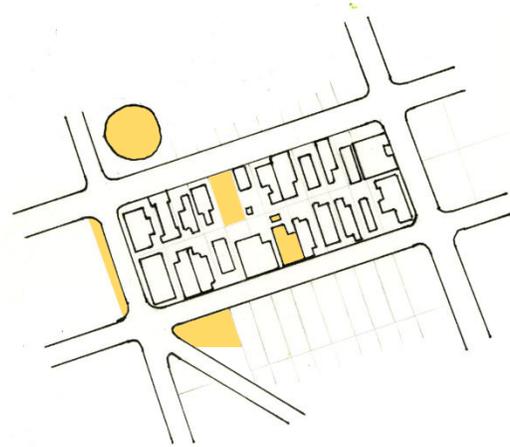


# WE OWN IT

Community-Owned Places  
for sustainable urban development



**Robert Ungar**

Master of Urban Design

UC Berkeley, CED

**PROPERTY  
IS INTENDED  
TO SERVE  
LIFE**



Dr. Martin Luther King, 1967  
*Trumpet of Conscience (p.56-57)*

WE  
OWN  
IT

This project proposes the establishment of community-owned networks comprising of under-used properties in cities.

The self-governed network model will be examined in rapidly changing East Oakland, to propose a vision for community-led urban design.

# Abstract

Some of the pressing challenges faced by people and cities around the world – social inequity, gentrification, climate adaptation, market failures or bureaucratic gridlock, could be tackled faster and more sustainably in partnership with well-organized communities. Lack of active communities in urban development diminishes people’s ability to participate the stewardship of places and their sense of belonging.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are becoming a viable model to secure housing affordability in market-oriented economies, stabilizing neighbourhoods with a model of shared equity ownership and land stewardship. CLTs can evolve to be a promising model to achieve additional community goals beyond affordable housing: (1) Strengthening local identity in Urban Renewal; (2) Improving Environmental Performance; (3) Activating un-used spaces; (4) Community capacity building; (5) Empowering local leadership; (6) Stewardship as a social adhesive and platform for shared responsibility.

This thesis project proposes the establishment of community-owned networks comprising of available spaces (vacant lots, parking lots, underused city streets, public infrastructure, brown fields and non-conforming lots). The urban design possibilities in a CLT ownership model for infill development is examined in East Oakland, expanding on Oakland Community Land Trust (OakCLT) existing operation. Through policy, financing and design, the project explores ways in which community-owned spaces transform an underdeveloped corridor to become an armature for sustainable development, in a path towards delightful and resilient cities which belong to their residents.



Oakland Arson, 2017. Source: San Francisco Chronicle

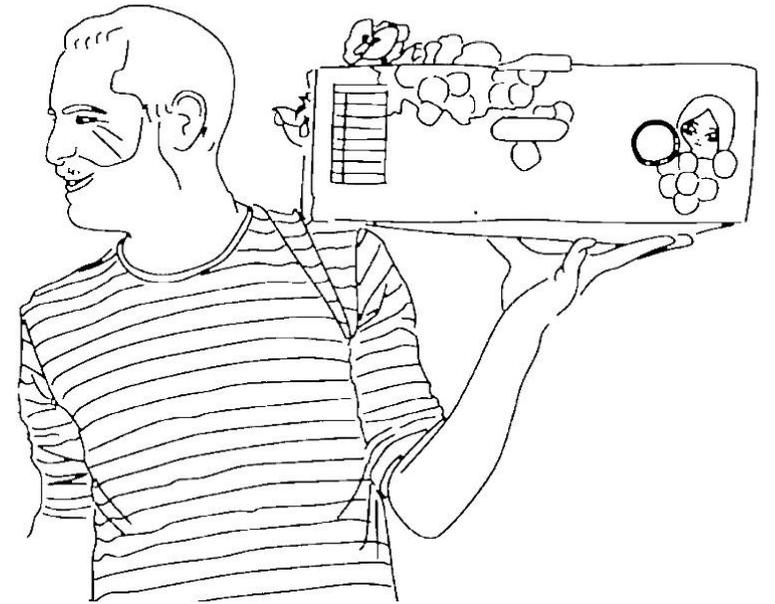
**“Development  
Ruins Our  
Community”**



**“We need  
more homes!”**

# Not Public Not Private

Social Urban Forms





Co Living



POPS

Hudson Yards. Image: BIG



Community Gardens / Forests

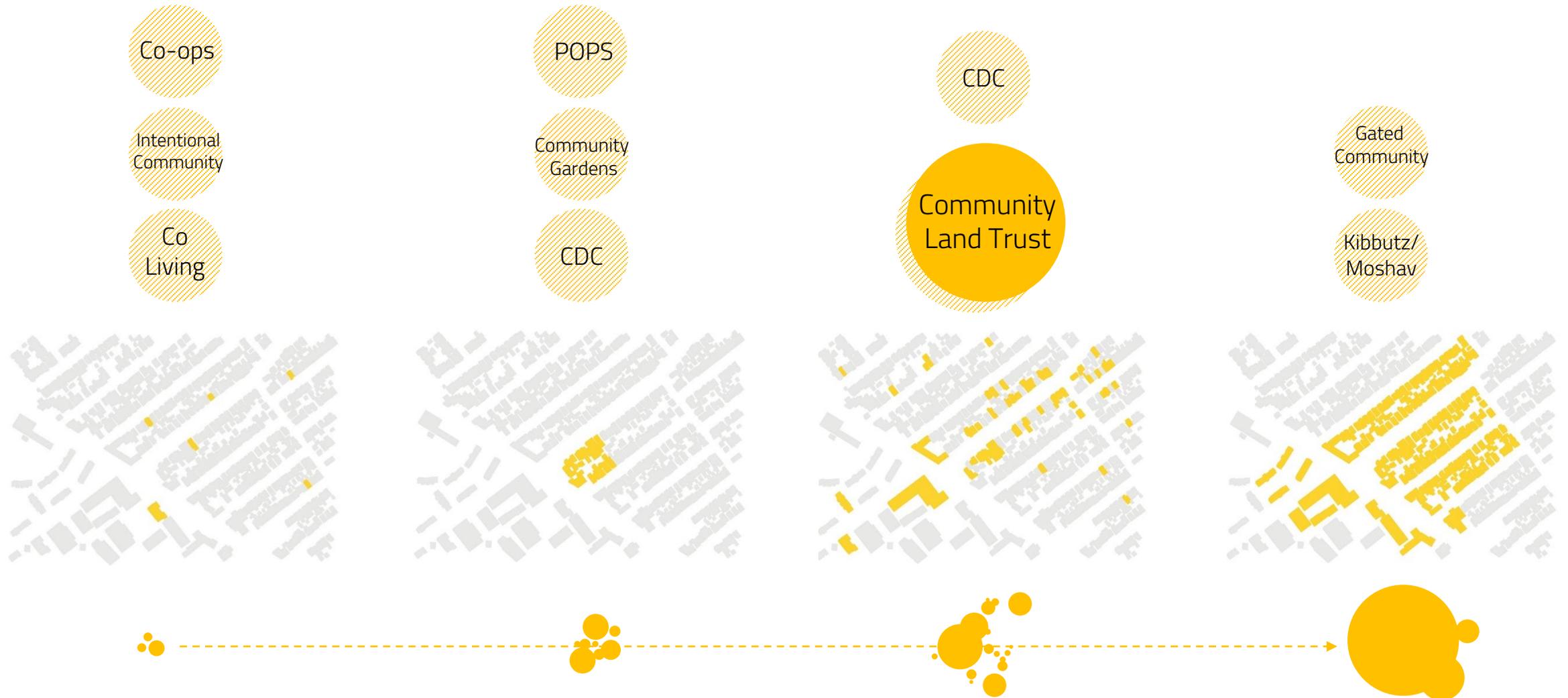
Tel-Aviv Food Forest. Image: Author



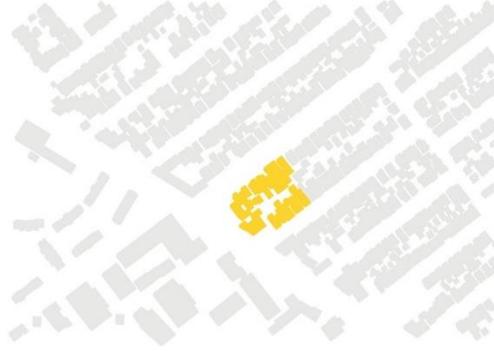
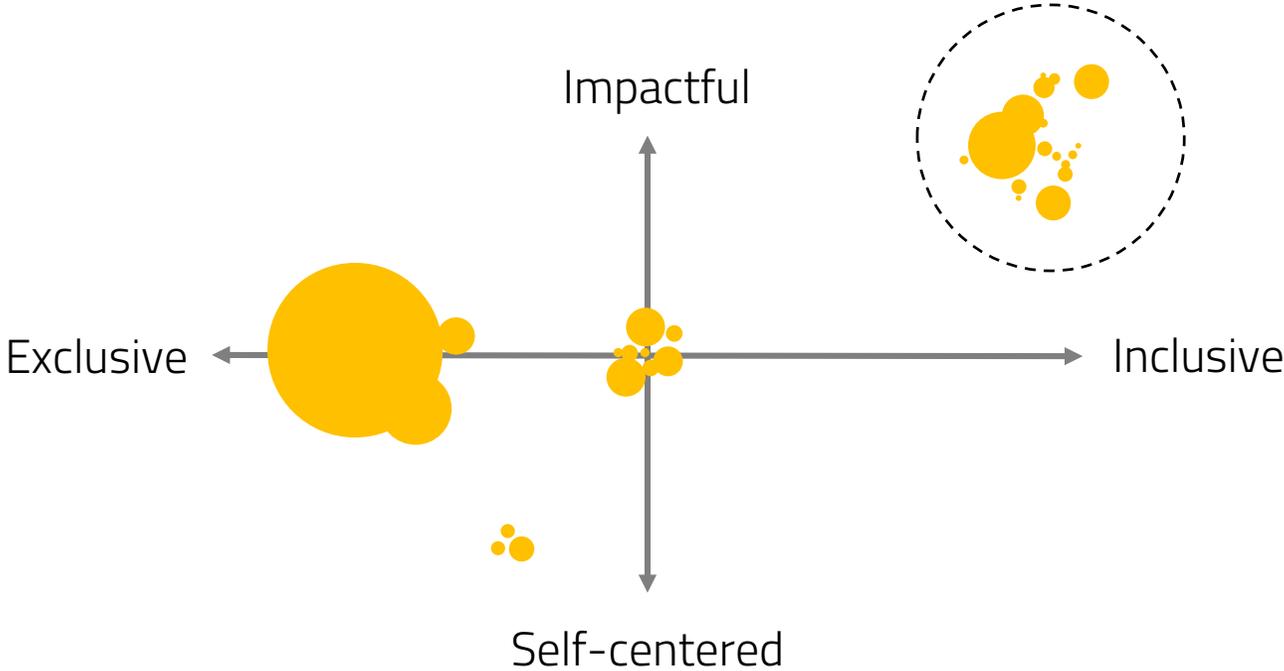
Kibbutz/ Moshav

Moshav Nahalal, Israel. Image: Zeev Stein

# Social Urban Forms



In size and dispersal, looking for  
**a Porous Cluster**

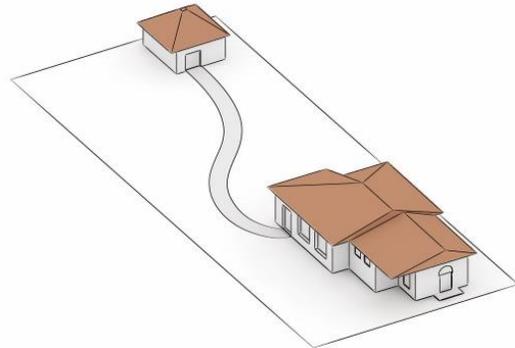


# Community Land Trusts

For locally-owned  
neighbourhoods

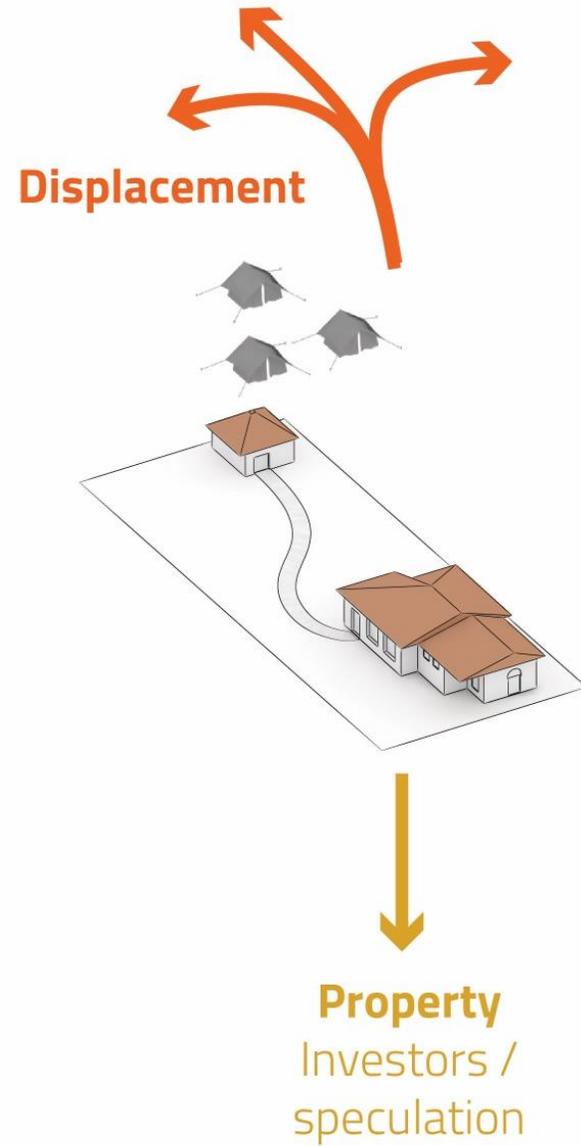


Today

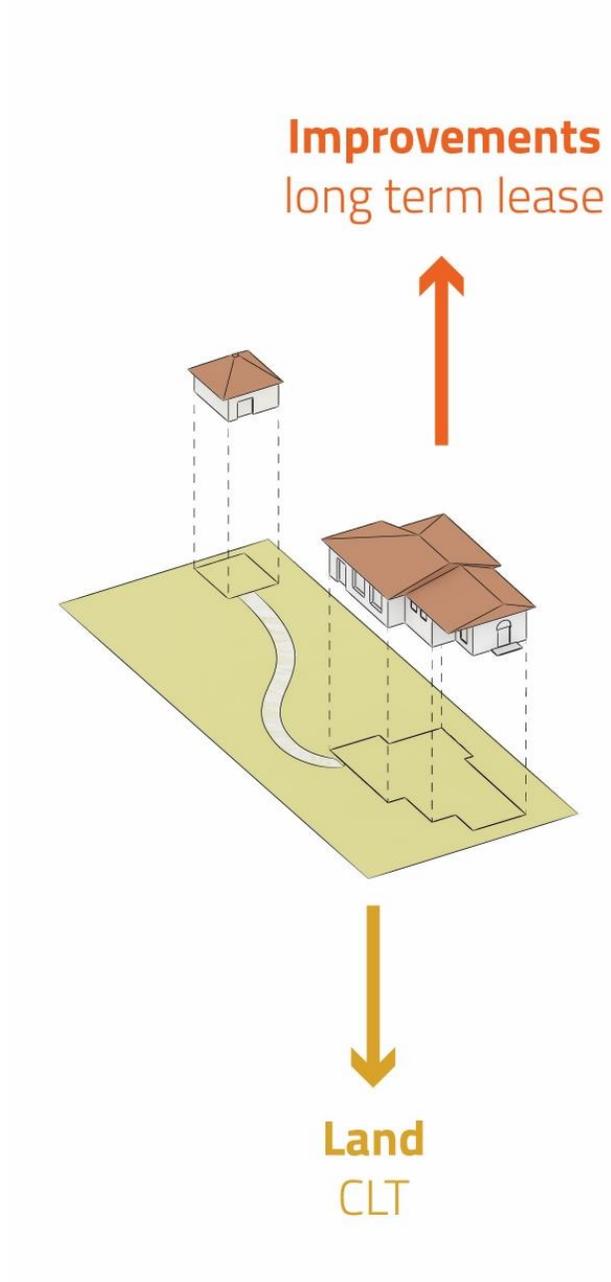


**Property**  
homeowner

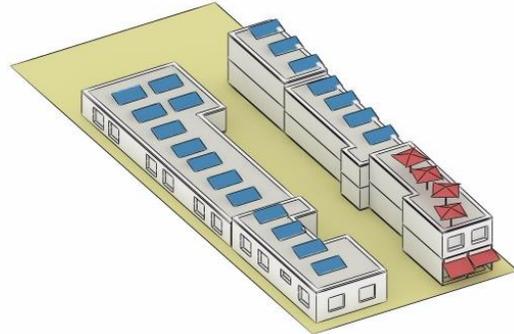
**Unregulated  
market**



**CLT  
Model**



**Community  
Benefits**



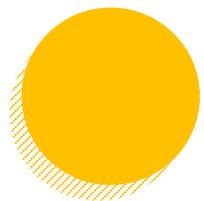
**Developer  
CLT**

Local  
economy

Gentrification  
resilience

Climate  
resilience

Densification



# New Communities

First CLT in US - Georgia, 1969



Slater King, Robert Swann, Marion King, Fay Bennett, founders of New Communities Inc.. Trip to Israel, 1968



Holly Square Teen Club + Retail, Denver, CO -- OZ Architecture



Sawmill. Albuquerque, NM



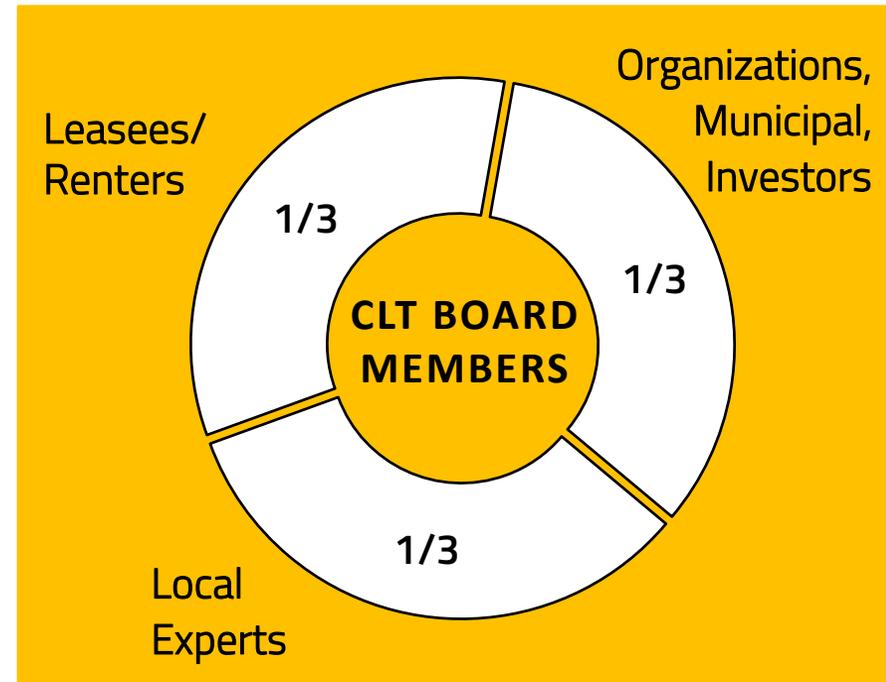
Urban Renewal - Residential + Retail , Mountain View, CA



Oakland Avenue Artist Coalition, Detroit, MI

# CLT Governance

- Non-profit organization
- Tripartite structure, 1/3 residents
- Ownership + stewardship of land
- Successful model for long term housing stability
- Non-housing CLTs – preliminary steps in US + UK
- Local capacity building



# Benefits for CLT-led Development

- Local identity in urban renewal
- Community capacity building – local entrepreneurship
- Path to leadership
- Activate under-used space
- Improving environmental performance
- Stewardship as social adhesive

# Policy Changes

## Zoning

**Community  
Development  
Priority Zone**

**Flexible land use  
designations in  
priority zone**

**Granting  
Public land  
to CLTs**

**Brownfield  
activation  
easements**

## Financing

**Zero-interest  
loans for CLT  
acquisitions**

**Impermeable  
surface fee**

**Community  
Benefits fee  
for new  
development**

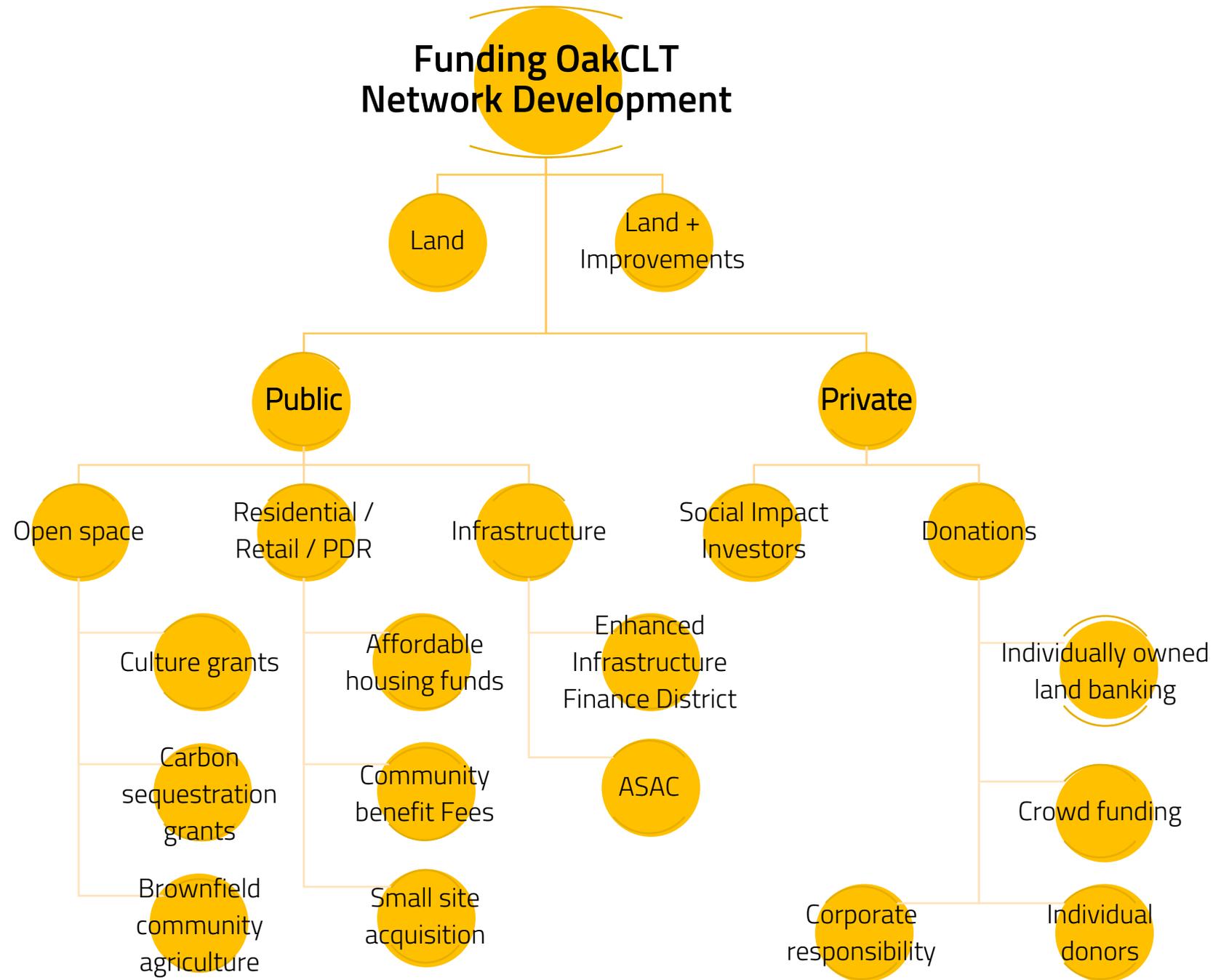
**TIF - Tax  
Increment  
Financing**

**Enhanced  
Infrastructure  
Finance  
District**

# Funding

Possible funding streams

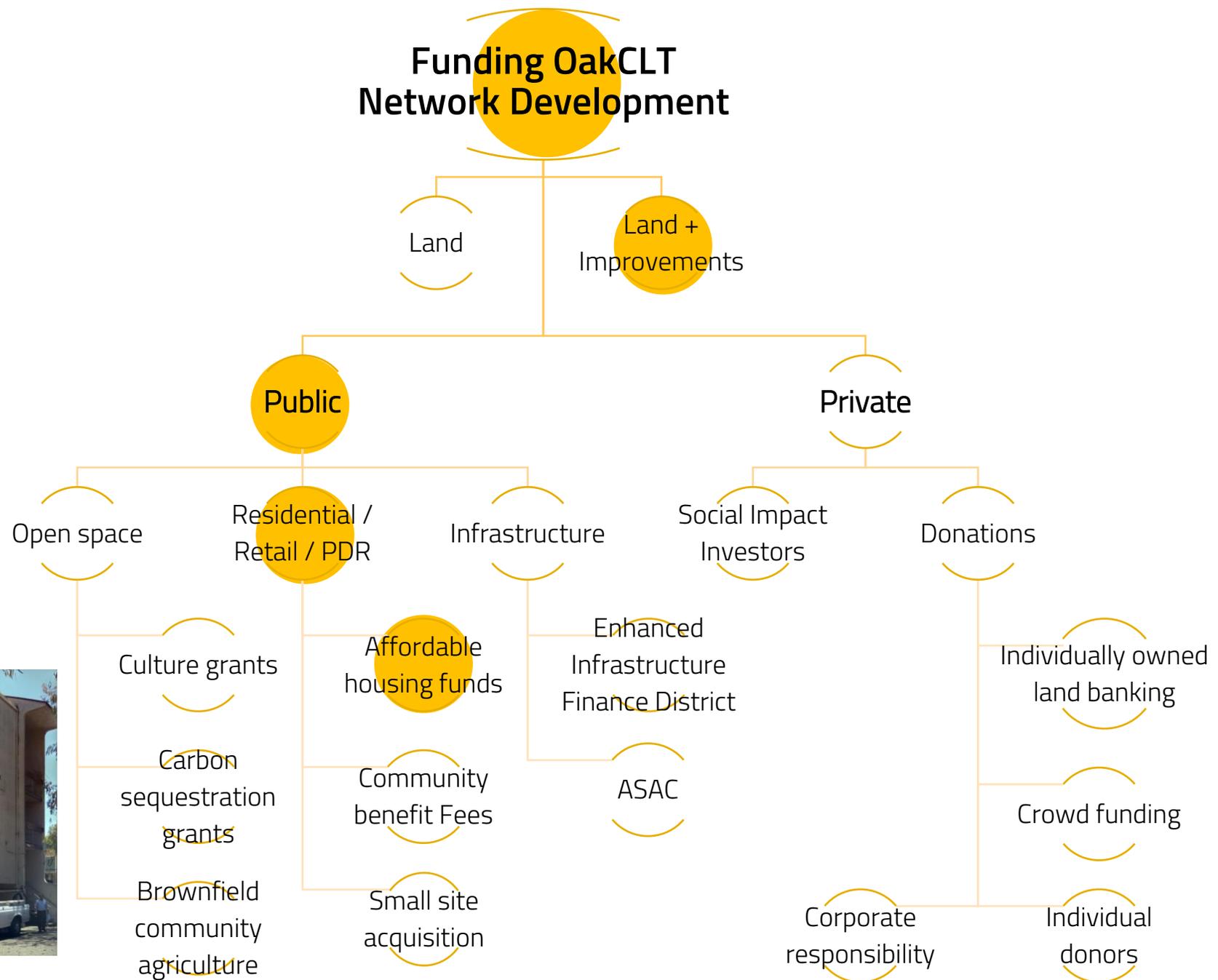
Mixed Funding = resilience



# Funding

Case study 1

## Funding OakCLT Network Development



OakCLT 15 unit property, 9<sup>th</sup> ave.



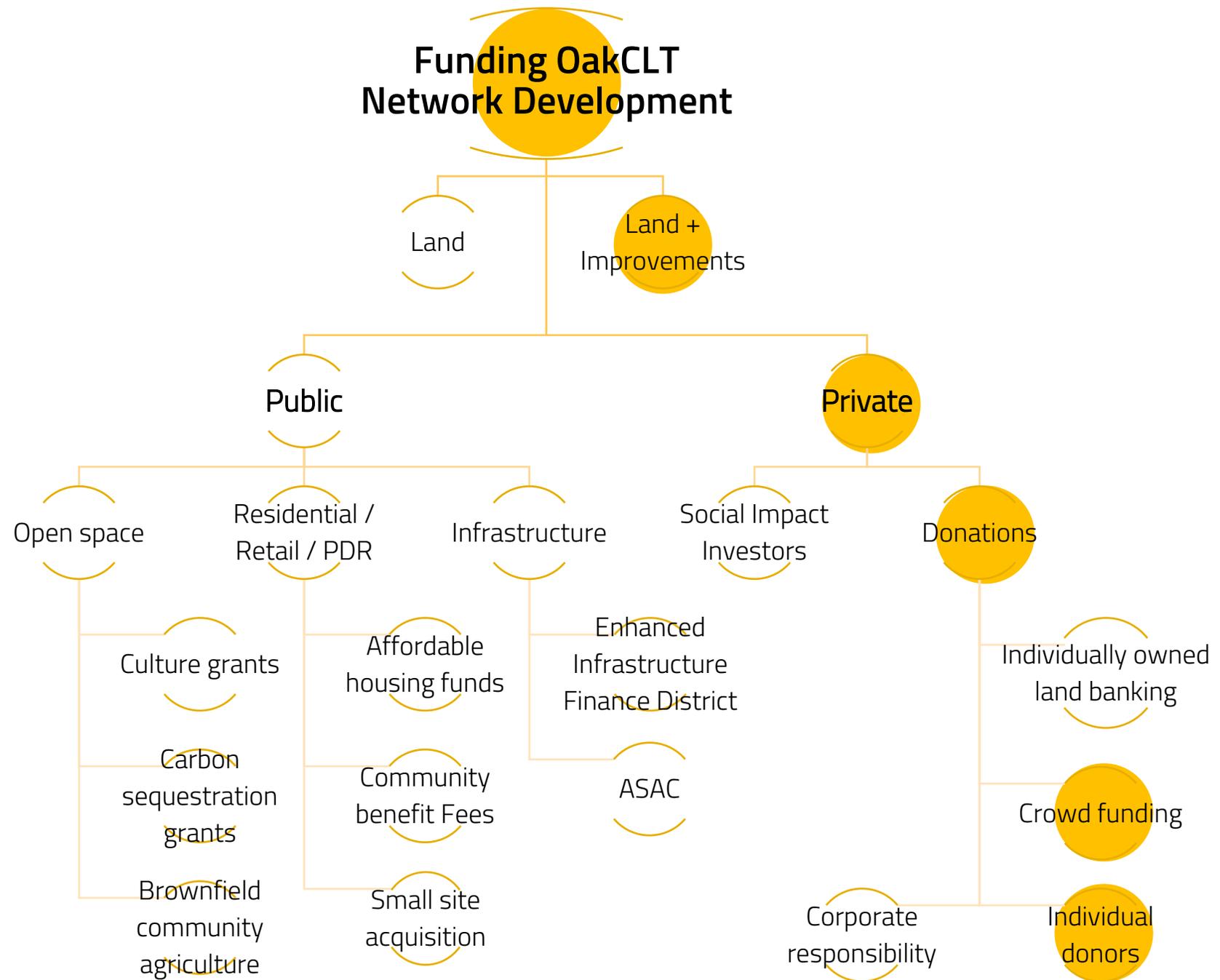
# Funding

## Case study 2

Hasta Muerte,  
OakCLT mixed use property, Fruitvale ave.



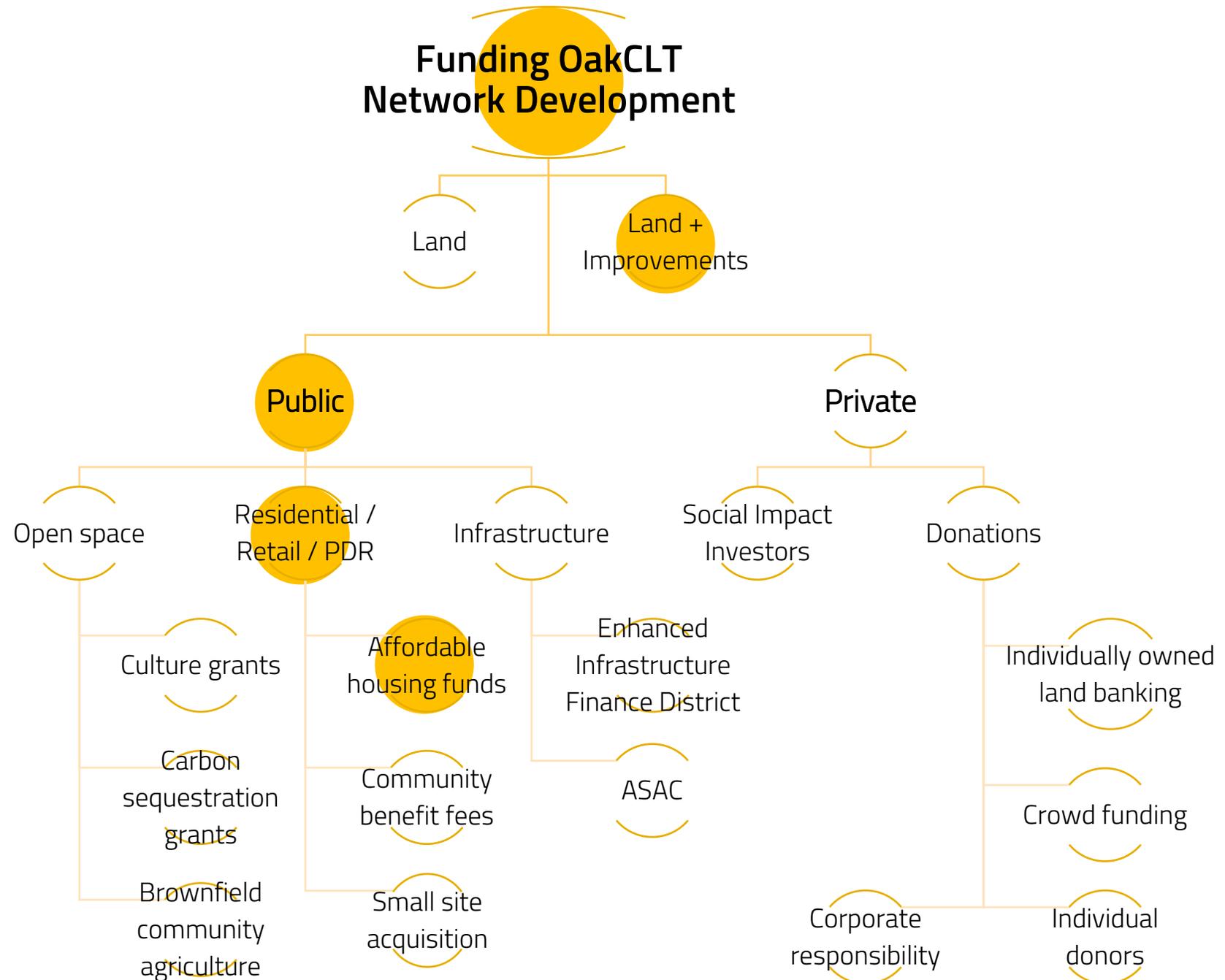
## Funding OakCLT Network Development



# Funding

## Case study 3

Single family house on 23<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Obtained by OakCLT in 2010 under Federal  
Neighborhood Stabilization Program  
funding from the City of Oakland



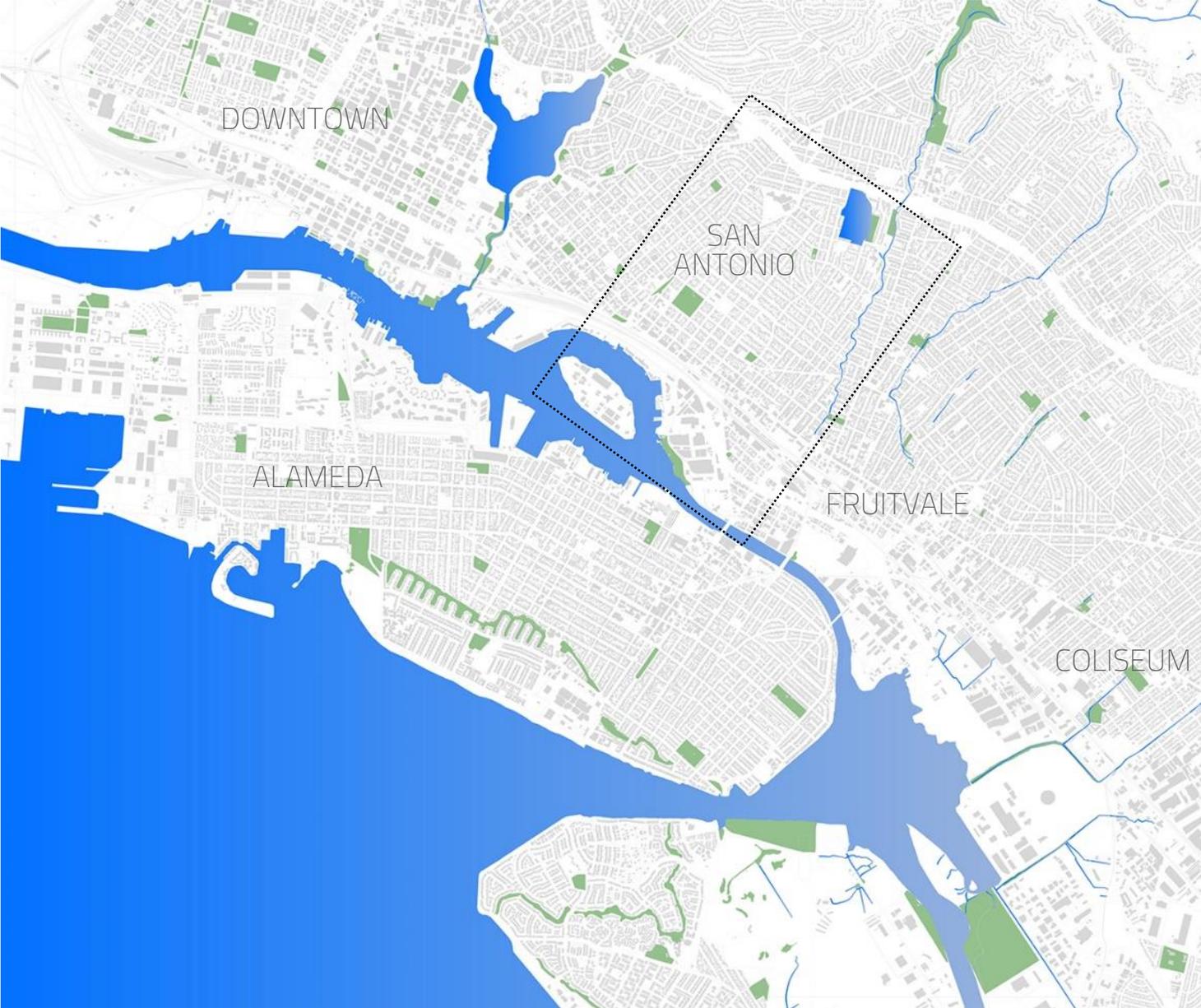


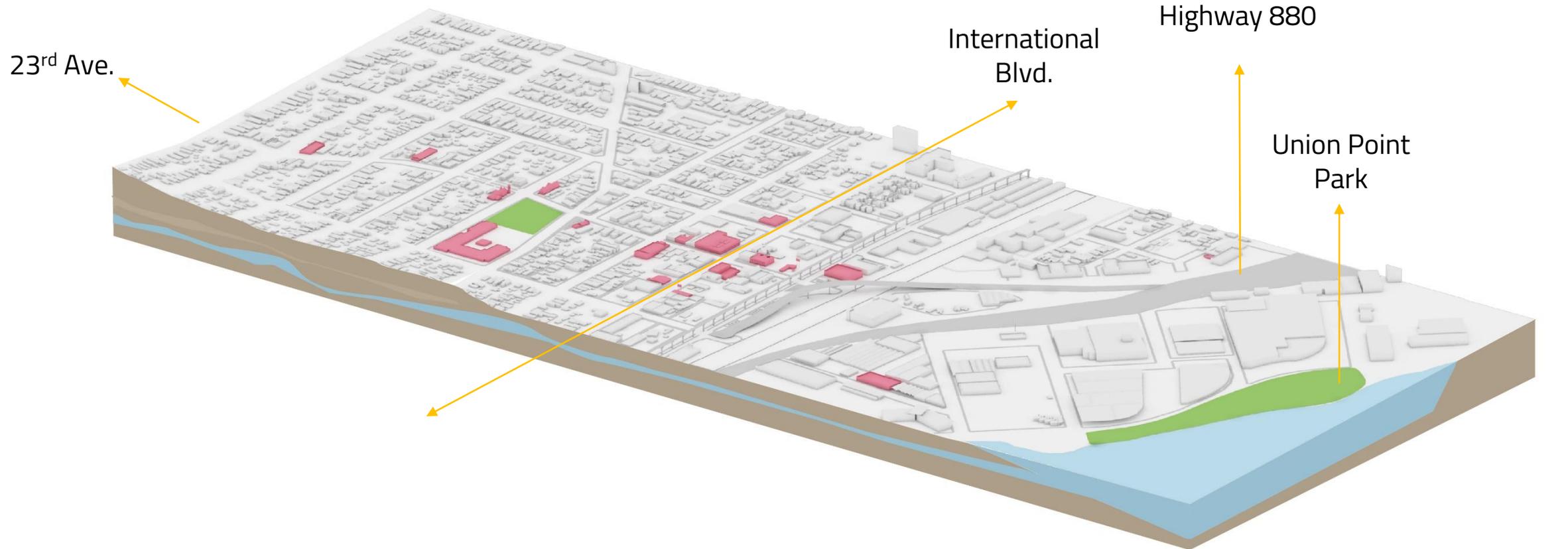
# East Oakland

Rancho San Antonio

# East Oakland

Rancho San Antonio





23<sup>rd</sup> Ave.

International  
Blvd.

Highway 880

Union Point  
Park

● Community  
Places



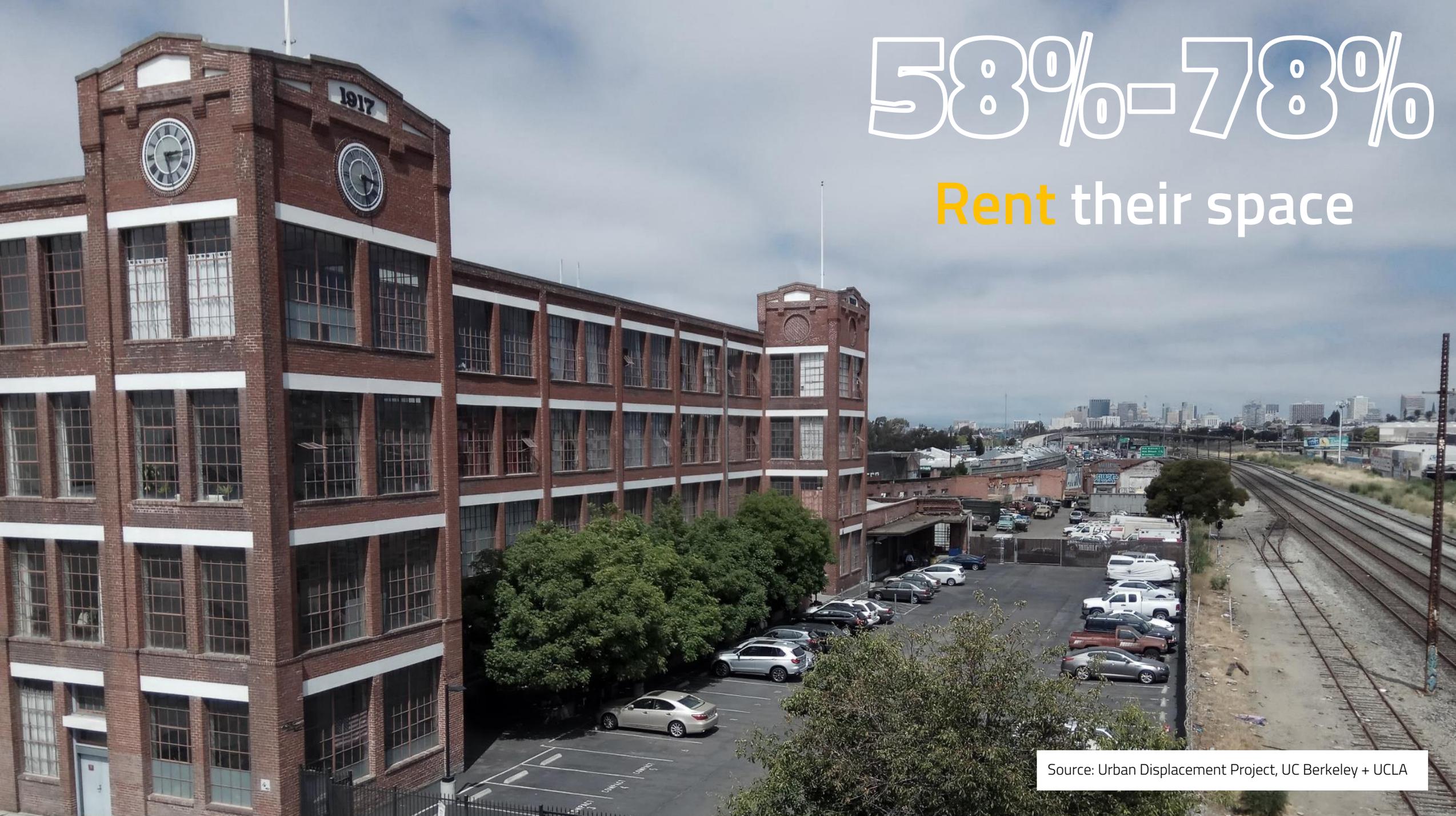
1/3

of African-Americans  
**displaced** in 10 years

# +11%

Home prices rose  
in **one** year



An aerial photograph of a large, multi-story brick industrial building. The building features a prominent clock tower on the left side with the year '1917' inscribed above it. The building has numerous windows and a flat roof. In front of the building is a parking lot with several cars parked. To the right of the parking lot, there are railroad tracks. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a cloudy sky.

58%-78%

Rent their space

Source: Urban Displacement Project, UC Berkeley + UCLA



TOP 20%

Bay Area business  
gentrification areas

Transit to  
Downtown

5.2

miles

53

minutes



15 Years to **approve**  
adjacent project

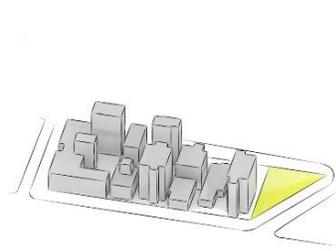


4,000

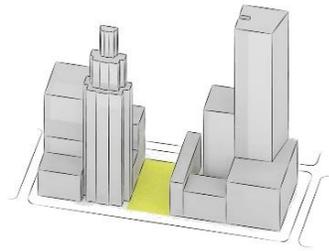
Vacant lots  
in Oakland

**Get the Land**

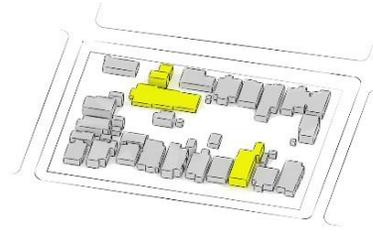




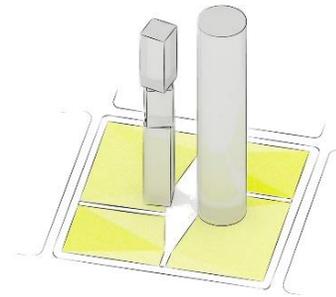
Remnant Lot



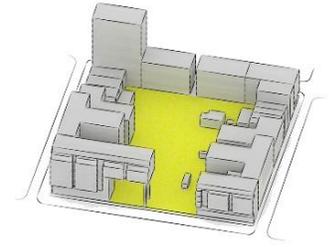
Passage



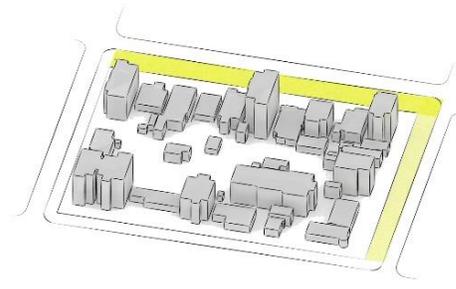
Problematic Properties



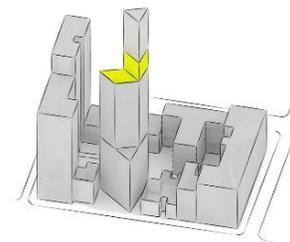
Plaza



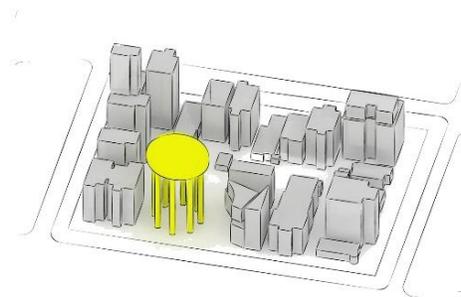
Courtyard



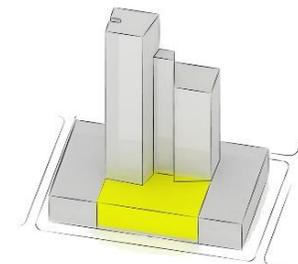
Sidewalk + Parking Lane



Terrace



Utility Building



Ground Floor

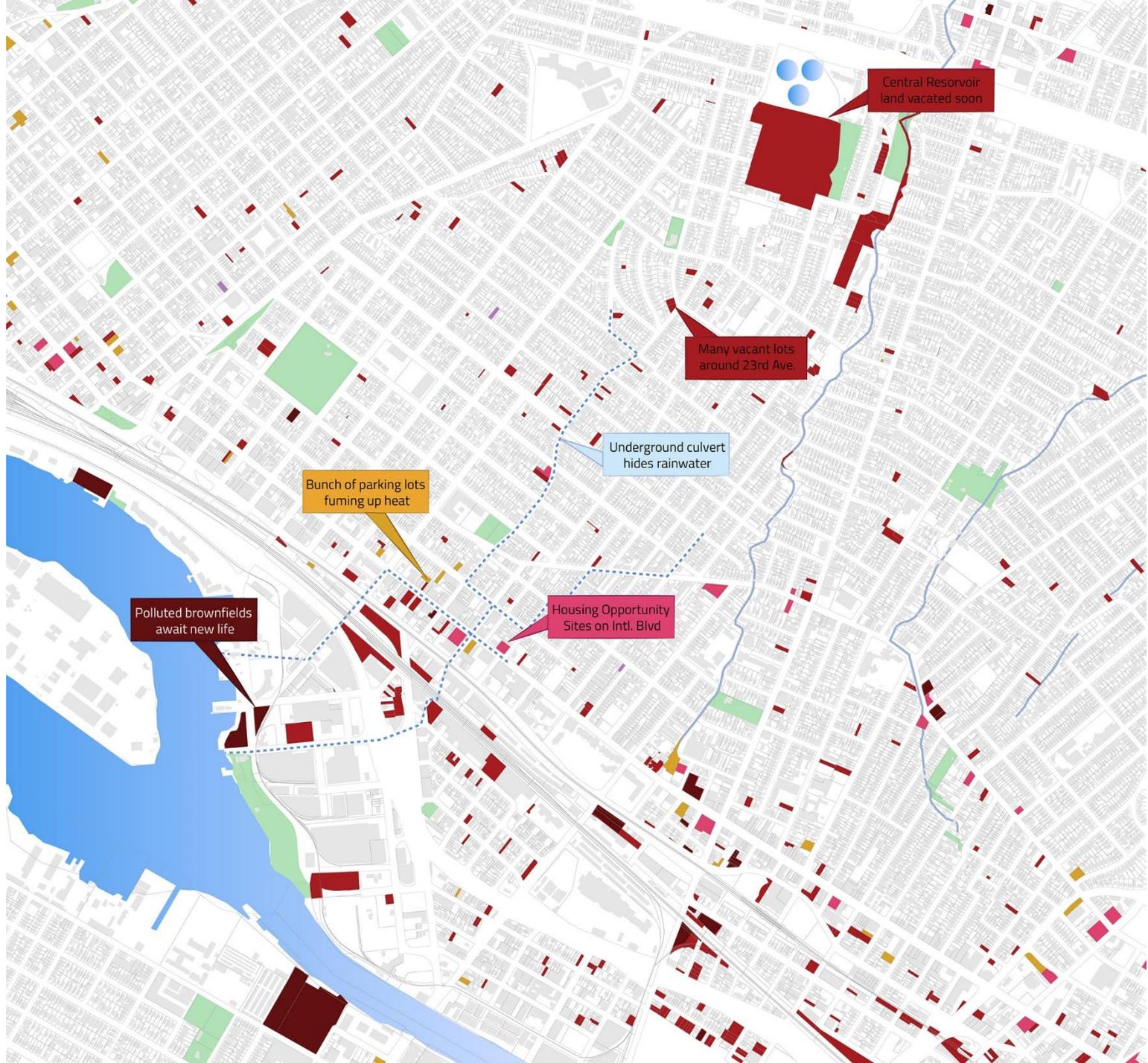
# Potential CLT Lots

Vacant  
Under-used  
Cheaper

-  Brownfields
-  Vacant lots
-  Parking lots
-  Housing Priority Sites 2015-2023
-  Foreclosed / to be foreclosed
- 



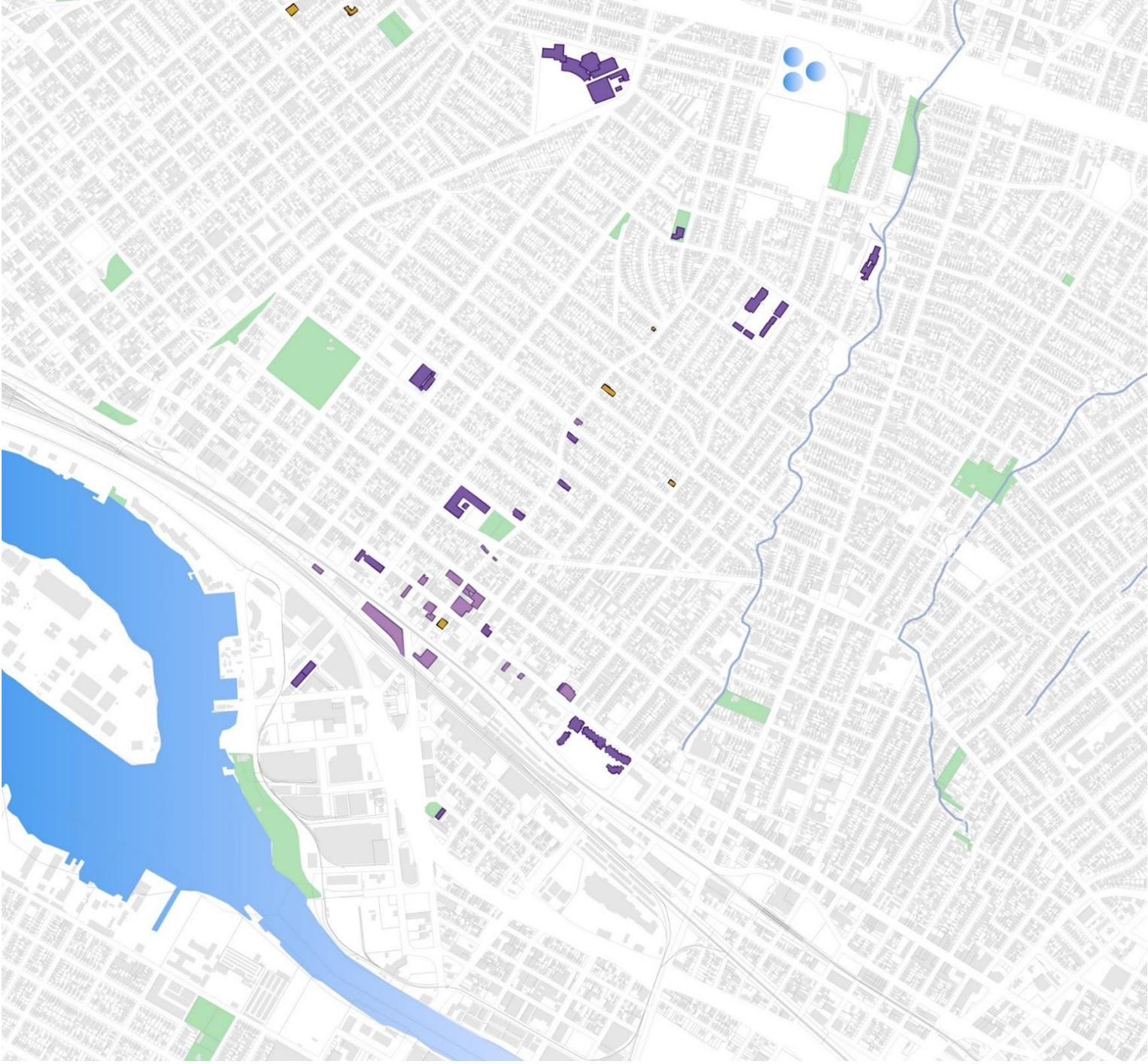




# Existing Community Places

San Antonio Rancho

- ▲ Community organizations
- ▲ Established community institutions
- ▲ OakCLT Properties





Tonga Church



Great \$2 Tacos



Garfield Park



Union Point Park

# Community Needs

## **Housing**

Mixed Income,  
no displacement  
in the process

## **Waterfront Access**

connection to  
Union Point Park

## **Commercial space**

Affordable, nice spaces,  
minimize commercial  
displacement

## **Culture**

Black Cultural Zone  
Latino street life

## **Local Hiring**

Youth employment  
Urban Agriculture

## **Trust**

Mutually constructive  
relationships between  
govt. and organizations

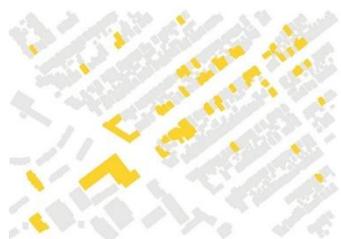


Acta Non-Verba  
Community agriculture



Youth Employment  
Partnership

The seeds are here

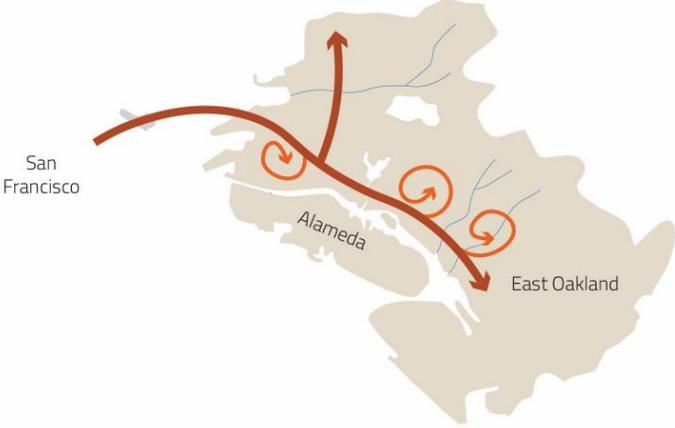




**How does  
community-led  
urban design  
Look like?**

# Strategy

## Regional



Capture investment  
without displacement



Leverage climate adaptation  
to closing social gaps



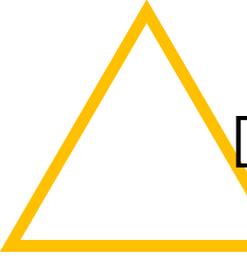
Access to  
green transit



Amplify local voices for  
sustainable partnerships

# Strategy

Local

 Community  
Development  
Priority Area



# Strategy

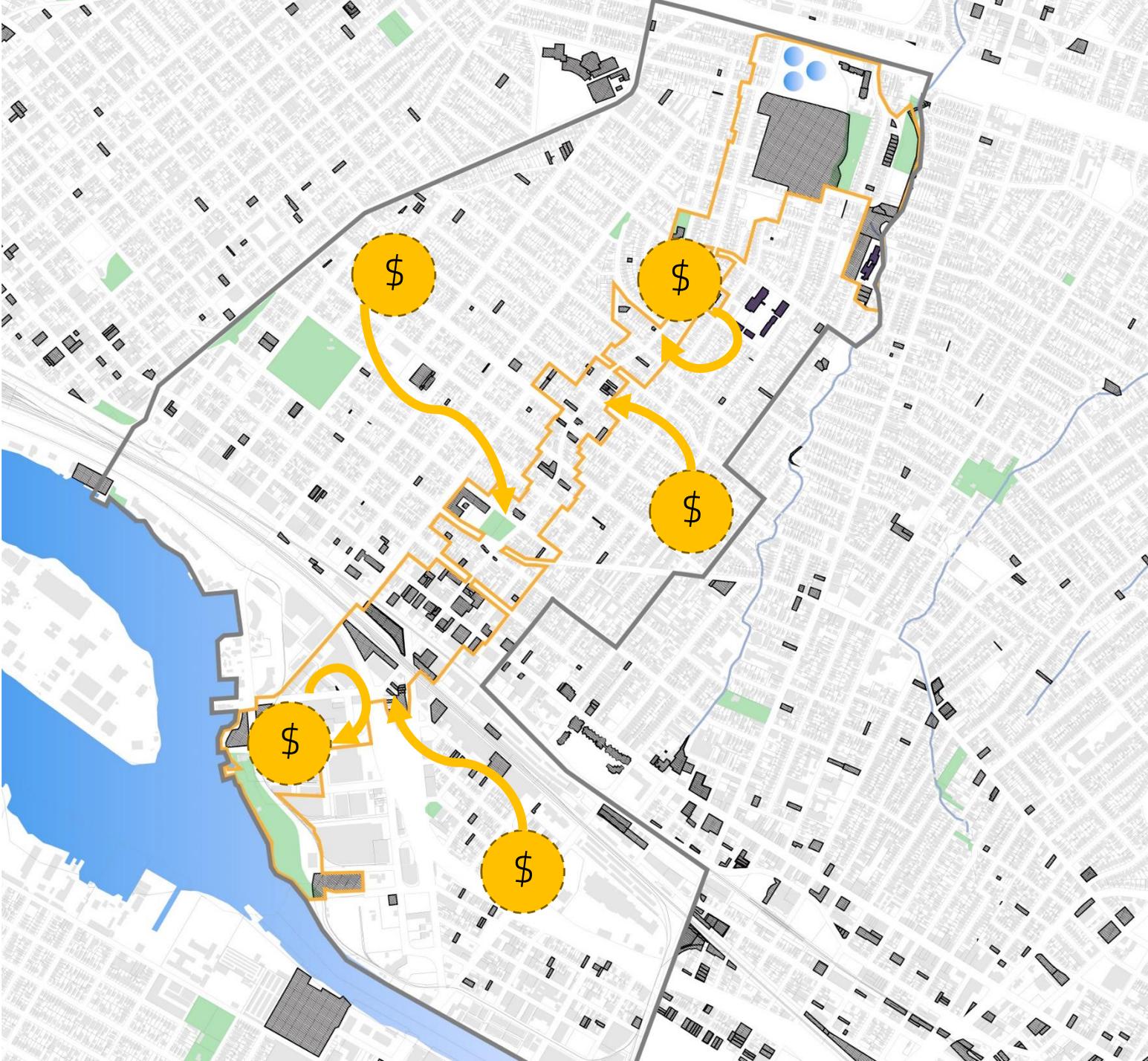
## Financing



Positive feedback investment cycle

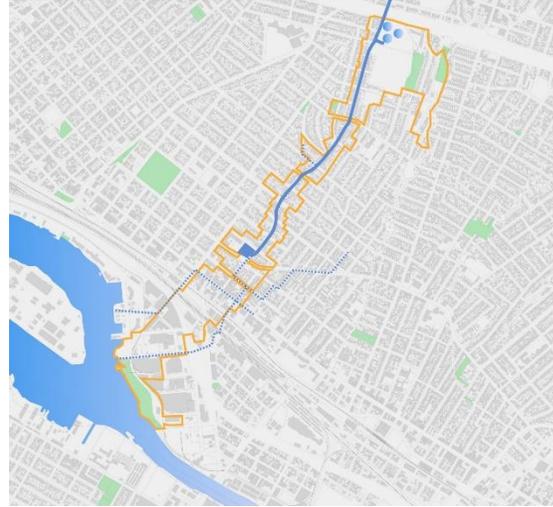
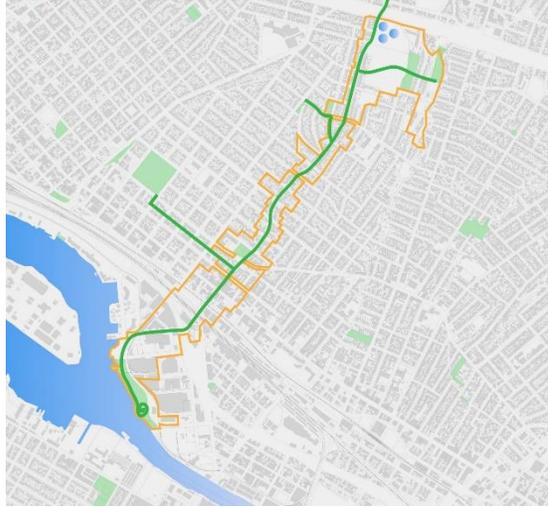
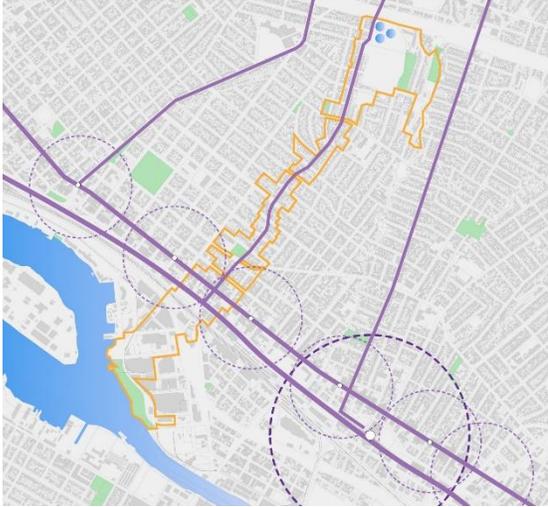


"Investment Shed" for development impact fees



# Strategy

## Systems



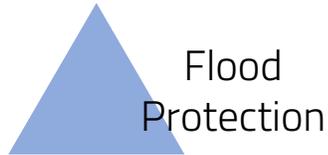
Public  
Transportation



Greenway  
to Waterfront



Traffic  
Diversion

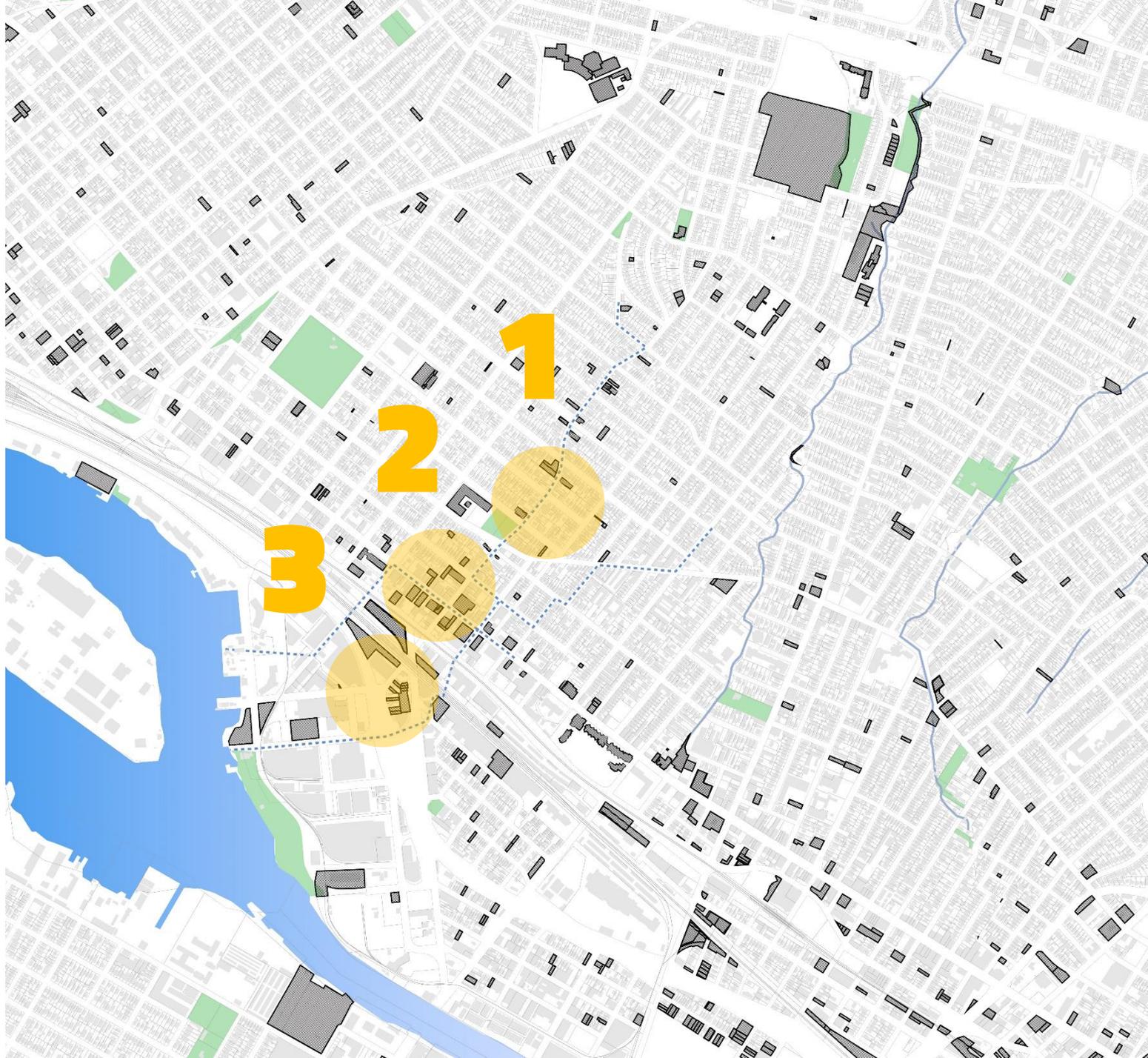


Flood  
Protection



# **Lively places CLTs can make**

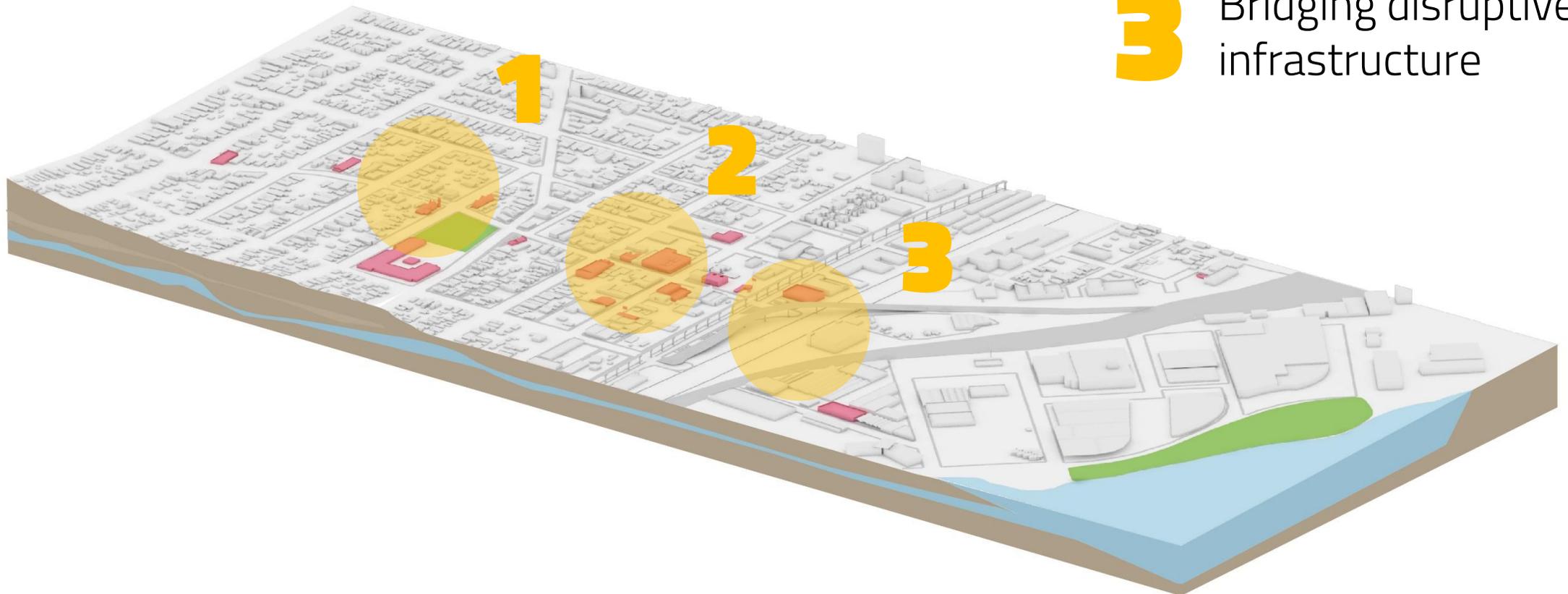
and cities rarely do



**1** 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave. as resilient mixed-income street

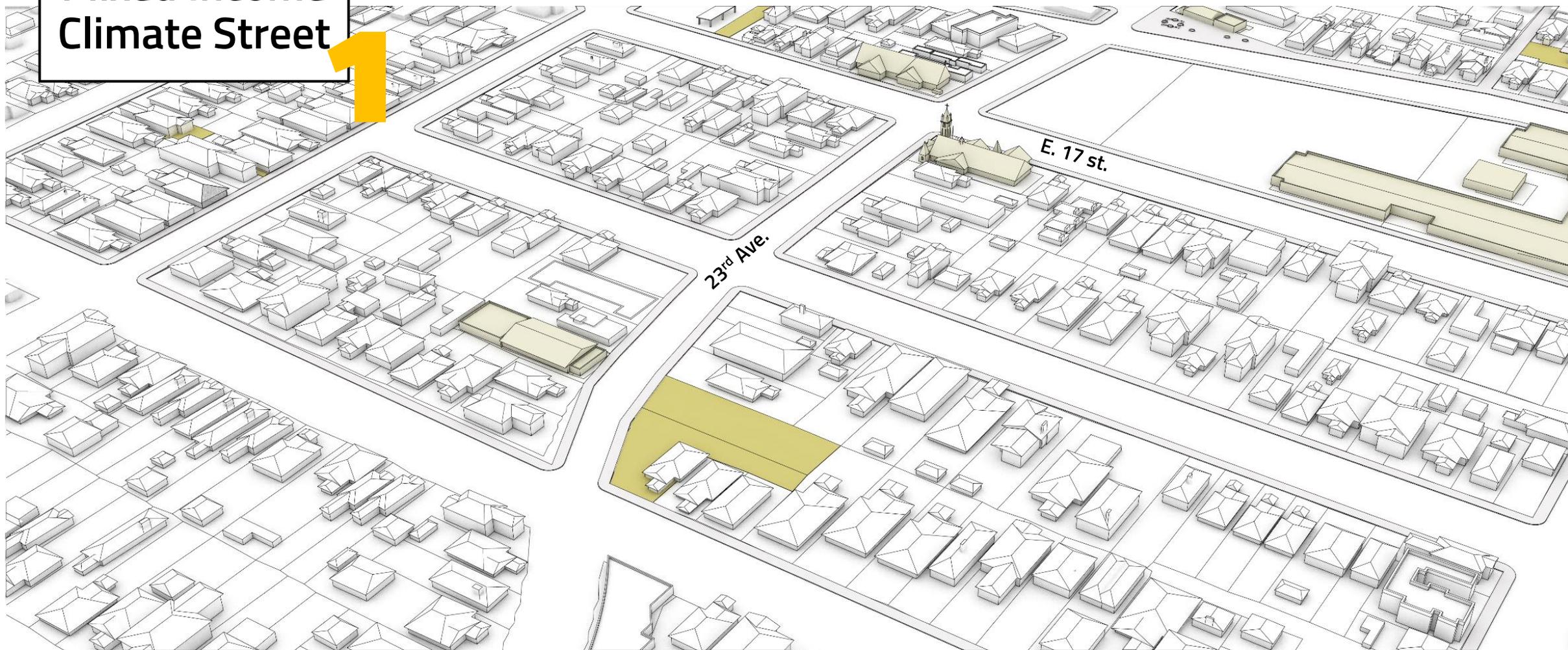
**2** Human-scale center for community life

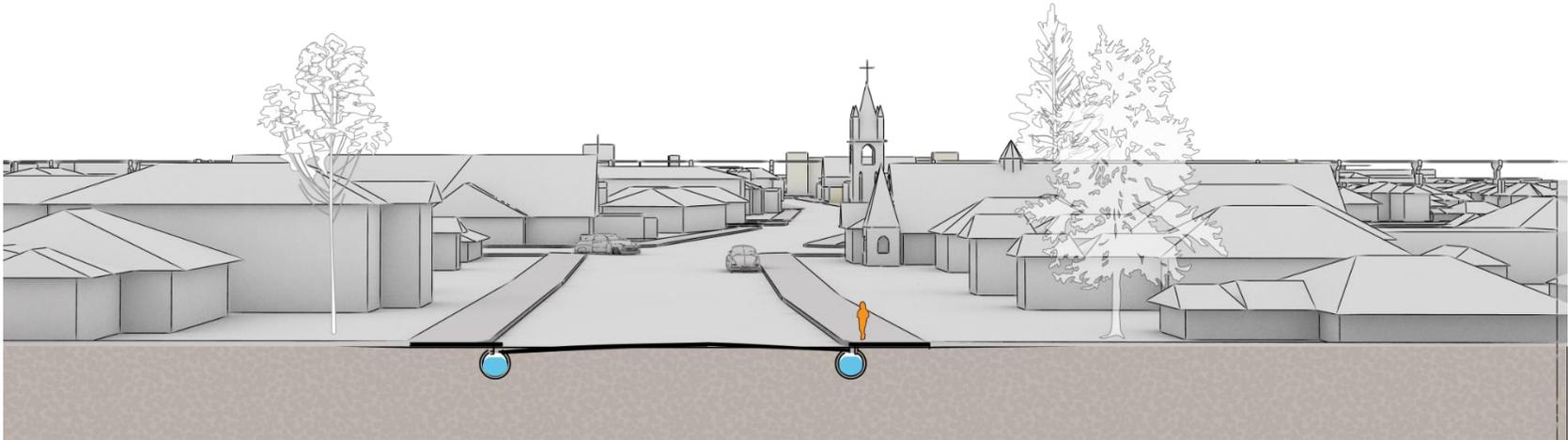
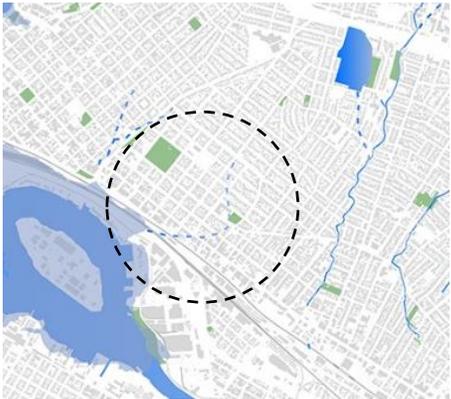
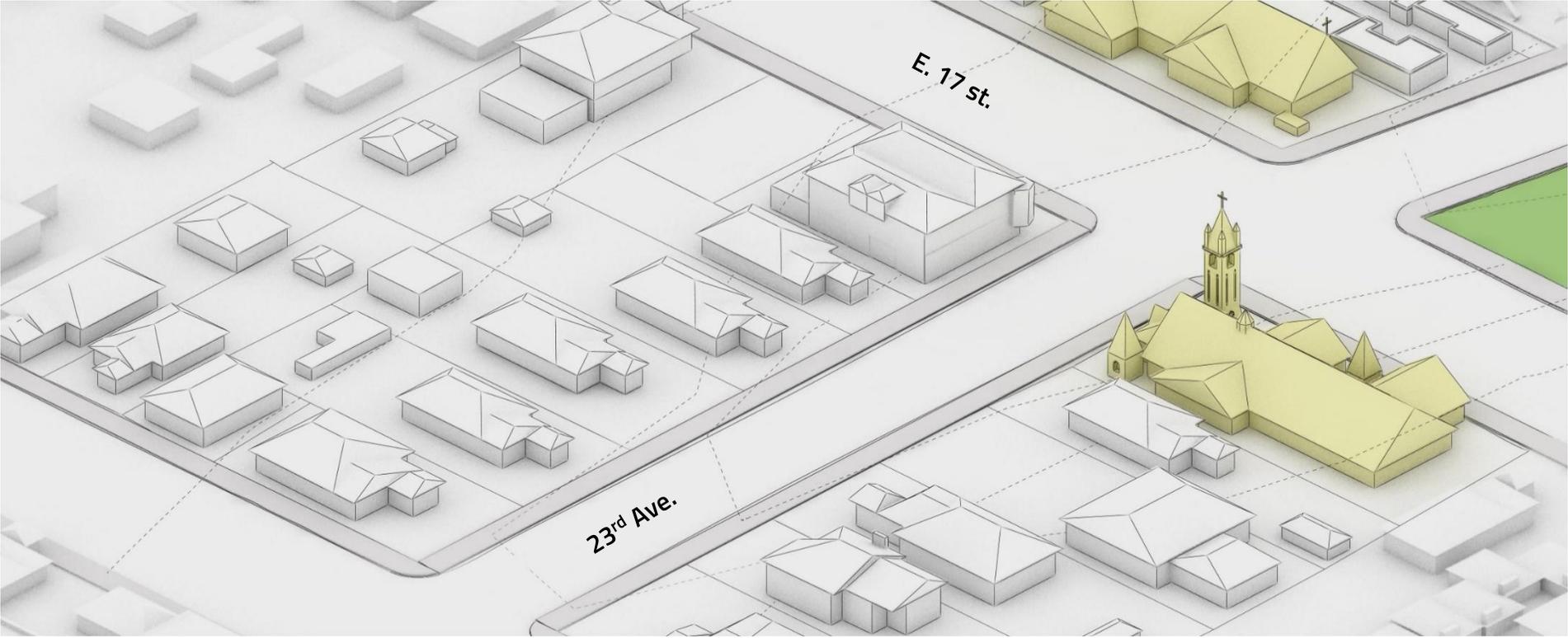
**3** Bridging disruptive infrastructure





# Mixed Income Climate Street







Flexible show-off space  
for community expression

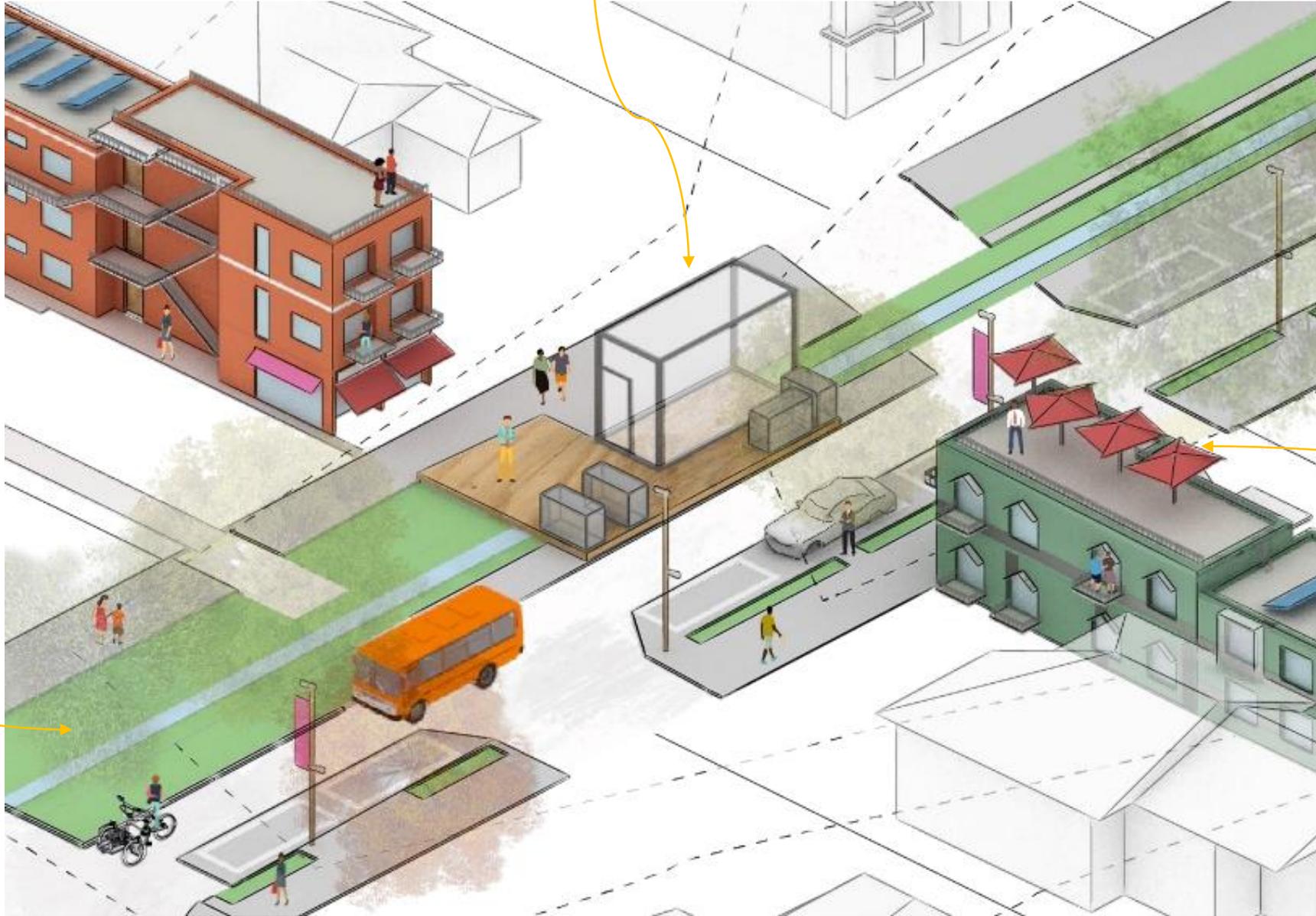
Elevated Parking  
on alternate sides  
to slow traffic

1 Driveway for  
2 properties

Culvert turned to  
open creek with  
porous banks

One-way  
shared street

Active frontage for  
enhanced safety –  
retail, balconies  
and open rooftops



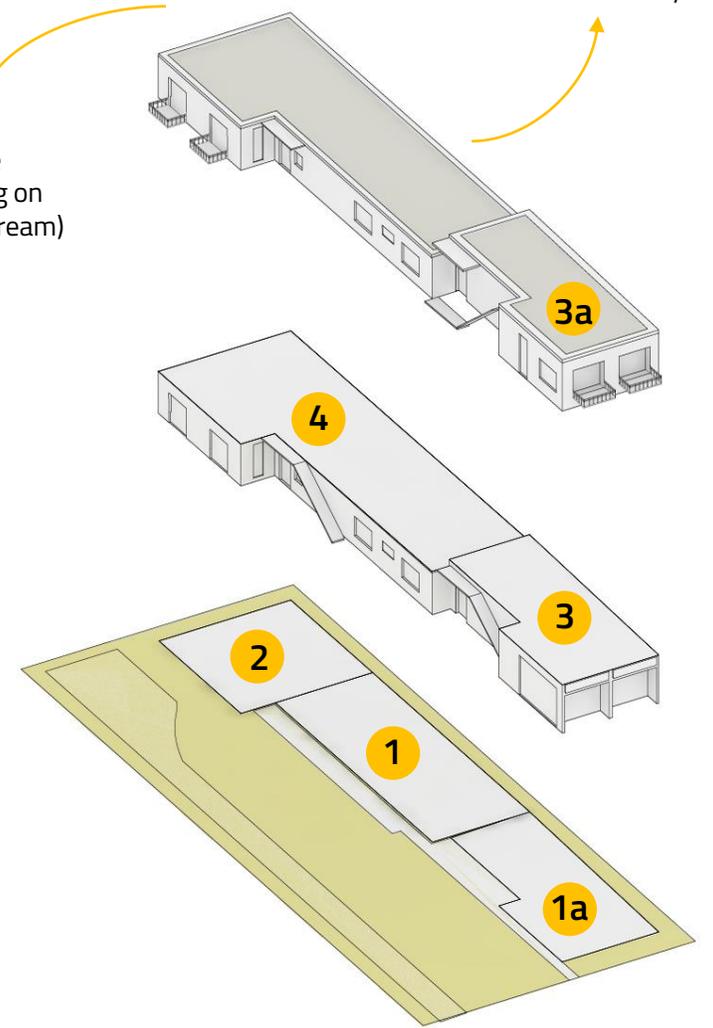
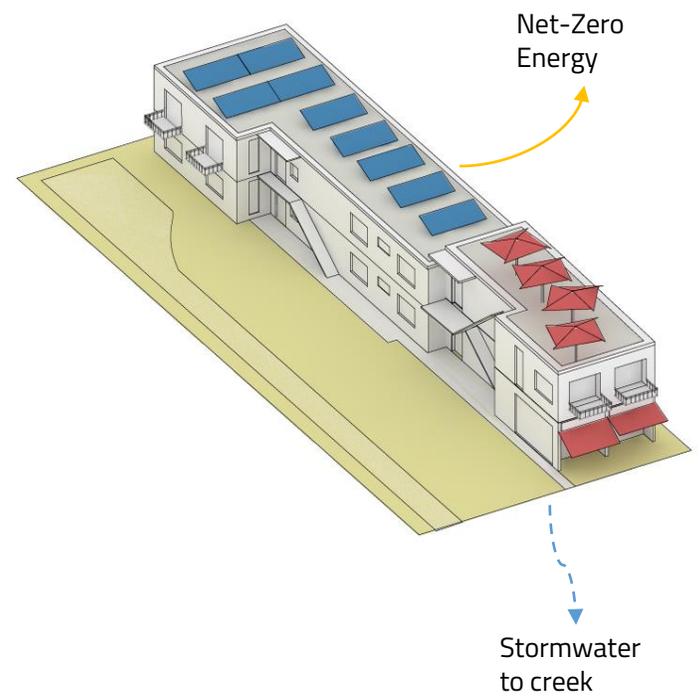
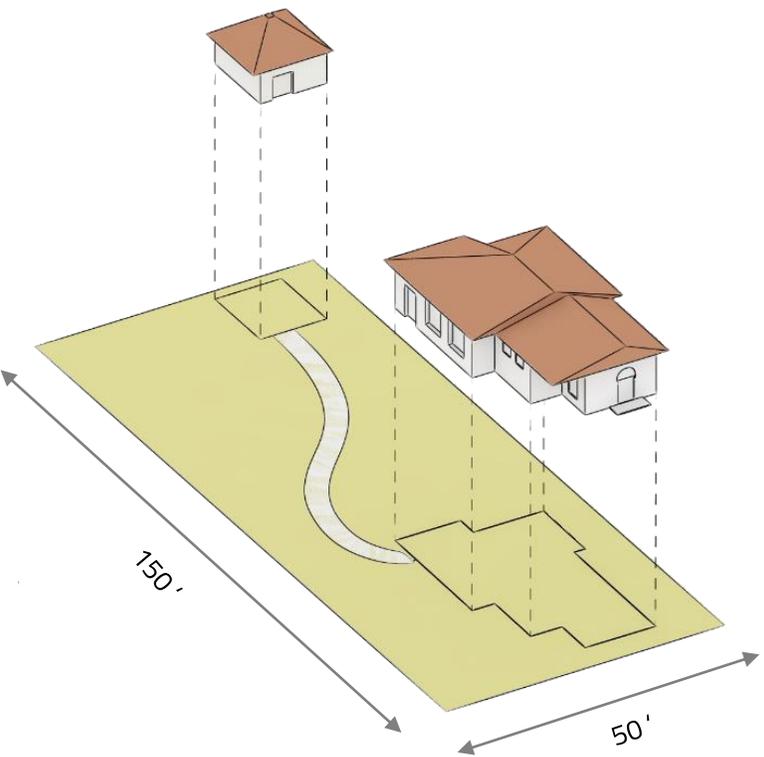
# Mixed income fourplex

Building type

- 1 1a**  
600sqf home  
500sqf retail
- 2**  
400sqf home
- 3 3a**  
500sqf home  
500sqf rooftop
- 4**  
1100sqf home

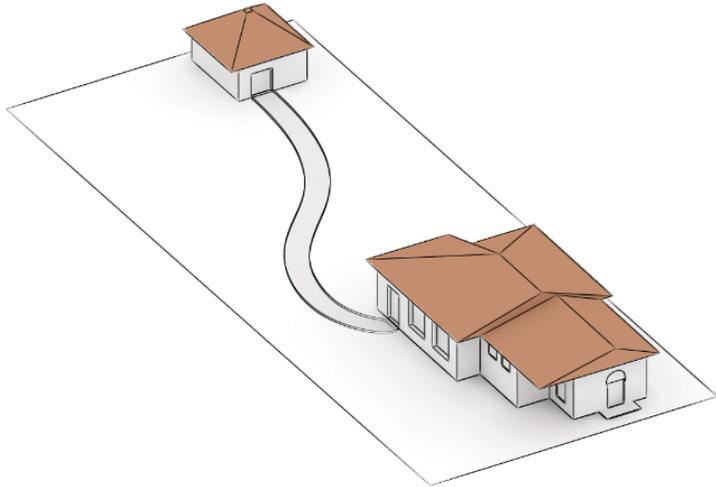
Prefab units can reduce costs by 20% and construction time by 40%

25%-50% Affordable (depending on funding stream)

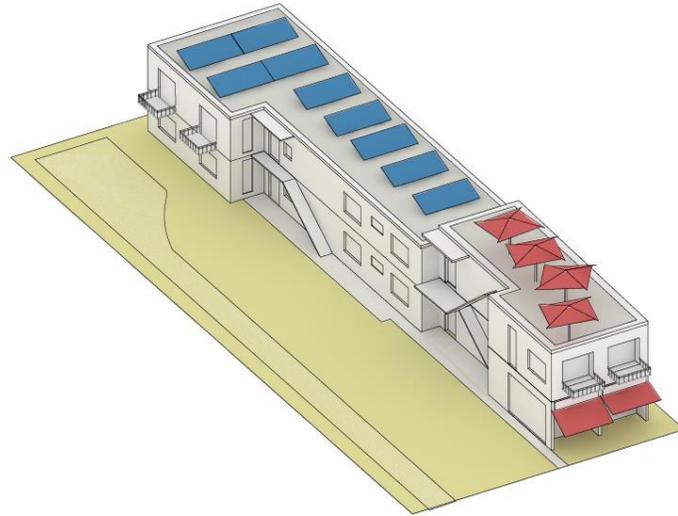


# Incremental Addition of Housing

now



soon



later?



# 1 Mixed income street – Pros/Cons

- ▼ Vacant lot
- ▼ Parking lot



- Affordable housing
- No displacement
- High visibility, safe streets
- “Missing middle” housing
- Small retail/office spaces
- Community street-space

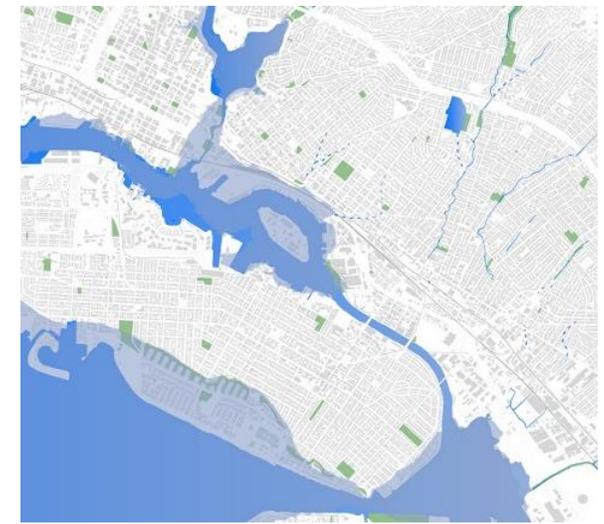
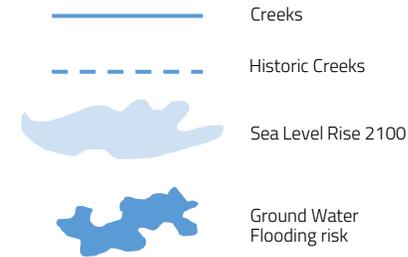


- Busier streets
- Less on-street parking
- New neighbours
- Slower traffic on street



# 1 Daylighting the Creek - Pros/Cons

▼ Public Land



- Resilient drainage
- Safer streets
- Bike lanes + frequent bus service
- Environmental grants
- Cooler, greener street



- Less on-street parking
- Disruptive construction period

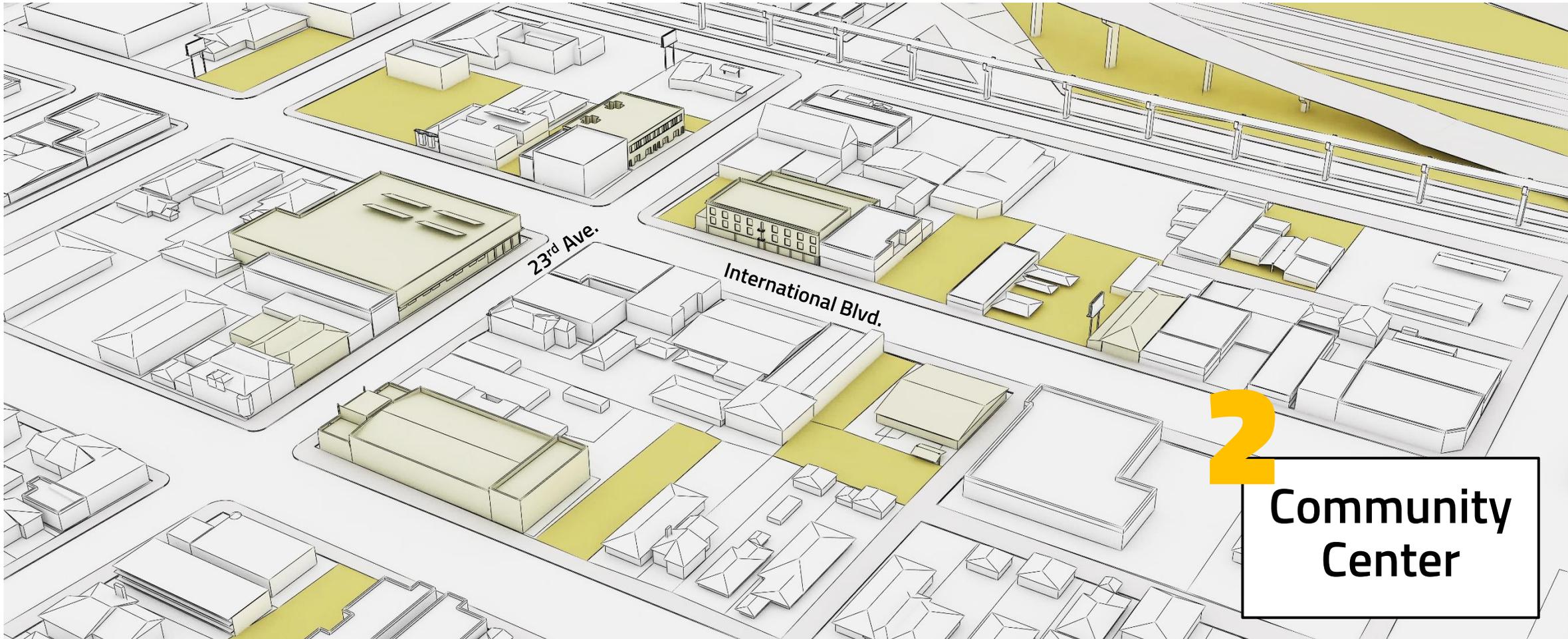


More research needed  
on numbers:

- Potential sites/acres
- Potential units
- Environmental benefits
- Financing options





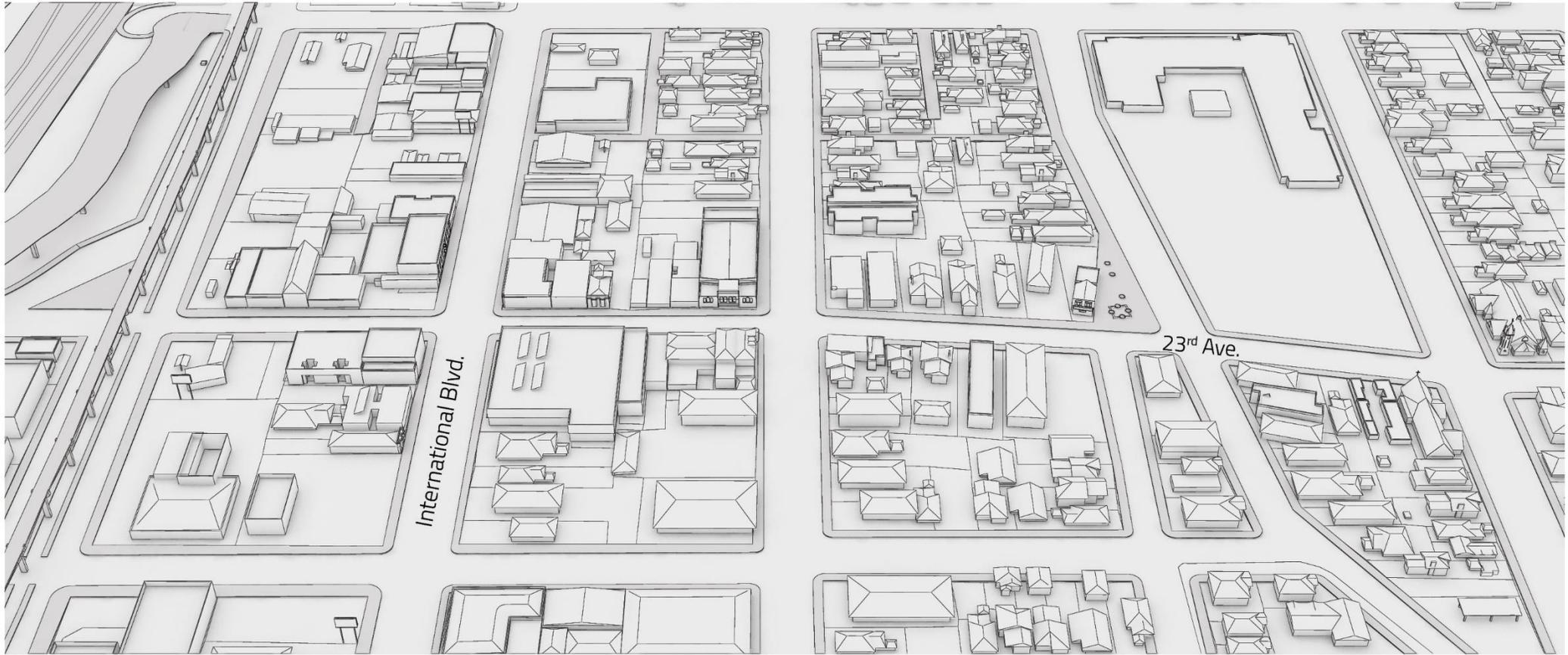


23rd Ave.

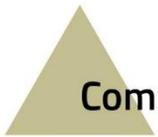
International Blvd.

2

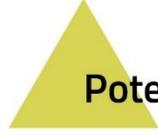
Community Center



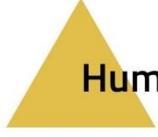
**Today**



**Community Assets**



**Potential Sites**



**Human Scale Alleys**

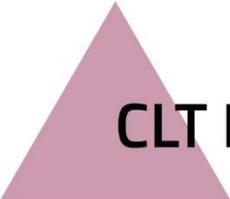


**Pocket Gardens**



**Community Places**



 **CLT Development**





Community  
kitchen

Farmer's  
market



Basketball  
Bar

Floodable  
Park



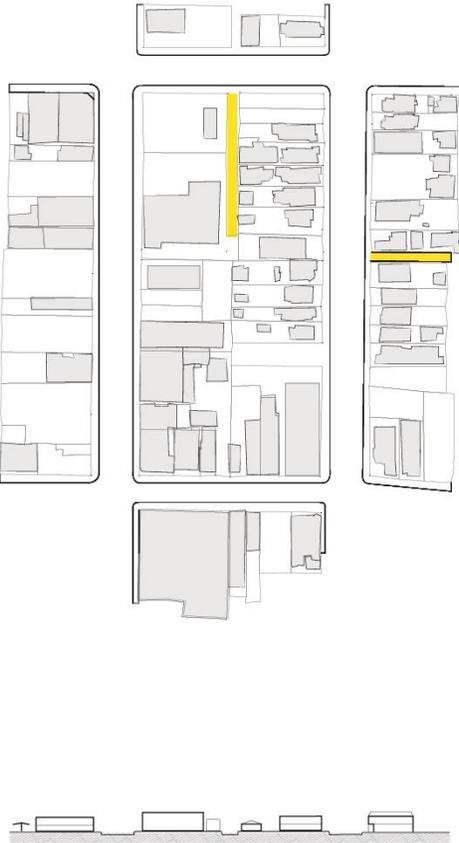
Tiny houses  
in redundant  
street



The Village

Media,  
culture,  
nightlife  
zone

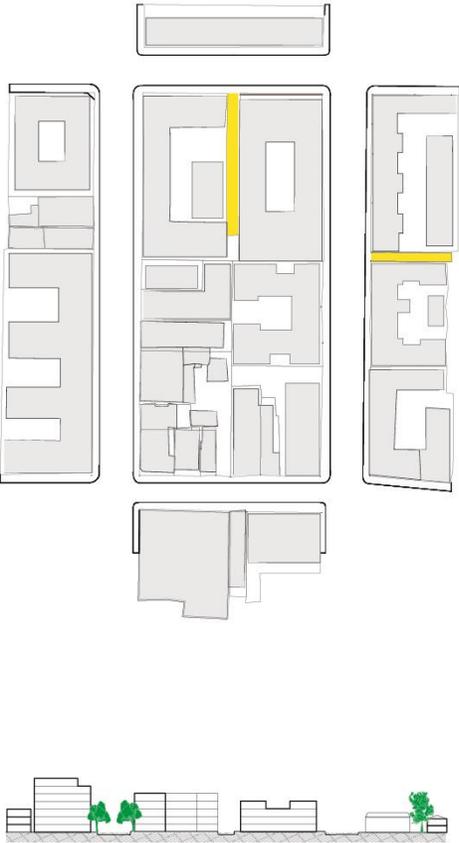
Typical block - today



CLT development model



Business as usual



## 2 Community Center – Pros and Cons

- ▼ Vacant Lots
- ▼ Parking lots
- ▼ Public Land



- Commercial/office space
- Economies of scale
- Space for partnerships
- Local identity
- Funding for NGOs to lead local social change



- Private lot Intersections  
multiple agreements
- Event closures
- Difficult current social reality

Temascal Alley, Oakland

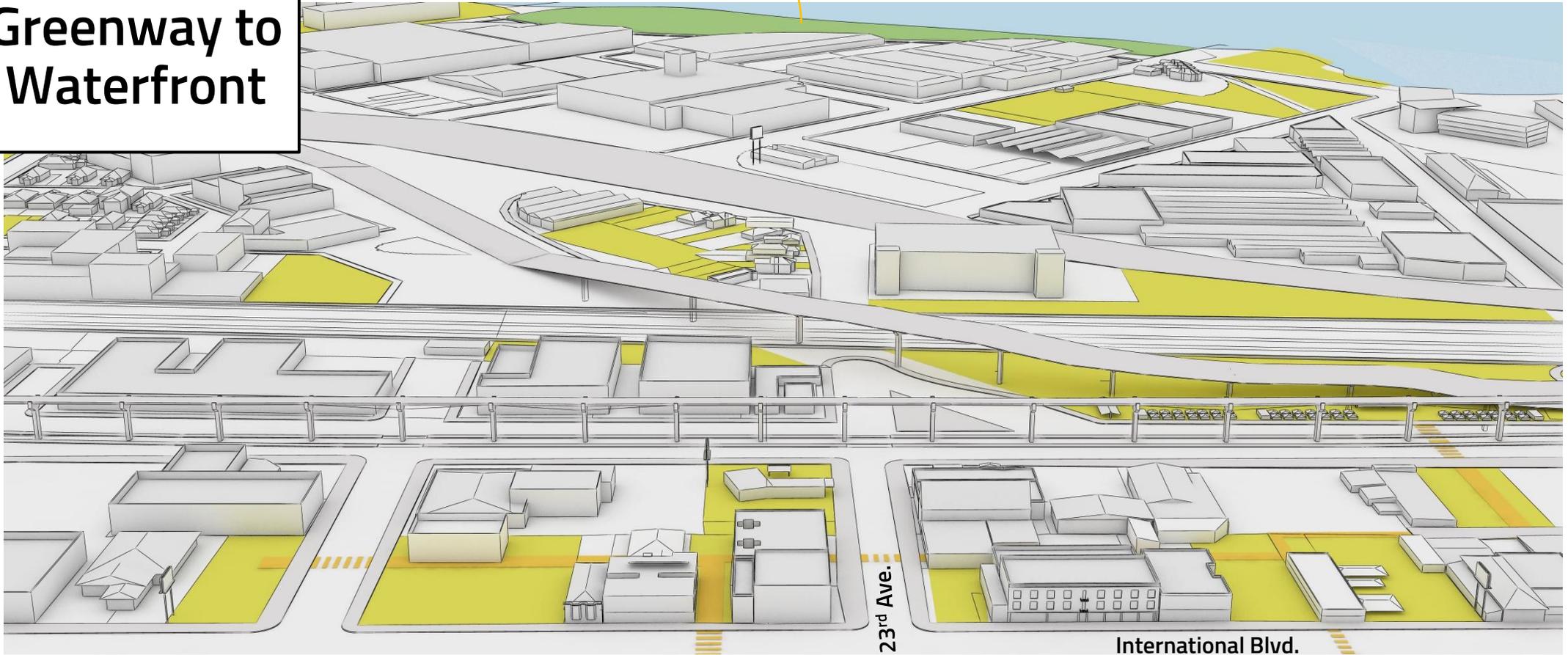




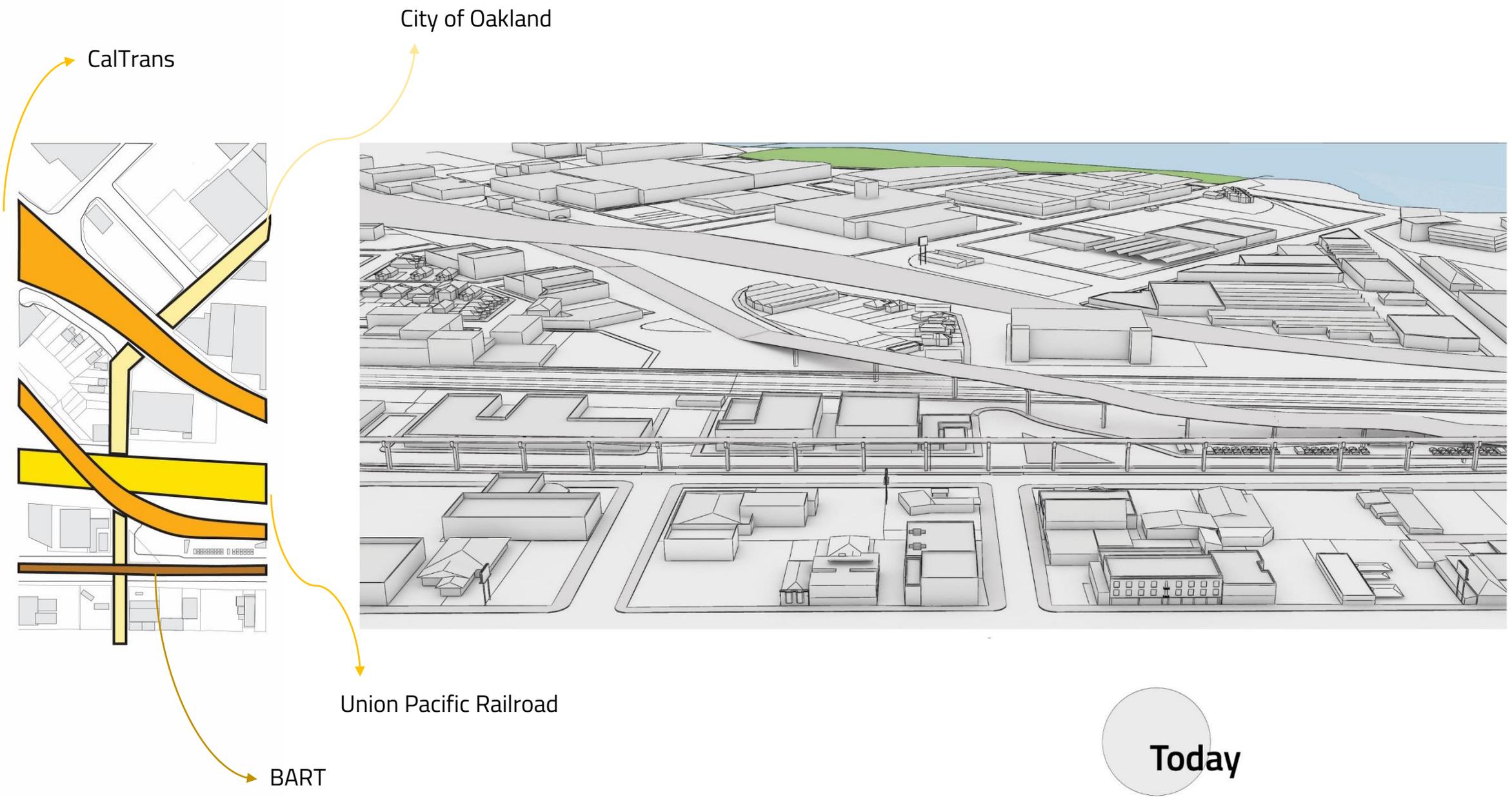
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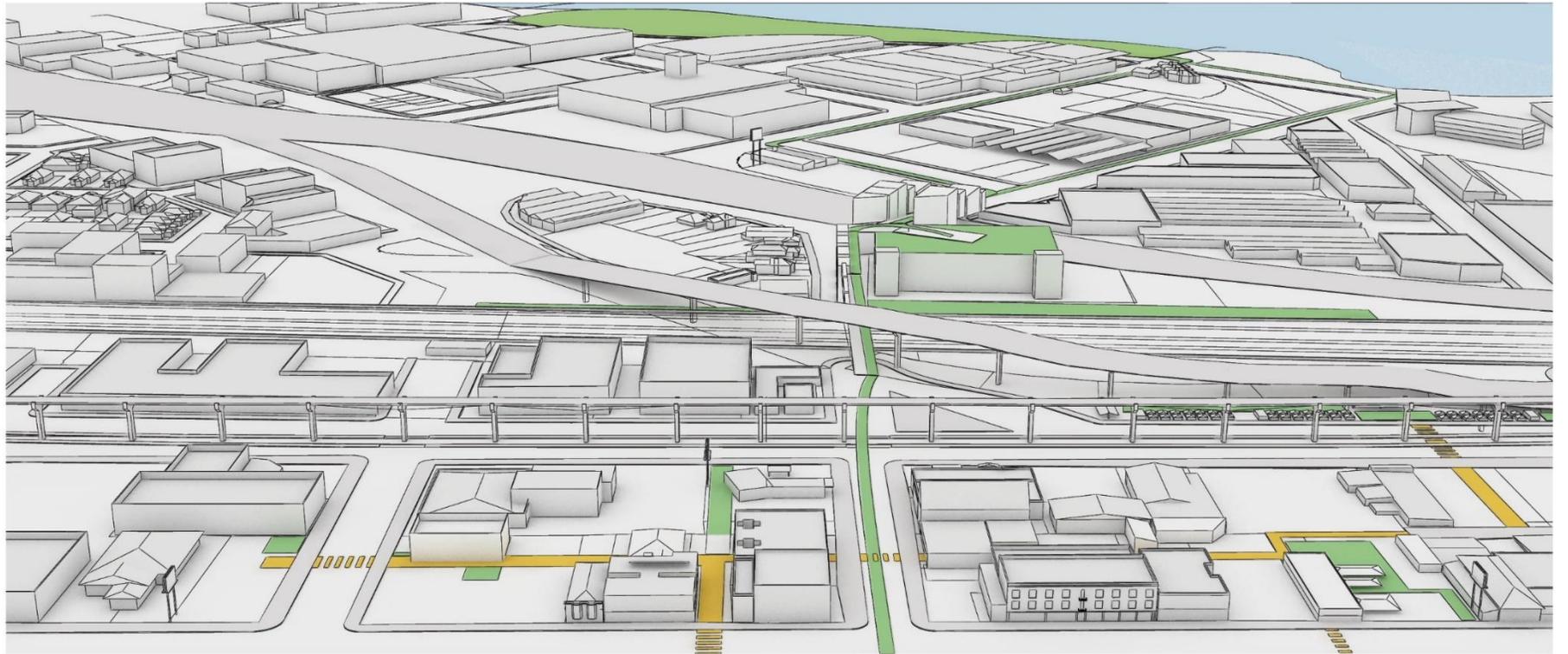
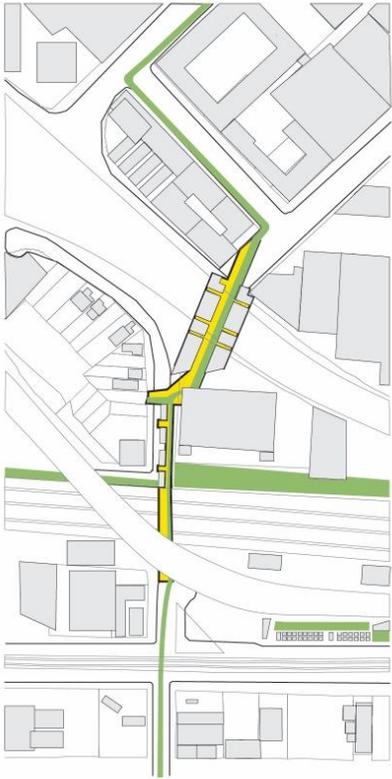
## Greenway to Waterfront

Union Point Park

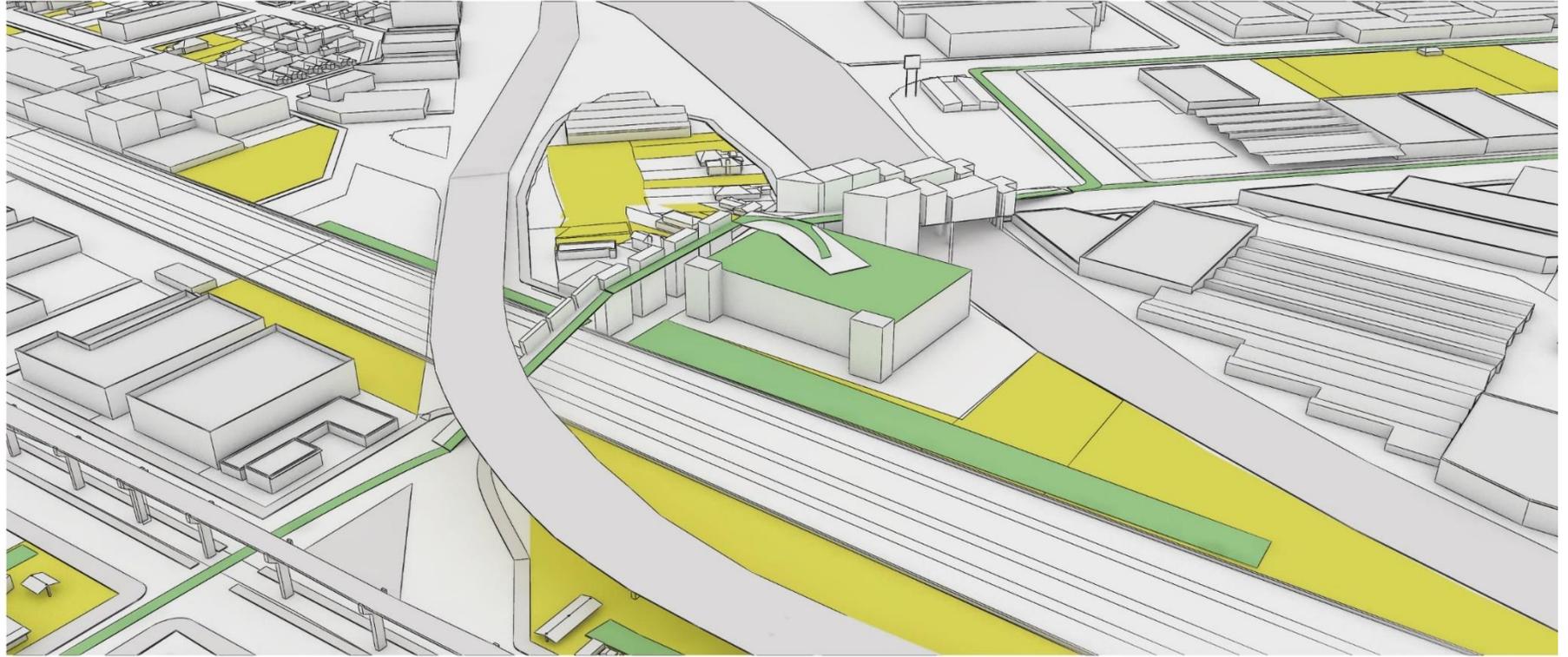
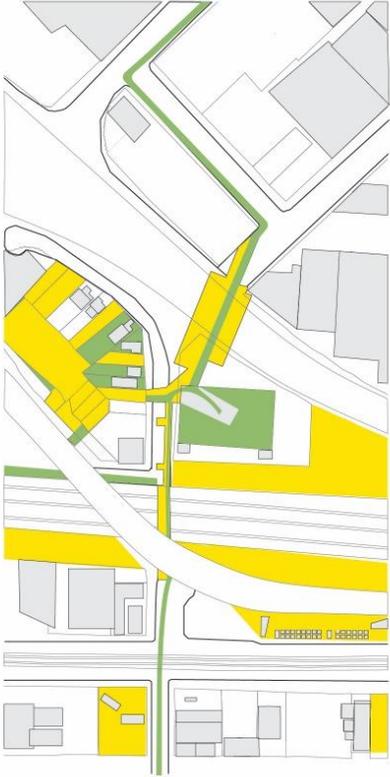


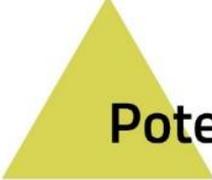


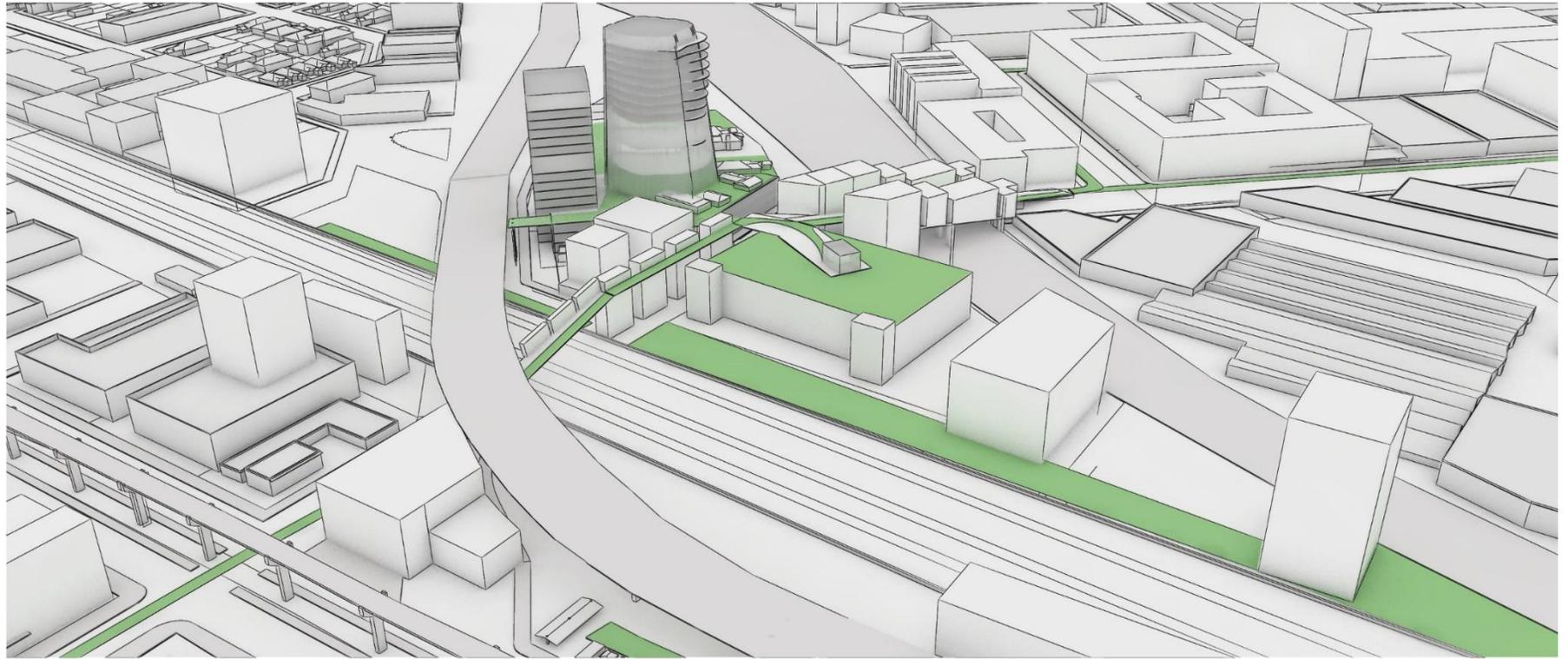
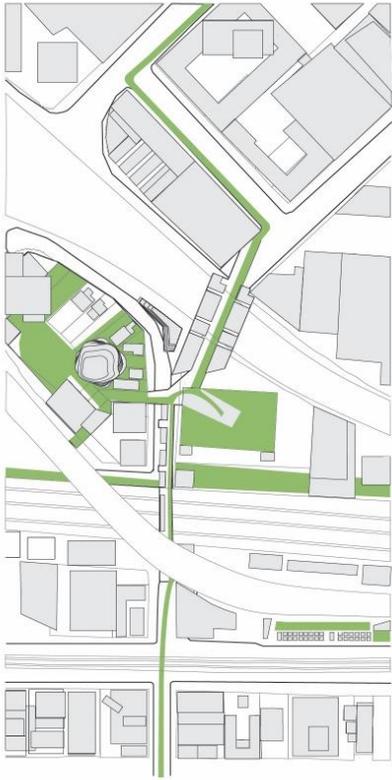




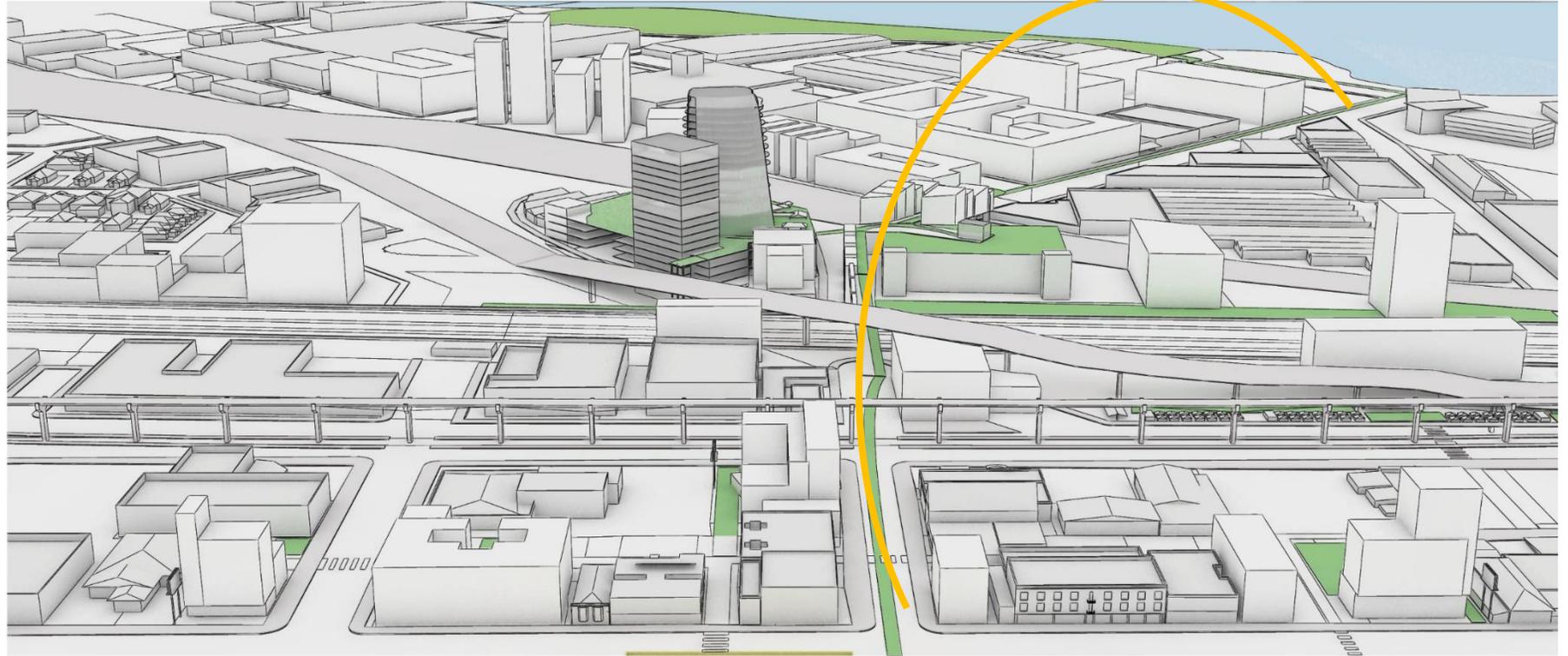
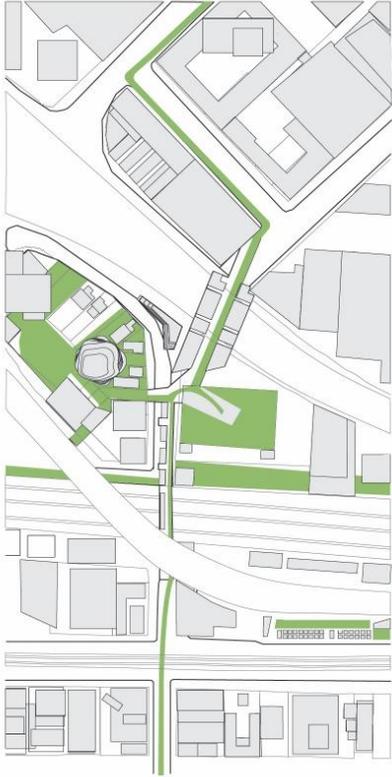
**23<sup>rd</sup> Greenway**

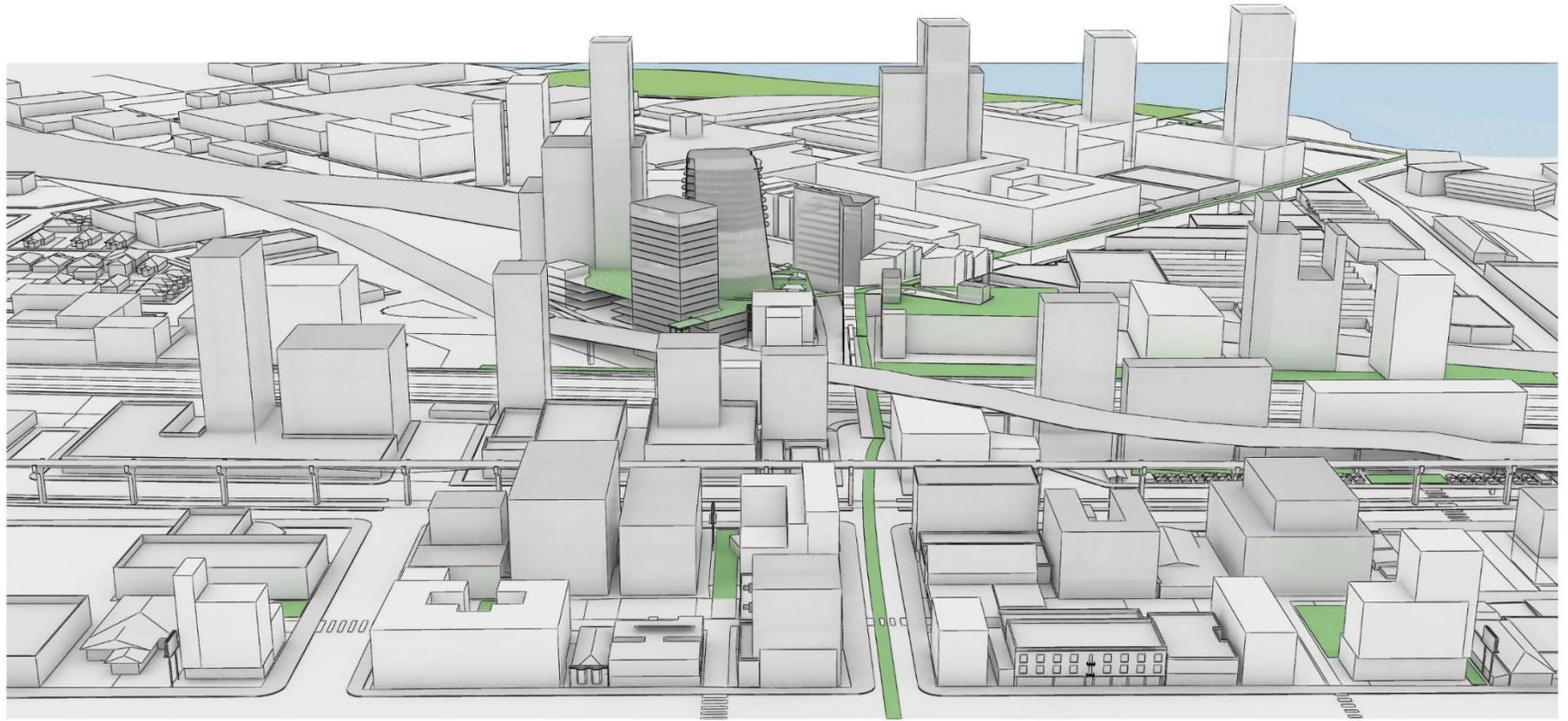
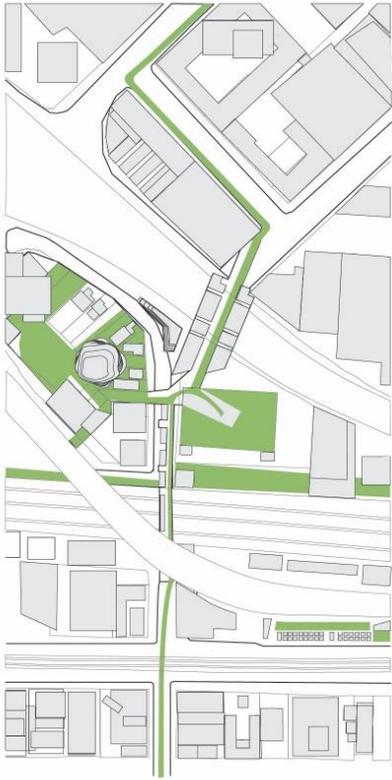


 **Potential Sites**

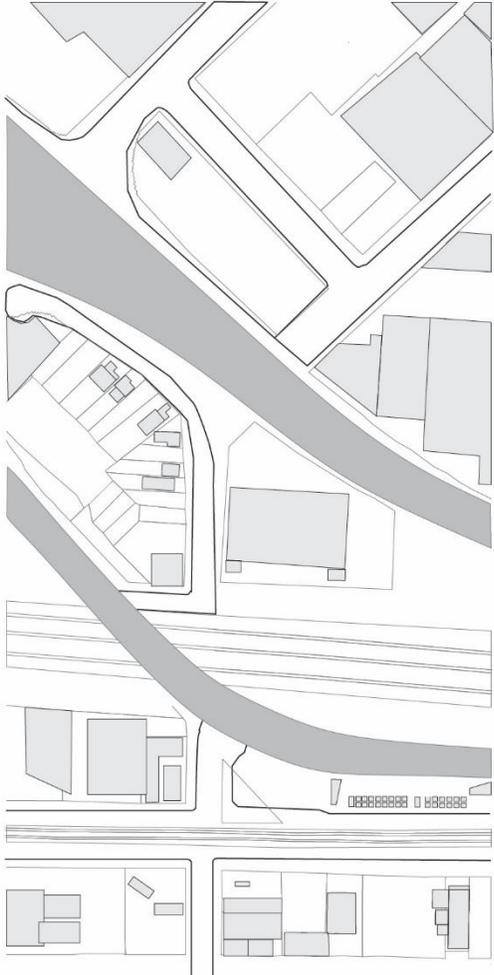


Only 1/2 a mile!

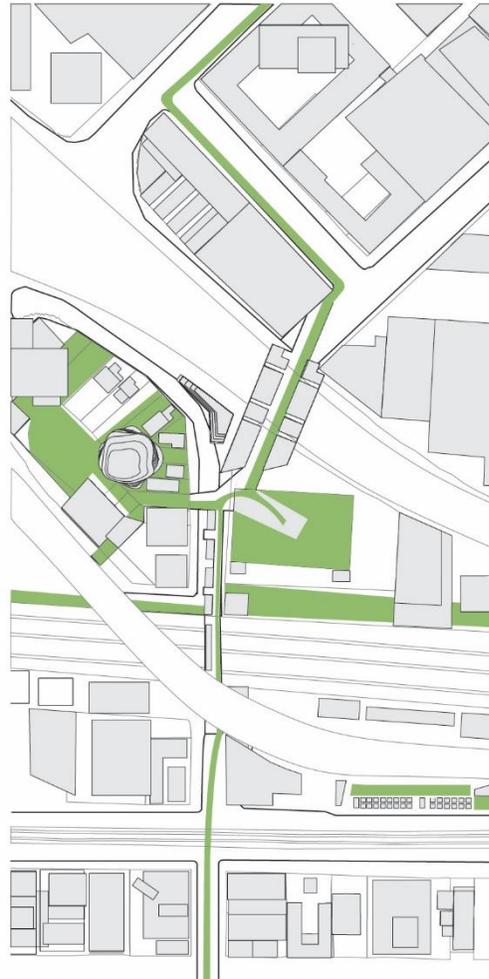




Today

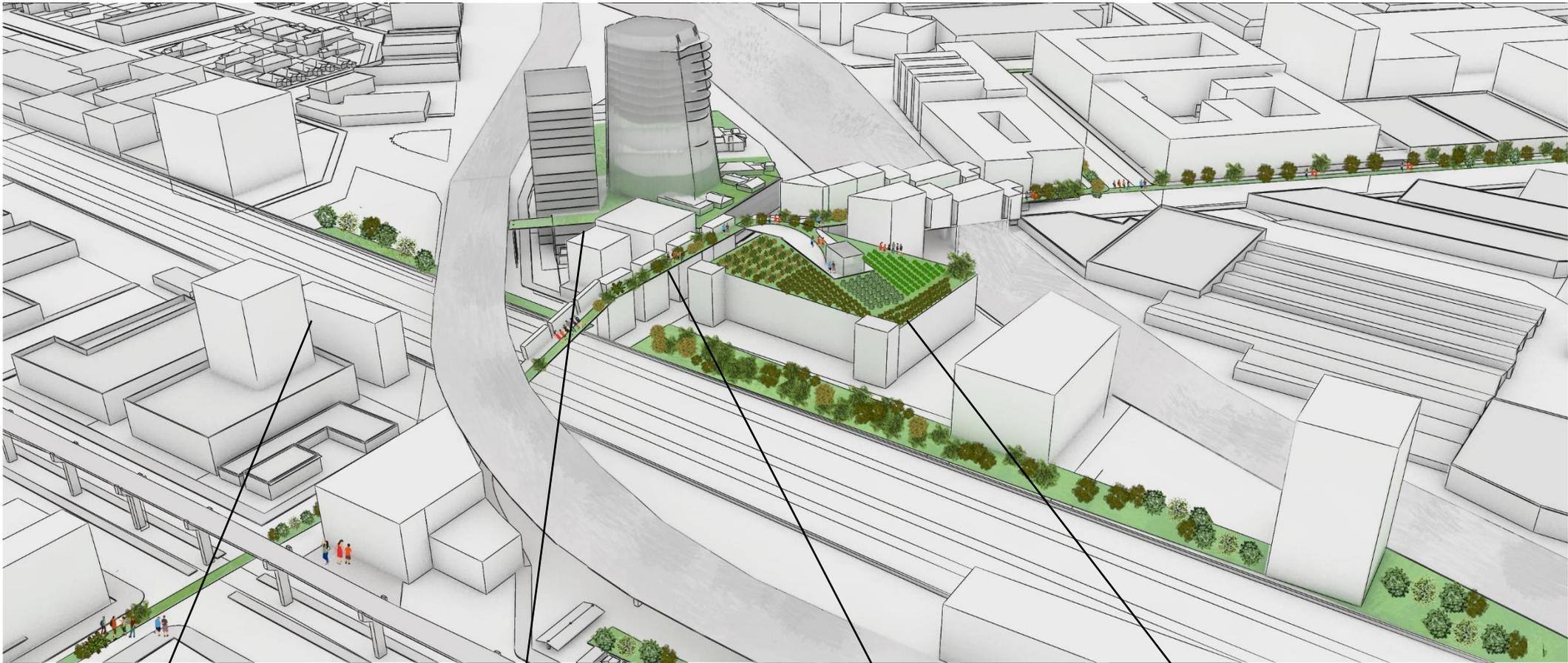


CLT development model



Business as usual





Housing

Convention center, hotel  
and office space  
+ elevated park on large  
parking garage

Bike + pedestrian  
bridge + retail

Restaurant and  
community  
farm

### 3 Greenway to Waterfront

- ▼ Vacant Lots
- ▼ Parking lots
- ▼ Public Land



- Access to waterfront
- Funding for CLT investments
- Regional destination
- Lots of parking



- High risk for a non-profit
- Complex bureaucracy
- Dual street elevation

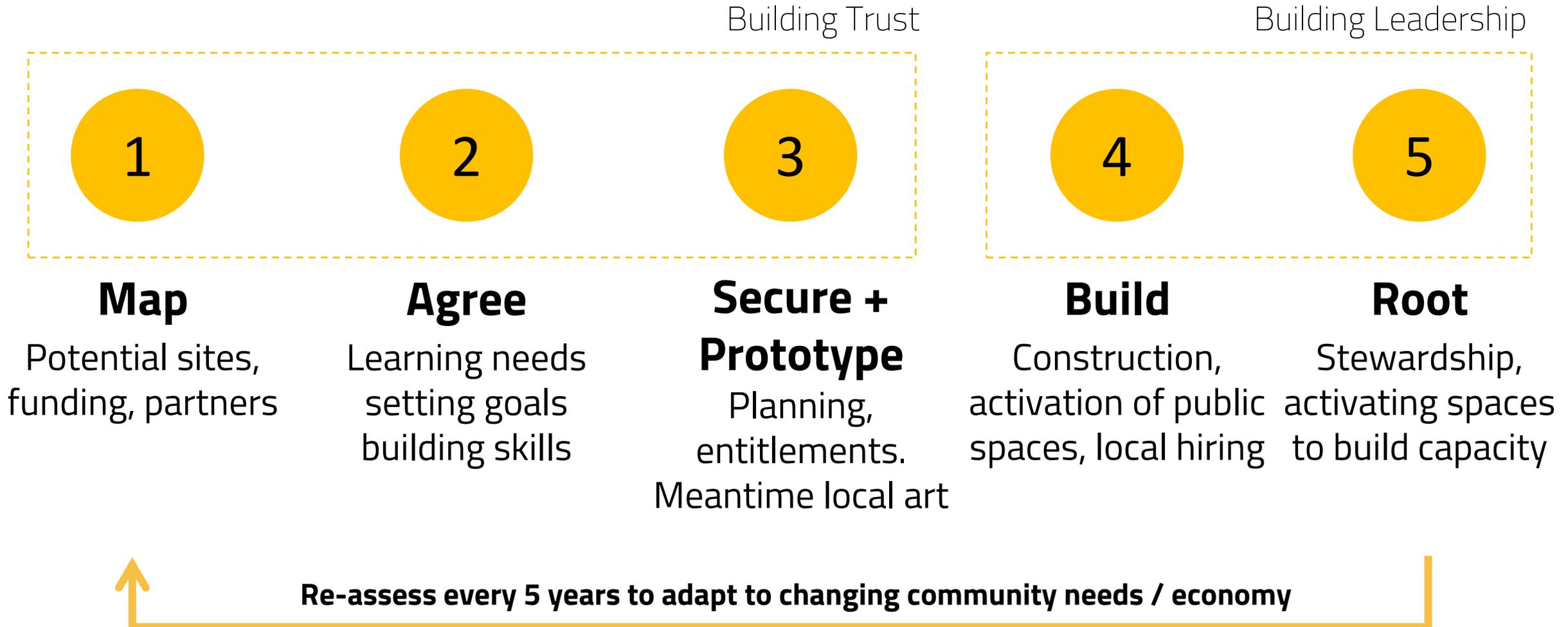
Elevated Bikeway,  
Xiamen, China



The Cap at Union Station  
Columbus, Ohio



# Process



1



2



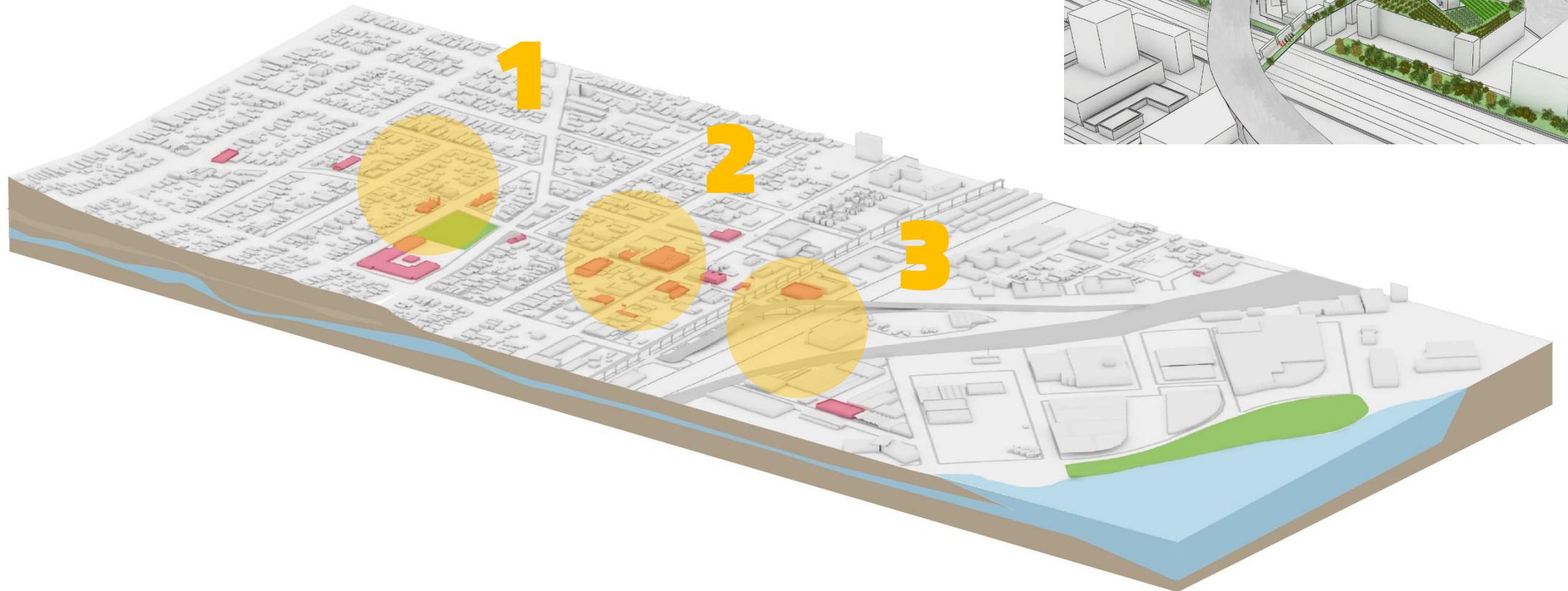
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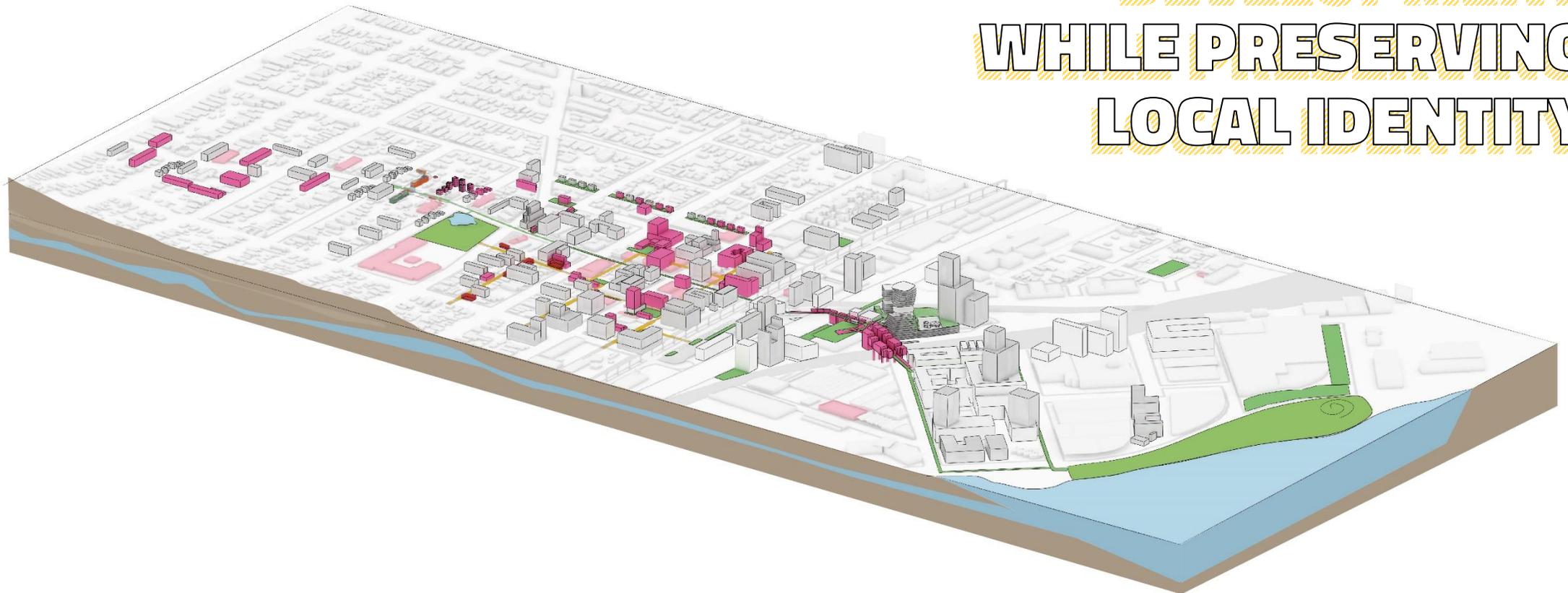
1

2

3



**COMMUNITY  
OWNED PLACES  
WILL ENABLE FAST  
AND EQUITABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
WHILE PRESERVING  
LOCAL IDENTITY**



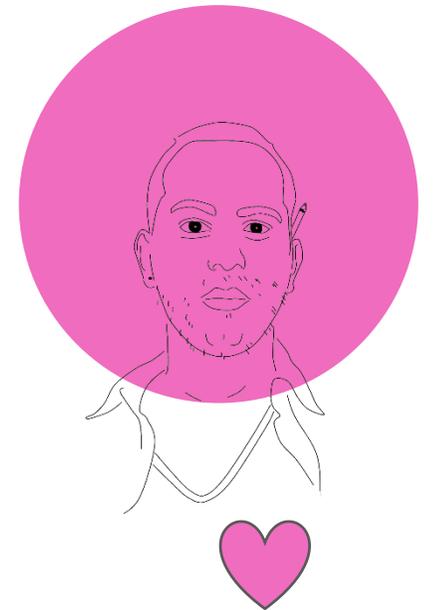
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Robert Ungar  
Master of Urban Design  
UC Berkeley, thesis project  
August 2018