



# Leveraging Social Capital to Increase Social Equity, Sustainability and Resiliency

INFINITE  
EARTH  
ACADEMY

# What is Equitable Development?

*The practice of enabling communities to prioritize and pursue development that benefits current residents and contributes to neighborhood resilience and improved quality-of-life.*



# Equity, Smart Growth and Sustainability

***Equitable Development is fundamental to achieving long-term sustainability.***

***“Sustainable development is necessarily “people-centered and planet sensitive” guided by values of equal rights and social justice ..”***

- [UN Research Institute of Social Development \(2014\)](#)

# Equity challenges are intersectional!

## ELEMENTS OF HEALTH



Air



Water



Food



Housing



Greenspace



Land Use



Transportation



Work



Noise



Climate

# Connecting Social Capital to Equity

- Community residents are experts on their own community.
- Listen to underserved communities' goals and concerns.
- Communities need to decide for themselves what is equitable and what is important to them.
- Equity is contextual!



# Today's Objectives

1. Assess gaps and opportunities in your community engagement approach
2. Select from a range of tools to assess equity, sustainability and resiliency
3. Learn how to identify cross-program connections to foster a more integrated planning process

# Community engagement needs to move from ...



One-way Engagement



Community Empowerment



Collaborative Community Partnerships

# Community Engagement Principles

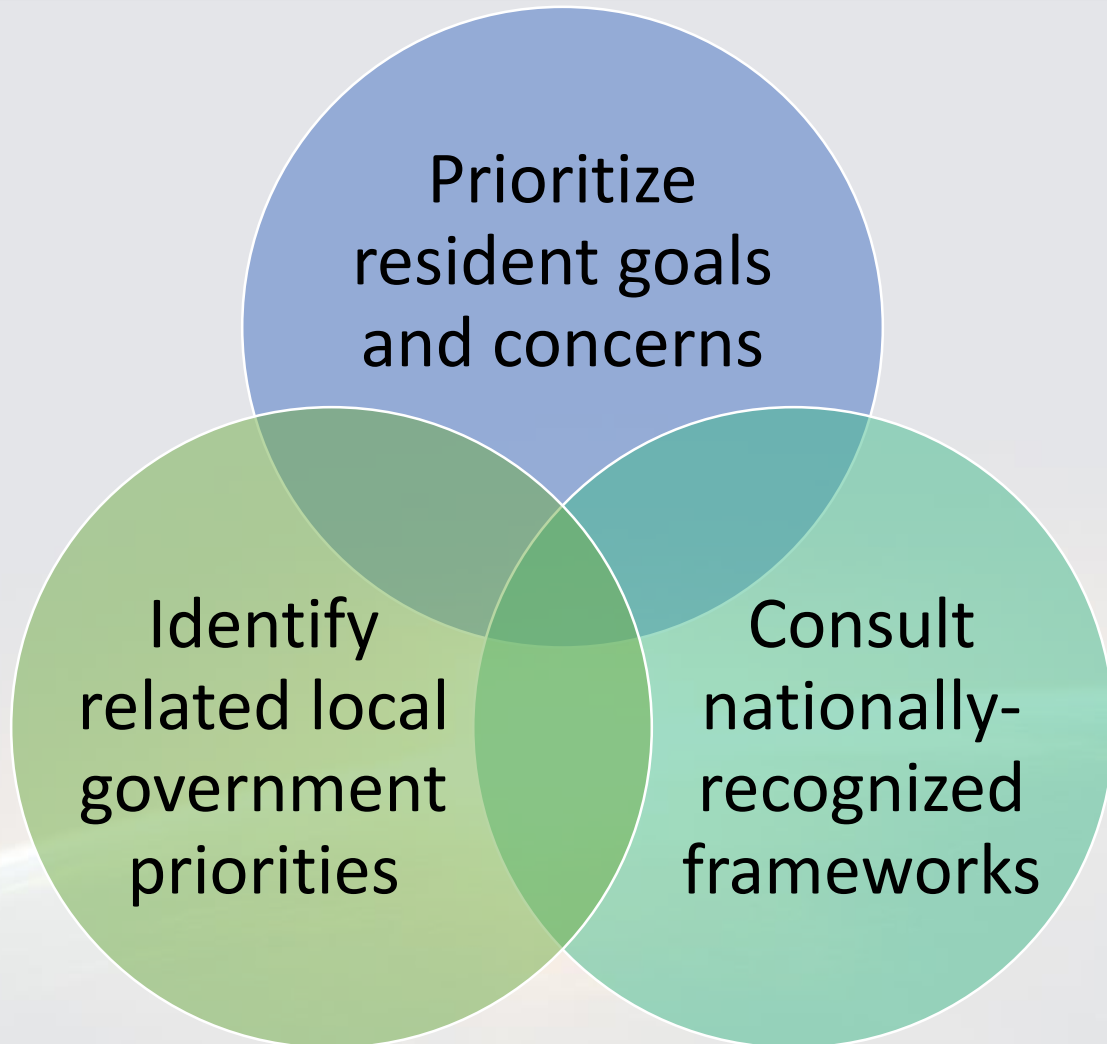
Community knowledge is valid *and* essential to success.

- ✓ Extend an open and intentional invitation
- ✓ Start a new conversation
- ✓ Put relationship first
- ✓ Build trust
- ✓ Listen to community needs





# Assessment Principles



- Keep resident goals and concerns at the forefront.
- Look for common interests.
- Develop shared understanding.
- Make connections to non-traditional funding sources.

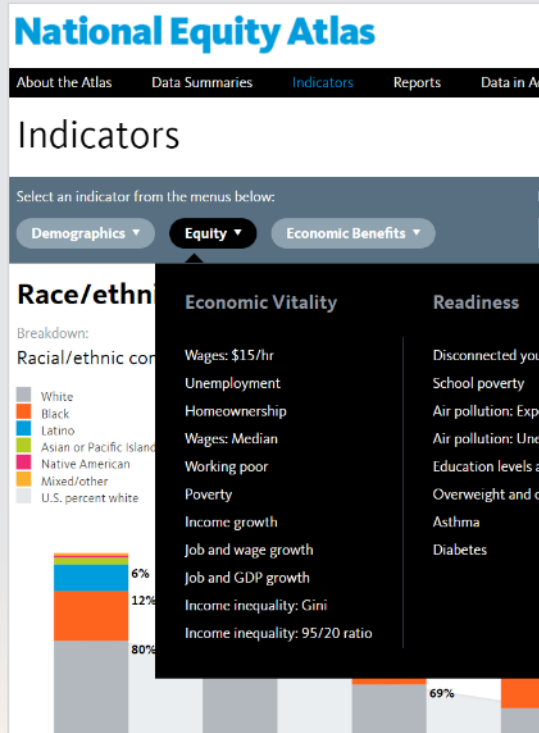
# Community Needs Assessment

- Holistic understanding of concerns and needs
- Ask many, many questions!
- Equity is contextual

## Questions may address:

- Neighborhood and community context
- Quality-of-life topics
- Hot button issues
- Key stakeholders to engage
- Relationship between community and decision-makers
- Relationship between community and potential implementation partners

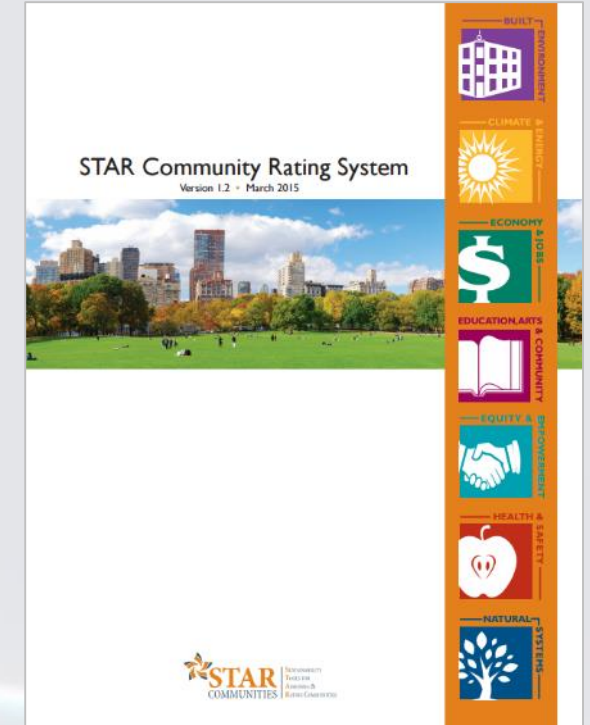
# Nationally-recognized frameworks



National Equity Atlas  
<http://nationalequityatlas.org/>

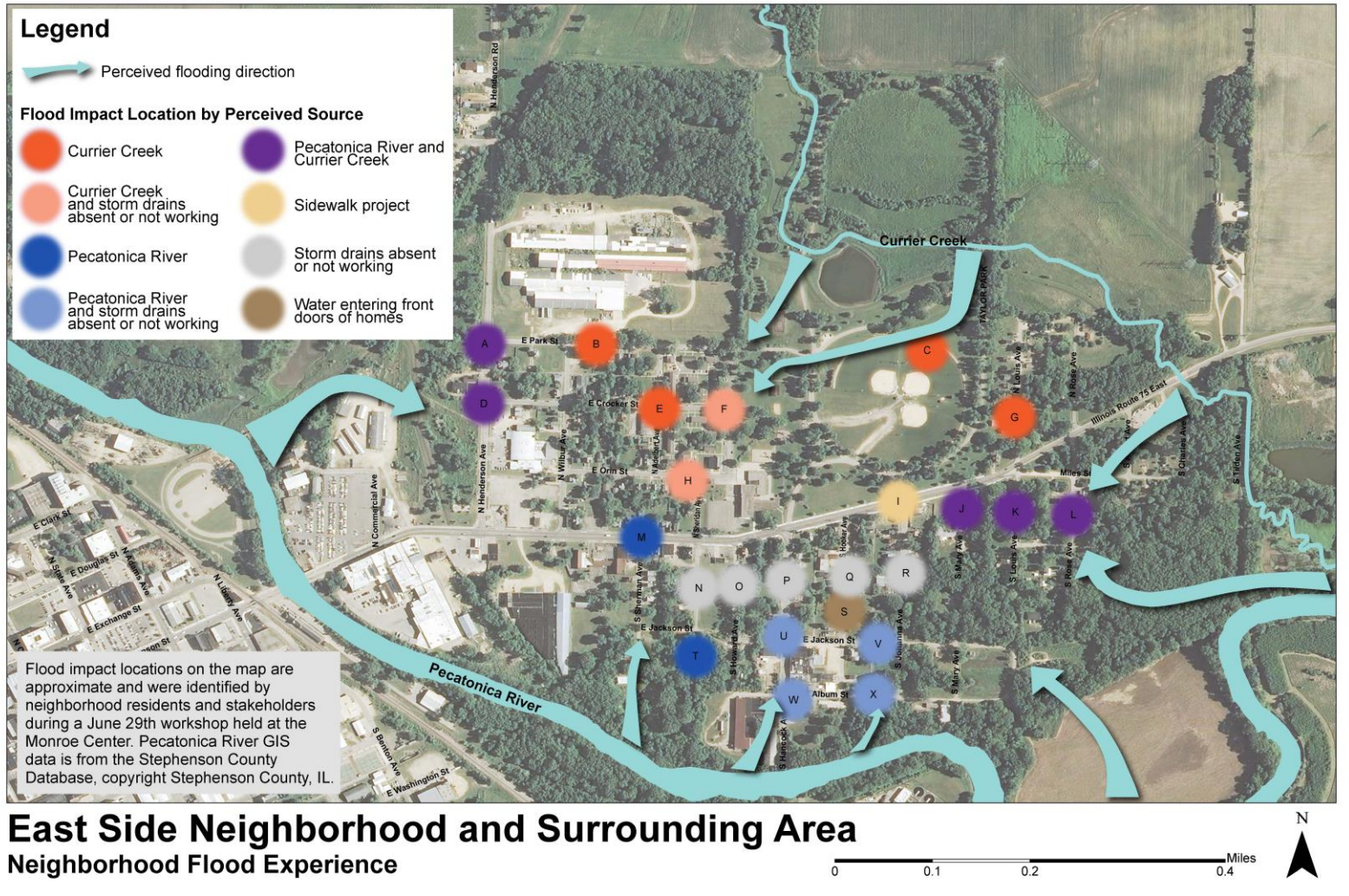


Partnership for Sustainable Communities  
<https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/>

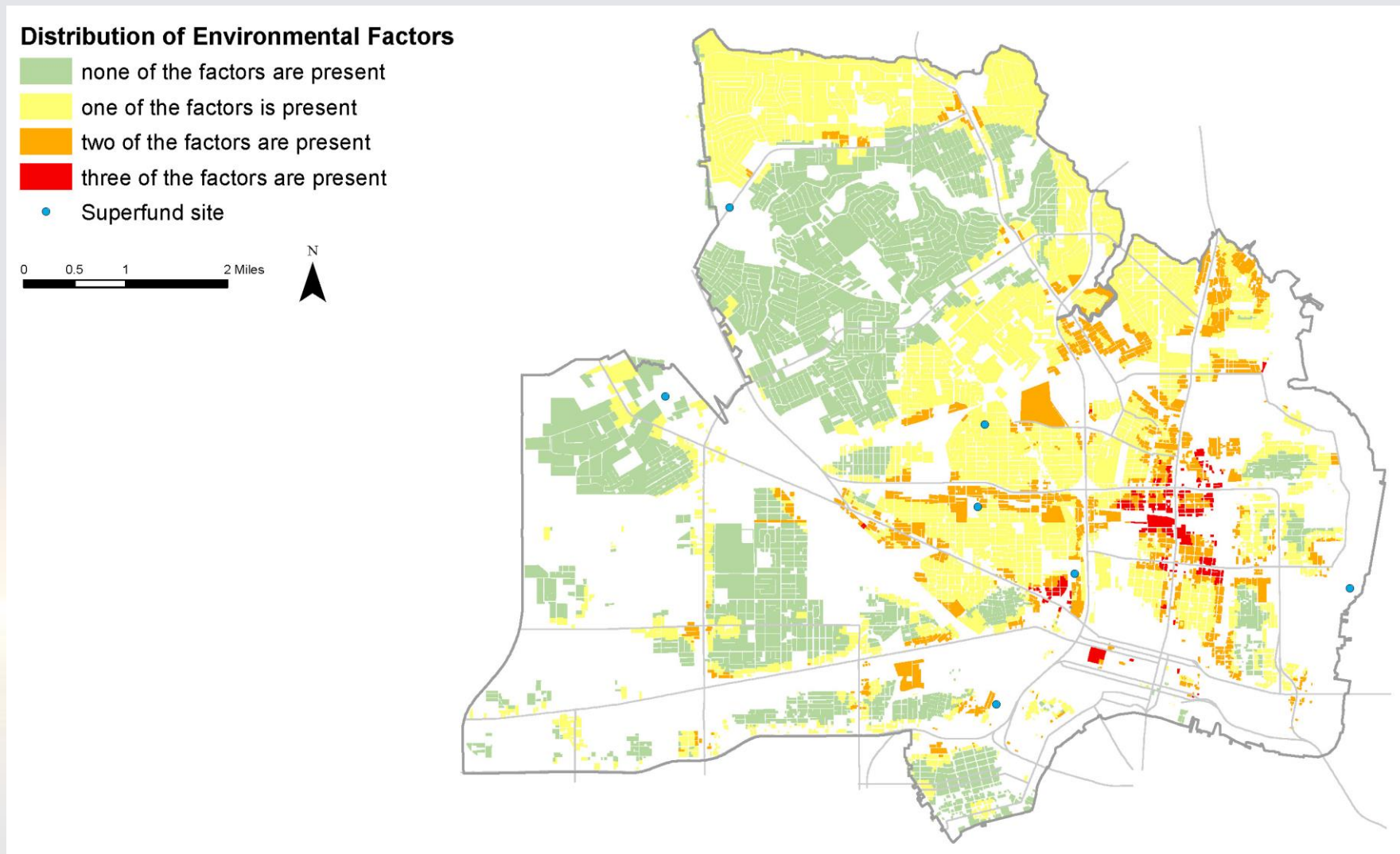


ICLEI – STAR Community Index  
<http://www.starcommunities.org/>

# Visualizing Your Assessments



# Visualizing Your Assessments

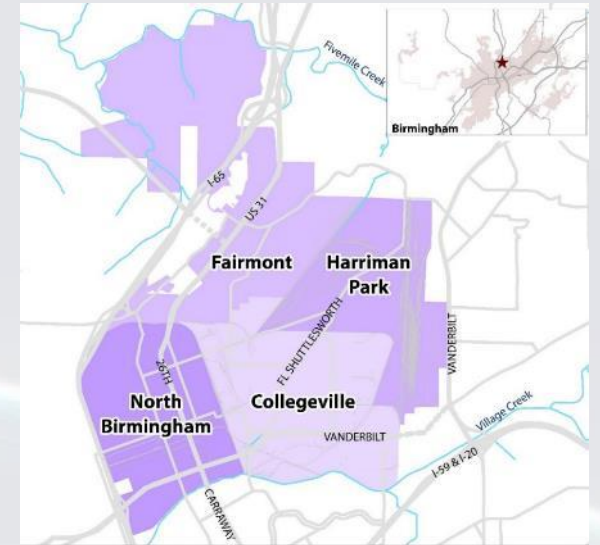


# Case Study: Northern Birmingham

“Fred [Shuttlesworth] didn’t invite us to come to Birmingham.

He told us we had to come.”

Andrew Young, Southern Christian Leadership Conference



Photographs courtesy of the Fred Shuttlesworth Foundation.

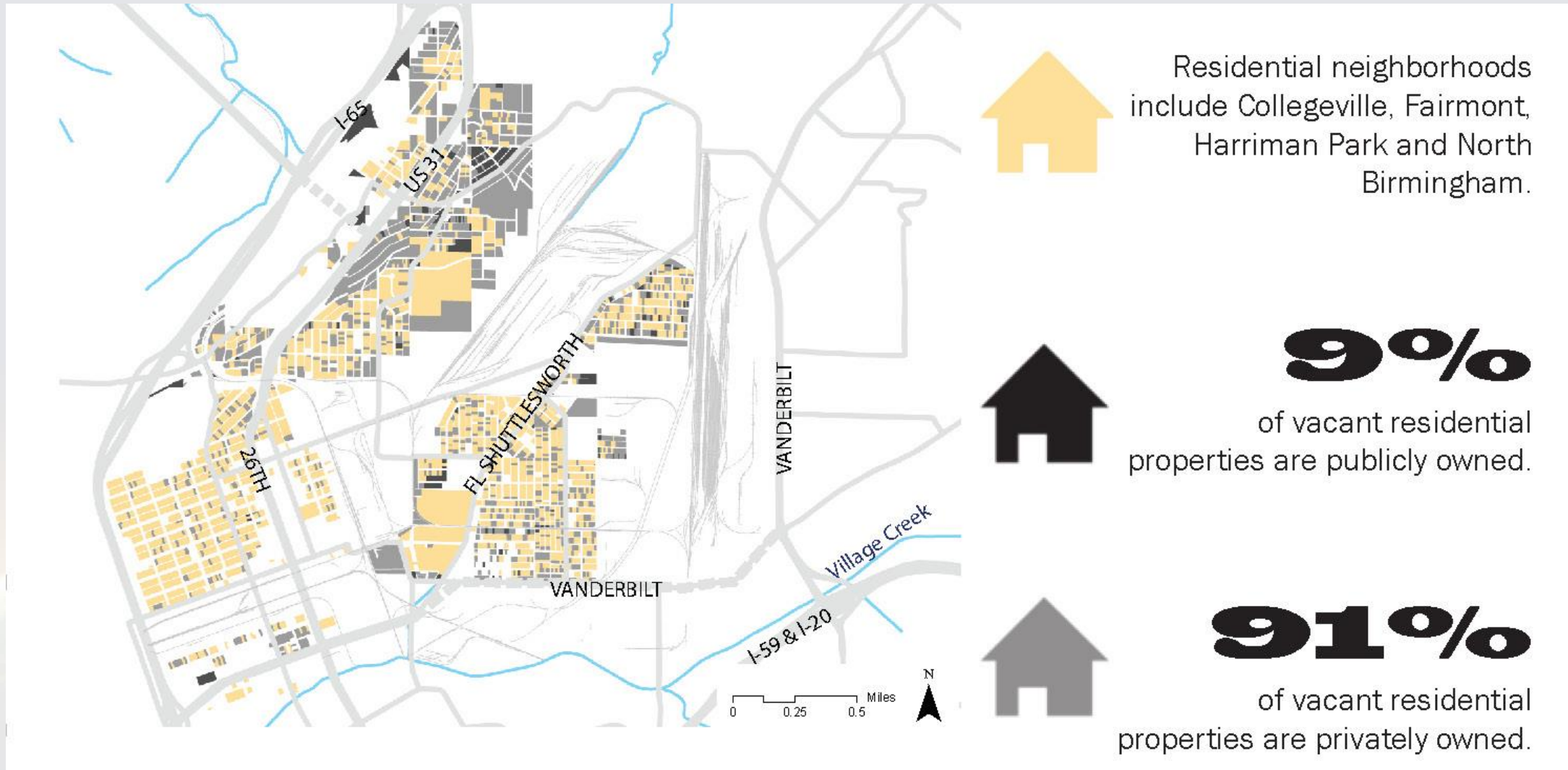
# Community-Driven Vision and Goals

*“It is our vision that Northern Birmingham neighborhoods will be vibrant, healthy communities celebrated for their role as cultural and economic touchstones for the City of Birmingham’s Civil Rights movement and industrial heritage.*

*Together the neighborhoods prosper by supporting jobs, affordable housing and retail options and foster community well-being with access to comprehensive wellness amenities, health services, and a safe and clean environment.”*



# Assessing Existing Conditions



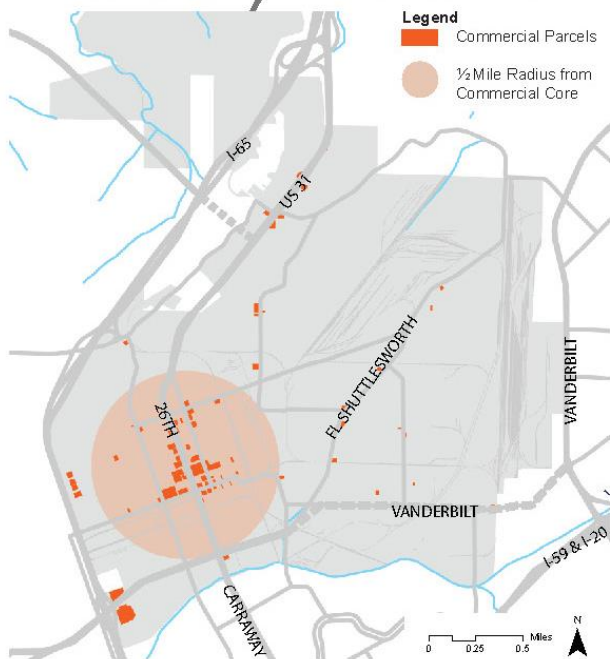


# Assessing Existing Conditions



*Northern Birmingham will have vibrant commercial areas that provide for the daily needs of the community! We are open for business!*

## Food, Fuel and Retail



The existing commercial district in North Birmingham has the space and infrastructure to offer an expanded range of goods and services that meet the daily needs of the community.

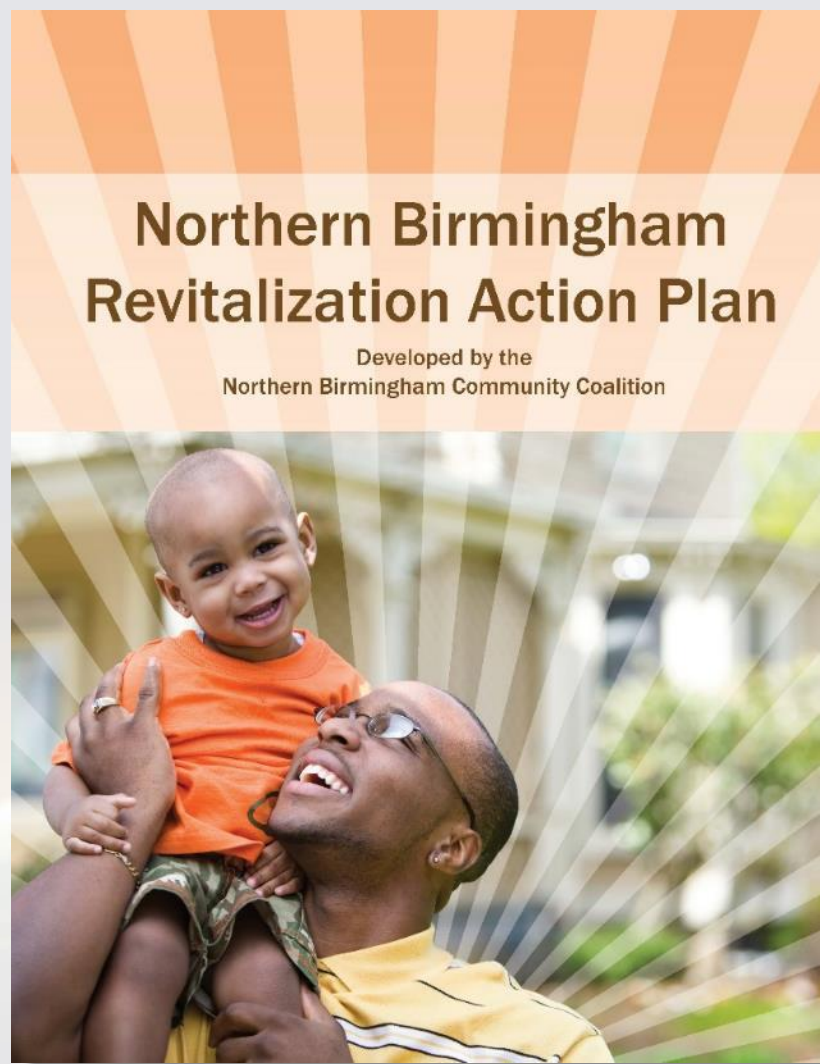


Gas stations could be better distributed throughout the neighborhoods and could provide clean fuel alternatives for private and commercial vehicles to reduce air pollution.



Expanding healthy, affordable food options could be accomplished by working with existing store owners to expand their selection and by attracting a new full-service grocery.

# Moving to Action!



## Commercial Action Plan

### Goals

Improve access to neighborhood-oriented amenities and increase job opportunities for Northern Birmingham residents through:

- FOOD: Increase access to grocery stores and healthy, affordable food.
- FUEL: Increase access to green fuel service stations.
- RETAIL: Increase access to neighborhood-oriented retail.

### Strategies

The Coalition has prioritized the following strategies to build partnerships for implementation.

- 1 Support efforts to attract neighborhood-oriented retail to the existing commercial core.
- 2 Identify and support job training opportunities within the community.
- 3 Pursue historic designation to honor the community's national contribution to Civil Rights movement.
- 4 Expand the Civil Rights trails and signage into the neighborhoods to celebrate the community's unique cultural heritage.
- 5 Encourage existing corner stores or grocers to improve their healthy food selection.
- 6 Connect small business entrepreneurs with capacity building resources.
- 7 Encourage local business and industry fleets to adopt clean fuels.
- 8 Encourage local service stations to add clean fuel options and additional green amenities.
- 9 Support entrepreneurial opportunities related to local food production, processing and distribution.

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## Early Commercial Wins

### Pursuing Historic Designation

In March 2014, Coalition members took brownfield developers on a community tour. During the dialogue, the developers identified the following strengths that the community could use to attract private investment: (1) Environmental cleanup efforts by the federal government give investors a high degree of certainty that a property does not have environmental roadblocks to development. (2) Historic designation can give the community a distinct identity and brand that attracts investors. As a result of these conversations, the Coalition has decided to pursue historic designation based on Northern Birmingham's significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement.

*"We need to partner with the City of Birmingham and REV Birmingham to bring investors to this area!"*  
Jimmy Coleman, North Birmingham business owner

*"[Investing in Northern Birmingham] helps strengthen the neighborhoods. Some of the businesses would probably hire neighborhood residents and boost the economy. More businesses equals more tax revenue."*  
Randolph Fowler, Community Relations and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, ACPPO

*"If you had one wish for something that could be better in this neighborhood, what would it be?"*  
"I would wish for the economy to change."  
"I would wish to have a flamboyant and clean neighborhood."  
"There could be better shops for people to go to."  
"Closer stores and indoor community centers."

**Student Voices**

Northern Birmingham Revitalization Action Plan | 21

# Early Wins!

- The Coalition partnered with Habitat for Humanity to **repair five Northern Birmingham homes** (2014).
- The Coalition partnered with the Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission and the City of Birmingham to **produce the *Northern Birmingham Community Framework Plan*** (2014-2015).
- The Coalition partnered with the Greater Birmingham Regional Planning Commission and the Georgia Institute of Technology to **produce the *North Birmingham Health Impact Assessment*** (2015).
- The Coalition partnered with GASP to **provide comments on two Title V Permits** to Jefferson County Department of Health for the ABC Coke and Walter Coke plants.
- The Coalition is partnering with UAB to **document health disparities in Northern Birmingham** (2016).
- The Coalition is partnering with Lawson State and EPA to **operate an environmental job training program** for residents living in areas impacted by contaminated lands (2016).

