



*Laney Walker-Harrisburg
Choice Neighborhood*

OUTLINE WITH CONTENT

NOVEMBER 22, 2022



for the
Central Savannah
River Area



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Opportunities like this do not come along often to bring together residents and stakeholders of the community and re-imagine a shared future.

The purpose of the Outline with Content is to provide an outline of the neighborhood transformation plan document that will result from the Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood Planning process. On the pages that follow, there is an analysis of the existing conditions, an overview of the planning process, and a summary of recent plans completed for different parts of the Choice Neighborhood on which this plan will build.

One year into the two-year planning process, the team has completed a thorough survey of residents living in Allen Homes and the larger neighborhood. Findings of the surveys have just been shared with the community. In the coming months, residents and planning partners and stakeholders will continue to explore the survey findings, prioritize issues to address in the plan, and develop innovative and implementable strategies to realize a shared vision for the future.

OUR TEAM:

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Lead Applicant | The City of Augusta

Co-Applicant | Augusta Housing Authority

STEERING COMMITTEE

Allen Homes Residents

Augusta, Georgia Land Bank Authority

Augusta Housing Authority

Augusta National, Inc.

Augusta Planning & Development Department

Augusta-Richmond County Housing & Community Development

Augusta Technical College

Augusta University/Medical College of GA

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Augusta

City of Augusta

Community Foundation for the CSRA

Medical College of Georgia Foundation

Paine College

Richmond County School System

Richmond County Tax Commissioner's Office

ASSETS & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Augusta University

City of Augusta

Paine College

PLANNING COORDINATOR

WRT

TASK FORCES

Our team is continuing to grow! This list only reflects the partners we have engaged with in the first year, we are planning to bring more voices to the table over the next year.

Housing

CO-CHAIR: Augusta Housing Authority

CO-CHAIR: Antioch Ministries, LLC

CO-CHAIR: Allen Homes + CN Residents

Augusta Planning & Development Department

Augusta-Richmond County Housing & Community Development

BLOC Global Development Group

Cranston Engineering

HUB Collaborative

Richmond County Tax Commissioner's Office

Salvation Army

Security Federal

Neighborhood

CO-CHAIR: Augusta, Georgia Land Bank Authority

CO-CHAIR: Augusta Planning & Development Department

CO-CHAIR: Allen Homes + CN Residents

Augusta Canal Authority

Antioch Baptist Church

Bethel AME Church

Downtown Development Authority

Good Neighbor Ministries

Greater Augusta Arts Council
Historic Augusta
Lucy Craft Laney Museum
Richmond County Marshal's Office
Richmond County School System
Richmond County Sheriff's Office
St. Luke Church
Tabernacle Baptist Church
Turn Back the Block (Harrisburg)

People

CO-CHAIR: Community Foundation for the CSRA

CO-CHAIR: Augusta-Richmond County Housing & Community Development

CO-CHAIR: Allen Homes + CN Residents

HEALTH WORKING GROUP

Augusta Locally Grown
Augusta University/MCG/Augusta University Health System
Harrisburg Family Health Care

EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Augusta University Literacy Center
Paine College
Richmond County School System

EMPLOYMENT WORKING GROUP

Augusta Economic Development Authority
Augusta Technical College
Augusta Tomorrow
Goodwill Industries

YOUTH WORKING GROUP

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Augusta
E3 Leadership Foundation
RISE Augusta

We gratefully acknowledge the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** for awarding the City of Augusta and the Augusta Housing Authority a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Grant to support this important planning process for the transformation of the Laney Walker and Harrisburg communities. HUD also serves as an integral member of our planning team.

PHOTOS: *Unless otherwise noted, all photos in this document were taken by WRT and other Planning Partners.*

Glossary of Terms

ACTION ACTIVITIES: This refers to a portion of a CN Planning and Action Grant that funds some physical neighborhood improvements immediately following the two-year planning process. Intended to start transformation, Action Activities respond to community needs and must be approved by HUD.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Housing is considered affordable if a family pays no more than 30% of its household income on housing-related costs.

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS: Anchor institutions are businesses and organizations firmly established within a neighborhood. They have regional significance and serve as economic and cultural drivers, generating jobs, creating local business opportunities, and contributing in significant ways to the development of human, social and cultural capital.

AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI): Area Median Income is the midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of families earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. The median household income for the City of Augusta is \$44,715.

CDBG: HUD's flexible Community Development Block Grant program provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs.

CN: Choice Neighborhoods. Sponsored by HUD, Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants support the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans that focus on three core goals: Housing, People, and Neighborhoods. To achieve these goals, communities must develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy or "Transformation Plan."

CNI: Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.

EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES: Up to \$130,000 of CN Planning Grant funds can be used for limited physical neighborhood improvements during the two-year planning process.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: This term refers to the use of the best available conclusions or findings from research and studies as a basis for determining the best practices and predictions of outcomes in a field.

EXTREMELY LOW INCOME: Households with an income under 30% of AMI.

FQHC: Federally Qualified Health Centers are community-based health care providers that receive funds from the HRSA Health Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas. They must meet a stringent set of requirements, including providing care on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay.

FMR: Fair Market Rent is the rent amount, including utilities (except telephone), to rent privately-owned, decent, safe and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature.

HCV: Housing Choice Voucher is commonly known as a Section 8 voucher. With a HCV, the participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

LOW INCOME: Households with income between 30% and 60% of AMI.

HUD: US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (a green building and neighborhood certification program).

LIHTC: The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit provides a tax incentive to construct or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for low-income families. LIHTC subsidizes the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing for low-and moderate-income tenants.

9% CREDITS: The 9% credit is a competitive tax credit allocation for the construction of affordable rental housing. It typically covers most of the cost of new construction. Tax credit units have set rents and prospective tenants must meet income limit requirements.

4% CREDITS: The 4% tax credit is not competitive, and does not cover the total cost of new construction. As a result, it is typically claimed for rehabilitated affordable housing and new construction affordable units that are financed with tax-exempt bonds or other subsidies.

MARKET RATE HOUSING: Housing units unrestricted by income.

NON-REPLACEMENT HOUSING: New housing proposed by the Choice Plan that is not intended to replace Allen Homes units.

PART I VIOLENT CRIMES: Aggravated assault, rape, murder, and robbery are classified as Part I Violent Crimes.

PUBLIC HOUSING: Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Rent is 30% of income. All existing units at Allen Homes are public housing.

PBV: Project-Based Voucher units are part of the Housing Choice Voucher program, also known as Section 8. PBVs are tied to a unit.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION

(RAD): This HUD program allows Public Housing Agencies to convert public housing to project-based Section 8 housing.

QAP: A Qualified Allocation Plan describes the process of distributing LIHTC.

RENEWABLE ENERGY/LOW IMPACT DESIGN:

Energy from natural resources such as sunlight and geothermal heat that is naturally replenished.

REPLACEMENT HOUSING: This refers to rental housing (section 8 housing and PBV housing) that will replace any Allen Homes units that are demolished, disposed of, or reduced.

SCHOOL READINESS: This refers to a set of expectations, guidelines or developmental milestones that describe what all children need to know before entering kindergarten.

TDC: Total development costs.

TENANT-BASED VOUCHERS (TBVS): Tenant-based vouchers are portable, increasing the ability of families to choose and lease safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing. The tenant pays 30% of income for rent and the voucher makes up the difference up to FMR.

SECTION 8 HOUSING: Section 8 is a common name for the Housing Choice Voucher Program that allows private landlords to rent apartments and homes at fair market rates to qualified low-income tenants. Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies with funds from HUD.

TRANSFORMATION PLAN: Communities that receive a CN Planning Grant from HUD must develop and implement a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy that addresses the three core goals of Choice Neighborhoods (Housing, People, Neighborhood). The Transformation Plan becomes the guiding document for the revitalization of the public and/or assisted housing units while at the same time, directing transformation of the neighborhood and creating positive outcomes for families.

WORKFORCE HOUSING: Rental or homeownership housing that is affordable to households earning between 60 and 120 percent of area median income.

CONTENTS

01.

Executive Summary

Welcome to our neighborhood.
Take a quick look at where we
would like to go.

02.

About Our Neighborhood

Planning for tomorrow requires a
sound understanding of conditions in
the community today.

03.

Building on Recent Plans

Many recent planning efforts offer
important strategies and objectives
for neighborhood revitalization that
this plan will build on.

04.

Planning Process

See how residents of the Choice Neighborhood are shaping a community-driven vision for the future.

07.

Neighborhood Plan

The Neighborhood Plan will strive to improve mobility and connectivity while creating more places to shop, dine, gather, and play.

05.

People Plan

The People Plan will connect residents of the community to education, employment, and health-related services so they can live happy and fulfilling lives.

08.

Implementation

This section will outline a clear road map to follow to bring the goals and strategies to life.

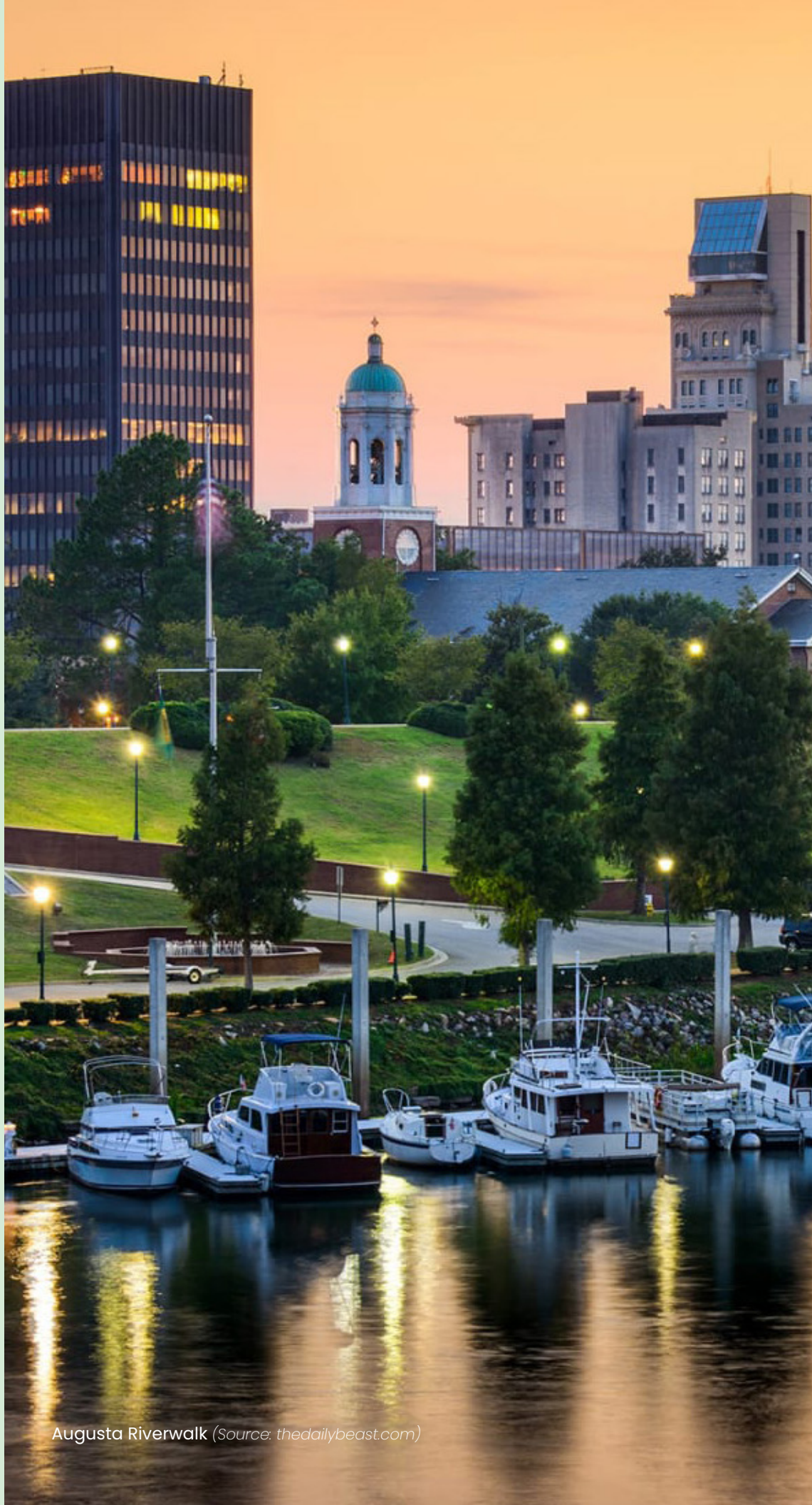
06.

Housing Plan

The Housing Plan will aim to create a mix of housing types that reflect the neighborhood's character, designed for people at all stages of life.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Augusta Riverwalk (Source: thedailybeast.com)



A TALE OF TWO (OR THREE) NEIGHBORHOODS

This is a tale of two neighborhoods that grew in different ways for different reasons around the downtown area of the prominent southern city of Augusta, Georgia. In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, all three areas were impacted by a set of common threads, and today are experiencing similar threats while united in a desire for change.

The Laney Walker neighborhood evolved well into the 1900s as an integrated, multi-cultural working-class community driven by development of the Georgia Railroad and Augusta Canal. In the early 20th century, Jim Crow laws imposed segregation block by block and Laney Walker became the main black neighborhood in the city. The area thrived despite segregation with numerous black-owned businesses, churches, and schools until the wave of suburban migration swept the country and disinvestment followed.

On the very edge of Laney Walker is Allen Homes, where the Augusta Housing Authority built 150 residential units in 1961. The site is disconnected from the surrounding street network and isolated by rail lines, a highway, high voltage power lines, and industrial uses, making it difficult for residents to access neighborhood amenities or feel part of the surrounding community.

Harrisburg flourished along the Savannah River in the 1800s as a mill village centered around the Sibley and King mills. When the mills began

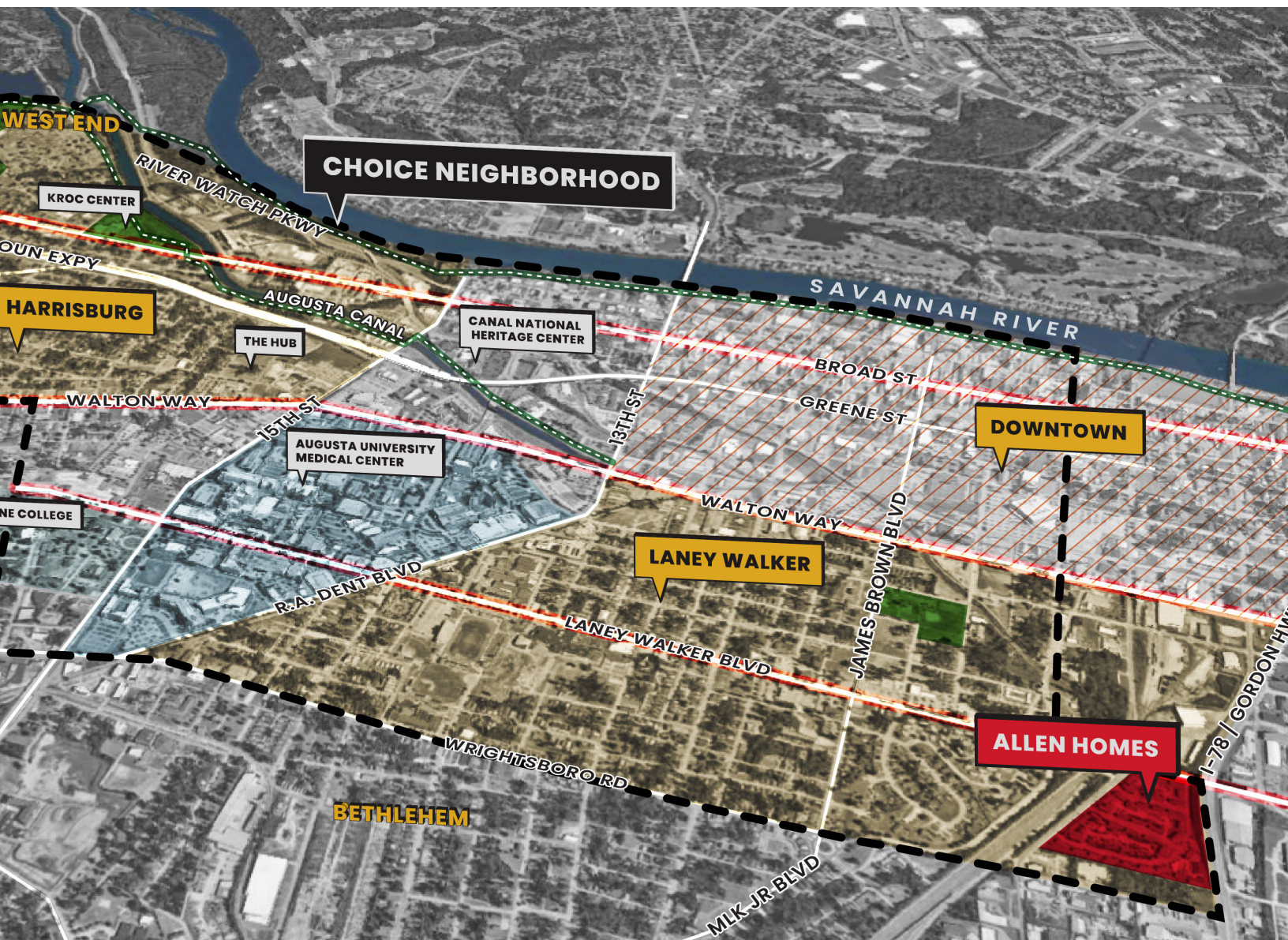
to decline in the 1930s the area remained largely residential. It also suffered from suburban flight in the 50s, followed by urban renewal efforts in the 70s that left large open swaths of vacant space. And in the 80s, the John C. Calhoun Expressway sliced the neighborhood in half, bringing further decline.



Both of these historic neighborhoods are wrapped along the edge of downtown where the walkable, pedestrian-scaled streets of the outer neighborhoods merge into a more visible, dense grid. Downtown is centered around Broad Street, which is lined with a variety of stately buildings, hotels, and theaters that hint at a more lively and prosperous time when the city was a winter destination for wealthy northerners attracted to the climate and natural beauty of the region, and its golf courses and polo grounds.

Despite the one week each year, the city welcomes tourists from around the world to the Augusta National for the famed Masters Golf Championship, downtown also bears the impact of changing settlement patterns, the influence of the automobile, and decades of disinvestment.

These three historic districts comprise the Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood and all three are ready to turn the page on this stubbornly enduring tale.



About the Neighborhood

Conditions in the Choice Neighborhood today reflect both struggle and promise. Decades of disinvestment have left sweeping pockets of blight and vacancy. In 2000, the population was approximately 12,000 and by 2021, it declined to 9,396. Very modest growth of less than one percent is anticipated through 2026.

Augusta is a minority majority city, where approximately 58.4% of residents are black, and 34.3% are white. In contrast, 68.9% of Choice Neighborhood residents are black and 25.4% are white, while 98% of Allen Homes residents are black with less than 1% white.

The median household income in the city (\$44,715) is twice that for residents of the Choice Neighborhood (\$20,633) and four times that for Allen Homes households (\$9,528). Low incomes are directly linked to employment. Based on the Choice Neighborhood survey, only 38% of neighborhood residents are employed full time versus only 27% of Allen Homes residents.

Where the vacancy rate in the city is high at 12.3%, it is double in the Choice Neighborhood at 23.3%. Also in sharp contrast is the Choice Neighborhood's homeownership rate of only 16.6% compared to the citywide rate of 44%.

The homeownership rate is low in part because of rising housing costs. In the Choice Neighborhood, the median cost of homes (\$78,606) are 3.8 times higher than the median income. This disparity is even starker when viewed by race. For black residents in the Choice Neighborhood, the cost of homes is 9.5 times higher than the median income vs. 3.4 times higher for white residents.

These conditions are compounded further across the neighborhood and particularly for Allen Homes residents by a high proportion of single mothers, low rates of literacy, and concerns about safety, threatening the neighborhood's ability to stabilize itself and residents ability to live healthy, productive, self-sustaining lives.

Demographics at a glance



There is a very high percentage of children at Allen Homes, where the **MEDIAN AGE IS 14.**

- City median age of 35
- Choice Neighborhood median age is 40.

Augusta is a minority majority city, where most residents identify as Black:

58% of City of Augusta

69% of Choice Neighborhood

98% of Allen Homes



Median Income:

\$44,715

City of Augusta

\$20,933

Choice Neighborhood

\$9,528

Allen Homes



Homeownership Rates:

44% of City of Augusta

17% of Choice Neighborhood



Nurturing the seeds

Although these numbers paint a concerning picture, there are a lot of positive elements to build on. The city has a strong and diverse economy with many employers anchored in and around the Choice Neighborhood. This includes a thriving military presence and growing nucleus of national cyber security, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and government administration round out the economy, offering a vast array of employment opportunities.

In addition, national trends continue to indicate a desire for more urban living with access to a range of amenities including restaurants, arts, culture, and outdoor recreation. Cities of all sizes will continue to fight for talent as they race to provide these amenities. Downtown Augusta has an advantage with a walkable “main street infrastructure” in place that will continue to flourish as it attracts more businesses, residents, and investments.

In the last two decades, the city has made significant efforts to reimagine the downtown and the historic neighborhoods of Laney Walker and Harrisburg. Redevelopment areas and opportunity zones span the Choice

Neighborhood, providing additional incentives. The Department of Housing and Community Development, the Augusta Housing Authority as well as smaller community development organizations have also completed several projects in pockets across the neighborhood. In fact, the Laney-Walker Bethlehem Revitalization Initiative was awarded the American Planning Association’s National Planning Excellence Award: HUD Secretary’s Opportunity & Empowerment Award in 2013.

Another very recent addition is the HUB for Community Innovation, which sits at the heart of the Choice Neighborhood. The HUB brings together several innovative non-profits committed to providing access to critical resources such as nutritious food, healthcare, and literacy, necessary for families to thrive. The challenge for this Choice Neighborhood planning process will be to connect all of these dots, and create a critical mass of visible reinvestment to build the momentum necessary to alter people’s perceptions that the tide is at last changing.

Creating a shared vision

With generous funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD) through the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI), Augusta has the potential to do just that. The City of Augusta and the Augusta Housing Authority received a two-year planning grant to develop a neighborhood plan to improve the quality of life for residents of Allen Homes and the surrounding neighborhood.

This place-based initiative focuses on three core goals:

Housing

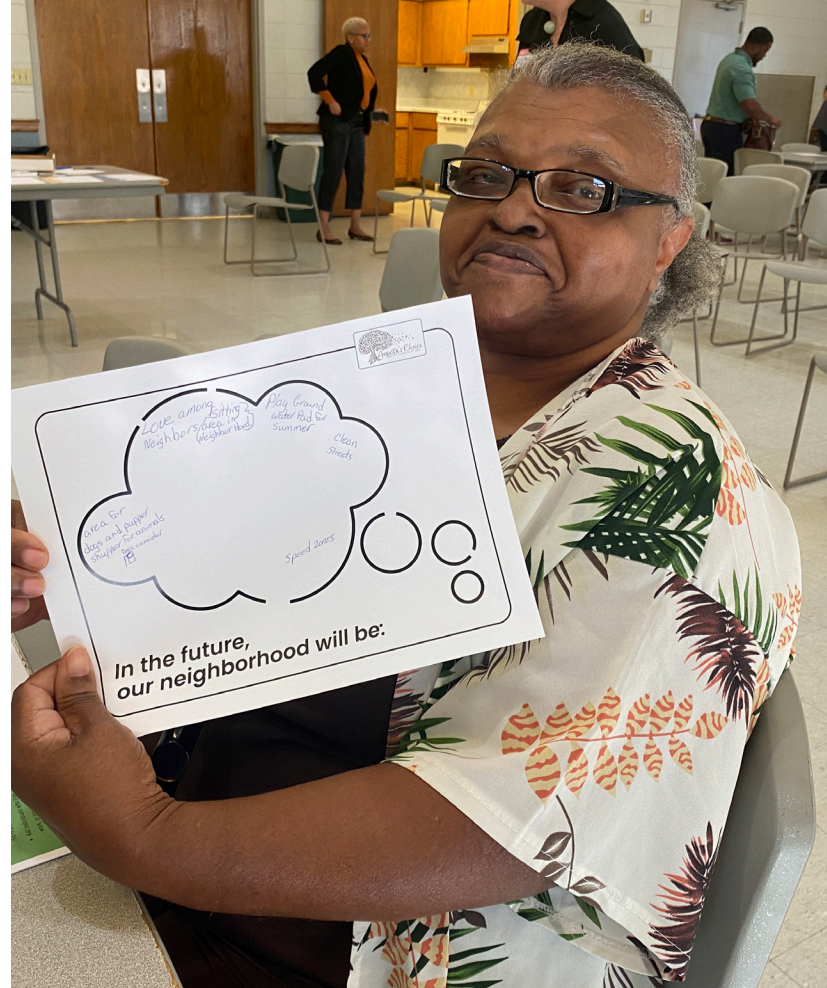
Improving distressed public housing, in this case Allen Homes, with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and supports the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

People

Enhancing the quality of life for residents with regard to employment and income, health, and children's education.

Neighborhood

Improving conditions through public and private reinvestment regarding safety, economic development and commercial activity, connectivity and mobility, and parks and open space.



Through the lens of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, the planning team will work with the community to continue the work that has been started.

An overarching goal will be to benefit the folks who have tried to weather the decades-old storm by remaining in the neighborhood so that they will not be priced out by anticipated investments and rising housing prices, and will have the opportunity to enjoy the transformation.

The planning process is striving to give voice to all stakeholders by inviting everyone to the table to create a shared vision. A survey of 66% of Allen Homes residents and over 400 Choice Neighborhood residents shows just how aligned their aspirations are. It is hoped that this transparent, consensus-based process can help to break down some of the deep-seated racial divides and long-standing biases against those in poverty.





Summary of the Plan Goals

People

Vision Statement

[still being developed with the community]

Goals:

Housing

Vision Statement

[still being developed with the community]

Goals:

Neighborhood

Vision Statement

[still being developed with the community]

Goals:

02

ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History (Source: visitaugusta.com)



Lucy Craft Laney

(1854 - 1933)

A leading educator of the nineteenth century, Lucy Craft Laney was born into a free African-American household in Savannah, Georgia. In 1873 she was part of Atlanta University's first graduating class. After teaching in Macon, Mississippi, Laney moved to Augusta, where she established the first kindergarten for black children and was instrumental in founding the Lamar Normal and Industrial Institute in 1887. Laney gathered support and recognition throughout the country for her work in Augusta. She was buried in the former Haines Institute. She was buried in the former Haines Institute.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and Delta Sigma Theta
Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History

2005.6



WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Like most cities around the world, Augusta blossomed as a result of its geographic location and natural resources. It sits on the western bank of the Savannah River, which runs for over 300 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. General James Edward Oglethorpe officially founded Augusta as an interior trading post in 1736. Agriculture and industry followed, making it one of the few industrial centers in the South. The location along the Savannah River also established the city's strategic military presence, which continues to shape the population, economy, and character of the city to this day.

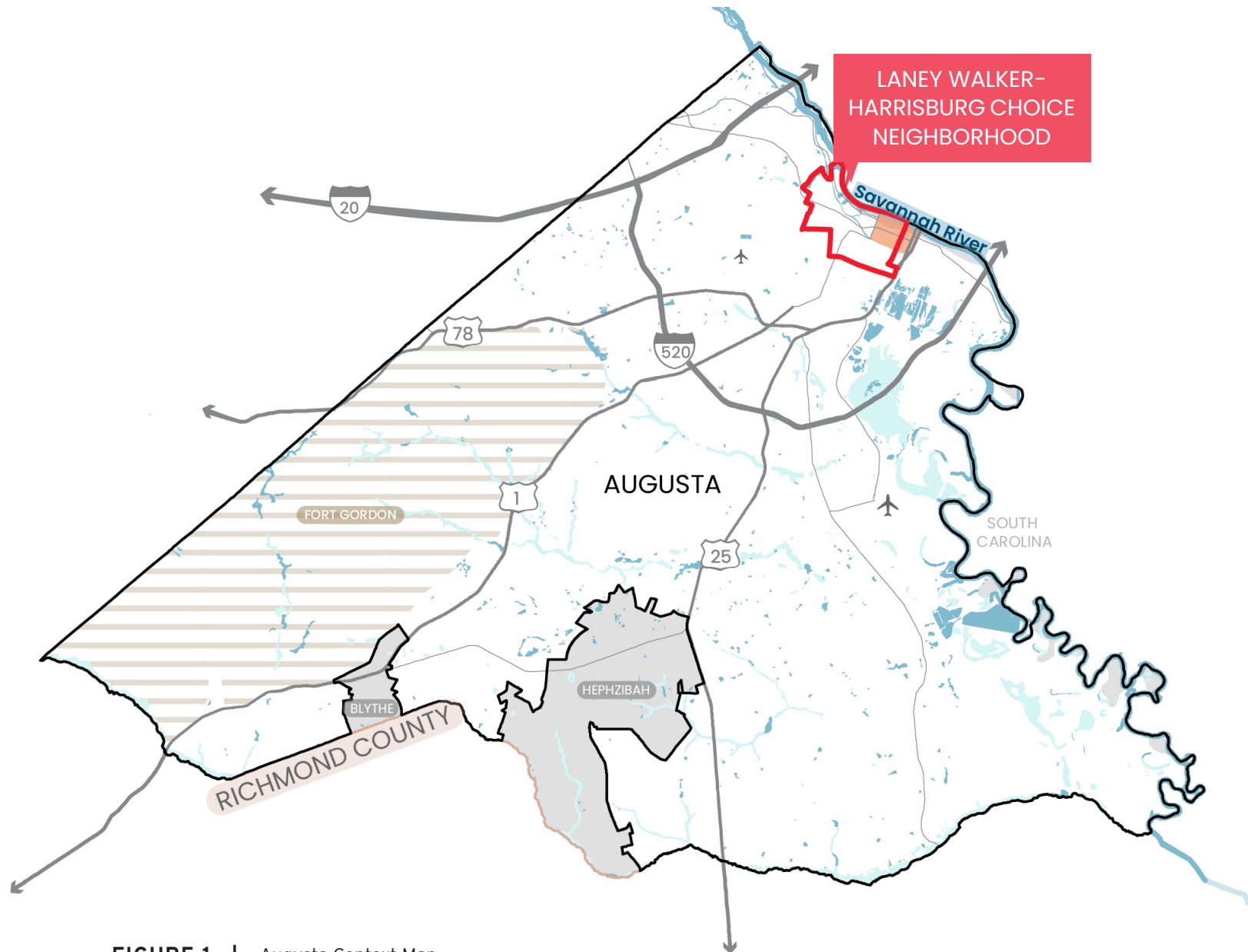


FIGURE 1 | Augusta Context Map



FIGURE 2 | Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood

THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY

The focus of this plan is on Allen Homes and Augusta’s urban center, including the neighborhoods of Laney-Walker and Harrisburg, the Augusta University Health Sciences Campus, and a significant part of downtown. The Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood falls within multiple National Register Historic Districts and reflects the distinct character of Old Augusta.

The Choice neighborhood boundary was established to harness the momentum of recent

investments and the presence of many anchor institutions. The eastern boundary follows interstate 78 to the riverfront, a barrier that cuts off Allen Homes and the area from Old Town. To the north the Savannah River forms a natural boundary. The western boundary follows Milledge Road, which delineates the Sand Hills neighborhood (home of Augusta National Golf Club). The southern boundary follows Wrightsboro Road, an east-west corridor in the city.

ABOUT ALLEN HOMES

Allen Homes is situated on the far eastern edge of Laney-Walker and the Choice neighborhood. Owned and operated by the Augusta Housing Authority, Allen Homes was built in 1961 and consists of 38 buildings housing 150 residential units. The 16.84-acre site sits on a former chemical plant, surrounded by a 6-lane highway, rail lines, and high-tension power lines, making it unsuitable for living. Reimagining the site and mapping out a vision for Allen Homes residents to benefit from investments in the Choice neighborhood is the focus of this planning effort.





Allen Homes at a glance

150
total units

139
occupied
(at time of grant)

38
residential
buildings

1
community
building



16.84
acre site



388
residents

14
median age



\$9,528
median household income



Golden Blocks Walking Tour (Source: VisitAugusta.com)

Laney Walker

Construction of the Georgia Railroad and the Augusta Canal between 1833 and 1847 attracted laborers to what would become the Laney Walker neighborhood. Located immediately south of downtown, Laney Walker grew into a well-integrated working-class community

Did you know? 

AUGUSTA'S BLACK WALL STREET

The "Golden Blocks" along Laney Walker Boulevard was the center of Black business and entrepreneurship during the Jim Crow era. Standing up against segregation, Black entrepreneurs and leaders created a thriving center for the community filled with industry, churches, and schools.

associated with three minority populations - Irish, Chinese, and African American. But in the early 20th century, Jim Crow laws segregated blocks by race and transformed the neighborhood into Augusta's principal black neighborhood. Despite these barriers, many important black-owned entrepreneurs and businesses (Augusta's Black Wall Street) thrived along with many churches and schools. The daughter of former slaves, Miss Lucy Craft Laney became a noted black educator who founded the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute, the first black kindergarten in Augusta, and the Lamar School of Nursing. Miss Laney's home is now a museum and conference center dedicated to black history in the neighborhood.

Harrisburg

Harrisburg sits on the western portion of the Choice neighborhood. In the mid-1800s through the early 1900s, it flourished as a mill village centered around the Sibley and King textile mills. The Sibley Mill was built on the site of the Confederate Powder Works used heavily during the Civil War. Harrisburg soon became a place to live, work, worship, and learn with a variety of housing and churches, and commercial development running along Broad Street.

By the 1930s, the mills began to decline, leading to an economic downturn. This caused many homeowners to leave, leading to high vacancies and public safety concerns. In the 1970s, urban renewal efforts left many large open spaces, compounded further by construction

of the Calhoun Expressway. The Expressway was intended to ease access to downtown but instead disrupted the street grid and divided the community in half, creating connectivity issues that remain today.



Did you know?

HARRISBURG IS A MILL VILLAGE

Augusta evolved as an industrial center of the South, and Harrisburg was the center of industry in the city. A village formed around the Sibley Mill creating a community for its employees to live, work, worship, shop, and learn all in one place.

Sibley Mill (Source: WRDW Alma McCarty)



Did you know?



MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

The Medical College of Georgia was the first medical school in the state and an important contributor to the establishment of the American Medical Association (AMA) and standardization of medical practices in the country.

Meds and Eds District

Nestled between the Laney Walker and Harrisburg neighborhoods is the Augusta University Health Sciences Campus. It was established in 1828 as the Medical College of Georgia and now forms a medical research, education, and services hub in the heart of the urban core along with other medical facilities such as the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center and Dental College of Georgia at Augusta. Adjacent to the campus is Paine College, a liberal arts college supported by the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church that was founded in 1822 to train African-American teachers and preachers and today contributes over \$33 million to the City's local economy (according to a 2018 study conducted by the United Negro College Fund).

J. Harold Harrison, M.D. Education Commons (Source: Wikipedia)





Downtown Augusta (Source: VisitAugusta.com)

Downtown Augusta

A major portion of Downtown Augusta falls within the Choice boundary. Centered around Broad Street, downtown is organized in a grid that makes it very walkable. It is home to the Augusta Riverwalk, the Augusta Museum of History, the Morris Museum of Art, the Imperial Theatre, Jessye Norman Amphitheater, restaurants, several hotels, the convention center, and the new Georgia Cyber Center.

Despite these envious amenities, downtown continues to counteract the impact of the automobile beginning in the second half of the

20th century, when the suburbs and open space became so accessible and appealing for residents and businesses. Downtown revitalization efforts started in 1974 with the creation of a special tax district and a downtown revitalization plan focused on addressing traffic, creating convenient parking, and developing an exciting physical environment, all elements it continues to address. Today, small businesses are slowly filling in empty storefronts and filling out the urban framework of a more vibrant, culturally-rich, walkable environment that is seeding urban redevelopment efforts across the country.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pre-Colonial Settlement

1540s Spanish explorers found Uchee & Westo Indians who had fished and farmed the land for hundreds of years.

1700s

Tobacco becomes the main cash crop after planters claim land through land grants.

Augusta continues to grow, especially as the cotton industry takes precedence.



1800s

Augusta grows in prominence and prosperity due to transportation improvements and advancements.



Civil War

Augusta prospers as an industrial center of the South and a major center for Confederate activity.

1700

1736

James Oglethorpe established Augusta as an interior trading post for fur and other commodities with native Indians.

1785-1795

Augusta is the state capital of Georgia.

1816

First steamboat reached Augusta, opening up iron trade and other transport.

1833

Georgia railroad is constructed, opening trade to the west.

1845

Augusta Canal constructed, bringing water power and manufacturing to South.

1862

Confederate States Powder Works open on Augusta Canal.

1890s

Electric streetcars are connected to outer suburbs, sparking tourism in Augusta.

Great Depression

Mills decline; business activity is stagnant and tourism drops.



Late 1800s



1908



New Deal

Augusta rebounds quickly after the war and continues to grow as an industrial center of the South.

Second major flood event since 1888 destroys much of downtown and is followed by another devastating flood in 1912.

Projects boost Augusta, including Canal repairs, road paving, and first public housing built in Augusta.

1872

Augusta Cotton Exchange is established.

1899

Augusta Country Club established by hotels for tourism.

1914

Levee constructed to protect city from future flooding.

1929

Massive flood broke through levee. Levee is strengthened to current level.

1875

Augusta Canal expanded, spurring new factories and mills to open (most notable Sibley Mill & John P. King Manufacturing).

1916

Great Fire of 1916 destroyed 25 blocks and 746 buildings in downtown.

1940s

Post WWII Augusta transformed military sites; Fort Gordon becomes home to US Army Signal Corps.

1950



1950s

Cars, coupled with cheap energy, lead to suburban flight. Downtown Augusta faces big changes as retail and commercial activity follow people to suburbs.



1970s

Downtown slowly declines, but abruptly changes with two mall openings within a week. Revitalization efforts are launched to respond to declining downtown.



1950

1955

Gordon Highway (I-78) built due to reliance on cars; cuts through the oldest parts of Augusta.

1970

1970

Race riot erupts to add to racial injustice.
Magnet schools are established for integration.

1974

Urban Renewal demolishes many mill homes and leaves behind large open spaces.

1974

Downtown Revitalization program launches; Augusta Tomorrow founded to lead efforts.

1978

Two malls open within a week and downtown is left with vacant buildings and storefronts.

The Next Chapter...

What's upcoming for Augusta?

The HUB, the Choice planning effort, and several more promising seeds.



1980s

Revitalization plan projects are implemented and John C. Calhoun Expressway is built, dividing Harrisburg into north & south.



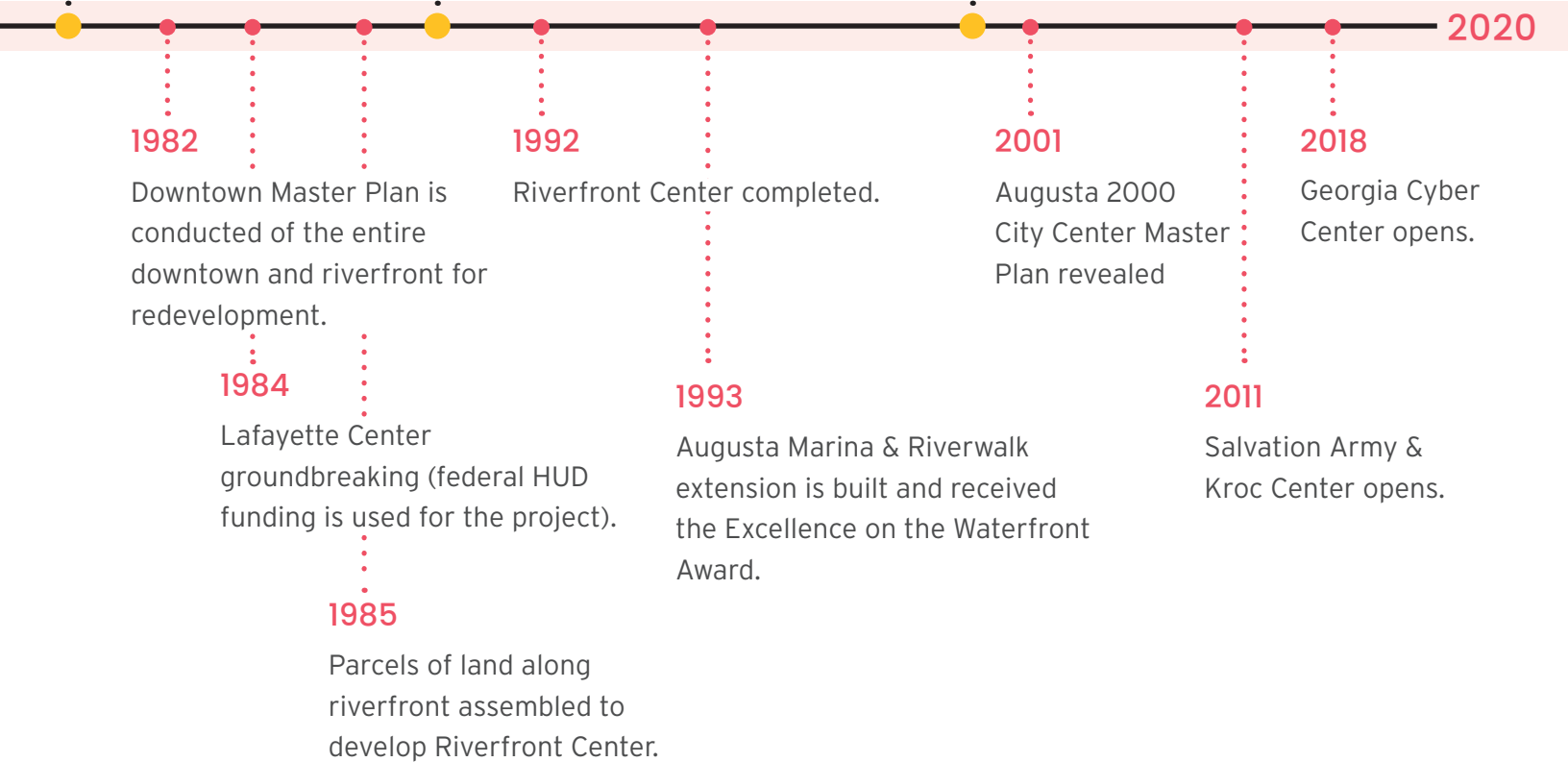
1990s

Downtown revitalization efforts continue with Riverfront Center and Riverwalk.



2000s

New Master Plan Update is revealed and neighborhood revitalization effort continues.



WHO LIVES HERE:

DEMOGRAPHICS, INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Resident Profile

The chart/summary graphic to the right provides a brief profile of those living in Allen Homes and the Choice Neighborhood as compared to residents of the Augusta/Richmond County. Of particular note is the median age of Allen Homes residents (14), which is very young compared to the Choice Neighborhood (40) and the city (35). This also reflects a high number of single parents living at Allen Homes (68% compared to approximately 23% for the Choice Neighborhood and city). There is also a sharp contrast in median household income, with city household incomes of \$56,695 nearly double Choice Neighborhood household incomes of \$27,944 (ESRI 2022 estimates), which are more than double Allen Homes household incomes of \$9,528 (Augusta Housing Authority at time of application).

POPULATION

AGE

RACE & ETHNICITY

POVERTY RATE

UNEMPLOYMENT

HOUSEHOLDS

HOUSING

Demographics at a glance

	CITY OF AUGUSTA	CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD	ALLEN HOMES
	202,081 **	9,396	388
MEDIAN AGE	35.3	40.1	14
UNDER 15	19%	14.7%	50.5%
15-24	14.5%	18.2%	16.2%
25-34	16.1%	12.1%	13.9%
35-64	34.9%	34.8%	16.8%
65+	15.5%	20.2%	2.6%
BLACK	58.4%	68.9%	97.9%
WHITE	34.3%	25.4%	0.3%
OTHER	2.0%	3.1%	0.0%
<u>HISPANIC</u>	<u>5.3%</u>	<u>2.6%</u>	<u>1.8%</u>
	20.6%	41.5%	NOT AVAILABLE
	7.6%	11.9%	NOT AVAILABLE
# HOUSEHOLDS	77,478	3,883	141
AVG. HOUSEHOLD SIZE	2.44	2.00	-
SINGLE-MOTHER HH (2010)	22.7% *	23.0% *	68.1%
MEDIAN HH INCOME	\$44,715	\$20,633	\$9,528
TOTAL # UNITS	88,332	5,061	150
HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE	44.0%	16.6%	NOT APPLICABLE
VACANCY	12.3%	23.3%	7.3%***
MEDIAN HOME VALUE	\$138,165	\$78,606	NOT APPLICABLE

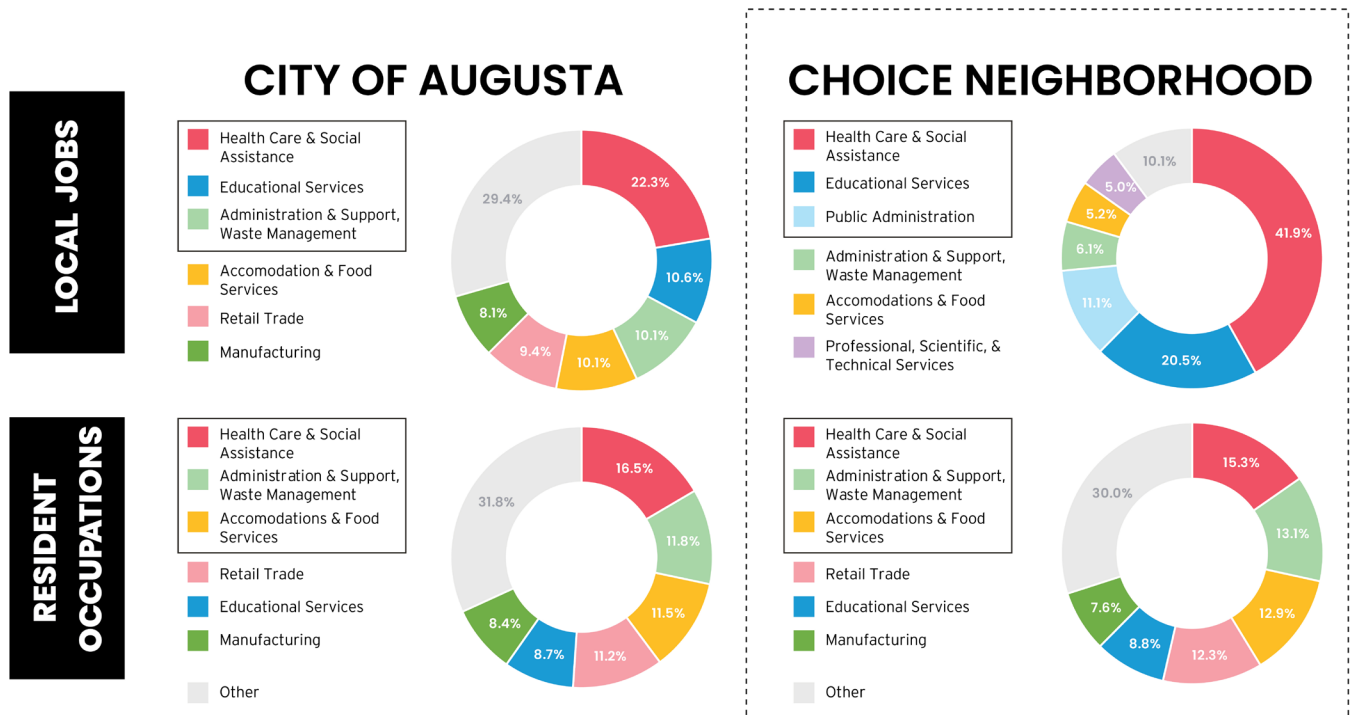


FIGURE 3 | Job Sectors

Employment Opportunities

The Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice neighborhood provides a large number of jobs to the region. More than 30% of the jobs within Augusta stem from the neighborhood. Of the top ten largest non-manufacturing employers within the city (according to the Augusta Economic Development Authority), six are within the neighborhood including: Augusta University (6,775 jobs), Augusta University Hospitals (5,341 jobs), and Piedmont Augusta (3,000 jobs). Additionally, numerous Richmond County Schools, Augusta-Richmond County offices (City Hall and Augusta Health Department), as well as the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center are located in the Choice neighborhood.

The majority of jobs within the neighborhood are Health Care & Social Services (41.9%) and Educational Services (20.5%). While some neighborhood residents work within those sectors (15.3% and 8.8% respectively), there is a lack of Manufacturing and Retail Trade positions within the neighborhood which collectively make up 20% of the residents' jobs.

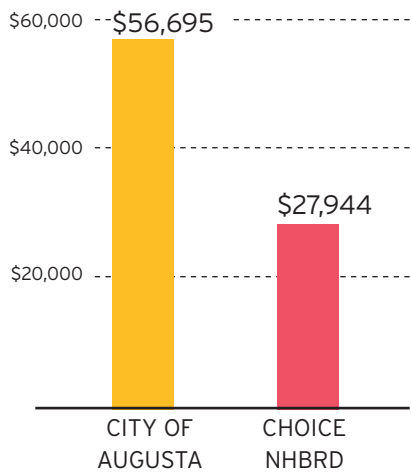


FIGURE 4 | Median Income

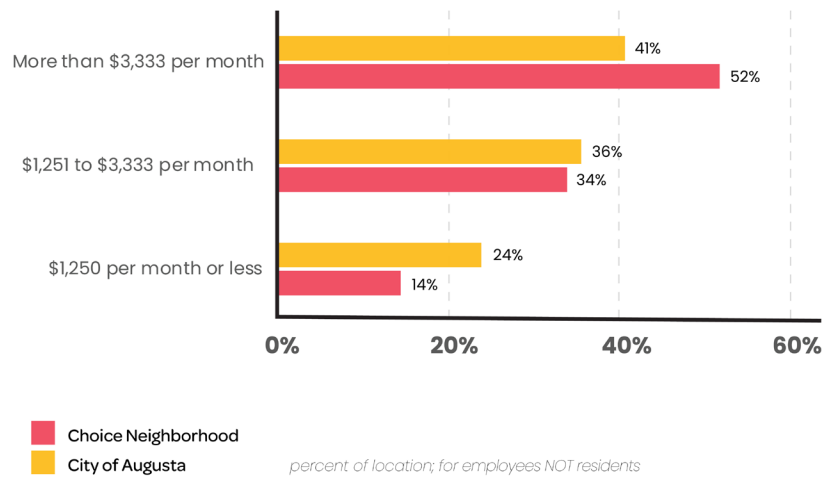


FIGURE 5 | Monthly Income

Rates of Employment

While Augusta’s citywide unemployment rate is 5.1%, the rate for the Choice Neighborhood is much higher at 8.2% (ESRI 2022 estimates). And based on the Choice neighborhood survey, this rate is more than double for Allen Homes residents with 25% of survey respondents unemployed and looking for a job.

Unlike many other distressed neighborhoods across the country where residents are faced with low incomes and high rates unemployment, the Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood is an employment hub for the city of Augusta. Jobs available within the Choice neighborhood are higher paying positions (than reflected by neighborhood resident incomes) with 52% of the jobs paying more than \$3,333 per month. Only 14% of the jobs within the Choice Neighborhood pay less than 1,250 per month.

The Choice Neighborhood is an employment hub, supplying more than 30% of Augusta’s jobs and offering high paying positions. Yet, resident employment rates and incomes do not reflect this.

Choice Neighborhood	Allen Homes
52%	51%
feel they lack the skills needed for available jobs	
42%	47%
have difficulty finding available jobs	

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

Challenge of Finding Educated Workers

There is a mismatch between jobs in the neighborhood and jobs of residents: most employed neighborhood residents (81%) work outside of the neighborhood boundary. Meanwhile there are 30,446 jobs within the neighborhood, but 98% of those are taken by workers from outside the neighborhood.

There is not a shortage of jobs within the Choice Neighborhood. But many of the jobs within the neighborhood likely require bachelors or advanced degrees. The number of people who have a bachelors or advanced degree is twice as high for people working in the Choice Neighborhood (26%) as completed to people living in the Choice Neighborhood (13%).

Only **2%** of jobs in the neighborhood are held by residents.

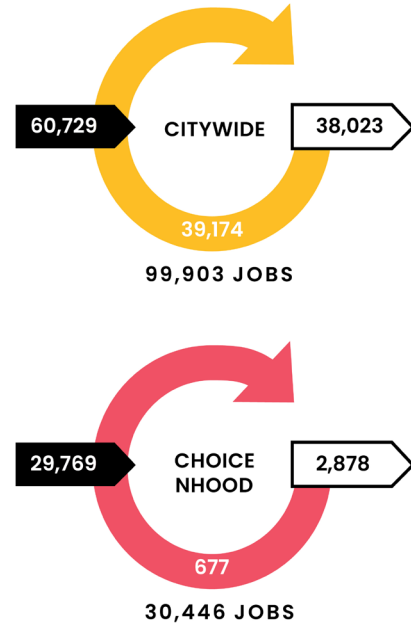


FIGURE 7 | Inflow / Outflow Employment

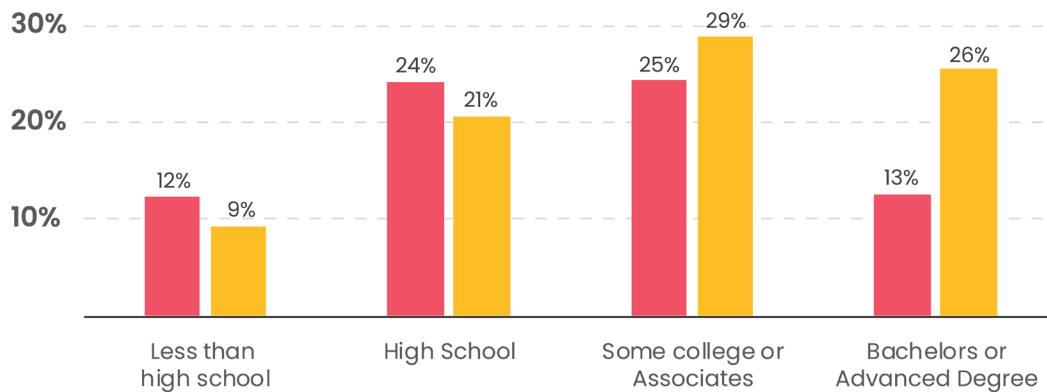


FIGURE 6 | Educational Attainment

■ Residents of the Choice Neighborhood
■ Workers of the Choice Neighborhood

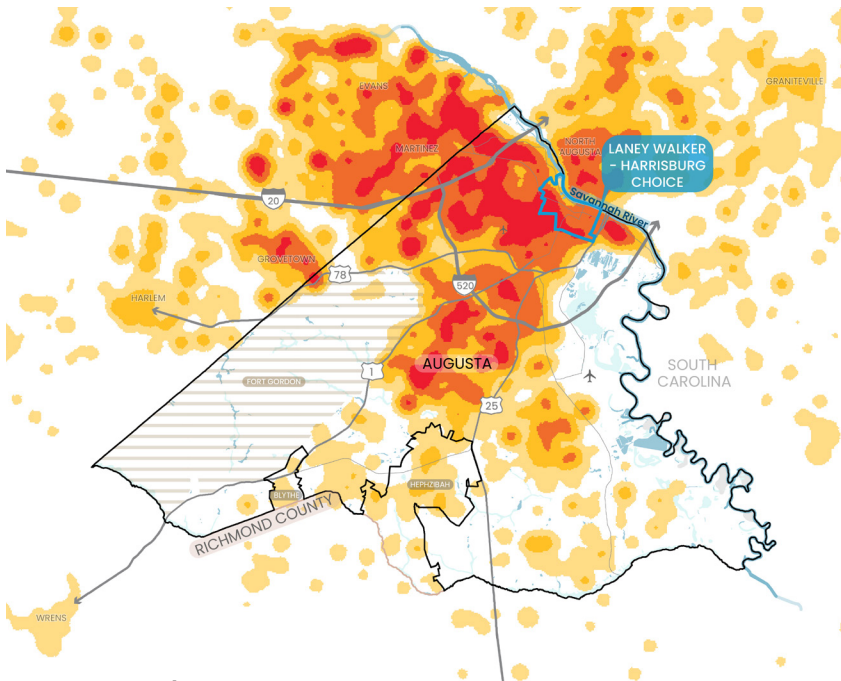


FIGURE 8 | Workers Distance to Home

Lowest
Highest

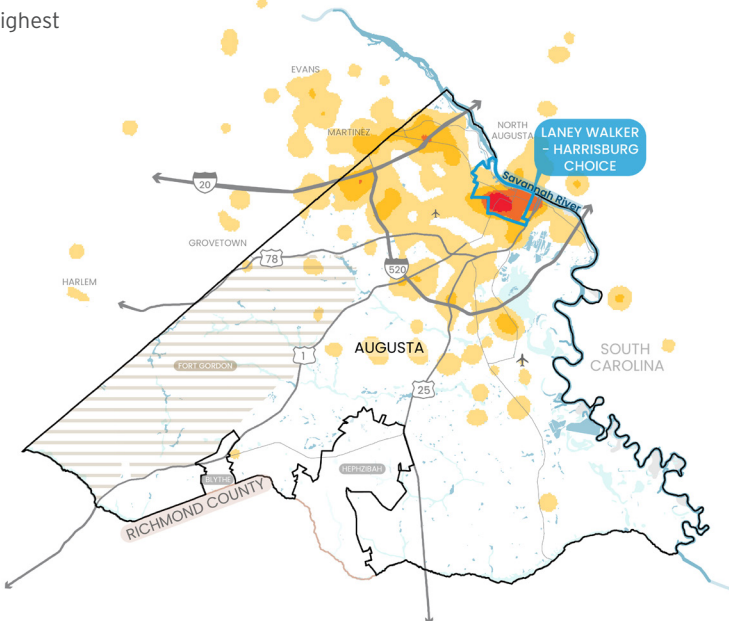


FIGURE 9 | Residents Distance to Home

Lowest
Highest

Getting to Work

Given that 81% of employed Choice Neighborhood residents are working outside of the neighborhood, where are they working? According to the Census, 61% of residents are traveling less than 10 miles, but there is a large percentage (28%) of residents who travel more than 50 miles to get to work.

“IF EMPLOYED, WHERE DO YOU WORK?”

in the Choice Neighborhood

0% **17%**

in Augusta

82% **68%**

outside Augusta

12% **10%**

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Augusta is supported by a diverse array of economic activities, including many that stem back to its founding with an emphasis on manufacturing, the military, and medicine. The city's cost of living, geography, and a young, diverse, educated, and upwardly mobile workforce are just a few reasons many forward-thinking and international companies now call Augusta home.

MAJOR DRIVERS

Manufacturing

Building on the city's legacy of industry and manufacturing, **Augusta is focused on seven sectors:**

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Aerospace
3. Chemical Manufacturing
4. Food Manufacturing
5. Customer Service
6. Cybersecurity And Data Centers
7. Logistics

Companies like EZ GO Textron, Cardinal Health, Graphic Packaging, Kellogg's, Augusta Coca-Cola, Kimberly-Clark, John Deere, Starbucks, Lockheed Martin Corporation, and Occidental Chemical Corporation have substantial operations in the city.

Did you know?



Due to its proximity to the Savannah River, Augusta was one of the main industrial centers of the South pre- and post-Civil War. Industry continued to grow after transportation advancements and the construction of the canal spurring new factories and mills to open.



Georgia Cyber Center (Source: Augusta University)



Fort Gordon (Source: U.S. Army Garrisons)

Military

Augusta played a critical role in the Revolutionary and American Civil War, and today it plays a major role in guarding the nation's security through the U.S. Army Cyber Command headquarters at Fort Gordon, located about 10 miles from the Choice Neighborhood. The Cyber Command HQ oversees five regional cyber centers in Arizona, Hawaii, Germany, Korea, and Kuwait and conducts global operations 24/7 with 16,500 soldiers, civilian employees, and contractors who operate and defend military networks and protect critical U.S. infrastructure against global cyber threats.

Fort Gordon employs over 29,000 and is the city's largest single employer.

Fort Gordon employs over 29,000 and is the city's largest single employer, supporting the need for services and housing across the city. The headquarters has also led to spinoff industries in data centers and cyber security including the new Hull McKnight Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center, located downtown in the Choice Neighborhood.

Medicine

Healthcare is the top industry in Augusta, providing more than 51,000 jobs within the Augusta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with nine major hospitals serving 18 counties and beyond. Within the Choice Neighborhood, the Augusta University Health Science Campus and Veterans Administration Hospital anchor a major medical services and employment hub that includes the Children's Hospital of Georgia—the region's only hospital dedicated to serving children. Augusta University is a public research university and academic medical center. The University, including Augusta University Health, contributed \$2.6 billion to the state's economy in the fiscal year 2019, according to a recent report from the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.

Healthcare is the top industry in Augusta, with **51,000** jobs & **9** hospitals serving 18 counties.

Children's Hospital of Georgia (Source: *AugustaTomorrow*)





Augusta Canal (Source: Augusta Canal)

Tourism

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the natural beauty of Augusta and the surrounding area attracted wealthy patrons for winter retreats, giving rise to golf courses and polo fields. Today, Augusta is synonymous with the Masters, the most prestigious professional golf tournament in the United States. It is one of four major championships held in the country each year. It is the only major hosted on the same course—the Augusta National Golf Club, located just outside of the Choice Neighborhood. The tournament's annual economic impact is estimated in excess of \$100 million.

The Augusta Canal is the only fully intact American industrial canal in continuous operation and has been designated a National Heritage Area. The waterway is now a popular recreation destination where visitors enjoy

land and water trails for paddling, hiking, and cycling. The heritage area hosts guided history and nature tours on replica canal cargo boats departing from the Augusta Canal Discovery Center, housed in a former textile mill. The Canal cuts across the Choice Neighborhood from Harrisburg to Laney Walker and has tremendous potential to become an even greater amenity and destination while supporting neighborhood revitalization efforts.



Did you know?

Augusta grew as a winter retreat for people escaping the harsh northeast winter. Golf became an attraction for families looking for outdoor recreational activities.

EDUCATION

Educational quality and level of educational attainment are factors that play an important role in shaping a person's life, including job and career prospects, income and self-sufficiency, and future opportunities. It is also true that an educated workforce can be a critical driver of a community's overall economic prosperity.

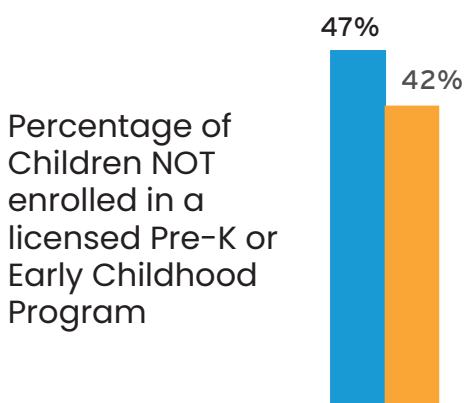
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FACILITIES

The educational cycle begins in a child's infancy. Participation in a quality early childhood education program for children under age 5 is an important factor in a child's long-term success. There are several licensed early childhood education programs within the Choice Neighborhood, including Westabou Montessori School, YMCA Child Development Academy, EOA Head Start, and Heritage Learning Academy, many of which offer tuition assistance.

According to the Choice Neighborhood Survey, less than half of the area residents have their

children taking part in a formal early childhood education program. When asked why, the top reasons for Allen Homes residents was the cost and no available openings.

There are several early childhood education programs located throughout the neighborhood, and many close to Allen Homes, however a lack of openings is a barrier.



Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

TOP REASONS WHY ALLEN HOMES CHILDREN ARE NOT PARTICIPATING IN A PRE-K OR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM:

- 46%** OPENINGS
- 38%** COST
- 38%** SCHEDULING CONFLICTS
- 30%** LOCATION
- 30%** QUALITY



FIGURE 11 | Educational Facilities in the Choice Neighborhood

LEGEND

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE

- 1 C.T. Walker Magnet School (Grade 1-8)
- 2 Lamar-Milledge Elementary School

OTHER

- 3 Curtis Baptist Schools (13 mos.- 12th Grade)
- 4 Challenge Preparatory Academy (Grade 5-6)
- 5 Heritage Academy (6 wks.-8th Grade)
- 6 Immaculate Conception School (K-12)
- 7 Richmond County Board of Education
- 8 Westabou Montessori School (2yrs-8th Grade)

HIGH SCHOOL

- 9 Lucy C Laney High School
- 10 A R Johnson Health Science & Engineering Magnet (6-12)
- 11 John S Davidson Magnet School (6-12)

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

- 12 Augusta University
- 13 Paine College

PRESCHOOL/CHILDCARE

- 14 Augusta Head Start Central Office
- 15 Big Blue Marble Academy
- 16 Family Y Child Development Academy
- 17 Silas X Floyd School (Head Start)
- 18 Tabernacle Child Development Center
- 19 Pathways Head Start

NOTE: Many children at Allen Homes attend Jenkins-White Elementary School and W.S. Hornsby Schools, which are not shown on the map and is outside of the Choice Neighborhood.

K-12

Four public schools serve the Choice Neighborhood: Laney High School, W.S. Hornsby Middle School, and two elementary schools—W.S. Hornsby and Lamar-Milledge. All of these schools are among the lowest performers in the state, with the lowest—W.S. Hornsby ranked at 1204th out of 1208th (according to schooldigger.com). (It should be noted that many of the children living at Allen Homes largely attend elementary school at Jenkins-White, which is beyond the boundary of the Choice Neighborhood, but also underperforming, ranked at 1237th out of 1,244 George elementary schools.) The performance of these schools not only impacts the students but makes it difficult to retain or attract families to live in the urban core.

There are, however, nine other (private and magnet) schools in the Choice Neighborhood that serve students from K-12 and are strong

performers such as the AR Johnson and Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School. Many of these require an application, a certain grade level, and sometimes a portfolio or try out for admittance, and as a result, few neighborhood residents apply. The presence of these schools, however, presents an opportunity for the planning process to explore ways to help students overcome the barriers to entry.

In the Choice Neighborhood, 74.9% of residents have obtained a high school diploma, GED equivalent or higher, but only 13.5% received a bachelor's degree or higher, based on ESRI forecasts for 2021. This is somewhat lower than Augusta residents in general: 85.6% have a high school diploma, GED equivalent or higher, and 23.3% earned a bachelor's degree or higher (ESRI 2021 forecasts).



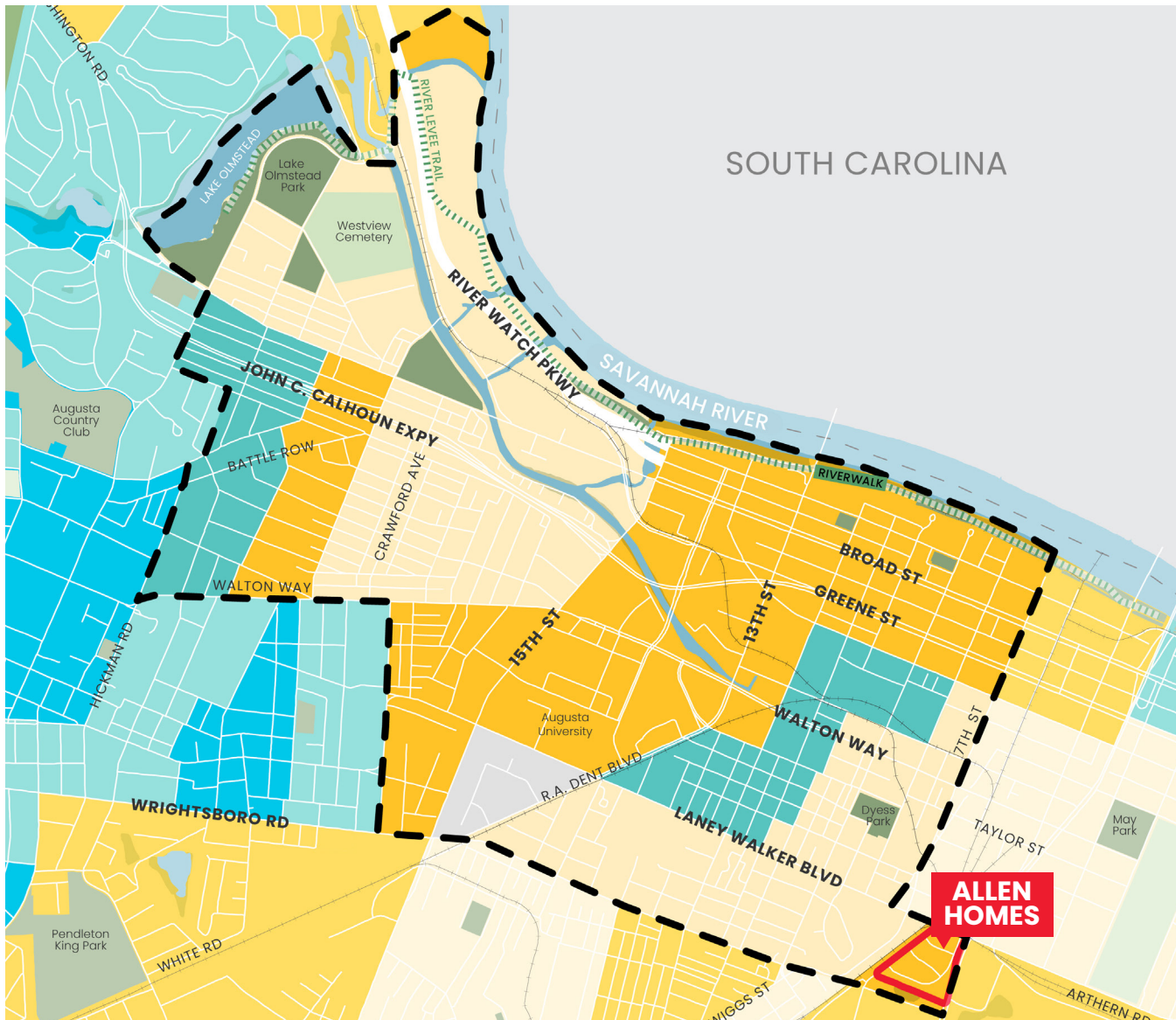


FIGURE 12 | Percent of People with Bachelor's Degree or Higher
 Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates

LEGEND

- 1-10%
- 11-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%

Residents in Allen Homes and the Choice Neighborhood have a low educational attainment level, which feeds into the jobs and employment mismatch.

Residents who have a bachelor's degree or higher

18% Choice Neighborhood
3% Allen Homes

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

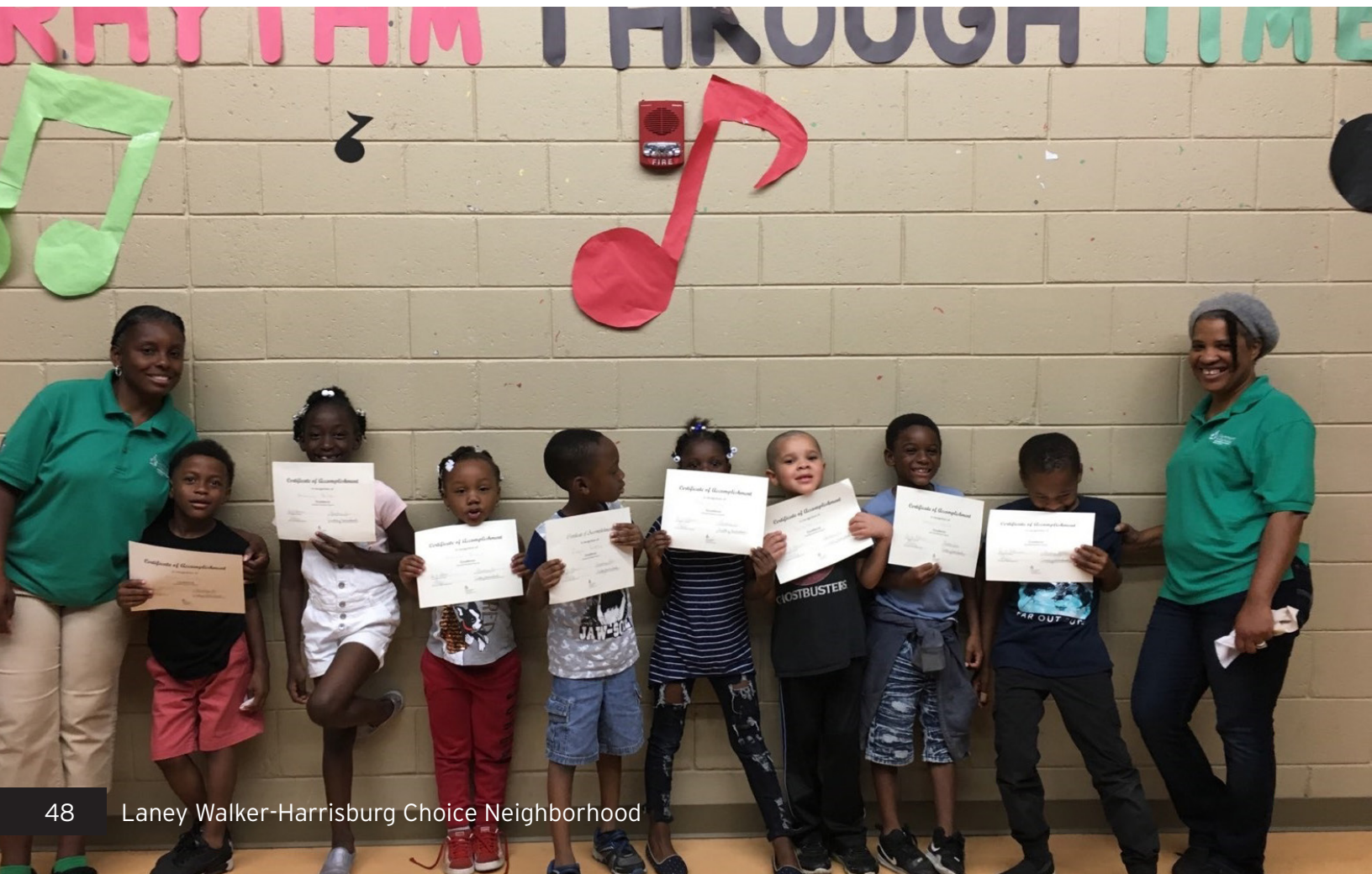
LITERACY

Literacy is an essential skill needed to navigate society. With a low level of proficiency, a person may face serious barriers to even basic needs and services, employment, and important information. According to SchoolGradesGeorgia.gov, only 50% of 8th graders in Richmond County were reading at or above grade level. In 2021, only 25-29% of students attending Laney High School were reading at the standardized level for their grade.

Low rates of literacy impact the ability of the city to employ residents and to nurture a locally-grown educated workforce to fuel its diverse economy.

Literacy deficits may also have generational impacts beyond the individual, as low rates of literacy affect parents' ability to help their children learn. There are several institutions working within the Choice Neighborhood to increase literacy, including the Augusta University Literacy Center and RISE Augusta (headquartered at the HUB).

Hornsby Elementary Students (Source: RISE Augusta)





Georgia Cyber Center (Source: GACyberCenter)

ACCESS TO WI-FI

The internet is a vital, global portal to education, employment, necessary services, knowledge, communication, and advancement. Within the Choice Neighborhood, 34.2% of households lack access to the internet altogether, and a further 19.1% of residents do not possess a computer at all (based on American Community Survey 2015-2019). As the world continues to increase its reliance on digital technology, this gap in access to critical infrastructure will pose an increasingly great disadvantage to those without it.



34.2%
households in the Choice
Neighborhood do not have
access to the Internet.

19.1%
of residents do not have
access to a computer
at home.

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MAJOR CONDITIONS

Health and wellness are crucial to the prosperity of any community, but it is important to recognize that physical and mental health are highly complex and are affected by a host of social and environmental factors, many of which are significantly more prominent in marginalized and disenfranchised communities.

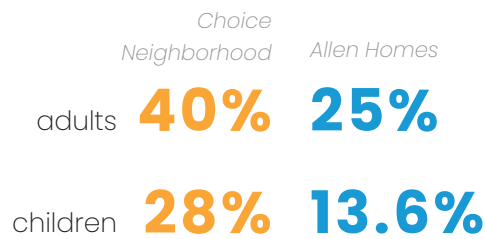
Citywide, the leading causes of death in Augusta are heart disease and cancer, two conditions which can be substantially mitigated by early recognition and proactive treatment. However, according to the Choice Neighborhood survey of neighborhood residents, over 40% of all adults and 28.8% of children do not have health insurance.

These rates are better for Allen Homes residents—25% of adults and 13.6% of children do not have health insurance. Twenty percent of residents would be unable to cover a 400-dollar emergency expense if one were to arise, let alone pay for continual medical care directly (2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Report by Augusta Health).

Capacity for treatment also extends beyond finances, where, for instance, almost half of all children at Allen Homes live with only one parent, who therefore bear a greater burden of care for both themselves and their dependents. Continual care is just as critical in the 34% of households in the Choice neighborhood where at least one member has some form of disability (2015-2019 ACS data), wherein those peoples' disabilities may impact their ability to manage their own health independently or without a strong social safety net.

The top health issues facing residents of Allen Homes are high blood pressure, depression/anxiety/or post-traumatic stress, and asthma/breathing issues (Choice Neighborhood survey of Allen Homes residents). In the Augusta region, the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment cites heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and women's health as the primary health needs. Similar to nationwide reporting, Georgia diabetes rates are significantly higher in Black and Hispanic populations than in white communities.

Residents who do NOT have health insurance



Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

20% of residents would be unable to cover a \$400 emergency expense or continual medical care directly.

Source: 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment

Trauma and Mental Health

Of 20 health issues presented as potential problems for Augustans in the 2019 Augusta Health CNA, mental health was listed as the top community concern (94.3% ranked as a “Major Problem” or “Moderate Problem”), above Substance Abuse (90%), Diabetes (88.5%), Nutrition/Physical Activity (88.1%), and Heart Disease/Stroke (83.7%). While Augusta has a high number of physical health treatment facilities, it has far fewer mental health facilities. Health assessments of Richmond County indicate that mental health issues, particularly depression and Alzheimer’s or dementia, affect a similar number of people as do heart disease and cancer, but overall rely on roughly half the number of mental health providers compared to physical healthcare providers. Of Allen Homes survey respondents, 30.3% stated trauma support services are not available in the Choice Neighborhood and 26.3% said mental health services or therapy are not available.

Other issues such as substance-use and alcohol-related disorders are reported as high concerns to residents of Richmond County, though these issues are often treated at separate facilities and may be of prohibitive cost to their beneficiaries, particularly those struggling through active addiction. Thirty-six percent of Augusta residents report being personally impacted by substance abuse, a similar figure to nationwide reporting. Of Allen Homes survey respondents, 29% cited that substance abuse facilities and support are not available in the Choice Neighborhood.

The top health services that Allen Homes residents feel are not available in the Choice Neighborhood are:

- #1** Trauma Support Services
- #2** Reproductive Health / OBGYN
Substance Abuse and Addiction
- #3** Mental Health Services
Domestic Violence
Physical Therapy

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey



Did you know?

TOP HEALTH ISSUES FOR AUGUSTANS

2019 Augusta Health CNA

- #1** MENTAL HEALTH
- #2** SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- #3** DIABETES
- #4** NUTRITION / PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- #5** HEART DISEASE



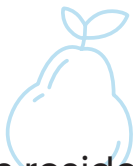
29%

of Richmond County residents state they are not physically active.

Physical Activity

Across Richmond County, 29% of residents report physical inactivity, compared to 19% nationwide. This is reflected in the Choice Neighborhood survey results. Only 26.5% of neighborhood respondents and 28.9% of Allen Homes respondents agree there are many places to exercise (gyms, parks, playgrounds) in the Choice Neighborhood. In addition, 39.5% of Allen Homes survey respondents never jog, walk, or ride a bike outside and 60.5% never exercise at a gym or fitness center.

51.3%



of Allen Homes residents find that at least once per week there is not enough food in the house.

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

Food Access

Access to fresh, nutritious food is of major concern for residents, as Augusta's urban core does not have a single grocery store, forcing many residents to travel well beyond the neighborhood to meet their basic needs. When Choice Neighborhood residents were asked to rate the health of the neighborhood, only 24.9% of neighborhood residents and 40.8% of Allen Homes resident feel high-quality fresh fruits, vegetables and food are widely available and affordable (Choice Neighborhood surveys). As a result, 51.3% of Allen Homes survey respondents do not have enough food to eat one or more times a week.

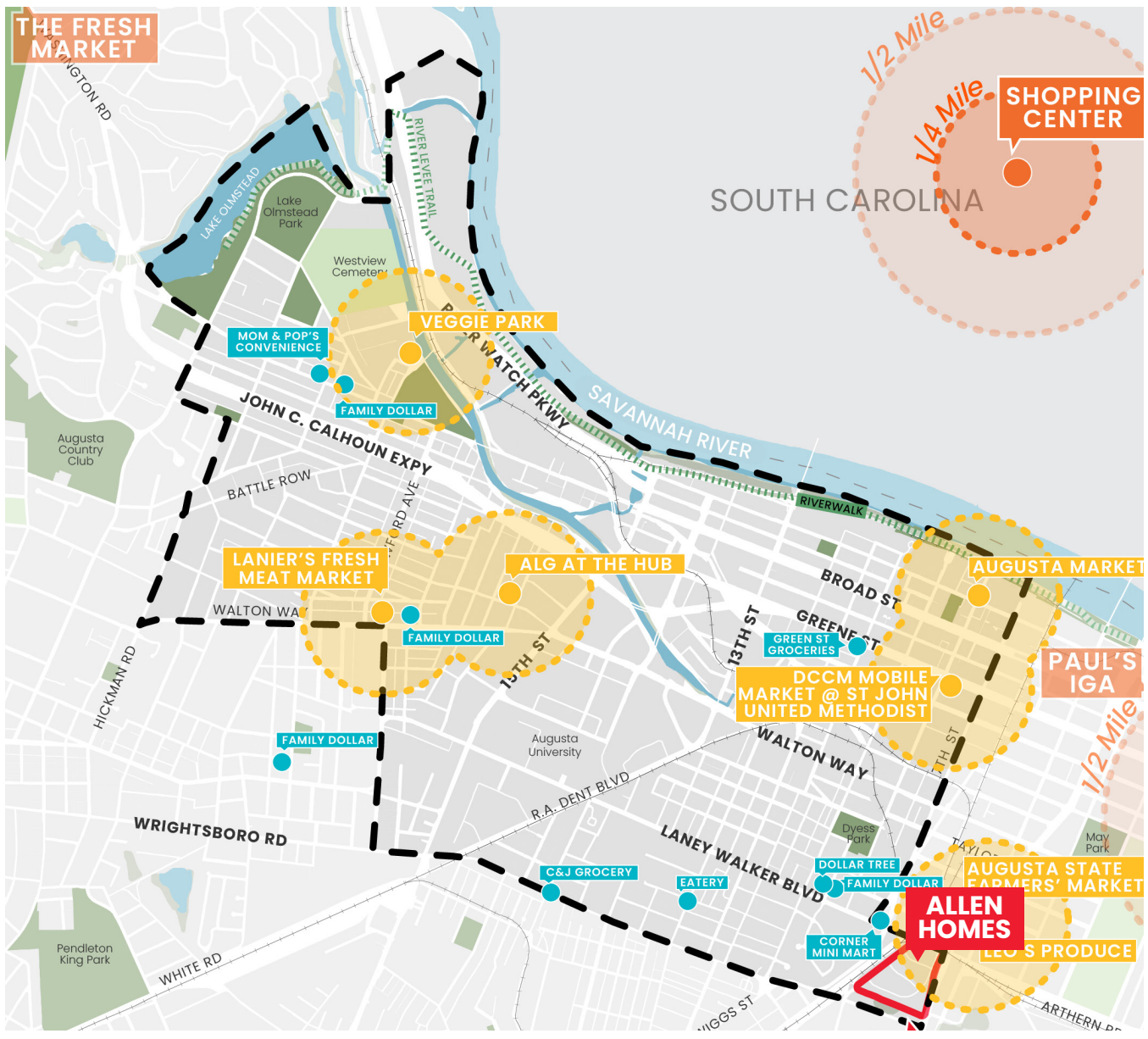


FIGURE 13 | Food Access

LEGEND (FOOD ACCESS)

- Discount or Convenience Store
- Farmer's Market or Bulk Produce
- Full Service Grocery Store
- Access to Healthy Food

The Choice Neighborhood is a food desert as there are no full service grocery stores available within the boundary.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Crimes are generally recorded in two categories which are used to monitor criminal activity in an area. Part I Crimes are ten serious crimes designated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that are likely to be reported such as burglary, homicide, arson, and aggravated assault. Part II Crimes generally do not result in serious injury to the victim and pose less of a threat to public safety.

Based on data from Richmond County Sheriff’s Office from the beginning of 2022 through August 2022, the top Part I Crimes reported in the Choice Neighborhood are larceny from auto, auto theft, and burglary. The top three Part II offenses include sexual assault and battery, larceny, and damage to property.

Top crimes in the Choice Neighborhood from January – August 2022:

Larceny from auto, auto theft, burglary, sexual assault and battery, larceny, and damage to property.

Source: Richmond County Sheriff’s Office

Zooming in, Allen Homes residents have encountered burglary, simple assault/battery, larceny, and damage to property with relatively low (but not non-existent) instances of homicide, assault with guns and weapons, drug-related instances, and other forms of robbery. This is consistent with patterns endemic to the greater Choice Neighborhood area as well, but

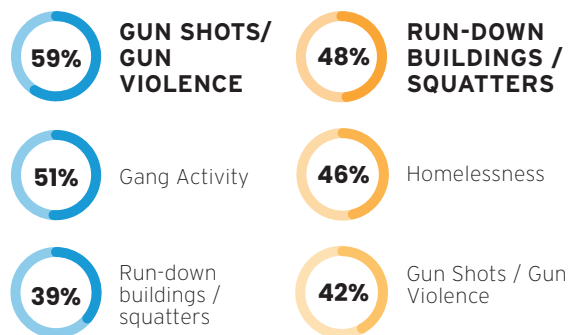
major differences include the high rate of sexual assault and battery, as well as the presence of other criminal activities such as fraud and criminal trespass which do not occur in the data describing Allen Homes.

PERCEPTION OF CRIME

Residents of both Allen Homes AND the Choice Neighborhood residents cite crime and safety as the number one neighborhood challenge that needs to be improved immediately.

Top safety concerns for Allen Homes residents are gun shots/gun violence, gang activity, and run-down buildings / squatters, which is echoed by Choice Neighborhood survey respondents whose top concerns are: run-down buildings/squatters, homelessness, gun shots/gun violence, and gang activity.

“WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE SAFETY CONCERNS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?”



A large number of vacant lots and blighted properties create conditions that can attract unwanted activity.



LAND USE

A look at the current land use map to the right indicates that there are three primary land uses in the Choice Neighborhood: commercial, residential, and school. Laney Walker and Harrisburg are largely residential; downtown is mostly commercial (along with public property), and the area surrounding the medical campus is largely categorized as “school” and “hospital.”

A closer look shows that commercial uses (in red) are dotted throughout the neighborhood, along more major corridors like Broad Street and Walton Way, but also scattered within the neighborhoods. Scattered commercial activity dilutes the impact of more concentrated activity centers that could attract more foot traffic.

Also of note are the limited number of green or open spaces, which are discussed later.



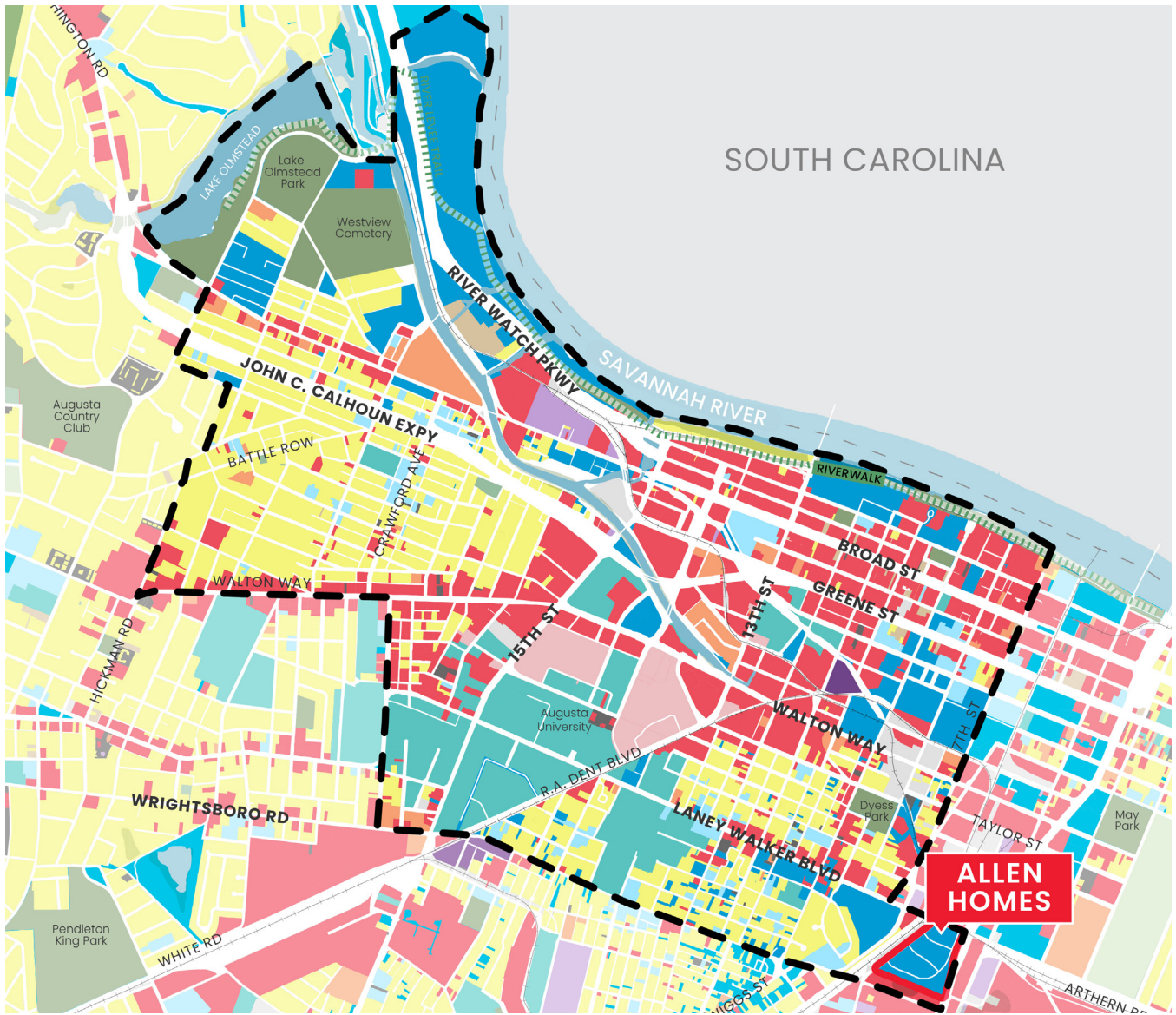


FIGURE 14 | Land Use Map

LEGEND (LAND USE)

- | | |
|---|--|
| Commercial | Exempt |
| Residential | Public Property |
| Industrial | Historic Lots |
| Brownfield | Open Space |
| Church | Utility |
| School | Unknown |
| Hospital | |

The Choice Neighborhood sits within Augusta’s urban core. Commercial properties are clustered downtown with residential uses concentrated on the southern and western sides of the neighborhood. The medical campus and Paine College are nestled between the residential areas.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

The land use map also suggests that residents of the Choice neighborhood have limited access to park space, served primarily by Dyess Park in Laney Walker, Lake Olmstead Park and Wood Street Park in Harrisburg and the Riverwalk along the northern edge. ParkServe®, a tool developed by the Trust for Public Land, indicates that in Augusta-Richmond County only

21.2% of residents are within a 10-minute walk of a park with a high priority need for new parks in the center of our Choice Neighborhood. An analysis of the Choice Neighborhood indicates that a significant portion of the neighborhood lacks access to park spaces within a 10-15 minute walk of their home.



Clockwise: Riverwalk Pocket Garden (Source: Augusta Tomorrow); Dyess Park (Source: VisitAugusta); Canal Pathway (Source: AugustaCanal); Riverwalk Pergola (Source: AugustaTomorrow)

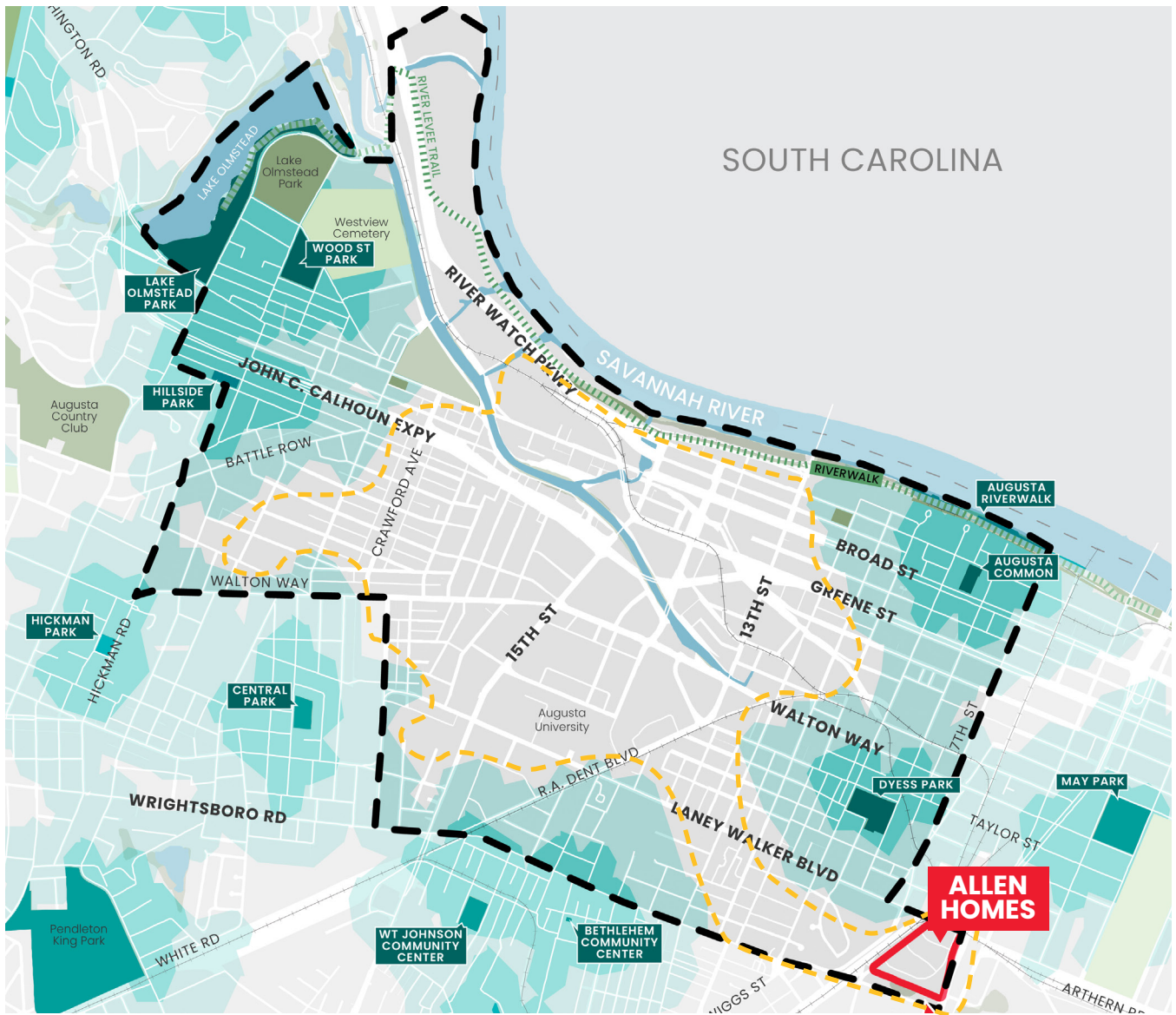


FIGURE 15 | Park Access

LEGEND

- Park
- 1/4 mile walkshed
- 1/2 mile walkshed
- Lacks Park Access

A significant portion of the neighborhood lacks access to a park or open space.

In Augusta-Richmond County, only

21.2%

of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Source: ParkServe (Trust of Public Land)

HOUSING

The overall housing trends in the City of Augusta show an increasing cost of homes and rents, a lack of available affordable housing, and decreasing participation in Section 8 by landlords, all of which compound the availability of quality affordable housing in the metro region. In comparison, the trends in the Choice Neighborhood show a significant increase in renter-occupied homes, a decrease in homeownership, a decrease in median home values, and an increase in vacancy rates.

ARCHITECTURE & CHARACTER

A significant portion of the Choice Neighborhood is historic, and residents cite the history and culture of the neighborhood as one of its greatest assets (45.6% of neighborhood residents responding to Choice Neighborhood survey cited history/culture as top two greatest strengths). Four national register historic districts intersect the Choice Neighborhood: Laney-Walker Historic District; the Harrisburg-West End Historic District; the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area; and the Augusta Downtown Historic District. Within these districts are individual historic landmark sites of cultural and historic significance, many clustered in the Downtown area.

In Harrisburg, historic mills are clustered along the Augusta Canal north of the Calhoun Expressway, part of the designated historic district. Outside the brick mill buildings, south of the canal, housing is typically single-family wooden or brick construction, relatively small by today's standards. Laney-Walker homes are of a similar age and construction, but tend to be in worse repair than Harrisburg houses. Single-story shotguns, bungalows, and other narrow housing forms are typical, usually with front porches. Some larger two-story buildings do remain throughout.





Choice Neighborhood and Allen Homes residents think that the **history and culture of Laney Walker and Harrisburg** is one of the neighborhood's greatest strengths.

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

Preserving the Historic Character

The historic character of the neighborhood is central to residents' identities, and existing initiatives like the Laney-Walker/Bethlehem Heritage Trail project cited in the LWB Urban Redevelopment Plan (2016) look to grow this identity. The 2011 "Reclaiming Historic Harrisburg" plan also prioritizes this existing historic housing stock as the neighborhood's primary revitalization opportunity. The study links the poor quality of the neighborhood's

housing to perceptions of crime and poor safety, finding 55% of Harrisburg houses in need of maintenance. However, the Plan also assesses that the neighborhood's shotgun and bungalow typologies are small enough to be good entry-level housing for residents, with especially deep lots that could easily receive back "carriage houses" to increase supply and keep attention on back alleys.

Unfortunately, many of the homes in the Choice Neighborhood have suffered from a lack of maintenance and repair for decades, leading to poor and in some cases dangerous living conditions. Vacancy is high in the Choice Neighborhood, even compared to the rest of the city - 23.3% of parcels are vacant, compared to 12.3% citywide (2019 American Community Survey). This high, scattered-site vacancy rate contributes to a lack of a cohesive urban fabric, particularly in the Laney-Walker neighborhood.

Demolition of blighted housing continues through the Augusta Georgia Land Bank Authority, which addresses the neighborhood's most severely undermaintained housing stock but also contributes to a further drop in available supply. Seventy-five demolitions are slated for the next year, the demolitions are performed on behalf of City by Environmental Services, a division of Engineering. Narrow parcels subsequently make scattered infill redevelopment difficult due to size constraints.

Vacancy coupled with poorly maintained properties has led to poor and sometimes dangerous living conditions in several areas in the neighborhood.

Renovating the area's severely deteriorated historic housing is difficult economically, but culturally central to the identity and character of these neighborhoods. Guidelines like the Historic Property Treatment Guidelines put forth in 2015 by the Augusta Housing and Community Development Department indicate the city understands the importance of intervening as early as possible to save and rehabilitate the neighborhood's housing stock.

Many of these homes in the Laney Walker neighborhood in particular are also being targeted for lead removal, which would bring an additional number of units back into healthy use for the neighborhood. The Lead Hazard Reduction Program, launched in 2022 and administered through HUD, granted \$3.3 million to Augusta in order to remediate 120 homes built before 1978.





FIGURE 16 | Vacancy

VACANCY

While the city has a vacancy rate of 12.3%, this figure is nearly double at 23.3% within the Choice neighborhood. This high rate of vacancy is clustered among smaller parcels within the residential areas, which disrupts the continuity of neighborhood blocks. Vacancies also attract trash and illegal dumping that cause eyesores and can also lead to crime and other unwanted activities. Downtown, vacant storefronts detract from the street life. While a high rate of vacancy can negatively impact the character of a neighborhood, it also presents an opportunity for thoughtful and inclusive redevelopment.

LEGEND (VACANCY)

- Vacant
- Vacant City-Owned
- City-Owned

For the most part, vacancy is clustered in small parcels within the residential areas, disrupting the urban fabric.



The available housing stock in the Choice Neighborhood is largely small single-family detached houses. Recent investments are infilling and starting to stabilize the housing stock.

HOUSING TYPES

As with much of Augusta, the Choice Neighborhood is mostly comprised of small single-family detached houses, rather than typologies like apartment buildings or townhomes. Many of these homes are smaller than current market demand, according to a 2022 Market Study of the Choice Neighborhood prepared by BLOC. Potential new residents moving into the Augusta area (ex. military families, cybersecurity workers, etc.) would have difficulty finding supply for modern rental housing in the Choice Neighborhood, with very few apartment buildings available for rent outside of Housing Authority properties. More traditional “urban” housing types like townhomes, loft buildings, and larger mixed-use apartment buildings could bring new residents of alternate demographics and household

composition to the neighborhood, particularly closer to the Downtown.

Reflecting this, the Choice Neighborhood Needs Assessment found that Allen Homes residents are most interested in the townhome typology of housing (65.8%), in contrast to the single family detached housing stock of the surrounding neighborhood. This could be because they are most familiar with the current style of Allen Homes. Even among current residents, there is a perception of a lack of safe, well-maintained housing available for potential homeownership. The Needs Assessment found the top challenge to homeownership among neighborhood residents was “Finding an affordable, safe, well-constructed home in a location you would like to be in the neighborhood” (70.6% of respondents).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The overall median home value in the neighborhood is relatively low at \$78,606, compared to the citywide figure of \$138,165, but this seems to be a side effect of the lower quality and smaller sizes of houses in the neighborhood. Median income is also low in the neighborhood, making overall affordability of homes less accessible: median home values are 3.8 times higher than median income in the neighborhood, compared to 2.5x citywide. Affordability also has a racial component: citywide, home affordability is 2.1x homes to median income for white Augustans, but 3.0x for Black Augustans.

Allen Homes is one of the Housing Authority's five properties in the Choice Neighborhood, with a total of 832 apartment units, making up 11% of the area's total housing supply, according to a Market Study of the Choice Neighborhood prepared by BLOC. An additional three public housing sites with a total of 560 units sit just outside the Choice Neighborhood, 310 units of which serve elderly residents. Also in the Choice Neighborhood are several other multi-family sites, HOME Program activity, and one LIHTC site.

OWNERSHIP

Citywide, more than half of Augusta residents are homeowners (52.6%), but only 22.4% of Choice Neighborhood houses are owner-occupied. Approximately, 77.6% of neighborhood residents are renters, compared to 47.4% citywide. Average rents are high (\$939, compared to \$1,060 citywide).

Affordability of homes in the Choice Neighborhood is **3.8x** higher than the median income.


Source: 2019 ACS

Choice Neighborhood Allen Homes

76% **77%**

Residents believe **new affordable rental housing** is what is most needed in the Choice Neighborhood.

In the Choice Neighborhood:

 **66%**
Rent

ONLY **34%** own

71%

of Choice Neighborhood residents said **finding an affordable, safe, and well-constructed home in a location they want to be in** was a challenge in moving towards homeownership.

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Currently, Augusta has several investment tools in place for various parts of the Choice Neighborhood to incentivize redevelopment efforts. Laney Walker and Harrisburg West End are designated as Enterprise Zones as well as Opportunity Zones, which focus on designated areas that suffer from disinvestment and economic distress. Enterprise Zones encourage revitalization by allowing real estate taxes to be abated for up to 10 years and provide other incentives to private employers who create five or more new jobs. Businesses that fall within an Opportunity Zone that create more than two jobs qualify for a state tax credit for each job.

There is one Tax Allocation District (#4) in the Choice neighborhood which spans a cluster of blocks around 15th Street and Walton Way where the HUB now sits, and another cluster between Green Street and Walker Street from 13th Street to Gordon Highway. Similar to Tax Increment Financing, this designation allows the city to use anticipated increases in tax revenue to fund public improvements upfront to incentivize private investments.

Did you know?



TOOLS FOR REVITALIZATION

Opportunity Zones focus on spurring economic growth and job creation in distressed, low-income communities.

Enterprise Zones encourage private economic development and job creation.

Tax Allocation District (TAD) similar to Tax Increment Financing (TIF), this designation allows the city to use anticipated increases in tax revenue to fund public improvements to incentivize private investments.

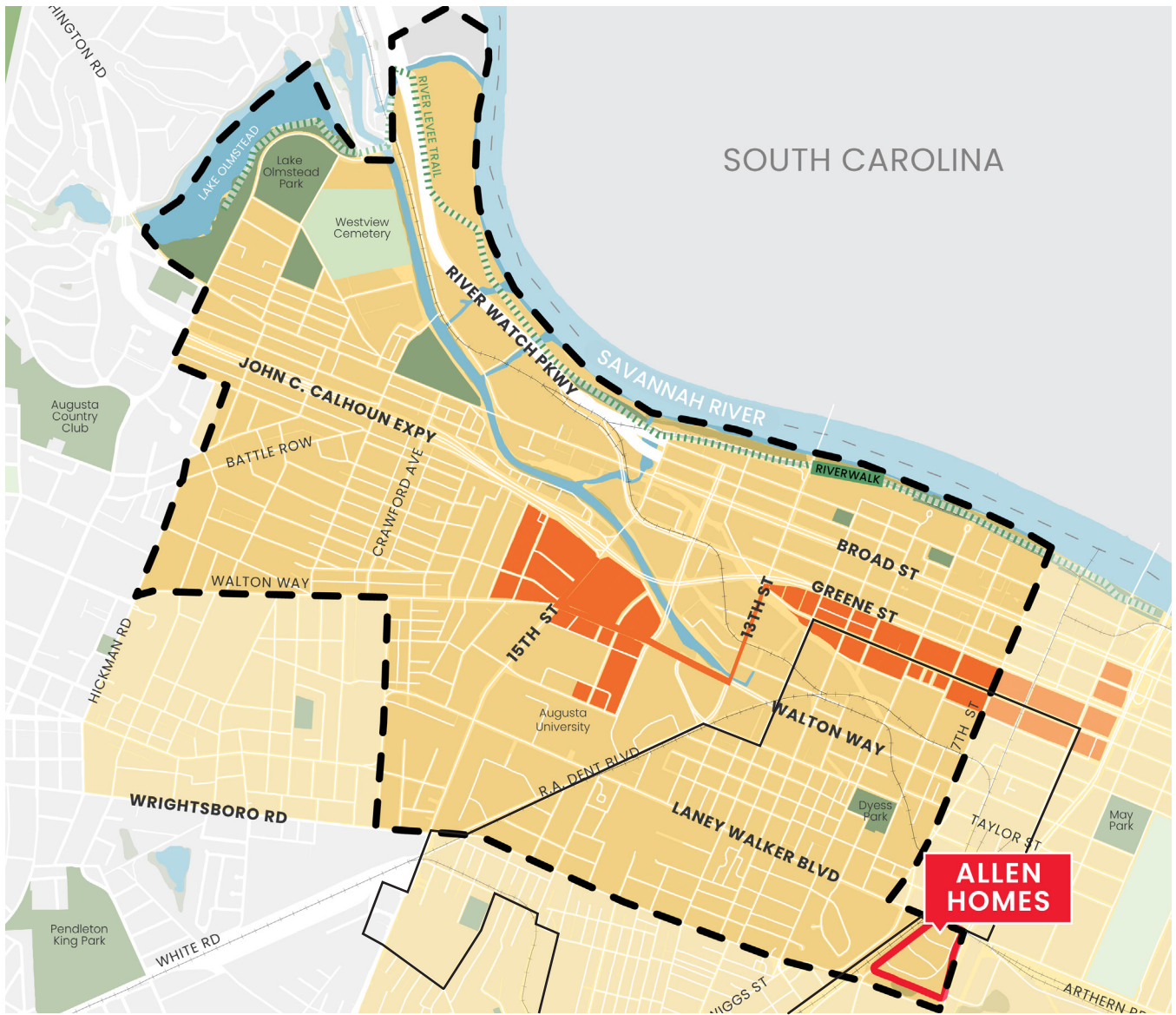


FIGURE 17 | Reinvestment Areas

LEGEND (REINVESTMENT AREAS)

- Opportunity Zone
- Enterprise Zone
- TAD Area

The entire Choice Neighborhood falls within an Opportunity Zone, offering incentives for reinvestment.

MARKET STUDY FINDINGS

The BLOC Global Group recently conducted a Market Study of the Choice Neighborhood to understand current conditions and future projections for the area's residential market.

The study found that there are two primary factors holding the local neighborhood back in comparison to the larger Augusta market: the lack of a major grocery store and lack of modern, improved housing options for a wider range of residents.

Other parts of the metro region include a broader range of options like townhomes, multifamily condominiums, and apartment buildings, all which are generally more attractive to newcomers to the area, especially renters. The Market Study recommends that in addition to providing quality housing for existing residents, the Choice Neighborhood housing plan should also target new demographics for the area, including: employees in the nearby medical and cyber industries; military households—both active-duty and retirees; and empty nesters. For both, the study suggests targeting households without children seeking higher-density

Strengths and Challenges

Among the biggest strengths of the neighborhood, the Market Study cites the central location and the commitment of the public, private, and philanthropic communities—as evidenced by the successful application for the Choice Neighborhood Plan and the recent launch of new HUB for Community Innovation and Boys & Girls Club facilities. However, the study acknowledges that the neighborhood is challenged by negative perceptions in the greater Augusta region of blight and disinvestment, including widespread vacant lots and the poor condition of existing houses; small and dated housing stock that does not meet modern market demands; and perceptions of crime.

The low household income of the neighborhood makes the seeding of widespread reinvestment and redevelopment difficult without significant capital. BLOC recommends taking an incremental approach to redevelopment building on gradual successful improvements to help mitigate these perceptions and raise awareness of the strengths of the area: good location, proximity to jobs centers, and the latent potential for mixed-use walkable communities.

Current and Projected Demand

Augusta-Richmond County

	# Units Delivered Annually	# Units in the Pipeline <i>Oct 2022</i>	Current Average Rent / Sales Price
Mixed-Income Rental Units	455	588	\$969 to \$1,249
For-Sale Units	950	1,125	\$152,625

Currently, there are 150 units at Allen Homes. At this point in the planning process, the Choice Housing Plan ideally would like to double this number of units for a total of 300 units. One hundred and fifty (150) of these units will be replacement units and the other 150 units will be mixed income. Based on BLOC's analysis, it is recommended that each phase of development be mixed-income with no more than 40% of the units being replacement and 60% non-replacement mixed-income units. This is suggested to create a sustainable balance for the community. The highest mixes of replacement units that BLOC's national analysis identified is 73% replacement and 27% non-

replacement, mixed-income units. However, BLOC would not recommend going beyond a mix of 50% replacement units / 50% non-replacement, mixed-income units.

Fifteen percent of Augusta-Richmond County's demand for mixed-income units are forecasted to be potentially captured in the Choice Neighborhood geography, for a total gross capture of 68 units. With a 60% annual absorption rate, a conservative annual market-rate target is 41 units. With a 50/50 mixed income/replacement unit split, each annual development phase is recommended to be no more than 80 units.

Recommended Development

in the Choice Neighborhood

	Annual Units	Total Units <i>1-10 years</i>	Total Units <i>1-15 years</i>
Mixed-Income, Non-Replacement	41	410	615
Replacement Units	39	380	575
TOTAL UNITS	80	790	1,190

For a site like Allen Homes with 150 units, this market projection would take approximately four annual development cycles of ~80 units each year, with a 60/40 market-rate to affordability mix. Early development successes could lead to a gradual increase in perception and in the capture rate for the neighborhood, increasing the viability for mixed-income unit development and therefore, proportionately increasing replacement unit development.

Seniors

Demand for senior rental units is separate from the previous mixed-income / replacement unit analysis. BLOC found the market in the Choice Neighborhood could absorb about 80 units of senior housing every three years, and could hold at 100% affordable with no impact on the community. These 80 units are above and beyond any replacement development for existing affordable senior apartments in the neighborhood.

Homeownership

As with the apartment analysis, a fraction of the total annual units delivered in the Augusta-Richmond County market fall within the capture rate of the Choice Neighborhood. Of the 95 homeownership units coming online each year, BLOC estimates only 5% of those (in Years 1-5) are viable within the neighborhood, for a total of 47 units annually. However, the study estimates a gradual uptick in capture rate for the ensuing years based on improvements in perception, for a rate of 7.5% in years 6-10 (71 units annually) and 10% in years 11-15 (475 units).

	Total Homeownership Units
Annual Units <i>1-5 years</i>	47
Annual Units <i>6-10 years</i>	71
Annual Units <i>11-15 years</i>	95
Total Units <i>1-10 years</i>	590
Total Units <i>11-15 years</i>	1,065



Needed Amenities

One of the primary reasons for the relatively low market demand in the Choice Neighborhood is the lack of necessary amenities for residents. A grocery store is by far the most impactful need for the neighborhood, but other services like parks, schools, shops, recreation, more frequent bus service and transportation options, and public improvements to roads, lighting, and landscaping all factor into prospective residents' decisions. These need to be developed in concert with new housing in order for these market projections to be accurate.

Conclusion

Because the area studied by BLOC is a large geography with several distinct neighborhoods, it is as-yet unclear whether these market projections hold throughout the geography, or should be targeted at specific areas. Recent residential development in the neighborhood has mostly entailed limited infill housing with some new construction closer to or in downtown. Generally, site selection for new housing sites needs to be in highly visible locations that are connected, safe, and close to everyday amenities.

In all, the study determined that large fundamental changes to the neighborhood's housing inventory, cost structures, and perceptions of quality and safety would have to be made in the study area in order to be truly competitive in the larger Augusta housing market.

MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

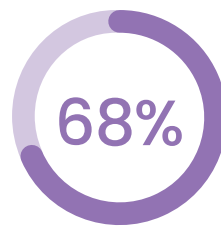
Augusta's evolution and character is closely tied to its transportation. While waterways like the Savannah River and the canal supported the city in its infancy, it later embraced the railroad and streetcar. These largely preserved the intimate pedestrian scale found in the historic neighborhoods of Laney Walker and Harrisburg. But once the automobile arrived and opened up access to the suburbs, it became the mode of choice. Expediting trips in and out of the city became the focus of major infrastructure investments like the John Calhoun Expressway built in 1976, to the detriment of existing communities like Harrisburg, which it sliced in two. Today, most trips into, across, and out of the city take place by car so much so that Downtown's revitalization efforts have apparently been hampered by access and parking challenges.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The city is served by a bus network with nine fixed routes and a complementary paratransit curb-to-curb van service. The Broad Street Transfer Facility is located Downtown. Operating hours for local service are Monday through Saturday, 6:30 am through approximately 8:00 pm. Late evening and Sunday services are not provided. Several routes serve Laney Walker and Downtown but the routes on the Harrisburg side of the Choice Neighborhood are more limited.

Although the city has a wide network, the buses do not run very often, or very late, and they do not connect easily to job or activity centers. In addition, many stops do not have benches or shelters, or signs providing details about the routes and schedules. Consequently, it is not a primary mode of transportation for Augusta's residents. Car dependency throughout Augusta has become a self-perpetuating cycle: some

people want to use other forms of transit, but because these modes of transportation are not robust or reliable, they fall back on car use, creating congestion and safety problems. In 2022, Augusta Transit received a \$1.4 million grant to update bus stops throughout the city to improve safety and accessibility by adding bus route signs, seating, and shelters.



of Allen Homes residents said they do not use public transit.

Source: Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

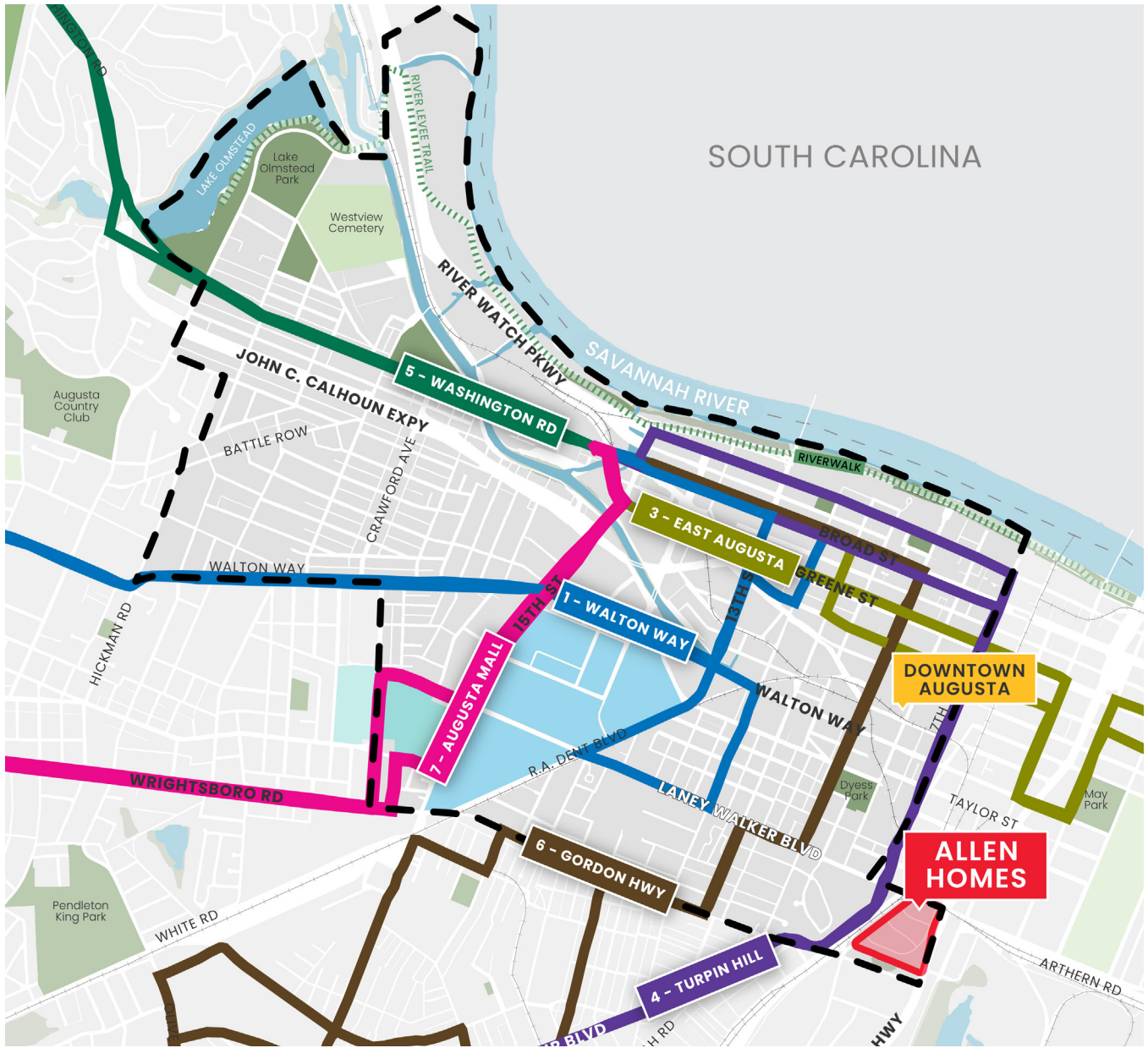


FIGURE 18 | Bus Routes

There are many bus routes that serve the Choice Neighborhood; however, the limited service hours, need for transfers, and lack of bus stop amenities and signage deter residents from using public transit on a regular basis.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESILIENCY

NATURAL RESOURCES & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Augusta has abundant natural resources. Nearly 15% of the overall area of the city is considered to be a wetland and another 57% is considered forested land, most of which is privately owned. While there are few specific initiatives geared towards green infrastructure, the overall land use management strategies designed to protect the river, canal, and aquifers, functions very similarly to contemporary green infrastructure strategies and has done so for most of the city's recent history.

Notable resources include the Savannah River, the Augusta Canal, Phinzy Swamp, Merry Brickyard Ponds, Spirit Creek Forest, as well as 60 other parks and open spaces, most of which provide critical habitat for wildlife, manage flooding and drainage, enhance water quality and overall ecosystem health, and promote various passive and active recreation opportunities. The Greenspace program, which is administered by the Central Savannah River Land Trust, was started in 2000 to accept and manage donated land intended to help the city preserve 20% of its land area as protected green space.

15%

of the city is considered
wetland

57%

of the city is considered
forested land

Many of these natural resources provide critical habitat for wildlife, manage flooding and drainage, enhance water quality and overall ecosystem health, and promote various passive and active recreation opportunities.

Opposite Top: Savannah River (Source: Augusta University); Augusta Riverwalk (Source: Trip Advisor); Trailhead (WRT); Phinzy Swamp Nature Park (Source: VisitAugusta.com)



VULNERABILITY PROFILE

National, state, county and city resources indicate that Augusta's highest risks regarding environmental hazards and mitigation primarily concern flood, drought, and excessive heat.

Flooding

Flood risk in Augusta is largely due to its place along the Savannah River as well as the many smaller tributaries within the city limits. A portion of the Choice neighborhood falls within the floodplain but receives some protection from the extensive levee system, which helps to mitigate flood and direct excess water away from critical areas.

Recent stormwater management efforts utilize a "watershed approach" and include a new Stormwater Utility Fee that corresponds to the impervious area of a property to prevent new residential and commercial developments from increasing the amount of stormwater discharge above the pre-development rate.

Did you know?



FLOODING WAS A MAJOR PROBLEM IN AUGUSTA

Three major flood events in 1888, 1908, and 1912 destroyed a lot of downtown and led to the construction of the levee. However, in 1929 another massive flood broke through. The levee was strengthened to today's current level.

Extreme heat and drought

Urban heat island effect is a real concern for those who reside in the urban core of Augusta and presents particular dangers for the elderly and people with disabilities, whereas in rural parts of Augusta and Richmond County heat and drought can have serious impacts on crop yield and plant health, the ecosystem, water quality, and therefore the physical and economic wellbeing of those who reside there. The most recent hazard mitigation plan describes nine drought occurrences between the years of 2000 and 2017, rated as severe to exceptional.

Extreme heat events are less well-documented, but the 10 hottest days in recorded history for the region have all occurred after 1997. The number of days above 95 degrees per year is expected to increase substantially over the course of the next century within this entire region of the country.

A substantial amount of work has been completed to assess the financial and political feasibility for possible future projects that include grey infrastructure maintenance and development, expansion of conservation areas, flood mitigation projects, and changes to land use patterns to reduce the greatest risks posed to Augusta.

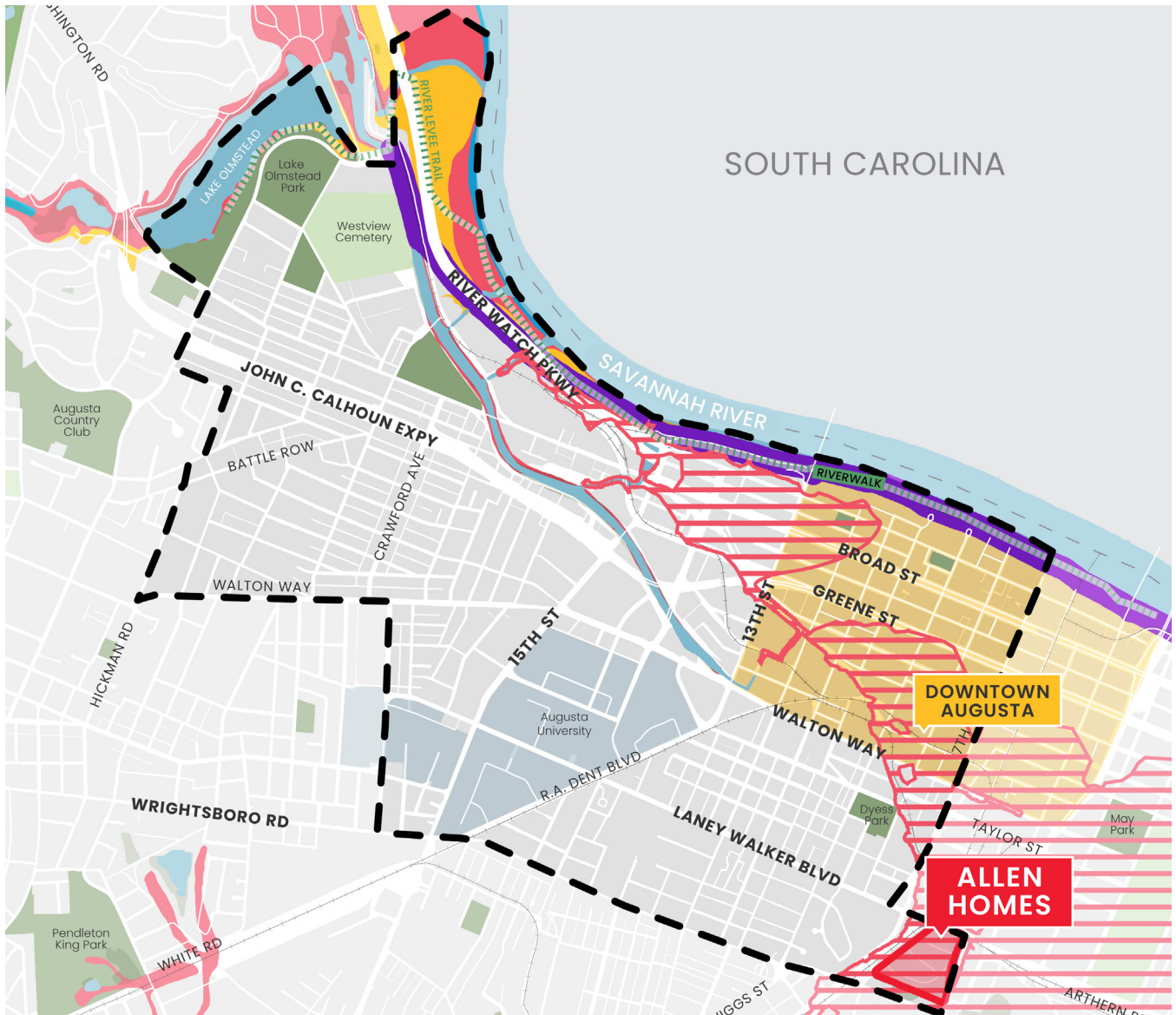


FIGURE 19 | Flood Zones Map

LEGEND

- Levee
- Flood Zones
- Floodway
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- 500 Year Flood Zone
- Area Protected by Levee

The Choice Neighborhood is largely protected from flooding by the levee, however there are still areas that are at risk of flooding.

BUILDING ON RECENT PLANS

03





BUILDING ON RECENT PLANS

Augusta has all of the ingredients of a thriving city. It has a rich history with historic districts in place to preserve its legacy. It has distinctive neighborhoods of a walkable scale, where everyone can feel at home. It is situated along a breathtaking river with a canal winding through its industrial past and physical heart. It has a diverse 21st-century economy, spanning health and medicine, advanced technology, industry, cyber security, and government. There is even a thriving arts and cultural scene.

The city also has a number of recent plans outlining great ideas and thoughtful strategies for revitalization. Several strategies have been implemented, many seeds planted, and some progress made.

The Choice Neighborhood Planning process offers the opportunity to stitch elements of these plans together and concentrate efforts on a few key “nodes” or sites to jumpstart transformation. To that end, this effort aims to build on the following plans.

.....
Envision Augusta 2035 Comprehensive Plan
.....

**The Laney Walker and Bethlehem Urban
Redevelopment Plan**
.....

Reclaiming Historic Harrisburg
.....

Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update
.....

Destination Blueprint For Augusta, Georgia
.....

Realizing The Garden City
.....

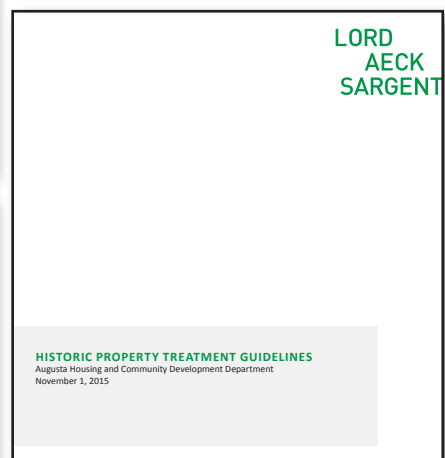
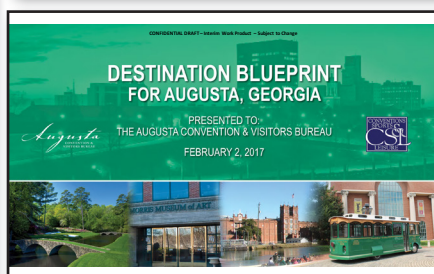
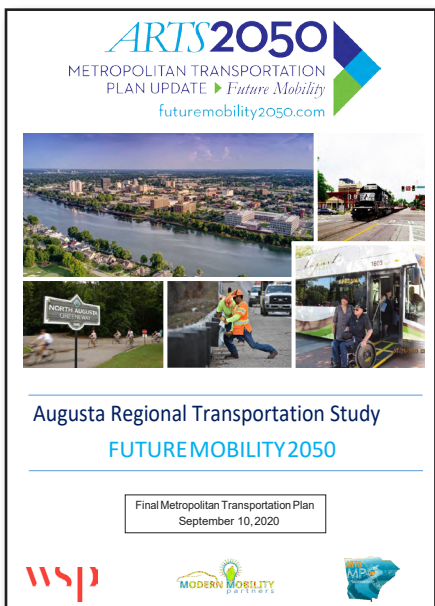
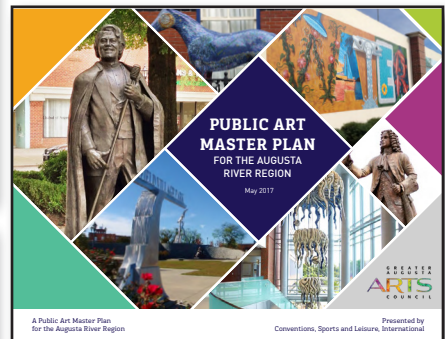
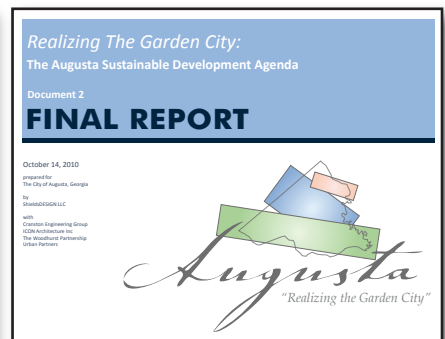
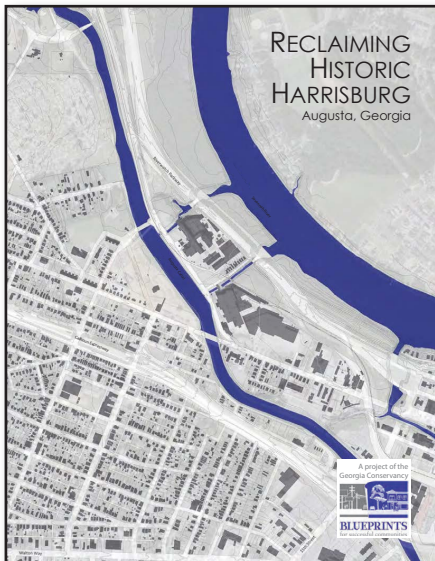
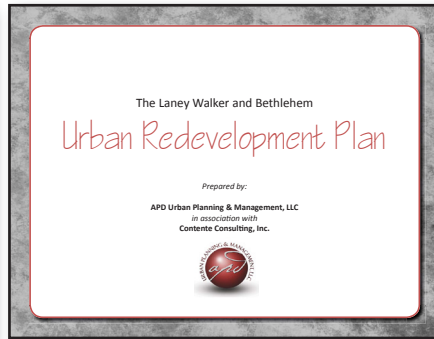
The Westobou Vision
.....

Future Mobility 2050
.....

Walkability and Age-Friendly Streets:
Opportunities To Transform Augusta Built Environment
.....

Public Masterplan for Augusta River Region
.....

Historic Property Treatment Guidelines
.....



RECENT PLANS

Envision Augusta 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2018)

The Envision Augusta Comprehensive Plan is the official document that guides the future of Augusta- Richmond County. The plan outlines a desired future for the city that reflects the aspirations of residents and describes how that future will be achieved.

Extensive polling and community input was collected. The resulting set of 12 Community Goals is centered around concentrated interventions tied to central nodes or key pieces of infrastructure.

Relevance to our plan:

- Infill development is proposed to address large number of vacancies in urban core.
- More housing options are desired in and around downtown, including affordable housing, housing for the homeless and those with special needs.

- Historic preservation, clustered development, and land conservation supporting smart growth are desired, as is revisiting the “Garden City” concept.
- A more robust transit network with multi-modal options is preferred.
- Enhanced connectivity to key resources, such as parks, transit, and healthy food, utilizing both transit improvements and neighborhood-scale mixed-use developments is recommended.
- Downtown living, shopping, entertainment and neighborhood-scale commercial corridors are also highlighted.



The Laney Walker and Bethlehem Urban Redevelopment Plan (2016)

This plan serves as a blueprint for the redevelopment of “blighted” areas within the historic Laney-Walker and Bethlehem neighborhoods. The revitalization effort began in 2008, when Council passed a \$1 hotel-motel tax to provide a 50-year period to finance redevelopment projects.

The required blight findings report indicated that 71% of the housing units in the area were considered deteriorated or dilapidated, 26% of all units were vacant, and almost 30% of roads were missing sidewalks. The goals centered around rehabilitating and replacing sub-standard housing with affordable mixed housing types, providing affordable rental housing, and offering financial incentives to existing property owners and new investors to live and work in the area.

Other key objectives included enhancing public open space and restoring the area’s cultural heritage through the restoration of existing buildings and design guidelines for new construction.

Relevance to our plan:

- The plan covers a significant portion of the Choice neighborhood with many projects completed or in the works, establishing momentum to build on.
- Key proposed development areas run along Wrightsboro Road, Laney Walker, and James Brown Boulevard.
- The plan encourages a mix of housing to attract a mix of incomes.
- The plan outlines efforts to keep existing owners in their homes, including a maintenance program for the elderly and grant assistance to correct code violations.
- The plan aims to help start and maintain existing small businesses and proposes job training initiatives for the construction trades used in home-building.
- Preserving neighborhood culture is highlighted by renovating heritage sites and establishing an African American Heritage Trail.
- Re-purposing open space for youth sports and senior wellness is proposed.



Preserving neighborhood culture is highlighted by renovating heritage sites and establishing an African American Heritage Trail.



Reclaiming Historic Harrisburg (2011)

This neighborhood plan for historic Harrisburg is based on Georgia Conservancy's *Blueprints for Successful Communities*, a sustainable community design program that involved rigorous community engagement.

The plan emphasizes existing investment opportunities, as well as major corridor improvements, connectivity to the Augusta Canal, and alternatives for the John C. Calhoun Expressway. Harrisburg's unique character, which stretches back 200 years to its founding as a mill village, is also celebrated in this plan through preservation and branding initiatives. As a general development strategy, this plan recommends a block-by-block approach to infill development.

Relevance to our plan:

- The emphasizes preserving and celebrating the neighborhood's history and identity.
- It aims to embrace the Augusta Canal as a major city amenity with trails along the edge, improved street connections, and new housing along the Canal.
- Offers strategies include restoring Broad Street as a main corridor by enhancing the pedestrian experience with new sidewalks and safe crosswalks; reducing the number of travel lanes and integrating a "Complete Street" approach; and considering a form-based code district.
- The plan considers the potential impact of redesigning the Calhoun Expressway so that it is better integrated into the existing fabric and restores neighborhood connections.



Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update (2017)

Like many cities, Downtown Augusta experienced significant neglect and disinvestment following migration to the suburbs. Due to a popular resurgence of interest in living in urban areas, the downtown is now being revitalized. This plan is an update to the 2013 plan, which focused on six redevelopment sites, three of which have been completed. The implementation strategy centers around several guiding elements including: parking, economic development, land use, the public realm, and cultural resources.

Relevance to our plan:

- The Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) includes the Choice Neighborhood.
- There is an emphasis on improving connectivity throughout the DRA including,

gateway enhancements, wayfinding, and a safer multi-modal transit network.

- Current trends indicate more development opportunity in this area, as well as an influx of people and jobs

Destination Blueprint for Augusta, Georgia (2017)

This document outlines strategies that the city could employ in order to make itself more attractive to tourism and visitation, both from within the local region and from afar. It focuses on revitalizing downtown and capitalizing on the history, culture, and natural resources of the city, while also considering the need for downtown densification and improvements to the overall quality of public space.

Key recommendations include refined connections from downtown to the river, a more defined organization of the downtown area, concentrated city branding, and new public events.

Relevance to our plan:

- The plan seeks to capitalize on Augusta’s key assets, including the convention center, river and riverwalk, the canal and its associated outdoor activities, as well as the rich history and culture.
- Strategies include “defining downtown” more clearly for visitors with areas centered around arts and culture, dining, hospitality, and the university/medical complex.
- Another strategy focuses on making the river even more of a destination.
- Amateur sports and outdoor / adventure experiences also present opportunities.

Public Art Master Plan for the Augusta River Region (2017)

This plan was commissioned by the Greater Augusta Arts Council as part of a downtown development effort to assess the value of public art and identify opportunities to integrate public art into the city’s redevelopment strategy. With Augusta’s downtown and other neighborhoods in transition, public art presents “an important opportunity to highlight a community’s unique sense of identity and character, and continued investment in its development that can help create a sense of vibrancy conducive to retaining and attracting residents, businesses

and visitors.” The plan also harnesses the potential of public art to create a sense of identity and authenticity, as well as pride within the community.

Relevance to our plan:

- Includes a recommendation for a potential sculpture trail along the Augusta Canal.
- Recommends a potential new arts and culture district in downtown.

The Public Art Master Plan harnesses the potential of public art to create a sense of identity and authenticity, as well as pride within the community.



Realizing the Garden City: Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (2010)

This plan is written as an accompanying document to the Comprehensive Plan, and is intended to identify actionable strategies and particular policies, sites, and development approaches in order to create a community-oriented sustainable development framework. It does so by dividing the region into three distinct zones—urban, suburban, and rural Augusta—and adapting the treatment accordingly. The plan uses a combination of design framework strategies and suggested policy goals in order to achieve implementation.

Relevance to our plan:

- The strategies reinforce Downtown as a lively urban core with housing, mixed-use development, and cultural and civic uses that serve the region.
- There is a focus on infill in urban / suburban areas while preserving certain parcels for green infrastructure and public amenities such as a public trail network.
- The plan supports housing and neighborhood improvements in Laney Walker, Bethlehem, and Upper Broad Street.
- It highlights Strategic Action Corridors that include the Historic Sibley Mill and Augusta

Canal Heritage Area, the Medical Campus, and Downtown.

- The plan embraces the 2009 Westobou Vision that focuses on the area surrounding the Savannah River in Augusta and North Augusta.
- The plan also focuses on creating an open space network and transportation linkages along Gordon Highway, 9th Street, 13th Street, Walton Way, Broad Street, and the Calhoun Expressway.

The Westobou Vision: Master Plan For A Sustainable Future (2009)

Prepared for Augusta Tomorrow, the Westobou Vision outlines a shared vision for the downtown areas of Augusta and North Augusta. The plan recognizes a number of challenges that have continued to hinder progress toward revitalizing the urban area, which included deterioration, obsolete housing, challenging infrastructure, and the lack of an open space network.

The 20-year plan recognizes and builds on a number of existing assets: Savannah River, Augusta Canal, high tech and health sciences industries, historic heritage, the arts, and regional sports, along with its context within the larger five county region.

Three guiding themes shape the overall vision—linking the garden cities, becoming a center of learning and innovation and creating a vibrant place to live, work, and play.

Did you know?

The name Westobou is a Native American name for the Savannah River. It was given this name by the Westo people who once lived in this region.



Relevance to our plan:

- This vision outlines a number of key projects and initiatives that reinforce the densification of the urban area and provide a variety of housing for a range of household types and incomes.
- The plan illustrates a vision for projects such as Dyess Park Canal Village and Harrisburg Canal Village.
- The medical district is envisioned as a mixed-use health sciences park.
- The plan embraces the opportunity to create green corridors and nodes.



Future Mobility 2050 (*Arts 2050, Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update*) (2020)

The main goals of the long range transportation plan are to reduce congestion and delay, improve accessibility and connectivity, enhance safety, maintain the existing system, support economic vitality, and promote environmental stewardship and sustainable land use development patterns.

Relevance to our plan:

- Priority strategies promote connectivity and alternative transportation modes such as bicycles and pedestrians, as well as van pools and car sharing.
- There is a focus on improving linkages to employment, business, retail, and activity centers as well as the urban core.
- The plan strives to minimize impacts on environmental resources, water and air quality, and historic properties.
- Several high-priority projects fall within or near the Choice Neighborhood:
 - Street and intersection improvements on Laney Walker Boulevard.
 - James Brown Blvd. Streetscape Phase III from Twiggs Street to Laney Walker Boulevard.
 - 15th Street over Augusta Canal (Bridge Repair and Restoration).
 - Walton Way from 7th to 11th Street, sidewalk renovations.



Walkability and Age-Friendly Streets: Opportunities to Transform Augusta’s Built Environment (2014)

This study outlines several national trends that are reshaping communities across the country. It summarizes several recommendations (based on the community’s input) to improve the built environment and quality of life for residents of Augusta.

Trends such as “aging populations, rising fuel prices, growing traffic problems, increasing health and environmental concerns, and changing consumer preferences,” are increasing the demand for more active modes of transportation, including walking, cycling and public transit.

Increasing a community’s “walkability” by integrating placemaking and streetscape improvements and enhancing transit options can lead to many benefits.

Benefits of increased walkability include improved health and wellbeing, a greater sense of community, higher property values, increased tourism, and greater public safety by placing more eyes on the street. Augusta tends to favor

the automobile over pedestrians and could realize many benefits from some relatively inexpensive investments.

Relevance to our plan:

- Maintain existing sidewalks and enhance street crossings to improve safety and encourage walking.
- Expand and maintain landscaping to make walking, jogging, and cycling more attractive.
- Add lighting to parks to make them safer for users and lengthen the time they can be used each day.
- Reduce vehicle speeds throughout the city.
- Adopt a Complete Streets policy and Implementation plan to make streets more user friendly and safer for all users.



Historic Property Treatment Guidelines (2015)

This plan was commissioned by the Greater Augusta Arts Council as part of a Augusta is a city with a rich history and wide array of historic resources. Many of its most historic neighborhoods including Laney Walker and Bethlehem have suffered severe disinvestment, leading to extensive blight.

The historic property treatment guidelines play a central role towards identifying strategies that can be used to ensure that the character of the city lives on by reinvesting in those historic properties. Created for the Housing and Community Development Department, these guidelines are used both for identifying historic properties as well as techniques for architectural preservation.

Relevance to our plan:

- Contains general information on types, features, and locations of historic structures within Augusta, as well as prescriptions for treatment.
- Multiple historic districts fall within the Choice Neighborhood boundary including Laney Walker, Harrisburg, and Downtown.

ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS

04



WE STILL HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Help us reach our survey goal!



About the Survey
As part of the Choice Neighborhood Planning process, we're conducting a survey of Allen Homes residents to better understand your desires for housing, jobs, education, health & wellness, parks, and your hopes for the future.
The survey will form the basis for the Choice Neighborhood plan!

150 EVERY household that completes a survey will receive:
50 WALMART GIFT CARD and will be entered into a grand prize raffle with the chance to win a TV!

NEW DATES ADDED!

PLEASE TAKE A SURVEY TODAY!

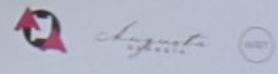
Stop by the Community Room:

MONDAY	July 18	2:00 - 7:00pm
WEDNESDAY	July 20	2:00 - 7:00pm
FRIDAY	July 22	2:00 - 7:00pm
TUESDAY	July 26	2:00 - 7:00pm
THURSDAY	July 28	2:00 - 7:00pm
SATURDAY	July 30	10:00am - 1:00pm
MONDAY	August 1	2:00 - 7:00pm
WEDNESDAY	August 3	2:00 - 7:00pm
FRIDAY	August 5	2:00 - 7:00pm

OR set up an appointment by calling
Ms. Octavia Odum (762) 246-7653

Note: Surveys will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be conducted one-on-one with a facilitator.

Questions? call or email us:
Ms. Octavia Odum Senior Resident Services Specialist
Email: odum@augustapha.org
Phone: (762) 246-7655



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AugustasChoice.org
TO LEARN MORE AND STAY UP TO DATE



OUR TEAM

The team assembled to lead the Choice Neighborhood planning process has been hard at work on revitalization efforts across the Choice Neighborhood for many years. All of the members of the core team work together on a regular basis and have come together to harness the potential of connecting recent initiatives to guide the community in developing a collective vision. Planning team members share a commitment to addressing many of the hardest issues hindering the re-birth of Augusta's urban core, from widespread blight to low levels of literacy, education, employment, and income.

CORE TEAM MEMBERS

The City of Augusta *(Lead Applicant)*

The City of Augusta is leading the planning process through the participation of multiple departments. The Richmond County Tax Commissioner's Office is the "quarterback" of the team, overseeing the grant administration and coordination among team members. The Planning and Development Department is serving as a Co-Chair of the Neighborhood Task Force. The Planning and Development Department ensures that Augusta's growth is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan. It also administers transportation planning, the zoning ordinance, environmental regulations, building inspections, and code enforcement.

The Housing & Development Department is a Co-Chair of the People Task Force. The department focuses on economic development, quality housing, and neighborhood reinvestment. It brings invaluable insight to this process through its work leading the successful implementation of the Laney Walker and Bethlehem Redevelopment Plan.

Augusta Housing Authority *(Co-Applicant, Co-Chair of Housing Task Force)*

Since 1937, the Augusta Housing Authority (AHA) has been providing safe housing for low-income families, which impacts over 15,000 individuals. As the Co-Chair of the Housing Task Force, AHA is helping to integrate the housing strategies with the overarching vision for community revitalization.

Antioch Ministries Inc. Community Development Corporation

(Co-Chair of Housing Task Force)

Antioch Ministries Inc. (AMI) aims to empower individuals and families to become more self-sufficient by developing quality, affordable residential housing; by creating homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income individuals and families; and by enhancing the economic prosperity of Augusta's urban core. AMI has constructed over 35 new homes in Laney Walker.



Augusta Georgia Land Bank Authority

(Co-Chair of Neighborhood Task Force)

The Augusta Land Bank Authority works with the City of Augusta-Richmond County to return vacant and abandoned land to productive use for community and economic development projects that produce affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households. Of the more than 350 properties acquired by the Land Bank, the majority have and continue to be used for housing within the Laney Walker neighborhood.

Community Foundation for the CSRA

(Co-Chair of People Task Force)

The Community Foundation for the CSRA partners with area donors and nonprofits to direct funding where it is needed most in the community. It also supports nonprofits through grantmaking and training and helps them achieve long-term financial stability. The Community Foundation was one of three organizations that

brought the HUB for Community Innovation to fruition (along with the MCG Foundation and Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Augusta). The HUB houses five nonprofits in two new buildings in the heart of the Choice Neighborhood, designed to catalyze revitalization of the Harrisburg and Laney Walker neighborhoods.

Medical College of Georgia Foundation (MCG)

Established in 1954, the Medical College of Georgia Foundation is focused on improving the quality of life of the people of Georgia, the nation, and the world by supporting the advancement of education, research, and patient care at the Medical College of Georgia. The Medical College of Georgia is a major employment and educational anchor in the urban core with a growing footprint in the center of the Choice Neighborhood. It is committed to supporting the revitalization of the community through efforts and investments such as the HUB for Community Innovation.



631

631

TRASH RECYCLED

OUR PARTNERS

RESIDENTS OF ALLEN HOMES AND THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

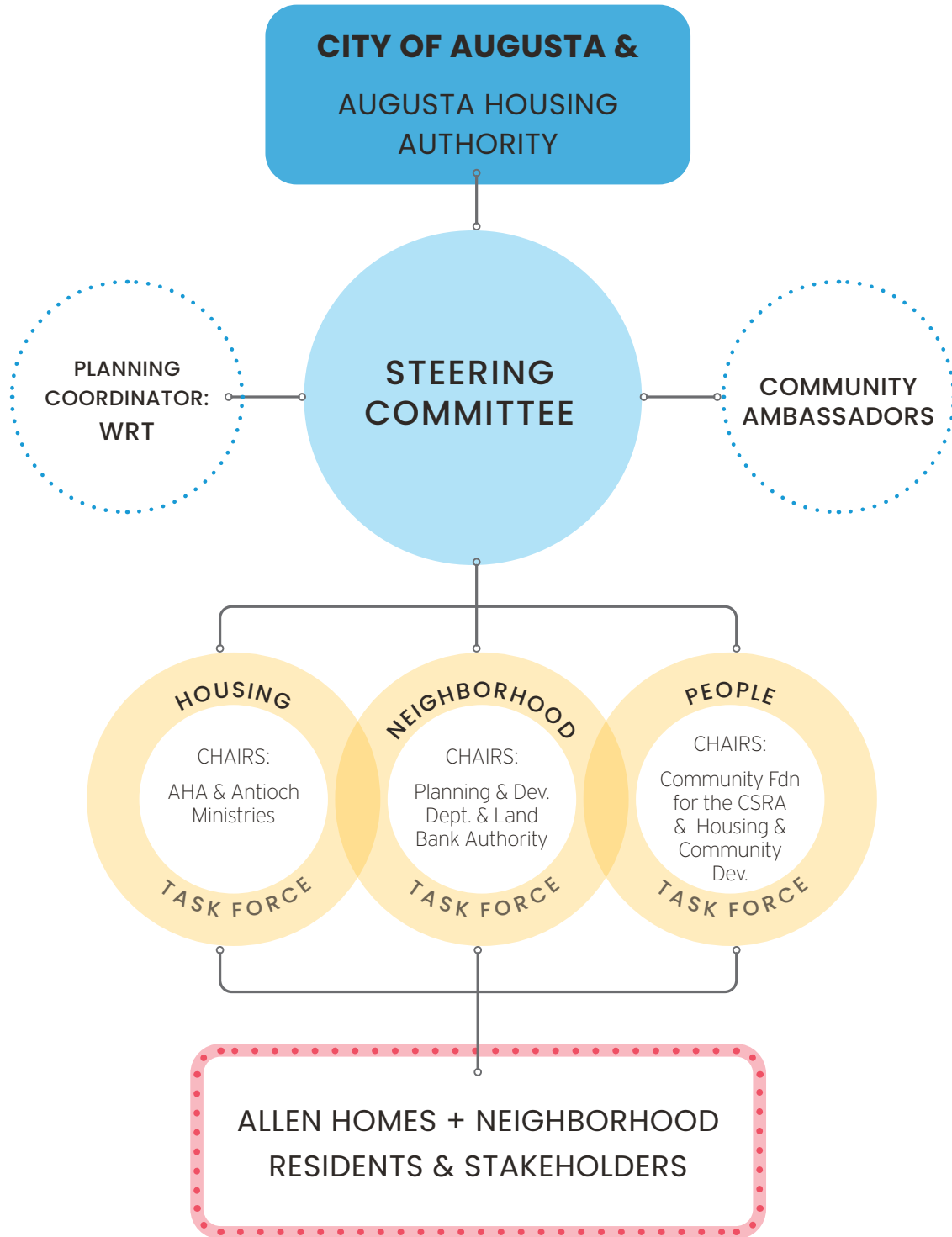
The participation of Allen Homes and broader neighborhood residents in the planning process is critical to creating a shared vision. All residents are invited to play an active role in helping to develop the goals and strategies by serving on the Task Forces (and taking part in the survey). For those with less time, they are encouraged to follow progress on the website and share their feedback on the plan by participating in community meetings, workshops, and special events.

AREA ORGANIZATIONS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

As the Choice Neighborhood spans two historic neighborhoods, a growing medical campus and downtown, it is home to a variety of educational and medical institutions, businesses, religious organizations, community groups, other service providers, and non-profits. Members of these organizations are all invited to serve on the Task Forces and to provide their input through community meetings, workshops, focus groups, and special events.



HOW WE ARE ORGANIZED



CORE TEAM

Members of the Core Team (described above) meet every other week to review and discuss the progress of the planning process. The Core Team is working together to identify potential development sites that could have the greatest impact on all facets of the plan. The Core Team explores ideas for engagement passed on by the Engagement Committee and will review and refine the plan's goals and strategies to maximize synergies.

TASK FORCES

Three Task Forces have been set up to focus on the three core elements of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative—housing, people, and neighborhood. They are tasked with reviewing all of the information gathered through the existing conditions analysis, needs assessment surveys, and from the community during meetings and events. The Task Forces identify the main issues to address, and then develop tailored goals and strategies with clear metrics for the plan. Working groups are being formed for the People the Task Force to focus more deeply on youth and education, employment, and health. The Neighborhood Task Force may also break into working groups to focus on infrastructure and public safety.

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

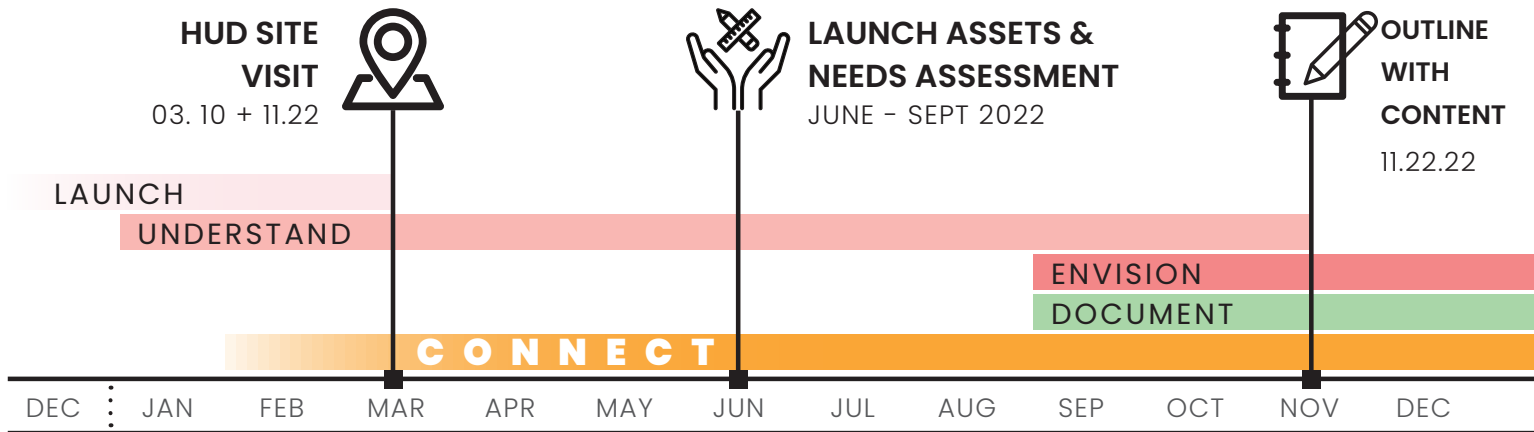
The engagement committee represents a broad range of active community members, partners, and stakeholders, who are working together to reach all corners of the community. The committee meets regularly to discuss the format, content, and logistics of engagement

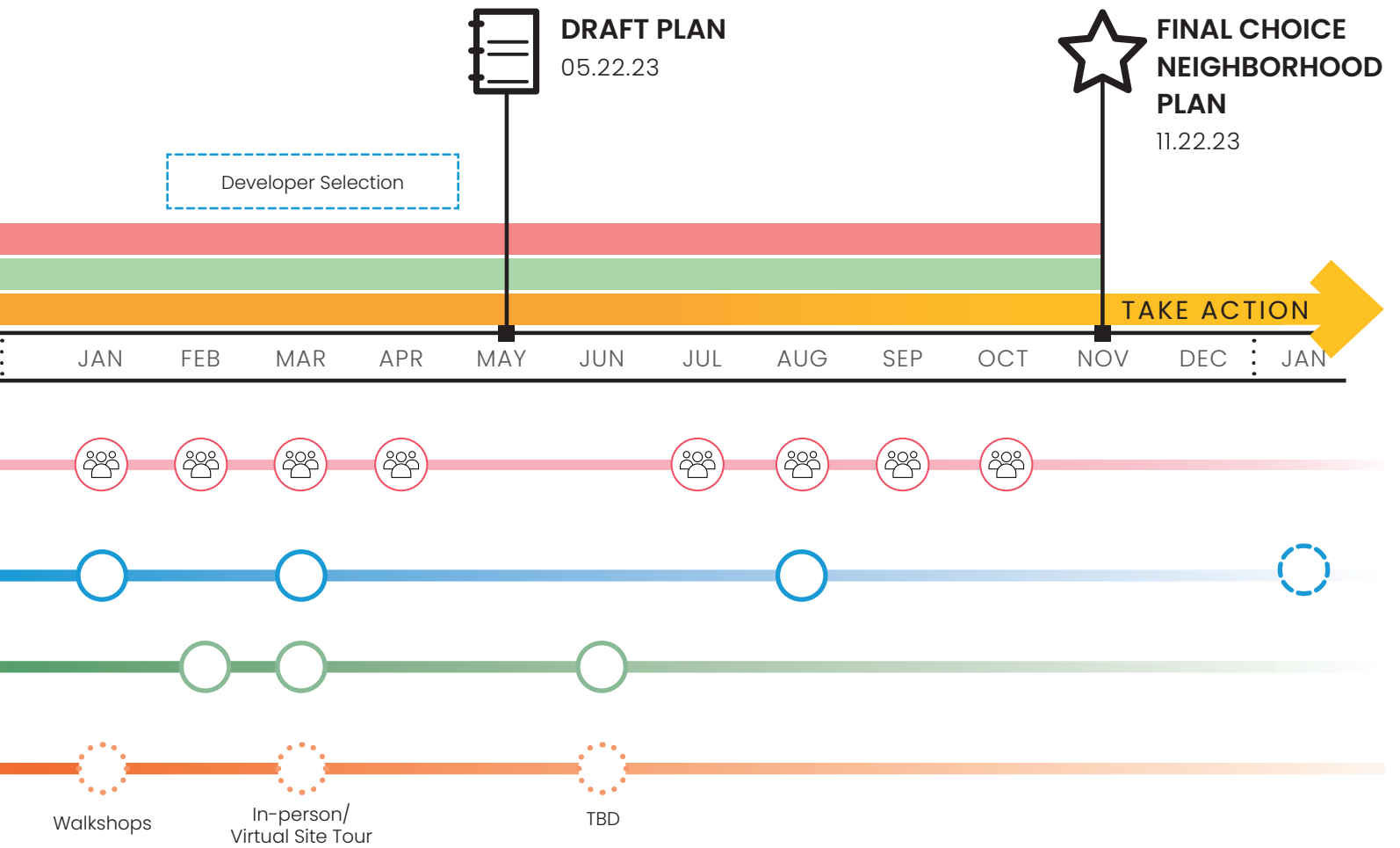
activities and reviews promotional materials to ensure they are tailored to the neighborhood's varied audiences. Committee members assist in organizing and promoting activities and events. The Committee was instrumental in getting residents to take part in the needs assessment survey.

EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The benefits of sound planning are many but two years or more can seem like a long time to see results. Early Action Activities are neighborhood-based improvements designed to be completed during the planning process that build momentum and excitement for the plan. An Early Action Committee will be formed in December 2022 and will comprise planning partners, residents of Allen Homes and the neighborhood, partners, and area stakeholders. The Committee's first task will be to establish a set of criteria to evaluate ideas proposed by the community. The Committee will also be charged with working through the details of the preferred activities and composing a proposal for HUD to review and approve. The Committee will then be tasked with overseeing implementation of the activities.

PROJECT TIMELINE





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

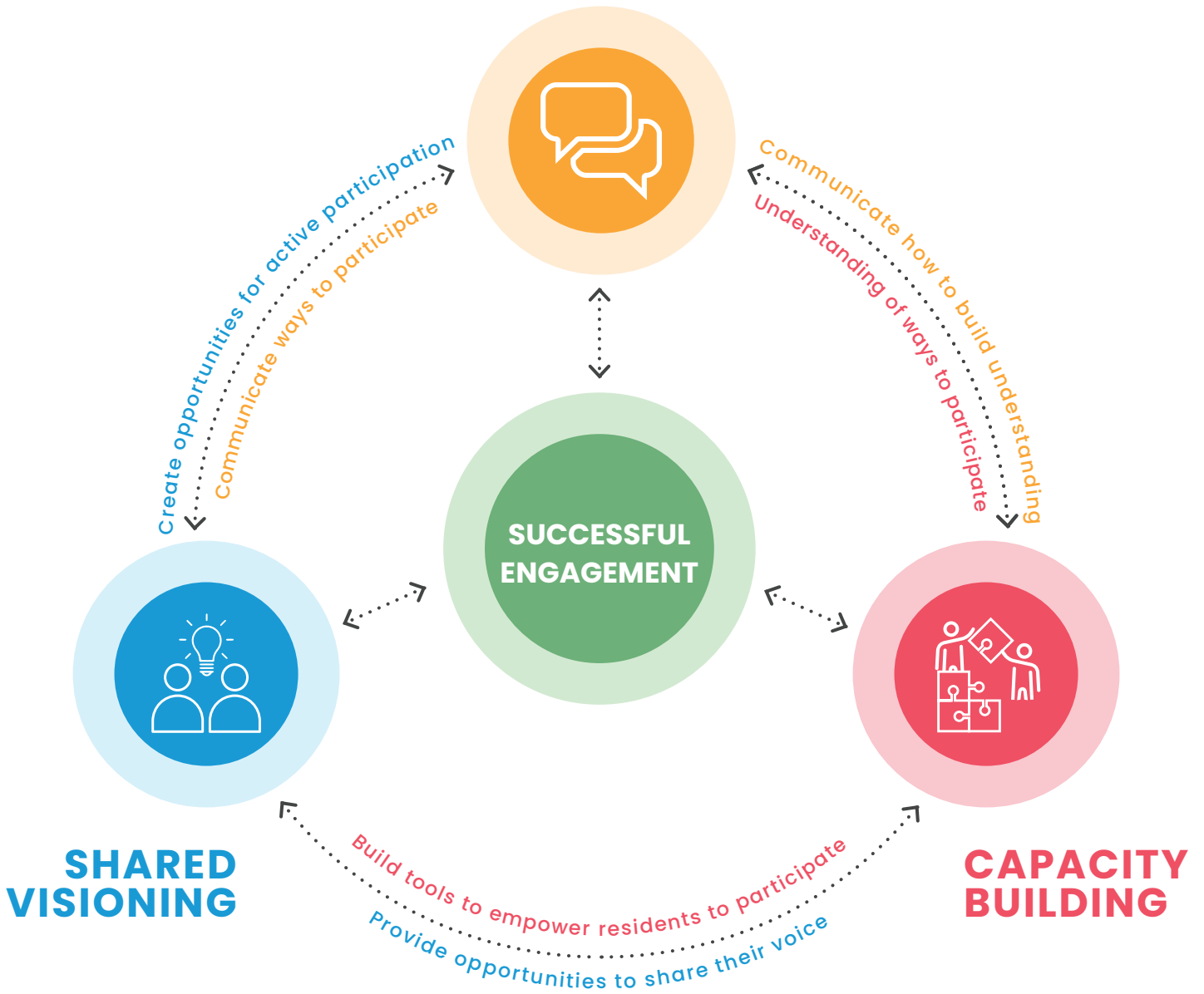
Augusta is still reeling from the migration of residents out to the suburbs and the lack of investment in the urban core that followed. While there are many elements to build on in the Choice Neighborhood, the most important are the people, the residents, the community. Despite the neighborhood's many challenges, current residents have chosen to live there and it is critical that the process understands their needs and aspirations, and that they take part in shaping the vision for the plan so that they can benefit from future investments.

Three main elements of the strategy involve: communication, capacity building, and shared visioning.

The engagement strategy is designed to be flexible so that it can continue to evolve during the process to reach the widest audience possible.



COMMUNICATING





COMMUNICATION

One size definitely does not fit all. Nearly 30% of residents in the Choice Neighborhood do not have access to the internet at home and when the planning team asked Allen Homes residents how they get their news about things happening in the community, they replied, posters and flyers or word of mouth from friends and family.

Analog:

The planning team installed a bulletin board at the Allen Homes Community Building that is updated regularly to keep residents informed. Flyers, posters, door tags, and postcards are also being used to let both Allen Homes and neighborhood residents know when events are taking place.

Flyers

WE STILL HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Help us reach our survey goal!

84% NEW DATES ADDED!

PLEASE TAKE A SURVEY TODAY!

Stop by the Community Room:

MONDAY	July 16	3:00 - 7:00pm
WEDNESDAY	July 20	3:00 - 7:00pm
FRIDAY	July 22	3:00 - 7:00pm
TUESDAY	July 26	3:00 - 7:00pm
THURSDAY	July 28	3:00 - 7:00pm
SATURDAY	July 29	10:00am - 2:00pm
MONDAY	August 1	3:00 - 7:00pm
WEDNESDAY	August 3	3:00 - 7:00pm
FRIDAY	August 5	3:00 - 7:00pm

OR set up an appointment by calling Ms. Octavia Odom (762) 246-7653

\$50 WALMART GIFT CARD EVERY household that completes a survey will receive a \$50 Walmart gift card and will be entered into a grand prize raffle with the chance to win a TV!

Questions? Call or email us:
 Ms. Octavia Odom Senior Resident Services Specialist
 Email: odom@augustachoice.org
 Phone: (762) 246-7653

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AugustasChoice.org
 TO LEARN MORE AND STAY UP TO DATE

JUST FOR KIDS!

Caregivers are of course, welcome too!

PIZZA PARTY!

Come have some pizza and learn a little bit about urban planning and how YOUR ideas matter through fun hands on activities!

Friday, November 4
 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm
 Allen Homes Social Room

Bulletin Board

Centrally located at Allen Homes, a Choice community bulletin board is updated regularly.

Door Hangers

DEAR RESIDENT,

SORRY WE MISSED YOU!

but we still want to hear from you!

Share Your Voice!
 HELP US REACH OUR SURVEY GOAL!

Understanding your needs and hopes for the future is the first important step in the Choice Neighborhood planning process. Please take a survey today and help shape a brighter future.

HOW TO TAKE THE SURVEY:

1. Stop by the Community Room
2. Take a survey
3. Contact Ms. Octavia Odom to set up another time that works best for you (762) 246-7653 | odom@augustachoice.org

Every household that completes a survey will receive a \$50 Walmart gift card and will be entered into a grand prize raffle with the chance to win a TV!



Digital:

A stand-alone website (AugustasChoice.org) provides an accessible repository of information. It features a calendar of upcoming events, an overview of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and provides access to meeting presentations and materials. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) is also being used to get the word out. In addition, the Augusta Housing Authority has an email and text message system in place that is used to broadcast information to residents.

Website



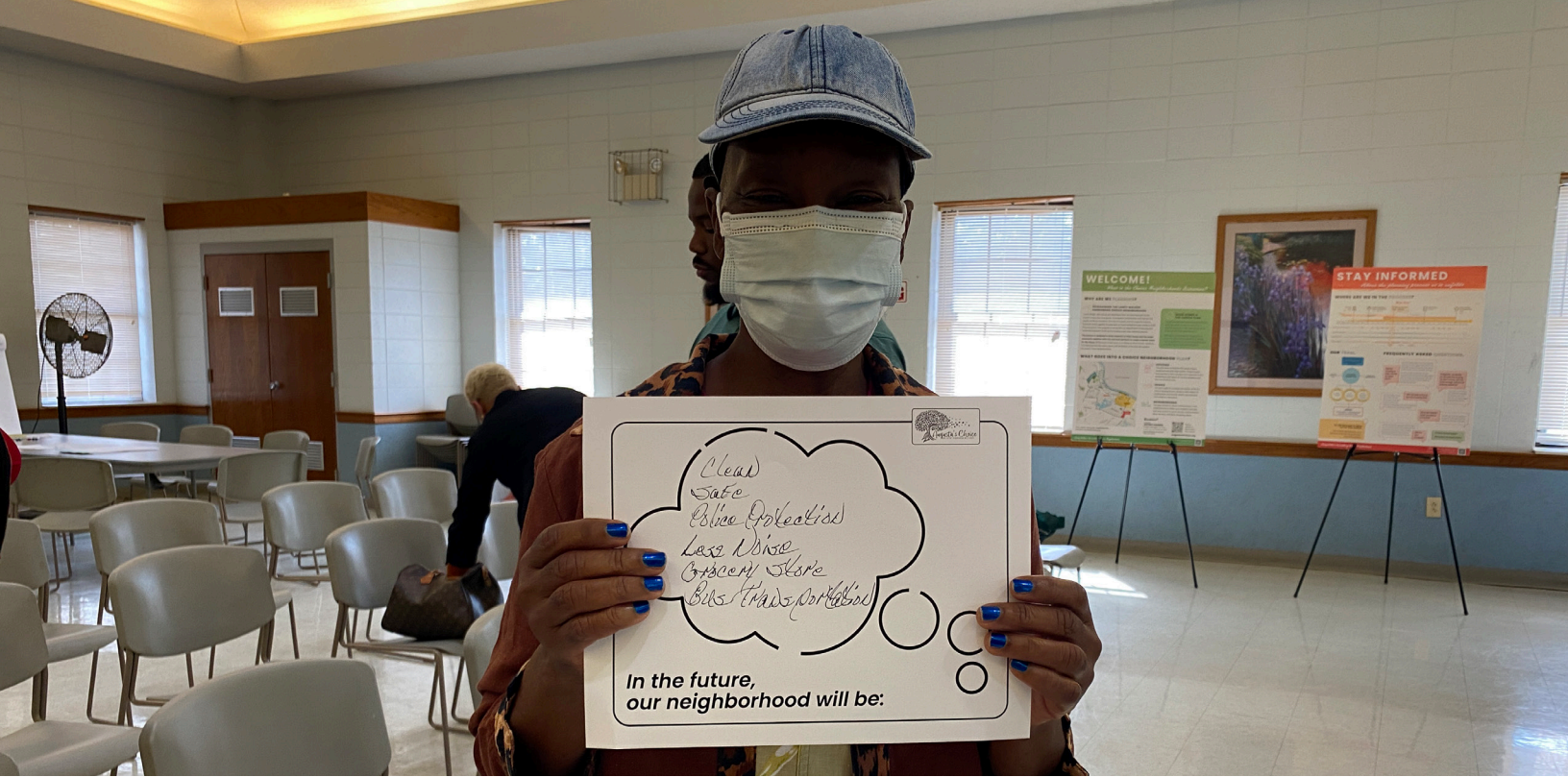


CAPACITY BUILDING

The goal of this plan is to be transformational—to the physical environment and the neighborhood’s long-term vitality but even more so to the quality of life for residents. Building local capacity is important for several reasons. First, it is important to have residents take part in the process and to do that it is necessary for them to understand the process and to feel comfortable sharing their opinions. And second, this is an opportunity for residents to develop their knowledge and skills to take ownership of this plan (and other community development efforts) and become a steward and advocate for change.

In addition to regular task force meetings, the planning process will introduce a Neighborhood Leadership Series in January 2023.





Neighborhood Leadership Series

A Neighborhood Leadership Series is being planned for January-February 2023. Open to the entire community, the series will feature multiple educational sessions with each focused on a different topic related to community planning and development. Each session will be led by local practitioners and include interactive activities to give residents hands-on learning experiences. The intent is bring together like-minded residents interested in shaping and preserving their neighborhoods. Topics may include planning at the city level, real estate development, starting your own business, and consensus-building.





SHARED VISIONING

Community Meetings, Surveys & Special Events

Allen Homes Resident Meetings

The planning process began with a hybrid meeting on February 24, 2022, with Allen Homes residents, who gathered in person, and planning partners via Zoom on account of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting introduced residents to the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and provided an overview of the planning process and ways to get involved. It also invited residents to the HUD Site Visit the following week. Another hybrid meeting took place on September 28, 2022 to review the draft of the Needs Assessment survey with a small group of Allen Homes residents and ensure they felt comfortable with the tone, wording, and content of the questions.



On November 4, 2022 a small group of Allen Homes residents met with planning partners to go over the Assets & Needs Assessment findings and to talk about some of the challenges they face and the opportunities they see for their future.



Community Meetings

Three large community meetings are planned throughout the planning process. The first set occurred on November 3 and 5, 2022, the entire community was invited to attend one of the two sessions where the planning team provided a detailed overview of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and overview of the results of the Assets and Needs Assessment Survey. After a brief presentation, participants engaged with members of the team on key topics and findings.



Did you know?

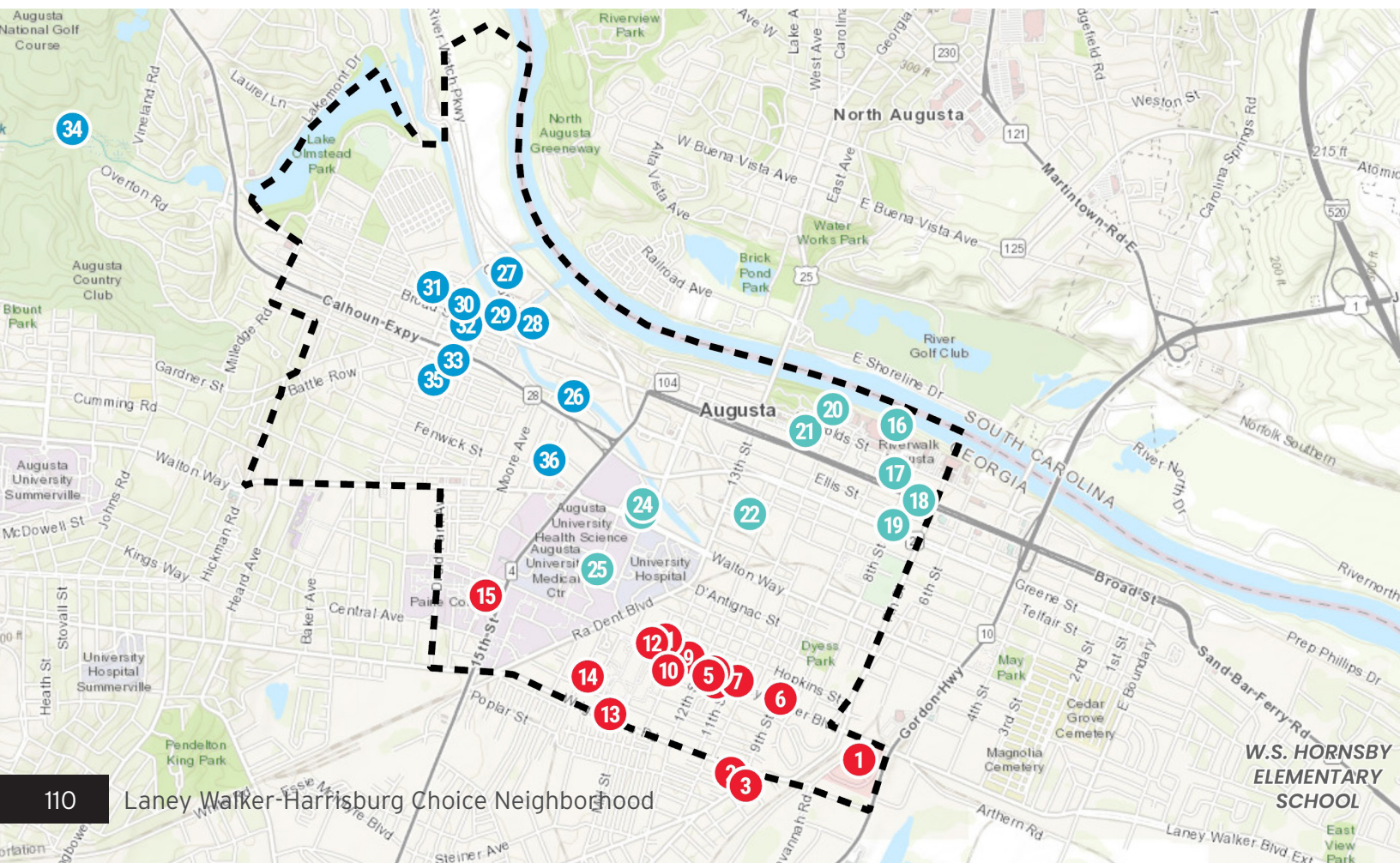
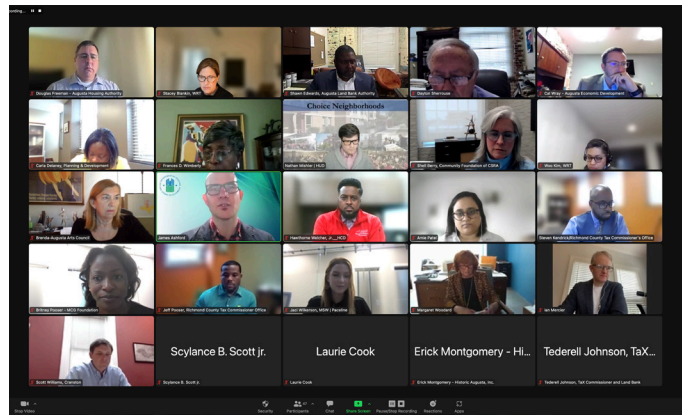
Community Meetings are a great way for you to stay involved in the process and share YOUR voice.

We'll be hosting two more series of meetings and workshops over the next year to hear directly from you about what you want your neighborhood to look like. Please join us!

HUD Site Visit

A two-day virtual HUD Site Visit took place on March 10 and March 11, 2022, bringing together Allen Homes residents, planning partners, area stakeholders, city representatives, and HUD team members. Although virtual on account of the pandemic, the Site Visit provided a lively “walk” through the rich history of the Choice Neighborhood (Link to the virtual tour <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/327a6c6aa385409b992bf9f1cca9038e>)

The Site Visit outlined many recent initiatives that the planning team will build on in developing a shared vision for transformation.





Special Events

Something for everyone! The planning process aims to make it easy (and fun) for residents of all ages to participate in the planning process. Smaller events including a barbeque at Allen Homes to encourage participation in the Needs Assessment and a children's pizza party are just a few of the activities held so far.

Additional activities are being planned including a bus tour of a transformed community in Atlanta, workshops of the neighborhood with residents to see first-hand what improvements would be most impactful, and a health and wellness fair.

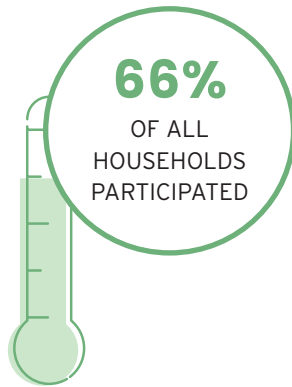


Assets and Needs Assessment Surveys

To better understand the needs and aspirations of Allen Homes residents and residents of the larger neighborhood, the planning team developed two survey tools:

We did it!

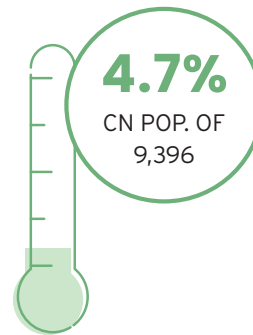
ALLEN HOMES SURVEY



92
SURVEYS COLLECTED
FROM AH HOUSEHOLDS*

139
TOTAL ALLEN HOMES
HOUSEHOLDS

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT SURVEY



441
SURVEYS COLLECTED*

* *Accidentally, 16 ALLEN HOMES Households took the neighborhood survey. Those responses were included with THE neighborhood survey findings.*



Allen Homes Resident Survey

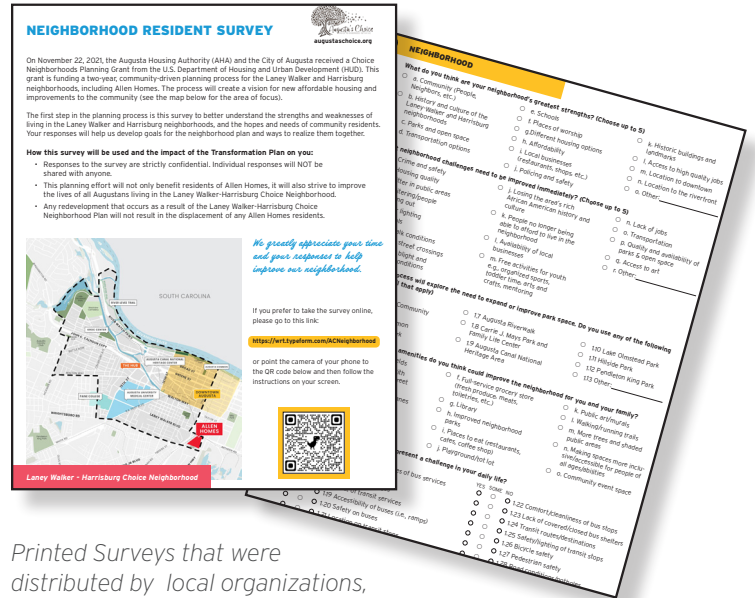
This comprehensive survey asked a wide range of questions of Allen Homes residents touching on topics such as housing, health and wellness, employment, and children's education. Volunteers from the City and Paine College were trained as survey administrators to guide Allen Homes residents through the questions and help answer questions. Just as important, they helped residents understand the opportunity the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative presents, how residents can share their voice, and get involved at a deeper level. Surveys were administered at Allen Homes, and a \$50 gift card was given to every household that participated in the survey. In addition, their names were entered into a raffle to win 1 of 3 TVs. The survey ran for approximately two months.

Survey for those who live, work, or play in the Choice Neighborhood:

This version of the survey was much shorter in length but repeated many of the same questions asked of Allen Homes residents with the goal of understanding how other residents, employees, and visitors experience the Choice Neighborhood. Surveys were made available online and also on paper. In some cases, participants were given small tokens of gratitude such as pens and candy bars.

Findings of from the survey will largely be summarized in the latter sections of the plan document. It is notable that there was substantial overlap in the findings between the two surveys.

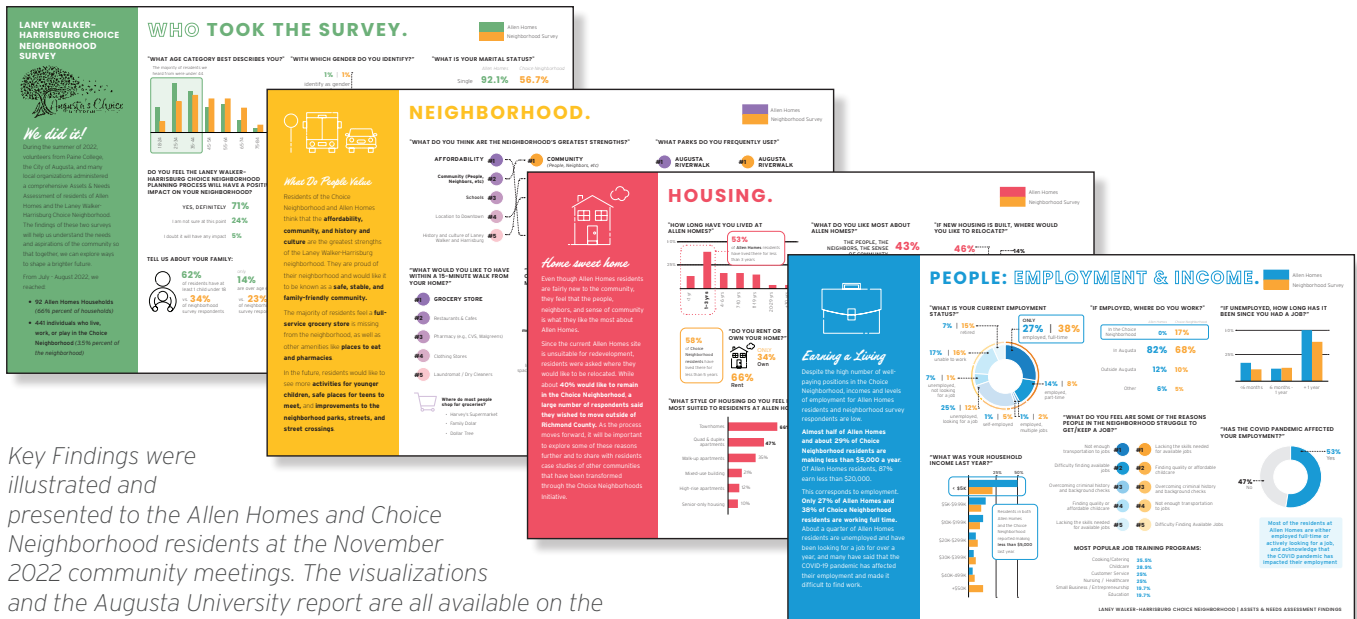
Augusta University analyzed the survey responses and prepared a report on the findings. This report, an illustrated summary of key findings, and responses to all of the questions were shared with the public at a Joint Task Force Meeting on October 11, 2022, Community Meetings on November 3 and 5, 2022, and posted to the website.



Printed Surveys that were distributed by local organizations, churches, schools, and other partners.



Social Media Flyers



Key Findings were illustrated and presented to the Allen Homes and Choice Neighborhood residents at the November 2022 community meetings. The visualizations and the Augusta University report are all available on the project website.

05

PEOPLE PLAN





PEOPLE PLAN

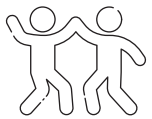
Despite a number of amenities, anchor institutions, jobs, and services within the Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood, residents of Allen Homes and the larger neighborhood generally are not thriving.

Overall household incomes are very low, as are levels of employment. Only a small percentage of neighborhood residents have education beyond a high school degree. In addition, low literacy levels are a challenge in the Choice Neighborhood where approximately 30% of Choice Neighborhood residents do not have access to the internet.

An overarching objective of the People Plan is to find ways to assist residents in taking advantage of all the neighborhood has to offer, including training and support for neighborhood-area jobs that provide livable wages, guidance to residents regarding health and supportive services, and educational services that build on fundamentals such as literacy.

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

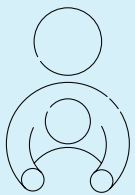


There is a very high percentage of children at Allen Homes, where the median age is 14.

62% of residents have at least 1 child under 18
vs. **34%** of neighborhood survey respondents

42% of Allen Homes residents have children under 5

47% of Allen Homes residents have children age 5 to 19



There is a very high percentage of single parent households in the Choice Neighborhood.

Of all Allen Homes survey participants, **none** are currently married.

Of all the Neighborhood survey participants, **only 24%** are currently married.

In addition, many Allen Homes residents are unable to work and have special needs.

21% of Allen Homes households have special needs

17% of Allen Homes heads of households are unable to work

Community Vision

**IN THE FUTURE, THE RESIDENTS OF
THE LANEY WALKER-HARRISBURG
CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD WILL...**

*The vision statement will be developed with
the community in the next few months.*

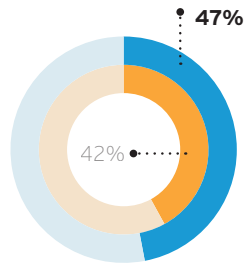
EDUCATION

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

42% of Allen Homes households have children under 5

Percentage of Children under age of 5 **not** enrolled in a licensed Pre-K or Early Childhood Program



WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THAT YOUR CHILDREN DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN A PRE-K OR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM?



Allen Homes CN

OPENINGS
no spaces available **46%** **24%**

COST
no affordable program that fits needs **38%** **36%**

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS
drop-off/pick-up times don't work with schedule **38%** **25%**

47% of Allen Homes households have children between 5 and 19



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE QUALITY OF YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION?

My child receives a high-quality education at school **56%**

My child is engaged, motivated, and/or inspired at school **58%**

Goal 1

Increase participation in quality Early Childhood Education programs.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will explore major challenges such as:

- Limited number of openings available in the neighborhood
- The location of existing facilities
- Cost of attendance
- Hours of operation
- Availability of licensed, high quality facilities

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

Goal 2

Improve academic performance for children in grades K-12.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will explore ways to support academic performance for K-12 students and increase high school graduation rates through on-site programming, that might include:

- Homework club on-site at Allen Homes
- After school programming
- Summer programs
- Behavioral counseling

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

Public Schools in Augusta Choice Neighborhood are among the lowest performers in the State

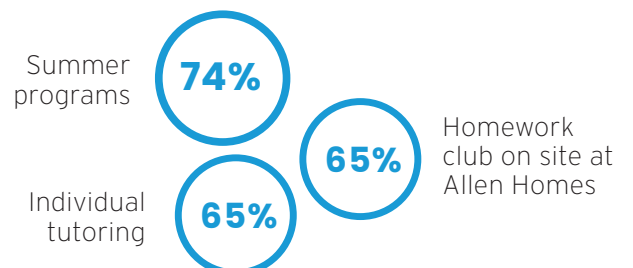
“Kids have lots of time and there are no positive things to engage in”

“No mentorship is being offered”

Only 73% of Allen Homes adults and only 84.2% of CN survey respondents have a High School Degree or GED or higher



WHAT ADDITIONAL SERVICES WOULD HELP YOUR CHILDREN DO WELL IN SCHOOL?



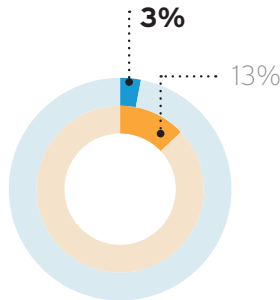
EDUCATION



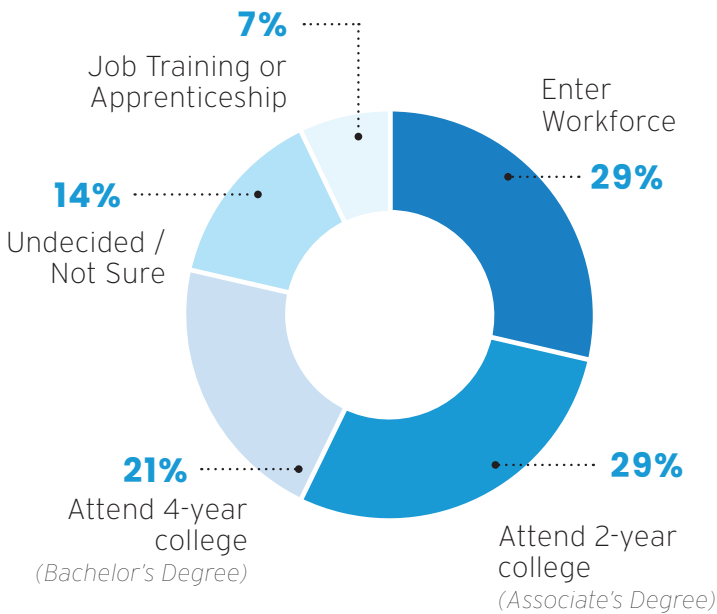
What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

Percentage of residents have a Bachelor's Degree or higher



WHAT DO YOUR CHILDREN PLAN TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?



Only **38%** of AH survey respondents feel their children's current schooling is preparing them to achieve their after high school plans

Goal 3 Equip students with the tools needed to attend college or begin a career.

Strategies will consider:

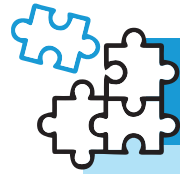
There are several major industries represented within and near the Choice Neighborhood including cyber security, medical/nursing/healthcare, government administration, advanced manufacturing, tourism, and military. The planning process will explore ways to align educational opportunities with these career fields, including:

- Mentoring with college students from Augusta University and Paine College
- College visit days
- Computer programming for elementary school children and exposure to cyber security industry
- STEAM-related activities
- Summer programs

A new automotive tech school is also being developed in the Choice Neighborhood and other tech programs are available just out of the neighborhood through the Augusta Technical College. Opportunities to target strategies for High School students (and older residents) will also be considered.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



BUILDING BLOCKS

Goal 4

Inspire young residents to pursue skills to live fulfilling, healthy lives.

Strategies will consider:

In addition to supporting more formal education, the planning process will explore additional education-related activities to support learning, career exploration and the development of life skills. This also includes strengthening basic building blocks like literacy and expanding access to the internet.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

RISE AUGUSTA

RISE Augusta is a nonprofit organization committed to supporting children, schools and educators to create a culture of success and expectation that every student—no matter their circumstances—deserves to be prepared, encouraged, and literate to be successful in life. With a goal of breaking the cycle of poverty, RISE Augusta offers: tutoring and remediation in schools, wrap around support services for families (eyeglasses, technology, utility bill payment), school services, book fairs, and summer school. RISE Augusta also supports high school-age children through a High School to Work Program and STRIVE at the HUB, which nurtures soft skills to succeed in the workplace. For young mother and fathers and moms to be, there is a BASICS at the HUB program to nurture early language nutrition at home.



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey



LITERACY

According to SchoolGradesGeorgia.gov, **only 50% of 8th graders** in Richmond County were reading at or above grade level. In 2021, **only 25-29% of students** attending Laney High School were reading at the standardized level for their grade.

WI-FI



29% of people in the neighborhood **DO NOT** have internet access

“WHAT PROGRAMS WOULD INTEREST YOUR CHILDREN?”

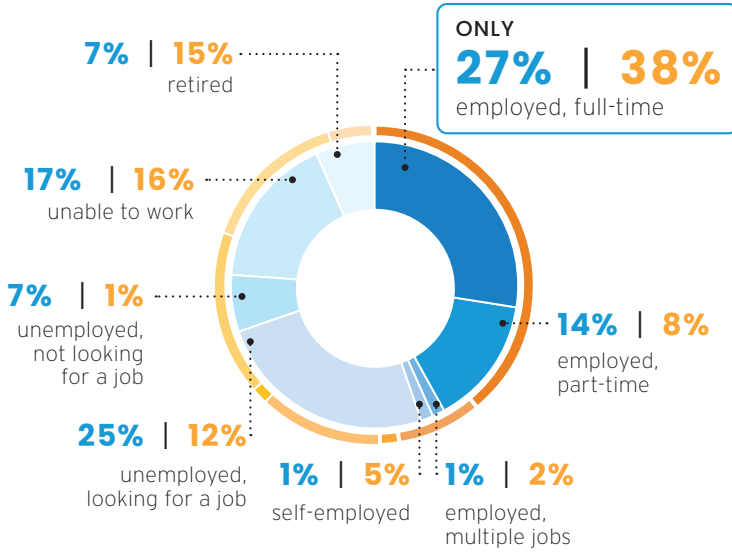
- #1 Dance
- #2 Arts and Crafts
- #3 Mentoring Program
- #4 Homework Help
- #5 College Prep or Computer Fluency/Programming/Coding

EMPLOYMENT

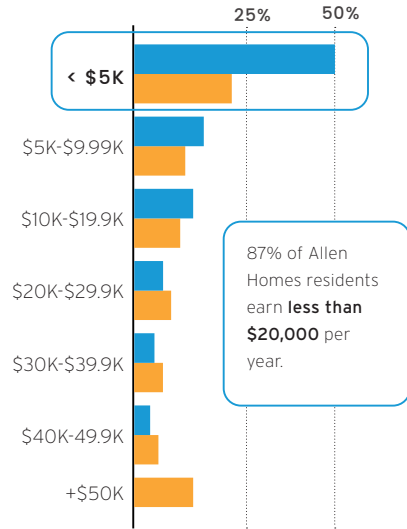
What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

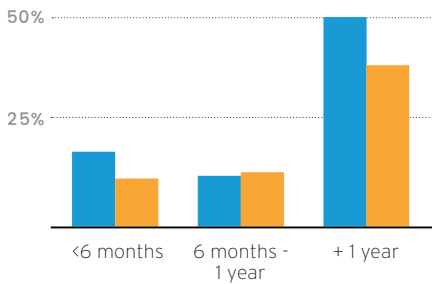
"WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS?"



"WHAT WAS YOUR HOUSEHOLD INCOME LAST YEAR?"



"IF UNEMPLOYED, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU HAD A JOB?"



"IF EMPLOYED, WHERE DO YOU WORK?"

	Allen Homes (%)	Choice Neighborhood (%)
In the Choice Neighborhood	0%	17%
In Augusta	82%	68%
Outside Augusta	12%	10%
Other	6%	5%



"WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE SOME OF THE REASONS PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD STRUGGLE TO GET/KEEP A JOB?"

- Not enough transportation to jobs **#1**

Lacking the skills needed for available jobs **#1**
- Difficulty finding available jobs **#2**

Finding quality or affordable childcare **#2**
- Overcoming criminal history and background checks **#3**

Overcoming criminal history and background checks **#3**

Goal 1

Increase incomes for residents of the neighborhood by increasing unemployment rates.

Strategies will consider:

Almost half of Allen Homes and about 29% of Choice Neighborhood residents are making less than \$5,000 a year. Of Allen Homes residents, 87% earn less than \$20,000.

Of the Allen Homes residents surveyed, all who are employed work outside of the Choice Neighborhood and only 17% of neighborhood residents surveyed work in the neighborhood. Allen Homes residents also cited transportation challenges as the number one barrier to employment.

This presents an opportunity to explore ways to connect residents to available jobs in the neighborhood and strategies to improve transit options to major employment hubs.

The survey also showed that the employment status of over 50% of Allen Homes residents was impacted by COVID-19.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



FIRST STEP STAFFING

An exciting new partner has opened a location in Augusta. First Step Staffing is a nonprofit staffing firm that was founded in Atlanta in 2007. It provides immediate employment to individuals at-risk of homelessness, as well as transportation to work and connections to other resources and services to retain stable housing.

First Step is co-located at the Salvation Army's First Stop Center, which brings together multiple community partner agencies and offers resources to prevent homelessness and help individuals achieve self-sufficiency.

The program might also be able to assist with staving off some of the challenges associated with the "benefits cliff" that residents often face when they advance in new positions and increase their incomes, but then find they are ineligible for some of the supportive services like childcare that enable them to work.

Goal 2

Work with area providers to align job training and tech programs with jobs in the neighborhood.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will explore gaps between existing job training programs available in the Choice Neighborhood, access to other programs nearby including those offered by Augusta Technical College, and how they align with current jobs and careers in the neighborhood.

Other strategies include raising awareness of available programs.

Generally speaking, the job training programs listed in the survey were all ranked by Allen Homes residents as "good" versus "just ok" or "poor." Goodwill Job Connection (87.5%), Job Training at Easterseals of East Georgia (89%), and Augusta University Career Services (85.7%) were ranked highly by over 80% of residents who used their programs.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

Goal 3

Promote self-sufficiency and resiliency among adult residents.

Strategies will consider:

This goal aims to help adults realize their full potential and become increasingly self-sufficient. Completing high school or pursuing additional education is one path. Approximately, 25% of Allen Homes residents have participated in Augusta Technical College’s Adult GED program.

Another way that residents may generate income is by starting a small business such as catering. Local nonprofit Augusta Locally Grown already has a small business incubator and commercial kitchen for lease in the Choice Neighborhood. Residents also expressed interest in small business loans and entrepreneurial programs.

The Allen Homes survey revealed that 63.2% of residents are unaware of the First-Time Homebuyers Workshop and 59.2% of residents are unaware of the available Credit Repair/ Budgeting Workshop.

Expanding and increasing awareness of these existing programs will be part of the strategies considered to support this goal.

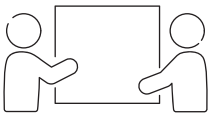
Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

What We Heard

Allen Homes Neighborhood Survey

78% of Allen Homes residents who are unemployed are NOT enrolled in school or job training. In part, this may be due to lack of awareness. Between 25% and 60% of residents are unaware of the available training programs.



MOST POPULAR FIELDS FOR DESIRED JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS:

- Cooking/Catering 35.5%
Childcare 28.9%
Customer Service / Nursing & Healthcare 25%
Small Business & Entrepreneurship / Education 19.7%

WHAT TRAINING PROGRAMS WOULD HELP YOU ADVANCE OR START A NEW CAREER, OR ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS?

- #1 Job Fairs
#2 Career Counseling / Mentoring
#3 Resume Writing/Interview Tips
#4 Small Business Loans
#5 Technology Training



SPOTLIGHT

Fostering a community where all residents thrive together

The Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood stands to become a national model for community revitalization with a major medical district directly at the center. The recently completed \$33.5 million HUB for Community Innovation is the cornerstone of an ambitious, multi-year community redevelopment initiative reestablishing communication and cooperation between local NGOs and residents, exploring creative, collaborative solutions that enhance equitable access to all the basic components of a vibrant community.

Nestled between Laney Walker and Harrisburg neighborhoods is the Augusta Medical District, a special-use zoning district, comprising the Augusta University Medical Center, Augusta University's Medical College of Georgia (MCG), the Augusta University Cancer Center, the Children's Hospital of Georgia, University Hospital, the Norwood VA Medical Center, and other public and private healthcare institutions.

The Medical College of Georgia, founded in 1828, is also the state of Georgia's only public medical school. The presence of this medical infrastructure presents an enormous opportunity to create a community centered around health and wellness that lifts up all residents.

A major step in bridging the gap between medical campus and the surrounding community has been forged with the recent completion of the HUB for Community Innovation, which sits at the heart of the Choice Neighborhood.



HUB FOR COMMUNITY INNOVATION

The \$33.5 million HUB for Community Innovation opened its doors on June 25, 2022. The campus comprises the HUB West, a 33,000-SF building housing Augusta Locally Grown, Augusta University Literacy Center, RISE Augusta, and Harrisburg Family Health Care. Across the way, HUB East is a 16,000 square foot building that is the headquarters and support center for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Augusta.

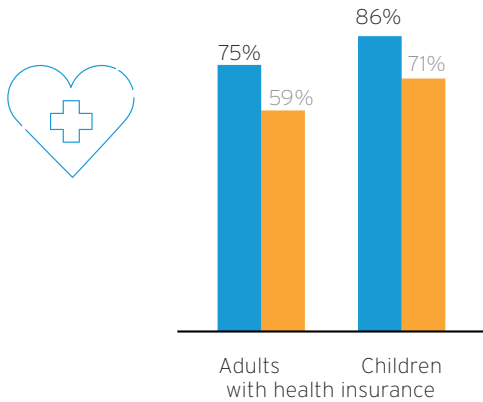
The HUB will help rebuild connections and collaboration among nonprofits and neighbors by hosting community events, welcoming public speakers, and providing space for civic groups to gather. The HUB Augusta Collaborative strives to pursue innovative, collaborative solutions that bolster equitable access to all the essential elements of a thriving community—mixed-income housing, a variety of healthy food sources, quality healthcare, and educational supports.

HEALTH

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

DO YOU HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE?



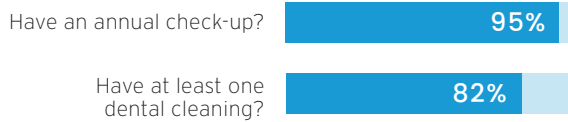
IF NOT, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE REASONS?

Cost

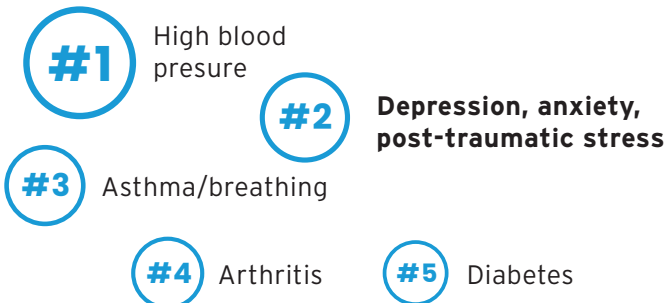
Not sure how to get insurance

Difficult getting approved

IN A TYPICAL YEAR, DO THE MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD...



TOP HEALTH CONDITIONS



WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO EXERCISE?

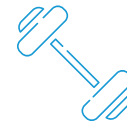


46%



of Allen Homes adults and 57% of children jog, walk or ride a bike outside a few times a week

only 29%



of Allen Homes residents & 27% of CN residents feel there are many places to exercise in the neighborhoods (gyms, parks, playgrounds)

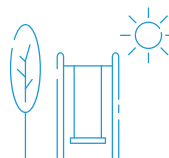
50%

of Allen Homes adults exercise at home with apps, videos, or home equipment

61%

of Allen Homes children NEVER participate in organized sports

70%



of Allen Homes children play casually in parks/ fields a few times/week

Goal 1

Encourage positive physical health of residents.

Strategies will consider:

Many factors impact one's physical health from regular check ups to exercise and nutrition. This goal will consider a range of strategies to support overall physical health, beginning with increasing the number of residents with health insurance.

Georgia's PeachCare for Kids program provides numerous benefits including medical, dental and vision, free gym memberships, and a Start Smart for Your Baby program. Allen Homes residents cite cost as the top reason for not having health insurance so increasing awareness of insurance options will also be among the strategies.

Other strategies might include:

- Integrating a gym in the housing development(s).
- Organizing weekly yoga or dance classes on site.
- Hosting health fairs to promote health insurance enrollment.
- Setting up a bike share for residents.
- Hosting monthly youth recreational activities.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

HEALTH

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

FOOD ACCESS:

51%
of Allen Homes residents find that at least once per week there is not enough food in the house.



28%



of Allen Homes households would like to grow their own food in either the backyard or a community garden

7% are interested in edible landscaping



40%
Nearly 40% AH residents indicate that mental health is a barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment

41%

of Allen Homes survey respondents with children aged 5-19 said behavioral counseling would help their kids do better in school



39%
of Allen Homes residents have lost someone close to COVID-19.

48.4%
Allen Homes survey respondents found it somewhat to very difficult to find info about mental health



DO YOU FEEL HIGH-QUALITY FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND FOOD ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

ONLY **41%** of Allen Homes residents AGREE
25% of CN residents

About **41%** of Allen Homes residents purchase from local farm markets



BUILDING BLOCKS

VEGGIE RX

In addition to farmers' markets and educational programming, Augusta Locally Grown operates the Georgia Food for Health Program in partnership with Wholesome Wave Georgia. Founded in 2014, the "VeggieRx" program supports 40 participants each year who receive: vegetable prescriptions for their households; plant-based cooking classes; monthly dietician coaching; clinic visits; and wellness classes.

Prescriptions for vegetables may be redeemed at the Veggie Park Farmers Market. A scientific study indicated that the program has a significant impact on participants' food security and quality of life.

Goal 2

Increase access to food so no one in the Choice Neighborhood is hungry.

Strategies will consider:

Food security in the Choice Neighborhood is a serious concern. There is not a single full-service grocery store within the neighborhood. For many Allen Homes residents, a trip to the grocery store can take a whole day because of the limited bus service.

Over 50% of Allen Homes residents are without enough food to eat at least once a week because they cannot afford it or because it is either too difficult to get to the store or they are too busy to shop or cook.

Strategies to address food security will consider the interest of residents in growing their own food and edible landscaping and building on local programs such as Augusta Locally Grown and other area farm markets.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

Goal 3

Improve overall mental health and wellness of residents in the Choice Neighborhood.

Strategies will consider:

High blood pressure and depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress are the top two health conditions cited by Allen Homes residents. Both of these can be associated with mental health. In addition, 40% of Allen Homes residents indicated that mental health is a barrier for obtaining and maintaining employment. Allen Homes parents also feel that behavioral counseling would help their children do better in school. Yet nearly 50% of Allen Homes residents find it difficult to learn information about available mental health resources.

Strategies to support this goal will explore increasing awareness of existing programs and expanding services.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

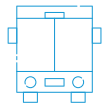
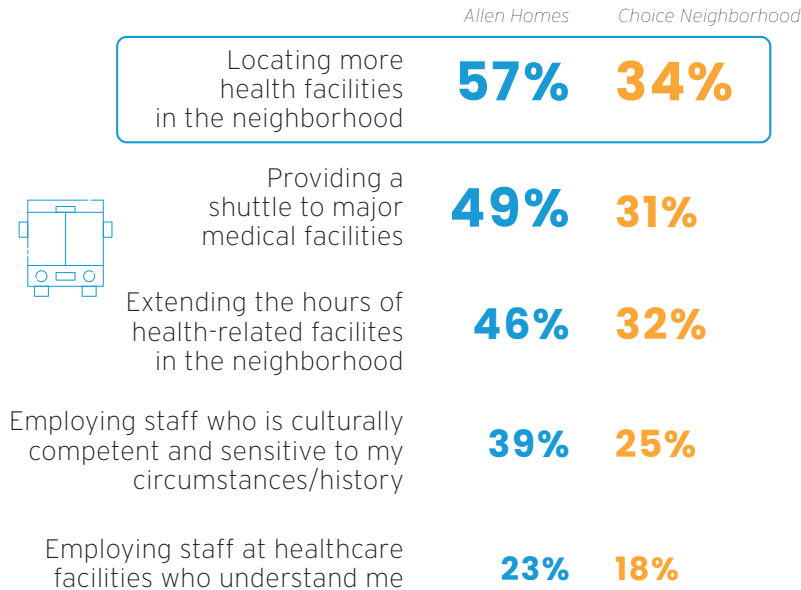
HEALTH



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

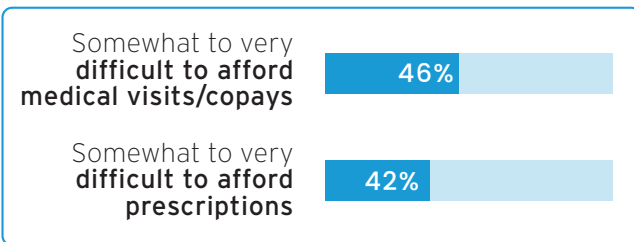
"HOW COULD YOUR ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE BE IMPROVED?"



Health services needed in the neighborhood:

- Physical Therapy
- Reproductive health/ OB-GYN services
- Mental Health
- Behavioral health

AFFORDABILITY



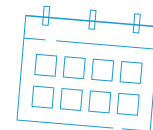
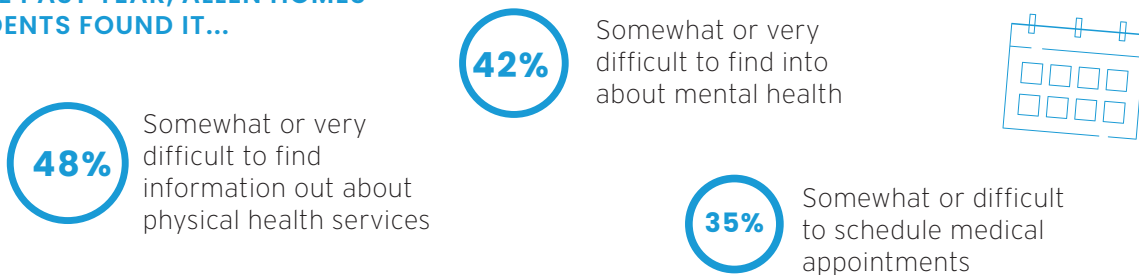
MOST USED MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS



- #1 Women's Health of Augusta
- #2 Augusta University Health - Family Medicine
- #3 Lamar Medical Center

ACCESSIBILITY

IN THE PAST YEAR, ALLEN HOMES RESIDENTS FOUND IT...



Goal 4

Expand access to health and wellness services in the community.

Strategies will consider:

Despite the location of the Medical College of Georgia campus in the heart of the Choice Neighborhood, residents of Allen Homes and the larger neighborhood stated in the surveys that the number one way to improve their healthcare would be to locate more health facilities in the neighborhood. This suggests that findings ways to raise awareness of existing services could expand access. Another strategy that will be considered is creating health navigators to connect residents to services.

The second and third most popular ways cited by residents to improve their healthcare in the surveys are by providing a shuttle to major facilities and extending the hours of existing facilities, which will also be explored.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

06

HOUSING PLAN





HOUSING PLAN

Both Allen Homes residents and neighborhood residents feel the #1 biggest need for the neighborhood is affordable rental housing. The Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood was historically comprised of small single-family housing stock for the city's workers, but many of these homes are in need of maintenance, limiting the supply of sturdy, affordable housing in the neighborhood. Increasing the supply across the neighborhood of affordable rental units is the primary focus of the Housing Plan.

Since the current Allen Homes site is unsuitable for redevelopment, this Housing Plan provides the opportunity to relocate residents in closer proximity to jobs centers, services, parks, and other amenities. More than half of Allen Homes residents have only lived on the site for 3 years or less, and yet the number one thing they like about living there is the sense of community. However, the lack of basic services - particularly grocery access - and transit is a challenge for the viability of any new housing development. Working with providers to expand bus access and locate crucial mixed-use services like a grocery store and daycare could help keep Allen Homes and neighborhood residents within the

neighborhood, rather than seeking to relocate elsewhere in the Augusta region. Additionally, the planning process aims to integrate a range of indoor and outdoor amenities into the new housing development, including open space, gardens, and bus access as desired by residents who took the survey, in order to retain current residents and attract prospective households to the neighborhood. A mix of housing types will also be considered including townhomes, duplexes/walk-ups, and higher-density mixed-use apartment buildings, depending on the surrounding context.

Homeownership is generally low in the neighborhood, but both Allen Homes and neighborhood residents are interested in working towards owning their own homes. Strategies for renovating existing houses and providing some new infill homeownership units will be paired with first time homebuyer assistance and education programs. Additional consideration will be given to full accessibility in new housing for residents with physical limitations, and supportive services for residents with mental and emotional challenges.

Community Vision

**IN THE FUTURE, HOUSING IN THE
LANEY WALKER-HARRISBURG
CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD WILL BE...**

*The vision statement will be developed with
the community in the next few months.*

Guiding Principles

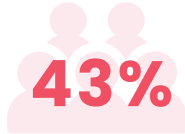
*Guiding principles will be developed with the
community in the next few months.*

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

"WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT ALLEN HOMES?"

THE PEOPLE, THE NEIGHBORS, THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY



Reporting changes in my income to allow my rent to go down **34%**

Being able to attend onsite programs, events, and services **33%**

Being able to live in the Laney Walker or Harrisburg neighborhood **32%**

"WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU FEEL IS NEEDED IN THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD?"

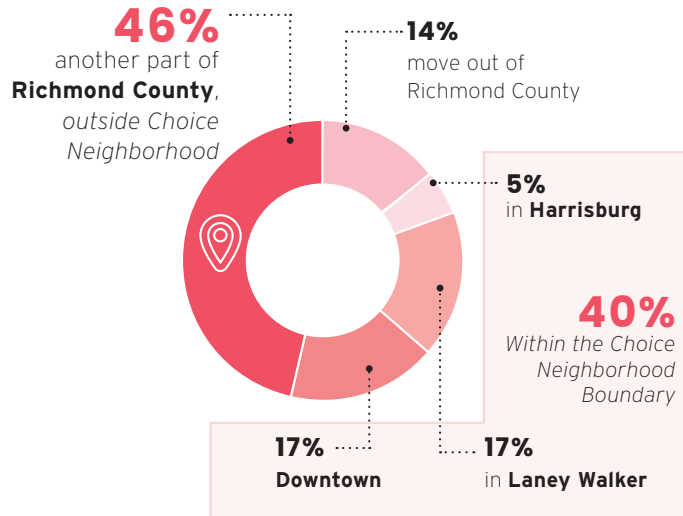


#1 **NEW AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING**

#2 **New homes for homeownership** #2 **A home renovation / modification program**

#3 **New moderately priced rental housing** #3 **New homes for homeownership**

"IF WE DECIDE AS A COMMUNITY THAT ALLEN HOMES IS NOT A GOOD SITE FOR FUTURE HOUSING, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO RELOCATE?"



Nov 3 Allen Homes Resident Meeting

Several residents said that if there were similar amenities and services in the Choice Neighborhood, they'd prefer to stay.

Goal 1

Increase the supply of affordable rental housing in the Choice Neighborhood.

Strategies will consider:

- Doubling the total number of new affordable rental housing units from Allen Homes (150 to 300)
- Locating several offsite housing sites for redevelopment throughout the Choice Neighborhood

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

Goal 2

Aim to keep as many Allen Homes residents within the Choice Neighborhood by increasing needed services, mobility, affordable housing options, safety.

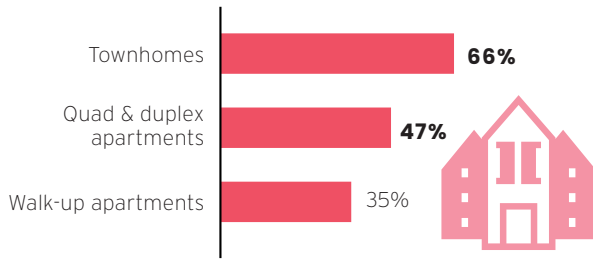
Strategies will consider:

- Attracting a grocery store in or near the neighborhood
- Increasing mobility via bus access, bike infrastructure, and sidewalk/street lighting
- Locating housing near childcare and recreational opportunities.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

“WHAT STYLE OF HOUSING WOULD YOU PREFER?”



“DOES YOUR FAMILY HAVE ANY SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS?”



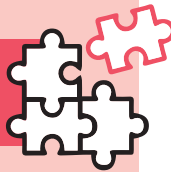
Allen Homes
accessible housing
 for those with disabilities **21%**

housing for **hearing**
 and/or visually impaired **7%**

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

BUILDING BLOCKS



TURN BACK THE BLOCK

Founded with the mission of revitalizing the once-thriving neighborhood of Harrisburg, Turn Back the Block is a local non-profit organization that uses a block-by-block approach to help improve the lives of members of this community. This program primarily works to help create and reinforce affordable, high-quality housing opportunities in the neighborhood, usually through construction, rehabilitation, ownership programs for homes. This is achieved through a combination of grants, donations, and low-cost sales as well as volunteer and professional labor. In many cases, families and other applicants may invest in their homes via “sweat equity,” where a donated portion of their time in the rehabilitation process will be deducted from the overall cost.

Goal 3

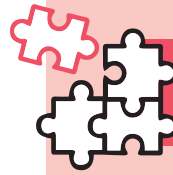
Provide a range of housing types from townhomes to multifamily units and accommodate a wide range of physical abilities

Strategies will consider:

- Incorporating a range of densities for each potential housing redevelopment site.
- Allowing for ADA-accessible units and providing the means to retrofit units in the future for accessibility needs.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



BUILDING BLOCKS

Goal 4

Increase homeownership opportunities for both Allen Homes residents and other neighborhood residents

Strategies will consider:

- Providing down payment assistance programs.
- Homeownership education.
- Home repair assistance programs
- Working with the Land Bank to reclaim and repair existing housing stock for new homeowners.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

There are several resources available to Augusta residents to use for home repairs and facade improvements. Through the City, there are three types of assistance for owner-occupied units:

Conditional Deferred Payment Loans assist residents who make less than 50% of the AMI with loan assistance for improvements.

Low Interest Rate Loans are available for higher-income households and have a capped rate at 3%.

Emergency Grants are also available for certain qualifying events.

There are other resources that can be found through HUD and the State of Georgia.



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

HOMEOWNERSHIP



66%
Rent

ONLY
34%
Own

"ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING TOWARD BUYING A HOME IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?"

YES!

Allen Homes
71%

Choice Neighborhood
65%



TOP CHALLENGES FOR HOMEOWNERS

#1

Difficulty paying for necessary repairs to their home

#2

Difficulty paying for utilities (gas, water, eating/cooling)

#3

Difficulty paying property taxes

Goal 5

Incorporate a range of amenities and open spaces into new housing development

Strategies will consider:

- Including play spaces and indoor amenity spaces in each new housing site
- Including space for community gardens on-site or locate new housing near existing community gardens

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



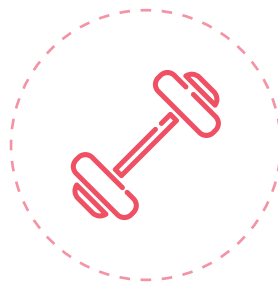
What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

FEATURES RESIDENTS WANT TO SEE IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT:



**#1
Playgrounds**



**#2
Exercise
Rooms**

**#3
Laundry
Facilities**



50%

of Allen Homes residents are interested in growing their own food.

32% in a backyard garden

28% in a community garden

Goal 6

Increase supportive housing options for residents with mental health challenges

Strategies will consider:

- Collaborating with the Medical College of Augusta and other medical institutions on services and housing location.
- Incorporating best practices in trauma-informed design in new housing.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey



There is a need for more supportive housing in the neighborhood.

38%

of Allen Homes

50%

of Choice Neighborhood

07

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN





NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The Choice Neighborhood is not without opportunity. With a rich history and culture, residents value the affordability and sense of community, and acknowledge the potential that the neighborhood has.

The neighborhood has a strong foundation to build upon, including a gridded network of blocks and streets, range of housing types, a major job center that includes Downtown and the Medical District, strong anchor institutions including the HUB and Kroc Center, and open space and recreational amenities like the Augusta Canal Trail and the Riverwalk. However, the neighborhood is not without major challenges.

The community struggles with crime and safety issues, including perception of safety stemming from the high vacancy rate and large number of blighted properties. Residents also struggle with a transit system that is not serving the needs of current residents and poor physical infrastructure that makes it difficult to get around without a car.

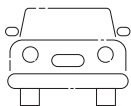
An overarching objective of the Neighborhood Plan will be to improve physical conditions and access to all that the neighborhood has to offer. This plan will look to build off of recent infrastructure improvements and thread together the seeds that have already been planted to better serve the needs of the community.

What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey



Allen Homes and the Choice Neighborhood residents want this neighborhood to be known as **"A Safe, Stable, & Family-Friendly Community"**



There is a high reliance on driving / cars to get around the neighborhood:

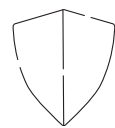
58% of Allen Homes residents **drive their own car**

33% of Allen Homes residents **get a ride from friends/family**

68% of Allen Homes residents said they **do not use the bus**

Top Challenge:

for both Allen Homes & Choice Neighborhood residents is



CRIME & SAFETY

59% Allen Homes are concerned about **Gun Shots & Gun Violence**

48% Choice Neighborhood are concerned about **Run-Down Buildings / Squatters**

only 12% of Allen Homes residents feel it is safe for children to play outside unsupervised.



Community Vision

**IN THE FUTURE, THE LANEY
WALKER-HARRISBURG CHOICE
NEIGHBORHOOD WILL BE...**

*The vision statement will be developed with
the community in the next few months.*

Guiding Principles

*Guiding principles will be developed with the
community in the next few months.*

Many Allen Homes and Choice Neighborhood residents commented they do not find neighborhood parks appealing to visit.

Assets & Needs Assessment Survey

FREQUENTLY USED PARKS



Allen Homes & Choice Neighborhood residents want to see more inclusive and accessible spaces for people of all ages and abilities.

What We Heard

Allen Homes Neighborhood Survey



BUILDING BLOCKS

KROC CENTER

Founded to provide underserved communities with a safe, central gathering space, Kroc Centers nationwide provide facilities and trained professionals for group fitness classes, sports & recreation opportunities, children & youth programming, art & education, aquatic lessons, and community & senior social programming.

The Kroc Center of Augusta is located in the heart of Harrisburg along the Augusta Canal and has over 100,000 square feet of programming space including: Indoor Water Park, Basketball Court, Chapel/Theater, Banquet Hall (with WiFi and AV), Classrooms, and a Conference Room.

Goal 1

Build gathering spaces for people of all ages and abilities.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will explore opportunities to build or connect residents to:

- Spaces where youth can gather safely.
- Central gathering spaces for the community members to gather informally or formally.
- Enhanced or new neighborhood parks.
- Recreational activities (i.e., walking track, athletic fields).

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



BUILDING BLOCKS

AUGUSTA LAND BANK AUTHORITY

The Land Bank Authority is a tool for the City of Augusta to deal with blight, dilapidation, and abandonment by taking these properties and putting them back into productive use.

The City of Augusta granted the Land Bank Authority \$1 million in American Rescue Plan funding in November 2022 to continue to combat blight in Augusta.

Goal 2

Restore the neighborhood fabric in way that reflects the rich history and maintains a sense of safety and stability.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies explore ways to address resident concerns and build on recent neighborhood infrastructure investments:

- Address scattered vacant and blighted properties in residential neighborhoods and along major corridors.
- Identify key corridors and streets to improve lighting (and build off of the infrastructure along James Brown Blvd and Laney Walker Blvd).
- Preserve the history and culture of Laney Walker and Harrisburg through Public Art - building off of the work of the Golden Blocks Greater Augusta Arts Council.

Metrics:

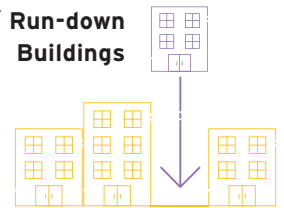
Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

Fewer Vacant Lots / Run-down Buildings



STRATEGIES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

Better Lighting

(along streets and in open space)



Less trash and illegal dumping

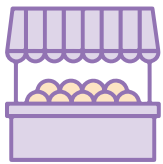
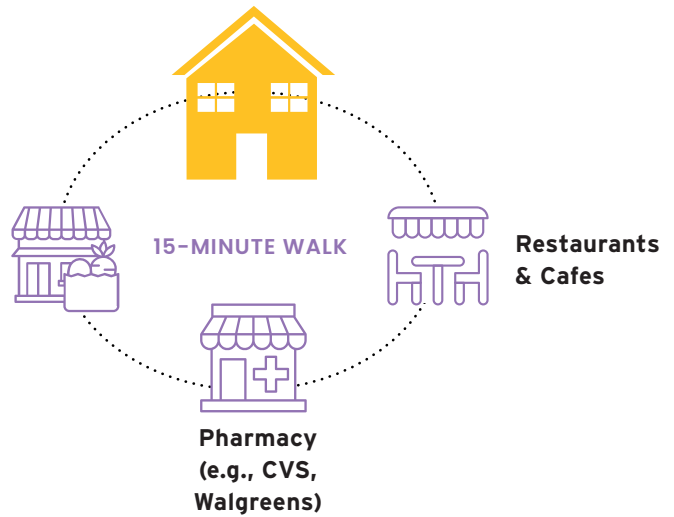
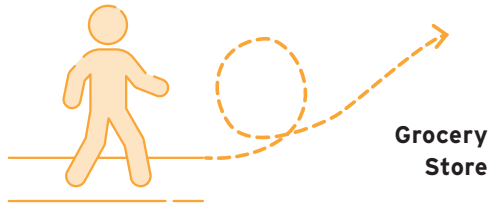




What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

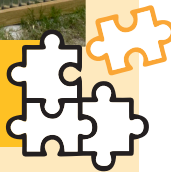
“WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE WITHIN A 15-MINUTE WALK FROM YOUR HOME?”



75% of Allen Homes residents would like to live within a 15-minute walk to a farmer's market



BUILDING BLOCKS



AUGUSTA LOCALLY GROWN

Augusta Locally Grown is committed to making local, affordable, fresh produce accessible to residents of the urban core. This non-profit is headquartered at The HUB and works directly with farms in the Central Savannah River Area, and prioritizes underrepresented groups: 74% of their farms are women-owned and 50% are veteran-owned. ALG hosts a weekly farmers' market at The HUB and in Laney Walker and accepts SNAP as payment.

Goal 3

Create an amenity-rich neighborhood that supports residents' needs.

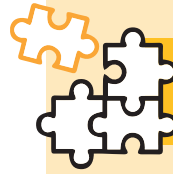
Strategies will consider:

Strategies will seek to better connect residents to amenities and daily needs:

- Grocery and fresh food options, including increasing awareness to Farmers Markets in the area.
- Places to eat (restaurants, cafes) and shop
- Near personal care services (hairstylist, barber, nail salon)
- Near services (laundromat, pharmacy, full-service bank)

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



BUILDING BLOCKS

WHAT WOULD MAKE RESIDENTS FEEL SAFER?



#1 BETTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE & ASSISTANCE SERVICES

#2 Better Lighting (along streets & in open space)

#2 Fewer vacant lots / run-down buildings

#3 Less trash & illegal dumping

#3 Better mental health & trauma support services

Goal 4

Foster a safe neighborhood day and night for residents of all ages.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will seek to address the crime and safety concerns residents have in the neighborhood around:

- Feeling unsafe walking around the neighborhood at night.
- Safety concerns for children playing outside unsupervised.
- Building stronger relationships with the Sheriff's Department.

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

RICHMOND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Community Services Division promotes citizen participation in reduction and prevention of crime and provides educational and safety-related programs based on community needs. The Division has many policies and programs geared towards promoting citizen participation in reduction and prevent of crime and educational and safety-related programs including:

Citizen's Advisory Board

This 13-member board meets with the Sheriff once a month to discuss issues and make recommendations to improve the community. Board members include one representative from the county's district, one high school senior, and one person appointed by the Mayor's Office, and one appointed by Chamber of Commerce.

Youth Citizens Police Academy

A one (1) week training program for students ages 14-18 to learn about police functions.

C.H.A.M.P.S. Program

Choosing Healthy Activities and Methods Promoting Safety is for 5th grade students (with plans to extend into middle and high schools) to help address dangers students face today.

Neighborhood Watch Program

Crime prevention program that teaches residents how to help themselves identify and report suspicious activity in their neighborhoods to make their communities safer.

HOW DO ALLEN HOMES RESIDENTS GET AROUND?



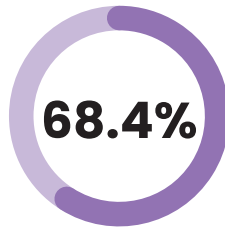
**#1
Drive**



**#2
Ride Share**



**#3
Bus**



Most Allen Homes residents said they **do not** regularly use the bus.

OF THOSE WHO DO, USE THE BUS TO ACCESS DAILY NEEDS.



and we heard, simple tasks like going to the grocery store could take a whole day.

Allen Homes & Choice Neighborhood residents said **transportation** was one of the biggest challenges to finding or keeping jobs.

Assets & Needs Assessment Survey



What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

Goal 5

Improve the bus system to better support residents.

Strategies will consider:

Strategies will seek to solve issues around:

- Bus routes and schedules
- Location and amenities of bus stops
- Comfort, cleanliness, and safety of bus stops and on bus

Metrics:

Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.

Goal 6

Strengthen the street network to enhance safety and pedestrian experience for users.

Strategies will consider:

Explore improving the physical conditions:

- Sidewalk conditions and creating continuous connections.
- Street conditions - paving and potholes.
- Address unsafe street crossings, especially around at-grade rail tracks.
- Identify key streets and destinations to connect with bike lanes and bike amenities

Metrics:

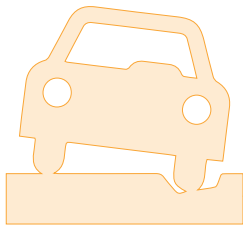
Note: Clear metrics for improvement, lead partners, and timeframes for completion will be outlined in the plan.



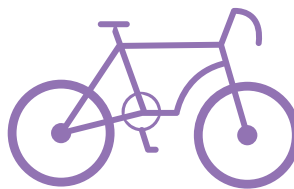
What We Heard

● Allen Homes ● Neighborhood Survey

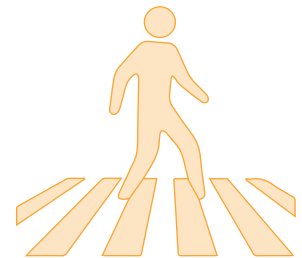
TOP CHALLENGES IN DAILY LIFE



**Road
Conditions /
Potholes**



Bicycle Safety



Pedestrian Safety

**Street Crossings &
Sidewalks**

08

IMPLEMENTATION





IMPLEMENTATION

During the planning process it is exciting to be able to dream of the possibilities. But after all that planning, it is equally exciting to see the vision become reality. The City of Augusta and Augusta Housing Authority are committed to leading a planning process for the Laney Walker-Harrisburg Choice Neighborhood with goals that are ambitious but attainable, outlined with clear strategies, lead partners, and defined metrics to track progress. The intent is to create a plan that functions as a road map for implementation.

EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES

The hardest part of planning is waiting to see change happen. Fortunately, there is no need to wait. The Choice Neighborhoods Planning grant from HUD includes some funding to launch small neighborhood improvement projects or “early action activities” to build momentum for the plan.

What can Early Action Funds can support?

“Early Action Activities” are intended to provide innovative solutions to neighborhood challenges that can be completed within the two-year planning process. They must involve physical community development or economic development projects. Although these funds cannot be used for non-physical uses (supportive services, administrative costs, marketing, basic infrastructure, etc.), they may be used for:

- Reclaiming and recycling vacant property
- Beautification, placemaking or community arts projects
- Facade improvement programs
- Neighborhood broadband/Wi-fi Infrastructure

- Fresh food initiatives such as a farm stand
- Gap financing for economic development projects

Identifying and Planning Early Action Activities

The first step in identifying ideas for early action activities was to conduct the needs assessment is to learn about residents’ aspirations for the neighborhood. Results of the survey have just been shared with the task forces and community for the first time and will continue to be discussed with residents during November, December and January. A Committee is also being formed at this time and will meet in December to establish criteria to review and evaluate the ideas. The Committee will be comprised of stakeholders and residents of Allen Homes and the larger neighborhood. The Committee will also be responsible for developing descriptions and cost estimates of the preferred activities, which will form the basis of a proposal to HUD.

Description of Early Action Activities

[These activities have not yet been identified.]

TRACKING PROGRESS

Measuring progress is an effective way to track the plan’s goals and strategies and to ensure steps are being taken to realize the plan. This section will include a detailed matrix summarizing all of the plan’s goals, strategies, and Early Action Activities. It will include timeframes, responsible partners, and metrics that can be reviewed on an annual basis and shared with the community to keep the plan on target.

People

GOAL 1:

Strategies	Metrics	Lead Agency & Partners	Timeframe	Leverage Resources
1. Work with...	Increase # of services	Community Foundation CSRA	MT	Existing operating funds

Housing

GOAL 1:

Strategies	Metrics	Lead Agency & Partners	Timeframe	Leverage Resources
1. Work with...	Build # new units	AHA	MT	Existing operating funds

Neighborhood

GOAL 1:

Strategies	Metrics	Lead Agency & Partners	Timeframe	Leverage Resources
1. Work with...	# new businesses	City of Augusta	MT	Existing operating funds

APPENDIX





Coca-Cola

BOTTLE

IN THIS SECTION:

1. Market Study (draft)
2. Assets & Needs Assessment
Survey Findings Analysis

Augusta
GEORGIA




RICHMOND COUNTY
TAX COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
FASTER.
FRIENDLIER.
BETTER.

AMI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION


AUGUSTA, GEORGIA LAND BANK AUTHORITY
Est. 1997


Community
FOUNDATION

For the
Central Savannah
River Area

WRT