

2.0 Site Inventory

2.1 Overview

This section contains an inventory and analysis of existing conditions in the Peoplestown Parks as they existed in early 2008. These conditions have been compiled from site visits, previous plans, community comments, and existing data sources and services. They were then analyzed to understand existing conditions and provide a baseline for park improvement efforts.

2.2 Peoplestown Parks

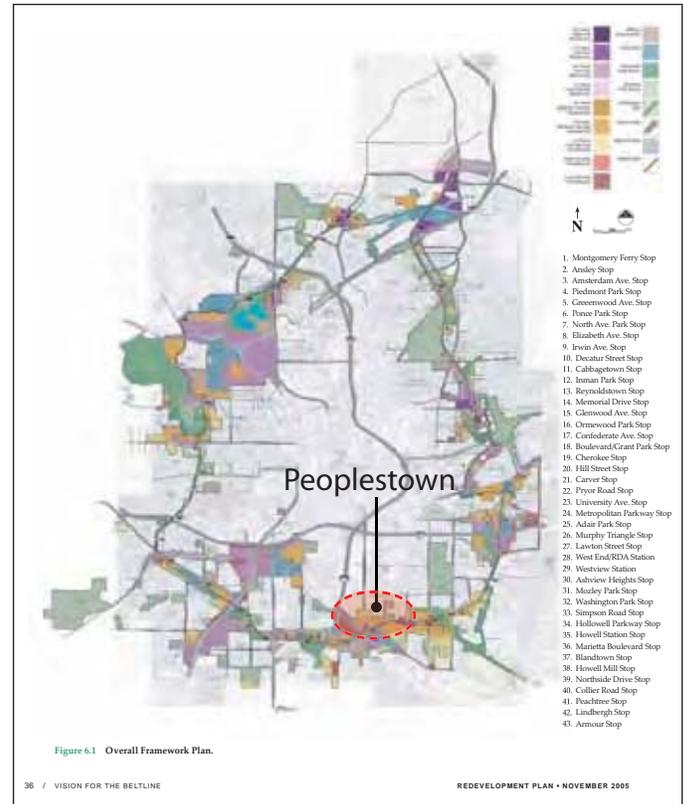
The Peoplestown Parks consist of two existing City of Atlanta Parks: DL Stanton Park and Four Corners Park. Both neighborhood parks are located at the southern end of Atlanta's Peoplestown neighborhood, where they occupy a strategic transition between the existing historic neighborhood and the redevelopment opportunities near the BeltLine. Users of both parks tend to be neighborhood residents.

With just over a quarter-mile of primarily undeveloped land separating them, their proximity offers an opportunity to plan for both parks in a unified manner.

2.3 Neighborhood History

DL Stanton and Four Corners Parks are key focal points of the Peoplestown neighborhood - a historic in-town Atlanta community located one mile south of Downtown. It lies south of I-20, east of I-75/85, and north of the BeltLine.

The diverse neighborhood grew up around a Victorian-era trolley that ran along Capitol Avenue (now Hank Aaron Drive). It was built primarily as housing for lower, middle, and upper income residents. Wealthier families were concentrated along the major paved, tree-lined streets, while poorer ones lived in dwellings at the rear of the lots accessed via alleys. The neighborhood was originally largely white, but there were segregated African American communities within it. These were



This effort builds on the vision of the 2005 Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan and is produced in conjunction with current BeltLine planning efforts



The Peoplestown neighborhood includes both Four Corners Park and DL Stanton Park, both within the BeltLine Tax Allocation District redevelopment area (shaded in orange)

characterized by smaller lots and houses, unpaved roads and a lack of utilities until around 1930.

Like many Atlanta neighborhoods, Peoplestown has changed over the years. As wealthier residents moved north, they were replaced by a substantial Jewish community, and then a predominately African American one. Peoplestown is significant as the only neighborhood along the Beltline to have had a substantial Jewish community, including Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews (from Germany and Eastern Europe). It contained a cultural market, Kosher stores, and several synagogues.

Over time, the residents of Peoplestown have become an active, outspoken group devoted to strengthening their community by offering more amenities and by developing their strong neighborhood character. The residents are led by community leaders who are actively engaged and informed, and who are successfully working together toward a common vision of improving and expanding the parks in their community.

2.4 Previous Park Plans

This plan builds upon the work of Friends of Peoplestown Parks (FoPP). In 2006, FoPP was selected by Park Pride to develop a vision and strategy which improved the parks and connected Four Corners and DL Stanton Parks.

Over 80 residents and supporters participated in 7 public meetings, starting in January 2007, to develop the Vision which was completed in the summer of 2007. The Vision improves upon current park amenities and facilities and connects the two parks. The Vision was created to be implemented over a 25 year period with near term goals focusing on expansion and improvements of the current parks and long term goals focused on connecting the parks and placing amenities in the expansion area. The Beltline has utilized the community's Vision as the vision for the Peoplestown Parks Master Plan included in the Sub-Area 2 Master Plan.

From the beginning, the community insisted on incorporating environmentally friendly elements and development principles into the future vision



The urban form of the Peoplestown Neighborhood shows a street grid that has allowed development and change to happen over time



Four Corners Park offers both active and passive uses



Recent land was acquired to expand Four Corners Park to the southwest at Weyman Avenue and Crew Street

of the park, consistent with the City of Atlanta's commitment to have all new facilities meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification standards. The LEED program has been successful in promoting green building principles, and is a widely recognized and nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Green Building Council and is currently making strides in accrediting neighborhoods and communities as well as individual buildings.

FoPP adopted five goals for the future design and development of the park and its facilities:

- Sustainable design and reduced environmental impact
- Energy and water efficiency, including greywater recycling

- Use of recycled materials in construction whenever possible
- Use of modern technology and construction approaches
- Use of renewable energy technologies
- Continued FoPP involvement in design and development

The resultant plan incorporated these goals into the following vision elements:

- Connecting the two parks by acquiring land south of Boynton Avenue for park expansion that could encourage passive recreation
- Creating a LEED certified aquatic and recreation center
- Establishing new tennis courts, a ball field, and play areas



The recently completed Peopletown Parks Vision illustrates the community's Vision and full park expansion possibilities

- Connecting the parks to the BeltLine

The conceptual master plan below shows these and other components.

2.5 Four Corners Park

Four Corners Park is a neighborhood park bounded by Hank Aaron Drive, Weyman Avenue, Crew Street, and Haygood Avenue. It lies just north of the BeltLine’s intersection with University Avenue, Ridge Avenue, Hank Aaron Drive, and McDonough Boulevard. The park is a small, vibrant facility where neighbors gather in the community center, frequent the basketball courts, and meet under the small pavilion for picnics.

The 3.4 acre park was recently expanded along its southern border. These new acquisitions have allowed the park to begin to fill the block and also suggest possibilities for the entire block.

Rick McDevitt Youth Center

Four Corners Park is home to the Rick McDevitt Youth Center. The center is housed in a formerly abandoned building and park that was prone to illegal activity before it was renovated at the urging of Rick McDevitt and Columbus Ward, founders of Atlanta Help Our Youth and Community Care, Inc.

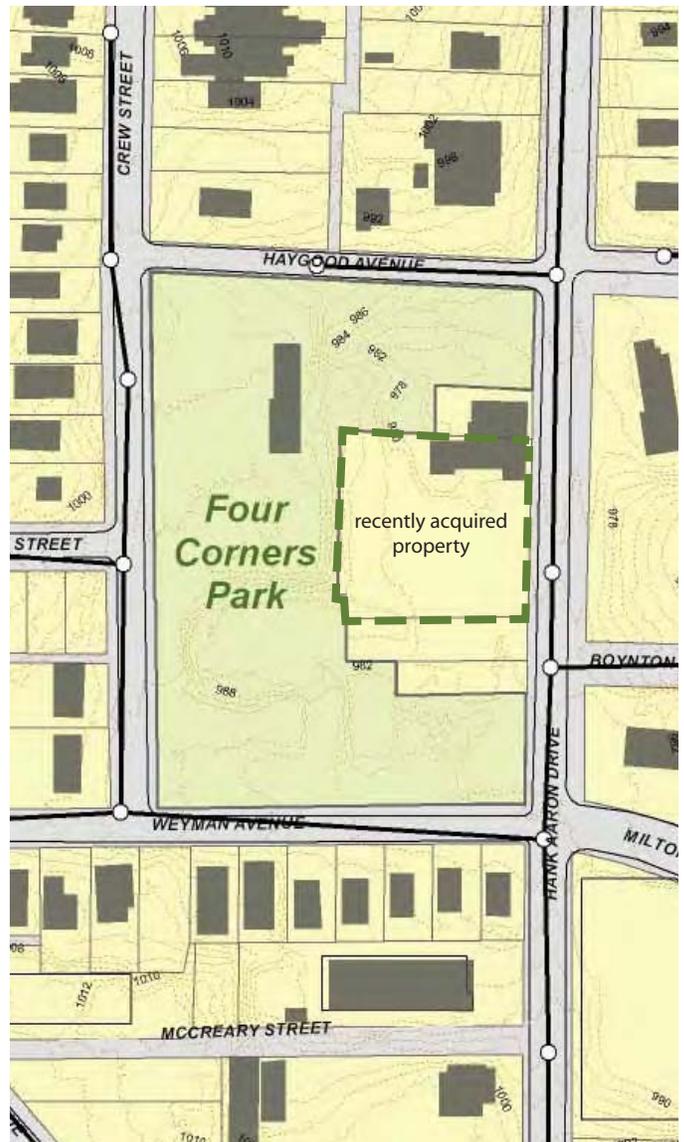
Today the youth center has become a successful example of collaboration between the City of Atlanta and the community, which obtains support from donors and partner organizations. Its use stands as a symbol of community pride. Until the construction of a new recreation center in Stanton Park, the McDevitt Center is the only public space for community and youth activity in the neighborhood.

Park Context

The park’s layout is typical of urban parks in Atlanta. It is fronted by streets and sidewalks on most sides, which allows adjacent homes to keep an eye on activity in the park and to define the street. This visibility promotes safety and helps the park feel like a truly public space. With the exception of Hank Aaron Drive, traffic on bordering streets is slow.



Main entrance to Four Corners Park at the northwest corner of the block, facing the Community Center and Playground



Graphic showing contours (brown lines) and utilities (black lines) around Four Corners Park

Adjacent land uses include single-family and multifamily housing to the north, west, and south. To the east are two single-family homes, a church, and vacant land. A large apartment complex lies across Hank Aaron Drive.

Existing Infrastructure

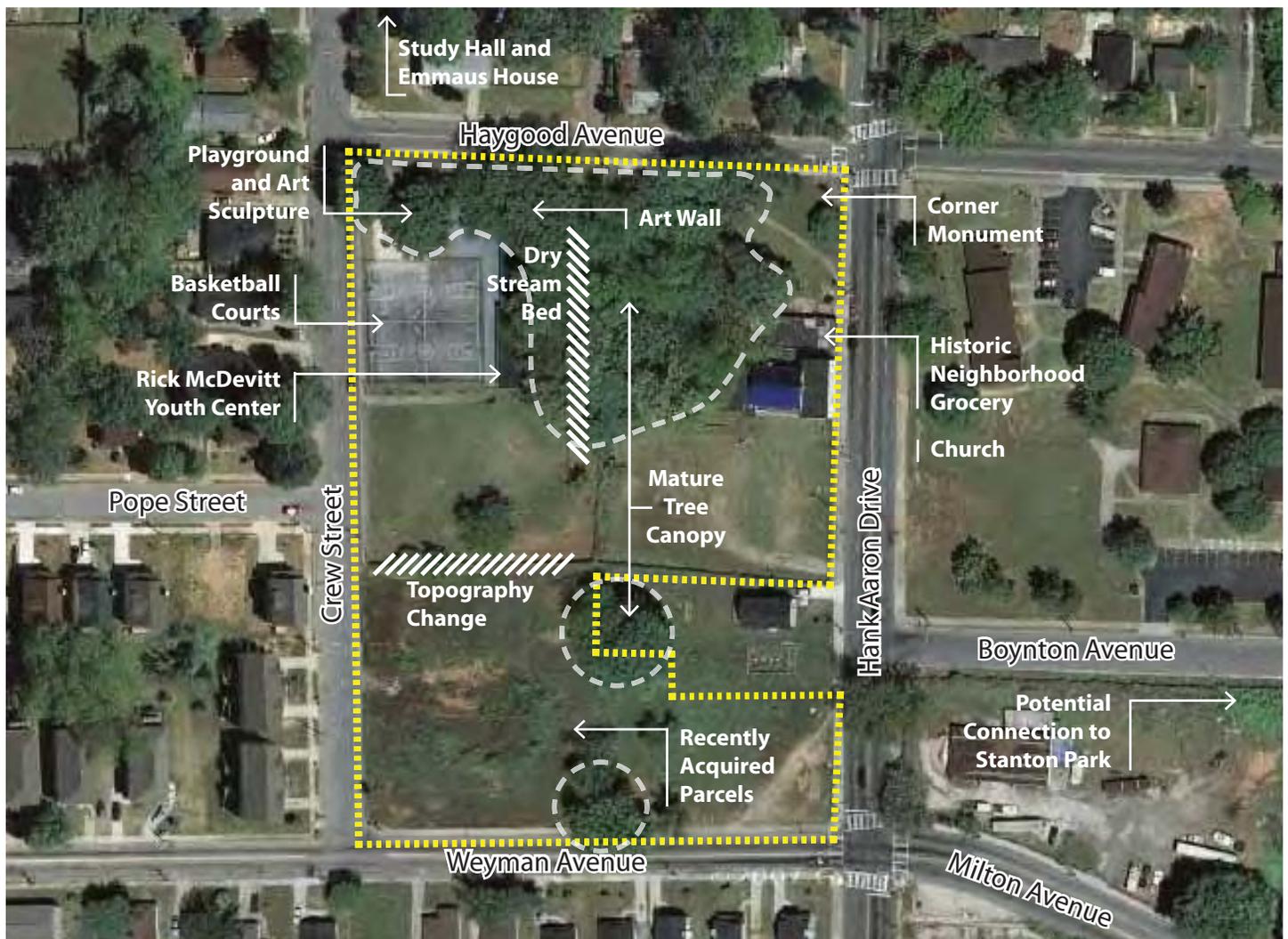
Four Corners Park’s bounding streets contain sewer and water facilities. Fortunately, the park does not appear to include easements in its boundaries.

Existing Natural Factors

Four Corners Park is mostly level, with a few key exceptions. Its flat west side provides an ideal site for a playground, basketball courts, and a small grassy area south of the youth center. The steepest part of the park is behind the youth center, where the land falls to a vegetated property line. Another



Several areas of existing vegetation are found in Four Corners Park



Four Corners Park overview, showing park boundaries in yellow, existing amenities, and nearby points of interest

steep area lies at its south end, where holes mark the location of demolished buildings.

The park has both wooded and open areas. Large, mature trees grow along its northern side and are ideal candidates for preservation. The newly acquired properties to the south have sporadic vegetation. There are no streams or floodplains in the park.

Existing Public Art

The park features two public art displays as well as an art wall along the northern portion of the Rick McDevitt Youth Center. The northern art wall has significant community meaning and could be retained and creatively incorporated into a new design.

Existing Facilities

As a small neighborhood park, the facilities in Four Corners Park are limited. In addition to the youth center, the park houses two basketball courts and a picnic area. These facilities serve the needs of the community and young residents. However, the recently acquired southern area presents an opportunity to provide further amenities.

In the Peopletown Parks Vision, the community identified elements to be added to the park. Among them are tennis courts, improved basketball courts, formal lawn gathering areas, an improved playground, an expanded picnic area, and public art.

Safety is also a concern for residents. In light of a troubled past of drug activity, litter, dysfunctional basketball courts, and graffiti covered walls, visibility and safety for the park's users are of primary concern. Design and placement of the amenities focused on accessibility, existing infrastructure, safety, and visibility.



Existing art mural on the north wall of the Rick McDevitt Youth Center



Existing sculptural artwork and playground in the northern portion of the park



Good parks can provide both open space and programmed spaces, such as basketball courts and playgrounds

2.6 DL Stanton Park

DL Stanton Park is a 7.6-acre neighborhood park located mid-block at the corner of Boynton Avenue and Martin Street. Today the park remains a largely under-utilized barren field adjacent to the proposed BeltLine. It has a less than glamorous past as an informal waste disposal site.

Park Context

DL Stanton Park was developed on a reclaimed former dumping ground when the area was a no-man's land between Peopletown and the rail corridor now known as the BeltLine.

Given this history, the park does not have a strong relationship to adjacent properties. It is largely hidden in the end of the block, with only a small amount of frontage on Martin Street. Surrounding homes back up to it with walls and fences, which precludes any possible security benefits associated with good visibility into the park.

Adjacent land uses include single-family homes to the north and east, vacant land to the west, and the BeltLine to the south. These are a challenge today, but some may provide opportunities for redevelopment that capitalizes on the park.

Existing Infrastructure

DL Stanton Park is impacted by a sewer line running east-west in its north end. To ensure that the City's Department of Watershed Management can access this line for potential maintenance, no buildings or other major permanent structures can be built on top of it. However, facilities such as walking paths, landscaping, and parking are permitted. In fact, the existing playground ring sits atop the line.

Existing Natural Factors

As noted earlier, DL Stanton Park is a grassy area with a small amount of vegetation at its edges. Trees are found only along the perimeter, abutting fences and defining residential back yards.

There are steep changes in topography along the southern edge of the property, as the vegetated banks rise to meet the BeltLine tracks.



The current entrance to the park is less than ideal, requiring a long path to reach the interior playground



Graphic showing contours (brown lines) and utilities (black lines) around DL Stanton Park

There are no streams or floodplains in or near the park. However, water has a tendency to gather in a low lying area in the northeastern part of the site.

Although the park was once an illegal dump, most of the soil has been remediated. However, contaminated soil may still exist underneath the demolished recreation center.

Existing Public Art

There is no public art in DL Stanton Park. However, the BeltLine subarea 2 master planning effort has

identified an opportunity to create new public art at the park's entry to the BeltLine.

Existing Facilities

DL Stanton Park currently lacks any facilities other than a playground. In the recent past, an oversized play ring was installed in the middle of the site, along with supporting infrastructure below. The ring physically dominates the site, but is located far from the entrance to the park. As such, there is poor visibility to it from public streets.

Recent playground improvements have been completed, replacing damaged equipment with new equipment in the existing playground ring. The old recreation center stood vacant and was recently demolished.



Recent playground improvements at Stanton Park include new equipment in the original central location

2.7 Boynton Avenue Site

As noted earlier, the Peoplestown Parks Vision

identified an opportunity to connect DL Stanton and Four Corners Parks by acquiring an approximately 10 acre tract between the two, along Boynton Avenue.

The expansion area identified in the Vision is a



DL Stanton Park overview map, showing park boundaries in yellow, existing amenities, and the BeltLine

partially treed site with significant topographic change. It is divided into higher and lower terraces, with the former following the BeltLine and the latter along Boynton Avenue.

This topography naturally breaks the site into two separate zones. Depending on future funding or development activity, the topography suggests that it may be easy to develop one or both of the zones into parks or development sites. If developed, the site's depth would allow for a linear park to be provided along the south side of Boynton Avenue.



The abandoned recreation center has recently been demolished



Graphic showing the community suggested park expansion area