

Alternative Development:
Infrastructure as a Multi-Project Program

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Two Solutions



\$40,000,000



\$23,000,000

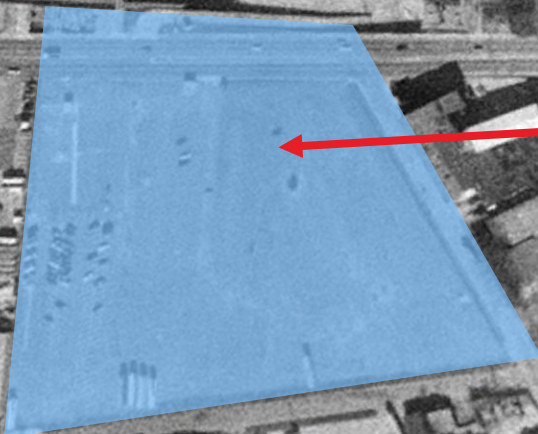
A black and white aerial photograph of a city area, likely Atlanta, showing a desolate low point. The image captures a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, streets, and parking lots. A prominent feature is a large, flat, open area in the center, which is described as a low point where a creek runs underground. The surrounding area shows a mix of residential and commercial structures, with some trees scattered throughout. The overall scene conveys a sense of urban decay and environmental challenges.

1993

A desolate low point in the historic Atlanta area . A creek runs underground, and there is prodigious flooding after all storms. This is a significant problem for the City.

1993

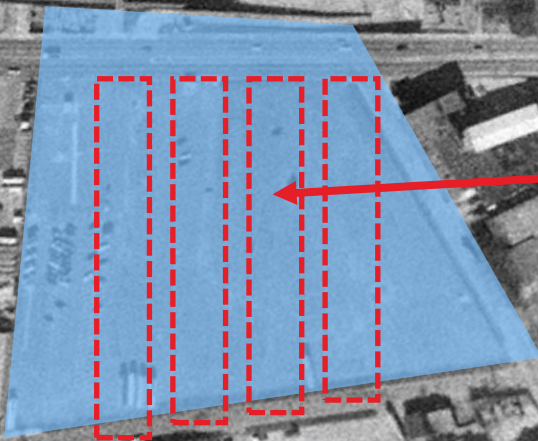
Extreme Flooding



After storms, this entire area, including the basement of the Sears building, North Avenue, and the giant parking lot turn into a lake, as well as an underground reservoir (the building basement).

1993

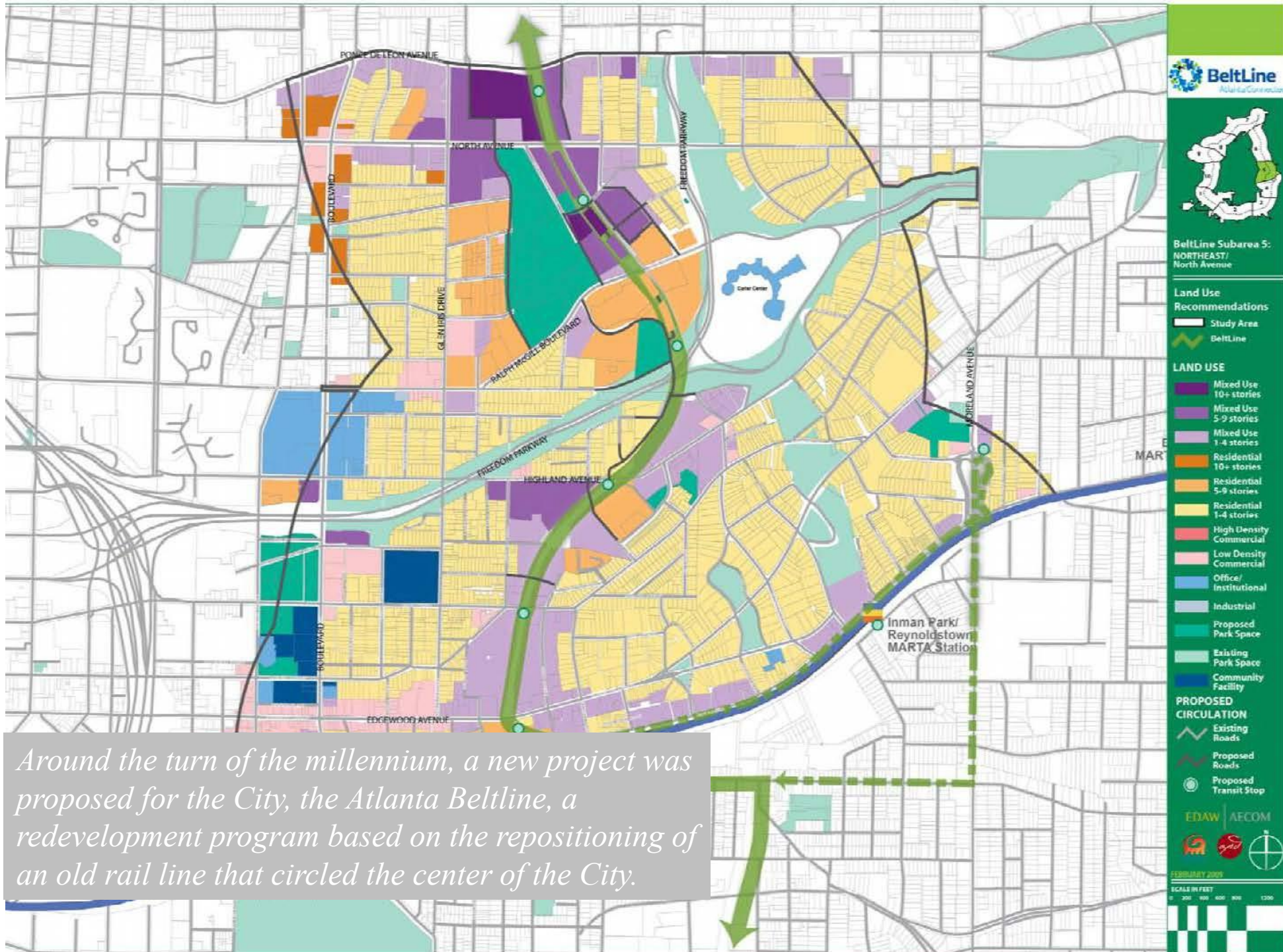
Underground Storm
Detention System



The initial concept was to dig a gigantic underground tunnel and channel stormwater to a processing plant before sending the cleaned residue to the river. The cost was projected at \$40 million.



2004



Around the turn of the millennium, a new project was proposed for the City, the Atlanta Beltline, a redevelopment program based on the repositioning of an old rail line that circled the center of the City.

2008

Beltline

New Development

Redevelopment was beginning in this previously underserved area, prompted by the future Beltline. This changes the calculus for the proposed underground detention system.

2010

Park Site – 17
Acres Assembled

Beltline

A group of developers, city officials, engineers, and others came together, working across agencies, to set aside an area for a park, which also acted as the detention system. The cost: \$23,000,000.

2011

New Development

Park Site

Pond/Detention



2012

Beltline

The planning and construction solved the stormwater problem at a higher performance level than the original design, and it spurred significant economic development.

2022

Beltline

Solving the storm flooding allowed the Ponce City Market to develop and provided an amenity for the district that pushed much higher density development than originally planned.

2025

Beltline

Today the area has been significantly transformed and has become a vibrant, walkable, sustainable neighborhood. This was all possible because of inter-agency collaboration and sharing of costs.

2025

