# “To begin with words and end up with images was a gift.”

Virtual advocate design at Durham, North Carolina

Charleston “Dong-Jae” Yi & Yanhua Lu
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LED2LEAP
LearningEmpowermentAgencyPartnership

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Design

*image source:* Print of George Wall by North Carolina artist Garry Atkinson

Walltown park, looking Northgate.

Northgate site pre-construction, 1959.

Daylighted creek in Walltown Park.

Northgate after the mall closed, 2020.

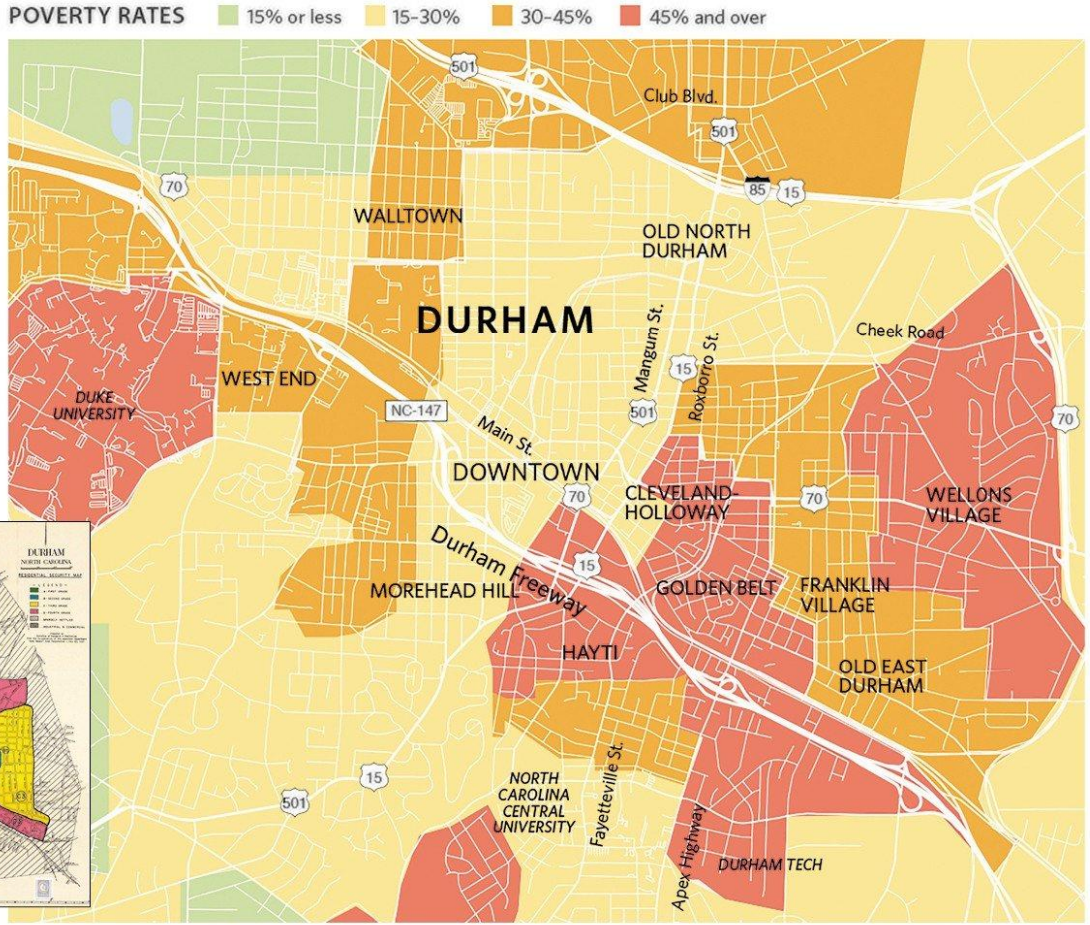
2018; Private developer bought the site.
2020; Redevelopment started.

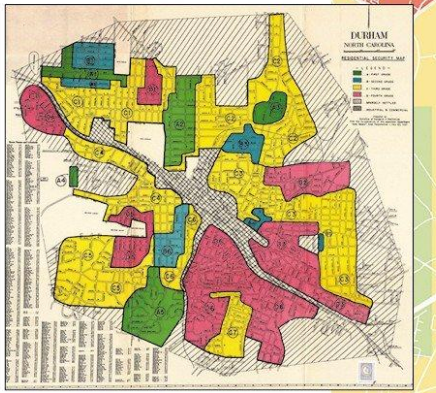
**Good News? or Bad News?**

Mr. Wall’s house and its across-the street neighbor, 2021.

# POVERTY IN THE BULL CITY

The map on the right shows the poverty rate by census tract, using data from the 2015 American Community Survey's five-year estimates. (One note: the area around Duke University shows high poverty because its residents are largely students with low or no incomes.) Below is the 1937 redlining map from the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, showing in red the African-American neighborhoods where banks refused to lend money. Some redlined neighborhoods still struggle with high poverty and low homeownership rates today.




COURTESY N.C. STATE ARCHIVES

© 2017 MAPS FOR NEWS, HERE

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU. GRAPHIC BY SHAN STUMPF

*image source:* https://indyweek.com/news/archives/housing-inequality-exhibit-opens-friday/

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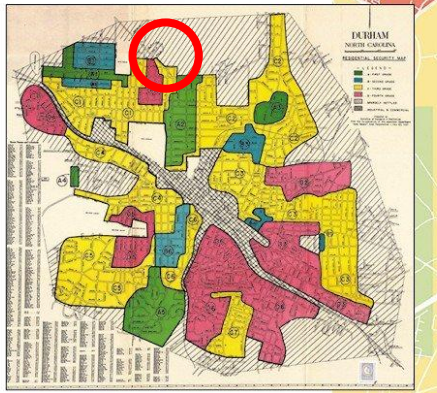


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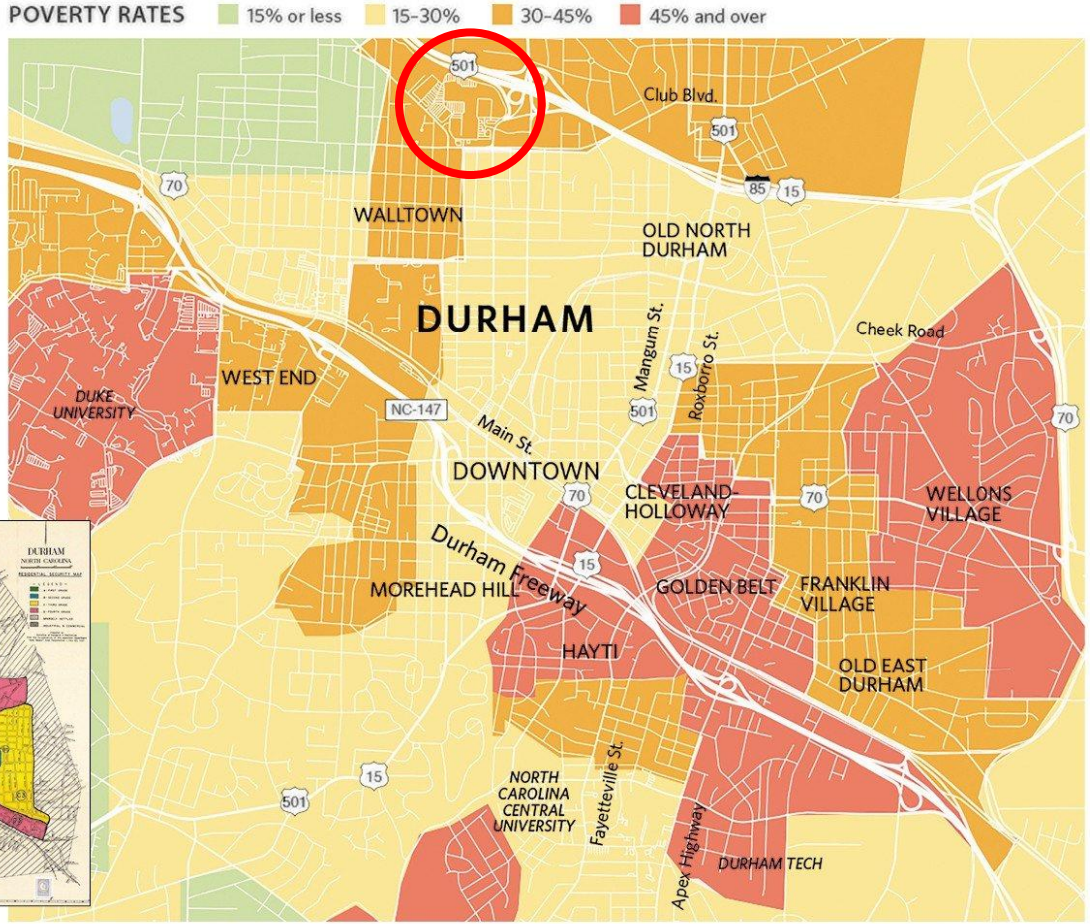


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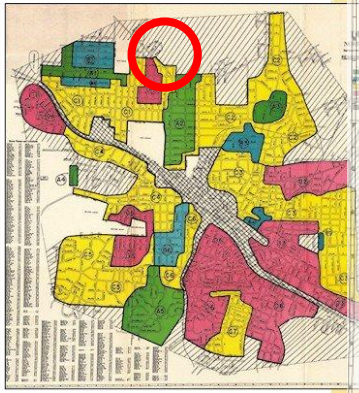

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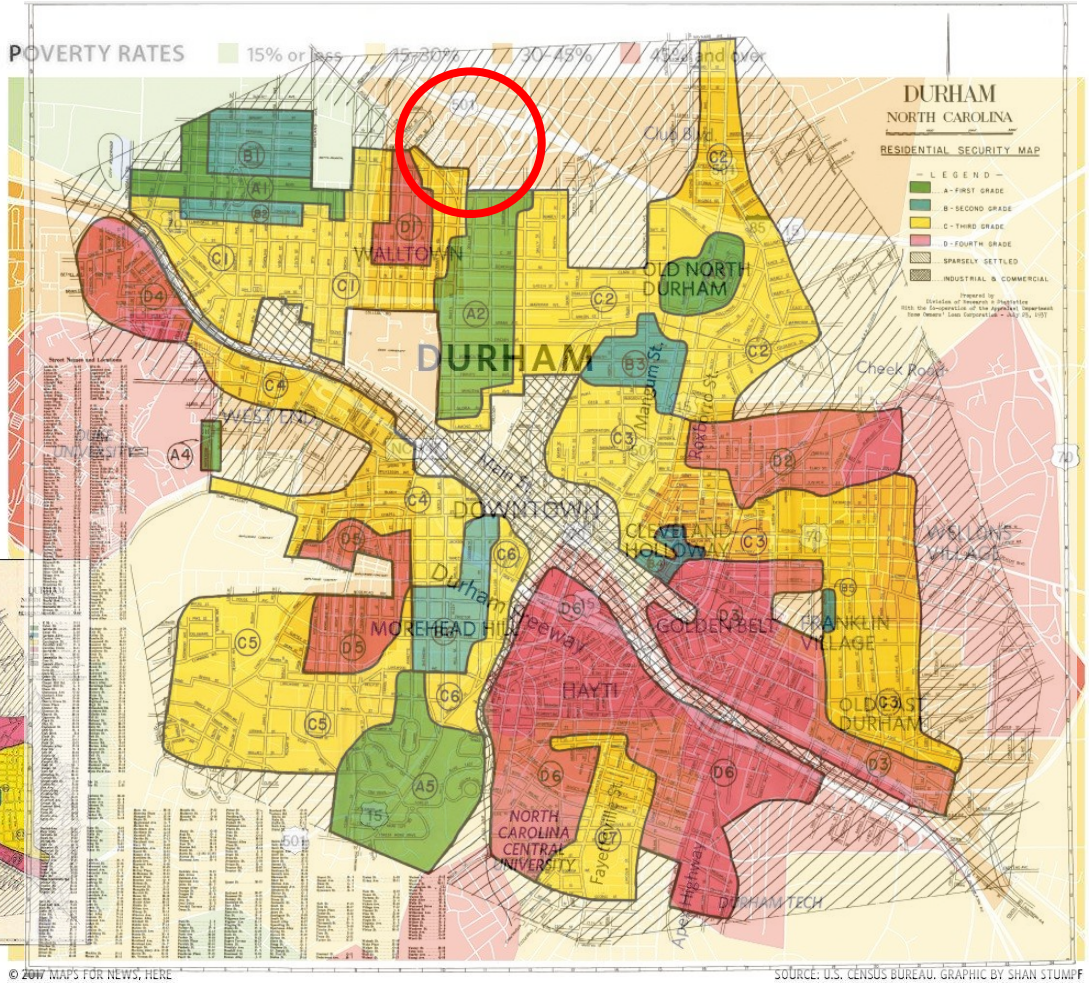


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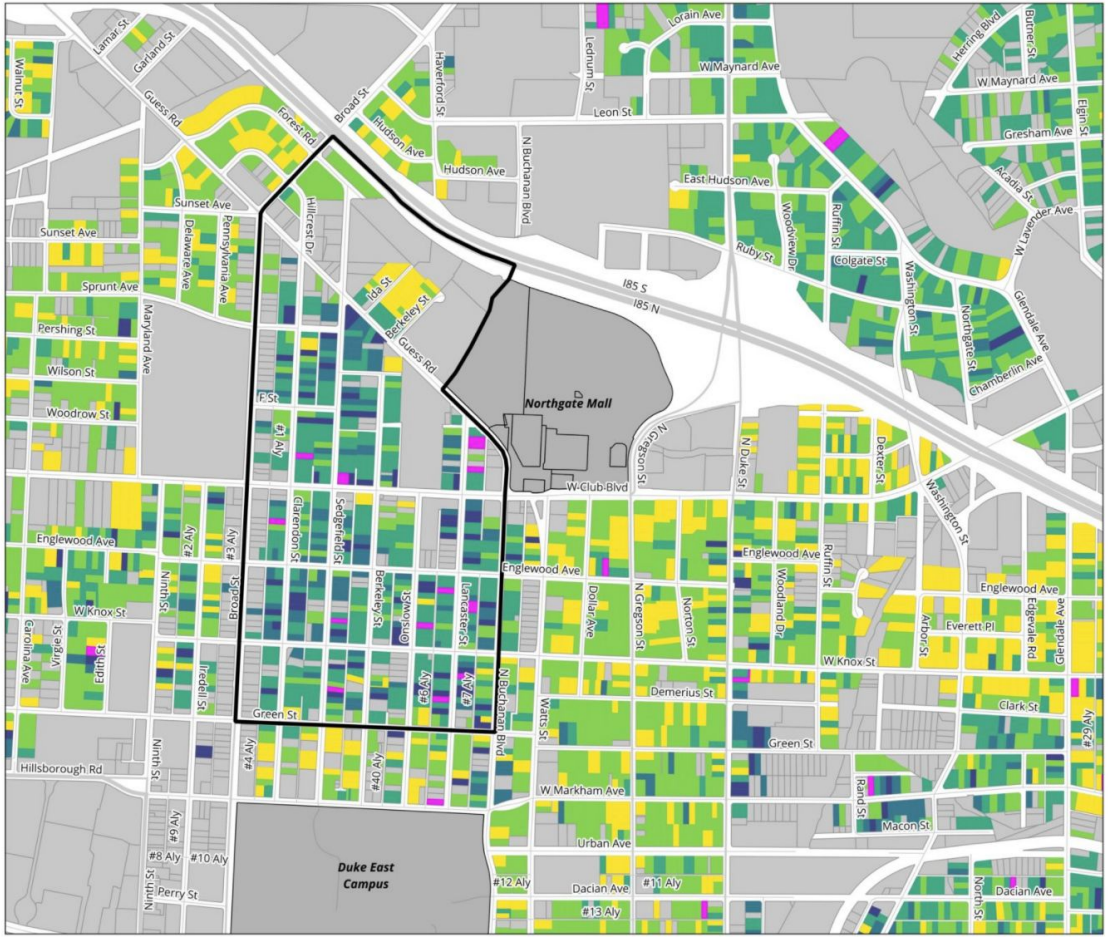
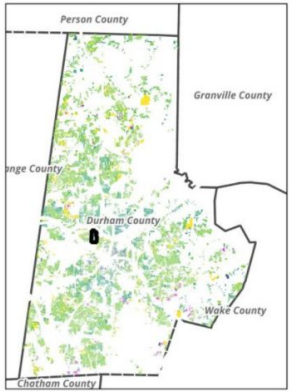



# Walltown: Residential Property Value Change 2017-2019



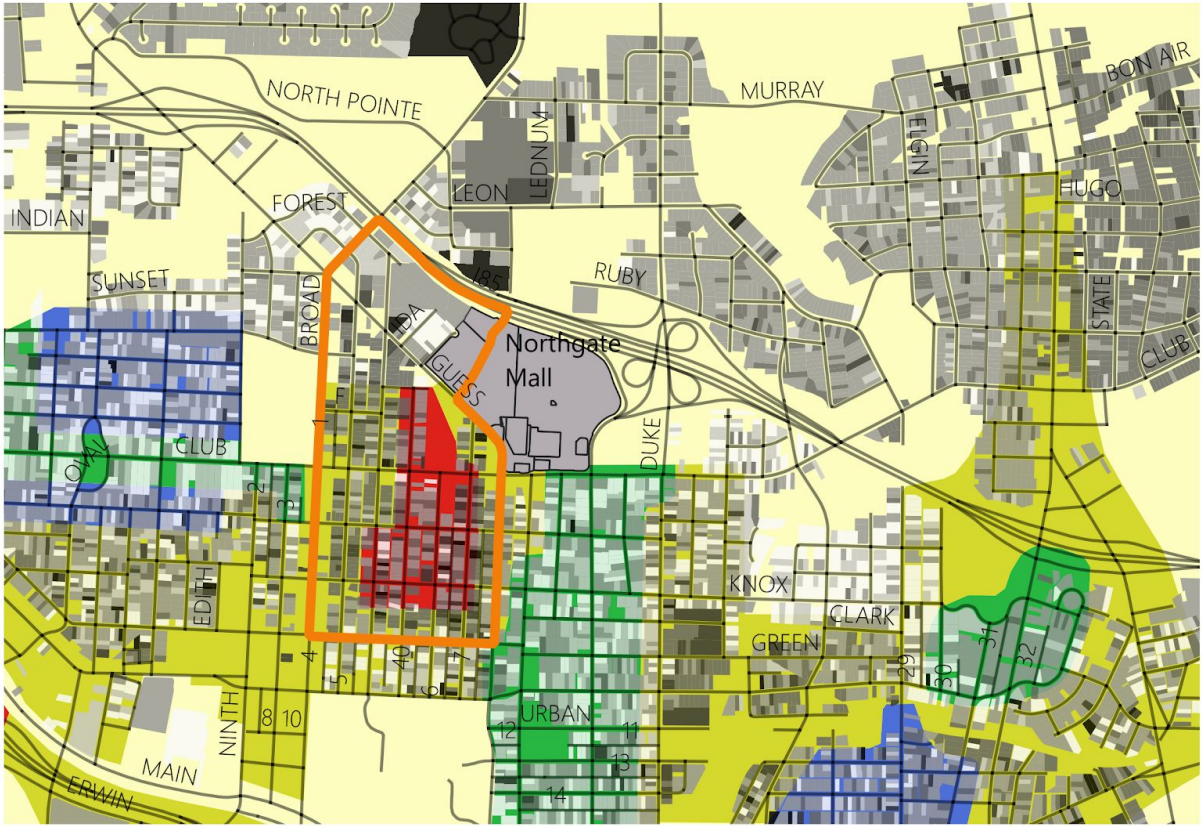

Walltown Census blockgroups

**Residential property value change (2017-2019)**

- - 100 to 0%
- 0 to + 33%
- + 33 to 66%
- + 66 to 100%
- + 100 to 300%
- + 300 to 896%

Source: Durham County Tax Administration (2019); DataWorks NC.

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 miles



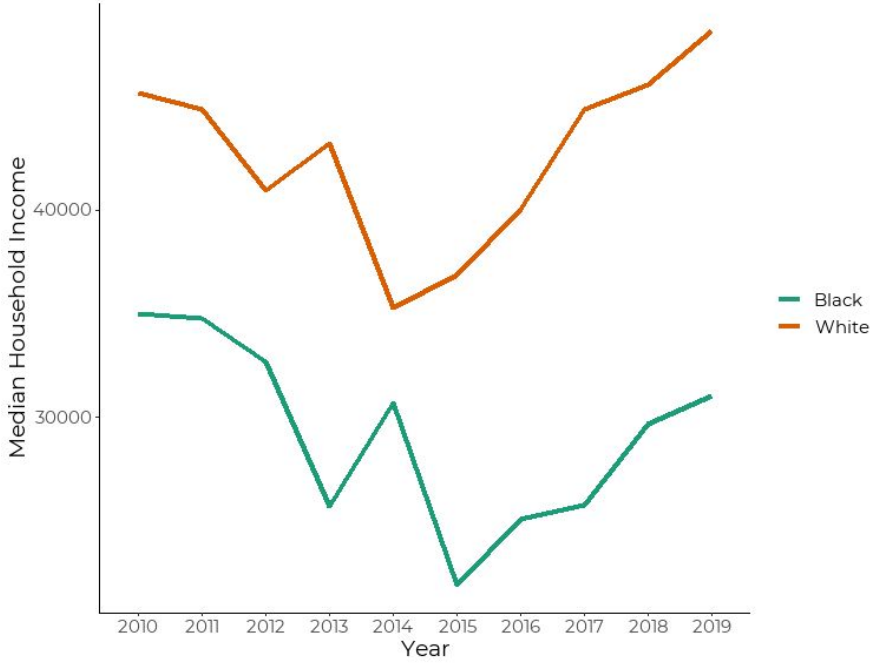

Walltown

Residential Tax Change 2017-19

- -100 - 0%
- 0 - 15%
- 15 - 50%
- 50 - 100%
- 100 - 300%
- 300% +

HOLC Described Areas, 1937

- A "Best"
- B "Still Desirable"
- C "Definitely Declining"
- D "Hazardous"



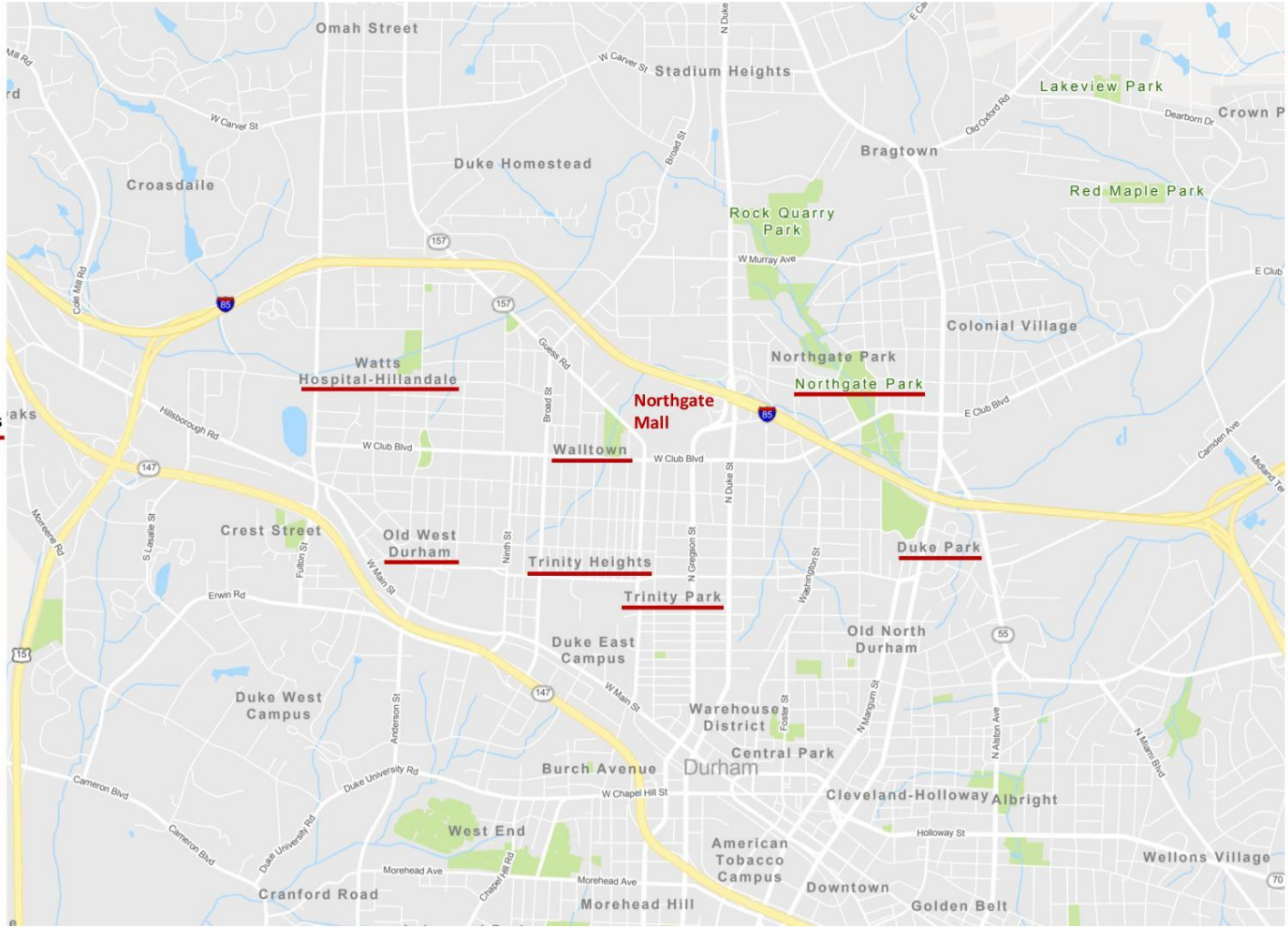

## Median Sale Prices of Single-Family Homes in Walltown

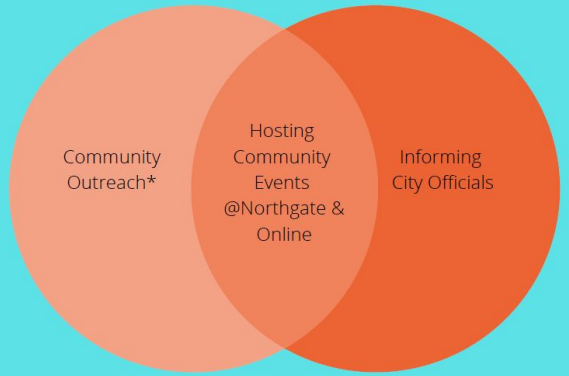
2000: $50,000

2010: $114,000

**2019: $261,500**

NMNC neighborhoods






*Community Outreach includes: faith communities, local schools & small businesses, mall patrons & tenants, neighborhood & PAC meetings, and social media including FB, IG, Spectacular Magazine & Bulls of Durham

## ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

From Jan-May 2020, Northwood and Engage + Create have led an outreach effort to:

1. Inform people about the Northgate redevelopment
2. Gather feedback that will be used to inform the development plan
3. Ensure that those impacted the most are able to give input based on **Durham's Equitable Community Engagement Blueprint**

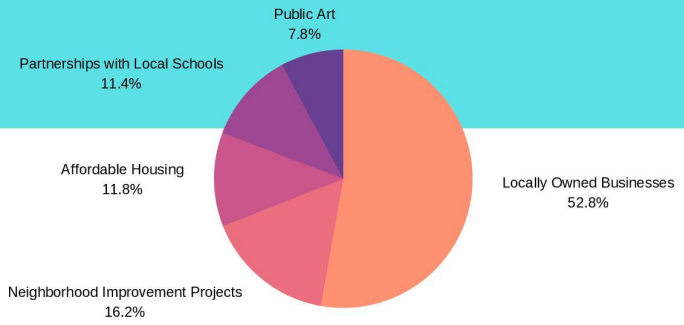
# COMMUNITY IMPACT

SURVEY RESULTS

**96%**

**NORTHGATE REDEVELOPMENT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT**

How would you like to see Northgate & Northwood continue to support the surrounding community?




# COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

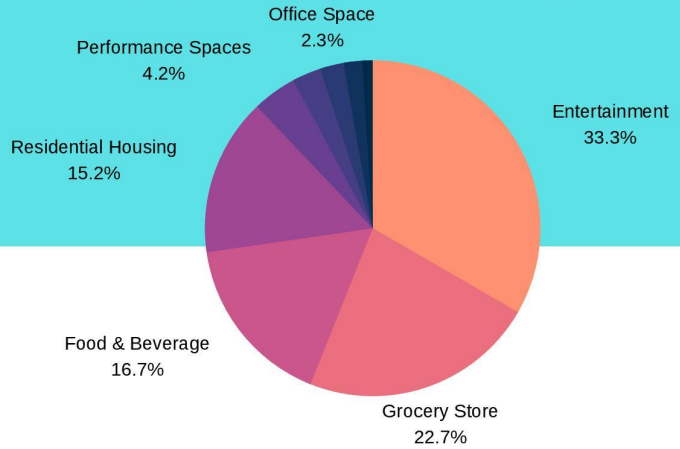
**612**

**COMPLETED SURVEYS**

*green space*

The most common recommendation captured from the survey that was not a pre-populated choice.

What is your First Choice for the redevelopment?



1. Establish a significant portion (at least 30%) of **AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS** in the property's housing plan providing first right of purchase and rental to low-income Walltown residents.

2. Create space for **AFFORDABLE RETAIL**, including a cooperative grocery store (opportunity for community ownership), so that residents can have nearby access to healthy food and other items needed for work, school, and home.

3. Design and enhance the built environment with consideration for **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, and ACCESSIBILITY** for seniors, families with children, people with disabilities, and people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

4. Foster **COMMUNITY GATHERING and CULTURAL ENRICHMENT** spaces, such as, the Durham Arts Council clay studio, a satellite library branch, and an interactive Walltown history exhibit.

5. Develop a section of the property as a **TRANSPORTATION HUB** for uses and bike riders, including a Park-and-Ride serving nearby universities, hospitals, and downtown Durham.

6. Provide space for a **COMMUNITY ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER**, which can serve as a hub for neighborhood residents about city and county services, access to homeownership and renters' rights, and other information based on the interests and needs of the community.

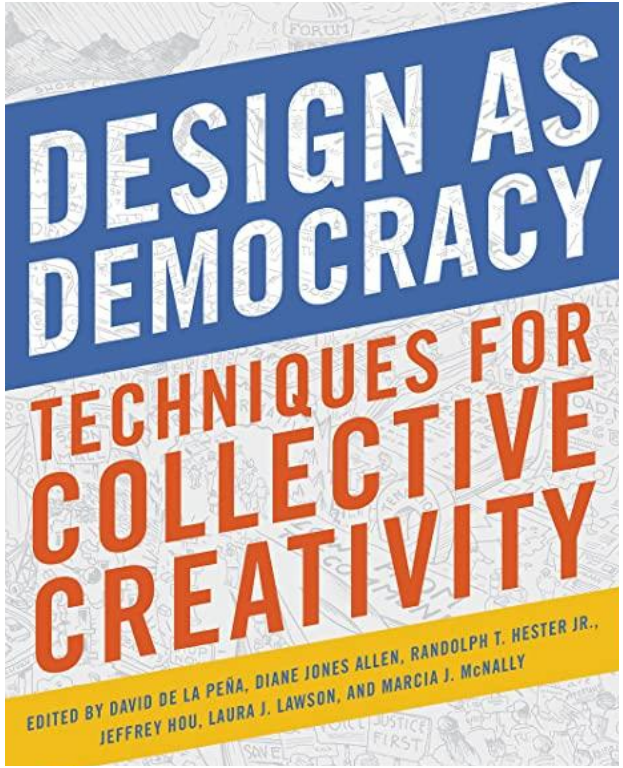
*image source:* https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus

## Private Developer’s Bubble Map

# Communities' Six Visions?

DESIGN
GAMES
A practical guide to design problem solving, using techniques that involve users in decisions, helping them to grasp complex environmental relationships, thus enabling them to develop solutions which are responsive to basic human needs
Playing for Keeps with Personal and Environmental Design Decisions
HENRY SANOFF

1978


DESIGN AS DEMOCRACY
TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY
EDITED BY DAVID DE LA PEÑA, DIANE JONES ALLEN, RANDOLPH T. HESTER JR., JEFFREY HOU, LAURA J. LAWSON, AND MARCIA J. McNALLY

2017

**“[Design game] is an approach to problem solving that engages a real life situation compressed in time so that the essential characteristics of the problem are open to examination.”**

Henry Sanoff, 1978

INTERSTATE 85
EXISTING RETAIL
OFFICE
RESIDENTIAL
RESIDENTIAL
RESIDENTIAL
RETAIL
OFFICE
COMMUNITY PARK
OFFICE
EXISTING GARAGE
HOTEL
RETAIL
RETAIL
GUESS ROAD
RESIDENTIAL
EXISTING GARAGE
DUKE MEDICAL
EXISTING BANK
RETAIL
W CLUB BLVD

85
SW
PD
PD
Duke
Retail

Parking Deck
Guess Road
N Gregson St
Parking Deck
Duke Medical
W Club Blvd

## Engagement Event Preparation

1. Identifying goals and formulation of focus group.
2. Meeting with a focus group including community representatives to affirm/revise goals.
3. Developing workshop process/protocol and interactive tools.
4. Training participants via mini-webinar.
5. Conducting walk through on the site including focus group members.
6. Assigning *Design Games* to the participants.
   Game #1: What are your top priorities?
   Game #2: Where are your top priorities?
   Game #3: Where should "_____" go?
7. Having live-sketch and discussion sessions
8. Analysis of data and interpretation of combined results of participants inputs.

## Charrette Day 1

1. Introducing results of Game #1, 2.
2. Presentations by each participant introducing composite plan. Focus group discussions.
3. Introducing areas of commonality and differences in site plans.

## Charrette Day 2

1. Presentations by resource members (representatives from the city etc.).
2. Identification of top 3 priorities by focus group members. Creation of spatial visuals by the design team.
3. Open discussions and reflections.

Google Slides

Ai Ps

zoom

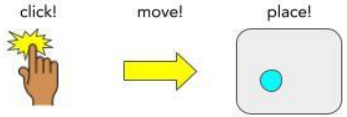
**Game #1**

Google Slides

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES?

INSTRUCTIONS:

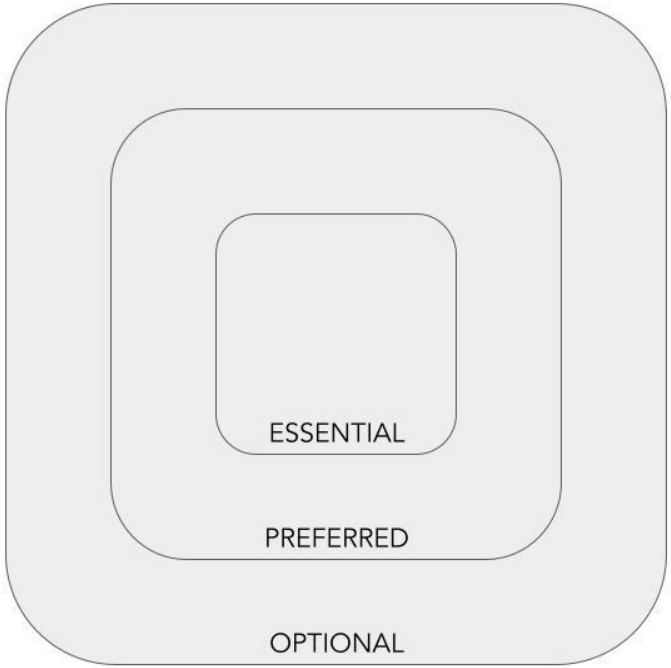
Click and Move each circle into the appropriate zone.



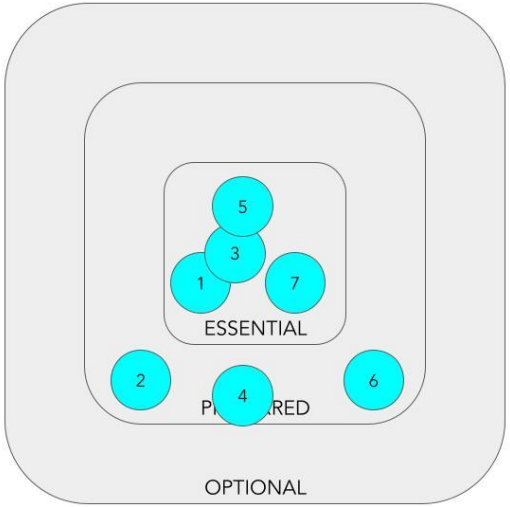
KEY

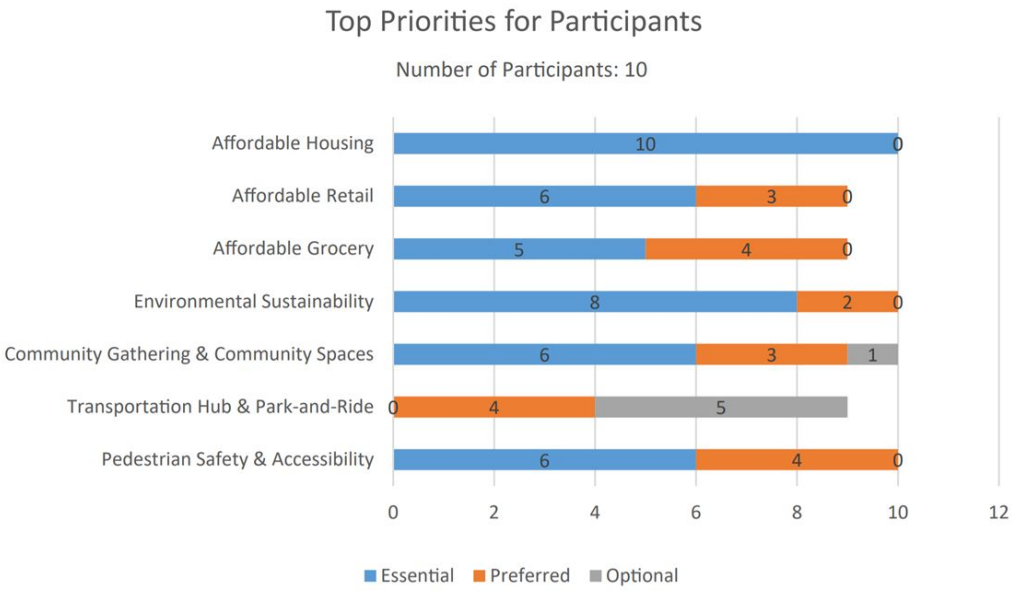
1. Affordable housing
2. Affordable retail
3. Affordable grocery
4. Environmental sustainability
5. Community gathering and community spaces
6. Transportation hub and park-and-ride
7. Pedestrian safety and accessibility

SOURCE: Neighborhood Council Goals



## Game #1 Community Inputs



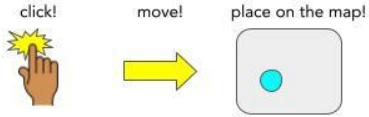
## Game #2

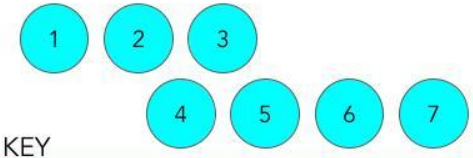
Google Slides

WHERE ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES?

INSTRUCTIONS:

Click and Move each circle to a place on the map.

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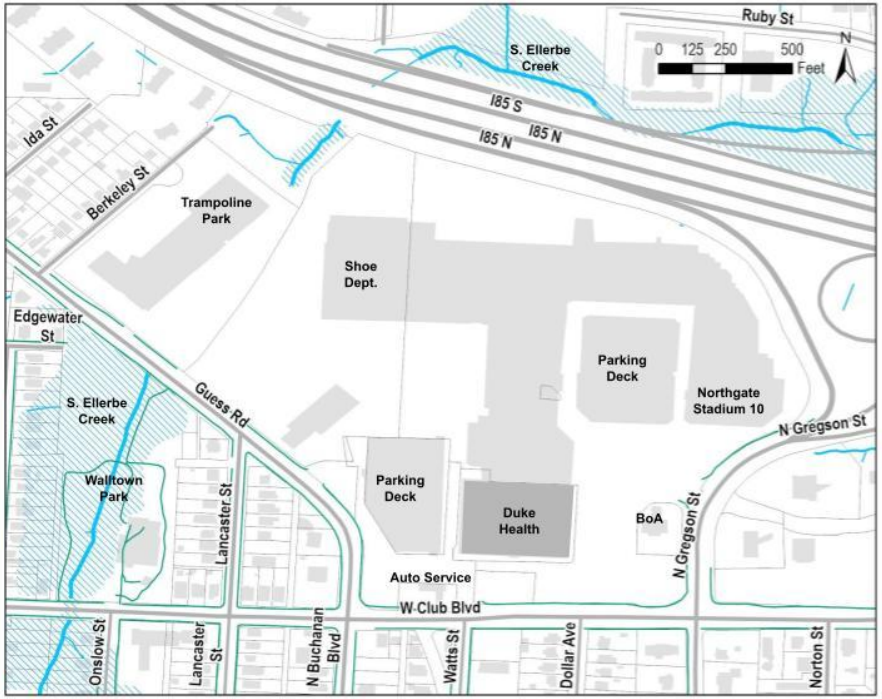
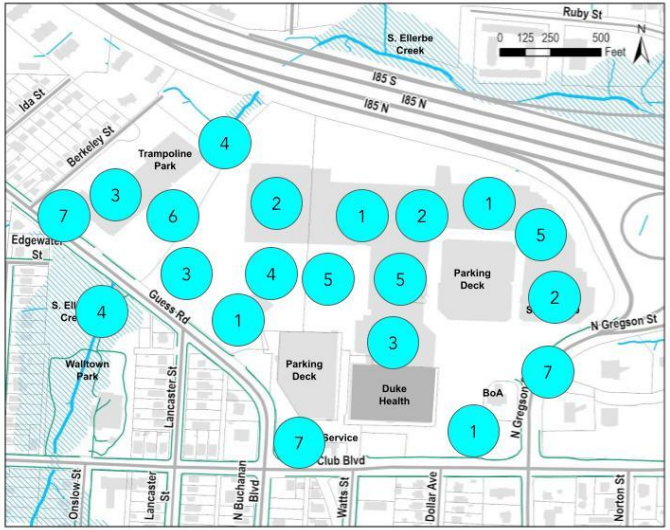
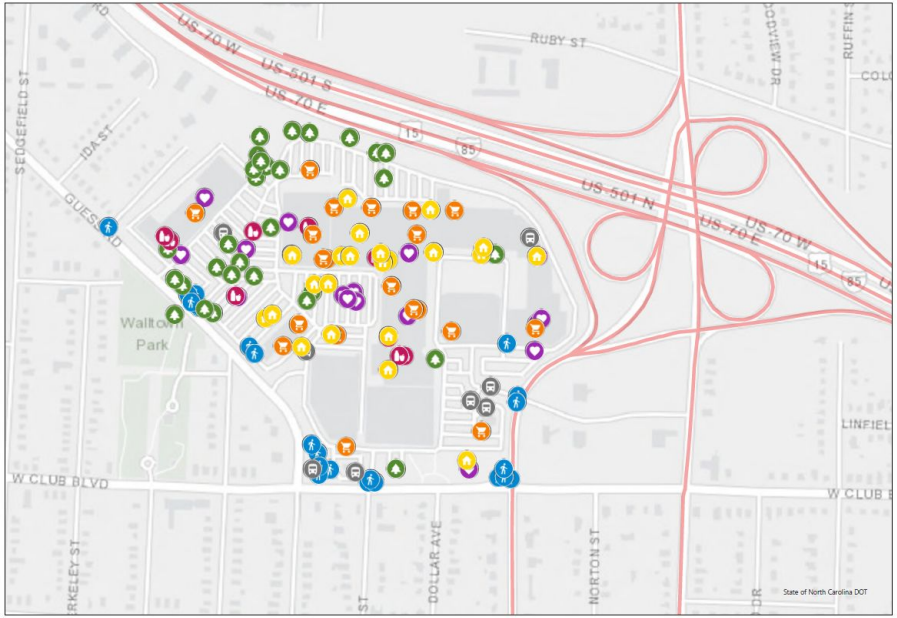


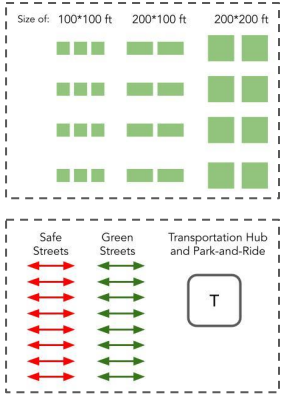
# Game #2 Community Inputs



# Game #3

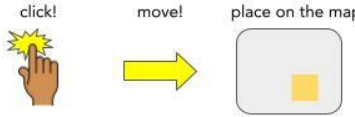
Google Slides

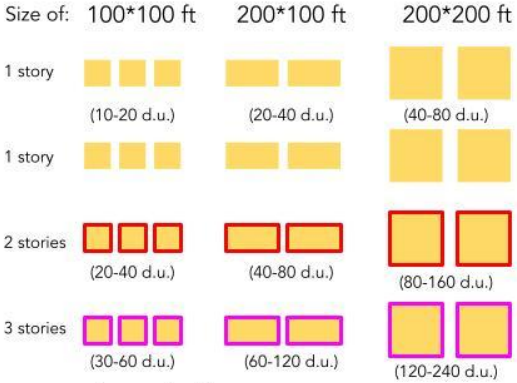



## WHERE SHOULD HOUSING GO?

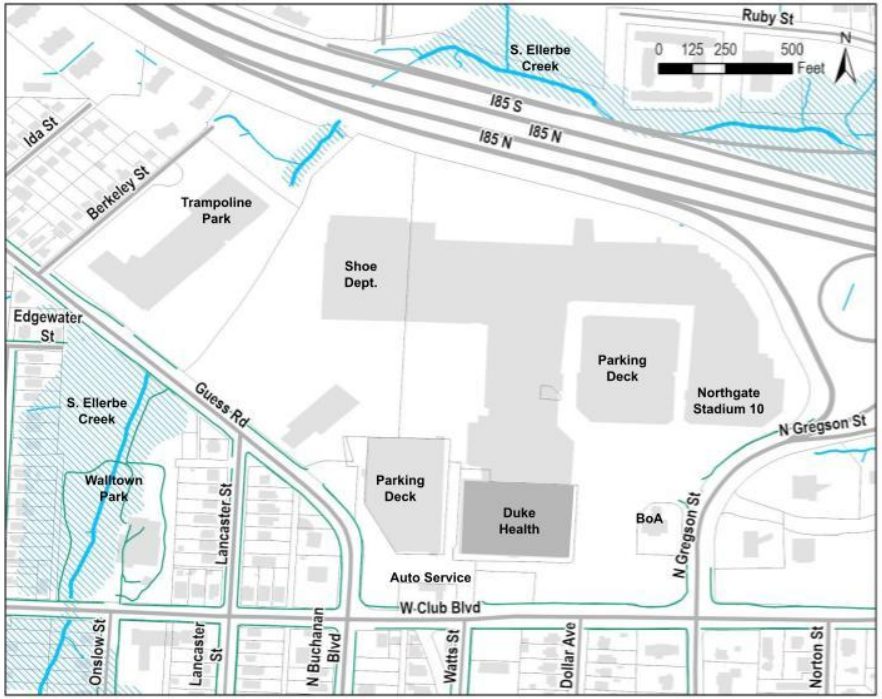
INSTRUCTIONS:

Click and Move shapes to a place on the map.

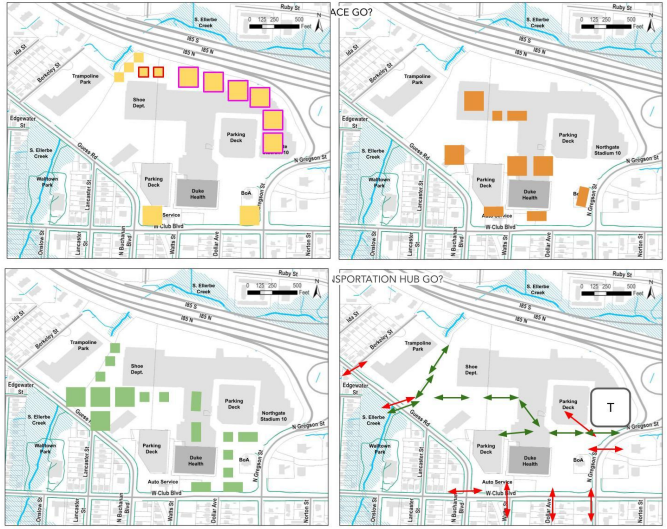


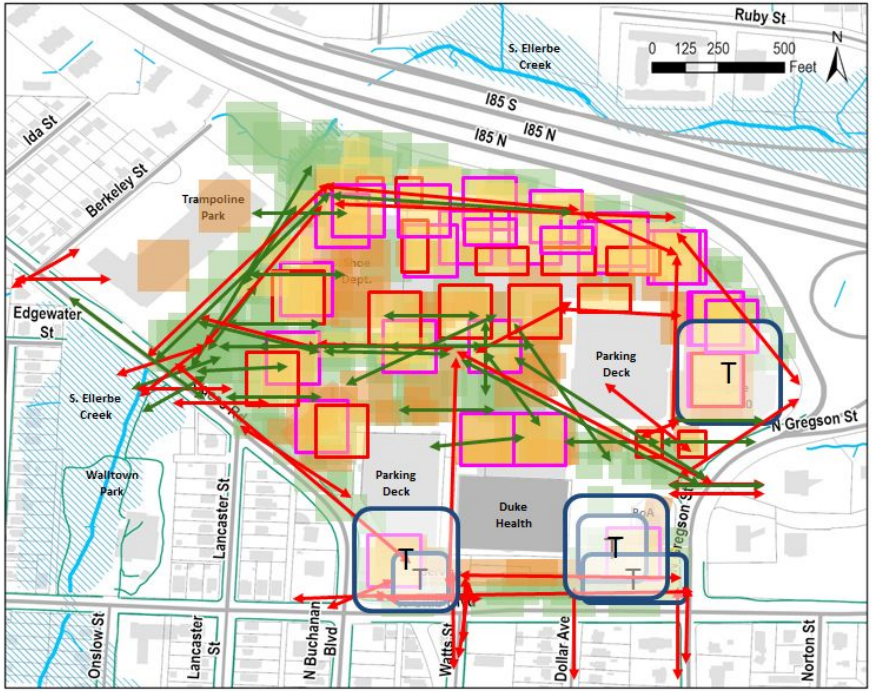




d.u. = dwelling unit



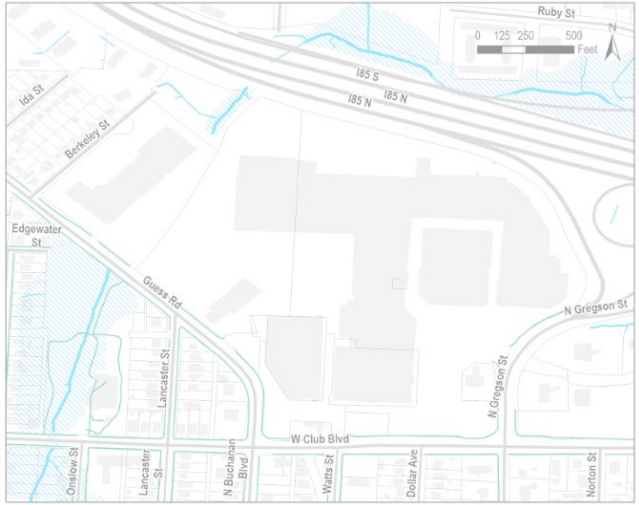
# Game #3 Community Inputs



Google Slides

zoom




<SCALE NOTE>
10ft = 5px = 2.5pt
streets for people = 20ft = 10px = 5pt
streets for car = 40ft = 20px = 10pt
100*100 = 10,000 sqft = 10~20 du = around 0.22 acre

For vegetations, 1) create layer under the vegetation group, 2) use eyedrop on the left green box, 3) use brush, size of 50px. Effects are embedded on the group.

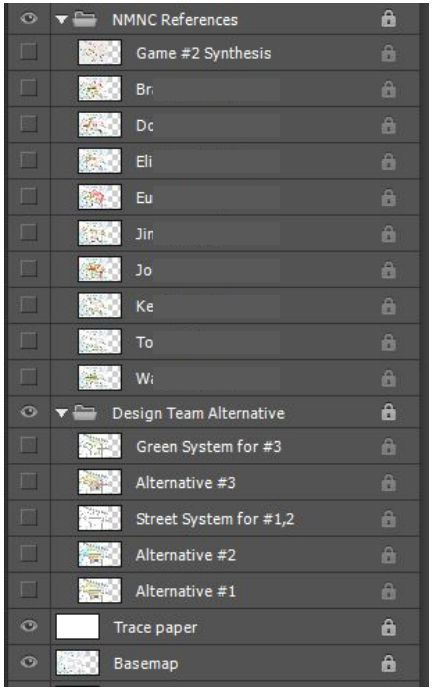
Pen tool for drawing streets.
1) select the icon at left, 2) then use the pen. Style would be automatically applied.

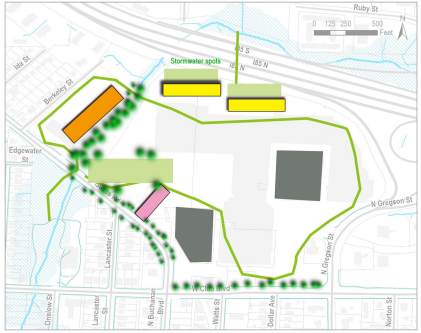
Copy and Drop the icon at bottom. (size of 100*100)
Hold "Alt-key" and Drag will let you copy the shape.
Stroke and Shadow effects are embedded on the group, so don't need to merge the shape.

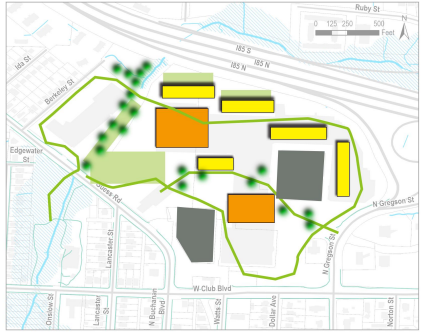
1lvl 2lvl 3lvl housing | retail | community space | green space

T

Park-and-Ride (Transportation Hub)
Drag and Drop the icon at left.
Size of 400*400 ft (parking deck size)




Ruby St
0 125 250 500 Feet
N
Stormwater spots
Idi St
Berkeley St
Edgewater St
Lancaster St
N Gregson St
W Club Blvd
Onslow St
Lancaster St
N Buchanan Blvd
Watts St
Dollar Ave
Norton St


Ruby St
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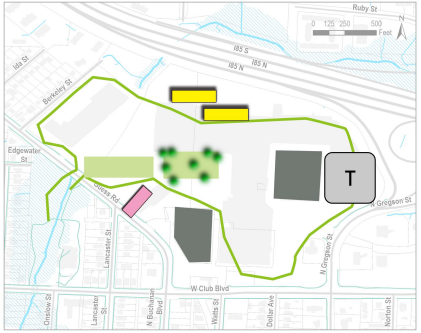
Ruby St
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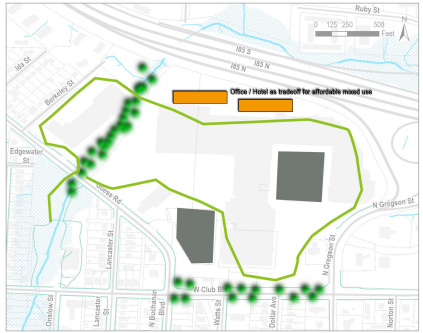
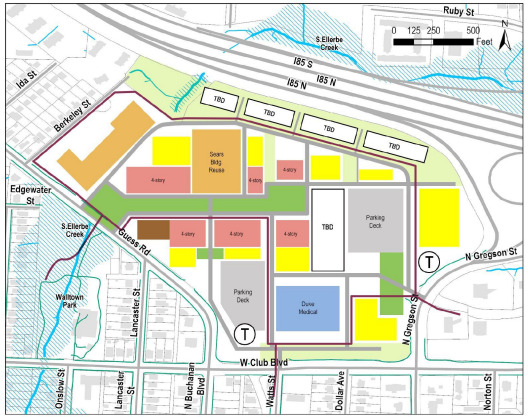
Dollar Ave
Norton St


Ruby St
0 125 250 500 Feet
N
Office / Hotel as tradeoff for affordable mixed use
Idi St
Berkeley St
Edgewater St
Lancaster St
N Gregson St
W Club Blvd
Onslow St
Lancaster St
N Buchanan Blvd
Watts St
Dollar Ave
Norton St

Ruby St
0 125 250 500 Feet
N
Idi St
Berkeley St
Edgewater St
Lancaster St
N Gregson St
W Club Blvd
Onslow St
Lancaster St
N Buchanan Blvd
Watts St
Dollar Ave
Norton St

## NMNC Alternative #1



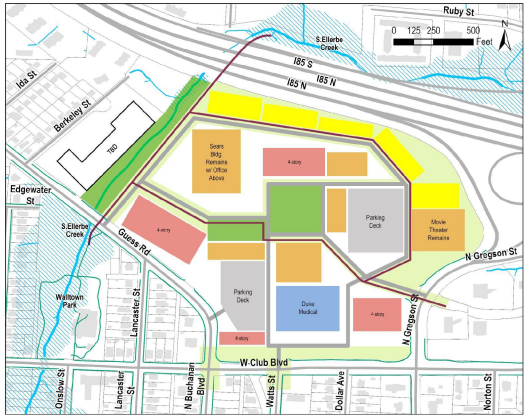

### Description

- Creates a lot of housing but with no explicit spatial strategy for how to accomplish 30% affordable at Walltown AMI.
- Extends significant green space/corridor from the center of the site all the way to Guess Road to make a strong, gateway connection to Walltown, and to create a public amenity.
- Anchors the green with two large green spaces: one on Guess Road and one in the center of the site
- Provides each housing cluster with a nearby green amenity.
- Reuses the Sears Building for artist space, Durham Tech satellite campus, and additional uses.
- Calls for a community space on Guess Road.
- Provides two transit stops: one off Gregson, one at the corner of Club and Guess.
- Creates a perimeter walking trail.

### Key

- Housing
- Retail
- Community space
- Community park
- Vegetation
- Mixed-use (Housing w/ ground floor retail)
- Transportation hub
- Walking trails
- Office
- Hotel
- TBD To be determined programs

## NMNC Alternative #2



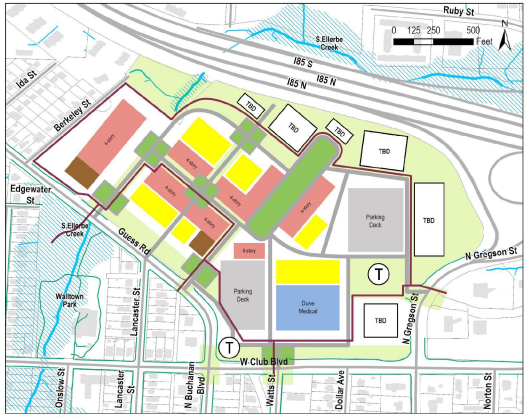

### Description

- Creates a lot of housing but with no explicit spatial strategy for how to accomplish affordable housing.
- Vegetation functions as green infrastructure system.
- Area where creek is currently underground is made into significant green space. If creek is daylighted, "Randy's Pizza building" may be affected thus identified as TBD on plan.
- Establishes a walking path north-south in the location of the creek and a loop trail to the movie theater east-west through the site across to Gregson. Path connects to the neighborhoods to the south and east. A trail under I-85 is contemplated, or possibly a pedestrian/bike overpass.
- Reuses the Sears building for grocery store with office above.

### Key

- Housing
- Retail
- Community space
- Community park
- Vegetation
- Mixed-use (Housing w/ ground floor retail)
- Transportation hub
- Walking trails
- Office
- Hotel
- TBD To be determined programs

## NMNC Alternative #3



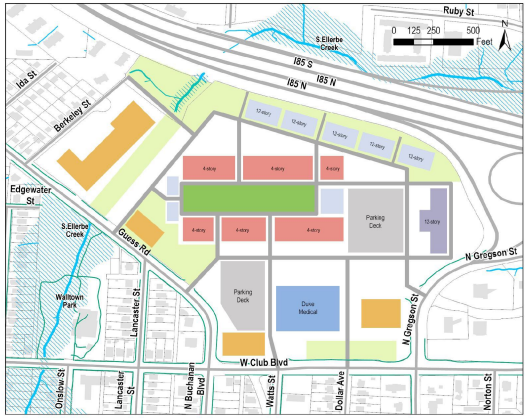

### Description

- The parcel in the northwest corner (with "Randy's Pizza building") is sold to an affordable housing developer. Then it is redeveloped with affordable housing over ground-floor affordable retail and community space.
- Reorients primary green space north-south to maximize the value as amenity for retail over housing.
- Creates street circulation in keeping with nearby neighborhood street grid, with green commons at street intersections, distributing green space along a north-south east-west axes.
- Places mixed-use development (retail/housing mix) along interior streets and around green spaces.
- Includes additional community space in location of existing Sears Auto.
- Provides transit hubs: one inside the site off Gregson, one at the corner of Club and Guess.
- Has a walking trail.

### Key

- Housing
- Retail
- Community space
- Community park
- Vegetation
- Mixed-use (Housing w/ ground floor retail)
- Transportation hub
- Walking trails
- Office
- Hotel
- TBD To be determined programs

## Northwood Raven Proposal (spatialized)




### Description

This is the Northwood Raven (NR) proposal for Northgate Mall, presented at a public meeting on September 16, 2020. It is an approximation, redrawn so it can be compared to the NMNC Alternatives (the NR version was originally drawn as bubbles). It is in two phases. Phase One proposes 4-story mixed-use buildings (ground-floor retail with housing above) around a central "Community Park". There are also a few small office buildings and retail buildings on the site. The one-story retail building located at the northwest edge of the property (the "Randy's Pizza building") is kept and "re-skinned", and the Bank of America building stays. Both parking decks are reused. In Phase Two, taller (10-12 stories) buildings would be built close to I-85 and Gregson, likely office and hotel.

**Positive things about the NR proposal**

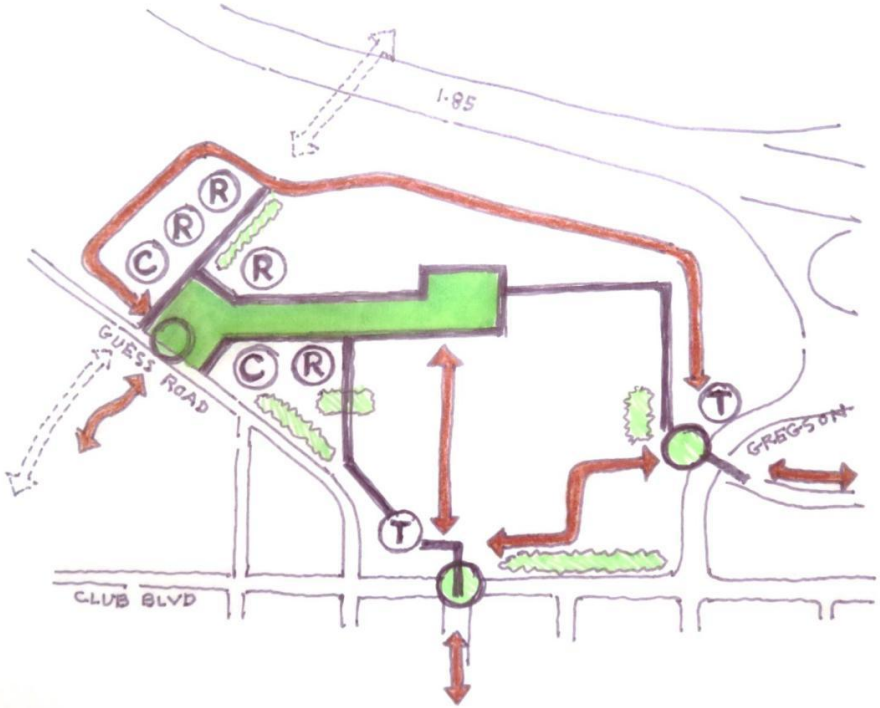
1. There is a lot of retail, some of which could meet community needs.
2. It contemplates a grocery store.
3. There is a significant amount of housing.
4. There is green space.

**Objections to NR proposal**

1. Open space labeled Community Park is isolated from the neighborhoods. As is, it communicates private, not community. It needs to extend to Guess Road with safe pedestrian crossing to Walltown Park.
2. The expectation is that all housing will be market rate, i.e. no affordable housing in Phase One.
3. If NR goes ahead with Phase One, building under 50 feet as is allowed, the density will be low for a site this size.
4. Office and hotel do not serve community needs per se.

### Key

- Housing
- Retail
- Community space
- Community park
- Vegetation
- Mixed-use (Housing w/ ground floor retail)
- Transportation hub
- Walking trails
- Office
- Hotel
- TBD To be determined programs




1. Affordable housing is highest priority
2. Community open space extends from Northgate to Walltown Neighborhood and Park
3. Safe pedestrian and bike connections made to/from neighborhoods across busy streets
4. Walking trail from neighborhoods around periphery of Northgate site
5. Safe, direct interior street pattern with street parking for retail and community space
6. Affordable retail accessible to neighborhoods
7. Dedicated community space for job training, history, arts, etc.
8. Small green buffers
9. Safe and attractive transit stops with weather protection
10. Future green connection to Ellerbe Creek

**“To begin with words and end up with images was a gift. It makes you start to think in a different way...to think about different outcomes and opportunities. To be able to understand what developer is thinking. We have new things to think about -- connecting to the park, and the environmental. It has renewed our energy which we need after going at this for almost 2 years.”**

Brandon Williams, Lead NMNC organizer

WALLTOWN
EST. 1902

# Community Outreach

WHAT RESIDENTS **WANT** TO SEE...

52% said “affordable housing”

48% said “affordable retail”

35% said “safe walking/transportation”

34% said “access to healthcare”

WHAT RESIDENTS **DON’T WANT** TO SEE...

71% said “luxury/expensive housing”

59% said “luxury/expensive retail”

49% said “liquor retail”

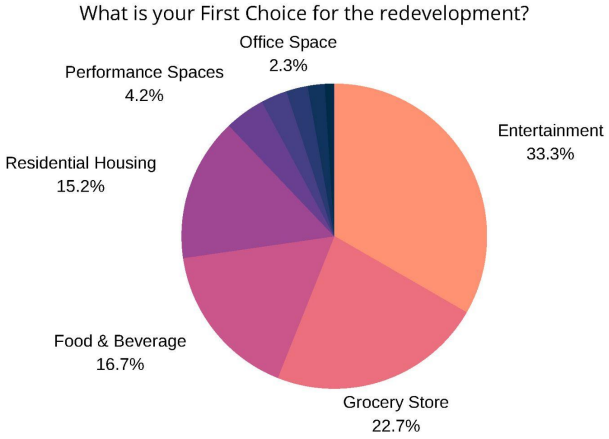
45% said “tobacco retail”

**612**

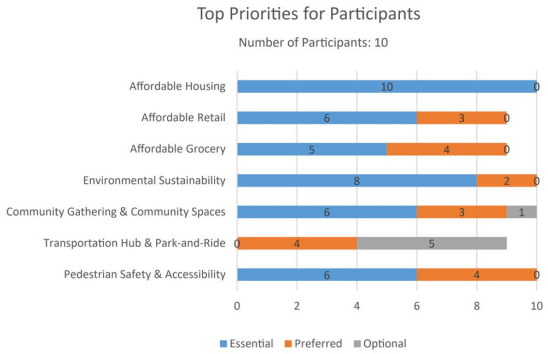
**COMPLETED SURVEYS**

*green space*

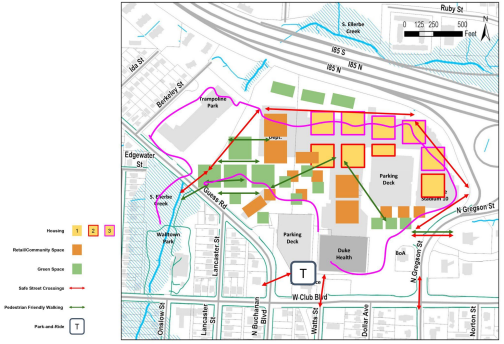
The most common recommendation captured from the survey that was not a pre-populated choice.



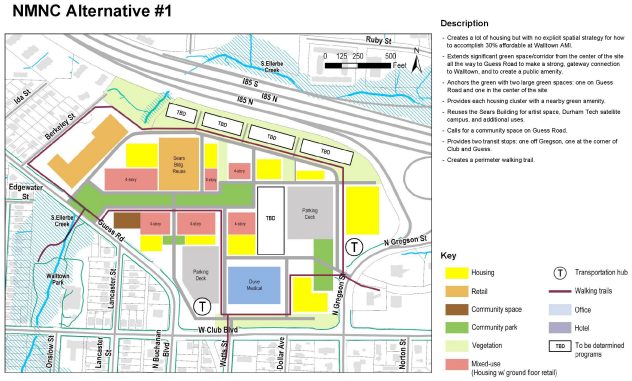
# Charrette (n = 10)




Top Priorities




Example of a composite plan



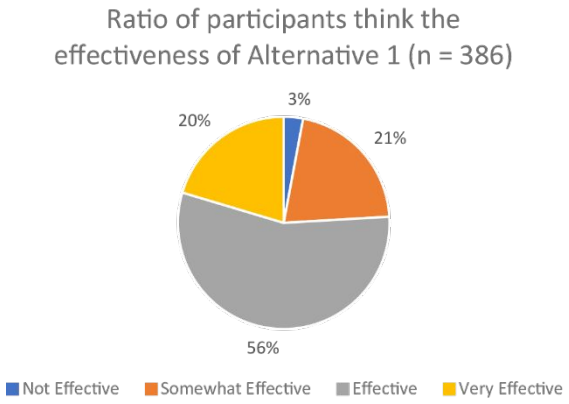

Example of a Design Alternative

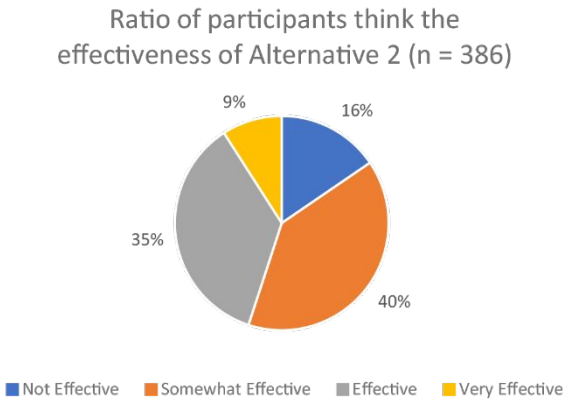
# Online Survey (n = 386)

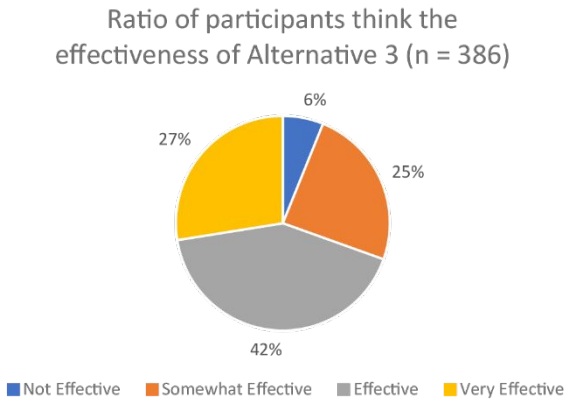
To understand participants’ needs, concerns, and desires towards

- Walltown community
- Three design alternatives
- Redevelopment proposal from the developer

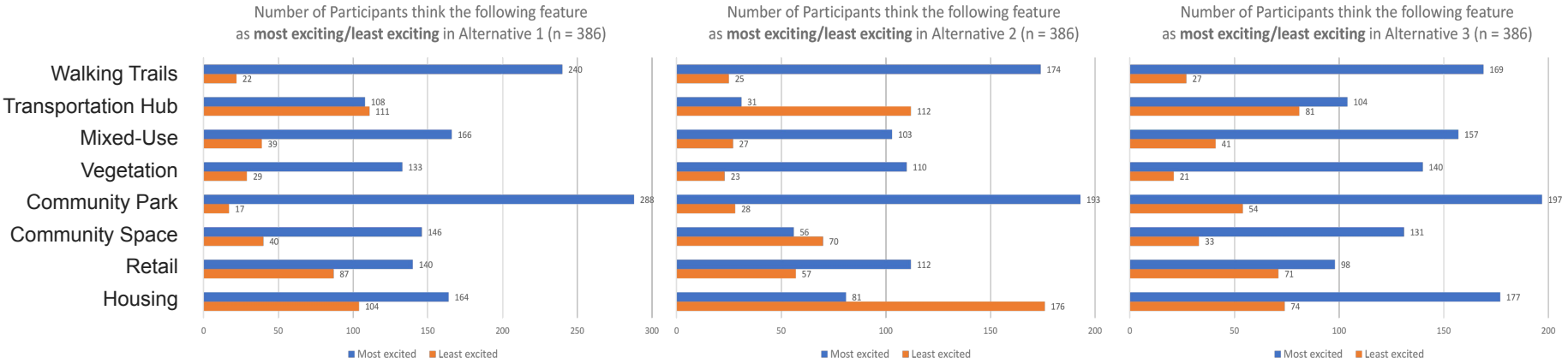
# Design Alternatives - Effectiveness



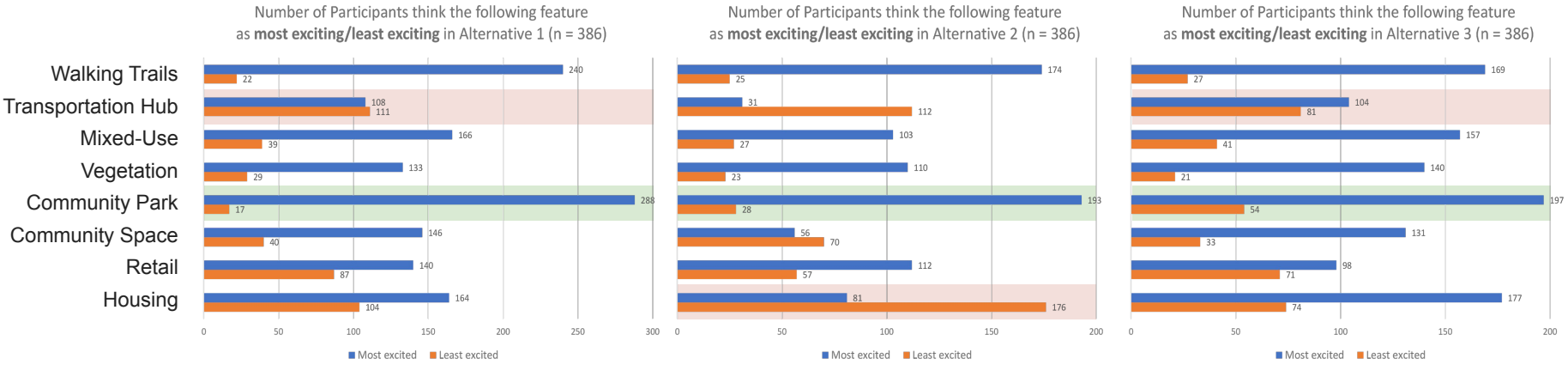



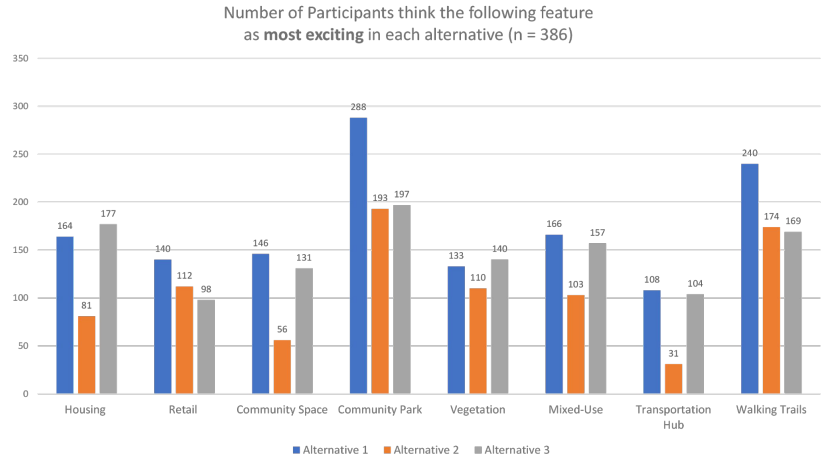
# Design Alternatives - Most Exciting/Least Exciting

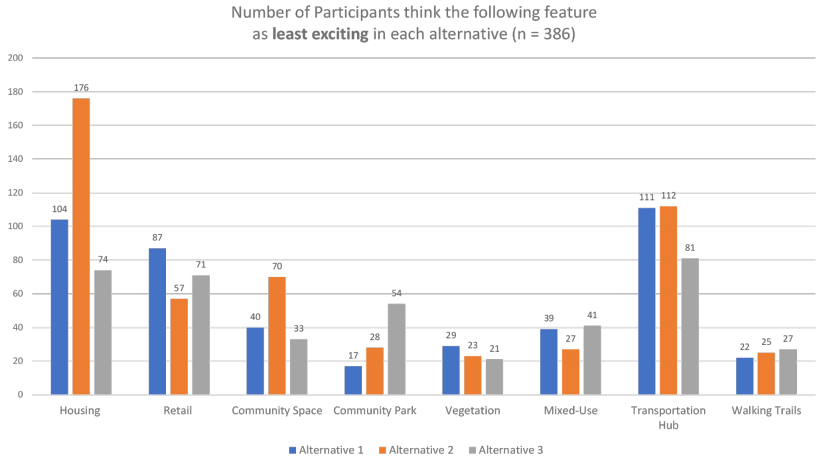


# Design Alternatives - Most Exciting/Least Exciting



# Design Alternatives - Most Exciting/Least Exciting



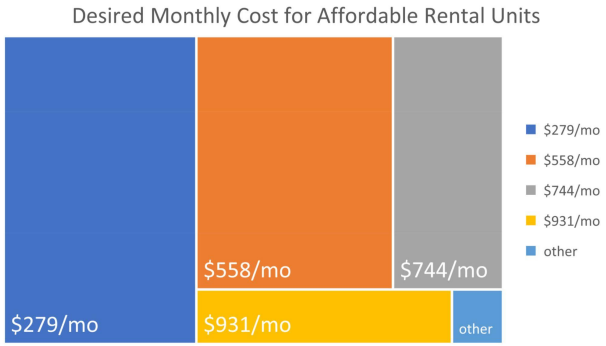
# Design Alternatives - Takeaways

Alternative #1
1. Communities want open space **connecting** Neighborhoods.
2. Communities need **specific strategy** to develop affordable-housing.
3. Communities have **two different perspectives** on housing layout.

Alternative #2
1. Communities dislike **housing along the highway**.
2. Communities want **transportation hub** and **community space**.
3. Communities like **over/under path** along the creek.

Alternative #3
1. Communities mostly **like the layout** of the plan.
2. Communities appreciate **specific strategy** of affordable housing.
3. Communities want some **stand-alone retail and grocery**.

# Affordable Housing




## Affordable Housing For Whom?

| | DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL - $90,900 (HUD Area Median Income) | | WALLTOWN - $37,222 (Neighborhood Median Income) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of Median Income | Monthly Income | Affordable Monthly Housing Costs | Monthly Income | Affordable Monthly Housing Costs |
| 100% | $7,575 | $2,273 | $3,102 | $931 |
| 80% | $6,060 | $1,818 | $2,481 | $744 |
| 60% | $4,545 | $1,364 | $1,861 | $558 |
| 30% | $2,273 | $682 | $931 | $279 |

* HUD AMI cited here rely on ACS 2013-2017 estimates, as do the Durham and Walltown median incomes.
* Affordable here means all housing costs being no more than "30% of monthly income".
* HUD AMI is for a 4-person household.
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/select_Geography.odn

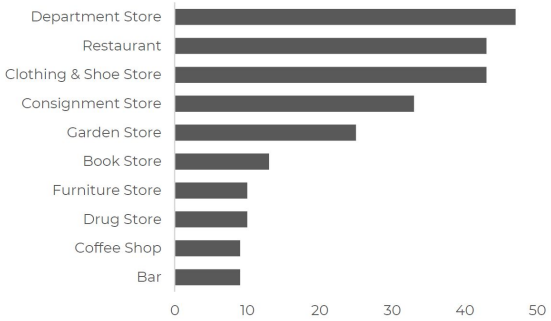
## How Much Money Do You Need to Make for Northwood Ravin Apartments to Be Affordable?

| Bedrooms | Average listed rent at Northwood properties in Durham* | Annual rent costs | Full-time hourly wage required |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 (studio) | $1,372.80 | $16,473.60 | $26.40 |
| 1 | $1,572.16 | $18,865.89 | $30.23 |
| 2 | $1,998.95 | $23,987.35 | $38.44 |
| 3 | $2,931.53 | $35,178.40 | $56.38 |

* Rental listings from DataWorks NC rentscraper, 4/2017 - 11/2020, including Trinity Commons, Van Alen, and Palladian Place. Affordable = 30% of income. Full-time = 40 hrs/week 52 weeks/year.

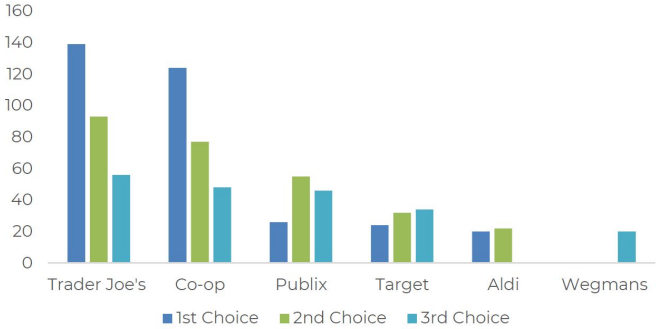
# Affordable Retails & Affordable Groceries

What kind of retail do respondents want?



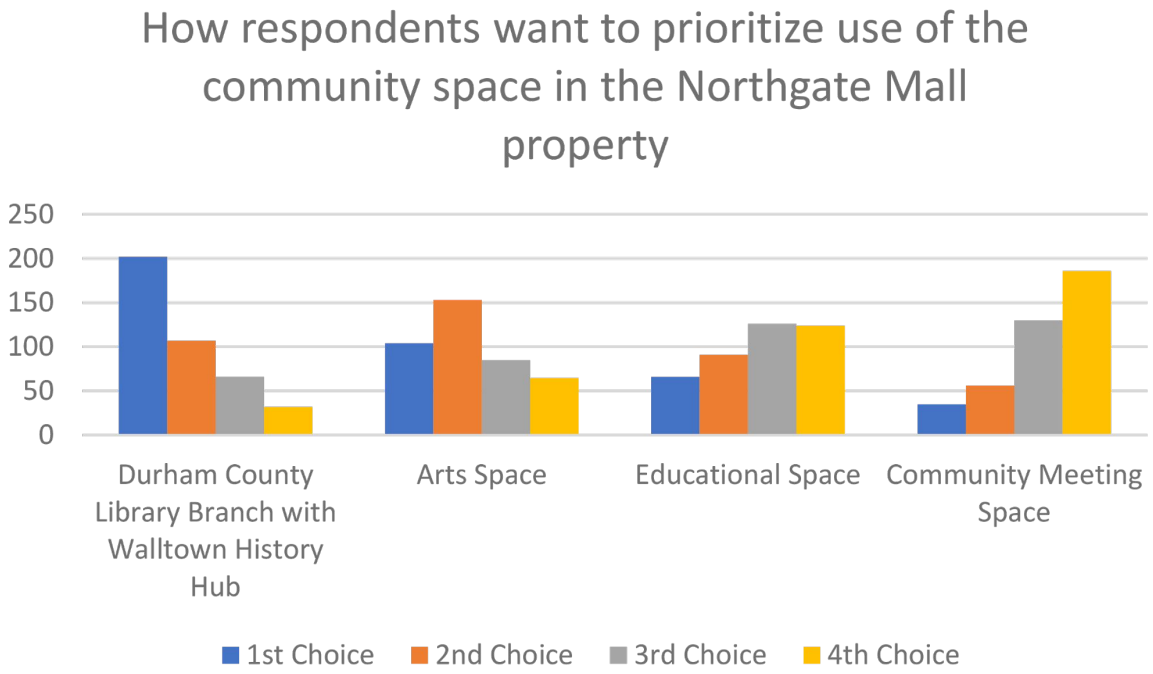

- 31% of respondents ask for locally-owned businesses
- Affordable
- be accessible to the Walltown community

Which grocery store do they want to see?

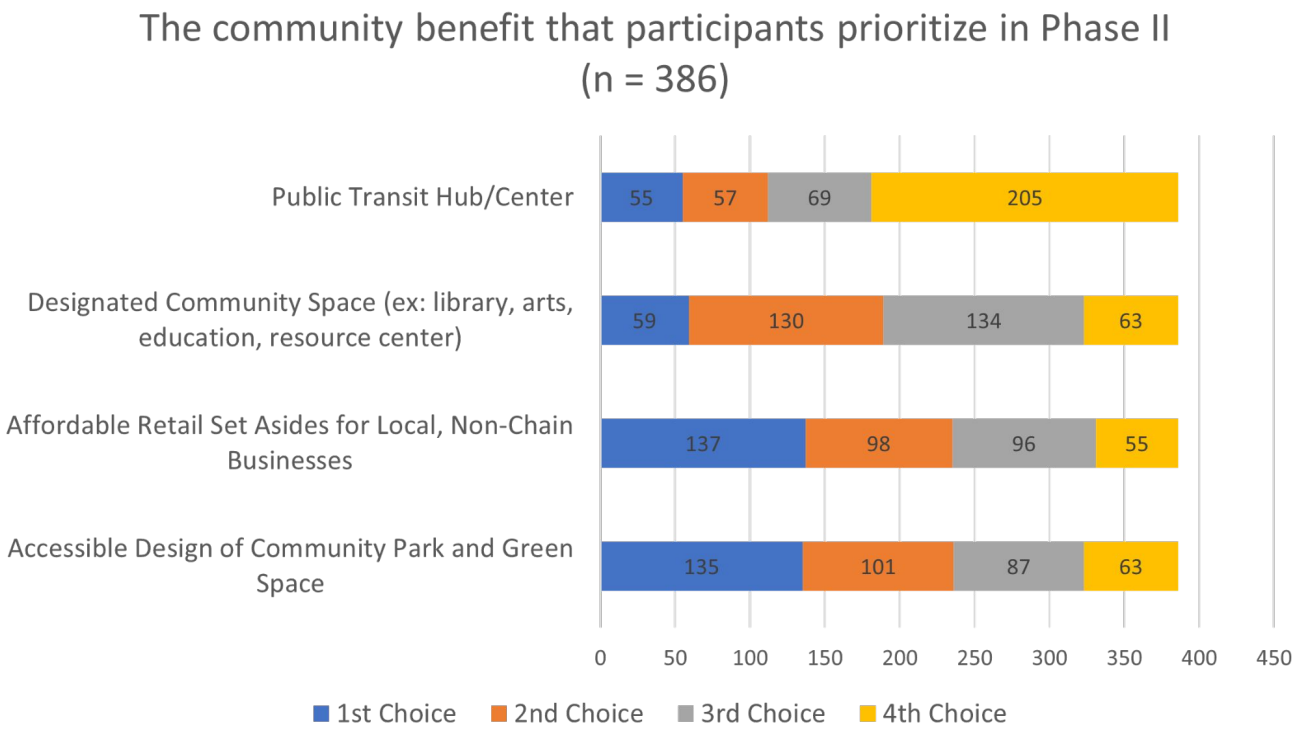



- Affordable and equitably accessible to neighbors of all incomes
- Center “workers”
- Collaborate with the Walltown community

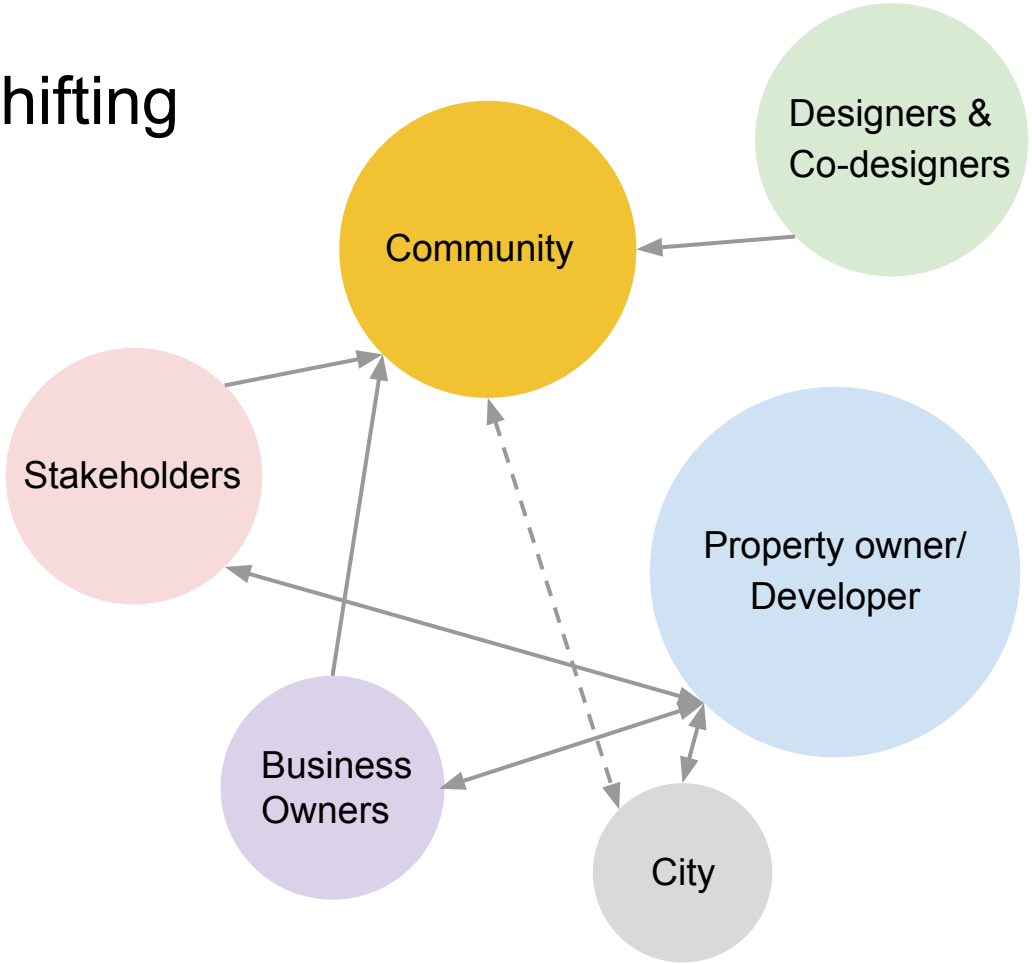
# Community Space



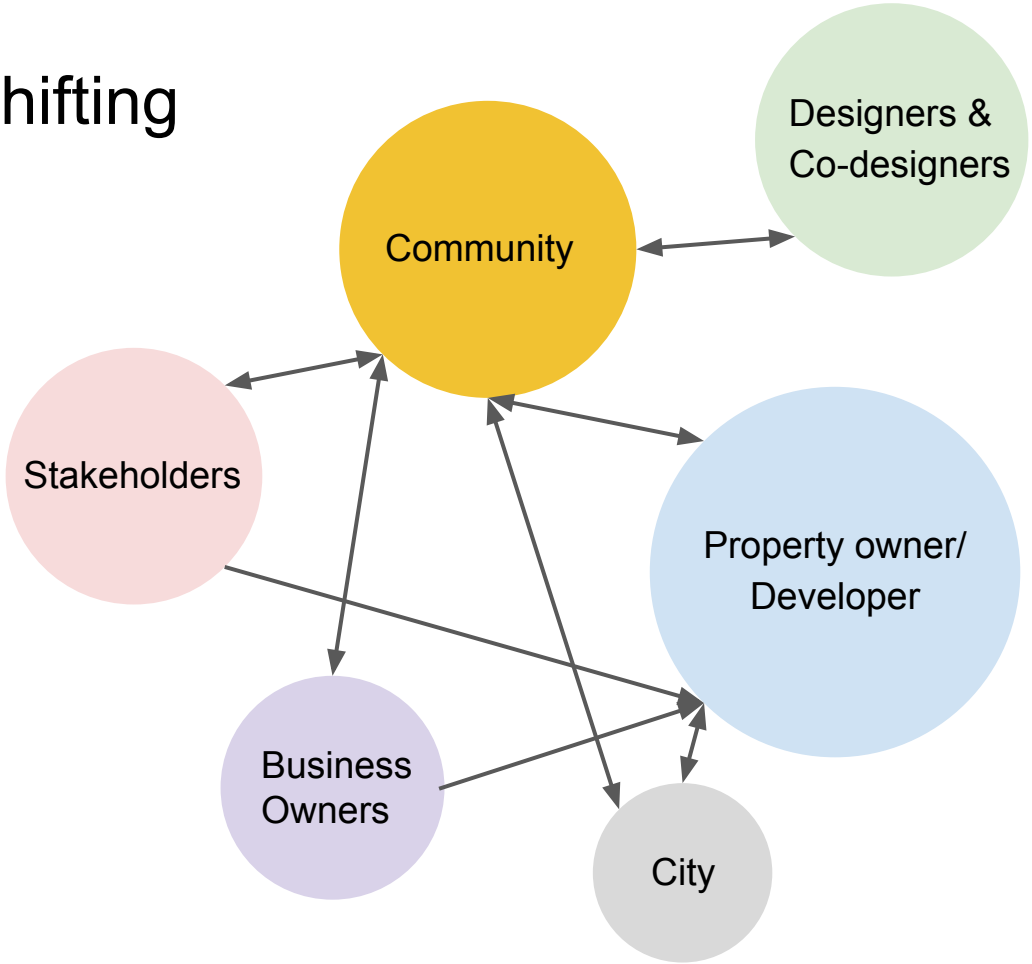
# Expectation of Investors' Redevelopment Plan Phase II



# Power Shifting



# Power Shifting



**“How do you advocate/empower people who are struggling with the dominant paradigm?”**

Thank You