Department of
CITY PLANNING

OFFICE OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE REPORT 2021 UPDATE

Released November 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Atlanta has seen substantial demographic change since 2010, accompanied by major public investments and rising rents and home prices. This report serves as an update to the Neighborhood Change Report released in early 2021 by reporting on findings from the newest American Community Survey.

- In the Neighborhood Change Report, Neighborhood Statistical Areas (NSAs) were classified among four types based on their changing composition of low-income (LI) and non-low-income (NLI) residents.

  - Growth NSAs: gained NLI and LI residents.

  - LI Displacement NSAs: gained NLI residents, but lost LI residents.

  - LI Concentration NSAs: lost NLI residents, and gained LI residents.

  - Population Decline NSAs: lost both NLI and LI residents.

- A newly released American Community Survey allows us to update the report which had measured change between 2010 and 2018. In this update, we examine if the categories listed above would be different if measuring change between 2010—2018 and 2010—2019.

- Many NSAs that changed category when measuring change from 2010—2019 instead of from 2010—2018 did so due to minor changes in their composition that nevertheless mattered for categorization purposes.

- The few NSAs that changed category where the differences appear more substantial were the NSAs that were categorized as "No Substantial Change" 2010—2018 and as either "Growth" or "LI Displacement" 2010—2019.

  - This may be related to a key citywide trend observed from 2018—2019. While population growth in Atlanta has previously included both LI and NLI residents, from 2018—2019, the city saw a decline in LI residents and an increase in NLI residents.

  - From 2018—2019, there was an increase of about 18,000 NLI residents and a decline of about 10,000 LI residents. Therefore, we would expect to see changes in the Growth and LI Displacement categories as noted above as individual neighborhoods have a decline in LI residents.

A NEWLY RELEASED AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ALLOWS US TO UPDATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE REPORT. IN THIS REPORT, WE ASSESS NEW DATA ON NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE SINCE 2010 AND CHANGES TO OUR 2020 REPORT.

INTRODUCTION

Since the release of the City of Atlanta's Neighborhood Change report, a new American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate has been released. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) tabulates ACS estimates to Atlanta's Neighborhood Statistical Areas (NSAs) which represent Atlanta's 103 neighborhoods. The data presented below discusses the differences seen in neighborhood change typologies when measuring neighborhood change using the 2015–2019 ACS instead of the 2014–2018 ACS.

WHILE POPULATION GROWTH IN ATLANTA HAS PREVIOUSLY INCLUDED BOTH LI AND NLI RESIDENTS, FROM 2018–2019, THE CITY SAW A DECLINE IN LI RESIDENTS AND AN INCREASE IN NLI RESIDENTS.

FINDINGS

Table 1 summarizes the updated NSA categories when measuring the changes in the low-income (LI) and non-low-income (NLI) composition of neighborhoods. The most frequent changes were Growth NSAs becoming Low-Income Displacement NSAs and No Substantial Change NSAs becoming Growth NSAs. In the Neighborhood Change Report, we discussed the likelihood that Growth NSAs will become LI Displacement NSAs if the constraints related to cost and supply of housing lead to neighborhoods being home to fewer low-income residents. However, as detailed below in Tables 2 and 3, when reviewing the changes that occurred to shift a NSA category, the Growth to LI Displacement change occurred on the margins whereas other differences were more substantial.

TABLE 1: NSAS THAT HAD A DIFFERENT DESIGNATION BY TYPE OF CHANGE

Type of Change	Number of NSAs
LI Concentration → Population Decline	1
LI Concentration → No Substantial Change	1
LI Displacement → Growth	2
Growth → LI Displacement	5
No Substantial Change → LI Displacement	3
No Substantial Change → Growth	5

Source: ARC NSA ACS 5-year estimates, 2006—2010; 2014—2018; 2015—2019.
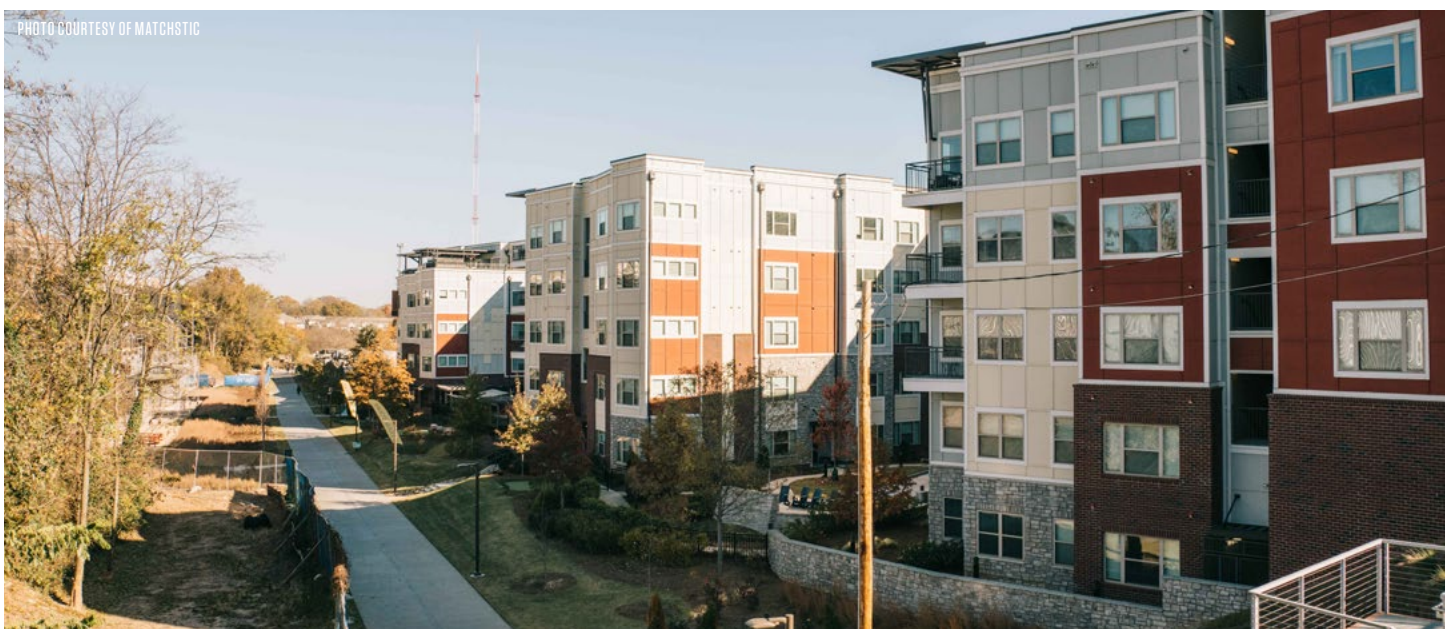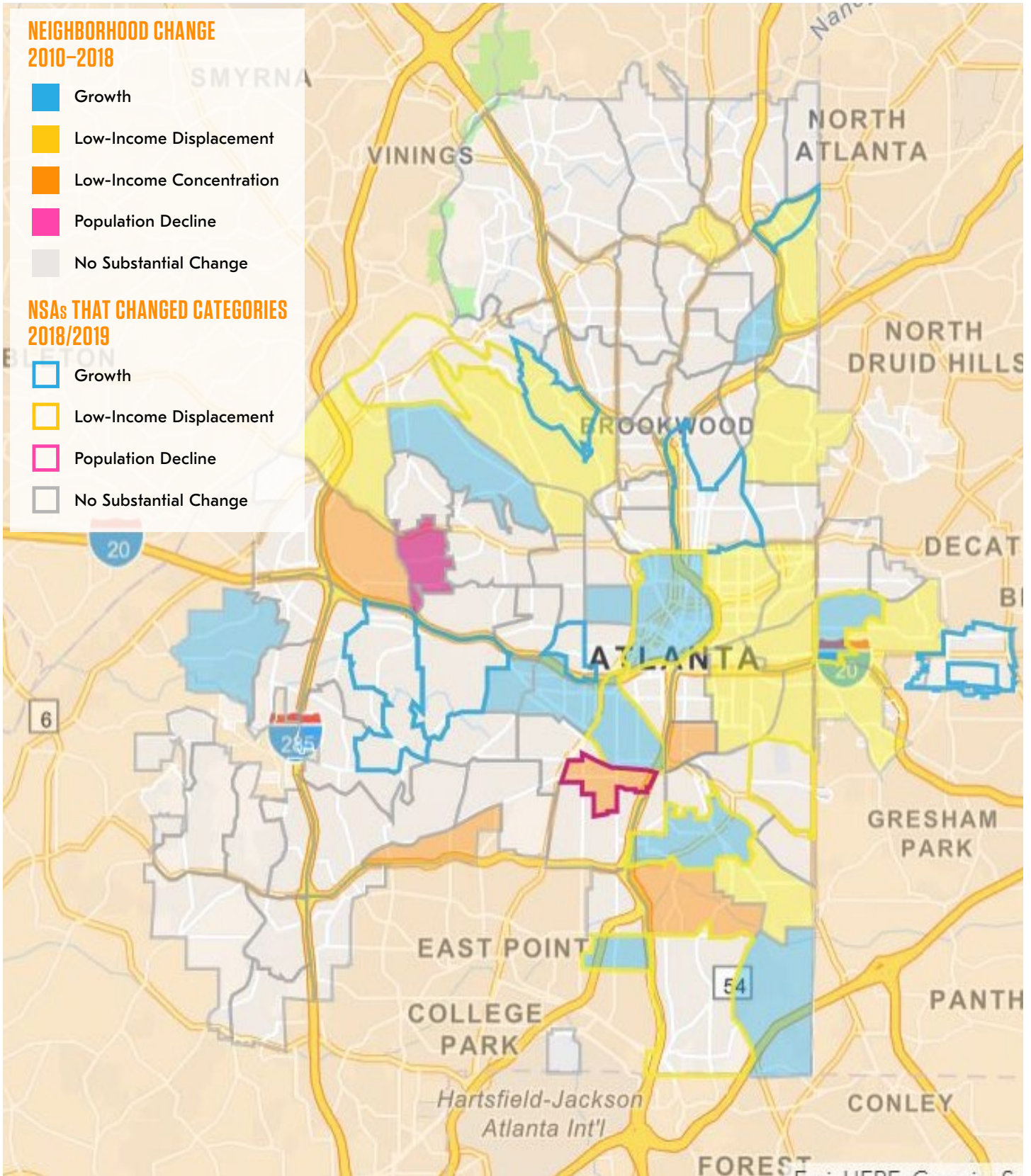

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATCHSTIC

Figure 1 displays where the NSAs that experienced some form of category difference from 2010–2018/19 are located and the new category when measuring change from 2010–2019. The changes in categorization to Growth or LI Displacement can be observed near to where new development and major public investments are occurring, for example near the BeltLine. In contrast, areas on the periphery of Atlanta like NSAs in the Southwest or Northwest did not see changes in NSA classification with the release of new data. Table 2 accompanies Figure 1 and displays the names of NSAs that saw a category change.

While there were differences observed when measuring change using the 2015–2019 ACS as opposed to the 2014–2018 ACS, the results in Table 3 suggest that in many cases these differences were not substantial. Table 3 documents the reasons why NSAs were categorized one way when change was measured 2010-2018 and another way when measured 2010–2019. For example, the two NSAs that went from LI Displacement in 2018 to Growth in 2019 did so because of an average difference in approximately 65 low-income residents, a relatively small number that is well within the margin of error. Similarly, the NSAs that went from Growth in 2018 to LI Displacement in 2019 did so because of a relatively small change in LI residents. Therefore, these changes in category from 2018 to 2019 should be noted to reflect minor compositional changes, or measurement error, that nevertheless mattered for the thresholds used in this study (i.e., a loss of low-income residents is considered low-income decline, whether the loss is 10 low-income residents or 1,000).

FIGURE 1: NSAs THAT HAD A DIFFERENT CATEGORY 2010–2018 AND 2010–2019 BY CHANGE TYPE

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE 2010–2018

- Growth
- Low-Income Displacement
- Low-Income Concentration
- Population Decline
- No Substantial Change

NSAs THAT CHANGED CATEGORIES 2018/2019

- Growth
- Low-Income Displacement
- Population Decline
- No Substantial Change

Source: ARC NSA ACS 5-year estimates, 2006–2010; 2014–2018; 2015–2019.

TABLE 2: NSAs THAT HAD DIFFERENT CATEGORIES 2010-2018 AND 2010-2019

NSA	2010—2018	2010—2019
Adair Park, Pittsburgh	Growth	Displacement
Ashview Heights, Harris Chiles, Just Us	No substantial change	Growth
Audobon Forest, Audobon Forest West, Chalet Woods, Harland Terrace, Peyton Forest, Westhaven	No substantial change	Growth
Beecher Hills, Florida Heights, Westwood Terrace	No substantial change	Growth
Benteen Park, Boulevard Heights, Custer/McDonough/Guice, State Facility, Woodland Hills	No substantial change	Displacement
Blair Villa/Poole Creek, Glenrose Heights, Orchard Knob, Rosedale Heights	No substantial change	Displacement
Bolton, Riverside, Whittier Mill Village	No substantial change	Displacement
Buckhead Heights, Lenox, Ridgedale Park	Displacement	Growth
Capitol View, Capitol View Manor	Concentration	Population Decline
Castleberry Hill, Downtown	Growth	Displacement
East Lake, The Villages at East Lake	No substantial change	Growth
Edgewood	Growth	Displacement
Hammond Park	Growth	Displacement
Lakewood Heights	Growth	Displacement
Midtown	No substantial change	Growth
Peoplestown	Concentration	No substantial change
Underwood Hills	No substantial change	Growth

Source: ARC NSA ACS 5-year estimates, 2006—2010; 2014—2018; 2015—2019.

The differences between the two ACS' look more considerable when examining the NSAs that went from No Substantial Change to LI Displacement or to Growth. On average, NSAs that went from No Substantial Change to LI Displacement saw a 28% increase in NLI residents (compared to 13% when measured from 2010—2018). Additionally, these neighborhoods saw an average 13-percentage point decline in LI residents, compared with a 6-percentage point decline when measured from 2010—2018. These compositional changes are relatively substantial and indicative of real differences in NSA conditions. Similarly, NSAs that were categorized as No Substantial Change from 2010—2018 that became Growth from 2010-2019 saw relatively large compositional differences. For example, these NSAs saw on average a 29% increase in NLI residents from 2010—2018 which jumped to 40% when measured from 2010—2019.

TABLE 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF NSAs THAT HAD A DIFFERENT DESIGNATION 2010-2018 AND 2010-2019

Type of Change	Key Difference	Magnitude of Difference
LI Concentration → Population Decline	• Lost LI residents rather than gained LI residents (1 NSA)	• Gained 250 LI residents 2010—2018 • Lost 4 LI residents 2010—2019
LI Concentration → No Substantial Change	• Did not see a >10% decline in NLI residents (1 NSA)	• 20% Decline in NLI residents 2010—2018 • 6% Decline in NLI residents 2010—2019
LI Displacement → Growth	• Gained LI residents rather than lost LI residents (2 NSAs)	• Average decline of 63 LI residents 2010—2018 • Average increase of 2 LI residents 2010—2019
Growth → LI Displacement	• Lost LI residents rather than gained LI residents (5 NSAs)	• Average increase of 121 LI residents 2010—2018 • Average decrease of 122 LI residents 2010—2019
No Substantial Change → LI Displacement	• Did see a >10% increase in NLI residents (2 NSAs) • Did see a >2 percentage point decline in LI residents (1 NSA)	• Average increase of 13% NLI residents 2010—2018 • Average increase of 28% NLI residents 2010—2019 • Average decline of 6 percentage point decline in LI 2010—2018 • Average 13 percentage point decline in LI residents 2010—2019
No Substantial Change → Growth	• Did see a >10% change in NLI residents and >2 percentage point change in LI residents (1 NSA) • Did see a >2 percentage point change in LI residents (4 NSAs)	• Average increase of 29% NLI residents 2010—2018 • Average increase of 40% NLI residents 2010—2019 • Average increase of 1 percentage point in LI 2010—2018 • Average 4 percentage point decline in LI residents 2010—2019

*Source: ARC NSA ACS 5-year estimates, 2006-2010; 2014-18; 2015-2019.*

In sum, the differences when measuring NSA change from 2010–2018 as compared to 2010–2019 occurred both on the margins (for example, NSAs that went from LI Displacement to Growth) and likely represented real compositional differences in NSAs (for example, in NSAs that went from No Substantial Change to Growth). Less substantial differences mean that the change in category was due to small differences on the margins of categories (i.e., a relatively small decline in the low-income population) whereas more substantial differences mean that the change in category was likely due to a more substantial change in the composition of the NSA.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG LEVINE/YOUTUBE

MAJOR PUBLIC INVESTMENTS UPDATE

Since the release of the Neighborhood Change Report, the Westside Park has been completed and opened to the public in August 2021. This greenspace that is 280 acres in the city is another major public investment that may spur neighborhood change. In March 2021, in anticipation of the increase in home prices that are often associated with major public investments, the City Council approved the Westside Park Housing Overlay Ordinance. This ordinance seeks to ensure that as new development occurs around the Westside Park, a portion of the housing will be affordable to low-income residents. The overlay covers the neighborhoods of Grove Park, Center Hill and Carey Park (see map, right) and includes requirements for both rental and for-sale housing. As Atlanta continues to see new development coupled with key public investments like the Westside Park, policy tools like the affordability overlay are important.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA LEMOS
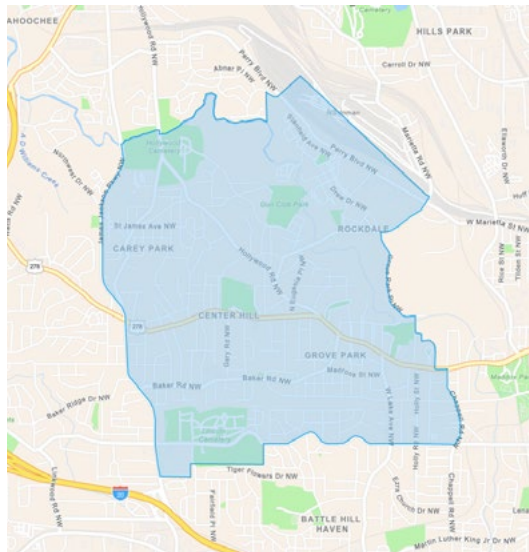
HOUSING SUPPLY AND LI DISPLACEMENT NSAs

As Atlanta continues to see an increase in its population, it will be important to ensure that housing supply, at a range of price points, exists. When demand for housing is outpaced by the supply of housing, this can drive up the costs of housing for residents. To address the inadequate supply of housing in Atlanta, the Department of City Planning is supporting several policy solutions that increase housing supply and increase the diversity of housing choices in the city. These include allowing more types of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in many parts of the city, increasing gentle-density near transit, and preserving some public land for permanently affordable housing. These policy proposals allow for a greater supply of housing at a range of price points, and create more housing options for residents in Atlanta. These policies are particularly important to addressing population growth that we see in many neighborhoods where home prices are rising. Growth NSAs, where there has been an increase in LI residents and NLI residents, are constantly at risk of becoming LI Displacement NSAs if housing supply cannot keep up with the demand that population change is placing on them. Further, as we see in this 2018—2019 update, NSAs that had previously experienced No Substantial Change are also places where there may be growth that can leave low-income residents behind. Increasing the housing supply in these neighborhoods is critical as well. In sum, tackling the housing supply problem, including supplying diverse housing types at and below market rate, is key to providing the housing needed in Atlanta to residents across neighborhoods and prevent low-income displacement.

CONCLUSION

With the new data released from the ACS and tabulated by the ARC to Atlanta's Neighborhood Statistical Areas, we can revisit the categories of change measured in the Neighborhood Change Report released in early 2021. In the report, we suggested that it will be important to monitor Growth NSAs because those are places where there has been an increase in both LI and NLI residents. However, without policies that support this growth in residents across the income spectrum, it is likely that these neighborhoods will become LI Displacement neighborhoods. And indeed, in this review of neighborhood change using the most recent ACS data, we see that NSAs that went from Growth to LI Displacement were the most common (along with No Substantial Change to Growth). However, it is also important to consider what accounted for the change in category. And here we see that the NSAs that went from Growth to LI Displacement did so due to relatively minor population changes. In contrast, NSAs that went from No Substantial Change to LI Displacement or Growth had larger compositional changes. This demonstrates that the Growth and LI Displacement NSAs continue to be dynamic and subject to compositional change. Particularly, as we saw Atlanta lose LI residents from 2018—2019 while gaining NLI residents, we expect to see more neighborhoods losing LI populations. As Atlanta grows, to reduce LI Displacement, it is important to support policies that increase housing of all types which can provide housing at various price points and stabilize neighborhoods.

TACKLING HOUSING SUPPLY, INCLUDING SUPPLYING DIVERSE HOUSING TYPES AT AND BELOW MARKET RATE, IS KEY TO MEETING ATLANTA'S HOUSING NEEDS AND AND PREVENTING LOW-INCOME DISPLACEMENT.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AARON COURY

"AS ATLANTA GROWS, TO REDUCE DISPLACEMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT POLICIES THAT CAN PROVIDE HOUSING AT VARIOUS PRICE POINTS AND STABILIZE NEIGHBORHOODS."

–FROM THE CITY OF ATLANTA'S NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE REPORT UPDATE