

# **CONTEXT SENSITIVE TREE ORDINANCE UPDATES**

**MORE HOUSING, MORE TREES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**ATLANTA IS GROWING TODAY,  
HOW DO WE MANAGE GROWTH  
FOR TOMORROW?**

# CURRENT CONDITIONS: TREE CANOPY



At 47%, Atlanta has the  
**densest tree canopy**  
of any city in the nation.

DATA SOURCE: GEORGIA TECH

<http://www.prism.gatech.edu/~ag124/UTCFinalReport.pdf>data-reveal-ups-and-downs-through-2016/

# CURRENT CONDITIONS: INCOME INEQUALITY



At 18 to 1, Atlanta has the  
**highest income inequality**  
of any city in the nation.

**NOTE:**

**18 TO 1 RATIO MEANS THAT THE TOP 5% OF HOUSEHOLDS EARN  
INCOMES 18 TIMES AS HIGH AS THE BOTTOM 20% OF HOUSEHOLDS**

DATA SOURCE: BROOKINGS INSTITUTE

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/city-and-metropolitan-income-inequality-data-reveal-ups-and-downs-through-2016/>

# CURRENT CONDITIONS: AFFORDABILITY



At 63%, Atlantant's have some of the **highest housing & transportation costs** for moderate income households in the nation.

**NOTE:**

**THE AVERAGE ATLANTAN SPENDS 63% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS - THE SIXTH WORST OF THE NATION'S 25 LARGEST METROS**

DATA SOURCE: ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

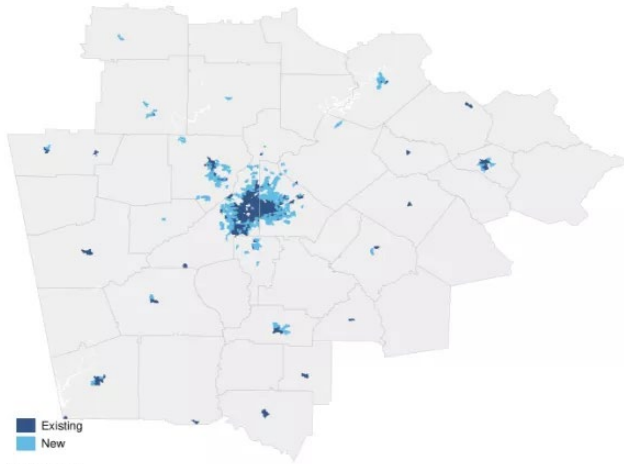
[https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/housingaffordability\\_fulldeck.pdf](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/publications/housingaffordability_fulldeck.pdf)

# CURRENT CONDITIONS: METRO ATLANTA GROWTH



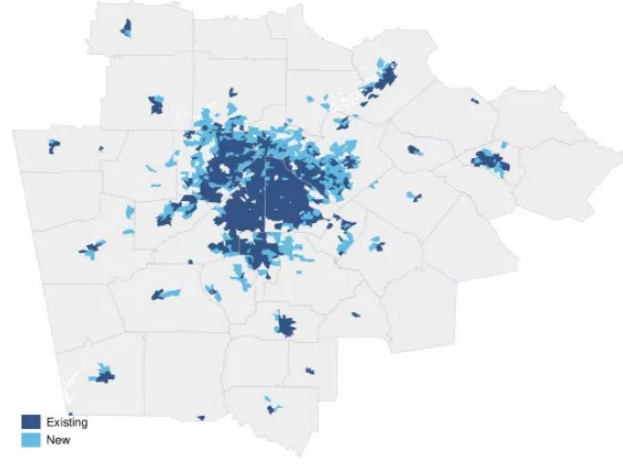
**1950s**

Atlanta—Athens—Clarke County—Sandy Springs, GA CSA  
**1950s**



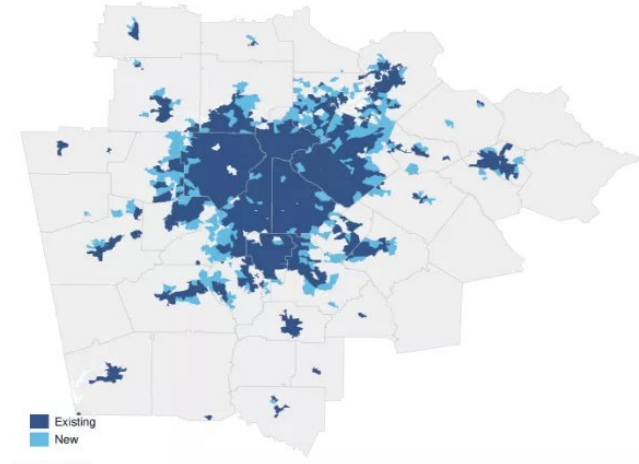
**1980s**

Atlanta—Athens—Clarke County—Sandy Springs, GA CSA  
**1980s**



**2000s**

Atlanta—Athens—Clarke County—Sandy Springs, GA CSA  
**2000s**



**CURRENT POPULATION OF METRO ATLANTA**

**5,710,795**

**2030 PROJECTED POPULATION**

**7,116,006**

**INCREASE OF**

**1,405,211**

# CURRENT CONDITIONS: METRO ATLANTA GROWTH



OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS...

METRO LAND GROWTH WAS NEARLY **6x**  
THAT OF METRO POPULATION GROWTH

CITY OF ATLANTA LAND GROWTH WAS NEARLY **4x**  
THAT OF CITY OF ATLANTA POPULATION GROWTH

Rising urban housing costs  
have led to consuming way  
more land than we need.

1,405,211

**HOUSING PEOPLE IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE**

Higher quality trees do more  
for the natural environment,  
higher quality land should do  
more for the built environment.

**PART 01:**

# **UNDERSTANDING URBAN ECOLOGY IN CONTEXT**

**SUSTAINABILITY IS REGIONAL**

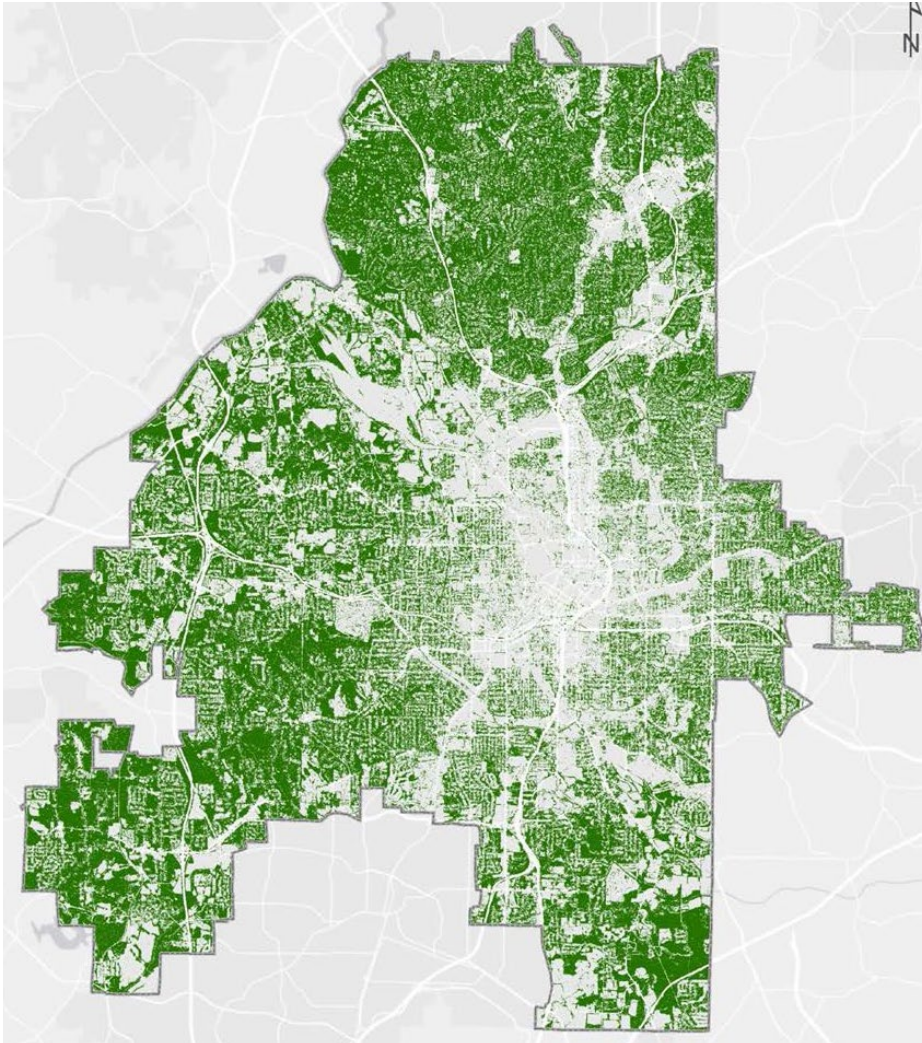
**DENSE DEVELOPMENT HERE**

**=**

**INTACT FORESTS THERE**

How can we preserve and  
improve our tree canopy?  
**BY PRIORITIZING HIGH  
VALUE TREES.**

# TREE CANOPY IN ATLANTA



**OVER**  
**77%**  
**OF ATLANTA'S TREE**  
**CANOPY IS LOCATED**  
**IN SINGLE FAMILY**  
**(R1-R5) DISTRICTS**

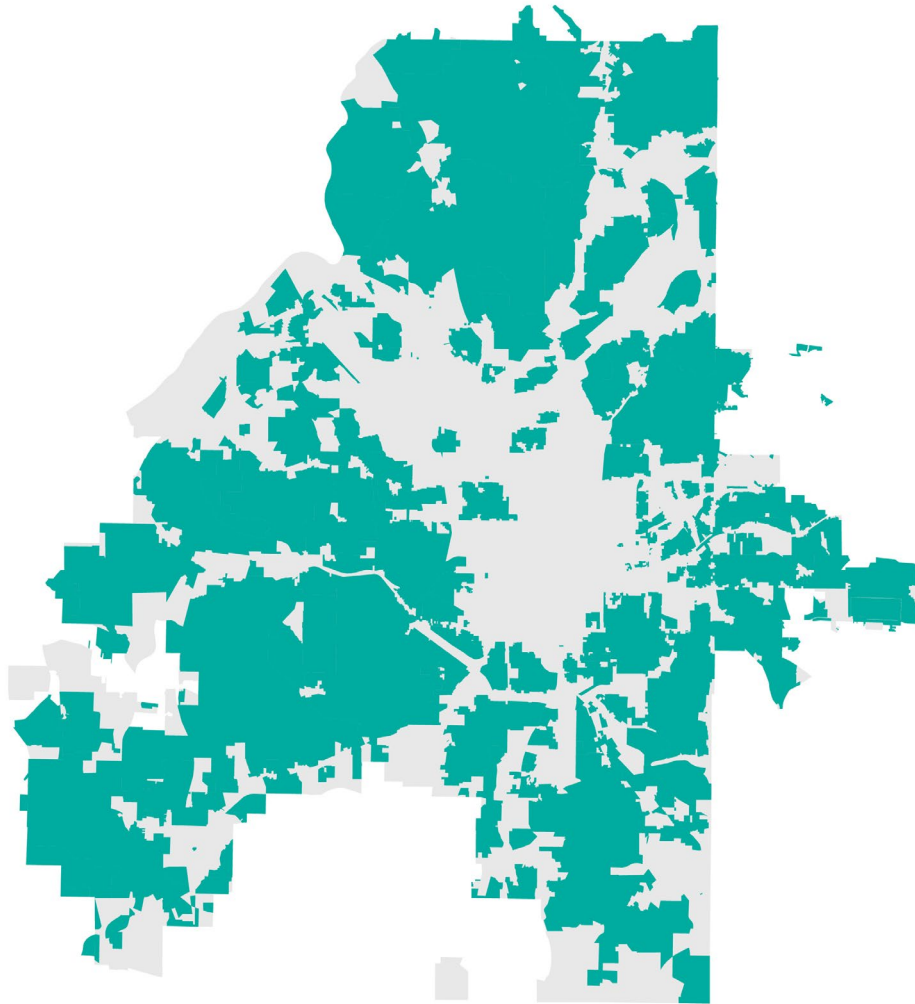
How can we encourage more  
affordable housing?

**BY PRIORITIZING HIGH  
HOUSING VALUE LAND.**

# POLICY SUGGESTION: WORK TOGETHER

Use high value tree  
preservation as a  
development bonus for sites  
on high value land.

# SINGLE FAMILY ZONING IN ATLANTA

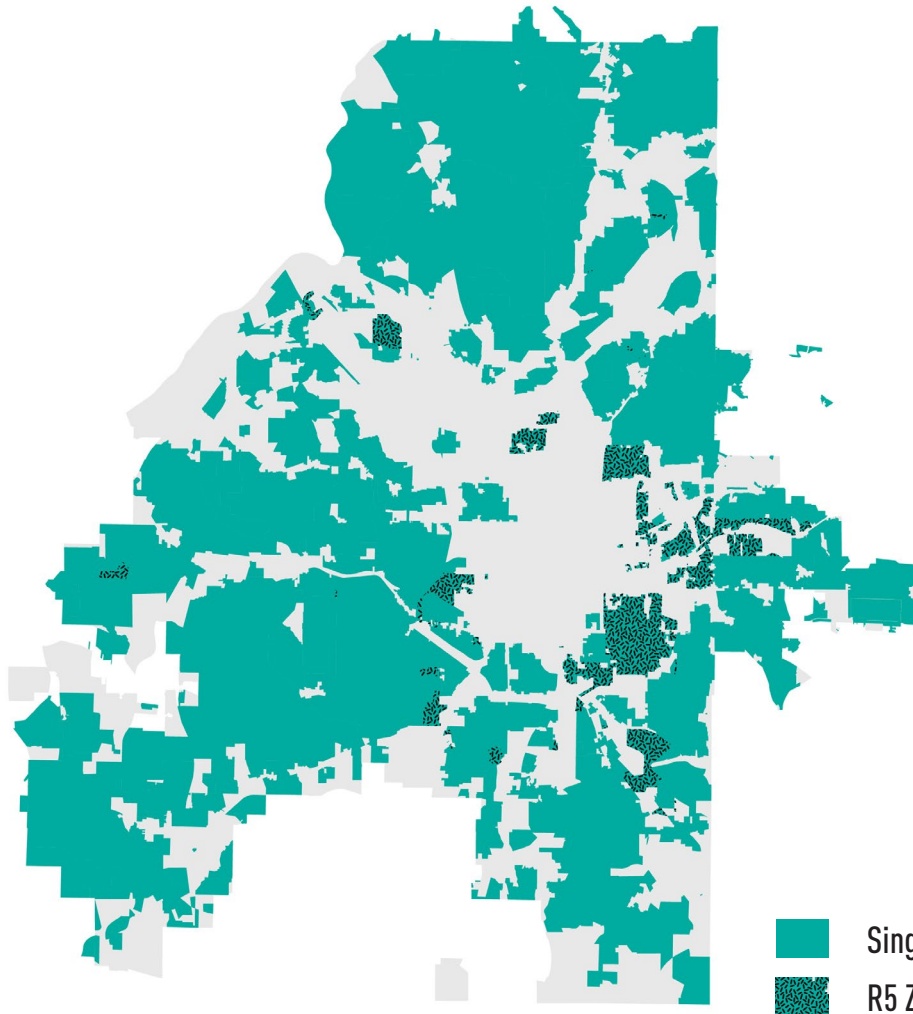


**OVER**

**60%**

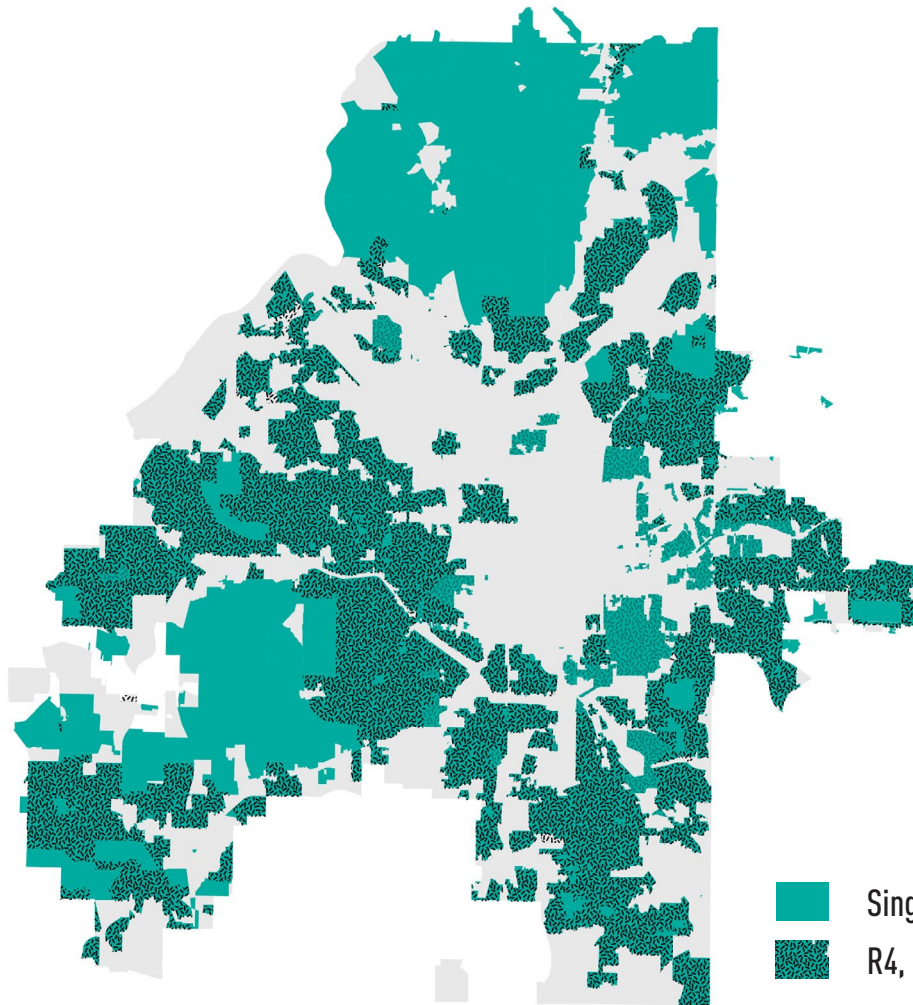
**OF ATLANTA'S LAND  
IS ZONED SINGLE  
FAMILY (R1-R5)**

# SINGLE FAMILY ZONING IN ATLANTA



**ONLY**  
**5%**  
**OF SINGLE FAMILY**  
**ZONING ALLOWS**  
**DUPLEXES & ADUS (R5)**

# SINGLE FAMILY ZONING IN ATLANTA



**CURRENTLY**

**60%**

**OF SINGLE FAMILY  
ZONING ALLOWS  
ADUS (R4 + R5)**

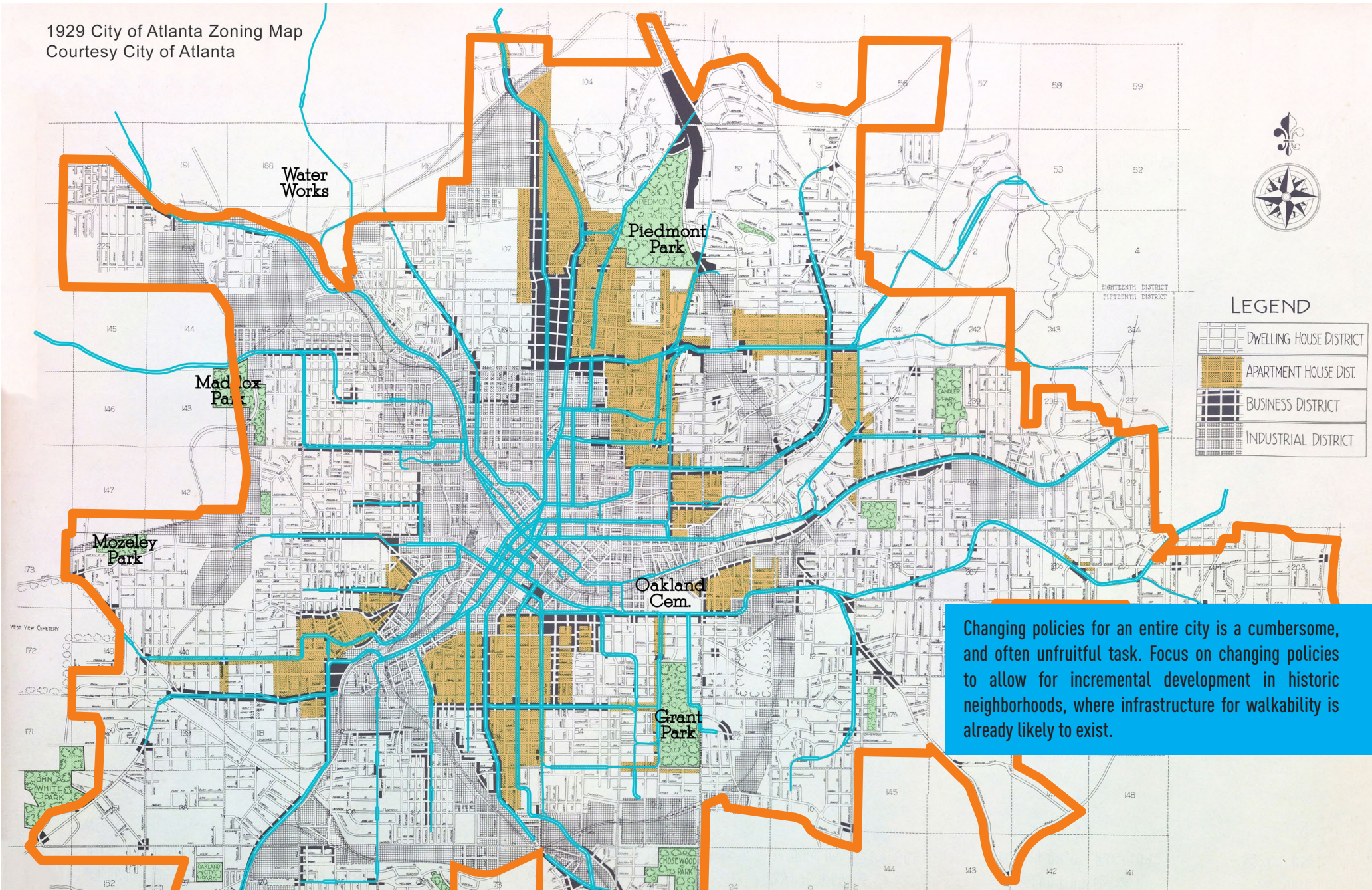
Not all single family zoning  
land can or should support  
more density. But our  
**HIGHEST VALUE LAND**  
should.

We consider our  
**HIGHEST VALUE LAND**  
to be the most walkable, least  
car dependent land.

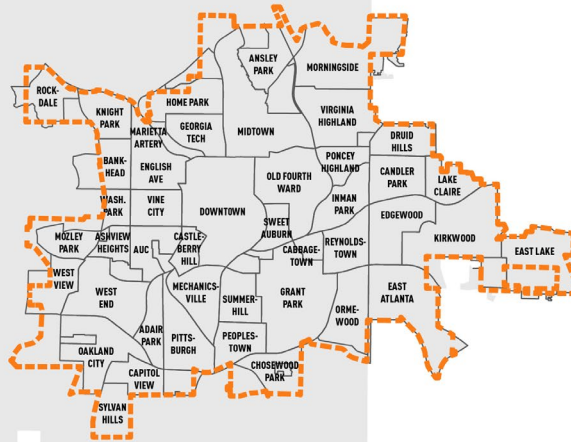
# ATLANTA IN 1929: THE ORIGINAL TOD

## 1929 ATLANTA ZONING MAP

1929 City of Atlanta Zoning Map  
Courtesy City of Atlanta



# ATLANTA'S MOST WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS



ALL OF ATLANTA'S

**MOST  
WALKABLE**

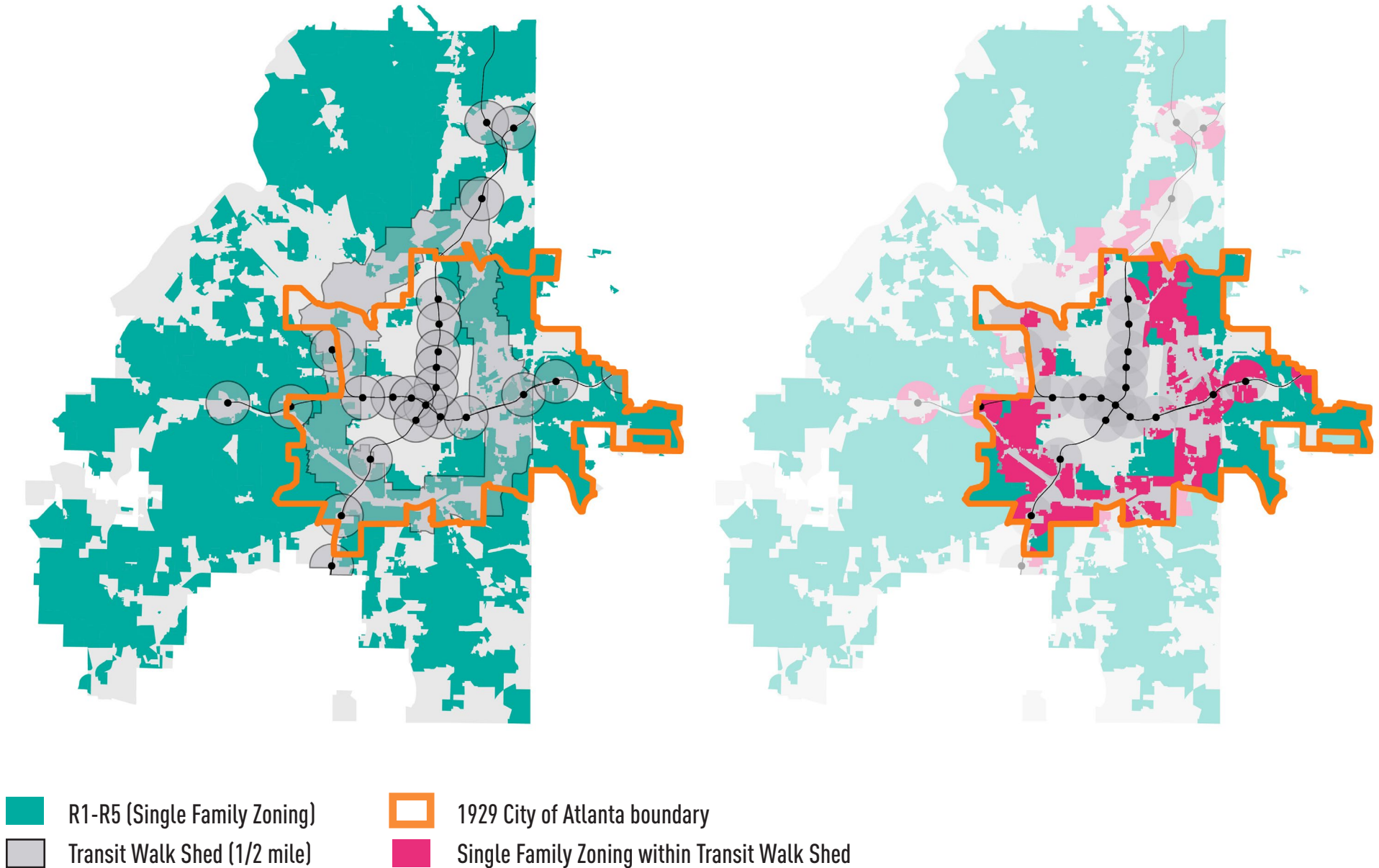
NEIGHBORHOODS ARE  
LOCATED INSIDE THE 1929  
BOUNDARY

Our highest value land is  
land within 1/2 mile of transit  
**and** within the 1929 City  
boundary.

# SINGLE FAMILY ZONING IN ATLANTA

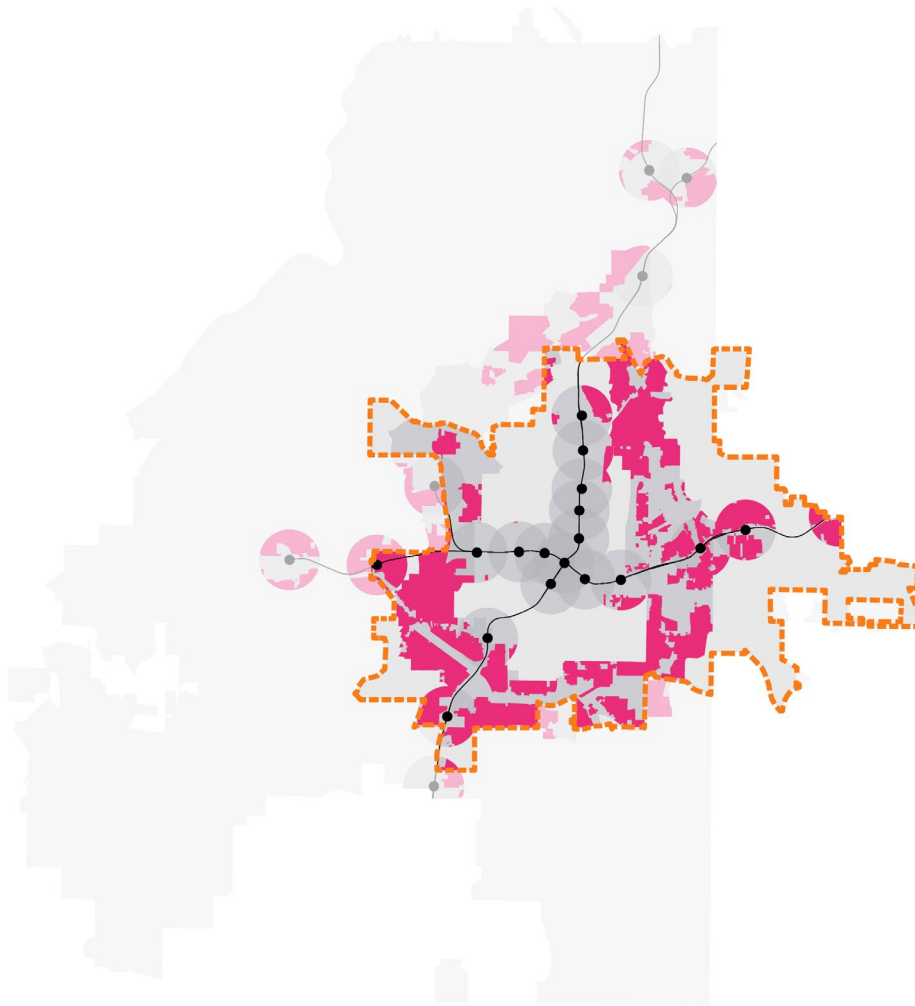
## SINGLE FAMILY ZONING + TRANSIT

## SINGLE FAMILY WITHIN 1/2 MILE OF TRANSIT



# SINGLE FAMILY ZONING IN ATLANTA

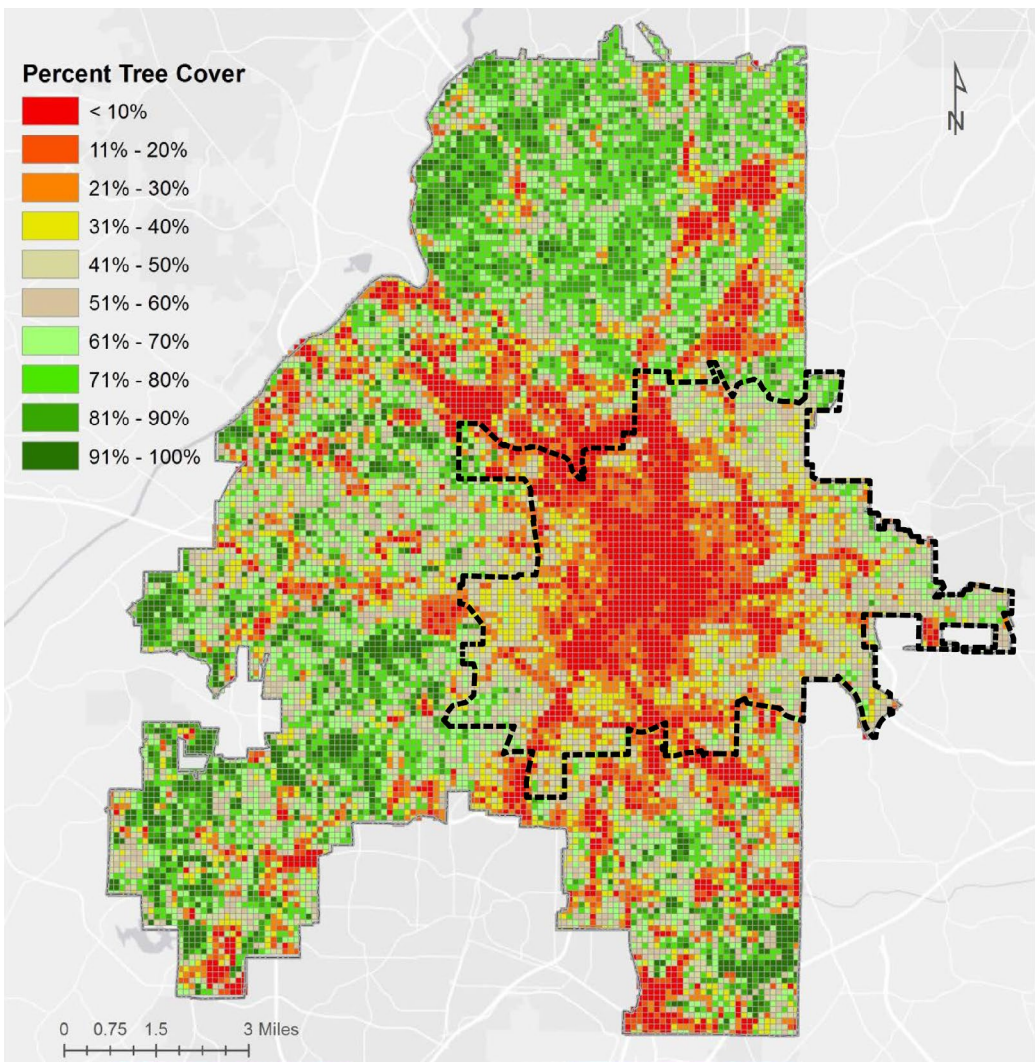
## SINGLE FAMILY ZONING + TRANSIT



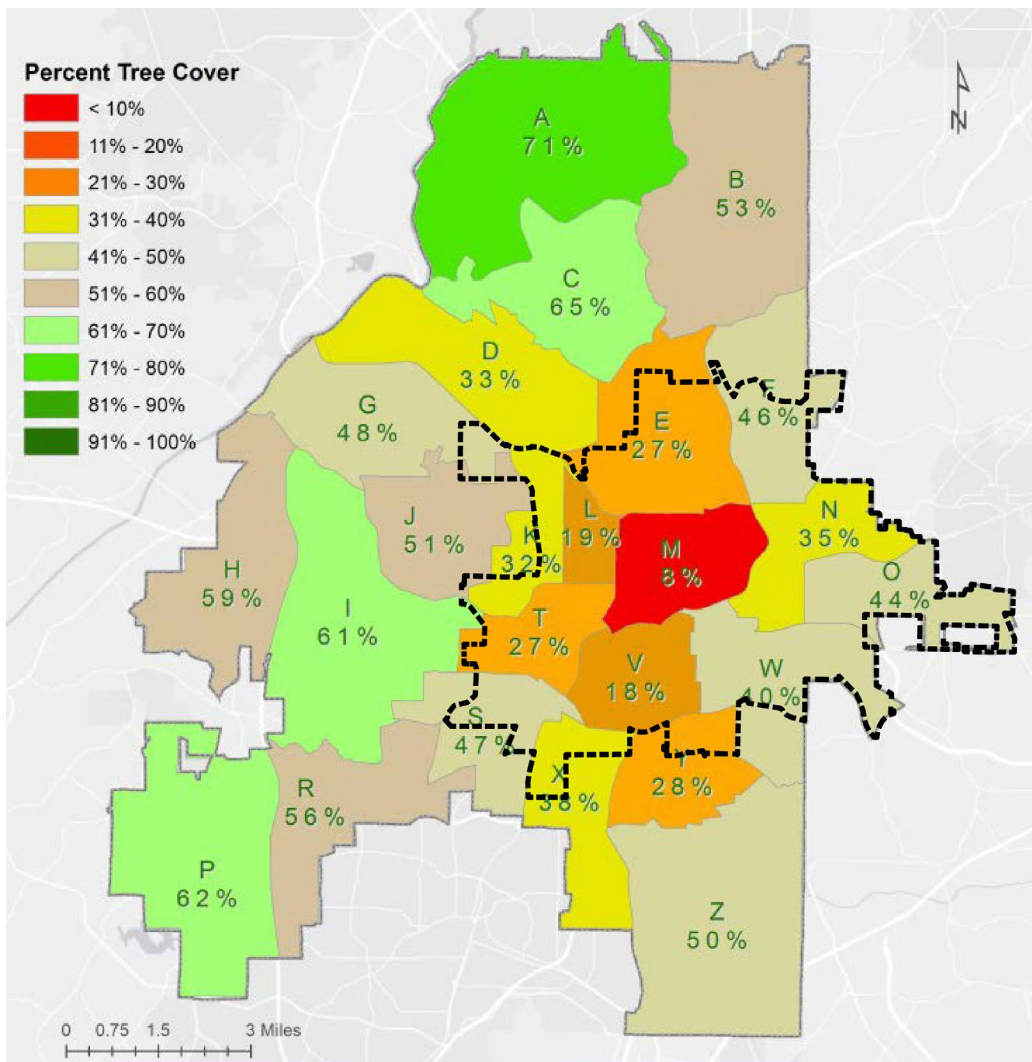
OVER  
**34%**  
OF OUR HIGHEST  
VALUE LAND IS  
ZONED SINGLE  
FAMILY (R1-R5)

**NOTE:**  
SINGLE FAMILY WITHIN 1/2 MILE OF TRANSIT IS 15% OF TOTAL SINGLE FAMILY LAND

# TREE CANOPY IN ATLANTA

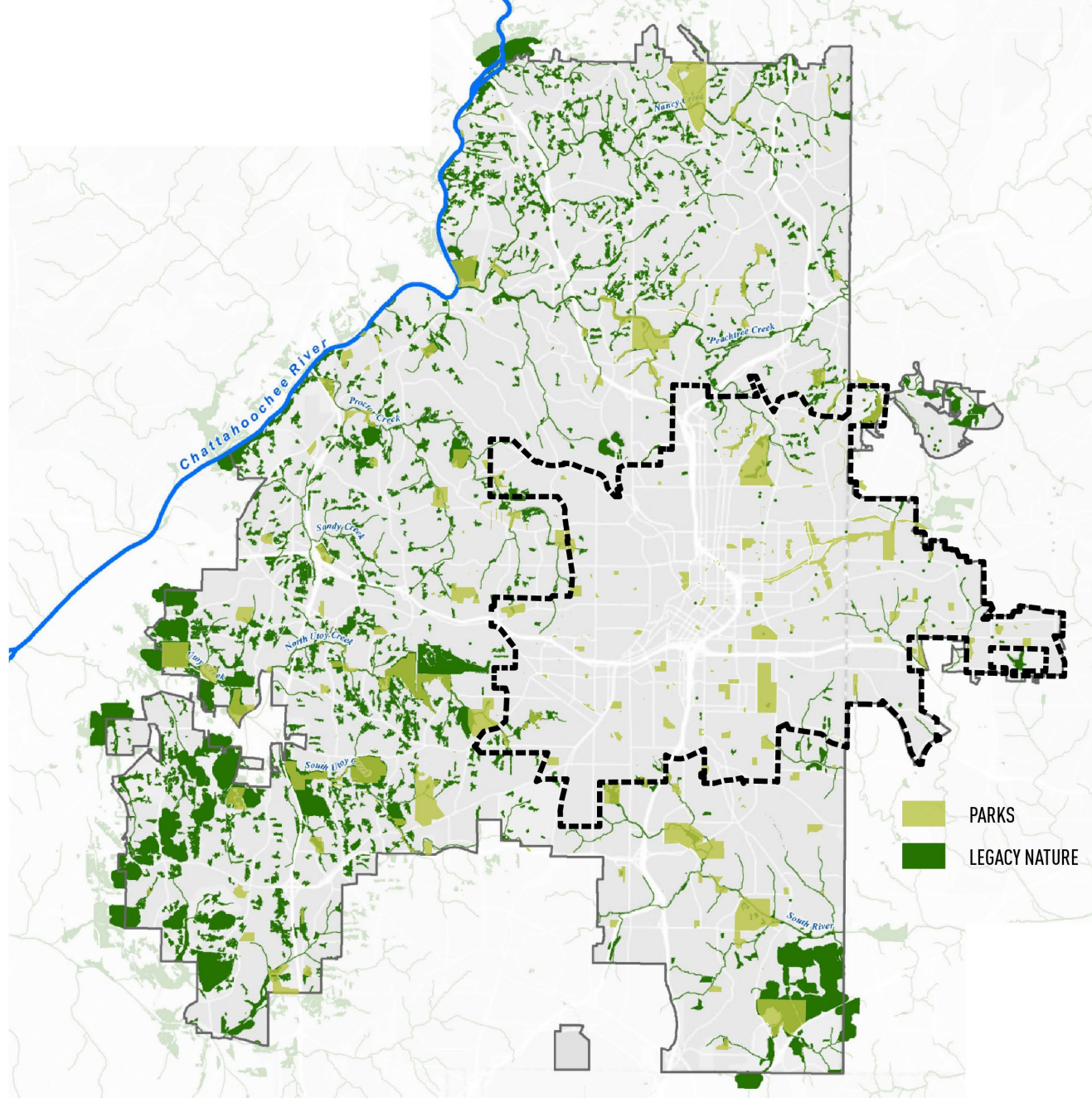


**PERCENT TREE COVER**



**PERCENT TREE COVER BY NPU**

# ATLANTA LEGACY NATURE



# INMAN PARK: 1880s



**DEVELOPMENT PRECEDED OUR CURRENT TREE  
CANOPY; NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND**

# TREES & ADUS



**NO TREES WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS ADU.**

**SMALL, DISCREET FOOTPRINTS ARE EASIER TO WORK AROUND ROOT ZONES.**

# PROBLEMS WE SEE

- 1. NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING,  
PARTICULARLY NEAR TRANSIT**
- 2. LOSS OF HIGH VALUE TREES FOR LOW  
VALUE DEVELOPMENT (ONLY 1 UNIT)**
- 3. LOSS OF TREES FOR PARKING**

Opportunity to leverage the  
tree ordinance update to  
**PRIORITIZE MISSING  
MIDDLE INFILL NEAR  
TRANSIT.**

**PART 02:**

# **POLICY SUGGESTIONS: CONTEXT SENSITIVE TREE ORDINANCE**

# CONTEXT SENSITIVE TREE ORDINANCE



Not all trees are the same. Not all  
land is the same.

The tree ordinance should vary based  
on urban form. Many cities do this -  
Charlotte, Gainesville, Athens.

# CONTEXT SENSITIVE TREE ORDINANCE

**1. SITES LOCATED NEAR TRANSIT**  
1/2 MILE WITHIN HEAVY RAIL, LIGHT RAIL, BRT

**AND**

**2. SITES PRESERVING HIGH VALUE TREES**  
NO HIGH VALUE TREES REMOVED

**AND**

**3. SITES PROVIDING MORE THAN 1 UNIT**  
2 MIN (ADUS CAN COUNT AS A UNIT)

SITES THAT MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE  
**EXEMPT FROM TREE APPEALS**

# CONTEXT SENSITIVE TREE ORDINANCE

**AND**

- 4. SITES PROVIDING SMALLER UNITS**  
750 SF OR LESS

**AND**

- 5. SITES MINIMIZING PARKING**  
NO MORE THAN 0.5/UNIT

**AND**

- 6. SITES LIMITING LOT COVERAGE**  
50% MAX FOR COMBINED IMPERVIOUS + PERVIOUS

SITES THAT MEET THESE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS ARE ALSO  
**RECOMMENDED FOR MR-MU REZONING APPROVAL**