

# “Stay on Target!”

Defining the Appropriate Target Area for Brownfields Grants

**Georgia**Brownfield  
ASSOCIATION

04.16.2026

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# Agenda

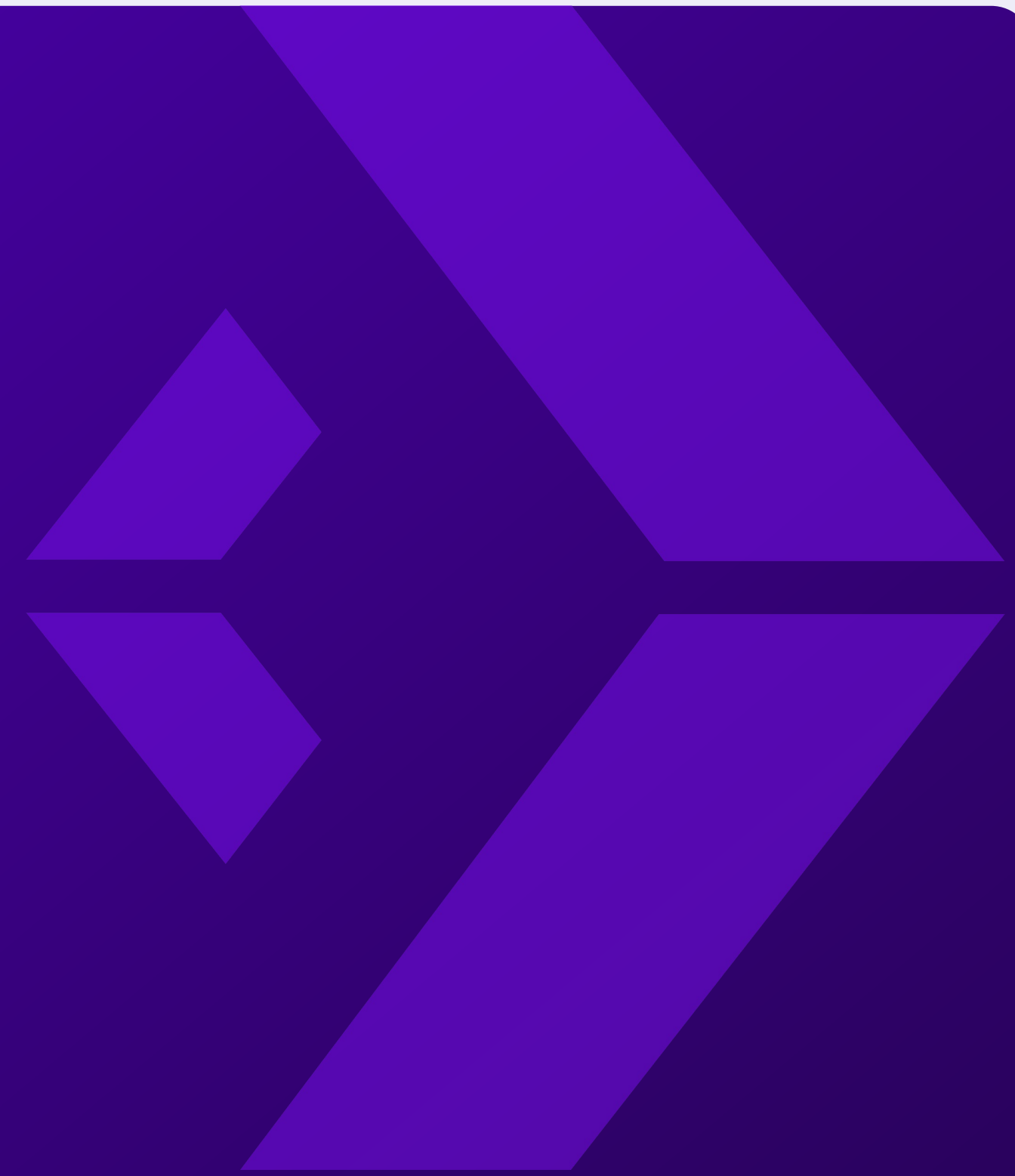
Topics we'll cover today



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- What is a Target Area?
- Mapping Post-Remediation Community Benefits
  - Understanding Community Need through Data
    - Developing the Narrative

# What is a Target Area?



# A Community in Need



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- Target Area: A city, town, or area that is the “target” of revitalization efforts
- **The unit of analysis for the “Community Need & Engagement” subsections of a brownfield grant application narrative**
- Example: Ponce City Market and Atlanta





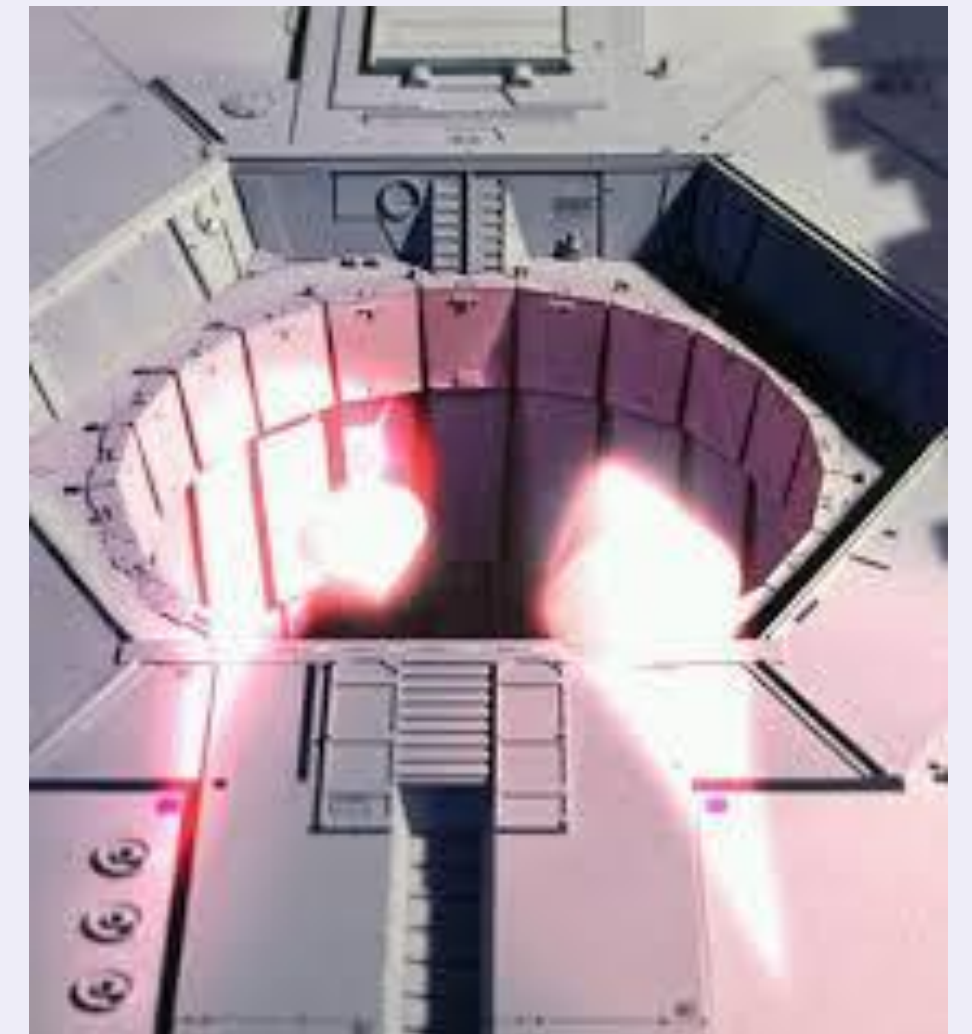
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# What do the “New Hope” Trench Run and Brownfields Applications have in common?



Pullman Yards, Atlanta

- An exact location
- Community need
  - Real benefits



Death Star, Space

# Constraint #1: Post-Remediation Community Benefits

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# Post-Remediation Benefits Should Accrue to the Target Area



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- Who in the community will benefit?
  - Clear demographic nexus

Housing

Agriculture

Community  
space

Recreation

Jobs

- Commercial/retail
- Manufacturing

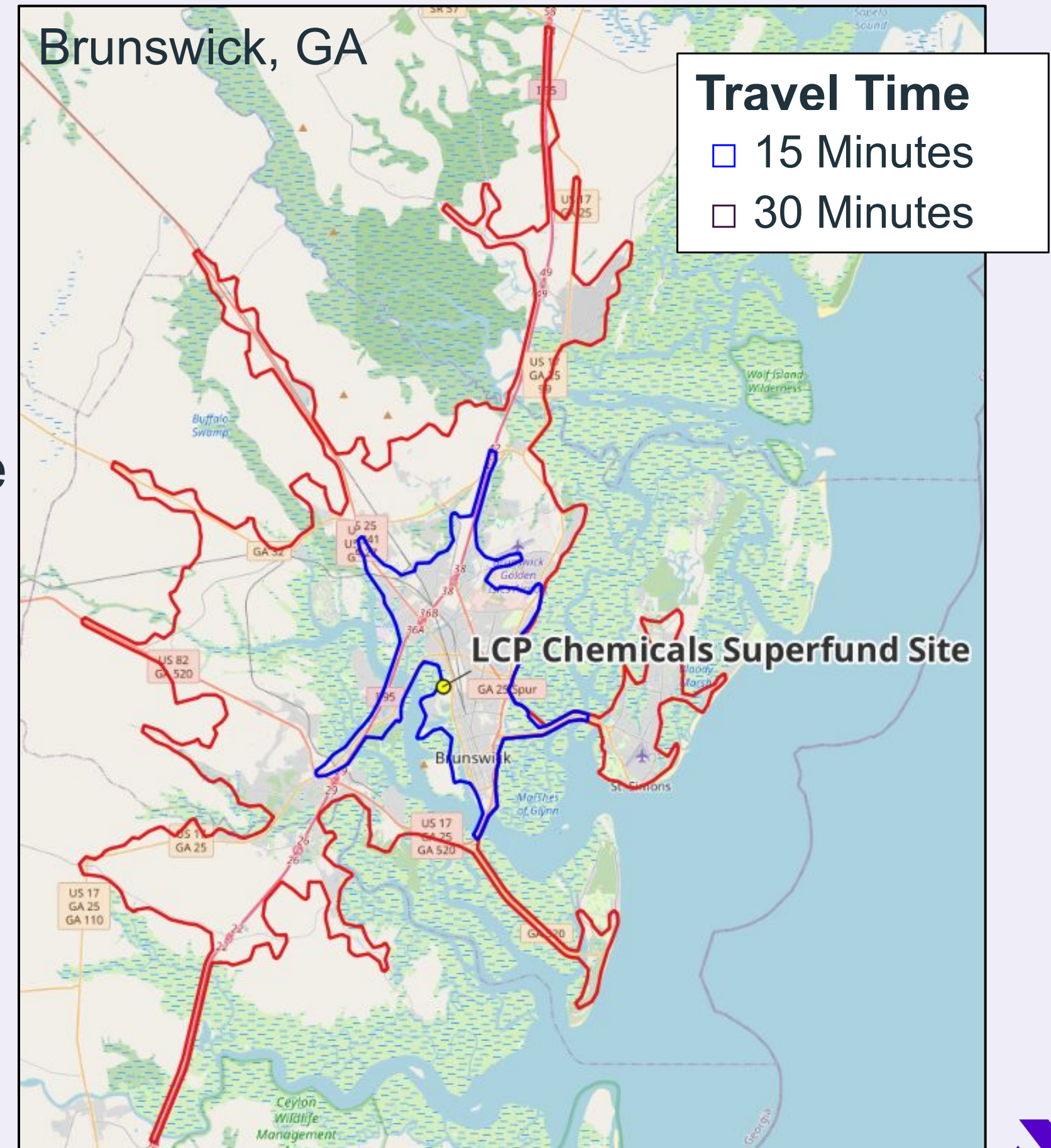
## Example:

- Windsor Street in Mechanicsville (2013 BF Assessment Grant)
- Federal Opportunity Zone and Qualified Census tract
- Lack of community cohesion in neighborhood divided by railroads
- Today: God is Dope (business) and new community space



# Mapping Benefits to Community Need

- Mapping can be used to allocate benefits
- Certain benefits (e.g., workforce) require further review
- **Defines boundary of TA**
- Example: Isochrones for commuting distance to determine scope of employment benefits
- Limitation: Care is needed for highly congested areas



# Constraint #2: Data

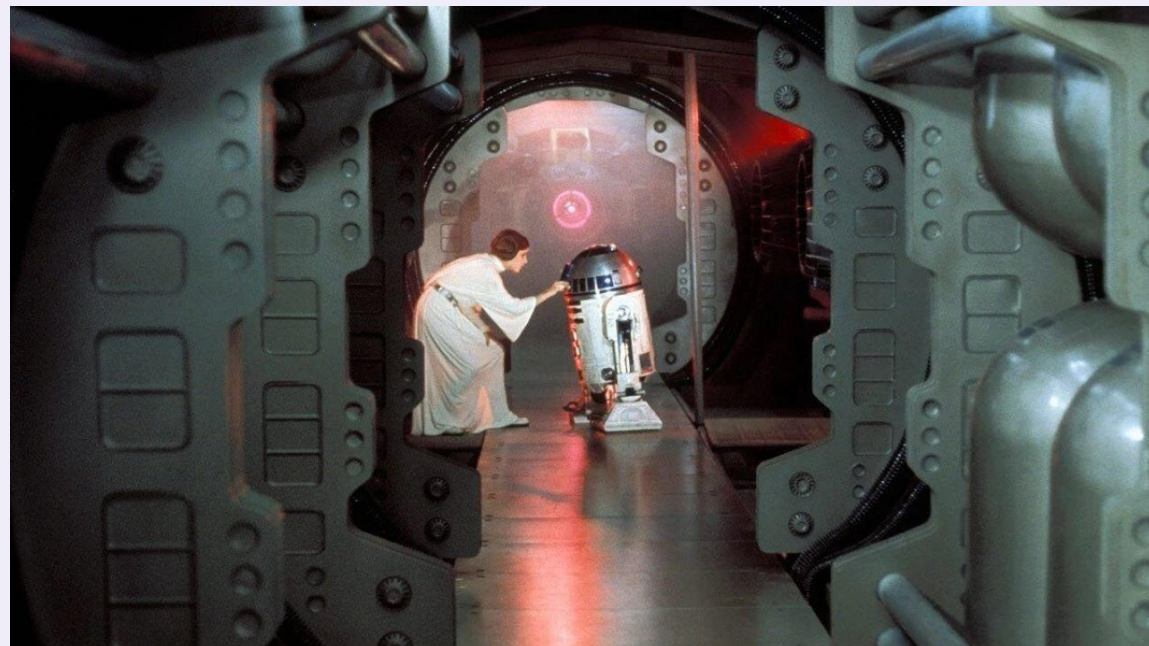
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# Data-Based Community Need

- TA should narrowly include demographics most in need
- Schematics for a narrative
- Variety of sources: U.S. Census Bureau, EPA, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CDC, USDA, etc.



Poverty

Housing

English  
Proficiency

Disability

Age

Chronic Health  
Conditions

Pollution Data

Land Use

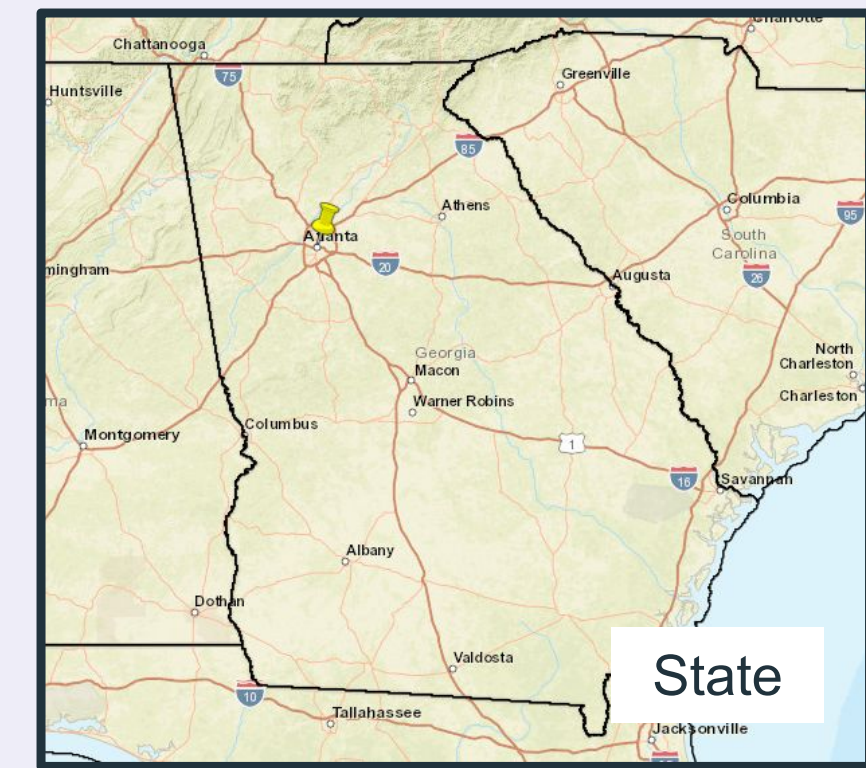
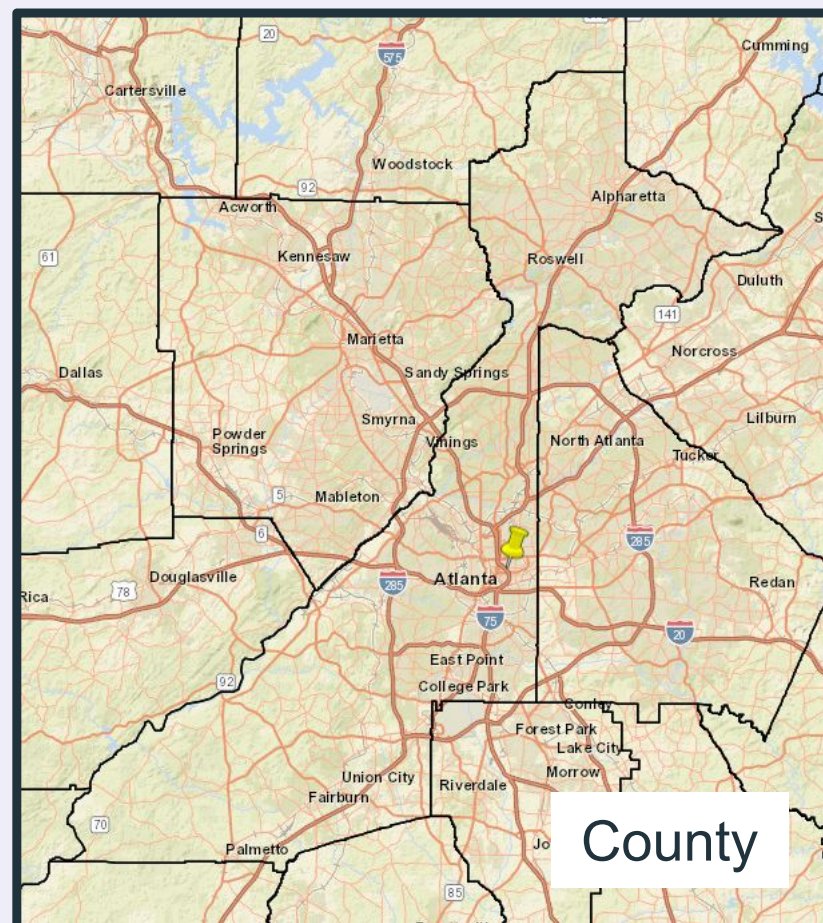
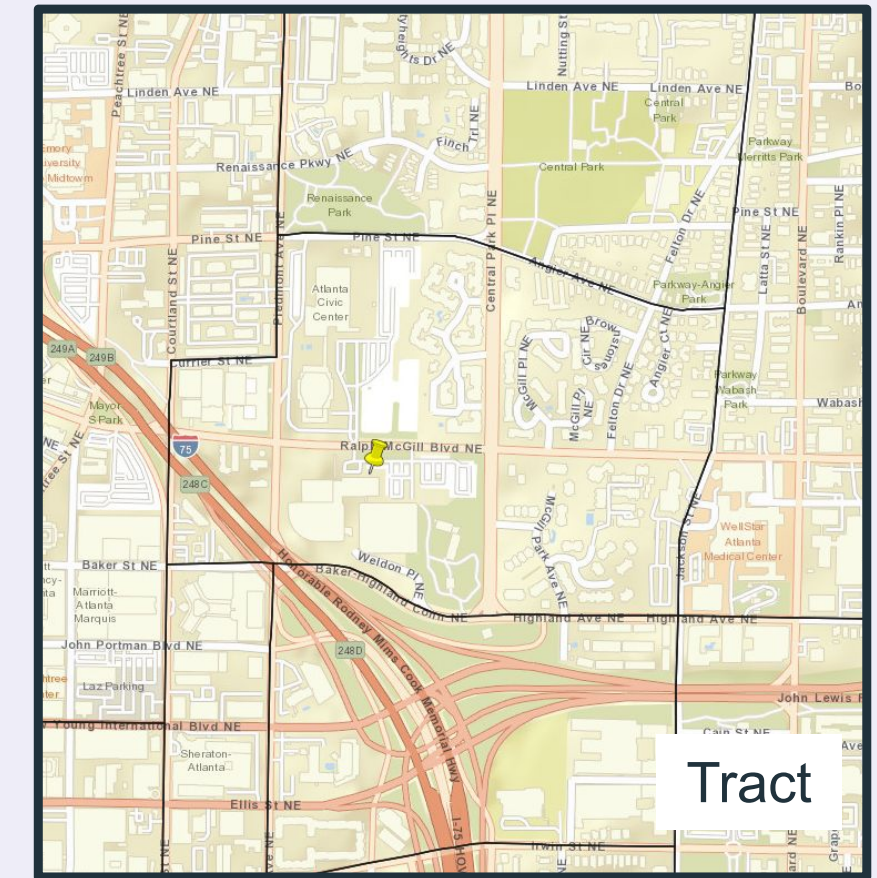
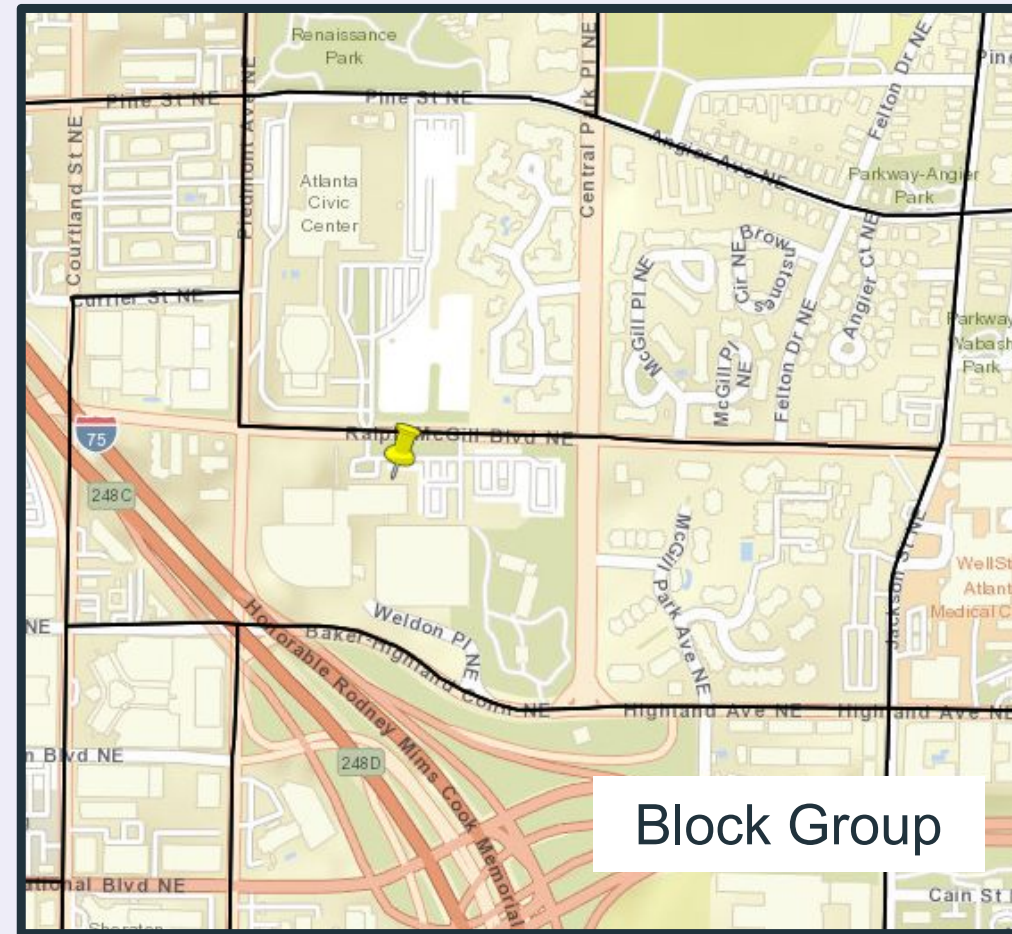
Unemployment

Labor Force



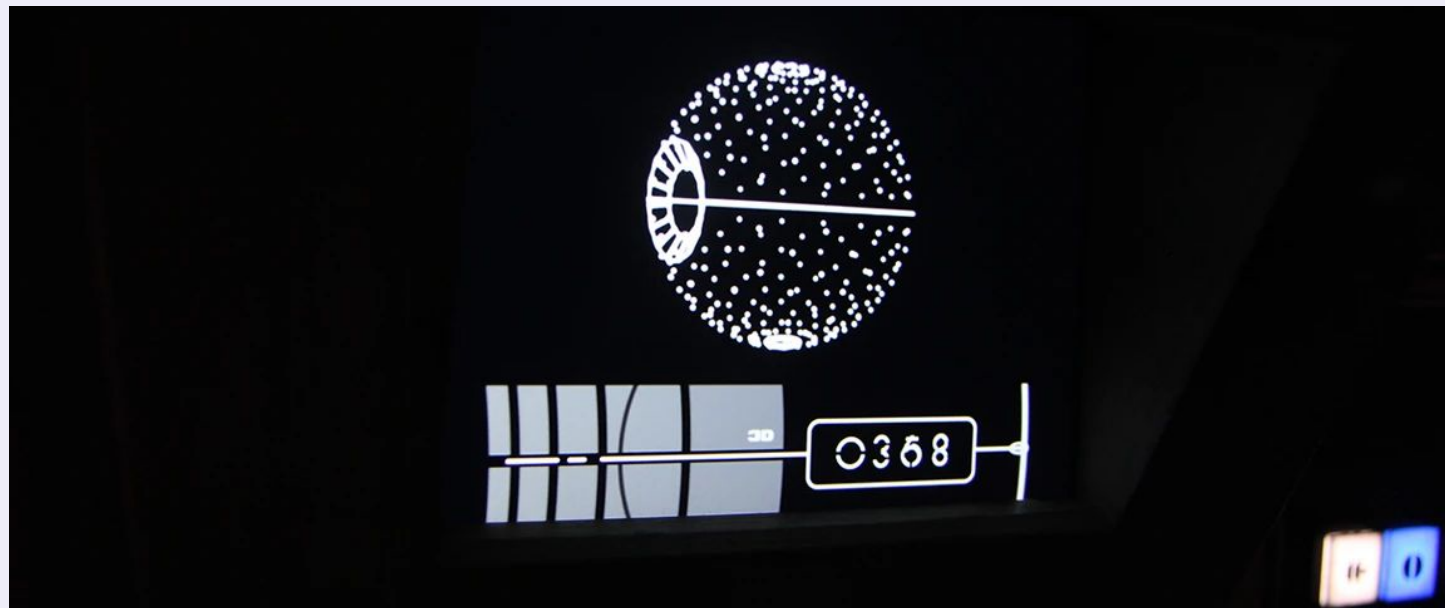
# Data-Based Community Need pt.2

- Grant Application Requirement: Target Area includes at least three jurisdictions
- Important to understand geographic boundaries
- Allows for comparison of data
- Example: Georgia Power HQ

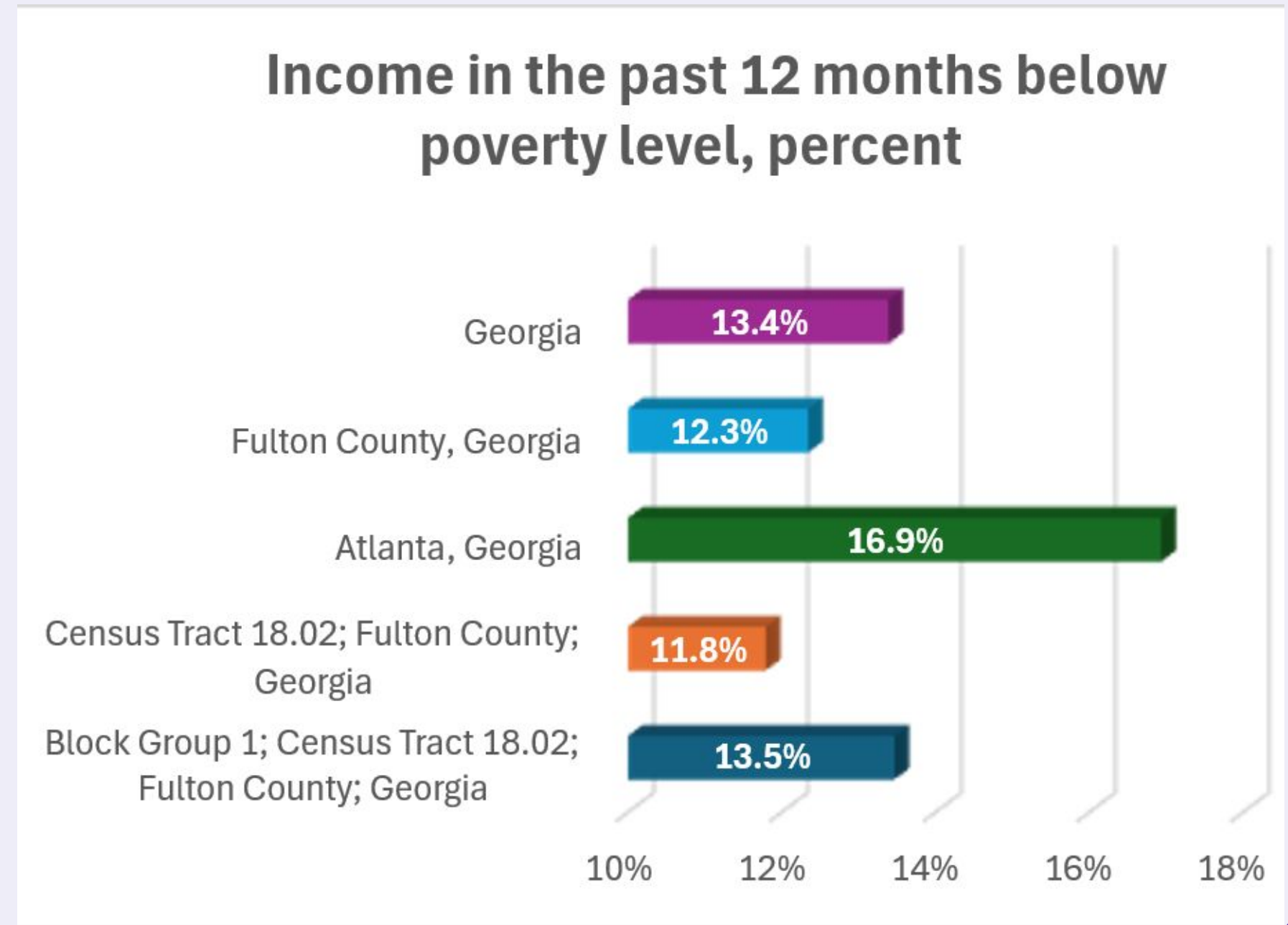


# Analyzing Demographics

- Highlights distribution
- Importance of analyzing data at different geographic levels
- Limitation: No spatial data



## Example: Georgia Power HQ



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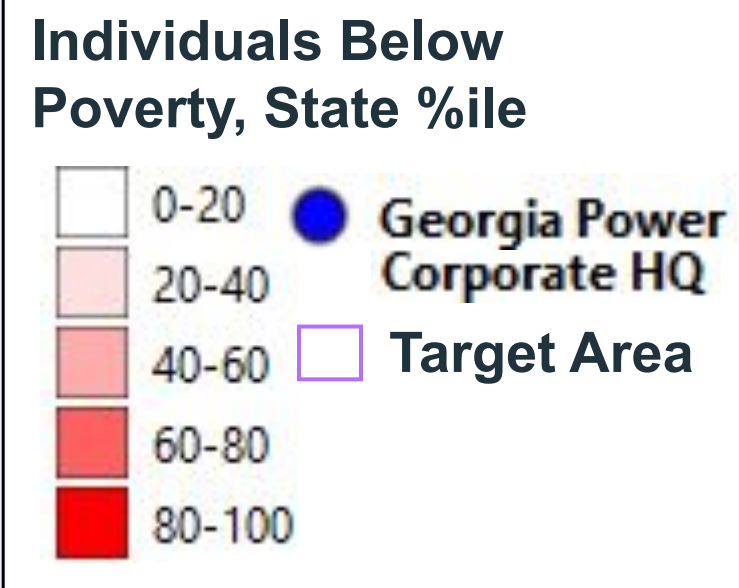
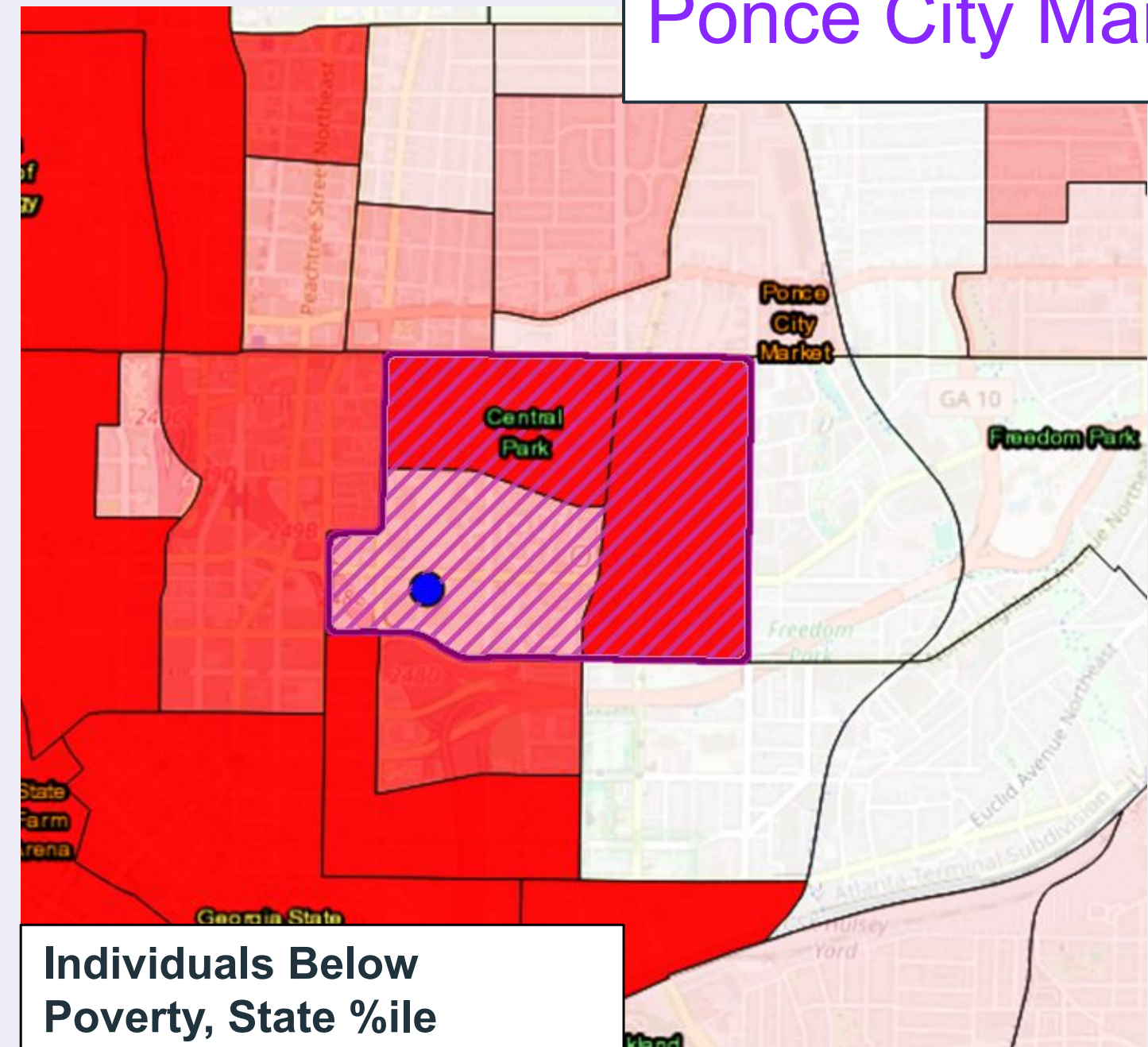
# Mapping Community Need

- Reveals patterns and trends
- Illustrates importance of connecting community with opportunities

Geographic Area Name	Total Population	Individuals with Income in the past 12 months below poverty level	(%)
Tract 18.02 (Host)	2,052	242	11.8%
Tract 17.01	2,117	722	34.1%
Tract 18.01	2,338	955	40.8%
<b>Total TA</b>	<b>6,507</b>	<b>1,919</b>	<b>29.5%</b>

Example:

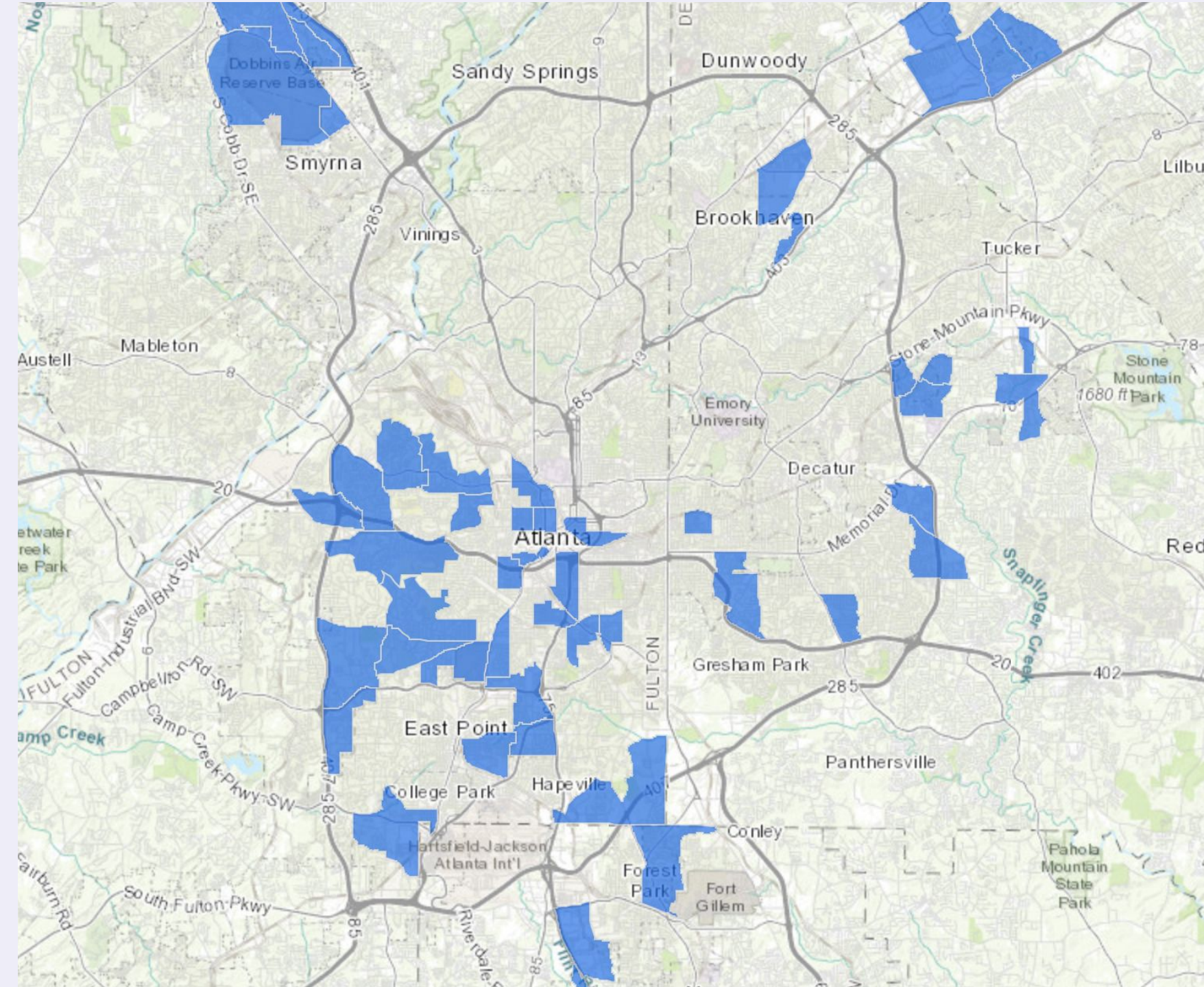
NOTE: Relative low poverty surrounding Ponce City Market



# Unconventional Data

- Comprehensive Plans
- Community histories
- Environmental data (Superfund, Risk Management Plan, etc.)
- EnviroAtlas
- Traffic data (AADT)
- Opportunity Zones

## Example: Opportunity Zones in Atlanta



# Developing the Narrative: Integrating Community Need and Benefits

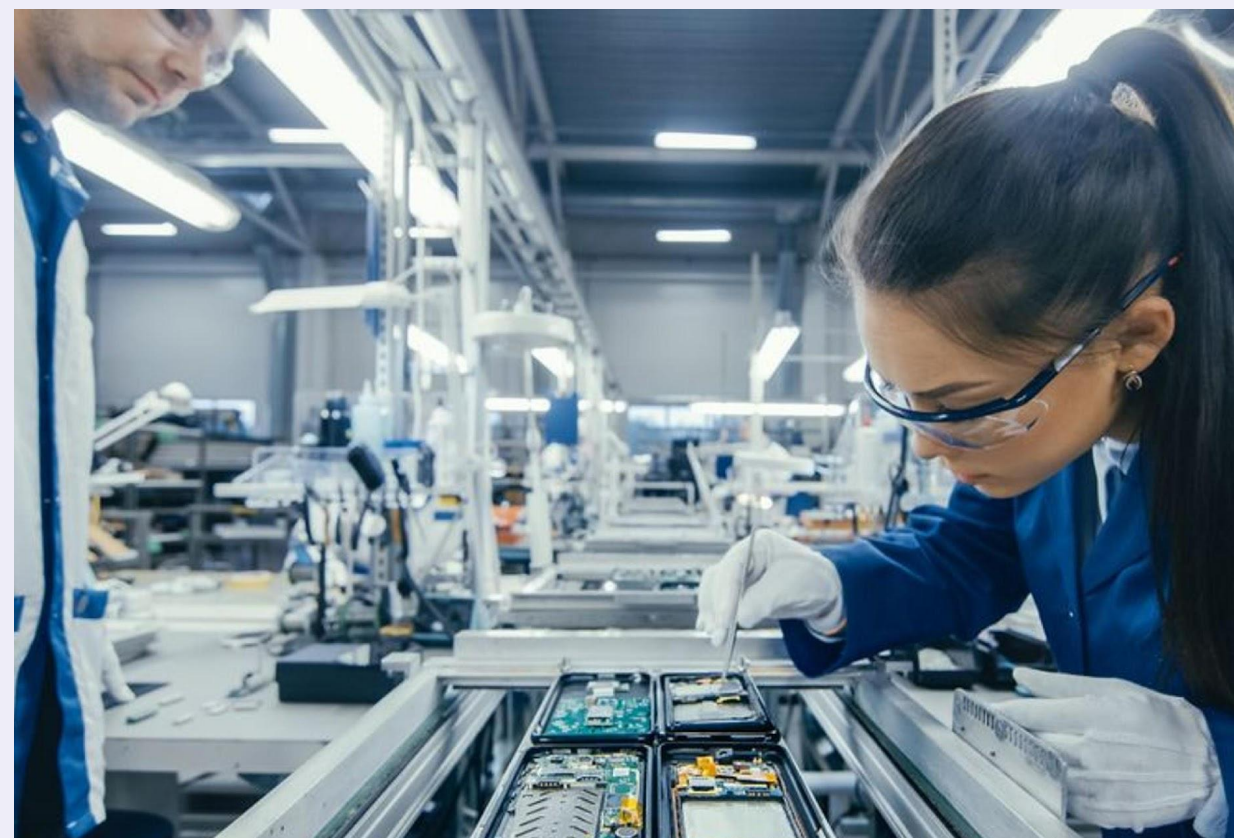
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# Benefits to Better Address Community Need

- **The point of revitalization is to benefit communities**
- Needs to be solutions for connecting communities to jobs, skills, and other benefits
- Example: Job-related benefits affects individuals within commuting distance



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# The Right Target Area...

- Includes the brownfield location/multiple jurisdictions
  - Maps to the extent of benefits
- Has demographic data nearby that demonstrates community need
  - *Anticipates post-remediation benefits affecting a present-day community*

# Thank you!

We will now take any questions.



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# THE **REGENERATIVE** BROWNFIELD MODEL

Post-Remediation Is Not the Finish Line:  
Designing Brownfields as Long-Term Community Assets



**“Unlearn what you have learned.”**

**-Jedi Grandmaster Yoda**



**\$250  
BILLION**

(NALP, 2024).

**Spent on public  
landscaping in 2024**

We have normalized environmental decay in our cities. Most of us have never seen it done right, so we don't even know what expectations to have.



ROOTS  
DOWN

We mow it, spray it, and ignore it.  
And yet it has so much potential.

- ↗ Store carbon
- ↗ Restore biodiversity
- ↗ Manage stormwater
- ↗ Build community health
- ↗ Heal our relationship with nature
- ↗ Guide us to help solve Global Climate issues

# URBAN LAND

What if we used the money, manpower, and visibility cities that already possess to turn parks, medians, and library lawns into **regenerative assets**?



# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS

The success of brownfield redevelopment is not only about design above ground.  
It depends on ecological health below ground.



## Without Healthy Soil

- Rainwater runs off instead of infiltrates the ground
- Trees struggle to survive
- Heat increases
- Maintenance costs rise



## With Healthy Soil

- Stormwater is absorbed naturally
- Trees grow stronger roots
- Infrastructure stays cooler
- Investment lasts longer

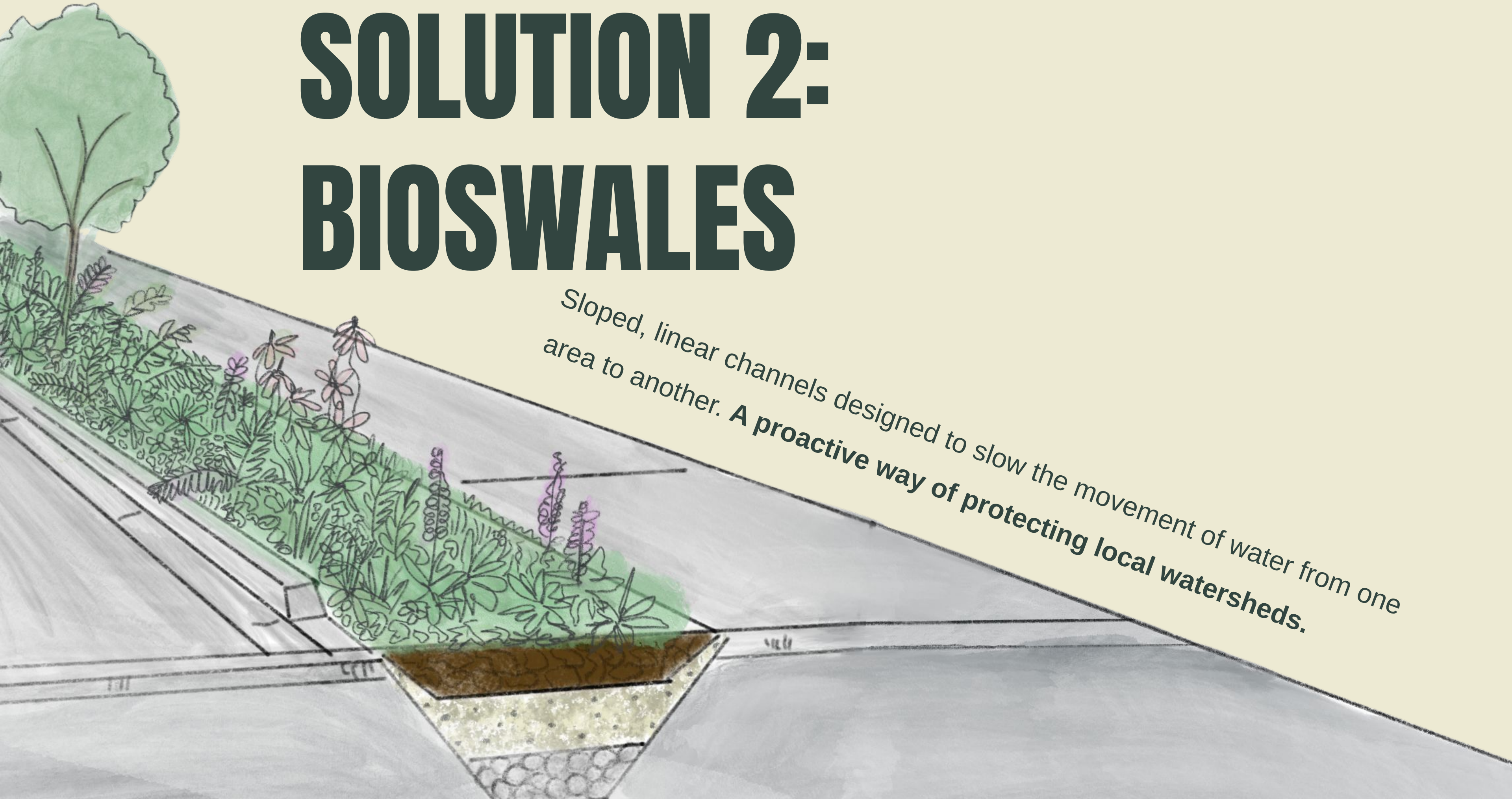
# SOLUTION 1: SOIL RESTORATION

Breaking up soil compaction allows water to transition from surface runoff to subsurface flow  
**By restoring soil, we create a foundation for more resilient water management.**



# SOLUTION 2: BIOSWALES

Sloped, linear channels designed to slow the movement of water from one area to another. A proactive way of protecting local watersheds.



# SOLUTION 3: RAIN GARDENS

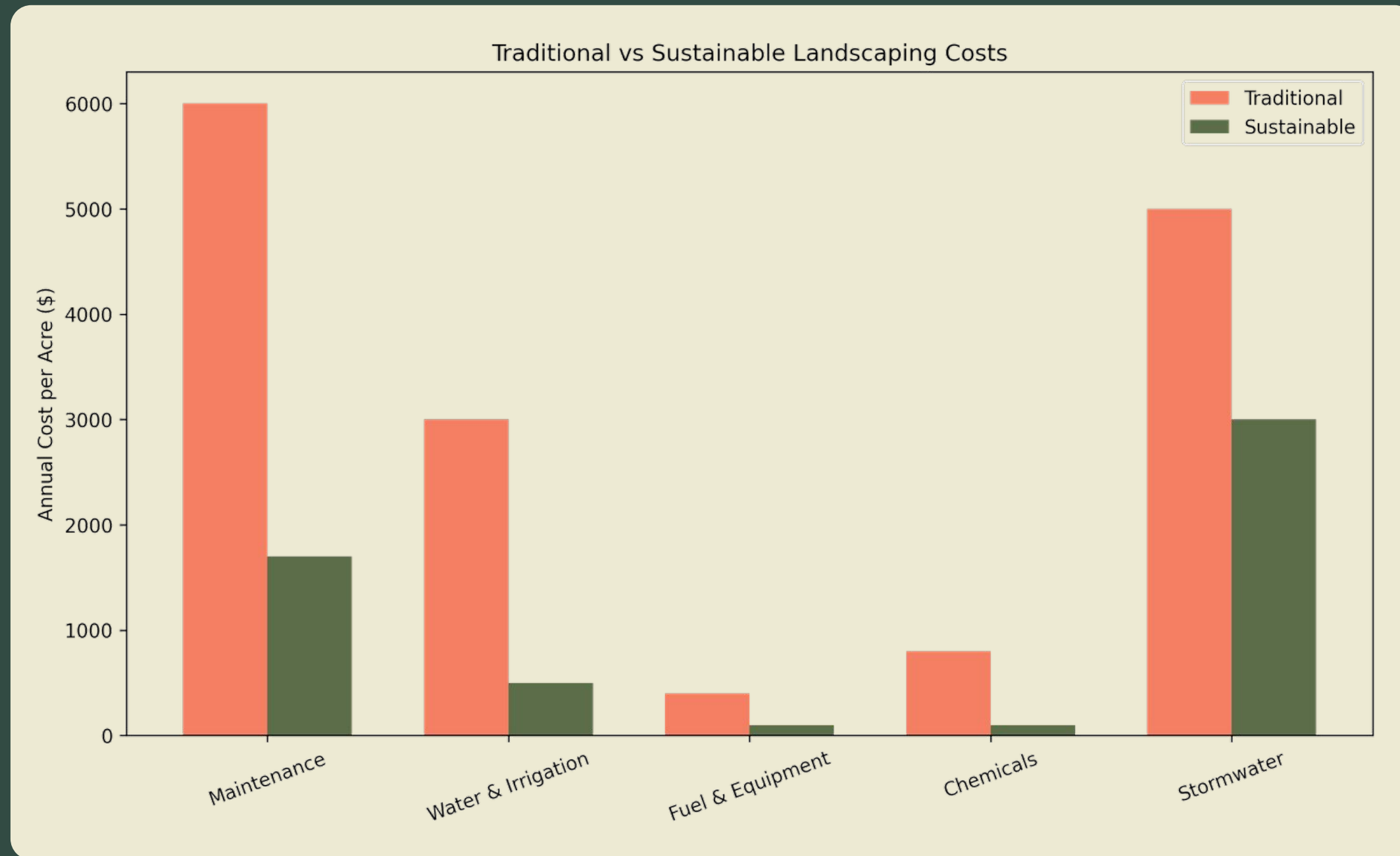
Shallow, bowl-shaped depression that captures and infiltrate water in one place.

**Manage surface runoff while ensuring natural biodiversity.**



**Rain Garden in Bess Walker Park  
Avondale Estates, GA**

# COST SAVINGS



## Lower Day-to-Day Costs

- Costs 60–70% less to maintain each year
- Less mowing and trimming
- No regular fertilizer or chemical treatments

## Lower Water & Drainage Costs

- Uses 60–80% less water
- Often needs no irrigation after the first year
- Helps absorb rain where it falls

## Long-Term Community Benefits

- Shade trees lower cooling costs
- Healthier plants mean fewer removals and repairs
- Natural landscapes reduce flooding over time

# CASE STUDY

## THE LIBRARY TRANSITION PLAN

Transforming Dekalb  
County Libraries into  
climate resilient  
Regeneration Stations.

### CLARKSTON LIBRARY



BEFORE

AFTER

## GRASSES

- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Indian Grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)
- Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)

## TREES

- Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*)
- Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- Willow (*Salix* spp.)

## FLOWERING PLANTS

- Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
- Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.)

# Phytoremediation

Regenerative care cuts costs while restoring beauty and pollinator habitats, using fewer man hours and less mowing & blowing.

# OUR SOLUTION

*The Regenerative OS builds the system and ensures its success.*

It creates awareness, making the case for action and transforms costly, outdated land management practices into active climate stewardship.

## THE REGENERATIVE OS

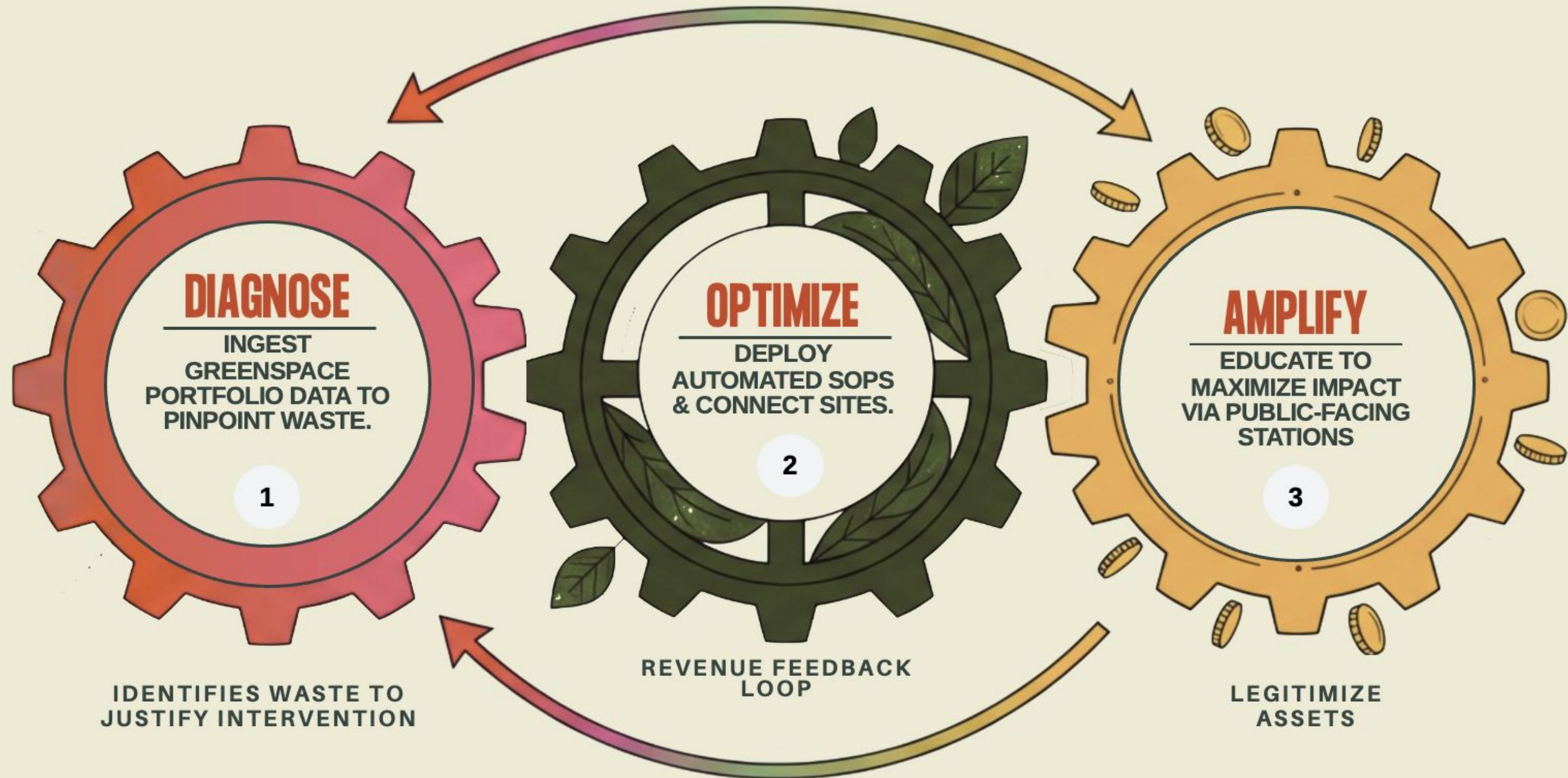
**Engine of Implementation.**

Data Capture, SOPs, Green Infrastructure Planning, Performance Tracking, and Public Awareness

THE ROOTS DOWN OPERATING SYSTEM (RD-OS)

# REGENERATIVE TECHNOLOGY AS A SERVICE (RTAAS)

A CLOSED-LOOP ENGINE THAT FUNDS ITS OWN EXPANSION



# Why this work matters

- Save money on long-term maintenance costs.
- Connect remediation work to institutional grants
- Protect green infrastructure from failure and mismanagement.
- Capture and share the stories that move hearts, minds, and policies.



## WHY NOW?

**The climate, equity, and health crises demand bold, tangible action *now*.**

**“Do or do not. There is no try”**



# The Future of Our Cities is Growing Right Under Our Feet.

We are building a new model for climate action—one that is visible, beautiful, community-driven, and built to last. By transforming the land we see every day, we transform our relationship with the planet and each other.

**Join us** in building it.

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