

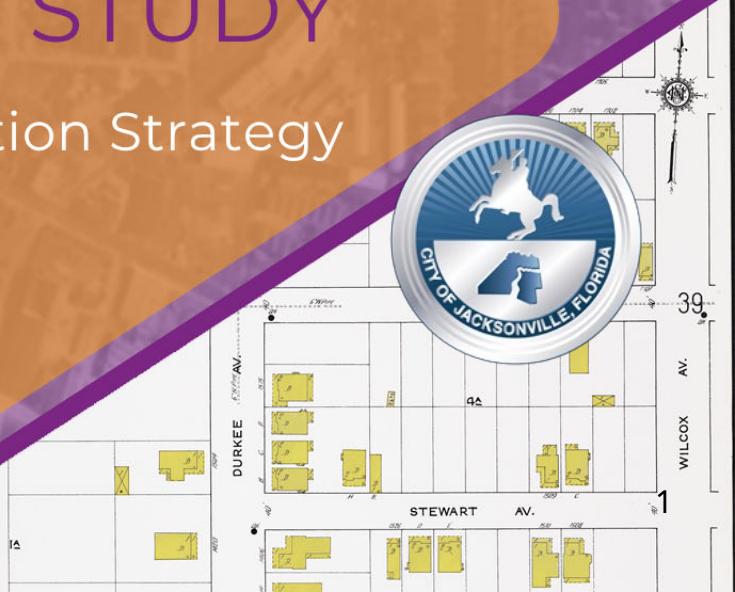


DURKEEVILLE REVITALIZATION STUDY

Final Report & Implementation Strategy

Prepared for the City of Jacksonville, FL by
Community Planning Collaborative, LLC.

June 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To the Durkeeville community

Thank you for your valuable input and thoughtful guidance in shaping the Durkeeville Revitalization Study. Your passion and commitment to preserving the community's heritage while stimulating economic revitalization have been inspiring. We deeply appreciate your dedication to protecting Durkeeville's rich culture and vibrancy for generations to come.

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On the front and back covers: 1943 aerial of Durkeeville → Credit: University of Florida

Disclaimer on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

At Community Planning Collaborative, we are committed to using innovative tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance our research, analysis, and communication efforts. AI supports our team by assisting with tasks like summarizing documents, drafting content outlines, identifying patterns in data, visualizing concepts, and generating ideas during project development. This report has been prepared with the assistance of AI for some components.

Because we prioritize transparency, ethics, and accountability around our use of emerging technologies, please note the following:

- We do not use AI for historic research, oral histories, or community-based research and outreach. That work is done the old-fashioned way, with expertise, time, care, and direct relationships. We believe in honoring lived experiences, local voices, and primary sources through human-centered methods that respect the integrity of our communities.
- All AI-assisted outputs are reviewed and edited by our team for accuracy, cultural relevance, and clarity.
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We do not use AI to replace human relationships, expertise, or lived experience; rather, we use it to support and amplify the meaningful work of our staff and collaborators.

We see AI as one of many tools in our toolbox, used with intention to free up more time for what matters most: listening deeply, building trust, and doing the work in community.

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GLOSSARY

ADAPTIVE REUSE	Process of repurposing old or historic buildings for new uses while preserving their original features and character; allows communities to retain cultural and architectural heritage while meeting modern needs
CAPACITY BUILDING	The process of strengthening the skills, resources, and abilities of individuals, organizations, or communities so they can effectively plan, lead, and sustain their own development and goals
CADC	Community Alliance Development Corporation
CBA	Community Benefits Agreement; a legally binding agreement between a developer and a community coalition that ensures a development project provides specific benefits, like jobs, affordable housing, or local investment, to the surrounding community
CBO	Community-Based Organization; nonprofit or grassroots group that operates at the local level to support and advocate for the needs, interests, and well-being of a specific community or population
CDC	Community Development Corporation; nonprofit organization focused on revitalizing and improving neighborhoods through projects like affordable housing, economic development, and community services, especially in underserved areas
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan; this is a part of the City's budget that lays out major City project expenses in the future
COJ	City of Jacksonville
CPC	Community Planning Collaborative; consulting team hired to work on the Durkeeville Revitalization Study

GLOSSARY

DBE	A Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) is a for-profit small business that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) established the DBE program to ensure non-discrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts. DBEs are intended to create a level playing field where these businesses can compete fairly for contracts.
DRMC	Durkeeville Residents Management Corporation
EWU	Edward Waters University
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FY	Fiscal year; a 12-month period used by a government to plan, track, and report its budget and financial activities. For example, the City of Jacksonville fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30
GW JAX	Groundwork Jacksonville; lead agency for Emerald Trail project
HISTORIC PRESERVATION	Practice of protecting, restoring, and celebrating buildings, places, and stories that have historical, cultural, or architectural significance, so they can be appreciated by future generations
HOPE VI	Federal government public housing program in the 1990s
INFILL DEVELOPMENT	Process of developing vacant or underused parcels within existing urban areas
INFRASTRUCTURE	Physical and organizational systems and facilities needed for the operation of a community; this includes transportation, utilities, communication networks, and public institutions
JEA	Jacksonville Electric Authority; City utility company
JHA	Jacksonville Housing Authority

GLOSSARY

JSEB	A JSEB refers to a Jacksonville Small and Emerging Business, a designation for small businesses in Jacksonville, Florida, that meet specific criteria set by the city. These businesses are eligible for various programs and opportunities, including city contracts and support services. The JSEB program aims to promote economic growth by supporting small businesses within the city, according to the City of Jacksonville.
JTA	Jacksonville Transportation Authority
LEGACY BUSINESS	Long-standing, locally owned business that has contributed significantly to the cultural, economic, or social fabric of its community; valued not just for their services or products, but for their historical significance, community roots, and role in preserving local identity and tradition
LISC JAX	Local Initiatives Support Corporation Jacksonville
MAIN STREET	National community revitalization initiative that helps historic downtowns and commercial districts thrive through preservation-based economic development focusing on design, promotion, organization, and economic vitality
MANIA	Myrtle Avenue Neighborhood Improvement Association
NADC	Neighborhood Alliance Development Corporation
TA	Technical Assistance; expert support provided to organizations or communities to help them build skills, solve problems, or carry out projects more effectively, often in areas like planning, funding, or program implementation
UCI	Unified Community Investors; neighborhood organization and subconsultant to the Durkeeville Revitalization Study
WITHIN-TRIFICATION	Community-led form of neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization driven by longtime residents and local stakeholders rather than outside developers or newcomers
ZONING	The way local governments control how land can be used to help organize and guide community development through regulations



Clockwise from top: A Durkeeville Revitalization Study steering committee meeting break out group at Dallas Graham Public Library. Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | The 1200 block of McConihe Street during the early 1940s. Credit: City of Jacksonville | A rendering of West 8th Street and Myrtle Avenue. Credit: Brookins Brown Blodgett



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Legacy Worth Reinvesting In

Durkeeville is more than a neighborhood. It is a living testament to Black excellence, self-determination, and resilience in Jacksonville. Shaped by generations of builders, educators, athletes, entrepreneurs, and families, Durkeeville has endured the harms of redlining, urban renewal, and policy neglect. Yet it persists, rooted in community pride and rich cultural heritage. This study is a community-led blueprint for revitalization that honors that legacy while charting a path toward equitable reinvestment.

In 2024, the City of Jacksonville launched the Durkeeville Revitalization Study with Community Planning Collaborative (CPC) to craft an actionable implementation strategy centered on affordable housing, cultural preservation, economic opportunity, and infrastructure improvement. The process builds on the vision of past efforts, most notably the 1990s HOPE VI “Rebirth of Durkeeville” plan, while removing long-standing policy barriers to progress.

Community-Led, Neighborhood-Centered

This study is rooted in the principle that planning must be done with community, not for it. Over 50 meetings, workshops, field assessments, and one-on-one conversations with residents, church leaders, small business owners, and institutions shaped every recommendation to create a vision plan with five pillars:

COMMUNITY VISION PILLARS

Economic Development

Housing

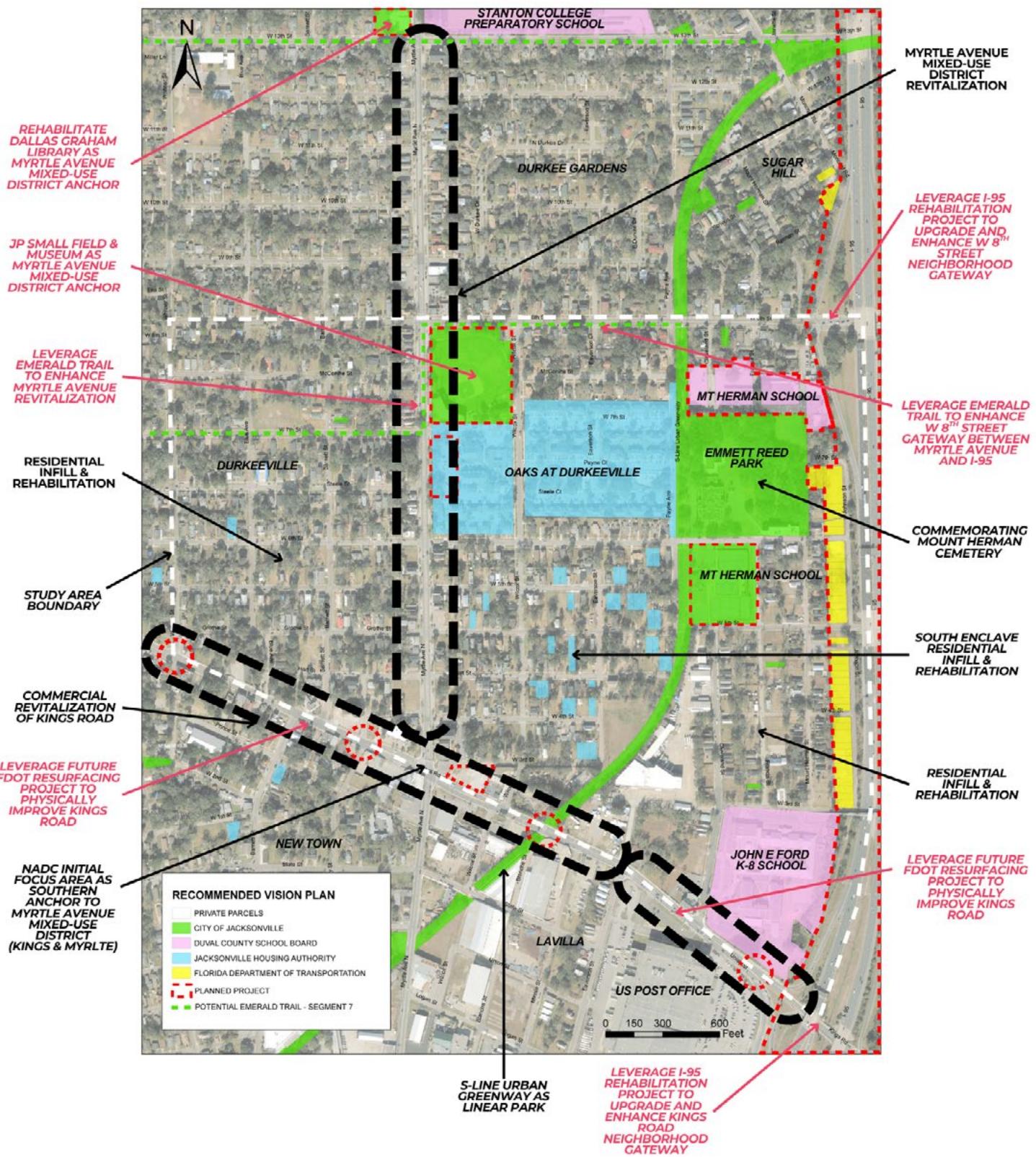
Community Resources

Accessibility & Infrastructure

Cultural & Historic Preservation

BLACK TEXT = REVITALIZATION PLAN GOAL

RED TEXT = REVITALIZATION PLAN GOAL ATTACHED TO PLANNED PROJECT WITH COMMITTED FUNDING SOURCE



A Physical Description of Revitalization Plan Vision → Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

The Vision: *Withinfiltration* and Cultural Preservation

Rather than gentrification, the strategy advances *withinfiltration*, which is revitalization led by and for current residents, and cultural preservation. The plan focuses on:

- Centering community in decision-making
- Revitalizing Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road as Black-owned business corridors
- Promoting affordable homeownership and missing middle housing
- Aligning \$385+ million in committed public investments with community priorities
- Emphasizing the legacy of the neighborhood through historic and cultural preservation
- Building local capacity through technical assistance and organizational support

Implementation Strategy Overview

The plan organizes over 40 projects into short-term (2025–2026), mid-term (2026–2029), and long-term (2030 and beyond) actions, tied to the City's Capital Improvement Plan and the Community Vision Pillars. These projects address:

- **Economic Development:** Reinvestment in commercial corridors; support for Black-owned businesses and job creation
- **Housing:** Infill housing compatible with Durkeeville's historic character; expanded affordable homeownership
- **Infrastructure & Accessibility:** Safe sidewalks, lighting, and drainage upgrades; enhanced connectivity via the Emerald Trail
- **Cultural Preservation:** Protecting historic resources like Mount Herman Cemetery, legacy businesses, and J.P. Small Field
- **Community Resources:** Expansion of libraries, youth programs, senior services, and health access

Key anchors include a new Baseball Museum and cultural district at Myrtle & 8th, a proposed full service grocery store at Hope Plaza, a future segment of the Emerald Trail and the transformation of J.P. Small Field into a vibrant historic sports attraction and community hub.

The plan also calls for critical policy changes: creating a zoning overlay to support missing middle housing and mixed-use development, updating architectural standards, and introducing incentive programs for projects aligned with community values.

Equally essential is capacity building. This means investing in neighborhood organizations, small businesses, and local leaders to ensure residents not only benefit from but lead revitalization.

Community Power

Revitalization is not just about physical projects. It is also about sustained, organized, and informed community involvement. The plan outlines practical tools and strategies for residents and neighborhood organizations to stay engaged. Above all, it affirms that the true power of this plan lies with the people of Durkeeville, whose leadership, persistence, and participation are essential to making the vision come to life.

What's Next

Durkeeville's revitalization is already in motion. With millions in committed funding and a clear community mandate, the time for action is now. Implementation requires:

- Ongoing, compensated community engagement
- Coordination across city departments and partner agencies
- Transparent progress tracking, public reporting, and accountability

This is a return to self-determination, a plan built from the ground up, and a future shaped by those who've always called Durkeeville home.

DURKEEVILLE REVITALIZATION STUDY

Short-Term Recommendations (FY2024/25–2025/26)

1. J.P. Small Field Improvements

- Phase I completed (new turf field)
- Phase II: New baseball museum building and children's playground at Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street

2. Malivai Washington Youth Center & Tennis Complete Renovation

- Tennis court reconstruction at 1055 W 6th Street

3. Kings Road at S-Line Trail Pedestrian Safety Improvements

- Overhead pedestrian traffic signal at S-Line crossing

4. Kings Road Midblock Crossings (FDOT)

- New pedestrian traffic signals and one overhead Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Union, Brady, and Whitner Street intersections.

5. Wilcox Street Sidewalks

- Installation of new sidewalk along Wilcox Street as part of Phase II improvements to J.P. Small Field. (Short Term Project Recommendation #1)

6. 8th Street Complete Streets

- Pedestrian, bicycle and aesthetic improvements on West 8th Street between Payne Avenue and Boulevard Street.

7. Cleveland Street Force Main Replacements

- Utilities upgrade for storm and potable water on Cleveland Street.

8. 8th Street Water Main Replacement

- Replacement of water main along West 8th Street between Mount Herman Street and Boulevard Street.
- Five affordable rental homes; permits issued Feb 2025

9. Wilcox Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd Street and Grothe Street, and between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

10. West 5th Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Myrtle Avenue and Payne Avenue

11. Eaverson Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets and between Hart and West 6th Streets.

12. Eaverson Court Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between McConihe and West 8th Streets.

13. Brady Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Kings Road and Hart Street to tie into Short Term Project Recommendation #4.

14. Whitner Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Prince and Steele Streets to tie into Short Term Project Recommendation #4.

15. Durkeeville Historic Resources Survey Update and National Register Nomination

- Apply for State of Florida Division of Historic Resources grants to update historic resources survey and nominate study area to the National Register of Historic Places.

16. Durkeeville Organization Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

- Provide direct technical assistance and support to neighborhood organizations to strengthen their influence and capacity as effective community stewards to ensure the long-term success of neighborhood revitalization efforts. (See Capacity Building section on page xx for more detail)

17. Host Key Program Educational Sessions

- Educational sessions to better connect, expose and promote existing financial, programming and social resources to the Durkeeville community and neighborhood organizations (Associated with Short Term Recommendation #16)

18. Mount Herman Cemetery Memorialization

- Perform ground penetrating radar (GPR) to identify unmarked burials and inclusion of a memorial and/or memorial signage dedicated to the story of Mount Herman Cemetery at Emmett Reed Park.

19. Jacksonville Housing Authority Infill Housing

- Construction of five (5) new construction single family houses on Grothe and Hart Streets.

20. Jacksonville Housing Authority Hope Plaza

- Rehabilitation of Hope Plaza shopping center to include new businesses (i.e. full service grocery store, restaurants, retail, etc.)

DURKEEVILLE REVITALIZATION STUDY

Mid-Term Recommendations (2026/27-2029/30)

1. Dallas Graham Branch Library Replacement

- Expand or replace existing Dallas Graham Branch Library with a new 25,000-square-foot library on or within walking distance of Myrtle Avenue. Preserve existing Mid-Century building and include expansion of programs for youth and seniors. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for BIPOC and JSEB businesses.

2. Emerald Trail Northwest Connector Segment #7

- Coordinate proposed trail alignment to a route that supports the community's long-standing infrastructure priorities along key corridors such as West 8th Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Kings Road. Avoid streets through residential single family areas. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for BIPOC and JSEB businesses.

3. Interstate 95 Over Myrtle Avenue Ramp Bridge #720163

- Incorporate drainage, landscaping, and gateway enhancements at Kings Road interchange into I-95 widening project. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for BIPOC and JSEB businesses.

4. Barnett Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Streets.

5. Barnett Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 7th and 9th Streets as part of Emerald Trail connectivity if West 7th and/or West 13th Street are selected as Emerald Trail corridors.

6. Hart Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Barnett Street and Blue Avenue.

7. Blue Avenue Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Street.

8. Blue Avenue Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 7th and 13th Streets as part of Emerald Trail connectivity if West 7th and/or West 13th Street are selected as Emerald Trail corridors.

9. Jacksonville Housing Authority Lots

- In alignment with Community Vision for infill housing, prioritize affordable home ownership in construction of new single family and duplex residential dwellings on remaining lots south of West 6th Street. New construction should include a Frame or Masonry Vernacular design style and include an off-street driveway on the side of the structure.

10. Durkeeville Neighborhood Zoning Overlay

- Creation of a new zoning overlay for study area to address current zoning regulations that artificially increase housing costs and restrict market rate commercial and residential development (See Policy Changes section on page 66 for more detail)

Long-Term Recommendations (Beyond FY2030/31)

1. Kings Road Resurfacing

- Collaborate with the community to include "complete streets" improvements as part of the next restoration, rehabilitation and resurfacing project between I-95 and MLK, Jr. Parkway.

2. I-95 Widening from Beaver Street to MLK, Jr. Parkway

- Incorporate drainage, landscaping, and gateway enhancements at 8th Street interchange into I-95 widening project. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for BIPOC and JSEB businesses.

3. Mount Herman Exceptional Center

- Collaborate with the community for future uses of property.

4. Mount Herman Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

5. Francis Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

6. West 4th Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Mount Herman and Cleveland Streets.

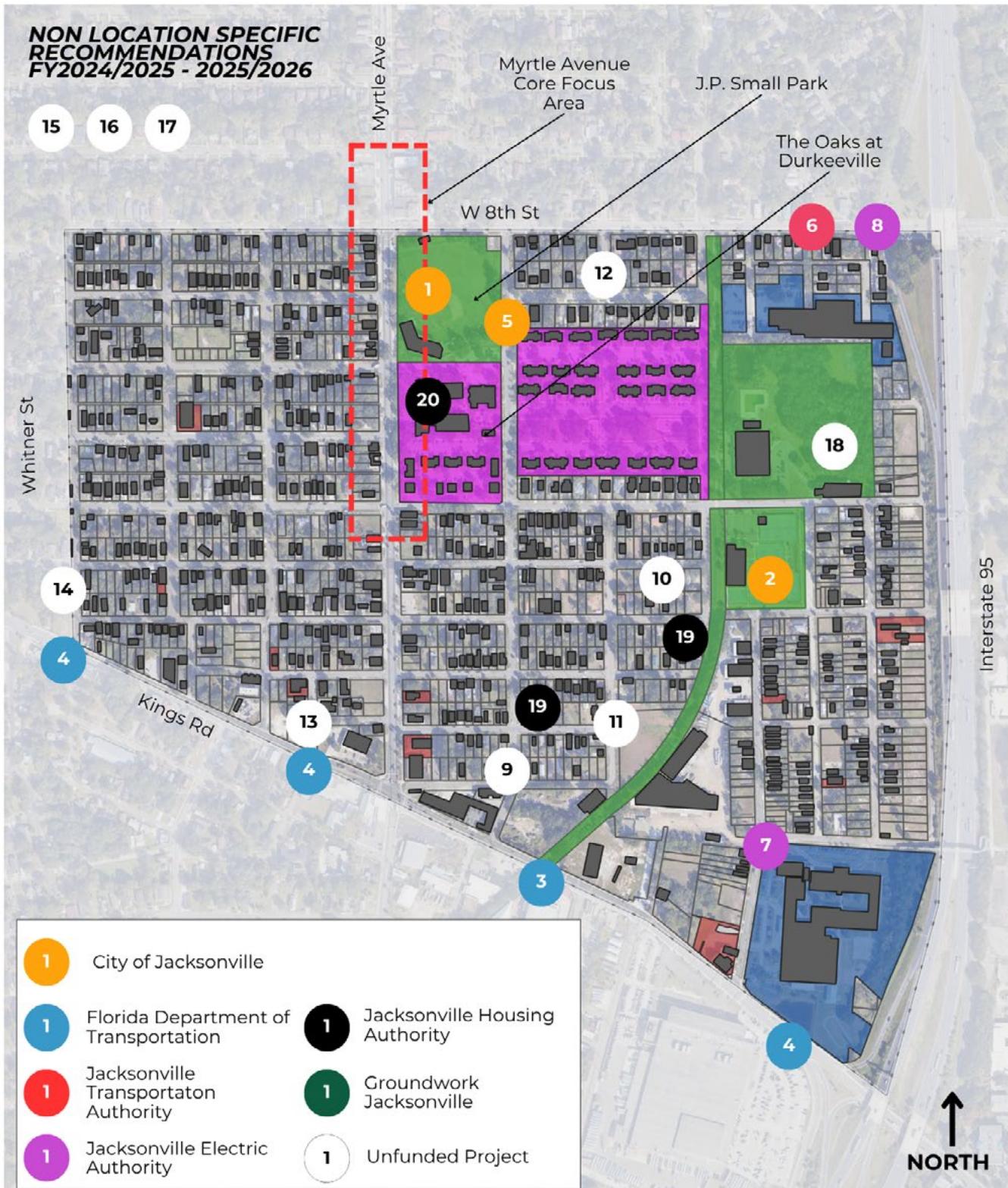
7. Myrtle Avenue Complete Streets - Segment #3

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Street.

8. Blue Avenue Sidewalks

- "Complete Street" improvements to Myrtle Avenue between Kings Road and MLK, Jr. Parkway. Coordination of alignment with Emerald Trail route (Mid-Term Project Recommendation #2) could advance portions of the project with existing funding sources.

SHORT-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



Durkeeville Revitalization Study Short Term Project Recommendations Map →
Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

MID-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



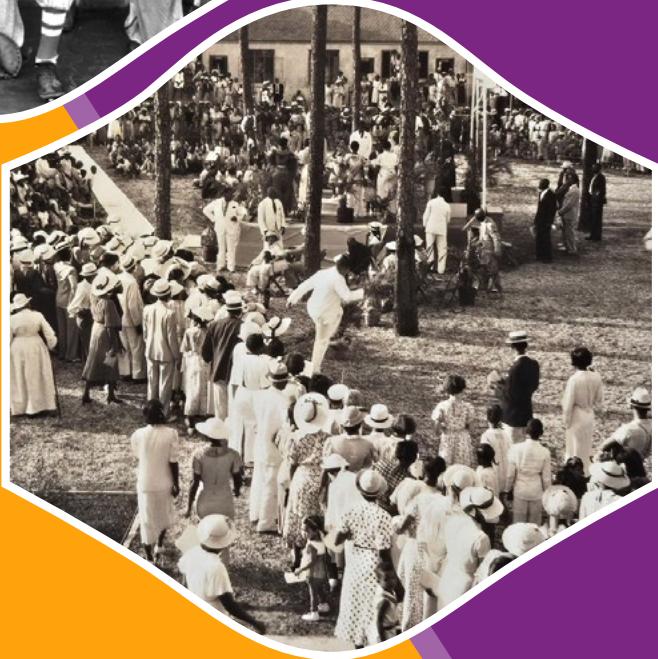
Durkeeville Revitalization Study Mid Term Project Recommendations Map →
Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

LONG-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



Durkeeville Revitalization Study Long Term Project Recommendations Map →
Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

Clockwise from top: The Jacksonville Red Caps were a Negro American League baseball team that played at Durkee Field during the 1930s and 1940s. → Credit: Durkeeville Historical Society | Built in 1936, the Durkeeville Housing Project was one of the earliest federally funded public housing projects and the second in Florida. → Credit: University of Florida | The Barnett's Subdivision of Durkeeville grew rapidly as a middle class African American community following the Great Fire of 1901. → Credit: Ritz Theatre & Museum



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Durkeeville neighborhood stands as a living record of Black self-determination in Jacksonville, a place shaped by migration, homeownership, culture, resistance, and legacy. But for decades, the area has also carried the burden of disinvestment, policy neglect, and the scars of redlining and urban renewal. This study, known locally as the Durkeeville Revitalization Study, sets out to change that path.

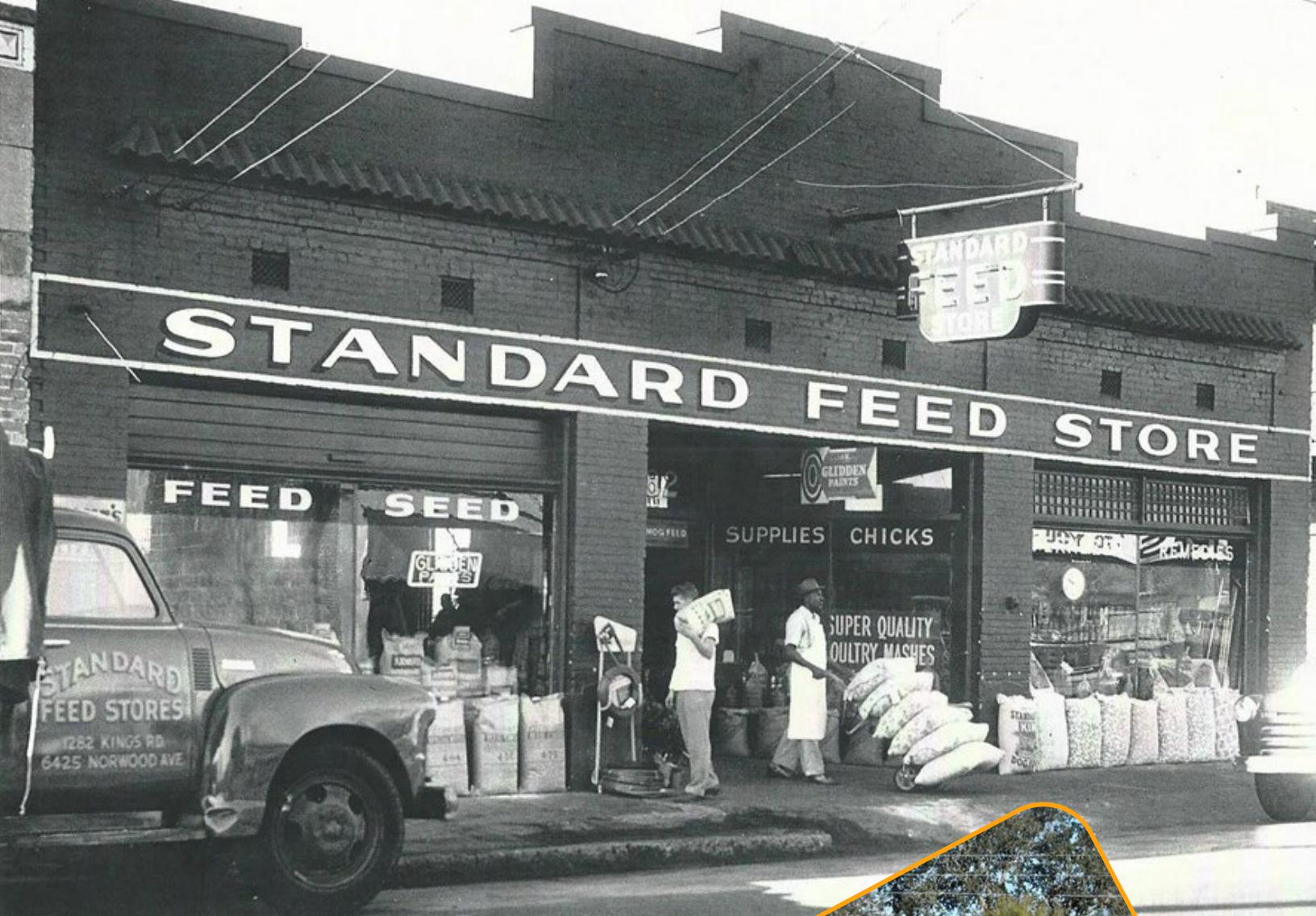
Project Background and Purpose

In 2024, the City of Jacksonville initiated the Durkeeville Revitalization Study with the support of Community Planning Collaborative, to craft a practical, community-led implementation strategy. The plan centers around revitalizing the core of Durkeeville in a way that reflects the community's present-day needs and long-term vision.

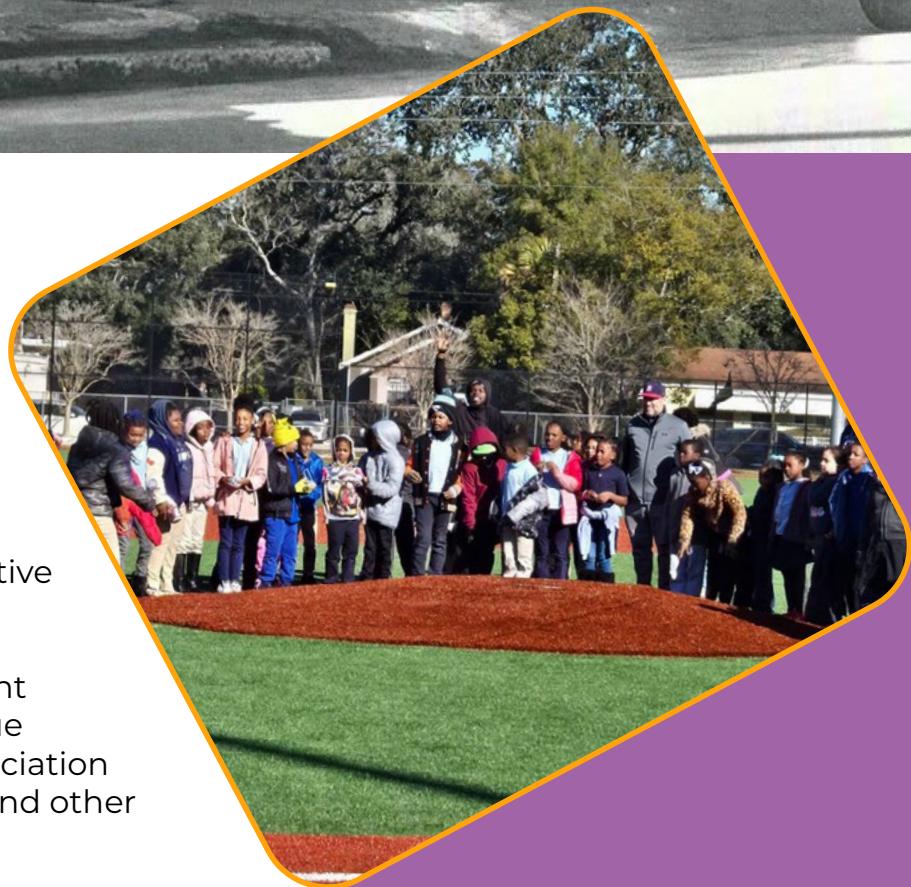
This strategy addresses:

- **Housing** – with a focus on affordable homeownership and infill development that matches the visual character and front yard setbacks of historic residential structures,
- **Community and Recreational Facilities** – including upgraded parks and potential new gathering spaces,
- **Commercial Spaces** – especially reinvestment along Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road,
- **Supportive Neighborhood Services** – from senior services to workforce training, healthcare, and public safety.

The primary beneficiaries of this work are the legacy families who built this special place, the descendants of Durkeeville's original residents, and the current residents, business owners, and institutions who've remained rooted through it all. This is about ensuring they shape and benefit from the neighborhood's next chapter.



This work also builds upon the legacy of previous community visioning efforts and studies, dating as far back as the 1970s, including the 1990s “Rebirth of Durkeeville” plan. A HOPE VI initiative that was led by the Jacksonville Housing Authority (JHA), CACA, Durkeeville Residents Management Corporation (DRMC), Myrtle Avenue Neighborhood Improvement Association (MANIA), the City of Jacksonville, and other local stakeholders.





The 1990s HOPE VI Post-revitalization plan for the study area. → Credit: City of Jacksonville

While that effort successfully redeveloped The Oaks at Durkeeville it ultimately fell short of realizing broader revitalization goals in the surrounding neighborhood. This study picks up that baton to deliver on those original community aspirations.

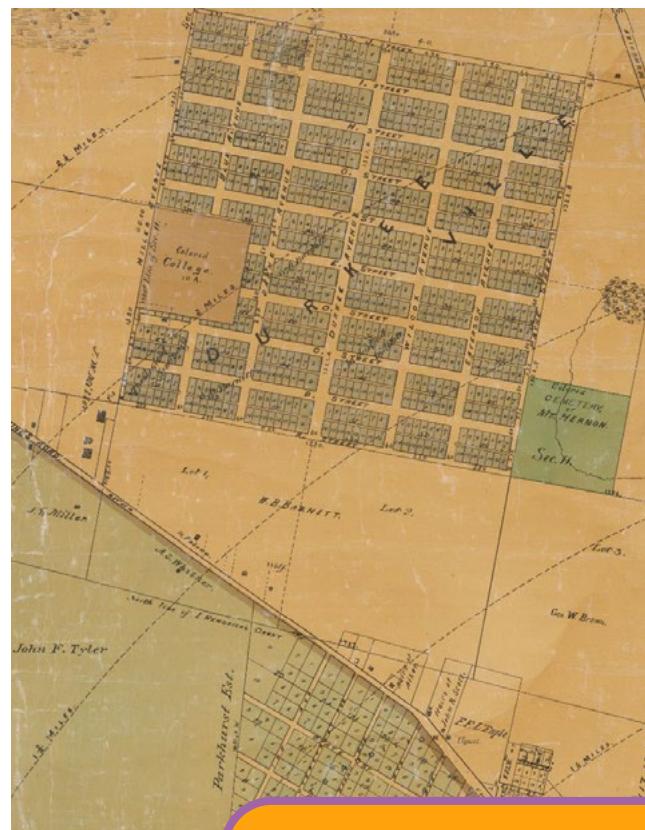
Study Area and Historical Context

The study area is bounded by:

- West 8th Street (north),
- Whitner Street (west),
- Kings Road (south),
- Interstate 95 (east).

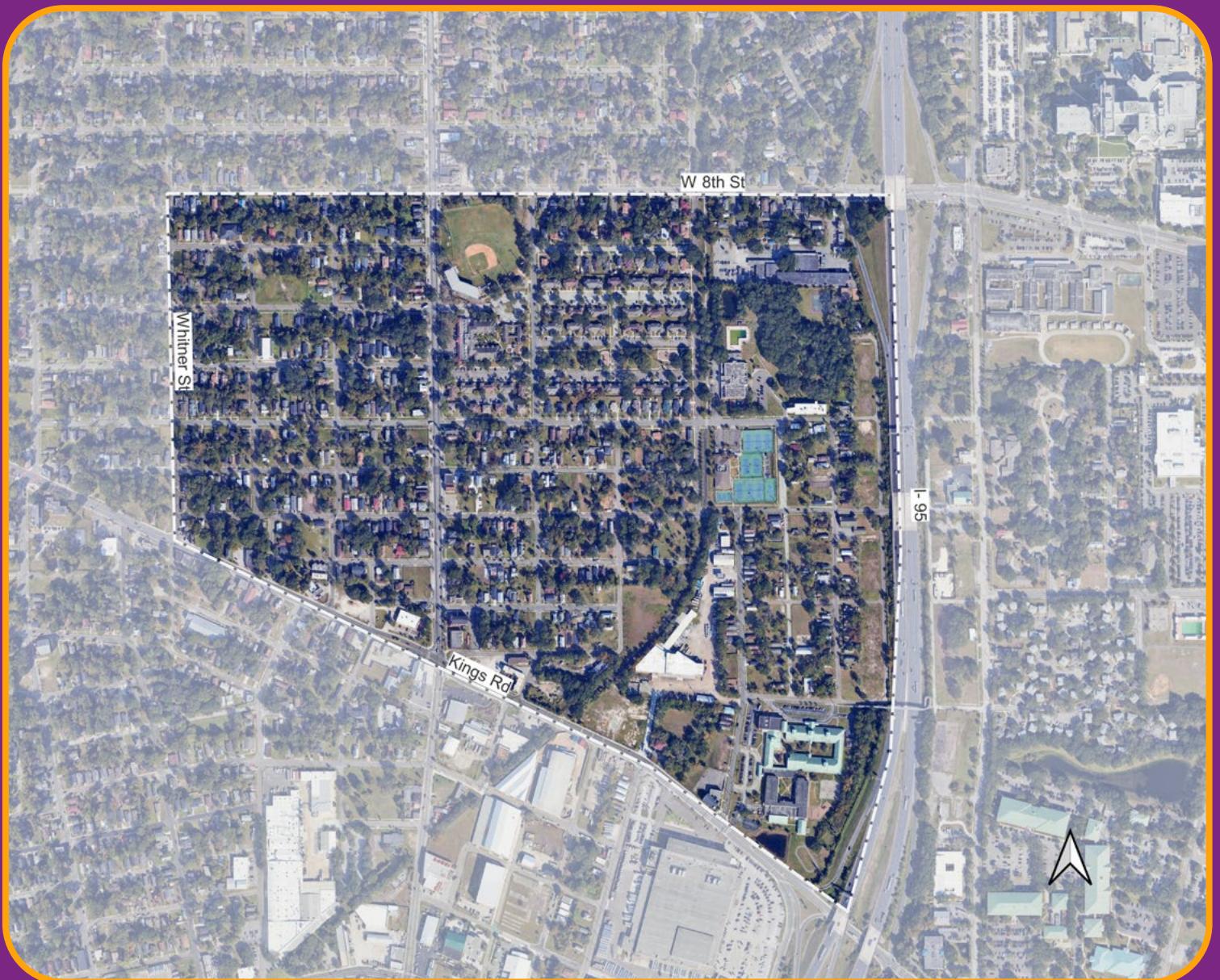
Historically, this area has been associated with the Barnett's Subdivision plats of 1907 and 1908. This neighborhood became a hub for Black professionals, homebuilders, teachers, and artists during segregation. Barnett's Subdivision is named for former land owner William Boyd Barnett, the founder of Barnett Bank, once Florida's largest bank. Durkeeville is home to:

- The largest surviving concentration of homes designed by Joseph Haygood Blodgett, one of Florida's first Black millionaires and most prolific architects.
- The Mount Herman Cemetery, a burial ground for Jacksonville's Black community dating back to the 1880s, partially paved over in the 1960s for Emmett Reed Park.
- J.P. Small Park, the former home of the Jacksonville Red Caps of the Negro Leagues.
- Industrial legacies like a Standard Oil plant and municipal incinerator, which left behind environmental injustice and eventually a Superfund site.
- The Durkeeville Housing Project, Florida's second public housing development for African Americans, built in 1937 and later transformed into The Oaks at Durkeeville.



Over time, neighborhood legacies were impacted by discriminatory federal policies, redlining, and the slicing of the neighborhood by Interstate 95, which physically and economically fractured the area. Today, the built environment is described by residents as "a fraction of what it once was." Still, its cultural and social fabric remains strong.

MAP OF STUDY AREA



Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

Study Area Analysis

This study undertook a rigorous, ground-truthed analysis of:

- Neighborhood History
- Land Use and Zoning
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Environmental Conditions
- Demographic Trends
- Health Outcomes
- Real Estate Market Dynamics

This process began in August 2024 with the development of a **Task 1: Data Collection and Field Review Technical Memorandum**. **Task 2: Existing Conditions** of the study area were analyzed and completed in October 2024. Completed in December 2024, the **Task 3: Future Conditions Assessment** served as a foundational chapter in the study. This assessment aimed to understand the projected socio-economic, environmental, financial, and physical conditions that would shape Durkeeville's future and inform the later implementation strategy.

Task 4: Initial Concept Planning & Analysis involved working with Durkeeville residents and stakeholders in December 2024 to begin the process of creating a series of initial design style preferences and graphics that would assist infill residential construction to better blend in with the historic and culturally built environment of the surrounding Durkeeville community. Through extensive community-led engagement and direction, these concepts were further refined during **Task 5: Concept Planning & Analysis** January through March 2025. A **Task 6: Recommended Concept for the Durkeeville Revitalization Study** was developed in April 2025. **Task 7.0 focused on creating an Implementation Strategy**. Completed in May 2025, this document is a comprehensive road map and a practical guide for implementing future development projects within the Durkeeville study area.

The Community Planning Collaborative team conducted field reviews and hosted fifty community, steering committee and individual stakeholder meetings, outlined in the Community Outreach and Engagement Section.

See Appendix for copies of the task deliverables.



Field Review Observations

As a part of the community, the consultant team consistently conducted field reviews through each phase of the study. These observations cover various aspects of the study area, including property ownership and development, historical and cultural significance, transportation and infrastructure challenges, public facilities, and residential conditions.

Property Ownership & Development

- Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church and Jacksonville Housing Authority own key properties along Myrtle Avenue and south of the Oaks at Durkeeville.
- “The Hole” at Grothe and Eaverson is a longstanding informal gathering space and former early 20th century mixed-use district.
- A new home on Grothe Street sold for \$181.74/sq ft in June 2024.
- FDOT has acquired land on Johnson Street for I-95 expansion.
- Existing zoning may hinder redevelopment.

Historic & Cultural Significance

- Historic assets include Joseph H. Blodgett-designed homes, J.P. Small Field, the Durkee Gardens Historic District, and Mount Herman Cemetery.
- Centered around J.P. Small Field, Myrtle Avenue is the central commercial and cultural hub of the study area.
- Legacy businesses like Skinner’s Florist, Paschal Brothers Hardware & Lumber, Standard Feed & Seed, and H.R. Lewis Petroleum have served the area for over 50 years.

Transportation & Infrastructure Challenges

- Sidewalk gaps exist on numerous streets, impacting walkability.
- Overgrown alleys between West 6th and 9th Streets west of Myrtle need attention.
- Kings Road is a pedestrian hostile corridor and a lack of crosswalks contribute to pedestrian conflicts with law enforcement and speeding vehicular traffic.

Commercial & Industrial Areas

- Kings Road between Myrtle Avenue and Eaverson Street is an early 20th century industrial area. H.R. Lewis Petroleum is the largest active industrial use in the study area.

Public Facilities & Infrastructure

- Mount Herman Elementary is slated for closure and demolition in 2039.
- J.P. Small Park is receiving \$10M in upgrades, including a new Jacksonville Red Caps Baseball Museum at Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street.
- The S-Line Greenway (Emerald Trail) runs through the area.

Residential Conditions & Community Interests

- Homes typically sit on 35' x 95' lots; many need rehabilitation.
- Vacant residential lots offer opportunities for compatible infill housing, echoing past Hope VI goals.

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONES

In Durkeeville, community cornerstones are the physical and cultural anchors that sustain neighborhood identity, nurture belonging, and support revitalization. These enduring institutions, spaces, and traditions serve as gathering points, memory keepers, and pathways to opportunity. Rooted in the area's historic legacy, these assets provide a sense of continuity amid change and offer vital resources that meet the educational, spiritual, recreational, and economic needs of residents. As pillars of community life, these cornerstones reflect the values and resilience of Durkeeville's people. They are the living soul and foundation that shape the neighborhood's collective vision for the future that is grounded in pride, connectivity, and cultural richness.



The Dallas Graham Public Library Branch at 2304 Myrtle Avenue was built in 1957. Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Dallas James Graham Branch Library

The Dallas Graham Public Library Branch is named in honor of Reverend Dallas Graham (1905–1976), a respected Civil Rights leader in Jacksonville and the Durkeeville community. Opened in 1957, the branch replaced the Wilder Park Library, which had served as Jacksonville's first library for African Americans since its founding in 1927 during segregation.

Wilder Park Library was demolished to make way for the construction of Interstate 95. Today, the Dallas Graham branch continues its legacy of community service and educational access. The building is historically significant as an excellent example of mid-century architecture. Plans are underway to expand the library and enhance its role as a vital neighborhood resource.



The Durkee Gardens Historic District features the architectural works of African American architects and builders such as James Edwards Hutchins and Sanford Augustus Brookins. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Durkee Gardens Subdivision

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2020, the Durkee Gardens Historic District spans 49 acres and is bounded by Myrtle Avenue, West 13th Street, Payne Avenue, Wilcox Street, and McConihe Street. The district includes 209 contributing buildings constructed between 1934 and 1969. Originally platted between 1934 and 1944, Durkee Gardens became home to many of Jacksonville's prominent African American physicians, educators, entrepreneurs, and religious leaders. The neighborhood is defined by its Minimal Traditional architectural style, reflecting the craftsmanship and enduring legacy of African American architects and builders such as James Edward Hutchins and Sanford A. Brookins.

Edward Waters University

Edward Waters University, the first historically Black college in Florida, was founded in 1866 by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church to provide education for newly freed African Americans and their families. During the Great Depression, the campus served as Florida's "Negro Headquarters" for the National Youth Administration (NYA), a New Deal program created in 1935 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Renowned educator and civil rights leader Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune directed the NYA's Division of Negro Affairs, supporting job training and education for Black youth across the country. Recognizing its historic and cultural significance, the Edward Waters University Historic District was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 8, 2022.



The EWU Triple Threat Marching Band performing at EWU Community Field and Athletic Stadium. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Emmett Reed Park

Dedicated on September 28, 1969, Emmett Reed Park is a 12.5-acre neighborhood park serving Jacksonville's urban core. The land was originally donated in 1941 by E.J. and Mary E. L'Engle, and today, the park offers a variety of amenities including playscapes, two tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a vibrant community center that hosts a range of public service programs. The park is named in honor of Emmett Reed, a Jacksonville native who dedicated over 30 years of service to the city's Recreation Department. Significantly, the park sits on the former site of Mount Herman Cemetery, one of the city's oldest African American burial grounds, dating back to the 1880s. This layered history makes Emmett Reed Park not only a hub for community life but also a site of cultural remembrance.



Built on the site of Mount Herman Cemetery, Emmett Reed Park and Community Center is the largest public recreational space in the Durkeeville Revitalization Study area. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Historic Churches

Durkeeville is home to several historic churches that played pivotal roles during the Civil Rights Movement. Among them is Mount Ararat Missionary Baptist Church, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his powerful sermon, "This is a Great Time to Be Alive," on March 19, 1961, at an event hosted by the Duval County Citizens Benefit Corporation and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. Many of the neighborhood's churches were designed and built by James Edwards Hutchins, one of Jacksonville's few African American contractors who also served as a designer. Hutchins was responsible for numerous churches and homes in Durkeeville. Following World War II, he partnered with the Veterans Administration to help train African American veterans in carpentry, brick masonry, and architecture. Hutchins left a lasting legacy of skilled Black craftsmanship in the community.



Durkeeville's historic churches play a pivotal role as anchor institutions, cultural, religious and social hubs. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



J.P. Small Field is one of the few surviving historic Negro Leagues baseball stadiums in the country. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

J.P. Small Field

Originally known as Barrs Field (1912) and later rebuilt as Durkee Field in 1936–1937, this historic stadium served as home to the Negro League's Jacksonville Red Caps and several minor league teams, including the Jacksonville Tars and Jacksonville Athletics. James Weldon Johnson once played at this field. Legendary players such as Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, Roy Campanella, Babe Ruth, and Lou Gehrig took the field here. Renamed J.P. Small Memorial Stadium in 1980, the venue honors James P. Small, a longtime coach and educator at Stanton and Raines High Schools. In 2018, the ballfield itself was named in honor of Hank Aaron. The park also houses the Jacksonville Red Caps Baseball Museum, with plans for future expansion.



John E. Ford Pre K-8 School on Cleveland Street. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

John E. Ford Pre K-8 School

John E. Ford Pre K-8 School is the only public English-Spanish Montessori school in the Southeastern United States. The school is named after Reverend John Elijah Ford, a prominent Jacksonville leader and co-founder of the African American Life Insurance Company in 1900. In 1907, Rev. Ford toured Europe's major cities, studying their libraries and museums before returning to serve as pastor at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. He later became a trustee and theology instructor at Florida Baptist College, dedicating over three decades to education and spiritual leadership in the community.



Durkeeville is home to the largest intact collection of buildings designed by noted Black architect Joseph Haygood Blodgett. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Joseph Haygood Blodgett Architecture

Durkeeville is home to the largest intact collection of residences designed and built by acclaimed Black architect and builder Joseph Haygood Blodgett. Born into slavery, Blodgett arrived in Jacksonville in the 1890s with just a paper dollar and a dime. He began working on the railroad for a dollar a day and, by 1898, had launched his own contracting business. After the Great Fire of 1901, Blodgett played a pivotal role in rebuilding the city, designing and constructing 258 homes. Remarkably, he retained ownership of 199 of them as rental properties, becoming one of Jacksonville's first Black millionaires. His legacy lives on in the enduring craftsmanship and historical character of Durkeeville's residential architecture.

Local Legacy Businesses

The Durkeeville Revitalization Study area is distinguished by its locally owned legacy businesses, which help preserve the neighborhood's authentic Jacksonville character and strong sense of place. Notable examples include Paschal Brothers Hardware & Lumber (est. 1924), Standard Feed and Seed (est. 1946), and Skinner's Florist (est. 1934), all long-standing institutions that reflect the community's enduring entrepreneurial spirit.



Originally established in LaVilla, Skinner Florist has been located on Myrtle Avenue since 1934. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Oaks at Durkeeville

In 1937, the Public Works Administration completed the Durkeeville public housing complex just south of J.P. Small Park. Designed during the Great Depression, the development provided quality housing for Jacksonville's Black middle class. In 1999, the original structures were replaced by The Oaks at Durkeeville, Florida's first redevelopment under the federal HOPE VI program. Shortly after its completion, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recognized The Oaks as one of the nation's top public housing projects for its success in revitalizing the neighborhood and attracting new businesses.



The Oaks at Durkeeville was Florida's first redevelopment under the federal HOPE VI program. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Stanton College Preparatory School

Established on April 10, 1869, Stanton Normal School was Florida's first school for formerly enslaved people, named after abolitionist and Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton. In 1877, President Ulysses S. Grant visited the school, shaking the hand of six-year-old James Weldon Johnson, who would later become Stanton's principal in 1894. Under Johnson's leadership, Stanton expanded into Jacksonville's only high school for Black students. During his tenure, Johnson wrote "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing", set to music by his brother Rosamond. The song later became known as the Black National Anthem. The current school building opened in 1953 as New Stanton High School. Before its construction, the site was the location of Masons Park, an amusement park for Black residents. In 2025, Stanton College Prep was ranked as one of the top five best high schools in Florida by U.S. News & World Report.



New Stanton High School circa mid-1950s. → Credit: Jacksonville Public Library



S-Line Urban Greenway Trail

The S-Line Urban Greenway is a 4.8-mile trail that links Durkeeville to surrounding urban core neighborhoods. Named after the former Seaboard Air Line Railroad (SAL), the corridor originally operated as the Jacksonville Belt Railroad, constructed in 1886. After being abandoned in the 1980s, the route was transformed into a greenway in the mid-2000s through the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Urban Pathways initiative.

The S-Line Urban Greenway Trail just south of West 8th Street. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Sugar Hill Neighborhood

Sugar Hill emerged after the Great Fire of 1901, flourishing with the development of the Colored Man's Railroad, a streetcar line owned and operated by prominent members of Jacksonville's Black community. By the end of the 1920s, Sugar Hill had become a prestigious enclave anchored by institutions like the Cookman Institute (now Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach) and Brewster Hospital. The neighborhood was home to elegant residences and the city's Black professional elite, including doctors, attorneys, educators, and architects. Despite its prominence, Sugar Hill was redlined in the 1930s, setting the stage for mid-20th-century urban renewal efforts. In the 1960s and 1970s, much of the neighborhood was razed to make way for Interstate 95 and the expansion of UF Health Jacksonville's medical campus.

Despite urban renewal, significant portions of Sugar Hill remain on the edge of the Durkeeville Revitalization Study area. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Historic residences along Scriven Street in a remaining section of Sugar Hill. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Clockwise from top:
Durkeeville community stakeholders developed their own vision plans during Public Community Workshop #1. → Credit: Nicole Huser | Members of the consulting team and residents during field review held on December 11, 2024 → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | Participants at Project Steering Committee Meeting #3. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

One thing is clear: you can't plan for Durkeeville without Durkeeville. That's the guiding principle behind this study - planning with, not for, a community whose voice has too often been sidelined. CPC was brought on to listen carefully, repeatedly, and for the people who know this place best. CPC placed community engagement at the center of everything for this study.

This is foundational. Meaningful engagement and relationship building are how equitable development happens. It requires early and consistent outreach, honoring cultural traditions, and building connections based on trust. In Durkeeville, that means honoring Black-led institutions, churches, small businesses, and the descendants of families who built this neighborhood from the ground up.

A range of engagement strategies has been employed to ensure inclusivity and foster collaborative visioning. Together, they form the scaffolding upon which the study has been built:

- **Project Steering Committee:**

To ground the work in community wisdom, a Project Steering Committee was formed with residents, descendants, property owners, church leaders, and small business advocates. They helped shape every phase of the study, from early visioning to final implementation priorities. Participants emphasized making Myrtle Avenue a vibrant, walkable corridor, need for funding access, financial education, community-focused businesses, social support services, and a grocery store. There was a shared belief that a baseball-themed cultural district could anchor a broader neighborhood resurgence.



Held at Dallas Graham Library, Project Steering Committee meetings took place on December 20, 2024 and February 28, 2025. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Consultant team members during an on-the-ground field assessment in August 2024. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



More than 40 individual stakeholder conversations were held during the Durkeeville Revitalization Study. → Credit: Tiffany Khesed

- **Public Community Workshops:**

Designed to encourage broad participation, these events showcased findings to date, encouraged open discussion, provided food and fellowship, and created space for feedback from those who may not typically engage in planning processes. Community workshops brought wider resident voices into the room, helping translate everyday needs into actionable priorities. Themes echoed throughout include homeownership opportunities, grocery access, cultural preservation, small business support, youth and senior services, public safety, and historic memorialization (especially at Mount Herman Cemetery).

- **Individual Stakeholder Meetings:**

To deepen the work, more than 40 one-on-one conversations were held with local leaders, institutions, and property owners between January and March 2025. These meetings sharpened the study's implementation strategy. The meetings helped share information on the project, align visions, explore collaboration, and ensure the recommendations reflect both community and organizational goals.

This plan was built from the ground up. Every conversation helped shape a future where the people of Durkeeville **lead, decide, and thrive**. This planning is rooted in trust, fueled by history, and guided by those who call Durkeeville home.



Public Community Workshops were held on December 8, 2024
and March 13, 2025. → Credit: Nicole Huser

Clockwise from top: A rendering of the interior of a coffee shop and cafe. → Credit: Midjourney AI/Adrienne Burke | A rendering of a museum gift shop. The inclusion of revenue generating uses into the proposed baseball museum at J.P. Small Field could generate income to support museum operating hours and staffing. → Credit: Midjourney AI/Adrienne Burke | A rendering of West 8th Street and Myrtle Avenue. Credit: Brookins Brown Blodgett

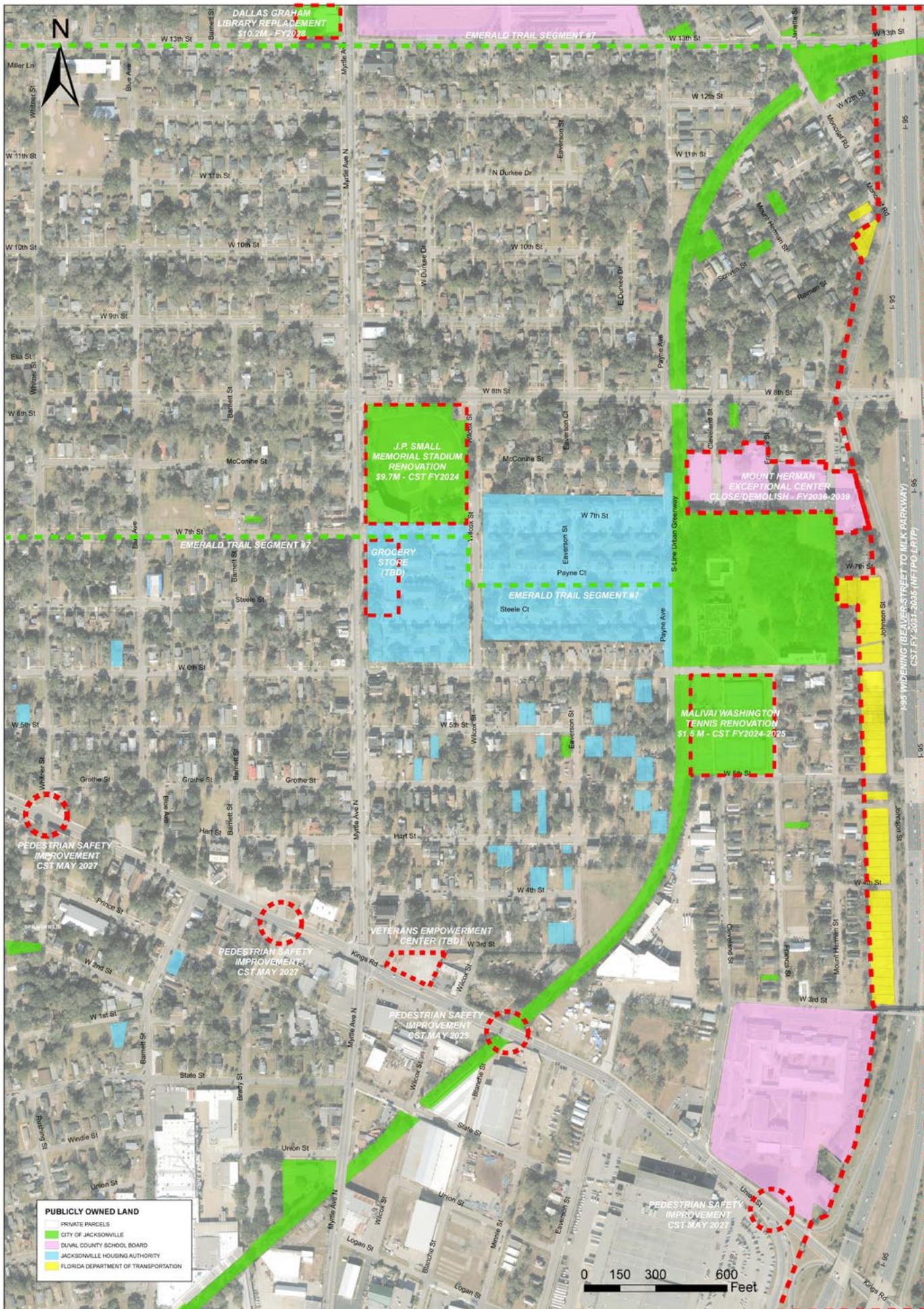


COMMUNITY VISION PLAN

COMMUNITY VISION PLAN

Durkeeville's vision is a memory of what once was, a mirror of what is, and a dream for what can be. It is shaped by the people who live, pray, raise families, and run businesses here. Through steering committee meetings, public workshops, and one-on-one conversations, the message was consistent: Durkeeville's future must be rooted in its history and shaped by its people.

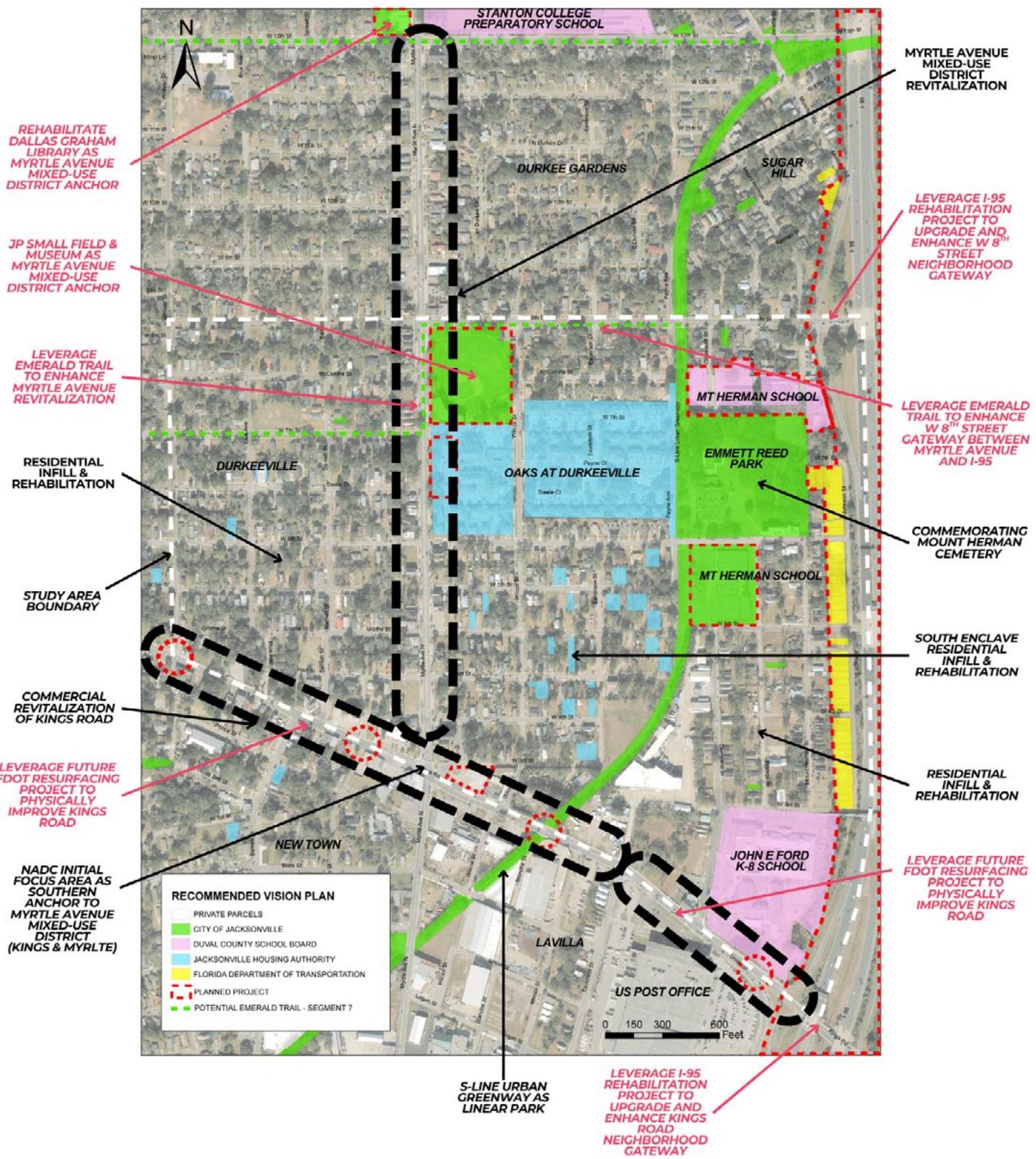
This plan picks up the baton passed from previous community visioning efforts, including the 1990s HOPE VI Post-revitalization plan, reviving what was left undone and expanding the vision to match today's reality. What's different now is the urgency and the opportunity. With more than \$385 million in public investment already in the pipeline and momentum building across agencies and anchor institutions, this vision is possible. It's within reach.



Map of Durkeeville Revitalization Study area identifying publicly owned property and location of committed (funded) public capital projects (locations highlighted in red). → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

BLACK TEXT = REVITALIZATION PLAN GOAL

RED TEXT = REVITALIZATION PLAN GOAL ATTACHED TO PLANNED PROJECT WITH COMMITTED FUNDING SOURCE



A Physical Description of Revitalization Plan Vision. → Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

This vision builds on the aspirations of previous visioning efforts, including the 1990s HOPE VI “Rebirth of Durkeeville” plan, reaffirming the community’s call for homeownership, walkable blocks, thriving commercial corridors, and cultural pride. It speaks to today’s realities: threats of gentrification, affordable housing challenges, economic inequality, aging infrastructure, and the need for community control over development. The goal now is implementation.

Below are the major pillars of the community vision, paired with specific implementation strategies and illustrated with renderings developed through community input.

COMMUNITY VISION PILLARS



Economic Development



Housing



Accessibility & Infrastructure



Cultural & Historic Preservation



Community Resources



Economic Development

What We Heard

- “We need a grocery store.” It was the most frequent request.
- More places to walk, eat, shop, and gather, especially on Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road and that are Black-owned businesses.
- A vision for a neighborhood business district like San Marco Square, 8th & Main or Five Points, but grounded in Durkeeville’s cultural history and identity.

Economic Development Vision:

- **Local Hiring:** Encouraging DBE, JSEB and Black-owned contractor participation in redevelopment projects
- **Job Creation:** Support small businesses and franchises focusing on entrepreneurship and sustainability including Black-led real estate development
- **Myrtle Avenue:** Support revitalization of the Myrtle Avenue corridor into a walkable, vibrant district with Black-owned businesses
- **Local Services:** Have local grocery store, restaurants, health services, community spaces, laundromats, etc. with emphasis on Black business ownership



Clockwise from top left: A rendering of Drums BBQ (The Window) following renovation through the City of Jacksonville’s Myrtle-Moncrief-Avenue B Business Corridor Improvement Program → Credit: Brookins Brown Blodgett | Rendering of a full service grocery and delicatessen at a renovated Hope Plaza. → Credit: Midjourney AI/Adrienne Burke | The vision expressed would transform both Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road into neighborhood business districts filled with businesses catering to the community and its culture. → Credit: Brookings Brown Blodgett



Outdoor sidewalk dining along Main Street in College Park, GA. → Credit: Eater Atlanta

SPOTLIGHT: **College Park, GA Main Street**

Founded in 1999, the College Park Main Street Association, Inc. (CPMSA) is a nonprofit dedicated to preserving, revitalizing, and promoting the historic Main Street and Virginia Avenue Business Districts in College Park, GA. As an accredited member of Main Street America, CPMSA operates under the Georgia Main Street Program and the National Main Street Initiative, using historic preservation as a catalyst for economic growth.

Through façade improvements, streetscape enhancements, and business support programs, the CPMSA's mission is to create a vibrant hub where residents, visitors, and Black-owned businesses collaborate to foster growth, celebrate community, and honor College Park's rich heritage.

Similar to Durkeeville, College Park, GA is a community where African Americans are the majority population. According to a December 2019 Atlanta Magazine article, College Park's Main Street revitalization process was said to be the perfect storm result of real estate availability, community enthusiasm, savvy social-media marketing and a more-is-more attitude among patrons looking for multiple dining options in close proximity.



Housing

What We Heard

- Homeownership is key to stability. People want to own, not just rent.
- “New homes should look like they belong here.”
- Infill development should honor historic character, not erase it.

Housing Vision:

- **Homeownership:** Strong desire for affordable homeownership opportunities
- **Rentals:** Concerns about accountability for landlords
- **Mixed-Use Development:** Support for combining residential with retail for accessibility and convenience
- **Diversify Housing:** Make “Missing Middle” duplexes, triplex, etc legal in Durkeeville on smaller lots and remove barriers for mixed-use development
- **Honor History:** New construction should be compatible with the historic architecture and character of the neighborhood



Enhancing the design quality of new infill housing to better integrate with the existing neighborhood was identified as a key community priority. During engagement sessions, stakeholders from Durkeeville voiced a strong preference for architectural styles rooted in Frame and Masonry Vernacular traditions. In response, these one-story (top left), two-story (top right), and duplex (bottom) home designs were thoughtfully developed as a visual guide for future development. It aims to ensure new construction complements the neighborhood's historic and cultural character, blending seamlessly with its established built environment. → Credit: Brookins Brown Blodgett



Recently completed Frame Vernacular-style infill housing on West Union Street. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

SPOTLIGHT: Infill Housing in Jacksonville's Historic Eastside neighborhood

During the study process, Durkeeville residents and stakeholders voiced concerns about the increase of infill housing that is architecturally incompatible with the neighborhood's historic character. Participants expressed a clear preference for new residential to reflect Frame and Masonry Vernacular styles, aligning with the neighborhood's architectural heritage. A similar desire for context-sensitive infill, respectful of neighborhood character and scale, has also been voiced by residents of Jacksonville's Historic Eastside.

After receiving feedback from the Historic Eastside community, Jacksonville-based JWB Real Estate Capital changed the design of their new construction Frame Vernacular-style single and multi-family dwellings to better visually fit into the surrounding established community. Also suitable for the Durkeeville study area, recent models feature raised concrete foundations, porch columns that don't visually block window and door openings and a front yard setback that matches with the neighborhood's surrounding built environment.



Accessibility & Infrastructure

What We Heard

- "Sidewalks are missing or broken."
- "We want to walk without fear of traffic or crime." Safety is a serious concern, especially for elders and kids.
- Better lighting, smoother roads, and drainage fixes are essential.

Accessibility & Infrastructure Vision:

- **Safety Improvements:** Speed bumps, lighting, and better sidewalks taking into account all generations and abilities
- **Drainage and Flooding:** Efficient systems to mitigate flooding
- **Pedestrian Safety:** Enhanced safety around key intersections like Kings Rd near Barnett St.



From top: A missing segment of sidewalk on Wilcox Street. Sidewalk coverage is inconsistent on north south streets throughout the Durkeeville study area. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | Rendering of 8th and Myrtle with enhanced pedestrian crosswalks. → Credit: Brookins Brown Blodgett



SPOTLIGHT: The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail, Pinellas County, FL

The Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail, commonly known as the Pinellas Trail, serves as a strong example of how the proposed Emerald Trail project could align with community goals to enhance the visual appeal and calm traffic along revitalization corridors such as Kings Road and Myrtle Avenue.

The Pinellas Trail is one of Florida's most popular linear parks, attracting over a million users each year. Spanning 47 miles, the trail weaves through some of the state's most urbanized areas, serving not only as a vital recreational corridor but also as an effective tool for traffic calming on Safford Avenue through Tarpon Springs and an amenity transforming trail users into business patrons in Dunedin.

Beyond its transportation and leisure benefits, the trail has significantly contributed to the economic revitalization of the communities and neighborhood commercial districts it intersects. By drawing consistent foot and bike traffic, the Pinellas Trail has become a key driver of local business activity and community engagement.

Top to bottom: The Pinellas Trail was designed to help slow traffic and beautify a major neighborhood street through Tarpon Springs. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | Dunedin has capitalized on the Pinellas Trail's popularity, encouraging businesses to locate in the area and cater to trail users. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Cultural & Historic Preservation

What We Heard

- “Don’t erase our story - celebrate it.”
- Residents want to preserve the legacy of Black architects, musicians, educators, and civic leaders who made Durkeeville what it is.
- The cemetery needs to be honored to provide community healing.

Cultural & Historic Preservation Vision:

- **Community Centers:** Preserving libraries, community centers, and other landmarks
- **Cultural Pride:** Emphasizing the area's history, including the sports and musical heritage of J.P. Small Field and memorializing Mt. Herman Cemetery
- **Historic Designation:** Pursue ways to protect and honor the heritage and culture of the neighborhood



Clockwise from top: Mount Herman Cemetery is the oldest and largest African-American cemetery largely erased from existence. Emmett Reed Park opened on top of the cemetery in 1969. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | Residences in the study area designed and built by African American architect and builder Joseph Haygood Blodgett. Durkeeville is home to the largest surviving architectural collection of Blodgett's work. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | The City of Jacksonville has plans to invest \$10.2 million to expand or build a new 25,000 square foot library to replace Dallas Graham Library in 2030. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



The Belgrade Library and Community Center in Belgrade, MT is an example of what the new Dallas Graham Library could resemble. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

SPOTLIGHT: **Belgrade, MT Public Library & Community Center**

Residents and stakeholders in the Durkeeville study area expressed a clear need for more community centers, youth and senior programming, and business incubators. The Jacksonville Public Library (JPL) plans to replace or expand the Dallas Graham Branch Library with a new, 25,000-square-foot facility in the same neighborhood. This project presents a valuable opportunity to integrate these community-identified needs into an existing publicly funded initiative.

Branch libraries often serve as localized hubs—places where individuals can engage in lifelong learning, access essential services, and build connections within their community. Increasingly, they are being reimagined as vibrant social centers that support a mix of uses and diverse programming.

A relevant example is the Belgrade Public Library and Community Center, which opened in Belgrade, Montana, in April 2025. The 23,500-square-foot facility was an adaptive reuse of a former fire station, intentionally designed to function as a central gathering space for the community. It includes dedicated areas for adult and youth services, study rooms, technology labs, children's play areas, an outdoor reading plaza, and flexible spaces for events and programming. Its mission is to empower a community of lifelong learners, a vision that aligns with the aspirations voiced by Durkeeville residents.



Community Resources

What We Heard

- “Our seniors need more support.”
- “Our youth need something to do besides just survive.”
- There’s a gap in access to health, wellness, and public services.

Community Resources Vision:

- **Youth & Senior Programs:** Affordable after-school programs like Boys & Girls Clubs and community spaces for the elderly
- **Business Incubators:** Repurposing spaces like Mt. Herman Exceptional Student Center and Hope Plaza for economic growth
- **Health:** Include holistic health-oriented programming at parks and JP Small Field



Top to bottom: The Jacksonville Housing Authority's Hope Plaza offers nearly 7,500 square feet of underutilized commercial space that could be used to bring new local retail businesses and restaurants to Myrtle Avenue in the vicinity of J.P. Small Field. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | A mock city hall workshop was facilitated by Unified Community Investors on January 4, 2025 at Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church. The workshop was a part of a youth action series centered around efforts to designate Durkeeville as a healthy and historic community. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Café Reconcile is an innovative workforce training program intended to empower and embrace youth to pursue their potential in New Orleans' hospitality industry. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

SPOTLIGHT: Café Reconcile New Orleans

Run as an innovative non-profit workforce training program, Café Reconcile New Orleans prepares ambitious young adults for careers in the city's celebrated hospitality industry. Anchoring Central City's Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard district, Reconcile New Orleans supports young adults, ages 16-24, as they transform their lives by encouraging their personal growth, providing workforce development and training, and equipping them with tools to achieve their potential.

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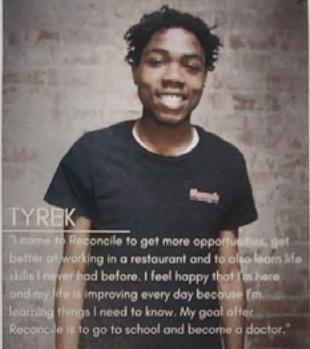
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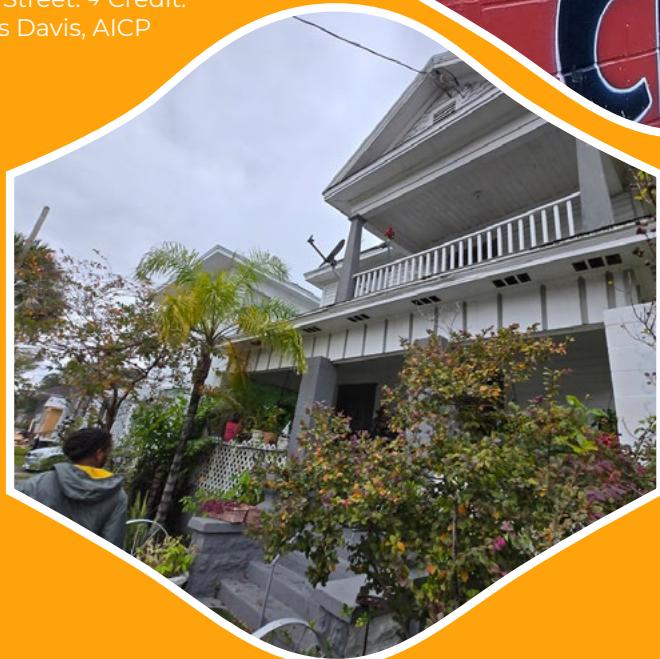
Café Reconcile's restaurant is an anchor institution on Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, a historic African American commercial district in Central City New Orleans, LA. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Top: The Myrtle Crab Shack at 1452 Myrtle Avenue. Garlic crabs are an underappreciated Jacksonville specialty. A variant of the well-known seafood boil, garlic crabs are cooked in a melted garlic butter sauce with sausage, corn, eggs and potatoes. Garlic crabs can be found across the coastal Southeast, but Jacksonville is the world capital of the dish, which is served up at dozens of local crab shacks and restaurants, especially in the Northside → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP

Bottom left: Historic residences along Hart Street. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Bottom right: Florida Planning Conference attendees tour the Jacksonville Black Baseball Museum at J.P. Small Field. A 2020 report conducted for the federal Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor put the potential economic benefit for tourism related to African American heritage sites in Gullah Geechee communities at \$34 billion. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



VISION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

VISION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Vision Foundation: Withinfiltration and Cultural Preservation

In 2024, the City of Jacksonville initiated the Durkeeville Revitalization Study with the support of Community Planning Collaborative, to craft a practical, community-led implementation strategy. The plan centers around revitalizing the core of Durkeeville in a way that reflects the community's present-day needs and long-term vision.

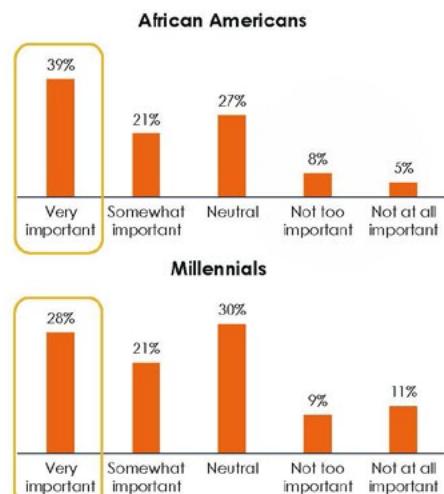
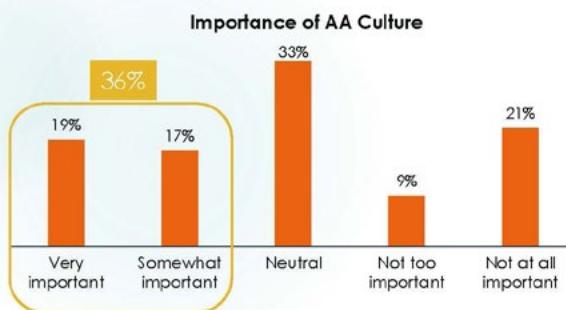
This strategy addresses:

- **Housing** – with a focus on affordable homeownership and infill development that matches the visual character and front yard setbacks of historic residential structures,
- **Community and Recreational Facilities** – including upgraded parks and potential new gathering spaces,
- **Commercial Spaces** – especially reinvestment along Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road,
- **Supportive Neighborhood Services** – from senior services to workforce training, healthcare, and public safety.

More than a third of all U.S. travelers say that "the availability of African American cultural, historic sites and attractions" is important in destination choice. Jacksonville is the largest city within the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and home to the country's largest concentration of Gullah Geechee descendants. Durkeeville is one of the most large-scale, intact historic African American neighborhoods in the city. → Credit: Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

Importance of African American Culture in Destination Choice

- More than a third of all U.S. travelers (36%) say that "the availability of African American cultural, historic sites and attractions" is either "very important" (19%) or "somewhat important" 17% in their choice of leisure destination.
- African Americans (39%) and Millennials (28%) are much more likely consider it "Very Important" to their choice of destination.



How important is the availability of African-American cultural, historical sites and attractions in your choice of destinations for your leisure trip? (C) 2020 Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor



Durkeeville stakeholders during a December 2024 neighborhood visioning exercise. → Credit: Nicole Huser

A Withintrification Strategy for Durkeeville

The Durkeeville withintrification strategy prioritizes revitalization from within through:

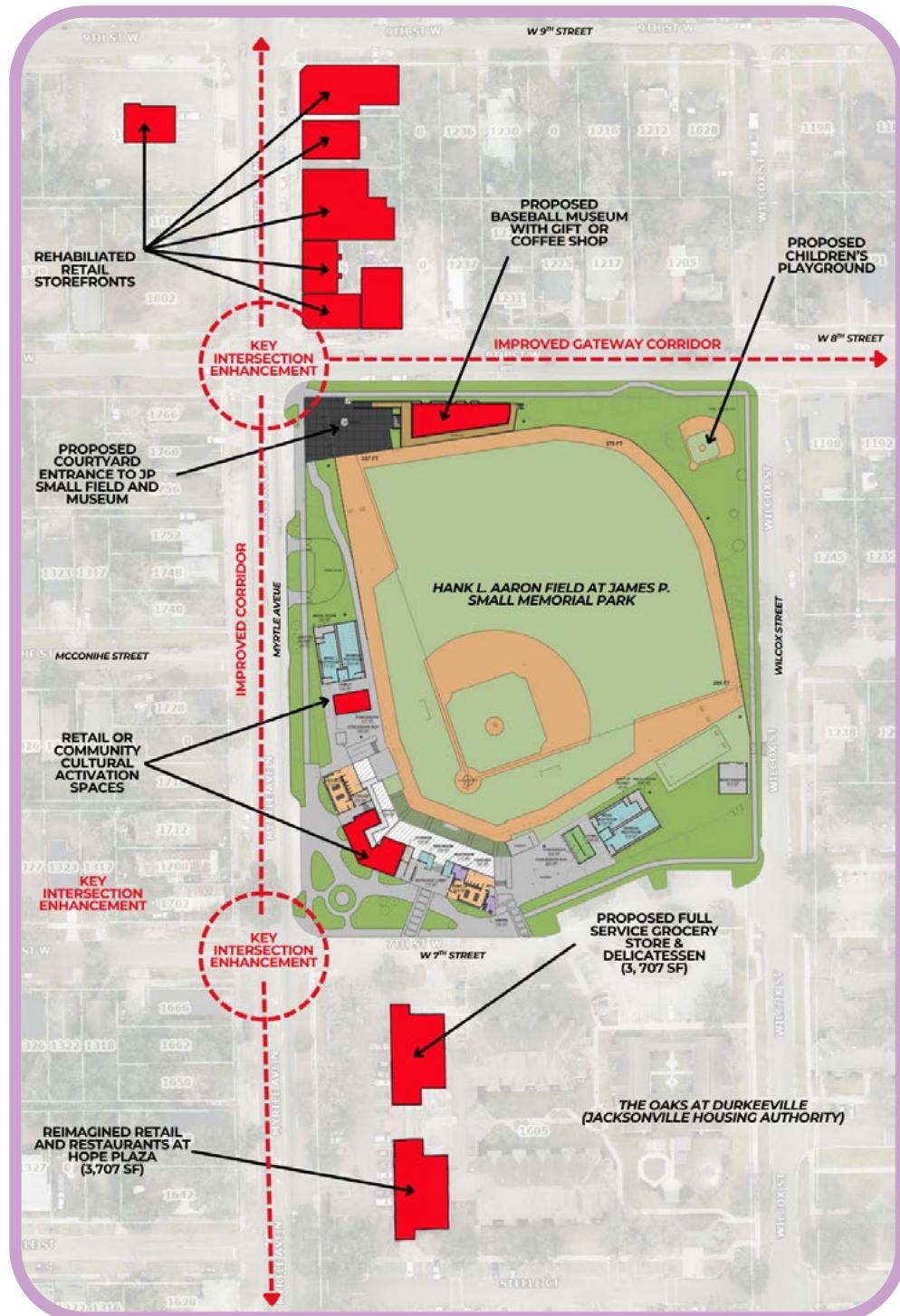
1. ensuring the community is at the table during decision-making and leading conversations,
2. revitalization of the Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road commercial corridors,
3. development of mixed-income housing that includes both affordable and market-rate homeownership options,
4. leveraging nearly \$400 million in committed public projects within the study area, and
5. building community capacity through technical assistance and organizational support.

By aligning existing community cornerstones and assets with planned public investments, this approach aims to achieve short-term wins while strengthening local organizations for long-term stewardship and growth. The recommendations build upon prior visioning efforts, **confirming that community priorities have remained consistent over time**. Rather than reinventing the vision, the focus is on overcoming implementation barriers and fully utilizing available resources.

Unlike gentrification, which often displaces existing residents, **withintrification** refers to revitalization led by the people who already live in the community. Coined by University of Pittsburgh professor Dr. John Wallace, the concept emphasizes identifying local assets, uniting them under shared goals, and increasing neighborhood value in a way that benefits, and is led by the current residents.

At the heart of the strategy is a cluster of projects, including the City of Jacksonville's rehabilitation of J.P. Small Field and the development of a new baseball museum at 8th Street and Myrtle Avenue. This intersection is visioned as a key anchor for coordinated revitalization efforts, leveraging public investment to fuel sustained economic and cultural development over a 5-to-10-year horizon.

Conceptual plan illustrating leveraging of existing public investment, partnerships and resources create a mixed-use district along Myrtle Avenue anchored by J.P. Small Memorial Park. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



Durkeeville: Honoring History, Cultivating Opportunity

Durkeeville is a close-knit community rooted in a rich legacy of Negro League baseball, entrepreneurship, and homeownership. The Myrtle Avenue Core Focus Area, an established, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood, reflects these traditions and should be the focal point for branding, marketing, signage, programming, and investment initiatives.



For nearly 50 years, Walker's Commercial & Vocational College was a major Jacksonville educational institution. Founded by Dr. Julia Walker-Brown, the school was located in Durkeeville. A part of the campus, 1815 Myrtle Avenue, still stands. → Credit: City of Jacksonville



Affectionately known as "The Window", Drum's BBQ at 1446 Myrtle Avenue, is one of several local legacy restaurants in Durkeeville known for its Jacksonville-style mustard-based barbecue sauce. → Credit: Terrance Fagan

Central to the community is historic J.P. Small Field, a unique and significant cultural landmark. With proposed enhancements such as a stand-alone museum, retail amenities (e.g., coffee or gift shops), and a children's playground at Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street, the site could evolve into a vibrant attraction. It already hosts baseball teams from Edward Waters University and Stanton College Preparatory School, and it has the potential to accommodate additional recreational events or teams like the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp.

Strategic investments along Myrtle Avenue, such as upgrading legacy business storefronts, improving landscaping, and adding outdoor seating, can enhance the economic vitality of the area. Projects like the Emerald Trail and a full-service grocery store at Hope Plaza can serve as additional anchors, supporting both community health and economic development. Promoting Black-owned business ownership and development connects to the historic roots of the neighborhood.



An aerial of Kansas City's 18th & Vine District. → Credit: Kansas City Star

SPOTLIGHT: **18th & Vine District, Kansas City**

The 18th & Vine District in Kansas City, MO, is nationally recognized for its profound historical and cultural significance, particularly within the African American community. This vibrant area is home to iconic attractions such as the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the American Jazz Museum, and the legendary Arthur Bryant's Barbecue.

While the district is widely associated with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro Leagues, its original Municipal Stadium was demolished in 1972. In contrast, Durkeeville's preserved and actively used J.P. Small Memorial Stadium offers a unique advantage. It presents both a cultural heritage landmark and an economic development opportunity, positioning the stadium as a powerful anchor and catalyst for the revitalization of Myrtle Avenue through the heart of the study area.



A rendering of a proposed \$5.4 million streetscape to 18th Street in Kansas City's 18th & Vine District. When complete, the plan will redefine the urban landscape while preserving the area's rich legacy. → Credit: City of Kansas City, MO

This plan outlines a clear path for how Durkeeville can realize its revitalization goals. From sidewalk repairs to museum staffing, from zoning reform to equitable Emerald Trail planning, this roadmap connects the community's priorities to real-world actions, funding, and accountability.

What makes this moment different is that implementation is not theoretical. Over \$385 million in planned investment is already "on the books" and this framework builds on that momentum, removes policy barriers, and activates community-led change.

These existing projects are highlighted as opportunities for community organizations, property owners, and residents to engage and advance their shared priorities within the ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts.

The implementation strategy utilizes the City of Jacksonville's Approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2025–2029 to divide its recommendations into different timeframes and maximize the funding allocated in the CIP.

- **Short-term:** 2025 – 2026
- **Mid-term:** 2027 – 2029
- **Long-term:** 2030 and beyond

This implementation roadmap is a strategy for **withintrification**, coordinated across city departments, state agencies, nonprofits, and neighborhood groups. What ties it together is a shared commitment to:

- Leveraging existing public investments like J.P. Small Field and the Emerald Trail
- Removing policy and zoning barriers to enable financial flexibility for market rate development and historic preservation
- Building capacity in local organizations so they can lead revitalization
- Focusing on affordability, access, and cultural identity every step of the way

SHORT-TERM

MID-TERM

LONG-TERM

2025

2026

2027

2028

2029

2030

BEYOND

Short-Term Projects & Recommendations

Short-term projects and recommendations prioritize initiatives funded through the Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Capital Improvement Plans of the City of Jacksonville and the Florida Department of Transportation. It also includes quick-start actions, such as low-cost improvements and technical assistance programs designed to strengthen neighborhood organizations, providing them the ability to lead neighborhood revitalization.

Mid-Term Projects & Recommendations

Mid-term projects and recommendations are aligned with Fiscal Year 2026–2029 Adopted Capital Improvement Projects for the City of Jacksonville, the Florida Department of Transportation, and other partner agencies.

Long-Term Projects & Recommendations

Long-term projects are not yet funded and usually involve complicated engineering and design work. They tend to be more expensive and will need extra time to find and secure the right funding sources.

Individual Implementation Strategy project recommendation sheets, containing community priorities, are included in the Appendix.



Short-Term Recommendations (FY2024/25–2025/26)

1. J.P. Small Field Improvements

- Phase I completed (new turf field)
- Phase II: New baseball museum building and children's playground at Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street

2. Malivai Washington Youth Center & Tennis Complete Renovation

- Tennis court reconstruction at 1055 W 6th Street

3. Kings Road at S-Line Trail Pedestrian Safety Improvements

- Overhead pedestrian traffic signal at S-Line crossing

4. Kings Road Midblock Crossings (FDOT)

- New pedestrian traffic signals and one overhead Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Union, Brady, and Whitner Street intersections.

5. Wilcox Street Sidewalks

- Installation of new sidewalk along Wilcox Street as part of Phase II improvements to J.P. Small Field. (Short Term Project Recommendation #1)

6. 8th Street Complete Streets

- Pedestrian, bicycle and aesthetic improvements on West 8th Street between Payne Avenue and Boulevard Street.

7. Cleveland Street Force Main Replacements

- Utilities upgrade for storm and potable water on Cleveland Street.

8. 8th Street Water Main Replacement

- Replacement of water main along West 8th Street between Mount Herman Street and Boulevard Street.
- Five affordable rental homes; permits issued February 2025

9. Wilcox Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd Street and Grothe Street, and between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

10. West 5th Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Myrtle Avenue and Payne Avenue

11. Eaverson Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets and between Hart and West 6th Streets.

12. Eaverson Court Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between McConihe and West 8th Streets.

13. Brady Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Kings Road and Hart Street to tie into Short Term Project Recommendation #4.

14. Whitner Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Prince and Steele Streets to tie into Short Term Project Recommendation #4.

15. Durkeeville Historic Resources Survey Update and National Register Nomination

- Apply for State of Florida Division of Historic Resources grants to update historic resources survey and nominate study area to the National Register of Historic Places.

16. Durkeeville Organization Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

- Provide direct technical assistance and support to neighborhood organizations to strengthen their influence and capacity as effective community stewards to ensure the long-term success of neighborhood revitalization efforts. (See page 66 for more detail.)

17. Host Key Program Educational Sessions

- Educational sessions to better connect, expose and promote existing financial, programming and social resources to the Durkeeville community and neighborhood organizations (Associated with Short Term Recommendation #16)

18. Mount Herman Cemetery Memorialization

- Perform ground penetrating radar (GPR) to identify unmarked burials and inclusion of a memorial and/or memorial signage dedicated to the story of Mount Herman Cemetery at Emmett Reed Park.

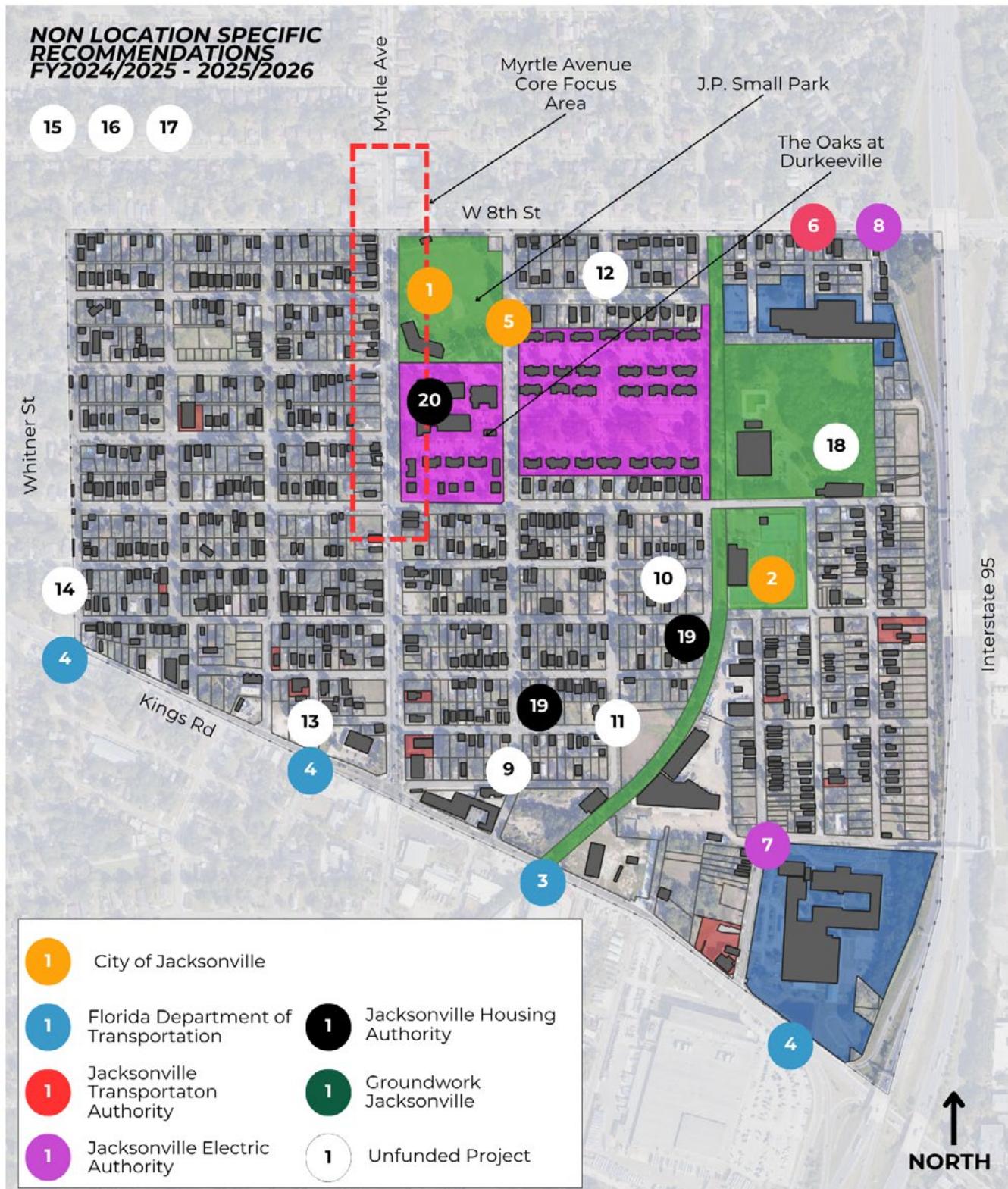
19. Jacksonville Housing Authority Infill Housing

- Construction of five (5) new construction single family houses on Grothe and Hart Streets.

20. Jacksonville Housing Authority Hope Plaza

- Rehabilitation of Hope Plaza shopping center to include new businesses (i.e. full service grocery store, restaurants, retail, etc.)

SHORT-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



Durkeeville Revitalization Study Short Term Project Recommendations Map
→ Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

Mid-Term Recommendations (FY2026/27-2029/30)

1. Dallas Graham Branch Library Replacement

- Expand or replace existing Dallas Graham Branch Library with a new 25,000-square foot library on or within walking distance of Myrtle Avenue. Preserve existing Mid-Century building and include expansion of programs for youth and seniors. Adaptively reuse existing building if a new library is built in a different location. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for Durkeeville residents and JSEB businesses.

2. Emerald Trail Northwest Connector Segment #7

- Coordinate proposed trail alignment to a route that supports the community's long-standing infrastructure priorities along key corridors such as West 8th Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Kings Road. Avoid streets through residential single family areas. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for Durkeeville residents and JSEB businesses.

3. Interstate 95 Over Myrtle Avenue Ramp Bridge #720163

- Incorporate drainage, landscaping, and gateway enhancements at Kings Road interchange into I-95 widening project. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for Durkeeville residents and JSEB businesses.

4. Barnett Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Streets.

5. Barnett Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 7th and 9th Streets as part of Emerald Trail connectivity if West 7th and/or West 13th Street are selected as Emerald Trail corridors.

6. Hart Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Barnett Street and Blue Avenue.

7. Blue Avenue Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Street.

8. Blue Avenue Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 7th and 13th Streets as part of Emerald Trail connectivity if West 7th and/or West 13th Street are selected as Emerald Trail corridors.

9. Jacksonville Housing Authority Lots

- In alignment with Community Vision for infill housing, prioritize affordable home ownership in construction of new single family and duplex residential dwellings on remaining lots south of West 6th Street. New construction should include a Frame or Masonry Vernacular design style and include an off-street driveway on the side of the structure.

(continued)

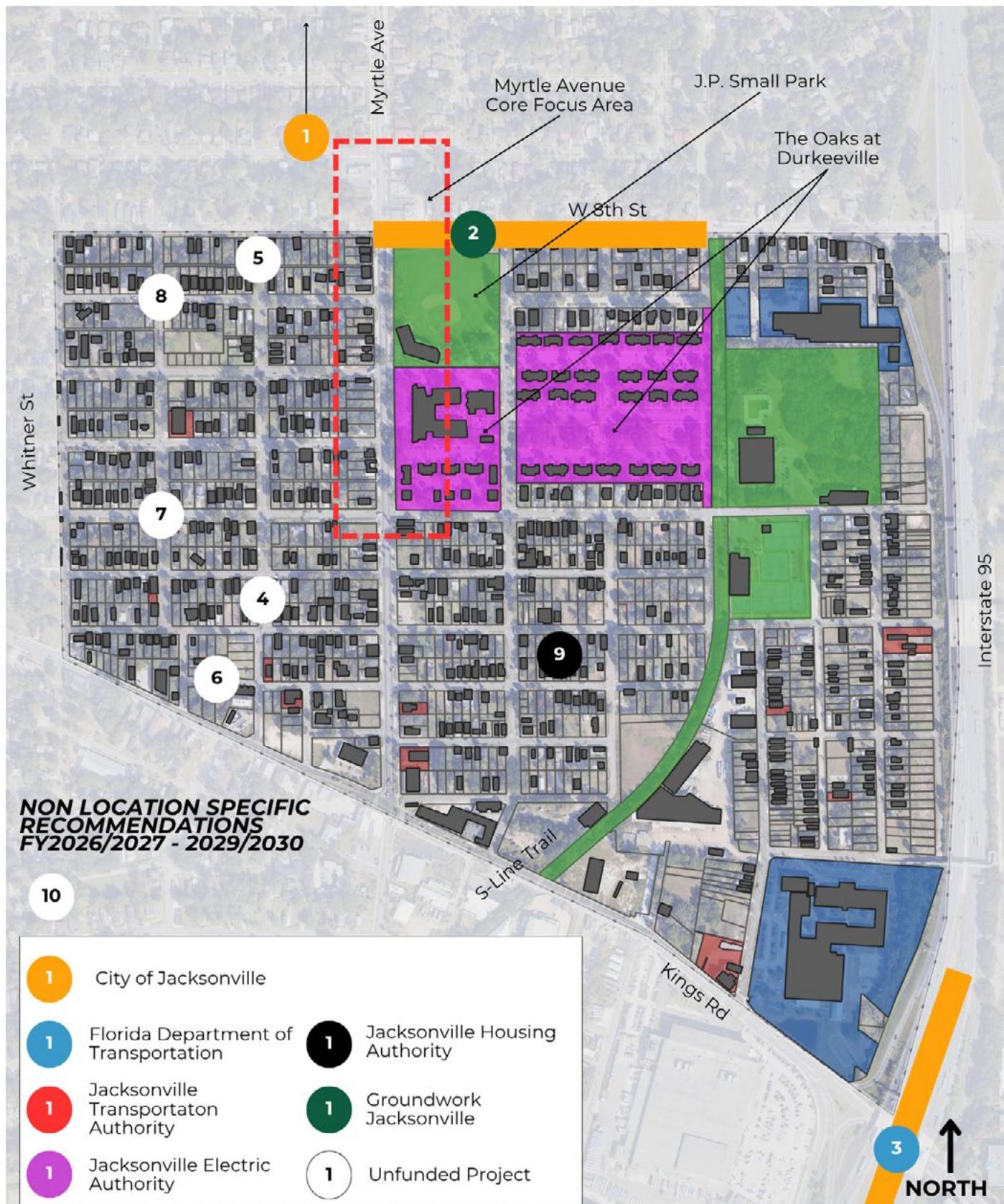
10. Durkeeville Neighborhood Zoning Overlay

- Creation of a new zoning overlay for study area to address current zoning regulations that artificially increase housing costs and restrict market rate commercial and residential development (See Policy Changes section on next page for more detail.)

11. Eaverson Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets and between Hart and West 6th Streets.

MID-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



Durkeeleville Revitalization Study Mid Term Project Recommendations Map →
Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

Long-Term Recommendations (Beyond FY2030/31)

1. Kings Road Resurfacing

- Collaborate with the community to include “complete streets” improvements as part of the next restoration, rehabilitation and resurfacing project between I-95 and MLK, Jr. Parkway.

2. I-95 Widening from Beaver Street to MLK, Jr. Parkway

- Incorporate drainage, landscaping, and gateway enhancements at 8th Street interchange into I-95 widening project. Place extra emphasis on local hiring initiatives to provide job opportunities for BIPOC and JSEB businesses.

3. Mount Herman Exceptional Center

- Collaborate with the community for future uses of property.

4. Mount Herman Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

5. Francis Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between West 3rd and 6th Streets.

6. West 4th Street Sidewalks

- New sidewalk(s) between Mount Herman and Cleveland Streets.

7. Myrtle Avenue Complete Streets - Segment #3

- New sidewalk(s) between Grothe and West 7th Street.

LONG-TERM PROJECTS LOCATION MAP



Durkeeville Revitalization Study Long Term Project Recommendations Map →
Credit: Community Planning Collaborative

Policy Changes

Durkeeville won't recover without removing the very policy barriers that helped cause that decline. Zoning and land use policies are not neutral tools. In historically Black neighborhoods like Durkeeville, they have long been used to exclude, displace, and disinvest. This plan recommends policy shifts that reverse those patterns and support a future rooted in affordability, heritage, and community control.

Through conversations with residents, community organizations, the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Housing Authority, and other stakeholders, policy modifications have been identified as necessary to realize the community's vision. These changes aim to remove structural obstacles, legalize traditional development patterns, and unlock investment in ways that benefit, not displace, residents.

Current policy challenges identified:

- Kings Road zoning does not support mixed-use development in keeping with a historic urban district and has burdensome parking requirements
- Residential zoning does not allow for new "missing middle" housing - duplexes, triplexes, quads - even though these have historically existed in the neighborhood
- Incentive programs to encourage projects that meet community goals exist but most Durkeeville stakeholders either aren't aware or need technical assistance to be eligible to access.

Potential solutions:

Creation of zoning overlay that:

- allows for mixed-use development along commercial corridors, addresses current parking challenges, and encourages adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- allows for development of missing middle housing
- creates architectural standards for new development that is in keeping with historic architecture and development patterns
- requires community meetings for projects of a certain size prior to submitting any applications for development approvals

Capacity Programs

Revitalization while limiting displacement of the descendant community happens through the people. It happens when residents, churches, small businesses, and community organizations are equipped with the tools and resources to lead and guide development on their own terms. That's why capacity building is a cornerstone of this plan and a key to long-term, equitable impact in Durkeeville.

The neighborhood has talent, vision, and deep community roots.

What it can lack is administrative bandwidth, technical support, and sustained investment. This section outlines how building skills, power, and infrastructure within the community is just as important as funding infrastructure on the ground. Capacity-building programs serve as the connective tissue between vision and action. It ensures that those most impacted by change are also leading it.

Capacity building means investing in skills, leadership, and organizational resources so that community-based groups can:

- Rehabilitate and own property
- Deliver services
- Support residents in navigating systems
- Access and manage funding
- Guide development aligned with neighborhood values

This is especially urgent in Durkeeville, where organizations, local churches, and legacy businesses have control of land or storefronts, but may lack the staff, administrative support or access to financial capital.

“We Have the Vision. We Just Need the Support.”

This quote from a community leader captures the spirit of this section. People know what they want. They've been here through it all. What they need now is to be resourced. Building capacity is how we ensure this plan ends with real results. It's how we pass the torch of neighborhood leadership.

Key Capacity Needs Identified:

- **Administrative and Staffing Support**

- Local organizations need staffing resources and administrative assistance to manage programs effectively and expand their impact.

- **Governance**

- Understanding the roles of the place-centered organization, the community, philanthropy and City of Jacksonville departments related to the neighborhood's public realm.
- Revenue generating opportunities for maintenance, operations and programming.
- Providing resources about business and organizational development will assist new and existing groups and business owners.

- **Technical Assistance for Small Businesses**

- Small businesses require help with navigating permitting, accessing capital, business planning, and scaling operations.

- **Skill & Trade Centers**

- Community members need exposure and access to job training programs focused on trades and practical skills that lead to stable, well-paying employment.

- **Leadership Development**

- Investing in leadership training will empower residents to take on roles in decision-making, advocacy, and community organizing.

- **Organizational Equity Support**

- Support is needed to help organizations adopt inclusive practices and ensure equitable representation in their staffing, leadership, and service delivery.

- **Access to Information**

- Residents and business owners need better access to timely and clear information about policy, resources, funding and grant opportunities, and civic processes to stay engaged and informed.

- **Restorative Justice & Healing**

- Integrating restorative justice practices into neighborhood gatherings, youth programming, school partnerships, tenant groups, and cultural events can foster community cohesion, promote healing, and reduce stress during changing times.

Why Partnerships Matter for Capacity Building

Durkeeville is already home to organizations doing meaningful, community-focused work. Partnering with schools, churches, nonprofits, and local businesses helps build on existing strengths rather than starting from scratch. These groups have deep roots in the neighborhood, strong relationships with residents, and valuable on-the ground knowledge. Collaborating with them allows efforts to be more coordinated, efficient, and sustainable. This helps uplift a strong support system for the entire community.

COMMUNITY POWER

Making the Plan Happen

The revitalization plan is just the beginning. To make real change happen, strong and steady community involvement and ownership is needed, in addition to City and partner support. **When neighbors stay informed, organized, and active, it helps ensure the plan is implemented, not forgotten.** Here are some ways local residents and organizations can support the process and push for results:

Host Regular Community Meetings

Consistent community meetings create space for conversation, planning, and collaboration. Having an organized community voice is very important. These gatherings can:

- Share updates on what's happening with the revitalization plan.
- Provide a space for residents to identify priorities and concerns.
- Help organize actions like outreach to city officials or attendance at public meetings.
- Strengthen local networks and partnerships.

Helpful Tip: Rotate meeting hosts or roles to share responsibilities and build leadership.



Create a Community Information Network

Sharing information widely helps everyone stay in the loop. A few ways to keep neighbors informed:

- Email lists or group text threads.
- Social media groups or neighborhood apps.
- Printed flyers or newsletters shared at churches, schools, or local businesses.
- A community bulletin board at a park or popular gathering spot.

Helpful Tip: Use these tools to share important dates, updates, and good news about plan progress.



Engage with Elected Officials

Local decision-makers need to hear directly from the people they represent. Advocacy efforts might include:

- Contacting City Council members and the mayor by phone, email, or in person.
- Inviting officials to community meetings, neighborhood tours, or events.
- Sharing personal stories that show how the plan can improve quality of life.
- Don't be afraid to be a squeaky wheel. Repeat contact helps elevate the issue.

Helpful Tip: A quick thank-you when a leader supports a project goes a long way.



Attend City Meetings and Speak Up

City boards and commissions often hold the power to move parts of the plan forward. Community members can:

- Monitor City meeting agendas to see what topics come up.
- Show up at meetings like the Planning Commission, City Council committees and meetings, and budget workshops.
- Make public comments to show support for projects and funding.
- Coordinate with others so multiple voices are heard.
- Matching shirts or signs at meetings can visually demonstrate support.

Helpful Tips: Speaking from lived experience is just as valuable as expert testimony. Rotate who attends meetings so it doesn't fall on just a couple of people.

Watch the City Budget Process

Many parts of a revitalization plan depend on funding. Community members can:

- Learn when the city's budget process takes place each year.
- Speak at budget hearings to advocate for funding that supports plan goals.
- Ask that neighborhood priorities be included in capital improvement plans.

Helpful Tip: Partnering with community groups can make budget advocacy easier and more effective. There is strength in numbers.

Sustain Momentum Over Time

Implementation can take months or years. To keep the energy going:

- Celebrate milestones and win no matter how small.
- Keep new people involved to grow leadership and energy.
- Stay connected with neighborhood organizations, schools, and places of worship.
- Remind everyone why the plan matters and how it improves quality of life.

Helpful Tip: Partnering with community groups can make budget advocacy easier and more effective. There is strength in numbers.

QUICK START ADVOCACY CHECKLIST

Identify Local Partners

- Make a list of nearby organizations, churches, schools, or businesses that could support plan projects
- Reach out to at least one partner to explore collaboration
- Look for ways to connect with youth programs or senior groups for intergenerational support

Build a Resource Contact List

List contact info for:

- City Council representative(s)
- Key City departments (Planning, Public Works, Housing, etc.)
- Neighborhood organizations or associations
- Community leaders and organizers
- Share this contact list at meetings and through neighborhood networks

Know Key Dates

- Learn the City's annual budget timeline (hearings, deadlines, adoption dates)
- Mark upcoming elections for local officials who influence implementation
- Add City board and commission meetings to a shared calendar
- Keep track of seasonal grant or funding deadlines tied to revitalization

Plans succeed when the people most affected stay involved. Every meeting, every conversation, and every show of support brings the plan one step closer to reality.

Track Implementation Progress

- Create a simple table to track plan actions (what's done, what's next)
- Include columns for: project name, responsible department, status, and notes
- Share updates at every community meeting

Celebrate & Sustain Engagement

- Host occasional community check-ins to highlight wins
- Create small ways to recognize volunteer efforts (shout-outs, certificates, potlucks)
- Bring new residents and voices into the process over time
- Use storytelling to remind the community why the plan matters



Durkeeville stakeholders participate in a May 2025 neighborhood walk to help determine the alignment of the proposed Emerald Trail project through the neighborhood. | Ennis Davis, AICP

Clockwise from top: The 1200 block of Grothe Street. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | Mayor Donna Deegan speaks at the June 2025 groundbreaking of five affordable houses (Short Term Recommendation #19) by the Jacksonville Housing Authority. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP | The Manuel Rivera residence is where Jacksonville Braves baseball players Hank Aaron, Felix Mantilla, and Horace Garner lived in 1953, the year they integrated Major League Baseball in the South. → Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



CONCLUSION (NEXT STEPS)

CONCLUSION

The *Durkeeville Revitalization Study* is a call to action. It is a shared commitment among neighbors, institutions, and city leaders to restore what was lost, build on what remains, and realize a future that is just, equitable, and Black-led. The community's vision is clear. This plan provides a roadmap to get there. Now comes the most important phase: implementation.

Durkeeville's revitalization will not happen in a single year or from a single agency. It requires **collaboration across time, sectors, and leadership levels**. It will be built block by block, policy by policy, and home by home, through continued listening, transparent decisions, and trusted relationships.

PRIORITY ACTIONS BY PHASE

Leverage Momentum through Short-Term Wins (FY2024/25 – 2025/26)

Top Priorities:

Complete funded projects:

- Construct new Jacksonville Black Baseball Museum
- Construct a new children's playground at J.P. Small Field
- Reimagining Hope Plaza shopping center
- Malivai Washington Youth Center court rehab
- Jacksonville Housing Authority infill housing south of West 6th Street
- Kings Road pedestrian safety upgrades

Activate additional shovel-ready but unfunded priorities:

- Mount Herman Cemetery restoration project
- Sidewalk improvements: Wilcox, West 5th, Brady, Whitner, Eaverson, Eaverson Ct.
- Support museum staffing and integrate revenue strategies (gift shop, events, café)

Remove Policy Barriers to Community-Led Growth

Current zoning restrictions block the very housing and commercial development styles that historically defined Durkeeville.

Top Priorities:

Through zoning overlay:

- Modify RMD-A zoning to permit duplexes and missing-middle housing
- Ensure Myrtle Avenue and Kings Road allows mixed-use, walkable development

Guide Future Housing Development with Equity and Design Integrity

New homes should feel like they belong. Affordable homeownership must remain at the center of neighborhood transformation.

Top Priorities:

- Ensure all infill homes follow community-supported architectural design preferences (Frame & Masonry Vernacular) consistent with state legal requirements available through an overlay
- Work with the Jacksonville Housing Authority to prioritize homeownership on additional lots and expand buyer programs
- Partner with local contractors of color and trade schools to build wealth and workforce pipelines

Align with Mid- and Long-Term Investments (2026 and Beyond)

Durkeeville's transformation will take decades. The community must remain at the table through every phase.

Mid-Term Priorities (FY2026/27 – 2029/30):

- Construct the new Dallas Graham Library (25,000 SF community anchor)
- Build out Emerald Trail Segment #7 on alignment approved by Durkeeville community
- Coordinate streetscape upgrades and business support around the trail route

- Partner with FDOT on I-95 Myrtle Avenue ramp replacement project to ensure noise reduction, landscaping at Kings Road, and local job creation
- If new Dallas Graham Library is built at different location, repurpose the existing Dallas Graham Library into an enhanced community-serving facility

Long-Term Priorities (Beyond FY2030/31):

- Advocate for corridor-wide Kings Road Complete Streets upgrades
- Shape FDOT's plans for I-95 widening to include Durkeeville gateway improvements
- Construct additional sidewalks and expand green infrastructure along Myrtle and secondary streets
- Coordinate with Duval County Public Schools on future use for Mount Herman Exceptional Center property

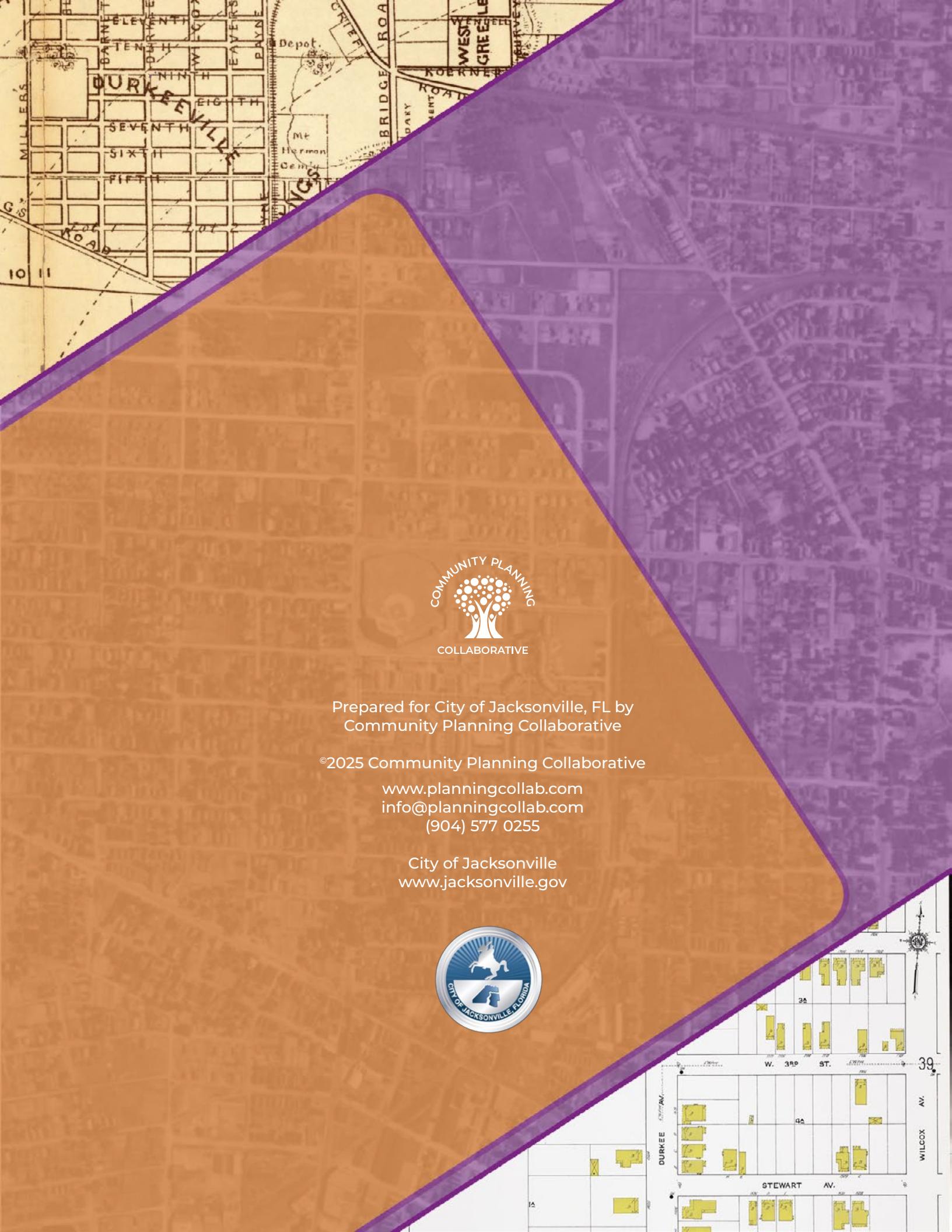
Durkeeville has waited long enough. This study honors the community's legacy. It strengthens existing institutions and leverages existing committed public projects. Furthermore, it prepares a roadmap that is community-led, city-supported, and publicly accountable. It is a return to self-determination.

Achieving success will require:

- Ongoing community engagement that is compensated, accessible, and transparent;
- Sustained funding for grassroots implementation, extending beyond capital infrastructure;
- Institutional alignment among COJ departments, the Jacksonville Housing Authority, Groundwork Jacksonville, FDOT, and nonprofit partners; and
- The use of clear metrics, regular check-ins, and public reporting to keep implementation on track.



Durkeeville residents and stakeholders at a March 2025 community workshop. Credit: Ennis Davis, AICP



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