



LAKEWOOD HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

For the Redevelopment of Atlanta Public Schools-Owned Property at 335 Sawtell Rd
For Integration of Neighborhood Retail and Affordable Housing



ATLANTA
URBAN DEVELOPMENT



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Foreword



Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUD) and Atlanta Public Schools (APS) are committed to revitalizing the neighborhoods of southeast Atlanta into thriving, equitable, and healthy whole neighborhoods.

APS’s five-year strategic plan emphasizes academic achievement, student well-being, and community-centered practices. APS also maintains a commitment to responsible stewardship of its assets (including land, facilities, and infrastructure) through transparent planning, public engagement, and data-informed decision-making.

A crucial component of this plan is the expansion of affordable housing options across a broad spectrum of income levels and family sizes. The use of APS-owned public land to support affordable, stable housing options within amenity-rich, well-connected neighborhoods is central to the City and APS’s vision for thriving neighborhoods. By supporting the transformation of surplus school sites into community assets, APS is advancing its mission beyond the classroom.

This approach reflects a broader commitment to equity and interagency collaboration - ensuring that vacant or underused school properties can become part of a comprehensive strategy to address housing challenges and strengthen Atlanta’s communities for future generations.

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Executive Summary

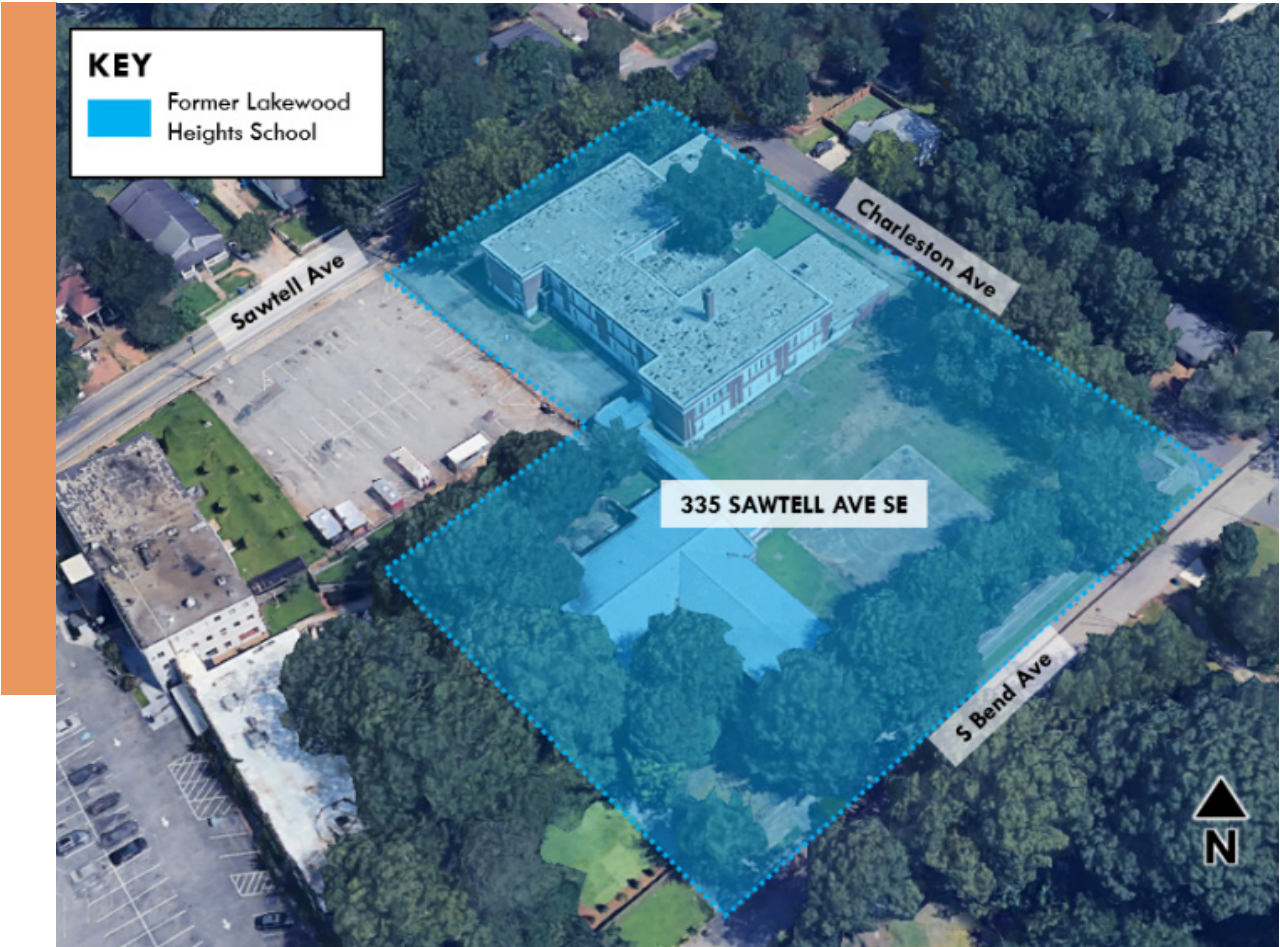
AUD requests submissions from qualified Respondents demonstrating the technical and financial capacity required to realize the redevelopment of the former Lakewood Heights Elementary School through a dynamic public-private partnership model.

The City of Atlanta, Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUD), and Atlanta Public Schools have partnered to solicit responses to this Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) from qualified developers (“Respondents”) to redevelop the former Lakewood Heights Elementary School into a mixed-use development with neighborhood amenities and mixed-income rental housing.

- The property is located at 335 Sawtell Ave, Atlanta GA 30315
- Parcel ID: 14 00390002006

The property was designated as surplus property by APS in early 2023. Following the formalization of an intergovernmental agreement between APS and AUD in late 2024, the site was identified by the Atlanta Preservation Center as one of major significance. The master plan, created collaboratively with the Lakewood Heights Community Association and NPU-Y, outlines development and neighborhood recommendations to APS and AUD for the preservation of the original Lakewood Heights elementary school building following a four-month community engagement exercise with residents and stakeholders.

The planning process included three public meetings, multiple stakeholder meetings, design exercises, and more to study the Lakewood Heights Elementary School and its potential for future redevelopment. Existing conditions analyses, including an existing building assessment, were performed as a precursor to evaluating different design frameworks for the site that balance demographic data trends, parking requirements, new programmatic uses, architectural styles, community preferences, and more.



Site boundary, bound by Sawtell Ave to the NW and Charleston Ave to the NE. Single family homes are located to the east and commercial development to the southwest.

The recommendations for Lakewood Heights Elementary overall suggest a mixed-income housing approach anchored by a small component of commercial development. Neighborhood recommendations include pedestrian improvements to surrounding roads and sidewalks, the creation of a strategy to address abandoned and/or vacant property, as well as the consideration of a shared parking strategy to support all commercial businesses in the area.

AUD requests submissions from qualified Respondents demonstrating the technical and financial capacity required to realize the redevelopment through a dynamic public-private partnership model. After evaluation of respondents, the selected Respondent will be given the opportunity to collaborate with AUD to finalize a development concept and plan.

AUD does not intend to issue additional procurement documents for the Lakewood Heights property beyond this RFQ.

Project Information

Project Background

The 2.15-acre project site includes land that is relatively flat but has grade transitions at the edges, mature tree canopy at the perimeter, and existing school buildings of various eras. The primary building was built in 1932 and expanded in 1952 with two additional wings. In 1993, the building was expanded to the south with an auditorium and gymnasium.

Lakewood Heights Elementary School was built in 1932 by Fulton County Schools. The original building was designed by Edwards and Saywood. In 1936, the school was the meeting place for the General Motors workers to plan what would become one of the largest strikes in U.S. history. In 1952, the property was acquired by Atlanta Public Schools and continued to run as a school for the following decades. The school was officially closed in 2003 (APS & Atlanta Preservation Center, 2023).

Existing Historic Building

Existing conditions for the project site include land that is relatively flat but has grade transitions at the edges, mature tree canopy at the perimeter, and existing school buildings of various eras. Preservation of the 1932 portion of the building is imperative. The 1952 wings may need to remain depending on the final design and to maintain access to historic tax credit funding. There is no preservation requirement for the 1993 building.

The conditions of different elements of the building are highly dependent on its age. While much of the millwork/shelving from the 1950s additions is intact and able to be rehabilitated, other elements from the original 1932 building require more attention to repair and restore. Elements associated with the 1994 addition, while the most recent, are of the least importance to preserve.



Information about the property and project. The site is approximately 2.15 acres with existing school buildings and tree coverage at the perimeter. The original building, shown in blue, was built in 1932 and is required to be preserved as part of this RFQ. The 1952 wings and 1993 addition are optional to preserve.



General Motors Strike
In 1936s workers staged the first sit down protest near McDonough Blvd to protest conditions in the GM auto plant. The planning for the strike was held at Lakewood Heights Elementary (APS & Atlanta Preservation Center, 2023).



Closing of the General Motors plant
The closing of the General Motors plant in 1990 left an 86-acre hole in Lakewood Heights. The loss of 1,000s of jobs had a ripple effect on the neighborhood as families, businesses, and services migrated.



Lakewood Heights Historic District
The Lakewood Heights Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2002. The District includes 412 buildings and 2,190 acres, including Lakewood Heights Elementary School.

Historical images of the site and Historic District.

Overall, most interior conditions show degradation of paint as well as minimal water damage. Existing doors and millwork can largely be restored. The interior of the auditorium contains a degraded acoustic ceiling tile drop ceiling and insulation, exhibiting the most damage compared to other spaces. Some classrooms exhibit degradation. Many doors and millwork can be restored.

Exterior building facades consist of brick veneer which have experienced biological growth, atmospheric grime, and rising damp. Key historical elements remain intact. Exterior windows and doors are boarded with plywood, but frames are intact. There is some roof damage that exists above the auditorium that is recommended to be removed and repaired entirely.

Overall findings from the building conditions assessment (attached as a link at the end of this RFQ) indicate the following:

- **Careful restoration will be needed, and the building envelope is intact.**
- **While all interior materials will need to be refinished, careful removals can take place to achieve the rehabilitation, while encouraging a preservation-minded approach.**
- **The building has suffered very little water damage and woodwork including bookshelves in each classroom remain intact. Woodwork, plaster, doors, etc. should be able to be largely restored.**
- **The school auditorium and auditorium roof have experienced the most damage.**

As of March 2025, according to the existing building assessment attached as a link to this RFQ, initial cost estimating indicates that rehabilitation of all existing structures could cost approximately \$16.9M, or \$369 psf. This estimate includes its 1952 and 1994 additions, which equates to about 46k square feet in total. The estimate is related to hard costs and does not include design service fees related to architecture or engineering. It includes but is not limited to sitework/selective removal, construction costs including concrete, masonry, carpentry, doors, windows, and metals; building envelope repair; finishes; conveying systems; building systems repair and rehabilitation; contingencies & allowances; and overhead and profit. More detail can be found in the existing building assessment attached as a link to this RFQ.

The budget is an initial planning tool that provides the Lakewood Heights Elementary development team time to prepare financially and logistically for all projects. Most importantly, the budget assumes that the entire rehabilitation will occur in one campaign, ensuring that work is not being performed out of sequence. This includes budget for potential environmental remediation, site work, and most soft costs, but does not include costs related to financing or acquisition.

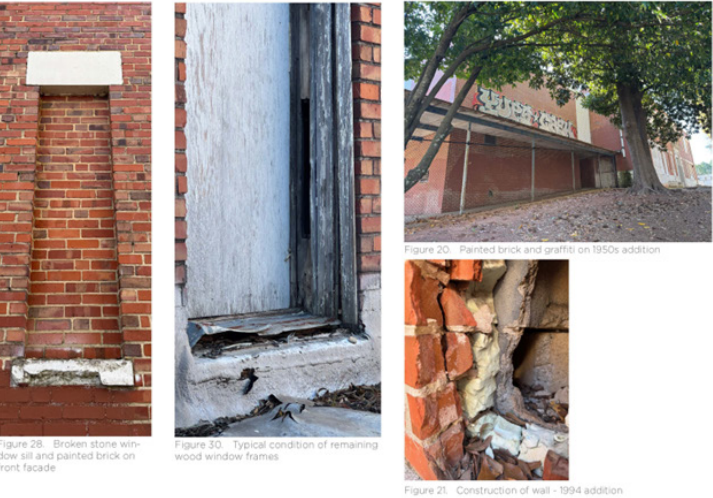
Intergovernmental Agreement

As part of a larger study into its real estate portfolio detailed later in this procurement document on page 28, APS has identified Lakewood Heights Elementary for redevelopment in partnership with AUD. This initiative aims to transform underutilized sites into mixed-income

Roof Conditions



Exterior Façade Conditions



Interior Hallway Conditions



Auditorium Conditions



Classroom Conditions



Doorway & Window Conditions



Stairwell Conditions

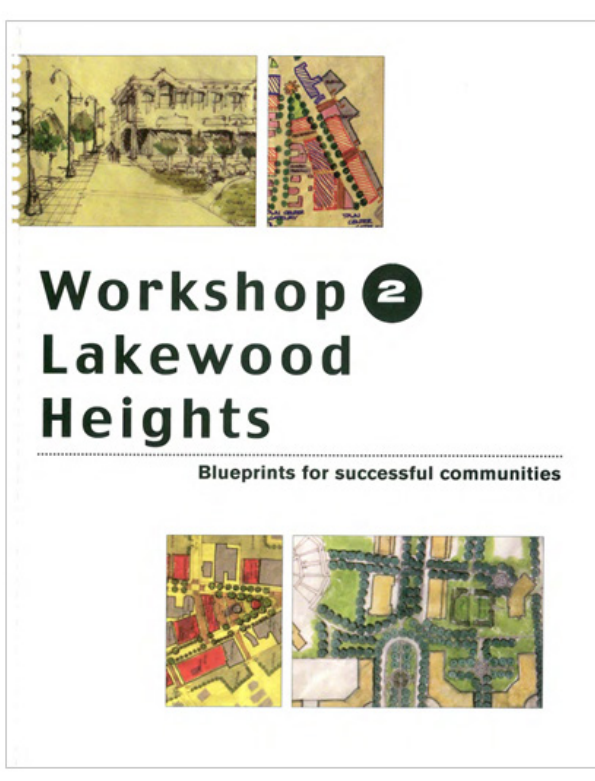
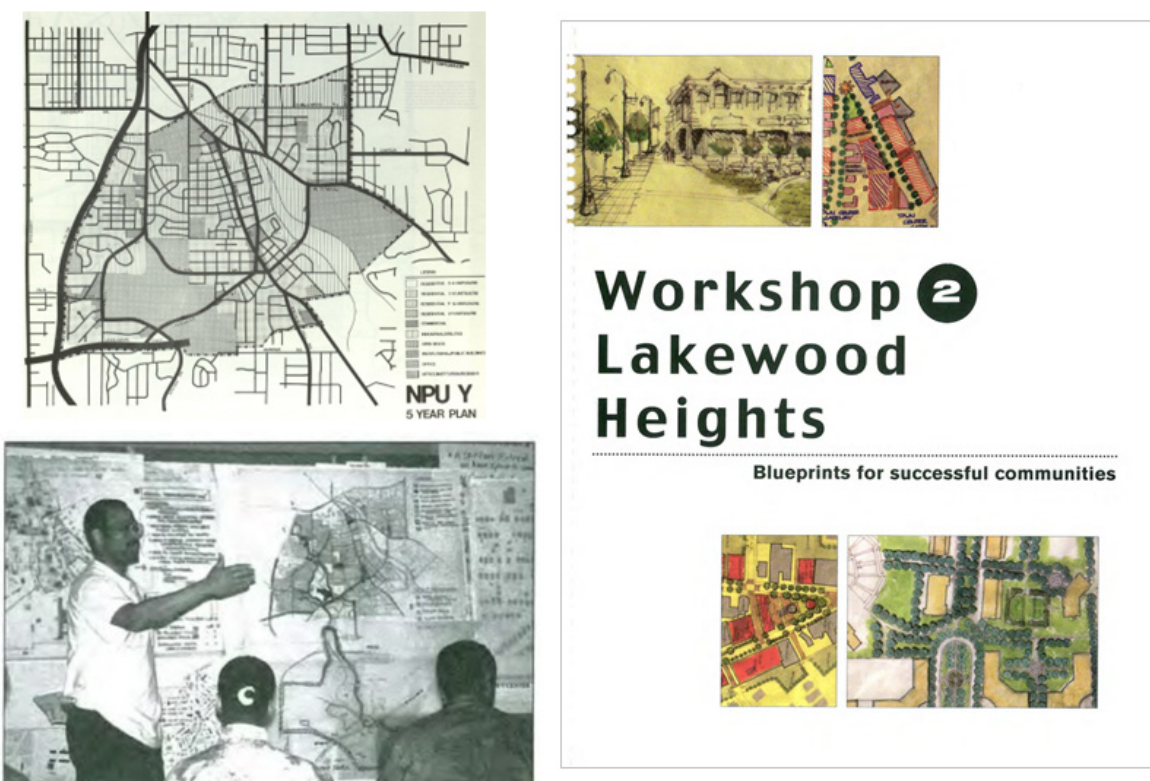


Existing images of exterior and interior conditions. Additional information regarding the existing building assessment can be found attached as a link to this RFQ.

housing and community assets, supporting the city’s affordable housing goals.

As a result, APS signed an intergovernmental agreement, or IGA, with AUD after evaluating three main priorities for the site. The IGA allows APS and AUD to work collaboratively on issues related to the site and serves as a legal foundation between the two entities. The three requirements are that the site must contain rental affordable housing, that the school must be historically preserved, and that APS must maintain a **50-year ground lease** on the property. The requirements are outlined in the IGA as necessary for the redevelopment of the Lakewood Heights Elementary site.

In terms of affordability, the IGA outlines a requirement of at least 20% units at 50% AMI and at least 10% units at 80% AMI. The remaining 70% of the units would be market-rate.



Previous plans included the NPU framework plan in the 80s and a neighborhood design workshop led by Egbert Perry in the 90s. They created initial blueprints on how Lakewood Heights could grow into a successful, vibrant community through setting forth neighborhood recommendations for beautification and equitable economic development. Further studies include a redevelopment plan for Jonesboro Rd in 2006 and an LCI study in 2023.

Previous Studies

The Lakewood Heights neighborhood has been the focus of several planning efforts over the past four decades, each building upon the last to guide revitalization and future development. The former Lakewood Heights Elementary School has consistently emerged as a key community asset within these plans.

In 1983, the **NPU-Y Five-Year Framework Plan** laid the groundwork for neighborhood improvement, addressing community needs and identifying long-term priorities. Building on that, the 1998 Lakewood Heights Community Design Workshop—part of the Blueprints for Successful Communities initiative—established specific goals for revitalization. These included the beautification of vacant and deteriorated properties, the encouragement of small business development, and the creation of a “town center” to foster community identity and cohesion.

The 2006 **Jonesboro Road Redevelopment Plan** expanded on these earlier efforts, emphasizing the importance of historic preservation. It centered on the revitalization of historic buildings and the installation of historic markers, reinforcing the role of heritage in the neighborhood’s future development.

In 2013, the **Lakewood Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study** reaffirmed the community’s vision and added new strategies for equitable growth. The study prioritized redevelopment on catalytic sites, promoted a mix of housing types and price points, and aimed to revitalize the Lakewood Heights commercial district.

In October 2019, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) launched a district-wide **Facilities Master Plan** in partnership with a consultant. The study evaluated all APS-owned properties, including those deemed surplus, and included Lakewood Heights Elementary. As a result of this analysis, APS began exploring how to best manage underused and vacant assets.

In November 2022, **APS and the Atlanta Preservation Center collaboratively introduced a scoring rubric** to assess the historical and cultural value of APS properties that considered factors such as building age, architectural merit, and cultural relevance. This rubric was applied to all APS sites with existing structures greater than 40 years of age, including the former Lakewood Heights Elementary.

In May 2023, the **Atlanta Preservation Center formally identified the Lakewood Heights Elementary property as having the highest potential/most significant for historic preservation**. Shortly thereafter, the APS Board of Education officially declared the property as surplus, signaling the district’s intent to explore options for its adaptive reuse or redevelopment.

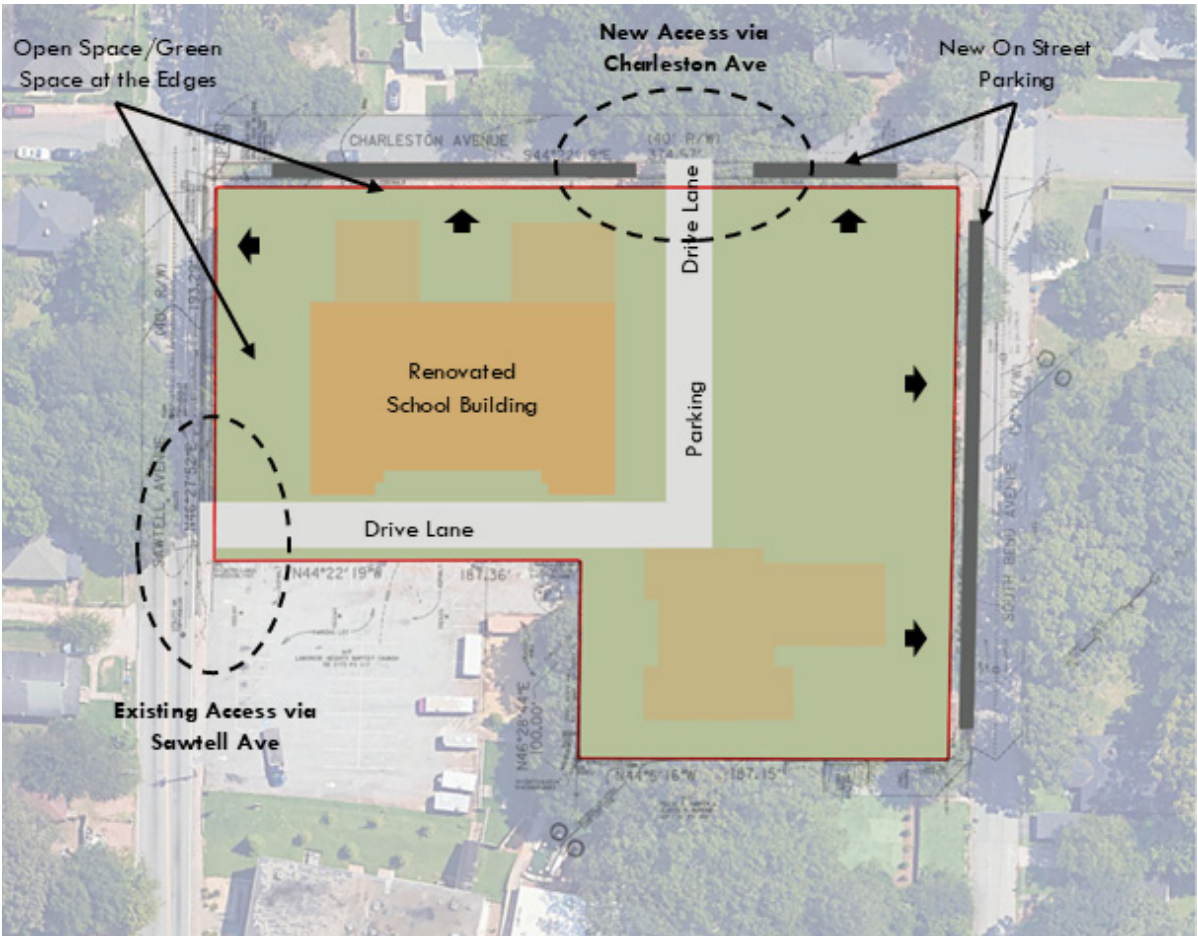
Together, these planning efforts - from early neighborhood frameworks to school district facility reviews - demonstrate a sustained commitment to the revitalization of Lakewood Heights. The former elementary school has consistently stood out as a catalytic site with potential to advance both community and preservation goals. With decades of planning supporting its significance, the property now presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment that honors the neighborhood’s past while shaping its future.

Zoning Entitlements

As of RFQ publication, the site has received a recommendation from NPU-Y to rezone to MRC-1. The rezoning is scheduled for City Council vote by August of 2025. The MRC zoning district is intended to promote walkable, mixed-use development that supports both residential and neighborhood-scale commercial activity. MRC-1, the lowest intensity of the three MRC tiers, is specifically designed for lower-density areas transitioning from purely residential to mixed-use environments.

MRC-1 zoning permits a variety of uses including multifamily residential, neighborhood-serving retail, small offices, and community facilities. Development standards under MRC-1 encourage pedestrian-oriented design, limit building height to 35 feet (approximately 3 stories), and set modest requirements for parking and setbacks to foster a street-oriented public realm.

For more detailed descriptions of the allowances under MRC-1, please refer to Chapter 34 of the Atlanta Code of Ordinances which also covers aspects like open space requirements, parking, and pedestrian-oriented design.



▲ Recommended use of existing and new access for the site with renovation and potential preservation of the 1952 and 1993 additions.



▲ As of Q3 2025, the site has been rezoned to MRC-1. Above, development blocks and parking are notated along with perimeter supplemental zone. The above plan is included as an attachment to this RFQ.

Project Scope

Development of the 335 Sawtell Ave Site

Recognizing the need and importance of affordable housing in the City of Atlanta, APS has partnered with AUD to re-activate its surplus and vacant properties to support mixed-income and mixed-use developments.

The overall vision created with the community for this Lakewood Heights site looks to integrate approximately 55 units with primarily 2–3-bedroom rental housing on the east portion of the site, with additional housing and 8,000 square feet of commercial space adaptively reused within the old school and at the corner of Sawtell and Charleston. Ingress and egress strategies seek to add an additional access point along Charleston Avenue and approximately 60 off-street parking spaces. An additional 22 on-street parking spaces could be integrated into the development with streetscape improvements and plantings. Please note that the “affordable 2–3-bedroom rental housing” characteristic is a key desire by APS, since this will support providing housing for APS families and students.

Scope of Work

The proposed pricing for residential units at the former Lakewood Elementary School site will result in a diverse mix of incomes and housing options that make up a thriving and sustainable community. The figure page-right shows how buildings will be distributed across the site, along with the proposed housing that would require projects to have at least 30% of units classified as income-restricted and affordable according to AUD’s Private Enterprise Agreement, attached as a link to this RFQ.

Atlanta Public Schools is committed to a mixed-income project that will stimulate economic development in Lakewood Heights while simultaneously locking in affordable units to limit future displacement of residents.



The above illustration and site plan illustrate an ideal scenario for the site. Anchored by neighborhood scale commercial at the corner, the original 1932 building is preserved with additional housing built toward the northeast. Note that the 1952 wings may need to be preserved to activate HTC funding, which may alter the final development plan, but that commercial space to activate the corner is highly preferable.

Development Priorities

The following development priorities were identified by project stakeholders and the Lakewood Heights community during the community engagement process. Respondent teams will be evaluated based on their ability to redevelop the Lakewood Heights Elementary School property in alignment with these priorities.

AUD and APS expect that competitive responses will respond to all the following development priorities:

- **Require preservation of original 1932 school building to maintain character defining features**

The neighborhood has identified historic preservation as one of the most important features of the project due to a long history of teardown and community divestment. Lakewood Heights is an historic district today and future designation of the property could provide economic benefit by generating historic tax credit funding and contributing to the appeal of the project for tenants.



- **Consider preserving 1993 school addition**

The 1993 addition provides additional residential units and could be economically viable for the project as demolition can be costly. Retaining it could balance the preservation of historical elements with functional upgrades.



- **Prioritize preservation of perimeter trees**

Mature trees around the property are valuable for maintaining neighborhood character, promoting environmental sustainability, and providing ample shade on the site.



- **Prioritize mixed use development that creates a community hub for neighborhood using catalytic commercial program**

Mixed-use development can serve as a focal point for the community, offering spaces for retail, dining, and social interaction. A strong commercial anchor can also stimulate broader economic growth and attract further investment in the surrounding area.

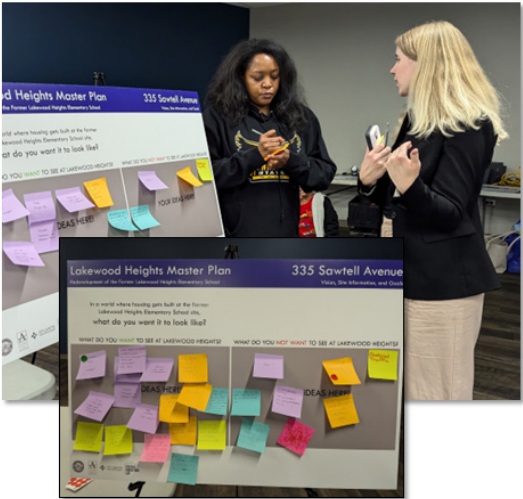


- **Require mixed-income housing with emphasis on attracting tenants with incomes at or above 80% AMI, with a third of built area reserved for 2-3 bedroom units**

Mixed-income housing promotes social diversity, establishes the Lakewood Heights submarket, and aligns with inclusive neighborhood goals. Respondents should demonstrate their ability to effectively market affordable (50% AMI), workforce (80% AMI), and market rate (100%+ AMI) units to contribute to a mixed-income community.



Interactive Boards



Breakout Sessions



Progress Presentations



As part of community engagement, participants were asked what they see for the future of the Lakewood Heights site in terms of overall development goals. Key priorities included preservation of the original school building and creation of a neighborhood community hub.

- **Require design that incorporates multiple ingress and egress options**

By providing two access points for the site, site vehicular connectivity is improved and enhances safety. It also supports a variety of transportation modes, such as walking, biking, and public transit.

- **Requirement to incorporate a parking strategy**

A comprehensive parking strategy balances the need for adequate parking with efforts to minimize impervious surfaces and encourage alternative transportation. Innovative approaches, such as shared parking or reduced minimums, can optimize land use and support sustainability goals.

- **Encourage stable housing outcomes for APS stakeholders**

APS and AUD recognize that stable housing is essential to the success of students, teachers, and staff both in and out of the classroom. To support this, AUD seeks a strong marketing and lease-up strategy that includes clear, targeted outreach to APS employees. Additionally, to address declining enrollment linked to a shortage of family-oriented housing, APS invites respondents to prioritize two- and three-bedroom units amongst those with affordability restrictions in order to attract and retain families in our communities. These strategies help meet neighborhood goals and directly support stronger educational outcomes.

Design Considerations

Striking, high-quality architectural, urban and landscape design that presents the Lakewood Heights development as an attractive and welcoming space

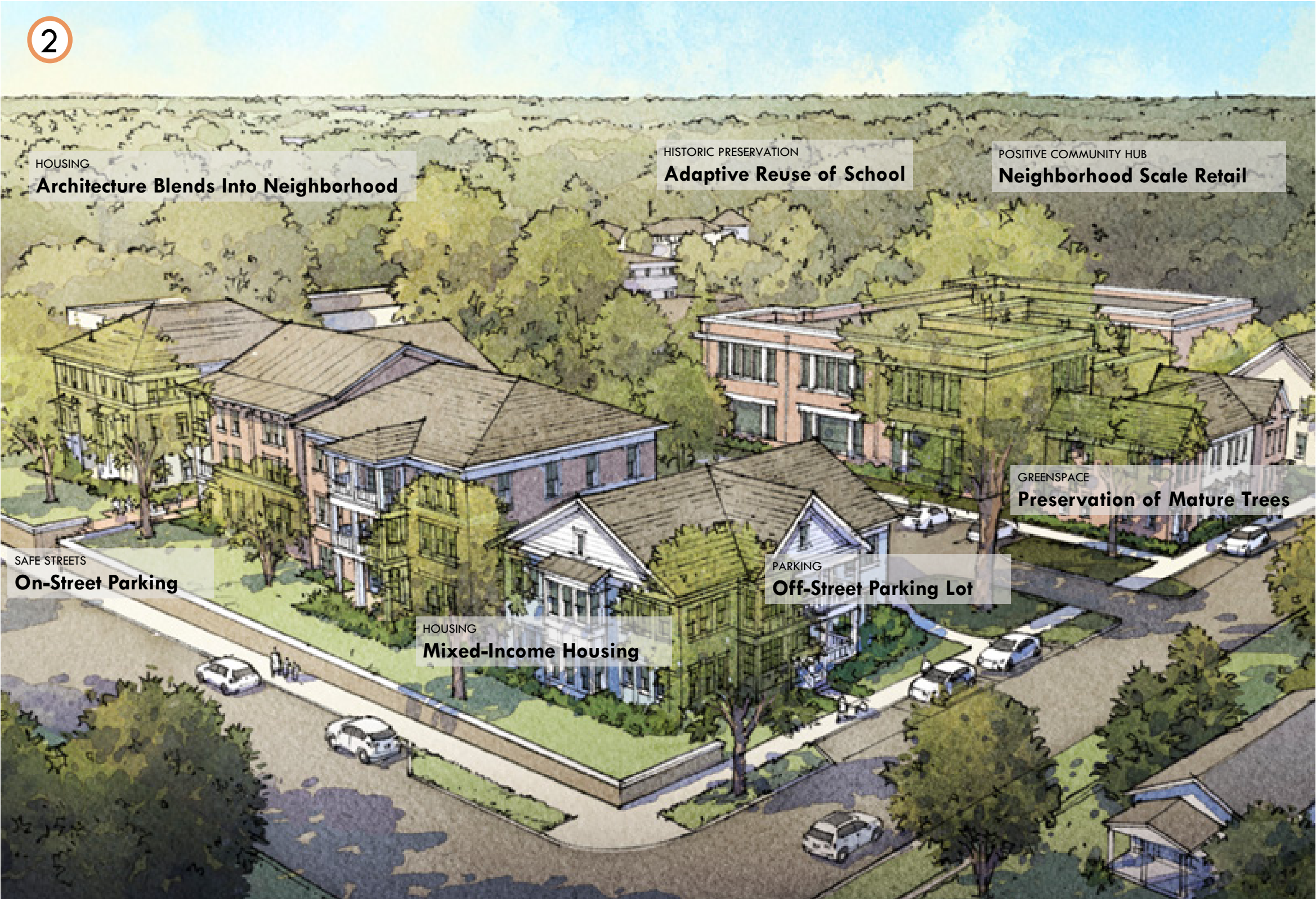
- Architecture**

Architectural design should be striking, appropriate for the neighborhood, and maintain clear relationship to the street. Creative approaches to preserving the original 1932 school building are highly encouraged.
- Urban Design**

Urban design should prioritize walkability, shared spaces, easy wayfinding/navigability, and safety
- Landscape Design**

Landscape design should seamlessly interweave the site with greenery to existing and planned recreational amenities
- Sustainability**

Design should prioritize materials, floor plans, and construction techniques that are best practices for energy efficiency, weatherization, and long-term durability of the development



Aerial view from the Charleston and South Bend intersection. Two and three-story apartment buildings in foreground and the school and townhomes beyond. Stone wall and perimeter trees remain. New on street parking spaces.

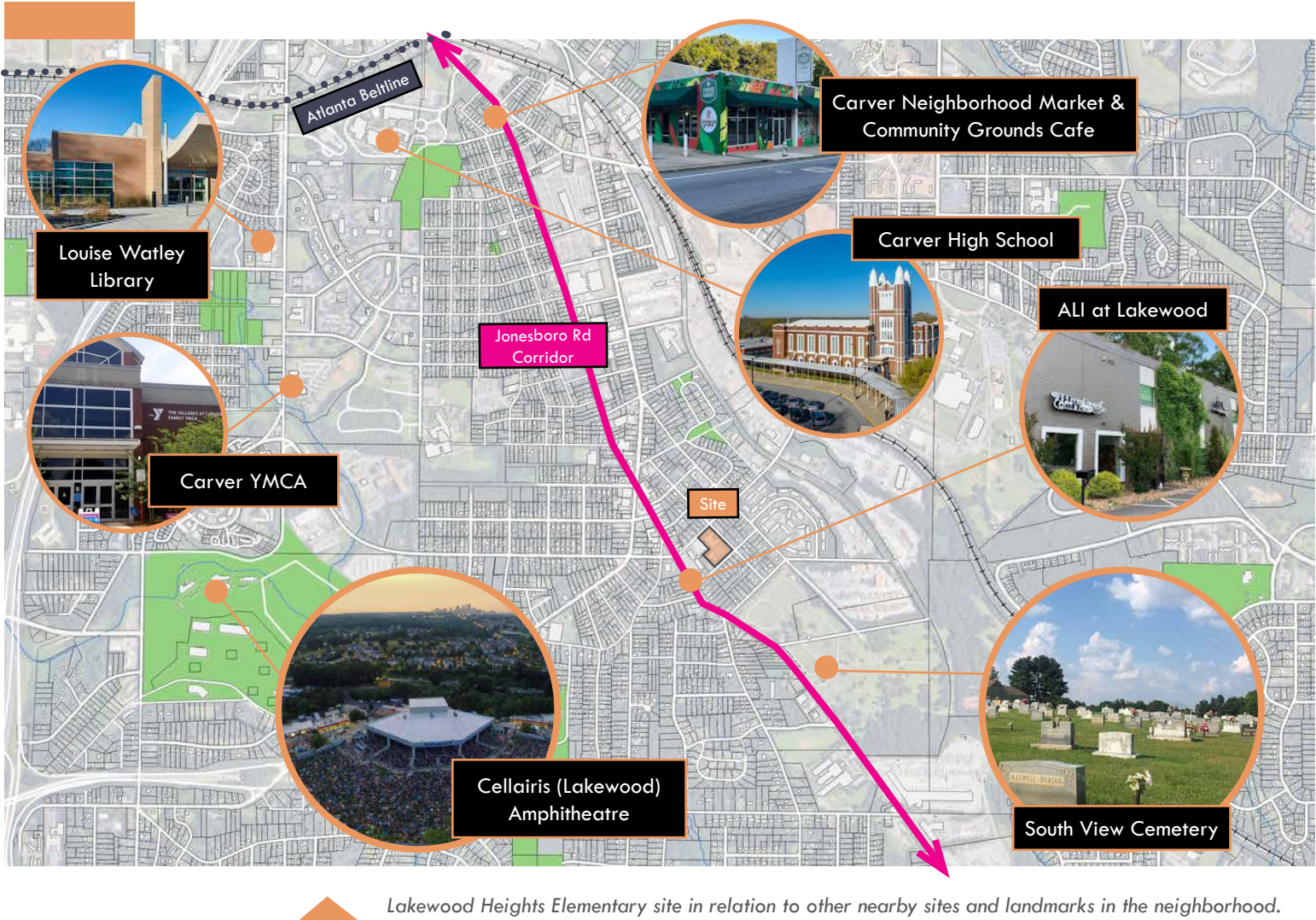
Neighborhood

Surrounding Area

The former Lakewood Heights Elementary School is located at 335 Sawtell Avenue SE in the heart of the Lakewood Heights neighborhood in southeast Atlanta. This historic residential community is one of Atlanta’s legacy neighborhoods, with a strong sense of identity, active community stakeholders, and a central location that offers access to key city amenities, transportation networks, and employment centers.

Lakewood Heights is bordered by the neighborhoods of South Atlanta, Lakewood, and Chosewood Park, and sits within the NPU-Y planning district. The area features a traditional street grid, mature tree canopy, and a mix of historic bungalows and newer infill development. In recent years, the neighborhood has been the focus of renewed interest, with planning efforts emphasizing walkability, commercial/retail, affordability, preservation, and economic revitalization.

The property is well-positioned near several regional destinations. Within a five-minute drive is the Lakewood-Fort McPherson MARTA station, providing residents with direct rail access to Downtown, Midtown, and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The Lakewood



Lakewood Heights Elementary site in relation to other nearby sites and landmarks in the neighborhood.

Amphitheatre, a major regional concert venue, is located just south of the neighborhood and draws thousands of visitors annually. To the northwest lies the Metropolitan Parkway corridor, which is seeing active reinvestment and serves as a connector to Atlanta’s urban core.

Recreation and green space are key assets of the area. South Bend Park, located less than a mile from the property, offers a playground, tennis courts, and access to the Southtowne Trail. Brown’s Mill Golf Course, a public course operated by the City of Atlanta, is also nearby. Additionally, the site is located near the Atlanta BeltLine Southside Trail corridor, a transformative multi-use path and greenspace network that, once completed, will further enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity across southeast Atlanta. These amenities support an active lifestyle and contribute to the quality of life for residents.

Educational and cultural institutions are within reach as well. The property is near several public schools, including South Atlanta High School and Long Middle School, and is within easy commuting distance to Atlanta Technical College and Atlanta Metropolitan State College. The area also benefits from its proximity to the Ron Clark Academy, an internationally recognized nonprofit middle school.

Local businesses along Jonesboro Road and Lakewood Avenue offer basic goods and services, while ongoing redevelopment efforts along these corridors are expected to bring in more neighborhood-serving retail and dining. The area is also home to a strong network of churches, nonprofits, and neighborhood associations that support community well-being and civic engagement.

The site is situated in a historically rich and strategically located neighborhood, with excellent access to transit, green space, and cultural amenities. The surrounding context supports the vision for thoughtful redevelopment that honors the neighborhood’s legacy while advancing goals of equity, preservation, and community-based growth.

Market Overview

The Lakewood Heights and nearby neighborhoods in Atlanta are experiencing dynamic shifts in their housing markets, presenting unique opportunities for mixed-income housing to bolster community development.

- Population Growth and Housing Demand**

The area surrounding the former Lakewood Heights Elementary School is experiencing a notable period of transition and growth. Historically impacted by disinvestment and population decline following industrial closures, neighborhoods such as Lakewood Heights, South Atlanta, and Norwood Manor have seen significant demographic and market improvements over the past five years.

Between 2017 and 2022, the study area experienced substantial population growth, reversing decades of decline. The combined neighborhoods of Lakewood Heights and Norwood Manor added roughly 1,000 new residents during this period, with South Atlanta contributing an additional 300, translating to approximately 400 new households. Notably, the population gains have been driven in part by an influx of Black families, particularly in 2–3 person and larger 4+ person households. These demographic trends reflect a growing interest in the area from families seeking affordability and community stability within the city limits.

- Rising Incomes and Homeownership**

The area has seen a marked increase in household incomes. The number of households earning more than \$50,000 nearly doubled between 2012 and 2022, while the number of households earning less than \$50,000 decreased by roughly 200. In Lakewood Heights specifically, the share of households earning more than \$100,000 rose by 20%, indicating a strengthening economic profile for the neighborhood.

Homeownership has also surged. Since 2017, the number of owner-occupied households in the study area has more than doubled, increasing from 370 to 820 households. This trend signals a growing demand for more stable, long-term

housing and reflects the attractiveness of the area’s more affordable for-sale housing options.

Meanwhile, the number of rental households has remained relatively stable, contributing to overall housing stability. Affordable rental housing is essential in Lakewood Heights to ensure that long-time residents and lower-income families can remain in the neighborhood amid rising home values and increasing ownership demand. As the area grows and attracts higher-income households, maintaining a mix of housing options—including affordable rentals—will be critical to preventing displacement and preserving the community’s socioeconomic diversity.

- Vacancy, Housing Supply, and Market Challenges**

While vacancy and occupancy rates around the school remain consistent with the broader area, a handful of vacant and abandoned lots still surround the site. Nonetheless, vacancy rates have declined significantly as demand for housing has grown. Single-family revitalization is driving most of the market growth in the area, with older homes being renovated and resold to incoming families.

Home values in Lakewood Heights have increased nearly fourfold since 2014—double the citywide rate of appreciation during that time. However, little new housing has been built south of the railroad tracks, which separates the study area from more rapidly developing parts of Southeast Atlanta.

- Rental and Commercial Market Conditions**

Despite the strong owner-occupied housing market, the rental and commercial sectors remain underdeveloped. While rents have increased by nearly 40% since 2014 in Lakewood Heights and South Atlanta — outpacing nearby Chosewood Park — they remain too low to support unsubsidized new construction or large-scale rehabilitation. As a result, the submarket remains unproven for new multifamily development without some form of subsidy or public-private partnership.

Redevelopment Opportunity

The former school site’s historic character, central location, and surrounding demographic momentum make it a promising candidate for adaptive reuse or mixed-income redevelopment. It serves as a catalytic asset for equitable growth in a rapidly changing neighborhood.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, Atlanta Regional Commission – Neighborhood Nexus, City of Atlanta – Department of City Planning, City of Atlanta – Office of Housing and Community Development, Lakewood Heights, Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study (2013), Jonesboro Road Redevelopment Plan (2006), Lakewood Heights Community Design Workshop (Blueprints for Successful Communities, 1998), Zillow Research, Redfin Market Insights, CoStar Group, Reonomy, Yardi Matrix

Project Sponsors

The Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (“AUD”) has been selected by the City of Atlanta to oversee the redevelopment of the Lakewood Heights Elementary site and to serve as the primary public contact.



About AUD

AUD is a non-profit, independent subsidiary of Atlanta Housing and is responsible for facilitating the development of publicly owned land as mixed-income communities that contribute positively to the needs of the City and its residents. The organization has been designed from the ground up to realize a new model of mixed-income housing development through a unique toolkit of local funding and financing sources.

Additionally, AUD was structured to create new efficiencies in procurement, long-term phased development, and partnerships with development teams, as well as with other public and nonprofit stakeholders.

AUD intends to work closely with the selected development partner during procurement, pre-development, construction, stabilization and beyond. The following sections provide an overview of AUD’s background, priorities, available resources, and partnership structure for the redevelopment of the Lakewood Heights Elementary site.



Front facade of the existing school, facing Sawtell Ave.

Atlanta Urban Development is a specialized nonprofit tasked with turning public land assets into marketable, mixed-income housing developments that offer quality, affordable, stable homes for all Atlantans. AUD is equipped with a unique toolkit to achieve affordability goals and facilitate project development. AUD will actively partner with developers and stakeholders to create inclusive communities where residents can thrive. AUD is governed by an independent board appointed by Atlanta Housing and the City of Atlanta, is directed by CEO John Majors, and employs a staff dedicated to public land development.

Values

AUD will select a developer that demonstrates its ability to strategically partner to meet the following organizational priorities.

- **Develop projects that introduce, deepen, or widen affordability offerings in accordance with AUD’s Private Enterprise Agreement (attached as a link to this RFQ) and provide long-term affordability to stabilize tenants and neighborhoods.**
- **Represent the City of Atlanta to ensure that projects align with the City’s housing and neighborhood development priorities, including affordable and stable housing for families with school-aged children, and introducing development into up-and-coming markets, for example in the City’s priority neighborhoods.**
- **Deploy innovative solutions for procurement, acquisition, financing, and deal structuring to optimize a project’s benefit to the public.**
- **The AUD model provides affordability through innovations in public subsidy and financing, without compromising on construction or architectural quality.**
- **AUD properties should be market-competitive with healthy financial performance that ensure holistic public goals can be met.**

Potential Resources

AUD’s participation in deals may unlock unique resources and subsidy sources to maintain the financial viability of the project.

- **Channel publicly-sponsored financial incentives to lower the cost of capital for construction and permanent financing, including:**

Housing Production Fund: mezzanine, early-draw predevelopment and construction financing that may cover up to 20% of residential construction costs. Housing Production Fund use subject to availability. To access Housing Production Fund, AUD must hold at least a 51% long-term ownership share of the residential portion of the project.

Below market permanent financing: AUD will coordinate access to public financing tools that may unlock below-market permanent financing

- **Full property tax exemptions for the rental housing portions of projects that meet AUD’s affordability requirements and other programmatic requirements of the Private Enterprise Agreement.**

- **AUD will help coordinate relationships between with public authorities, financial partners, and governing entities to secure access to public resources throughout the development process on behalf of the development partnership.**

This includes working with the selected developer to maintain relationships with AUD, the Urban Residential Finance Authority, the Tax Assessor of Fulton County, the City of Atlanta, the Metro Atlanta Land Bank, Atlanta Housing, and others.

- **Support on state and federal funding applications**

AUD will help coordinate relationships to support applications for Historic Tax Credits, New Markets Tax Credits, or other federal and state funding sources.

Partnership Structure

Once a Respondent is selected, AUD will work to establish partnership terms as an intermediary with the landowning stakeholder, APS.

As part of the IGA, APS expects a land structure to allow for a **50-year ground lease** of the site. Proposals should reflect how the proposed development priorities will support and lean into this land structure. The AUD model is centered around strong development partnerships with private sector experts, solidified in a joint venture structure. The JV partnership agreement will ensure that risk and project upside are appropriately structured and aligned across development partners. Risk and profit sharing will be negotiated between AUD and the development partner and will be commensurate with ownership interest, activities, and financial participation of the parties involved.

The selected development partner will be responsible for ensuring the successful completion of construction and stabilization of the Project, including:

- **Providing or compiling a capable, experienced, professional development team to realize AUD’s and the City’s goals of this procurement and development**
- **Playing a significant role in ensuring that the final site planning and design align with the initial master plan and project priorities**
- **Securing financing for construction, including appropriate guarantees, and providing a permanent finance takeout plan**
- **Working with partners to ensure the seamless integration of Lakewood Heights into broader area growth infrastructure planning**
- **Leading adaptive reuse of the former elementary school as determined by the development agreement**
- **Supporting the development of community amenities as determined by the development agreement**
- **Leading vertical site development as determined by the development agreement**
- **Participating in ongoing community engagement and communications throughout the development of the property**
- **Marketing housing units to future renters, commercial tenants, and other users**

Because of the importance of AUD projects to the City’s future planning goals, AUD anticipates a close working relationship with development partners from predevelopment to asset stabilization. Partnerships may be structured to continue into operations or may be dissolved at stabilization. The AUD model is designed to allow project appreciation and value growth, representing a unique opportunity to enjoy limited-risk upside through AUD partnership.

In addition to facilitating relationships with public entities, AUD will support ongoing collaboration with aligned public partners, foundations and nonprofits such as City of Atlanta, APS, Invest Atlanta, Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, and others. AUD will support ongoing partnerships with community members that were established during the City of Atlanta’s community engagement and rezoning processes.

About Atlanta Public Schools

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) serves nearly 50,000 students across more than 80 schools. Established in 1872 , APS is committed to providing equitable, high-quality education to students from diverse backgrounds, neighborhoods, and communities throughout the City of Atlanta. The district’s mission is through a caring culture of equity, trust, and collaboration, every student will graduate ready for college, career, and life.

APS operates with a strategic focus on getting back to basics through a community of believers. Central to its work is the belief that schools function best when they are deeply connected to the communities they serve. As a result, APS collaborates closely with city agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local stakeholders to ensure students and families have access to supportive resources both in and out of the classroom.. APS maintains a commitment to responsible stewardship of its assets (including land, facilities, and infrastructure) through transparent planning, public engagement, and data-informed decision-making.

In addition to its core mission of education, APS recognizes its role as a large-scale property owner in the City of Atlanta. By aligning its facility planning and real estate strategies with broader city goals, such as housing affordability, sustainability, and equitable development. APS is working to maximize community benefit from its physical assets.

Surplus Properties Repositioning

As part of its long-term planning strategy, APS has conducted a thorough analysis of its real estate portfolio to identify underutilized and surplus properties. One of the district’s key goals is to reposition these properties in a way that aligns with community needs and supports their affordable housing initiatives.

The former Lakewood Heights Elementary School, located at 335 Sawtell Avenue SE, is one such surplus site. Declared surplus in May 2023, the property was identified as a significant opportunity for historic preservation and adaptive reuse through the APS Facilities Master Plan process. Working in partnership with the Atlanta Preservation Center and community stakeholders, APS is exploring redevelopment scenarios that prioritize housing affordability, economic inclusion, and long-term neighborhood benefit.

By supporting the transformation of surplus school sites into community assets, APS is advancing its mission beyond the classroom. This approach reflects a broader commitment to equity and interagency collaboration—ensuring that vacant or underused school properties can become part of a comprehensive strategy to address housing challenges and strengthen Atlanta’s communities for future generations.

About City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta, under the leadership of Mayor Andre Dickens, is committed to expanding affordable housing opportunities, with a particular emphasis on homeownership. Recognizing the importance of stable, long-term housing solutions, the Mayor has set an ambitious goal to build or preserve 20,000 units of affordable housing by 2030. The City plays a key role in the redevelopment of public land across the City. The City serves as an advisor to its partners at AUD and APS for this project.

The City also emphasizes the importance of development without displacement, ensuring that both newcomers and legacy residents have access to diverse housing options. By focusing on affordable homeownership, the city aims to foster community stability, allowing residents to build equity and invest in their neighborhoods.

Through these concerted efforts, the City of Atlanta are actively working to create pathways to homeownership, empowering residents and strengthening communities across the city.

Potential Resources

The City of Atlanta recognizes the need for support across agencies, departments, organizations, and partners to meet the holistic project goals. While the expectation is that much of the development of The Lakewood Heights property is self-capitalizing through use of AUD’s development tools, additional resources may be required to meet other broader economic development, community development, affordability, and homeownership goals.

The City of Atlanta expects site improvements related to the viability of the site to pay for themselves, while investments with a cross-neighborhood impact may rely on other sources.

The City of Atlanta expects the development team to do its best to align development programming and timelines with the subsidy requirements of public and non-profit entities to reduce project costs and support efficient and timely delivery. Below is a list of some of the funding and resources that may be available for project development.

• Affordable Housing Tools

Invest Atlanta offers several programs aimed at reducing the financing burden for rental housing development. These include tax-exempt and taxable multifamily housing revenue bonds, which can be used for acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing.

Additionally, Invest Atlanta’s Affordable Housing Preservation Fund and Housing Opportunity Bond programs are designed to provide low-interest loans to developers committed to delivering long-term affordable units. These tools are designed to close financing gaps in projects located outside of TADs, like Lakewood Heights, and encourage equitable development in emerging submarkets.

- **Support for Small Businesses and Commercial Activation**

For projects that aim to incubate small, minority-, or women-owned businesses, technical assistance and capital grants may be available through Invest Atlanta or its partners, such as Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE) and Atlanta Emerging Markets, Inc. (AEMI). Atlanta Urban Development is open to receive responses that include use of New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) to support commercial development, although AUD cannot guarantee award of NMTC.

- **Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse**

Given the school’s historic designation potential and architectural significance, the project is eligible for state and federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits. These incentives allow developers to recoup a portion of qualified rehabilitation expenses, which can be critical in offsetting the higher costs often associated with adaptive reuse. Georgia’s state program provides a 25% income tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenditures on historic properties, and the federal program offers a 20% income tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings that are listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. According to the DCA, in Georgia, the 25% state tax credit can be layered with the federal incentive of 20% to cover up to 45% of combined eligible expenses.

- **Additional Resources and Layered Financing**

Depending on the final project program, additional financing may be available from philanthropic foundations, federal programs (such as HUD’s HOME or CDBG funds, NMTC), or public-private partnerships structured through community development financial institutions (CDFIs). Projects that incorporate green infrastructure, energy efficiency, or job training components may also qualify for sustainability or workforce grants.

- **Coordination with permitting and other City offices**

The City of Atlanta works closely across its permitting and capital improvements staff to support the redevelopment of public land through AUD. These working relationships can be leveraged to support a timely and cost-efficient redevelopment of the site.

- **Ongoing coordination with partners and community**

The City of Atlanta’s Housing Innovation Lab has been an integral leader in the design and rezoning of the Lakewood Heights site, including working closely with community members to articulate a vision for the future of the site. The City may continue to elevate these relationships and support coordination between the project team and the community to ensure that the development has a positive impact on existing community members and stakeholders.



Examples of ongoing collaborators that the City of Atlanta and AUD work with on housing developments across the City.

Together, these tools create a flexible and layered financing environment that can help overcome the site’s limitations and support a mission-aligned, community-driven redevelopment vision.

Procurement Requirements

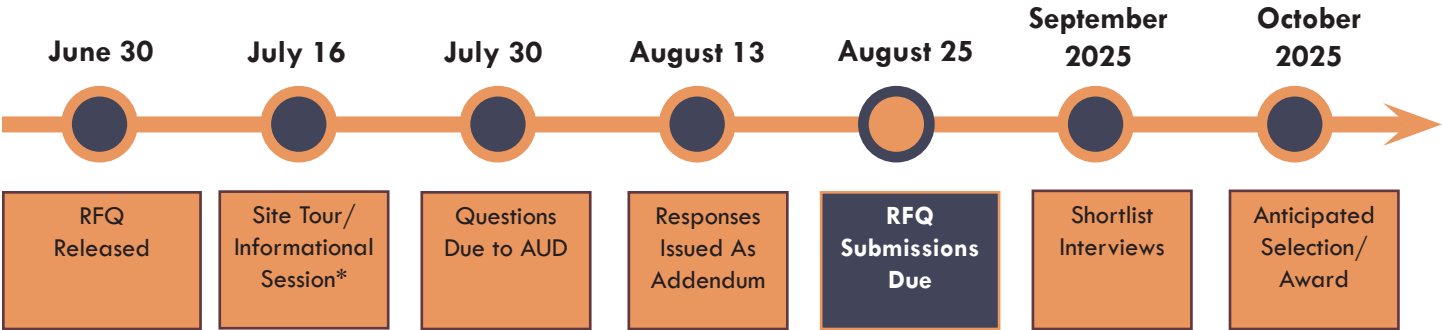
Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUD) will serve as the primary public contact for the Project.

Project Leadership

The Atlanta Urban Development Corporation seeks a qualified partner for the development of the former Lakewood Heights Elementary property. AUD is leading this initiative directly and is seeking Qualification Packages from those interested in partnering to develop the project.

Please pay careful attention to submission requirements, as these will be the basis for evaluation. For each submission section below, AUD will accept only a limited number of 8.5” x 11” pages. Additionally, applicants may upload up to 10 pages of supplementary material (appendix) that provide additional context to their application. Supplemental material may be referenced by the evaluation team but will not be the basis upon which applicants are evaluated.

AUD issues Requests for Qualifications to provide applicants with the ability to highlight team strengths, vision, and capacity to execute the Project. Respondents should tailor their applications to best demonstrate their ability to form strong partnerships that can work with AUD to realize the Project’s Development Priorities. Respondents are not expected to provide full development plans and are expected to work with AUD during negotiations to come to a satisfactory development agreement between parties.



Schedule for procurement of Lakewood Heights Elementary.
This schedule is subject to change based on AUD & APS needs and capacities.

* - to RSVP for the site tour, please register at <https://AUDLakewoodTour.eventbrite.com>. All participants must sign the attached APS site tour waiver and release form.

Deadline for Submission

The deadline for submission of responses is **11:59pm Eastern Time on August 22, 2025.**

Responses received after the deadline will be considered late and will not be opened. Qualifications packages must be emailed to admin@atlurbdevco.com.

Applicants that pass the first round of evaluation will be invited for interviews in the months of September/October. Please ensure that team leadership is flexible. If there is a time that absolutely does not work for your team, please indicate it in the executive summary of your response. AUDC will attempt to respect availability of applicants as necessary and able.

Submission Requirements - 40 Pages Maximum

Respondents must include all information outlined below in their responses. In each section below, please provide the requested information within the page count maximum. Any pages in excess of the page count will not be considered for evaluation. **One page is considered a single standard 8.5x11 letter size. Responses may be sent as 11x17 spreads if preferred, but the page count must be maintained. All pages should be numbered.**

1. Cover Letter – 1 page

Include a cover letter indicating the full name and address of the Respondent and the branch office or other subordinate entity that will perform or assist in performing the redevelopment described. Please indicate the name of the senior contact person, appropriate telephone, and email address, and acknowledge Respondent’s ability to commit to the contents of the response and any other information the Respondent deems relevant. The letter should summarize the Proposal in one page. Indicate whether the Respondent operates as an individual, partnership or corporation and what legal entity will be acquiring the Property. If applicable, include the state in which Respondent is incorporated or organized. If not Georgia, provide evidence of license to do business in Georgia.

2. Table of Contents – 1 page

3. Executive Summary – 2 pages

The Respondent shall provide a brief written narrative of their proposed development vision, team structure, and capacity to realize the project. The purpose of the Executive Summary is to provide AUD with an overview of key elements of the submission and a narrative explanation of how elements will be integrated, managed, and implemented to achieve successful project completion.

4. Project Vision – 6 pages

Respondents should provide a high-level description of their vision and program for the project. AUD seeks a forward-thinking, innovative, community-minded development partner prepared to execute a catalytic public-private partnership that will establish a standard of housing quality and design for the development and beyond. The vision should respond to the development plan that was done previously for the site and directly to the Development Priorities listed on page 16.

Conceptual diagrams, drawings, renderings, and other visualizations that depict the following are encouraged but not required in responses:

- A site and development plan indicating proposed use(s), locations, pedestrian paths, parking, landscaping, and ingress/egress
- Project renderings for major project components, demonstrating key visual elements;
- Preliminary building elevations, diagrams, drawings, and floorplans for project components, indicating information such as use, finishes, square footages, unit counts, materiality, planting, etc. that give clarity to the overall proposed vision

Values: In their vision, respondents should provide a clearly-articulated vision for how they intend to work together with project team, AUD, and partners to ensure that the Development Priorities for the site and neighborhood are achieved. Respondents should also lay out how their vision aligns with AUD’s Values outlined on page 25, Atlanta Public Schools values, outlined on page 28, and the City of Atlanta’s Values, outlined on page 29. The vision should establish how your team will be a beneficial addition to the community and how the development will set the stage for future phases of development.

Context: The vision should communicate an understanding of the current development context, including both opportunities and challenges presented by project, and how these will be addressed in the development. While AUD does not expect fully fledged concepts for redevelopment in responses, it is important that applicants communicate an understanding of the setting in which the development is occurring and use this to ground their vision for a mixed-income, commercially driven development.

Programming: The vision statement should articulate a proposal for uses, including rental housing options, community amenities facilities, light commercial retail, and/or recreational facilities. The proposal should reference the Lakewood Heights Development Plan and Development Priorities sections. Applicants may provide high-level clarifications of any proposed variations from these documents. The respondent should indicate how they plan to incorporate urban and architectural design into the project in a way that increases attractiveness, livability, and resilience of development.

Long-term use: The vision statement should provide a high-level vision for the long-term operations of the site, which may include recreational, educational, employment, and leisure opportunities for residents and programming of community and recreational facilities. The vision should include how the redevelopment will support the neighboring communities in line with the Development Priorities.

5. Project Delivery Plan – 2 pages

The respondent should provide a proposed plan for execution that outlines

- How the respondent proposes to work with AUD during construction, including shared responsibilities and resource use in line with the Project Phasing, AUD Resources, AUD Partnership Structure, and City of Atlanta Resources sections.
- The proposed partnership structure with AUD and considerations for how responsibilities would be allocated
- A description of the steps necessary to evaluate due diligence, financing, pre-development, design approach, integration with existing planning, construction, community engagement, lease-up, property management, and long-term operations
- A timeline for execution that includes proposed start date of construction, completion, lease up, and conversion to permanent financing

6. Team Organization – 2 pages

An overview of the application team, including

- Team organizational charts that include a description of each team member organization and their role on the development team, including but not limited to development firms, architecture and engineering firms, legal counsel, financial partners, commercial tenants, investors, shareholders, and other contractors, service providers, or partners, as applicable
- Resumes of key personnel who will work on the project, including a short overview of background, years of experience, educational background, and employment history for each primary individual
- Identification of a single point of contact for future communications related to this procurement, including contact person’s name, title, organization, address, telephone number, and email address
- Proposed structure of the development entity (e.g. LLC), including members and roles

For applicants responding as individuals or partial teams, please indicate which personnel roles will need to be procured after selection, as well as a brief description of your experience compiling development teams.

As applicable, please indicate whether team members demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion, including through promoting MBEs, FBEs, and SBEs.

An MBE, FBE, or SBE may also apply and be selected to this procurement independently. Those that meet the qualifications of the RFQ are encouraged to submit their qualifications for consideration. For an MBE, FBE, or SBE that plans to participate on a contract, AUD encourages but does not require certification as an MBE, FBE, or SBE and registration with the City of Atlanta’s Office of Contract Compliance M/FBE Register. AUD defines SBEs as businesses whose gross sales do not exceed \$2.5 million in the recent calendar or fiscal year.

7. Key Personnel Project Experience – 6 pages

Please highlight 2 to 3 projects on which key personnel of the respondent team have played a central or lead role that best highlights the team’s ability to achieve the Development Priorities and responsibilities (AUD Partnership Structure Section) of the redevelopment. These projects may include

- Experience with historic preservation, especially in regards to Historic Tax Credit financing
- Engagement with public or quasi-public entities like AUD
- Developments in emerging markets like Lakewood Heights
- Mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-tenure developments
- Public-Private Developments with creative ownership and financing structures

Each project example should include, at a minimum:

- Name and location of the project
- Site plans, massings, renderings, and/or photographs
- Respondent team members involved on the project and role
- Other firms involved on the project
- Scope (land area, gross square footage by program/product type, etc.)
- Total development cost (excluding land)
- Development timeline, and
- Details of the project financing, including respondents role in securing financing

8. Additional Personnel Project Experience – 6 pages

Please provide an overview of an additional 3-5 projects that highlight the experience of other personnel from the respondent team. Each project should include, at a minimum

- Name and location of the project
- Respondent team personnel involved in the project and role
- Visual or textual material that demonstrates team member contribution
- Other firms involved in the project
- Scope of development

9. Financial Qualifications and Capacity – 4 pages

Respondents must provide evidence of their team’s financial capacity and demonstrate their financial ability to undertake the project. For respondents that are not publicly traded, audited financial statements in U.S. dollars for the three most recent years must be provided. If the Respondent is a joint venture or partnership, financial statements for each partner are required. In addition to financial statements, additional evidence shall include two financial references, a letter from a financial institution with whom the Respondent has a relationship, and the identification of sources of equity or debt capital that may or will be used for the Project.

Additionally, Respondents should disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest.

10. Appendix – Up to 10 pages max

Respondents may include as an appendix a portfolio of past projects, further demonstration of past partnerships, highlights from key and additional personnel, and any other material that may serve to provide additional context to the evaluation committee. Members of the evaluation committee may use materials in the Appendix for reference but will not base scoring off of materials that only appear in the Appendix.

Additionally, Respondents should disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest.

Contact

For all correspondence related to this procurement concerning the Lakewood Heights Elementary Project, please direct your communications to the designated point of contact listed below:

John Majors
Chief Executive Officer, AUD
admin@atlurbdevco.com

Under no circumstances should a respondent or its representatives engage in any form of communication with individuals from the City of Atlanta, AUD, or APS during procurement, starting from the issuance of the RFQ until the submission deadline.

Unauthorized contact of this nature may result in the rejection of a submission.

For additional information, including all due diligence documents collected up to this point and relevant attachments for this procurement, please refer to the following website: www.atlurbdevco.com

Anticipated Timeline

Publish / Release RFQ	06/30/2025
Property Tour, Q&A*	7/16/2025
Question & Response Period	Ends 07/30/2025
AUD Responses to Questions to be Posted	08/13/2025 at 5 PM ET
Qualification Package Due	08/22/2025 at 11:59 PM ET
1st Round Interviews**	Week of 09/29/2025
2nd Round of Interviews (as needed)	Week of 10/06/2025
Announcement / Publish	Week of 10/20/2025

* - to RSVP for the site tour, please register at <https://AUDLakewoodTour.eventbrite.com>. All participants must sign the attached APS site tour waiver and release form.

** - Applicants that pass the first round of evaluation will be invited for interviews in the months of September/October. Please ensure that team leadership is flexible. If there is a time that absolutely does not work for your team, please indicate it in the executive summary of your response. AUDC will attempt to respect availability of applicants as necessary and able.

Submission Requirements Table

SUBMISSION COMPONENT	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF 8.5x11 PAGES
1. COVER LETTER	1
2. TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
4. PROJECT VISION	6
5. PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN	2
6. TEAM ORGANIZATION	2
7. KEY PERSONNEL EXPERIENCE	6
8. ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL EXPERIENCE	6
9. FINANCIAL QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY	4
10. APPENDIX	10
TOTAL	40

The deadline for submission of responses is 11:59pm Eastern Time on August 22, 2025.

Responses received after the deadline will be considered late and will not be opened. Qualifications packages must be emailed to admin@atlurbdevco.com.

Scoring Criteria

Team – 50 points

- Team Composition
- Personnel Experience
- Experience with similar projects

Applicants responding as individuals or as partial teams will be evaluated on their demonstrated ability to put together a development team capable of delivering the Project.

Project Vision and Narrative – 30 points

- Alignment of vision with site, neighborhood, and AUD goals
- Creativity of vision
- Viability of vision

Ability to execute – 20 points

- Financial qualifications
- Execution plan
- Team Capacity

Attachments

Attached to this RFQ are the following exhibits.

APS Site Tour Waiver & Release Form

Lakewood Heights Master Plan

Lakewood Heights One-Pager Fact Sheet

Site Boundary Survey

Existing Site Plan

Building Conditions Assessment

**Standards For Rehabilitation & Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
(Appendices from Building Conditions Assessment)**

DCA Standards for Rehabilitation

AUD Private Enterprise Agreement (PEA)

Draft Rezoning Legislation

Rezoning Plan

