Future Fund - Investment in housing construction
- Atlanta Land Trust - Investment in building permanently affordable homes
- Georgia Resilience & Opportunity Fund - Provides income for local female residents
- Access to nearby events and games
- Possibility of increased investment
- Increased Tourism

However, much of the revenue being produced by the stadium does not contribute to Vine City

Public Investment Compared to Public Cost



Last church service in Friendship Baptist Church

- At least \$700 million worth of public investment despite initial \$200 million price tag
- Like most stadiums, there is no property tax despite legal troubles
- Low paying service jobs
- Temporarily increased foot traffic - Increased crime
- Destruction of two predominantly black churches during construction
- Light pollution and Traffic congestion

Rodney Cook Sr. Park is an underutilized asset



- Offers recreational amenities and a space to connect residents
- Also a watershed management project: all water flows to the park, preventing floods
- Lack of buildings, housing, people, and activities surrounding the park raises public safety concerns
- Lack of benches and shade to encourage visitors to stay



Lack of buildings & people surrounding the park

Vine City's location is an advantage of the neighborhood



Proximity to downtown & attractions

- Its proximity to downtown Atlanta is convenient to participate in multiple events, festivals, major attractions
- Two MARTA train stations in the neighborhood help residents to easily access and travel within the city



Vine City & Ashby MARTA stations

The school that serves Vine City is underperforming

In 2016, Hollis STEM Innovation Academy (Pre-K to 8th grade) opened to serve Vine City

- Despite spending about \$17,000 per student (higher than spending at nearby APS schools), Hollis is ranked 1,242nd out of 1,248 Georgia elementary schools
- Hollis has a partnership with Georgia Tech
- The school has received private investment from Mercedes Benz in addition to a STEM grant
- There is an on-site health care clinic within the school



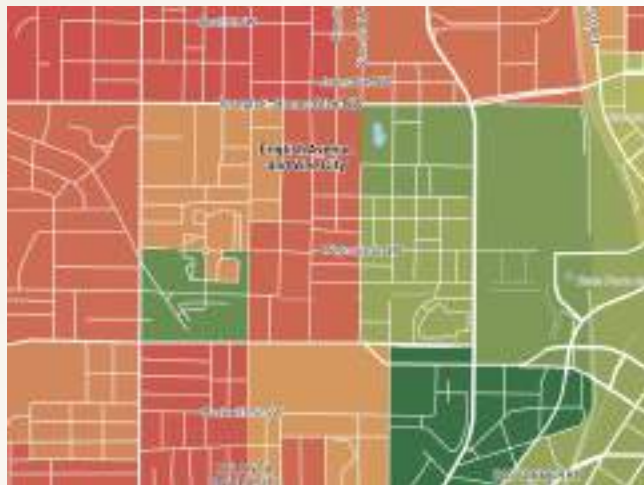
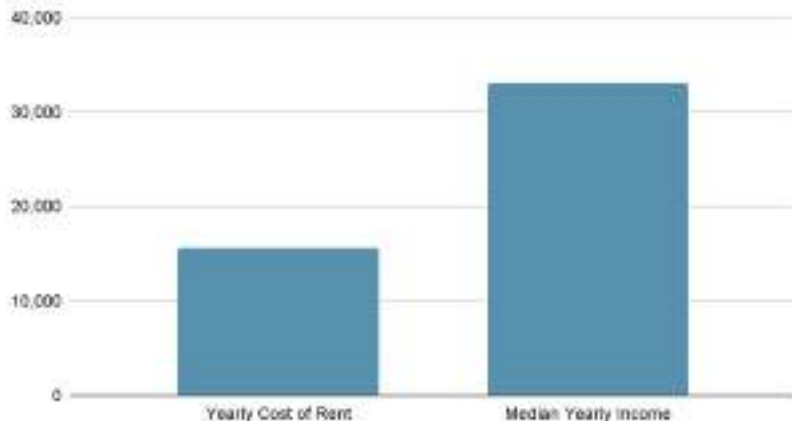
The people in Vine City are being underserved by the dire housing situation

- Average rent is around \$1,300 compared to median income of \$33,365
- Nearly 90% of people are renting
- Most housing built in the 50s & 60s
- Around 12% of properties are vacant



Blighted and vacant property in Vine City

Rent & Income Comparison



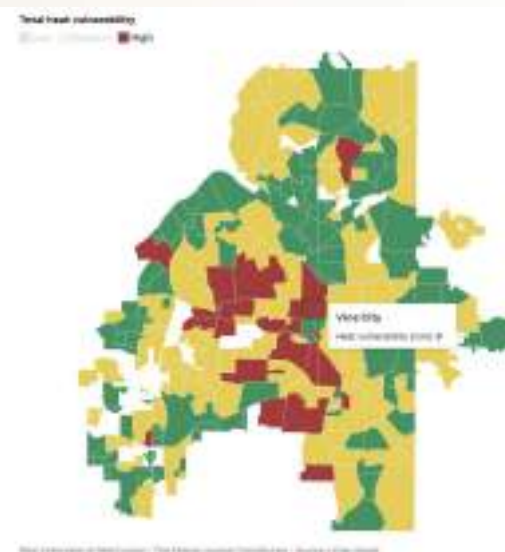
Vacancy map of Vine City (Source: Best Neighborhood)

Residents in Vine City experience many health challenges

- Top 10 areas with the highest Community Need Index (CNI) scores
- Top 2 of heat-vulnerable neighborhoods
- 18% unemployment rate & low income => high stress levels
- 19% without health insurance coverage => low health literacy
- 48% have no access to a vehicle => long commute times => no time for healthy habits & activities



Vine City during peak sun hours



Neighborhoods most vulnerable to heat

There are some potential but currently not feasible options that Mercedes-Benz Stadium could offer to be more equitable



- Pay a living wage to every employee
- Sponsor the tuition of residents to nearby/states schools
- Provide potential housing or healthcare services through a local clinic
- Donate a small portion of game day revenue directly to nearby communities
- Commit to paying their property taxes - \$26 million per year or PILOT program
- Sponsor and coordinate tailgating activities with the community and local small businesses

Through strategic investment, Vine City has the potential to be a thriving neighborhood

Short Term

Addressing immediate neighborhood specific concerns through introduction of local meeting spot for community engagement and construction of "Main Street"

Mid-Long Term

Addressing vacancy and heat vulnerability through housing enforcement, mixed-income affordable housing, and focus on tree canopy

Long Term

Addressing health concerns and perception through the introduction of local grocery, increased investment and partnership, and a new marketing strategy



Community engagement can be sparked and centralized through additions to Rodney Cook Sr. Park



⚡ Possible Location for shaded area

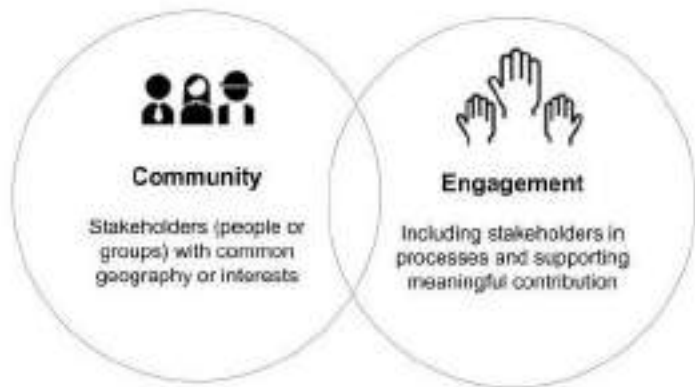


- Residents in the community would benefit from having a regular meeting location that is centered around their needs
- Lack of shade and seating - Accessibility Concerns
- Lack of regular activity in the park
- Introduction of large shaded area where meetings and similar events can be held
- Multiple possible locations due to large area
- Should be well lit and open (no unnecessary walls) to deter criminal activity

Positive changes to outcomes can be facilitated through this accessible and shaded area



- Bimonthly meetings could be held where important neighborhood topics could be discussed, possibly led by community leaders
- Park events can be organized around this location
- Organizing of renters in tenants' unions and information on tenants rights
- Spreading awareness of community issues and solutions - Blight Enforcement & Superfund Cleanup
- Increasing foot traffic into park along with other strategic options increases safety and health outcomes

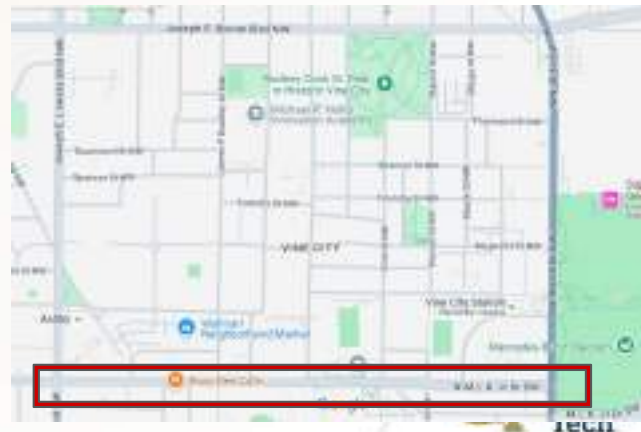


Martin Luther King Jr. Drive NW should be transformed into a Main Street

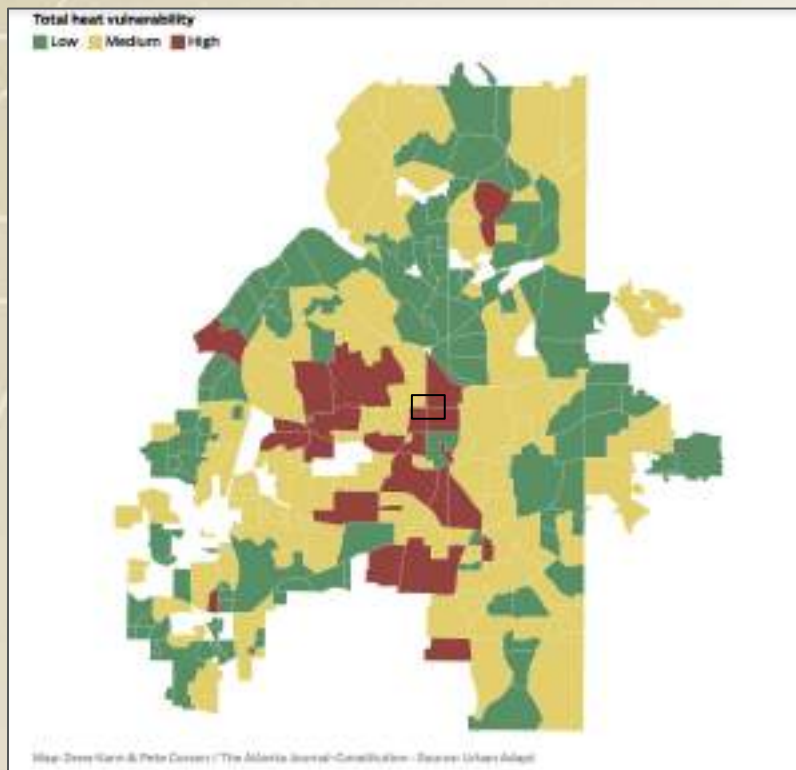
- Close to Herndon Home Museum & Vine City MARTA
- **Short term:**
 - Remove street parking to expand sidewalk & add more bike lanes
 - Host farmers' markets, art festivals,...
- **Long term:** Combine with Clark Atlanta University's upcoming development for mixed-used retail & housing units
- Partner with the Georgia Main Street Program
- Partner with local non-profit organizations:
 - Oasis Of Vine City
 - Vine City Civic Association
 - Greater Vine City Opportunity Program
 - English Avenue/Vine City Community Collaborative
 - Clark Atlanta University's student orgs



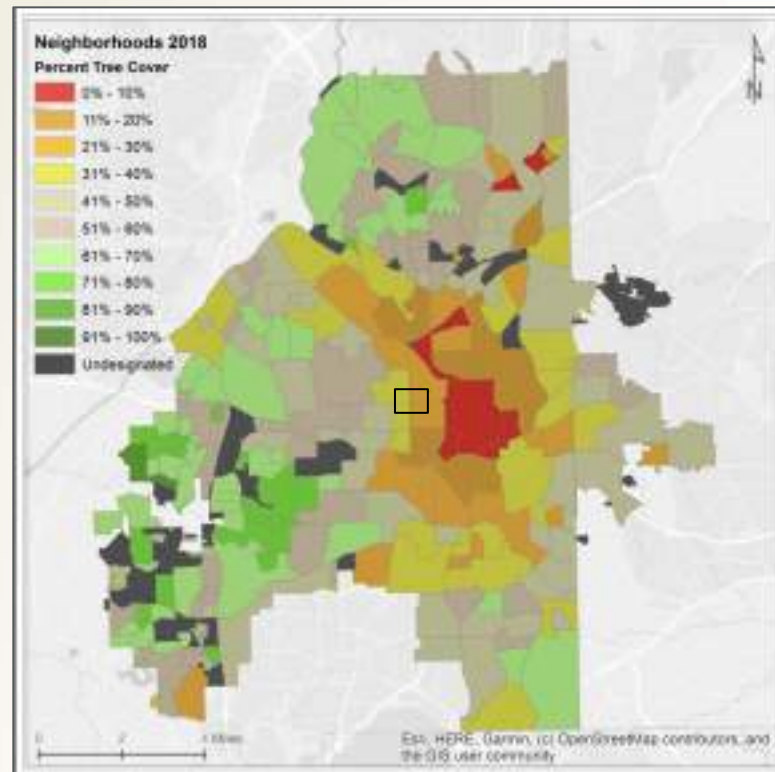
MLK Jr. Drive NW



Vine City suffers from heat vulnerability and low tree canopy



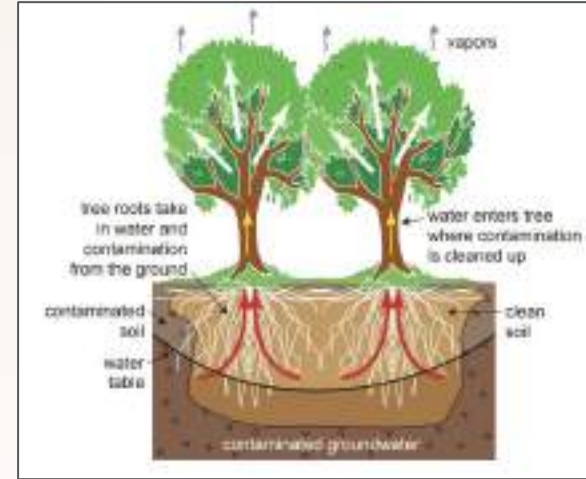
Vine City is one of the most heat-vulnerable neighborhoods in the City



The tree coverage of Vine City is 22%, compared to the City of Atlanta's 47.9%

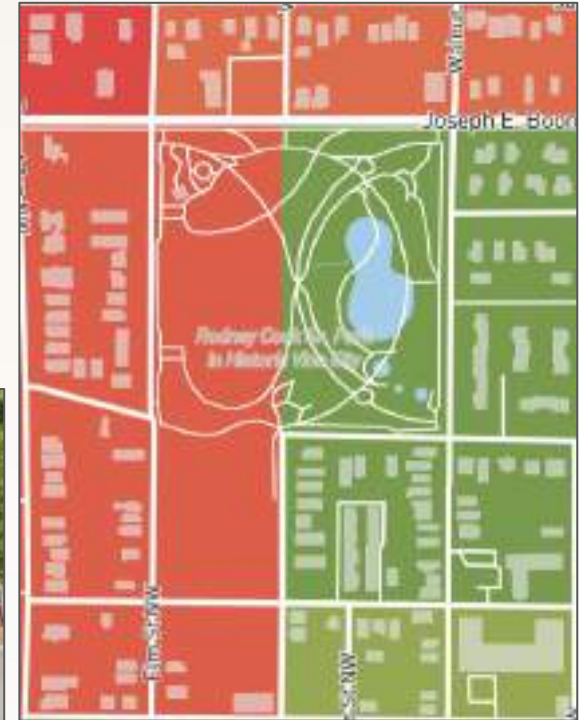
The EPA should maximize tree canopy when replanting vegetation in the Superfund site

- After the EPA replaces the soil from a property, they replant vegetation
- The selection process for the vegetation is called phytoremediation, where plants that naturally clean the environment are used
 - Common plants used for this are ferns, grasses, poplar trees, and willow trees
- The City should direct the EPA to prioritize plants that provide shade to the community, like poplars, over grasses
 - The hybrid poplar tree grows 8 feet per year and has a large and dense canopy



Vacant housing is prevalent around Rodney Cook Sr. park

- Residential vacancy rate is high overall in Vine City, but much of it is concentrated around the park
- With many empty houses and lots, there are not many eyes on the park, which means the park lacks passive supervision
- Reports of shootings and drug deals at the park are not uncommon



Vacancy rates are concentrated in blocks around the park (Source: Best Neighborhoods)

Changes in housing in Vine City are needed

- Vacancy and blight are significant, and 61% of residents are rent-burdened
- Focusing housing projects around the park will create supervision, improving public safety through more eyes on the area
 - This will leverage the park as an asset by reducing public safety concerns
 - A safer park in turn can attract more people to housing near the park
- Mixed-use of retail and housing will help to activate edges
- Housing with a ratio of market-rate and affordable units should be built around the park
 - This will bring a larger range of income-levels to the neighborhood



City of Atlanta Affordable Housing Tracker shows no projects completed or under construction around the park



Create mixed-income housing through a partnership with Choice Atlanta

- The City should acquire vacant properties around the park through code enforcement and eminent domain
- Once the property is acquired, the City can transfer it to a land bank for use by a housing authority or put it up for public auction
 - This has a limitation in that neighbors must first file complaints about vacant properties
- Choice Atlanta, an Atlanta Housing Authority that uses HUD grant funding, has proposed mixed-income housing plans around the park
 - The City should partner with the housing authority as they acquire vacant properties



Choice Atlanta has identified the blocks surrounding the park as areas for acquisition and development

The introduction of a new grocery store would act as an attractor for the neighborhood



Concentration of convenient/ corner markets stores on the West side



- Located next to the park (North Vine City)
- An additional accessible option will also ease the food desert problem
- Incentives for grocery store development
 - Tax relief/deductions, utility/rent subsidies, financing to reduce development costs
 - Build amenities (parking garage, streetscape improvements, etc.) to appeal to developers
 - OR partnership with nonprofit/for-profit developers /food co-op to establish a city-owned grocery store
- Increase work opportunities for local residents

Having the new grocery store close by will also attract public eyes on the park



CITY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRESENTS OUR 2024 2025

After School Program
AGES 5-12

18 LOCATIONS • HEALTHY SNACK & HOT MEAL DAILY • TUITION ASSISTANCE

Monday – Friday | 2:30 – 6:00 PM
\$35/week, plus a multi-child discount
Non-resident rate \$50/week (no multi-child discount)

Homework Assistance/Tutoring, S.T.E.M., Social Emotional Learning,
Health • Wellness, Writing • Literacy, Arts • Culture, and More!

Starts August 5!
Secure your spot today!

TEEN PROGRAM AVAILABLE | FREE | AGES 13-18

For locations and details, visit <https://atl.org/atlrec>
Transportation options may be available for some sites.
Attendance programs follow the city's professional calendar.

- Parents can do grocery shopping while children visit the park
- Increase foot traffic & more lighting surrounding the park
- Investment in youth programs and activities to boost frequent visitors, ensure public safety & community engagement
- Build partnerships with libraries, businesses, hospitals, schools, non-profit organizations, retirement homes to encourage hosting more events

Vine City should reinvent itself by moving on from the old “BLUFF” and promoting its Civil Rights background with future investments

Building

Lasting

Unifying

Future

Foundations

- Vine City still has the perception of being a dangerous community that should be avoided
- Vine City’s rich history gives a great backing for a new marketing strategy
- Promotion of historical black history and the introduction of new foundations in HBCU like Clark Atlanta, Morehouse, and Spelman
- Partnership with Clark Atlanta to help spread the new “BLUFF” in their proposed mixed-use housing and local retail stores



Herndon Home



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Long Term

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These strategic investments can lead to changes in other outcomes, such as gaps in education and high crime rates that currently limit the community from achieving its full potential