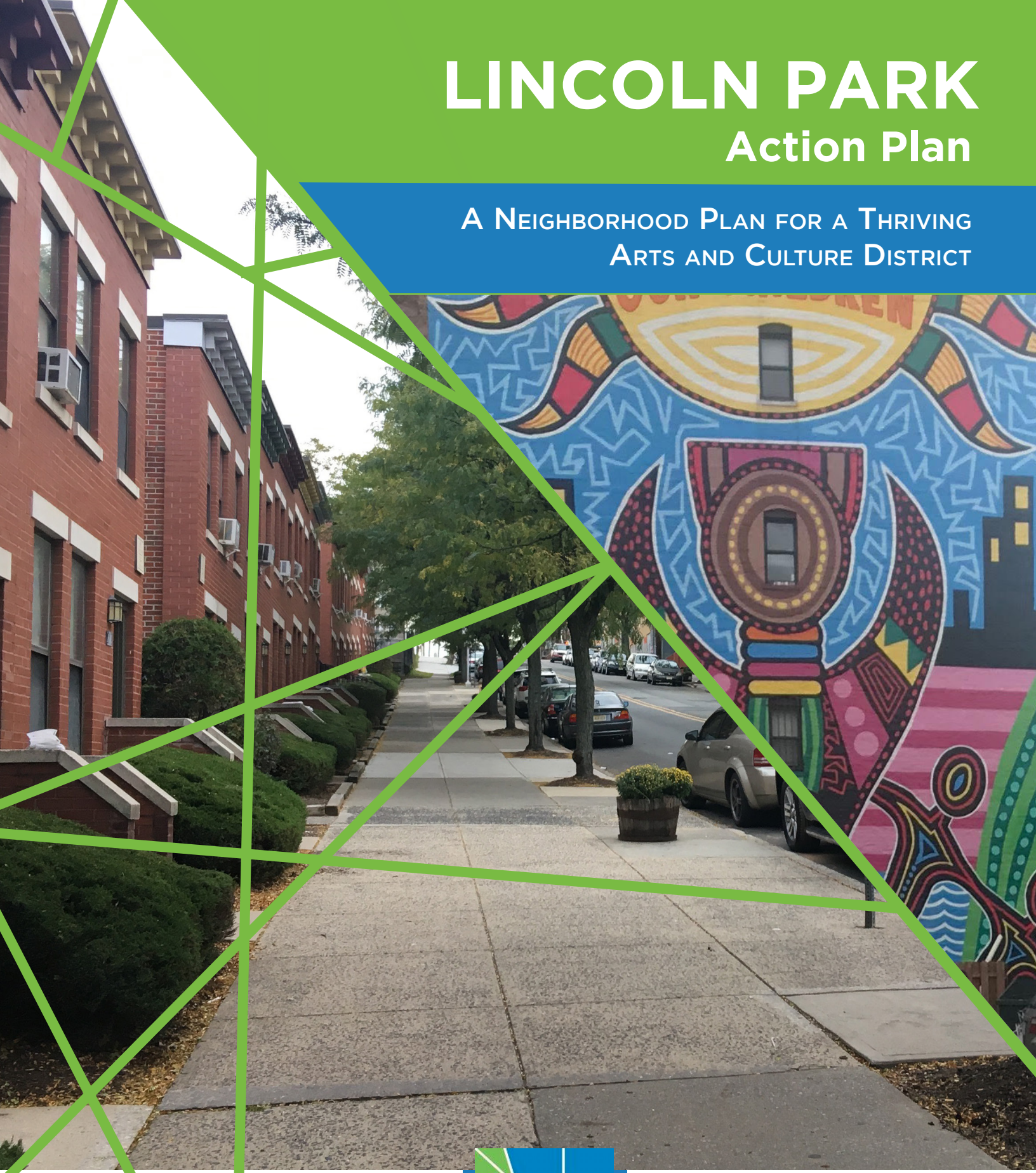


# LINCOLN PARK

## Action Plan

A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN FOR A THRIVING  
ARTS AND CULTURE DISTRICT



Prepared for the Lincoln Park  
Neighborhood



Prepared by Topology







# FOREWORD

**“Wherever American cities are going, Newark will get there first.”**

**– Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson (Mayor of Newark 1970-1986)**

Newark is changing, and nowhere is that change more evident than the Lincoln Park Neighborhood. Over the past decade, emerging gentrification pressures, the closing of long-time small businesses, and the struggle of the neighborhood’s non-profit organizations have led us to a pivotal juncture.

Will Lincoln Park let change happen to it or will Lincoln Park drive the change?

When we jointly applied for a Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF) planning grant in 2017, we did so knowing that we needed to make a concerted effort to engage neighborhood residents, institutions, and businesses. Not only to satisfy the provisions of the grant, but to change the way we viewed the neighborhood - its residents, its institutions, its businesses, and its relationship to the City of Newark – and the way the neighborhood viewed us.

Fundamentally, we wanted to change the way we both do our work here in Lincoln Park.

For Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC), this meant working intentionally in the neighborhood where we come to work every day. It meant deepening our relationship with Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District (LPCCD) and building on our decade of partnership in the transformation of the housing stock in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood. It also meant looking introspectively into how we are going to partner to achieve the goals set forth in this plan.

For LPCCD, we wanted to return to our roots as an arts and cultural organization working with and for the residents and artists that call the Lincoln Park Neighborhood home. We wanted to engage our partners in the neighborhood more intentionally so that our collective work lifts up the residents, institutions, and businesses in the neighborhood. For us, it meant working to improve our internal structures and the way we organize to empower residents.

This plan represents more than a year of hard work by more than a hundred individuals looking to position Lincoln Park as a vibrant arts and culture scene, healthy and engaged, with economic opportunities for all residents.

Jeffrey Crum  
Chief Investment Officer  
New Jersey Community Capital

Anthony Smith  
Executive Director  
Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District

# ABOUT US

## COMMUNITY ASSET PRESERVATION CORPORATION

Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC) is the Real Estate development subsidiary of New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC), a federally designated Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). CAPC acquires vacant and abandoned properties to stabilize and revitalize communities. CAPC partners with local community builders and contractors to rehabilitate and return properties to productive use as quality, affordable housing. It is one of the largest non-profit real estate developers in the State of New Jersey.

Since 2013, CAPC's office has been located at 421 Halsey Street in the heart of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood. CAPC has previously partnered with LPCCD to develop 36 units of housing.

## LINCOLN PARK COAST CULTURAL DISTRICT

Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District (LPCCD) is working to transform the neighborhood with a mission to plan, design, and build a comprehensive arts and cultural district in the Lincoln Park/Coast area of the City of Newark, New Jersey. LPCCD was founded through the vision and assistance of local residents, civic leaders, business professionals, and the City Administration in the late 1990s. Formally incorporated in 2002, LPCCD has been working to develop arts and culture programming and sustainable housing options in the neighborhood.

LPCCD created and facilitates the annual Lincoln Park Music Festival that draws 50,000 people to the neighborhood. Over the last 15 years, they have also developed more than 100 units of housing in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood.





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## PLAN FUNDER

Wells Fargo Regional Foundation

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Jared Adams, Lincoln Park Resident  
Keith DaCosta, CareSparc Consulting  
Kim Ford, Lincoln Park Resident  
Richard Grossklaus, Lincoln Park Resident  
Donna Holland, Lincoln Park Resident  
Haas Manning, Lincoln Park Resident  
Katie Pagan, Lincoln Park Property Owner

Emilio Panasci, Lincoln Park Resident  
Maria Pilar Paradiso, LINK School  
Anthony Schuman, LPCCD Board  
Det. Michael Silva, Newark Police Dept.  
Michelle Truvillion, Lincoln Park Resident  
Kim Williams, Lincoln Park Resident

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS & INSTITUTIONS

Great Oaks Legacy Charter High School  
Newark Symphony Hall  
Rutgers University – Newark  
Integrity House

LINK Community Charter School  
Newark Arts Council  
The New Jersey Institute of Technology

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

The City of Newark & The Newark Municipal Council  
Hon. Mayor Ras J. Baraka  
Invest Newark  
Newark Downtown District

## PLANNING TEAM

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Mahako Etta, ERI Group

Giancarlo Di Lonardo, NJCC  
Stephanie Neal, CAPC  
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Mozell Baker, LPCCD







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lincoln Park is striving to be the premier arts and cultural district in New Jersey. The neighborhood, located in the heart of New Jersey's largest city and surrounding one of the three original colonial-era 'commons', is home to dozens of artists, arts organizations, and creatives. Lincoln Park is also the home of many long-time residents, new immigrants, and vital community organizations and services used by residents and visitors alike.

As a neighborhood in transition, Lincoln Park's residents, stakeholders, Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC), and Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District (LPCCD) utilized the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation's (WFRF) planning grant to evaluate needs, establish goals, and ultimately develop a 10-year plan for the future of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood. The resulting plan creates a framework for increasing the production of affordable and market-rate housing, fostering entrepreneurship and supporting neighborhood businesses, empowering residents, and creating a healthier, more active, and better connected neighborhood. This plan also sets forth implementable strategies to realize specific outcomes in each of those thematic areas.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Led by LPCCD and CAPC, with technical assistance provided by Topology and New Jersey Community Capital's Community Strategies team, the Lincoln Park Action Plan began in May 2018 and was completed in August 2019. This 15-month planning process was created in partnership with community leaders and builds on previous planning efforts and strategic discussions led by LPCCD. The planning process prioritized connecting with residents, understanding existing conditions and data, and having a Steering Committee made up of residents and stakeholders who helped to shape the final planning document.

LPCCD facilitated the collection of data through resident surveys, several community forums, a parcel-level property survey, secondary data gathering, and numerous focus groups. Resident input was integrated into the planning team's research, data analysis, and maps to provide a comprehensive picture of the neighborhood and the thematic areas that are ultimately articulated in this document. A 15-person Steering Committee made up of residents and representatives from neighborhood institutions and City-wide partners guided the process and ultimately gave the plan many of its more grounded strategy recommendations.

## PROJECT THEMES

The Lincoln Park Action Plan covers six key, related themes. These themes represent the highest priority areas expressed by Lincoln Park residents and stakeholders. Embedded within each theme, targeted goals and strategies have been developed to help the Lincoln Park Neighborhood realize its 10-year vision.



## **ARTS, CULTURE, & RECREATION**

LPCCD and the community renewed its commitment to provide high-quality arts programming, foster a sense of pride in the cultural diversity and history of the neighborhood, and ensure that residents and visitors have recreational opportunities that rival other neighborhoods in Newark and beyond. Building Lincoln Park into a premier arts and culture district will require residents and partner organizations to come together.

## **HOUSING**

As the City of Newark continues to experience unprecedented levels of private investment and speculation, displacement and gentrification are already becoming a real threat to Lincoln Park. LPCCD's goal is to increase housing security for existing residents and to catalyze the development of 250 additional housing units in Lincoln Park over the next 10 years so that families, seniors, artists, and others can call the neighborhood home.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In order to support the area's growing cache as an arts district and ensure that residents have the skills needed to enter into the established and emerging finance, information technology, and professional service jobs available in Newark and the surrounding region, the strategies set in this section aim to improve workforce development and economic opportunity in Lincoln Park. Additional strategies in this section target supporting entrepreneurs and the men and women working in the arts and the larger creative/maker sector.

## **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & RESIDENT LEADERSHIP**

Residents of Lincoln Park have proven, time and again, that they are leaders – in their children's schools, in the workplace, and in the community – and now they will build on this track record in a more formal way. Much of this plan's success hinges on organizing and empowering residents and existing groups to own and continue to address their common challenges. This section envisions strategies that will help residents and stakeholders find and exercise their collective voice.

## **MOBILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, & SAFETY**

This section proposes strategies to improve residents' ability to get around the neighborhood, the state of neighborhood infrastructure, and the safety of residents. The strategies seek to make investments in public spaces so the Lincoln Park Neighborhood is well-functioning and safe place to live, work, and recreate.

## **RESIDENT SERVICES & SUPPORTS**

As part of a more robust approach to neighborhood services and public health, LPCCD will look to develop explicit agreements with human service partners in and around the neighborhood to link residents with existing programs in the City while working to identify long-term services and supports for youth, senior citizens, and special populations more locally.





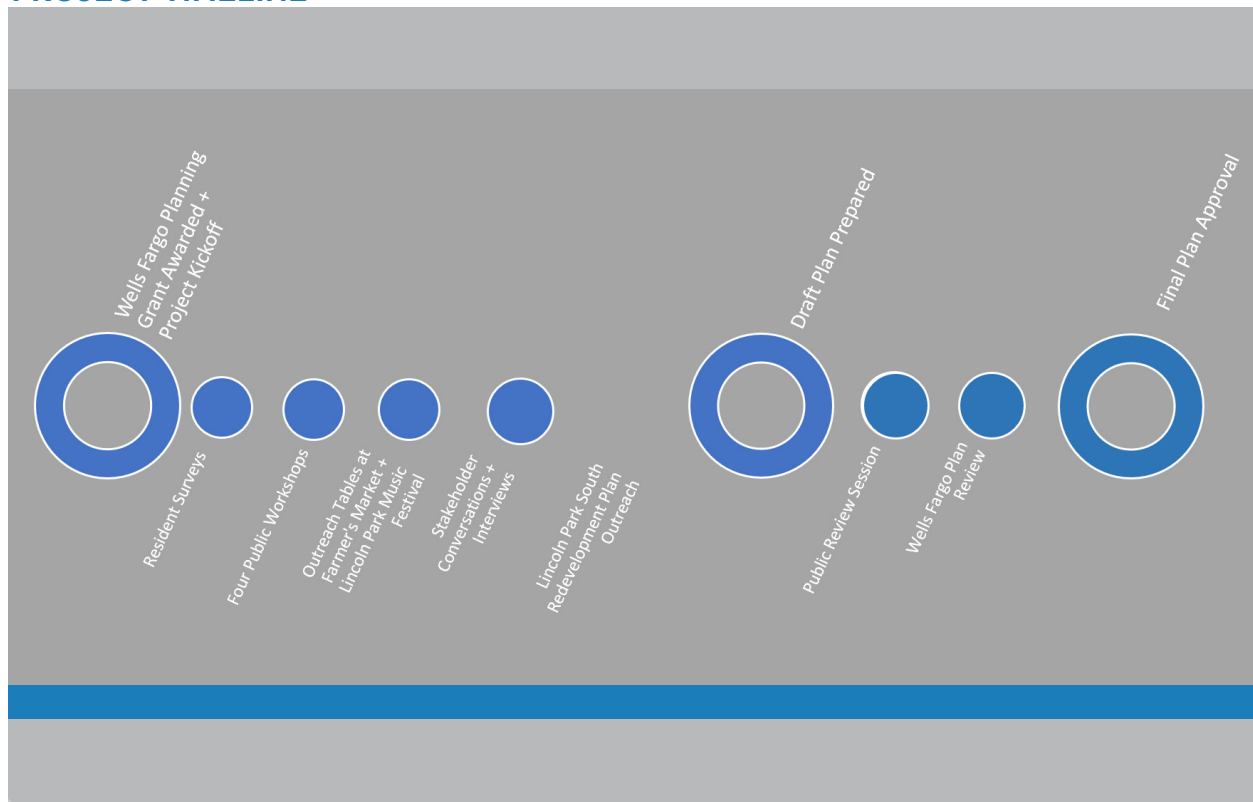


Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District (LPCCD) and Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC), in collaboration with Topology and New Jersey Community Capital's Community Strategies Team, facilitated a resident-driven neighborhood planning process that resulted in the Lincoln Park Action Plan. This plan builds on several planning efforts undertaken by LPCCD and the City over the last twenty (20) years aimed at aligning strategies for revitalization with evolving neighborhood conditions. The Lincoln Park Action Plan addresses six key themes identified by the community and provides measurable goals and implementable strategies for each theme.

The Lincoln Park Action Plan development process was supported by the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF) through their Neighborhood Planning Grant program. This grant program provides funding to community organizations as they develop community-driven revitalization plans that address the human, physical, and social goals of a defined neighborhood.

LPCCD's work in the Lincoln Park Neighborhood has positively impacted the housing and social environment since the completion of the initial Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan submitted to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program in 2006. The Lincoln Park Neighborhood continues to face challenges related to housing, jobs and economic development, as well as mobility and safety. The Lincoln Park Action Plan strives to create an implementable 10-year plan to position Lincoln Park as a healthy and engaged community with a vibrant arts and culture scene and economic opportunities for all residents.

## PROJECT TIMELINE



# PLANNING PROCESS + HISTORY

Located at the confluence of major physical and political boundaries, Lincoln Park is situated along the southern end of Newark's bustling downtown business district. The neighborhood serves as a hub of activity due to the presence of two City arteries - Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson Boulevard (Broad Street) and Clinton Avenue. As an extended runway from Newark Liberty International Airport, Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson Boulevard (Broad Street) connects the neighborhood to opportunities for international commerce and the arts as travelers must pass through the neighborhood to get to Downtown Newark and northern suburbs. The convergence of local, regional and international activity all takes place around an idyllic, six-acre greenspace under the watchful eye of iconic, turn-of-the-century towers and brownstones.

The combination of location and history have played a crucial role in the ongoing growth, development, and unique, artistic character of the area. Lincoln Park has been a community on the rise for the past four decades. The neighborhood, colloquially referred to as "The Coast," is leveraging its location and its history to write the next great chapter in Newark's renaissance and position itself as the region's premier arts and culture district.

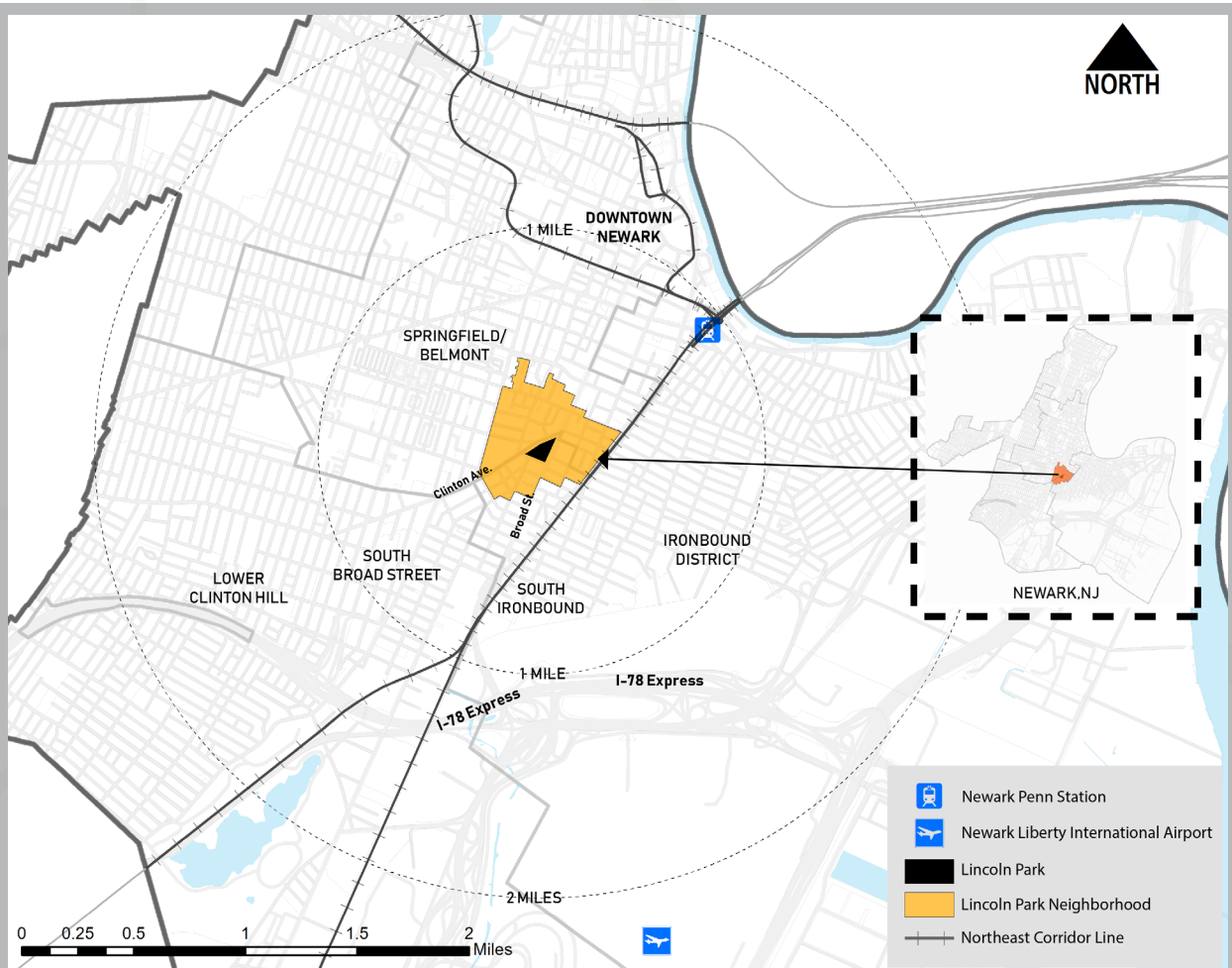


Figure 2: Lincoln Park Neighborhood Boundary Map



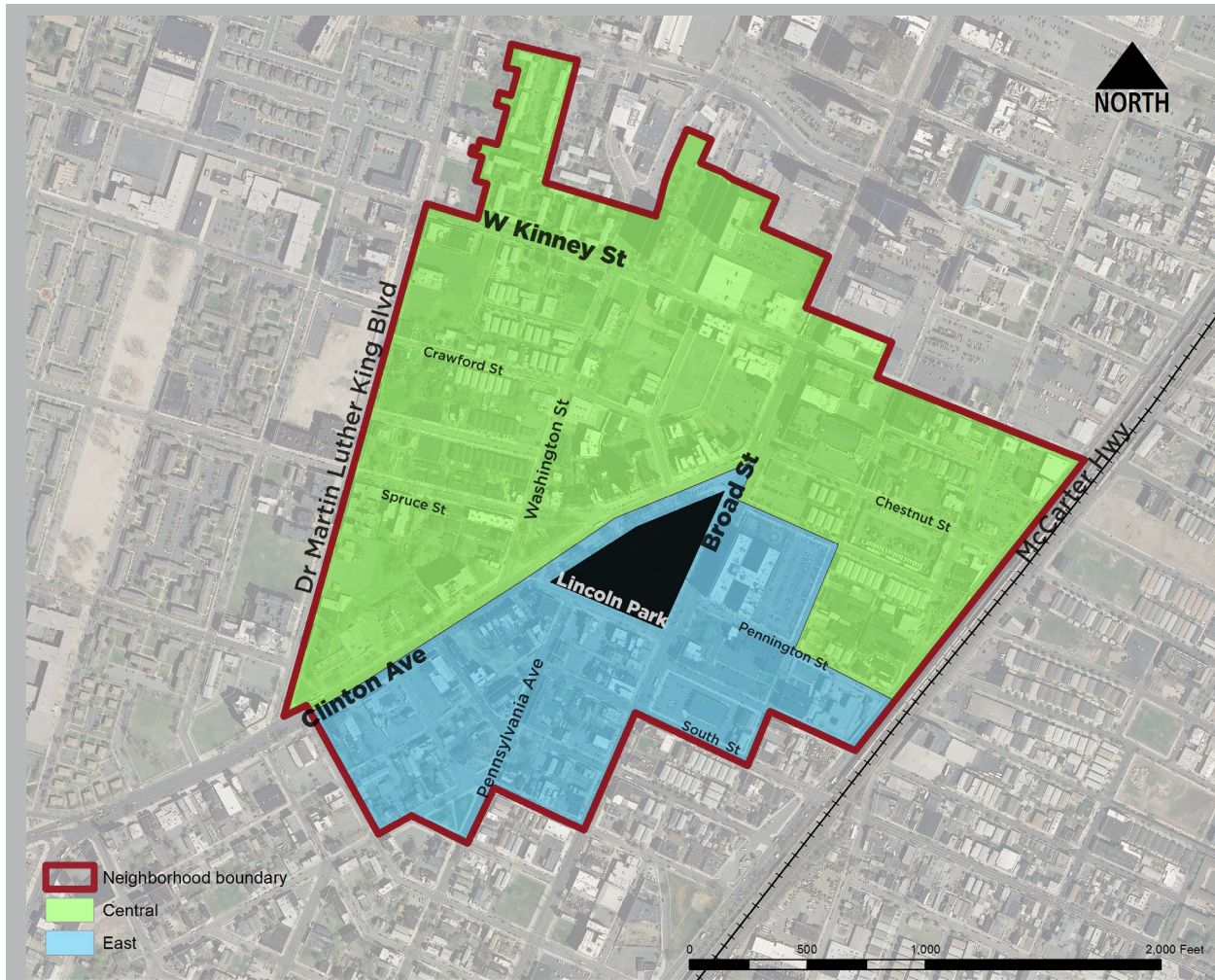


Figure 3: Neighborhood + Political Wards

## NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION

The Lincoln Park neighborhood is split between two of the City's political wards, the Central Ward and East Ward, with the boundary of a third (the South Ward) just a few blocks away. With the heart of the neighborhood at the convergence of two wards, challenges have often arisen from a planning and redevelopment standpoint creating silos in local government that prevent effective communication and the equitable distribution of local resources and services. This problem is compounded by the division of the neighborhood among different police precincts, complicating the response of the City's police force to incidents throughout the neighborhood.

The neighborhood is also home to numerous corridors that are important local and regional connections. The aforementioned Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson Boulevard (Broad Street) runs through the middle of the neighborhood; this boulevard connects several major highways (with links to Newark Liberty International Airport) and Downtown Newark. The eastern edge of the neighborhood is McCarter Highway, State Route 21, which also connects to several major highways on the southern end of Newark, and connects the neighborhood with northern municipalities such as Belleville, Nutley, Clifton, and Paterson. Clinton Avenue, coming into the neighborhood from the southwest links Lincoln Park with the South Ward of Newark and the communities of Irvington, Maplewood, and South Orange.



# PLANNING PROCESS + HISTORY

Lastly, the western boundary of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. MLK Boulevard links the neighborhood with three higher education institutions within the City – Essex County College, Rutgers University – Newark, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

The northern area of the neighborhood (between Kinney and Crawford/Chestnut) is in an Opportunity Zone, a new federal program designed to spur investment in low-income communities. The program offers tax incentives for investing in businesses and real estate in these communities through a qualified Opportunity Fund.

Such incentives may make it easier for housing and economic development projects within these bounds – such as several of the projects outlined later in the plan –to obtain the equity investment needed for property owners and others to redevelop vacant real estate or grow business enterprises. A map depicting the extent of the Opportunity Zone can be found below:

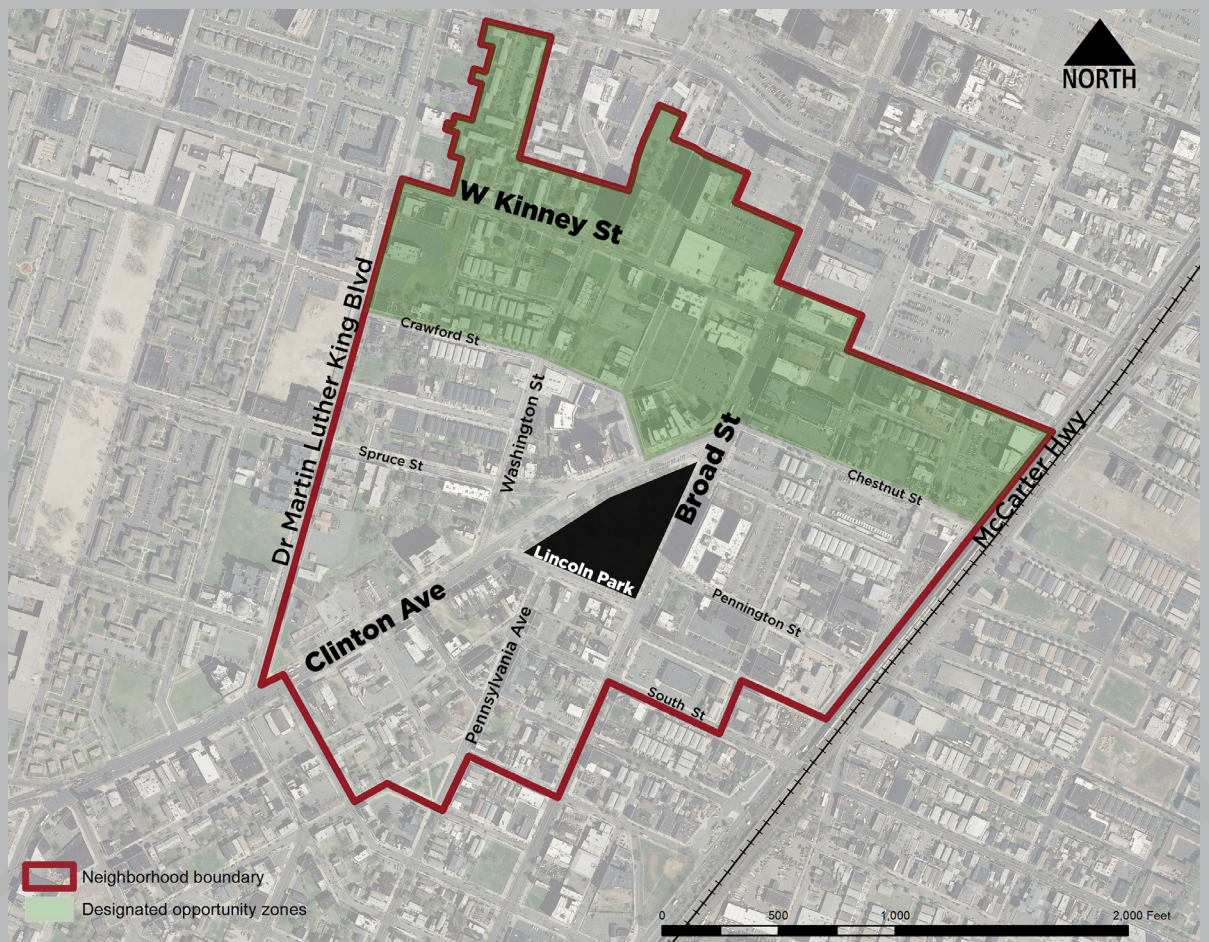


Figure 4: Lincoln Park Opportunity Zones



## NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The Lincoln Park Neighborhood has a rich and significant past that has played an integral role in Newark's history. The area's namesake—the Park – is located in the heart of the neighborhood and has served a wide array of residents for more than 300 years as one of Newark's original colonial-era 'Commons' (Figure 2).

The Park's status as one of the 'Commons' meant that it served as a gathering place for Newarkers of all stripes. Shortly after the Civil War, the area formerly known as "South Common" was renamed to Lincoln Park after President Abraham Lincoln who visited the area in 1861.

From its founding in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the neighborhood was one of the most sought-after areas to live. In the 19th century, Lincoln Park was known for its stately homes and notable families living on the Park's western edge.

The neighborhood attracted both upper-and middle-class families of Newark. The homes of some of the City's wealthiest residents along the Park nicely juxtaposed the more modest working-class homes on the outer rings of the park filled with musicians, artists and the working-class. The interaction of these residents provided the neighborhood with an artistic, bohemian culture in this era long before many other urban communities.

During the planning process, the Project Team learned that the neighborhood was home to numerous entertainment destinations in the 1940s – nightclubs, jazz bars, and music venues. The district's nightclubs and informal status as a "red light district" earned it the nickname, "The Coast," after the Barbary Coast – a similar district – located in San Francisco, California. This era of Lincoln Park's history (1920s-1950s) produced notable musicians, artists, and creative people, such as award winning jazz singer Sarah Vaughan, adding to the neighborhood's unique fabric.

Through the middle of the 20th Century, the Lincoln Park Neighborhood experienced the effects and echoes of urban renewal policies and later the 1967 Newark Rebellion. Many historic and significant structures within the neighborhood were demolished during this time. Vacancy gave way to unhealthy and anti-social activities such as drug use and other criminal activity. Several neighborhood streets that previously had vibrant street life were rerouted and were replaced with large blocks of federally funded housing projects that displaced existing residents and created towers of physically isolated new residents.

In an attempt to mitigate this wide-ranging disruption of urban renewal and other changes in the built environment throughout the City, federal historic preservation legislation (as well as local ordinances in Newark) became a useful tool to save notable landmarks. The South Park Presbyterian Church was placed on the National Historic Register in 1972, and Lincoln Park (the Park and 40 surrounding buildings) were placed on the Register in 1984. The late 1990s and early 2000s began the reemergence of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood as an artistic, energetic, and empowered community. The neighborhood's history and continued reinvention tell a captivating story of an area transformed through status, neglect, and rebuilding.

# PLANNING PROCESS + HISTORY

Today, the Lincoln Park neighborhood is in the process of transforming thanks, in large part, to numerous arts-focused organizations and community-based advocacy groups. Jazz and African-American music, their legacy and their continued presence, play an important role in the neighborhood's present and future. The neighborhood's emerging immigrant communities – Latinx, West African, and Caribbean among them – have also woven their cultures and customs into the neighborhood's daily life. With notable amenities in the neighborhood, such as Newark Symphony Hall and a picturesque park, there are ample assets through which LPCCD, CAPC, and other stakeholders can pave the way for Lincoln Park to become a thriving arts and culture district, healthy and engaged, with economic opportunities for all residents.



*Figure 6: South Park Presbyterian Church, Broad Street*



# THEMES

The Lincoln Park Action Plan has 6 interrelated themes that were distilled down during the neighborhood planning process. These theme areas work together to shape the holistic vision for the Lincoln Park Neighborhood that residents and stakeholders shared in community forums, in resident satisfaction surveys, and during focus groups.

## **Arts, Culture, & Recreation**

LPCCD and the community renewed its commitment to provide high-quality arts programming work to foster a sense of pride in the cultural diversity and history of the neighborhood, and ensure that residents and visitors have recreational opportunities that rival other neighborhoods in Newark and beyond. Building Lincoln Park into a premier arts and culture district will require residents and partner organizations coming together. Opportunities to further leverage the LPCCD brand – especially the success of the Lincoln Park Music Festival – to connect to Newark Symphony Hall and other arts organizations will pay dividends by drawing more people to experience the arts in the neighborhood. The City's increased investment in the physical Lincoln Park and the infrastructure on and around Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson Boulevard (Broad Street) provide opportunities for LPCCD and its partners to leverage private and philanthropic dollars to make improvements to recreation programming, streetscape improvements, and mobility in and through the neighborhood.

## **Housing**

As the City of Newark continues to experience unprecedented levels of private investment and speculation, displacement and gentrification are becoming a real threat to Lincoln Park. It is critical to implement strategies that not only create additional housing opportunities, but preserve the affordability of existing residences, advocate for improved housing conditions in the neighborhood, and reduce the number of households who are spending more than 30% of their income on rent. LPCCD's will aim to catalyze the development of a mix of 250 additional affordable and market-rate housing units in the neighborhood over the next 10 years that families, seniors, artists, and others can call home. A long-term goal is also to activate the South Park Presbyterian Church Façade as a mixed-use development with an affordable housing component.

## **Economic Development**

To complement the areas' cache as an arts district and ensure that residents have the skills needed to enter into the established and emerging finance, information technology, and professional service jobs available in Newark and the surrounding region, these strategies aim to improve workforce development and economic opportunity in Lincoln Park. Part of this will involve helping residents and stakeholders fulfill their expressed desire to see more small businesses, sidewalk cafes, and national retailers in the neighborhood.

## **Community Empowerment & Resident Leadership**

Residents of Lincoln Park have proven, time and again, that they are leaders – in their children's schools, in the workplace, and in the community – and now it is time to support them in building on this track record. Much of this plan's success hinges on organizing and empowering residents and existing groups to own and continue to address their common challenges. This section envisions strategies that help residents and stakeholders find and exercise their collective voice.

## Safety, Mobility, & Infrastructure

Residents talked about the difficulty they have crossing major roads in the neighborhood and pinpointed parts of the neighborhood they felt unsafe in. This section proposes strategies to increase public safety, improve pedestrian mobility, and also to improve the public spaces throughout the neighborhood that have been neglected. The strategies in this section will take advocacy by residents and coordination with the public sector.

## Resident Services & Supports

As part of a more robust approach to neighborhood services, LPCCD will look to develop explicit agreements with human service partners in and around the neighborhood to link residents with existing programs in the City while working to identify long-term services and supports for youth, senior citizens, public health, and special populations more locally.

