

Actionable Strategies for Equitable Development

Re-Imagining Baton Rouge's Plank Road

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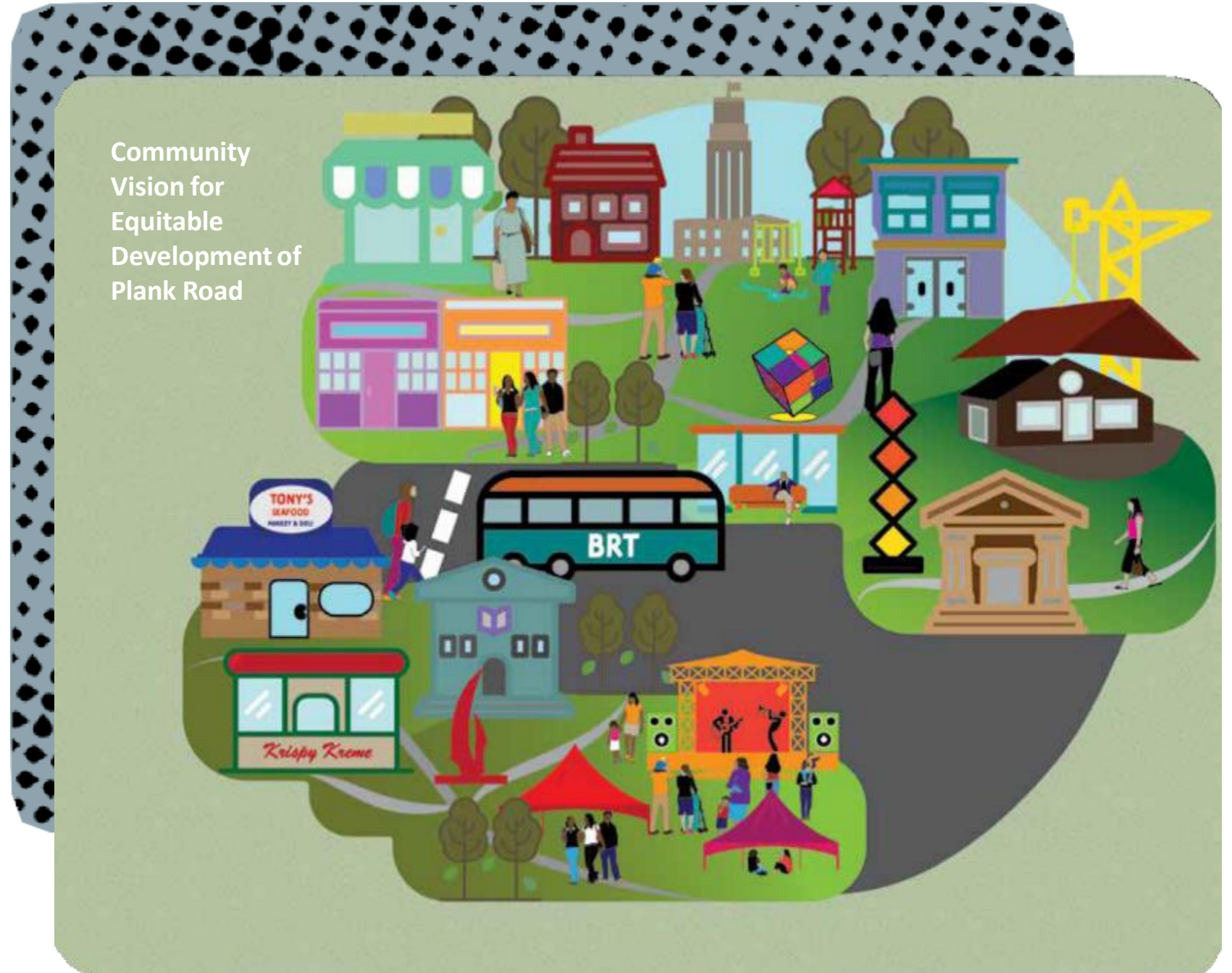
ABOUT BATON ROUGE

- ❑ Louisiana State Capital, East Baton Rouge Parish most populous in the state
- ❑ 830k+ metropolitan area population, 2nd largest in the state, 71st largest in nation
- ❑ Home to Louisiana State University, Southern University, and Baton Rouge Community College
- ❑ Economy: petrochemical/industrial/higher ed/government
- ❑ Land use and urban development dynamics:
 - ❑ Most of the current built environment developed mid-20th century
 - ❑ Strip mall and cul-de-sac subdivision domination
 - ❑ Many roads built without sidewalks or crosswalks
 - ❑ Limited mass transit with inadequate transit infrastructure
 - ❑ Racial segregation motivated most early urban land use and development decisions
 - ❑ Current challenges with racial and spatial stratification



WHAT IS *IMAGINE PLANK ROAD*?

- ☐ A PROCESS
- ☐ A VISION
- ☐ AN IMPLEMENTABLE ROADMAP FOR EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT











THE
R&B
CAFE

FOR SALE
BY OWNER
FOR LEASE
225-220-1620

ROPPOLOVILLE 30
ACCARDI-ROPPOLO
GEN. MERCHANDISE

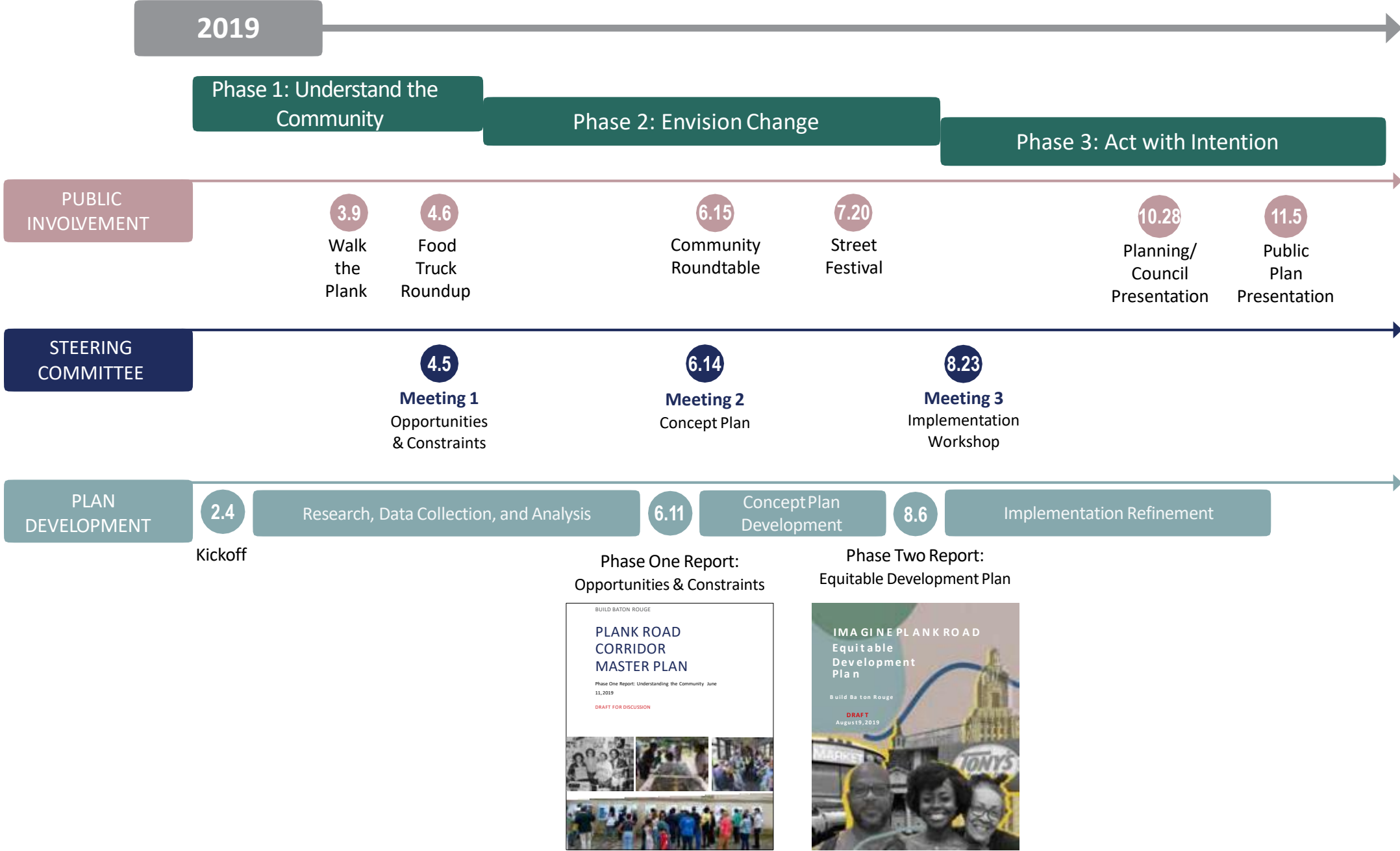




The Vision

The Plank Road Corridor is a
**thriving,
socially diverse,
and walkable**
network of neighborhoods
anchored by
**strong local businesses,
quality housing,
and resilient infrastructure**

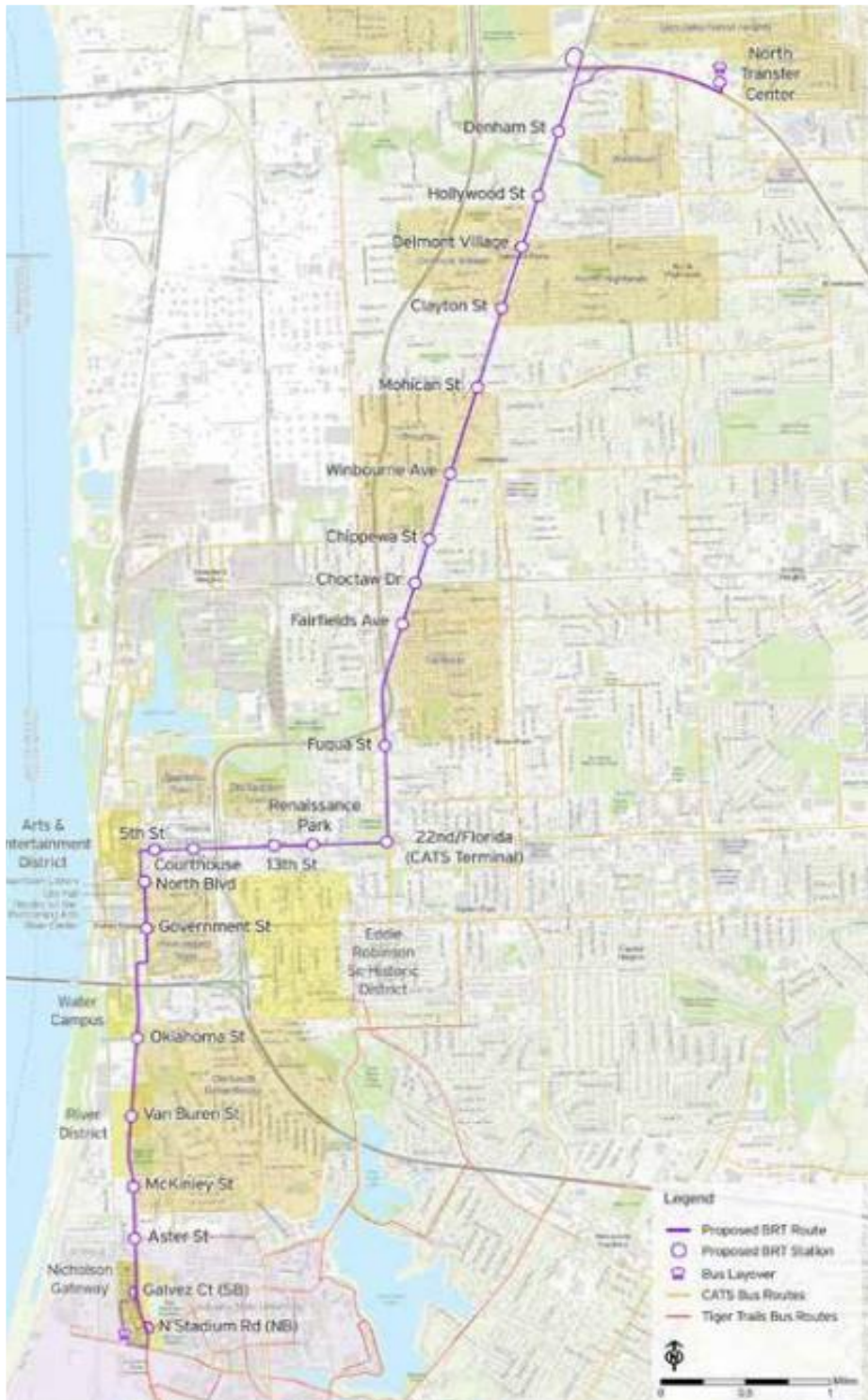
OUR PROCESS





IMPLEMENTING BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

- ❑ Goal to begin operations by 2023, depending on funding and approvals
- ❑ Connections from Plank Road neighborhoods to Mid-City, downtown, LSU Campus, and other activity hubs
- ❑ Safety enhancements to protect pedestrians and reduce crashes
- ❑ Projected ridership increase of 39% over 20 years
- ❑ New sidewalks, curbs, and ADA-compliant intersections for the majority of Plank Road



IMPLEMENTING BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

Proposed BRT station design

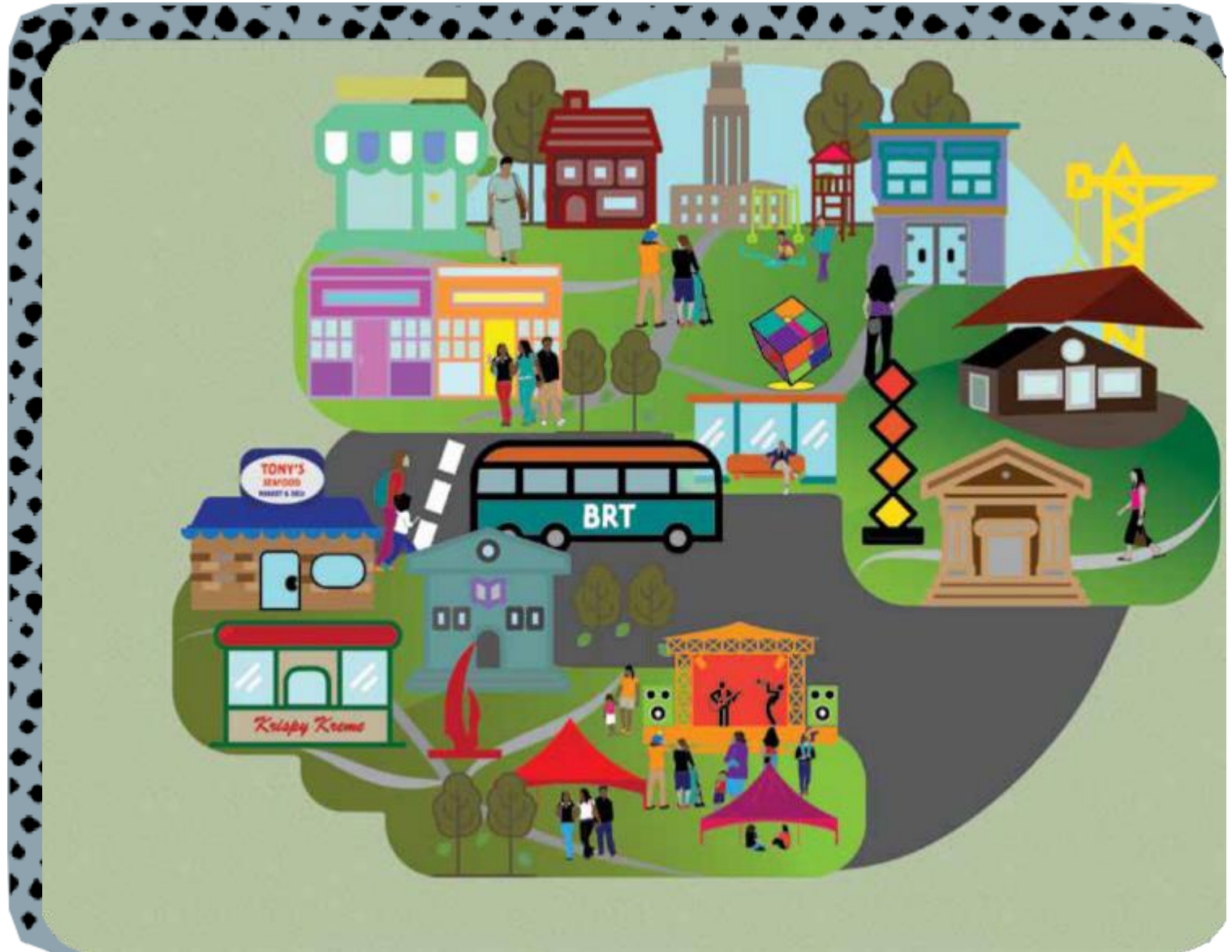


Source: Plank-Nicholson Bus Rapid Transit 2019 BUILD Grant Application



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES/THEMES

1. Preserving community culture
2. Attracting and growing black-owned business
3. Tackling blight and vacancy
4. Introducing more quality shopping
5. Providing accessible and attractive places to gather and recreate



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Expand home ownership and repair assistance

- ❑ Establish a Community Land Bank & Trust Hybrid
- ❑ Expand existing homeowner training, repair, financing and Rapid Roofing Reset programs
- ❑ Establish a small landlord repair program

Land Banks (LBs)

- Public or quasi-public entities
- Acquire, maintain, and hold vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent properties
- Prepare properties for redevelopment

LB Land Disposition Challenges:

- Finding the right developer/type of development
- Attracting developers/development to economically distressed areas

Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

- Non-profit, community-based organizations
- Ensure community stewardship of land
- Lease structures for affordable residential or commercial use
- Provide permanent affordability by:
 - building a resale formula in to ground lease
 - sharing increased equity between current owner and CLT

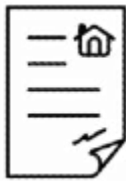
CLT Land Acquisition Challenges:

- High land costs
- Lack of clear titles to vacant land

The solution: LB & CLT Hybrid



Community
Wealth



This is more affordable because the LB can provide the CLT with land at an affordable price while cutting maintenance costs for the LB

Land:

- Donated or sold to CLT from the LB
- Owned by CLT

Structure:

- Built/developed by CLT or partner
- Owned by individual
- Resold to another qualified buyer at an affordable price

Ground Lease:

- Homeowner leases land from CLT
- Typically a 99-year lease at a modest monthly fee

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Establish a Plank Road Overlay District

Designed to balance design goals with ease of development:

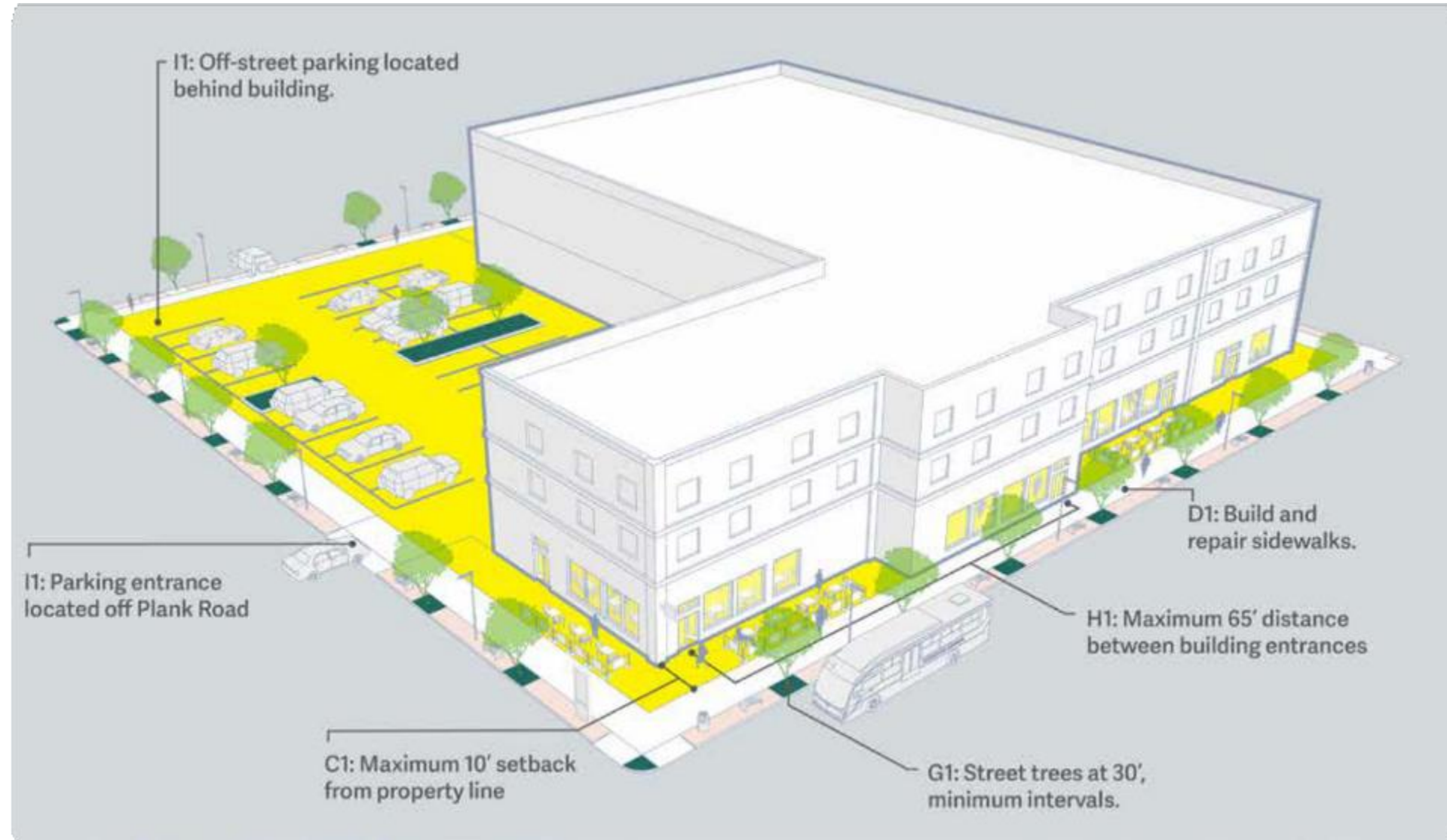
- ☐ Voluntary parking exemptions
- ☐ Building entrances that face the street
- ☐ Active ground floors with required transparency



Commerce &
Jobs



Enhanced
Connectivity



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Establish a Plank Road Cultural District

- ☐ A Cultural District could incentivize redevelopment of these properties by providing tax credits and abatements.
- ☐ Property rehabilitations are eligible for historic tax credits and tax abatements.
- ☐ Sales of original artwork within Cultural Districts are exempted from local sales tax.



Cultural
Expression



Community
Wealth



Present condition



Restored

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Invest in small business development programs

- ☐ Establish, fund and operate a business microloan program
- ☐ Support financing of affordable or pop-up retail spaces
- ☐ Offer incentives for quality employers and retailers to move to Plank Road
- ☐ Establish a business alliance or Main Street organization
- ☐ Re-establish facade program previously administered by BBR, identify funding from local sponsors such as banks
- ☐ Deploy EmployBR resources at multiple locations on the Corridor



Commerce &
Jobs



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Restore blighted property and return vacant land and buildings to commerce

- ☐ Invest in loan repayment and forgiveness program
- ☐ Establish a Neighborhood Improvement District
- ☐ Establish side lot program
- ☐ Pair code enforcement in targeted areas with assistance programs



Community
Wealth



Health &
Safety



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

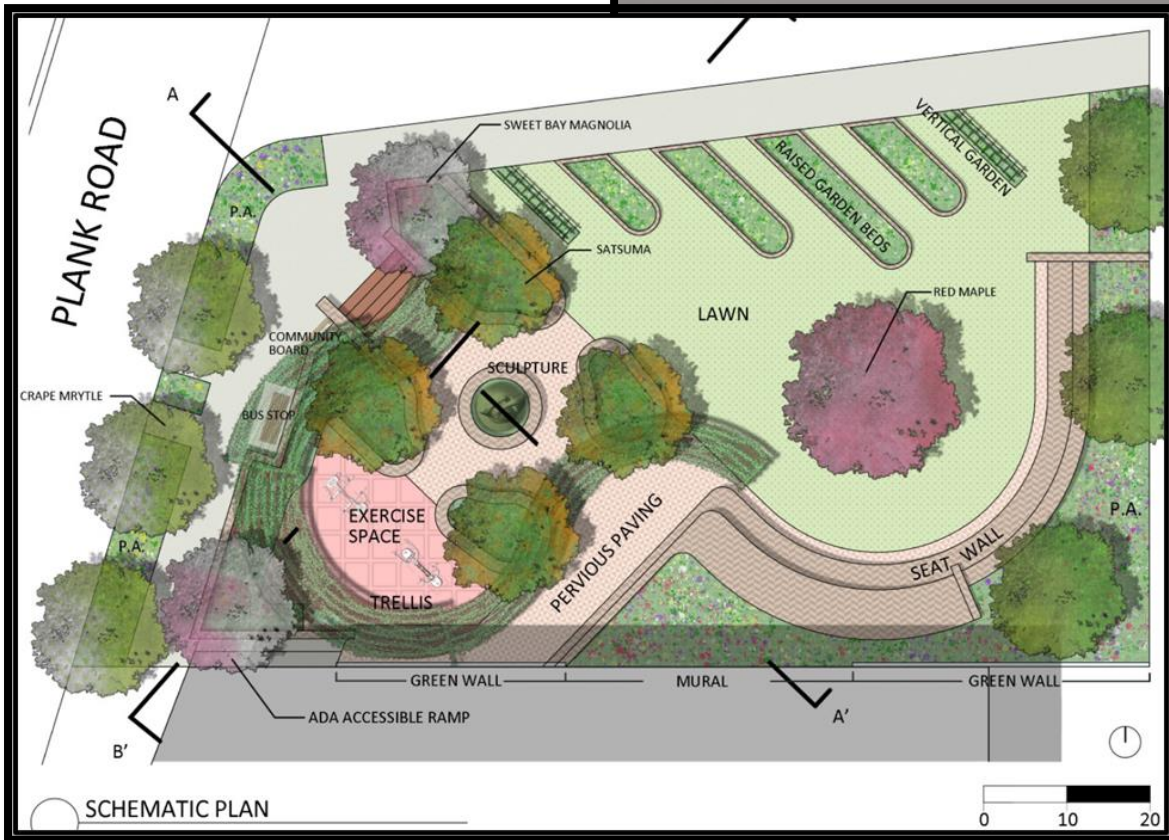
Establish a Tax Increment Financing District

- ❑ Incremental sales tax TIF/EDD - 2% undedicated Parish sales tax
- ❑ Previous development subsidized by TIF has mostly been downtown hotels
- ❑ A Plank Road TIF could support public services and facilities
- ❑ Appropriate for development of high sales volume businesses (e.g. grocery stores, general merchandise) on currently underutilized property

Recent Progress

- ❑ Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Council as a component of the City-Parish's comprehensive development plan
- ❑ Secured funding for new projects and initiatives
- ❑ Community Land Trust development underway
- ❑ Overlay District planning underway
- ❑ New partnerships for small business support and new funding confirmed

Recent Progress



- ❑ Vacant lots targeted for redevelopment:
- ❑ New mixed-use development with affordable housing, daycare & offices
- ❑ New pocket park

Conclusion

- ❑ Equitable development must be grounded in a nuanced and unvarnished understanding of local history
- ❑ Confronting the racialization of space and the spatialization of race is essential to any worthwhile planning effort
- ❑ Authentic and on-going community engagement is the cornerstone of effective planning
- ❑ Resources for neighborhood planning efforts must be spent on the businesses and services owned by the people who live there

