



2023 Forest Park Planning Group Brief

Background and Purpose

Forest Park, GA has historically been marginalized regarding resources despite having a vibrant and active community. In 2023, multiple local agencies and organizations focused on addressing the needs of this community through funding and elevating their voices to advocate for actionable changes. As such, these entities partnered with the Hand Heart + Soul Project (HHSP) to establish and convene the Forest Park Planning Group.

[On establishing the Forest Park Planning Group]: *"It's really important to have qualitative assessments, qualitative data, having these conversations so that we can also just be able to capture some of these moments. I think a lot of times that our work gets lost like we have these calls, and then it's one {and} done."*

Activities and Action

In the early Spring of 2023, members of the Forest Park Planning Group were solicited through established networks and by reaching out to other community organizations. The priority for group involvement included:

- Community-based organizations with a focus on housing, workforce development, and education
- Residents
- Non-profit organizations
- Youth
- Community Activists, and
- Local business owners
- Anchor partners



While an attempt was made to include youth, the Planning Group was ultimately unsuccessful in having representation, despite outreach.

Activities and Action (cont.)

The Bridgespan Group—a global social impact consulting group—initially led the Forest Park Planning Group, which met monthly starting in Summer 2023. Members introduced themselves, created a group agreement, and discussed shared visions for their community. Ultimately, they developed a vision and three action-orientation goals for education, economic inclusion, and housing in Forest Park. The planning group then held a social event on November 14th showcasing their progress, building relationships with new individuals and organizations, and generating ideas on how to execute their vision and goals.

Forest Park Vision and Goals

“Forest Park will be a safer place where residents can afford to live, where residents have job security, and where there is a strong and connected nonprofit ecosystem that is resourced to provide wrap-around services within the community, in order to increase economic mobility, so residents can thrive and prosper.”

Education	Economic Inclusion	Housing
Key levers Children are ready to learn and thrive in Kindergarten.	Key levers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Residents gain skills and experiences necessary for the job marketResidents have access to a supply of quality jobs with sustainable wages and benefits	Key levers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Guidance and resources to access and remain in quality, affordable housingAdequate availability of quality, affordable housing stock
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Early childcare professional recruitment and developmentEarly learning affordability	Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wrap around supports for job training programsYouth hiring programsPolicies and incentives to increase employment	Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Policies preventing resident displacementCollective of housing actorsCode enforcement revision
5-Year Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase kindergarten readiness by 12% (from 38.2% to 50%)Close quality rated childcare supply gap by 17 points (from -51.9 to -35)	5-Year Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">25% of disconnected youth participate in workforce development programs50% of the working-age population completes a certificateIncrease labor-force participation by 17% (from 68.6% to 80%)Increase number of jobs with a sustainable income by 12% (from 38.4% to 50%)	5-Year Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">Decrease eviction filing rates by 18% (from 68.28% to 50%)Decrease housing vacancy by 6% (from 21% to 15%)Decrease number of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing by 20% (from 54.6% to 35%)

What's Next?

Forest Park Planning Group members found their efforts fruitful and decided to continue convening beyond this initial phase. They intend to leverage relationships and community assets to implement the goals created, work with elected officials to advocate for policies that promote their three goals, and establish a tailored policy agenda with the support of HHSP.





