

CONSENSUS HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

Hulsey Yard Public Open House – July 13, 2019 (Lang Carson Community Center)
Online Planning Activities – July 22-26, 2019 (Online Survey)

HULSEY YARD MASTER PLAN



OVERVIEW

On Saturday, July 13, 2019 the Lord Aeck Sargent planning team along with neighborhood leaders of Cabbagetown, Inman Park, Reynoldstown and Old Fourth Ward hosted a four-hour Public Open House at Lang Carson Community Center. Over 250 people attended.

This Open House was the second public workshop as part of the planning process and was a follow-up to the Pop-Up Studio held May 8-11 at the same venue. Open House exercises were crafted as a way to dig deeper into themes and ideas initially discussed at the Pop-Up Studio. The room was organized around three planning stations where participants cast ballots related to Redevelopment Framework Plans (Station 1), Open Spaces & Amenities (Station 2), and Street Types (Station 3). Other workshop materials included previously-shown site analysis maps, Pop-Up Studio highlights boards, the physical site model, Live/Work dot exercises, and general “What are we missing?” comment boards. Planning team members were on-hand to assist participants through the exercises, answer questions, engage in dialog with neighbors, and collect ideas for the future of the site.

Following the July 13 Open House, the planning team created an online version of the planning activities, which was active the week of July 22. 378 people completed the online planning activities.

The following are consensus highlights from both the Open House and Online Activities combined. While all individual participant written comments, drawings and input were recorded, documented and reviewed, the highlights noted below are meant to summarize the most common themes, concerns and ideas documented.

BY THE NUMBERS

Participant Sign-Ins / Log-ins	
13-July	234
Online	378
Total	612

Ballots Cast: Framework Plans	
13-July	229
Online	378
Total	607

Ballots Cast: Open Spaces & Amenities	
13-July	217
Online	378
Total	595

Ballots Cast: Street Types	
13-July	211
Online	378
Total	589

STATION 1: FRAMEWORK PLANS

In preparing for the July Open House, the bulk of the planning team's efforts were spent creating the three Framework Plan concepts. The May Pop-Up studio and online exercises delved heavily into Community Character, Land Use, Density and Connectivity. The Framework Plans were created as reflections of those consensus points. Each plan showed roughly the same amounts of density, acreages of open space, street connections to Dekalb Avenue, inclusion of BeltLine transit and a potential infill MARTA station. What was different about each plan was *how the different elements were arranged* across the site. Participants were asked their preferences related to street/block layout, how open spaces are distributed and how each plan relates to the neighborhood contextually along the periphery of the site. Consensus highlights from the Framework Plan exercise are summarized below.

Roundhouse Park was supported by roughly 75% of participants (combination of very appropriate and appropriate rankings), with most comments relating to the **preference for a larger neighborhood-oriented open space**. The idea of **celebrating the roundhouse through site design** seemed to also resonate with many participants. A few key quotes:

"One large, central park with a true theme that unites the space is extremely valuable and rare."

"I love that it honors the legacy of the railyard, which is central to Atlanta's history, heritage and identity."

"Looking for new ideas, not old ideas. The roundhouse is gone. What does the area need now?"

"Green Ribbon" was supported by roughly 69% of participants, with many comments again relating to the preference for a more contiguous open space over a series of more dispersed open spaces. Many participants observed that this concept created **more opportunity to emphasize the BeltLine** and reinforce a variety of modal options. Others noted that they liked how this concept created more **equitable open space across the site** while remaining contiguous. A few key quotes:

"This one is my favorite. It is movement-friendly."

"I like the concept of a linear park that means all residents have greenspace right outside their door. Knowing the health benefits of a daily interaction with nature and greenspace, this design ensures that everyone has equal access to that."

"This one looks the most like the existing Beltline and is therefore the least needed. The green ribbon is a space to move through and not one to idle in, which the area needs."

"Hulsey Squares" was supported by roughly 50% of participants. Supportive responses noted their **preference for smaller block sizes** and spreading open space more equitably across the site. Others observed **that this concept did more to deter cut through traffic between neighborhoods**. It is notable, however, that over 35% of respondents were unsupportive of Hulsey Squares (combination of inappropriate and very inappropriate rankings), which was between two and three times more unsupportive than either of the other two concepts. A few key quotes:

"Keep it simple, keep it human-scaled, and let the smaller parks be canvases for future advocacy and investment by the neighborhoods."

"While the smaller squares ensure that all residents have nearby greenspace, the concept of small squares encourages nearby residents to view this space as 'my park' as opposed to recognizing that it is a public amenity for all. The design can be divisive instead of inclusive."

"A lot of small parks tend to mean that none of them are particularly useful."

STATION 2: OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES

For this exercise, the planning team assembled and displayed 30 images of various open space and amenity types. Participants were asked to review the images and pick the top ten most appropriate for the future of Hulsey Yard. Once the planning team had compiled all the open house and online ballots, each image selection was assigned one point. Consensus highlights for Station 2 are in the attached chart. Changes in color for each selection denote a gap in selections of over 15 points. A few highlights:

- Multi-Use (Bike/Ped) was by far the most preferred with 368 points (40 points above any other selection!). This feedback reinforces the **prioritization of bike/ped mobility over vehicular mobility**, which has been a common theme throughout this planning process.
- Food & Beverage was the second-most preferred with 328 points. This is also a common theme related to mobility in that many participants have expressed **desire for more proximate, neighborhood-oriented food options**.
- Open Lawn, Large Community Park, Re-established Native Landscape and Playground also ranked extremely high. These reinforce a clear **preference for a larger, more contiguous open space(s) over a smaller, more dispersed system of open spaces**. There also seems to be wide support for **re-establishing native habitats and “repairing the land”** as part of site design.

STATION 3: STREET TYPES

Whereas past discussions and exercises related to where new transportation connections might occur, this exercise related more to what those might be. Given that preferred connection points illustrated on the Framework Plans were generally the same across all three options (a result of previous consensus), participants were now asked to select what types of streets they wanted those to be.

For this exercise, the planning team assembled diagrams and photos representing eight (8) different types of streets. These street typologies were based on a combination of those outlined in both the *Streets Atlanta Design Manual (2018)* and the *NACTO Urban Street Design Guide*. Using a ballot to record their answers, respondents were asked to pick the four (4) street types they felt were the most appropriate for the future of Hulsey Yard. Each selection was counted as one point as illustrated on the attached chart. A few key take-aways include:

- **Bike/Pedestrian Alley was the most preferred with 482 points**. This street type was selected on 82% of all ballots, reinforcing the ongoing theme of **prioritizing bike/ped mobility over vehicular mobility**.
- **Shared Street, Neighborhood Local Street and Neighborhood Collector Street also ranked high**, with many respondents noting a **desire to keep streets neighborhood-scaled**.
- On the other hand, **Urban Arterial only received 25 total points, appearing on less than 4% of all ballots**. This reiterates the widespread desire to **calm traffic, prioritize safety and include a variety of modal options** when designing new streets for the site.

OTHER COMMON THEMES

Additional boards were supplied at the open house for participants to write other comments, concerns or ideas for the future of Hulsey Yard. The online version also included a section for additional comments. The most common themes included:

- Participants were **very supportive of “smart density,”** particularly **Intown Village and Intown Mixed-Use Center** community character types.

- The majority of respondents seemed to support the idea of *Regional Destination*-type character provided that **new street/trail connections to the north are created** and **transitional height zones to adjacent neighborhoods** are respected as diagrammed on the framework plans.
- Unsurprisingly, **“needs more greenspace” was perhaps the most common comment**. As previously explained, the framework plans were conceived under a “worst case” scenario in which the property would be redeveloped by a mostly private-sector organization. The amount of open space (greenspace) represented on them was therefore very conservative and was limited roughly to the minimum open space required by zoning. The amount of greenspace that can be implemented on the site is highly contingent on a public-private partnership. Because these framework plans hinge on publicly-implemented open spaces, trails and transit, it is critical that **the City of Atlanta, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., MARTA and/or other public-sector agencies to take a heavy role in the redevelopment of the site**.

A few other key quotes related to common themes:

“Parking maximums! #BanCars”

“If you don't build the transit, there is no point in building any of the rest.”

“Build it for people to live in and not for people to visit. People will visit anyway.”