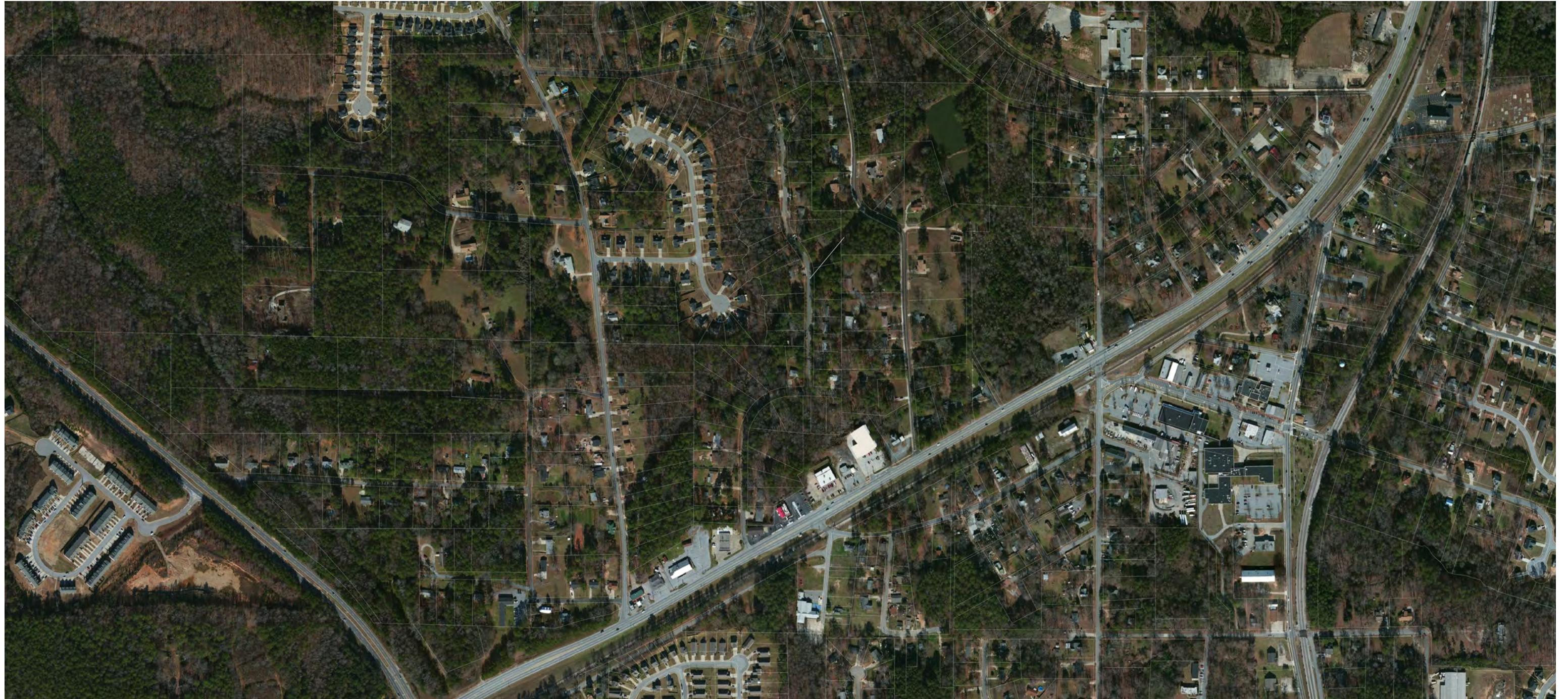# Mayor's Institute on City Design

Alumni Technical Assistance for Mayor Vince Williams and Union City, Georgia
REVISED: 6/18/21
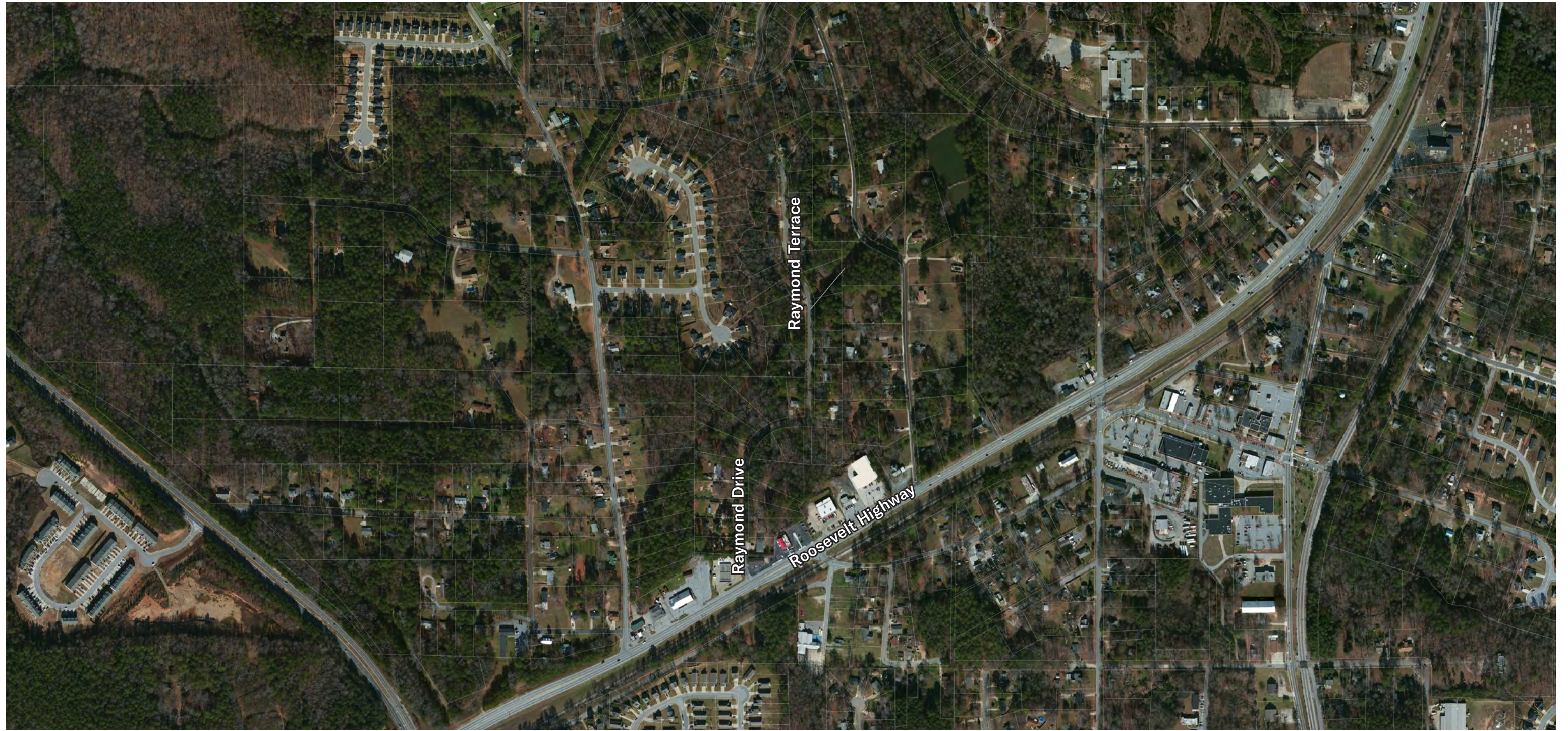

Mayors' Institute on City Design

UNION CITY
Georgia

Prepared by: Ifeoma Ebo
Brie Hensold
Jim Stockard

Project Vision

Reclaim, Renew, & Reimagine
Raymond Drive and Terrace

As an **active, safe, and welcoming** neighborhood

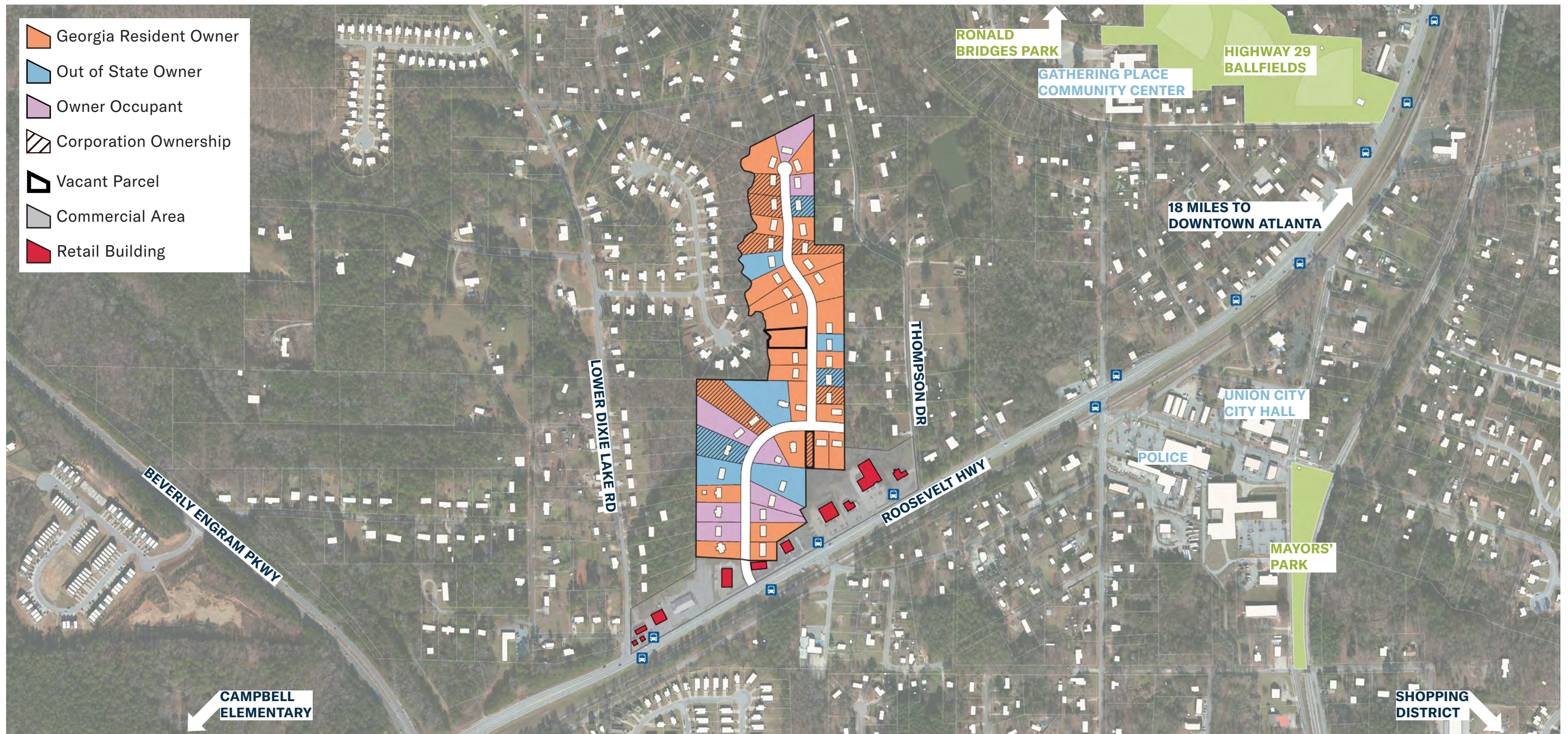**TODAY:** Raymond Drive and Raymond Terrace

TODAY: Community Assets

Map Legend:
- Focus Area
- Place of Worship
- Municipal Facility
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop

Map labels:
RONALD BRIDGES PARK
GATHERING PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER
HIGHWAY 29 BALLFIELDS
18 MILES TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA
UNION CITY CITY HALL
POLICE
MAYORS' PARK
LOWER DIXIE LAKE RD
THOMPSON DR
ROOSEVELT HWY
BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY
CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY
SHOPPING DISTRICT

- 1/2 mile long residential corridor
- Proximate to community center, recreation spaces, parks, and the civic center, bus stops
- Located just off Roosevelt Highway, a regional commercial corridor
- Dead end street lacks connectivity and network
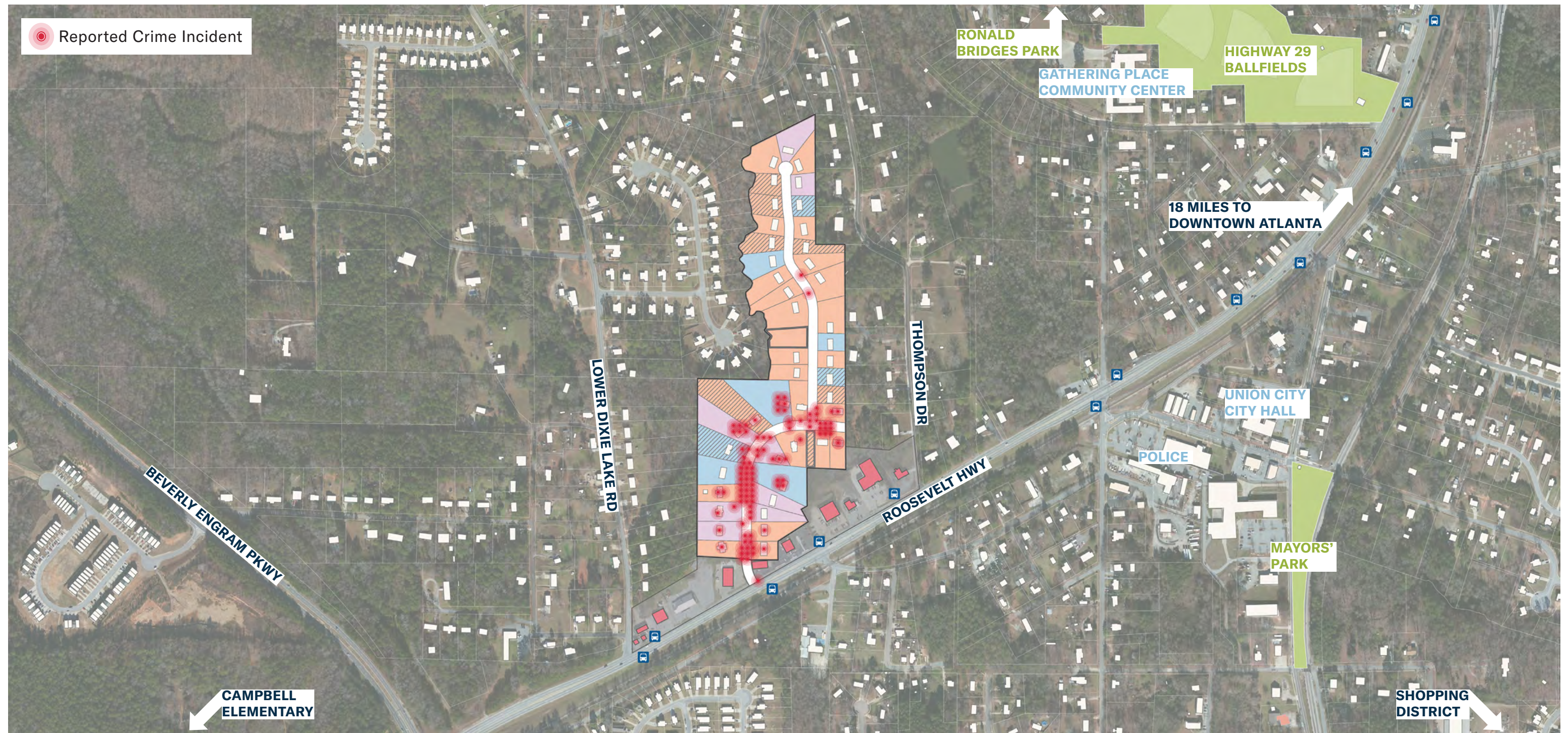
TODAY: Land Ownership and Tenure

- 45 parcels
- 8 owner occupants, 8 out of state owners, 29 non-Union City Georgia owners
- 2 vacant sites
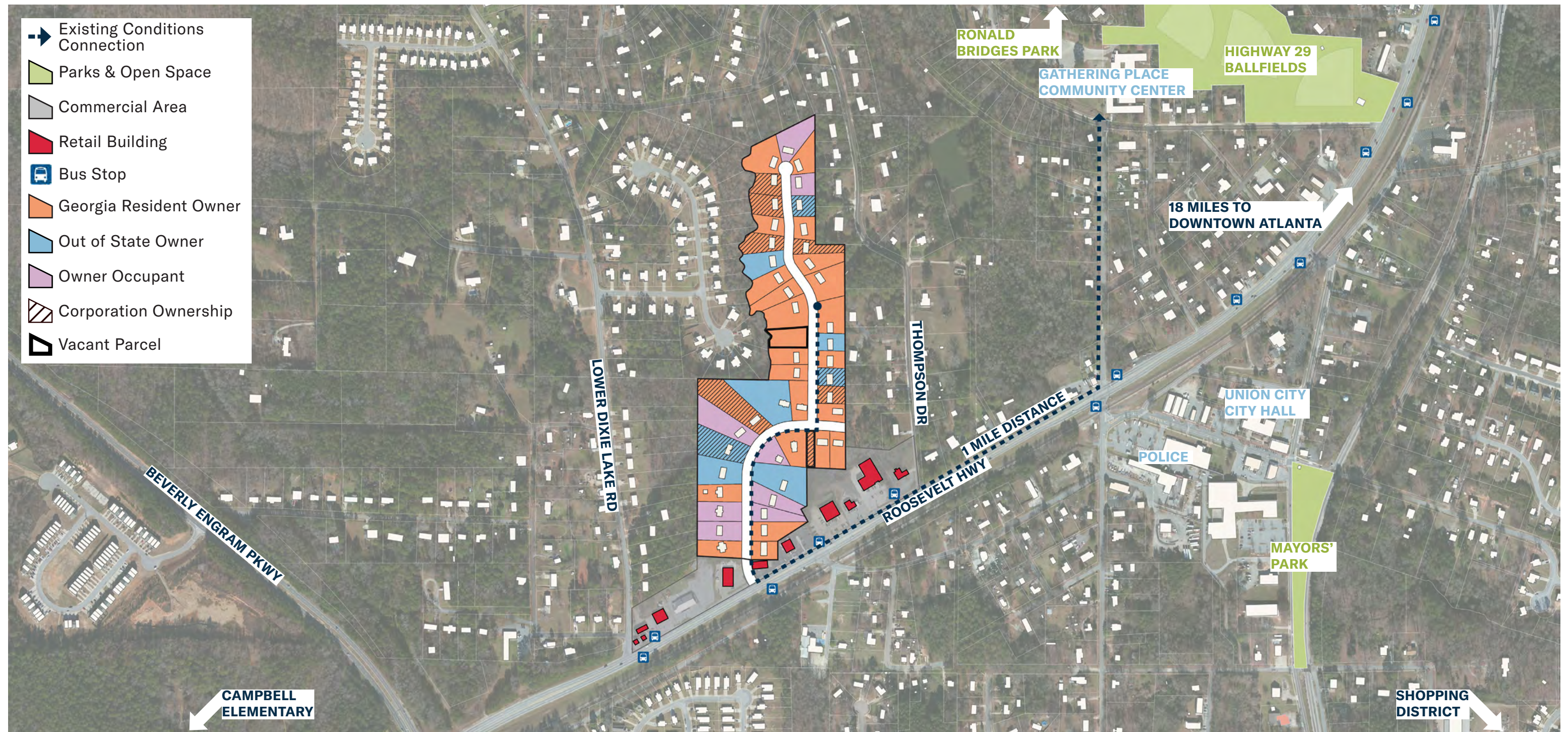- Most sites around 1/2 an acre

TODAY: Crime Incidents 2014-2020

- Crime incidents focused around Raymond Drive and Roosevelt Highway commercial entrance

TODAY: Existing Distance to The Gathering Place

Legend:
- ➔ Existing Conditions Connection
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel

Map labels: RONALD BRIDGES PARK, GATHERING PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER, HIGHWAY 29 BALLFIELDS, 18 MILES TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, THOMPSON DR, LOWER DIXIE LAKE RD, BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY, 1 MILE DISTANCE, ROOSEVELT HWY, UNION CITY CITY HALL, POLICE, MAYORS' PARK, CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY, SHOPPING DISTRICT

- Existing walking distance from Raymond Terr. to The Gathering Place Community Center is 5300 ft., approx. 1 mile, or a 15-20 min. walk.

- Inconsistent sidewalk and pedestrian crossing conditions make this walk uncomfortable and unsafe for pedestrians

IDEAS: Establish Trail Along Utility Corridor
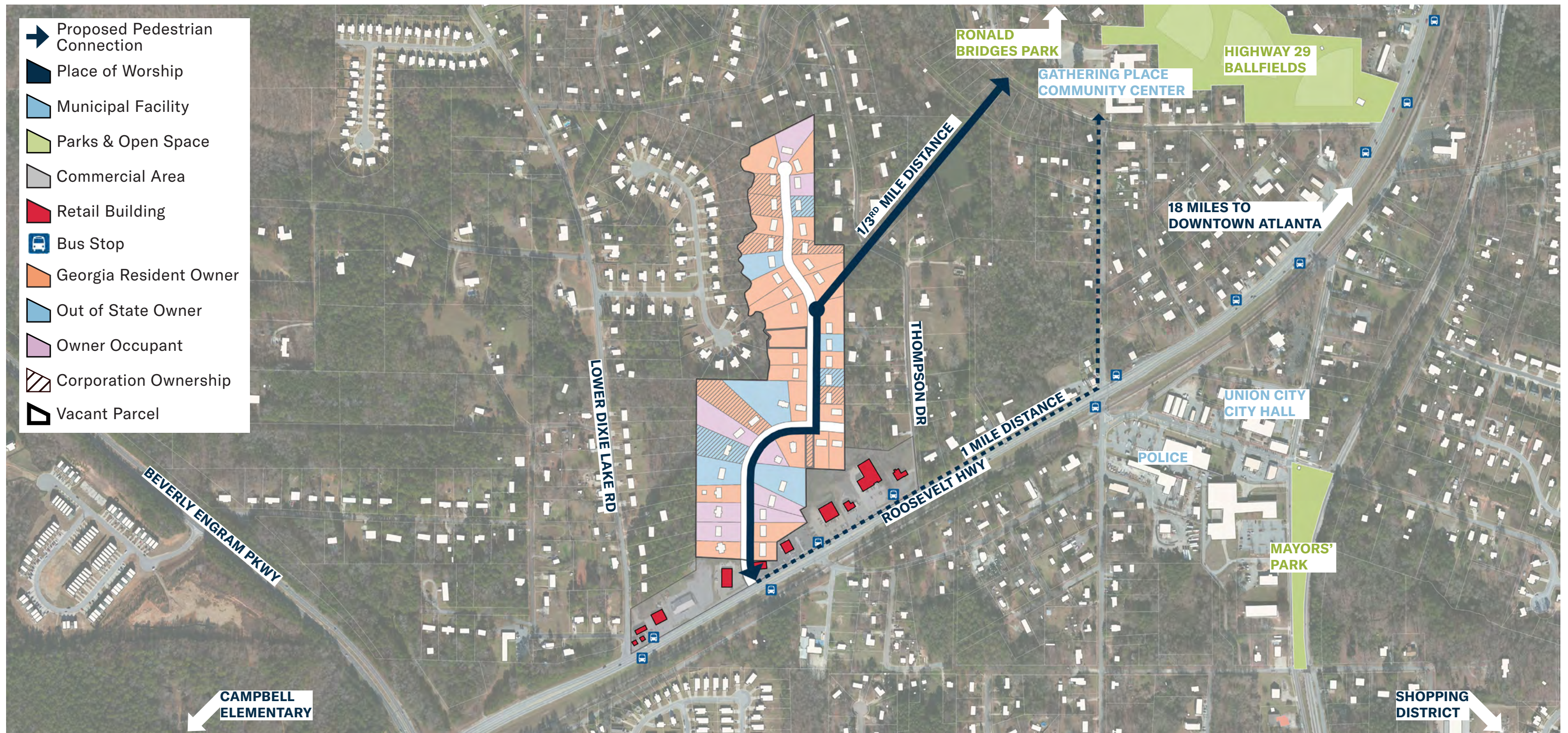
- Explore potential for a trail along an existing utility corridor to connect Raymond Terrace and Thompson Drive directly into natural forested area, scenic pond, and the community resources at the Gathering Place.
- Reduces travel time and distance by 2/3rds

UTILITY CORRIDOR TODAY

Along Raymond Drive

Along Thompson Drive

CASE STUDIES: Duke Energy Trail Collaborations

Charlotte Whitewater Center, NC

Duke Energy Trail, Pinellas, Florida

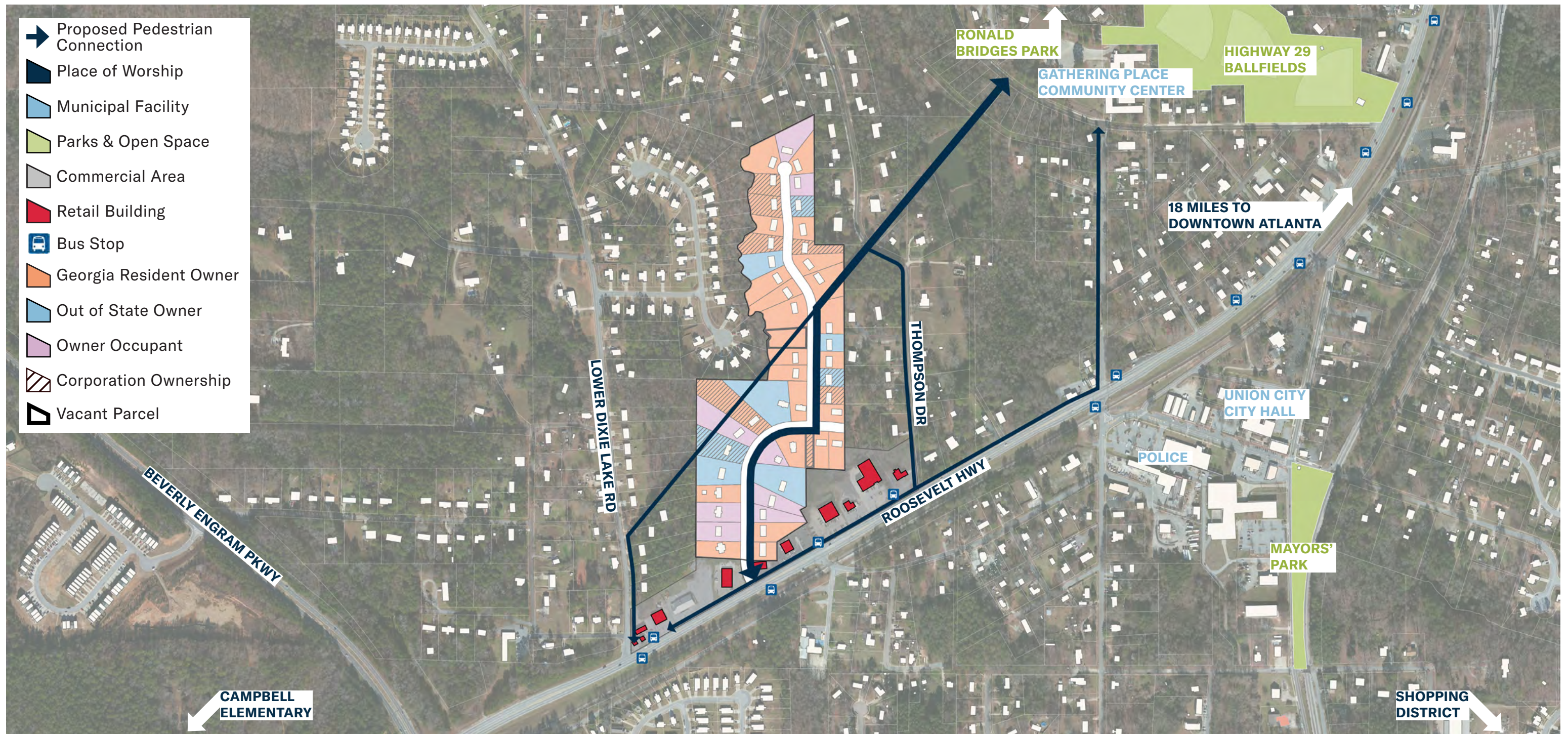# CASE STUDIES: Georgia Power + Atlanta Beltline Collaboration

30 acre site today
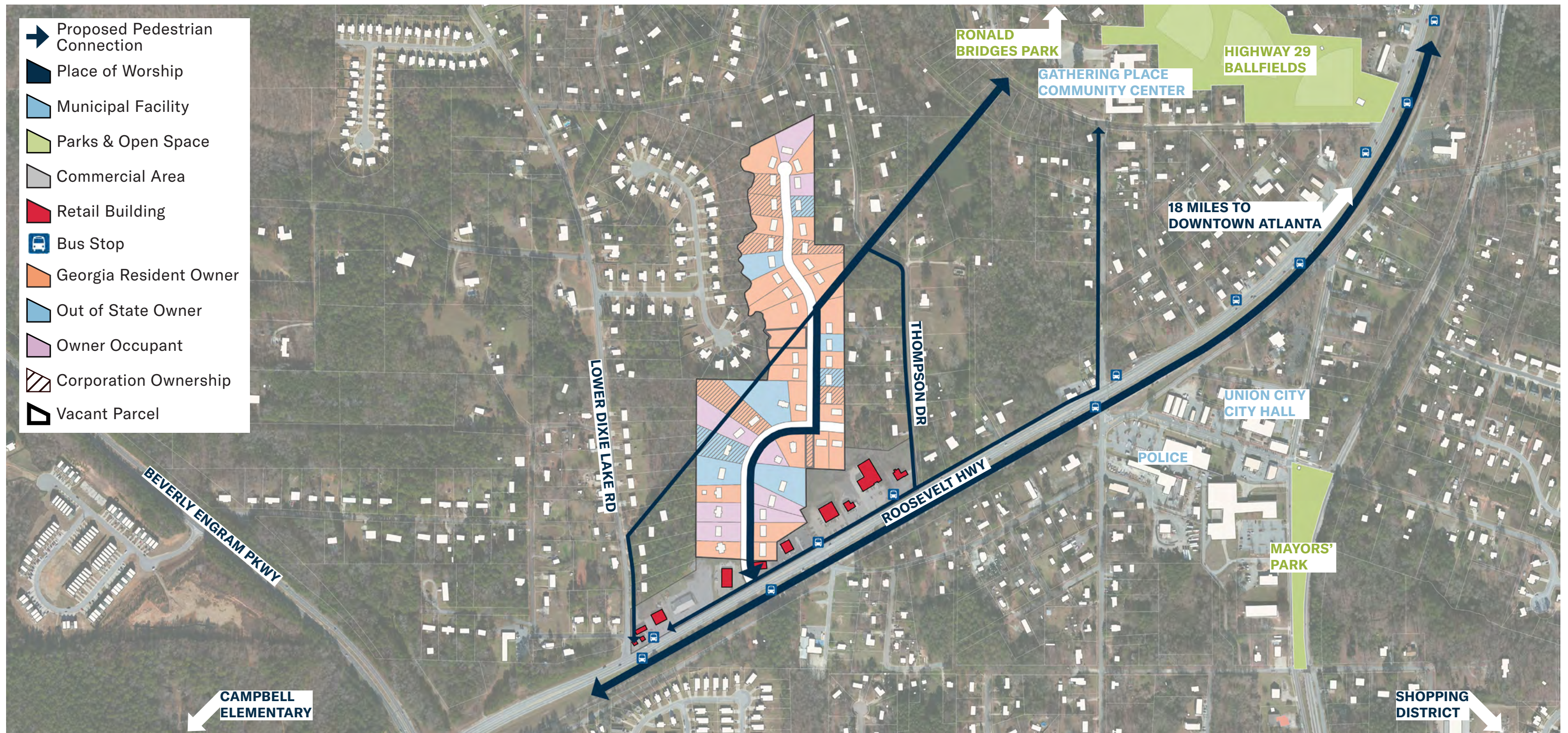
Proposed Boulevard Crossing Park

IDEAS: Expand a Trail and Sidewalk Network

Legend:
- → Proposed Pedestrian Connection
- Place of Worship
- Municipal Facility
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel

Map labels: RONALD BRIDGES PARK, GATHERING PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER, HIGHWAY 29 BALLFIELDS, 18 MILES TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, UNION CITY CITY HALL, POLICE, MAYORS' PARK, SHOPPING DISTRICT, CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY, LOWER DIXIE LAKE RD, THOMPSON DR, ROOSEVELT HWY, BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY

- Create greater network and grid connectivity
- Improve pedestrian walkability along existing streets through lighting, signage, or street art
- Expand trail connection if possible to Lower Dixie Lake Road

IDEAS: Create a Bike Trail Along the Rail Easement

Legend:
- Proposed Pedestrian Connection
- Place of Worship
- Municipal Facility
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel

RONALD BRIDGES PARK

GATHERING PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER

HIGHWAY 29 BALLFIELDS

18 MILES TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

UNION CITY CITY HALL

POLICE

MAYORS' PARK

THOMPSON DR

LOWER DIXIE LAKE RD

BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY

ROOSEVELT HWY

CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY

SHOPPING DISTRICT

- Investigate the width and potential of a multi-modal trail between Roosevelt Highway and the railroad corridor

- Trail would directly connect neighborhoods along the way into the civic center and community parks

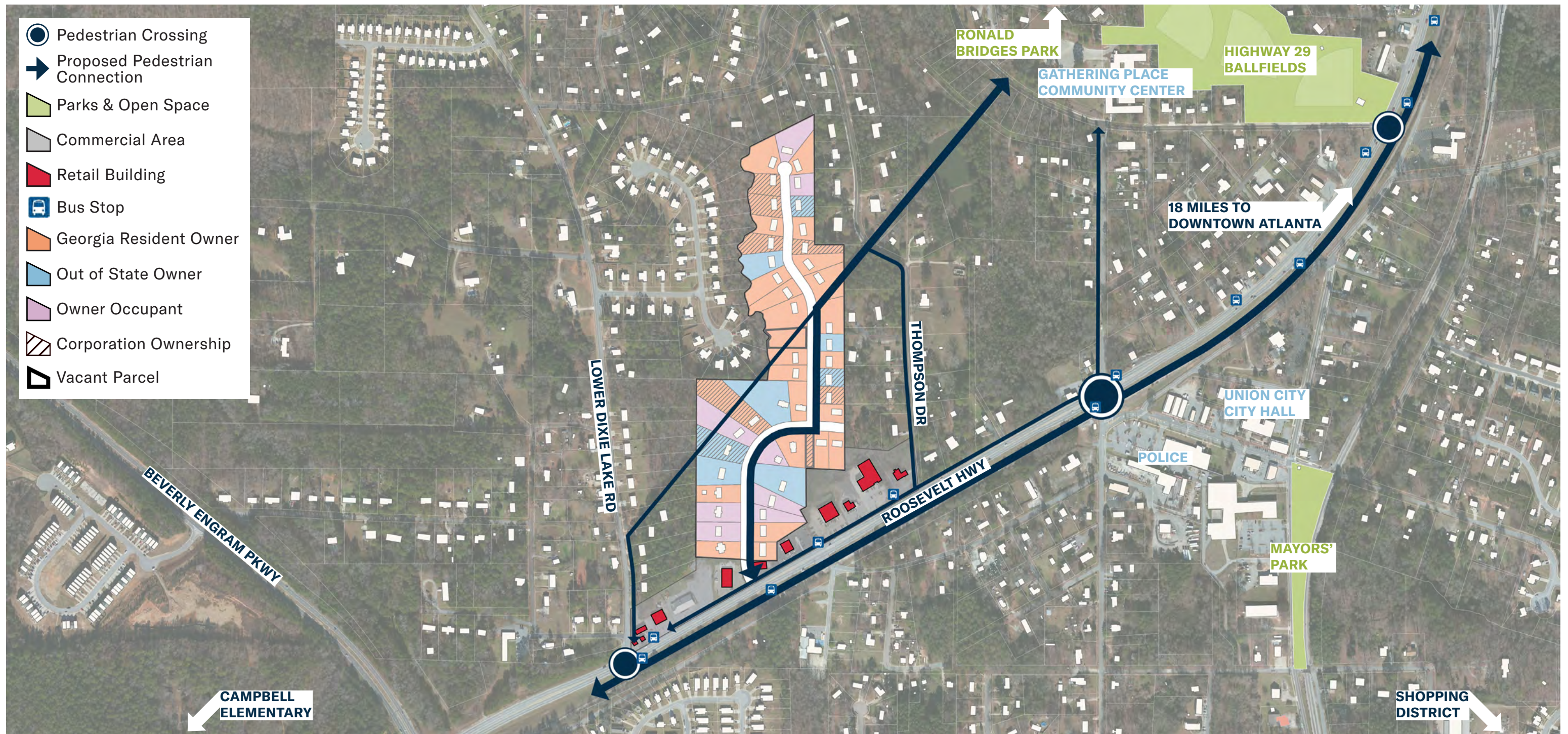# BIKE TRAIL: Safe travel along Roosevelt Highway

Roosevelt Highway Rail ROW Today
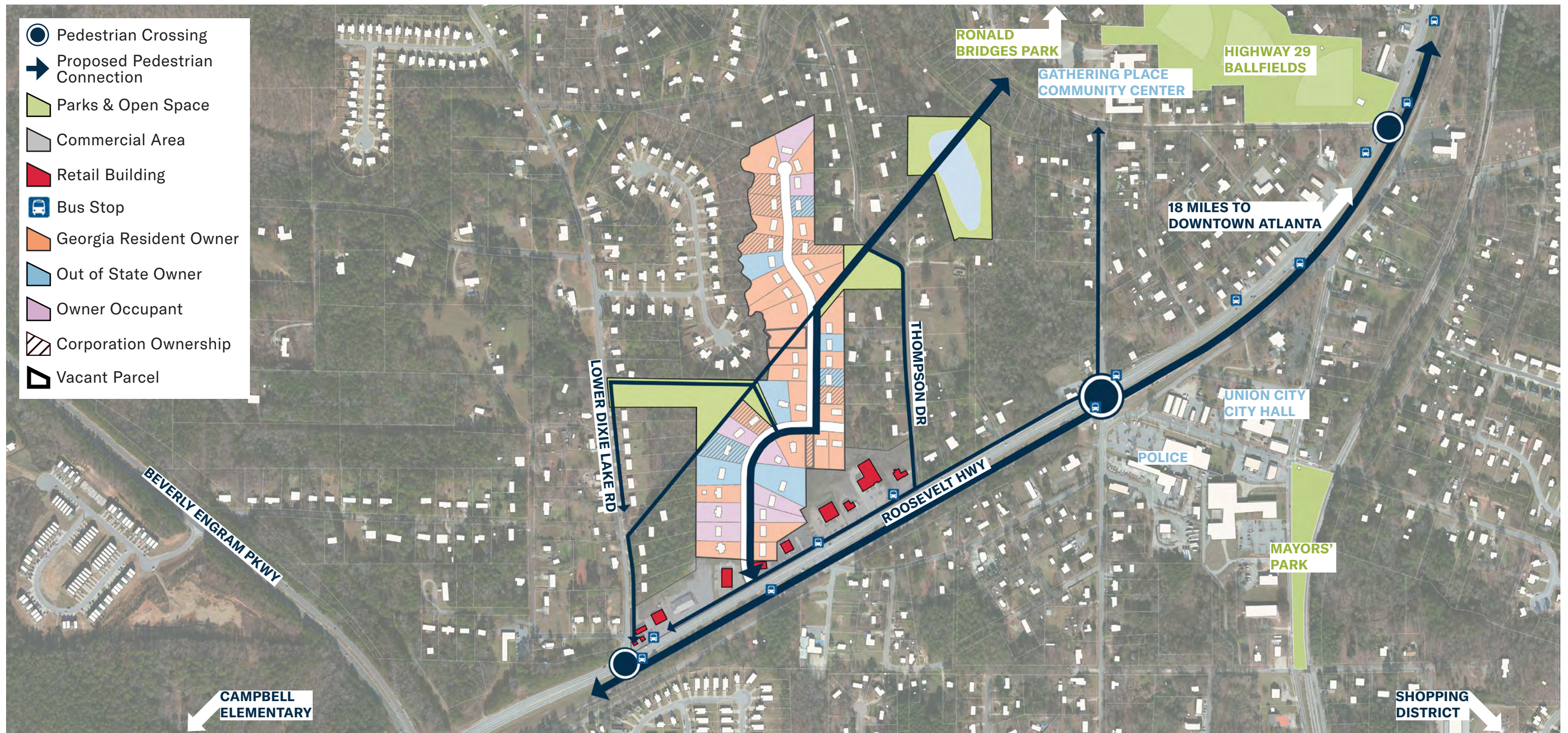

Charlotte Rail Trail Conversion

IDEAS: Pedestrian Friendly Crossings

- Tie new sidewalk and trail connections to other infrastructure such as bus stops and improved crossings

IDEAS: A Network of Small Parks and Community Spaces

- Work with community to use vacant, underutilized or public land for community activation projects, pop-up programming and art

Why Does Public Space Matter for Crime and Public Safety?

Civic trust and appreciation.

- People who report an abundance of outdoor recreation space are 27 percent more likely to view local police positively

- People who live in a community they think is beautiful are 28 percent more likely to have high levels of trust in the local police compared with people who don't think they live in a beautiful community

- People who report high availability of community events are 13 percent more likely to trust government to do what is right, as compared to people who report low availability of community events (e.g. festivals, street fairs, picnics, parades, et al.)

Participation in public life.

- Streets must be addressed as "places": not just their function in transporting people and goods, but the vital role they play in animating the social and economic life of communities

- When streets are great places, they encourage people to linger.

Stewardship of the public realm.

- In addition to physical environment benefits, resident participation in urban greening programs is associated with community empowerment and social cohesion.

- People who live in a community with high levels of community events are 19% more likely to think they can have an impact on their community and 11% more likely to work with others in doing so, relative to people in places with few community events

Training → CPTED
Community Organizing
Placemaking

Data Collection → Site Audits
Community Surveys
Participatory Research

Vision Building → Redefine Safety
Problem Identification

Action Planning → Brain Storming
Form Partnerships
Site Design &
Activation Strategies

Participatory Budgeting → $50k Challenge
Fast Track Proposals
Full Proposals

Advisory Group → Proposal Review
Contract Agreements
Government Partnerships

Activation → Pilot Projects
Site Specific
Programmatic Activations

Placemaking → Site Specific
Physical Interventions
Site Markers
New Spatial Identities

Participatory Evaluation → Data Collection Tools
Surveys / Observation
Indicators and Metrics

What Type of Projects are Safe Places, Active Spaces?

Environmental Change

- Physical interventions should aim to establish community assets at neighborhood locations that have been neglected, feel unsafe or are underutilized.

Social Programming

- Programs should aim to improve abilities for different parties to improve self-awareness/management and social awareness/management. The end goal of the program/project should be to enhance functional and cohesive neighborhood relations to tackle crime and nuisance, and other social strategies.
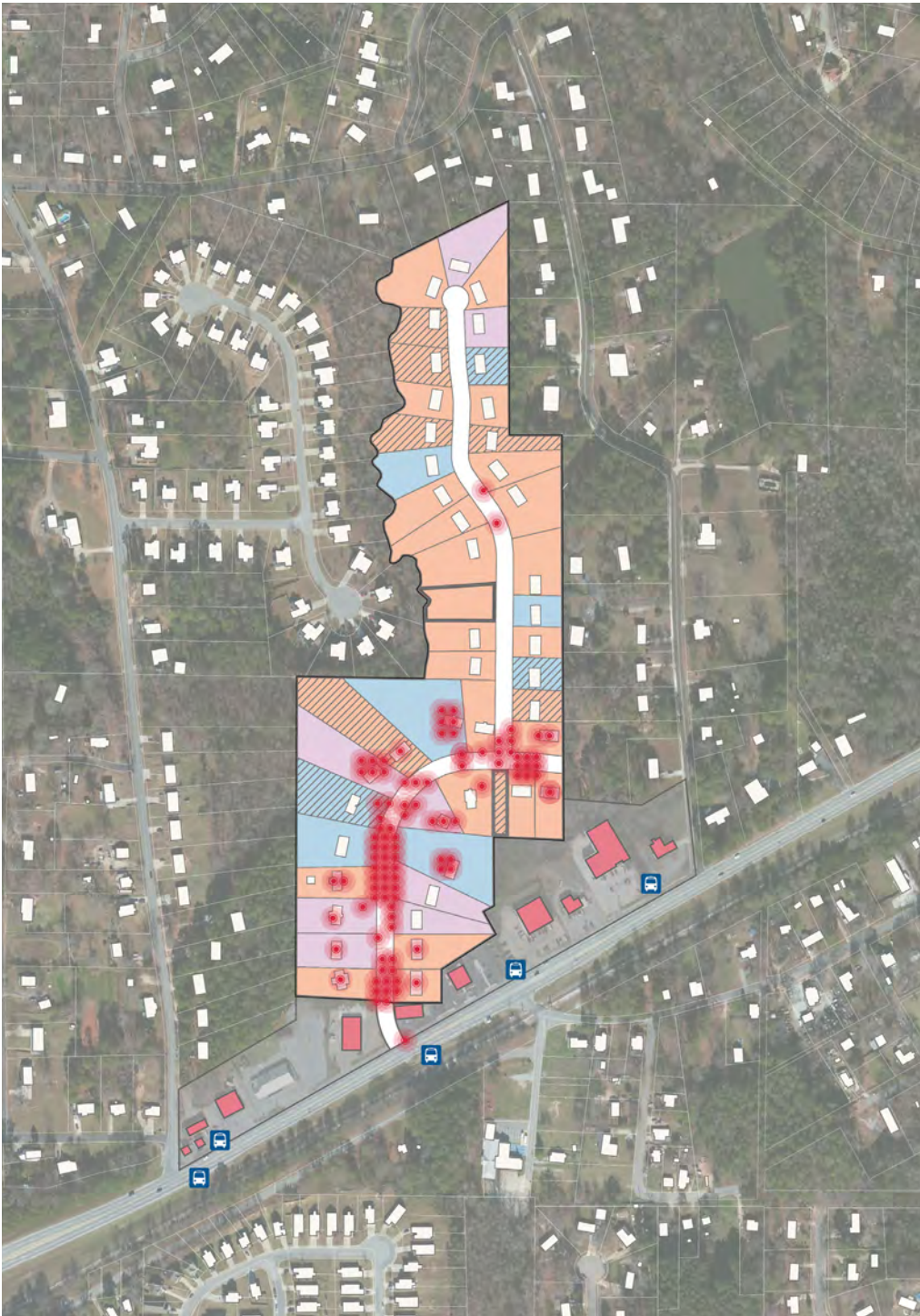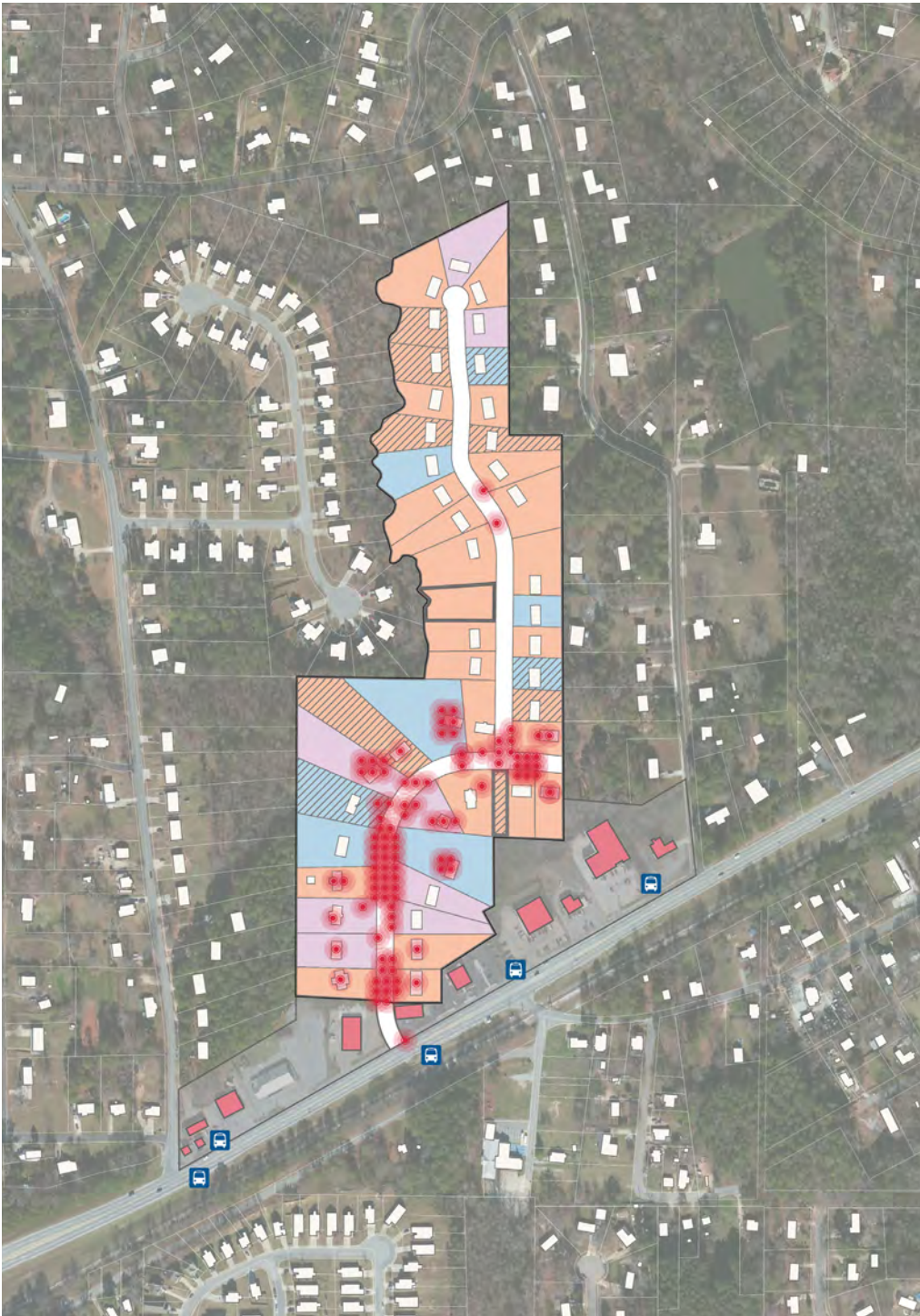
IDEAS: Lighting / Art
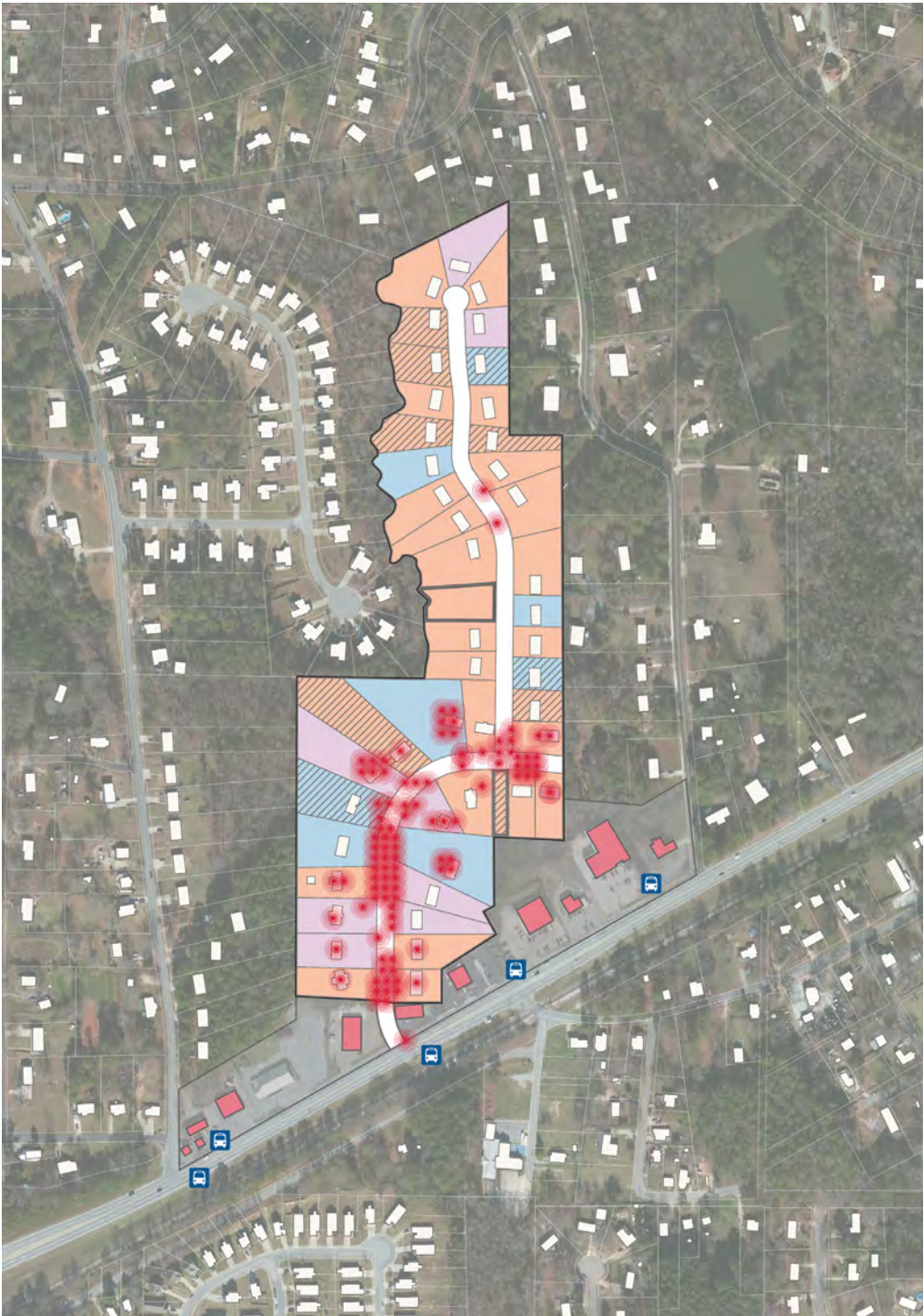
IDEAS: Social Programming

IDEAS: Pop-up Events/
Beautification

Indicators for Measuring Social Impact

- Level of Participation in Process of Design
- Level of Participation in Programming
- Social Media Engagement
- Engagement in Civic Groups

Participation

Use

- Diversity of Use of Space
- Quality of Space
- Diversity of Times of Use
- Quality of Space

- Perception of Safety
- Perception of Belonging
- Perception of Agency
- Perception of Care

Perception

Cohesion

- Level of Social Interaction
- Trust Between Community Members
- Level of Isolation
- Level of Friendly Relationship

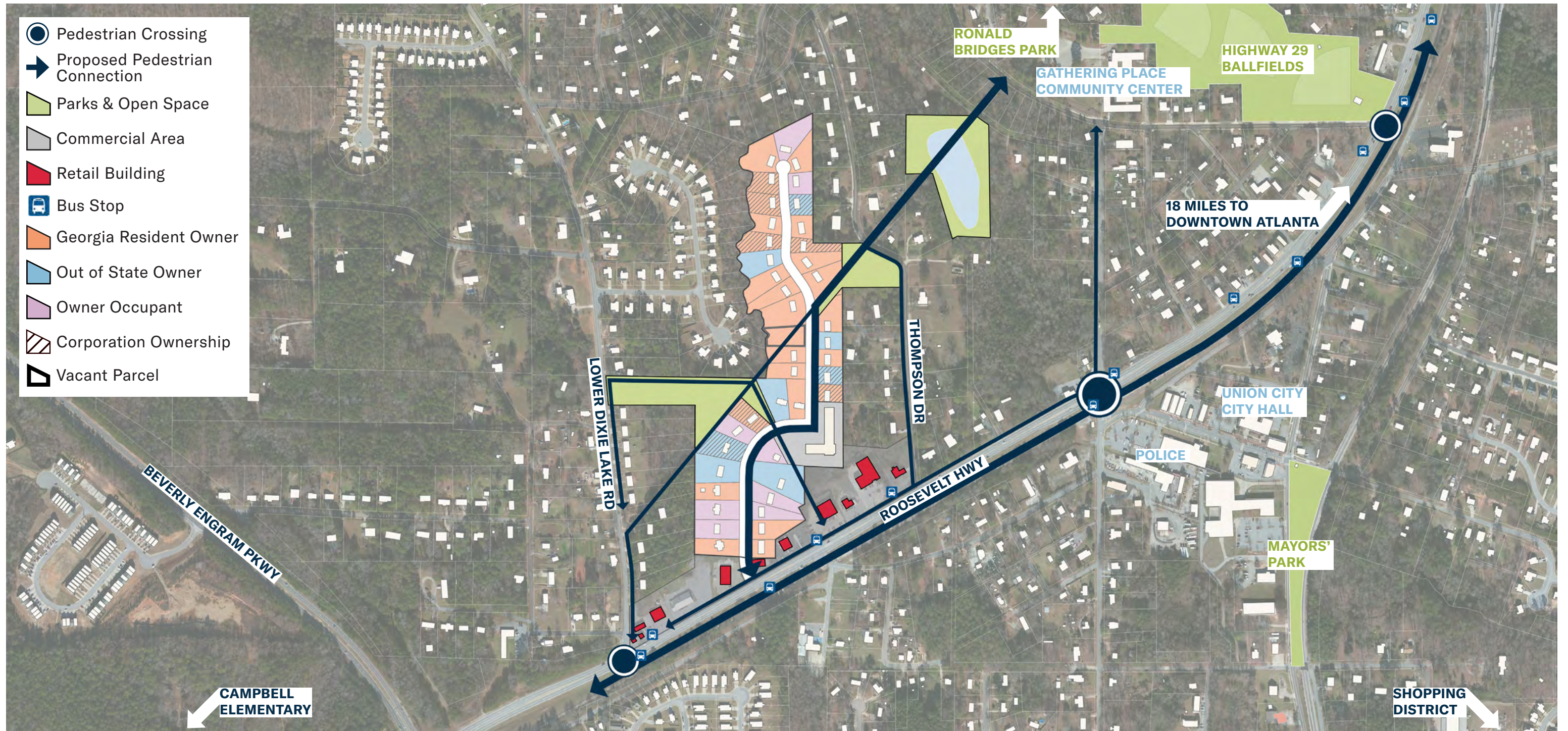# Safe Places, Active Spaces! Community Playbook:
Principles for Neighborhood Activation

- Engage the real experts.

- Prioritize youth.

- Enable social connections.

- Address the complex roots of crime.

- Start with what's there.

- Reduce territoriality.

- Expand activity on public property.

- Light the night.

- Reduce barriers to local commerce.

- Invest in dignity.
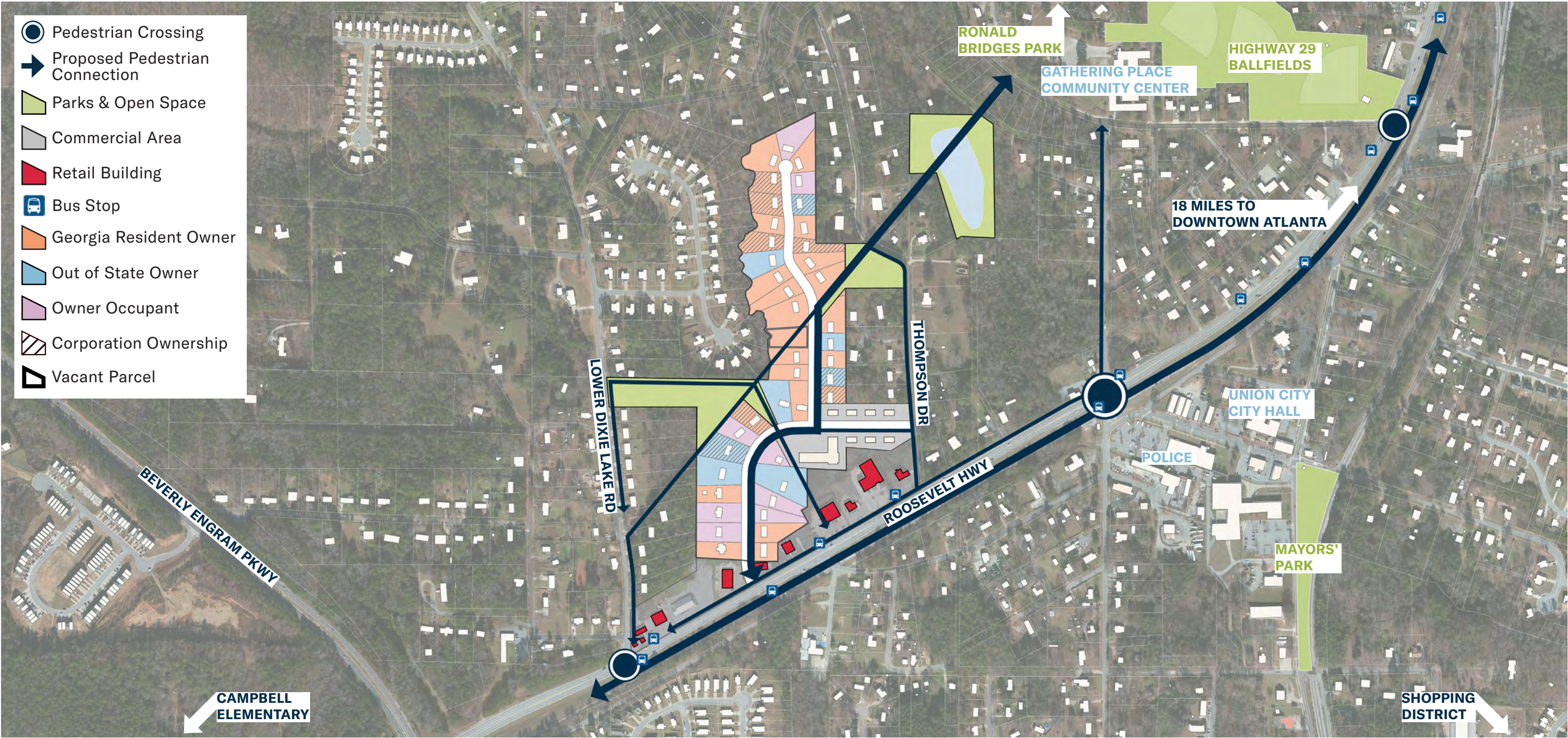
- Provide equity in maintenance.

IDEAS: Land Acquisition to Create Medium Density Affordable Housing

Legend:
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Proposed Pedestrian Connection
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel

RONALD BRIDGES PARK

GATHERING PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER

HIGHWAY 29 BALLFIELDS

18 MILES TO DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

UNION CITY CITY HALL

POLICE

MAYORS' PARK

LOWER DIXIE LAKE RD

THOMPSON DR

ROOSEVELT HWY

BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY

CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY

SHOPPING DISTRICT

IDEAS: Land Acquisition to Connect Raymond and Thompson Dr.

Legend:
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Proposed Pedestrian Connection
- Parks & Open Space
- Commercial Area
- Retail Building
- Bus Stop
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel

RONALD BRIDGES PARK

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POLICE

ROOSEVELT HWY

BEVERLY ENGRAM PKWY

MAYORS' PARK

CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY

SHOPPING DISTRICT

Housing in the Raymond Drive Neighborhood

Legend:
- Georgia Resident Owner
- Out of State Owner
- Owner Occupant
- Corporation Ownership
- Vacant Parcel
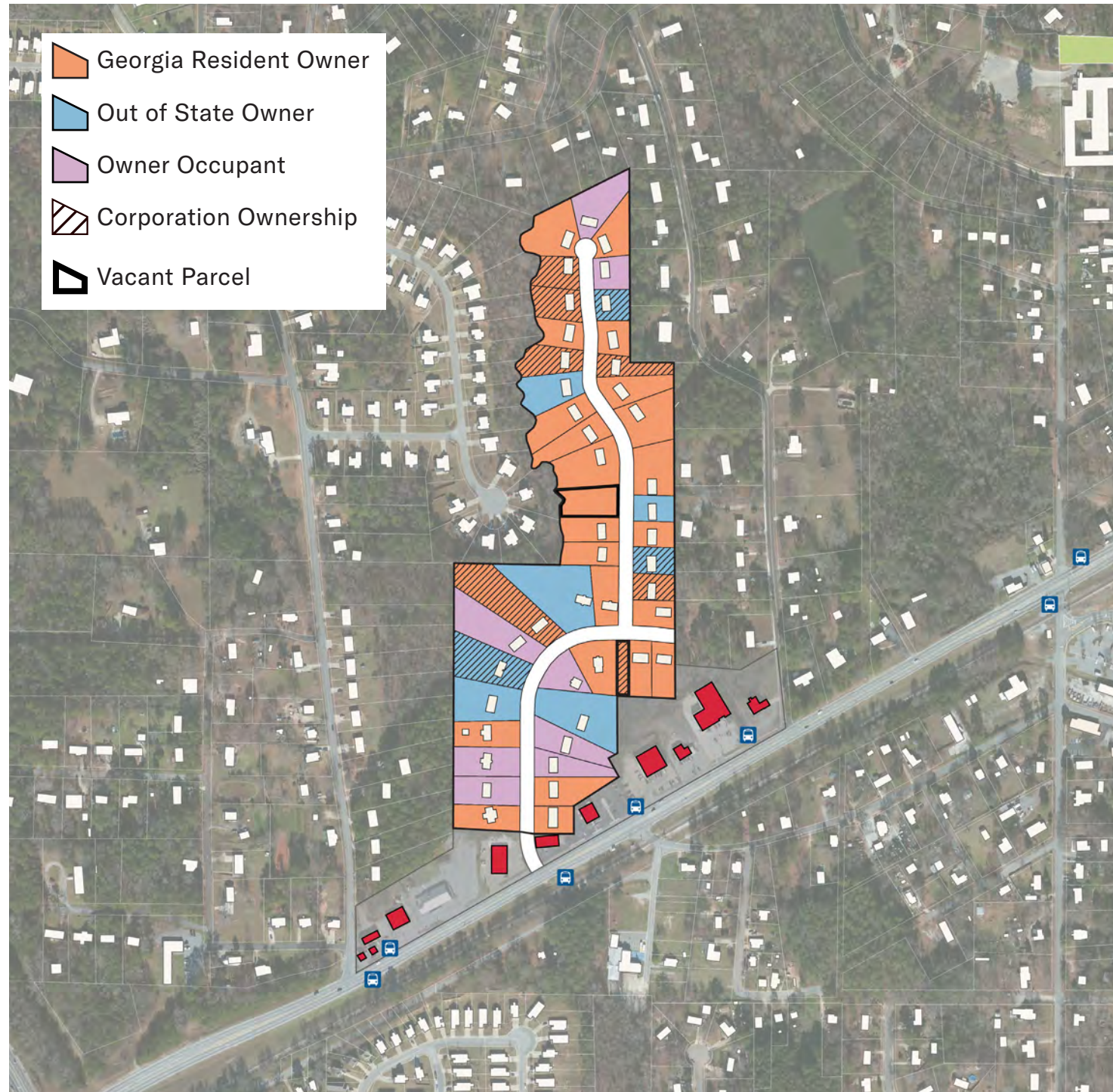
Current Situation

- Short, isolated residential street (1/2 mile long)
- 45 parcels
  - 8 owner occupants
  - 8 out of state owners
  - 29 non-Union City Georgia owners
- Modest homes, some in poor condition
- Elevated crime rate on Raymond Drive
- Unimproved street (no sidewalks, curbs, drains)
- Many Duplexes, lots of trees

Key Housing Issues

- Poor Conditions

- Absentee Ownership

- Affordability

- Eligibility for Mortgages

Key Housing Issues ➡️ Program Suggestions

- Poor Conditions
- Absentee Ownership
- Affordability
- Eligibility for Mortgages

1. Engagement
2. Acquisition of Properties
3. Improvement of Properties
4. Facilitate Home Ownership
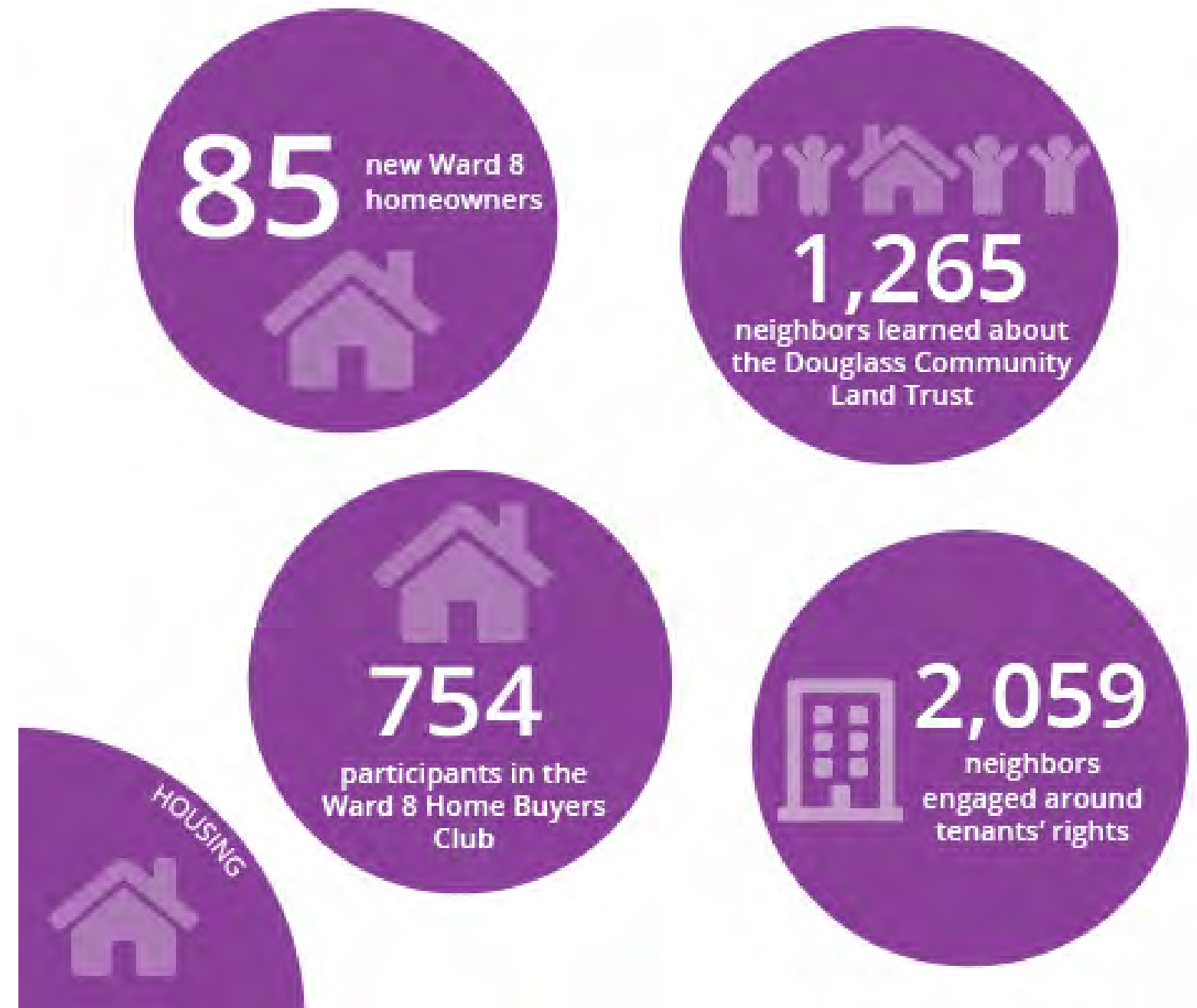5. Build new rental housing

1. Engagement

- Meet with owners
- Meet with residents
- Discuss desires for the neighborhood
- Discuss individual plans
- Respond quickly to early popular ideas
- Discuss more complex ideas for later implementation

2. Acquisition of Properties

- City purchase
- City facilitates purchase by another public or non-profit buyer
- City facilitates purchase by first-time home buyer (Pittsburgh, DC, Cleveland, California)
- Eminent Domain

85 new Ward 8 homeowners

1,265 neighbors learned about the Douglass Community Land Trust

754 participants in the Ward 8 Home Buyers Club

2,059 neighbors engaged around tenants' rights

HOUSING

Example: Non-profit Building Bridges Across the River focused on home ownership in a DC neighborhood

3. Improvement of Properties

- Code enforcement (Greensboro, NC; Alameda County, CA)

- Low interest loans or grants where necessary

- Limits on rent increases

- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers for eligible tenants

- Limits on tax increases
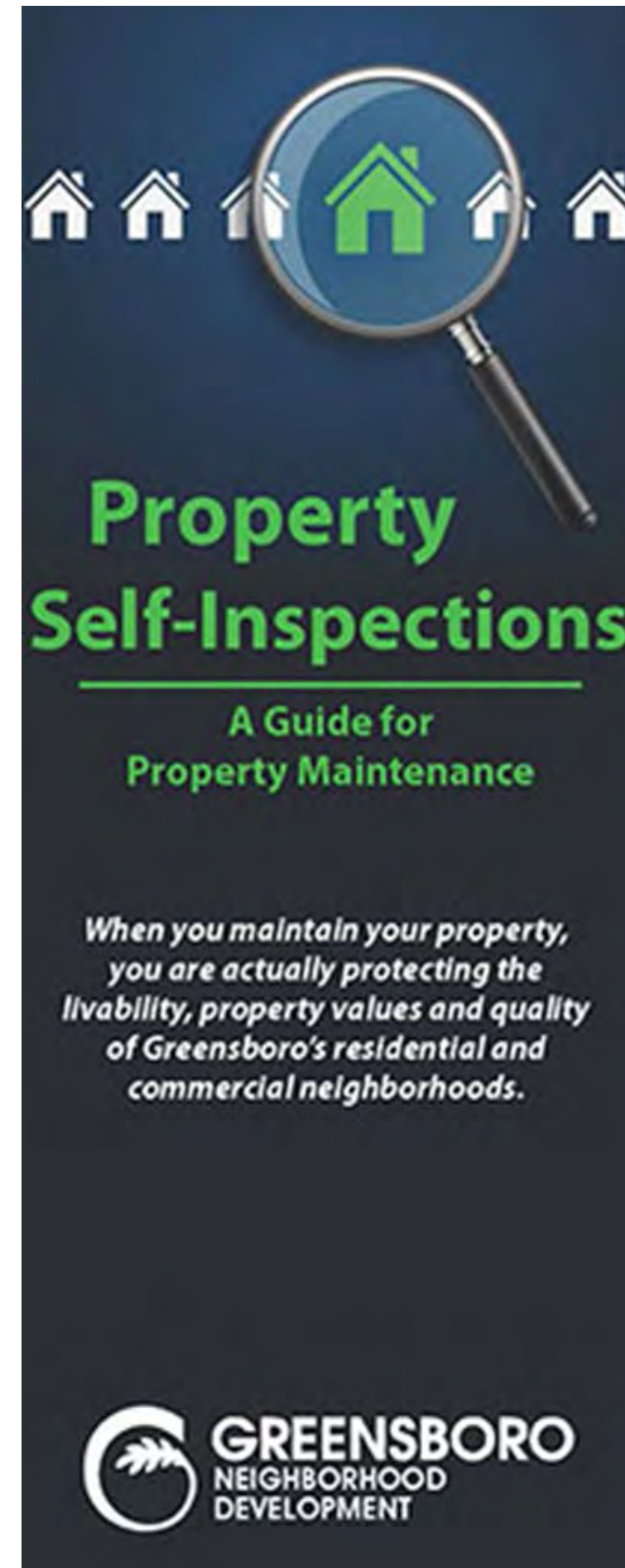
4. Facilitate Home Ownership

- A wealth building program, OR

- A limited-equity revolving city asset program (Cambridge, MA, Montgomery County, MD)

- First time home-buyer education program (Baltimore, Somerville, MA)

- City response to eligibility issues

5. Build Rental Housing

- Create a zoning overlay to allow greater density for affordable housing and build one or two small multifamily rental properties (Cambridge, MA)
- Encourage the Union City Housing Authority to acquire several larger parcels, and build duplexes as of right.
- Encourage the Union City Housing Authority or an experienced non-profit in the area to acquire several adjacent parcels and apply for a zoning variance to build one or two small multifamily rental properties.

Thank You!

Reclaim, Renew, & Reimagine
Raymond Drive and Terrace

As an **active, safe, and welcoming** neighborhood

Mayors' Institute on City Design

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Georgia

Prepared by: Ifeoma Ebo
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