Workshop 2 Lakewood Heights

Blueprints for successful communities

The Lakewood Heights Community Design Workshop

results of a community design workshop for Lakewood Heights, Atlanta, Georgia

A component of The Blueprints for Successful Communities Initiative of The Georgia Conservancy in Partnership with:

The Interprofessional Community Design Collaborative and,
The Georgia Tech Urban Design Workshop

March 1998

Funding provided by:

UPS
AT&T
Georgia Power
Deen Day Smith
Philip Morris Companies, Inc.
Kraft Foods and Miller Brewing Company
City of Atlanta

Contents

Blueprints for Successful Communities page 2
Objectives of Inner City Livability page 2
Lakewood Heights page 3
Study Areas page 11
Jonesboro Road page 13
Fairgrounds page 16
Issues and Recommendations page 17
Participants page 28

Panelist Egbert Perry leads discussion

The Blueprints Initiative

Over the last decade, growth and development have diversified and strengthened Georgia's economy, but at a significant risk to Georgia's environment. The good news for Georgia is that all across the state builders, developers, bankers, environmentalists and government officials are realizing that the way we have treated and used land over the last century cannot sustain our region in the coming century. For that reason, in 1995, the Georgia Conservancy formed a unique partnership comprised of the Urban Land Institute, the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, American Institute of Architects, and American Society of Landscape Architects to foster public education and facilitate a process for creating successful communities in Georgia.

To further this effort the Successful Communities Partners have joined with the Urban Design Workshop of the Georgia Tech College of Architecture and the Interprofessional Community Design Collaborative to conduct a series of workshops in selected communities in the Atlanta region to address specific development issues in those communities which may be prototypical for the region in general. The workshops also serve to integrate the Successful Communities Principles which have been established as a result of this initiative.

The Lakewood Heights Community Design Workshop is the second of many workshops planned. The Georgia Conservancy and its partners have concluded that this effort, combined with continued public education, will result in communities across Georgia which are economically strong, environmentally sound and socially progressive.

Successful Communities Principles

Successful Communities:

- work together to produce a high quality of life that they want to sustain;
- work to create regional strategies for transportation, land use and economic growth;
- understand that sustainable community design is based on the effect of the built environment on the natural environment, aesthetics, scale, history and culture;
- promote efficient use of existing infrastructure, energy, water and land;
- incorporate compact integrated land uses which bring people closer to work, to school and shopping and safeguard undeveloped lands for agriculture, greenspace and recreation
- provide transportation options so that each member of the community has access to goods, services and recreation
- are designed to be safe, healthy, economically strong, environmentally sound and inclusive.

The Conservancy believes that these principles apply to all communities, from those on the edge of urbanizing regions facing problems of managing rapid growth and change to inner city neighborhoods facing problems of outmigration, economic disinvestment and deteriorating housing stock and infrastructure. For these urban communities the principles translate to the following specific objectives:

Objectives of Urban Livability

- Diversity of income.
- Diversity of family/household type (age, size composition).
- Balanced economic growth for both job development and commercial services.
- Diversity of land uses, closely integrated within the community.
- Access by all persons to housing options, including single family, multi-family, and extended family opportunities in both rental and ownership formats.
- Access by all persons to transportation options (pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and transit) supported by a fine grained street system.
- Efficient use of existing physical and social infrastructure.

- Availability of a variety of civic uses and spaces for both social and recreational purposes.
- Preservation and efficient use of historic architectural and landscape character.
- Strong visual community identity through legible neighborhood edges, gateways, and public spaces.

Lakewood Heights: A Community In Transition

Lakewood Heights, like many of Atlanta's inner city neighborhoods, has suffered from several decades of outmigration of population, businesses and jobs to the suburbs. This has resulted in deteriorating housing and infrastructure, many vacant lots and buildings, loss of supporting retail facilities, and the myriad social ills that accompany such deterioration. Yet, at its core, the neighborhood retains many fundamental elements that make it unique. The ethnic and income diversity, though diminishing, is still there. The traditional physical structure of mixed uses on small blocks is intact. The unique presence of the Lakewood Fairgrounds and adjacent public lands, representing both a problem and an opportunity, remains. Finally, there is still a strong sense of community with most of the institutions necessary to sustain a viable community.

The workshop process began with several meetings where residents were asked to list the assets and problems of their community.

Assets

What are the assets of Lakewood Heights which we most value? What characteristics should be retained and strengthened and around which our future should be built?

- The community's history, style and character
- Small town quality: front porches, garages off to one side or in the rear, and houses and businesses close to the street.
- Diversity of the population; race, age, income.
- The urban quality: a good mix of commerce, housing types, industry, stable neighborhoods, and education institutions.
- Good accessibility: proximity to the interstate, mass transit, downtown, and the airport.
- Dedicated residents, friendliness, and loyalty to the community.
- Strong anchors of the community: Boys and Girls Club, Masonic Building, fire station, Sun Trust Bank, school, and churches.

Missing or Troubling

What concerns do we have about the community which must be addressed in order for us to create a more desirable community?

- Pockets of poor and run-down housing.
- Too many people in Lakewood Heights with limited incomes.
- Need for a broader range of recreational program and facilities.
- A damaged and declining environment, especially the air quality and physical appearance. One person said, "After a while, people get used to it and simply live with the unsightliness."
- Presence of unsanitary conditions; many rats, much "stock piling" (dumping of trash); and overgrown vacant lots.
- Lack of pride by many people: properties are often trashed, abused and left to deteriorate.
- Loss of homeowners; much absentee ownership. Very little code enforcement.
- Crime's a problem (against both people and property) and concern over unsafe conditions, especially at night; random shooting, prostitution, transients, crack houses, drug dependency.
- Little new desirable investment; and at the same time, a decline of existing businesses. Few new retail businesses and those nearby are inadequate and in poor condition; many said they "must travel far to get the basics".
- Old, decrepit and dirty industry and undesirable businesses abound, such as junkyards and recycling plants.

Lakewood Heights Neighborhood in NPU-Y

Neighborhood Context

The Lakewood Heights neighborhood is the largest neighborhood in Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU)-Y in the south side of Atlanta's inner City. NPU-Y is comprised of nine neighborhoods, five of which are smaller neighborhoods clustered along Pryor Road on the west side of the NPU. On the east side is the historic Jonesboro Road corridor, along which are located intact but deteriorating traditional residential neighborhood. A once thriving commercial corridor, it has now deteriorated due to employment losses in the adjacent industrial corridor, the area's historic job base. Lakewood Avenue forms the southern leg of the triangle, and is the spine of the Lakewood Heights Neighborhood.

NPU-Y is unique due to the existence of several large land parcels including the Lakewood Fairgrounds, several Atlanta Public School sites, the Carver Homes Public Housing Project, Southbend Park, and Heritage Village, a redevelopment project of the Urban Residential Development Corporation. The NPU has excellent accessibility to downtown and the Atlanta Airport from the adjacent I-75/I-85 expressway. Nearly all of NPU-Y lies within Atlanta's Empowerment Zone boundary.

Proposed Pryor Road Corridor Redevelopment Projects

- High Point Estates (HUD - URDC)
  400 apartments–single family +/- 125 units
  senior apts +/- 25 units
- Carver Homes (Atlanta Housing Authority)
  100 acres–900 units (+/- 600 occupied)
  Phased demolition and rebuild +/- 700 units
- Commercial Corner
  To be redeveloped with grocery included
- Lakewood Village (private)
  54 buildings +/- 100 units (separate owners)
  City seeking to purchase and demolish for redevelopment

NPU–Y Population Forecast–Development Program

NEIGHBORHOOD "WALKING" AREAS	APPROX. 1960 POPULATION	APPROX. 1990 POPULATION	PROPOSED CHANGE FOR 2010	
			# NEW UNITS	TOTAL POPULATION
A. Lakewood Heights (Town Center & Fairgrounds)	6811	2976	(+- 1000)	5649
B. Pryor Road Area	9208	2297		2959
• Betmar LaVilla	549	239		306
• Amal Heights	186	81		105
• Joyland	716	313		403
• High Point	545	239		345
• Carver Homes	7212	1425		1800
C. South Atlanta		1710	(+- 200)	2250
D. Chosewood Park Engelwood Manor	1908	2543	(+- 100)	2813
TOTAL	17,927	9,526	(+-1300)	13,671

Jonesboro Road Corridor Study

Findings:

1. Incompatible land uses
2. Declining housing stock
3. 25% of parcels are:
   - Vacant
   - Deteriorated
   - Code violations
   - Tax delinquent
4. Opportunities for reintroducing housing, both:
   - Where it once existed and
   - Where it now should be located
5. Need to remove trucks
6. Commercial Development
   - Historically a "string of pearls"
   - Re-focus on Lakewood Heights
   - Market study

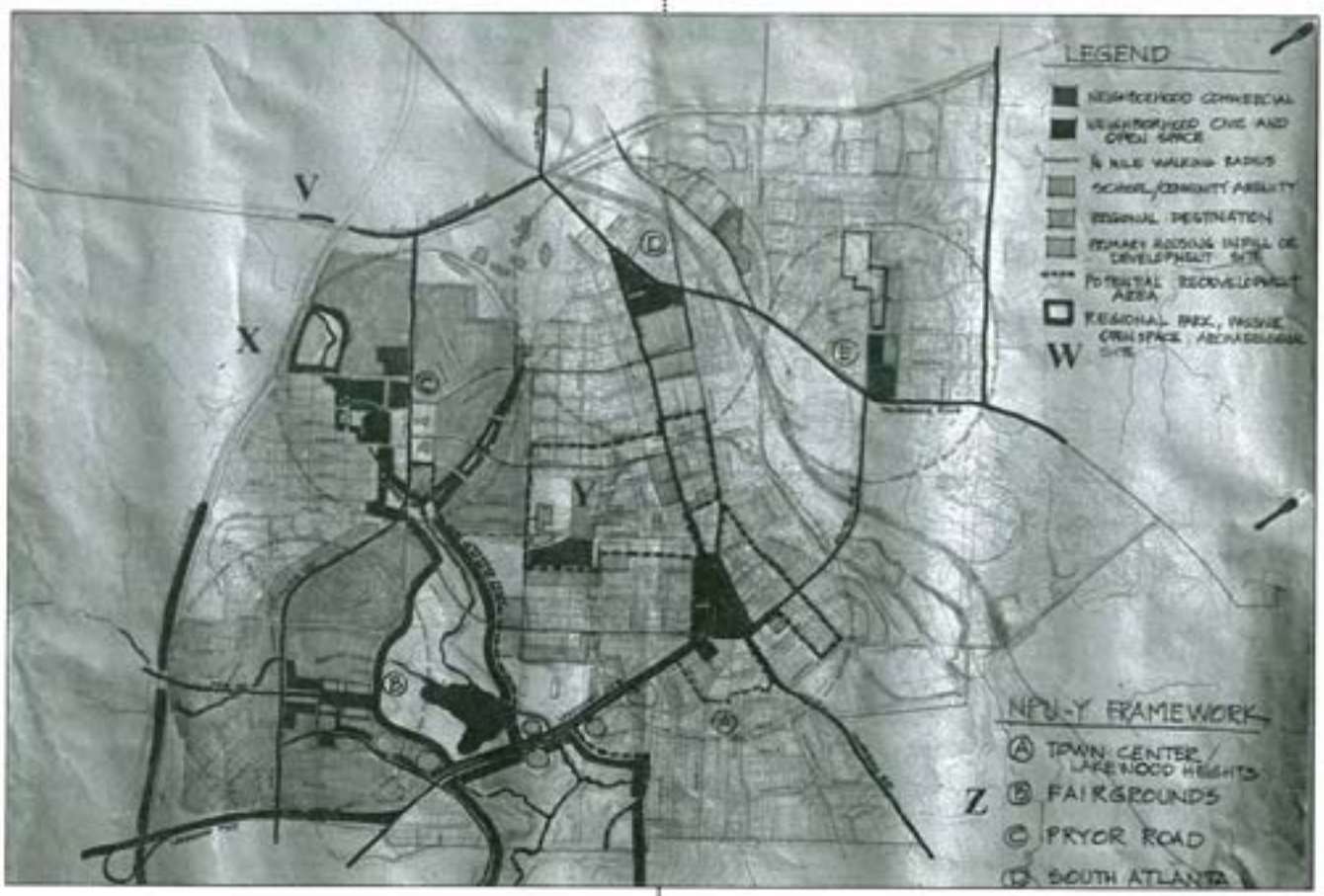
     Current population can support
     +/- 60,000 sq. ft of new retail

Source: Bishop Planning Consultants

NPU-Y Goals

The nine basic neighborhoods of NPU-Y create a unique opportunity to reconstitute five viable traditional in-town districts, each with the residential base to form a "walking" community with convenient "village center" commercial uses, mixed income and mixed density housing, and easy access to elementary schools and public transit.

The fundamental goal of these neighborhoods should be to replenish their base with a diverse population of a size approaching that of 1960 when the area was at its peak of viability. This can be accomplished at or near the historic densities of the area of five or less net dwelling units to the acre and still create the critical mass necessary to support commercial and cultural village centers in each of the five areas. This growth would also create the tax base adequate to support viable urban infrastructure. When coupled with a revitalized job base in the old industrial area, Lakewood Heights and NPU-Y can be a significant and attractive demonstration of a livable inner city community.



NPU-Y Framework Plan

History

There is some evidence that native American communities existed in the South River watershed which runs north/south through the site. At the turn of the century , the Lakewood Heights area was located just south of 19th century urbanized Atlanta and the neighborhoods of Summerhill, Mechanicsville and Peoplestown. The area's development in the early 20th Century was secured by three separate, but interrelated, forces:

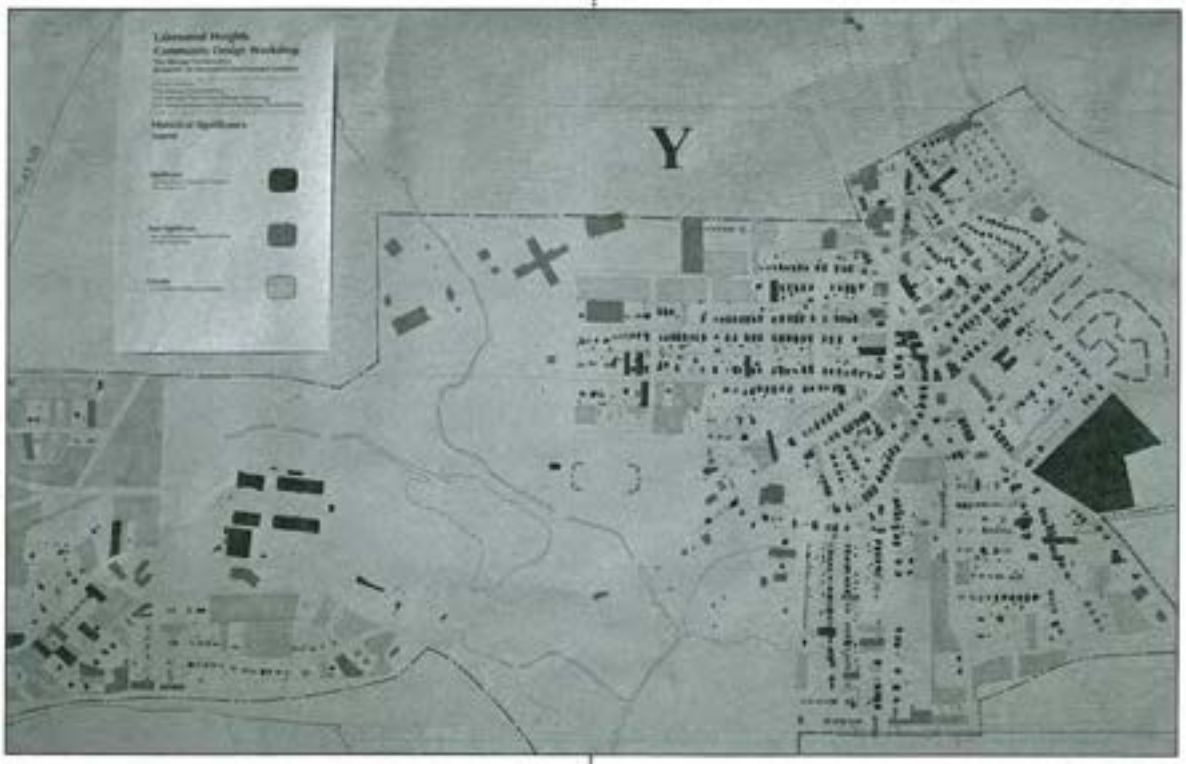
- Development of commercial uses and a residential neighborhood along Jonesboro Road and its associated streetcar line, and the parallel development of an industrial area along the adjacent rail line. This community was primarily a white blue collar neighborhood with its main job base located in the adjacent industrial area, which included a General Motors assembly plant.

- Development of an African-American community adjacent to the Gammon Theological Seminary and Clark University, now the site of Atlanta's Carver High School.

- Development of the Southeast Regional Fairgrounds on the site of the City's first waterworks plant along Lakewood Avenue with streetcar access from downtown Atlanta and subsequent development of large public and private housing projects along Pryor Road.

These communities eventually grew together creating a unique area of population and land use diversity which reached its peak around 1960 when the construction of the I-75/I-85 freeway connector and the onset of industrial outmigration began the long process of deterioration that the community faces today.

1928 map of study area

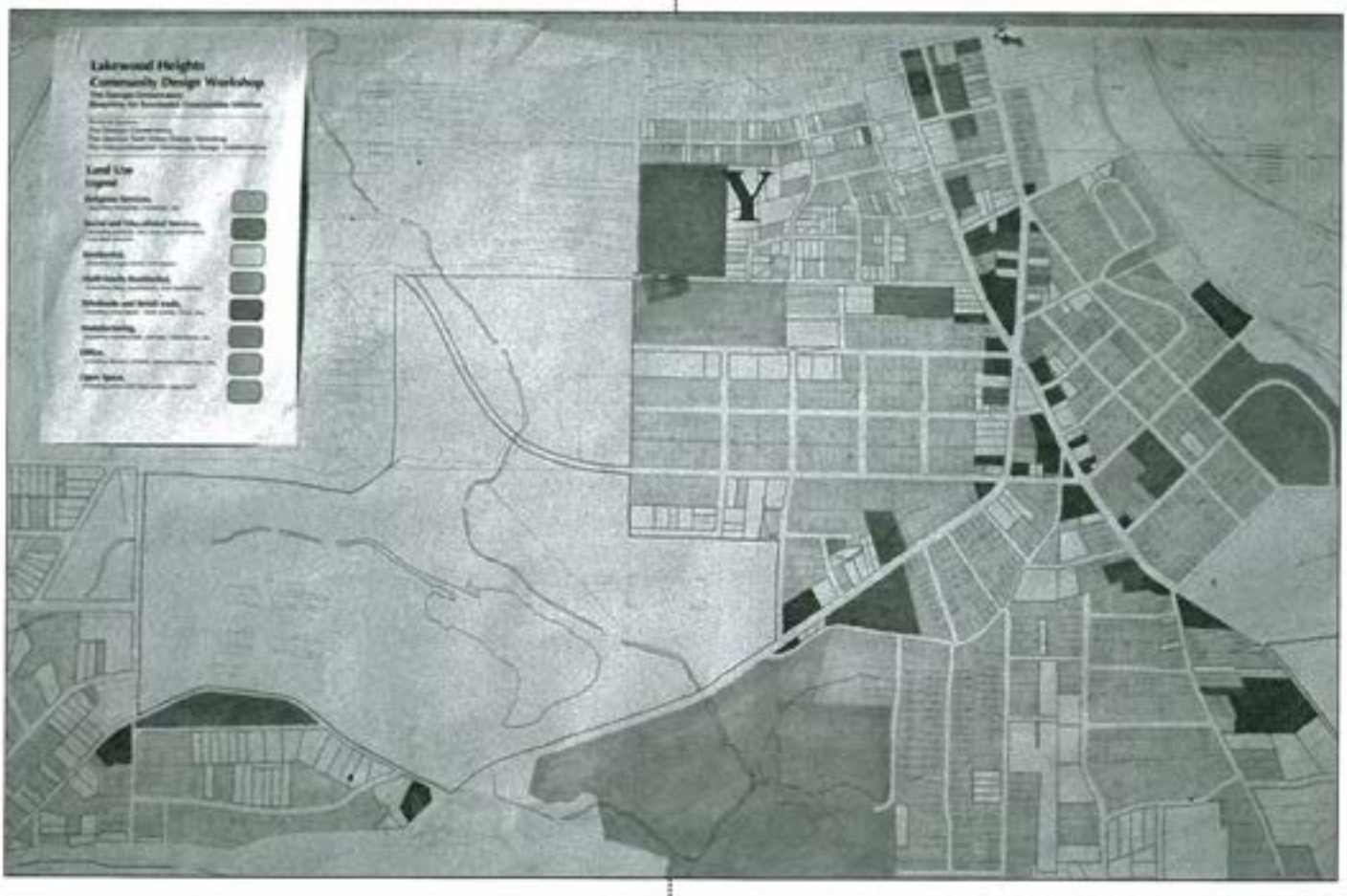


Historic resources

Land Use

Land uses in Lakewood Heights and NPU-Y have been traditionally mixed due to the unusual circumstances of the area's history. The neighborhood is characterized by a surprisingly stable traditional residential neighborhood of small single family lots with commercial and institutional uses along Lakewood Avenue and Jonesboro Road. The adjacent parallel industrial building are now vacant or are occupied by light industrial uses such as auto repair and body shops.

The Lakewood Fairgrounds and City of Atlanta properties occupy the center of the neighborhood creating a severe division between the traditional residential neighborhood and residential areas west of the fairgrounds. Much of the latter area now consists of vacant lots, used primarily for overflow parking by the operator of the fairgrounds and its associated amphitheater.



Land Use

Building Conditions

Building conditions have been surveyed using the classification system developed by the Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA). The system was employed for redevelopment plans prepared for 15 other inner city neighborhoods, including those immediately to the north of NPU-Y, which exhibit many of the same structural characteristics as Lakewood Heights. The work was conducted as a windshield survey and does not reflect any assessment of interior conditions. The categories surveyed include:

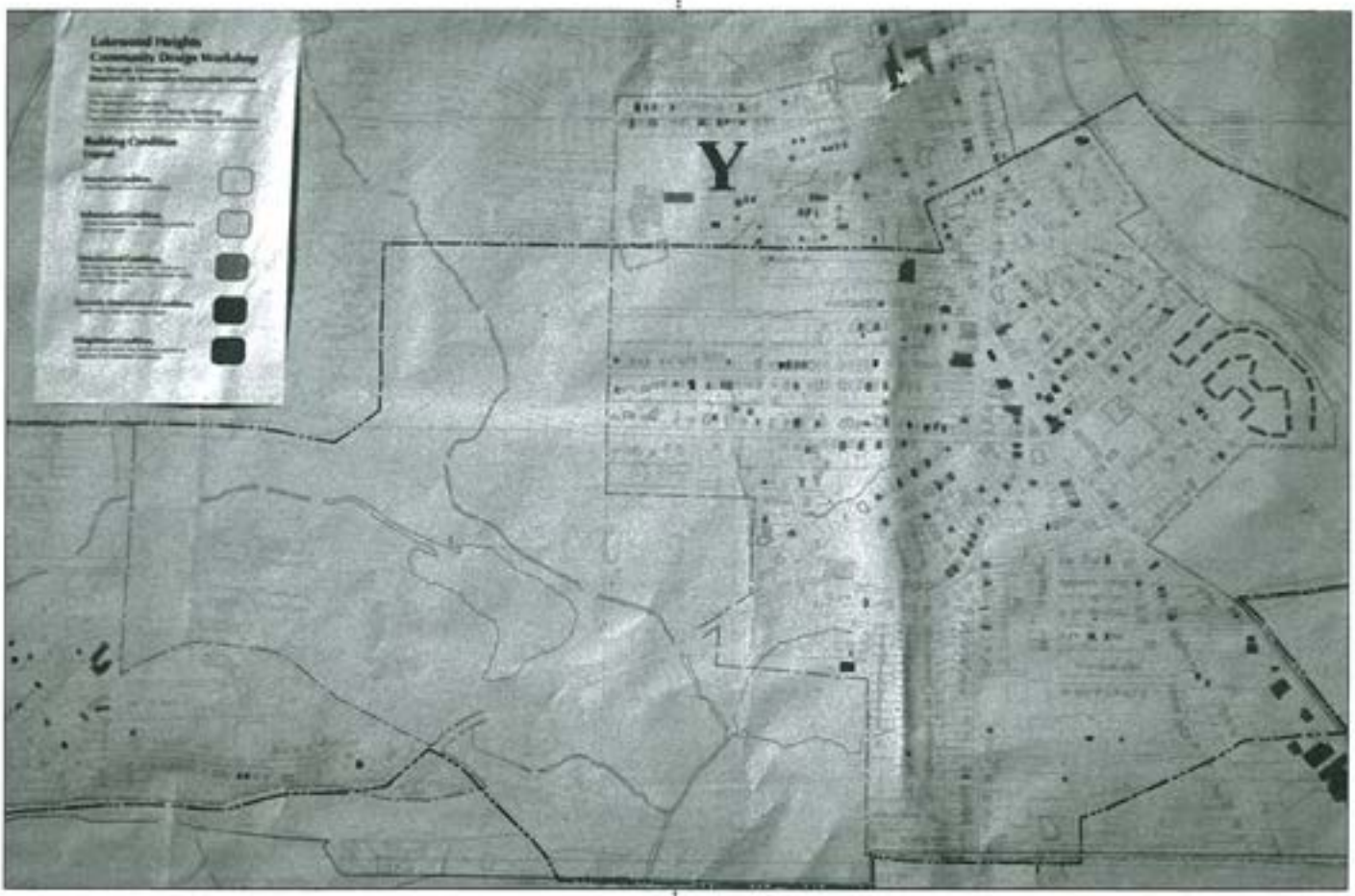
1. Standard Condition: Buildings which need no improvements.

2. Substandard Condition: Buildings which need minor improvements, such as painting or minor roof work.

3. Deteriorated Condition: Buildings which need one major repair such as new roof, new windows, foundation repair, water damage repair, etc.

4. Severely Deteriorated Condition: Buildings which need more than one major repair.

5. Dilapidated Condition: Buildings which are not worth the funding needed to improve them to standard condition.



Building Conditions

Natural Features

A rudimentary survey of natural features in the area that impact suitability for various types of construction was conducted. It included:

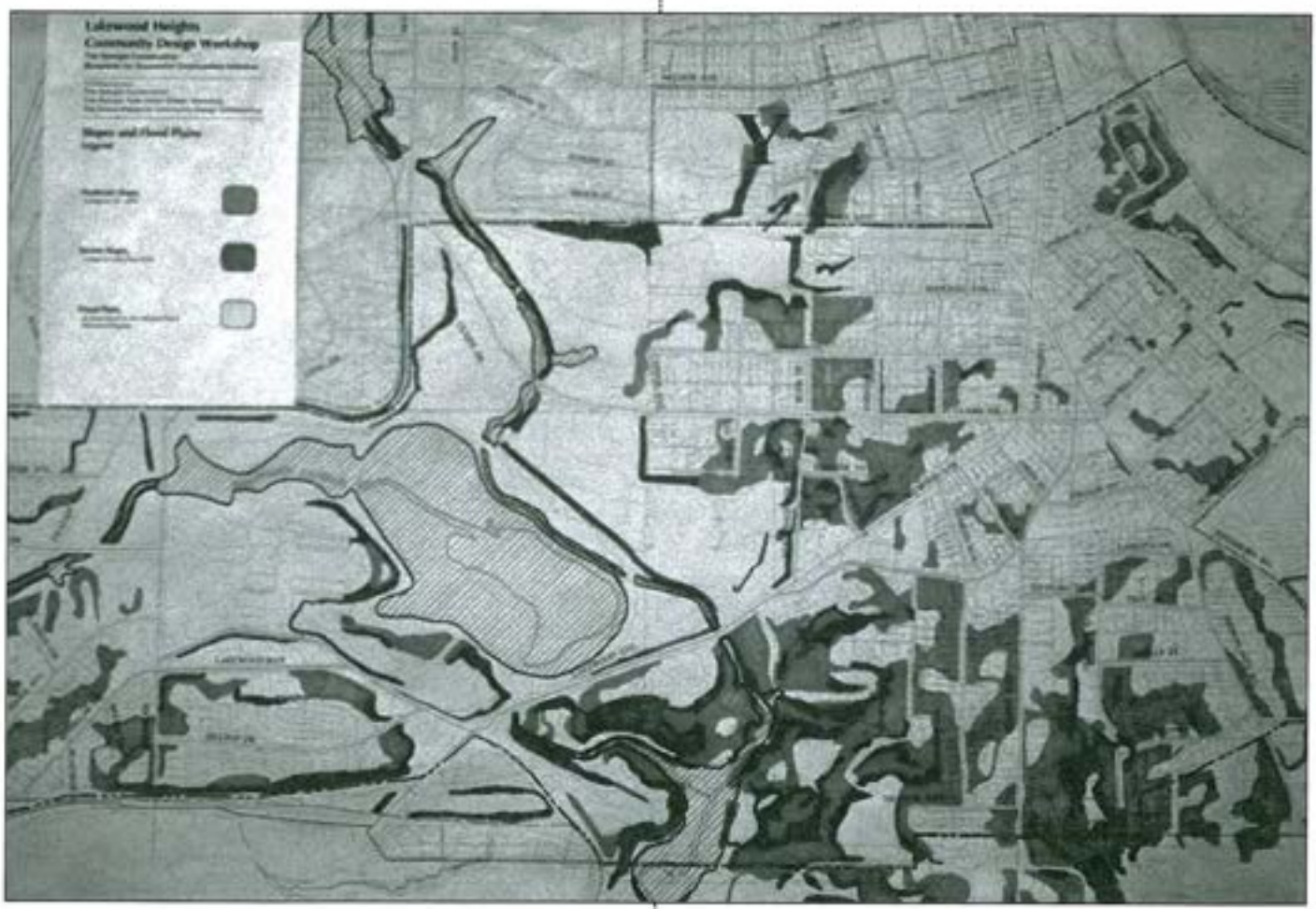
1. Slope Analysis

- 0-10% slopes; presenting little or no difficulty developing roads or buildings.
- 10-20% slopes; presenting difficulty developing roads or medium density or greater development. Driveways and single family houses are possible with careful site planning.
- 20% and above slopes; severe difficulty for any kind of development without substantial alteration.

2. Flood Plain Analysis

All areas falling within the 100-year flood frequency were also surveyed and mapped.

This survey shows that areas along the main South River tributary, including the Fairgrounds Lake and drainage area, are characterized by steep slopes and wet areas while the Jonesboro Road and rail corridor follows a generally flat ridge line. These two systems have historically impacted development patterns in the neighborhood and will continue to do so in the future.



Natural features analysis

Suggested Goals and Objectives for the Lakewood Heights Community Plan

Four main goals and several objectives were established by the community as the basis for the Workshop Plan:

A. Attract New Economic Development and Business Opportunities

- Provide opportunities for new housing and greater variety in housing types.
- Attract new and a wider range of businesses in the village center.
- Create new job opportunities for local residents.
- Recycle brownfield areas into more productive uses.

B. Improve the Physical Appearance of the Lakewood Heights Area

- Clean up trash on the streets and in vacant lots.
- Make the appearance of unsightly businesses more acceptable.
- Improve the physical and visual quality of the conditions found along the major arteries and streets.

C. Create a More Livable and Safer Living Environment

- Provide better lighting in neighborhoods and along major streets.
- More forcefully enforce zoning, building and housing codes.
- Establish greater police presence.
- Close known crack houses and unsavory places of assembly.
- Improve the natural areas and facilities found in parks and open spaces and develop the Greenway Trail proposed for the Lakewood area.
- Expand public transportation connections with MARTA rail stations and downtown.

D. Strengthen Neighborhood Cohesion and Pride

- Establish a neighborhood identity through signage, logos and neighborhood newspapers and flyers.
- Join with adjacent neighborhoods to increase the voice of the southeast communities.
- Increase the number of neighborhood-wide community functions.
- Place completed neighborhood plans into the City's Comprehensive Development Plan.

Study areas

STUDY AREAS

The Town Center Site

The community identified two areas for intensive study during the Workshop. The first, called the Town Center, is comprised of the historic commercial core of the community located around the intersection of Jonesboro Road and Lakewood Avenue. While the area shows significant deterioration, it still functions as the center of the neighborhood with several important institutions, such as a bank, elementary school, Masonic, and churches.

A. Goals for the "Town Center" Study Area

- Stabilize and rehab sound existing residential and commercial structures.
- Promote infill single-family development on vacant neighborhood lots.
- Promote mixed use/mixed density development on larger available lots in Jonesboro Road. commercial corridor.
- Promote infill light industrial development on vacant and under used industrial properties east of Jonesboro Road.
- Promote civic uses and spaces along Lakewood Avenue and around Lakewood Avenue/Jonesboro Road intersection.

The Fairgrounds Site

This study area also includes of the historic Lakewood Fairgrounds, owned by the City but now under a 50-year lease to a private operator for a variety of uses, as well as areas immediately adjacent, including:

- Southbend Public Park
- Lakewood Stadium (Atlanta Public Schools)
- The City's motor pool public works venue
- Lakewood Village, a deteriorated private apartment complex
- A residential neighborhood with many vacant parcels now used for Fairgrounds event parking

B. Goals For The "Fairgrounds" Study Area

- Promote new mixed density, mixed income residential development on larger parcels on and adjacent to Lakewood Fairgrounds site.
- Promote civic uses and spaces along Lakewood Avenue and around Lakewood Avenue/Jonesboro Road intersection.
- Explore development and transportation connections between proposed Pryor Road redevelopment projects, the Fairgrounds, Lakewood Avenue and Lakewood Heights west of the Fairgrounds.
- Promote "enhanced" use of Fairground facilities as a unique regional destination.

Panelists Beverly Dockery-Ojo & Klaus Roesch

Panelists Sarah Haga, Alycen Whiddon, Doug Hooker, & Ray White

TOWN CENTER

Town Center is proposed as the reconstituted commercial and cultural core of the Lakewood Heights neighborhood. In addition to the currently viable uses in the area, the Workshop has identified vacant or deteriorated parcels which can support up to 91,000 sq. ft. of new commercial uses. This is in keeping with the recently completed Jonesboro Road Corridor Study which identifies a similarly sized market and recommends that new commercial development be focused in the Lakewood Heights sector of the 6.5 mile corridor.

In addition to new commercial uses, the Town Center Study Team also recommended:

- Acquisition and construction of a small public space at the "point" of intersection of Jonesboro Road and Lakewood Avenue, which could provide a usable space at the symbolic center of the neighborhood.
- Widening and streetscaping of sidewalks to improve pedestrian circulation and "calm" traffic.
- Re-routing of truck traffic off of Jonesboro Road onto Sawtell Avenue.
- Creation of public parking areas at the rear of street front retail buildings buffered from adjacent residential areas.
- Development of a "community gardens" project on vacant parcels at the south end of the Town Center.

View south along Jonesboro Road at Lakewood Avenue

View north along Jonesboro Road

Town Center Proposed Program

A. Proposed Town Center Uses Include:

- Retail grocery
- Post office
- Fire station (site for community center)
- Senior center
- Recreation
- Coffee houses
- Specialty shops (deli, ice cream etc.)
- Large/medium grocery store
- Laundry/dry cleaners
- Library
- Hardware store
- Artwork display
- Craft shop
- Health food shop
- Performing visual arts
- Health center
  - Senior citizen
  - Activity center
  - Day facility

B. Suggested Town Center Design Considerations:

- Add new streetscaping
- Narrow the through lanes
- Provide street parking for vehicular traffic
- Add bike lanes
- Preserve and rehab present commercial buildings
- Establish gateway park along Lakewood Avenue
- Add a restaurant with patio/garden

C. Program for New and Rehabilitated Retail:

- Jonesboro between Sawtell and Gould 15,600 sf - new space
- Jonesboro between Gould and Whatley
  12,000 sf - new space
- Between Whatley and Livermore
  12,000 sf - rehabilitate
- Jonesboro - Lakewood Point
  52,000 sf - new space
- Lakewood
  13,500 sf - new space
- Lakewood Terrace
  23,000 sf - new and/or rehabilitate
- Lakewood and Rhodesia
  10,000 sf - rehabilitate

Total: 91,300 sf

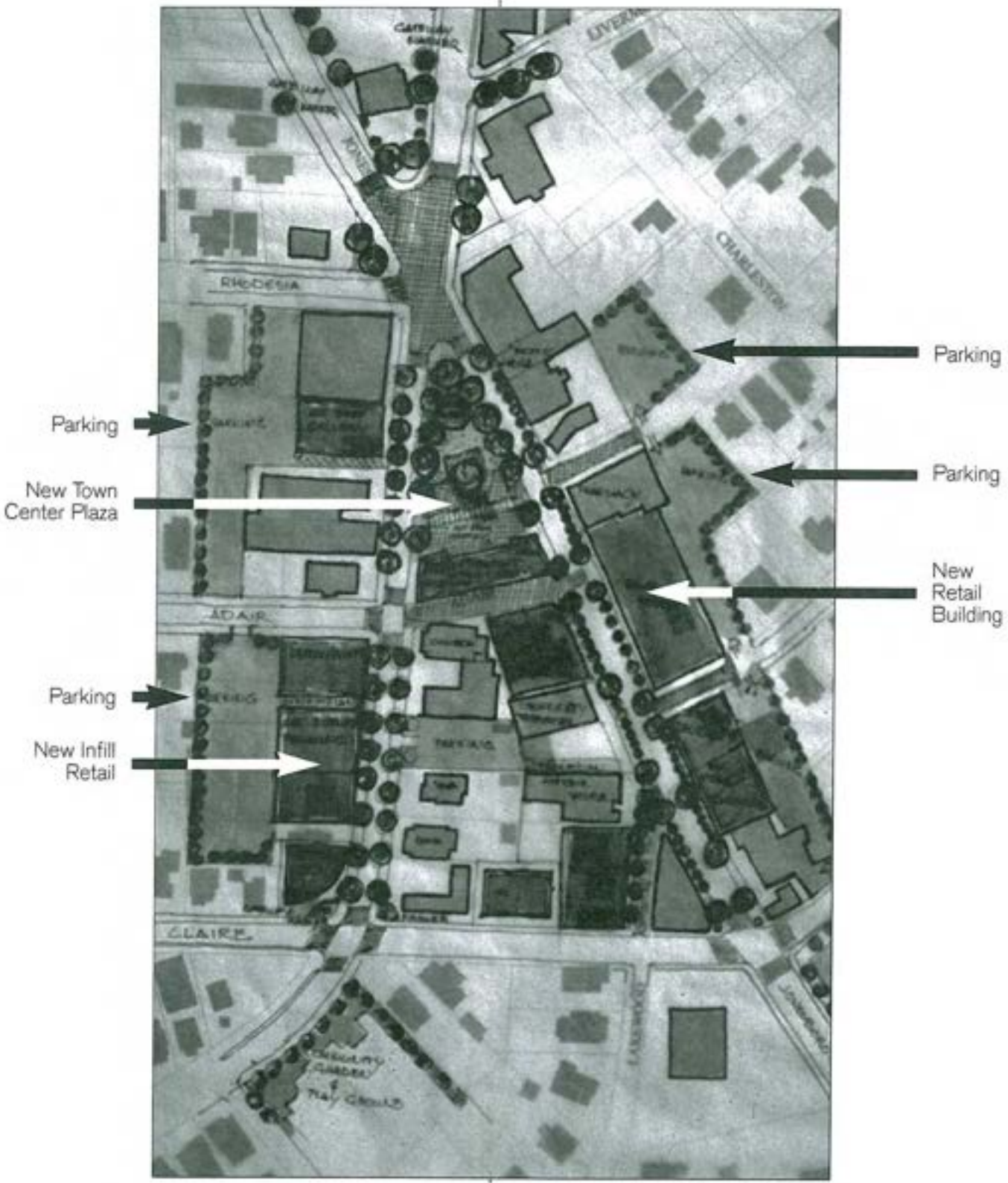
D. Parking Program

Provided:
68,000 sf parking, or 189 spaces:
Needed:
2,000 sf/space, or 182 spaces

E. Zoning

Town Center Zoning should be changed from C2–to C1
Mixed Use development

View of Town Center north along Jonesboro Road



Town Center Site Plan

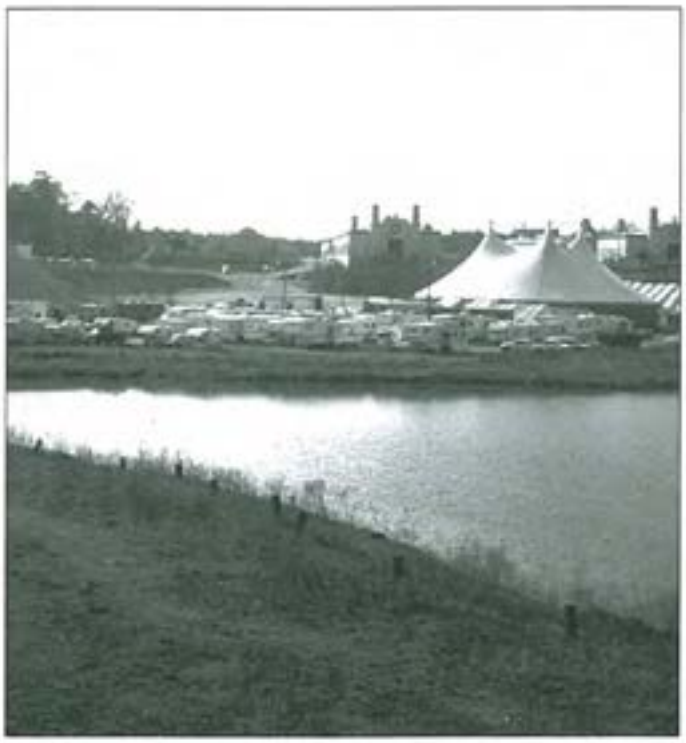
FAIRGROUNDS SITE

The Fairgrounds site combined with adjacent properties including the City public works facility, school board stadium and South Bend Park, contains almost 300 acres of potentially unique open space. Historically, the fairgrounds has been a regional facility. Continuing this use pattern is essential to ensure that development can be funded both for construction and long-term maintenance purposes. A "big idea" for the site will enable compatible uses to mutually support of each other and create a development for both local and regional destination and a place where people come for more than one activity. The regional activities will be of benefit to the Lakewood heights community by sustaining a facility with benefits to the local community, including employment and services.

The Workshop developed a planning framework for the Fairgrounds area which divides the site into three distinct areas:

1. The *greenspace*, including the lake, related streams north and south, and recreational land on both sides of the lake.
2. *New residential development*, including sites on all sides of the green space.
3. The *Central Commons* or "Oasis", centered around the four historic fairgrounds buildings.

Concepts were developed for each area around the "big idea" of a local and regional destination for health, healing, and the arts.



View of Lakewood Fairgrounds and lake

View of Lakewood Stadium

Green Space Development Concept

The plan creates a new distinctive image for the neighborhood that includes a large picturesque park and engaging promenade.

Objectives:

- Protect and enhance natural waterways and environmentally sensitive or unique areas.
- Provide accessible and secure open space.
- Introduce recreational opportunities that will adequately serve the entire Lakewood Heights neighborhood.
- Establish a network convenient, safe and engaging pedestrian routes.
- Remove noxious and environmentally unsafe areas and uses from parks and neighborhood areas.

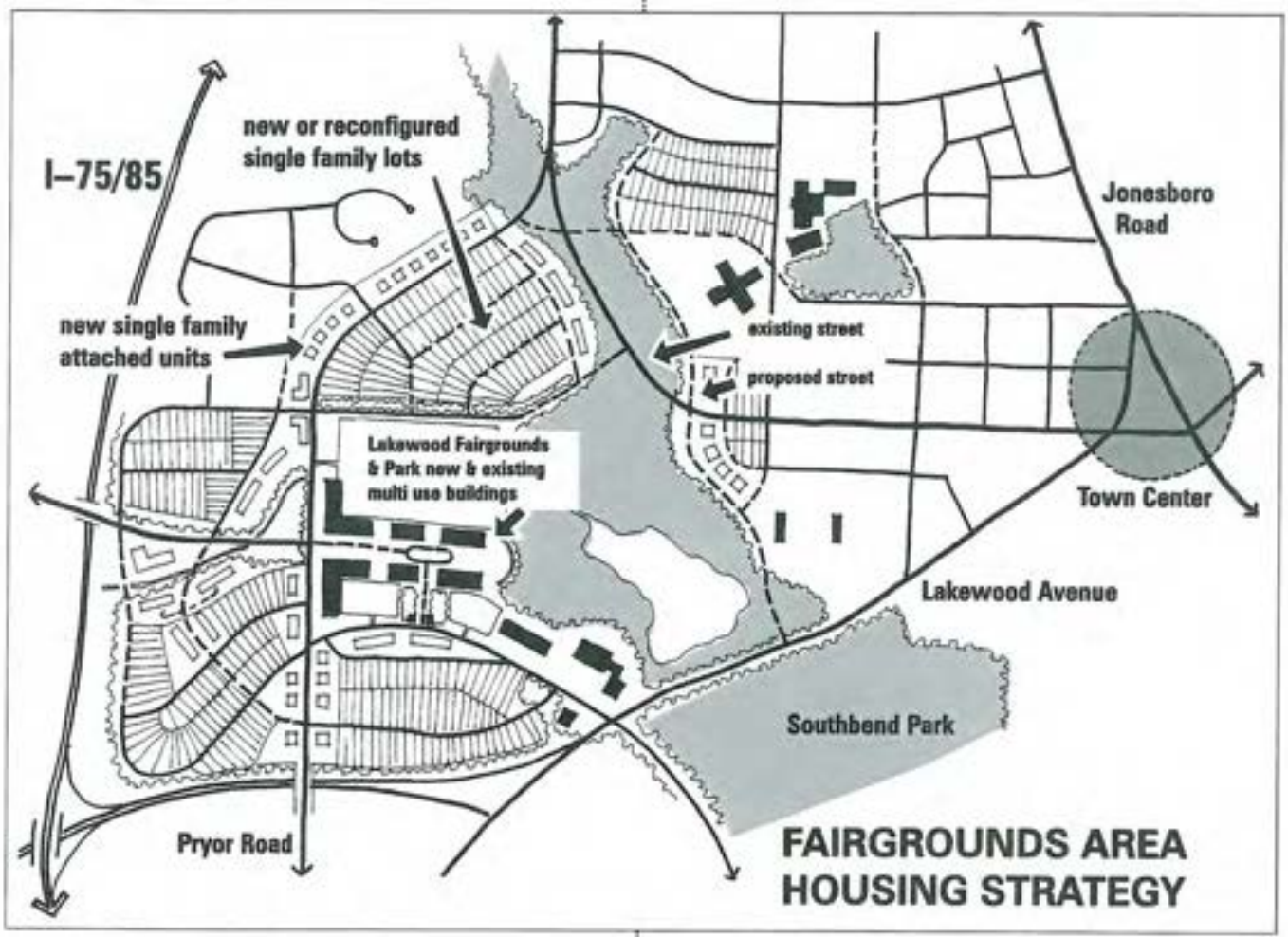
New Residential Development Concept

New housing will benefit the Lakewood Heights neighborhood by providing additional residents to take advantage of the revitalized town center, the Oasis and green space. There are four areas proposed for new housing:

Lakewood North (formerly Lakewood Village
- Apartments) Single family housing

Lakewood West
- Single family housing
- Mixed use along the freeway

Lakewood Oasis
- Life care facility with parking deck below
- Multi-family housing



Central Commons "Oasis" Development Concept

The "Oasis" is centered on the four historic Fairgrounds buildings but includes the existing Fairgrounds amphitheater, the John Birdine Community Center and two new buildings: a retreat and learning center and the proposed Holyfield Center. It is proposed that the seven buildings contain the following programs:

A. Historic fairgrounds buildings, amphitheater and John Birdine Center

- Intergenerational center, including day care and senior care
- Fine arts center, including display, sales and teaching facilities
- Restaurant(s) including evening entertainment and health food
- Coffee shop or café for casual dining
- Bookstore focused on health and the arts
- Music store
- Health food grocery store
- Outdoor (amphitheater) and indoor theater
- Movie theater specializing in arts and foreign films
- Specialty clothing store
- Alternative exercise facility

B. Outdoor gathering room (between historic buildings)

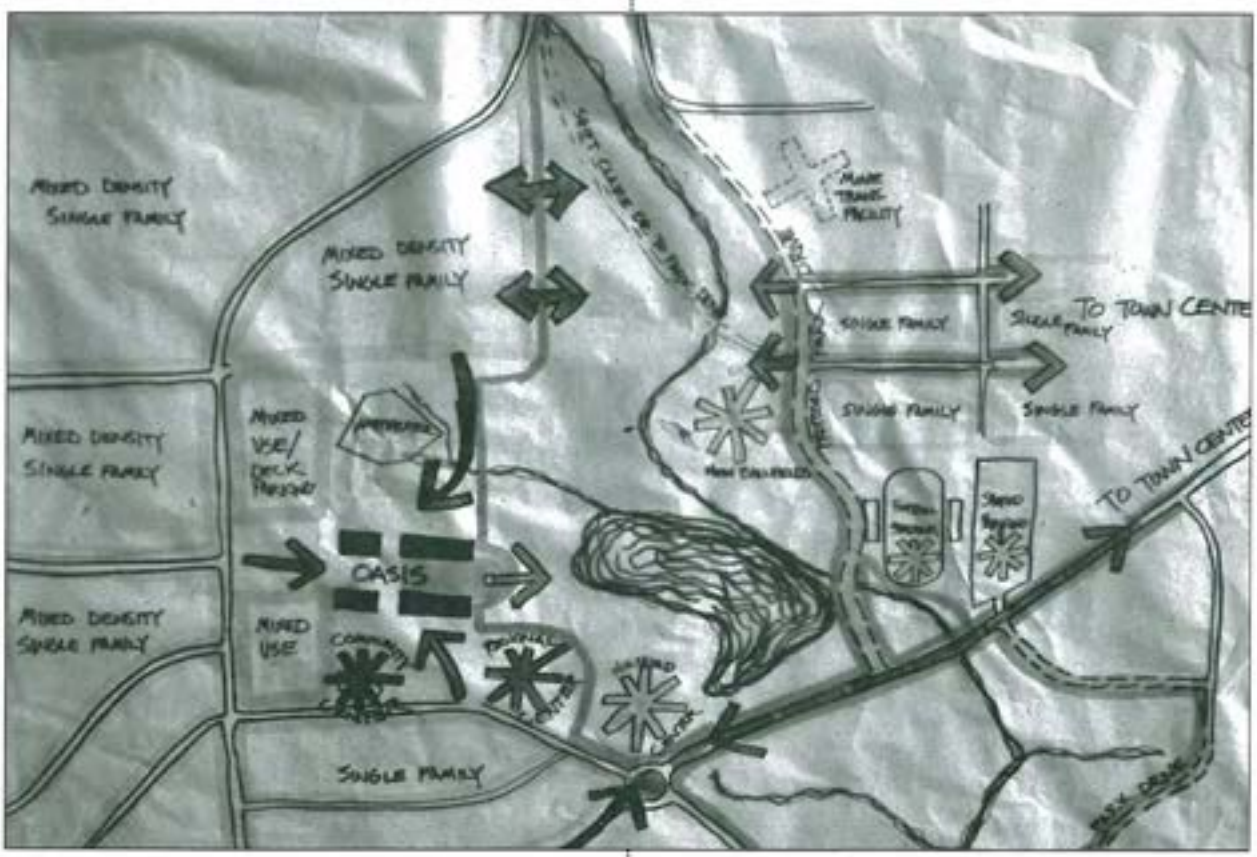
- Outdoor arts, antiques, arts and crafts
- Concerts and festivals
- Childrens' and elders' activity areas
- Garden and green spaces
- Life College South
- Center for healing arts including pre-natal and elder care
- Overnight facility for local and international guests

C. Holyfield Center

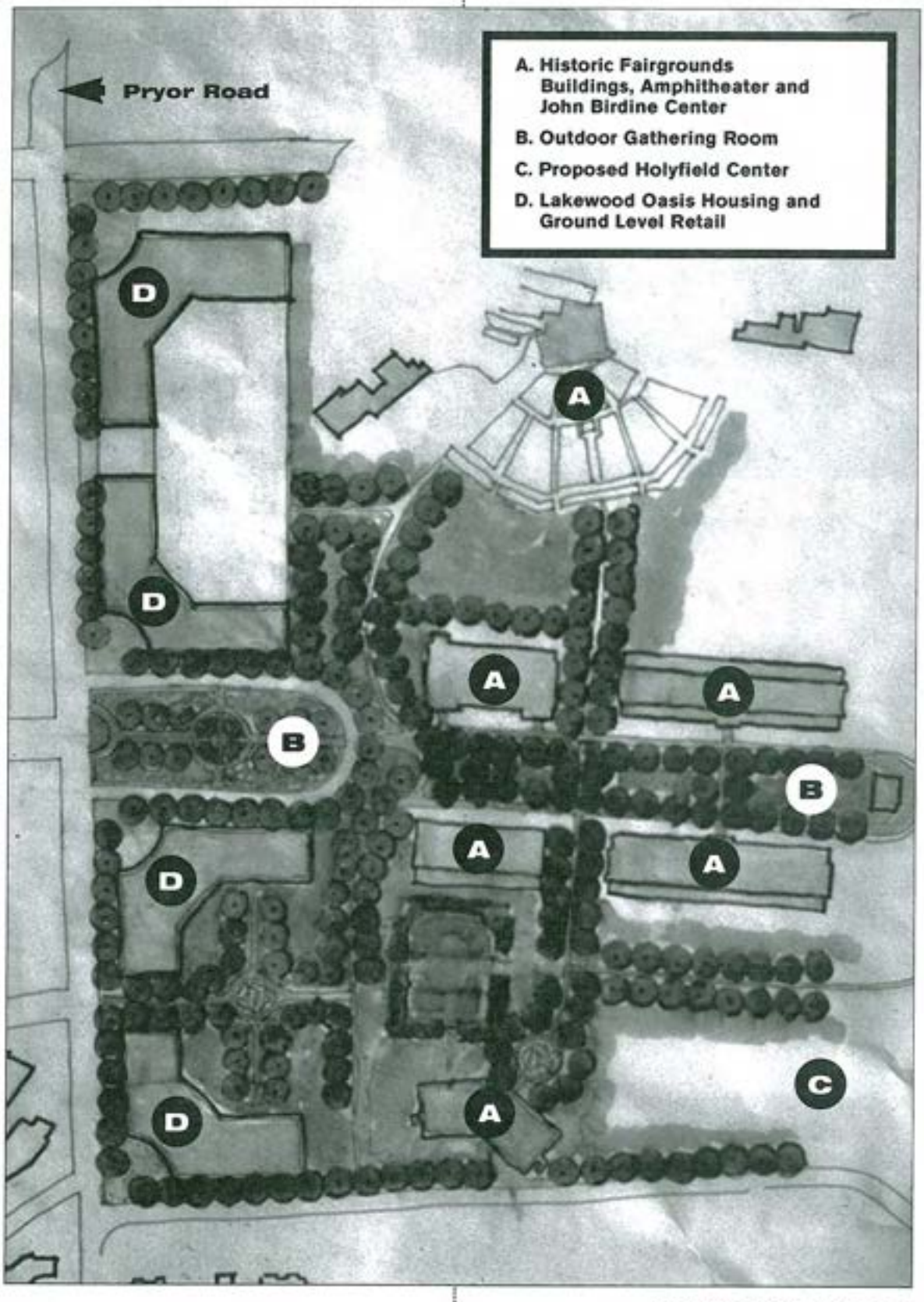
- Athletic facilities
- Family enrichment center

D. Lakewood Oasis Housing

- Lifecare facility (parking below)
- Multifamily housing



Fairgrounds Site Concept Plan



Fairgrounds Site–Proposed
Central Commons "Oasis" Site Plan

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing/Redevelopment

Characteristics of the revitalized community:

1. Safe and secure
2. A "walking" community with a Town Center
3. Mixed incomes, ages, family composition
4. "Ownership" vs. rental
   Pride of ownership and
   evidence of owners' investment
5. Viable community organization
6. Marketed as a total community
7. Develop consistent with existing scale/density
8. Mixed income/mixed age
   - Community center
   - Senior facility near Town Center
     (intergenerational)
   - Various home ownership programs
   - Encourage various housing types

Transition from a rental to ownership community will require:

1. Low interest loan pool for rehabilitation of homes (available without regard to income)
2. Community developed covenants
3. Lifestyle training
4. Home ownership skills and property maintenance training
5. "Zero" tolerance standard (upheld by community)
6. Tax abatement
7. Mortgage assistance (emphasize existing renters as well)
8. Down payment assistance
9. Public/private financing partnership
10. Maintain historic character of community
11. Land use/zoning controls - design studies
12. Community newsletter
13. Develop plan for development of vacant land
    - Develop infill housing and parks
    - Develop larger parcels
    - Use Land Banking Authority to control sites
    - Apply for Section 108 program for this community

Issues

1. Noise from Fairgrounds–special concern for residential development
2. Design of new housing
   - Compatible with historic character of neighborhood
   - Avoid sub division configuration
3. Financial support of amenities
4. Reduce number of absentee landlords
6. Increase level of code enforcement

Tools

Develop program for buyers of existing homes to include:

- Mortgage pool
- Economic development
- Low interest loan pool for rehab of existing homes (all incomes)
- Mixed income housing / discourage low income concentrations
- Section 108 funds to support private investment
- Aggressive land banking

Pursue transportation/infrastructure improvements:

- Exterior streetscaping infrastructure–(lighting, side walks, etc.)
- Traffic as it relates to crime/public safety (traffic "calming" devices and reducing number of one way streets, for example)

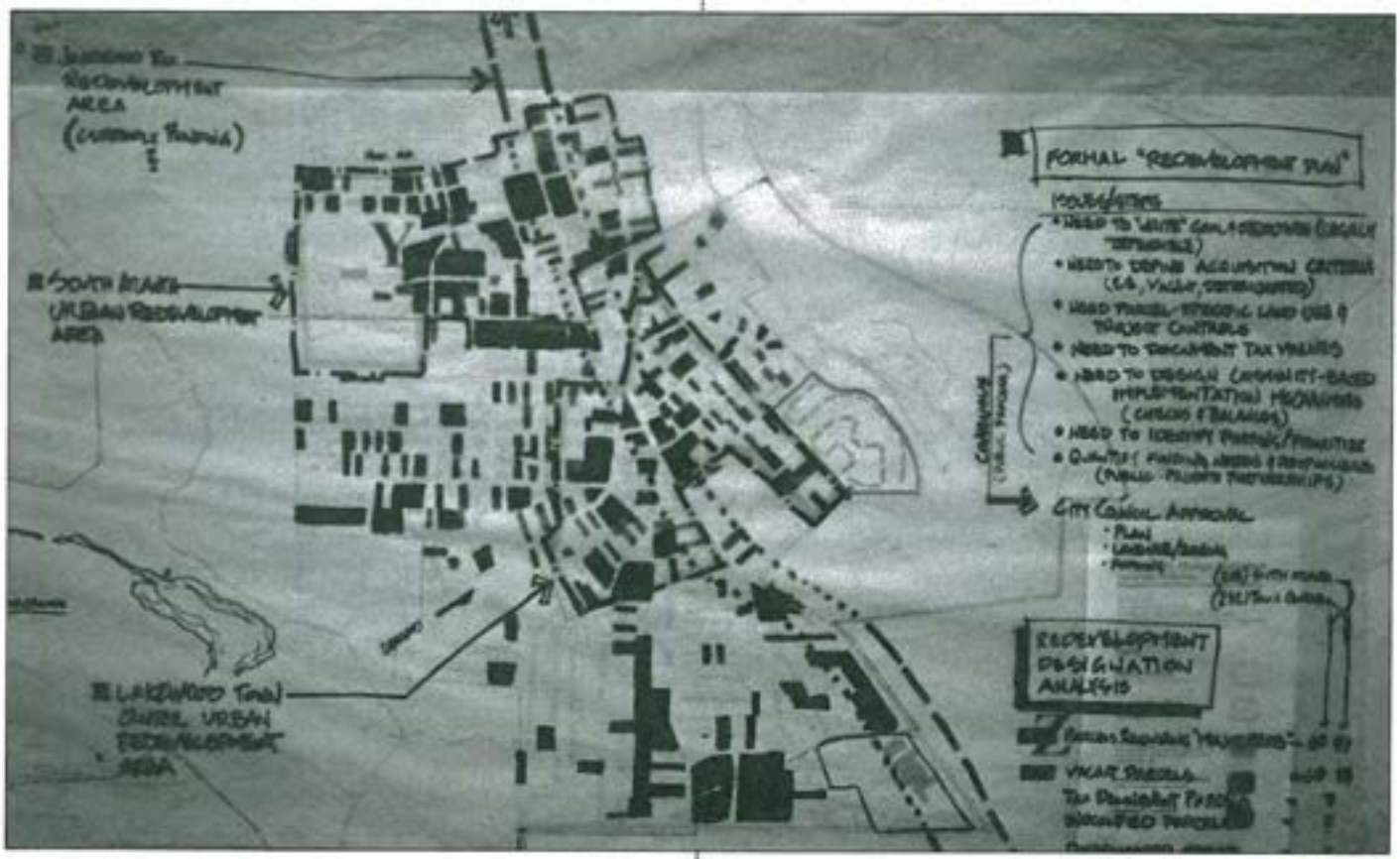
Redevelopment Areas

The Housing and Redevelopment Team made a preliminary assessment of eligibility for portions of the study area to be designated as official redevelopment areas. This was done by assessing a combination of data on vacant parcels and building conditions. Areas having more than 50% combined vacant or deteriorated or worse building conditions were considered potentially eligible for designation. Two such areas were identified:

1. The Town Center area, including the proposed retail village and adjacent residential blocks.

2. The area forming the seam between the Lakewood Heights and South Atlanta neighborhoods extending from Price Middle School to Jonesboro Road.

Upon being declared a redevelopment area, a specific Redevelopment Plan needs to be prepared and approved. A redevelopment area can attract focused public resources, including use of condemnation powers, and identify parcels for public and private investment according to the plan. It is recommended that the City and the neighborhood Community Development Corporation (CDC) pursue possible redevelopment designation for these two areas.



Proposed Redevelopment Areas

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

View of creek along Claire Drive

OPEN SPACE/ENVIRONMENT

The Workshop recommended the creation of a new distinctive image for the neighborhood that includes a large picturesque park and engaging promenade.

Open Space Objectives:

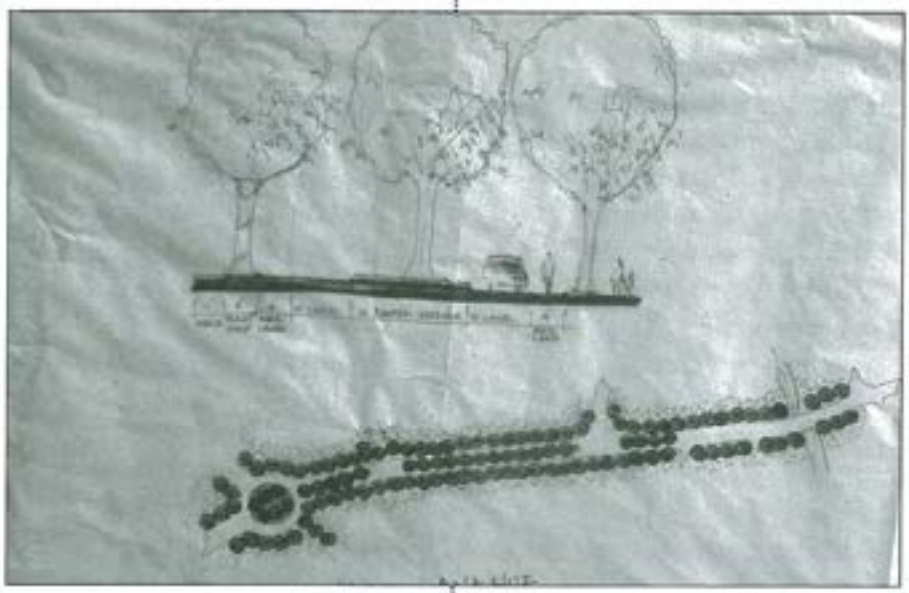
- Provide nature trails, a botanical garden and a mountain bike trail in the area west of the creeks in Southbend Park.
- Provide accessible and secure open space.
- Create a single park called Southbend/Lakewood Park to be redesigned as a picturesque open space.
- Create new park space north of the existing Fairgrounds to include the entire area around the natural creek corridor.
- Create a new Lakeshore Parkway (see page 25) along the eastern edge of Southbend/Lakewood Park lined with street trees, sidewalks and on-street parking.
- Develop homes along the outside edge of Lakeshore Parkway to provide more "eyes on the park" for increasing security.
- Extend Harper Road to Macon Drive lined with street trees, sidewalks and on-street parking.
- Provide a multi-use trail from Pryor Road south to Harper Road along the natural waterway.
- Establish a bicycle and pedestrian connection to the Oasis and the Retreat Center.
- Link the multi-use trail with greenways and park facilities outside the neighborhood.
- Provide neighborhood parks within residential areas for community gardens, children's playgrounds and picnic areas.
- Provide recreational opportunities that will adequately serve the entire Lakewood Heights neighborhood.

Locate the proposed Holyfield Center in Lakewood Fairgrounds.

- Provide new ballfields and courts to be shared by the Holyfield center, City parks and the Boys and Girls Club, within the Southbend/Lakewood Park.
- Rebuild the city gymnasium within Southbend Park, near the existing pool site.
- Establish convenient, safe and engaging pedestrian routes.
- Provide a beautiful safe, and distinctive pedestrian promenade along Lakewood Avenue from Pryor Road to the Town Center.
- Repair sidewalks in neighborhoods and link with parks, schools, and the town center.
- Construct a continuous sidewalk around the perimeter of Southbend/Lakewood Park.
- Encourage bike riding, public transit and pedestrianism as an alternative to the automobile.

Environmental Objectives:

- Protect and enhance natural waterways and environmentally sensitive or unique areas.
- Clean out and open up existing creeks and create a natural creek environment.
- Clean, dredge and expand the Lakewood Lake.
- Identify and protect natural springs.
- Protect the "100 acres" south of Southbend Park.
- Remove noxious and environmentally unsafe areas and uses from parks and neighborhood areas.
- Remove the existing DOT facility, fire training facility, City motor transport facility and the Atlanta public school bus parking area to areas outside the neighborhood that currently have environmental problems, such as the former GM site.



Proposed Lakewood Avenue
Landscape Plan

Proposed Park Plan

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation and Infrastructure

Issues

- At-grade conflicts exist between trains and other vehicles at Sawtell Avenue and at Henry Aaron Drive (formerly Capitol Ave.) These situations detract from a better quality of life because the trains sound their horns as they approach the intersections. The sounds can be heard for miles, and they are disruptive, especially at night. There is a need to eliminate these conflicts.
- Heavy truck traffic travels along Jonesboro Road and McDonough Boulevard, creating a nuisance condition. There is a need to eliminate or mitigate this traffic.
- The traffic signal at Lakewood Avenue and Terrace Way needs to have its timing reevaluated.
- Abandoned vehicles are a problem throughout the neighborhood.
- Current MARTA operations greatly hinder accessibility into the neighborhood. There is no regular, daily bus route from the Town Center area to the Lakewood MARTA station, nor is there a regular route which connects the Pryor Road corridor to the Town Center.
- The sidewalk system is nonexistent, discontinuous or inadequate throughout the neighborhood. This discourages pedestrian movement.
- There are no established bike trails in or through the neighborhood.
- Street lighting needs enhancing throughout the neighborhood.
- Signage is minimal and totally inadequate. Many of the institutions and points of historical interest are not served by signage.
- The lake at Lakewood needs major improvements to make it healthier and more amenable for passive recreation.
- The neighborhood experiences an unacceptable frequency of power outages.

Recommendations

Transportation (Near-term)

- Restrict commercial vehicle traffic through the Town Center, particularly along Jonesboro Road. Re-route truck traffic, east on Sawtell towards McDonough Boulevard. This will enhance the walking and bicycle movement through the Town Center.
- Add on-street parking in the Town Center area. Add off-street parking behind the commercial/retail buildings.
- Undertake a transit study and work with MARTA to establish regular daily bus service between the neighborhood and the Lakewood MARTA Rail Station. Also, establish stronger bus service between the Pryor Road corridor and the Town Center. This is especially important for strengthening the linkage between these two parts of the community.
- Reevaluate the timing of the traffic signal at Lakewood Avenue and Terrace Way.

Transportation (Longer-term)

- Undertake a transportation study to identify and develop potential alternative corridors for truck traffic in order to minimize or remove it from Jonesboro Road and McDonough Boulevard.
- Study the concept of relocating the distribution businesses to the Southside Industrial Park.
- Design and construct a vehicle underpass/rail bridge for the Sawtell rail crossing. Analyze the possibility for doing the same for the rail crossing at Henry Aaron Drive.
- Establish shuttle between Lakewood Park and Town Center.
- Conduct a transit study to evaluate feasibility of light rail from downtown to Lakewood Park, along Pryor Road corridor.

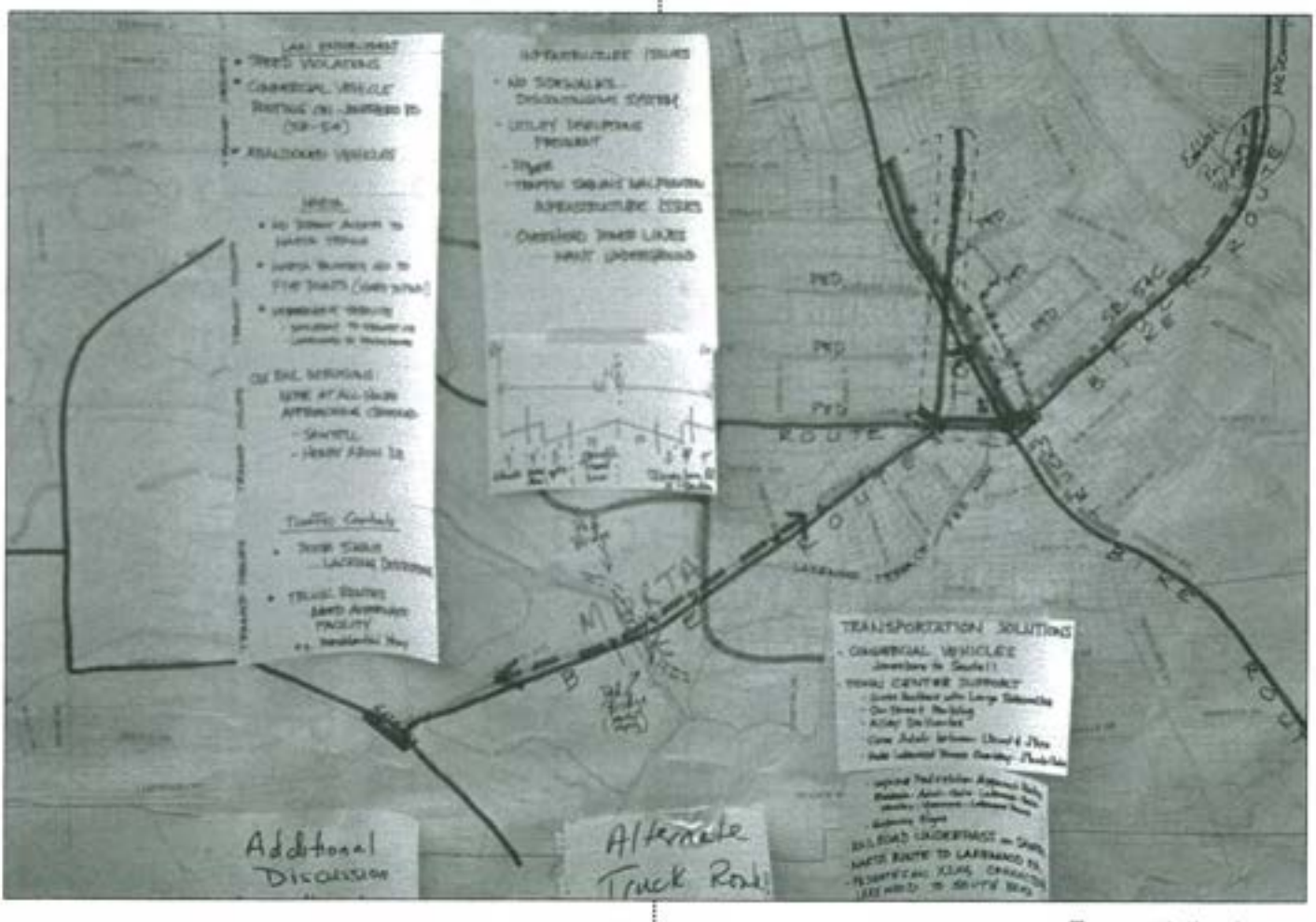
Infrastructure (Near-term)

- Establish a system of sidewalks along the east-west neighborhood streets leading into the Town Center. Add the type "C" Atlanta Light (pedestrian light fixture) along the residential streets in the blocks immediately adjacent to the Town Center.
- Install the type "A" Atlanta Light (street light), and place the electric line underground in the Town Center area.
- Establish gateway signage on Lakewood, at Lakewood Way—Macon Drive. Establish gateway signage and information kiosks at appropriate entry points into the Town Center. These will designate the significant institutions and tell the history of important landmarks within the community.
- Install overhead street signs at the major intersections approaching and within the Town Center;

install neighborhood identification signs on street name signs throughout the community.

Infrastructure (Longer-term)

- Design a new "Park Drive" (see page 22) running southeast off of Claire Drive, into Lakewood Park.
- Dredge the lake and redesign the controls and surrounding landscape to make it amenable for passive recreational use.
- Study the creeks feeding the lake, in order to establish upstream retention capacity. Study and develop opportunities to relocate the facilities used by the Department of Public Works, the Bureau of Motor Transport, and the Georgia Department of Transportation, in order to expand the Lakewood Park northward.



Transportation issues

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There were a number of issues regarding the need for a significant increase in economic development in the Lakewood Heights area. Most of these issues concern job creation. New, retained and expanded investments in the community are required to attract and retain jobs and investments. Questions raised during the Workshop related to the economic development needed for Lakewood Heights and where such investment should be located.

JOBS

Issues: There is an unemployment problem prevailing in the Lakewood Heights community. Household income levels are extremely low. The provision of new development and redevelopment projects in the Lakewood Heights area will provide higher paying jobs. Successful employment gains will depend on retaining residents. People need assistance to overcome barriers to acquiring and maintaining employment (e.g., drug dependency and alcoholism).

Recommendations: Improve residents skills through the provision of job training programs (e.g., nearby Carver High School and Atlanta Metropolitan College). Encourage development of appropriate medical and health facilities to address chronic problems of drugs and alcohol addiction. An analysis of the "structural" causes of unemployment should be conducted before any programming to address unemployment is undertaken. Clean up "brownfields", thereby providing more buildable lots for development of job producing businesses.

QUALITY OF COMMUNITY

Issues: Attracting new people and investment to Lakewood Heights will only be successful if identified community improvements are made. General clean-up including removal of trash on streets and vacant lots is required. The presence of undesirable junk cars and auto repair shops needs to be addressed. Also, the renovation of faded and worn building facades detract from the visual appeal of the community. Safety of the people and protection of property and effects is of paramount importance. Crimes committed by young people is a problem. Children need to be monitored, protected and mentored. Major crimes such as drug dealing, auto thefts, vandalism and prostitution need to be addressed.

Recommendations: Establish a "store-front" police "duty station" in an office at the proposed Town Center. Efforts should be made to link children and adults together, to ensure each other's safety and interaction as much as possible. Neighborhood Clean Up Team should be established among residents to maintain a sanitary and economically viable community. Improvements should be made to upgrade or replace street lights to promote safer environments. The establishment of a Neighborhood Leadership Development Program will ensure that appropriate and acceptable behavior will be learned and practiced by youths throughout the community.

INVESTMENTS

Issues: It is widely recognized by Lakewood Heights residents that a variety of investments is needed in their community. These include additional housing and residents, and more commercial establishments including retail shops and services. Especially absent at present are restaurants, food stores(including health foods), clothing stores, books and crafts, theaters (movie and performing), video stores, repair services, coffee houses, medical facilities, and a new library. There is a serious absence of new investments in housing to reverse the community's dwindling population and housing stock. This can be accomplished by providing infill housing in existing neighborhoods as well as new units in and around the Town Center and the Lakewood Fairgrounds.

Recommendations: The proposal for new residential and commercial investments should be targeted in both the Town Center by the Lakewood Development Corporation (CDC) to implement the Redevelopment Plan.

Each area should be built around an established theme. It is recommended that the revitalization of the Town Center adopt a Village Life image, one characterized by increased pedestrianization, compactness, parking in a few large lots, and general improvements in the visual quality of the area, especially in the signage and building facades.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS NEEDED

1. Lakewood Heights Community Development Corporation acquisition and development of Town Square, public space and commercial building.

2. Lakewood Heights Community Development Corporation to raise public/private funds for streetscape of Town Center and Lakewood Avenue.

3. Initiate Lakewood Heights Community Development Corporation/Sun Trust infill, rehabilitate and clean-up loan program.

4. Atlanta Public Schools to maintain and rehabilitate Price Middle School.

5. Lakewood Heights Community Development Corporation to sponsor redevelopment plans for two redevelopment areas.

6. Lakewood Heights Community Development Corporation to sponsor market and site study of infill/new development on the west side of neighborhood.

7. City of Atlanta to initiate feasibility and cost study for park development, lake rehabilitation, and parkway construction.

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Workshop 2
Lakewood Heights

Blueprints for successful communities