



Community Design to Promote Physical Activity: Looking Through a Health Equity Lens

Case Studies: Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, & Vermont

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CDC/DNPAO National Training
Atlanta, Georgia
May 7-8, 2024

"The health of a community is a direct reflection of the lives of its residents." – Unknown.

What is Equity?

- Equity means the consistent and systematic treatment of all individuals in a fair, just, and impartial manner, including individuals who belong to communities that often have been denied such treatment
- This includes communities often impacted by equity issues such as racial & ethnic minorities, marginalized groups, geographically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged and intersectional identities

Source: Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government



What is Health Equity?

- The state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.
- Achieving this requires focused and ongoing societal efforts to address historical and contemporary injustices; overcome economic, social, and other obstacles to health and healthcare; and eliminate preventable health disparities.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



What is Health Equity in the Built Environment?

- It refers to the **design, construction, and maintenance** of physical spaces that promote health and wellness for **all members** of a community.
- Recognizes that the design of the built environment can have a significant impact on people's health, particularly for **marginalized and underserved communities**.



Differences between Equity and Health Equity

- **Equity** in the built environment refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes among all individuals and communities, regardless of their background or circumstances.

- **Health equity** in the built environment focuses on the fair and just distribution of these resources, opportunities, and outcomes **with regard to health**.
- Ensures that all individuals and communities have equitable access to the resources and opportunities that **support good health**.

*How might we redesign our towns to
prioritize health for all, not just the few?*



How Might We Redesign for All?

Accessible Green Spaces:

- Develop and maintain **parks**, gardens, and green areas that are easily **accessible** to all residents, regardless of where they live in the town.
- These spaces promote physical activity, mental well-being, and **social interaction**.

How Might We Redesign for All?

Affordable and Safe Housing:

- Ensure that housing is not only affordable but also safe and **healthy**, free from hazards like mold, poor air quality, and inadequate heating or cooling.
- Mixed-income housing can help diverse groups live together, fostering a sense of **community**.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Walkable and Bike-Friendly Infrastructure:

- Design streets and neighborhoods that prioritize **pedestrians** and cyclists over cars.
- This includes safe sidewalks, **bike lanes**, traffic calming measures, and pedestrian zones, encouraging active transportation and reducing reliance on vehicles.





How Might We Redesign for All?

Public Transportation Access:

- Improve public transportation to be more reliable, **affordable**, and accessible, particularly for those who do not have access to private vehicles.
- This can include expanding routes, increasing frequency, and ensuring **ADA** compliance.

How Might We Redesign for All?

Access to Healthy Foods:

- Address food deserts by ensuring all residents have access to affordable, **healthy** food.
- This could involve supporting local **farmers' markets**, community gardens, and grocery stores offering fresh produce, especially in underserved areas.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Community-Centered Design:

- Involve **residents** in the planning and decision-making process to ensure that the built environment reflects the needs and wants of the community.
- This participatory approach can help identify unique local needs and create a sense of **ownership and belonging**.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Inclusive Public Spaces

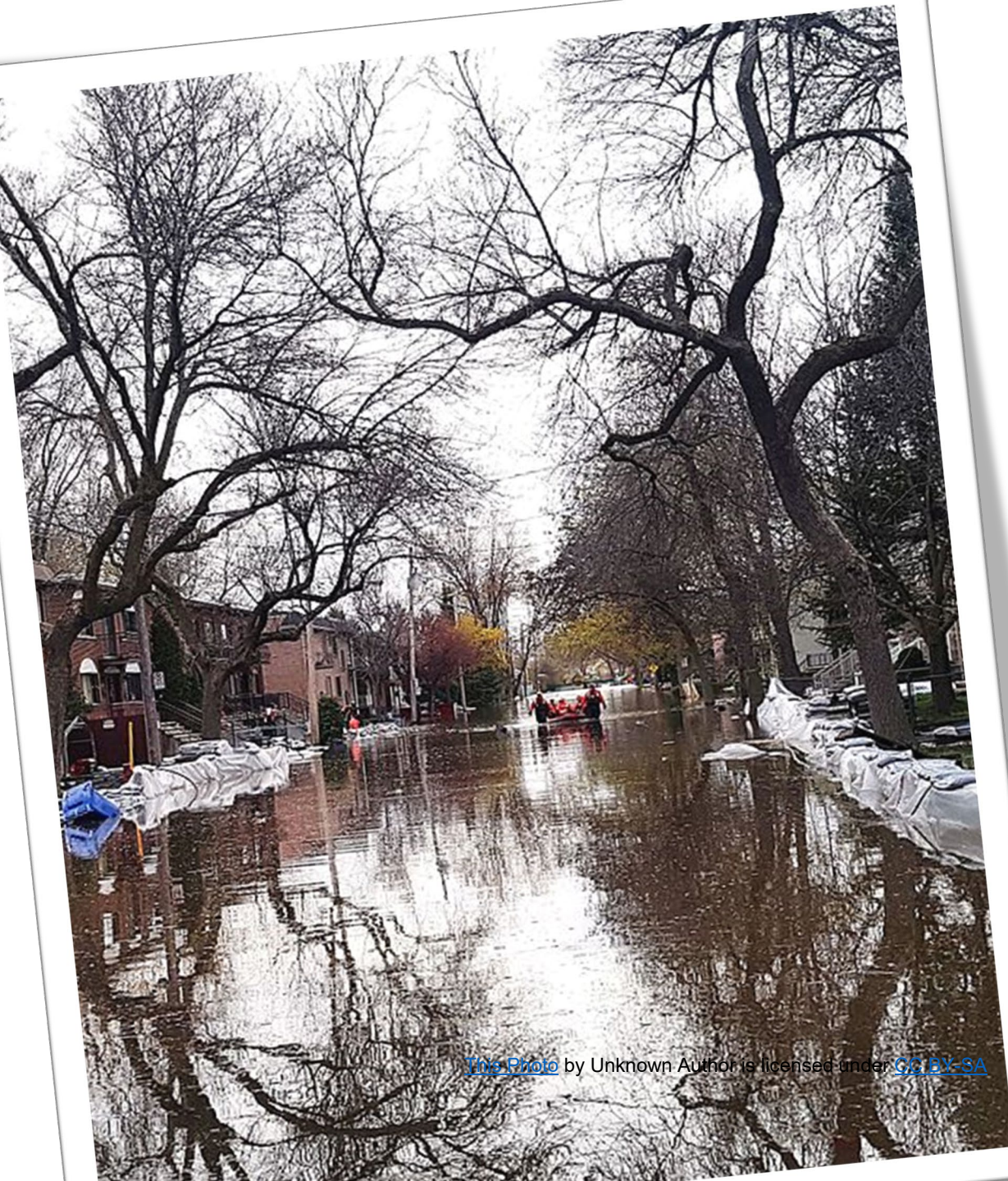
- Design public spaces and buildings that are inclusive and accessible to people of all **ages**, abilities, and backgrounds.
- This includes **ADA-compliant** facilities, multilingual signage, and spaces that cater to various cultural practices.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Environmental Health

- Implement measures to improve air and water quality, manage waste effectively, and reduce exposure to environmental hazards.
- This is crucial for preventing health issues related to environmental factors.



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How Might We Redesign for All?

Mental Health Considerations

- Incorporate elements in the built environment that promote mental well-being, such as **quiet zones**, community gathering spaces, and elements of nature integrated into urban settings.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Healthcare Accessibility

- Ensure that quality **healthcare** services are accessible and affordable for all residents.
- This could involve strategically placing health clinics and hospitals within reach of **underserved populations** and offering telehealth services where in-person visits are challenging.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Cultural Competency and Humility

- Design **public spaces** and services that are culturally sensitive and representative of the diverse communities within the town.
- This includes incorporating art, design, and **cultural symbols** that reflect the local community's heritage and identity.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Community Leadership:

- Foster **community leadership**, particularly among groups that have traditionally been marginalized.
- Support local initiatives and organizations that **empower residents** to take an active role in shaping their environment.



How Might We Redesign for All?

Universal Design Principles:

- Apply **universal design** principles in public spaces and buildings to ensure accessibility for people with **disabilities**.
- This goes beyond minimum legal requirements to create spaces that are genuinely usable and **welcoming** for everyone.



*Statewide Example:
The State of Vermont*

Healthy Communities

Health Equity and Community Design Technical Assistance (TA) Pilot

LEARN MORE

Porter Knight Bristol, VT

Project Title: Increasing access to recreation spaces on town parks

Goal: Increase equitable access to recreational trails on five town parks

TA and Resources Provided:

- Podcast feature
- Wayfinding and signage guidance
- Park renderings











Middlebury Skatepark Project

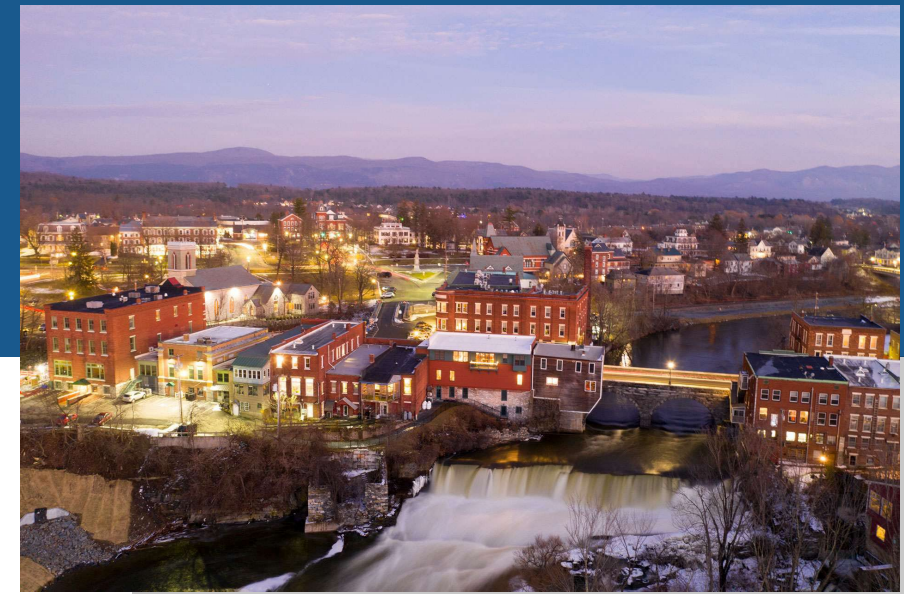
Town of Middlebury, VT

Project Title: Middlebury Skatepark Project

Goal: Create an age-friendly, contemporary, accessible skatepark open to all regardless of the level of ability including various wheeled disciplines.

TA and Resources Provided:

- Data Collection and Analysis
- Outreach and Engagement
- Streetscape Design Support
- Planning and Programming Resources
- Marketing and Communications Resources
- Fundraising and Grant Resources





increase scale of people
so skate elements don't seem so big

replace - someone
teaching child
skate

replace w/
child on trick
scooter

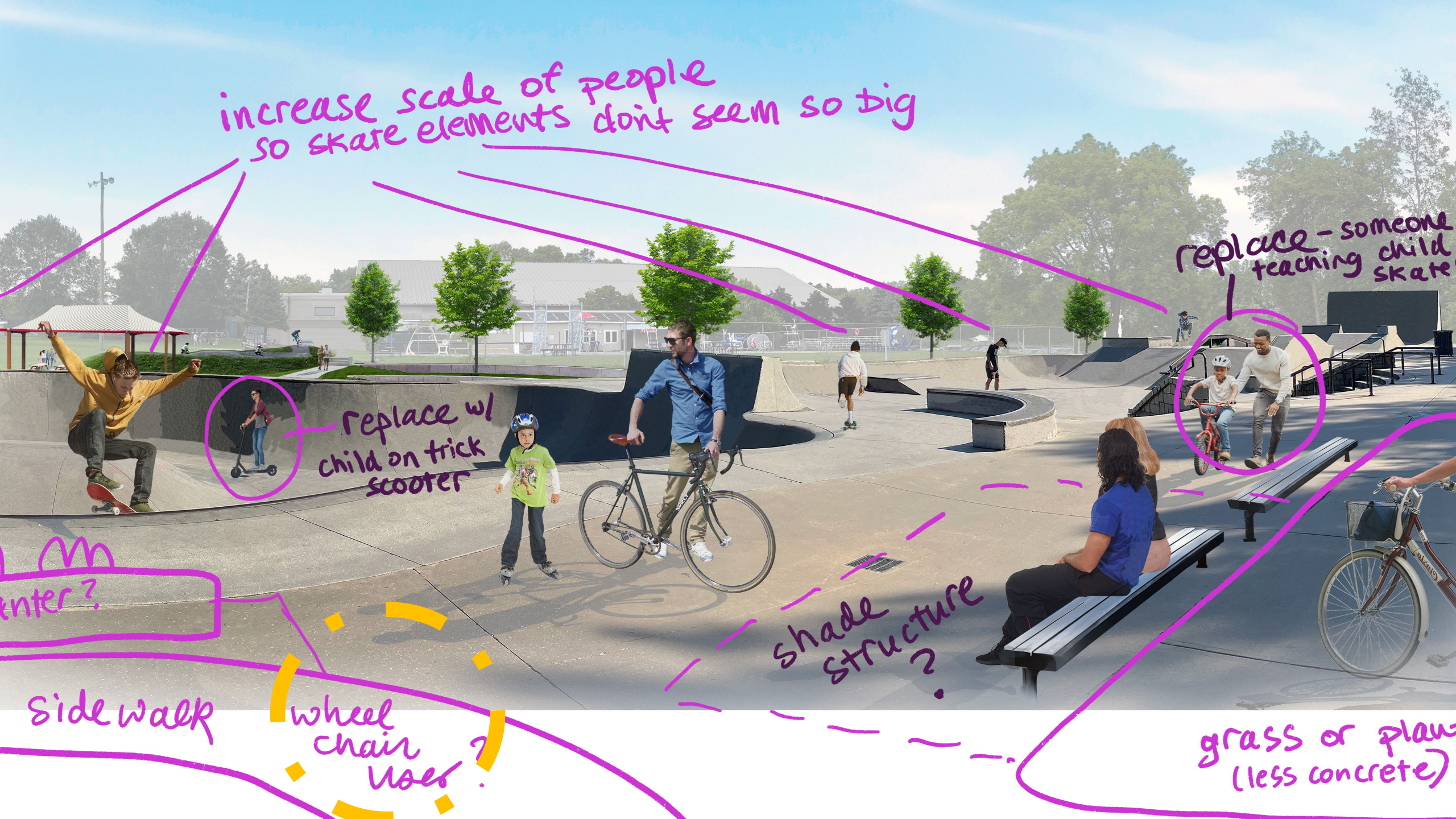
shade
structure
?

grass or plant
(less concrete)

side walk

wheel
chair
user?

enter?



Not so prominent?





Municipal Example:
The City of Savannah, Georgia



■ Bowles C. Ford Park

CPTED Analysis

Complete Streets Analysis

■ **Design Implementation** ■

3D Renderings

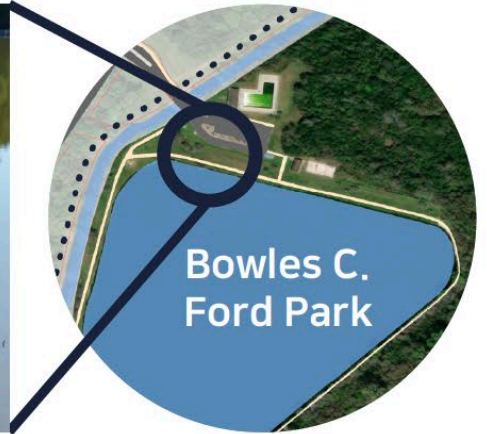
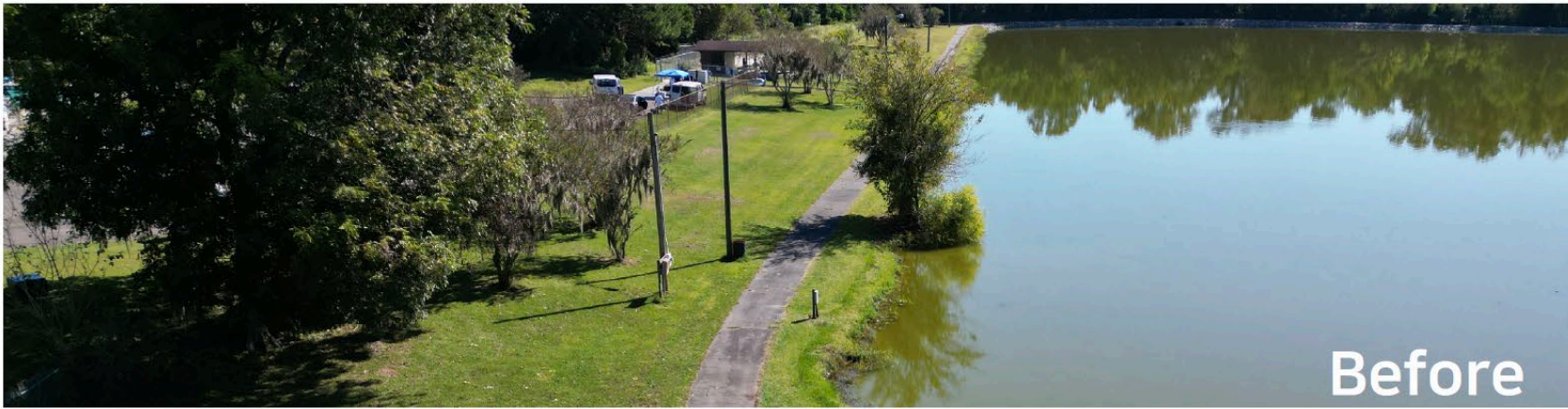


Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings



Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings



Photo Credit: GCG, 2022



Kennedy Park

CPTED Analysis
Complete Streets Analysis
■ **Design Implementation** ■

Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings

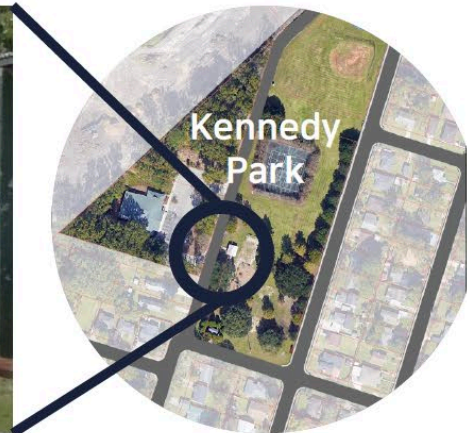
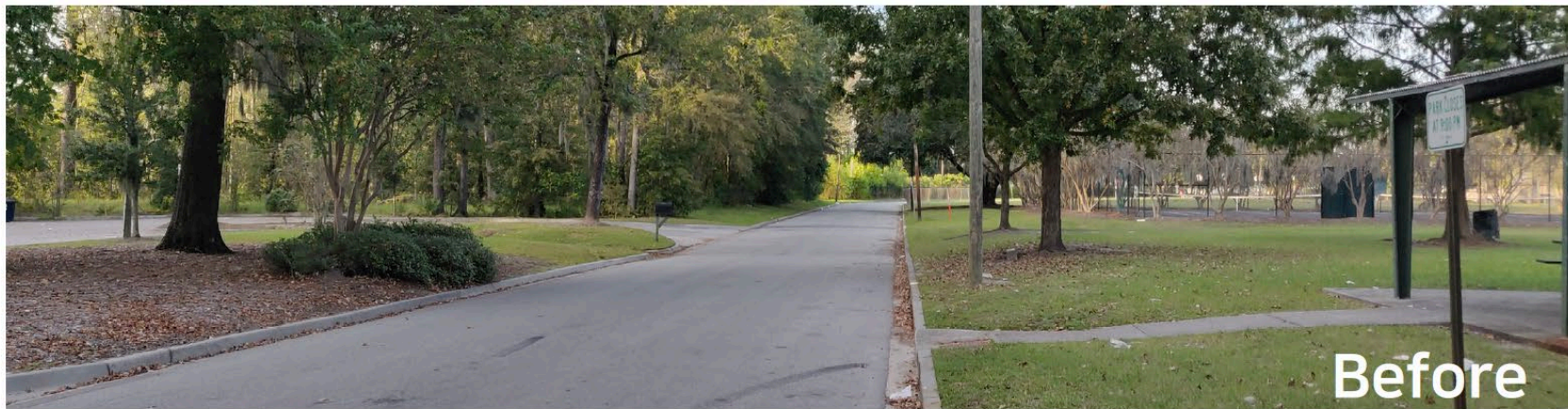


Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings



Photo Credit: GCG, 2022



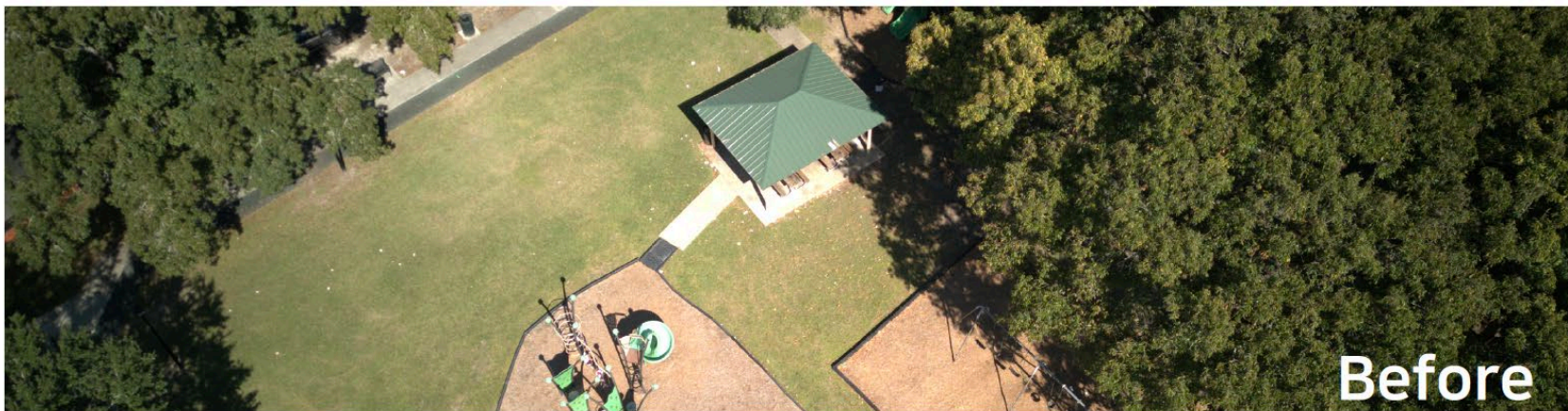
■ Cann Park

CPTED Analysis

Complete Streets Analysis

■ **Design Implementation** ■

3D Renderings



Before



Cann Park



After

3D Renderings



Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings



Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

3D Renderings

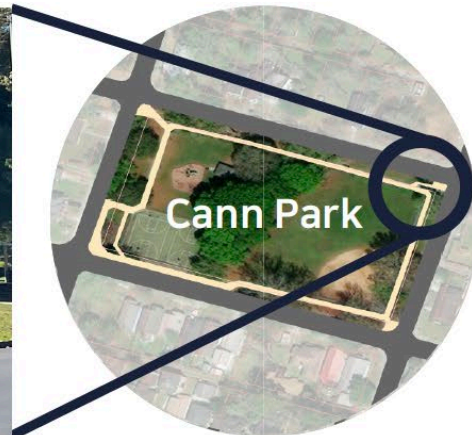


Photo Credit: GCG, 2022

Urban Example:
Jersey City, NJ

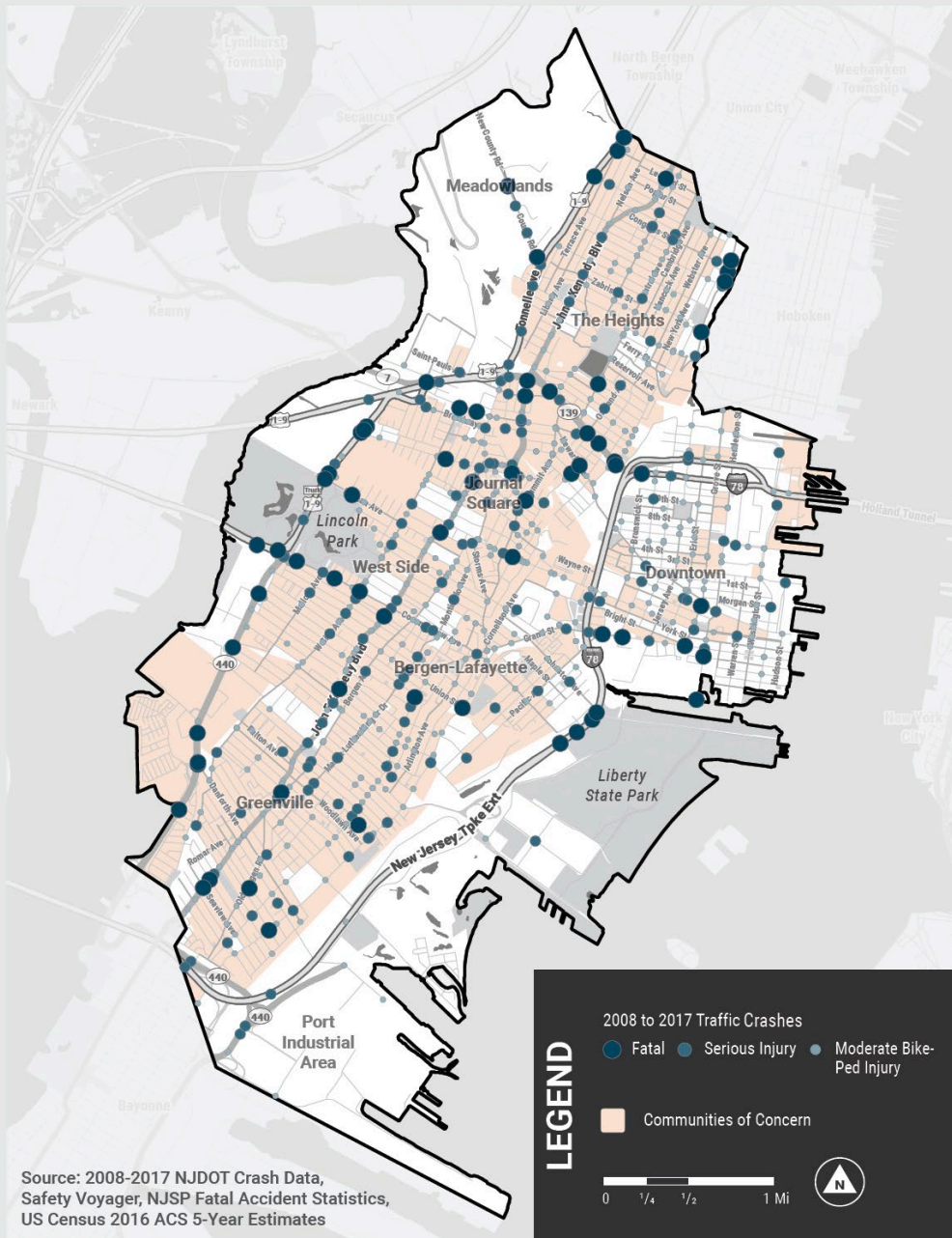


WELCOME TO DOWNTOWN CITY

JERSEY

City/Municipal Example: Jersey City, New Jersey

Figure 6: Map of Communities of Concern and Traffic Crashes



Bicycle Master Plan & Vision Zero Action Plan

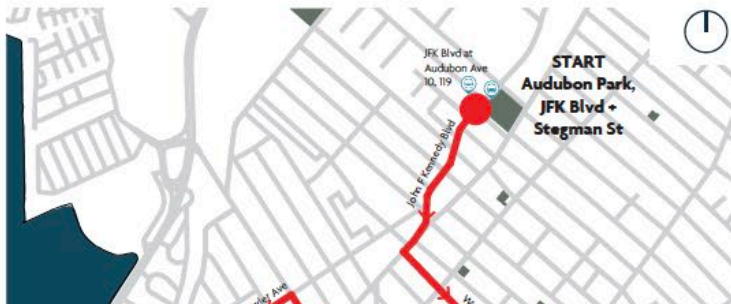
FIRST EVER IN THE CITY HISTORY!



WARD A



Ward A's route started at Audubon Park and ended adjacent to Bayside Park, and made sure to include portions of the larger N-S arterials, like Ocean, Garfield, and Bergen Avenues.



WARD B



Ward B segments had the highest average rating at 2.03. This route included a large portion of West Side Avenue.



WARD C



Ward C segments had the lowest average rating at 1.43. JFK Blvd in Ward C was among the lowest scored segments at 1.2

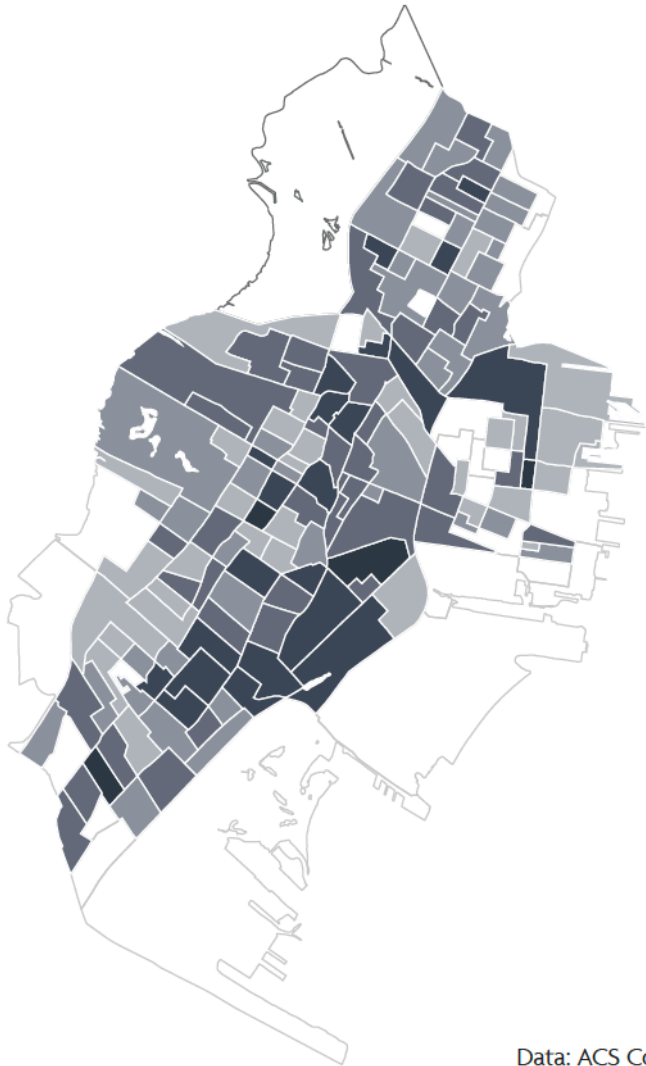


Centering Equity

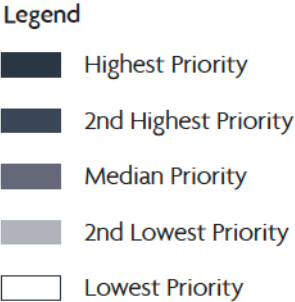
DEVELOPMENT OF AN EQUITY ACTION PLAN



- 5** Prioritize increased bike infrastructure investments and maintenance in areas identified as priority Communities of Concern, those that are the most vulnerable within such a designation. Achieving this goal will require consistent overlap with the Evaluation Action Plan, as well as the Priority Network Goals and Chapter 3 recommendations.



This map illustrates the most vulnerable 10% of the designated Community of Concern populations in Jersey City, based on race and socioeconomic class. The darkest areas on this map are where the Master Plan will target investments in the network, and the implementation of the Equity Action Plan.



Data: ACS Community Survey 5-year Estimates.





Rural Example:
Noxubee County, Mississippi

“To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi!”

Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan

Project Overview

- Collaboration between the Small Town Center at MSU and Equitable Cities
- Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and AIM for CHangeE
- **Purpose:** “Catalyst project,” meant to improve safety, comfort, and accessibility of active transportation throughout the county

A photograph of two children riding bicycles on a dirt path in a forest. The child in the foreground is a girl with curly hair, wearing a blue helmet, a green vest over a plaid shirt, and blue jeans. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The child behind her is a boy, also wearing a blue helmet and a white long-sleeved shirt, looking forward. They are both on mountain bikes. The background is a sunlit forest with tall trees and fallen leaves on the ground.

NOXUBEE COUNTY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
FRED CARL, JR. SMALL TOWN CENTER

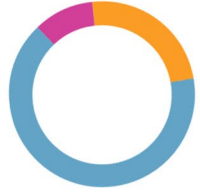
Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan

Challenges

- Rural Context with limited resources
- “Inflexible” Street design and conditions
- Unsafe traffic and personal safety conditions
- Car culture
- Rapidly expanding and popular ATV culture

DEMOGRAPHICS BROOKSVILLE, MACON, SHUQUALAK

POPULATION
Noxubee County Total: 10,285



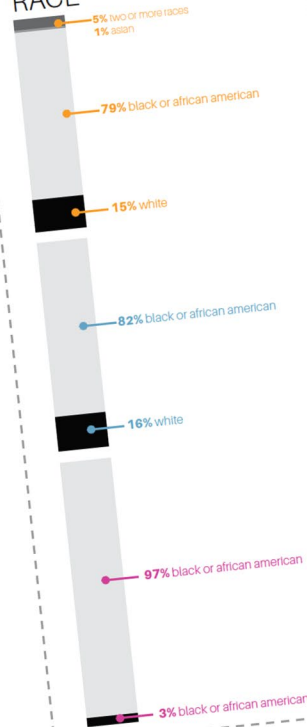
MEDIAN AGE
35.4
32.3
39.2

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$27,045
\$25,901
\$21,094

VETERANS:
2.6%
7.1%
1.5%

POVERTY RATE
34.9%
34.4%
41.3%

RACE



AVERAGE COMMUTE (in minutes)



EDUCATION LEVEL
(Bachelors or Higher)

14.7%
14.5%
8.00%

EDUCATION LEVEL
(High school or higher)

72.4%
75.7%
75.3%

Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan

Select Findings

- Need for investments in public parks
- Need for investments in sidewalks and existing walking tracks
- Need for increased access to popular destinations such as businesses
- Revitalization of each downtown
- Access to alternative modes of transport

Signif

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The follo
findings
via poste
They als
the STC
the com



Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan

Project Outcome

- Establishment of [Bike Noxubee](#)!





Thank You!

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**EQUITABLE
CITIES**