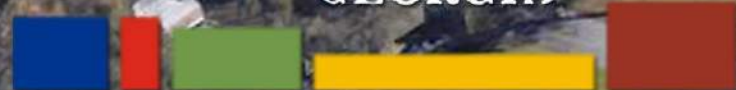




# The Liberty District

Renewing a neighborhood

COLUMBUS  
GEORGIA



We do amazing.



Hecht  
Burdeshaw  
Architects, Inc.



# Table of Contents

General

Background and History

Area Context

Anchor Institutions

Data Maps

Neighborhood Character

Opportunity Sites

A Neighborhood Transformed

# Acknowledgements

## Mayor Skip Henderson

### City Council

Byron Hickey	Glenn Davis
Bruce Huff	Toyia Tucker
Charmaine Crabb	Gary Allen
JoAnne Cogle	Walker Garrett
Judy Thomas	Travis Chambers

### City Manager

## Isaiah Hugley

### City Staff

Pam Hodge	Deputy City Manager
Lisa Goodwin	Deputy City Manager
Vance Beck	Engineering Director
Will Johnson	Planning Director
Holli Browder	Parks and Recreation

# Interviews & Input

## Interviews and Input

Lula Huff

Pastor Emmett Aniton

Ed Wolverton

Cathy Williams

Brian Sillitto

Chris Woodruff

Sia Etemadi

Oz Roberts

Paul Pierce

Reverend Richard Jesse

Johnny Warner



# Liberty Heritage Historic District

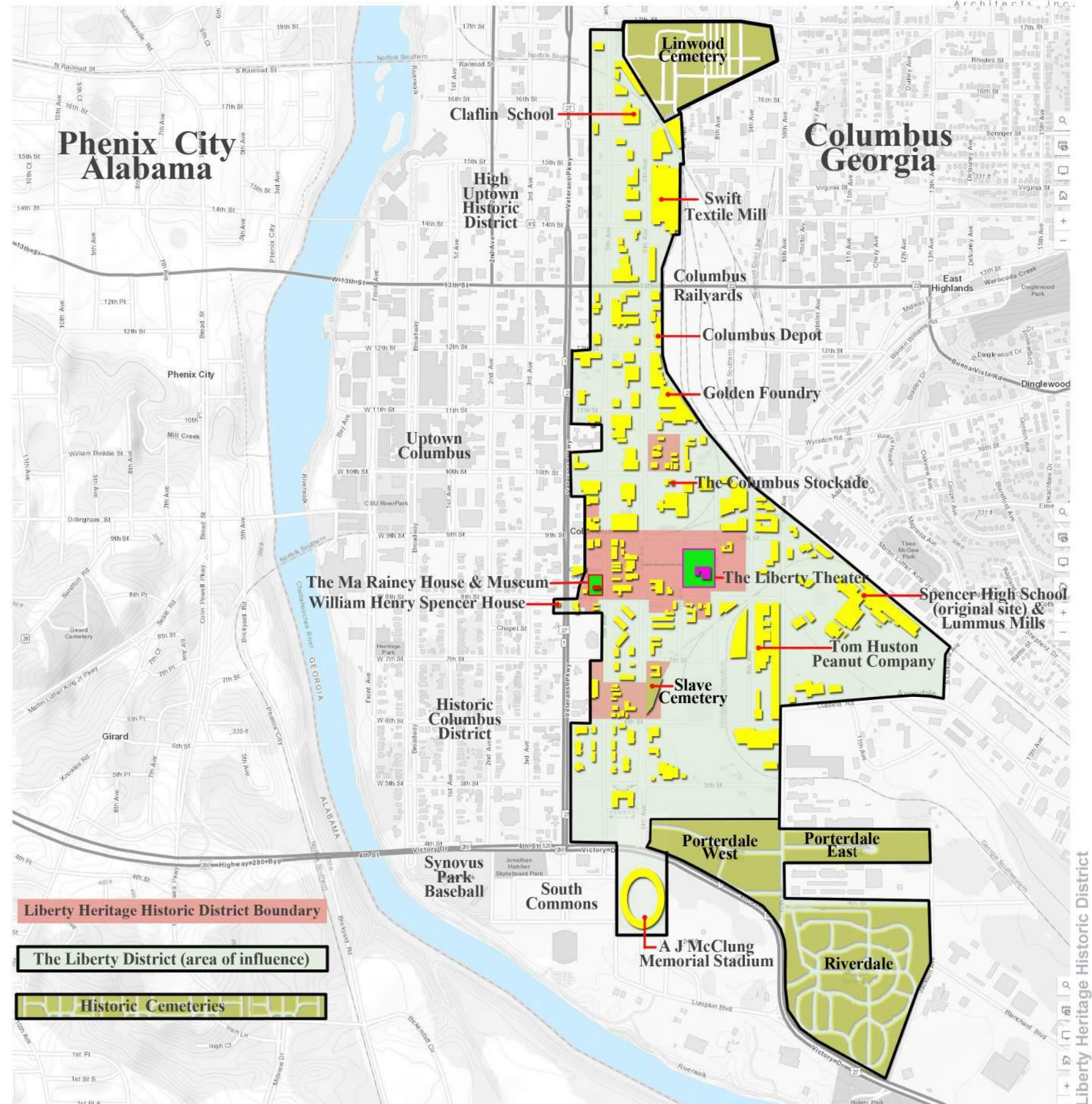
## The historic center of black life in Columbus

From the 1984 nomination form of the  
National Register of Historic Places application.

The Liberty District also boasts several historic churches, schools, businesses, and homes that reflect the diverse and vibrant history of the neighborhood. Some examples are the St. James AME Church, which was founded in 1876 and is one of the oldest black churches in Columbus; the Spencer High School, which was established in 1930 as the first public high school for African Americans in Columbus; the Claflin School, which was built in 1868 as one of the first schools for freed slaves in Georgia; and the Ma Rainey House and Museum, which was the residence of the legendary blues singer known as the "Mother of the Blues".



The Liberty Heritage Historic District is a valuable part of the historic districts of Columbus, Georgia that showcase the rich and diverse heritage of the city. The district is a testament to the resilience, creativity, and achievements of the African American community that has shaped the history and culture of Columbus for over a century.





# History - 1900 Sanborn Map

## Observations

Sanborn maps are detailed maps of U.S. cities and towns in the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally published by The Sanborn Map Company (Sanborn), the maps were created to allow fire insurance companies to assess their total liability in urbanized areas of the United States.

Since they contain detailed information about properties and individual buildings in approximately 12,000 U.S. cities and towns, Sanborn maps are valuable for documenting changes in the built environment of American cities over many decades.

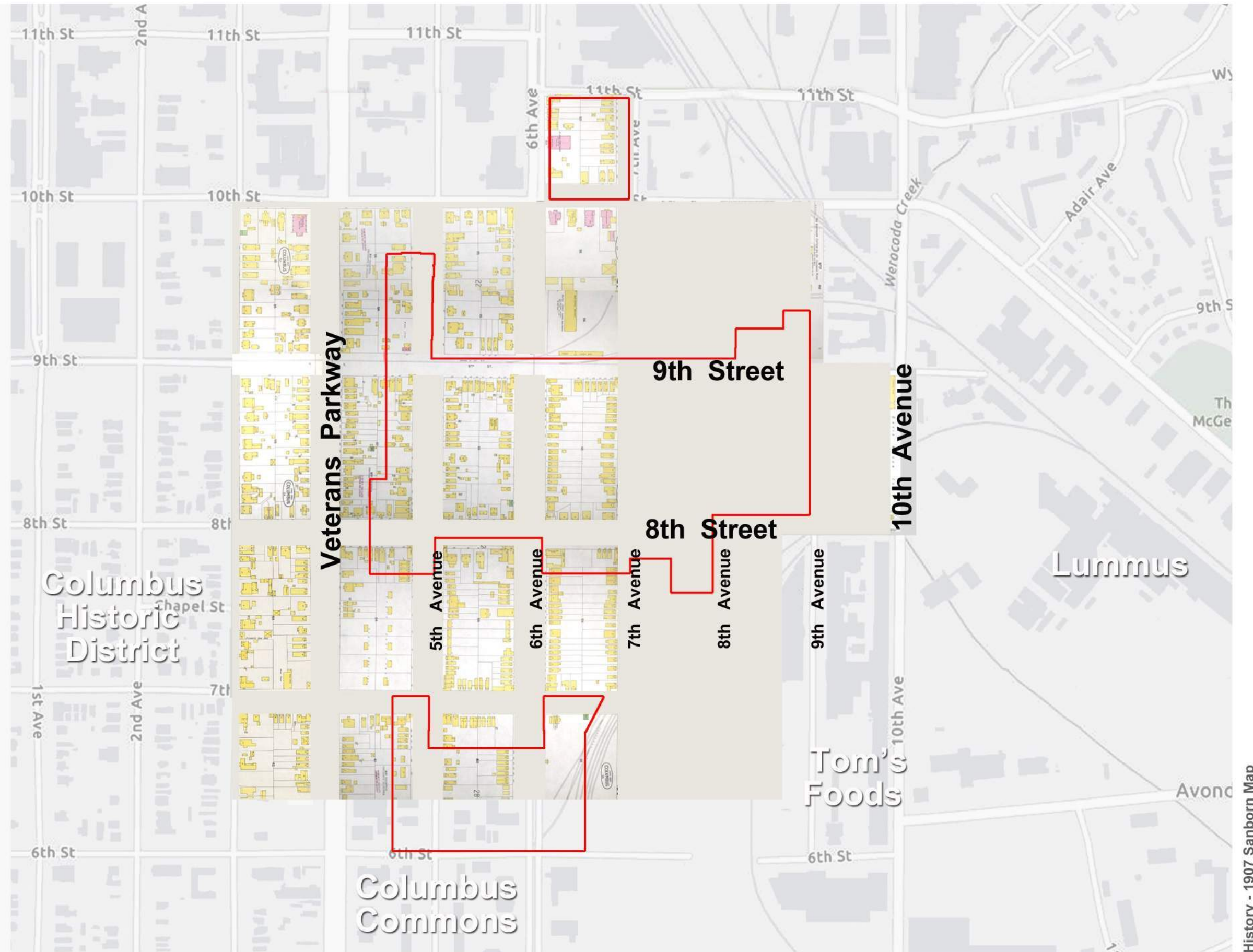
## Legend



Sanborn Map



Liberty Heritage  
Historic District





# History - 1907 Sanborn Map

## Observations

Sanborn maps are detailed maps of U.S. cities and towns in the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally published by The Sanborn Map Company (Sanborn), the maps were created to allow fire insurance companies to assess their total liability in urbanized areas of the United States.

Since they contain detailed information about properties and individual buildings in approximately 12,000 U.S. cities and towns, Sanborn maps are valuable for documenting changes in the built environment of American cities over many decades.

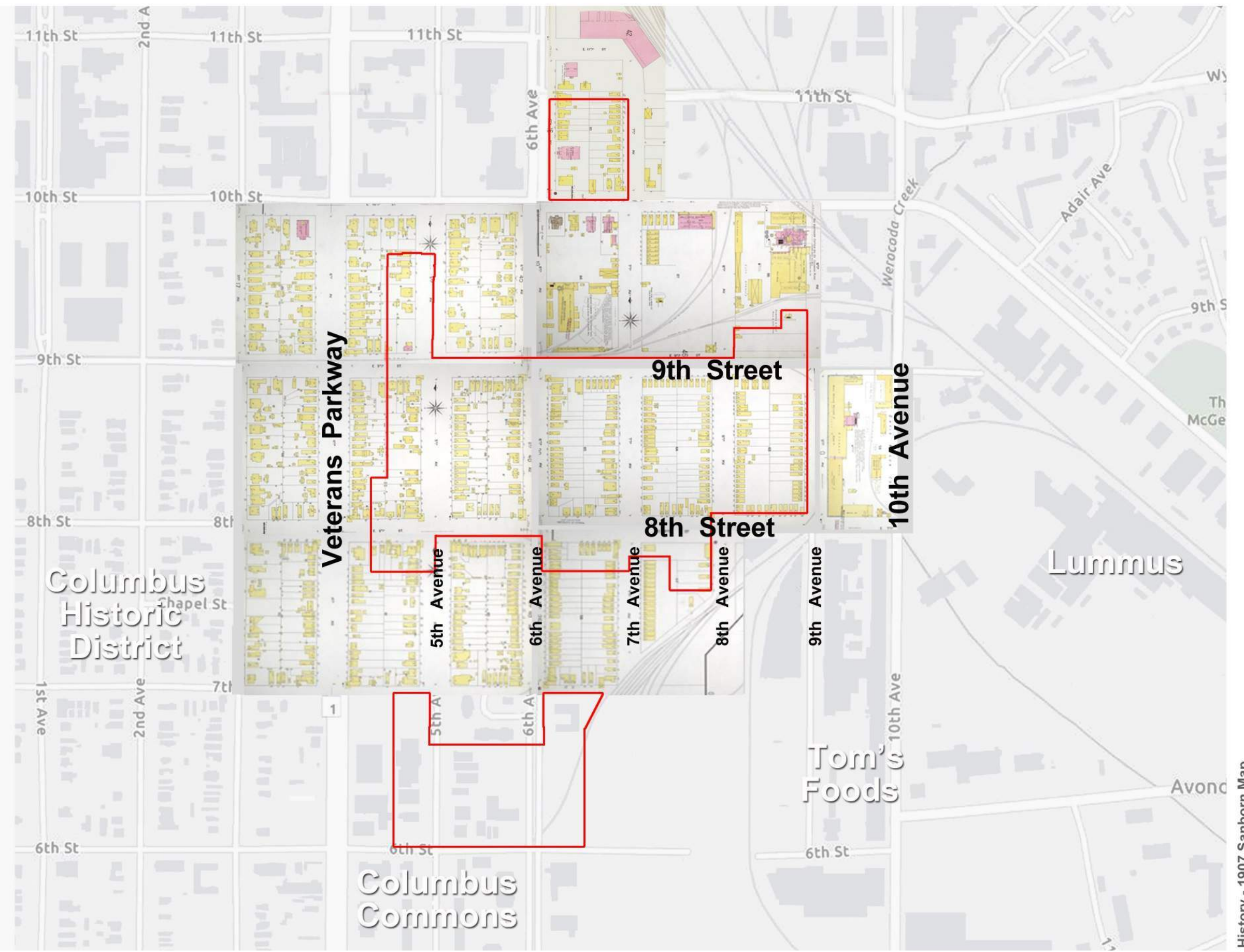
## Legend



Sanborn Map



Liberty Heritage  
Historic District







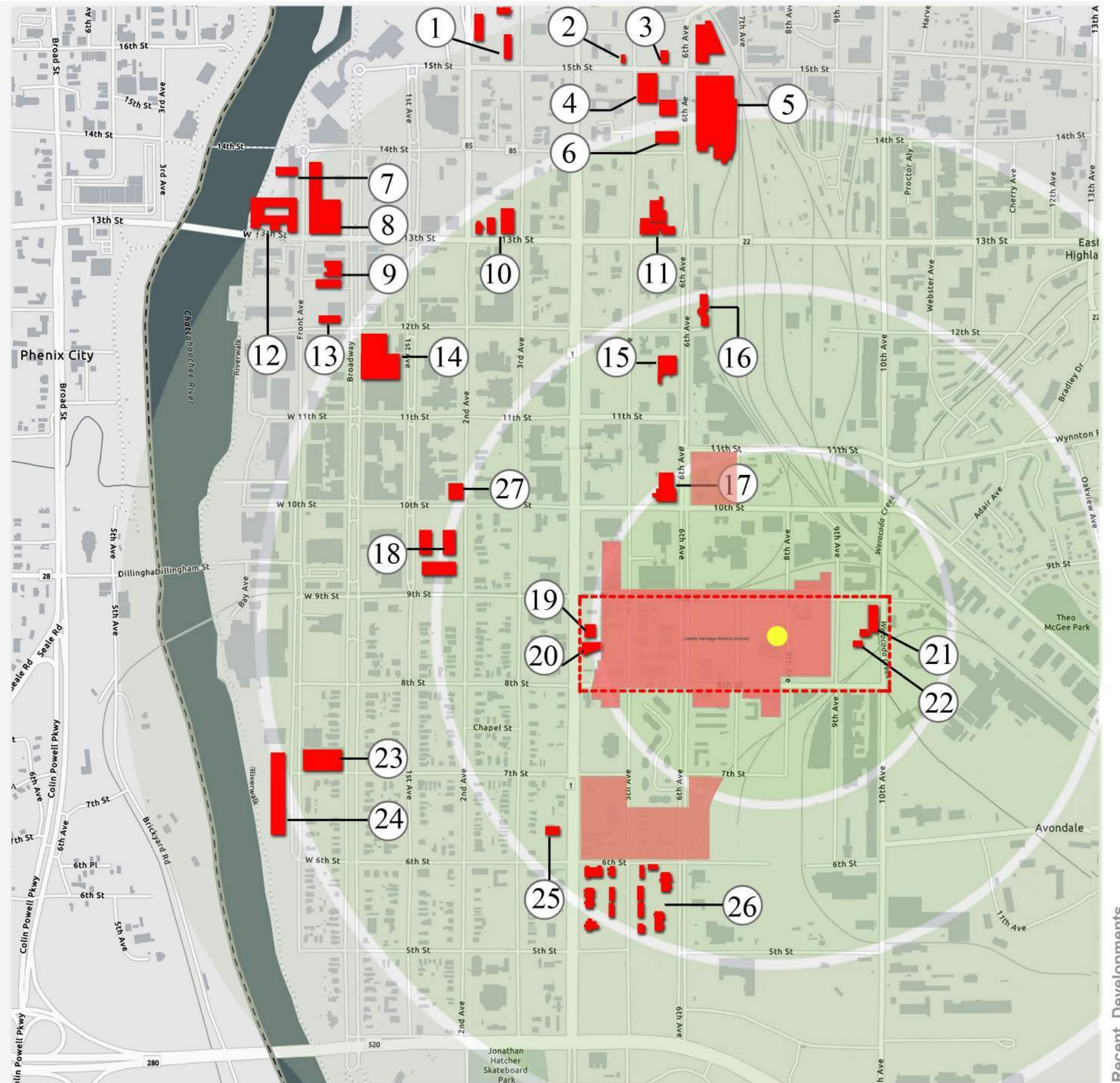


# Recent Developments

(Quarter mile walking range increments)

## Legend

1. New Loft Housing
2. Sputnik Bar
3. Stumpy's
4. Fetch Dog Park
5. Swift Mill Lofts and Office
6. Moes BBQ
7. Hotel Indigo
8. Synovus
9. Ram Hotels
10. Uptown Provisions
11. Chattabrewchee/ Vintageville
12. The Rapids
13. Hampton Inn
14. City Offices Renovation
15. Salt life
16. New Law Offices
17. Sheriff's Department
18. New Judicial Building
19. Family Dollar
20. Trailways Bus Depot
21. Warehouse 9
22. SpeedWay
23. New Historic Home Sites
24. Chattahoochee Promenade Renovation
25. Neighborworks
26. Columbus Commons Residential
27. Springer Performing Arts in the Outdoors





# Recent Developments

(Quarter mile walking range increments)





# Churches

## The spiritual center of the Liberty District

# Houses of Worship as Institutional Anchors for the Liberty Neighborhood

The churches within the Liberty District play a significant role as anchor institutions in preserving this historic neighborhood, and their presence is one of the truly unique aspects of the Liberty District's charm. The presence of churches in the Liberty District dates back to the 1840's, shortly after the founding of Columbus in 1828. Some churches were off-shoots of larger churches as a way to segregate their congregations while others were founded by slaves and their descendents for the black citizenry.

Churches have been in the Liberty District for the good times and the bad. When residents and businesses were leaving the district in the 60's, 70's and 80's, the churches made the decision to stay. And the former Liberty residents still came back to worship in the Liberty District churches, just as they always have done, because churches serve as more than just places of worship; they are hubs of cultural, social, and economic activities that contribute to the lives of their parishoners, as well as to the preservation and revitalization of the Liberty District.

**Community Organizing:** Churches have a long history of mobilizing their congregations and the broader community for social and political change. They often serve as catalysts for community organizing efforts aimed at preserving historic neighborhoods by advocating for policies and resources that benefit the community.

**Historic Preservation:** Many churches are themselves historic landmarks. Preserving these church buildings can be a symbol of the neighborhood's history and cultural identity. Churches often work with preservation organizations to secure funding for restoration and maintenance of their historic structures.

**Cultural and Educational Programs:** Churches may offer cultural programs, workshops, and educational initiatives that promote the heritage and history of the neighborhood. This helps maintain a sense of identity and pride among residents.

**Social Services:** Some churches provide social services such as food banks, counseling, job training, and housing assistance. These services can help stabilize the neighborhood population and prevent displacement due to gentrification.

**Economic Development:** Churches can support local businesses and entrepreneurs through partnerships, mentoring, and space rental. Churches have payrolls too, during the good years and the lean. They can also promote economic development initiatives that create jobs and improve the overall financial health of the neighborhood.

**Housing Initiatives:** Some churches engage in affordable housing projects to ensure that long-time residents can continue to live in the neighborhood. This can involve developing affordable housing units or advocating for housing policies that protect residents from eviction and rising rents.

**Community Events:** Churches often host community events, such as festivals, health fairs, and educational workshops. These events bring residents together and promote a sense of belonging and cohesion within the neighborhood.

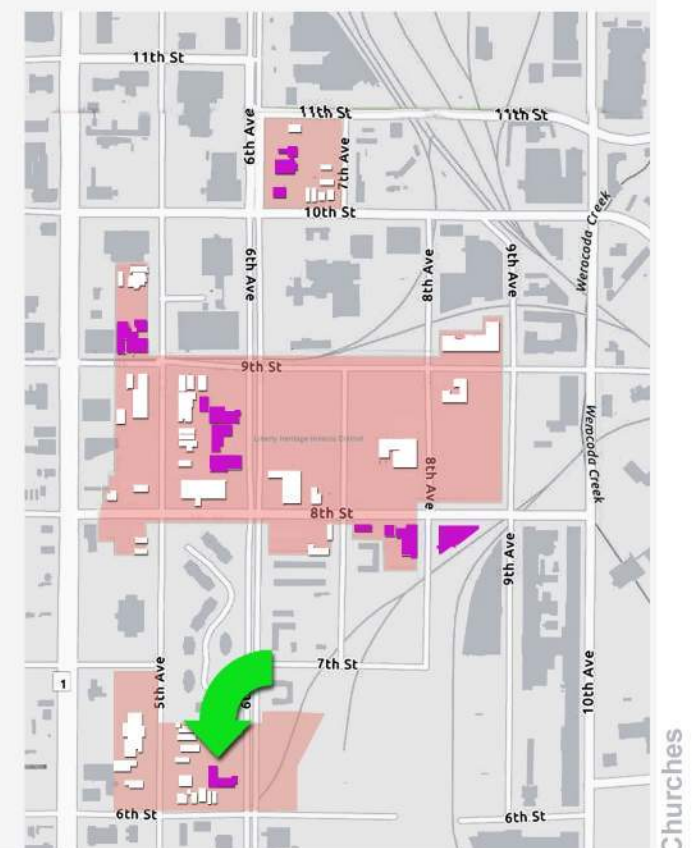
**Youth and Family Support:** Many churches offer programs for youth and families, such as after-school programs, mentoring, and family counseling. These services can help address issues that may threaten the stability of the neighborhood.

**Crisis Response:** In times of crisis, such as natural disasters or community emergencies, churches often serve as hubs for disaster relief efforts and community support, further solidifying their role as anchor institutions.

## Greater Beulah Baptist Church



In 1959, the trustees and the pastor found three plots of land located at 609, 611, and 613 6th Avenue. On these plots a brick structure was erected and incorporated. At the same time, the word "Greater" was added. The church was renamed "The Greater Beulah Baptist Church, Inc." On May 3, 1959, the first service was held for the Greater Beulah Baptist Church, Inc. In 2020, Dr. C. Medley Hayes retired as pastor of Greater Beulah after 30 years of service. Dr. Maurice K. Mickles succeeded him as pastor.





# Churches

## The spiritual center of the Liberty District

### First African Baptist Church



The initial congregation of this church was formed by slaves who had attended Ephesus Baptist Church (later First Baptist), since its organization on February 14, 1829. When a new church was built in 1840 the slaves worshipped in the older building. White ministers served the African Baptist Church until 1862 when Rev. Harry Watson became the first black minister. The church was granted a site at Eleventh Street and Sixth Avenue by the Georgia General Assembly but moved to its current location at a cost of \$75,000 in 1915. It was renamed First African Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. J. H. Smith.



The First African Baptist Church Parsonage in Columbus, Georgia is a historic church parsonage at 911 5th Avenue. It is a one-story Victorian cottage with Eastlake trim that was built in 1915-16. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

In 1916 it was the residence of Rev. J. Henry Smith, pastor of the First African Baptist Church. It was home of Rev. Jacob T. Brown in 1918 and was the home of Rev. Broadus H. Hogan in 1918. Both were pastors of the church.

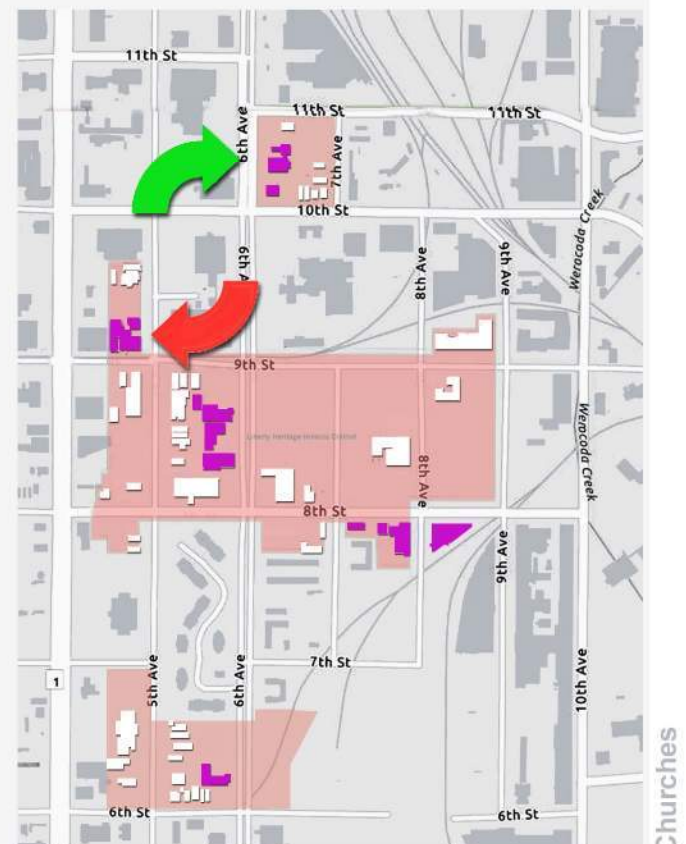
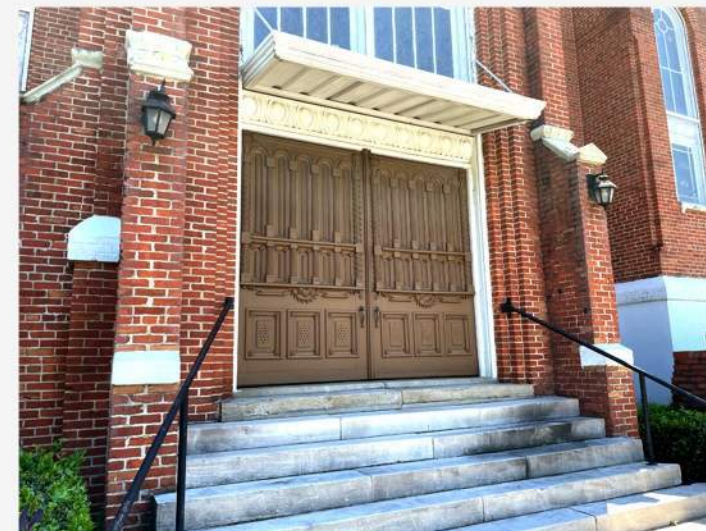
It was listed on the National Register along with other historic properties identified in a large survey

### St James AME Church



The property on which Saint James AME Church stands was given to the African Methodist Episcopal Church by an act of the Georgia Legislature in 1873. The present edifice, a cathedral in structure and design, was erected during the pastorate of the Reverend Wesley J. Gaines at a cost of \$20,000.00.

It was completed in 1876. The front doors, which came from the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, are probably the oldest parts of the church. The heavy, ornately carved front doors were built by slaves at the Dudley Sash and Door Company located at Sixth Avenue and 13th Street. The bell tower was built while the Reverend Larry Thomas was pastor (1886-1887).





# Churches

## The spiritual center of the Liberty District

### Friendship Baptist Church



Founded in 1892 at 4th Avenue and 6th Street, the church moved to its permanent home here in January of 1897. The first minister was Rev. J. S. Kelsey, who served the church from 1897-1901. The present building was completed under his leadership. It was enlarged and improved during the long ministry of Rev. R. K. Paschel, 1901-1944. A dream of Rev. Paschel was realized in 1950 with the completion of the educational annex named in his honor. Four other pastors served during the church's first century: A. W. Fortson, 1944-1968; W. H. Smith, 1968-1974; James H. Carter, 1974-1978; and Emmett S. Aniton, Jr., 1979-present.

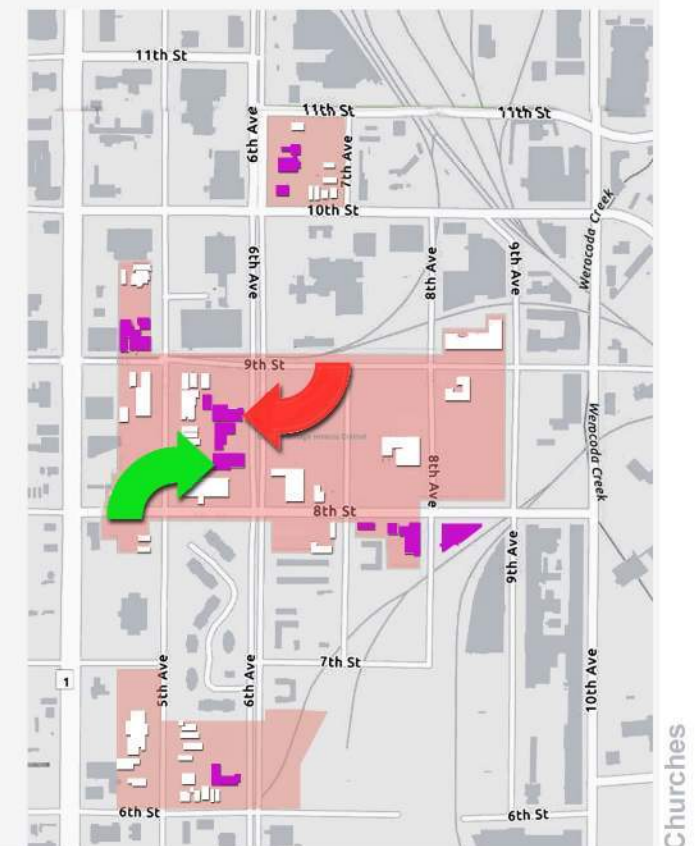


### Prince Hall Masonic Temple



The Prince Hall Masonic Temple in Columbus is one of 18 sites that comprise the MLK Jr. Outdoor Learning Trail, a project that was developed by Columbus State University students. It was the site of a speech that Martin Luther King, Jr. gave to an audience of more than 1,000 people in 1958 during his inaugural year as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King's visit was part of the emerging SCLC efforts to register black voters and encourage nonviolence in preparation for the 1960 presidential election.

King visited Columbus following the murder of Dr. Thomas Brewer, a Columbus leader who helped organize and finance King v. Chapman, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended the white primary system in Georgia. Following the decision, Columbus blacks lived in constant fear of Klan bombings and cross burnings. The Prince Hall masons invited King so that the local black churches would not be subject to retaliation by local Klan activists.





# Churches

## The spiritual center of the Liberty District

### Holsey Chapel CME Church



In 1884, a group of black citizens banded together to organize a church. They appealed to the Commissioners of Columbus, Georgia, and obtained a lot on Eighth Street. The first church was completed in 1886 and called Everett Chapel after Newton Everett, one of the original founders and trustees. In 1894, the church was renamed Holsey Chapel, after Bishop Lucius H. Holsey, who played a vital role in the organization of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1915, Holsey Chapel was destroyed by a storm. A new building was completed in 1919, along with a parsonage. The current brick structure was built in 1946.

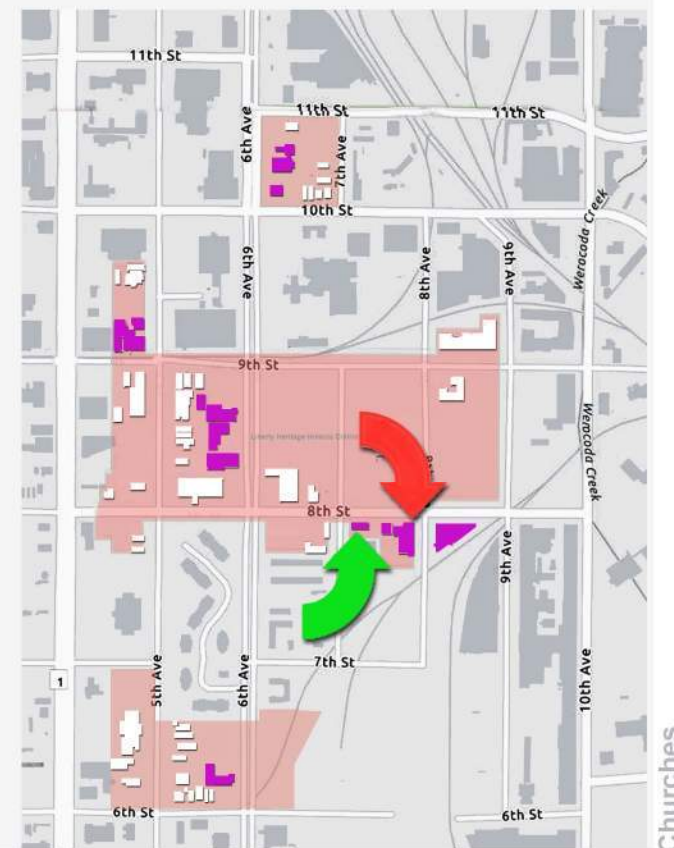


In 1888, Reverend P. W. Powell became pastor of Everett Chapel. When Everett Chapel was renamed Holsey Chapel in 1894, Reverend C. T. Shatten served the congregation. Reverend Loyd McAfee was pastor from 1904 until 1919. Other pastors have included the Reverends Samuel Dunbar, Lewis Pearcey, Talton Cunningham, Needham Means, John Cochran, Edward Roberts, Frank Rowe and John Parham. Holsey Chapel experienced its greatest growth under the leadership of Edward D. Bryson, who was followed by L. P. Napier. Under the leadership of Reverend Allen Page, III, Holsey Chapel remains strong because of effective leadership and dedicated membership.

### Total Man Ministries Church



Pastor Mary Ann Norwood founded Total Man Ministries in 2004 to be a living example of Gods love to spiritually lost people in the Liberty District and geographical area.





# Planning Goals

## Encourage existing property owners to invest in renovations

Having a well-crafted master plan for the Liberty District can encourage property owners to invest in renovating their buildings by creating a supportive regulatory / zoning environment, offering financial incentives, improving infrastructure, and fostering a sense of community and pride in the neighborhood. The combination of these strategies can stimulate private investment and contribute to the overall revitalization of the Liberty District area.

## Plan a complete neighborhood with a renovated Liberty Theater at its center.

There was a time when the Liberty District had many elements needed for a successful neighborhood - a plentiful housing stock in a location close to employment opportunities, schools, churches, a community meeting house, thriving businesses, entertainment and cultural venues, and access to public transportation. This master plan will provide a map for neighborhood renewal by staying true to the elements of the past that made the neighborhood a special and unique part of Columbus, Georgia.

## Envision the success of the Ma Rainey House Museum

The Museum exists within the four walls of Ma Rainey's home. This plan envisions a way of expanding the telling of her story through new site elements - a blues garden and an intimate outdoor performance space, as well as collaborative exhibits and performances at the Liberty Theater.

## Every neighborhood needs a great neighborhood park

A neighborhood park in the Liberty area can play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life in a community. It fosters physical and mental well-being, strengthens social bonds, and contributes to the overall attractiveness and vitality of the neighborhood. As such, investing in the creation and maintenance of neighborhood parks is often seen as a valuable community development strategy.

## Create a plan that will facilitate moving city-owned property from public to private initiatives.

This transfer could be to a single lot to a person interested in a home or duplex home, or to a developer who is interested in multiple lots and willing to work within the master plan intent to renew the Liberty neighborhood.

By following a structured and transparent process, the City can effectively move city-owned property within the Liberty District into private hands while ensuring that the transfer aligns with the city's goals, benefits the neighborhood, satisfies the city's investment costs and adheres to legal and regulatory requirements.

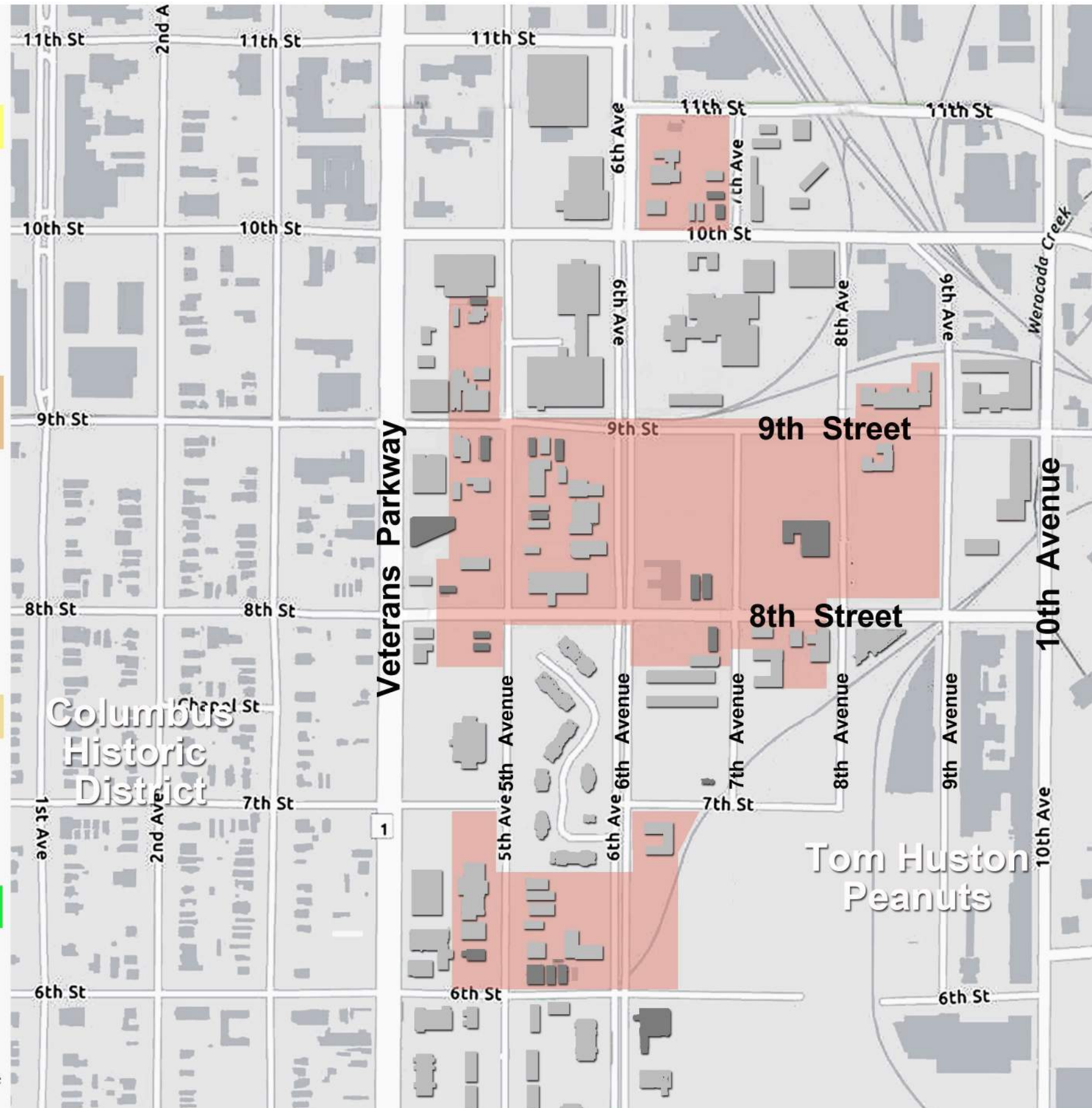
The resulting construction projects can demonstrate the power of Public-Private Partnerships in enabling seed projects of various sizes that can jump-start further private investments and initiatives that will help to renew the Liberty District.

## Include a variety of housing types and sizes

A variety of housing types in the Liberty neighborhood creates a dynamic, inclusive, and adaptable community. It addresses the diverse needs and preferences of residents, supports economic vitality, enhances social cohesion, and contributes to a more sustainable and resilient urban environment.

A mix of housing types can include options like apartments, condos, townhouses, and single-family homes, catering to residents with varying budget constraints. This can help address housing affordability challenges within the community.

A Liberty District with various housing options can support residents at different stages of life. Seniors may choose to downsize to smaller homes or apartments, allowing them to remain in the same Liberty neighborhood - year after year.





# Walkability

## Approximate walking and biking times in the Liberty District and surroundings

In urban planning, walkability refers to the accessibility of amenities by foot, and is based on the idea that urban spaces should be more than just transport corridors designed for maximum vehicle throughput. Walkability is about creating neighborhoods where people can easily walk to services and amenities within a reasonable distance, typically defined as a walk of 30 minutes or less. Factors influencing walkability include the quality of paths, pavements, crossings, road design, lighting, building accessibility, and perceptions of safety.

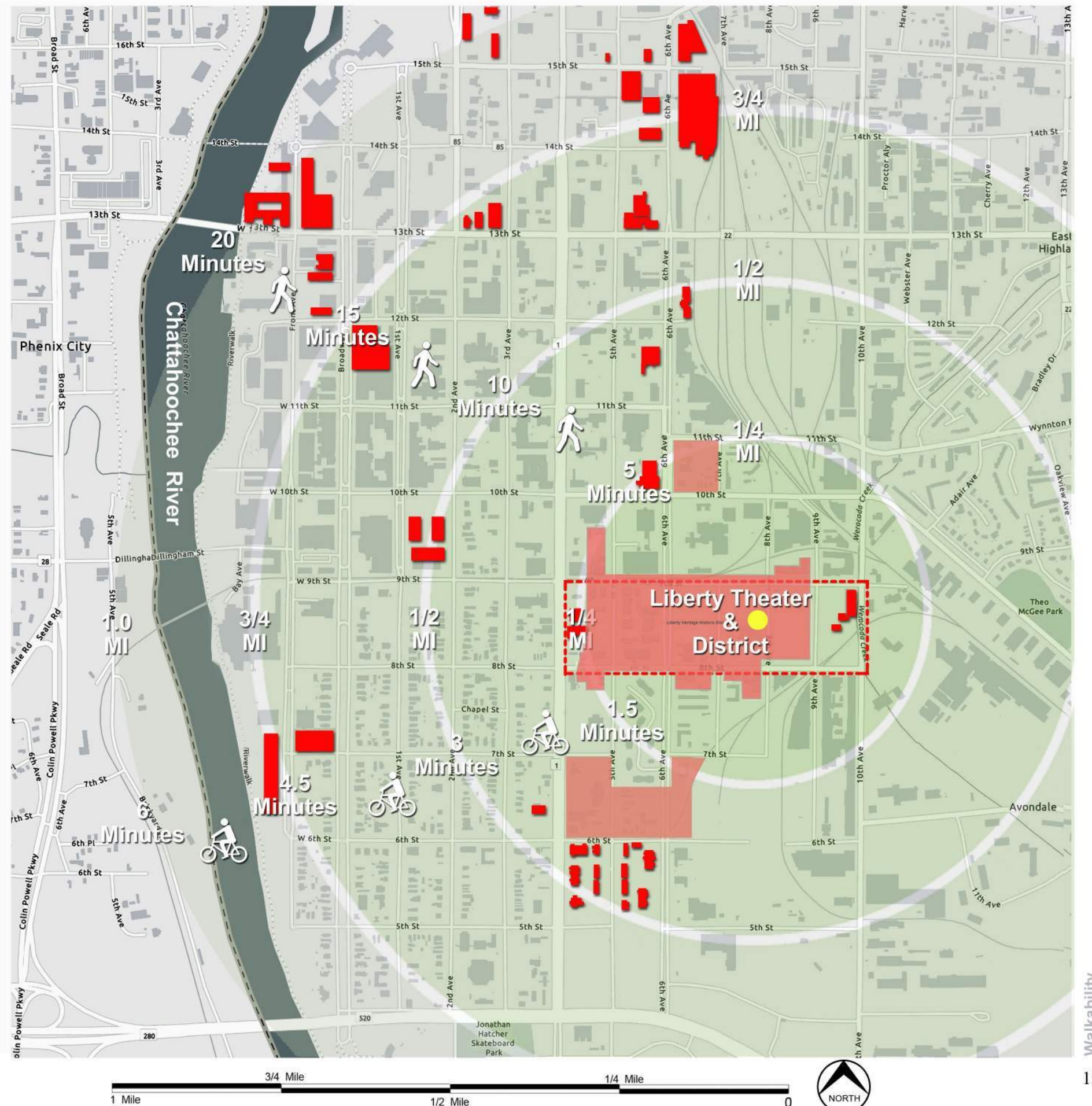
The Liberty District already has many advantages in developing a walkable neighborhood. Much of the infrastructure is already in place. When a major public works project a few years ago was undertaken to help with lessen the flooding issues in the neighborhood, Sixth Avenue was completely renovated in the Liberty District area with all new pedestrian and bike friendly intersections, underground utility lines, safe roadway lighting, and landscaped with trees to provide areas of shade adjacent to all new sidewalks along this important corridor.

In the three block area around the Liberty Theater, every street right-of-way is generously proportioned with sidewalks and mature trees giving shade to the area.

Residents of walkable neighborhoods can see a health benefit when taking advantage of increased walkability. The exercise is good for them, and can promote other advantages of a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, cities with good public transit and access to public amenities can promote happiness.

Walkable neighborhoods reduce reliance on cars, which helps lower CO2 emissions. A higher Walk Score in the Liberty District can increase property value as new developments are undertaken. Walkability fosters community interaction, combatting loneliness. People walking around town have more opportunities to engage with neighbors and participate in civic activities.

As the neighborhood begins to change, every project can contribute to a better walking environment within the neighborhood, and the city can plan to expand it's public infrastructure to connect the Liberty District to Uptown Columbus with innovative transportation options beyond the car.





# Transportation

## METRA Bus Routes

Metra bus routes are intended to connect larger areas of our community with a robust public transportation system, and the layout of existing bus routes will do just that for the Liberty District. Using a bus can help the city lower transport emissions, which will make Columbus a cleaner and healthier place. It will also contribute to less congestion by reducing the number of cars on the roadways.

Public transportation is generally more affordable than owning and maintaining a private car. Many of the current and future residents of the Liberty District will fit the profile of a typical transit user - lower income residents, students, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The Liberty District can be the location for a large number of new housing units, many of them in higher density housing configurations. This residential potential will be attractive to many people who want to live and work in the Liberty District, while utilizing the retail, educational, entertainment and recreation aspects of the Uptown area.

Metra will have the opportunity to develop more short distance routes that can connect the Liberty District to Uptown Columbus and nearby areas of development such as the Midcity Yards, the Highside Market, and Riverfront Place among others.

The Liberty District can leverage this transit advantage to become the place to live where a world of opportunities are just a short ride away!

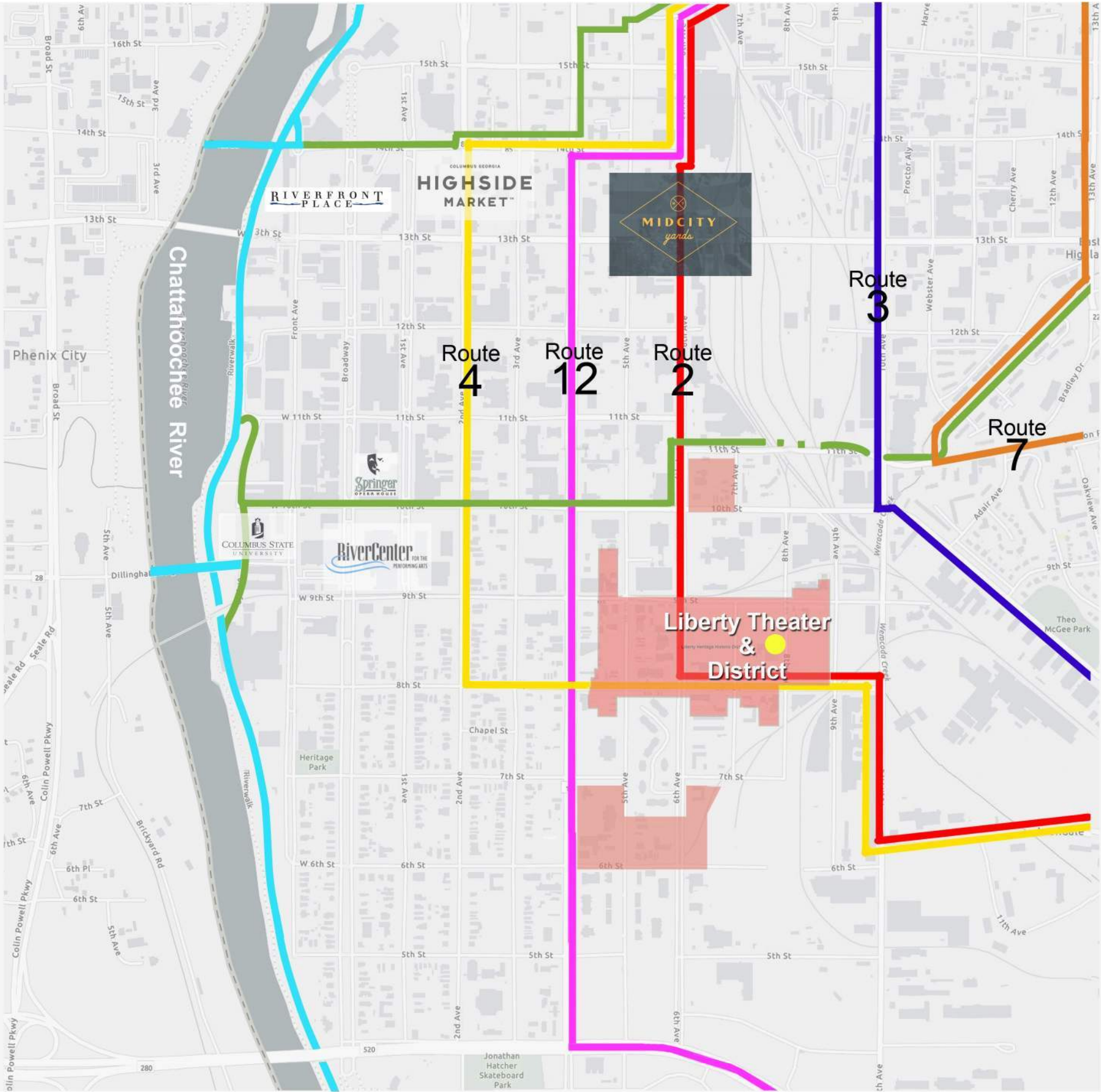
## Dragonfly Trail

The Dragonfly Trail is network of bike and pedestrian walkways that connect the Uptown area to many other neighborhoods around the city. All of these paths lead directly to the Chattahoochee River, which is the center of outdoor recreation in Columbus.

The Dragonfly Trail is just a block away from the heart of the Liberty District, and the District is already connected to this trail by the sidewalks of the Sixth Avenue corridor.

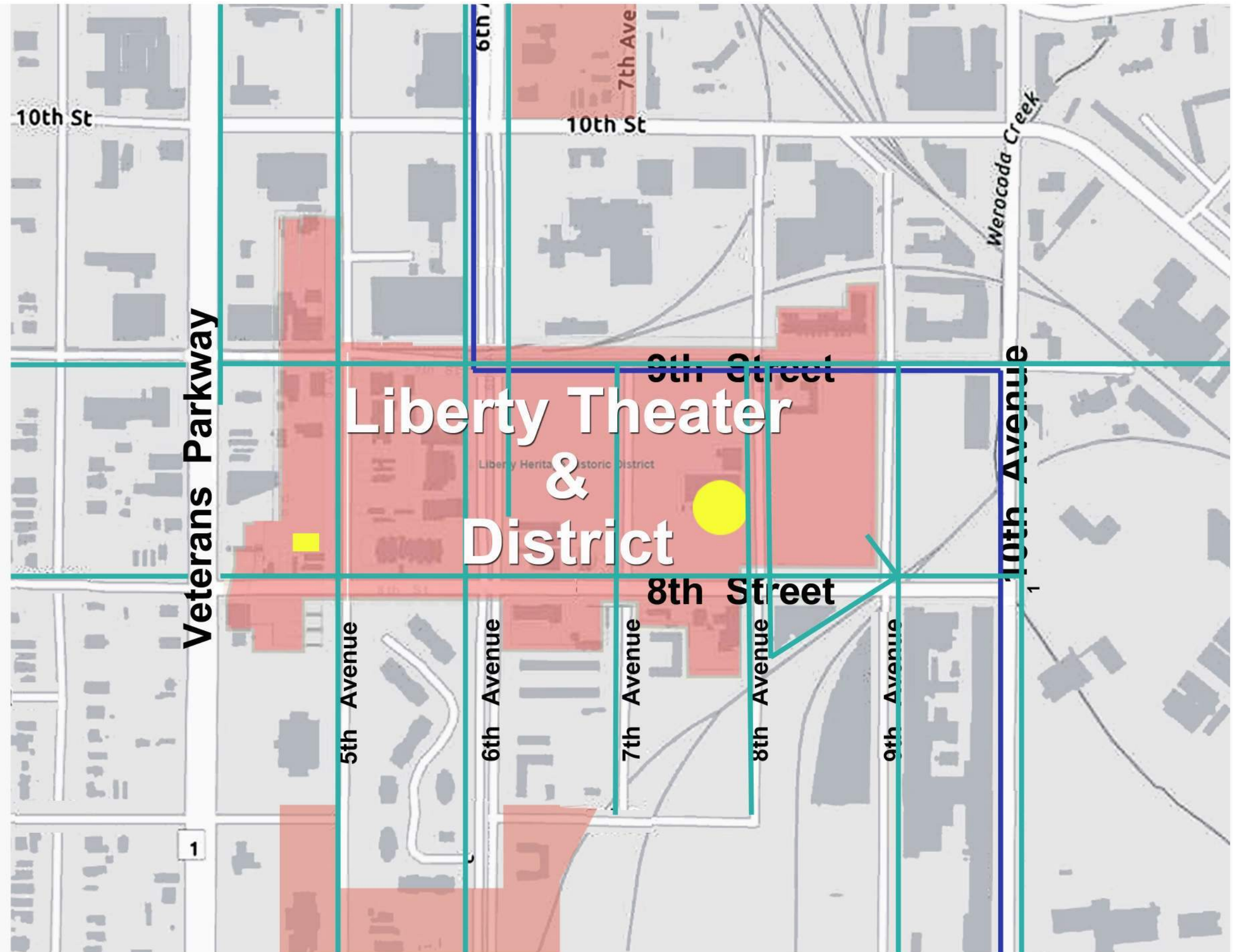
## Chattahoochee Riverwalk

The Chattahoochee Riverwalk has now been two decades in its creation, and offers the residents of the Liberty District with a wonderful pedestrian and bicycling venue for their families. It is a linear park that spans 14 miles along this beautiful waterfront.





# Overhead Power Line Locations (Existing)





# Property Ownership

## Within the Liberty District

### Private

The steady decrease of private property ownership in the Liberty District has contributed to a decrease in property tax revenues for the City. This has occurred at the same time that significant infrastructure investments have been made in reducing the Liberty areas subject to flooding.

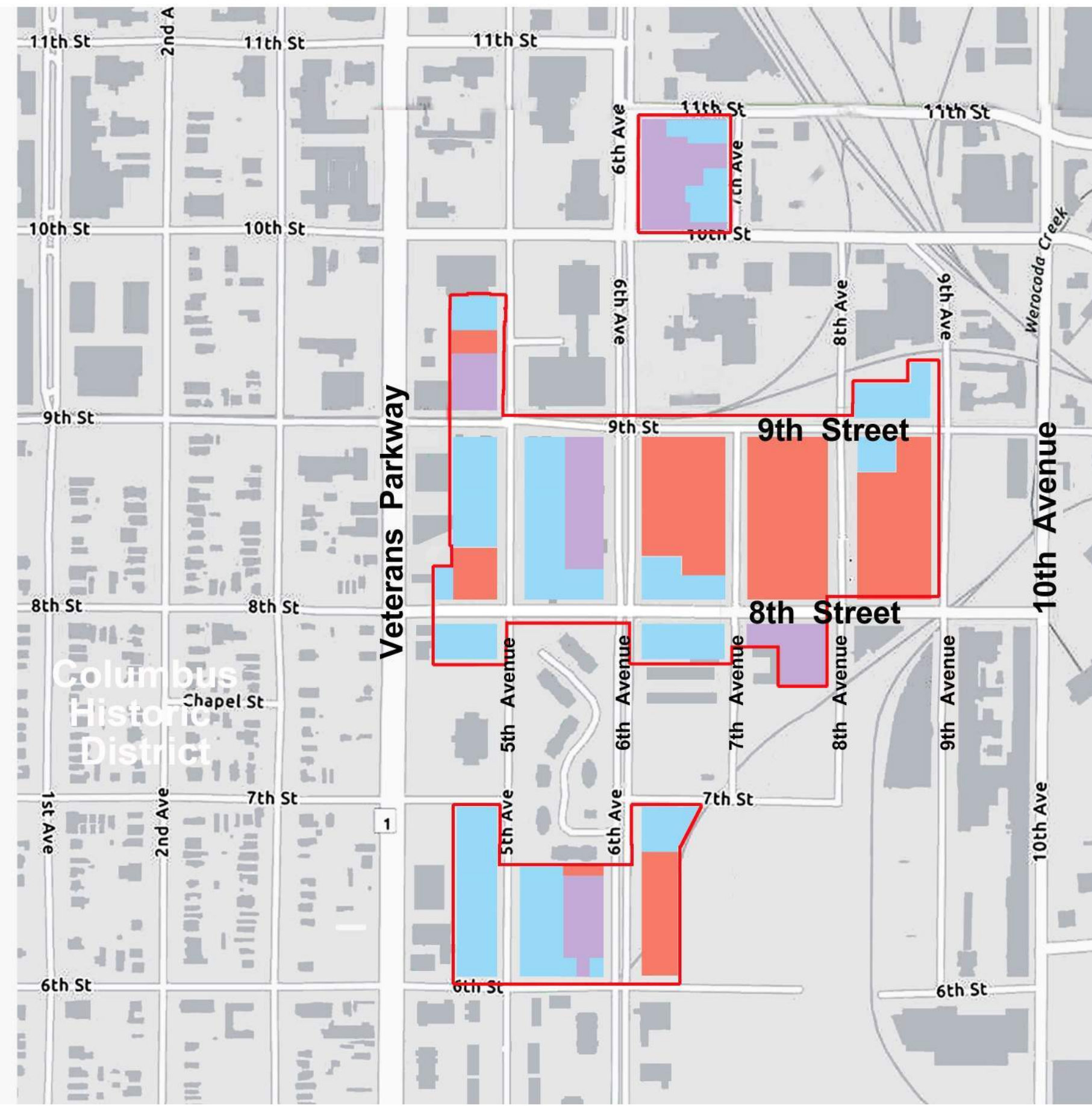
### City of Columbus

Due to a variety of factors such as general disinvestment in the Liberty area, a decline in upkeep of private property, and an increase in rental properties, the City of Columbus issued “demolition by neglect” notices on a significant number of Liberty District properties over the years.

When owners cease to pay their property taxes, property ownership transfers to the City of Columbus. This has resulted in the City becoming the largest property owner in the Liberty District.

### Religious

Religious property ownership has remained relatively constant over the decades. Since most religious organizations are exempt from taxation, the City receives no tax income from these properties.









# Building Occupancy

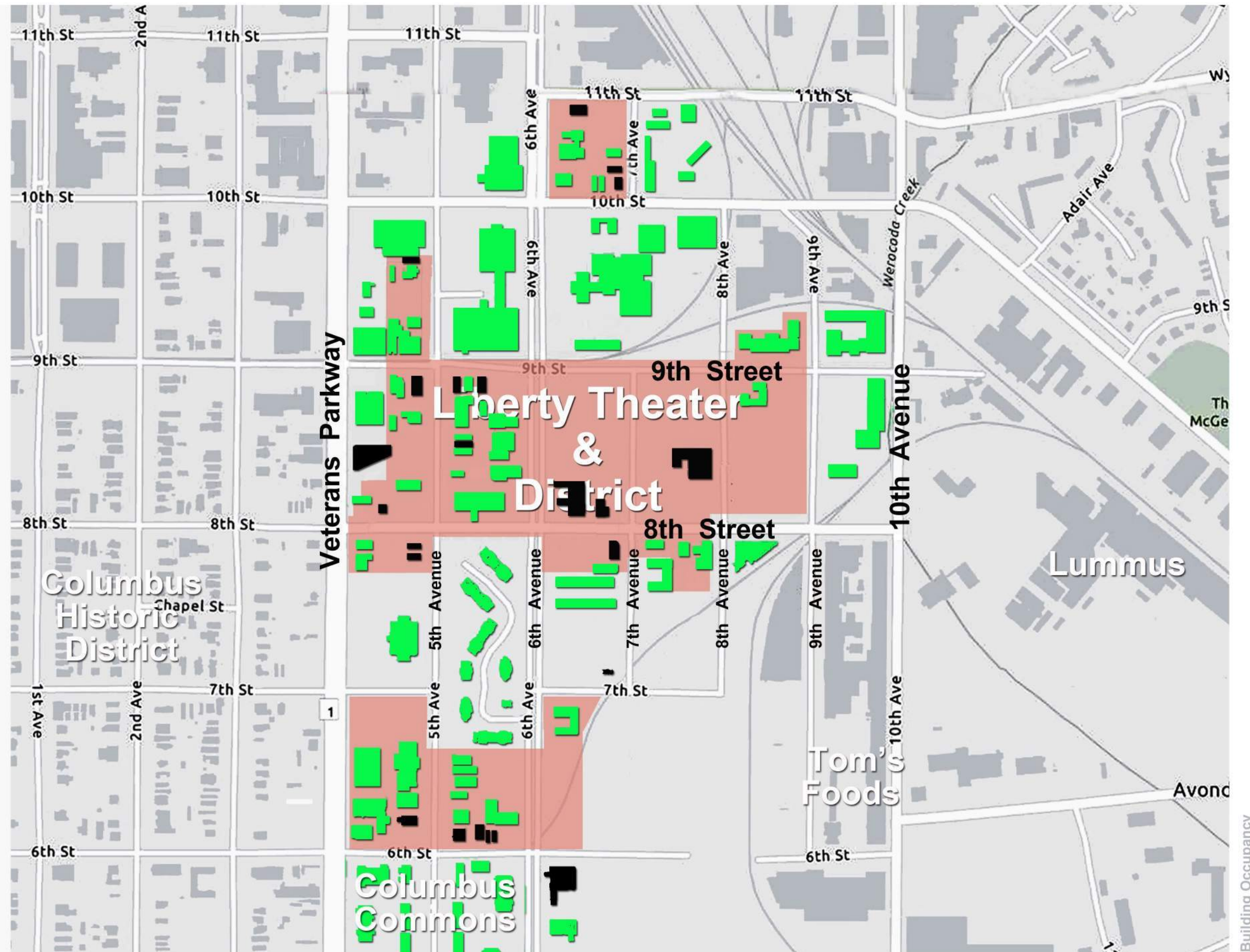
## Observations

The Liberty District is home to a wide variety of building types and condition, from historic churches built in the early 1800's to new housing developments at Columbus Commons.

Tom's Foods and Lummus properties are currently under-utilized but may be considered for significant developments in the future as the Liberty District continues to attract investment by the City, the Columbus Housing Authority, and developers within the community.

## Legend

-  Existing structures outside of study area
-  Liberty Historic District
-  Building vacant or under-utilized
-  Building Occupied





# Flood Hazard Zones

Within the Liberty District

## 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

A Flood Hazard Zone refers to an area that faces a significant risk of flooding. These zones are identified on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which communities use to understand flood risk and take necessary precautions.

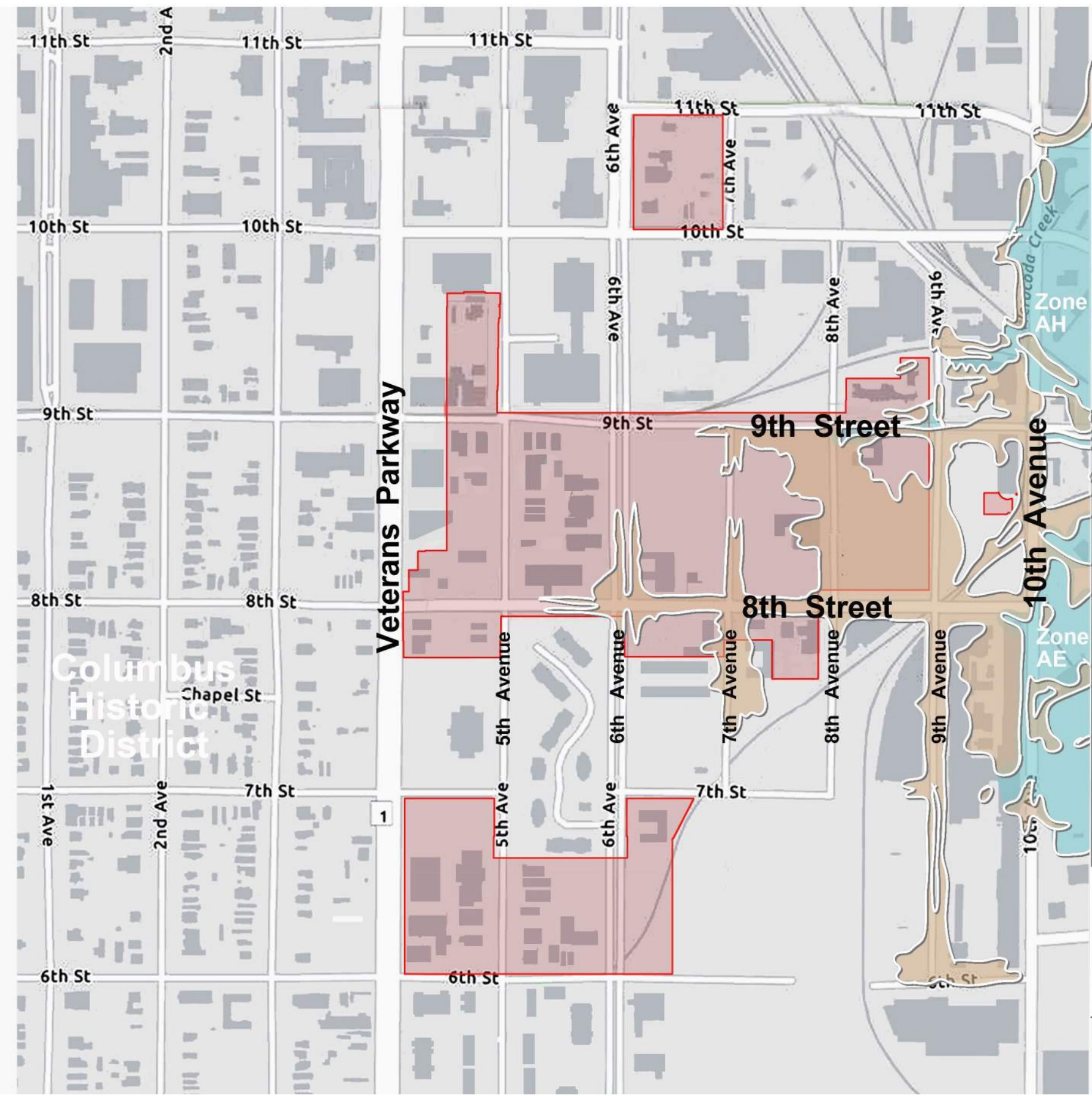
The 1% annual flood, also known as the base flood, has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. It represents the flood level with the highest likelihood of occurrence. In other words, it's the flood that has a 1 in 100 chance of happening each year. This is often referred to as a 100-year flood.

## 0.2 % Annual Chance Flood Hazard

A 0.2% annual chance flood, also known as the 500-year flood, has a 0.2% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. In other words, it's the flood event that occurs approximately once every 500 years.

## Liberty District Limits

An eastern portion of the Liberty District lies within the Weracoba Creek watershed area.





# Building Uses

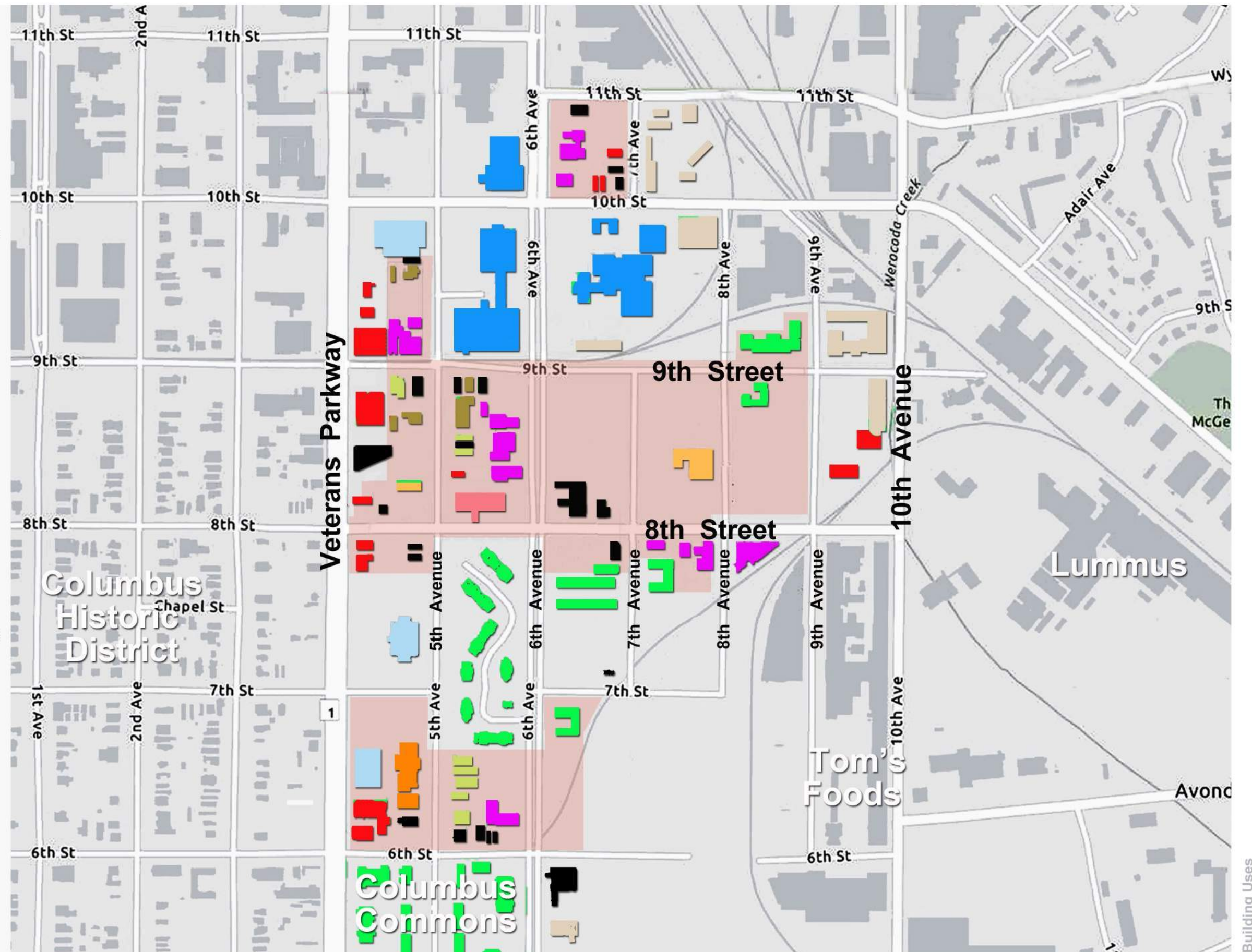
## Observations

The Liberty District, once a vital and thriving center of black life and culture in Columbus, has seen its status as a functioning neighborhood diminish with every passing year. Many of the businesses that once located here, examples of black entrepreneurship, have left the neighborhood and a majority of the housing stock has fallen into disrepair and been demolished.

What remains as a bridge from past to present are the buildings that have survived in the Liberty neighborhood and anchor it today - the Liberty Theater, the churches, the Muscogee County Jail, and the Mildred Terry Library among many others.

## Legend

- Existing structures outside of study area
- Liberty Historic District
- Building vacant or under-utilized
- Day Care
- Religious
- Law Enforcement / Corrections
- Commercial
- Funeral Services
- Warehouse / Industrial
- Civic / Government
- Residential - Single Family
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Offices
- Entertainment





# Zoning 2024

## SFR 4 Single Family Residential 4

The SFR4 zoning district provides a higher density residential zoning district while protecting residential character by prohibiting commercial uses; allowing uses that enhance residential areas, such as places of worship, elementary and secondary schools, and parks; and establishing property development regulations that preserve open space.

## RMF 2 Residential Multi-Family 2

The RMF2 zoning district provides a high density residential zoning district that allows only multifamily dwelling types and maintains an overall residential character by allowing a limited number of commercial uses such as assisted, retirement or personal care facilities, and bed and breakfast inns; allowing secondary uses within offices, and institutional, prohibiting other commercial uses; allowing uses that enhance residential areas, such as places of worship, elementary and secondary schools, and parks; and establishing property development regulations that are consistent with higher density residential concentrations.

## RO Residential Office

The residential/office (R/O) district is intended to accommodate a mix of multifamily residential buildings and office space that architecturally reflect the historic character of this area.

## UPT Uptown

The purpose of UPT zoning is to provide a mixed use zoning district that provides for both high intensity commercial and high density residential uses in an area that is adjacent and complementary to the CRD zoning district. The UPT zoning district is intended to be applied in areas that are:

1. Located in an area where high density and intensity development is encouraged;
2. Located adjacent to the CRD zoning district; and
3. Capable of allowing complementary existing and future land uses that can attract employment, residential and entertainment activities in one extended area.

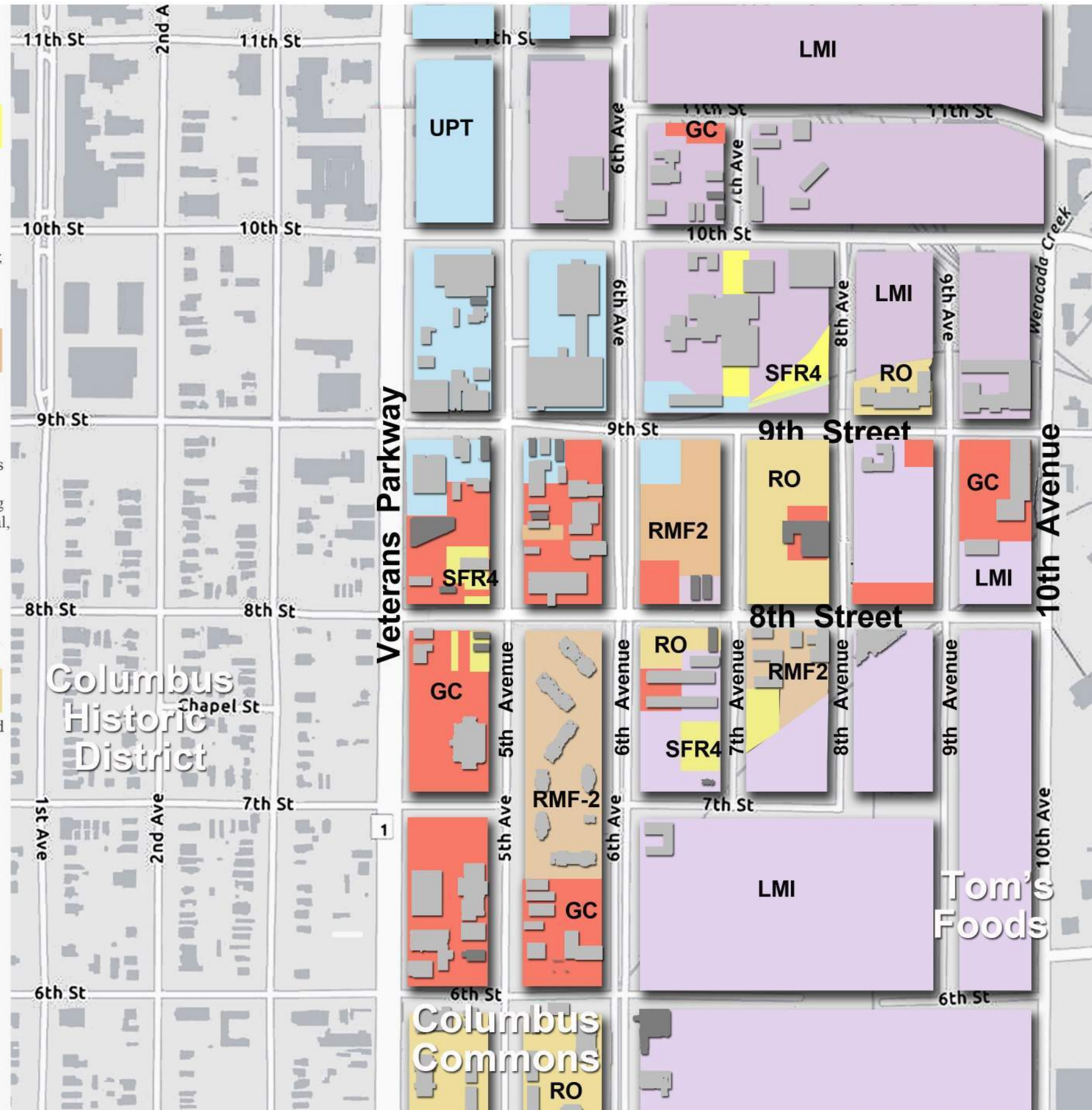
## GC General Commercial

A general commercial zoning district is a type of zoning that allows for a wide range of commercial and service activities, especially along major roads and in central business areas. Some of the benefits of a general commercial zoning district are that it provides attractive and efficient retail shopping and personal service uses for customers and residents.

It also allows for more intense types of commercial establishments that may not be suitable for other types of commercial zoning, such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, car washes, new and used car lots, or movie theaters.

## LMI Light Manufacturing / Industrial

Light manufacturing industries are usually less capital-intensive than heavy industries and are more consumer-oriented than business-oriented, as they typically produce smaller consumer goods. Most light industry products are produced for end-users rather than as intermediates for use by other industries. Light industry facilities typically have a less environmental impact than those associated with heavy industry.





# Zoning Proposed

## SFR 4 Single Family Residential 4

The SFR4 zoning district provides a higher density residential zoning district while protecting residential character by prohibiting commercial uses; allowing uses that enhance residential areas, such as places of worship, elementary and secondary schools, and parks; and establishing property development regulations that preserve open space.

## RMF 2 Residential Multi-Family 2

The RMF2 zoning district provides a high density residential zoning district that allows only multifamily dwelling types and maintains an overall residential character by allowing a limited number of commercial uses such as assisted, retirement or personal care facilities, and bed and breakfast inns; allowing secondary uses within offices, and institutional, prohibiting other commercial uses; allowing uses that enhance residential areas, such as places of worship, elementary and secondary schools, and parks; and establishing property development regulations that are consistent with higher density residential concentrations.

## RO Residential Office

The residential/office (R/O) district is intended to accommodate a mix of multifamily residential buildings and office space that architecturally reflect the historic character of this area.

## UPT Uptown

The purpose of UPT zoning is to provide a mixed use zoning district that provides for both high intensity commercial and high density residential uses in an area that is adjacent and complementary to the CRD zoning district. The UPT zoning district is intended to be applied in areas that are:

1. Located in an area where high density and intensity development is encouraged;
2. Located adjacent to the CRD zoning district; and
3. Capable of allowing complementary existing and future land uses that can attract employment, residential and entertainment activities in one extended area.

## GC General Commercial

A general commercial zoning district is a type of zoning that allows for a wide range of commercial and service activities, especially along major roads and in central business areas. Some of the benefits of a general commercial zoning district are that it provides attractive and efficient retail shopping and personal service uses for customers and residents.

It also allows for more intense types of commercial establishments that may not be suitable for other types of commercial zoning, such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, car washes, new and used car lots, or movie theaters.

## LMI Light Manufacturing / Industrial

Light manufacturing industries are usually less capital-intensive than heavy industries and are more consumer-oriented than business-oriented, as they typically produce smaller consumer goods. Most light industry products are produced for end-users rather than as intermediates for use by other industries. Light industry facilities typically have a less environmental impact than those associated with heavy industry.





# Public Finance Options

## Enterprise Zone

The Columbus Business Development Center, the city's Enterprise Zone, was established to revitalize the area's residential neighborhoods, while creating and retaining jobs for its residents. Business and residential developments, which plan to invest in this area, are given special state and local tax incentives as well as other possible fee exemptions

The following businesses and service enterprise developments may qualify for location within the Columbus Business Development Center:

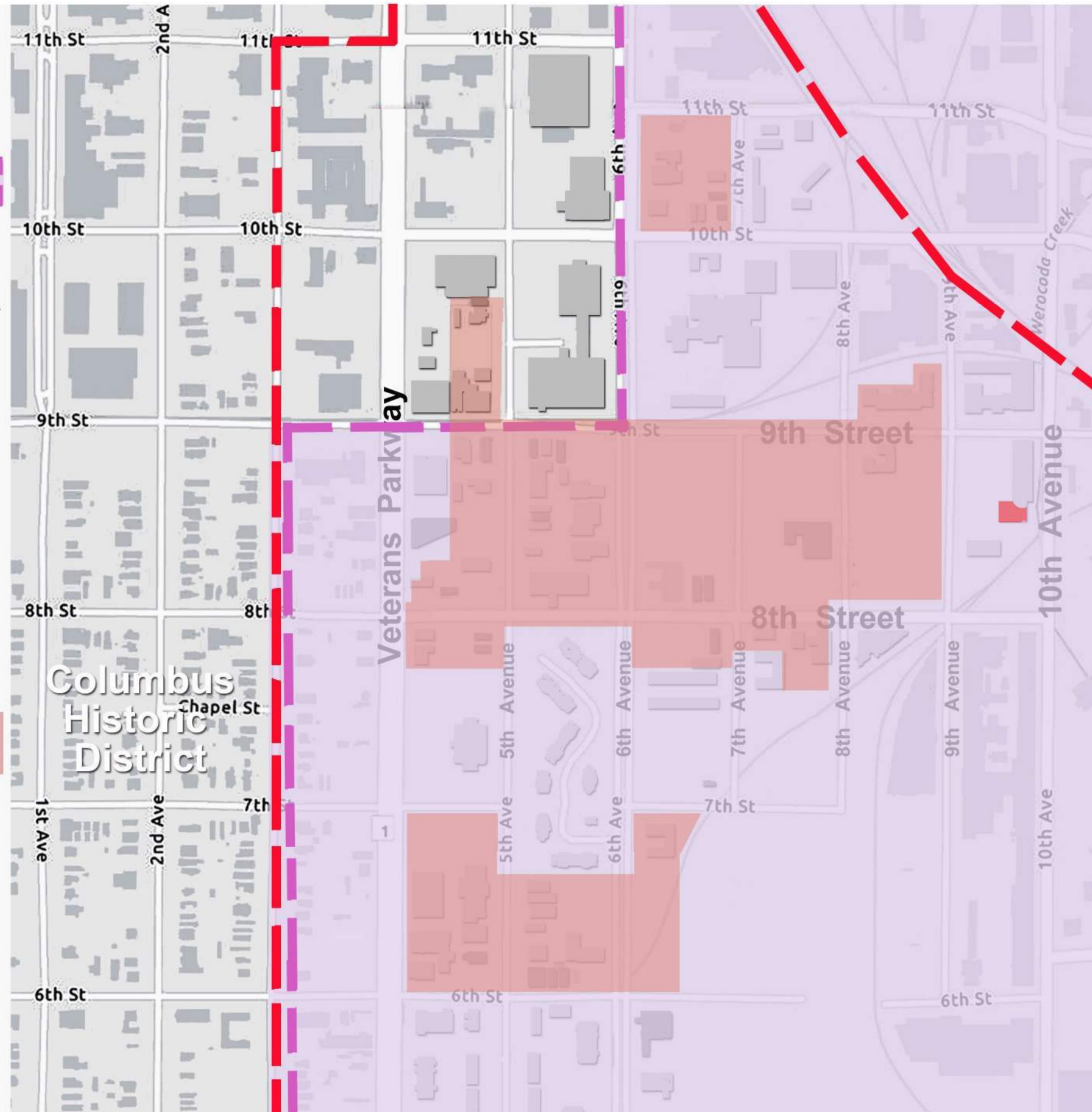
Business Enterprise  
Retail  
Manufacturing  
Warehouse and Distribution  
Processing  
Telecommunications Tourism  
Research and Development  
New Residential Construction  
Residential Rehabilitation

## Historic Columbus Foundation Rehabilitation Loan Program

The Historic Columbus Rehabilitation Loan Program provides rehabilitation funds for historic commercial or residential structures. Rehabilitation loan funds may be used to make repairs or improvements on the interior or exterior of qualifying properties.

Loans will be made up to a maximum of \$100,000.00 with payment terms varying based on project and loan recipient underwriting.

Loan underwriting and servicing provided by NeighborWorks Columbus



## Liberty / 6th Avenue Tax Allocation District (TAD)

Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) are established for the purpose of catalyzing investment by financing certain redevelopment activities in underdeveloped or blighted areas using public dollars.

Redevelopment costs are financed through the pledge of future incremental increases in property taxes generated by the resulting new development. Typically, upon creation, TADs have vacant commercial and residential properties, blighted conditions and numerous vacant buildings or are in need of significant environmental remediation.

The 1985 Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law gave additional powers to local municipalities in order to facilitate the redevelopment of blighted or economically depressed areas. One of the powers granted to local governments is the ability to issue tax allocation bonds to finance infrastructure and other redevelopment costs within a tax allocation district.

## Federal Opportunity Zone

The entire Liberty District is within the boundaries of the Federal Opportunity Zone.

Opportunity Zones are an economic development tool that allows people to invest in distressed areas in the United States. Their purpose is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors.

Opportunity Zones were created under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Thousands of low-income communities in all 50 states, are designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones.

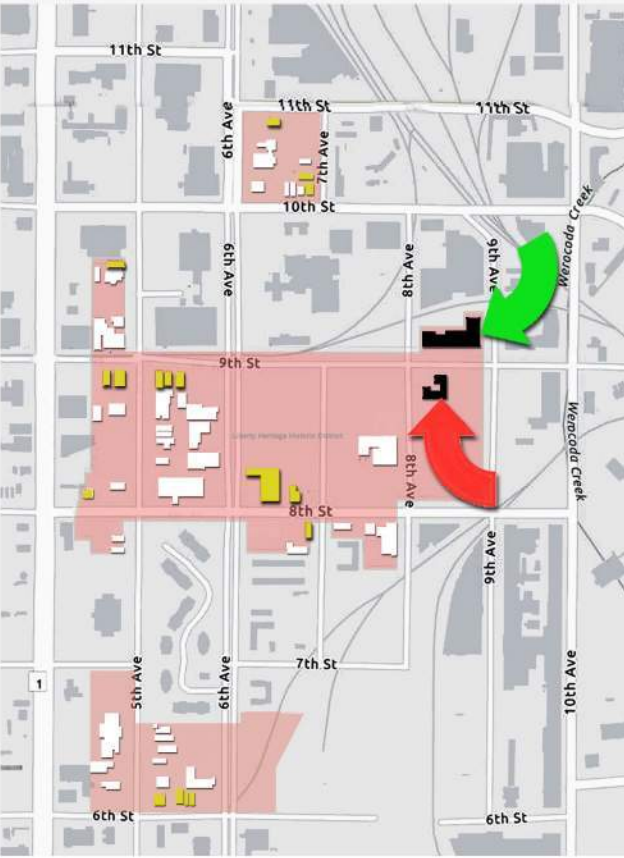


# Neighborhood Character

The Pines - 808 9th Street



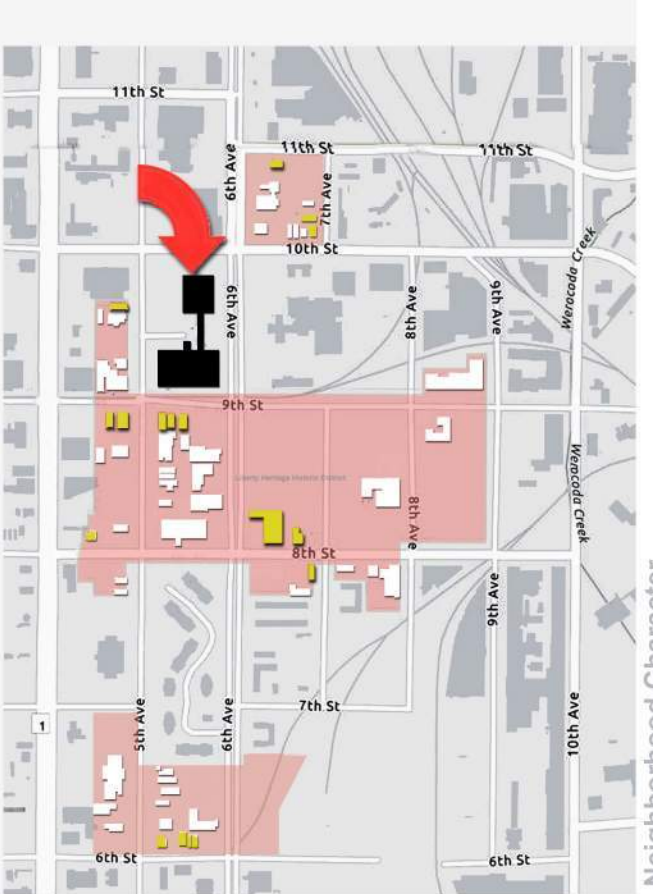
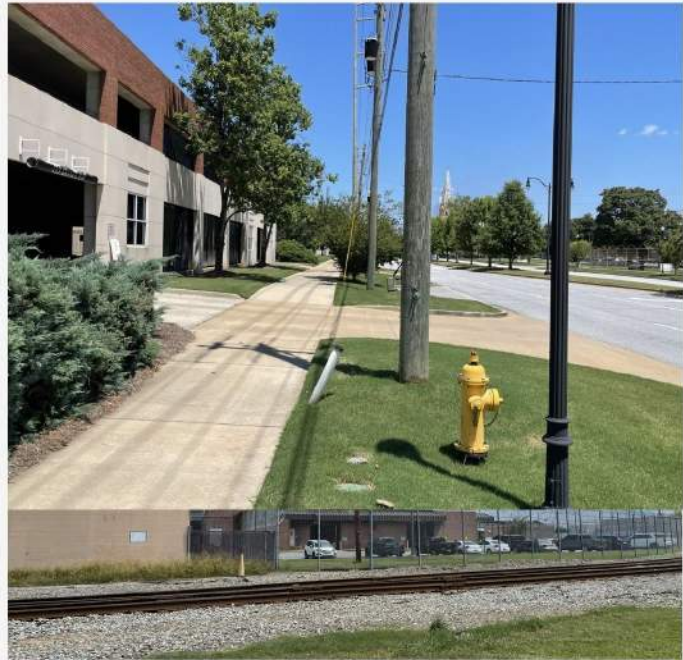
Legacy Terrace - 906 9th Street





# Neighborhood Character

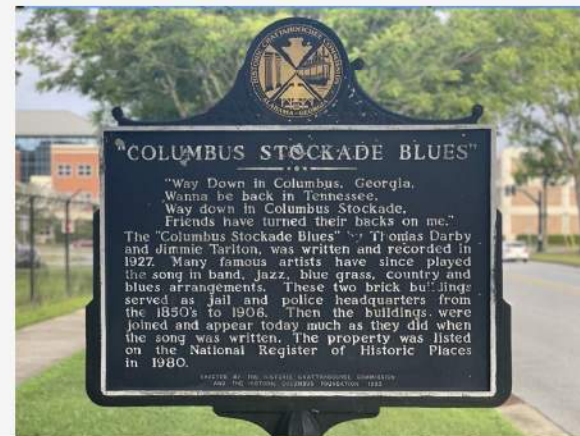
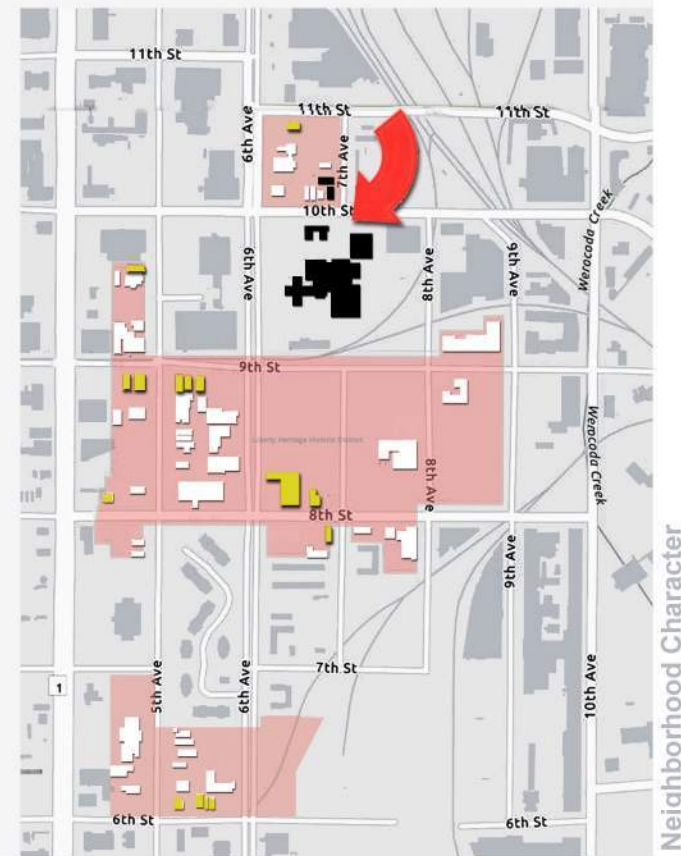
## Public Safety Building





# Neighborhood Character

## Muscogee County Jail



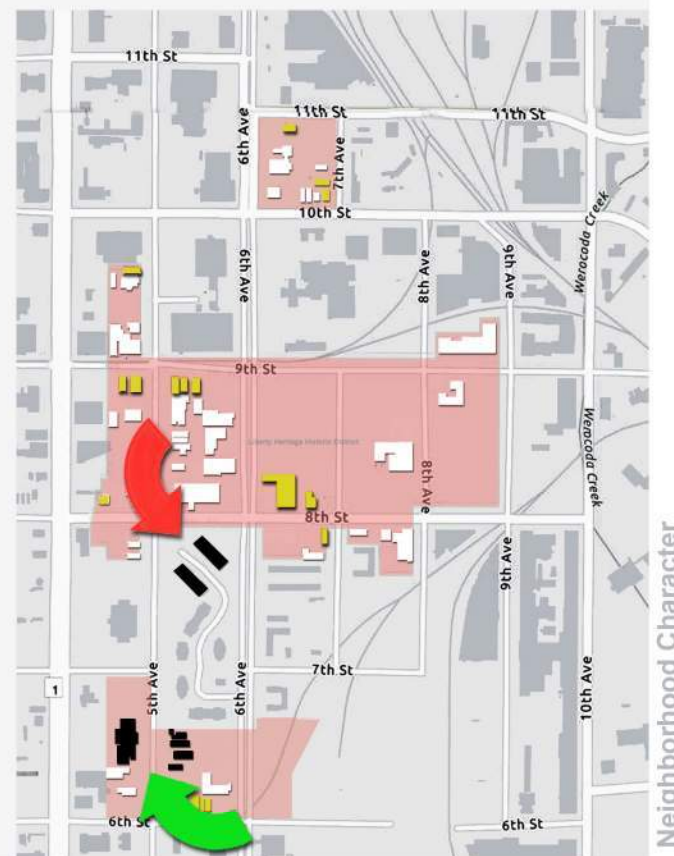


## Neighborhood Character

### Liberty Garden TownHomes - 629 6th Avenue



### School Renovation - 627 5th Avenue



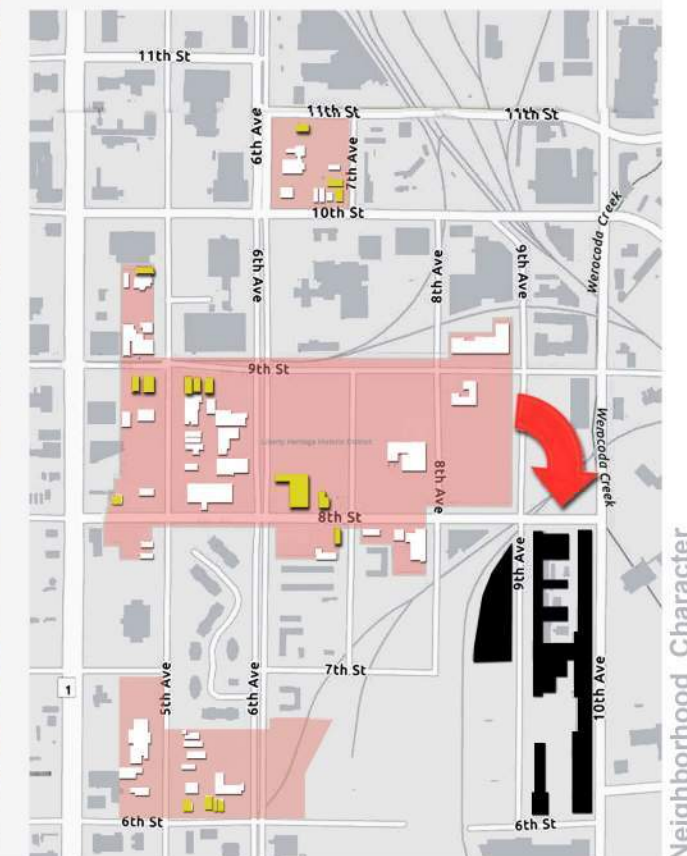


# Neighborhood Character

## Tom Huston Peanuts



In 1925, the Tom Huston Peanut Company began operating in Columbus, and was an immediate business success. The company was bought several times over the past century, most recently in 2018 by the Campbell Soup Company. The company has plans to eventually close the entire plant, and has begun to lease some buildings as warehouse and office space. The future of this complex of buildings just south of the Liberty District has yet to be determined.

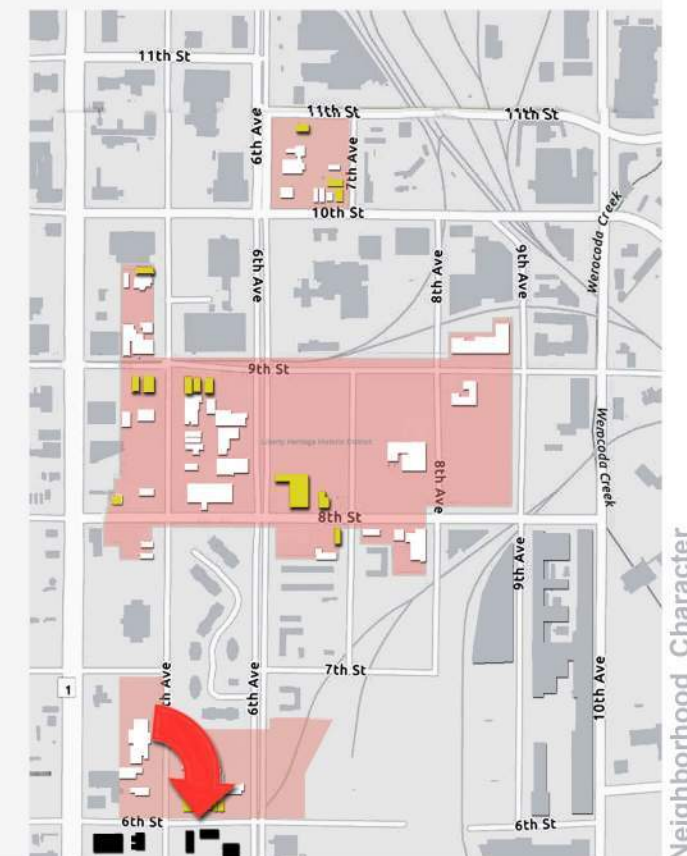




# Neighborhood Character

## Columbus Commons

Columbus Commons is a relatively new multifamily housing complex that provides 106 units in an urban setting that also offers new landscaping mixed with the mature trees that were saved as part of the project. With the success of Phase One, the Columbus Housing Authority is now in the planning stages for Phase Two which will extend the multifamily housing mix south to Victory Drive.



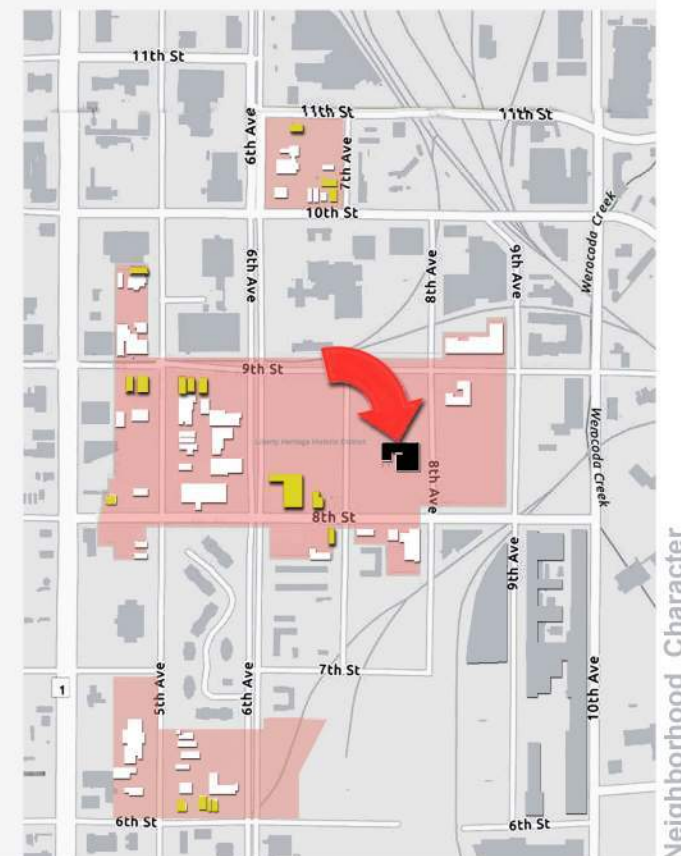
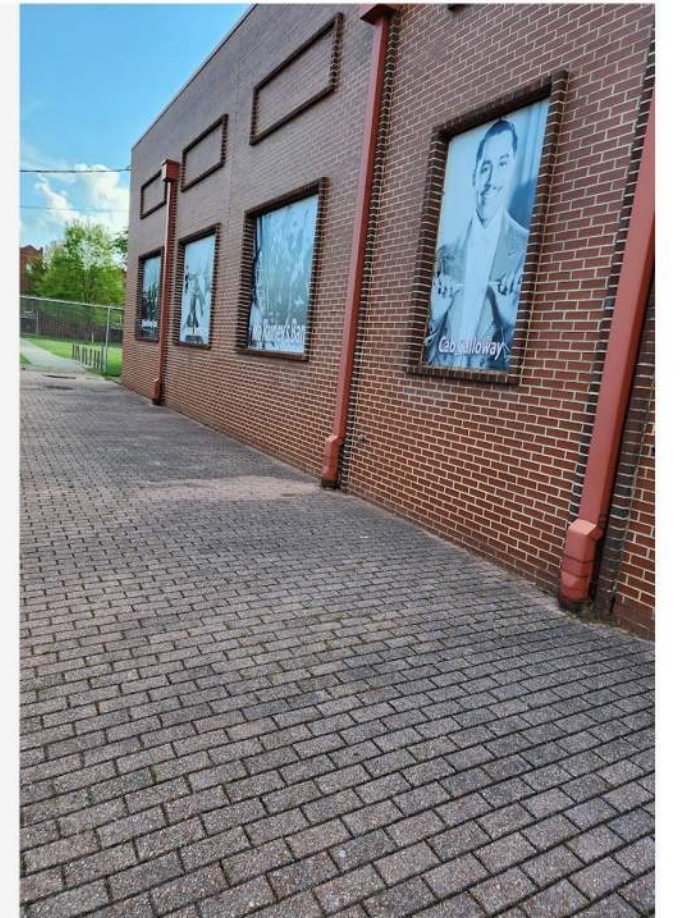


# Neighborhood Character

## The Liberty Theater

One of the most notable landmarks in the Liberty District is the Liberty Theatre, which was built in 1924 as the first and only theater for African Americans in Columbus. The theater hosted local and national performers, such as Ma Rainey, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Bessie Smith, and served as a cultural hub for the community. The theater also screened movies and hosted community events, such as graduations, weddings, and civic meetings.

The theater was closed in 1974 due to urban renewal and decay, but was restored and reopened in 1992 as a cultural center that offers educational programs, art exhibits, and live performances.



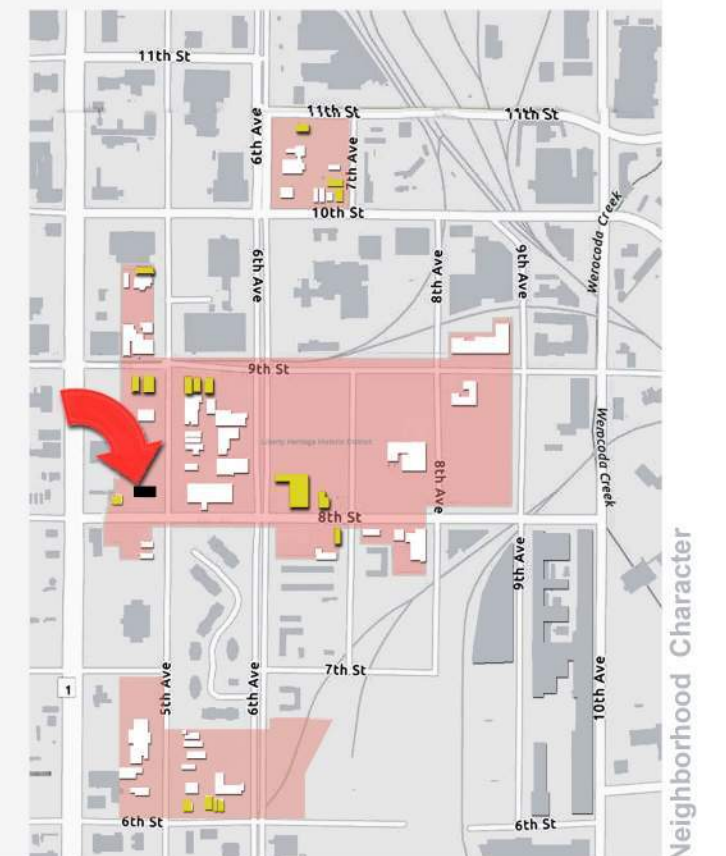


# Neighborhood Character

## The Ma Rainey House and Museum

Gertrude Pridgett “Ma” Rainey, famed “Mother of the Blues”, lived in this house after 1935 during retirement in her native city. In 1904 she introduced blues as part of her traveling act. For 30 years, her performances contributed to the growing popularity of this truly American musical art form. A pioneer female recording artist, she made 94 blues records for Paramount before 1928.

While this neighborhood was once filled with one and two story simple frame houses such as this, most have been demolished.





# Opportunity Site Locations

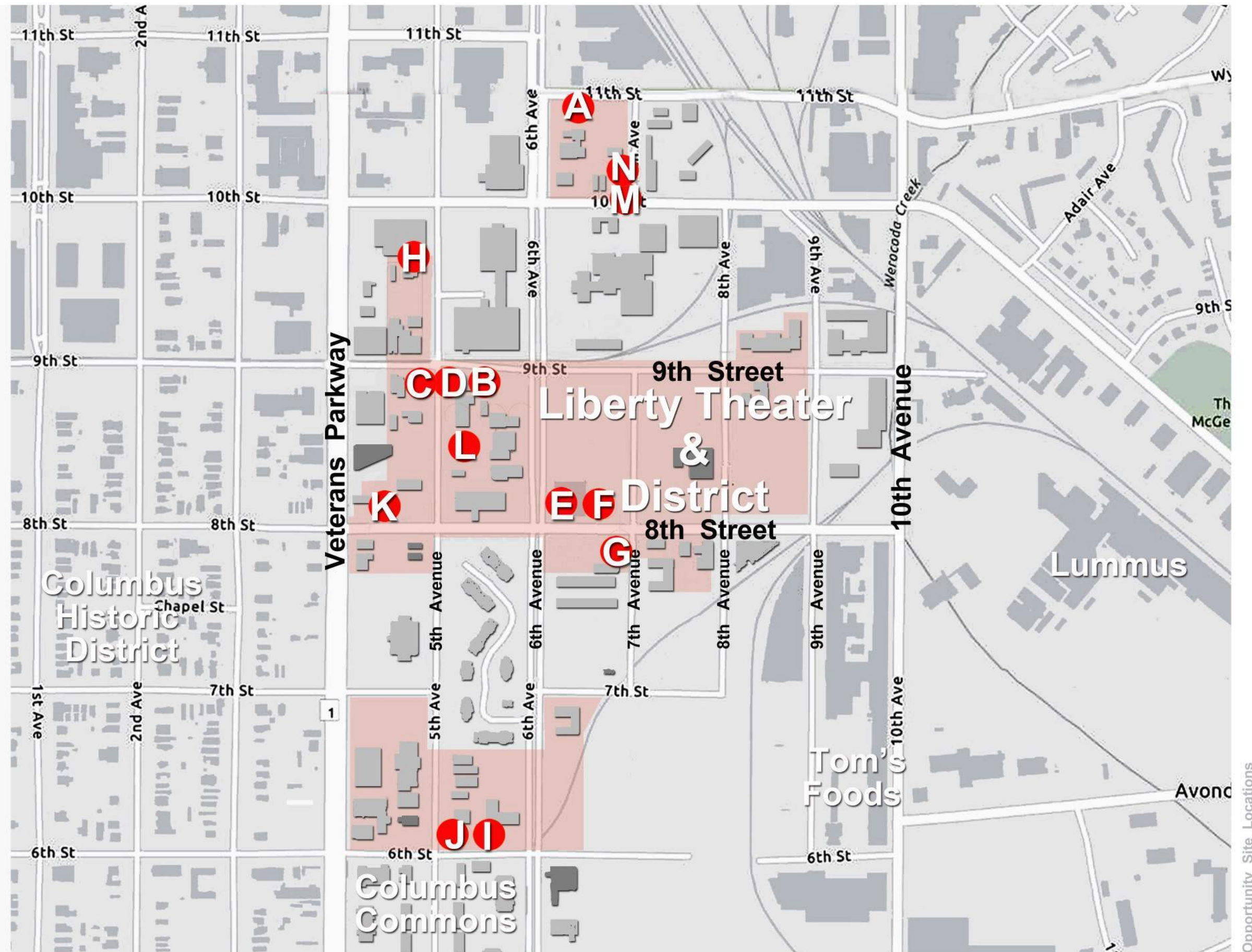
## Observations

For the purposes of this master plan, an "Opportunity Site" is an existing building that is privately owned and is in need of repair to various extents. These buildings should be on the front line of efforts to salvage the remaining building stock that provide a vital link to the stories of the Liberty community.

They establish the materials and details of the original neighborhood, which is important in setting the standard for any new development to meet.



The Liberty District and individual property owners should coordinate with the Historic Columbus Foundation in pursuing low interest construction loans or grants that are available for use in preserving and redeveloping this neighborhood.





# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

## 424 9th Street



### Site Data

Lot Area:	10,890 SF
Building footprint:	3,700 SF
Building GSF:	11,100 SF
Current Zoning:	UPT

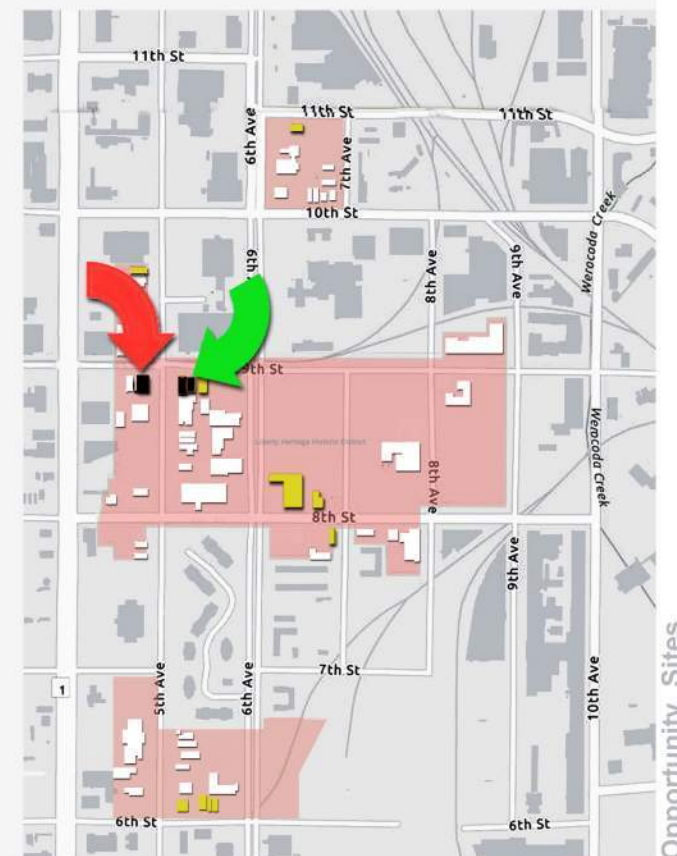


## 500 & 506 9th Street



### Site Data

Lot Area:	6,534 SF
Building footprint:	2,774 SF
Building GSF:	8,322 SF
Current Zoning:	UPT





# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

## 800 6th Avenue



## 615 8th Street



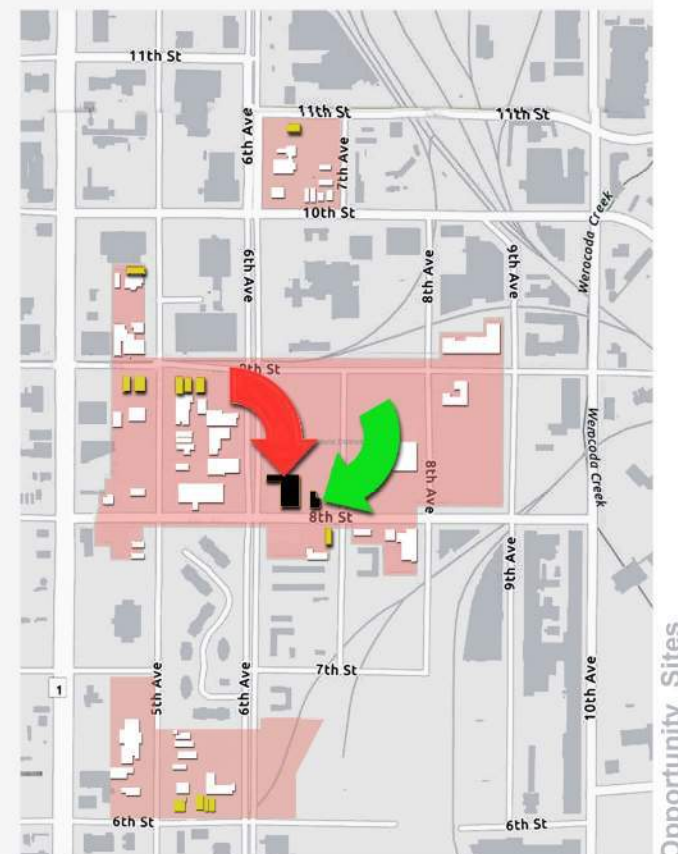
### Site Data

Lot Area:	21,780 SF
Building footprint:	13,380 SF
Building GSF:	13,380 SF
Current Zoning:	GC



### Site Data

Lot Area:	7,405 SF
Building footprint:	2,483 SF
Building GSF:	2,483 SF
Current Zoning:	LMI





# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

## 800 6th Avenue



## 615 8th Street



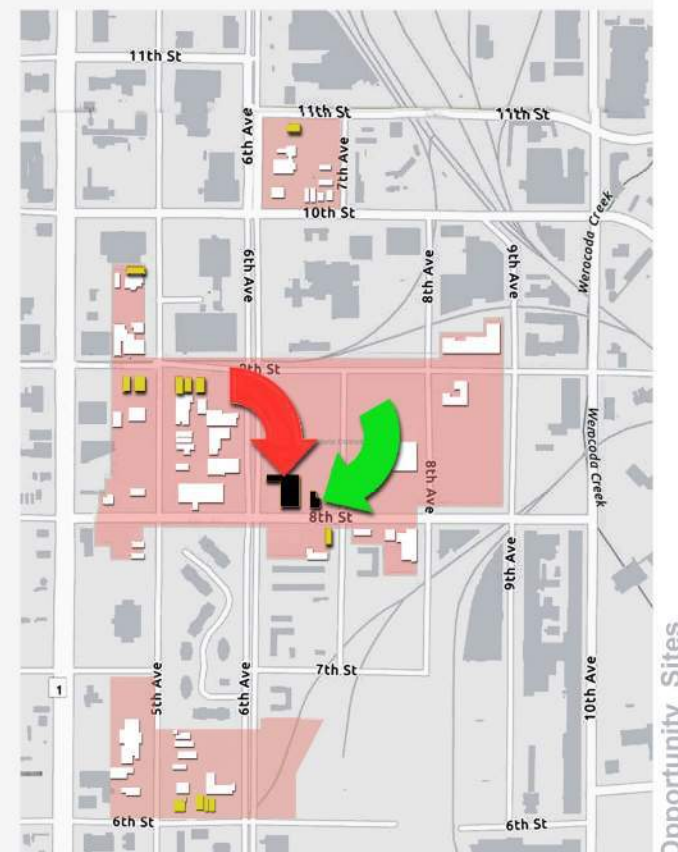
### Site Data

Lot Area:	21,780 SF
Building footprint:	13,380 SF
Building GSF:	13,380 SF
Current Zoning:	GC



### Site Data

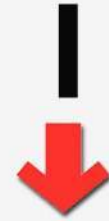
Lot Area:	7,405 SF
Building footprint:	2,483 SF
Building GSF:	2,483 SF
Current Zoning:	LMI





## Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

511, 515, 517 6th Street



600 5th Avenue



### Site Data

Lot Area:	9103SF
Building footprint:	3459 SF
Building GSF:	3459 SF
Current Zoning:	R3



### Site Data

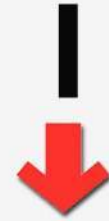
Lot Area:	8802SF
Building footprint:	2525 SF
Building GSF:	2525 SF
Current Zoning:	GC





## Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

511, 515, 517 6th Street



600 5th Avenue



### Site Data

Lot Area:	9103SF
Building footprint:	3459 SF
Building GSF:	3459 SF
Current Zoning:	R3



### Site Data

Lot Area:	8802SF
Building footprint:	2525 SF
Building GSF:	2525 SF
Current Zoning:	GC





## Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

### 698 8th Street



### 931 5th Avenue



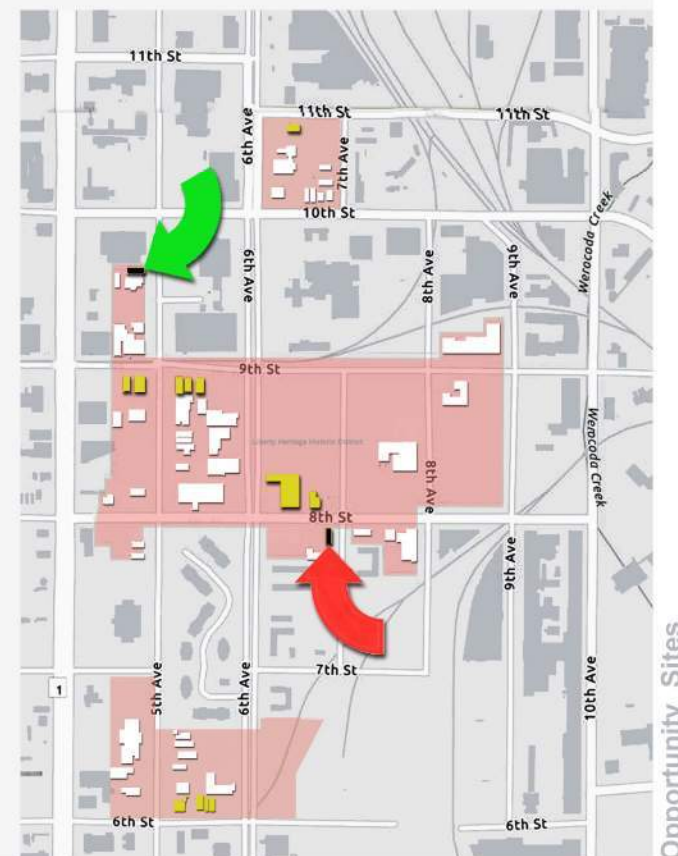
#### Site Data

Lot Area:	33,323 SF
Building footprint:	1,280 SF
Building GSF:	2,560 SF
Current Zoning:	RO



#### Site Data

Lot Area:	5,400 SF
Building footprint:	2,014 SF
Building GSF:	4,028 SF
Current Zoning:	UPT





## Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

### 411 8th Street



### 824 5th Avenue

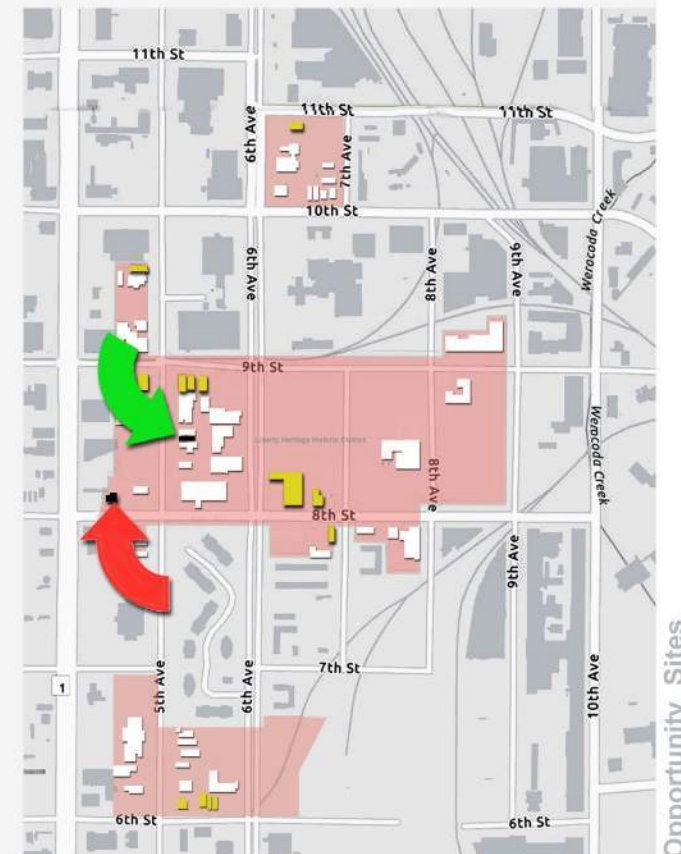


#### Site Data

Lot Area:	5035SF
Building footprint:	1287 SF
Building GSF:	1287 SF
Current Zoning:	GC

#### Site Data

Lot Area:	7389SF
Building footprint:	1032 SF
Building GSF:	1032 SF
Current Zoning:	GC





# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

1003 7th Avenue



## Site Data

Lot Area:	2602SF
Building footprint:	1285 SF
Building GSF:	1285 SF
Current Zoning:	LMI

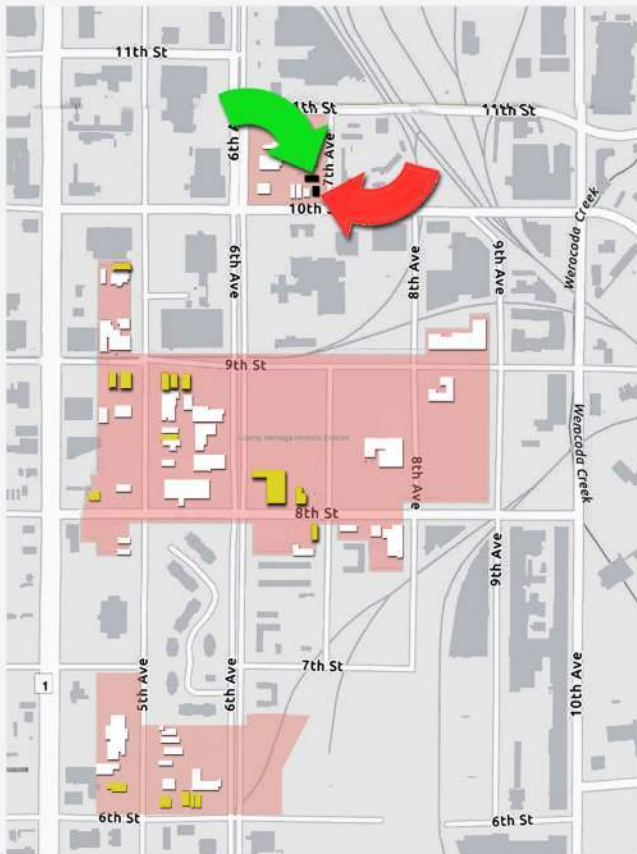


1007 7th Avenue



## Site Data

Lot Area:	6278SF
Building footprint:	1341 SF
Building GSF:	1341 SF
Current Zoning:	LMI





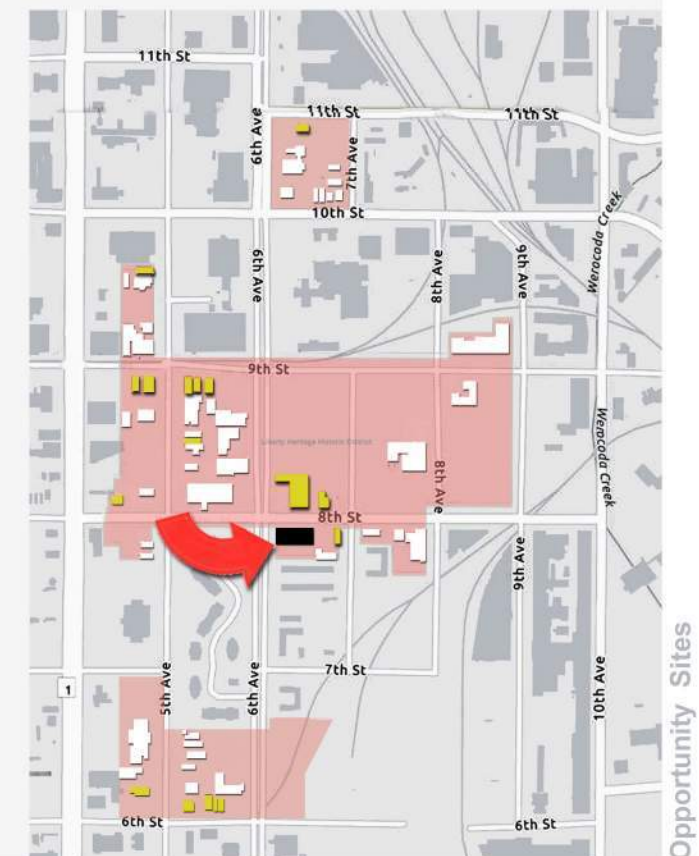
# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

## 600 8th Street



### Site Data

Lot Area:	33,323 SF
Proposed footprint:	8,950 SF
Proposed GSF:	17,900 SF
Current Zoning:	RO





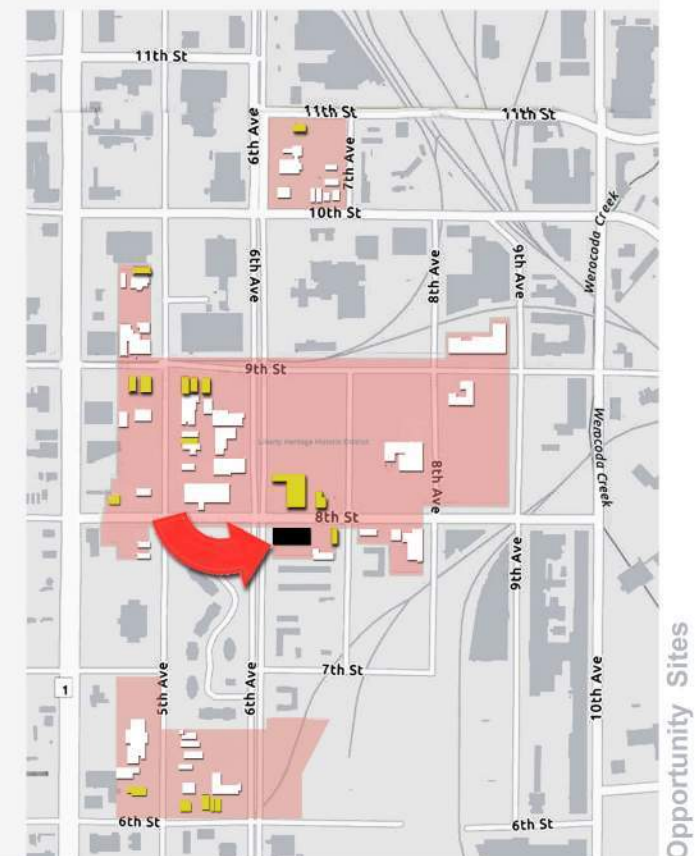
# Opportunity Sites With Existing Building

## 600 8th Street



### Site Data

Lot Area:	33,323 SF
Proposed footprint:	8,950 SF
Proposed GSF:	17,900 SF
Current Zoning:	RO





# Gateway Locations

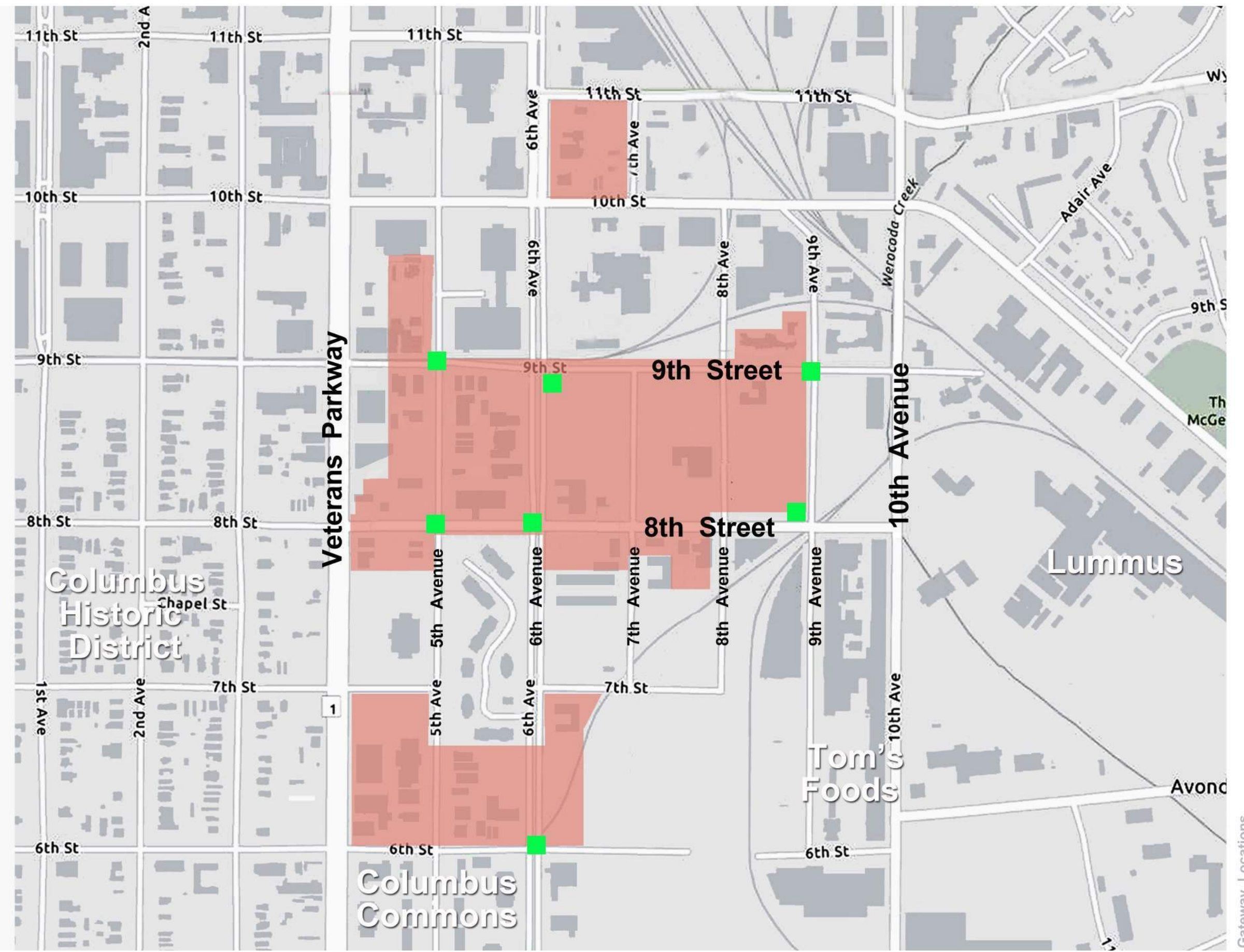
## Observations

The Liberty District is in need of new imagery and branding. Installation of a gateway element will let visitors know that they have arrived at a special place. The gateway should have imagery, color and texture that bring to mind the character and history of this special neighborhood.

The Uptown area has a comprehensive signage design, and this should be a point of review and coordination for any updated design effort.

## Legend

■ Potential location of Gateway element



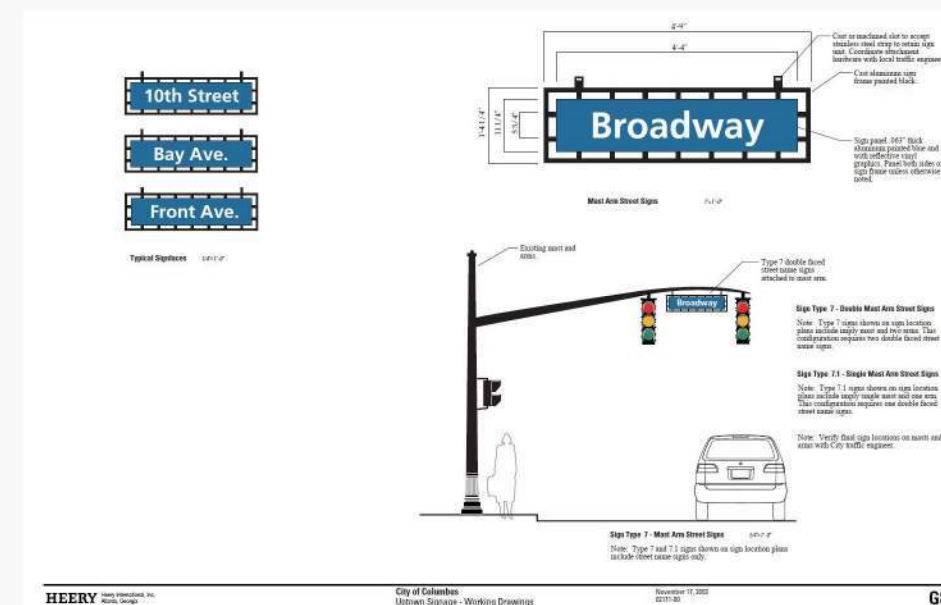
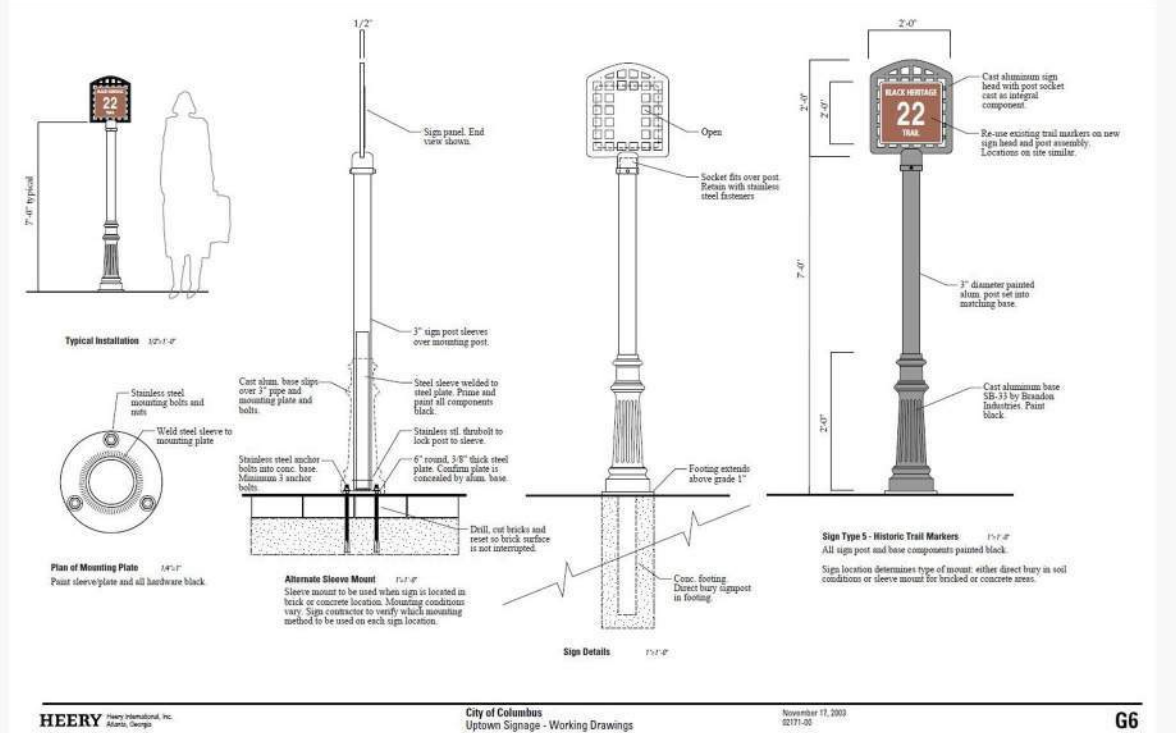
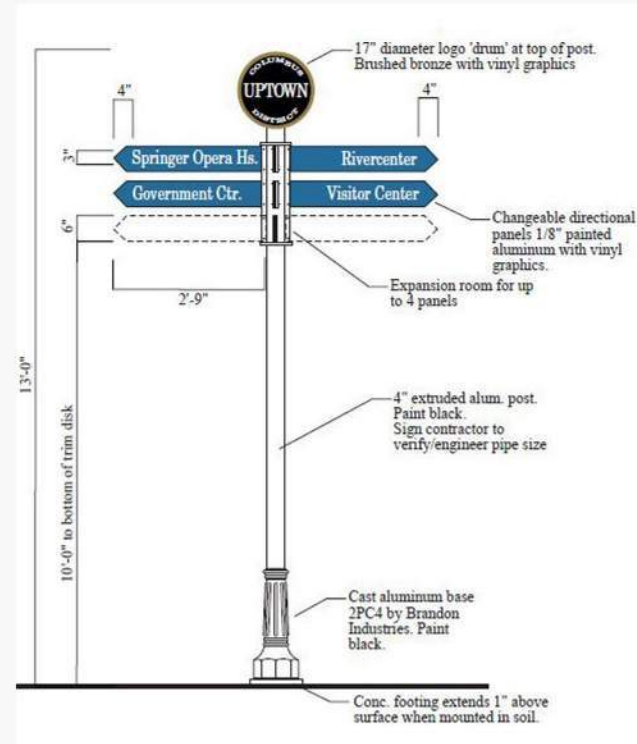
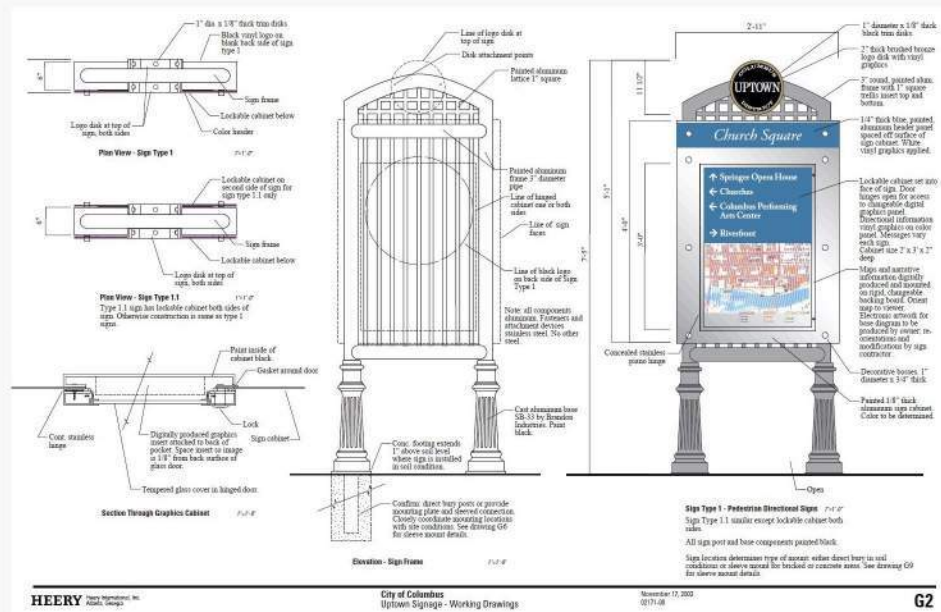


# Signage & Branding

## Observations

Signage needs to be approached in a comprehensive way to be effective in delivering a message of “you have arrived”.

This is a sampling of the signage design involved in creating the place we call Uptown.





# Missing Middle Housing

## Renewing a neighborhood while resisting gentrification

### A variety of housing types will benefit the future Liberty neighborhood

"Missing middle housing" refers to a range of housing types that fall between single-family homes and large apartment buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings. These neighborhoods can become inviting and walkable places, located in proximity to both jobs and the cultural heart of the city. Strengthening a historically black neighborhood such as the Liberty, in decline through decades of disinvestment, can begin with the introduction of missing middle housing.

- 1. Affordability:** Missing middle housing typically offers a more affordable option for residents compared to single-family homes or large apartment complexes. This can make it easier for existing residents to remain in the neighborhood, preventing displacement due to rising housing costs. Additionally, it can attract new residents who are looking for more affordable housing options.
- 2. Diverse Housing Options:** Historically black neighborhoods may have limited housing options due to decades of neglect and disinvestment. Introducing missing middle housing can diversify the housing stock, accommodating different household sizes and income levels. This can make the neighborhood more inclusive and vibrant.
- 3. Community Stabilization:** As affordable housing options increase, more families may choose to invest in these neighborhoods, stabilizing the community. Stable communities are more likely to have engaged residents who are invested in the well-being and improvement of the neighborhood.
- 4. Economic Opportunities:** The construction and renovation of missing middle housing can stimulate economic development in the area. It creates jobs and encourages local businesses to flourish, contributing to the overall revitalization of the neighborhood.
- 5. Preservation of Historic Character:** Missing middle housing can be designed to blend with the historic architecture and character of the neighborhood. This allows for the preservation of the cultural heritage of historically black neighborhoods while still accommodating new development.
- 6. Density and Walkability:** These housing types often promote higher population density, which can support local businesses and public transit. Walkable neighborhoods with mixed housing types can reduce the reliance on cars, making it easier for residents to access the amenities and services that the entire Uptown Columbus area has to offer.
- 7. Community Engagement:** The process of planning and implementing missing middle housing can provide opportunities for community input and engagement. Engaging citizens in the decision-making process can ensure that development aligns with their needs and desires.
- 8. Investment Attraction:** The introduction of missing middle housing can signal to investors and developers that the neighborhood is undergoing positive changes. This can attract private and public investment in infrastructure, parks, and other essential services.
- 9. Social Equity:** By addressing housing affordability and promoting economic opportunities, missing middle housing can contribute to greater social equity within historically black neighborhoods. It can help rectify past injustices and create a more equitable future for the citizens of Columbus.

Strong and financially resilient communities are comprised of a variety of housing types. Not just single-family detached homes on one end of the spectrum and huge apartment complexes on the other, but a wide range of "middle housing" options in-between: duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, courtyard cottages, bungalow apartments, and more. Yet these middle housing types—so familiar to our grandparents and great-grandparents—are rarely built today.

Dan Parolek of Opticos Design coined the term "missing middle housing" in 2011 to describe middle housing options that are in high-demand (across all age groups) but getting harder and harder to find.

All too often, the market isn't supplying these housing options. The Liberty neighborhood has the opportunity to lead the city in providing attractive housing options that are increasingly hard to find in Columbus.

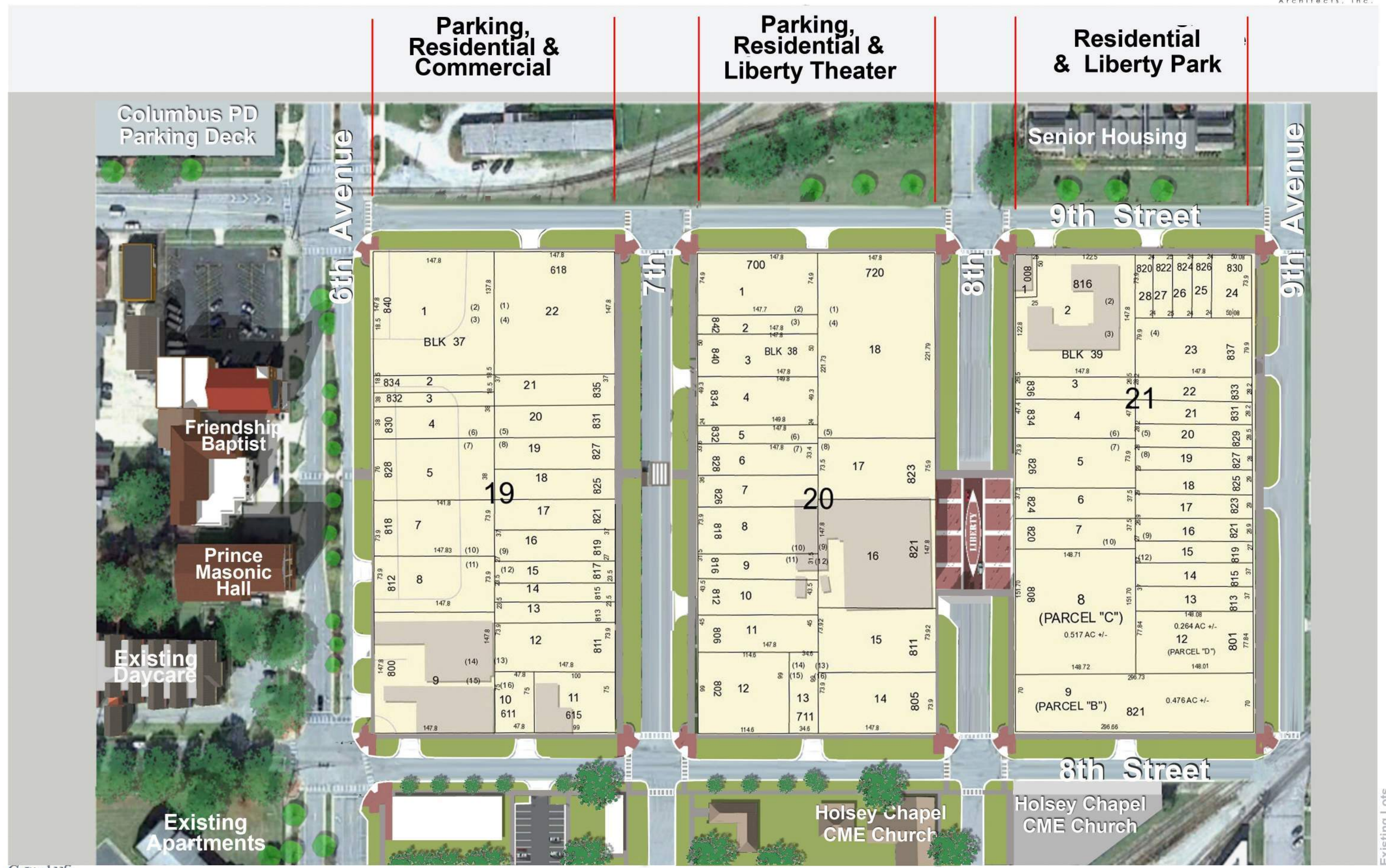




# Project Gateway Design









# Missing Middle Housing

## Renewing a neighborhood while resisting gentrification

### Strategies to preserve the Liberty neighborhood and culture

Resisting gentrification in historically black neighborhoods is a complex and challenging process that involves various strategies and community efforts. Gentrification typically refers to the transformation of a neighborhood through the influx of wealthier residents and businesses, often resulting in the displacement of long-term, lower-income residents, and a loss of the neighborhood's cultural and historical identity. Historically black neighborhoods are often particularly vulnerable to gentrification due to their cultural significance and often more affordable housing.

**Community Organizing:** Building a strong sense of community and organizing residents is crucial. Encourage open discussions, meetings, and forums where residents can voice their concerns, share ideas, and plan collective actions.

**Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Advocate for policies and programs that promote affordable housing options, such as inclusionary zoning, rent control, or community land trusts. These measures can help ensure that long-term residents can continue to afford to live in the neighborhood.

**Preservation of Historic and Cultural Assets:** Seek official recognition and protection for historically significant landmarks, buildings, and cultural assets in the neighborhood. This can help preserve the neighborhood's identity and history.

**Community Land Trusts:** Establish community land trusts to collectively own and manage land in the neighborhood. This can provide a level of control over development and prevent land from being sold to developers who may not have the community's interests at heart.

**Local Business Support:** Promote and support local businesses, especially those owned by residents of the neighborhood. Encourage entrepreneurship and economic development within the community.

**Zoning and Land Use Policies:** Advocate for zoning regulations and land use policies that prioritize community interests and prevent unchecked development. Work with local government officials to ensure these policies are in place.

**Tenant Protections:** Push for stronger tenant protections, such as eviction prevention measures and just-cause eviction laws, to safeguard renters from being displaced.

**Community Benefits Agreements:** Negotiate with developers to secure community benefits agreements that ensure the neighborhood receives investments, services, and amenities in exchange for new developments.

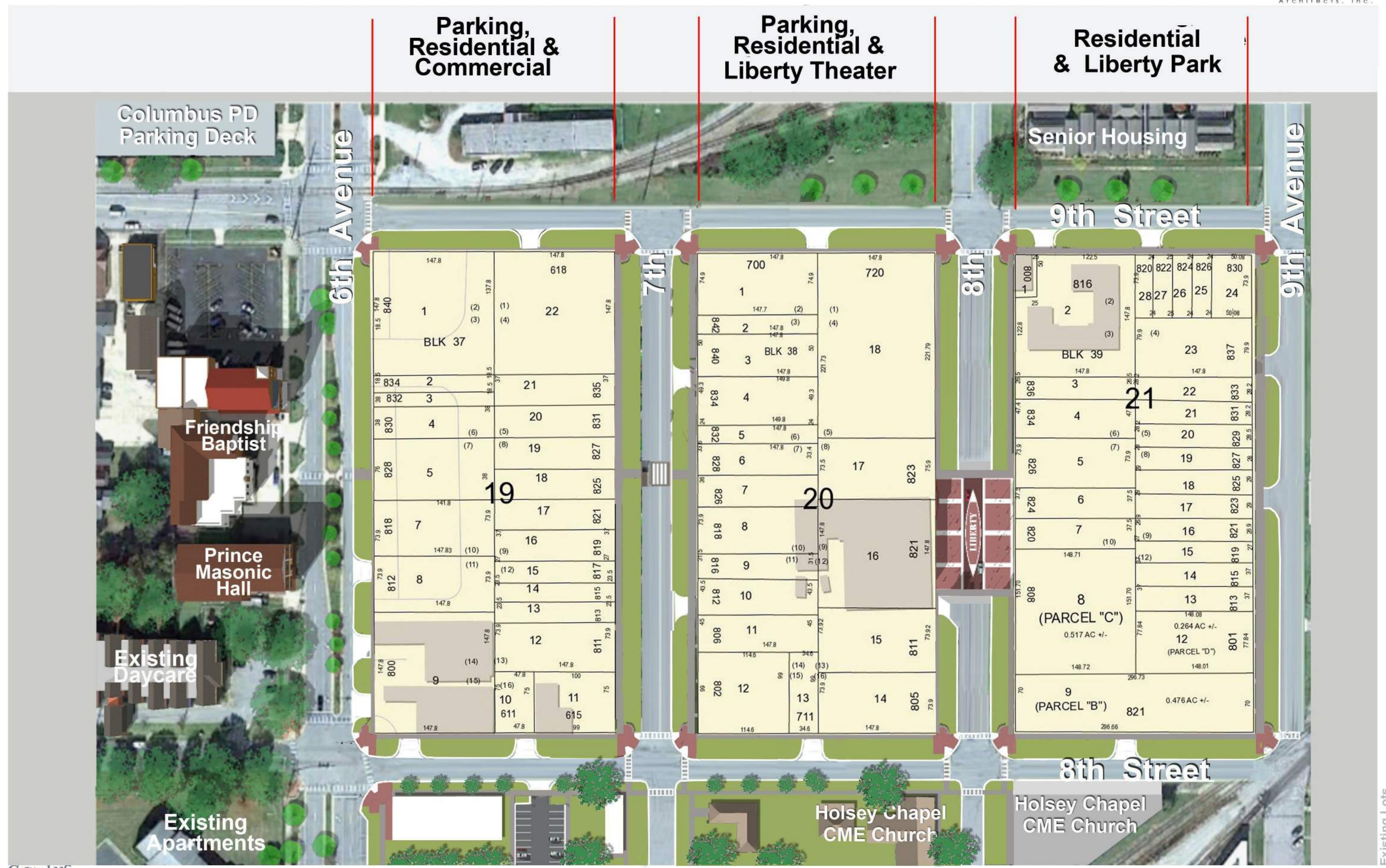
**Public Awareness and Education:** Raise awareness about the impacts of gentrification through community education initiatives. Engage with the broader public and media to garner support for your cause.

**Legal Assistance:** Provide legal support and resources to residents facing eviction or other legal challenges related to gentrification. Legal aid organizations can be valuable partners in this effort.

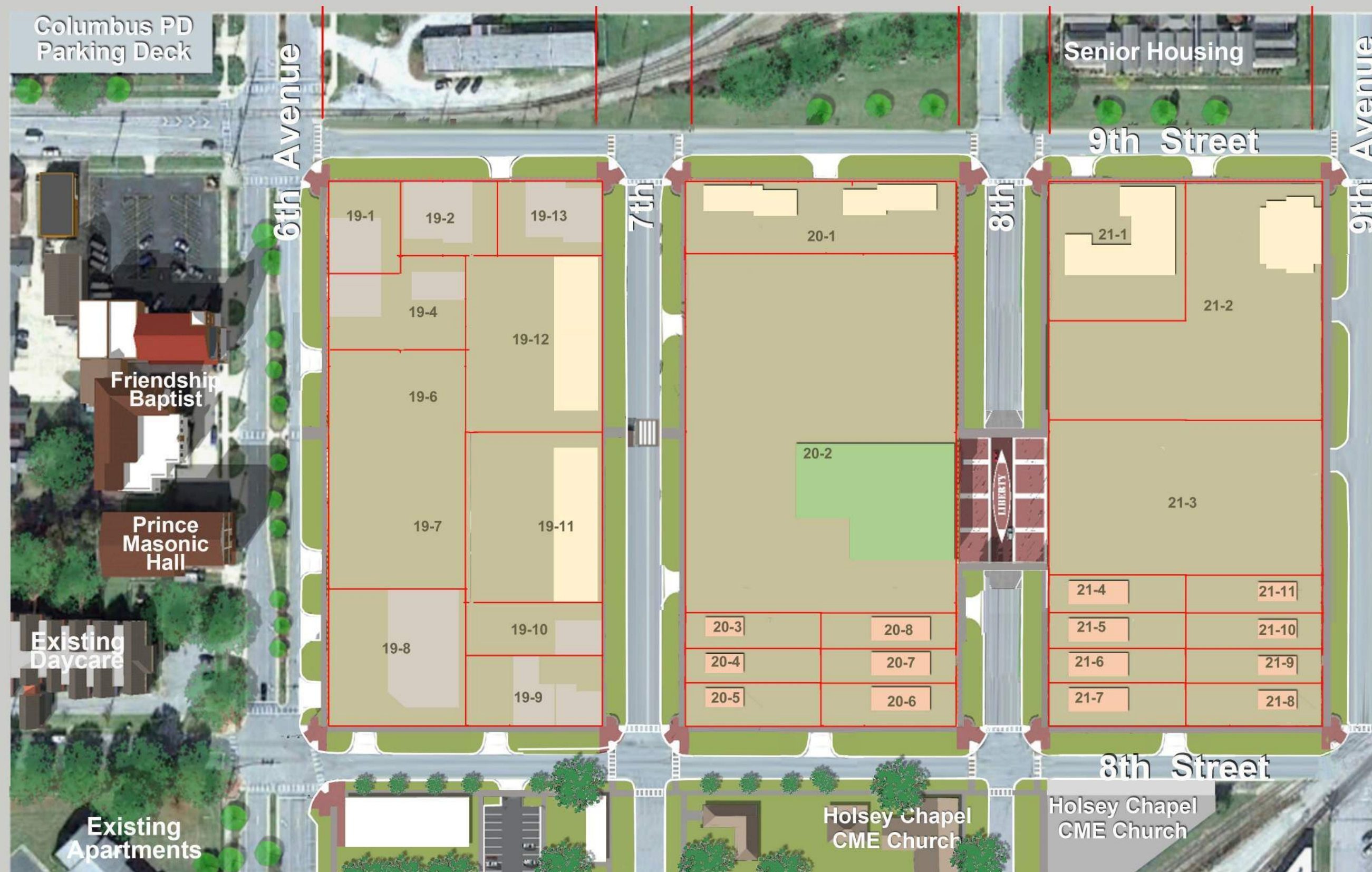
**Cultural Celebrations and Events:** Organize events and activities that celebrate the neighborhood's culture and history. This can help instill a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

**Collaboration and Alliances:** Seek alliances with other community groups, activists, and organizations that share similar goals. Strength in numbers can be a powerful force for change.





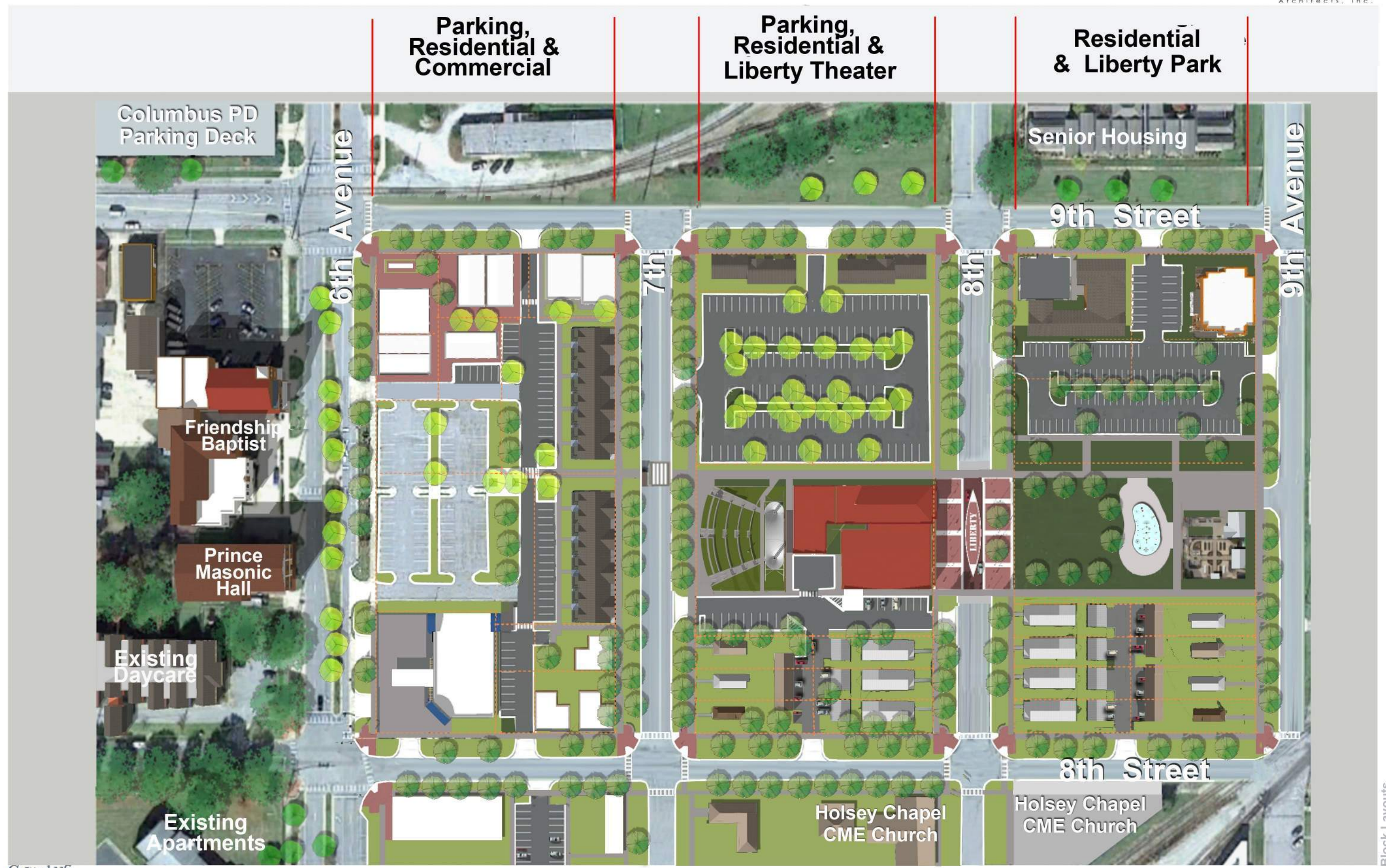




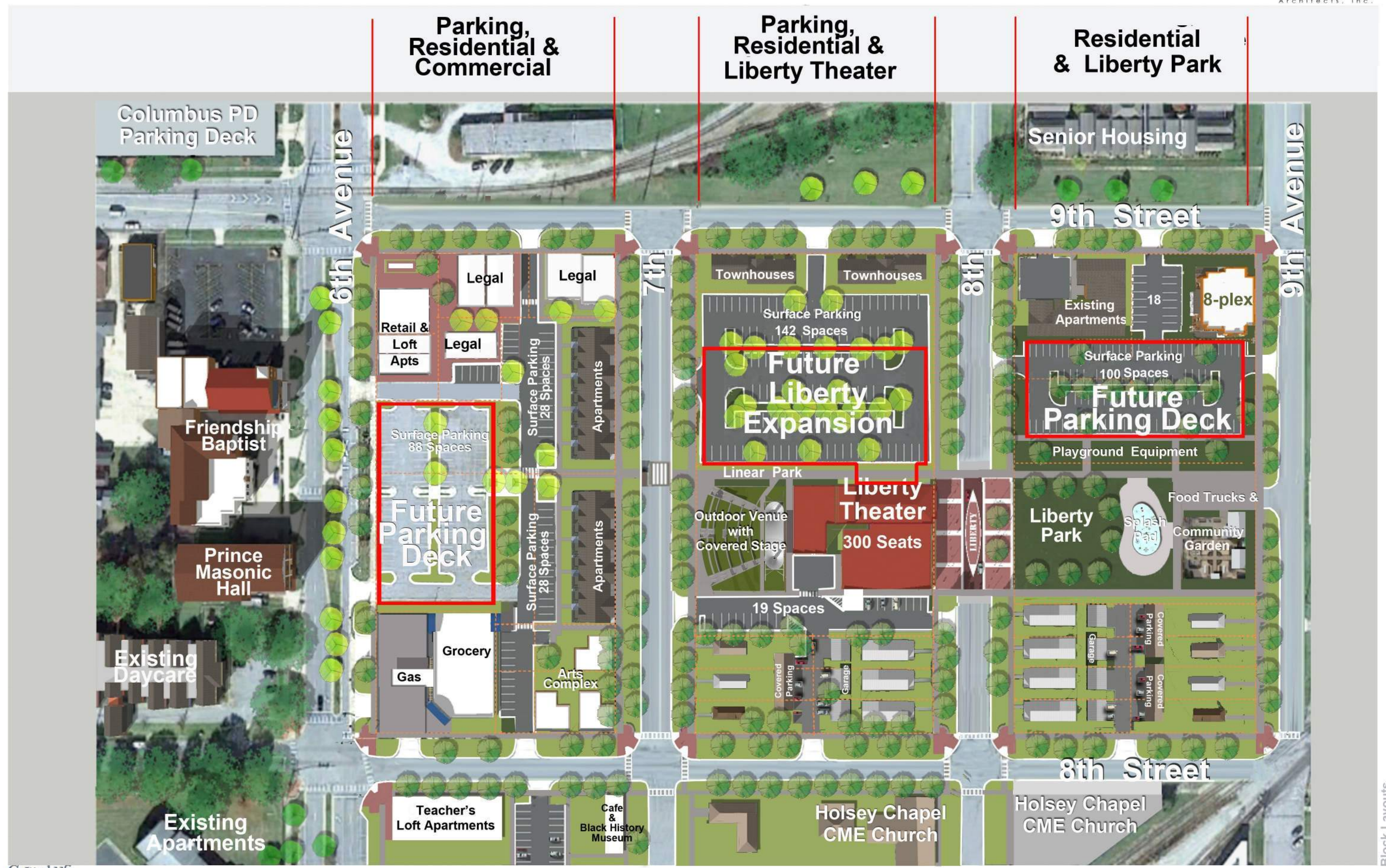




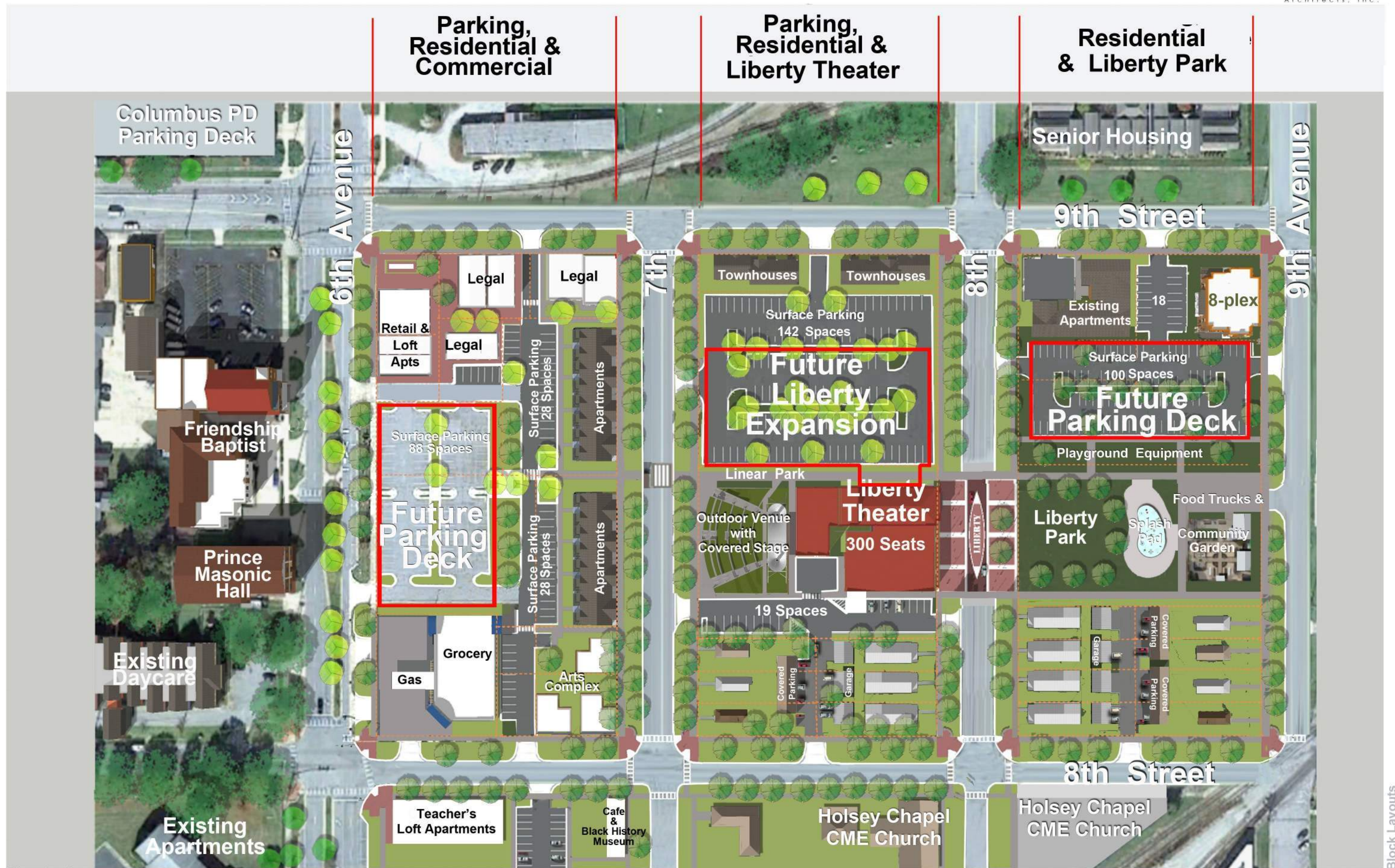




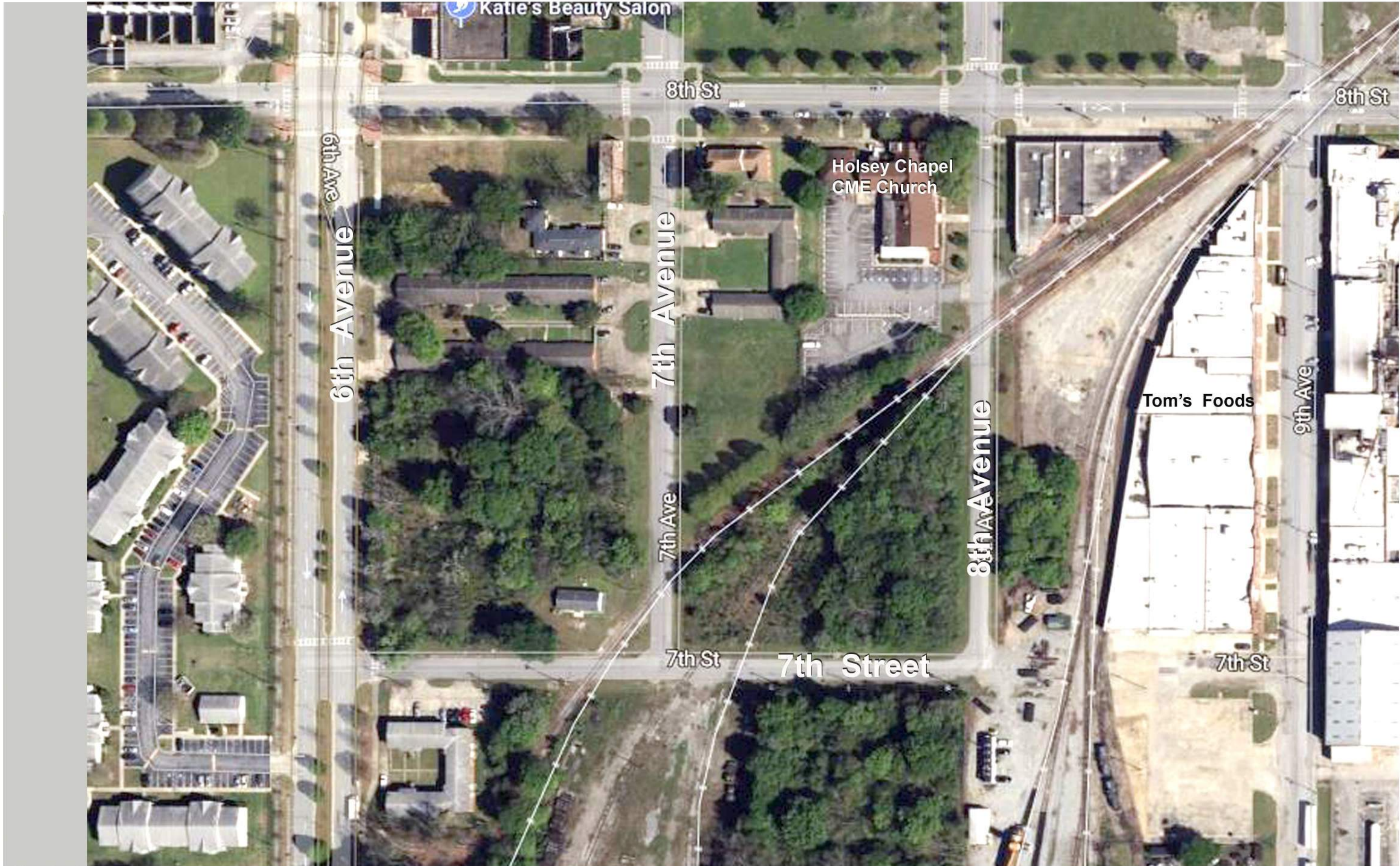








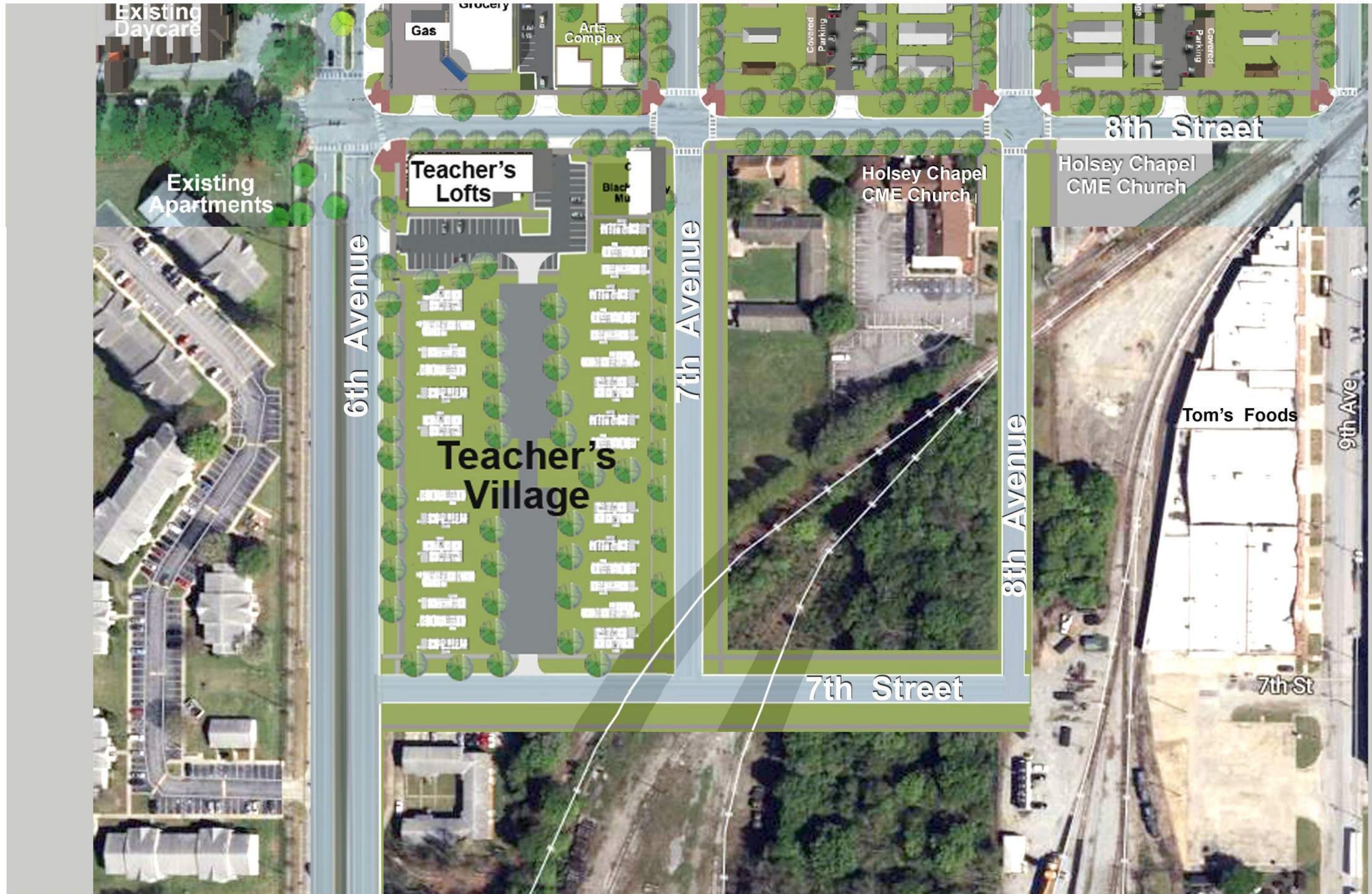














# Project Gateway Design





