

# OLD FOURTH WARD MASTER PLAN

Atlanta, Georgia



Just one mile east of Downtown lies Atlanta's Old Fourth Ward. Home to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. birthplace, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and the Sweet Auburn District, this diverse neighborhood is rich in history and pride. However, like many urban neighborhoods, the Old Fourth Ward fell on hard times in the decades following the 1960s as middle class residents of all races left for the suburbs, taking needed jobs and businesses with them. More recently, the neighborhood's proximity to Downtown and a renewed interest in urban living has raised concerns of displacement of long-term residents by wealthier newcomers.

Given a clear goal of creating a plan to encourage growth without displacing residents, TSW was retained by the City of Atlanta and the neighborhood's city councilman to prepare a 25-year framework for change. Through a neighborhood-based effort that included interviews, public meetings, workshops, and focus groups from October 2007 through August 2008, TSW provided the neighborhood and the City of Atlanta with the tools necessary to define its future on the neighborhood's terms.

Plan recommendations are based on a guiding principle of sustainability, which includes environmental, social, and economic components. These will ensure that the plan benefits existing and new residents, businesses, and the earth. They will allow the Old Fourth Ward to become a model of true sustainability for Atlanta and the nation.

The ability to be implemented is central to the master plan. It includes both policies and projects in the areas of economic development, housing, transportation, land use, historic preservation, education, parks, urban design, and infrastructure. For each project, costs, funding strategies, and responsible parties are identified.

Recommendations include \$29 million in transportation investment, with a focus on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit projects that balance the needs of the neighborhood, particularly children, with those of commuters. Sixty-five acres of new greenspace are identified, ranging from community gardens to large parks. Catalytic development sites are also defined, and include senior, affordable, and market-rate options. Most importantly, opportunities to fund these and other projects are detailed, including the creation of a community improvement district, the use of federal grants, and incentive-based zoning.



*top right:* Map showing the neighborhood land use vision  
*middle right:* Proposed Boulevard streetscape  
*bottom right:* Rendering showing Boulevard after proposed streetscape  
*left:* Neighborhood stakeholders used blocks at the community workshop to discuss future building scale

