



# English Avenue

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CP 6006 – Fall 2021

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## Comment from Group

*In working on this project, we developed an appreciation for the English Avenue community and its vibrant history, having had little exposure to it before.*

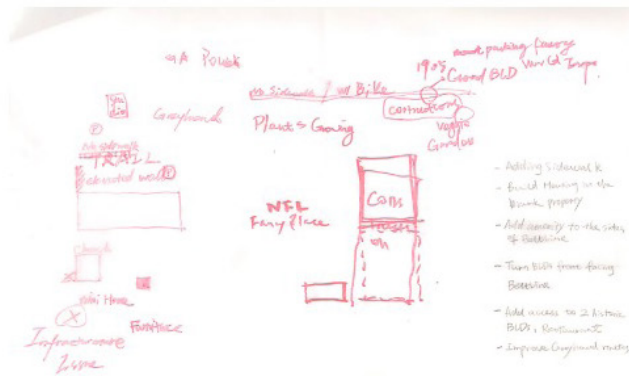
*We thank the members of the English Avenue community for their hospitality and their willingness to open up about the neighborhood, its history, and their hopes and concerns for its future.*

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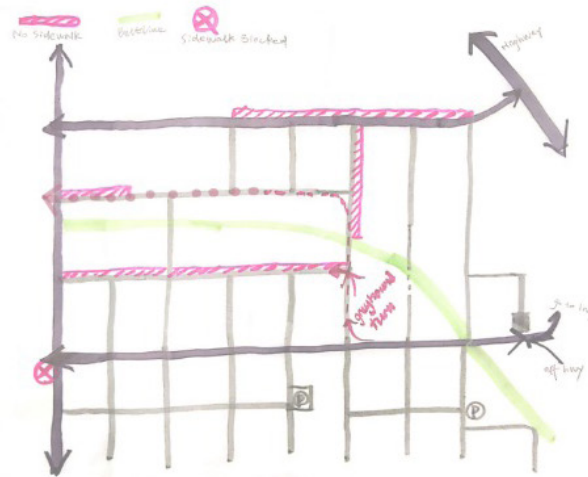
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# SITE ANALYSIS

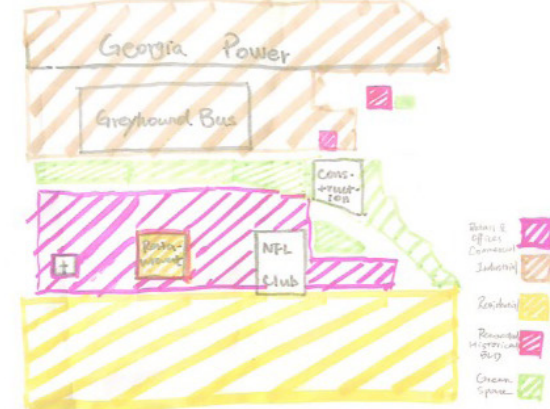
## On-site observations



## Networks and Routes



## Landuse patterns



### Crime

The number of violent crime cases in English Ave. neighborhood is concerning.

Many of the residents we spoke with expressed frustration about the security problems and the lack of solutions.

References were made to Kathryn Johnston.



### Littering

Trash cans are not widely available.

Illegal littering and garbage were prevalent site-wide.

Dead tree branches and leaves are blocking the sidewalks.



### Vacant Buildings

Many buildings in the site appeared vacant.

We noticed some of the buildings had official warnings from the city regarding the unsafe state of the structures.

This hampers the sense of community and the scenery of the neighborhood.



### Traffic Flow Issues

Narrow streets - particularly on DLH.

Unclear street lines

Lack of traffic lights or lights for left turns at high-traffic intersections.

Small turning radius, and frequent bus coming in and out of the Greyhound maintenance center.



### Gentrification

Recent construction of expensive town homes, apartment, and office buildings with price points significantly above the median incomes of the local residents.

With the construction of the Reservoir Park, new housing units are being built fast.

Aesthetics of the new buildings do not match the historic theme of the area.



### Lack of Communal Public Space

Two communal vegetable gardens found on the north side of D.L.H Pkwy.

Owner of one of which said nobody ever came there.

There is one informal outdoor gathering space with no amenities (Fox St & Lindsay St intersection).

Locals have no official public space to go to during the day - gather outside.



# Section 1

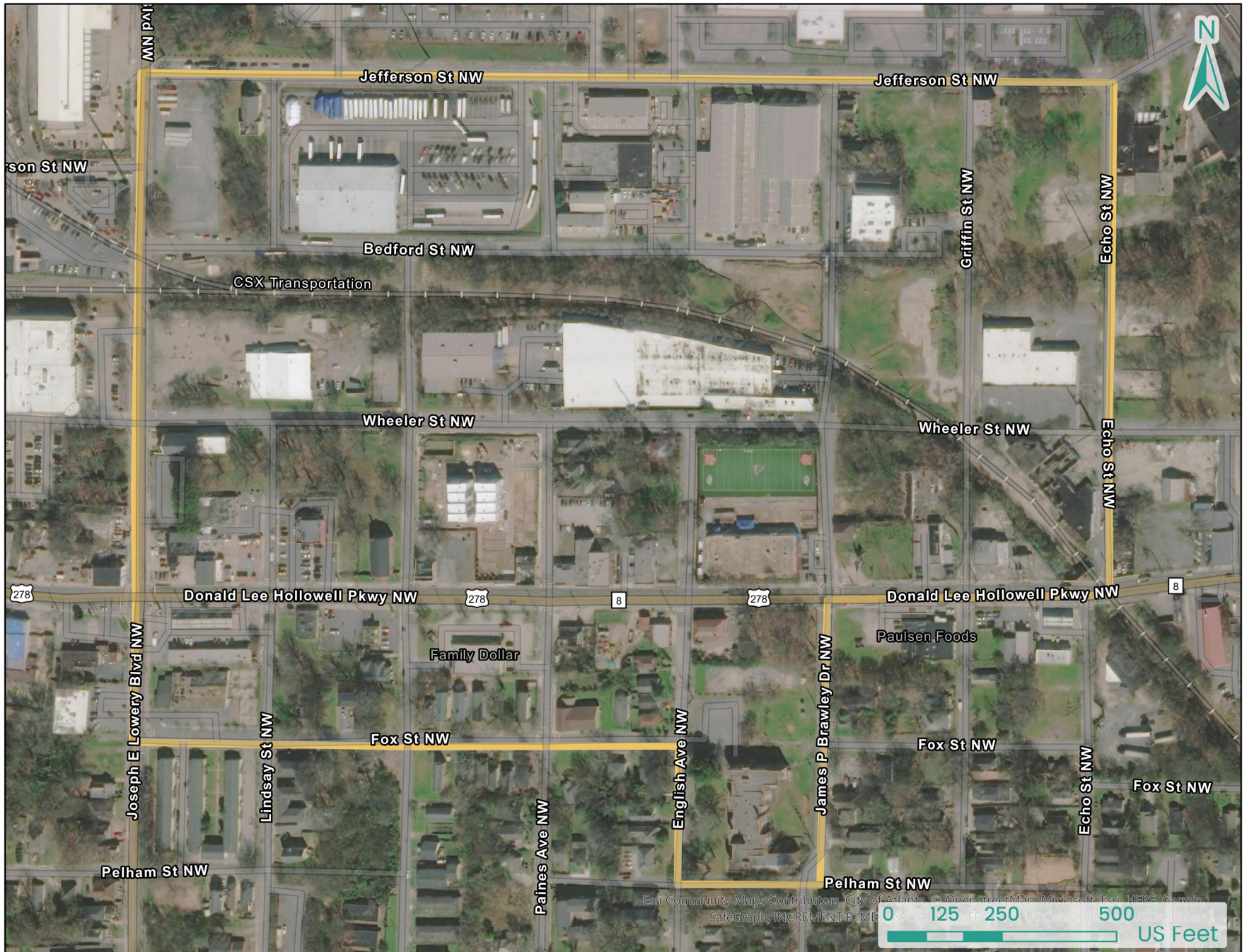


# Site Context Map

The English Avenue neighborhood study site is bound by Echo St NW on the east, Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard NW on the west, Bedford St NW on the north, and Pelham St. NW to the south.

The area is subdivided into three sections: residential (below Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway (hereafter, DLH)), commercial (between DLH and Wheeler Street), and industrial (north of Wheeler Street).

Together with sections of the the Vine City neighborhood (south), parts of English Avenue are known colloquially as “The Bluff” (Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) “L”, City of Atlanta). Prior to 2011, this area was notorious for violence, heroin trade, and gang activity. Multiple redevelopment projects have since claimed credit for “rebranding” the area, though local residents equate such “redevelopment” with gentrification and crippling increases in their cost of living.



# Transportation in the Study Area

The site is surrounded by three major roadways:

- DLH connects West Atlanta and the greater Midtown areas, handling a daily average of 28,428 vehicles (GDOT, 2021).
- Northside Drive services Atlanta's west side from Buckhead to Atlanta University. It is an alternate route for the central I-75/I-85 corridor and handles a daily average of 32,000 vehicles (GDOT, 2021).
- Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard NW parallels Northside Drive on the neighborhood's western edge and sees an average of 14,326 vehicles per day (GDOT, 2021).

Transportation is a significant concern. Traffic flow varies widely across the day, while the transportation infrastructure is degraded. Narrow roads, a lack of dedicated turn lanes or signals, and a large pedestrian population contribute to traffic congestion.

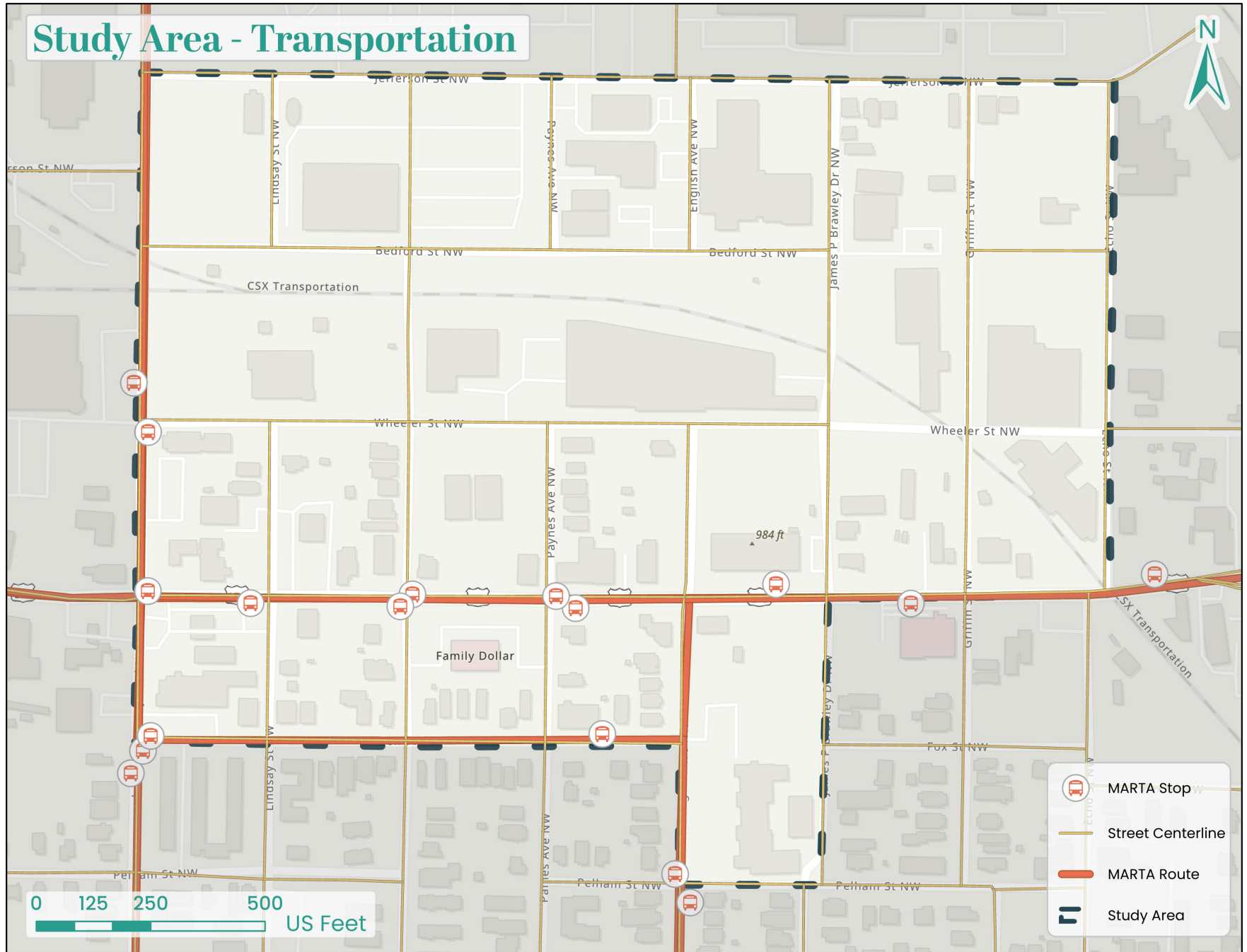
The Greyhound Lines Maintenance Center on Jefferson Street NW is problematic. Buses traveling to this center must make wide turns from DLH onto narrow side streets, blocking both east- and west-bound traffic, causing significant congestion.

There are 17 MARTA stops within or in close proximity to the study area.

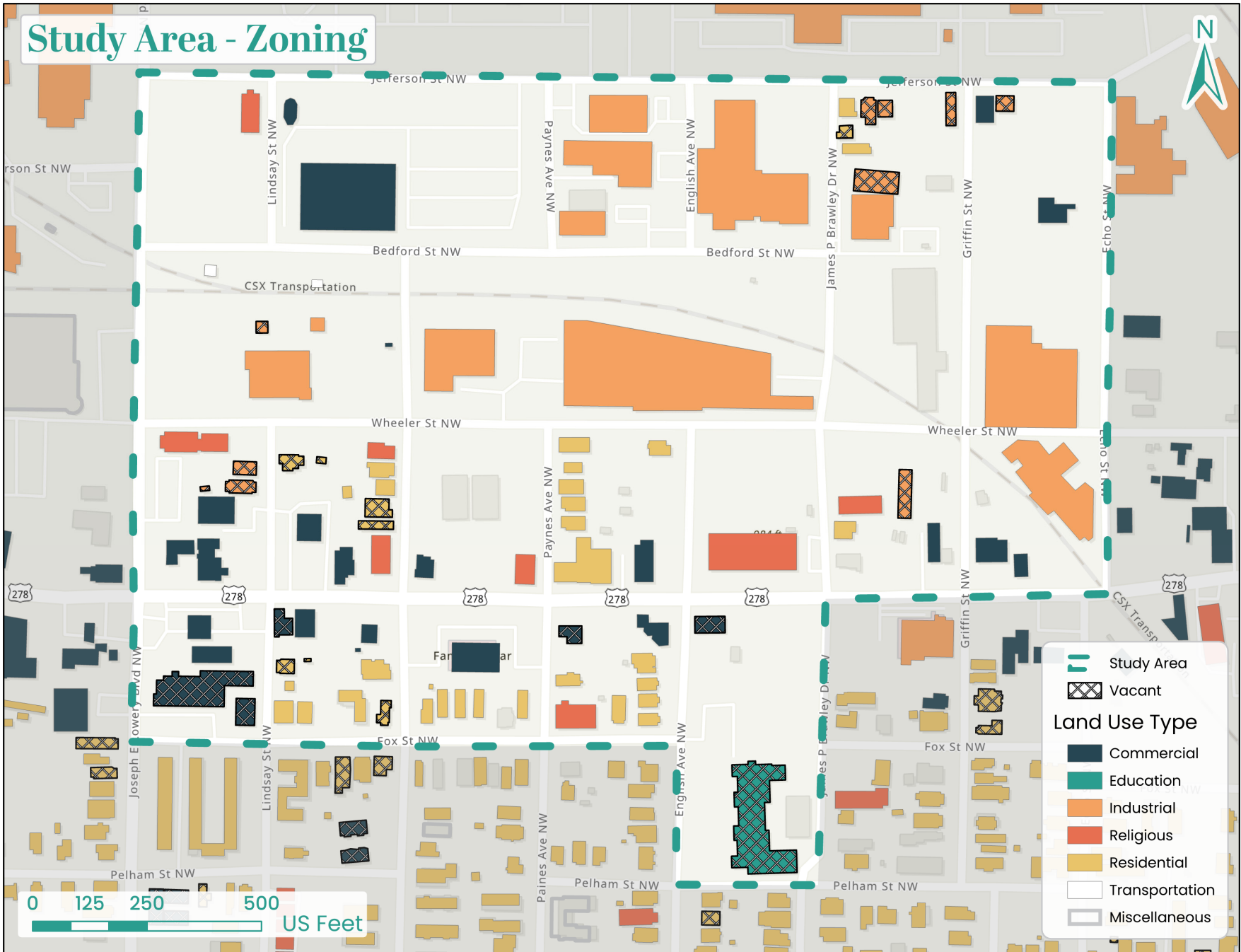




# Study Area - Transportation



# Study Area - Zoning

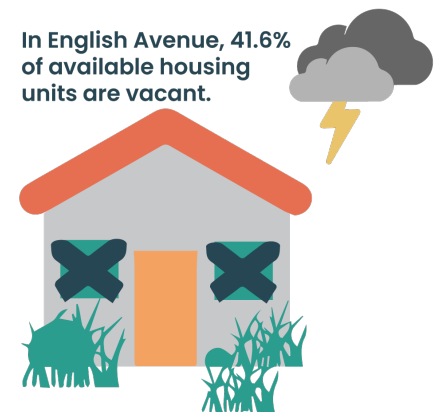


# Land Use & Zoning in the Study Area

The study area is split horizontally into thirds by Wheeler Street NW and DLH. The majority of structures located north of Wheeler Street NW are zoned as industrial.

Zoning in the middle-third, between Wheeler Street NW and DLH, is a diverse mixture of commercial, religious, and residential structures. This area has been the subject of urban development and gentrification since 2006, with development projects turning existing structures into professional offices or leveling them in favor of constructing high-cost condominium-style housing complexes.

The lower third, south of DLH, is principally residential. The majority of English Avenue's longer-term residents live in single or multi-family residences located in this area. Several buildings in this part of the study site are condemned, including the historic two-story English Avenue School whose roof contains several large holes. One hole in particular is over 10 feet in diameter and extends down through the roof, both floors, and into the foundation of the structure.



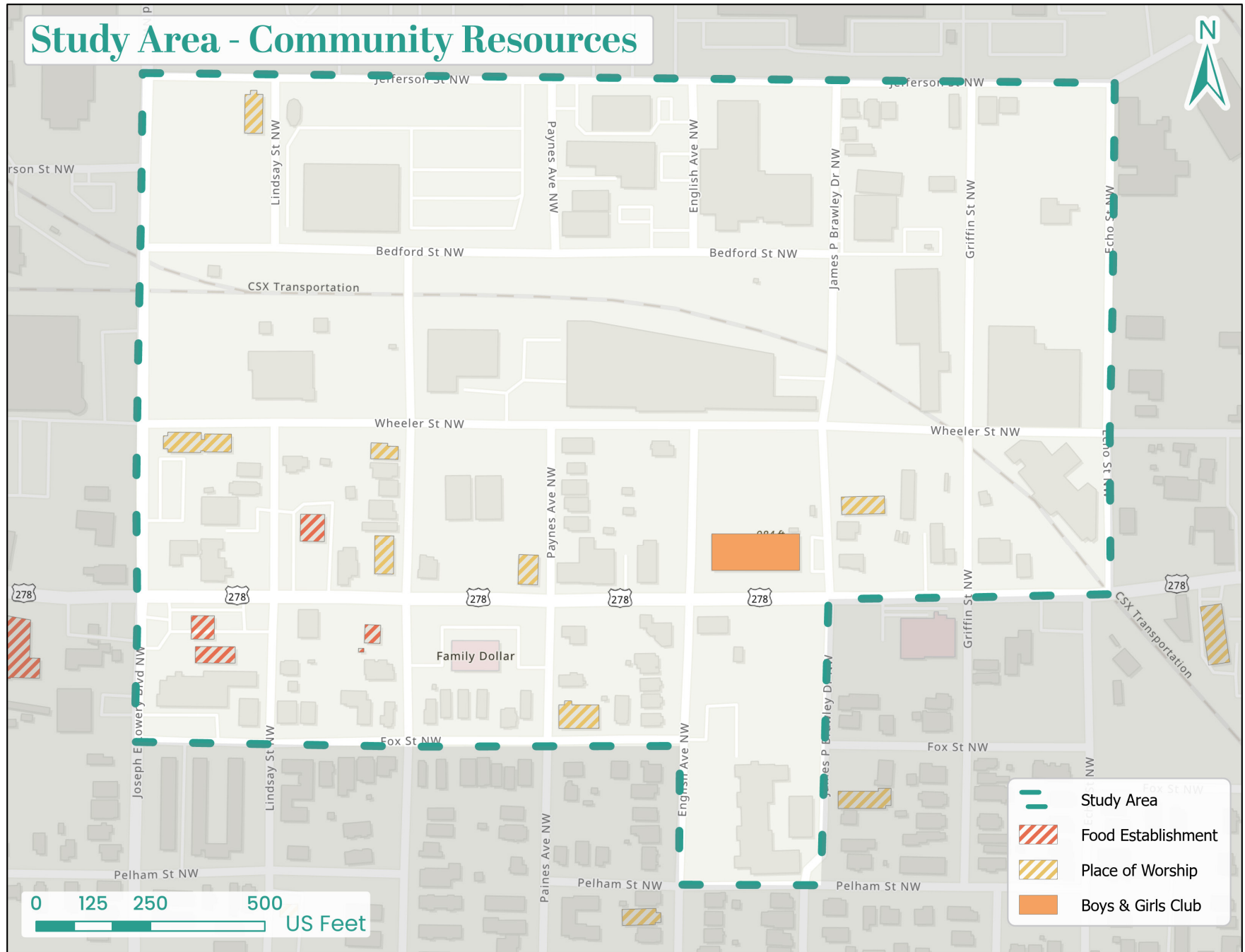
# Community Resources in the English Ave Study Area

The English Avenue community is resilient. Locals actively support the community. K&K, a local restaurant, provides meals to neighborhood residents. Several religious and community organizations service the area as well, including seven places of worship, five food establishments, and several community support organizations.

The English Avenue school is listed the National Register of Historic Places and is currently slated for future redevelopment into a community center.

The site contains several informal community gathering sites. One notable location is a vacant lot left an abandoned development project on the corner of Fox Street NW and Lindsay Street NW where local residents have established a semi-permanent informal meeting place.

# Study Area - Community Resources

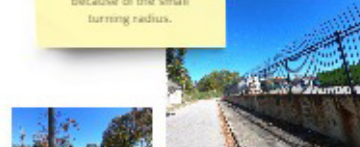


**Seemingly Vacant Property**

Area zoned as chemical plant.



Greyhound Bus maintenance center, the bus comes from west side and make a right turn on Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy - James P Brawley Dr causing traffic conflicts because of the small turning radius.



Historical building - built in 1900 as a meat packing facility, now functions as a commercial office space.



Valerie who works for a real estate company in the building; they have a veggie garden for everyone to pick btw!



**Construction of High-rise building**

A house with roosters and community garden, looks like a place for community bonding activities. Has a mini library and a table on the curb with a sign indicating free items are often made available to community members.



**Place of Worship**

Pictured: Greater Deliverance Baptist

Residents commented that the churches in the neighborhood have historically held the community together by organizing events for kids and young adults.



Under-maintained sidewalk



A mini home with cute small garden



**SITE MAP**  
Central-West Atlanta Area: 68.9 Acres

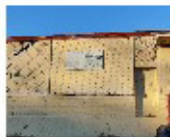


**Greyhound Bus turning point**

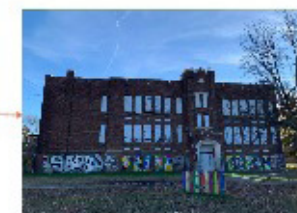
Traffic conflicts caused by no left turn green light.

**Vacant Commercial Building**

Another type of abandoned building, halted real estate development. This should be a "fancy looking" mixed use building with retail and offices.



Sidewalk blocked by dead branches and leaves



A listed historical building (1910), used to be an elementary school. Now it is poorly maintained and abandoned as all entries are boarded and locked. The area north of the school had interesting features such as the painted garbage can enclosures with art and garden planter boxes, evidence of efforts of community activities.



Interview with Vance & Tony  
Primary concerns voiced:  
- Safety problems and rising crimes  
- Garbage  
- Lack of funding  
- Incapable neighborhood leader



Abandoned houses are one of the major issues killing the sense of community and belonging in this neighborhood. However, they could also be opportunities being used for other functional spaces.



**Newly-built town houses**

This project claims that their design would fit the cultural environment of English Avenue while it looks out of place. This is one of the example showing the differences of north and south side of Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy.

Residents of the community commented that they are aware these new housing developments are not intended for them as the prices are well-above what the local income levels can afford.

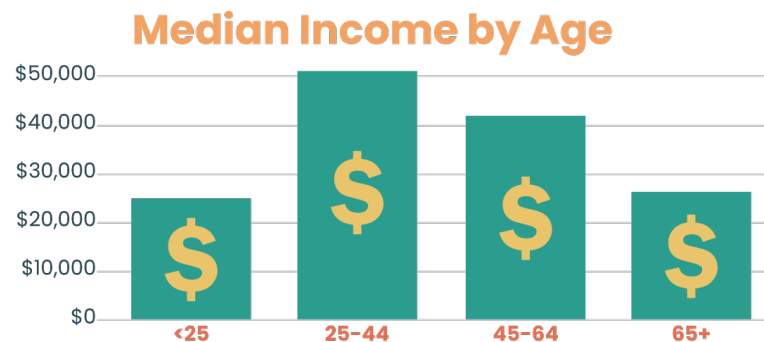


# Problems Identified in the Study Area

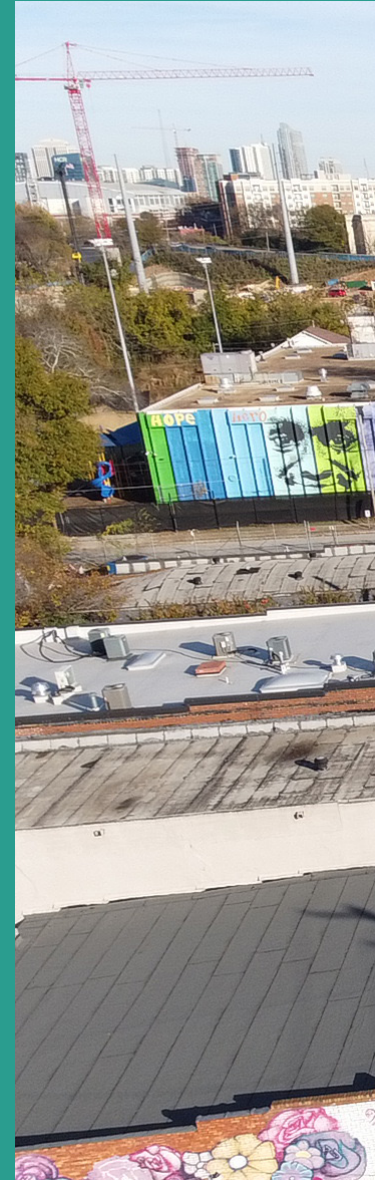
The residential population occupies an estimated 1,163 housing units, with a median household income of \$29,463. Rates of home ownership are low at around 16%. Structural vacancy rates are a severe issue with an estimated 828 vacant housing units (41.6% of total supply) in the greater English Avenue neighborhood as of 2021. Many of these buildings having been abandoned or condemned.

Residents interviewed cited rising costs of living, gentrification, and stagnant wages as key forces driving out locals.

Side streets, with the notable exception of the area surrounding the beltline trail maintained by the City of Atlanta, are in disrepair. Sidewalks and bike lanes exist but are not always useable. In certain areas, sand and low-to-medium foliage have completely overtaken sidewalks or other footpaths.



# PUBLIC OUTREACH





# Section 2



# What We Learned from Members of the Community

The neighborhood is in perpetual transition. Since he arrived in the 1980s, “Vance,” a local community organizer at Integrity Transformation CDC whom we spoke with at the informal gathering space (at Fox St and Lindsay St), mentioned seeing significant change in the last ten years. The native community is predominately low-or middle-income. The threat of expansion and gentrification from new development in the area has forced many locals to move out of the area. Crime is a notable concern as economic stress-fractures within the community threaten its stability.

“Tony” mentioned the importance of civic involvement and the role churches as

social hubs in the community when he was younger but noted that both seem to have become less prevalent over time. Infrastructural problems are significant to residents in the community. Potholes and worn streets cause damage to local vehicles and alter the flow of traffic, constricting both local and transverse commuter traffic onto the main arterial roadways that are more-well maintained by the City of Atlanta and Fulton County. Some of the issues may be attributable to political issues with local leadership.

Some local residents expressed concerns that local political leaders and activists were misallocating funds to projects such as placing the English Avenue school on the National Register of Historic Places and

to developing the area north of DLH for commercial use, instead of putting funding towards infrastructure and localized community projects. Even beautification and sanitation have taken a backseat to new development projects as new condominium and townhouse construction projects targeting wealthy outside buyers are underway while garbage piles on vacant lots continue to grow.

City planning meeting documents from the City of Atlanta send mixed messages regarding the future of English Avenue as well. While the city seems to support the neighborhood, its own meeting minutes highlight the dramatic reduction in population and flat income growth over the last ten years, while also greenlighting multiple higher-end urban development projects that will undoubtedly exacerbate local economic woes.

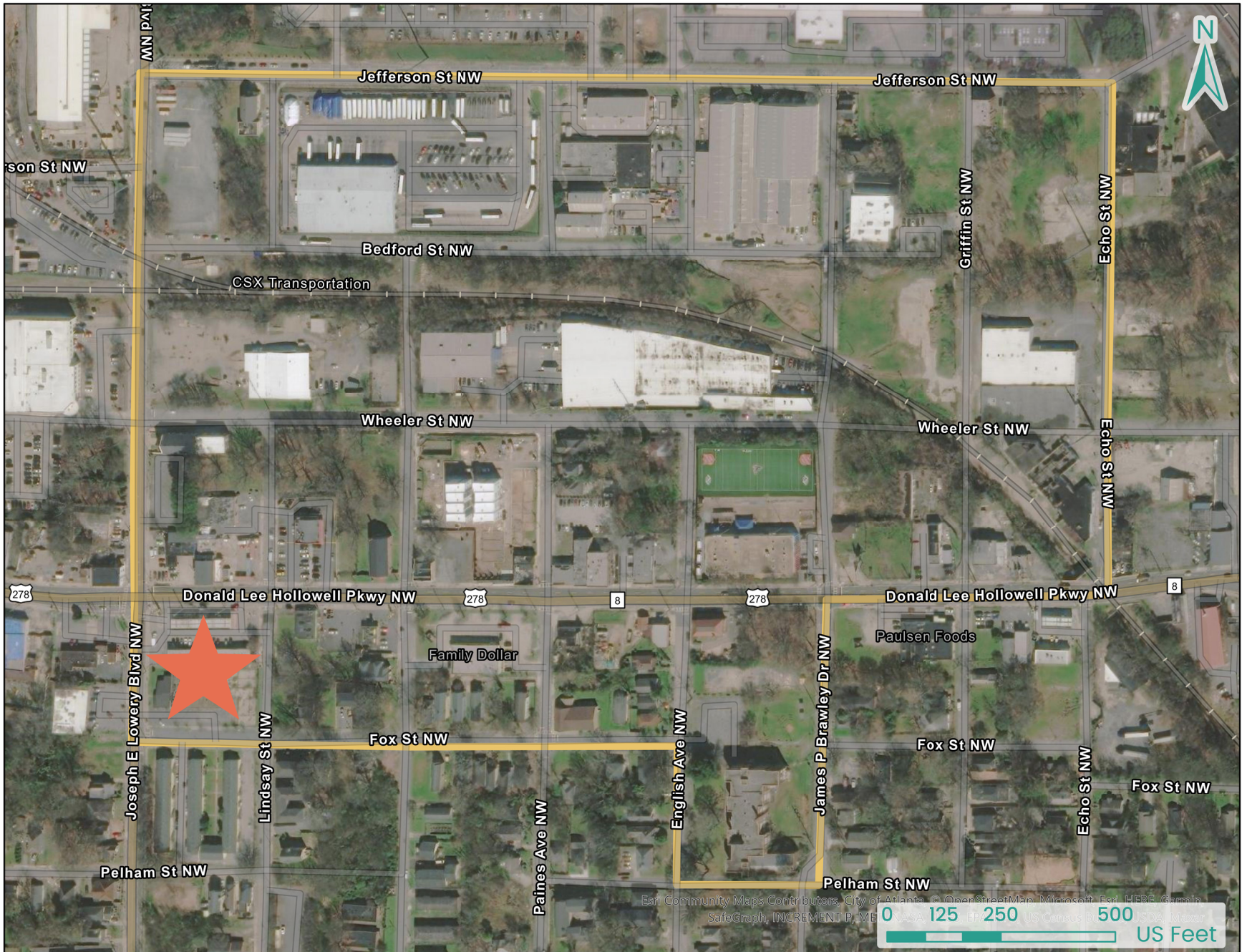


# GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS



# Section 3





# Overarching Goals

- 1. Provide community gathering space with useful facilities.**
- 2. Allocate appropriate spaces for children to play.**
- 3. Reclaim the abandoned building for a community center and local businesses.**

# Design Process

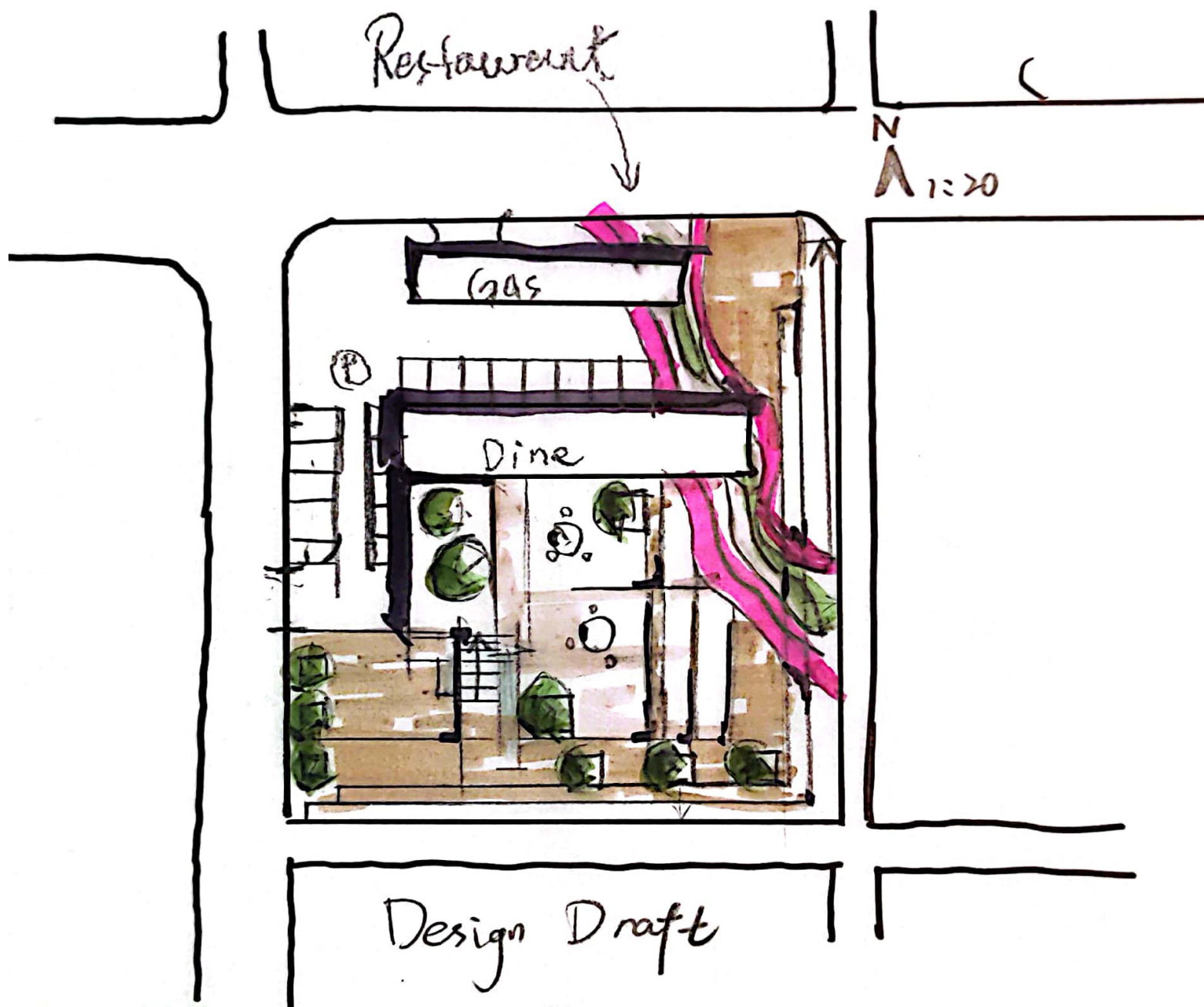
Reclaim the abandoned development project building, clearing the site for a community-oriented structure.

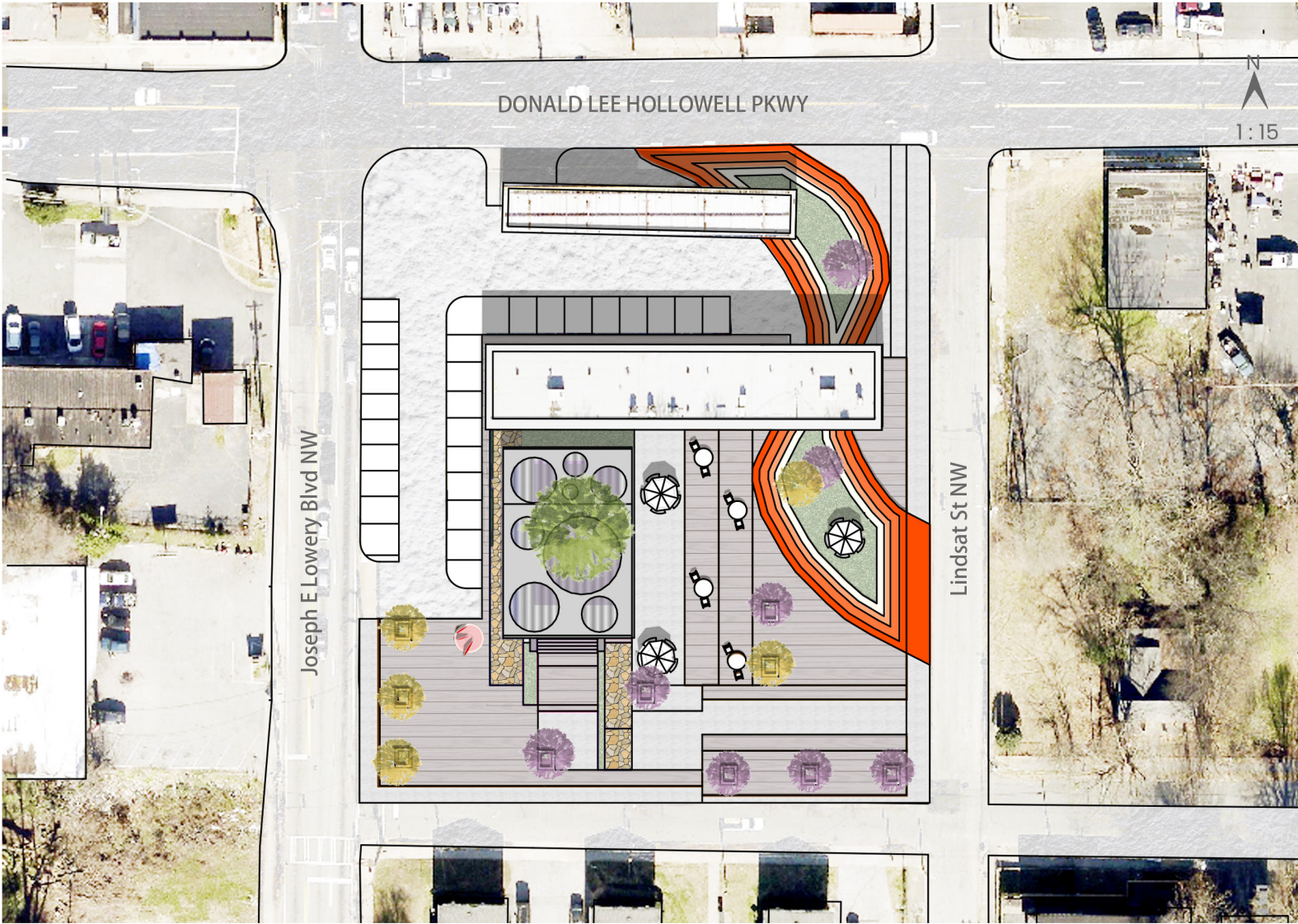
Stair-step design elements and plants will insulate gathering spaces from parking areas on the west-side while also creating aesthetically-pleasing seating. Installing a gentle-sloped ground feature on the eastern-side of the site improves its accessibility for persons with restricted mobility.

Renovate the restaurant, creating open ground-floor spaces connecting to the plaza on the opposite side, improving pedestrian flow.

An asymmetric geometric path placed on the east half of the site disrupts the grid pattern and provides a visually connection between two important community landmarks: K&K Kitchen on the north side, and the historical elementary school on the southeast side.







# Small Site Design

# 3D Concept Plan



# Summary of Recommendations

During our analysis, we identified a lack of communal space that allowed community members to gather. The current space, identified as the two abandoned lots south of the gas station, does not meet current needs for residents.

For our site plan recommendation, we propose an outdoor dining and gathering space to meet the demands of the community members' daily activities. We include wide stairs as casual seating areas. The proposed renovation will function as a community bonding site the residents, while addressing needs for those less fortunate.

We incorporate a colorful "strip" to allow for a streamlined connection between the two signature sites of our area: the historical elementary school (which is proposed to be a community center) and K&K kitchen. Renovating the commercial spaces will also attract new customers from outside the community.

