

# WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT



## 6B EDUCATION

Third-graders at Hollis Academy



## 10B HEALTH

Initiatives include more green space



SOURCE: WESTSIDE FUTURE FUND



## 4B MIXED-INCOME

Creating new, affordable housing



## 2B TRANSFORM

Twice-monthly summits draw diverse mix

# Atlanta's Westside story

Teamwork, innovation and vision aim to change the narrative

The west side of Atlanta is undergoing transformation through economic development that is both targeted and guided, and organic. In the Martin Luther King Jr. corridor in the shadow of the new Atlanta Falcons stadium, the Westside Future Fund is tackling generational poverty and crime with initiatives that focus on safety, education and training, mixed-income housing and health. On pages 2B-10B, stories will cover the programs being implemented by the WFF and its partner groups. On page 12B, Westside Future Fund Chairman Richard Dugas shares the organization's vision for the revitalization of the English Avenue, Vine City, Atlanta University Center and Ashview Heights neighborhoods. On page 13B, longtime Vine City resident and community advocate D. Makeda Johnson shares the residents' perspective for positive change. And on pages 14B-15B, students participating in the Raising Expectations program discuss their hopes for the future.

Further north of the MLK Jr. corridor



BYRON E. SMALL

and the stadium, in a longtime industrial corridor along Howell Mill Road, new offices, apartments, restaurants, retail shops and arts centers are changing the face of that neighborhood. Developers are transforming former industrial sites and adapting old manufacturing

and warehouse buildings to new purposes. Stories on pages 16B through 19B will explore what is driving the interest in remaking a one-time gritty sector of Atlanta into a hip live/work/play destination.

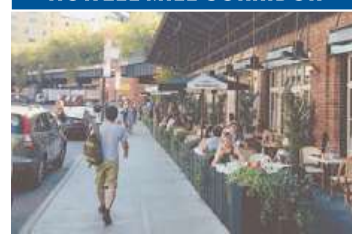
—Jessica Saunders, Managing Editor



## 8B SAFETY

A new youth center is underway

## HOWELL MILL CORRIDOR



## 16B LOCATION LOCATION

Access helps drive Westside redevelopment boom

## 18B DINING DESTINATION

What's next in restaurant growth

## 19B BROWSE, DON'T CLICK

Unique retailers take on ecommerce



## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Westside revitalization effort tackles gentrification fears

BY RANDY SOUTHERLAND  
Contributing Writer

Atlanta's Westside is poised for a redevelopment surge and a coalition of business leaders, city officials and community activists are determined that prosperity will not bring inequality for longtime residents.

The effort is being led by the **Westside Future Fund**, an organization created by Atlanta Mayor **Kasim Reed** and the **Atlanta Committee for Progress** to help steer redevelopment in Westside neighborhoods. It recently created a master plan for the area which includes several neighborhoods around the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Its goal is to be what leaders describe as a community quarterback for renewal.

"Being a community quarterback means having an organization that is literally looking at the total picture," said **Richard Dugas**, chairman of the Westside Future Fund board of directors and retired executive chairman of the board of **PulteGroup Inc.** "It's not just safety and security. Not just education. Not just housing. Not just health and human services. It's a total picture. We can either help do some of the work ourselves or we can coordinate the work of others."

The fund can help ensure that money and time are put to the best uses within the district, according to Dugas.

Since its creation in 2014, the fund has guided philanthropic, corporate



Westside residents and supporters gather twice a month at The Gathering Spot for Transform Westside Summit meetings sponsored by the Westside Future Fund.

SPECIAL/CHRIS MITCHELL

and city-led efforts to improve housing, safety and job opportunities in some of the Westside's poorest neighborhoods.

One of the first jobs for the fund was helping establish better relationships with Westside residents.

"We want to be clear our goal is to help to revitalize the Westside while

not displacing existing residents," said Dugas. "We want to ensure that the effort we're undertaking does not result in gentrification."

Earning the trust of local residents has been a challenge. Atlanta has a long history of pushing residents out of poor neighborhoods to make way for big

projects such as the expansion of the **Georgia World Congress Center** and the **Georgia Dome**. Many of the promises of economic development and affordable housing usually went unfulfilled.

"The biggest issue is the concerns that people have when we bring large-scale, high-priced development to our communities and the impact on property values," said Atlanta City Councilman **Ivory Lee Young**, whose District 3 includes much of the Westside. "The net consequence with higher taxes is gentrification."

Young cited the Westside community of **Lightening**, which was razed to make way for the expansion of the Georgia World Congress Center as well as the north end of the Georgia Dome.

"It was a community that had residents, business, churches, but there was very little regard for the future of Lightening," said Young, noting that one of his next-door neighbors had been a resident of the community. "Anything tied to government is now immediately the subject of suspicion because of the way things were done back then. That contributes heavily to people's doubts and fears about what we're doing now."

Young, an architect, was hired in 1989 to design affordable housing in the Westside. Only 27 out of a proposed 150 units were eventually built.

To avoid those kinds of results, one of the guiding principles of the Westside Future Fund is ensuring that history doesn't repeat itself by leading a different approach to the revitalization efforts, according to Dugas.

With redevelopment will come rising property values and higher taxes – a combination that often makes it unaffordable for poorer residents to continue owning their own homes. To mitigate this problem, the city created an Anti-Displacement Tax Fund with a combination of private and foundation investments. The fund, which is open to low-income residents, will cover increases in property taxes.

"The highest priority identified within the plan was to put protections in place for the existing residents of the area," said **Tim Keane**, commissioner of Atlanta's planning and community development department. "We can ensure that we've done everything we can to address the issue of forcible displacement of people."

The anti-displacement fund is modeled on a similar program established by Charleston in a blighted mostly industrial area of the city. At the time, the fund was considered highly innovative and a way to mitigate tax increases for poorer residents without the difficult process of persuading governing bodies such as school boards to reduce tax rates.

The anticipated development didn't materialize and the fund was never

## TOP WESTSIDE PROJECTS FUNDED BY CITY OF ATLANTA (\$1 MILLION - PLUS)

City of Atlanta has committed \$97 million to Historic Westside neighborhoods since 2013

PROGRAM	FUNDS	FUNDING RECIPIENT
Rodney Mims Cook, Sr. Park	\$14,620,000	Trust for Public Land
Vine City MARTA Station Pedestrian Bridge	\$12,900,000	Sunbelt Structures, Inc.
Morris Brown College Acquisition	\$11,200,000	CoA Invest Atlanta
Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Innovation Corridor Project	\$6,400,000	CoA Department of Public Works
Sunset Avenue Sidewalks and Streetscape	\$5,500,000	CoA Renew Atlanta
Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Innovation Corridor Project	\$4,500,000	CoA Department of Public Works
Castleberry Park	\$4,200,000	Bolton Atlanta, LP and Gallman Development Group
Langhorn Street Complete Streets	\$4,200,000	CoA Renew Atlanta
Land Acquisition, Assembly, and Redevelopment	\$3,700,000	No data
Westside Community Resource Center/Quest Health Development Complex I & II	\$3,468,162	Quest Community Development Organization
Westside Trail Vine City MARTA Station Connection	\$2,697,000	PATH Foundation/Capital Projects
Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Innovation Corridor Project	\$1,474,000	CoA Department of Public Works
Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Innovation Corridor Project	\$1,300,000	CoA Department of Public Works
Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard Complete Streets Project	\$1,284,454	CoA Renew Atlanta
Operation Shield	\$1,200,000	Atlanta Police Foundation
AUC Streetscape	\$1,150,000	CoA Department of Public Works
Bankhead Avenue Bridge Removal	\$1,121,400	CoA Renew Atlanta
Boone Blvd. Green Street	\$1,104,200	CoA Department of Watershed Management
Choice Neighborhoods - Critical Community Improvements	\$1,000,000	Atlanta Housing Authority
English Avenue School	\$1,000,000	Greater Vine City Opportunities Program
Owner-Occupied Rehab	\$1,000,000	Various
Owner-Occupied Rehab	\$1,000,000	Various
Boone Blvd. Green Street	\$1,000,000	CoA Department of Watershed Management

SOURCE: WESTSIDE FUTURE FUND

REVITALIZATION CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 19B





# COMMITTED TO THE WESTSIDE

Together with the Westside Future Fund, nonprofit partners and residents, The Home Depot Foundation is doing our part to revitalize Atlanta's Historic Westside community by completing home repairs, revitalizing outdoor spaces and designing community events at The Home Depot Backyard, a 13-acre greenspace connected to Mercedes-Benz Stadium.





## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Programs seek to diversify, improve Westside housing



Oasis at Scholars Landing residents do chair yoga in the activities center.

BY TONYA LAYMAN  
Contributing Writer

**Westside Future Fund** is helping to lay the foundation for Westside residents to live in a mixed-income, diverse neighborhood. One of the fund's four focus areas is creating mixed-income communities where current residents are able to remain for generations and new residents are attracted to reside – a combination that stimulates and supports local business.

"In the 1960s there were 50,000 people in this neighborhood. Today there are 14,000, with a median income of \$24,000 annually," Westside Future Fund (WFF) Executive Director **John Ahmann** said. "The folks remaining there are what most would consider lower income. Best practices have demonstrated that having a concentrated income in one area does not help create a vibrant community."

Several organizations are acting to realize this vision.

**Atlanta Habitat for Humanity** has built 50 homes in the area, but none in the last 10 years because it hasn't been a desirable location for eligible homeowners. That mindset is changing. By this summer, **Novelis**, along with partners – the **Atlanta**

**Falcons**, the **Arthur Blank Family Foundation**, **Mercedes-Benz Stadium** and the **Georgia Dome** – will have collected and recycled around 3 million aluminum cans to fund a Habitat house in English Avenue.

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity owns 20 lots in Westside.

"Over the last 10 years no one has selected that neighborhood for their home because of disinvestment in the area. But now we are looking forward to selling all 20 of those lots," said Habitat President and CEO **Lisa Y. Gordon**, adding new investment in the area is resulting in more desire to live there.

Habitat's Repair with Kindness program offers non-Habitat homeowners up to \$20,000 for critical home repairs. Some homeowners can get additional assistance from **Invest Atlanta** or the Blank Foundation for even larger repair projects to ensure homes are safe, dry and accessible.

"These residents are the anchors in those communities. They own the home, but trying to make improvements over time can be difficult financially," Gordon said.

In the last year, Habitat has completed

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

History has shown that when Atlantans work together toward a common goal, remarkable things can happen.

It's the Atlanta way.

Jackson Spalding is honored to be working with the Westside Future Fund to help tell the historic Westside story. Through the collective efforts of many dedicated people, that story surely will be one of success.

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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

four repair projects in Ashview Heights and 10 in English Avenue under the program. Additionally, the organization's Brush with Kindness program has also helped 22 Habitat homeowners complete minor repairs and repaint their homes.

The **Atlanta Housing Authority** is making a significant investment in the Westside.

"Atlanta Housing Authority is currently planning to invest over \$65 million in the Westside community," said President and CEO **Catherine Buell**. "We are working to be very strategic about where we are locating our residents. We have to make sure our residents have a place to live but also look at what is going on in the community that we need to support or highlight to ensure our families are able to thrive in that neighborhood."

The mixed-income model allows planners to attract more amenities and resources into a community, improving quality of life for residents through diversified populations, she said.

By the end of the year, AHA will break ground on the 12-acre former Herndon Homes site for a mixed-use community with mixed-income residences along Northside Drive in English Avenue. Of the 700 residential units, 563 will be family rental, 105 will be senior rental and 32 will be for-sale townhomes. Forty percent of the units will be affordable to residents earning less than 60 percent of the area median income, about \$35,000 annually. The site will also include 30,000 square feet of retail, a community space that will feature a S.T.E.A.M. Education Center and health and wellness center and green space. This project is slated for completion in about five years, Buell said.

AHA, in partnership with the **City of Atlanta**, will continue to invest in targeted revitalization and transformation initiatives, family self-sufficiency services and community development programs in the Vine City, Ashview Heights and the Atlanta University Center communities as part of the Choice Atlanta Initiative, Buell said.

AHA is partnering with **McCormack Baron Salazar** and **The Integral Group LLC** to redevelop the nearly 19-acre former University Homes public housing site in the Atlanta University Center. The project started with the development of Veranda at Scholars Landing, which is seniors housing, and Oasis at Scholars Landing, which is assisted living. The next phase is a multifamily building along Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard.

Along with **HJ Russell & Co.**, AHA is using HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program to renovate the first phase of existing mixed-income community Villages of Castleberry Hill.

**515 Rhodes Partners LLC** is developing a mixed-use, mixed-income project, The Enclave at Western Heights, near the Vine City MARTA station and the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium. It features 250 apartment units, a hotel, medical office building and 20,000 square feet of retail and restaurants.

WFF announced April 12 the

Anti-Displacement Tax Fund program, which will pay qualifying homeowners' property tax increases to ensure current Westside homeowners are not displaced as improvements raise property taxes. The fund is administered by the WFF and sourced from philanthropic donations.

"The homeowners in the area are paying low taxes because their appraisals are low but as investment is made and taxes go up, Westside Future Fund will help pay those gaps," Ahmann said.

Through the Westside TAD, the city is allocating funds to help existing homeowners renovate. "Through the leadership of Invest Atlanta, they have brought up some of the most blighted property," he said.



JOANN VITELLI

Oasis at Scholars Landing is part of the University Homes redevelopment.

# Restoring and revitalizing

The PwC Charitable Foundation is proud to support the Westside Future Fund and its Westside Neighborhoods Beautification Project. Restoring the west side to a vital powerhouse of innovation and leadership enables all of Atlanta to continue to thrive and grow economically.

[www.pwccharitablefoundation.org](http://www.pwccharitablefoundation.org)





## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Projects promote training and education in Westside neighborhoods

BY MARTIN SINDERMAN  
Contributing Writer

From elementary schools to job training, the current revitalization effort is focused on giving Westside residents a chance to develop abilities, talents and skills toward earning livelihoods that can transform impoverished families and neighborhoods.

Multiple organizations have mobilized toward providing the next generation of residents with access to high-quality education and current residents with opportunities to develop new work skills in the neighborhoods around the new Atlanta Falcons stadium.

Many of these efforts are underpinned by support from Atlanta's corporate community, including **The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation** started by and named for the Falcons owner, which has committed to invest \$15 million in programs that catalyze positive change and improve the quality of life in the area, building upon nearly \$10 million that the foundation has invested in the area over the past decade.

"Cradle-to-career education" is a major focus – along with promoting mixed-income communities, safety and security, and community health and wellness – of **The Westside Future Fund (WFF)**.

Established in December 2014 by the **Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP)**, a coalition of private-sector CEOs and leaders, universities and nonprofits in partnership with Atlanta Mayor **Kasim Reed**, WFF serves as a catalyst for philanthropic and corporate support to accelerate improvements in the health, education and welfare of current residents of neighborhoods including English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights and the Atlanta University Center.

Cradle-to-career education includes programs providing the next generation of Westside residents with access to high-quality education, and supporting current residents with services such as skills assessments, training and job readiness, according to WFF Executive Director **John Ahmann**.

WFF teams with partners to develop appropriate programming, according to Ahmann.

"Our job is building strategies with execution partners that address our impact areas, such as training and education, and then go out and raise money to fund them," he said.

One example is **Westside Works**, a partnership among **Integrity Transformations Community Development Corp.** (Integrity CDC), headed by The Rev. **Howard Beckham**, which runs the program; the **Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA)**, which provides construction-ready and concrete-truck driving programs; **Per Scholas**, a provider of technology education and career development services; **The**

**The Westside Beautification Program, a Westside Works job readiness program, gives participants training and work experience.**



SPECIAL/ CHRIS MITCHELL

**Center for Working Families Inc.**, with job readiness and certified nursing assistant programs; **Levy Academy**, with a culinary arts program; **Literacy Action**; **YMCA**, with a child-development-associate program; **Invest Atlanta**; The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation; and the **Atlanta Workforce Development Agency**.

Aimed at getting residents of the neighborhoods into living-wage jobs, Westside Works has trained more than 500 enrollees, according to Beckham, with 404 placed into full-time jobs with hourly wages averaging \$13.76. The overall economic impact of the program, based on total wages earned, has been approximately \$10.6 million since its inception in 2013, he said.

"A considerable percentage – around 31 percent – of our registrants self-identify as ex-offenders, so developing programming to not just get people employed, but also to help this group overcome some of the barriers they face has been an ongoing challenge," Beckham said.

In another Westside Works effort, the Westside Beautification Program, sponsored by WFF, participants take a three-week job readiness program, and then get three months of work experience cleaning up the community. Another benefit is the creation of an individual employment plan, designed to help participants obtain long-term employment in the future.

Last October marked the unveiling of **Hollis Innovation Academy**. Serving students from the former Bethune Elementary School, the academy features



**Students at Hollis Innovation Academy take part in a math class.**

JOANN VITELLI

an innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) focused curriculum, developed and implemented in partnership with the **Georgia Tech Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing**.

The academy currently serves pre-kindergarten through 5th grades, and will grow by one grade level every year through eighth grade.

"Our goal is to be an innovative school that provides a strong curriculum, with strong links to the surrounding community," said Hollis Principal **Diamond Jack**.

Enrollment at Hollis is currently around 500-510, according to Jack.

Support for Hollis comes from **Chick-fil-A**, the Blank Family Foundation, and others "that have stepped up to help make Hollis a great school."

The Blank Foundation's "Pipeline Project" seeks to increase the number of low-income, pre-K to 12th-grade students in the Westside neighborhoods and the rest of Atlanta, Fulton and DeKalb counties wanting and achieving proficiency in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM).

"Our goal is to create a better pipeline of kids that are prepared for STEM-related careers and professions," said Blank Family Foundation Program Officer **Ayana Gabriel**.





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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Safety and security initiatives lift troubled Westside neighborhoods

BY GARY MCKILLIPS  
Contributing Writer

Reducing crime in a big city is no easy task, particularly in an area where drugs and violence are staples of daily living. Yet in one such location, Atlanta's Westside, crime overall has gone down almost 40 percent in just one year and the drug trade has been vastly curtailed.

The unlikely catalyst for much of this success has been the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, new home of the **Atlanta Falcons** and the **Atlanta United FC** soccer club. Located near some of the city's most crime-ridden locales – English Avenue, Vine City, the Atlanta University Center area, and Ashview Heights – the stadium was built with a pledge by Falcons owner **Arthur Blank** to help transform these communities.

"Many times stadiums don't uplift the surrounding community, but Arthur is committed to changing that narrative," **Frank Fernandez**, vice president of community development for the **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation**, said. "From the perspective of the foundation, you cannot have what is arguably best about Atlanta – an iconic stadium with marquee events – next to what is worst about Atlanta, that being disinvested and marginalized communities," he added.

There are many investors in Atlanta's Westside with Blank, whose contribution will reach \$22 million by the end of 2017, and Mayor **Kasim Reed's Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP)** among the largest. ACP backed efforts to create the **Westside Future Fund**, a philanthropic nonprofit coordinating revitalization activities. The U.S. attorney's office is also working to improve conditions on the Westside through its Drug Market Intervention initiative.

According to Westside Future Fund Executive Director **John Ahmann**, "We wake up every day and worry about the set of things needed to improve the lives of the current and soon-to-be residents of these historic Westside neighborhoods." The fund established four impact areas, one of which is safety and security.

The **Atlanta Police Foundation (APF)** is responsible for executing a variety of programs that have already made a difference in the area.

**Dave Wilkinson**, president and CEO of the APF, explained his organization is very strategic in the way it assists the Atlanta Police Department. "We ultimately work closely with the mayor and the police chief and others to build the public safety plan," he said. Crime Stoppers, the anonymous tip line, is one of the APF's most successful programs.

When it came to focusing on Atlanta's Westside, the APF again worked closely with the Atlanta police. One of the first initiatives, known as Operation Shield,



Atlanta Police Officer Savannah Barry is among five living in Westside neighborhoods in Pulte houses.

JOANN VITELLI

involved the installation of cameras and license plate readers, a \$1.9 million investment designed to create a greater police presence and help stabilize the area. In the first two months of 2016 crime was up "in the neighborhood of 17 percent, including approximately 11 murders," he said. "As soon as the cameras and license plate readers were installed, we saw a stabilization effect that led to crime being down 39.8 percent in one year."

A second APF initiative was the

establishment of a security patrol known as **Westside Blue**, involving off-duty Atlanta police officers patrolling in English Avenue and Vine City, police beats 102 and 103.

Also implemented was a program that made officers homeowners in the area. With the help of Atlanta-based Pulte Homes and the Blank Family Foundation, five Atlanta police officers are living in Westside neighborhoods with 20 more scheduled to move in over the

## ► KEY CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVES\*

- Secure Neighborhoods – including home ownership by police officers
- Westside Blue – official security patrol
- Operation Shield – cameras and license plate readers
- At-Promise Center – youth learning and community center

\*Crime was reduced 39.8 percent from February 2016 to February 2017

SOURCE: ATLANTA POLICE FOUNDATION

next five years. Officers buy the homes at cost. They also have take-home patrol cars which, when parked in front of their houses, serve as a crime deterrent.

Another strategy is converting the former Head Start building into the At-Promise Youth Center for young Westside residents and their families, Wilkinson said. "It's all about changing the crime picture in the long term by changing the trajectory of the lives of kids in these crime-ridden neighborhoods," he added.

As the Westside programs were becoming active, the U.S. attorney's office, under the direction of John Horn, began the Drug Market Intervention (DMI) initiative. "DMI is a program that focuses on removing the open heroin market from the community while also partnering with residents to empower them to revitalize the neighborhood once the overt drug trafficking activity is reduced or eliminated," Horn said.

Through a variety of meetings, special projects such as neighborhood clean-ups and other activities, Horn said DMI helped reduce the open market trafficking and made it easier for programs such as the Westside Future Fund to be successful. "Before you couldn't go two blocks without there being an open marketplace," he said. "Now, there are still some isolated hotspots we are continuing to address, but you don't see it everywhere. It's not as open. The very nature of things has changed dramatically."

Total Year to Date (to 3/31)	2016 Zone 1	2017 Zone 1	Zone 1% Change 2017 Compared to 2016	2016 English Ave Beat 103	2017 English Ave Beat 103	English Ave % Change 2017 Compared to 2016	2016 Vine City Beat 102	2017 Vine City Beat 102	Vine City % Change 2017 Compared to 2016
<b>Part One Crime</b>									
Homicide	9	6	-33%	2	0	-100%	2	0	-100%
Rape	9	18	100%	1	1	0%	1	1	0%
Robbery	80	78	-3%	6	5	-17%	7	8	14%
Aggravated Assault	113	122	8%	11	10	-9%	9	14	56%
Burglary	225	138	-39%	19	12	-37%	26	5	-81%
Larceny - From Non Vehicle	198	165	-17%	6	12	100%	75	24	-68%
Larceny - From Vehicle	237	188	-21%	12	8	-33%	19	11	-42%
Auto Theft	176	127	-28%	11	4	-64%	13	7	-46%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>-54%</b>

Source: Atlanta Police Foundation





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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Improving residents' health includes access to care, more green space

BY TONYA LAYMAN  
Contributing Writer

Improving the health of the historic Westside neighborhoods involves a multifaceted approach that includes more green space for outdoor recreation, and several options for residents to access health care. The nonprofit **Westside Future Fund** has made community health and wellness one of its four focus areas in the communities of Ashview Heights, the Atlanta University Center, English Avenue and Vine City.

The revitalization and installation of new parks along with new and growing health-care centers is helping improve the health and wellbeing of the area's residents.

In 2005, **Park Pride** answered the plea of Vine City residents to help revitalize two acres that was overrun by kudzu and occupied by several abandoned houses. In 2007, the first phase of Vine City Park was constructed with the help of \$1.9 million from the **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation**, Westside tax allocation district funding from **Invest Atlanta** and the **Department of Watershed Management**. In 2012, an adjacent property was acquired and the park was extended by 25 percent, adding a playground, exercise station and rain garden, said Park Pride Executive Director **Michael Halicki**.

This Westside community experiences frequent and repeated flooding, which has contributed to a significant number of abandoned and/or derelict properties, and is partially responsible for an unhealthy economic and environmental situation for residents of these neighborhoods. The design of the area's parks is helping tackle these issues under the Proctor Creek North Avenue (PNA) Green Infrastructure Vision, a Park Pride proposal that The Conservation Fund supports, to bring green space and storm water fixes to the neighborhoods.

"The flooding issues we have seen on the Westside not only does damage to the housing inventory but creates awful issues with mold and mildew which is another public health issue," Halicki said.

In 2015, Park Pride supported The Conservation Fund's efforts to create Lindsay Street Park – the first park in English Avenue and of the PNA Vision. Up next in the plan is the Rodney C. Cook Sr. Park and Boone Park West.

"This area has been chronically underparked in a city that is underparked," he said. "And that keeps people inside and inactive. Parks can make a difference and can serve as a catalyst to get people outside. Being in a park environment can lower blood pressure and add years onto your life. Parks are good for your health, including your mental health."

Designed to capture 10 million gallons of storm water which will prevent flooding in 150 acres around the park, Cook Park – a collaboration between **The Trust for Public Land** and the **City of Atlanta** – is



A staff member at Healing Community Center helps a resident complete forms. Access to health care is a focus of neighborhood revitalization.



Vine City Park, which includes a playground, exercise station and rain garden, is an example of the green space offerings in historic Westside neighborhoods.

16 acres that has been vacant for 15 years following the demolishing of homes there damaged by flooding. This month that will change, said **George Dusenbury**, Georgia director for the Trust for Public Land.

Ground will break this month on the \$30 million project which will be completed next year and feature a great lawn, boardwalks, sports courts, a splash pad, playground and fitness zone.

"By building a great park in Vine City we are helping to revitalize that community," Dusenbury said. "We are making it more physically attractive and studies have shown that people who live near parks are more active, have more friends, are more apt to exercise and are more connected with their community. This will be

a tremendous amenity for those who live there. Areas near parks also have better air quality which is important in Atlanta."

To help residents who need medical attention, several efforts are being made to improve access to care in the Westside communities.

**Families First Resource Center** offers a wide range of services aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty and uplifting families on the site of the former E.R. Carter School. Families First, the state's largest mental health service provider, will use the center to grow families served annually from an average 37,000 to 200,000 by 2020.

Interim CEO Dr. **MiShawna Moore** said the organization offers 11 programs and 36

services throughout its locations. It moved back to the area in June 2016, from its former Midtown location.

"We started in Westside and when we moved to our Midtown location it mirrored Westside but now Midtown has changed and our vision gave us the opportunity to look for a place to move back home," she said.

There they are working with several other organizations to provide what she calls a "universal referral source" and close the gap on the healthcare needs for the residents of Westside.

**Healing Community Center**, which provides affordable, quality health care to at-risk and underserved populations in Westside Atlanta, was founded by Dr. **Charles Moore**, who started serving the area by delivering care out of his car in 2004. As a physician at **Grady Health System** in the Department of Otolaryngology, he often saw patients who presented with cancers that could have been easily treated had they sought medical attention earlier.

"This was in response to seeing a number of folks who didn't have access to care or would come to the hospital when their disease had progressed to late stage and they had limited options," he said.

He then moved the service to a mobile unit before building out a physical center at 2600 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive about three and half years ago.

The center, which received funding as a federally qualified health center, provides care to both insured and uninsured people on a sliding-scale fee basis. Services include pediatrics, adult medicine, ob/gyn, dental, behavioral health and specialty care. It has another location on Sunset Avenue and a site at one local elementary school with plans to open another school-based site this fall, said CEO **Karen Williams**.

"We turn no one away," she said.

The center also runs the Health Community Workers program, in which individuals from the community are hired to go out and educate and assess the community to help determine who needs care, Williams said.

"It is a way to address barriers and overcome them. A number of people in our community respond better with a personal touch and this provides additional information in ways to get them into care," Moore said. "Most people want to improve their quality of life but it can be difficult to do so if you don't have the information to take the steps to do."

Westside Future Fund Executive Director **John Ahmann** said the core mission of the fund is to enable better and healthier lives for residents.

"We want to help folks there do better," he said. "The things in place are making an impact, but it is not enough yet. However, with the work being done there, will they have a bigger impact in a year and in the year after that? Absolutely."



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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

## VIEWPOINT

# It's time for the Westside

As the magnificent Mercedes-Benz Stadium progresses toward its much-anticipated grand opening, an equally inspiring development is taking shape in the stadium's giant shadow.

Four neighborhoods just west of the new stadium are mounting a comeback.

This is a defining moment for the Westside's historic English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights and Atlanta University Center neighborhoods. An area that includes the world's largest consortium of historically black colleges and universities and has a rich historical narrative of black Atlanta academic, religious, political and business leadership.

We've been here before. As part of the construction of the Georgia Dome in 1992, commitments were made, but promised results did not occur. The underlying reason is that there was no real structure in place to ensure results.

This time we have an urgent mandate from our city's top political and business leadership. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and Atlanta Falcons' owner Arthur Blank, along with the Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP) – a



Richard Dugas is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Westside Future Fund

coalition of public, private and nonprofit sector leaders – have identified these neighborhoods as top priority.

This time revitalization is guided by a realistic strategic plan.

This time residents are being directly engaged for their vision of the neighborhoods' rebirth.

This time we have Westside Future Fund (WFF). The creation of the not-for-profit WFF was announced by Mayor Reed in December 2014 to coordinate a revival of these neighborhoods and ensure their long-term success.

I was honored when Mayor Reed asked me to chair the board of WFF, which includes leaders from business, philanthropy and higher education. We also have the leaders of Invest Atlanta and the Atlanta

Housing Authority and two longtime city councilmen who represent the Westside. The dedicated WFF staff is led by Atlanta native John Ahmann, former ACP executive director.

We're also fortunate to have the support of Dan Cathy, chairman/CEO of Chick-fil-A, who can often be spotted at our twice-monthly Transform Westside Summit meetings.

But here's what truly inspiring – the Westside community is bullish. Committed. Engaged. Residents, college students, business owners – they're all-in as we map strategies and roll up our sleeves to address the poverty, crime, disinvestment and broken promises that have hollowed out the area.

Based on best practice research in community revitalization, WFF has identified and developed plans for four areas needing simultaneous attention: safety and security, cradle-to-career education, health and wellness and mixed-income communities. And through our execution partners, we're already charting progress: starting a security patrol, building new homes for police officers, helping to open a pre-K to 8th-grade school with a

STEM-focused curriculum, and operating a job training program.

While they were excited by the improvements, residents were understandably worried they won't be able to afford to stay in their neighborhoods as they begin to improve. That's why with Mayor Reed, the WFF just launched the Anti-Displacement Tax Fund, which will pay property tax increases for current homeowners in the four WFF communities, allowing residents to keep their homes even as property values rise.

It's a big opportunity and a big challenge. But Atlanta's business community has a track record of partnering with the public sector to advance the city, whether in promoting peaceful desegregation or hosting the Olympic Games. This is another watershed opportunity.

We owe it to these historic neighborhoods. We owe it to ourselves to demonstrate that uplifting people and rebuilding neighborhoods – so they can share in the region's prosperity – is as important to our city as erecting iconic buildings.

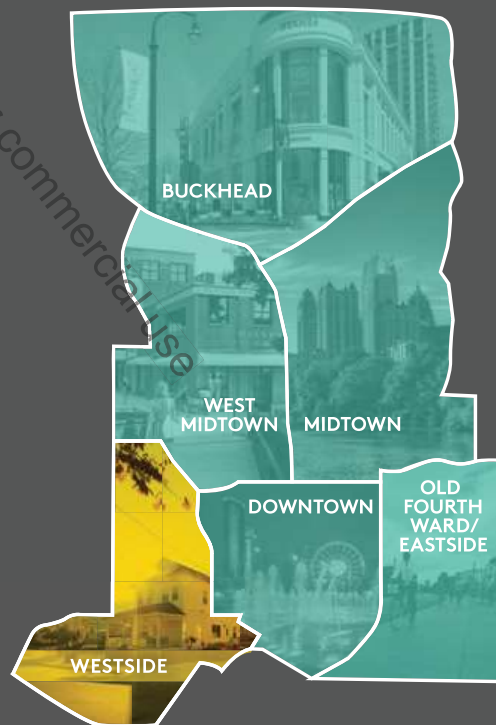
WFF is up to the challenge.

## The Westside is vital for all of Atlanta to thrive.

A dynamic city is the sum of its parts. And neighborhoods all over Atlanta are experiencing an exciting infusion of energy – Downtown, Midtown, the Old Fourth Ward, East Atlanta, Buckhead and around the Beltline. But for all of Atlanta to truly thrive, we need to restore the strength of our historic Westside neighborhoods.

The Westside Future Fund is a not-for-profit organization bringing together community leaders from business, government and philanthropy who believe in the opportunities the Westside offers and are committed to helping the area revitalize and grow.

Collaboration will be the key to success – between the Westside Future Fund, Westside residents, experts and investors. To learn more about our vision and our progress, visit [westsidefuturefund.org](http://westsidefuturefund.org).



### OUR WESTSIDE FUTURE FUND PARTNERS

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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

## VIEWPOINT

# Fulfilling our vision of the beloved community

Gentrification of urban American cities is a complex phenomenon with social, political and economic implications.

It represents a double-edged sword with both opportunities and challenges. The infusion of higher-income individuals into urban centers generates increased renewal investments in formerly neglected and abandoned blighted communities. It provides needed revenue to local municipalities to meet the expense of much-needed infrastructure and service delivery improvements. Unfortunately, gentrification and displacement are manifesting as symptoms nationally as the urban center across our nation thrives to attract upper-middle-income families while displacing current residents with increasing housing costs that exclude the working poor and altering the cultural and historical fabric of urban America cities.

Gentrification can be managed and provide an opportunity for Atlanta, Georgia, to honor its most noted son and drum major for social justice: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Atlanta can once again shine as an urban American city "Too Busy to Hate." We can redefine the G word. We are in a moment of opportunity for the creation of the "Beloved Community," a community of racial and economic diversity.

But it will not just happen, it must be intentionally developed. It is simple, but requires authentic partnership between community, political and private stakeholders committed to the possibility of the "Beloved Community." It will require a resident retention plan that prevents forced displacement, inclusionary affordable housing policy that supports mixed income and racial diversity by acknowledging the area median income, and a tax abatement program to protect vulnerable home and business owners.

The Historic Westside Community is poised with the opportunity to manifest not forced displacement, but demonstrate how to align urban transformation with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of "The Beloved Community." A community where justice and equality is the order of the day; an authentic mixed community where all can live, change and grow without the destruction of the Historic Westside Community's cultural integrity.

To accomplish the building of the Beloved Community, trust must be established requiring a shift from traditional transactional approaches to community redevelopment. We had declared that our approach will be transformative and centered on the development of human capital. This



D. Makeda Johnson is a Vine City resident and community advocate

innovative transformative approach to community development is no easy task. It requires that both residents, stakeholders and service providers rethink and reset traditional mindsets associated with poverty that fails to see and value the many assets within communities and design programs that empower residents with the skills and resources to be a part of the solution with equality and equity.

This writer loves living and working within the Historic Westside Community. Having chosen to call it home for nearly three decades, I proudly celebrate the beauty of community. We are a very resilient community that has, in spite of many challenges, continued to make contributions to society, especially as it relates to striving for social justice and an equitable society. Unfortunately, too often those who seek to serve often overlook the value of relational capacity that exists within community, wealth of knowledge and ability to be a vital asset to achieving transformative sustainable communities.

Envision what could happen as residents and dedicated stakeholders shift their mindsets and reinvent how to renew communities without displacement, where there is the pollination of skills and the capacity to stay in communication even when they are difficult, seeking to establish trust and new ways of engagement that produce the greater good for humanity while creating economically healthy, thriving businesses, well-kept homes, quality affordable housing that is reflective of the earning of the communities' workforce, accessible and affordable healthcare, high-performing educational institutions. In this moment of opportunity, we can be the change that the world is looking for and create the environment that produces productive citizens with economic and social mobility by design. As residents and stakeholders, we will either fulfill or betray the vision of the beloved community based on our actions or inaction. There is a critical need for advocacy on behalf of the often-marginalized long-term residents in gentrifying communities; we have the opportunity to shift that. Where do you stand? I shall continue to strive to be a drum major for justice, equality and inclusion for the establishment of the "Beloved Community."



**APD Urban Planning & Management LLC (APD-U)**, is a national urban planning firm, with over twenty-five (25) years of experience successfully working in communities with rich African American history and culture like the Westside neighborhoods. We have successfully provided real estate development and advisory services, designed affordable housing stabilization strategies, and provided development recommendations and technical assistance as part of our comprehensive neighborhood urban planning services.

We have had the pleasure of serving the Westside communities through several clients: Invest Atlanta, the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, the Atlanta Housing Authority, the City of Atlanta, and the Westside Future Fund. Our work in the Westside began with the creation of the Westside TAD Neighborhoods Strategic Implementation Plan for Invest Atlanta. Since then we have supported the revitalization of these communities through our clients in several ways including:

- Acquisition of vacant and abandoned properties throughout Vine City and English Avenue
- Vision planning to help document resident desires for the future of their neighborhoods
- Real estate advisory services to community partners
- Community engagement
- Policy guidelines for the Westside Homeowner Rehabilitation Program
- Westside Blight Remediation Study
- Community Retention Strategy

We look forward to continuing to work with Westside residents, stakeholders, and our clients in the revitalization of these great communities.



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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

## VIEWPOINT

# Future expectations from young Westsiders

**R**aising Expectations empowers youth in crises by raising academic, social and civic expectations to facilitate high school graduation and post-secondary plans. This is especially important for students growing up in troubled neighborhoods like Vine City and English Avenue on the Westside. Here three Raising Expectations participants from the Westside share hopes for the future.

## Natasha Ellis

**Joined RE:** 10th grade, 16 years old  
**School:** Washington High School  
**Career Interest:** Computer science  
 I moved from a rural area to Atlanta when I was five years old. It was a night and day difference from my town in South Georgia. I didn't like the change of hearing gunshots and police sirens, or hearing my mother try to convince me that it was just fireworks or neighbors playing loud music downstairs. I'm not ashamed that my family is low-income; not everybody can live a crystal-staircase lifestyle but adjusting to life on the Westside was hard, difficult.

I attended all APS schools and hated them. I hated the way I was taught in class, the way the teacher would give up



SPECIAL

Natasha Ellis moved to the Westside from rural Georgia.

at any given moment because the class wouldn't settle down. I tried to avoid looking at the ugliness of abandoned houses that lined the streets but I walked to school every day. I was scared; from elementary to middle school, I was scared to call my new community a home. No matter how much I disliked living here, there was nothing I could do to change my reality. My mother felt as if I was rejecting where I lived and that if I didn't adjust, problems would arise for me in the future. So she found a program called Raising Expectations to help me. I've been a part of this

nonprofit program for nine years.

Now that I've become less fearful and more open, I see my community's richness and history. I know the story of Mr. Alonzo Herndon and that there used to be a movie theatre right around the corner from Washington High School, or that the school I attend today was the first high school to educate African-Americans in the state of Georgia.

I want to see government taxes and other investments to repair sidewalks, create great schools that stay open and a safe community. I envision a school with broader STEM classes that meet the needs of students going in unique and new career fields. I want teachers who understand the community I come from. I don't want a teacher who can't cope and understand students who come from difficult families' backgrounds. Students in my community respect those who understand them and their life experience first.

Many people want to change the Westside Community because of what it looks like but they're only thinking about attraction and beauty. But history is beautiful. History itself is an attraction no matter how abandoned it looks. I would also like to see leaders

challenge themselves to stop trying to demolish every imperfect thing they see and make a community where history and development work together by keeping our community intact.



SPECIAL

Jeremy Jones wants to become an airline pilot.

## Jeremy Jones

**Joined RE:** 10th grade, 16 years old  
**School:** Washington High School  
**Career Interest:** Commercial airline pilot  
 I'm fairly new to the Westside but I've grown to love its rich history. The fact that I live less than a mile from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s and Dr. Alonzo Herndon's house is amazing. Sometimes I just shake my head in surprise as I walk

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**Jarvis**  
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 Public safety is more personal to me than most would understand, when you're a teenager with limited resources, just trying to become a man. The influence of what I saw around me looked like glitter and gold, but as time progressed and circumstances changed, I realized this lifestyle would eventually take its toll...on my future, my family and the things that I hold dear, and when faced with 40 years I thought the end was definitely near. But Atlanta's a second-chance city, and this village has taken me in - from business leaders to the community, now my new chapter can begin.

My name is **Jarvis**. When I was younger, I made the wrong decisions because I didn't have adequate resources needed to go through everyday life. As a result, I was facing 40 years and spent three years incarcerated. However, I was given a second chance, and have since graduated from high school, am enrolled in college and work with the **Atlanta Police Department** and **Atlanta Police Foundation** to help youth realize their full potential. Who would have thought five years ago my life would be where it is today? I'm a living testimony that is anything possible. **I'm excited to see the At-Promise Center open and what it will do for our great city!**

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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

throughout my historic neighborhood.

The Westside is probably one of the few places where you can go from elementary school to college. There are HBCU's (historically black colleges and universities) in the community and college students are always volunteering. When most people think of the Westside they have negative perceptions but the Westside is deeper than it looks. For example, Washington High school is where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. graduated. And there are countless monuments and statues celebrating the richness of civil rights history.

When I think about the changes I would like to see, I think about improving education, affordable housing, more nonprofits for kids in the community like Raising Expectations and summer jobs for youth. I also know that we need to fight against crime because we have too many young people going to prison. One way to help is to create a better education and support systems in this community so kids can stay in school. I would recommend more groups like Raising Expectations where you have mentors from Morehouse and Spelman who care about (children) and get involved. Since I've joined Raising Expectations, my grades have improved and so many opportunities have opened for me outside of school.

I also think there needs to be more careers instead of jobs for parents so they can actually sustain their families without having to struggle. And finally I believe that the Westside should be a community just like the Eastside where you have a Beltline, upgraded schools, better housing and more restaurants while still being able to keep its history and uniqueness.



SPECIAL

Jocelyn Reynolds is a student at Spelman College.

### Jocelyn Reynolds

**Joined RE:** 12th grade, 18 years old

**School:** Washington High School

**Career Interest:** International Business

**College:** Spelman College

As some may know, Booker Taliaferro Washington High School was the first school built in Atlanta to educate Blacks with many notable alumnae that attended, yet today Washington High School has a low graduation rate, high drop-out rate, and low test scores. I believe that more resources, such as better technology, since Washington High School is a STEM school, newer editions of books and more educational tools that help kids prepare for life after high school, could help change those current trends.

As a resident of the Westside, I would like to see major changes take place in the community that will positively affect those that live here, especially my peers. I would love for there to be more funding for programs that provide youth with the support and guidance needed to succeed such as Raising Expectations. I say this because I know a handful of my peers that experienced tragic and unfortunate events within their own homes and neighborhood and need people to support them outside of school. Raising Expectations has helped me get into college, apply for scholarships and introduced me to new opportunities like my former internship with Councilmember Andre

Dickens and the 2016 Black Girls Lead Conference in Broadway, N.Y. I think more kids might stay in school if they had that type of support.

I also have seen how certain policies and decisions made by leaders negatively affect the residents of the Westside. And because most residents are not informed of these certain policies, they are unprepared, resulting in unfortunate events happening like not having affordable places to stay or being able to take care of their family needs. As the Westside of Atlanta continues to grow and change, I would like to see the following: current residents having affordable places to live, youth brought up in better conditioned

homes and neighborhoods, more small businesses owned by African-Americans, the historical aspects of the community marked, known and kept in good condition, more healthy food options and most importantly, see more youth go to college. There is still a lot more to improve but as long as people remember to value the history, the people and the youth I believe we can have a community that goes back to all that it once was before – a thriving, vibrant community with a legacy of excellence.

Natasha Ellis, Jeremy Jones and Jocelyn Reynolds took part in the Raising Expectations program



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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Office, multifamily join redevelopment boom in Howell Mill/Upper Westside

BY LESLIE JOHNSON  
Contributing Writer

On Atlanta's west side, a former industrial center is brimming with new projects, plans and purpose.

Developments and recent real estate news in the market, which includes Upper West Side, West Midtown and the Howell Mill corridor, include: an 11.5-acre site where **Georgia Tech** is seeking developers for a project that could include a hotel, retail, office and residential components; three investors' purchase of six industrial buildings in the neighborhoods along Defoor Hills and Collier roads for adaptive reuse; **Edens'** Publix-anchored shopping center at Moores Mill Road and Marietta Boulevard. And the **Atlanta Humane Society**, which is selling its longtime West Midtown headquarters, has hired **Cushman & Wakefield** to list the property.

And there's more on the horizon – not just speculatively but actively in the works, including **Eden Rock Real Estate Partners'** plans for a \$25 million mix of restaurants and retail called Westside



Village at Moores Mill.

**Westbridge Partners'** Stockyards Atlanta is another project – 135,000 square feet of what the company describes as “adaptive re-use redevelopment of the last

remaining historic buildings in the Miller Union Stockyards district of West Midtown Atlanta.” **Fitzgerald & Co.**, an advertising firm based in Atlanta, is moving to the Stockyards.



Chris Faussemagne

“I think what’s interesting is, beginning in the 2000s, the dynamics were related to leveraging the location,” said Westbridge Partners principal **Chris Faussemagne**.

The drivers at that time included the creative class and food and retail operators, he said.

People like the increasing ease of getting from point A to B on foot in the Upper West Side, which is an important magnet, along with the market’s mix of offerings.

“I think today the dynamics are, both office and multifamily developers are trying to leverage the quality of life,”

## ► GOING WEST

Approximately \$350 million of new development is reportedly planned for Atlanta's Upper Westside. Some projects include:

- Stockyards, a 135,000-square-foot, \$30 million redevelopment: Westbridge Partners
- Westside Village at Moores Mill, up to 100,000-square-foot, \$25 million project: Eden Rock Real Estate Partners
- The Quarter Upper West Side, a \$200 million redevelopment of 44 acres along Marietta Boulevard: Cannon Equities. Pulte Homes is developing some 200 townhomes as part of the large-scale project.
- Moores Mill Shopping Center with a new Publix, 70,000 square feet of retail and 345 apartment units, \$95 million development: Edens

Faussemagne said. “The neighborhood is in the process of changing from being a destination to being more walkable, with more opportunities. We had very little office space and now office is a big thing being developed. I would say 10 to fifteen years ago it (space) was designed for the creative class and it was smaller; 10,000 square feet was the biggest. We’re seeing larger space not just for the typical creative class, but for credit-based larger companies that want to be in an environment where they can have all the restaurants and walk to work. It’s larger floor plans and larger requirements.”

**Pierce Owings**, senior director, land sales, at Cushman & Wakefield, whose most recent and relevant experience is primarily within West Midtown – north of North Avenue and east of Marietta – said aesthetics are a draw. “The industrial look and feel of the area is the linchpin to its success,” Owings said through email correspondence. “In the last development cycle, the brick buildings attracted some of the best new restaurants and a unique food experience emerged. The food scene, coupled with the close proximity to major jobs markets like Buckhead, Midtown, and Downtown, created demand for new residential development.”

**Harold Wyatt**, principal at **Wyatt Capital LLC** and one of the investors who purchased the buildings along Defoor Hills and Collier roads, said via email that several factors are involved in making the market so hot right now.

“It’s a combination of in-migration back to the inner city resulting in greater demand for authentic urban experiences across the board from where people live, work, shop, eat and recreate and many companies are reacting to those demands by relocating their businesses to the inner city so that they may recruit and retain

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

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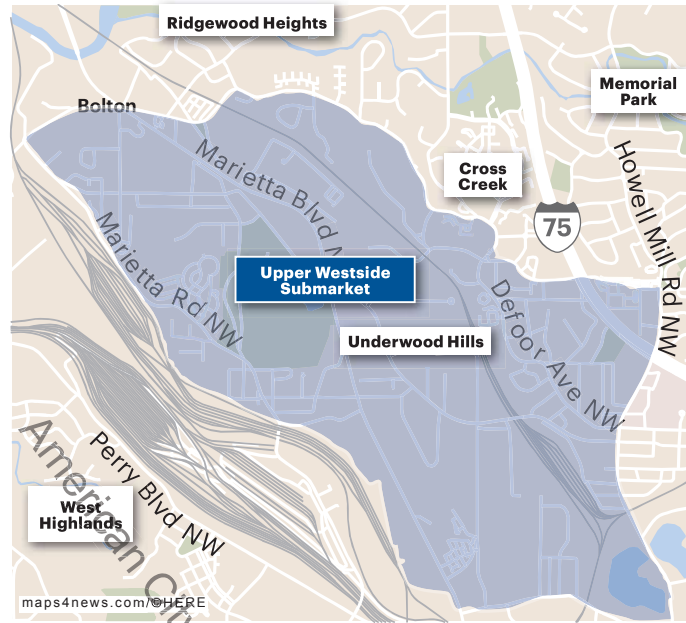
talent," Wyatt said. "The Westside being in close proximity to higher educational institutions doesn't hurt either. The effects of this demographic shift are quite simple – greater demand increases the cost of real estate."

As the Westside area attracts more residents and businesses, the more growth opportunities will become available and necessary.

"It's almost impossible to invest on pure basis at this point as asset pricing is generally high, so you have to be quite careful if you care about maintaining a margin of safety in your investments. But there are more office workers and more residents coming into the Upper Westside and retail and restaurants will follow to support the demand," Wyatt said. "Edens' development of a new Publix and Pulte's townhome development along with our adaptive reuse of warehouse to loft office redevelopment on DeFoor Hills Road represent examples of changing uses of property and the evolution of the Upper Westside." And it's easier to navigate the Upper Westside geography compared to other intown locations, he said.

Real estate experts say the next decade should create more openings for Westside expansion and change.

"When you look at a lot of intown growth in Atlanta, it has been because of



MAP/SPECIAL

the Beltline. We have no external generator such as the Beltline," Faussemagne said. "Over the next 10 years we should have access to the Beltline. I think that's a huge opportunity. The reality is everyone has to change the way they get around the city."

To help support the burgeoning market and tackle growth issues, the Upper Westside Improvement District was formed last summer. The district goes along Howell Mill Road from Marietta Street to Collier Road.

"We anticipate continued densification

of the major north-south and east-west corridors," Owings said. "As office and hospitality components are added the submarket, we expect more vertical multifamily projects to begin to pencil by the next development cycle."

The Westside location is well situated for long-term growth, Wyatt said. "This geography is very solid given that it is essentially in between Buckhead and Midtown and the continued influx of new residents and businesses will likely provide some level of stability through any lull in the economy or the real estate cycle, as there are going to simply be more people living and working in this submarket tomorrow than there are today and property uses will continue to densify," he said.

"We expect to see more companies attracted to authentic nontraditional office space that offers free parking as an alternative to the more costly traditional office tower occupancy that requires experiencing time-consuming parking deck experiences and waiting for an elevator to get to your office, etc."

As far as future challenges, Wyatt said one "for all real estate projects will be how inflated site work and construction costs influence investment and development of all types." Then there is transportation and education infrastructure and how their challenges are solved, he said.



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## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# How Westside is evolving into a culinary epicenter

BY KAREN COHEN  
Contributing Writer

**Bacchanalia** first opened its Atlanta Westside doors in 1999 when the area was primarily vacant and industrial.

"At first it was just Bacchanalia, **Taqueria del Sol** and **Mondo** in the area. We were a tight knit group," said **Anne Quatrano**, chef and co-owner of Bacchanalia / **Star Provisions**. "It was quiet, but our original Buckhead location patrons followed us to the Westside."



Anne Quatrano

Quatrano says encouragement from a local developer and loving the idea of re-using an old building were motivating factors to move Bacchanalia from its original Buckhead location to Atlanta's Westside.

"Bacchanalia and Taqueria del Sol were really the first pioneers to put Westside on Atlanta's restaurant map," said **Ford Fry**, chef and restaurateur of **Ford Fry Restaurants**.

Fast-forward almost 20 years later and Atlanta's Westside has evolved into a premier destination for foodies. The urban revitalization of old buildings, along with the mix of unique retail shops, has brought new high-quality restaurants to the area.

Where there once were only a few restaurants, Westside is now booming with its own food vibe distinctive to Atlanta. "The restaurants are unique, local and thoughtful in processes," said Fry. "These are not mainstream chain restaurants."

Recently Westside restaurant pioneer Bacchanalia and gourmet market **Star Provisions** moved just over a mile away to the Ellsworth Office Lofts in a custom-built building.

"We wanted to find a space that offered accessible parking and ease of access for our guests," said Quatrano.

**Federico Castellucci** knew Atlanta's Westside was the ideal location for his Basque Country concept. "I realized that the neighborhood could use something unique and different," he said. "Basque cuisine, let alone Spanish cuisine, were certainly something different for the neighborhood."

Castellucci's vision became a reality when **Cooks and Soldiers** opened in 2014 on 14th street at Howell Mill.

Ford Fry chose Westside to open Marcel, as he saw the area was lacking a high-end steak experience. He opened The Optimist there, offering high-quality seafood. In addition, he owns JCT Kitchen and Bar on Howell Mill Road, serving new southern food.

"The area attracts people who appreciate high quality and the seasonality of food," said Fry.



RENDERING/SPECIAL

Bacchanalia and gourmet market **Star Provisions** recently moved to a new, custom-built Westside location at Ellsworth Office Lofts.



SPECIAL

*Federico Castellucci opened Cooks and Soldiers on the Westside in 2014.*

**Stream Realty Partners**, which developed Ellsworth Office Lofts, also saw the potential along the Beltline's Westside trail and is developing Lee + White, a 23-acre property with industrial warehouses. The space will become home to

local food and breweries.

"The project is centered on experiences," said **Ben Haultt**, co-managing partner at Stream Realty Partners. "The concept is to create a food and beverage district where you can see how food is made, ride a bike, grab a beer and enjoy a meal."

Currently, 150,000 square feet is already leased including **Monday Night Brewing**, **Southern Aged**, **Wild Heaven Beer** and **Banyan Roots Brewing Co.** Restaurants are vying for the remaining 60,000 square feet left in phase one. "We are also looking at various distillers and cideries for the space," said Haultt.

More restaurants are flocking to the Westside to capitalize on its resurgence. **Flying Biscuit** is relocating its West Paces Ferry and Northside Drive location to the Howell Mill Village.

**Holler & Dash Biscuit House**, a fast-casual biscuit concept from Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Inc., is headed to Westside Ironworks.

Atlanta native **Stephen Franklin** is re-purposing a former Pizza Hut on Collier Road into his new BBQ concept, **DAS BBQ**, with construction expected to be complete by year's end.

**Cushman & Wakefield** listed the Atlanta Humane Society property on Howell Mill Road for sale. It credits the Westside's revitalization as a contributing factor for the property's prime real estate status.

"In a 360-degree radius, within two blocks in any directions of the Atlanta Humane Society, there are unique and dynamic dining and retail options.

This has been the X factor in attracting people to live and work in Westside," said **Pierce Owings**, senior director of lands sales at **Cushman & Wakefield**.

Fry also points to Westside's accessibility as a contributing factor for restaurants succeeding in the area.

"Westside is a diamond in the rough," Fry said. "There are many access points into the area. People from Smyrna and Vinings come in through the backside. Marietta Street brings in downtown customers. Tenth and 14th streets bring in Midtown and Howell Mill and Northside pulls in from Buckhead."

As Westside continues its transformation, local restaurateurs see the food industry evolving too. "My gut says restaurants will keep going further west," said Fry. "I see it filling in more down Marietta Street and more west toward Bolton Road over time."

As far as the future, Castellucci says he foresees some challenges for restaurateurs becoming successful on the Westside with rising rents and the high cost of construction.

"I think we are about tapped out in the upscale and fine dining establishments," said Castellucci. "I foresee more casual options proliferating as well as more bar-focused establishments."

As the Westside continues its culinary evolution, local restaurateurs are optimistic about its future. "I like what I see in Atlanta's Westside restaurants," said Quatrano. "People are opening chef-driven, smaller-budget restaurants. It says a lot about the integrity and direction of Westside's restaurant scene."



## WESTSIDE MARKET REPORT

# Location, unique experiences drive Westside retail growth

BY W.W. CHASTAIN  
Contributing Writer

In the face of declining retail, Atlanta's Howell Mill corridor/Upper Westside/West Midtown area offers an exception to the rule.

Originally a warehouse and meat-packing district, the area first became the design district of Atlanta, boasting of furniture, rug, and antique stores, along with designer places. Restaurants followed, which led to quality retail stores such as **J. Crew**, **Billy Reid**, **Anthropologie**, and **Lululemon** rooting in the area.

"[The area] developed over time and it is very authentic," said **Frank Buonanotte**, founder, Board of Directors member and retired chairman emeritus of **The Shopping Center Group** and partner on Westside Ironworks. "It happened organically. A developer didn't just plunk down a development and say 'viola.'"

Retailers have found the available spaces attractive for their shops.

"Westside is kind of a canvas to create some of those authentic and experiential type feelings because of the existing buildings and some of the interesting architecture," said **Jeff Stein**, partner of **Westside Ironworks LLC** and founder and principal of **Stein Investment Group**. "It's a varied area of redevelopment. It's pocketed."

Bucking the trend in retail requires savvy and business sense, according to **Chris Decoufle**, vice president of **CBRE Inc.**, who brokered the Westside Provisions deal.

"You used to be able to think about space and then you brought a bunch of tenants in, and you put them in based on



Jeff Stein & Frank Buonanotte are developing Westside Ironworks.

BYRON E. SMALL

credit, or other criteria," Decoufle said. "That's still important, but now you have to think about how each retailer is going to affect the draw to other retailers. And then you have to think a lot about your place. Is it unique? Is it an experience? Is it something different than a mall? Is it safe? Is it safe and edgy? That would be great. That's hard to get right, but once you do, you start intermixing very good local and regional type brands."

On-line shopping has killed a lot of retail. What drives a consumer to go to stores rather than a computer?

"In the times of e-commerce, the brick-and-mortar retailers thrive by offering goods or services that cannot be obtained online, such as medical office, restaurants, services or experiential retail," said **Amy Fingerhut**, first vice president, CBRE. "There is also an edge

up for many brands and concepts that want storefront availability for customers to touch and feel the product, and then order it. In other words, the customer may not walk out of the store with purchase in hand, which allows retailers to keep less inventory on site and lowers costs by eliminating some costs to maintain the space."

Buonanotte believes uniqueness is a big part of the equation for why this area of Westside is such a hot retail sector.

"You go into a place that has brick walls, high ceilings, hardwood floors, where the place is 80 years old," Buonanotte said. "Or you go to a place that has 20-foot industrial windows that were there when it was a meat-packing plant. And each space is different."

**Dixon Rye** typifies the ideal tenant. Occupying the street front of the Westside

Ironworks complex on Howell Mill, Dixon Rye is touted as one of the best new home furnishing stores in Atlanta.

"Dixon Rye took the original storefront door ... and made it a feature of the space," Buonanotte said. "They took the original window frames and created a little shop within a shop out of them. It's a really good example of when you walk in there, you see the volume of that space and you see these huge overhead cranes with chains hanging down. You can never find that in a mall in Atlanta."

Location also plays a role in the area's success.

"It's very close to Buckhead," Buonanotte said. "You can go down Howell Mill from Buckhead or down Northside Drive. It's accessible and convenient from Midtown. It's extremely convenient for Vinings. That's a great customer base. They can come down Marietta Boulevard or Interstate 75, very convenient. It's also extremely convenient to convention-goers and leisure travelers because of its great proximity to downtown. It's convenient for visitors to Atlanta. Those are things that make all retail successful, location and close proximity to a good shopper base with quick and easy access. Westside has that."

The current mix of the area doesn't lack much. Stein believes the area could use a grocery store or two. Buonanotte noted some entertainment already exists in the area, citing Topgolf and Northside Tavern as examples. He believes more entertainment will follow. Decoufle thinks there is room for "unique" office space.

"Some of these areas, Westside and Ponce [City Market], the surprise has been the level of offices that are in demand."

REVITALIZATION CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 2B

fully utilized. As a result, Atlanta lacks a model for how such a fund might affect gentrification.

"In this case the scale is much larger – a larger geographic area – and the details of the program are much longer term," said Keane. "The scale of this is way bigger than what happened in Charleston, but the technique is the same."

The more generous funding needed for such an effort has come from a variety of sources including the **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation**, the **Chick-fil-A Foundation**, the **Georgia Power Foundation**, **Cox Enterprises**, **PulteGroup**, **Delta Air Lines Inc.**, **Georgia-Pacific** and others.

"This will really influence the nature of this place in terms of who's living there and the kinds of business that go there," said Keane.

In addition to helping homeowners, the Westside Future Fund is also focused on protecting renters and small businesses in the area from being displaced.

"In English Avenue and Vine City

alone, there are probably some 3,500 single-family homes and apartments being rented out for \$250 to \$500 a month," said Westside Future Fund Executive Director **John Ahmann**. "While these units are affordable, they're in poor condition. Our goal is to maintain that affordability, but provide much higher quality housing."

Renters are even more vulnerable to displacement as property owners become able to raise rents or sell. Business owners face a similar threat of rising rents.

To build a more sustainable community, the fund and its partners have focused on not just better housing, but safety, job training and other initiatives.

"If we want to drive the economic growth of a neighborhood and a community you have to ensure that you are really providing for (it) across the broad spectrum of need," said **Invest Atlanta** CEO **Eloisa Klementich**.

Development has to include an emphasis on issues as diverse as jobs and daycare to ensure that residents in affordable housing are able to keep and maintain them over the long term, she added.

Atlanta's City Council recently

approved a \$40 million bond to fund affordable housing throughout the city.

This followed a \$30 million **Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant** from **HUD**, which was directed to revitalize west Atlanta, including Vine City, Ashview Heights and the Atlanta University Center neighborhood.

Invest Atlanta has launched programs aimed at providing a wide variety of housing options for local residents. These include down payment assistance for home buyers, affordable rental units and grants to help existing homeowners to maintain and repair their residences.

The agency is planning to redevelop 24 single-family properties in English Avenue and Vine City to turn currently abandoned land parcels into affordable workforce housing units. The initiative will add new housing for Westside residents while eliminating vacant and blighted properties.

Since 2013, the agency has invested \$15 million through its Community Improvement Fund and leveraged more than \$55 million in investments in the Westside.

With safety a prime concern of

residents, the Atlanta Police Foundation has helped facilitate the construction of five homes for police officers in Vine City. Additional homes will be constructed in English Avenue. A total of 25 houses will put officers throughout the community. The homes were built through a partnership between home builder **PulteGroup**, which constructed the homes at cost, the city, the **Atlanta Police Foundation**, the **Atlanta Housing Authority** and the **Blank Family Foundation**.

Police have also installed cameras at locations throughout the area.

The city has joined in a coordinated effort with the Atlanta Housing Authority, police and Invest Atlanta to eliminate blighted properties.

"So we're dealing with public safety issues and blight," said Keane. "We're dealing with zoning and regulatory issues. Plans call for a lot of regulatory changes."

While the fund has focused on Vine City, English Avenue, Ashview Heights and Atlanta University Center, Young, a member of the fund's board of directors, has pushed for a wider effort.

— 2017 —

## ATLANTA **BUSINESS CHRONICLE** EVENTS

### **CORPORATE COUNSEL AWARDS**

Hyatt Regency Atlanta  
May 10 | 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

### **CFO OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

College Football Hall of Fame  
May 25 | 7:30 - 9:30 A.M.

### **GROW GEORGIA SUMMIT**

Twelve Atlantic Station  
June 8 | 7:30 - 11:30 A.M.

### **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FORUM**

Cobb Galleria Centre  
June 23 | 7:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

### **MOST ADMIRED CEO AWARDS**

The Foundry at Puritan Mill  
August 24 | 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

### **BEST PLACES TO WORK AWARDS**

TBD  
September 6 | 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

### **SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**

Georgia Aquarium  
September 21 | 7:30 - 9:30 A.M.

### **GOVERNOR'S INTERNATIONAL AWARDS**

Atlanta History Center  
October 5 | 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

### **WOMEN WHO MEAN BUSINESS**

TBD  
October 19 | 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

### **HEALTH CARE 20/20**

Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre  
October 26 | 7:30 - 11:30 A.M.

### **40 UNDER 40**

The Foundry at Puritan Mill  
November 9 | 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

### **GROW GEORGIA SUMMIT**

Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre  
November 16 | 7:30 - 11:30 A.M.

### **BUSINESS OF ENTERTAINMENT**

TBD  
December 7 | 7:30 - 11:30 A.M.

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