Aspiring to the Beloved Community

The Atlanta City Design @ATLcitystudio designATL
“The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of the beloved community.”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1969
Metropolitan Atlanta is expected to grow by nearly 50% over the next couple of decades: from 5.5 million today to over 8 million.
What is the Atlanta City Design?
1 of 2.
The City of Atlanta is going to change.
Not changing is not an option.
1. Our change will involve significant growth.
If properly designed, growth can be a powerful tool for shaping the Atlanta we want to become.
2. More people are better than fewer.
A diverse population is better than a homogenous one.
The most strategic scenario for growth includes everyone.
1. Where we came from.
2. Our best selves.
3. Our change ahead.
4. Our path forward.
   - Design recommendations.
   - Designing the form of the city.
Where we came from.
High Ridges; Green Valleys.
Native People.
Pitch Trees, Crossroads & Railroads.
Breaking The Confederacy.
Reunification & Reconstruction.
Jim Crow & Streetcars.

Georgia Railway & Power Company
Modernization & Automobiles.
Black Mecca.
A New City For Civil Rights.
Rebirth. Like a Phoenix Rising (again).
Our best selves.
Atlanta was first a crossroads and a railroad junction; later a highway interchange and a global airport hub. This history defined our city early and emphatically – not as a place with it’s own style of architecture, or its own flavor or sound, but as a meeting ground and marketer of Southern culture, products, and people. Today, we do the same for the world.
That’s not a slogan. It’s just who we are. When we’re at our best, Atlanta brings different people, cultures, and businesses together. And then we export our ideas around the globe.
The conditions for those ideas to develop – *the essence of who we are as a city* – can be defined by a set of five values.
(1) **Nature.**
Atlanta’s defining natural feature is our tree canopy and the verdant wilderness that inhabits it.
(2) Access.

Atlanta’s founding mark at the Zero Mile Post was only the first of many strategic connections between its people and the resources to make something special.
(3) Ambition.
Atlanta’s driving motive, more often than not, is to make our voices heard and promote our standing in the world.
(4) Progress.

Atlanta’s focus on the future and determination to achieve our goals compels us to then engage in hard work and make tough decisions and significant investments.
(5) **Equity.**

Atlanta’s legacy for the world is our belief that the Beloved Community is not only an aspiration, but a realistic and achievable goal.
Nature.
Access.
Ambition.
Progress.
Equity.
If we aspire to these values and to the beloved community, we can design the Atlanta we want to become.

We can ensure Atlanta remains a city for everyone.
Our change ahead.
Change is coming.

“World’s population increasingly urban with more than half living in urban areas.”
United Nations, July 2014

“Census shows big U.S. cities continue to grow.”
USA Today, May 2016

“Gentrification is a global problem. It’s time we found a better solution.”
The Guardian, September 2016

“Will Portland’s housing crisis repeat mistakes of San Francisco?”
The Atlantic, May 2014

“Why companies are moving back downtown.”
Governing, August 2016

“To avoid housing nightmare, say ‘yes in my back yard’.”
Boston Globe, July 2016

“As more people move in, NYC suffers affordable housing crisis.”
NPR, March 2016
The region currently has 5.5 million people.

The ARC projects the region will grow by 2.5 million people for a total metro Atlanta population of 8 million by 2040.
The City of Atlanta currently has 8% of the regional population. The ARC projects that percentage will remain steady at 7% as the region’s population grows over the next 20-25 years.

However, research shows 15% of the US population wants to live in a city.
If we assume the region will grow to 8 million people and 15% of those people want to live in the City of Atlanta, then the population of the City will grow to 1.2 million.
What this potential growth looks like.
What this potential growth looks like.
Our potential growth in comparison.

- **Chicago**
  Population: 2.7 million
  Area: 234.0 sq. mi.
  Density: 11,538 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Houston**
  Population: 2.3 million
  Area: 627.8 sq. mi.
  Density: 3,663 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Washington, DC**
  Population: 672,228
  Area: 68.3 sq. mi.
  Density: 9,842 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Vancouver**
  Population: 603,502
  Area: 44.4 sq. mi.
  Density: 13,592 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Paris**
  Population: 2.2 million
  Area: 40.7 sq. mi.
  Density: 54,054 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Atlanta (Today)**
  Population: 463,818
  Area: 134.0 sq. mi.
  Density: 3,461 ppl./sq. mi.

- **Atlanta (Future)**
  Population: 1.2 million
  Area: 134.0 sq. mi.
  Density: 8,955 ppl./sq. mi.
1. The first premise of the Atlanta City Design is that the City is **going to change**. That not changing is not an option. That our change will involve significant growth. And that if properly designed, growth can be a powerful tool for shaping the Atlanta we want to become.

2. The second premise is that almost always, more people are better than fewer. That a diverse population is better than a homogenous one. And that the most strategic scenario for growth **includes everyone**.
Change is exciting. For some people, however, the scale of this change can be scary because historically, it has benefitted some more than others.
Demographic imbalance.

Geographic imbalance.

Economic imbalance.

Ecological imbalance.
Our imbalance.

The city’s black population is declining. Growth in the black population above the growth line does not offset losses below.

The city remains largely black and white, even while the region is poised for sizable growth in other groups, especially hispanic and latinos.

The increase in households making over $75,000 is equal or faster in the City than in the Region.

“Atlanta, once again the nation’s leader in income inequality”
Creative Loafing, March 2015

71% of metro residents think public transit is “very important” to solving our problems.
Metro Atlanta Speaks, ARC

“This geography appears to play a major role in making Atlanta one of the metropolitan areas where it is most difficult for lower-income households to rise into the middle class and beyond.”
New York Times, July 2013
It’s easy to fear that Atlanta - this home that we love - will get ruined in the process.
If we want to instead leverage change to make an even better Atlanta, we need to design the changes we see coming to meet and uphold our core values.
Change is an opportunity. It can fuel the creation of the future we want.
Can we embrace both the beauty of Nature and urban life?
(1) The challenge for *Nature* is to strike the right balance with Atlanta’s rapid urbanization.
Can we maintain our Access to the region without destroying the places we live?
(2) The challenge for Access is to balance the value of our transport hub with its impact on the places we live.
Can we protect opportunities for both our global and local Ambition?
The challenge for Ambition is to remain open to both global and local opportunities.
Can we make Progress and still protect things that have meaning?
(4) The challenge for Progress is to protect people and places with meaning from the market forces that would overrun them.
Can we deliver a city built on Equity so that everyone benefits from change?
(5) The challenge for *Equity* is making sure that all the benefits of Nature, Access, Ambition, and Progress accrue to everyone.
If we want a city designed for everyone, we have to do things to ensure that is possible. We can design change to address these tensions and make Atlanta the city we want it to become.
Our path forward.
City Design can help us tackle the challenges of change and live up to the promise of the Beloved Community.
City Design is the intentional shaping of the city to reflect our shared values, meet our opportunities, and achieve our goals.
The Plan of Chicago, 1909.
The Plan of Vancouver, 1990s.
How this will work.

Understand our core values and the challenges inherent to each.

Translate our aspirations into recommendations that can shape growth based on those values.

Operationalize City Design through specific policy and implementation decisions.
Design recommendations.
Translating aspiration into recommendations for action.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
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<td>Nature</td>
<td>Forest</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Hub</td>
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<td>Ambition</td>
<td>Global</td>
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<td>Progress</td>
<td>Market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Collective</td>
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**DIRECTION**

2. Design Mobility.
3. Remain Open.
5. Include Everyone.
(1) Nature.
Let's embrace ecology.
1a. Eco-system rehabilitation.
1b. Green infrastructure.
1c. Land conservation & stewardship.
1d. Urban agriculture.
1e. Sustainable building design.
(2) Access.
Let’s design mobility.
2a. Transportation priority.
2b. City structure.
2c. Growth patterns.
2d. Transportation investments & maintenance.
2e. City-wide orientation & wayfinding.
(3) Ambition.
Let’s remain open.
3a. Business innovation & incubation.
3b. Development & community benefits.
3c. Adaptable sites & buildings.
3d. The arts.
3e. Public life.
3f. Education.
(4) Progress.

Let’s balance priorities.
4a. Housing innovation & affordability.
4b. Cost of living.
4c. Preservation.
4d. Social Engagement.
(5) Equity
Let’s include everyone.
5a. Investment priority.
5b. Civic participation.
5c. Welcome.
Designing the form of the city.
With these values and ideas in mind, we can define the physical form of Atlanta.

This form emerges from who we are.
We’re going to protect and expand whatever wildness remains, focusing denser development in already-disturbed places and embracing human life and city building as a part of the city’s ecology.
We’re going to design systems for moving around the city that prioritize people more than cars, and that promote physical access, health, and prosperity for the communities where we live.
(3) Ambition/Remain Open.

We’re going to design spaces and infrastructures for social, entrepreneurial, and artistic interaction and innovation so that we can remain open to new opportunities and follow our ambitions.
(4) Progress/Balance Priorities.

We’re going to protect people and places threatened by market forces, knowing that our city’s cultural value and economic opportunity depends on them.
(5) Equity/Include Everyone.

We’re going to do all of this equitably, ensuring a balanced approach across our historic demographic, geographic, economic, and ecological divides, and committing to equitable outcomes in the implementation of any idea.
Structure.

Core Areas.

Corridors.

• Peachtree/Roswell
• Piedmont
• Ponce de Leon
• DeKalb
• Memorial
• McDonough
• Jonesboro
• Metropolitan
• Lee/Murphy/Campbellton
• MLK
• Boone
• Hollowell
• Marietta/Perry
• Howell Mill
Peachtree.

- Buckhead / Lenox
- Armour Yards
- Lindbergh
- Peachtree St
- Peachtree Hills
- Piedmont Hospital
Land.

**Conservation Areas.**
- Traditional neighborhoods
- Key industrial districts

**Growth Areas.**
- Core areas
- Corridors
Conservation Areas.
Growth Areas.

- Woodruff Park
- Sylvan Hills
- Peachtree St
- Equitable Building
- Georgia-Pacific Building
- Arthur B Langford Pkwy
- I-75 / 85
Midtown.
Structure and Land.

Conservation Areas.
- Traditional neighborhoods
- Key industrial districts

Growth Areas.
- Core areas
- Corridors
Conservation Areas.

CA-1 Urban (dark green)
CA-2 Suburban (medium green)
CA-3 Rural (light green)
CA-4 Industrial (grey)

Growth Areas.

GA-1 Corridors (light gold)
GA-2 Fixed Guideway (medium-light gold)
GA-3 Heavy Rail (medium-dark gold)
GA-4 Supertall (dark gold)
Next Steps for City Design.
Your input today.
(1) Nature.

1a. Eco-system rehabilitation.
1b. Green infrastructure.
1c. Land conservation & stewardship.
1d. Urban agriculture.
1e. Sustainable building design.

Let's embrace ecology.
Forest | City
## (2) Access.

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<tr>
<th>2a. Transportation priority.</th>
<th>2b. City structure.</th>
<th>2c. Growth patterns.</th>
<th>2d. Transportation investments &amp; maintenance.</th>
<th>2e. City-wide orientation &amp; wayfinding.</th>
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**Let’s remain open.**

**Global | Local**
(4) Progress.

Let’s balance priorities.
Market | Meaning

4a. Housing innovation & affordability.
4b. Cost of living.
4c. Preservation.
4d. Social Engagement.
(5) **Equity.**

5a. Investment priority.

5b. Civic participation.

5c. Welcome.

*Let’s include everyone.*

Collective | Individual
Aspiring
to the Beloved Community

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