

# Finding The Flint

Reducing Runoff in Agritopia



**ULI MTAP**

**Sara Haas, Thomas Calloway, Cory Mosser, Tyler Gaines, Robyn Zurfluh**

# Project Goal

- To assess the potential of district level coordination in the agricultural/industrial geography around the State Farmers Market, with the goal of mitigating storm water impacts on the Flint River watershed.
- To understand the impact of stormwater within the State Farmers Market geography, and how that knowledge might drive conservation efforts within the district.

# Team

**Robyn Zurfluh** is a partner, principal and architect at Smith Dalia Architects. For more than 20 years, Robyn has partnered with commercial, civic and non-profit clients during the development, design and construction of their built projects. Her work has ranged from minor local renovations to leadership on National Park masterplans. Robyn provides expert guidance throughout the design process including and especially during early problem solving, programming and project conception phases of real estate development. Her adept leadership and personable team management style are assets for all project types, and under her leadership, Robyn's teams have produced award winning and place-oriented public and institutional buildings, non-profit campuses and affordable housing developments throughout Atlanta and the southeast.



**Tyler Gaines** is Vice President of Development at Pollack Shores Real Estate Group. Since arriving in 2013, he has successfully entitled, closed and developed numerous projects in major Southeastern markets such as Atlanta, Charlotte and Nashville. Tyler leads land acquisition and development of projects in the Atlanta area. Tyler holds a civil engineering degree from Georgia Tech. He is actively involved in the community and enjoys spending time with his friends and family, his wife Whitney and their three children, Adley, Reed and Claire.



**Cory Mosser** is the founder of Natural Born Tillers, a commercial edible landscape company. Natural Born Tillers seeks to bring together farmers, investors and entrepreneurs to establish new models of development and food experience. Cory's background includes over a decade managing organic farms throughout Georgia. Cory specializes in creating and programming edible spaces for developments and commercial businesses.





# Team

**Sara Haas** is a Director with Enterprise Community Partners Southeast. She leads Enterprise's Affordable Housing Preservation work in Atlanta and Miami, develops affordable housing capacity building programming, and supports the investment of capital into the Southeast market. Prior to joining Enterprise, Ms. Haas developed and managed national AmeriCorps VISTA programs focused on affordable housing and community development at Habitat for Humanity International and Points of Light. Ms. Haas graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology School of City and Regional Planning with a Masters of City and Regional Planning, and received a Bachelors of Business Administration from the Emory University Goizueta Business School.

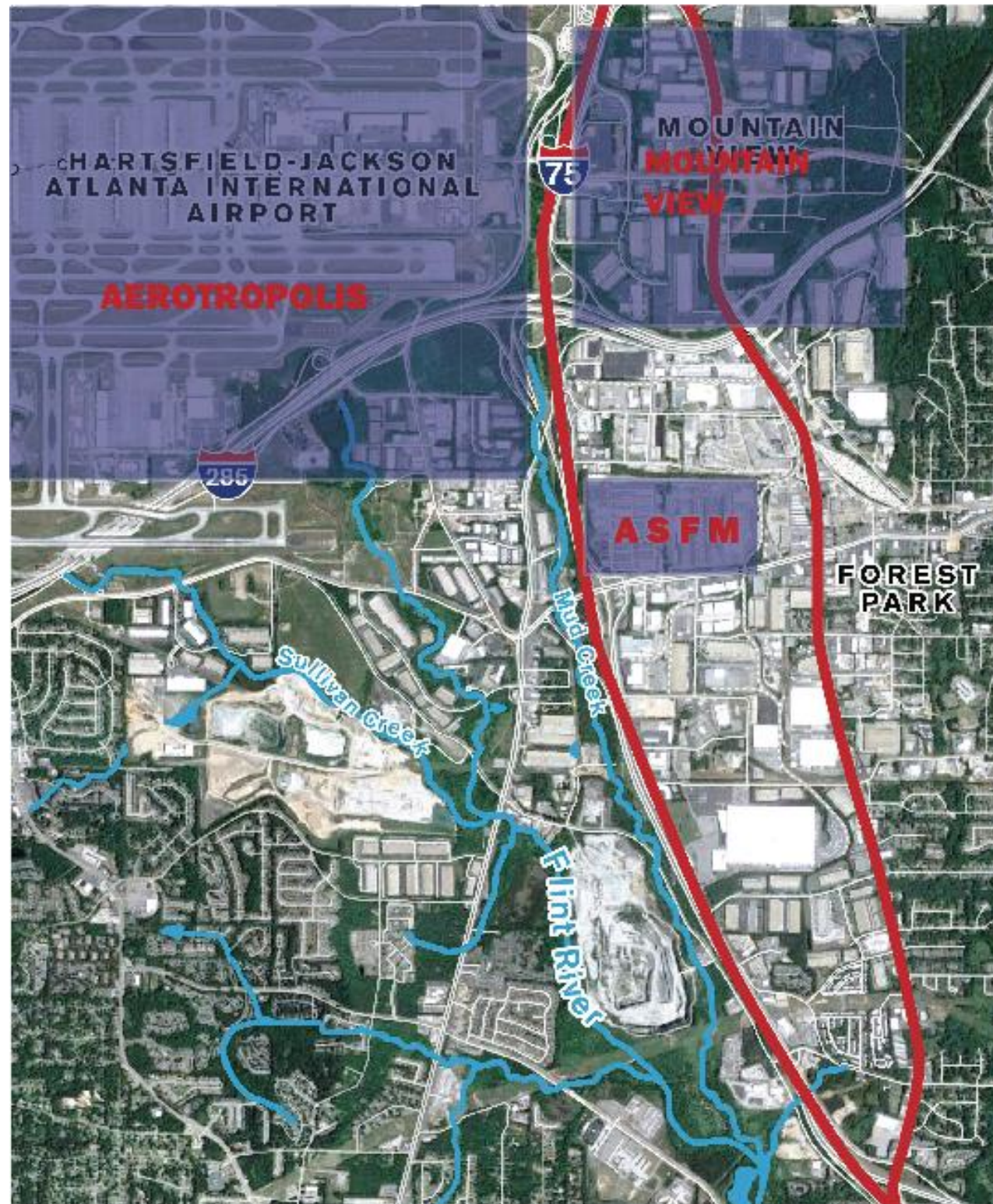


**Thomas Calloway** is an Atlanta area native born in the city but grew up in the northern suburbs. Happily moved back inside the perimeter in 1996 to attend GA Tech and has been living in town ever since. He owns and operates a small residential construction company, and lives with his wonderful wife Kim and their stupendous cat Mr. Wendell Winkles in East Point GA where he currently serves as a city council member.





# Site Analysis



# Site Analysis

- Target Area is appx. 1204 acres of which the vast majority (over 60%) is impermeable.
- Result is around 5 million cubic yards of runoff in an average year, last year was closer to 7.3 million cubic yards (assuming a 65% runoff rate).
- 158 individual properties: 26 properties (17% by parcel) are 10 acres or greater. The largest 26 properties represent 718 acres of 1204 total acres (60% of the acreage).
- Large Property Owners include Georgia Power, Clorox, JC Penney and Rex-am.

# Site Analysis

- The vast majority of the area is used as manufacturing facilities or as logistics/freight uses.
- Low redevelopment incentive- Low margin, storage dependent businesses with low overhead costs.
- Access to the interstate and Airport are main factors for driving industrial use.
- Market Rates are in the middle of the overall Industrial Market in the Atlanta Area. Fulton Industrial is priced lower Northern Suburbs are priced higher.



# Stormwater Impact

- Significant Rainfall events have led to flooding of Upper Riverdale Road which isolates Southern Regional Hospital from the surrounding community.
- The Flint River is a vital source of irrigation for Georgia's agricultural community, the state has a vested interest in maintaining water quality and flow.
- Flint River provides 6% of Atlanta's drinking water (south metro residents).
- Future climate modeling suggests less frequent, but more intense precipitation events, increasing the importance of stormwater management strategies.



## WEATHER

### **Couple can't get to hospital because of flooding**

Buses and cars were unable to make it through heavy flooding Thursday night.

Author: Tim Darnell  
Published: 10:59 PM EDT August 2, 2018  
Updated: 11:42 PM EDT August 2, 2018

ATLANTA -- A Clayton County couple was unable to get to a local hospital late Thursday night because of flooding.

Elliott Westmoreland told 11Alive's Ryan Kruger his wife was going into diabetic shock and needed medical attention at Southern Regional Hospital.

The couple was unable to travel in their car over local roads because of flooding, so instead got on a bus, which also was unable to make it to the hospital.



# State Farmers Market Site

- 147 Acres State Owned. 2018 annual profits of \$3.3 million.
- Undergoing \$10 million in renovation- \$5 million for new roofs
- 4 acre site redevelopment 70,000 sq ft of refrigerated space
- Completely exempt from stormwater improvements, issuing runoff directly into Mud Creek
- Serves as a central hub for most surrounding businesses



# Area Stakeholders

- Local Business Owners
- State Dept of Ag
- Citizens
- Clayton County
- EPD
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Finding the Flint and Area Partners





# State Farmers Market Study

The committee held four public meetings with testimony from: Commissioner and representatives from GA Dept. of Agriculture, Other state agencies GDOT, economic development, audits and accounting, CID's, industry groups, community groups, local universities.

Currently there are competing desires for the future of the market:

- There is an increasingly long list of tenants wanting additional cold storage. The Department of Agriculture is working to accommodate those tenants with the construction of four additional cold storage facilities at a cost of \$2.4 million, with more tenants still on the wait list.
- Local residents, municipalities and county organizations such as the Clayton County Visitor Bureau have expressed their desire for a revitalized retail location on or near the existing market.



*House of Representatives  
Study Committee on the Revitalization of the  
Atlanta State Farmers Market*

## **Final Report**

**Chairman Valencia Stovall**  
Representative, 74<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Debbie Buckner**  
Representative, 137<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Robert Dickey**  
Representative, 140<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Penny Houston**  
Representative, 170<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Tom McCall**  
Representative, 33<sup>rd</sup> District

**The Honorable Scot Turner**  
Representative, 21<sup>st</sup> District

**The Honorable Sam Watson**  
Representative, 172<sup>nd</sup> District

**Ms. Bonnie Wilson**  
Southerland Food Service

**Mr. Don Barnett**  
Market Grocery

**November 1, 2018**



# State Farmers Market Study

## Committee Recommendations

- **Allow the Georgia State Farmers Markets to Keep Earned Revenue**

Current revenues in excess of operating costs go back to the general fund of the state. The study committee recommended using a portion of those funds for maintenance and redevelopment of the Market.

- **Create a second campus for the Atlanta State Farmers Market**

The committee would like a second area with climate controlled retail building and area for educational programs run by Georgia Dept. of Agriculture and “Georgia Grown” business. The space can be on the current site or nearby.

- **Rework Traffic Flow**

Rework traffic and infrastructure to be pedestrian friendly, safer, and reduce interaction between large trucks and retail customers.

- **Add On-site Security**

With safety in mind, the committee recommends the addition of full-time security to the market

- **Create Public-Private Partnerships**

In creating a public-private partnership, the community can work with the Georgia Department of Agriculture on projects outside of the state budget.

# Property Owner Assessment

## Broker Representation in the area:

- The majority of the square footage and acreage in the area are represented by 4 brokers
  - o Max Ellis – Colliers International – Industrial Associate
  - o Doug Smith – Seefried Industrial Properties – Senior Vice President
  - o Kent Walker – Selig Enterprises – Vice President
  - o Ray Stache – Cushman Wakefield – Senior Director

## Broker Interviews:

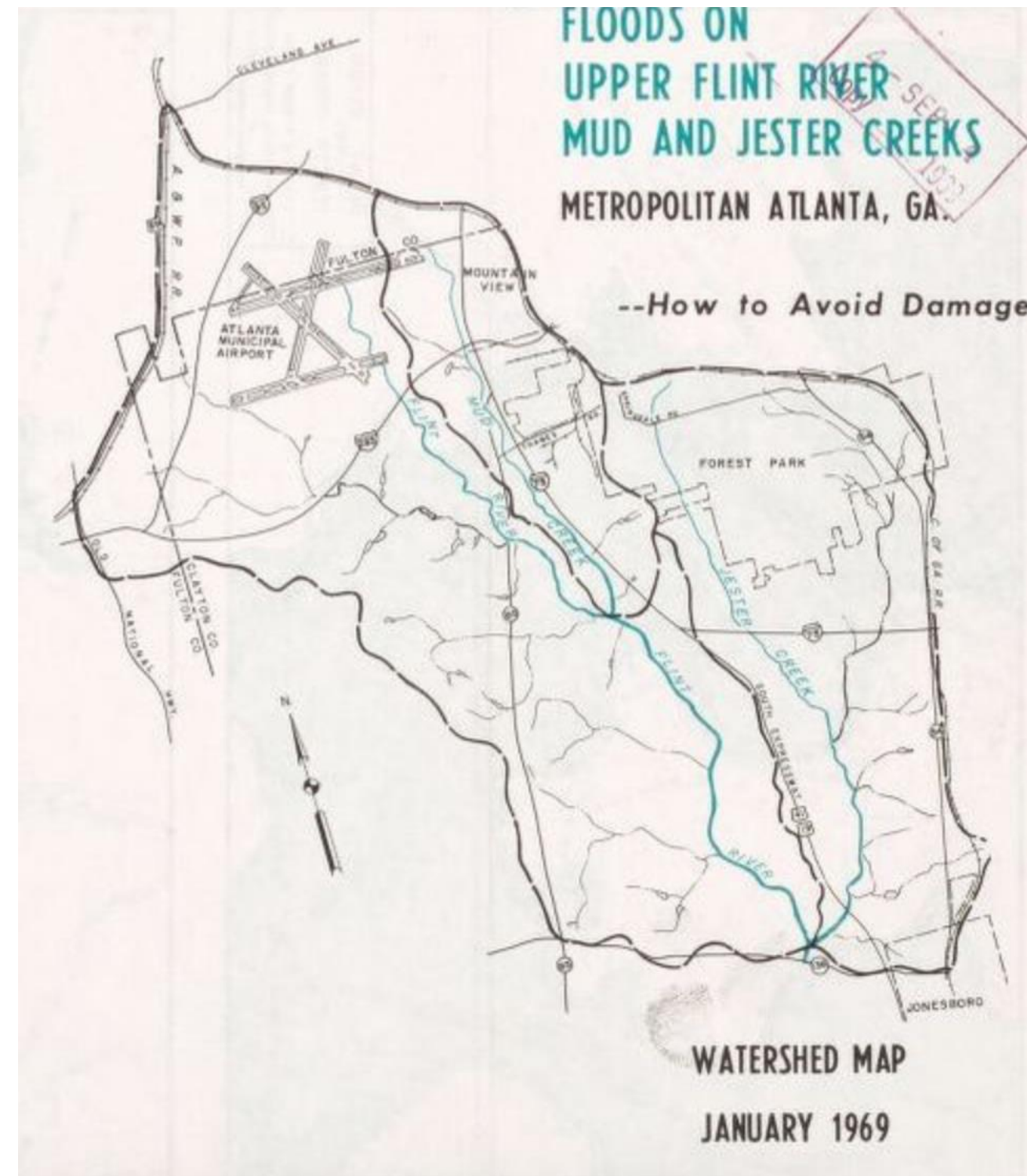
- All four of the above listed brokers were interviewed as a part of our market assessment.

## Finding the Flint Awareness:

- None of the brokers interviewed had heard of Finding the Flint
- None of the brokers interviewed knew there was a river in the area

## Potential Redevelopment or Additions:

- Redevelopment requiring a Land Disturbance Permit is required to update current properties to bring the properties in compliance with current Stormwater Regulations.
- All four brokers stated that improvements to the properties consisted of updating light fixtures and roofs which do not require a LDP.
- No brokers were aware of or could foresee a redevelopment of any of the properties that would require a Land Disturbance Permit.
- Brokers felt the current properties were operating as their Highest and Best Use.



# Property Owner Assessment

## Example Project:

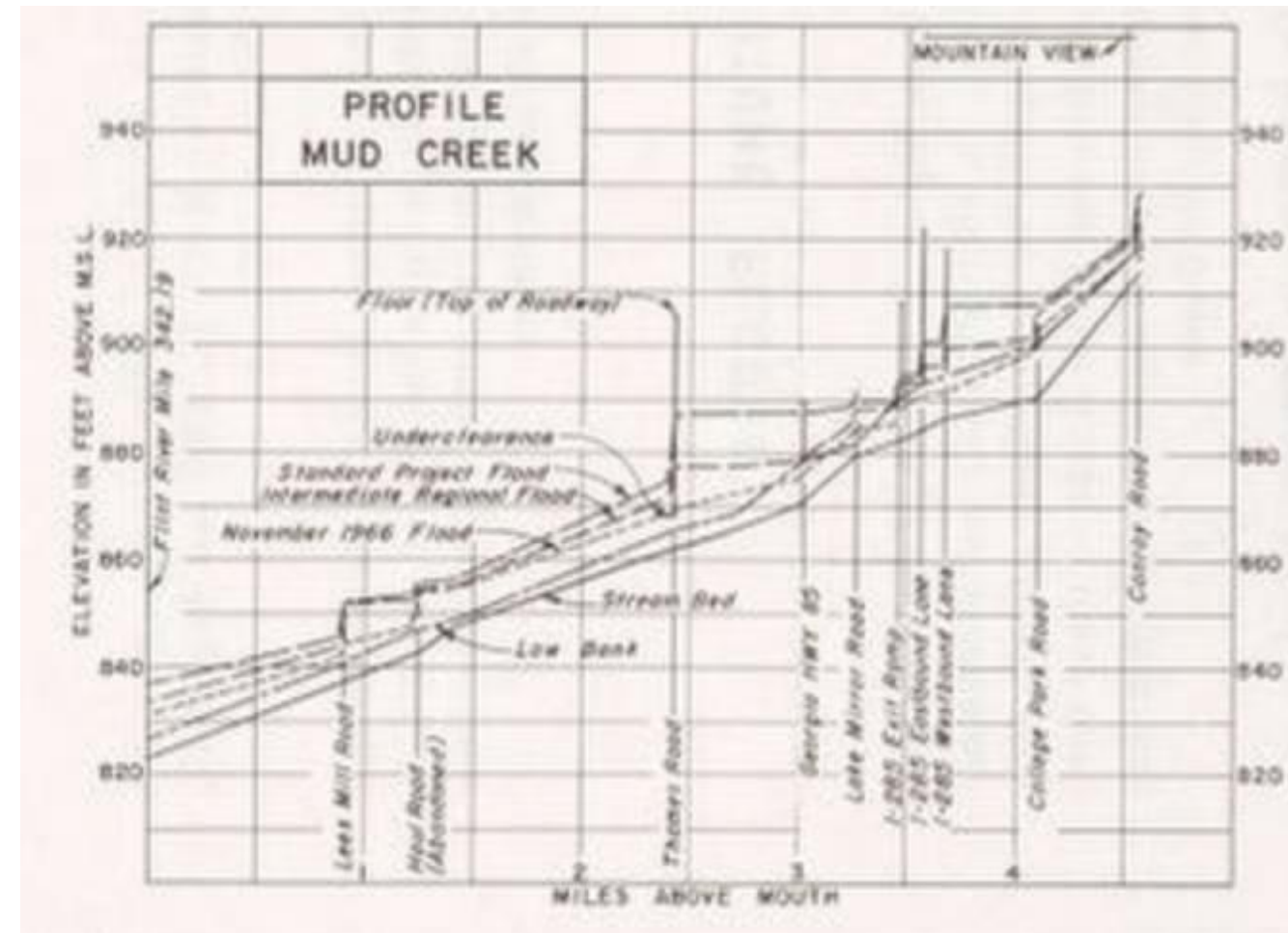
- Brokers interviewed asked if there was an example project of what Finding the Flint was trying to implement were available to review, so they could better understand what was involved with “green infrastructure.”
- There was some confusion as to specifically what a Finding the Flint development would look like. i.e. Detention Ponds, Trails, Green Roofs, etc.

## Available Land:

- In looking at the properties in the area we evaluated whether the properties had excess or undeveloped land where green infrastructure could be installed.
- The majority of the parcels were almost completely developed with little excess land.
- There is a large undeveloped piece of property adjacent to the Flint River that is owned by the Atlanta Airport.
- There is also a large quarry that is next the Flint River.

## Reasons for Joining or Creating a CID.

- The broker's interviewed thought the municipal needs of the area were being met and did not see a reason for property owners to join or create a CID.
- Traffic and access to the interstate and Airport were key factors for being in the area. These needs were adequately met.





# Industrial CID Example

## Fulton Industrial Boulevard Improvement District

Current Priorities: Public Safety (Motivating factor to start the CID), Infrastructure Improvement, Beautification Economic Development

Industrial Ownership: Significant Range in Ownership Type

Large national companies (UPS, Pepsi, Coke), REITs, Retirement Funds, Often tenants are not the owners.

Industrial Owners Motivation: Issues that impact their bottom line, Need to identify a local champion that can reach out to peers.

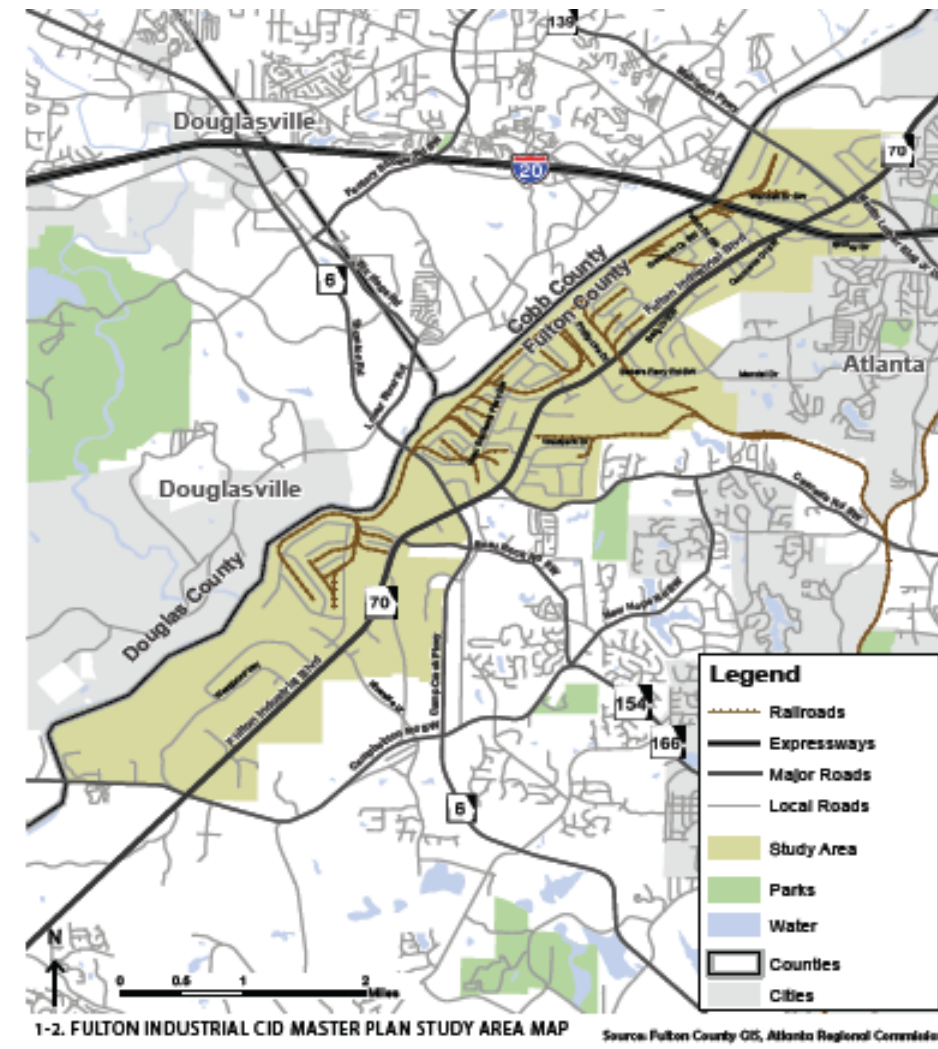
Opportunity for Alignment

The Chattahoochee River Greenway Study, administered by the Atlanta Regional Commission

- 10 Mile Stretch through the Fulton Industrial Boulevard Corridor
- Stormwater is not a priority, but may be a conversation
- Employee Retention is a priority – River is seen as a potential amenity

Fulton Industrial Master Plan identifies Protecting the Chattahoochee River and Encouraging Sustainability in their master plan

**Given the desire to maintain the industrial nature and competitiveness of the district, alongside a desire to protect the River and build it as an amenity, this may be a model to watch.**



# Local CID Opportunity

## Aerotropolis

Current Priorities: Economic Development, Public Safety, Infrastructure, Transportation Improvements, Beautification, Way Finding

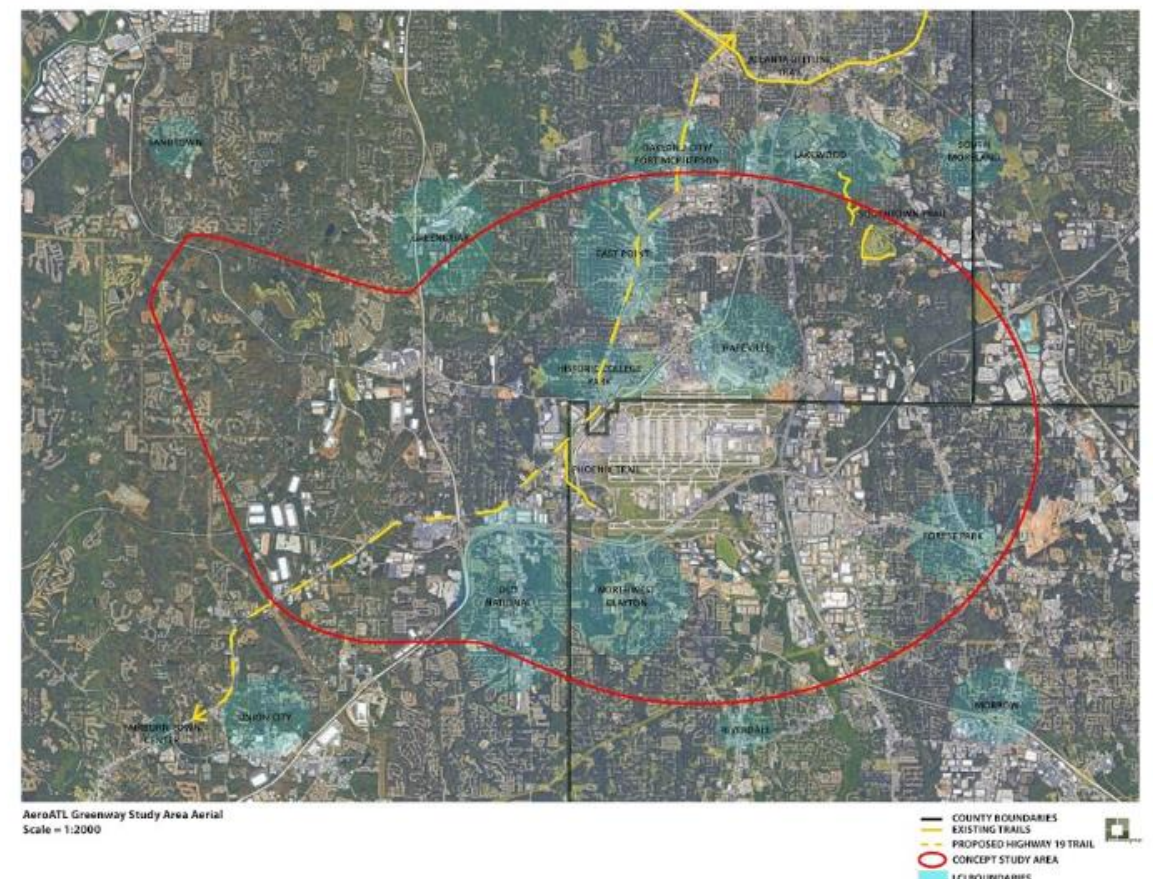
Industrial Ownership: National Companies, REITS; Owner is often not the tenant.

Industrial Owners Motivation: Property owners in the industrial area have few pain points, so will be difficult to incentivize them to join a CID. Leasing is strong, meaning that additional investment is not incentivized. Stormwater is not an impact driver currently

## Opportunity for Alignment

- Aerotropolis seeks to expand boundaries, including the Finding the Flint MTAP study area - Align property engagement efforts with Aerotropolis.
- Alignment with the AeroATL Greenway Plan- Clayton County's identified priority trail would follow the Flint headwaters.
- Identify property owners with environmental priorities, such as ProLogis.

AeroATL Greenway Study Area Map



# Additional Local CID Examples

## **Upper Westside**

This is an example of a former industrial area that is evolving into a Mixed-Use residential and entertainment district.

Priorities: Transportation challenges given the evolution of the district, Crime, Lack of Greenspace.

Roads were not designed to deal with stormwater, and now lack of drainage is significantly impacting the increased traffic in the area due to changing uses.

Plan to prioritize stormwater impacts in upcoming master plan efforts.

Value Proposition for an owner:

Unified voice of property owners who can leverage their private funds with significant public funds to address pain points.

## **South Fulton CID**

Priority: The catalyst to start this CID was one at-grade railroad crossing – trains blocked trucks for 30-45 minutes, directly impacting business bottom lines, and a few key owners wanted to solve it.

Transportation infrastructure is their priority.

Owner profiles: Industrial, Warehouse, Manufacturing, Fulfillment Centers.



# Additional Collaboratives

## Upper Flint River Working Group

- Seeks to address water availability, recreation, ecological function of the river, reduce flooding, and address instances of low-flow.
- Already has water utilities and staff of the Airport engaged.
  - Opportunity: Is the State engaged? Is there potential to get them involved, and then begin the conversation about the Farmer's market?
  - Opportunity:
    - Clayton County sources water from the Flint River; given the critical role the river plays in the County's sustainability, identify opportunities for the county to incent or compel changes to stormwater management practices in the industrial area impacting the river?
    - Have private property owners been invited to participate in any of the working group efforts?

## Savannah River Clean Water Fund

- Given that this is a largely rural, forested watershed, and thus has differing challenges to the Upper Flint, the most applicable solutions are around collaboration and funding:
  - To procure commitments for the \$1 Million annual investment from water users/beneficiaries, the Fund has partnered with a select group of major water utilities to ensure that sustainable funding stream.
  - Beaufort Jasper Water & Sewer Authority, City of Savannah, City of Augusta, North Augusta, S.C., & Columbia County, GA.
- How are the participating jurisdictions in the Upper Flint River Working Group and Finding the Flint participating through funding?
- This effort began with a multi-sector task force including the public sector, private sector, philanthropy, and residents.
  - Are the existing Finding the Flint and Upper Flint Working Groups inclusive of the State, Residents, and Private Businesses and Landowners?

# Current Regulatory Framework

- Clayton County provides stormwater management for the entire county (unincorporated Clayton County plus the “6-cities”) since only 2007. Clayton County mandates the Georgia EPD Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (without the Coastal Supplement). In Clayton County, the calculated improvements are based on a “forested” condition.
- To date, the county has been focused on maintenance and repair and has not undertaken system wide stormwater projects. There is localized flooding and occasional CSO overflow, but generally the stormwater system is functional. All stormwater flows east to west and through culverts under I-75 which discharge directly into Mud Creek (tributary to Flint River).
- New developments and substantial renovations (more than 5,000 s.f. of impervious area) are required to meet the state manual’s standards. New developments are very rare (one in the last 10 years that wasn’t airport related). Existing developments, generally, do not have any stormwater infrastructure on site.
- Fees support the county wide storm water utility. CCWA provides relief of up to 40% of stormwater fees to encourage individual developers to adhere to best practices. Although regulations incorporate manual due to the size of manual allows for vastly different interpretations and applications at the staff level
- Relative low cost of Storm water fees does not provide impetus for current mitigation. Residential properties pay \$3.75 per month. Commercial properties pay \$3.75 for every 2,950 s.f. of impervious surface. (or \$664/year for one acre of impervious surface) The Airport pays somewhere in the range of \$60-70k per month to Clayton County.

# Other Municipal Models

**Decatur, GA** has invested in a district-wide stormwater management plan with public input. The City of Decatur mandates the Georgia EPD Georgia Stormwater Management Manual together with its Coastal Supplement which requires enhanced infiltration at developed areas.

Their stormwater infrastructure is planned to manage the Right of Way (ROW) runoff from streets, sidewalks and city facilities as well as additional capacity to manage development. The system is municipal and is paid for with a combination of fees and taxes.

Developers can choose to “buy in” to this system (fees to the City) to manage volume and water quality of stormwater or can install stormwater infrastructure on their own sites.

**The City of Atlanta** has been investing significantly in stormwater (and sanitary) sewer infrastructure for many recent years as a result of a federal consent decree and annual fines resulting from sewage overflows and water pollution. The improvements are mandatory, and the city benefits from reduced fines.

The City has invested in large scale stormwater innovations like the Old 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Park detention system (utilizing detention areas as a public amenity), the Bellwood Quarry water storage and management system (Nancy Creek basin) as well as smaller scale interventions like porous street paving in the Southwest Basin.

These interventions are for the benefit of the City of Atlanta to manage their ROW runoff and mitigate flooding. Local developments must manage stormwater independently for their stormwater. The City of Atlanta mandates the Georgia EPD Georgia Stormwater Management Manual together with its Coastal Supplement which requires enhanced infiltration at developed areas.

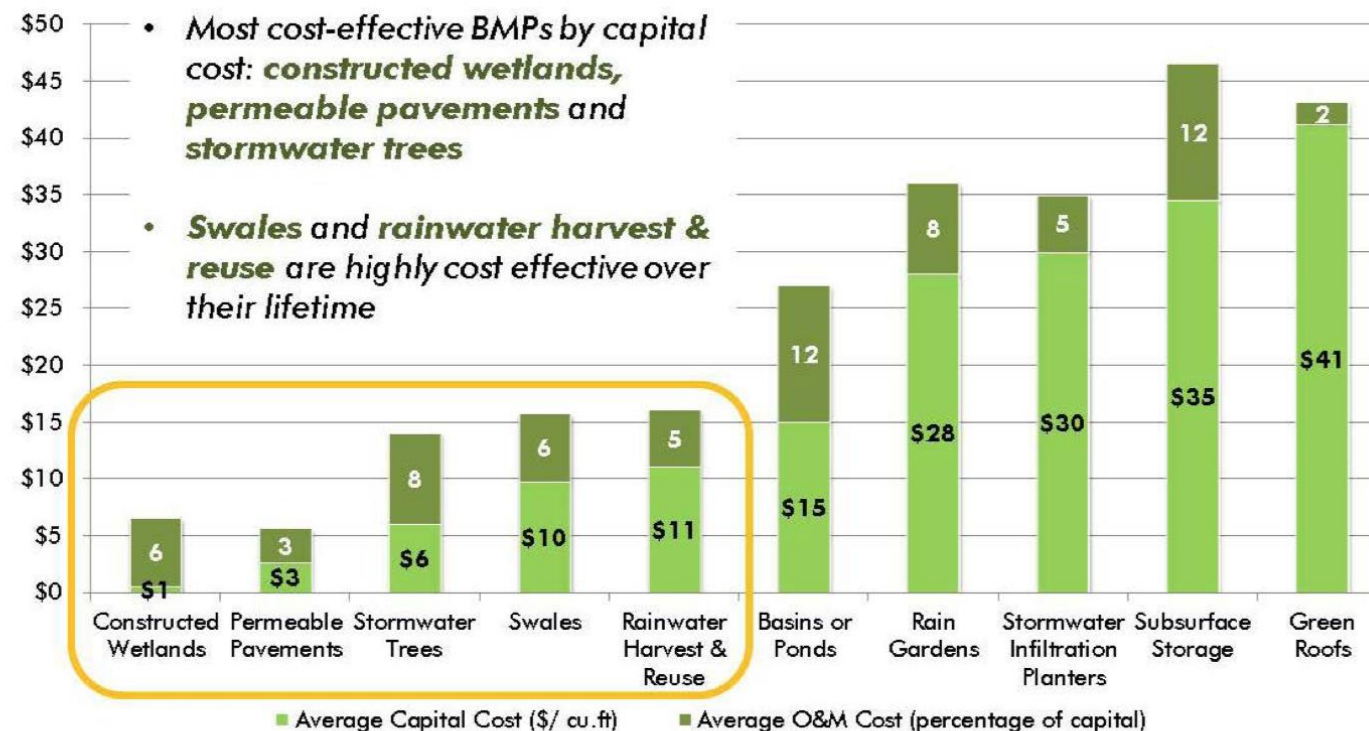
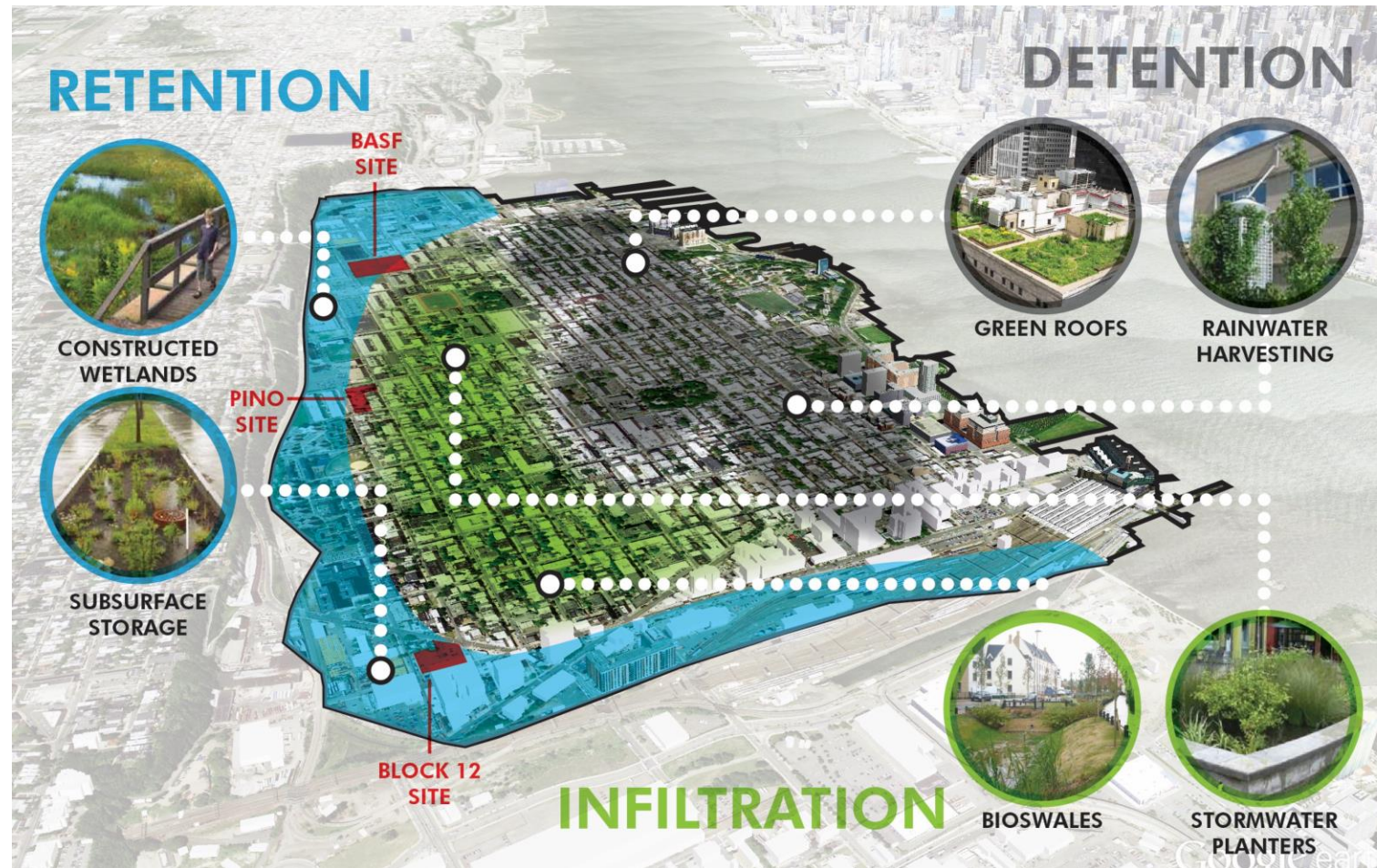


# Regulatory and District Solutions

## **Project Ideas:**

- Adopt the Coastal Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Manual
- Create MOU with State Dept of Agriculture re: stormwater management at ASFM and other state owned properties in the area.
- Create MOU with Airport construction within the Flint River Basin. Districtwide Stormwater management opportunities
- Frontage Road Infiltration trench (full dimension north/south along I-85 from Forest Parkway to Tara Blvd.
- Demonstration stormwater management installation (location t.b.d. may include state owned properties central to study area). Potentially in partnership with Dept. of Agriculture as a component of “Georgia Grown” support of downstream farmers.
- District Wide stormwater detention structure or public amenity (location t.b.d may include privately owned property targeted for stormwater installation project). Community amenity or underground detention to capture runoff for significant area within the study area.
- District Wide street improvements (utilizing porous pavers) for capturing and managing ROW runoff and possibly additional development runoff (locations t.b.d., can be implemented on any North/South roadway).

# Green Infrastructure Toolkit



BMPs Cost Effectiveness per cubic foot of implementation



# Green Infrastructure in Action

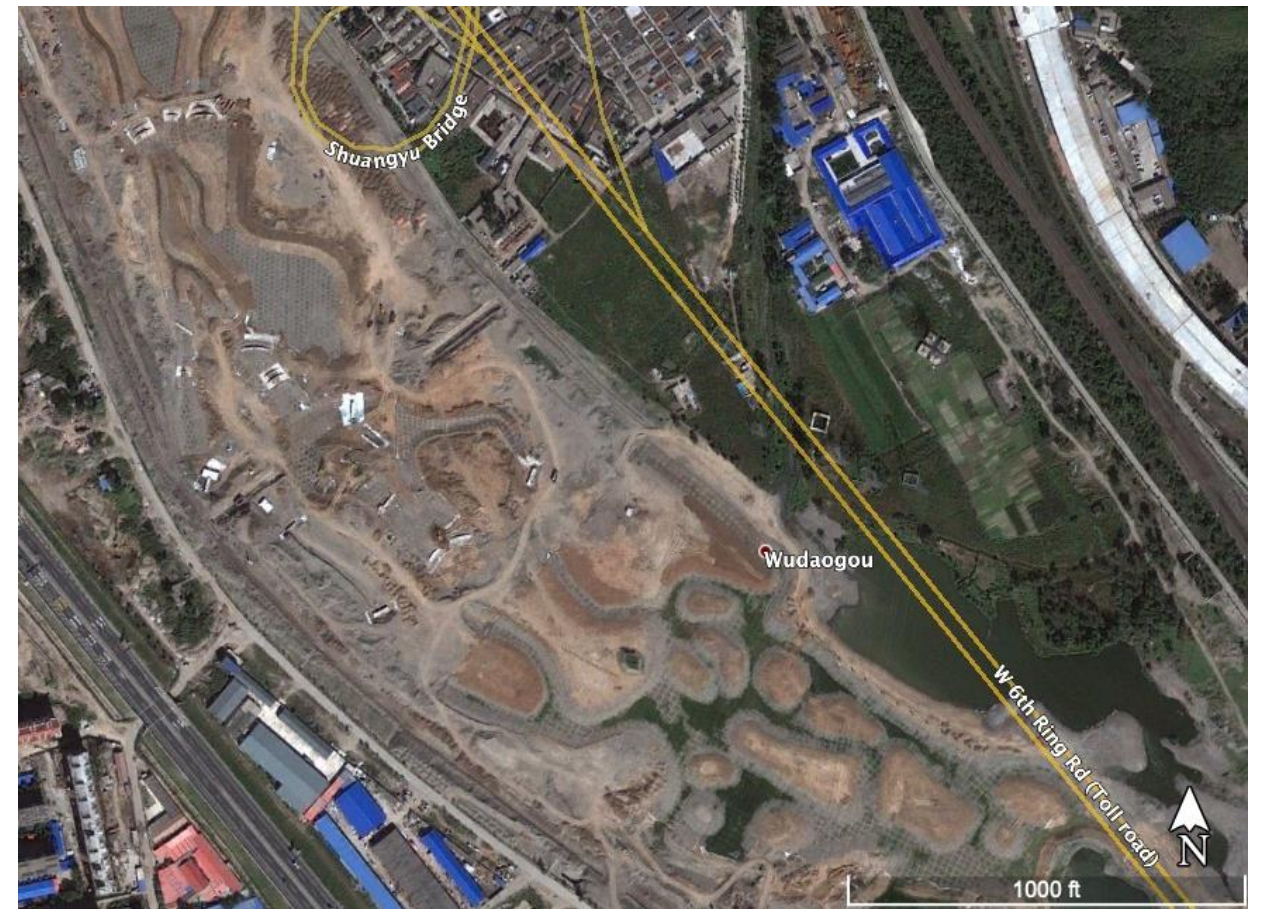


## UTEP's Campus Transformation Project

- 12 acres, \$15 Million
- Increased Vegetation on site by 60%
- Site can absorb rainfall in excess of 75,000 cubic feet in a 24 period.



# Green Infrastructure in Action



## China's Yongding River Eco Development Zone

- 22,000 acres, \$2.5 Billion
- Created 6 lakes and 2 wetlands over 100 miles of dry river beds and landfill.
- Site recovers around 100 million cubic yards of groundwater per year.



# Green Infrastructure in Action

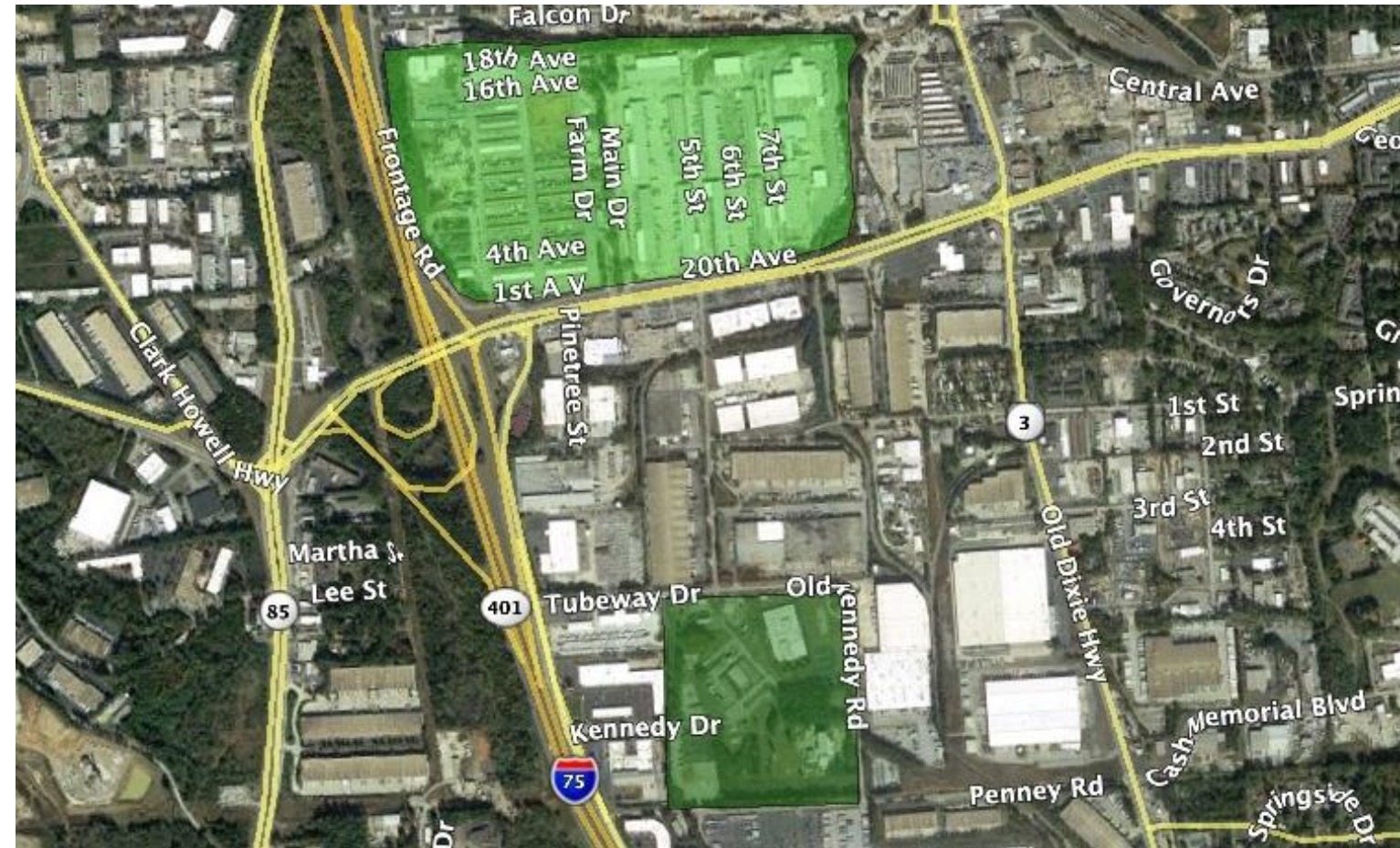




# State Catalyst/Agritopia

## State Regents/GA HWY Dept Site

- 47 acres
- Least developed site in study area.
- State Owned, public funds could be available.
- Terrain would allow a catchment basin for a majority of site.





# State Catalyst/Agritopia





# State Catalyst/Agritopia



# Takeaways

- Regional planning at and around the airport is active and ongoing. District planning at the incorporated Cities is active and ongoing.
- Principal goals of CID master plans center around economic development and transportation improvements. Stormwater management is not addressed specifically.
- There were not obvious drivers for property owners to get involved in a CID. Improving properties to meet the current Stormwater Regulations through redevelopment does not seem likely in the near term.
- Having an example project designed and budgeted would be helpful to relay what Finding the Flint cooperation would look like for their property owners.
- A mix of public/private partnerships, State Funding from the Farmers Market, MOU's for state and airport development and regulatory reform could increase interest in redevelopment that leverages green infrastructure.
- There is some potential opportunity for smaller green infrastructure on excess land of existing Industrial parcels. There is also the potential look at large scale green infrastructure on State owned land utilizing other state projects as inspiration.