

# DOWNTOWN *Atlanta* MASTER PLAN



# TO THE DOWNTOWN ATLANTA COMMUNITY,

December 1, 2017

After a full year of planning and meeting, mapping and imagining, Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District are excited to present the **Downtown Atlanta Master Plan**, a blueprint for the next fifteen years of growth and change Downtown.

In many ways, this plan, and the collaborative, community-driven process we embarked on together to develop the plan, embody CAP and ADID's reasons for being. For more than 75 years, CAP and its many partners have worked to envision the best path forward for Downtown, build support for that vision, and then coordinate efforts toward a Downtown that reflects our aspirations; for the past 20 years, ADID has been our tactical arm—working each day to make sure everyone's experience in Downtown Atlanta is a pleasant one.

Put simply, we at CAP/ADID bring people together to digest data, dream, make decisions, and take action. Over the past year, in the context of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*, we met with you, your colleagues, clients, customers, neighbors, fellow students, and guests visiting Downtown. We listened, paired research and data with stories and anecdotes, and together arrived at a new vision to guide our work going forward. To be certain, we remain committed to fostering Downtown as the vibrant heart of the region, host to a robust economic climate, a livable environment, and home to our diverse Downtown community.

But new priorities have emerged too, namely a desire to cultivate Downtown as a collection of neighborhoods that offer the best of city living—housing choice within close proximity to good jobs; walkable and bikeable streets; access to arts, culture, history, and local restaurants and retail showcasing the best of Atlanta; and a greener, more active public realm that invites all who live, work, or are just passing through Downtown to linger and fall in love with Downtown for the first time, or all over again. In the years to come, we will use this plan to guide advocacy efforts and policy decisions, redevelopment projects and infrastructure investments, all calibrated to help Downtown Atlanta thrive in the context of the region's projected growth, and do so in ways that remain true to the community's vision.

Thank you to everyone who made time over the past year to think about the Downtown of tomorrow. Whether you took a survey, attended a meeting (or several), shared an idea (or many), or served on a committee, your contributions help ground this plan for Downtown's future in the voice and vision of our community. As you will see, your words (and in some cases your faces) populate the pages of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*.

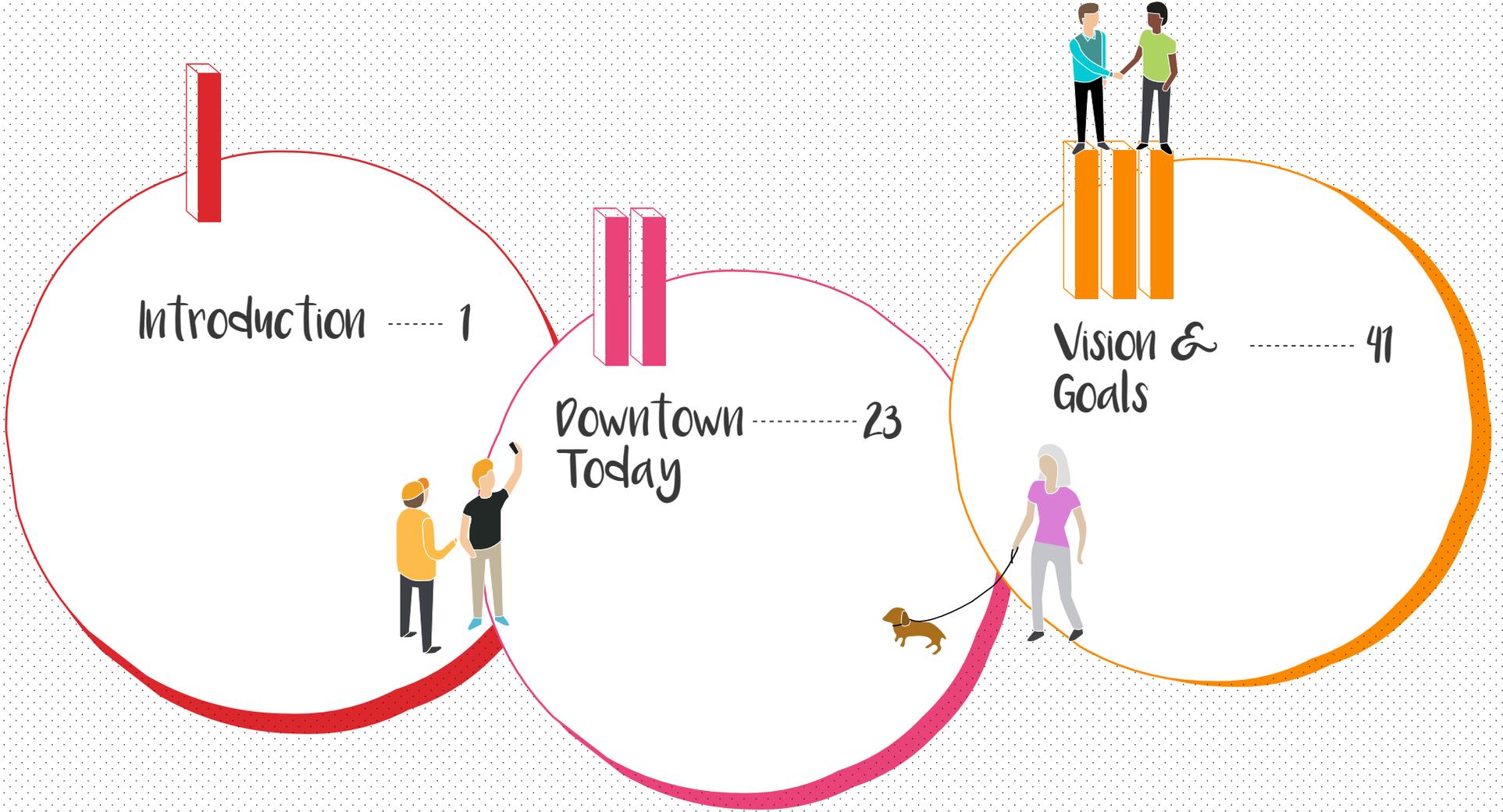
Without your commitment to the heart of our city and the energy you brought to the planning process, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* would fall flat. Much like the planning process, implementing our shared plan for Downtown will be a collective effort. Together, with our many planning partners and your sustained involvement, we will work to make this plan's vision a reality as Downtown becomes a thriving full-service neighborhood—a place for everyone and where everyone wants to be.

With gratitude and anticipation,

**A.J. Robinson, President**  
**Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. / Atlanta Downtown Improvement District**





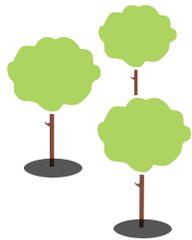


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# INTRODUCTION

# OVERVIEW

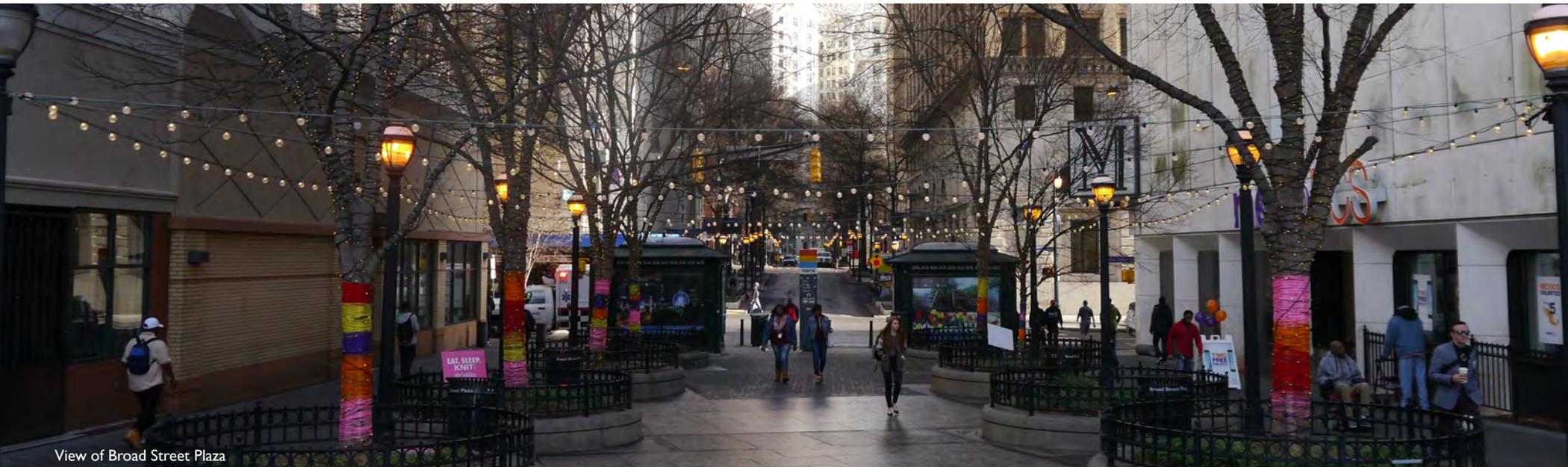
The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* is the result of a year-long collaborative process that engaged people from all walks of life in Downtown Atlanta and the region in a conversation about the next fifteen years in Downtown's unfolding future. Broadly speaking, we asked people who live Downtown, work Downtown, study, visit, or just hang out Downtown, **“What kind of place do you want Downtown to be?”**

Your answers were rich and varied, reflecting a range of perspectives and the complexity and diversity of Downtown Atlanta—at once a business district, a tourist and entertainment destination, and a neighborhood (or several), a transit hub, an area steeped in history, a creative and cultural center, and a place that is rapidly changing.

Indeed, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* comes at a good time. Development momentum and opportunity are palpable, with more than \$4 billion in public and private investment in the past 10 years and another \$3.8 billion recently completed, currently under construction, or planned for completion before 2020. Significant new resources exist for investments in infrastructure, including the Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Bond, revenue that will be raised by the MARTA Referendum, and T-SPLOST dollars, portions of which will be put to work in strategic transportation upgrades Downtown. Furthermore, Downtown Atlanta—much like downtowns nationwide—is experiencing renewed interest in downtown living and the character and sense of place that exists in the historic center of our city. And so, the time is ripe for us to come together and consider trends driving new growth, weigh the potential for change, establish the aspects of Downtown we wish to preserve, and determine how best to guide coming change.

This plan, in many ways, represents our collective answer to that initial question. The pages that follow contain maps, data, and drawings coupled with photos, quotes, and ideas from many people—*more than 2,250 in all*—each of whom cares deeply about Downtown Atlanta. Together, we crafted a shared vision for the heart of our city; the plan's supporting recommendations echo the priorities of our Downtown community and offer a road map for translating our vision for Downtown into reality.

The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* is comprehensive, addressing a range of topics that will help the Downtown community, led by the City of Atlanta in collaboration with Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. (CAP) and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) and their many partners (including you!), navigate and advocate for land use changes and transportation improvements, investments in open space and the public realm, and a range of policies and programs that together will unlock Downtown's real estate and economic development potential in support of a more vibrant, livable, and equitable Downtown for all to enjoy.



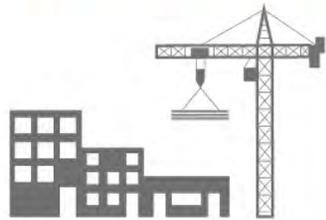
View of Broad Street Plaza

# DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN

## WHY NOW?

Downtown Atlanta is poised to take advantage of:

### MOMENTUM + OPPORTUNITY



**\$4 billion** of public and private investment in the past 10 years and **\$3.8 billion** currently under construction or planned to be completed before 2020.

### SIGNIFICANT NEW RESOURCES



Atlanta is investing in its infrastructure. The **Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Bond**, **MARTA Referenda** and **T-SPLOST** represent opportunities to strategically upgrade Downtown Atlanta.

### AUTHENTIC ATLANTA



Complexity and character that only Downtown can provide - a mix of residents, entrepreneurs, students and dreamers defining what kind of **place** Downtown should be.

Figure 1. Why now?

## STUDY AREA

The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* study area encompasses a 3.6-square mile area (2,309 acres) at the heart of Atlanta. Bounded by North Avenue to the north, I-20 to the south, Boulevard to the east, and Northside Drive to the west, the study area includes the traditional Downtown core and Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) service area, as well as portions of adjacent neighborhoods.

Downtown Atlanta, defined as such, is large and complex. Downtown is home to the city's historical origins—the Zero Milepost that marks the terminus of the Western and Atlantic Railroad and three intersecting street grids that emerged flanking the rail lines that still traverse

Downtown. The study area is home to numerous major employers—a mix of private corporations and anchor institutions including the State Capitol and Government Center, Georgia State University, and Grady Health System. Downtown hosts the city's most visited sites—among them the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, the Georgia World Congress Center, the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium and Philips Arena, Centennial Olympic Park, and AmericasMart, as well as the many hotels, museums, and other attractions that draw visitors to Atlanta. And Downtown is home to a collection of unique neighborhoods and the people who call Downtown home—those who live in Fairlie-Poplar, Centennial Park District, or South Downtown, Castleberry Hill, Memorial Drive/Grant Park, Sweet Auburn, Old Fourth Ward, South of North (SoNo), and Centennial Place.

Six Atlanta City Council Districts overlap with the Downtown study area: Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 12. Five of the City's Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) overlap with the study area: NPU-L, M, T, V, and W. Some of Downtown's neighborhoods fit fully within the bounds of the Downtown study area, while others stretch beyond the major streets that define the plan's focus area. Downtown's future is tied to the trajectory of surrounding areas and vice versa, so while there is a dotted line around the study area on most maps, the planning process looked beyond the boundaries to understand Downtown in context.

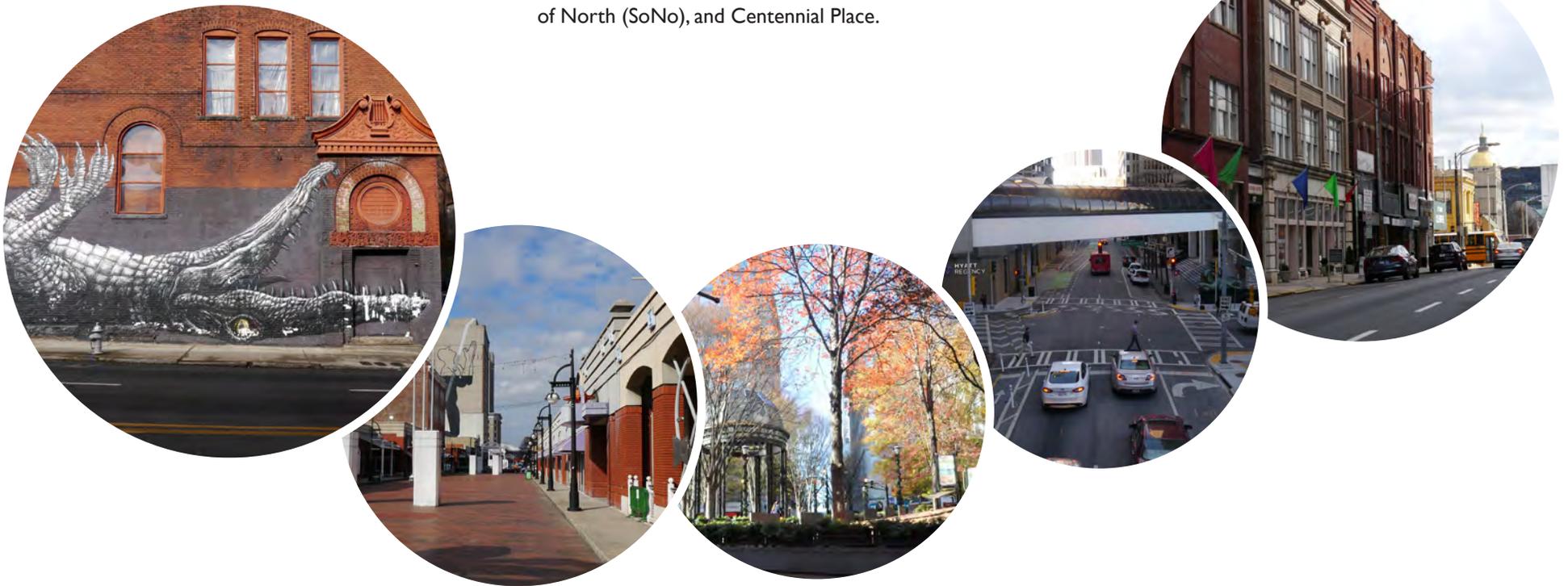
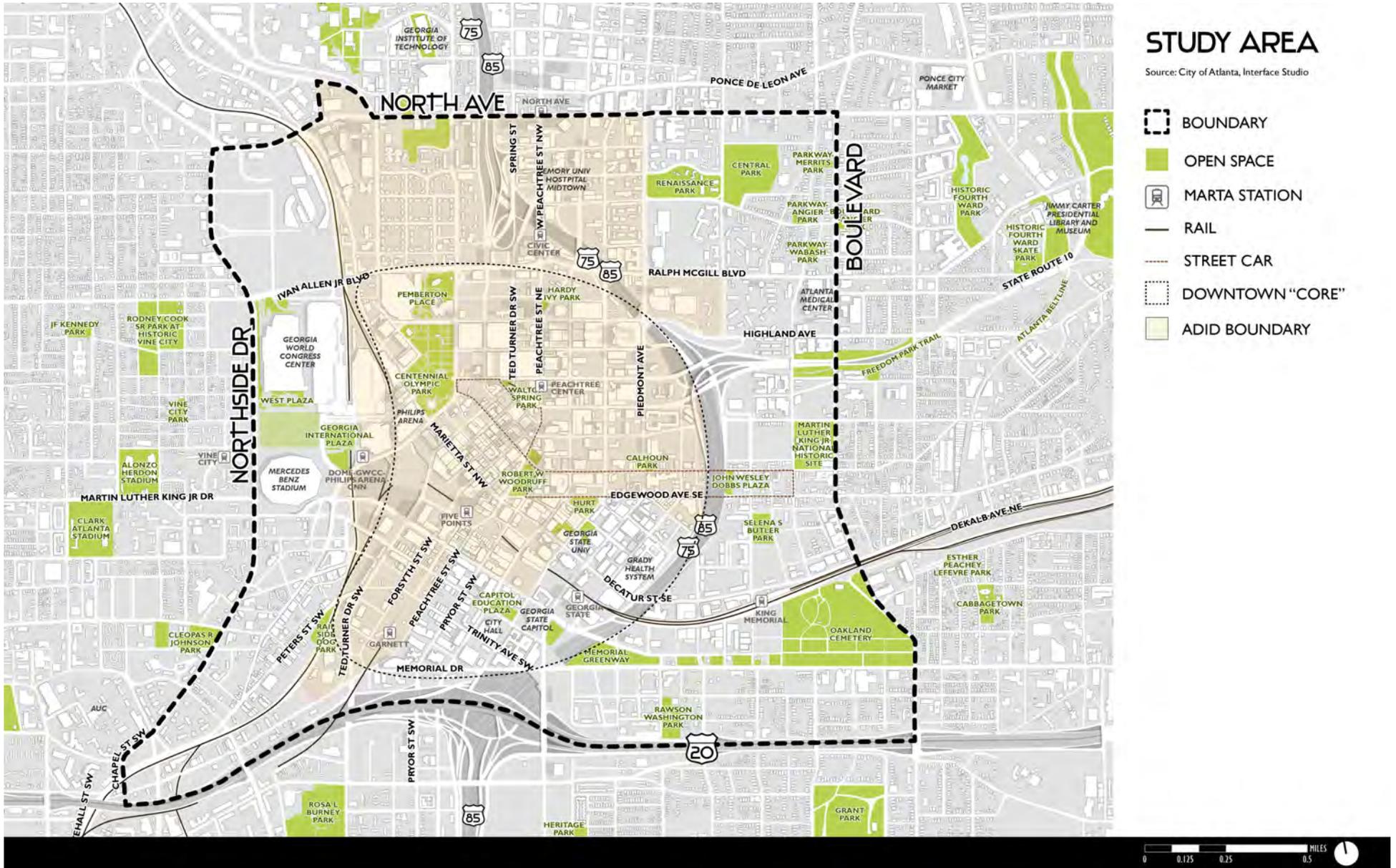


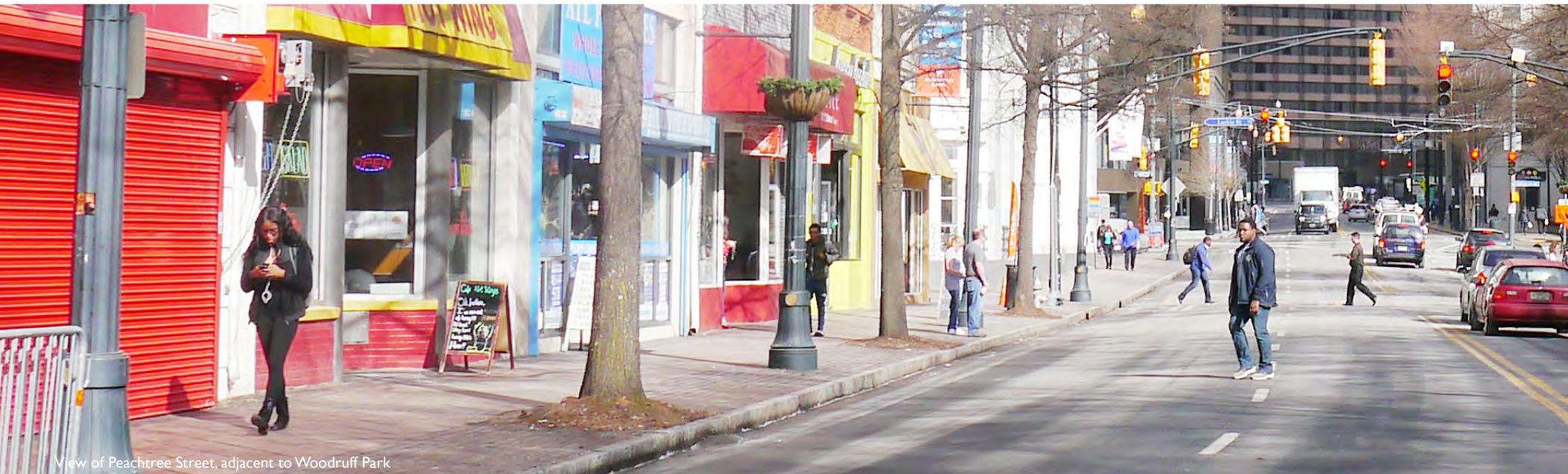
Figure 2. Base Map



## WHY DO WE PLAN?

The pace of change in Atlanta, and Downtown in particular, is remarkable. Dubbed “The City Too Busy to Hate” in the 1960s, present-day momentum and investment Downtown requires a constant eye on the news. While the region has experienced a remarkable trajectory of growth in recent decades, Downtown is poised to play a critical role in the City and region’s continue growth in coming years—welcoming new density in proximity to transit, jobs, and entertainment, as well as surging numbers of visitors. Both the pace of change and the increasing demands on Downtown necessitate planning to coordinate efforts and enable Downtown leadership and elected officials, investors and community advocates to be proactive in shaping anticipated growth to yield a vibrant and connected Downtown that feels and functions as a place where people want to be.

Updating the prior plans for Downtown—the 2004 *Imagine Downtown Plan* and the 2009 *Imagine Encore Plan*—with this new *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* also creates an opportunity to help focus the energy and actions of Downtown stakeholders and elected officials with a vision and recommendations grounded in an open and transparent public process. This plan has grappled with the key issues facing Downtown, determined local priorities, considered feasibility and phasing, and organized a range of ideas into actionable steps forward.



View of Peachtree Street, adjacent to Woodruff Park

Over the next 15 years, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* will help the planning partners to:

- Align prior plans with new or ongoing efforts and investments in Downtown,
- Prioritize and make decisions about how to allocate organizational resources,
- Build consensus among neighbors, neighborhoods, and Downtown stakeholders,
- Garner local and regional political support for key Downtown initiatives,
- Attract continued private and public investment,
- Identify additional opportunities to raise funds for implementation, and
- Empower residents and partner organizations with a unified vision for change.

While this document contains many specific ideas, things can and will continue to change in real time, as they have while this plan was in progress. New developments are already underway, many more initiatives are in the planning phase, and new opportunities will arise. Going forward, it is critical to have a common vision, developed by the community and adopted for Downtown, to help evaluate new projects and guide change so it is compatible with what Downtown stakeholders want for its future. As a living document, some of the specifics in the plan may shift, but an effective plan will establish the vision and core ideas that reflect the values of the community over time.

*The Downtown Atlanta Master Plan represents an opportunity to take stock of prior plans and bring them into alignment.*

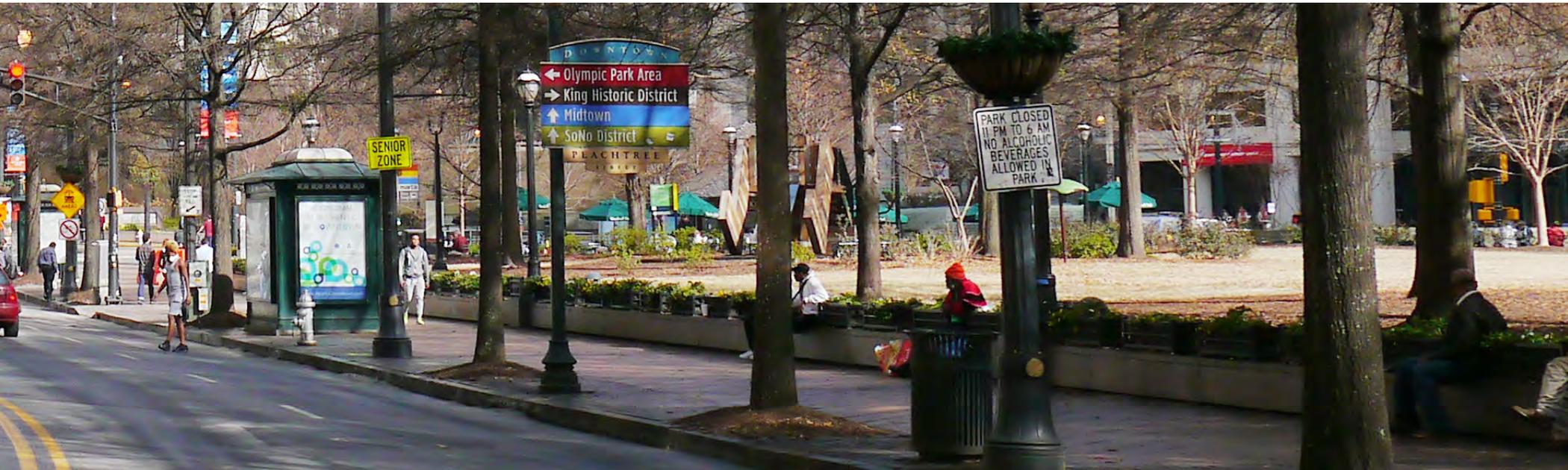


Figure 3. Map of Existing Plans

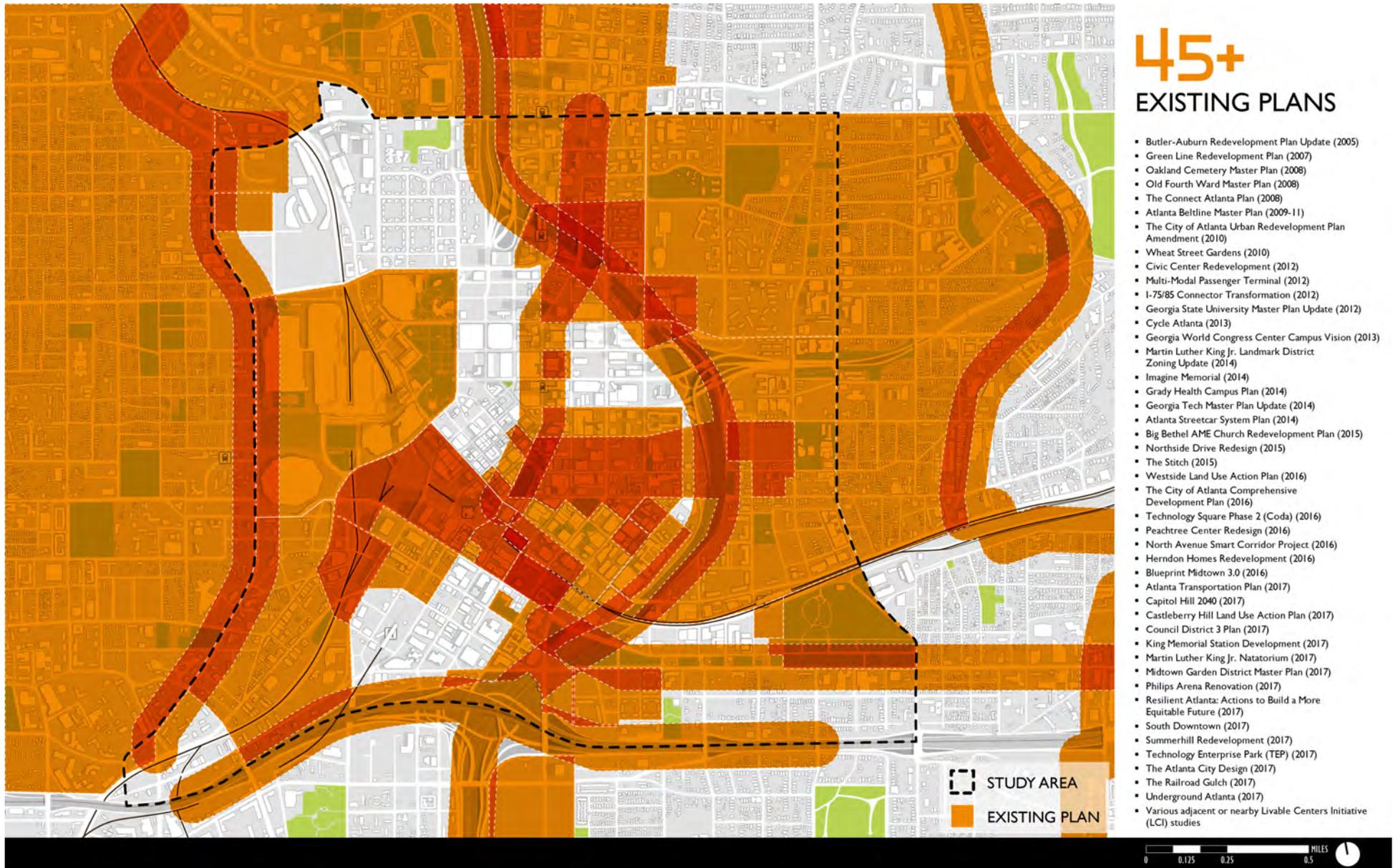
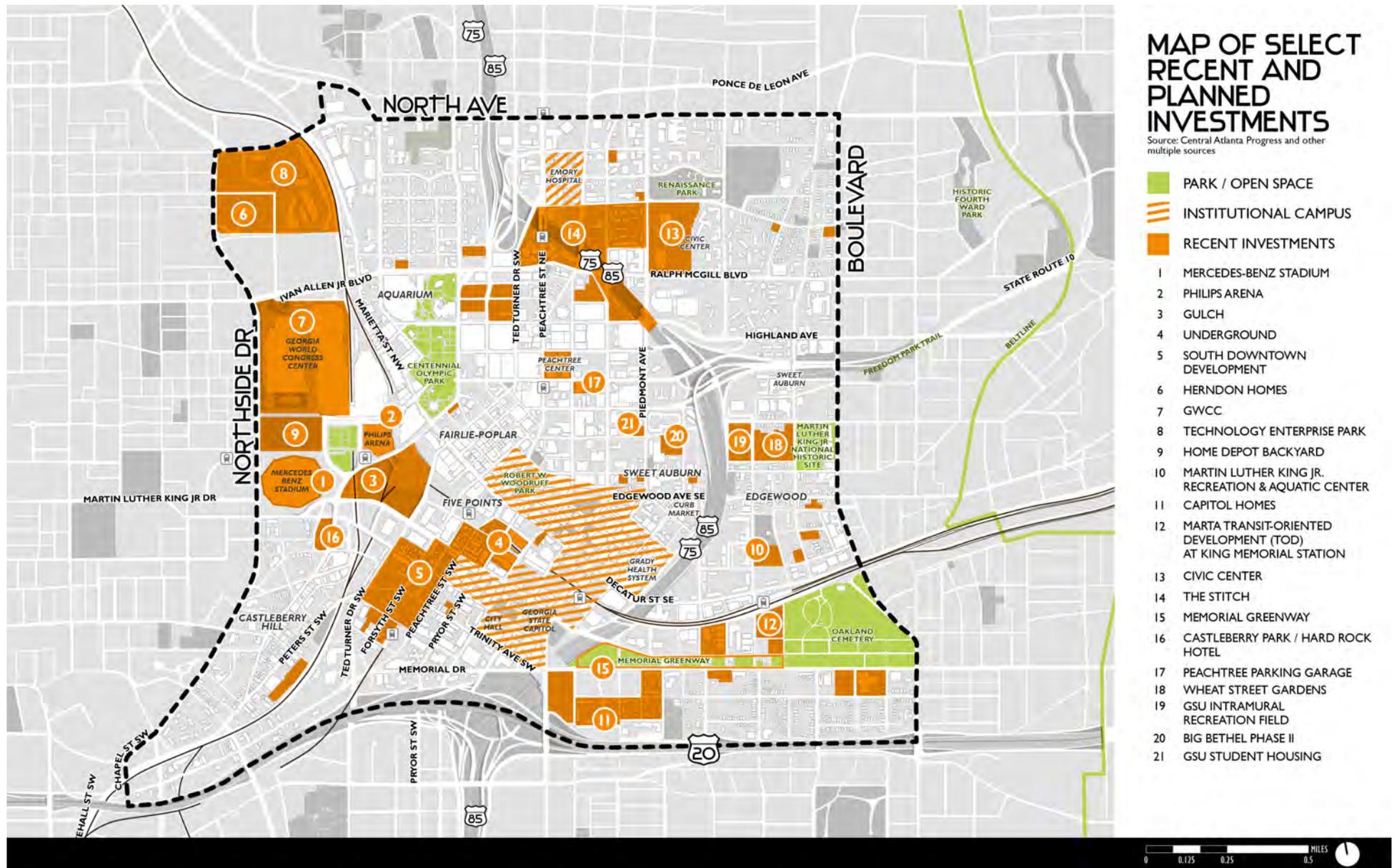


Figure 4. Map of Select Recent and Planned Investments



# HOW DOES THIS PLAN RELATE TO PREVIOUS PLANS AND ONGOING INITIATIVES?

The 2017 *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* commissioned by Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District will replace the 2004 Imagine Downtown Plan and 2009 Imagine Encore plan update as the comprehensive development plan for the four-square-mile area of Downtown Atlanta. Much progress has been made toward advancing the goals and strategies of the Imagine plans, and the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* reinforces that work, building on the following goals from the 2009 plan update; Downtown will continue to:

- Lead the way in advancing sustainable mobility choices in the city and region,
- Pursue investments in the public realm, transportation and land use mix, and overall vibrancy of Peachtree Street,
- Expand urban living options through equitable development, with a range of housing types offered at different price points to ensure that Downtown's neighborhoods remain affordable, diverse, and inclusive,
- Serve as the region's cultural and entertainment destination, with unique attractions distributed across the four-square-mile area, and
- Balance the preservation of elements of its distinct urban form and character with new development and public realm improvements that enhance the sense of place found only in Downtown Atlanta.

In 2009, the Imagine study area was adopted as the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan for Downtown Atlanta. Likewise, the 2017 *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* will serve as the required ten-year LCI Update for the Downtown LCI planning area. The Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative is a grant program that incentivizes local jurisdictions to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide improved access to jobs and services. The LCI program's goals are to:

- Provide access to a variety of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking, and biking,
- Encourage mixed-income residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping, and recreation options, and
- Develop an outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders.

Given the region's growth and momentum, there are many other planning and development initiatives that precede the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*, each playing an important role in shaping Downtown's future; some of these plans speak to the city or region as a whole, others to areas within Downtown, and still others to neighboring areas that nonetheless will influence Downtown in coming years. At present the inventory of prior planning and development efforts that pertain to the Downtown study area includes more than 30 plans and projects, and the list is growing—seemingly every day. The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* represents an opportunity to take stock of prior plans and bring them into alignment.



## CITYWIDE PLANS

The following citywide plans establish both the broader planning context into which the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* must fit as well as the legislative process by which this plan for Downtown gains standing.

**The Atlanta City Design** (2017) is an important and singular initiative undertaken by the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning to establish shared values, goals, and major design moves that together point to our future as the Beloved Community. The document anticipates continued growth and makes recommendations for targeting that growth, radically changing the form of the city in proposed Growth Areas, with Downtown at the Core. According to the aspirations of *The Atlanta City Design*, Downtown will play an important role in absorbing and supporting continued growth to help fuel Atlanta's evolution as a dense, equitable, ecologically-sensitive and economically strong city. The forthcoming **Urban Ecology Framework** is a supporting component of *The Atlanta City Design*. It will focus on defining the Conservation Areas across the city, which will complement the Growth Areas and in which natural features will be preserved, restored, and enhanced through investments in the public realm.

**Resilient Atlanta: Actions to Build a More Equitable Future** (2017) offers a comprehensive set of targets and actions to address the city's most pressing stresses by building capacity among residents and city systems to better withstand future shocks. The strategies are organized under four visions that will position the city to preserve local history and culture; enable all Metro Atlantans to prosper through access to education and job creation; increase access to affordable housing,

public transportation, green space, and fresh food; adopt sustainable energy and water-efficient infrastructure and building techniques; and establish policies and systems that promote resilience and preparedness.

**The Connect Atlanta Plan** (2008), **Cycle Atlanta** (2013), and **Atlanta Transportation Plan** (2017) promote mobility, economic growth, and quality of life, particularly in the context of Atlanta's fast-growing region and suburban pressures on transportation infrastructure. The 2008 plan was the City's first Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and the 2017 ATP is an effort to update the plan. Members of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* consultant team were also tasked with a role in developing the ATP, ensuring coordination between the two planning efforts on projects and policies that speak to Downtown's streets, transit resources, and connections to adjacent neighborhoods.

**The City of Atlanta Comprehensive Development Plan** (2016) is the comprehensive planning foundation for the city; it identifies needs and opportunities to be addressed over a 20 year planning horizon and guides smart growth and development with a framework for evaluating land use and zoning decisions. The Downtown Character Area has preferred development patterns, policies, and implementation strategies. As the umbrella planning document for the City, the CDP incorporates all plans formally adopted by City Council; following review

and recommendation by the Department of City Planning, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* aims to be incorporated under the CDP as the guiding planning document for Downtown.

**The City of Atlanta Urban Redevelopment Plan Amendment** (2010) designates Atlanta's Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), characterized by deteriorating infrastructure, vacancy, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and other indicators of blight and distress; within the URA, the use of redevelopment tools to assist in revitalization efforts is enabled. The URA covers approximately 49,250 acres of the City, and encompasses the Downtown study area in full. Three Downtown-specific redevelopment plans overlap with the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*'s study area: the 1992 Westside Tax Allocation District (TAD) Redevelopment Plan and the 2003 Eastside TAD Redevelopment Plan, both of which are supported by economic incentives administered by Invest Atlanta to assist with implementation, and the 2005 Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan.



## PLANS WITHIN DOWNTOWN

The following plans overlap with portions of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* study area. Key details of recent planning efforts are summarized in Chapter IV, where this plan's strategies address neighborhood- and corridor-specific recommendations.

- **Capitol Hill 2040** (2017)
- **Castleberry Hill Land Use Action Plan** (2017)
- **Council District 3 Plan** (2017)
- **North Avenue Smart Corridor Project** (2016)
- **Memorial Drive Greenway 2016 Vision Plan** (2016)
- **Northside Drive Redesign** (2015)
- **Atlanta Streetcar System Plan** (2014)
- **Grady Health Campus Plan** (2014)
- **Imagine Memorial** (2014)
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Landmark District Zoning Update** (2014)
- **Georgia World Congress Center Campus Vision** (2013)
- **Georgia State University Master Plan Update** (2012)
- **I-75/85 Connector Transformation** (2012)
- **Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal** (2012)
- **Oakland Cemetery Master Plan** (2008)
- **Old Fourth Ward Master Plan** (2008)
- **Woodruff Park Master Plan** (2008)
- **Green Line Redevelopment Plan** (2007)
- **Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan Update** (2005)
- **Memorial Drive-Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Area Revitalization Study** (2001)



## SIGNIFICANT REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND PROJECTS WITHIN DOWNTOWN

The ongoing redevelopment projects and recent proposals listed below are major drivers of anticipated change in Downtown over the next fifteen years. The strategies in Chapter IV summarize these influential projects and proposals where relevant, explaining how this plan's recommendations support, integrate, or hope to inform such investments.

- **The Railroad Gulch** (2017)
- **Philips Arena Renovation** (2017)
- **Underground Atlanta** (2017)
- **South Downtown** (2017)
- **Technology Enterprise Park (TEP)** (2017)
- **King Memorial Station Development** (2017)
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Natatorium** (2017)
- **Summerhill Redevelopment** (2017)
- **Herndon Homes Redevelopment** (2016)
- **Peachtree Center Redesign** (2016)
- **The Stitch** (2015)
- **Big Bethel AME Church Redevelopment Plan** (2015)
- **Civic Center Redevelopment** (2012)
- **Wheat Street Gardens** (2010)

## PLACES FOR ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Of course, Downtown does not exist in a vacuum. Its future is linked with that of adjacent neighborhoods, each with its own vision and plan for the future. The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* takes into account the momentum, potential, and recommendations of the following plans, seeking to coordinate efforts and create complementary outcomes.

- **Midtown Garden District Master Plan** (2017)
- **Blueprint Midtown 3.0** (2016)
- **Technology Square Phase 2 (Coda)** (2016)
- **Westside Land Use Action Plan** (2016)
- **Georgia Tech Master Plan Update** (2014)
- **Atlanta Beltline Master Plan** (2009-11)
- **Various adjacent or nearby Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) studies** for Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods, Midtown, Ponce de Leon, Upper Westside, and Vine City

# THE DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN PROCESS

## SCHEDULE & PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* reflects a year and a half-long planning process that commenced in Summer 2016 and drew to a close at the end of 2017. Three coordinated studies, each commissioned by Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. (CAP) and Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID), together comprise this plan for the future of Downtown.

- **Downtown Real Estate Market Study** by Bleakly Advisory Group

Completed in February 2017, the market study identifies major trends influencing development Downtown, projects anticipated growth in terms of population, jobs, and new development potential (residential, retail, office, and hospitality), and outlines strategies to help Downtown overcome barriers to reach its market potential. Findings from the *Downtown Real Estate Market Study* inform this master plan; the full market study is available as a technical appendix.

- **Downtown Transportation Plan** led by Kimley-Horn and Associates, along with Nelson\Nygaard, Sycamore Consulting, Inc., and APD Urban Planning and Management

*The Downtown Transportation Plan* (DTP) focuses specifically on Downtown's multi-modal transportation network, with detailed analysis, capacity modeling, and policy and project recommendations that support travel by all modes—automobile, transit, cycling, and walking. The master plan includes an overview of the DTP research and strategies in the Transportation Choice chapter; the full DTP and supporting project lists exist as stand-alone technical appendices.

- **Downtown Atlanta Master Plan** by Interface Studio and Stoss Landscape Urbanism

The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* is the new comprehensive master plan for Downtown; it builds upon the real estate market study and transportation planning work to address a full range of planning and urban design topics including housing and neighborhoods, economic development, open space, service provision, the arts, preservation, development, transportation, and parking. This document serves to update CAP's 2004 *Imagine Downtown* plan and, together with the market study and DTP, meets the Atlanta Regional Commission's requirements for an updated Downtown Atlanta LCI Plan.

2016 ..... 2017 .....  
SUMMER FALL WINTER SPRING SUMMER FALL WINTER

DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE  
MARKET STUDY

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The three components of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* embraced a collaborative process, guided by CAP's leadership and the frequent involvement of CAP members and partners, City, State, and Federal agencies, key Downtown institutions and anchors, and—of course—the community of Downtown residents, employees, students, and visitors, those most passionate about the future of Downtown Atlanta.

Committed to a community-driven process, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* met **face-to-face with more than 2,250 different people** who offered their time, ideas, and expertise in **more than 135 different meetings and planning sessions**. **More than 2,800 people completed the online survey**. To ensure widespread and active participation in developing this plan, the public outreach included multiple and varied opportunities for the Downtown community to get involved and lend their voice and vision to the plan. **In all, the planning process engaged more than 5,000 people.**

- **Interviews and Small Group Discussions** – **Over 125 people** met for one-on-one interviews or small group discussions conducted with a mix of residents, business owners, employees, local leaders, non-profits, institutions, City representatives, service providers, developers, architects, and advocates. These conversations presented a chance to have open and honest dialogue about what Downtown needs going forward.
- **Working Group and Technical Committees** – The plan team convened a series of seven meetings with a *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* Working Group comprising local residents, business representatives, City representatives, non-profits, regional agencies, institutions, real estate professionals, designers, arts organizations, the hospitality industry, and Downtown champions. The Working Group's role was to help guide the work and promote major public events ensuring that the process would be driven by community input. Similarly, the Downtown Real Estate Market Study and Downtown Transportation Plan each had a dedicated Technical Committee of local experts serving as a sounding board to guide the work.
- **Website** – The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* website ([www.planDowntownATL.com](http://www.planDowntownATL.com)) served as the online home for the project. The website was kept up-to-date with meeting announcements, the latest presentations, and online versions of the public input exercises for those unable to attend the public meetings or Open Houses. Over the course of the project, the website drew **more than 14,200 unique visitors!**
- **Surveys** – Nearly **2,900 respondents** completed an online survey, offering detailed opinions from multiple perspectives—people who live Downtown (12% of respondents), live and work Downtown (11%), work Downtown (37%), and visit Downtown on occasion (40%).
- **Focus Groups** – **More than 100 people met in 20 focus groups** convened for topic-specific discussions about resident quality of life, marketing/hospitality, restaurants/retail, technology/innovation, the arts, market-rate development, non-market-rate development, sustainability, homelessness, preservation, student life, and issues specific to Castleberry Hill, the Edgewood Avenue corridor, and the South of North area.

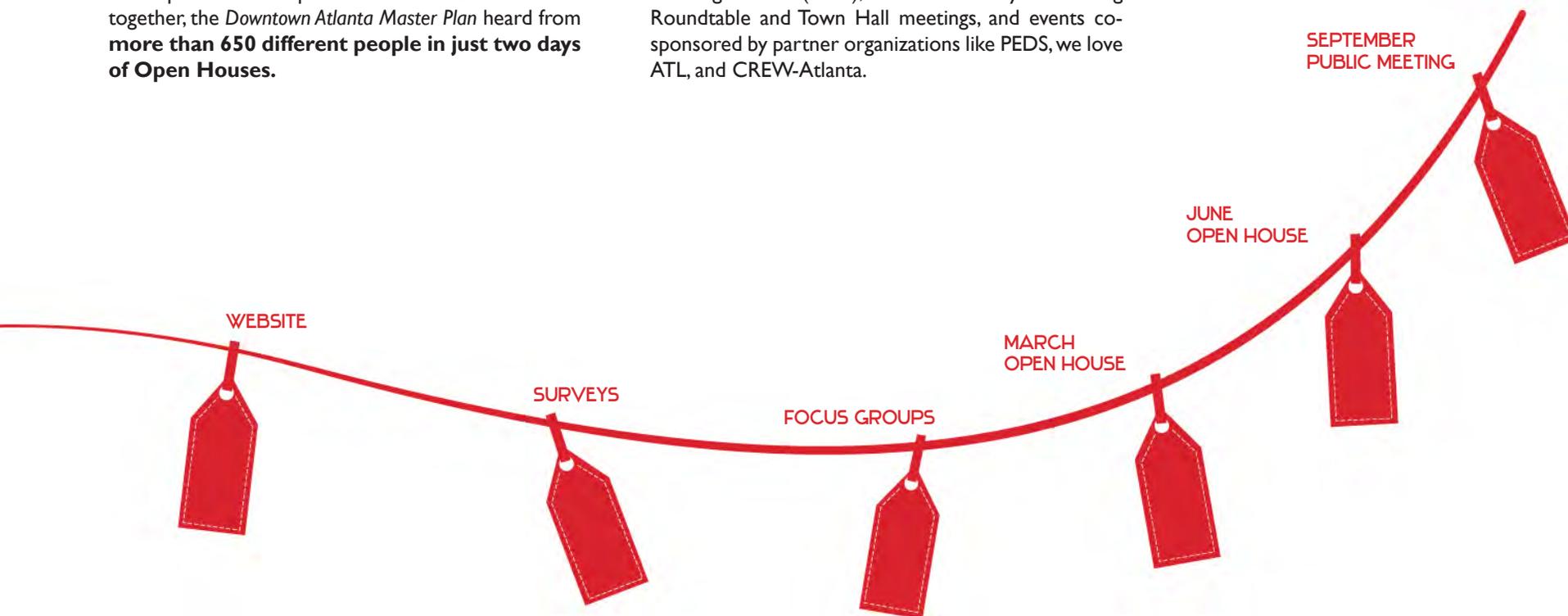


- **March Open House at The Rialto** – The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* took over the ground floor of The Rialto Center for the Arts for a full day (11:00 AM to 8:00 PM), and set up a series of interactive exhibits. The first Open House invited the public to review data about Downtown and share their vision for the future. Over the course of the day, **over 500 people** stopped by, providing a lot of insightful comments and ideas.
- **June Open House at The Rialto** – The second Open House was much like the first—a full day informal and interactive event at The Rialto. **Over 400 people** dropped by to review some preliminary ideas for the future of Downtown and offer feedback to help refine the plan’s recommendations. Taken together, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* heard from **more than 650 different people in just two days of Open Houses**.

- **September Public Meeting at the Central Library** – The Central Library hosted the final public event, which included a formal presentation of the plan’s vision, goals, and proposed strategies and policies. Following the presentation, meeting attendees were free to ask questions and help prioritize the plan’s recommendations with a budgeting exercise. **More than 200 people signed in** at the event.
- **Meeting stakeholders where they are** – Central Atlanta Progress staff also conducted outreach at meetings and events that were not specific to the master plan, in order to share information and obtain input. Examples include monthly meetings of neighborhood associations and Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU), CAP’s monthly Marketing Roundtable and Town Hall meetings, and events co-sponsored by partner organizations like PEDS, we love ATL, and CREW-Atlanta.

The process included a mix of formal and informal events, surveys, and many one-on-one and small group discussions. We were able to capture the input of those who live and work Downtown but also those who live elsewhere in the region and visit Downtown on occasion. As the center of a fast-growing region, Downtown Atlanta touches many people’s lives and in a real sense is the part of the city that belongs to everyone. The outreach approach reflects this, as does the energy and passion that the community brought to the planning process.

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!**





June Public Open House

## FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS

TRADE-OFFS IN REDESIGNING ROADS DOWNTOWN

- STEP 1: Consider the road and corridor. The proposed alternative, if approved, will have the potential to create a series of great City blocks, and have the potential to create a series of great City blocks.
- STEP 2: Consider the different needs for each street type and the appropriate mix of uses that can be supported.
- STEP 3: Take your set of priorities and see how they fit with the different types of streets. SIGNATURE / GREEN / PROMENADE / WORKING / BOULEVARD

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

HOW SHOULD DOWNTOWN EVOLVE AND GROW AS A COLLECTION OF NEIGHBORHOODS?

- STEP 1: Consider the different neighborhoods that comprise Downtown. What types of investment in housing and preservation will support Downtown as a collection of LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS?
- STEP 2: Consider how retail and workspace contribute to Downtown as a VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD. Where should we seek to create hubs of retail or diversity the type of work space available?
- STEP 3: If we want to foster an ACTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD full of people, where does parking fit in the mix? Take a survey of stakeholders to answer questions about how to better manage parking.



March Public Open House



March Public Open House




**FACE TO FACE**  
 +2,250 DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN +135 SESSIONS


**ON THE WEB**  
<http://www.planDowntownATL.com>

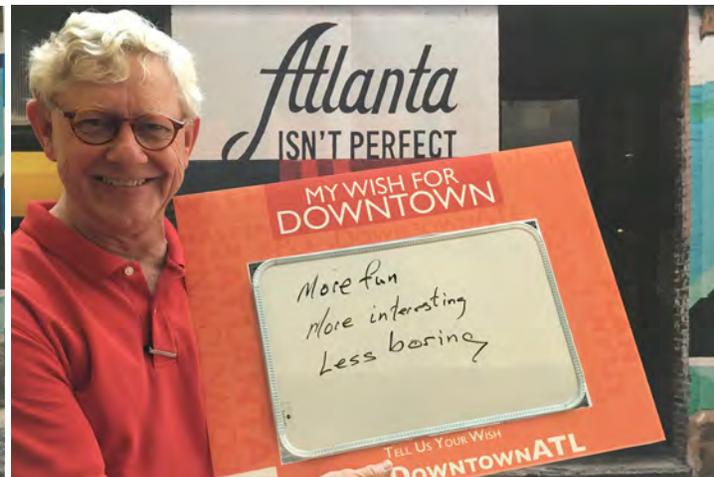
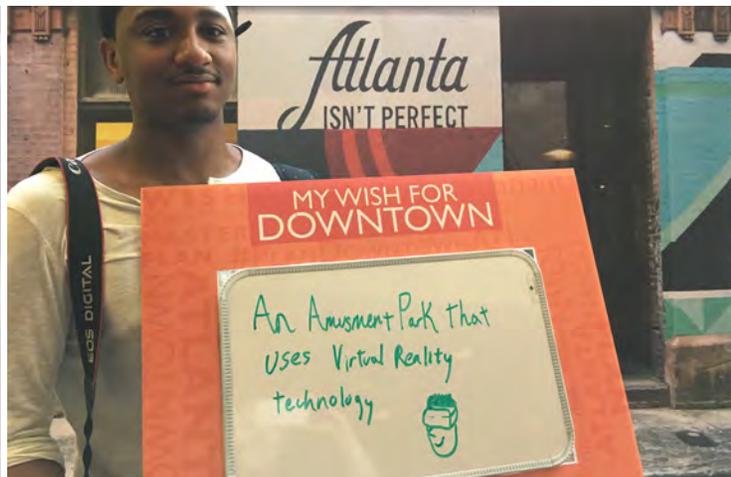
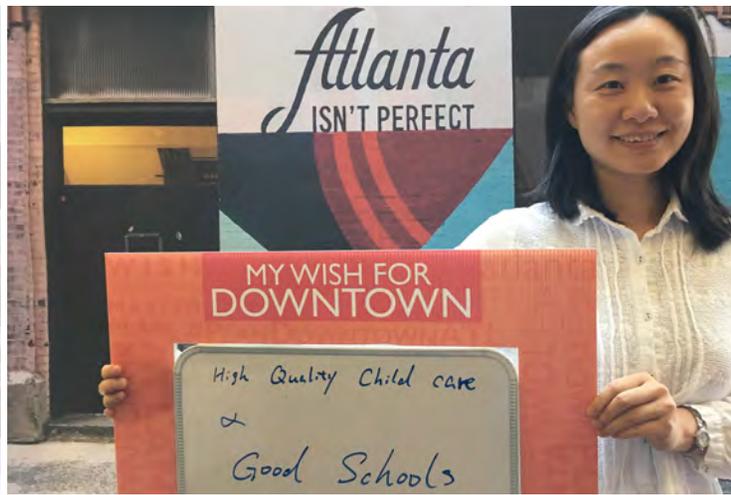
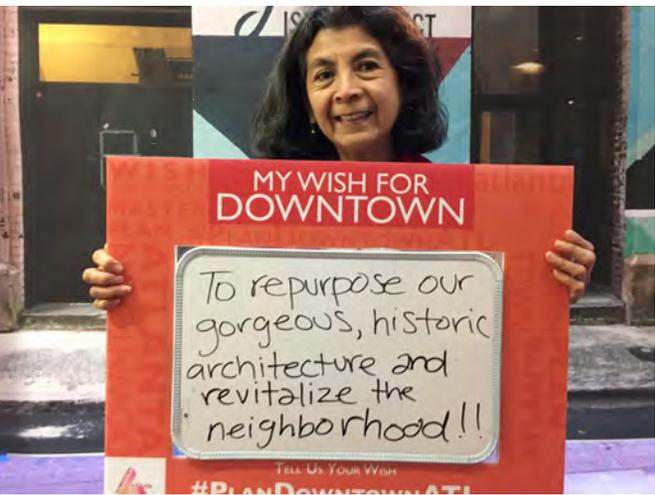
**WEB TRAFFIC** [ ] +17,000 PAGE VISITS  
 [ ] +14,200 DIFFERENT VISITORS  
**ONLINE SURVEY** [ ] 2,869 RESPONDENTS




March Public Open House



June Streets Alive Event



# OPEN HOUSE 2

KEY SITES, Whitehall

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN HERE?

**Green the street!**

- Street trees
- Stormwater planters
- More green spaces
- Community gardens
- Keep it open!

**"We need affordable places to live/work:"**

- art studios
- affordable housing

**Lofts!**

**HOUSING**

- Keep as adaptive re-use
- Housing & Mixed-use
- Recreation/sports amenities

**More trees, Dedicated bike and pedestrian lanes**

**in-fill projects with no setback**

**Pocket Park, Dog Park**

**Reduce to 2 lanes**

- Streetscaping, on-street parking
- Separated bike cycle track, bike lanes
- Streetcar down Whitehall connecting neighborhoods to downtown
- Clean up
- Limit parking lots & on-street parking

**Rede start- Also artis**

Locations: Peters St., Whitehall St., McDaniel St.

## OPEN HOUSE

THUMBS UP/THUMBS DOWN



### TOP TEN IDEAS



Left: photos from the March Open House  
Above: graphic summaries of two Open House activities

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

In addition to the ideas and insights, hopes and dreams shared by the Downtown Atlanta community, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* is built upon a foundation of data and analysis. The planning team paired the public input with research about existing conditions, trends, and projections for growth and change. Together, the listening and the analysis inform a shared vision for the future as well as a set of goals and strategies that will help us work together to make vision become reality over the next fifteen years. The remainder of the plan includes four main chapters:

- **Downtown Today** provides an overview of Downtown's history and present conditions, identifying key findings shaping Downtown's future and/or informing this plan's recommendations for change
- **Vision & Goals** details the community's shared vision for the future and presents six goals that organize the plan's strategies
- **Strategies** documents the plan's action-oriented recommendations, addressing a range of topics from how to continue keeping Downtown clean and safe to how to grow Downtown's collection of neighborhoods, from economic development to environment and ecology, and from transportation to preservation and the arts; each set of strategies includes a summary of the relevant analysis findings that make the case for why the strategies are critical for Downtown's future
- **Implementation** describes how to transition from ideas to action now that the plan is complete

Finally, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* includes a series of technical appendices under separate cover:

- **Atlas of Maps** provides additional details from the mapping and analysis not included in the main body of the plan
- **Record of Public Input** provides a full summary of the input collected at the Open Houses and final public meeting
- **Downtown Real Estate Market Study**
- **Downtown Transportation Plan**
- **Five-Year Prioritized Transportation Action Plan**
- **Comprehensive Transportation Project List**





**DOWNTOWN TODAY**

# A (VERY) BRIEF HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN

No plan for Downtown Atlanta can ignore the powerful legacy of Downtown's rich history that remains visible today. Though sometimes overlooked, Downtown's earliest roots literally laid the groundwork that shapes today's conversations about Downtown's future. Its development pattern reveals both the unique opportunities to further Downtown's growth but also some daunting challenges to overcome.

It is well known (and often written) that Atlanta developed as a city not due to its proximity to natural resources or a major river but rather as a result of its strategic location at a crossing of major travel routes. As with many cities, the earliest settlements were formed by Native Americans. In Atlanta, the Cherokee and Creek Indians created trails that followed the natural lay of the land. Some of these trails evolved into streets that still traverse Downtown Atlanta today, most notably Peachtree and Marietta Streets. By the mid-1800s, three separate rail lines intersected in what is now Downtown. The historic "Terminus" and "Zero Mile Post" represented Atlanta's identity, a place where goods and materials were exchanged and new businesses could flourish via access to a vast national rail network. This intersection of commerce and transportation defines Downtown and the City of Atlanta through each era of its growth.

Driven by private business interests, the early development of Downtown was haphazard and uncoordinated. Landowners, in an effort to maximize profits, laid out their land parallel to the rail lines, which followed the topography like the Native American trails before them. New streets and businesses developed within rail-adjacent street grids each with a slightly different orientation. This approach represents the value placed on maximizing regional and national connections, sometimes at the expense of local ones. Today, Downtown's shifting street patterns are a part of its unique identity but for many, confusing to navigate.

Over time the City expanded outwards, with Downtown playing the central role in organizing growth. The original Wards, of which only the Old Fourth Ward retains its original name, were established as pie-shaped districts extending one and a half miles from Five Points. Later, major corridors served as the basis for a streetcar system that created the first suburbs. Like the original rail system, these streetcars operated on a hub and spoke network where Downtown served as the hub for an expanding City.

Travel and transportation patterns all shifted with the rise of the car and the vast effort to retrofit the city to maximize connectivity. Highways and major roads enabled people and jobs to relocate. The need to accommodate the car necessitated new roads that literally covered the original streets and rail infrastructure below; with increased vehicular access Downtown came increased demand for parking, and much of Downtown's historic fabric succumbed to demolition to make space for parking lots and garages. Accordingly, the street life on some blocks is dimmed by adjacent surface parking, while other portions of Downtown are, in effect, a roof, which presents challenges for long-term maintenance but also in providing basic amenities like street trees, which are far more difficult to plant in these conditions. But the broader impact of increased connectivity is the rise of multiple centers in the region, linked by highways and, since the 1970s, MARTA. These centers – Midtown, Buckhead and others farther afield – attract jobs, residents, and investments.

Unlike other cities where the downtown is often the only mixed-use, urban center, Atlanta offers quite a few, each with its own character and personality.



Five Points, 1914  
Source) Atlanta History Center



Looking north at Peachtree St & John Wesley Dobbs Ave, 1918  
Source) Atlanta History Center



Auburn Ave & Peachtree St, 1925; now Woodruff Park  
Source) Atlanta History Center

Despite the challenges, Downtown's lasting legacy is its ability to redefine itself in the wake of major changes, oftentimes outside of its control. With its connecting rail network, Atlanta was the transportation center of the Confederacy. The Atlanta Campaign, the Union's strategy to end the Civil War, left Downtown in ruins. There is no shortage of history covering General Sherman's infamous Atlanta Campaign that destroyed much of the city, but Downtown has faced additional setbacks amidst tremendous growth including the Great Fire of 1917 and the clearance of homes and businesses for new highways and infrastructure during Urban Renewal.

Each era brought a renewed commitment and resolve in writing a unique chapter in the city's—and the nation's—history. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with the relocation of the State Capital to Atlanta and the idea of Henry Grady's New South, there was a big effort to attract regional headquarters to Atlanta with the Chamber of Commerce slogan, "Can you get by without a headquarter in Atlanta?" Major companies like Trust Company, Coca-Cola, Georgia-Pacific, Retail Credit (now Equifax) got their start at that time and built many of the early skyscrapers that today define the unique character of Downtown. This is one of the reasons Atlanta surpassed other cities like Birmingham and Charlotte to become the capital of the southeastern United States. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, Downtown served as the "cradle of civil rights" that emerged from a history of Jim Crow laws and inequities in how services were provided. Sweet Auburn is among the many Downtown legacies in the fight for equal rights, and that important history is central to Downtown's future.

In the most recent era of regional growth and expansion, Atlanta emerged as the center of the south – a title stemming from strong business growth, much of which found a home Downtown. Today, Downtown includes major corporations like CNN and Coca-Cola, major tourist destinations, as well as prominent universities and hospitals. In total, over 152,000 jobs are located Downtown, by far the largest concentration in the region. Boosting the economy as well is Downtown's role as a destination for business meetings, trade shows, and various professional sporting events supported by 11,500 hotel rooms and the Georgia World Congress Center.

**In fact, change is happening so quickly it can be a monumental challenge to pause and ask ourselves what we want for Downtown.**

Today, downtowns across the country are seeing new investment, fueled by demographic changes and a desire for walkable, mixed-use places. Atlanta is no different, with developers and residents rediscovering Downtown at a pace not seen in a long time. Growth and development is indeed a central part of Downtown's identity, but so too is a recognition that Downtown is important precisely because of the role it continues to play in shaping Atlanta's culture and identity. This is the intent of this Downtown Atlanta Master Plan, to provide an opportunity for those who care about Downtown to work with us to help shape its future.



A view of Downtown's railways, 1925



Intersection of Peachtree, West Peachtree, and Baker, 1940s; now Hardy Ivy Park  
Source) Atlanta History Center



Source) Atlanta History Center

# DOWNTOWN TODAY: ISSUES THAT WE MUST ADDRESS

Downtown is the original urban center in Atlanta – vibrant, gritty, and essential to the region’s economy. The next steps in Downtown’s evolution must address some persistent and unique challenges:

## DOWNTOWN REMAINS FRAGMENTED



- » Downtown is an employment center with **28%** of the City’s jobs
- » It is a destination to over **15,500,000** visitors per year

Downtown plays many roles simultaneously. It is an employment center with 28% of the City’s jobs, a destination attracting over 15,500,000 visitors per year, a collection of distinct neighborhoods, and a major institutional hub. Each of these uses and activities has different needs with respect to development, transportation, and parking, among other demands. Over time, Downtown has adapted to serve each land use as efficiently as possible. However, in that process, we have sometimes sacrificed the quality and character of adjacent streets, creating real and perceived barriers between uses. Many people have expressed that Downtown is often better connected to the region than to itself.

It is easy to lay blame for this sense of fragmentation on the shifting street grids and network of meandering one-way streets. While these are challenges that make Downtown feel confusing and disconnected, many other factors contribute to this problem. Changes in elevations due to rail infrastructure are a major challenge but so too are the blank walls, parking lots, and unused leftover spaces frequently found Downtown. These conditions discourage street activity, which reinforces negative perceptions about safety. The result is more cars on the road, as fewer people feel comfortable walking. The future of Downtown must strive to connect what feels like islands of activity to one another.

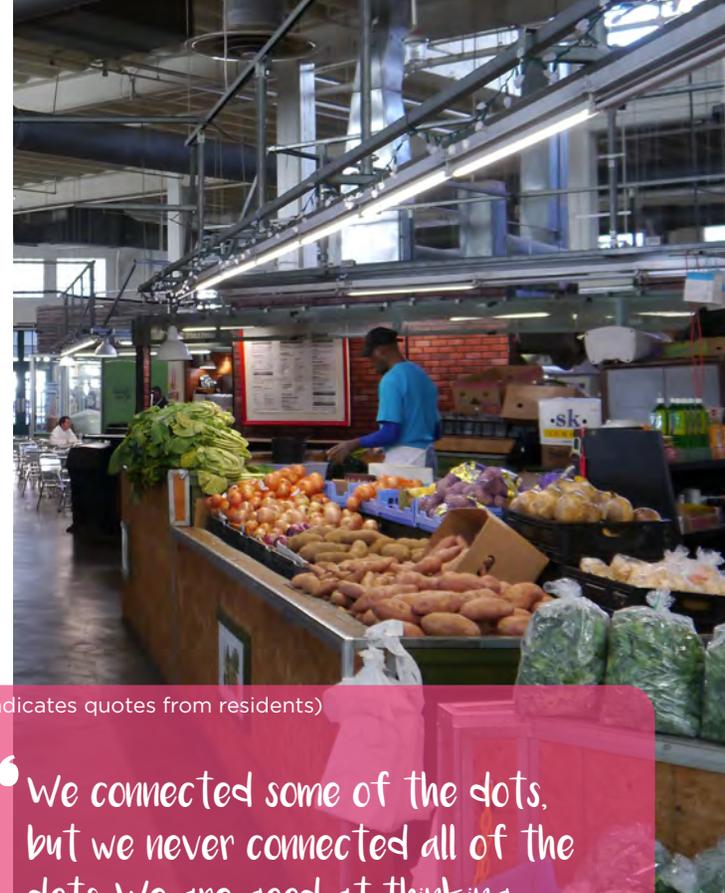


» See Figure 35 on page 154 for an analysis of the pedestrian experience in the core of Downtown

Unwelcoming streetscape and overhead pathway detract from activity at street level



Mercedes-Benz stadium, prior to completion



(Indicates quotes from residents)

“We connected some of the dots, but we never connected all of the dots. We are good at thinking we’ve done a lot, but there is still a lot of opportunity to do it better.”



Walkable Fairlie-Poplar district bustling with Georgia State students between classes



Edge of Five Points Station superblock

# DOWNTOWN IS FACING AN ERA OF UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH



» **BY 2031**, Downtown could grow by more than **12,000** residents (a **45%** increase in population) and **43,000** jobs (a **28%** increase)

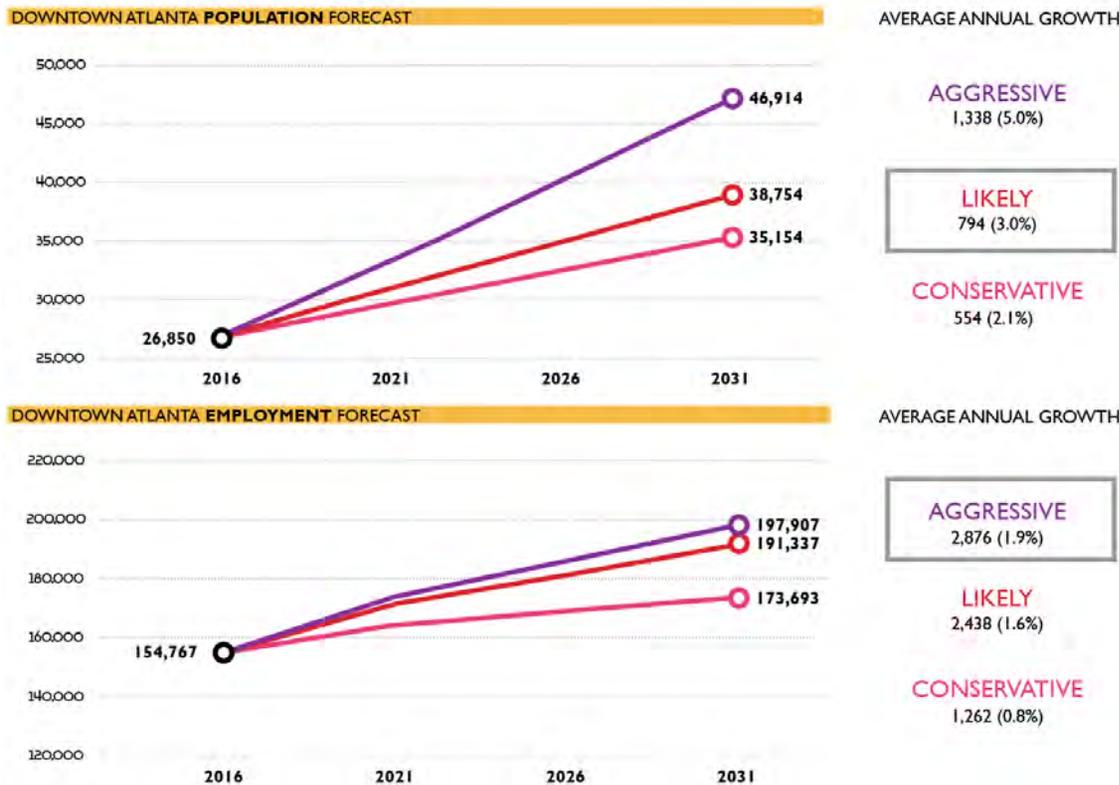
We are on the doorstep of unprecedented growth, both in Atlanta and in Downtown. The City has added 50,000 people over the past six years, and estimates suggest that the region will grow to eight million people over the next 20 to 25 years. With a percentage of the population seeking to live closer to where they work and play, Downtown Atlanta will grow significantly. Downtown can and should play a critical role in absorbing some of that growth. The market study completed for this master plan indicates that by 2031 (15 years from when the work was completed), Downtown could grow by more than 12,000 residents (a 45% increase in population) and 43,000 jobs (a 28% increase).

The development momentum Downtown is already visible, from the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium to new housing from smaller projects in the Old Fourth Ward as well as larger ones on the horizon for South Downtown. At the same time, major institutions are expanding and updating their campuses. Both Grady and Emory hospitals are investing in new buildings, Georgia Tech is set to develop the Technology Enterprise Park along North Avenue, and Georgia State University, now with 32,000 students Downtown, is rapidly developing with plans for further expansion at the former Turner Field. The Georgia Building Authority and the Atlanta City Design Studio have both just released plans to improve the areas around the State Capitol and City Hall. New hotels are planned to accommodate continued increases in the number of annual visitors.

These investments and future projects are opportunities to help fill the gaps Downtown and create connected, walkable Downtown neighborhoods. It is critical that we proactively guide investment in line with this plan's vision for Downtown.

“Old Atlanta is poised to capture new growth, in sync with market preferences.”

Figure 5. Population and Employment Forecasts  
Source) Bleakly Advisory Group



## HOWEVER, DOWNTOWN ALSO FACES STIFF COMPETITION FOR NEW RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Downtown is indeed growing, but with increased investment around the city, its challenge is to remain relevant. In 2016, only 3% of permits for multi-family housing and commercial development were located Downtown compared to 21% around the Beltline. There was seldom a meeting for this plan where Ponce City Market was not referenced as a new “hub” or “center” in Atlanta. With the exception of smaller-scale developments around Edgewood, in the Old Fourth Ward, and in Castleberry Hill, Downtown has lacked the kind of neighborhood-scale investment that is rushing toward Beltline communities. We could say that Downtown, or at least the core of Downtown, is not the right place for this kind of investment, but other cities have proven that downtowns can successfully integrate residential and mixed-use development in ways that help to further boost the local economy.

“Our question now is how to connect. Surrounding areas are improving, so how can we connect to that growth and take advantage of it?”



Ponce City Market, adjacent to the Beltline

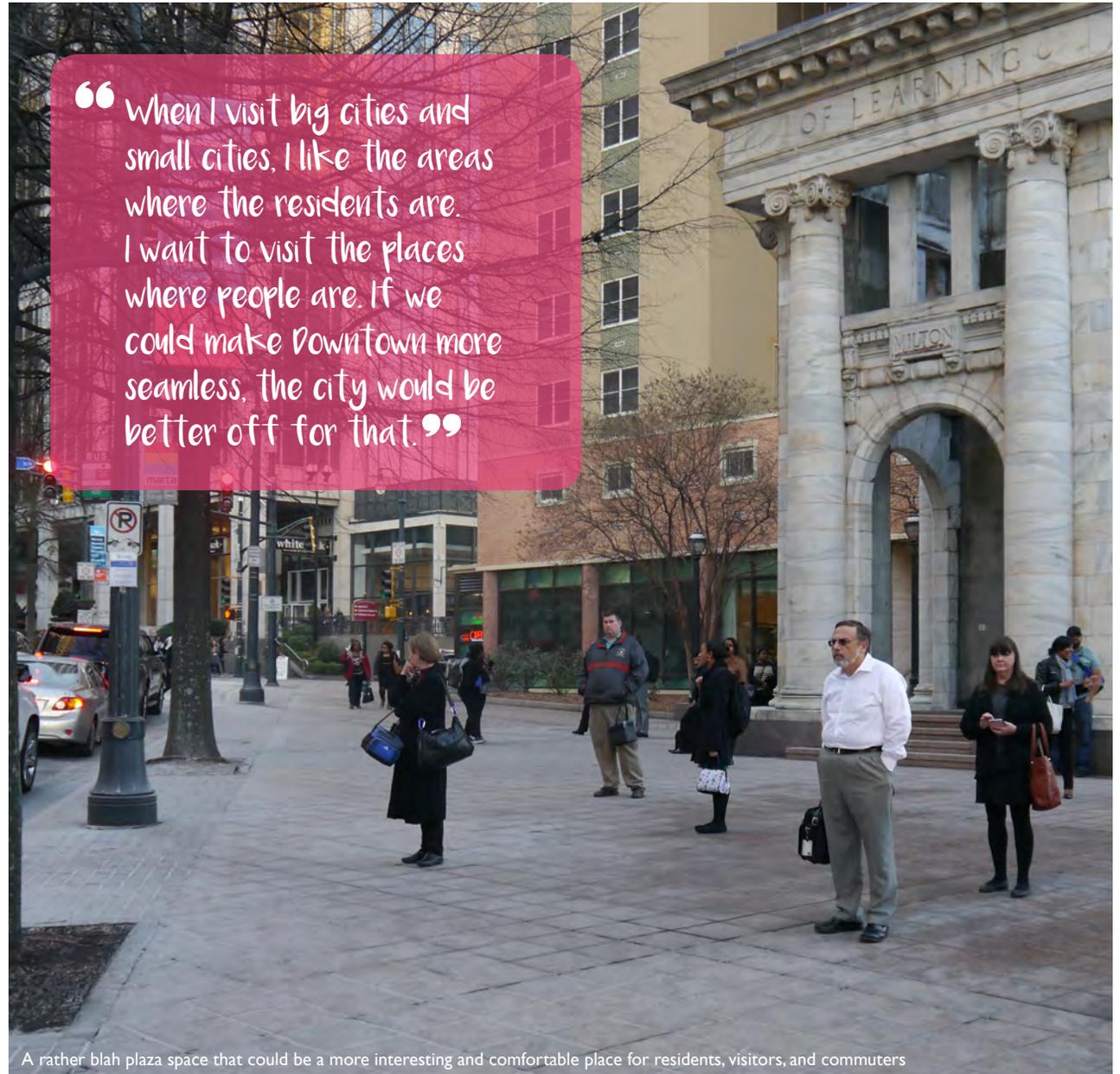


» In 2016, only 3% of permits for multi-family housing and commercial development were located Downtown compared to 21% around the Beltline (see Figure 7 on page 33)

“Everyone is focused on the Beltline. I love it, but a city without a downtown is not a city.”

## DOWNTOWN MUST BE BOTH “HOME” AND DESTINATION

While Downtown’s residential base is growing, so too is its tourism and hospitality industry, which is reporting exponential growth in visits to Downtown fueled by special events and entertainment. The good news is that the services and amenities sought by residents, such as a vibrant public realm and retail and restaurant options full of local flavor, are features enjoyed by visitors to the city as well, who often seek a “local’s” experience. Downtown’s visitors from near and far (as well as newcomers to the Downtown residential community) must learn to navigate Downtown’s three intersecting street grids, currently characterized by a confusing network of one-way streets. And while wayfinding signage does exist, bolder, artful signs that add to Downtown’s sense of place while also serving to connect dots and fill gaps between destinations can go a long way toward “shrinking” what can feel like a very big but fragmented Downtown. In many respects, strategies that improve Downtown neighborhoods are one and the same as strategies that serve Downtown’s core industries, including hospitality and entertainment. That said, with the scale and concentration of special events venues Downtown, all implementation efforts must design for flexibility and balance the goal of fostering livable neighborhoods with the operational needs of Downtown’s many major destinations.



## DOWNTOWN CORE LACKS RESIDENTS AND RETAIL

In the four-square mile area referred to as “Downtown” for this plan, there are 26,500 residents including over 5,000 students. However, only about 18% of this population lives in the core of Downtown (roughly from South Downtown to Centennial Olympic Park). Overall, the median income Downtown is about 81% of the City’s median income. Why does all of this matter? The number one answer to the survey question, “What do you dislike most about Downtown” was the “lack of stores or businesses that meet my needs.” There are just not enough restaurants, retail, and the kinds of services in Downtown that can be found in other Atlanta neighborhoods. If “retail follows rooftops,” the Downtown core needs a lot more residents to generate enough income density and demand to support new stores and services.

But as the demand for retail grows, it is critical to carefully consider where we should encourage these uses to locate. Today, there are 523 restaurants, stores and services in Downtown, but these uses are scattered across different streets. Some corridors are clear destinations, like Edgewood Avenue and Peters Street, but with the exception of a few blocks here and there, there is very little retail density in the core of Downtown. Retail thrives when it is next to other retail. We cannot have new retail on every street, as there is simply just not enough demand, even with new housing, to fill all of the spaces. We need to encourage retail where it has the best chance of succeeding.

“Millennials flock to Downtown, but there’s not that much housing.”

“Downtown is very nine-to-five, Monday-to-Friday. Business can be tough because Downtown clears out after hours. Broad is a ghost town at night; Edgewood on the other hand is the opposite—a ghost town during the day.”

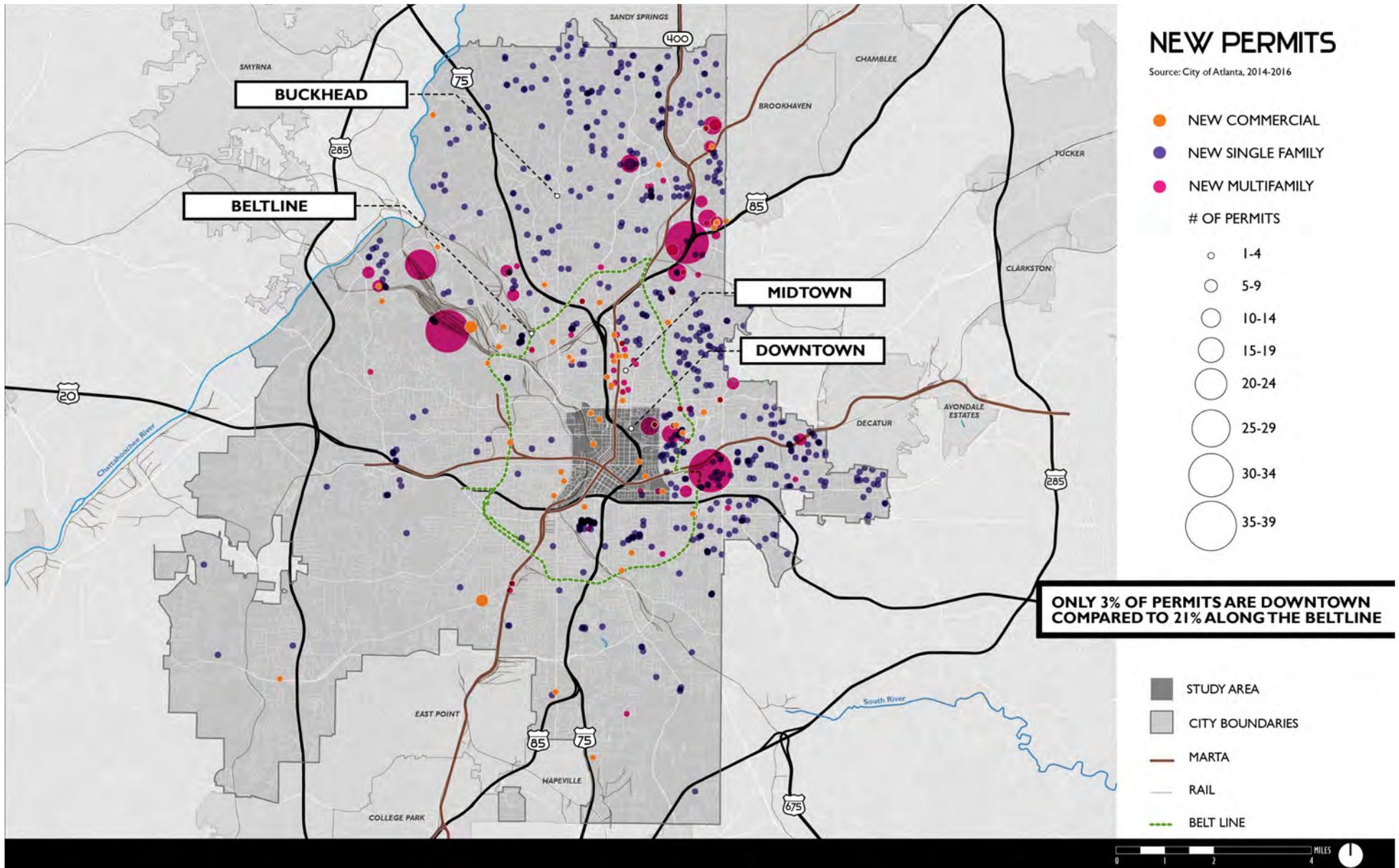


- » The number one answer to the survey question, “What do you dislike most about Downtown” was the “lack of stores or businesses that meet my needs.”
- » In the four-square mile area referred to as “Downtown” for this plan, there are 26,500 residents including over 5,000 students. However, only about 18% of this population lives in the core of Downtown (see Figure 6 on Page 32)

Figure 6. Map of Population Distribution



Figure 7. Map of New Permits, Citywide



## PERCEPTIONS OF DOWNTOWN TOO OFTEN HOLD IT BACK



» Of the 96,000 parking spaces Downtown, there are about 30 car break-ins per week. This impacts 0.03% of cars Downtown.

Downtown is too often perceived as unsafe which, in turn, discourages new investment. Comments are often raised about the lack of people on the streets, crime, and day-to-day nuisance issues like panhandling. These perceptions are long-standing, but in fact, Downtown is quite safe. In 2016, there were just over 3,000 Part I crimes in Downtown. However, 85% are property crimes and 68% are larceny crimes – mostly car break-ins. To put this in perspective, 3,000 crimes in a Downtown with over 26,000 residents, 152,000 jobs, and 15,500,000 annual visitors. Of the 96,000 parking spaces Downtown, there are about 30 car break-ins per week (down from over 200 ten years ago). This is impacting 0.03% of cars Downtown.

Despite the low crime rate, perception is reality. Of the top five “dislikes” about Downtown from the survey, crime and nuisance issues were numbers two, three, and five along with complaints about traffic and the lack of retail. New housing and retail will help to address some of these concerns by adding more people and more activity to Downtown streets. However, it is necessary to continue to improve the look and feel of Downtown at all times of the day and evening as well as continue to dispel the myths that hold it back.

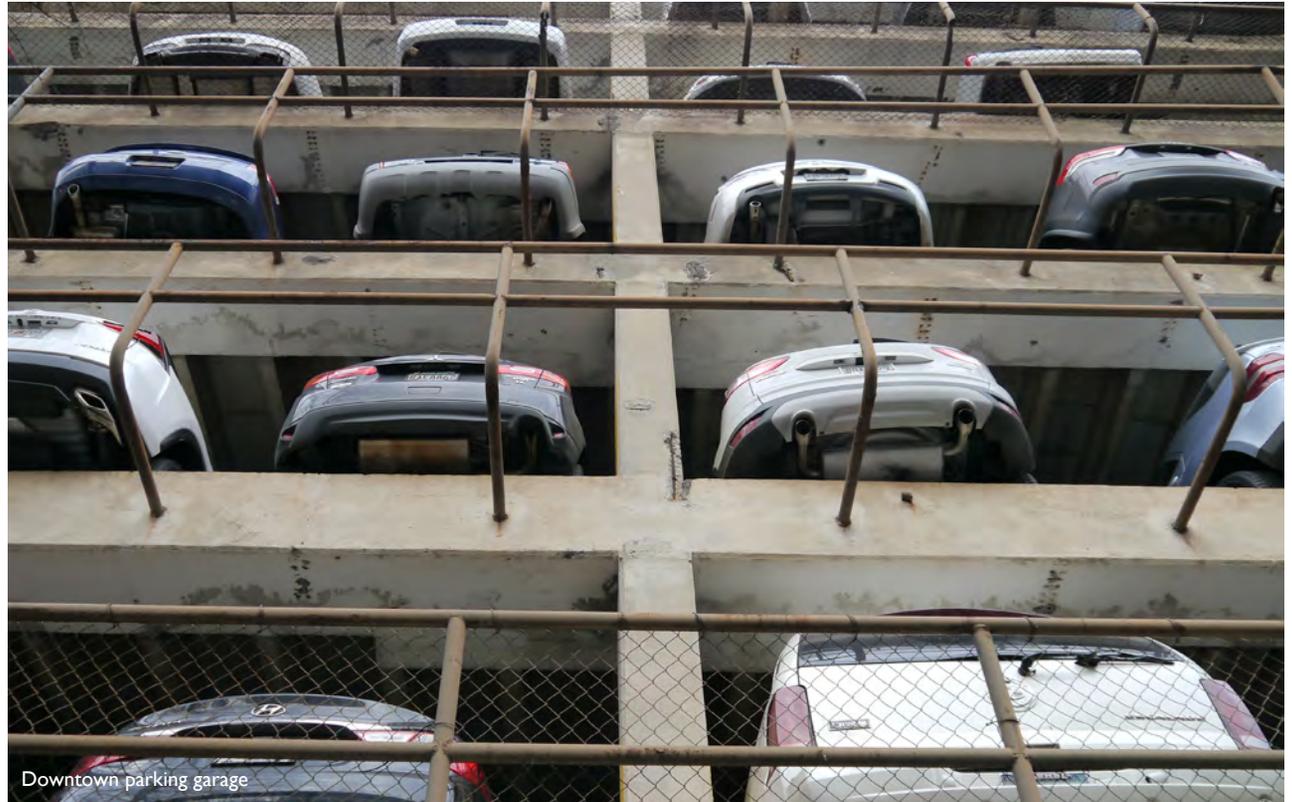
“Guests say, I don't see people on the streets. Is it safe?”



Few people on the street can make those not familiar with the area feel uncomfortable

## YES, THERE IS TRAFFIC, BUT WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF SPACE FOR CARS

Downtown was reconfigured to move cars to and from the highways efficiently. There are pinch points, of course, and moments, like large sporting events, where regardless of street capacity, additional measures need to be taken to handle the sheer volume of cars. But the real issue is how we commute and from where we commute. Of those who work Downtown, only 1.3% also live Downtown. The majority of employees, 99% of them, are commuting, and almost 60% are driving alone. This results in 96,000 parking spaces in Downtown, of which about a third are empty even during the work day. As Downtown continues to grow, the solution is not to build wider roads or more parking. We do not have the space to do so without sacrificing the very things that add economic value to Downtown like more housing, growing businesses, and new destinations. Streets need to be designed to actively support all modes of transportation and to help encourage those who can, to take transit, walk, or bike.



Downtown parking garage

“My friends ask, But what about parking? No! I live in Downtown, I don't need a car!”

## DOWNTOWN IS TRANSIT RICH...BUT NOT TRANSIT “FRIENDLY”



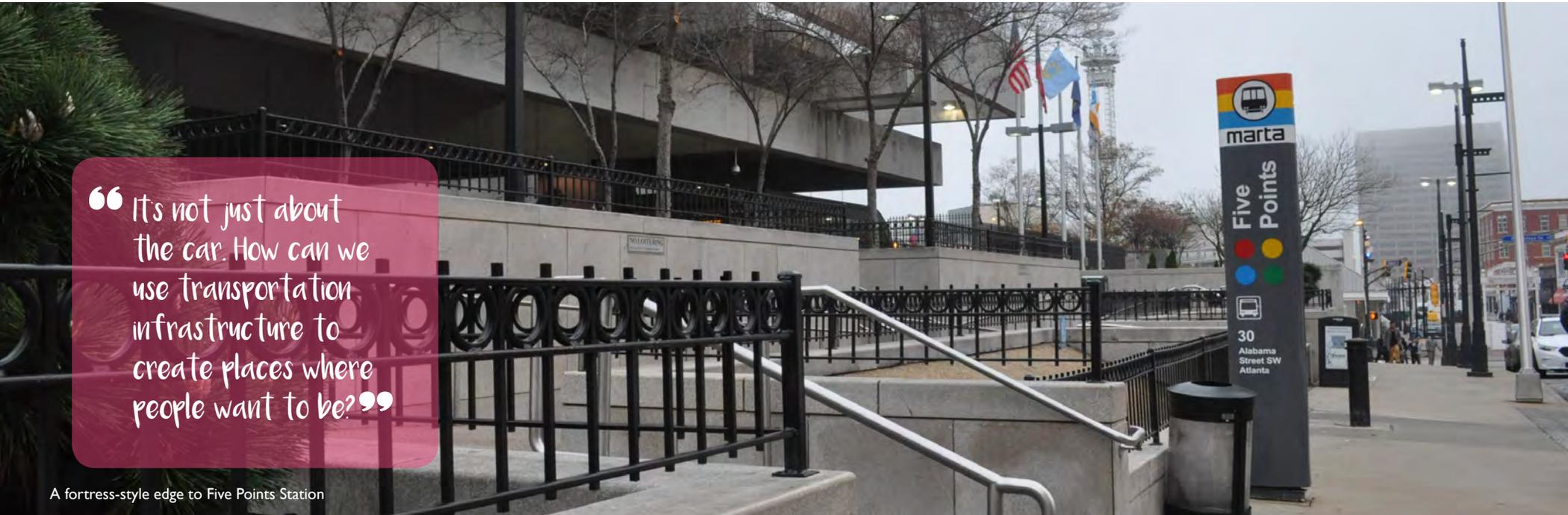
- » Of those who work Downtown, only **1.3%** also live Downtown; **99%** of employees commute into Downtown each day, and almost **60%** are driving alone (see Figure 71 of Page 229)
- » Two of the best things about Downtown according to survey respondents are its walkability and transit accessibility

Two of the best things about Downtown according to survey respondents are its walkability and transit accessibility. Many Downtown residents echo the same – they chose to live Downtown because it has the best transit access. In 2015, close to 1.2 million people used Downtown MARTA rail stations each month, with almost 500,000 using Five Points alone. However, some of the primary stations Downtown like Five Points and Garnett are not currently welcoming places. This has less to do with the interior of the station and more to do with the character of the areas surrounding the stations. These, and many other MARTA stations, are

large pieces of infrastructure. Their scale creates open plazas that, to date, have not been actively programmed or activated. So while Downtown has rich transit assets, to encourage more transit use and fewer commuters driving alone, these stations need to become more welcoming and integrated as active parts of the Downtown fabric.

“It's not just about the car. How can we use transportation infrastructure to create places where people want to be?”

A fortress-style edge to Five Points Station



## DOWNTOWN'S INFRASTRUCTURE DOES NOT SUPPORT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Today, Downtown suffers from a number of physical conditions that negatively impact health. Downtown currently has seven acres of parkland for 1,000 residents<sup>1</sup> falling short of Project Greenspace's goal of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents citywide, a goal that matches the National Recreation and Park Association's open space goal. 42% of Downtown is not within a five-minute walk of open space, and there are very few recreational fields or trails in Downtown. In addition, Downtown has a 3% tree coverage compared to 48% citywide. These factors greatly contribute to Downtown's "heat-island" effect and compound the poor air quality stemming from highway traffic. Water quality is also a concern where Downtown faces major stormwater

challenges. The Eastern Continental Divide cuts through Downtown, which means water in Downtown is directed toward both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. There are high points (along portions of Peachtree) but also low points near Northside, North Avenue, in the Old Fourth Ward around the Atlanta Civic Center, and near I-20, all of which cause localized flooding during rain events.

Downtown Atlanta is home to renowned hospitals and multiple sporting facilities and events, and it served a central role in hosting the Olympics. We believe these assets and legacies can play an active role in helping to bring a stronger focus on health to Downtown.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the daytime population including employees. This number rises to 11.5 acres per 1,000 residents at night.



- » Downtown currently has **7** acres of parkland for **1,000** residents
- » **42%** of Downtown is not within a five-minute walk of open space (see Figure 47 on Page 185)
- » Downtown has a **3%** tree coverage compared to **48%** citywide (see Figure 44 on Page 178)



Folk Art Park

Atlanta is poised to be a smart city. We have transportation, walkability, bike share, density. A priority is helping people understand how sustainability impacts them—it's a critical for the health of our city and citizens.

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE LIMITED BY CURRENT OWNERSHIP PATTERNS



» **22%** of parcels Downtown are publicly-owned, and most of these are used for City facilities and operations

Today, there are very few publicly-owned parcels that are immediately available for redevelopment. Twenty-two percent (22%) of parcels Downtown are publicly-owned, and most of these are used for Federal, State, and City facilities and operations. The remaining private parcels each have their own story. Most are actively used, of course, but others are ready for redevelopment. However, gaining site control Downtown is extremely difficult. Many of the underutilized parcels deemed ripe for redevelopment are currently privately operated as surface parking lots. Some of these properties have been owned by families for decades, while others are simply speculating in the land market - making money off of the parking revenue and believing the value of their property is far above market value. In other words, far too much land Downtown is used for surface parking, which is inefficient, uncoordinated, and often ill-maintained, and sale prices quoted to those interested in assembling land for redevelopment are high, all of which

prohibits redevelopment activity and explains why many of these surface parking lots remain partly empty during the day and almost entirely empty in the evenings and weekends. Two things need to be addressed to break Downtown out of this cycle:

- 1) The City needs to play a more direct role in managing parking Downtown by helping to develop public parking garages, thus freeing up land currently used as surface parking lots, and acquiring land for redevelopment, and
- 2) Given that publicly-owned land available for redevelopment is precious, there must be clear guidelines for how those properties will be developed to meet the objectives in this plan.

“Property owners make so much money on parking, so they hold on... and their asking prices are deal killers.”

Surface parking lot Downtown

## WE RISK LOSING WHAT MAKES DOWNTOWN “UNIQUE”

For years, downtowns across the country served as homes to artists, non-profits and small, local businesses. Because there was less investment and market pressure, older buildings remained. But once private investment takes off, as it has recently in Atlanta, the people and spaces that make Downtown unique become increasingly under threat of displacement. Downtown stakeholders worry that small businesses and artists cannot pay the higher rents that new landlords are expecting given the increased interest in Downtown. The same is true for those who live Downtown. Downtown, today, offers housing for people of all incomes; in fact, 26% of all housing units are income restricted for households earning below 60% of area median income. Cities across the country struggle with retaining affordability in their growing downtowns. Atlanta is not alone in this challenge.

Coupled with the people and businesses that characterize Downtown, the existing buildings are an important legacy to preserve. Only 1% of buildings Downtown are protected by Landmark status, though an estimated 50% of buildings are 50 years old or older; many of Downtown’s older – often smaller-scale – buildings could be, and have been, replaced with new development. If we strip away the layers of Downtown’s past, we lose the connections to the important events that shape the City today. We need to create value Downtown and support investment but we also need to hold on to what makes Downtown authentic.



» Only 1% of buildings Downtown are landmarked and many more could be (see Figure 12 on Page 64)

“Downtown has the best historic building stock, bar none.”



Historic buildings in foreground with more recent construction behind

“I love how quickly we advance as a city, but I hate how quickly we erase history.”



*Atlanta*  
ISN'T PERFECT

“ The beauty and potential of downtown is in the mix – it's affordable and not, it's black and white, there's fancy retail and stores that sell the basics at a low price. It's very Jane Jacobs—not homogenized. But there's so much new development on the table, and you can't get new cheap space, so how can we preserve some of the grit and character? ”



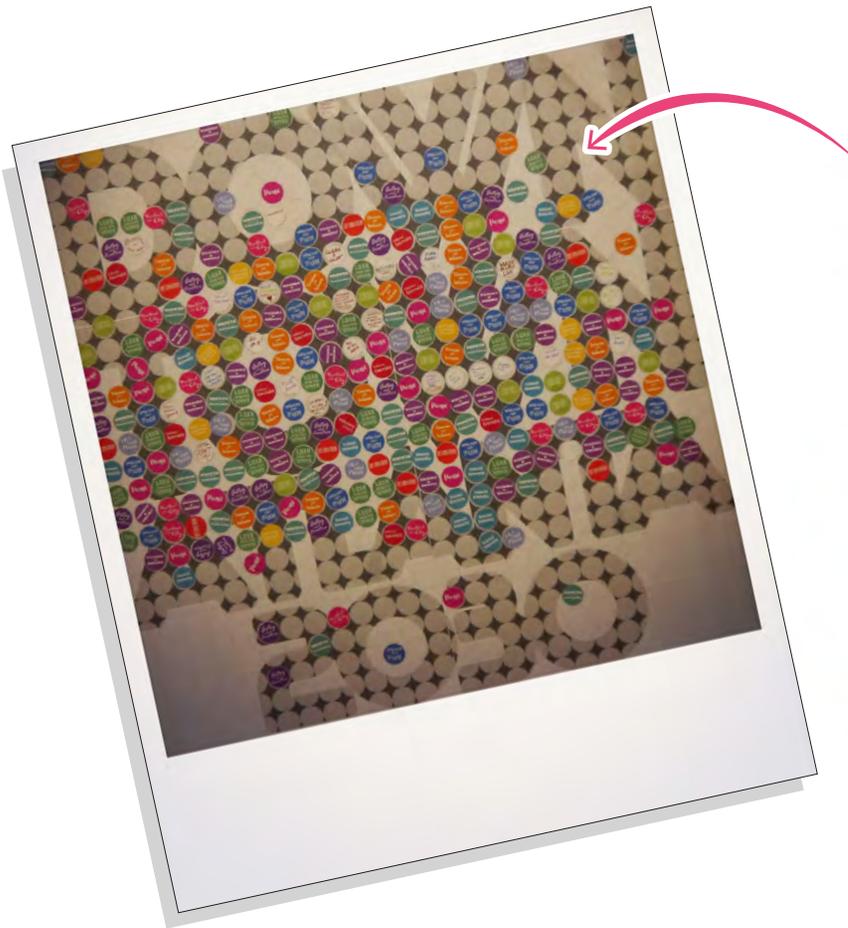
# VISION & GOALS

## A SHARED VISION

The community's words, ideas, and dreams provided the foundation for a collective vision statement that frames the Downtown Atlanta we envision—the type of place we hope to create and the range of experiences we hope to foster.

## WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Downtown Atlanta is the established center of commerce in the Southeast. Bustling with thriving businesses, institutions, and government offices, Downtown swells during the day with workers and students, many of whom take to congested roads after 5 o'clock leaving behind a quieter Downtown after business hours. Downtown's history as the region's crossroads – first of the railroads and later of the city's street grids and MARTA rail lines – continues to serve as a draw in this fast growing metro area. People of all ages and walks of life, be they local residents, employees, or visitors drawn to Downtown for an urban experience, entertainment, conventions, and special events, have reason to be Downtown. As Downtown's momentum builds and the narratives that once held Downtown back continue to change, there is a unique opportunity to give people a reason to stay, becoming a part of the Downtown community.



SELECT A STICKER WITH YOUR FAVORITE WORD OR PHRASE FROM THE VISION, AND ADD IT TO THE MOSAIC. IF YOU PREFER, WRITE IN YOUR OWN WORD OR PHRASE TO ADD TO THE MIX.



Vision stickers selected by participants at the June Open House form a mosaic mural.

# The Vision for Downtown

Over the next fifteen years, *Downtown Atlanta* will remain a **BUSTLING BUSINESS DISTRICT** and unique, national **DESTINATION** while shifting focus to strengthen its role as a **THRIVING, FULL-SERVICE, AND EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNED WITH PEOPLE IN MIND**. Downtown will preserve its rich history and architecture and attract new independent businesses **FULL OF LOCAL FLAVOR**. Lively, **WALKABLE AND BIKEABLE** streets coupled with a **LUSH, HEALTHY, AND HUMANIZED PUBLIC REALM** will serve as a backdrop to a friendly social life for residents, employees, and visitors who meet to enjoy all that Atlanta's **CULTURAL EPICENTER** has to offer. A range of policies and programs and new housing choices at a range of prices enable Downtown to remain **HOME** to a **DIVERSE AND INTENTIONALLY INCLUSIVE** community. Well connected by **TRANSIT AND TRAILS**, and desirable yet **AFFORDABLE** in the context of Atlanta's other growing neighborhoods, Downtown will capture a significant share of the region's projected growth, **BALANCING DEVELOPMENT WITH PRESERVATION** to remain the heart of historic Atlanta and the **HEARTBEAT OF THE CITY!**

# WHAT ARE WE SEEKING TO ACCOMPLISH?

Six goals respond to the overarching vision and organize the strategies presented in the next chapter of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*.

## 1 MAINTAIN FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

to humanize Downtown

*Topics include: clean and safe strategies and homelessness*

- 1.1 Continue to keep Downtown clean and safe
- 1.2 Support efforts to address homelessness Downtown

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE

to ensure that new growth does not overwrite our history

*Topics include: arts, culture, and preservation*

- 2.1 Connect the dots of Downtown's unique amenities
- 2.2 Tell Downtown's overlooked and untold stories
- 2.3 Celebrate and preserve Downtown's creativity
- 2.4 Preserve Downtown's built heritage

## 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

tailored to meet the needs of residents

*Topics include: residential and commercial development and neighborhood character, diversity, and pride*

- 3.1 Reinforce the unique character of each Downtown neighborhood
- 3.2 Invest to create a connected, dense "residential backbone" in the heart of Downtown
- 3.3 Re-imagine critical sites
- 3.4 Provide housing options to retain a mix of incomes Downtown
- 3.5 Strengthen resident ties Downtown
- 3.6 Market Downtown living & promote a family-friendly Downtown



Walton Street NW



Atlanta Constitution Building



South Broad Street

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER

of the region

*Topics include: retail and office redevelopment opportunities, ground floor activation, jobs, and economic development*

- 4.1 Help to grow new businesses and talent Downtown
- 4.2 Activate the ground floor
- 4.3 Protect space for making things Downtown



Sweet Auburn Curb Market

## 5 RESTORE THE FOREST IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY

to improve air and water quality, create shade, and add beauty Downtown

*Topics include: open space and greening, health, sustainability, and programming for all ages*

- 5.1 Boost the tree canopy
- 5.2 Integrate green infrastructure
- 5.3 Develop a program to re-design “blah-zas” as vibrant plazas
- 5.4 Integrate play and active green spaces at MARTA stations
- 5.5 Create green gateways
- 5.6 Increase linear connectivity to create green ribbons around the city
- 5.7 Integrate health into the Downtown experience
- 5.8 Develop with a commitment to sustainability



Woodruff Park

## 6 OFFER REAL CHOICE IN TRANSPORTATION

to reduce traffic congestion and reliance on automobiles and create space for increased activity

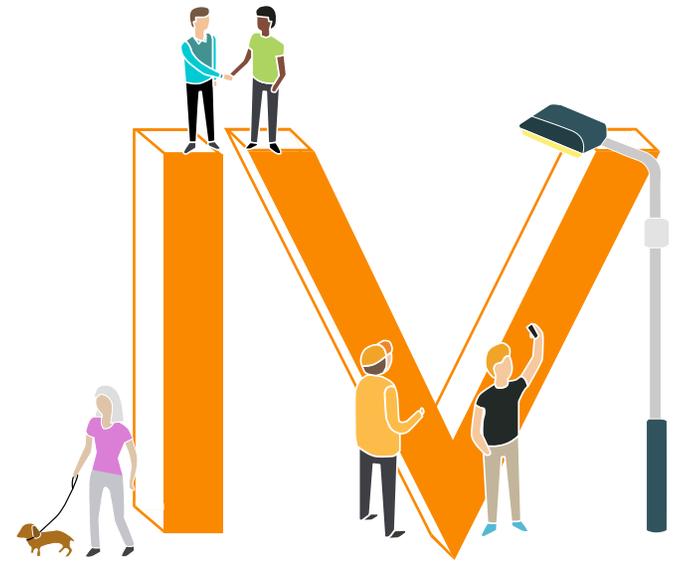
*Topics include: street design and connectivity, a multi-modal future, and parking*

- 6.1 Manage Downtown streets, sidewalks, and parking for success
- 6.2 Design streets according to their personalities
- 6.3 Shift how people commute and travel in, out and through Downtown
- 6.4 Monitor and evaluate transportation projects



Relay Bikeshare Fleet

**MAINTAIN FOCUS ON  
QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES  
to humanize Downtown**



1

# 1. MAINTAIN FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES TO HUMANIZE DOWNTOWN



- » Downtown is still perceived as “unsafe” by some even though crime has declined.
- » **3,000** crimes in a Downtown with over 26,000 residents, 152,000 jobs, and 15,500,000 visitors.
- » There are about **30 CAR BREAK-INS PER WEEK** (down from over 200 ten years ago).
- » This is impacting **0.03%** of cars parked Downtown, of which there are 72,000 on a given day.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Atlanta is great at big ideas, but we cannot forget the “basics” that inform our day-to-day experience Downtown. This means focusing on the look and feel of public spaces so that they welcome people and help them feel relaxed and safe. Urban renewal in the 1960s transformed Downtown, making more room for the car and ensconcing people in buildings that were envisioned as internal oases – places to escape from urban life. Today, urban life is an asset to be celebrated. Street life is a big component of what makes cities interesting, but many parts of Downtown are not yet comfortable places to walk around or spend time outside.

Downtown is still perceived as “unsafe” by some even though crime has declined and the majority of crime is related to car break-ins, which have also declined. In 2016, there were just over 3,000 Part I crimes in Downtown. However, 85% are property crimes and 68% are larceny crimes – mostly car break-ins. To put this in perspective, this is just 3,000 crimes in a Downtown with over 26,000 residents, 152,000 jobs, and 15,500,000 visitors. There are about 30 car break-ins per week (down from over 200 ten years ago). This is impacting 0.03% of cars parked Downtown, of which there are 72,000 on a given day.

But perception is important. Safety was among the top three changes survey respondents wanted to see regardless of whether they live, work, or visit Downtown.

The cleanliness and attractiveness of Downtown was another top area survey respondents across the board felt needed improvement. In fact, every day the ADID Ambassadors and Clean Team provide many services tailored to keeping Downtown clean, safe, and hospitable—from street cleaning to foot and Segway patrols, panhandling interventions and coordination with other public safety forces at the Atlanta Police Department (APD), MARTA, and university and hospital campuses, among others.

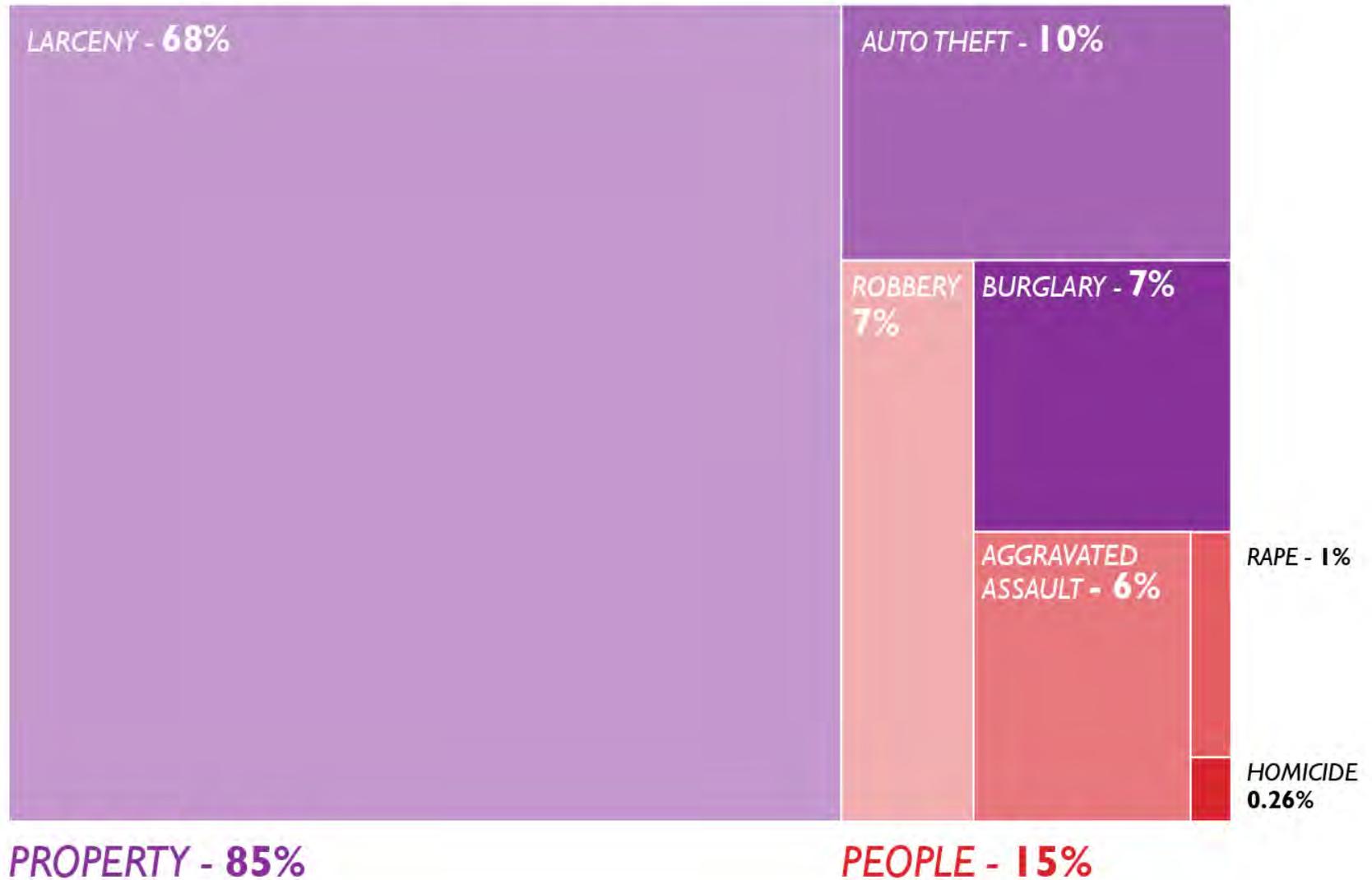
Though Downtown is quite safe and trends are moving in the right direction, work remains to be done. Downtown must be kept clean and safe in order to support added activity; added activity in turn supports real feelings of safety—among visitors, new residents, employees, as well as the vulnerable people experiencing homelessness who are part of the Downtown community.

The following recommendations target the look and feel of Downtown as well as the function of Downtown services that together foster a welcoming and comfortable experience for people of all walks of life and ensure that progress is maintained through diligent data tracking.

“Homelessness, panhandling, and the lack of people at times create safety concerns.”

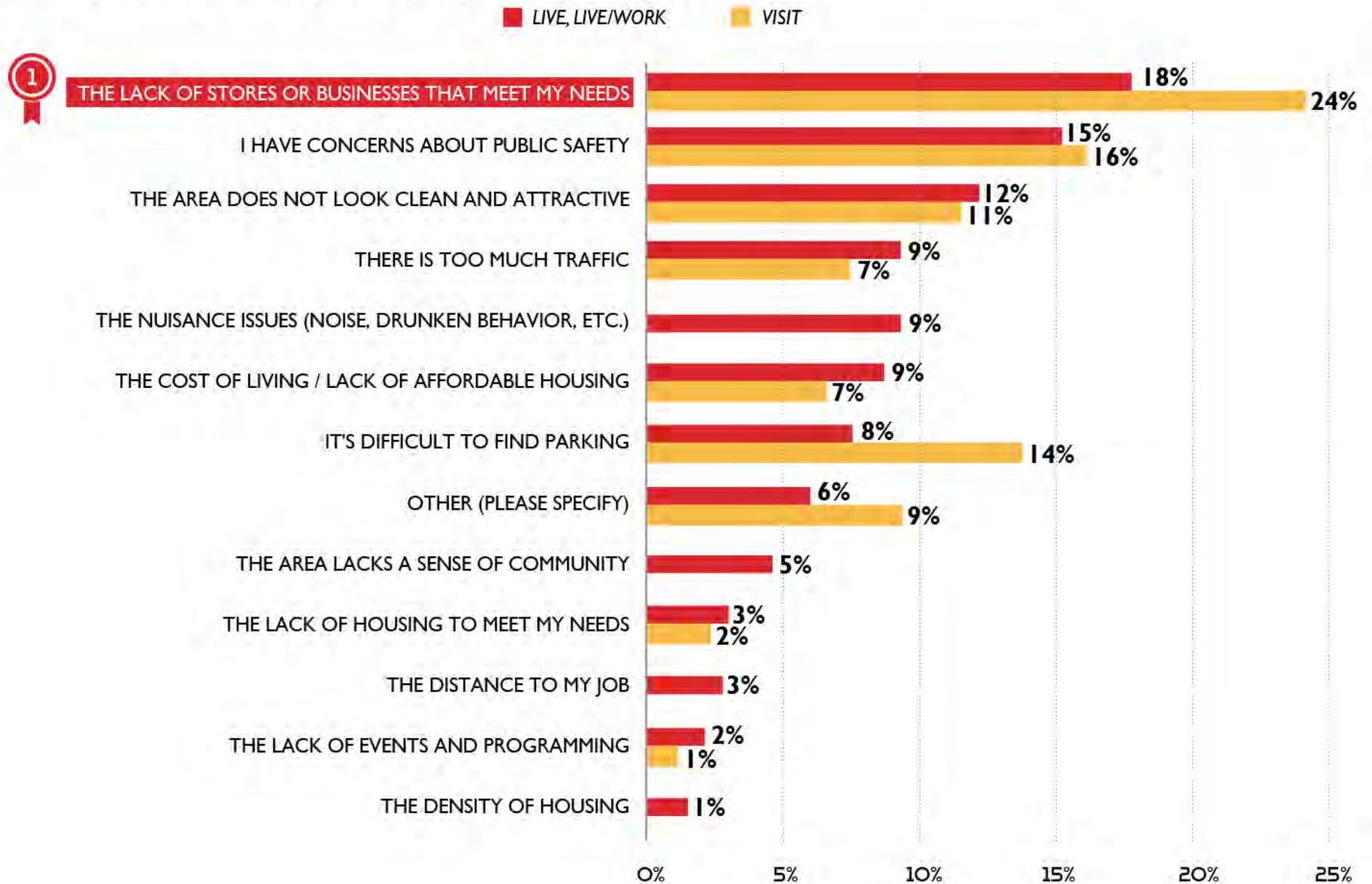
Figure 8. Part I Crimes by type 2016

THERE WERE **3,090** TOTAL PART I CRIMES IN THE STUDY AREA IN **2016**



**Figure 9.** Survey Results: What do you dislike about Downtown?  
 While the “lack of stores and businesses that meet me needs” was cited most frequently as an issue Downtown, concerns around public safety and nuisance issues were common and drive many discussions about Downtown’s future.

## WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE MOST ABOUT DOWNTOWN?



### I.1 Continue to keep Downtown clean and safe

The public realm needs to be clean, safe, and attractive so that it invites people to venture outside. Investing in the basic components of an excellent urban experience creates a virtuous circle that attracts more people and generates a liveliness that builds a sense that Downtown is a safe and exciting place to be.

#### » Target street lighting improvements to support street life

Walking Downtown in the evening can be desolate, with businesses closing after work and limited evening activity. Better street lighting sets the stage for nighttime activity by creating a comfortable and welcoming environment for people. Lighting helps boost public safety through the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) by maximizing visibility and conveying the message that a place is being taken of, being watched over, and is meant for people to use. Street lighting improvements should be targeted around areas of activity, including:

- Institutional campuses
- Public facilities
- Around MARTA stations and transit stops
- Existing and suggested commercial corridors, and
- Pedestrian-priority streets such as signature, promenade, boulevard, and green streets.

#### » Encourage building owners to install façade lighting

Façade lighting adds both illumination and interest to the public realm. At the first Open House, we asked participants to choose which ideas from other cities could make Downtown more vibrant, and “uplit buildings” ranked as the third most popular idea. Downtown has an abundance of architecturally interesting and historic buildings that could be accented through lighting, while also fostering a strengthened sense of safety after hours. Consider a new zoning requirement that mandates exterior façade lighting. Additionally, important corridors can be highlighted by encouraging and coordinating lighting among multiple building owners. Philadelphia’s Avenue of the Arts is the first example from an American city of lighting coordinated in this way. A dozen historic buildings have been lit with LED fixtures that also provide a platform for programmed lighting effects and special event light shows that add visual excitement and support the cultural uses along the avenue.



## PRECEDENTS



Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA

Source) <http://earthtechling.com/2013/01/new-yorks-leds-shine-light-on-efficiency/>



## PRECEDENTS



Race Street

Philadelphia, PA

Source) <http://www.thecondoshops.com/news/philly-fringe-festival-getting-new-old-city-headquarters/>



Sensing YOU, Highway 87 underpass

San José, CA

Source) <https://www.designboom.com/art/dan-corson-sensing-you-sensing-water-san-jose-12-18-2015/>

### » Install functional and artful lighting to brighten the underpasses

The many levels of Downtown – from the rail beds up to the elevated roads and highways – produce dark and uninviting underpasses that are a barrier to walkability and separate neighborhoods. Commissioning artists and designers to develop creative and beautiful lighting solutions for the underpasses will introduce additional illumination, making them feel safer, and also add visual interest. In combination with uplit building façades, underpass lighting treatment can contribute to highlighting important corridors such as Sweet Auburn and Edgewood Avenue, branding areas such as the Georgia State campus, and enhancing special events.

### » Work with surrounding commercial areas within Downtown to consider expansion of the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID)

Downtown is poised for growth with 36,000 new jobs and 12,000 new residents anticipated by 2030. Areas such as South Downtown and the Edgewood Avenue entertainment district are currently and imminently undergoing major changes, while others, such as the Gulch and the Stitch, are gearing up for future growth. Given all this new investment, it is worth considering expanding the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID), which is a critical piece of implementing and maintaining safe and clean initiatives. As Downtown grows, area property owners and ADID can work together to determine whether and where expansion is needed so that new and expanding commercial areas, particularly in the eastern parts of South Downtown and near the government area, benefit from its services.

### » Execute community-informed event management

Currently, when a special event (or regularly occurring attraction such as weekend nights on Edgewood Avenue) occurs necessitating street closures for traffic and crowd safety, the Atlanta Police Department (APD) offers one of two typical event management responses: that of an outdoor festival or that of an emergency. Popular Downtown sub-districts that serve as entertainment destinations— as Edgewood does now and South Downtown may in the future—call for a customized, in-between approach that reflects the character of the area while also serving the needs of local businesses and patrons as well as near neighbors. Consider exploring the role of ADID in supporting APD efforts if the service area expands (I.1), and work with neighborhood advocates and Downtown public safety officials to develop tailored strategies for nuisance and safety issues, infrastructure improvements, as well as traffic, parking, and curbside management (referenced in Strategy 6.1 and further detailed in the Downtown Transportation Plan appendix).

» **Use zero waste events to reduce trash and change habits Downtown**

Atlanta has set a goal of becoming a zero waste city and dramatically increasing landfill diversion. The City’s recycling program covers single-family residential recycling, major city buildings and large events in city parks. Its residential recycling rate is ~20% compared to the national average of 34%, and it is working to expand the program’s reach in multifamily residential buildings, which will be a main component of Downtown residential growth. Additionally, major institutions run their own sustainability programs. Georgia State’s diversion rate is 47% which translates to \$19,616 in annual savings for the university. Downtown’s prominence and leadership in sustainability puts it in a position to be a zero waste model. The City and its commercial and institutional partners Downtown can coordinate on zero waste events to communicate the City’s zero waste goals and increase its visibility, illustrate the how and why of waste diversion, educate the public on what they can do, pilot zero waste strategies and policies, and reduce trash Downtown.

» **Launch a Best Block contest**

The Downtown business community and institutions play a critical role in creating a welcoming public realm. A Best Block contest can create friendly competition and coordination among corporate and institutional partners to push the envelope and implement many of the recommendations for a clean, attractive, and sustainable Downtown. The City’s “Love Your Block” initiative and other block beautification contests such as the Greenest Block in Brooklyn are models that could be applied to promote projects that support a vibrant, welcoming block, such as streetscape, landscaping, lighting, and sustainable practices, in the public right-of-way, as well as in plazas and atop surface parking lots. Voting on the Best Block can be open to the public; a leaderboard and public recognition for top ranked blocks and corporate or institutional investors can keep people in the loop about improvements happening Downtown as well as generate and track data on the plan’s implementation.



**PRECEDENTS**



Greenest Block in Brooklyn  
Brooklyn, NY

Source) <https://www.brownstoner.com/brooklyn-life/greenest-block-in-brooklyn-2017-stuyvesant-avenue-bed-stuy/>

## 1.2 Support efforts to address homelessness Downtown

Throughout this planning process, the Downtown community voiced a commitment to inclusivity and compassion—a desire to work together to improve the life circumstances of people experiencing homelessness Downtown, and to ensure that they remain a part of the community fabric as Downtown continues to change. Indeed, of all the strategies vetted at the final public meeting, this one received the most votes from meeting attendees who helped prioritize the plan’s recommendations.

As a community, we recognize the people in need in our midst, and we understand Downtown’s role in that equation; it is necessary to help those in need here, where the services are. Downtown is the center of supportive services and the hub of the regional transit system. Not only that, Downtown is *home* to a number of people who live outside, and efforts to help people transition to living indoors must strive to find housing near to the community of which they are a part.

### » Support the Continuum of Care’s efforts to integrate services and reduce homelessness

Partners for HOME recently published a new strategic plan, *Clear Path: Atlanta’s Five-Year to Make Homelessness Rare, Brief, and Non-Recurring*. The plan adopts the Housing First policy approach, which prioritizes offering permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible, and then offering necessary supportive services to help individuals and families remain in that housing. It outlines a coordinated approach to ending veteran homelessness by 2017, chronic homelessness in 2019, and youth and family homelessness by 2020.

“We want to see people not just surviving, but thriving. We want people to be able to enjoy Downtown.”

For Downtown to truly do its part to support these targets and house members of Downtown’s homeless community in their community will require finding space to fill gaps in order to meet the demand for supportive housing as well as wrap-around services within Downtown, where many people experiencing homelessness have a sense of community and belonging. Presently, the requirements of City’s Supportive Housing Ordinance (SHO), which mandate a 2,000-foot buffer between supportive housing providers while requiring that new providers be located within 1,500-feet of transit, effectively prevent any additional supportive housing from being built Downtown. Join advocates pushing to remove the distance requirements from the SHO, and work to replicate the model facilities already located Downtown in the historic Imperial Hotel and the Welcome House.

Of course, Downtown alone cannot solve homelessness in the City or region, nor should it; as Downtown partners and advocates work to find new locations for additional supportive housing Downtown, it will be important to remain involved in citywide conversations to avoid an over-concentration of supportive housing units in any one neighborhood or part of the city.

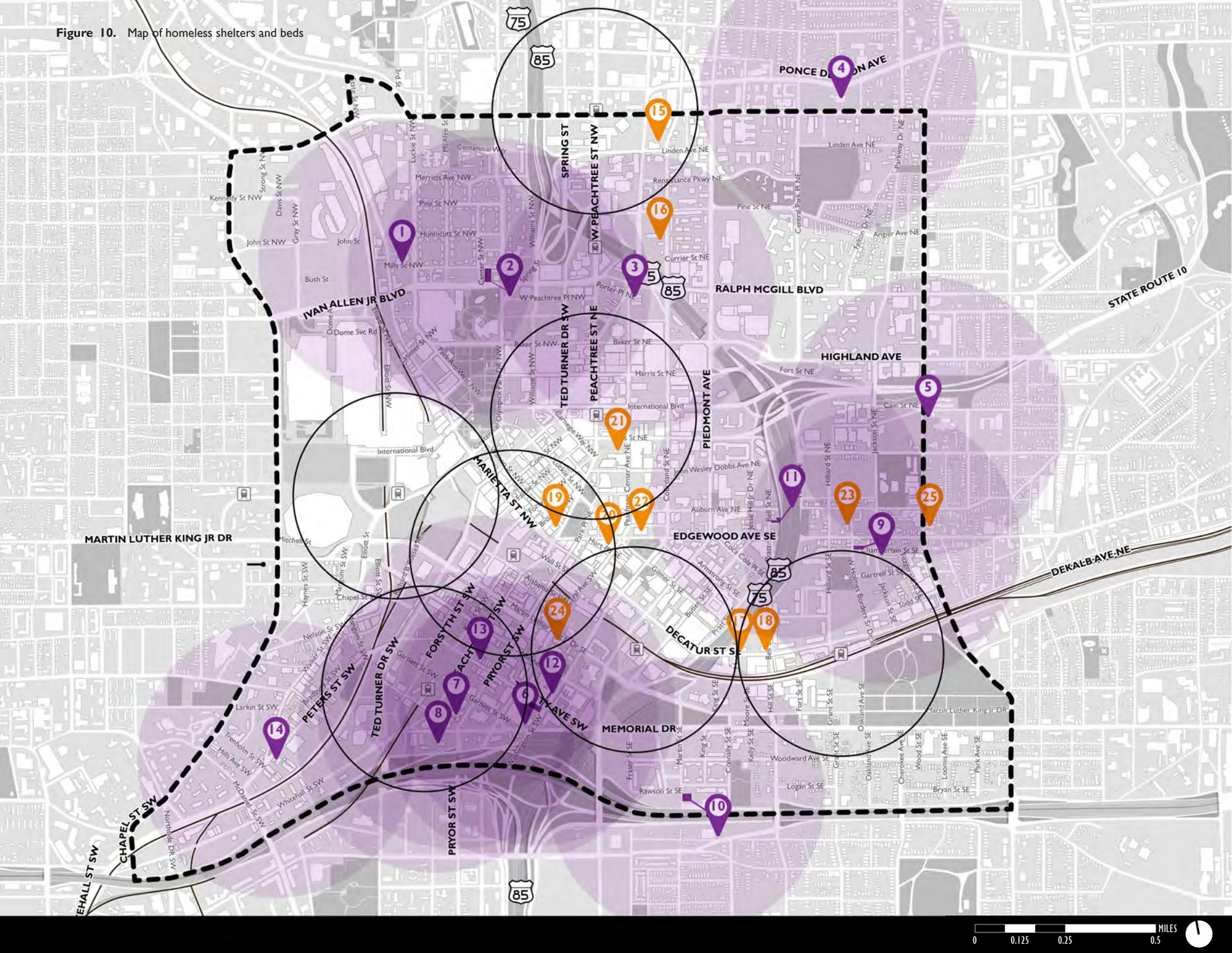
“Doing it well matters: people experiencing homelessness won’t go near new facilities if they aren’t good.”

“We need to integrate those in poverty, not segregate ourselves. We can still have innovation and progress if we embrace a different vision that doesn't try to push the poor into certain pockets.”



Public art installed at the Piedmont and Baker intersection

Figure 10. Map of homeless shelters and beds



# HOMELESS SHELTERS

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Central Atlanta Progress, Atlanta Housing Authority, Partners for HOME, National Housing Preservation Database

## SHELTER BEDS, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND SERVICES

- 1 THE SALVATION ARMY
- 2 ATLANTA MISSION
- 3 COMMONS AT IMPERIAL HOTEL
- 4 LIVING ROOM
- 5 OUR HOUSE (GENESIS HOUSE)
- 6 PROGRESSIVE HOPE HOUSE
- 7 GATEWAY CENTER
- 8 WELCOME HOUSE
- 9 O'HERN HOUSE
- 10 COLUMBIA TOWER AT MLK VILLAGE
- 11 TRINITY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES
- 12 TRINITY ASSESSMENT CENTER (ACTION)
- 13 ATLANTA RECOVERY CENTER
- 14 ATLANTA CITY RESCUE MISSION

## SERVICES ONLY

- 15 CHILDREN HOMELESS SHELTER
- 16 CROSSROADS COMMUNITY MINISTRIES
- 17 ODYSSEY III
- 18 PROJECT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
- 19 HOPE ATLANTA
- 20 BACK ON MY FEET ATLANTA
- 21 ATLANTA CENTER FOR SELF SUFFICIENCY
- 22 SAFEHOUSE OUTREACH
- 23 ACTION MISSION MINISTRY
- 24 CATHOLIC SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
- 25 OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH

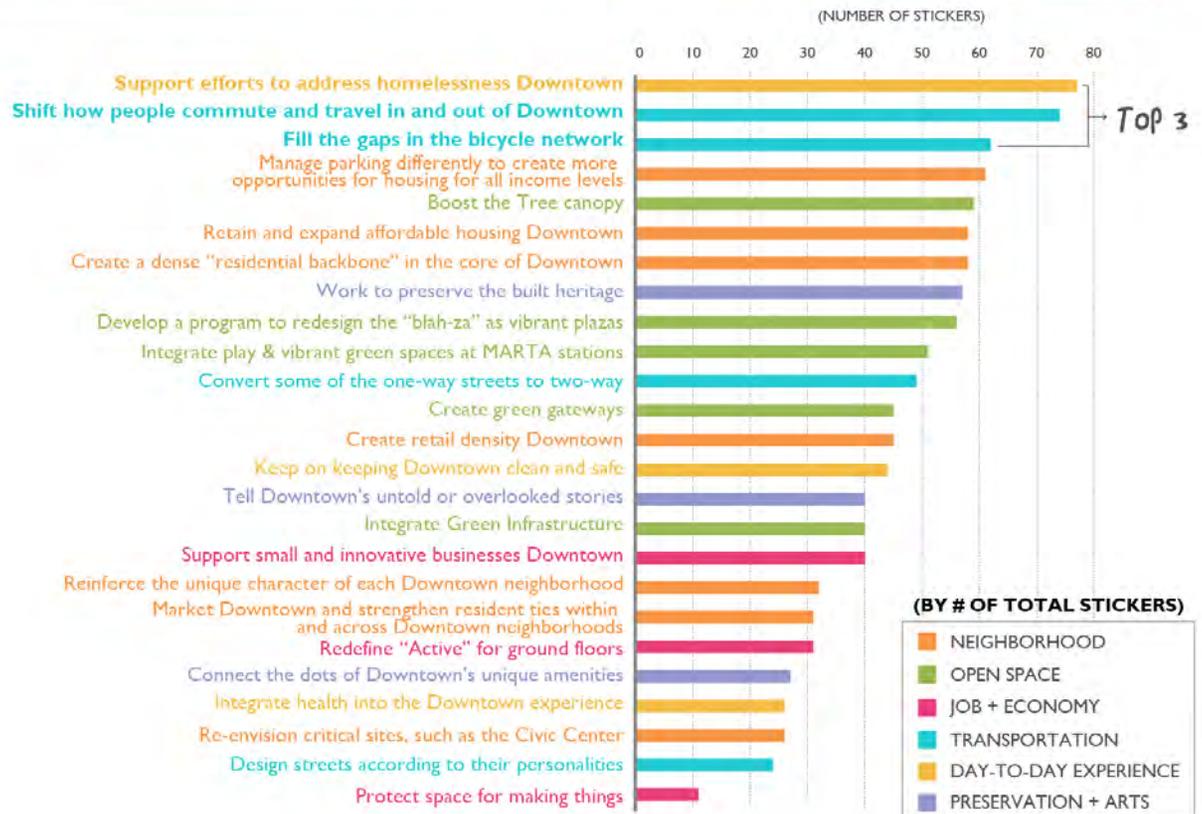
## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ORDINANCE (SHO) REQUIREMENTS

(As of June 2009)

-  2,000 FT BUFFER : DISTANCE BETWEEN FACILITIES
-  1,500 FT BUFFER : DISTANCE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

# FINAL OPEN HOUSE

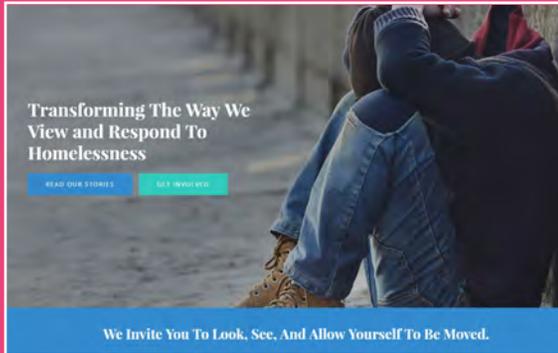
## PRIORITIZING STRATEGIES



**Figure 11.** Open House priorities  
A key priority of those that attended the final open house is to support efforts to address homelessness Downtown.



## PRECEDENTS



The River  
Source) <https://theriveratl.org>



Solidarity Lockers  
Source) <https://ppl.com.pt/en/ies-sbs/cacifos-solidarios>

### » Create a regular blog series featuring stories of people experiencing homelessness

Part of decreasing fear and stigma surrounding homelessness is increasing awareness and providing connections that can establish the common ground between different Downtown populations. To help put a human face on the statistics and improve understanding of the complex issues that can result in homelessness, work with Downtown service providers and The River—an outreach program of Virginia-Highland Church working to establish personal relationships with and share the stories of people living on the streets—to collect stories of a range of Downtown community members who have struggled to maintain housing, from college students to teens who left home for various reasons, working families to those whose struggles have been chronic. Couple these stories with opportunities to volunteer with Downtown service providers.

“The fears and stigmas need to be addressed.”

### » Build public spaces that are hospitable to all

The improvements to parks and plazas described in Strategies 1.1 and 5.3 are not intended solely for people with means; Downtown’s public spaces should be improved as places for all people to rest and relax, comfortably. Continue to maintain the Automatic Public Facility in Woodruff Park, and explore locations for additional facilities Downtown, possibly in the government district. Integrate water fountains and water bottle filling stations in public parks and along trail segments. These amenities, if well maintained, will serve families and students who are Downtown on a budget, as well as people exercising or just exploring Downtown.

Additionally, look for suitable space to integrate large coin-operated lockers or larger storage bins that offer people a safe place to store their belongings and shed some of the stigma that comes with the burden of carrying your worldly possessions with you day-in and day-out. The lockers could be located in a day center, a service provider, a religious institution, or built into the public realm as in this example from Portugal. San Diego’s Transitional Storage Center provides larger 96-gallon bins within a secure facility and is another model worth investigating.

» **Continue efforts that put people transitioning out of homelessness to work Downtown**

ADID currently contracts with a Clean Team charged with keeping streets, sidewalks, and public spaces well swept within its boundaries, as well as with landscaping contractors who maintain plantings and trees Downtown. First Step Staffing facilitates the hiring of people who have recently experienced homelessness, military veterans, and people who have been previously incarcerated. ADID's Public Space Maintenance arm also provides positions to community service workers. Look for new opportunities to partner with wrap-around service providers, such as Gateway Center, to develop a training and employment track for individuals working to break the cycles of homelessness, addiction, and recidivism. Reach out to property owners in areas outside ADID's boundary to determine where else there might exist a demand for such services.

ADID already has a proactive approach to panhandling intervention. Connect with the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico, to learn about its panhandling diversion program, There's a Better Way, which offers day jobs to panhandlers, at a rate of \$9 per hour. After a day's work, the laborers are connected with emergency shelter to house them overnight as needed. Consider raising funds to pilot a similar program in Downtown Atlanta. Explore ways to adapt the Albuquerque model in partnership with Georgia Works, a residential job and like-skills training program at the Gateway Center, which is set up to pay participants into a bank account where a portion of the dollars earned, is set aside to build toward first- and last-month security payments for an apartment.



## PRECEDENTS



### READY, WILLING & ABLE IS A PROGRAM FOR SECOND CHANCES

Ready Willing & Able  
Philadelphia, PA  
Source) <http://www.rwaphiladelphia.org>



There's a Better Way  
Albuquerque, NM  
Source) <https://www.cabq.gov/mayor/priorities-initiatives/initiatives/theres-a-better-way>  
Source) Image: <http://www.upworthy.com/this-mayor-saw-a-homeless-man-with-a-will-work-sign-it-gave-him-a-great-idea>

**UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND  
PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE**  
to ensure that new growth does not  
overwrite our history



## 2. UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE TO ENSURE THAT NEW GROWTH DOES NOT OVERWRITE OUR HISTORY



- » Many of the top ranked vision themes that emerged from the second public open house point to the need to celebrate and preserve an authentic Atlanta:
- » “diverse and inclusive” (ranked #2)
- » “growth balanced with preservation” (#4)
- » “artsy and creative” (#7)
- » “full of local flavor” (#10)

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Downtown's urban fabric has been altered over the years by numerous large scale redevelopments, and new development is set to dramatically expand the existing commercial and residential footprint. With all this change underway, many members of the public expressed a strong desire to get ahead of impending growth. It is important to maintain and bring to the fore the aspects that make Downtown Atlanta interesting and set it apart: its complexity and character, its grit, its history, its architecture, its homegrown culture and style, and its diverse people.

“In everything we do, Downtown must remain true to itself.”



Many of the top ranked vision themes that emerged from the second public open house point to the need to celebrate and preserve an authentic Atlanta: “diverse and inclusive” (ranked #2), “growth balanced with preservation” (#4), “artsy and creative” (#7), and “full of local flavor” (#10). Local history and culture, and arts and cultural opportunities were among the top 3 things visitors surveyed like best about Downtown. Downtown Atlanta’s food, music, culture, and history bridge past and present, and are expressed in many of its destinations and amenities: its cultural centers, restaurants, museums, and entertainment venues. But the pockets of activity are not physically connected or easily navigated, presenting an opportunity to invite people to explore Downtown more widely.

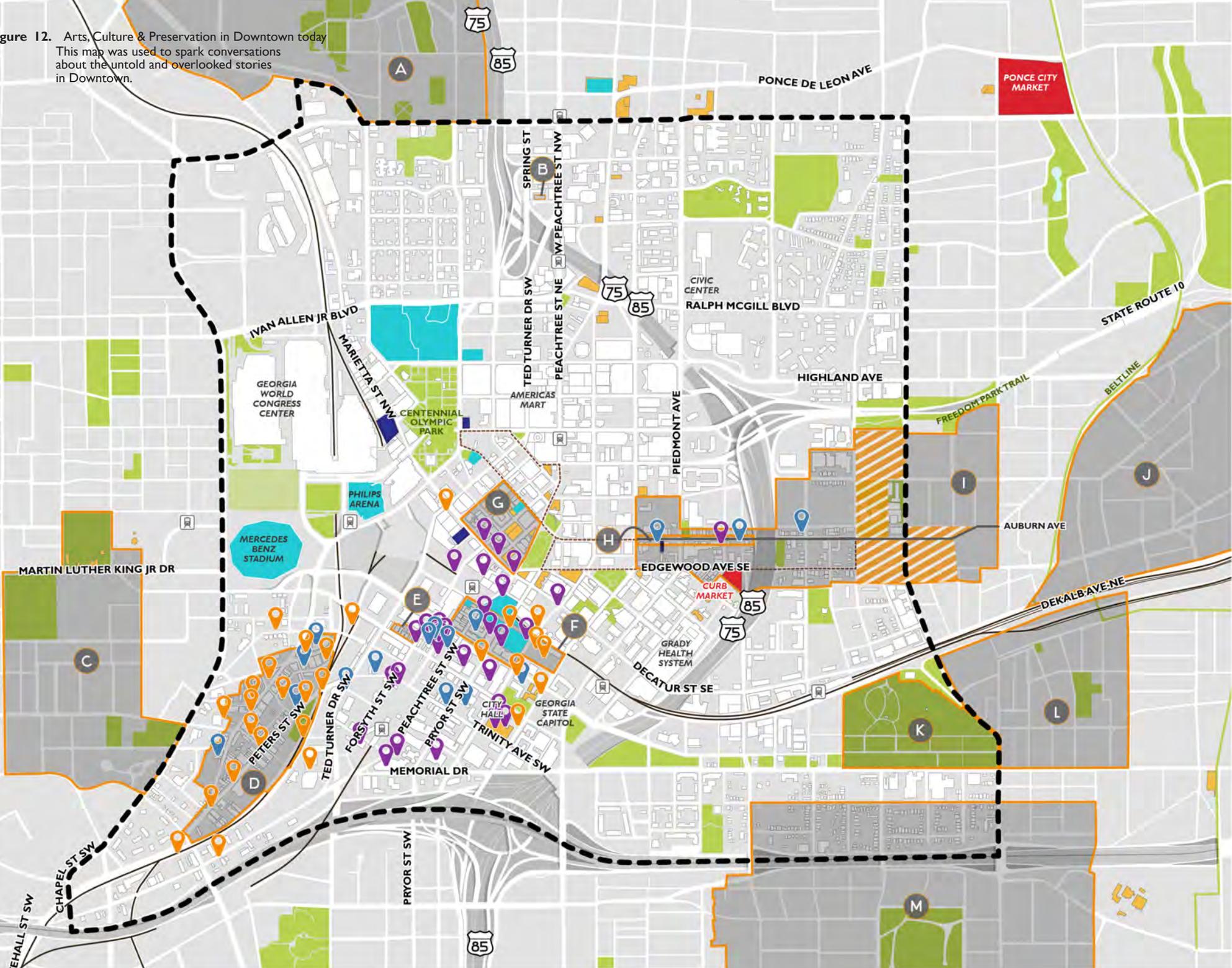
There are also untold stories and collective memories embedded in places that are often overlooked, and historic structures—now threatened by increasing market pressure—that are tangible pieces of the city’s history. Of the 2,100 buildings Downtown, about 50% are 50 years old or older, 15% are under threat (meaning that they are vacant or the land value is greater than the building value), 6% (114 buildings) are vacant, and just 1% (24 buildings) are “landmarked.”

“Architecture and history set Downtown apart from places like Buckhead.”

The following recommendations seize on the opportunity to bring untold stories and history to light, celebrate and seek to preserve affordable space for local art and culture, and highlight the built heritage, in order to physically connect and highlight Downtown’s assets and experiences, and express a unique and authentic Downtown identity where residents and visitors alike can...soak up the local flavor of Atlanta and there is art and culture bursting from the seams!



**Figure 12.** Arts, Culture & Preservation in Downtown today  
 This map was used to spark conversations about the untold and overlooked stories in Downtown.



# ARTS, CULTURE, PRESERVATION

Source: City of Atlanta, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Sweet Auburn Works, Castleberry Hill Master Plan, [www.southdowntown.org](http://www.southdowntown.org)

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

-  LANDMARK BUILDING
-  MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
-  OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES

-  HISTORIC DISTRICT
- A GEORGIA TECH
- B BALTIMORE BLOCK
- C ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER
- D CASTLEBERRY HILL
- E HOTEL ROW
- F UNDERGROUND
- G FAIRLIE-POPLAR
- H SWEET AUBURN
- I MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
- J INMAN PARK
- K OAKLAND CEMETERY
- L CABBAGETOWN
- M GRANT PARK

## ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT RESOURCES

-  SPORTS/ENTERTAINMENT
-  MUSEUM
-  MARKET
-  PUBLIC ART
-  COMMUNITY ASSET



Examples of public art in Downtown

2.1 Connect the dots of Downtown's unique amenities

Downtown is home to marquee cultural and entertainment venues, business centers, and historic assets that draw over 15 million people per year, but there is not much interaction between these amenities. Visitors need a hand to orient themselves and discover all that Downtown has to offer.

“There are wonderful pockets of Downtown with great restaurants and bars, cultural spaces, sporting event venues, and concert venues, but these are not well connected to encourage walking between them.”

Figure 13. Arts, Culture & Preservation mapping exercise. Residents and stakeholders had a lot to share about the unique stories Downtown.





Figure 14. Arts, Culture & Preservation exercise.

# ARTS, CULTURE & PRESERVATION

HOW CAN WE TELL THE STORIES OF DOWNTOWN'S PAST AND EVOLVING PRESENT WITHIN THE PUBLIC REALM?

DOWNTOWN IS ATLANTA'S MOST HISTORIC AREA, RICH WITH ARTS AND CULTURE, BUT YOU TOLD US: "You can see the rich layers Downtown, but this may soon be stripped away," "Downtown isn't as activated at night as it could be," "I love how quickly we advance as a city, but I hate how quickly we erase our history."

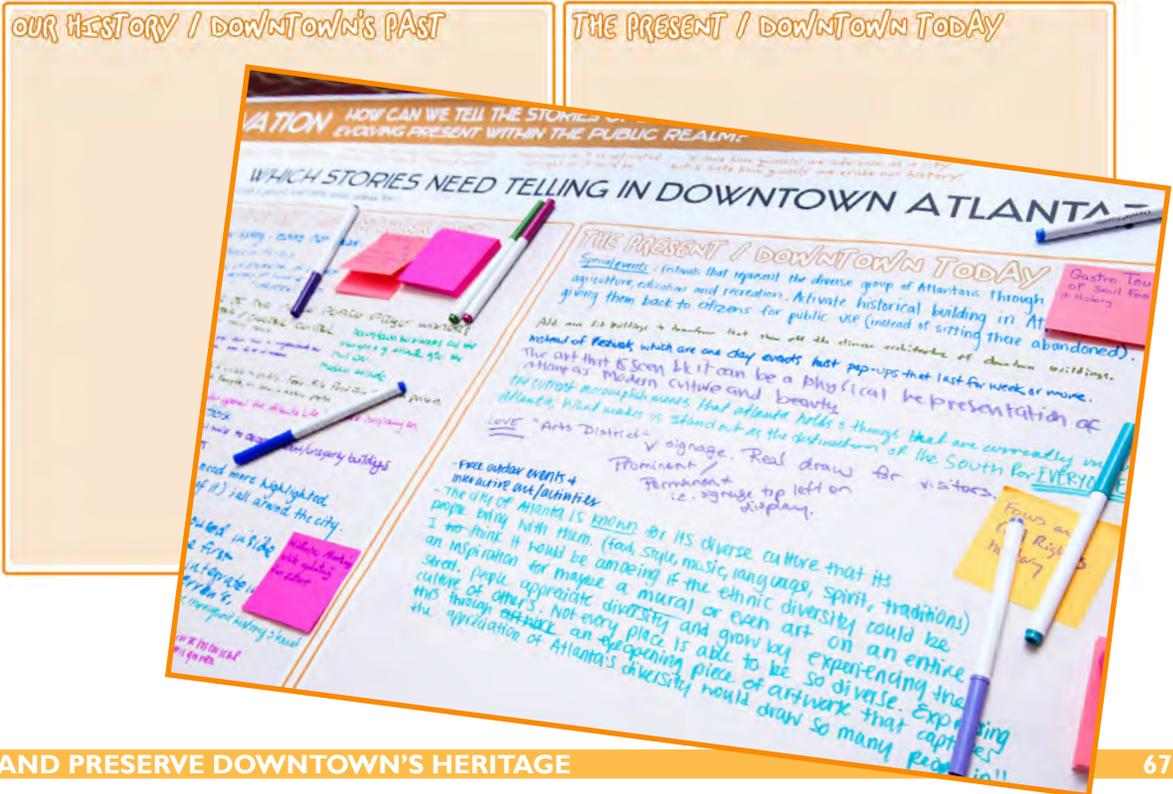
## FIRST, SOME INSPIRATION...

How are other cities telling stories about their arts, culture, and history? How are they using local heritage to enliven and beautify their downtowns?



## WHICH STORIES NEED TELLING IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA?

Grab a post-it and note your ideas for:



“Wayfinding signs, you have no idea what food, shopping or entertainment options are available to you unless you happen upon them or run into an ambassador (whom I love).”

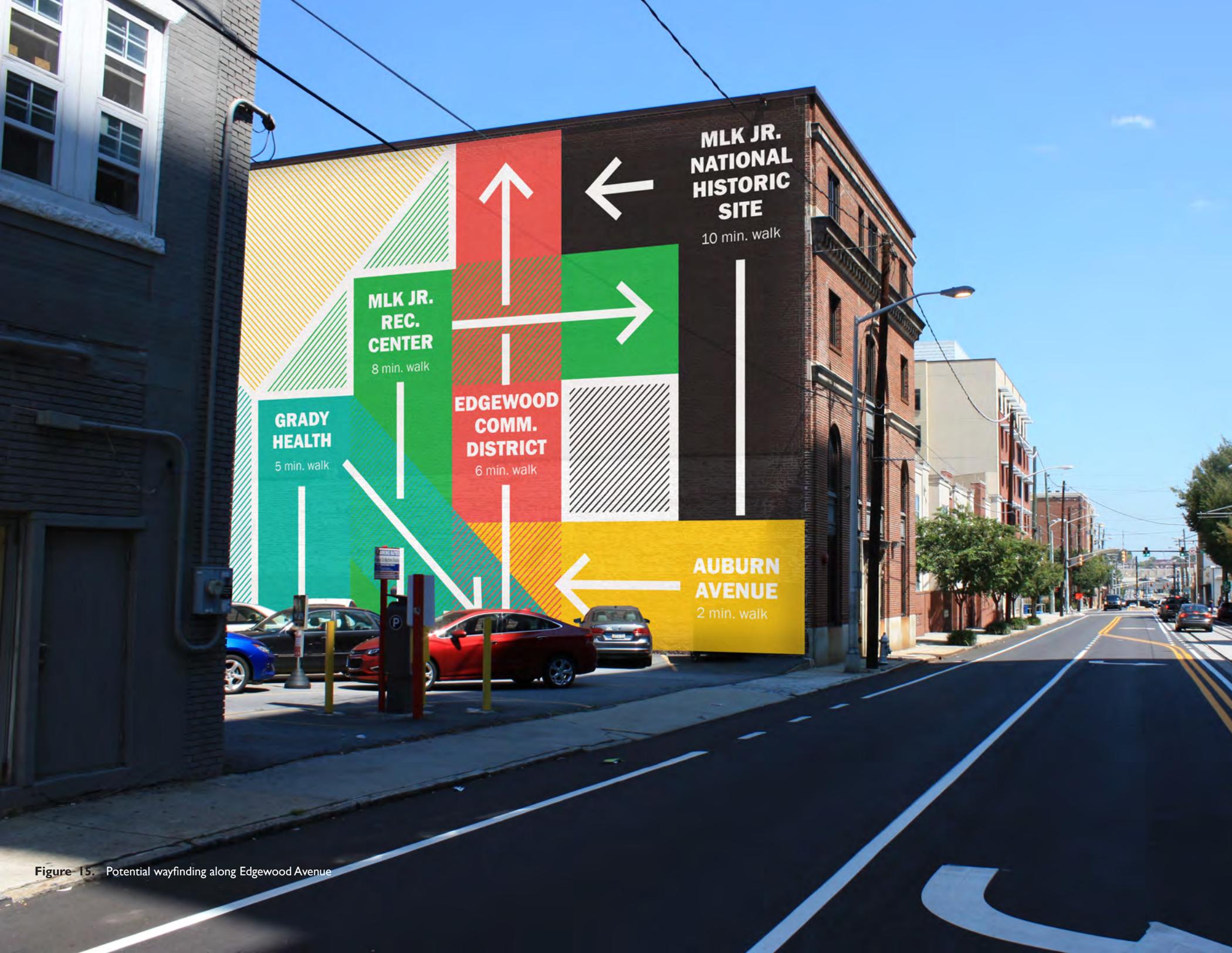
» **Enhance and expand the wayfinding system**

Investment has been made in extensive wayfinding signage and historic markers in Downtown that help point the way, but there is an opportunity to expand upon this system with graphic and artistic wayfinding that does double duty to enliven the public realm. The large scale of Downtown’s streets and buildings calls for big interventions. Unused blank walls and excess pavement can be re-purposed with bold graphics that aggressively, but artistically, promote Downtown assets, fill the gaps between them, and shrink the distances between them by underscoring the short walking and biking distances between destinations.

Given the success and utilization of the Ambassador-staffed kiosk on Peachtree Street, explore opportunities to scale up this concept closer to Centennial Olympic Park and the cluster of adjacent tourist destinations. Collaboration with the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau’s Visitor Welcome Center should be pursued. Consider retrofitting a shipping container to pilot this idea, bringing materials from multiple Downtown venues along with friendly staff who can provide food, drink, and navigation recommendations closer to this hub of visitor activity. Also, if the Welcome Center at Underground Atlanta will be closed in conjunction with redevelopment efforts there, seek a replacement location nearby.



Edgewood Avenue near Courtland, looking east



**MLK JR.  
NATIONAL  
HISTORIC  
SITE**

10 min. walk

**MLK JR.  
REC.  
CENTER**

8 min. walk

**GRADY  
HEALTH**

5 min. walk

**EDGEWOOD  
COMM.  
DISTRICT**

6 min. walk

**AUBURN  
AVENUE**

2 min. walk

Figure 15. Potential wayfinding along Edgewood Avenue

Figure 16. Potential wayfinding along Edgewood Avenue, looking west



↑  
**MERCEDES  
BENZ  
STADIUM**  
16 min. walk

←  
**GEORGIA STATE**  
2 min. walk

↑  
**FAIRLIE  
POPLAR**  
8 min walk

↑  
**PEACHTREE  
STREET**  
5.5 min walk

↑  
**WOODRUFF  
PARK**  
4.5 min walk



Artful bike racks!



Artful storefront

» **Integrate public art to highlight hidden and smaller spaces**

Downtown is also filled with smaller, quieter spaces in contrast to the better known, larger-scale attractions and amenities. These types of spaces humanize the city and offer a glimpse into everyday life and experience. Site-specific public art can be used to uncover these spaces, interpret local histories, and produce moments of delight and discovery in the city that entice visitors and residents alike. Fundraising efforts for the works of public art will need to match the size and scale of the pieces envisioned.



## PRECEDENTS

» Coordinate with existing online resources to ensure that new investments in the artful landscape, however big or small, find their way into databases for those interested in exploring or understanding their surroundings:



City of Atlanta's Public Art Tour  
Atlanta, GA

Source) <http://ocaatlanta.com.s53111.gridserver.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Audio-tour-map.pdf>



Goat Farm's guide to South Downtown in  
On the Grid  
Atlanta, GA

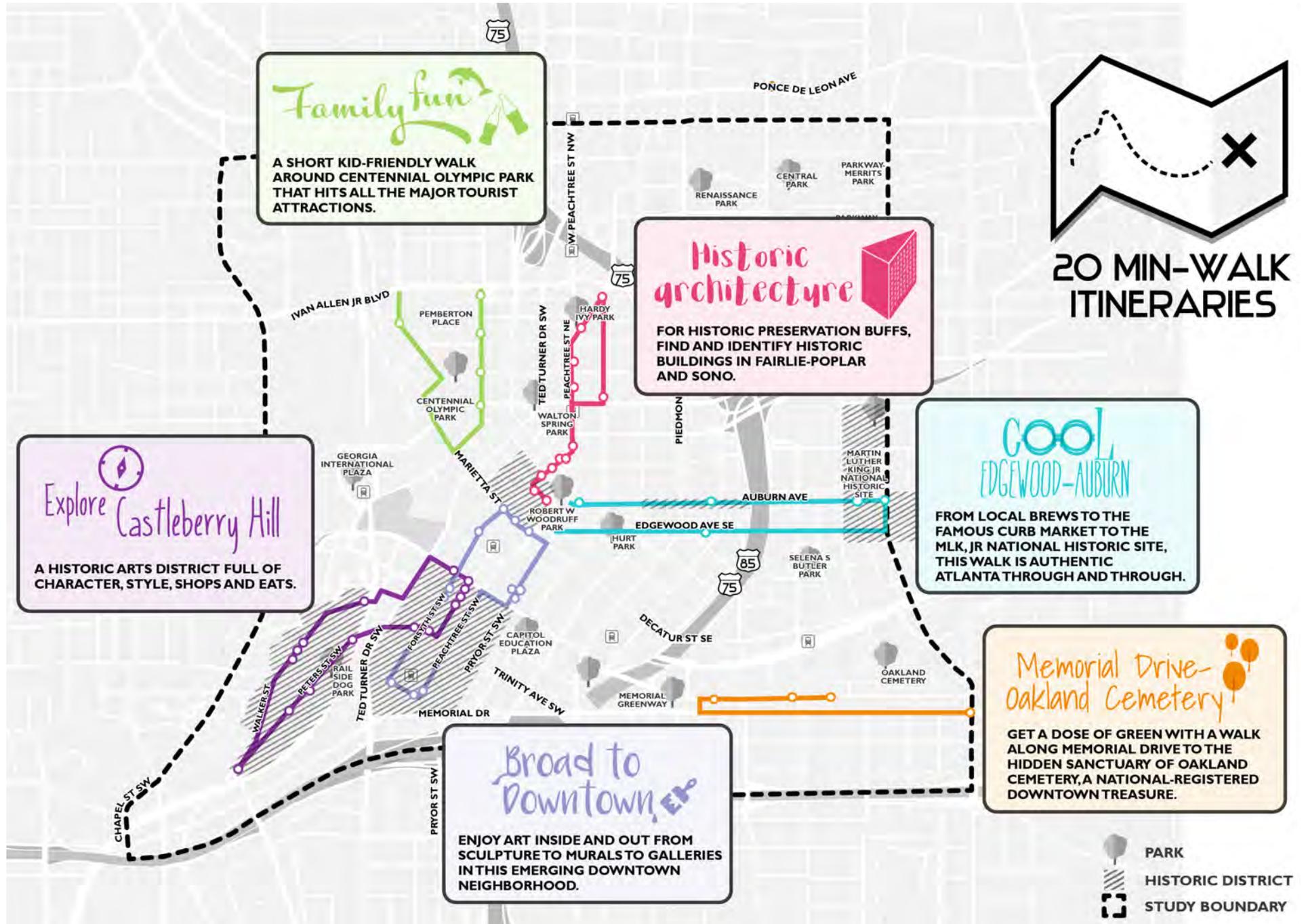
Source) <https://onthegrid.city/atlanta/south-downtown/>

## » Create and market linear experiences Downtown

More structured discovery can be designed to lead people through curated experiences Downtown. This can be expressed through themed itineraries with a focus on food, art, culture, architecture, and history, to name just a few and could potentially plug into the City's ELEVATE programming. Combining a self-guided itinerary in the form of downloadable app or printed maps and guides with guideposts and destinations in the physical environment such as the graphic wayfinding and public art described in the previous two recommendations is a low cost first step in developing linear experiences. This type of treatment could build off the Atlanta Public Art Tour map and audio guide.

Participants in the second open house gave thumbs up to ideas such as Philadelphia's Mural Mile, historical trails like Boston's Freedom Trail, and interpretive signs. A more involved next step would be to enlist businesses, institutions, and other venues along the route to participate by offering programming or special deals related to or complementary to the itinerary theme. This active version could follow the lead of events such as monthly First Thursday Downtown Art Walks, which enjoyed larger participation by studio artists and gallery-goers in the recent past than today.

Figure 17. Potential 20-minute walking itineraries for Downtown





## PRECEDENTS



Fire in the Fourth Celebration  
Atlanta, GA  
Source) <http://www.fireinthe4th.com/fit4/>

### » Develop new opportunities to interact and bring Downtown's history to life

While wayfinding will guide people through Downtown, and public art will insert opportunities for discovery and delight into the public realm, interactive experiences will encourage people to explore and stay a while. These may take the form of playful street furniture, playable sidewalks, or interactive art which ranked as the fifth most popular among ideas to enliven Downtown. Interactive programming such as the Fire in the Fourth Festival,

which commemorates the Fire of 1917 that destroyed much of the Old Fourth Ward, can go a step further and immerse visitors in the history and cultural life of Downtown Atlanta. The Tenement Museum in New York is an example of using the stories of a specific tenement building to tell the story of immigration in the city and offer a glimpse of what immigrant life was like. Many existing institutions are good partners to develop such programming to bring to life the history and culture of Downtown; connect with the Atlanta Preservation Center about ways to amplify and build awareness of its guided walking tours.



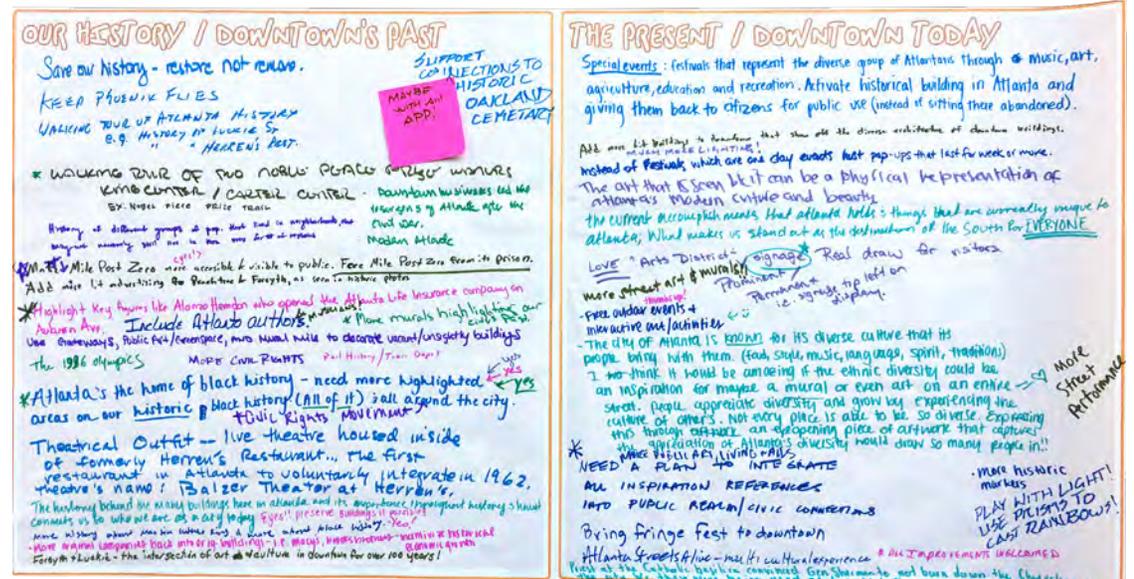
## 2.2 Tell Downtown's overlooked and untold stories

Downtown Atlanta is steeped in history – from its railroad origins to its resurgence after the Civil War to its central role in the Civil Rights Movement. Underneath the big events and larger-than-life figures, there is a history writ small – the people, places and events that do not make it into the official history books. These stories make up the texture and detail that bring to life the spirit of Atlanta.

“I think Downtown should acknowledge its strength and welcome the past... Atlanta has history, let our story shine bright.”

### » Target public art to highlight untold stories

With funds from the Atlanta Arts and Entertainment District revenue supplemented by philanthropic dollars, public art should become a vehicle for making these local stories visible in the public realm. Public art may be temporary such as projections and performances, or more permanent, as in murals and site-specific installations. It can also be used as a strategy to activate vacant historic buildings and elevate discussions about preservation. When paired with the other recommendations in this chapter, these interventions can produce a multi-media experience that takes participants on unexpected journeys both through the city and into other worlds and times.



Arts & Culture activity input from June Public Open House



## PRECEDENTS



Hidden City Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, PA  
Source) <https://hiddencityphila.org/about-3>

### » Develop a Downtown storytelling app

The public art interventions and themed itineraries described in the previous recommendations of this chapter can be enriched with storytelling that speaks to the cultural heritage of Downtown. While some of this may live on historic markers and interpretive signage, developing a digital home for storytelling adds another layer and has the advantage of being able to creating an immersive environment that enhances the experience of Downtown. The success of podcasting and storytelling projects such as the Moth’s Story Slams and the Library of Congress’s StoryCorps reveal an appetite for the art and craft of storytelling – more so when it can make a personal connection. A storytelling app and its content can be developed through partnerships with the educational, historical, and cultural institutions Downtown, through a crowdsourcing project as described in the recommendation below, or through an storyteller in residency program, modeled after Detroit’s new Chief Storyteller position, charged with rewriting narratives about the city in ways that pay homage to the city and the daily experiences of its residents.

### » Use special events and tours

History and the arts are highlighted in existing events such as Phoenix Flies, Open House, Docomomo, and ELEVATE, which could be expanded upon to further bolster what makes Downtown unique – art, music, food, and cultural diversity. Events, particularly outdoor ones, were ranked high by the public among the ways to tell and celebrate the overlooked stories that define Downtown – everything from concerts and performances to movies, night markets, and regularly scheduled walking tours like those designed by Atlanta Movie Tours or the Atlanta Preservation Center. Explore opportunities to reach bigger audiences by integrating event features; Hidden City Philadelphia, for example, functions much like a hybrid of Phoenix Flies, Open House, Docomomo, and Elevate and thus draws artists, preservationists, designers, urban explorers, historians, and culture consumers to events.

“The history of Sweet Auburn is unparalleled nationally: I wish Atlanta celebrated that part of Downtown more and realized how special it is to our unique heritage and identity.”

## » Develop a crowdsourced project

One way of uncovering untold stories and places is to ask community members to contribute. An online map and database can be created to crowdsource information about the sites, people, and memories that have local significance. Photos, documents, and other memorabilia could also be added to create an archive that can be used for research and could eventually inform one of the place-based interventions described in the previous recommendations. The Place Marking Project on the Lower East Side in New York is a public history project that utilized community contributions to create “place marker” signs that exhibit personal stories and photos and provide a window into the community life of the neighborhood from years gone by.



Place Marking Project  
Lower East Side New York City, NY

“The current accomplishments that Atlanta holds are what make us stand out as the destination of the South for everyone.”



## » DID YOU KNOW?

### 540 John Wesley Dobbs Ave NE

The John Wesley Dobbs House, which the “Mayor of Auburn Avenue” called home for 52 years, still stands in the Old Fourth Ward. From the sidewalk, passersby can see his name engraved in the marble of the front steps.

In the 1930s, Mr. Dobbs (1882-1961) coined the name “Sweet Auburn” for his local community and its Auburn Avenue commercial corridor, long a center of African American business, entertainment, and political power. He served as the Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons for nearly 30 years and was active in the civil rights movement. Mr. Dobbs advocated for voter registration in all corners of his community. Through his efforts, he built a powerful voting block that forever shifted Atlanta politics, forcing the white establishment to work with the black community. His grandson, Maynard Jackson, became Atlanta’s first black mayor (1974-1982, 1990-1994).

The home was built circa 1890.



Source) Atlanta Preservation Center

## 2.3 Celebrate and preserve Downtown's creativity

With the cluster of established cultural venues in the Fairlie-Poplar district, collection of creative businesses and artists' studios in Castleberry Hill, and newer arts destinations in South Downtown, Downtown is a hub of culture and creativity in the Atlanta region. As Downtown and South Downtown, in particular, prepare for coming investments and change on the horizon, a new and pressing need has emerged, and that is the need to treat the arts sector and its many participants and drivers of culture as a key Downtown asset, worthy of celebration and requiring preservation.

“What's cool and unique now is happening in South Downtown at Eyedrum, Murrmur, Mammal Gallery... How can we maintain that area as an experimental art space?”

### » Undertake a cultural plan for Downtown

The City's Resilient Atlanta plan includes a targeted effort to build Atlanta's arts and culture sector as one of the city's fastest growing industries by 2025; the first stated step is to conduct a citywide cultural plan. With a solid concentration of arts and cultural assets existing Downtown, CAP/ADID and representatives from a range of Downtown arts and culture organizations will need to be actively engaged in the citywide process. To help shine a spotlight on Downtown's existing resources (to see them mapped, visit ARC's Open Data mapping tool, <http://garc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8d4aba949f0f4cc293ac7d4fbc20efa8>), prioritize the implementation of recommendations proposed under Goal 2 of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*, assess the need for added space for creation, rehearsal, display, and performance, and evaluate the potential of designating an Arts District (or several) in Downtown, commission a more targeted study that brings a greater level of detail for Downtown to the citywide effort.

### » Activate underutilized ground floor spaces with art and active cultural or creative uses

Strategy 3.2 details a range of strategies to increase the visibility and vitality of Downtown's creative community by redefining “active” ground floor uses to focus on supporting small businesses, artist work space, and local services. The recommendation also suggests that resources and programs be identified so that such spaces can be offered at below-market rents in recognition of two factors: 1) the value of Downtown's local arts sector, and 2) the market realities of finding established retail tenants able to significantly contribute to a building's monthly revenue. There is a need for an intermediary between property owners or investors and the local arts community; explore the potential of a new program, complementing the City's Percent for Public Art program—a Percent for Culture program, to be applied within a designated creative district Downtown.



South Broad Street

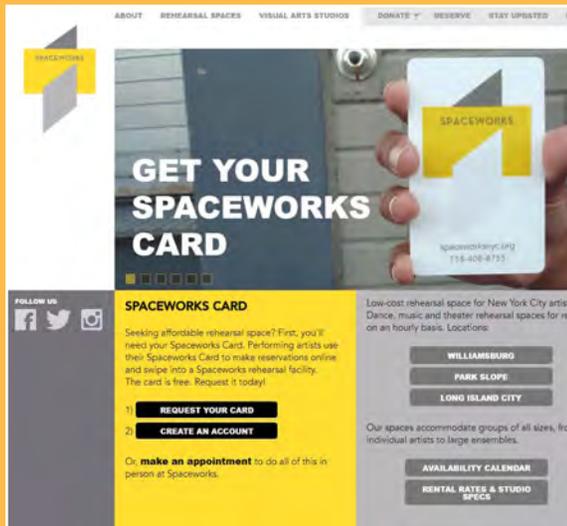
“Right now, more important that investing in public art, is investing in a mechanism to prevent the repeated displacement of artists and arts organizations.”



## PRECEDENTS



New York City To Be Determined  
New York, NY  
Source) <https://nyctbd.com>, Image: <https://www.nytimes.com/>



SpaceWorks  
New York, NY  
Source) <https://spaceworksny.org>

Under such a program, CAP would work with developers or property owners interested in contributing the first floor of their building (or a portion thereof) to an artist or cultural organization as work space. CAP would find potential matches, and develop a “rental agreement” by which tenants receiving free or low-cost space would be responsible for beautifying, activating, and programming the vacant ground floor windows of the space with art, lighting, activity, and monthly community events. Added benefits would include

“reducing the placelessness on certain blocks or at certain parking garages where people tend to lose their cars and increasing feelings of safety after hours.”

Operationalizing a Percent for Culture program could take the form of a Community Benefits Agreement, with creative and cultural uses receiving long-term, low-rent leases for activating difficult to rent ground floor spaces. As an alternative to dedicating space, investors and developers could pay into a revolving loan fund for building fit-outs for creative uses (see Strategy 3.2). And as space security is a key issue of concern over the long-term, CAP and arts advocate partners should also explore ownership opportunities, perhaps through opportunities to purchase ground floor units for work space in condominium developments or through a community land trust model, focused on the preservation of affordable work space (instead of or in addition to housing) over time.

“What if developers contributed the first floor of their building for use by an arts or community organization that supports culture? Once a month, the organizations in such spaces would curate a cultural event in exchange for the space.”

» **Market the arts with targeted programming and a guide to creative events Downtown**

As described above, in Strategies 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, investments in the public realm and in work spaces for the arts, culture, and creative community should translate to opportunities for programming that not only solidifies Downtown's role as a cultural destination, but also creates added employment and/or opportunities to sell and buy artwork in Downtown. Reinvigorate the First Thursday Downtown Arts Walk, with participation from some of the more recent additions to the Downtown arts scene. Add seasonal programming and events similar to the Indie Craft Experience Holiday Market at the Georgia Freight Depot that keep people coming back to Downtown as an arts marketplace. Coordinate with existing well-used resources to spread the word, including Creative Loafing, Atlanta PlanIt and the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau events calendar, and in all efforts, incorporate artist-made content, from sound-tracks to signage, menu design to invites and posters.

“Make Downtown the place to go for LOCAL art, LOCAL food and shops, LOCAL nightlife.”

» **Focus the efforts of the Atlanta Arts and Entertainment District to convene and promote arts organizations Downtown and coordinate their advocacy and investments**

Any effort aimed to add capacity and sustainability to Downtown's arts, culture, and creative community will require a dedicated committee, curator, and, ultimately, a funded staff position to focus on the effort day-in and day-out. As things stand today, Downtown's artists and arts organizations are at capacity focusing on their work, their missions, and their ability to stay where they have put down roots in Downtown. The new revenue to be generated by the Arts and Entertainment District in Downtown presents a new opportunity to build in supportive infrastructure for art, art making, and preservation of the creative community.



## PRECEDENTS

**ARTSNOW** / CONNECTING ARTS,  
CULTURE AND COMMUNITY  
IN SUMMIT COUNTY

ArtsNow  
Summit County, OH

An example of an arts liaison working to connect, collaborate, and support the creative sector.

Source) <http://artsnow.org>

## 2.4 Preserve Downtown's built heritage

“Downtown is cool in a different way, because of the historic fabric.”

Downtown's creative sector (2.3) is not the only local asset in need of stewardship and preservation as the real estate market strengthens and the pace of development accelerates; Downtown stakeholders also feel a real sense of urgency related to the preservation of the historic building stock Downtown.

Advocates worry that preservation efforts are losing ground.

“Downtown has long been overlooked, but the tides are turning.”





“We were at a tipping point, dangerously close to not having enough historic buildings to be able to tell a cohesive story.”

Park Place

» **Complete a survey of all existing buildings, streets, and infrastructure Downtown to identify what is eligible for Landmark status or other designations**

In 2013, CAP/ADID commissioned a new survey of Downtown’s architecture, the Downtown Contemporary Historic Resources Survey. The survey focused on buildings that had been built between 1935 and 1985, identifying 266 resources within the study area—examples of Art Deco, Stripped Classical, International, Brutalism, and Late Modern styles. While this document presents an excellent record of Downtown’s more modern buildings, the last survey of Downtown’s older resources was conducted in 1984 and published in *The Heart of Atlanta: Historic Structures Survey*. It is time for an updated survey of older historic resources in Downtown, and CAP

should seek funding for a more comprehensive survey of all buildings 40 years or older. The purpose of the updated survey is to help “balance growth with preservation” as Downtown continues to evolve, identifying historic assets and areas that necessitate better protections, as well as areas where the need for greater density to support anticipated growth will need to be accommodated.

Beyond buildings, the survey should also make note of streets and infrastructure elements that contribute to the story of the city’s evolution, from materiality to construction methods to advances in transportation systems such as the streetcar. Complement the survey with an online archive that packages historic maps, photos, articles, songs, and stories that help bring the history, culture, and lived experiences of these places to life for those curious to learn more (see Strategy 2.2).

The benefits of such a survey are underscored by recent preservation successes along the Beltline; the City conducted a survey of historic properties for inclusion in the *Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan*, and buildings identified for possible landmark designation were subsequently saved from demolition.

“The area is full of charm and beautiful architecture. It’s a true urban neighborhood.”



» **Work with the City to enact a temporary moratorium or evaluation period for demolitions Downtown**

The updated comprehensive survey of historic resources Downtown will take time to fund and complete, but development Downtown is likely continue. In the interim, work with the City to devise a process that will slow demolitions—even for buildings that are not formally “recognized” historic assets—to afford experts the needed time to evaluate the historic value, merits for preservation, and options to do so in concert with new investments and development. Such a process could take the form of a temporary moratorium on demolitions, or a review process aimed at buying time for evaluation, until the updated survey is complete.

“We have lost lots of historic fabric because we were told that any development is better than none. We disagreed, but that was the prevailing perspective.”

» **Maintain a list of older structures or blocks under threat of redevelopment and demolition**

Building on the preliminary analysis conducted for this study to identify properties under threat (meaning that they are vacant or the land value is greater than the building value), develop a list, to be refined by the updated comprehensive survey, of buildings or blocks that are under threat of redevelopment and demolition. Work with local preservation experts and advocates to prioritize the list, and begin conversations with the City about pursuing additional landmark nominations Downtown.

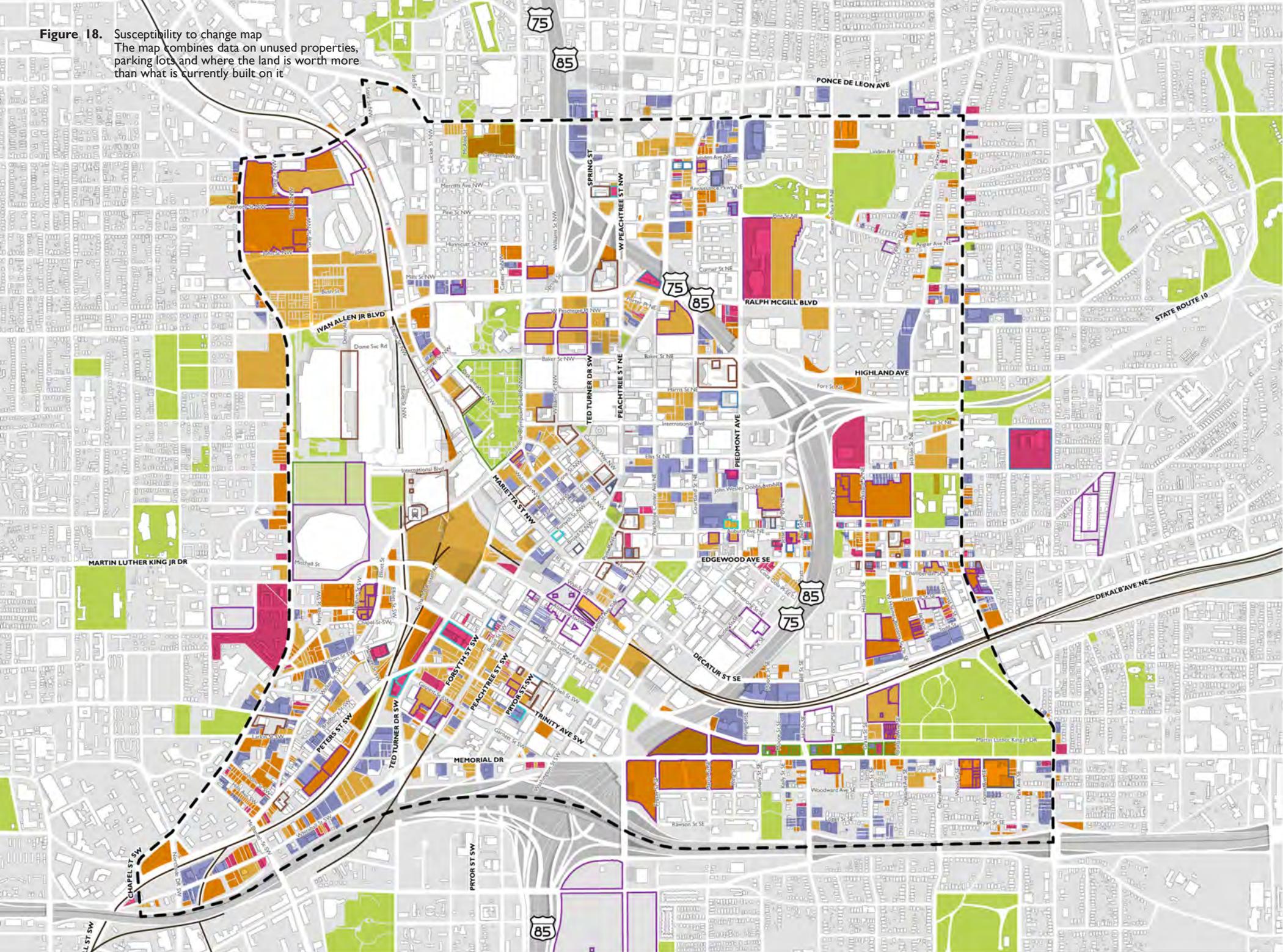
“Not every building has to be preserved because of its architecture, but sometimes several buildings together, say something. We lose the story when buildings are picked of one by one.”

» **Establish a diverse Downtown preservation task force**

With the ballooning pipeline of new development projects, it is important for preservation advocates to come together and take action, monitoring change and proactively working to change the narrative that development in Atlanta overwrites valuable histories. The key purposes of the task force should be to enhance communication about and develop strategies for buildings under threat, to assist developers in finding resources for preservation such as tax abatements, tax credits, or transfer of development rights, and to ensure that a diversity of histories and places are preserved for generations to come. Depending on the task force’s interest, it could also spearhead an initiative to develop a set of guidelines for how to retrofit Downtown’s modern architecture in ways that respect the architectural style while also supporting a more active interface with the adjacent public realm; the guidelines would support a “more flexible approach to preservation.”

The Atlanta Urban Design Commission recently received funding to undertake a four part Historic Atlanta Revitalization Strategy, which will ultimately inform the city’s zoning re-write. Members of the Downtown preservation task force should seek opportunities to coordinate and collaborate.

**Figure 18.** Susceptibility to change map  
The map combines data on unused properties, parking lots and where the land is worth more than what is currently built on it

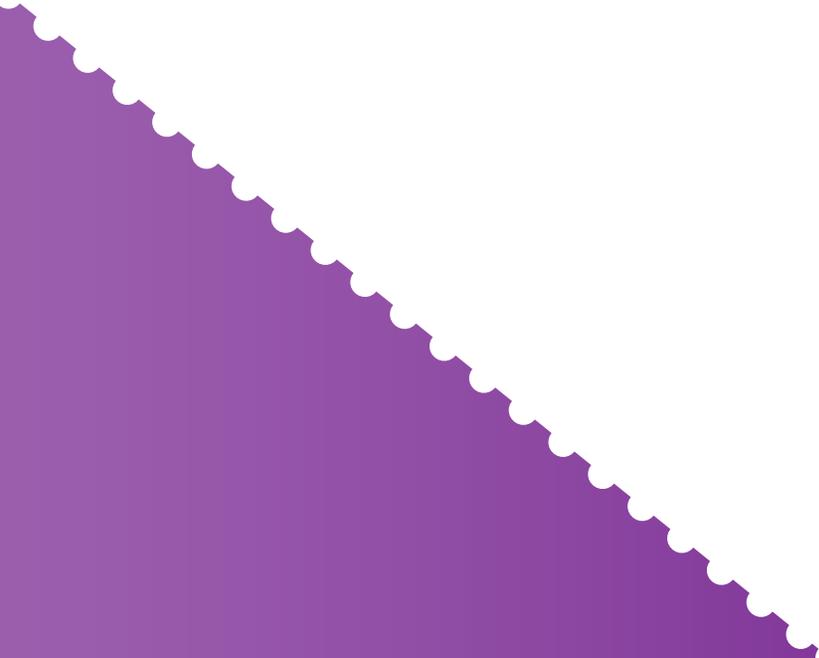


# SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

-  Study Area
-  Parking Lot
-  Vacant Lot
-  Vacant Building
-  Land Value > 50% of Total Assessed Value
  
-  New Construction
-  Renovation
-  Renovation/Adap. Reuse
-  Renovation/Vacant
-  Renovation/Vacant/Adap. Reuse
-  Open Space



**GROW DOWNTOWN**  
**NEIGHBORHOODS** tailored to meet  
the needs of residents



# 3. GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

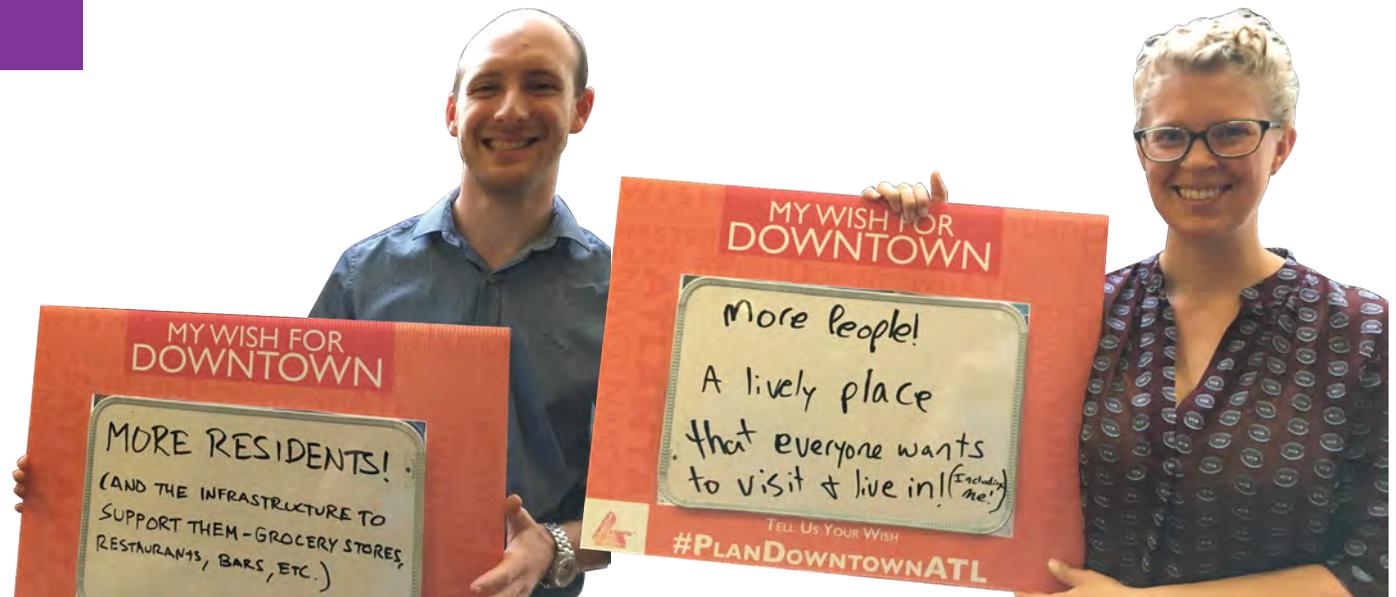


- » What is typically referred to as the “core of Downtown” is home to only about **18%** of the total Downtown population.
- » Downtown could grow by **12,000** residents over the next 15 years.
- » Downtown has about **3,500** units of housing that are income-restricted. This accounts for **26%** of the total housing units Downtown. However, the subsidies will end in 2030 for approximately **45%** of the existing affordable units.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Downtowns today are thriving due to a growing desire to live in vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods. New housing helps to draw more people, which in turn supports more retail and creates a safer atmosphere where streets that were once empty are now regularly populated with residents. Downtown today is home to more than 26,500 residents including roughly 5,200 students in dormitories. The majority of these residents, however, live toward the periphery of Downtown in neighborhoods like the Old Fourth Ward, Castleberry Hill, Memorial Drive, and Centennial Place. What is typically referred to as the “core of Downtown” is home to only about 18% of the

total Downtown population. Those who participated in the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan planning effort made it clear that one of the primary issues in Downtown is the lack of services – the kind you might find in a different Atlanta neighborhood. Downtown residents do have drug stores Downtown thanks to the large number of employees and visitors but the range of other services from local restaurants to local shopping lags. When residents were asked about their “one wish for Downtown,” the number one response was that it be more resident-oriented.



Growth is coming. According to the market analysis conducted by Bleakly Advisory Group, Downtown could grow by 12,000 residents over the next 15 years. Half (50%) of this potential increase in residents can be accommodated in housing developments already proposed or underway in Downtown, but there is additional market potential that can be guided by this plan to reinforce the qualities of existing neighborhoods Downtown while also adding new neighbors who will help to stimulate additional investment.

While welcoming new neighbors, we must continue improving services for existing residents and ensure that Downtown living remains accessible to a variety of ages and incomes. Downtown has about 3,500 units of housing that are income-restricted—in other words, dedicated to be affordable for households earning below specific income levels. This accounts for 26% of the total housing units Downtown. While the existing affordable housing units go a long way toward fostering a mixed-income Downtown, the subsidies dedicated to keeping these units affordable will expire over time. The subsidies will end in 2030 for approximately 45% of the existing affordable units.<sup>2</sup> As housing developments receive new or renewed Low Income Housing Tax Credit allocations from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs or bond financing from Invest Atlanta, existing affordable units can be preserved and more affordable units can be added to the inventory. However, competition for such subsidies is fierce, and while new units will be added, it

<sup>2</sup> Metro Atlanta Affordable Housing Tool, Enterprise Community Partners: <http://neighborhoodnexus.org/case-studies/enterprise/>

will remain a challenge to meet the need for affordable housing in Downtown and to ensure that investments in affordable housing stock keep pace to preserve Downtown as a mixed-income area in the context of anticipated market-rate growth.

In addition to existing income-restricted housing units, there is housing in Downtown that we would refer to as “naturally occurring affordable housing” (NOAH), which presents a different – yet equally timely – set of concerns. These units, typically Class B and Class C multifamily residential properties, maintain low to moderate rents without federal, state, or local subsidy. However, as market forces continue to push rents higher, these Class B and C properties are prime targets for demolition or gutting to a Class A luxury complex. This is a challenge not just for Downtown, but for Atlanta as a whole as the city faces increased development pressures. The City for All coalition reports that Atlanta is losing 16% of its naturally occurring affordable housing annually, and that there is a deficit of 25,000 “quality affordable housing units” for those making below 50% of the area median income. Working to retain and expand affordable housing

“If more affordable housing was available near public transit outside of downtown as well as in it, it would be a win-win for access to downtown and keeping Atlanta residents in Atlanta.”

Downtown is an important step in helping to address a much larger problem.

As market pressures continue to increase for new housing supply, the reality is that the majority of the new housing development will be on property that is currently used for another purpose. Less than 10% of Downtown’s parcel area is vacant—a very low number—and most of that land is already spoken for with plans for new development or open space. Meanwhile, 25% of the land area is currently dedicated to parking. There are underutilized sites that are opportunities for significant development, most notably the Atlanta Civic Center, the railroad Gulch, and the Stitch, as well as a large number of surface parking lots that are not the highest and best use for property Downtown. Redevelopment on these sites will change both the look and feel of Downtown. Better connections can be made to nearby assets and neighborhoods, and parking lots can transition to new garages “wrapped” with active uses. Atlanta has an opportunity to fill the gaps that currently separate uses and activities within Downtown.

### 3.1 Reinforce the unique character of each Downtown neighborhood

To refer to Downtown as one district is really a misnomer. Downtown is, in fact, a fragmented collection of many distinct, smaller neighborhoods. Highways, inactive street frontages, expansive surface parking lots, and rail infrastructure, however, can create disruptions in the neighborhood fabric and barriers between different Downtown neighborhoods.

Recognizing the variety across Downtown neighborhoods, investments should be place-based and reflective of the neighborhood's own unique needs. Some of these neighborhoods have already created plans that the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan incorporates and supports. Specific initiatives proposed by specific neighborhoods are folded throughout this report. Similarly, the *Downtown Transportation Plan* focused on streets, transit, parking, and active transportation. Its recommendations are also incorporated in this report under Goal 6.

“Atlanta thinks in neighborhoods,” so we divided Downtown into ten residential pockets or neighborhoods and asked participants at public events to tell us what each area most needs to become a better place to live. As investments are made, they should help to build upon what makes each neighborhood unique.





Robotron  
1,205,550 - W/HA

STICK

DOUBLE  
DRAGON

“ We have all these great communities among us - I can walk to Castleberry, Edgewood. ”

Figure 19. Key Downtown neighborhood needs identified by Downtown neighbors

**CENTENNIAL PLACE**

- Improve perceptions of public safety
- Address local homelessness
- More services & retail for residents
- Retain affordable housing
- Better connections to Downtown & Georgia Tech

**CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK**

- More housing
- More retail & activities for residents & tourists
- More walkable streets
- Play up Centennial Olympic Park

**FAIRLIE-POPLAR**

- More housing
- Focus on walkability
- More services & retail for residents
- Build brand as destination for culture & art
- Better connection to Centennial Olympic Park

**SOUTH DOWNTOWN**

- More housing & things to do
- More greening & public space
- More services & retail
- Address safety concerns
- Better streets & wayfinding
- Historic preservation

**CASTLEBERRY HILL**

- Better connections to Downtown
- More greening & open space
- More retail for residents & workers
- More work space - office/studio
- Adaptive reuse/preservation
- Better parking management

GEORGIA TECH

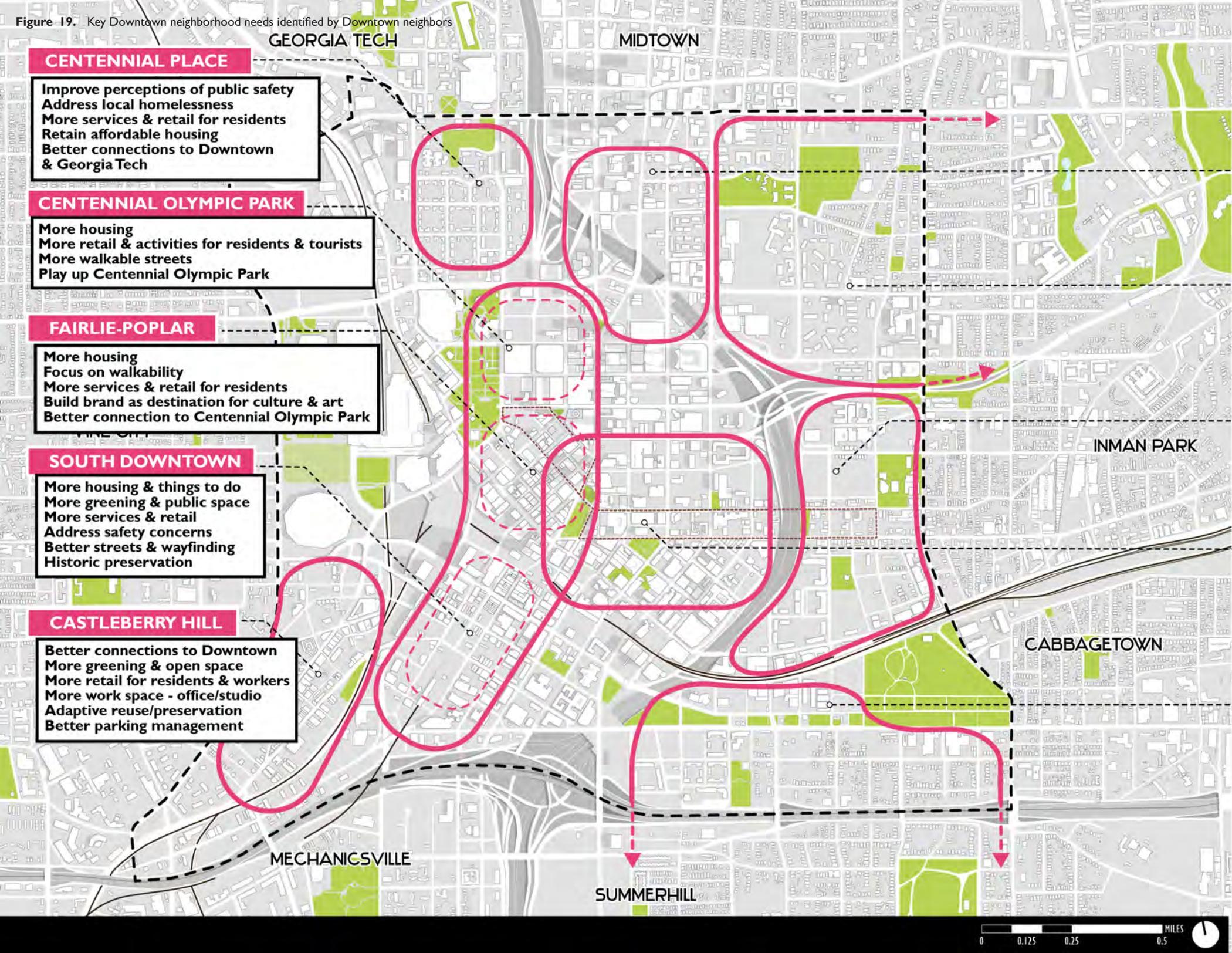
MIDTOWN

INMAN PARK

CABBAGETOWN

MECHANICSVILLE

SUMMERHILL



# NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

 STUDY AREA     NEIGHBORHOOD     SUBDISTRICT

## SoNo

Stitch to better connect Downtown & Midtown  
Infill development to connect east to west  
New park space

## OLD FOURTH WARD

More affordable housing  
More greening & active open space  
More services & retail for residents  
Better connections to Downtown

## SWEET AUBURN

Preserve unique history of Auburn Ave  
Manage Edgewood Ave entertainment district  
Improve sidewalks  
Infill retail along Auburn & Edgewood

## GEORGIA STATE

More housing for students and staff  
More cohesive campus identity  
More greening & humanized public space  
More crossover services & retail for students & workers  
Better walking & biking around campus & Downtown  
Better traffic calming & parking management

## MEMORIAL DRIVE/GRANT PARK

Affordable housing  
More resident-serving retail & services  
Better pedestrian connections to Downtown  
Better traffic calming

Residents identified the following needs, by Downtown neighborhood:



The *Council District 3 Plan* and the *Castleberry Hill Land Use Action Plan* were both completed in 2017 and highlight the importance of creating stronger connections to Downtown, integrating new public art and wayfinding, managing the neighborhood's parking challenges, and improving pedestrian safety (and slowing down thru-traffic!). The Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association is working to prioritize and implement key recommendations from the plans.



### **Castleberry Hill**

- Better connections to Downtown including reopening the Nelson Street Bridge
- Wider sidewalks, more open space, and outdoor seating
- Better pedestrian safety



New housing is underway around Centennial Olympic Park, and upgrades to the park itself are forthcoming. Residents made it clear that Baker Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive need to be safer, more vibrant streets that support local residents. These proposals are integrated into the transportation recommendations.

### Centennial Olympic Park

- Improve streets and add more retail and activities
- Add new housing
- “Focus on residents” but don’t forget about the tourists

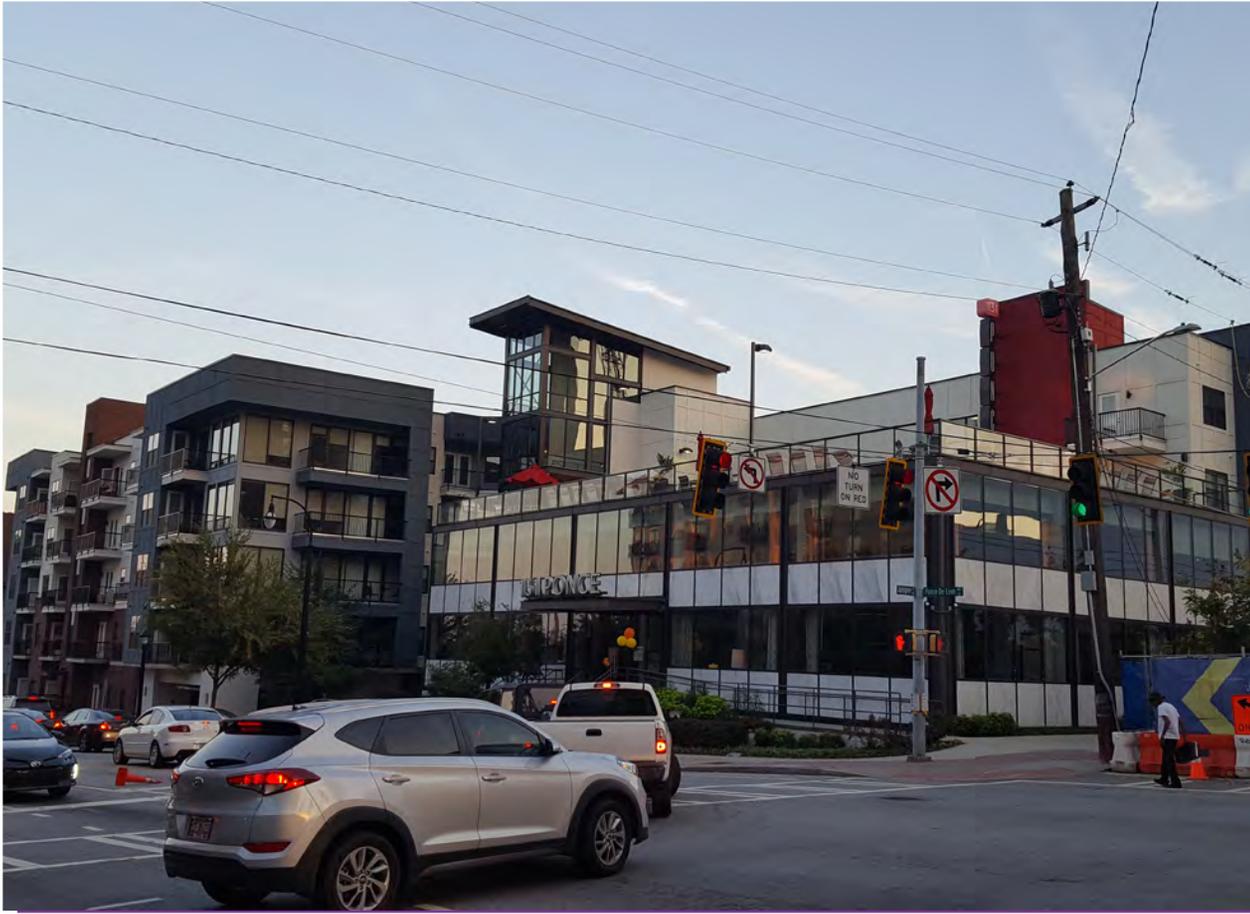


The Atlanta Housing Authority has secured key federal resources to protect affordable housing at Centennial Place. When the Atlanta Housing Authority's mixed-income Herndon Homes development is complete and Georgia Tech develops Technology Enterprise Park, this northeast corner of Downtown will enjoy added density, retail, connectivity, and opportunity.



### **Centennial Place**

- Improve perceptions of public safety
- Address local homelessness
- Add more retail options for residents
- Retain affordable housing



### South of North (SoNo)

- Continue to strengthen connections between Downtown and Midtown by advancing the Stitch vision plan and repurposing the beautiful building at Peachtree and Pine, formerly a shelter, with a new mix of active and cultural uses
- Integrate new park space and improve stormwater management
- Encourage infill development to better connect west to east
- Redevelop the Atlanta Civic Center

The proposal to bridge the highway and help to reconnect the neighborhood, Downtown, and Midtown is referred to as “the Stitch” and is moving actively toward implementation. There is also investment underway along North Avenue by the City to transition it into a smart corridor including an autonomous bus. The old Atlanta Civic Center site remains a major opportunity to integrate new housing into the area, and the redevelopment should be designed to address the longstanding connectivity and stormwater challenges of the site and surrounding blocks. The recent sale of the former homeless shelter at Peachtree and Pine represents a new opportunity for a mixed use project to activate a key intersection and better connect neighborhoods on the northern end of Downtown – Centennial Place, South of North, Old Fourth Ward, and Midtown.



Broad Street north of Five Points has been closed to traffic coming from Peachtree for some time. The Atlanta City Design Studio's Peachtree Street Urban Design Study completed in 2017 recognizes the importance of the Fairlie-Poplar district and makes suggestions for key intersections with Peachtree to include better pedestrian space and public art, as well as activated ground floor uses.



### **Fairlie-Poplar**

- Focus on walkability and better pedestrian spaces
- Add more housing
- Provide more services and retail options
- Build upon the concentration of arts and culture venues in the district
- Protect the resources of the National Register Historic District



Georgia State is currently undertaking an updated campus plan and is working to increase housing options for students Downtown. Connecting their existing campus to potential new uses at the Summerhill redevelopment is also important to the University; an improved bicycle network will serve students as well as the rest of the cyclist population.

### **Georgia State University**

- More housing options that are affordable to the student population
- Better and safer connections to the rest of Downtown
- Improved bicycle network
- Introduce more greening
- Calm traffic



There are active plans to transition the stretch of land between Memorial Drive and MLK Jr. Drive east of I-75/85 into a greenway. Called the Memorial Greenway, this new park will create a direct connection between the historic Oakland Cemetery and the State Capitol. Much of the necessary land has been acquired to make the vision a reality. In addition, the redevelopment of Capitol Homes continues and there are numerous private housing and mixed-use developments underway or planned for the area.



### **Memorial Drive/Grant Park**

- Encourage resident-serving retail
- Improve pedestrian connections – particularly the Memorial Greenway - to other parts of Downtown and to Oakland Cemetery, both a local and regional destination
- Improve pedestrian safety by slowing down traffic and creating safe connections to Downtown
- Retain a mix of incomes



The *Old Fourth Ward Master Plan* was completed in 2008. Built upon much resident input, the plan encourages the protection of existing residential areas and focusing new growth along major corridors like Boulevard and near transit. It encourages a greener, more walkable community with a mix of uses and housing.

### **Old Fourth Ward**

- Maintain a mix of incomes
- Add more greening including street trees
- Advocate for Streetcar connections to Downtown and Midtown



There is currently a major ongoing redevelopment effort in South Downtown that envisions the area as a social and safe place for the arts, events, and unique entertainment, active day and night with a community that lives and works in the area. The plan seeks to balance the preservation of existing architecture with modern design, while introducing a significant amount of new housing as well as new businesses. This plan also proposes progressive upgrades, such as complete street improvements, to most of the streets in South Downtown to assist with wayfinding, pedestrian connectivity, bicycle safety, and greening. In addition, Underground Atlanta presents a large opportunity to add a variety of housing options and a diverse mix of commercial uses.



### **South Downtown**

- More housing and more retail, restaurants, bars, galleries, and services
- Retain affordable housing and space for artists
- Improve public spaces and parks
- Address safety concerns in the area
- Better streets and wayfinding
- Transparent public process as major developments proceed



### Sweet Auburn

- Preserve the unique history of Auburn Avenue
- Foster a well-managed entertainment district along Edgewood Avenue
- Improve the sidewalks
- Infill retail along Auburn and Edgewood
- Develop joint solutions to common problems like parking
- Protect and expand affordable housing



A number of initiatives have been moving forward in the area, many targeted toward the unique needs of both Auburn and Edgewood Avenues. Along Edgewood Avenue, business owners have come together to address some growing issues including weekend traffic and noise. One block of Edgewood between Jackson Street and Boulevard is currently closed to traffic on weekend evenings, and the business owners are working on a strategy to redesign the street, manage traffic, and encourage new development nearby. Along Auburn Avenue, long-standing work by the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) to promote the district, guide investment, and protect affordable housing is now supplemented by Sweet Auburn Works, a non-profit focused on economic development, tourism, and preservation in the community. In the near term, the new M. L. King, Jr. Natatorium, a Renew Atlanta bond funded project, and planned mixed use Transit Oriented Development at King Memorial MARTA rail station will create two new neighborhood-serving destinations in the area.

## 3.2 Invest to create a connected, dense “residential backbone” in the heart of Downtown



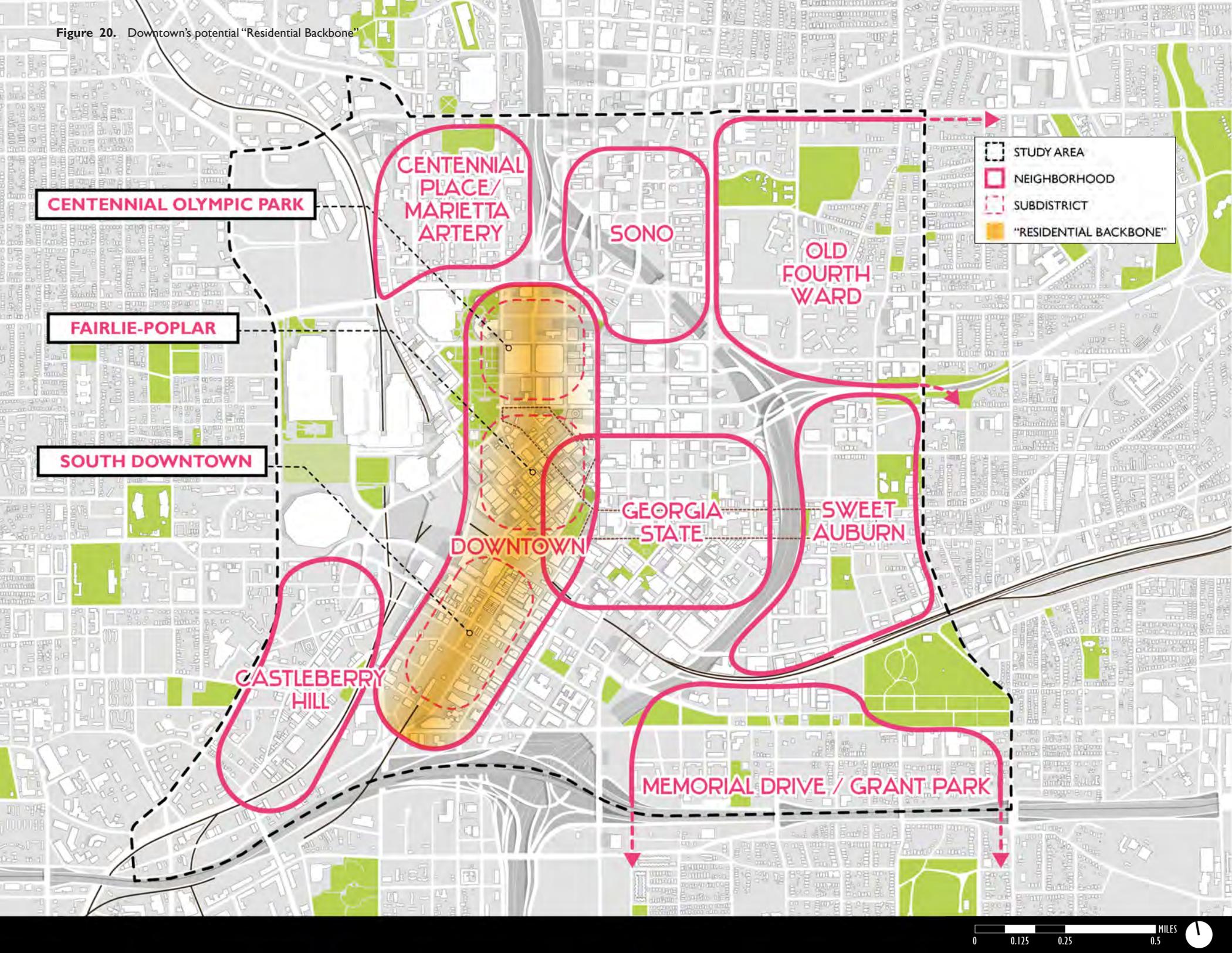
- » Market estimates indicate that Downtown could support over **19,000** new residential units over the next 15 years.
- » Currently, about **50%** of these new units are underway or planned for development.

Given the growth in the City, market estimates indicate that Downtown could support over 19,000 new residential units over the next 15 years. The opportunity is to guide the development of these new units in ways that help to re-establish a true Downtown neighborhood. Currently, about 50% of these new units are underway or planned for development. These new units are scattered throughout Downtown but mostly concentrated along the edges in more established neighborhoods like Memorial Drive/Grant Park or the Old Fourth Ward. To help change the character of the core and better support more services and street life, more residential units are needed. For example, future planning efforts should focus on creating a “residential

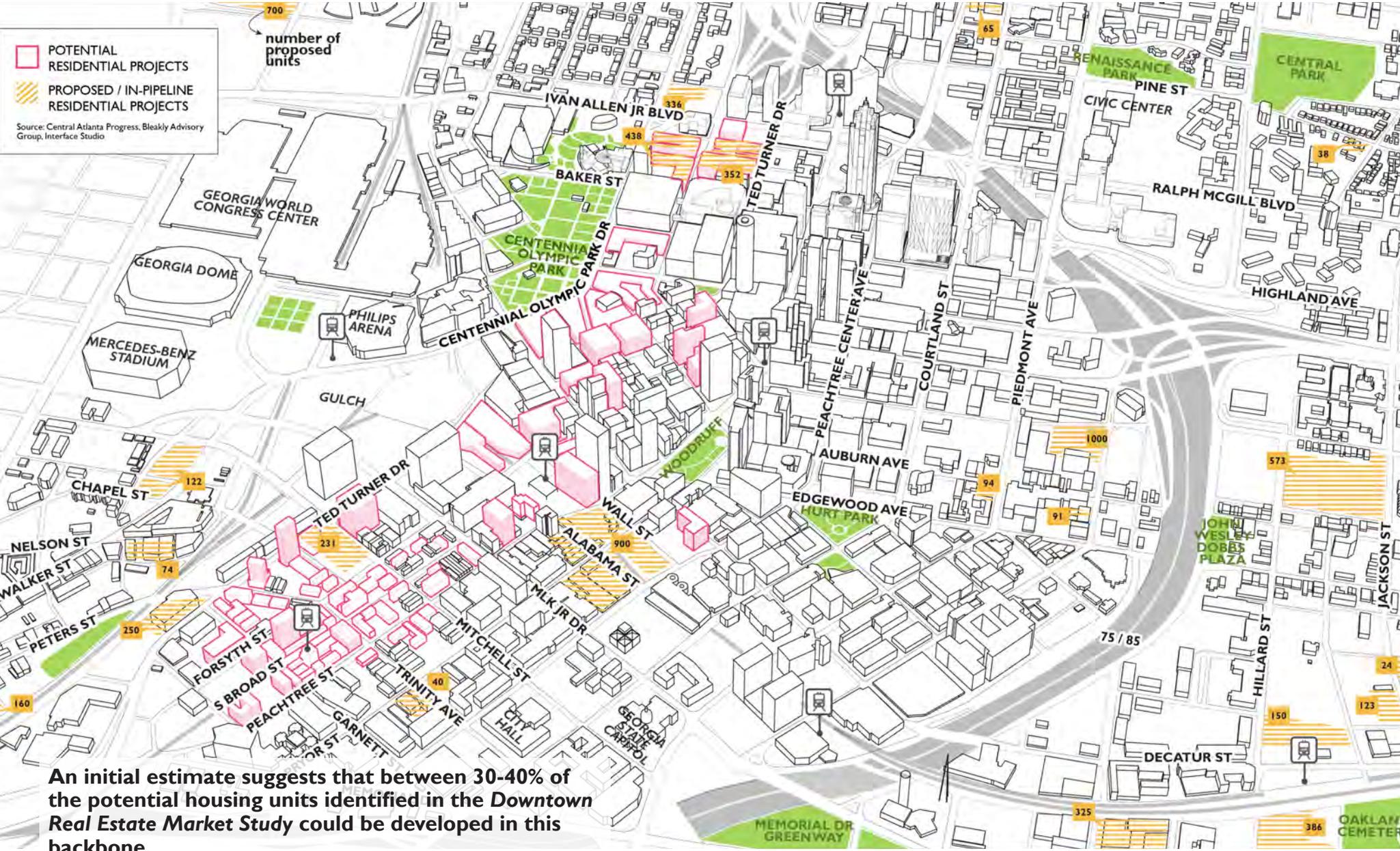
backbone” Downtown by encouraging new residential units on underutilized land from South Downtown north through Fairlie-Poplar to Centennial Olympic Park. An important aspect of this residential growth is the need for housing diversity. Downtown should not become a place dominated by condominiums for young professionals. A range of housing types and sizes needs to be encouraged to support the needs of students, recent graduates, families of all backgrounds and sizes, and seniors opting to age in place. An initial estimate suggests that between 30-40% of the potential housing units identified in the *Downtown Real Estate Market Study* could be developed in this backbone.



Figure 20. Downtown's potential "Residential Backbone"



**Figure 21.** Test fit: how many units could be built in the Downtown core?





» A move toward district parking can bring other benefits including potential funds to support improved transit access and the quality and character of Downtown streets.

### » **Unlock development sites by pushing forward with a district parking approach**

The advantages of Downtown living – walkability, street life, thriving businesses – are diminished by the dominance of surface parking lots and garages, which together account for 25% of the land area, creating significant gaps in activity. Further, constructing parking adds cost to development and, when a development site is adjacent to an existing underutilized garage or lot, limits the ability to efficiently use the parking that exists. When a developer proposes a project Downtown, the lender will often ask about the plan for providing parking, which developers need to satisfy in order to secure financing. At almost \$30,000 per space, this is a significant cost. The result is that many projects become more difficult to build and ultimately less affordable to the renters or buyers. Ideally, the developer could use spaces nearby that are empty in the evening for residents. But without certainty that the parking will exist two, three, or even 10 years down the road, this is not a realistic approach.

What is needed is better management of the parking that exists to free up land for new uses and reduce the costs of development. Most cities, as their downtowns grow, transition their parking lots to parking garages to maximize space. In Downtown Atlanta, this has occurred to some degree, but few parking decks are publicly-owned garages that can serve as shared parking resources for new residential developments. Publicly-owned and managed parking would help maximize the efficient use of space and parking utilization over the course of the day and week. With common branding for public parking, navigating and parking Downtown will also be easier for visitors looking to support Downtown destinations and businesses. But the real benefit is that as parking lots come under public control, some can be redeveloped to garages while others can be assembled and sold for redevelopment, thereby providing much needed land Downtown for new housing and new businesses.



Alabama Street

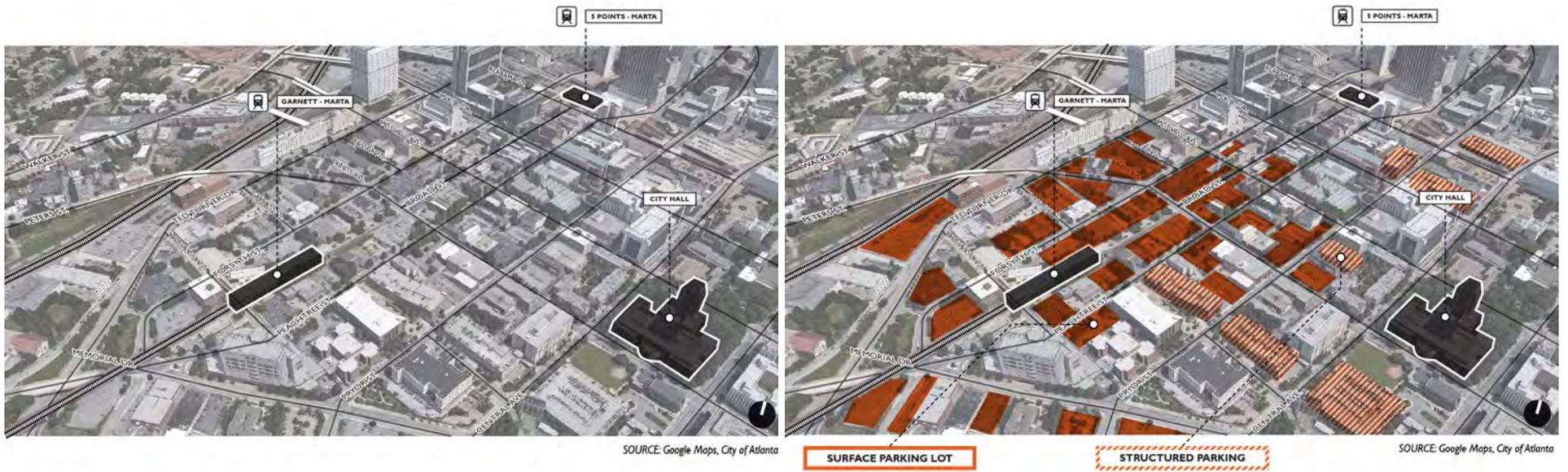
A move toward district parking, managed by a parking authority or similar entity, can bring other benefits. Through collection of fees, funds would be available to support improved transit access and much needed enhancement to the quality and character of Downtown streets. A “Downtown Parking Fund,” fueled by parking revenues and a potential non-accessory parking tax, could be used to pay for transportation projects Downtown thereby providing long-term revenue to support Downtown growth. For more details, see the parking recommendations under 6.6.

“The key to providing less parking is MARTA – pitch Downtown as affordable alternative. Sell residents on MARTA being a big part of their life. Find development sites close to rail.”

Figure 22. The link between transit, parking and development in Downtown.

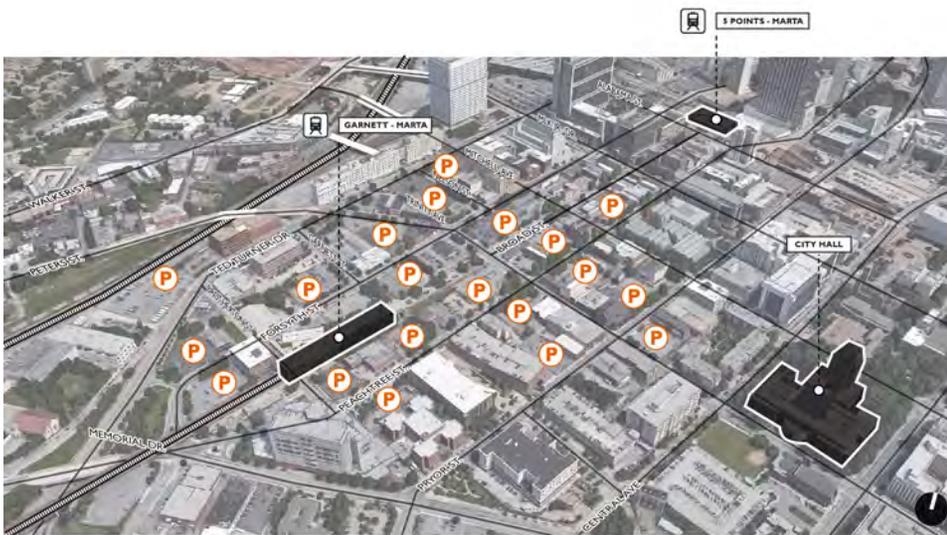


**Figure 23.** District parking explained in South Downtown

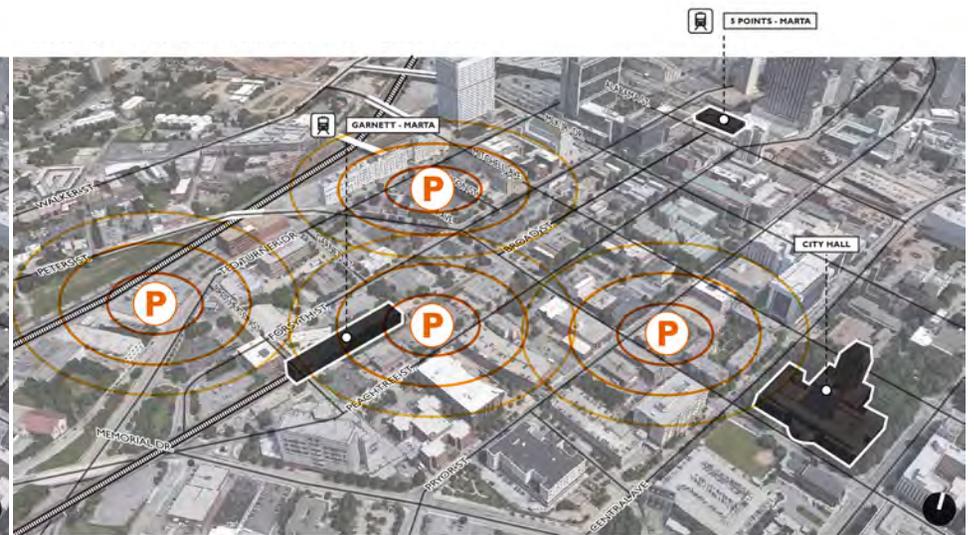


**This is South Broad Street area.**

**Surface parking is evident throughout the neighborhood. These lots are prime locations for new development.**



SOURCE: Google Maps, City of Atlanta



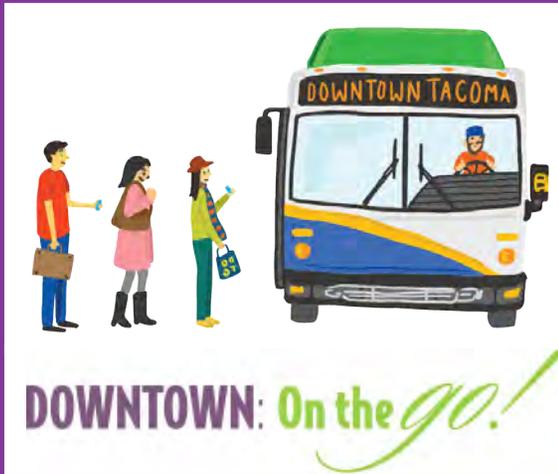
SOURCE: Google Maps, City of Atlanta

If each parking lot gets developed, parking would most likely be managed on a property-by-property basis.

If we manage parking on a district level, instead of at a property-by-property level, we free up space for new development.



## PRECEDENTS



Downtown: On the Go, Live Downtown  
Tacoma, WA

Source) <http://www.downtownonwego.com>

“My school is too expensive as is, and so I need to find an apartment, but the only affordable ones are significantly out of Downtown—though I wish it weren't so.”

### » Encourage micro-units & townhomes for both rental and homeownership

To attract the people who have the flexibility to move to Downtown, there must be a range of housing options that cater to different needs. Size, location, amenities, and pricing are all factors to consider. As the Downtown market grows, different models of Downtown living should be encouraged to offer product choices for residents. Currently, Downtown offers primarily two models of housing – single-family detached or semi-detached homes in the edge neighborhoods and high-density apartment or condo buildings in the core. A few low-rise apartment and garden apartment developments aside, there are limited alternative housing options. Microlofts – small apartments – help to provide a supply of housing that is cost-effective for students and young professionals who are not looking for a larger apartment or home. Townhomes of two and three bedrooms should also be encouraged to help capture larger families that are seeking an urban density but still looking for a small yard and front door on the street. Smaller flats as well as townhouses may also appeal to seniors looking to downsize and age in place in the walkable Downtown area. Both of these options offer an attractive solution to creating a transition between the density of Downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Bring a micro-unit developer to Atlanta to give a talk to local developers and City leaders about the advantages, and barriers to implementation, of micro-units. Also work to encourage townhome development as a means of creating a welcoming Downtown for families. Consider a design competition for one or two key sites that helps to raise the awareness and support for these types of investment.

### » Explore employee assisted housing options

Downtown is home to a significant number of employees and some of the region's largest corporations. Currently, almost 99% of Downtown employees commute from outside of Downtown. Many will continue to do so, but others may be interested in owning or renting a home Downtown, close to where they work, with the right incentive. Employee Assisted Housing programs offer ranges of financial incentives to make the case for living near the office. Partnerships with major corporations could result in an incentive package for employees to choose housing options in or near Downtown. The “Live Downtown Detroit” program is just one example that utilizes a combination of forgivable loans, renter's assistance, and funds for home improvements to incentivize downtown living for employees of partner corporations. The result is less demand for transportation (and parking), often a cost borne by the employers, an incentive to retain local talent long-term, and an improved Downtown that better reflects the values of local employers.

» **Evaluate and increase awareness about existing incentives for historic preservation**

Evaluate the City, State, and Federal government's suite of economic incentives for historic preservation to determine their effectiveness and applicability in today's market. Currently, the financial tools that exist to promote historic preservation or adaptive reuse include tax abatements, tax credits, impact fee exemptions, façade easements, and the transfer of development rights. Work with developers and housing advocates, particularly around affordable housing, to encourage the use of these tools or, if necessary, to invent new tools, incentives, or potential sources of gap financing to spur the types of rehabilitation projects and housing units at the range of price points that Downtown needs.

» **Continue to expand student housing Downtown**

Affordable housing options for the more than 30,000 students at Georgia State University, let alone the thousands more in school at Georgia Tech or nearby at Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Clark Atlanta University are very limited. Although Georgia State is rapidly seeking to build and provide more housing for its students, students struggle to compete with young professionals and empty nesters for market-rate housing in and near Downtown. The benefits of providing student housing close to where they attend classes include laying the groundwork for retaining talent locally after graduation, reducing commuter miles, and encouraging more activity through nights and weekends Downtown. The influx of students in the Fairlie-Poplar district has helped to create more street life and to support local restaurants. Focus should be given to more student housing designed to be integrated into the larger fabric of each Downtown neighborhood using microlofts (described above) that provide a viable housing option not just for students but also younger professionals and lower-income individuals.

“Many students don't have vehicles, so having a safe place within walking distance would be a huge advantage to the university and city dynamic.”

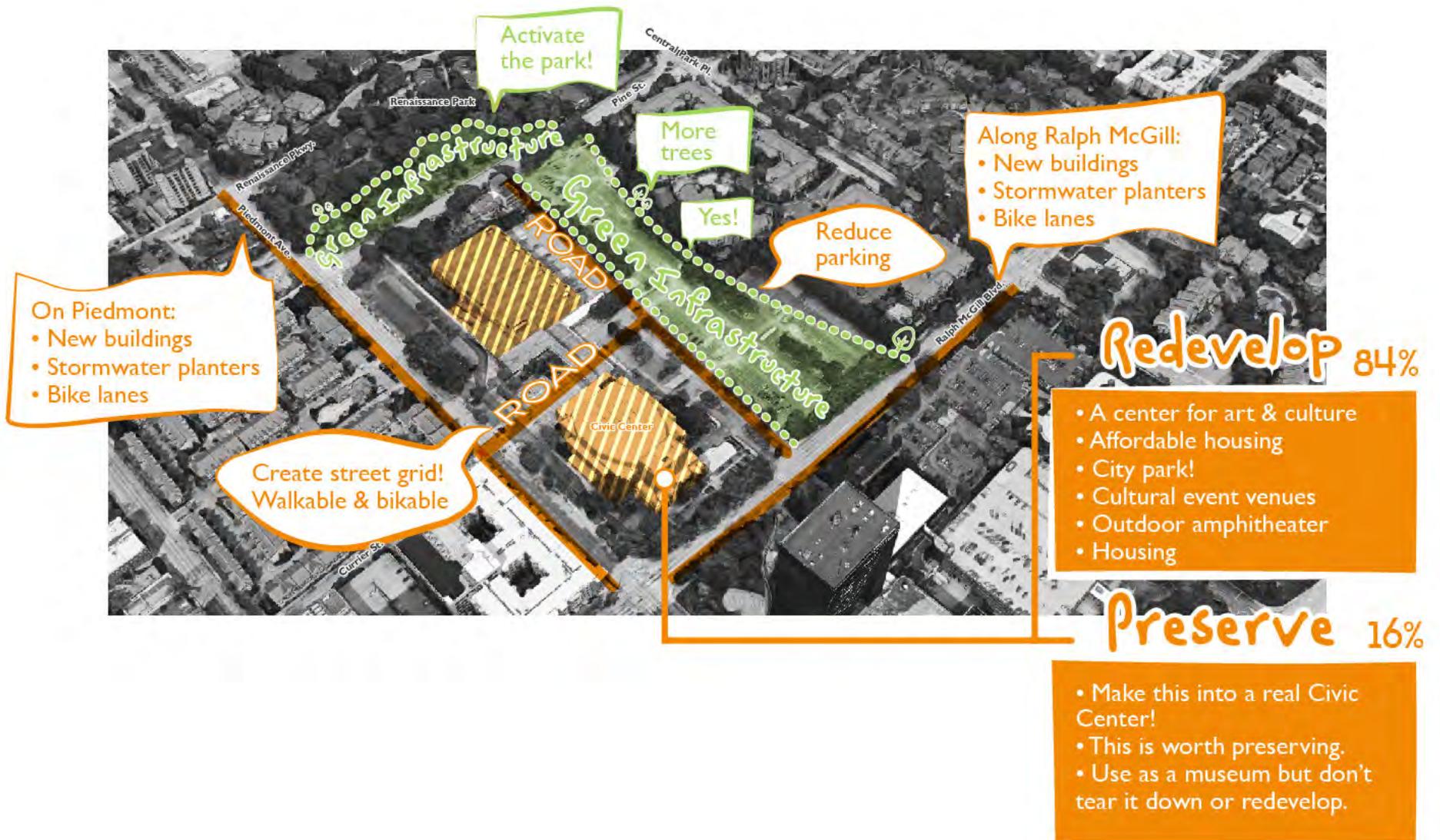
### 3.3 Re-imagine critical sites

There is limited space Downtown for new development. However, a few major sites remain as significant opportunities that can help to shape the future of Downtown for decades to come. In some cases, these sites have seen multiple design proposals complete with renderings and images intended to showcase new buildings and activities. The specific future of each of these sites can and should be determined in an open public dialogue including CAP/ADID, the City, residents, businesses, community and cultural organizations, and potential developers. The following reflects the key principles and themes that emerged from the public during this process.



What should happen here activity during June Public Open House

Figure 24. You be the planner - community ideas for the Civic Center



» **South of North (SoNo):**

**Atlanta Civic Center**

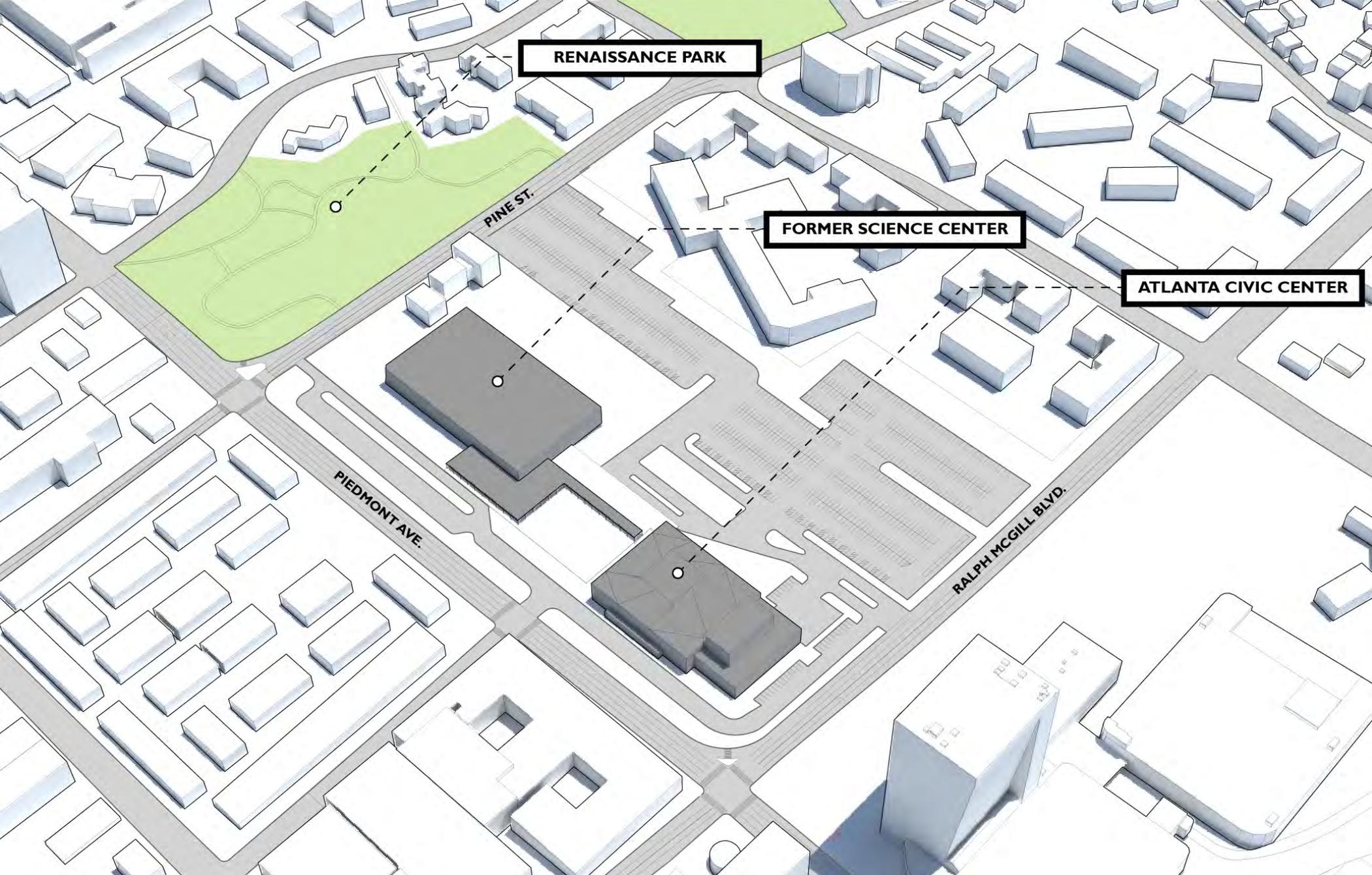
The Atlanta Civic Center site is the largest, City-owned parcel eligible for redevelopment in Downtown. As such, it is an enormous opportunity. The site currently comprises the old auditorium (now vacant) and the former exhibition building that is now utilized by the film industry. The center of the site is a massive surface parking lot built exactly in the spot where some of Downtown's worst stormwater issues are located. There are two options for the future of this site:



Civic Center site



Figure 25. The Civic Center today



- **Option 1:** Retain all or portions of the buildings. As beautiful as the old auditorium is, it is difficult to repurpose, which is the reason it has struggled to stay in active use. The former exhibition hall is actively used because it is precisely the kind of space that is

difficult to find Downtown. Should a tenant be found for the auditorium, one option is keep both buildings but repurpose the rest of the site, leveraging the re-use of the auditorium to attract restaurants, smaller flexible performance and rehearsal space, and other

arts, music, and cultural tenants that would benefit from proximity to large audiences drawn to performances at the auditorium. This includes transitioning the surface parking to parking garages and lining these garages with new development facing a new stormwater park. See details further illustrated on pages 187-190.

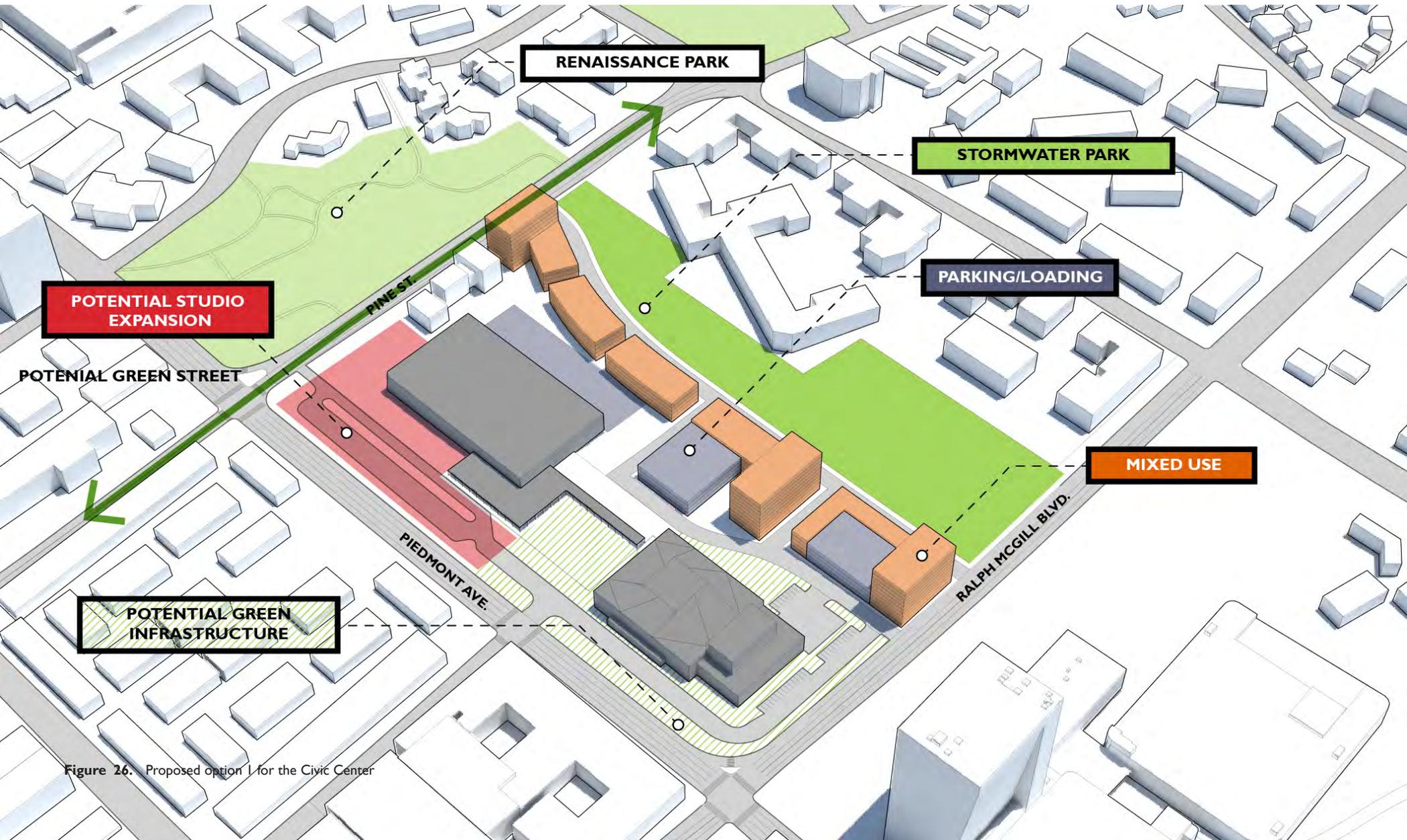


Figure 26. Proposed option 1 for the Civic Center

- **Option 2:** The second option takes the position that both buildings are difficult to reuse. With a clear site, the opportunity is to recreate the street grid and develop a walkable, neighborhood. Each block can integrate its own parking or share centralized parking.

The centerpiece to the site is a large stormwater park that serves as an amenity for the neighborhood. Improvements to Renaissance Park as well as to Pine Street should be considered to leverage the investment in this park and more effectively manage stormwater in the area.

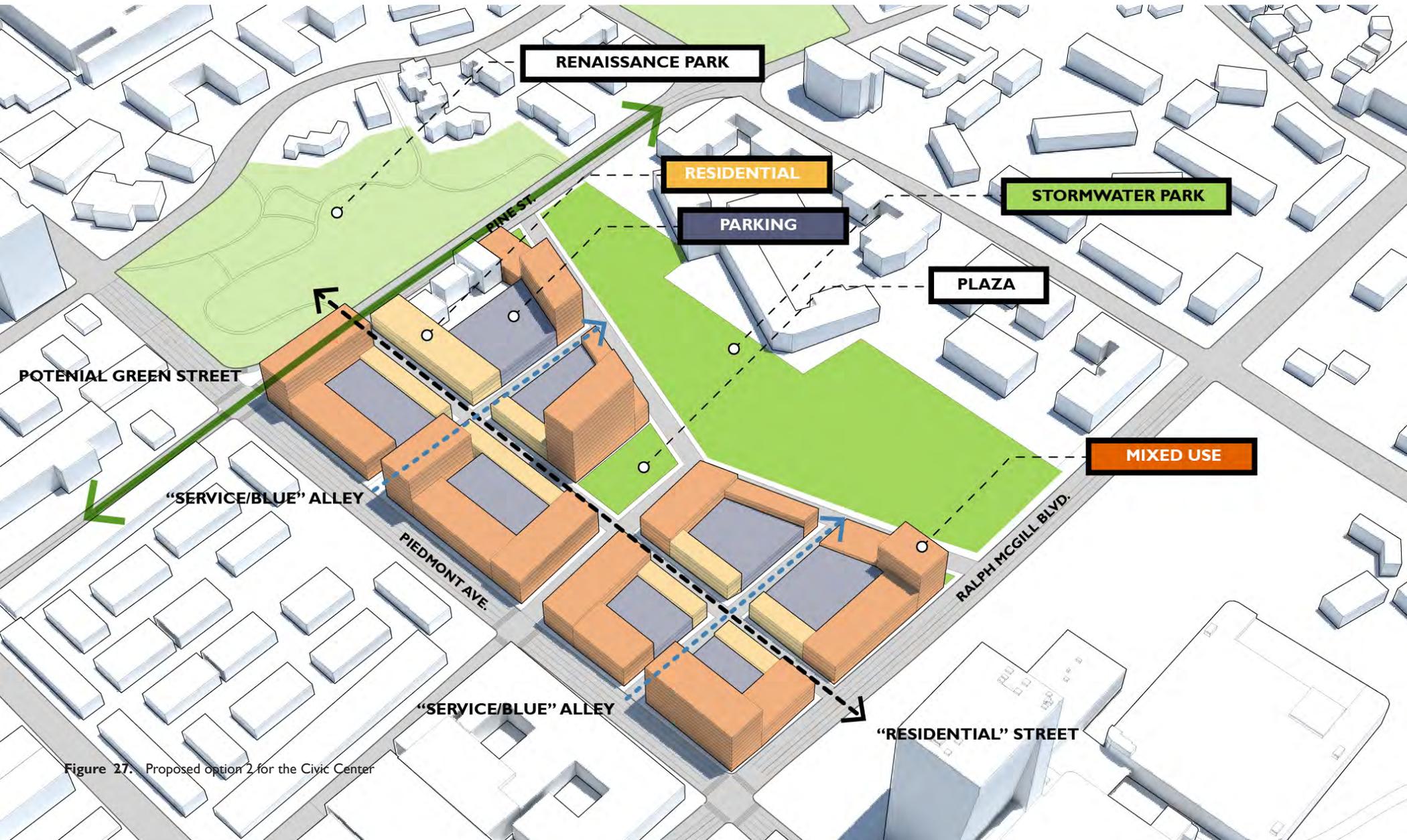


Figure 27. Proposed option 2 for the Civic Center

## » The Stitch

CAP/ADID launched a dynamic vision for the “Stitch” in 2016. To help better connect Downtown and Midtown, the Stitch is a mixed-use development to be built atop a cap over the highway. The project as envisioned includes new green space and civic infrastructure as well as new development pad sites that will help to maximize the use of transit at the Atlanta Civic Center MARTA rail station.

Since the release of the vision, CAP/ADID have been taking steps toward turning it into reality. A feasibility study is underway that will include a pathway to implementation. Participants in the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan expressed excitement for the vision. The completion of this project will bring significant benefits to Downtown residents, businesses, and visitors alike.



The Stitch

## » Five Points and South Downtown:

### The Railroad Gulch

The railroad “gulch” is the location where Atlanta’s original rail lines intersected and created the spark that fueled the City’s initial growth. As the City evolved, an elevated road system was built over this area leaving a hole in the middle of Downtown. The complicated ownership patterns, including air rights, as well as the cost of development has held back many proposals to repurpose the Gulch. Most recently, the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal Study (2012) and the Green Line Redevelopment Plan (2007) provided alternative visions including new streets, open space, and new development. In the case of the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal, the idea was to integrate a major transportation center including a new Amtrak Station.

Today, the Gulch is again a topic of conversation, ignited by a June 2017 announcement by the Atlanta Hawks about the planned renovation to Philips Arena and concurrent announcements about a major mixed use redevelopment at the Gulch. While the specific ideas for the site have changed over time, there are a few core principles that the redevelopment of the Gulch should seek to achieve:

- Extend Alabama Street west to Centennial Olympic Drive to provide a direct connection from Five Points to major destinations
- Create new streets that sub-divide the large site and are lined with new mixed-use development that helps to provide activity at all times of the day and week

- Integrate stormwater management into the site design, and seek to provide new open spaces that serve the development and surrounding uses
- Incorporate street-level plantings and the required structures to support tree growth
- Cap major portions of the site (depending on the program and design) to help activate key street connections, but also look for opportunities to provide glimpses of the rail infrastructure below, Downtown’s DNA
- Consider capping and redeveloping adjacent sites not typically considered part of the Gulch to help truly fill in this gap Downtown



The Gulch





## » **Underground Atlanta**

After the streets were created that covered the original facades and streets on the lower level of the City's original commercial buildings creating 'Underground' Atlanta, the area's fortunes have ebbed and flowed. Since the 1980s, however, when the first plan to integrate large-scale redevelopment was launched, it has been the subject of active debate. Today, Underground Atlanta is primarily vacant, and the entire parcel was sold to a private developer in 2017. Due to the size and importance of this site, its redevelopment will likely have a large impact on other developments Downtown. A few key principles emerged from discussions during this process:

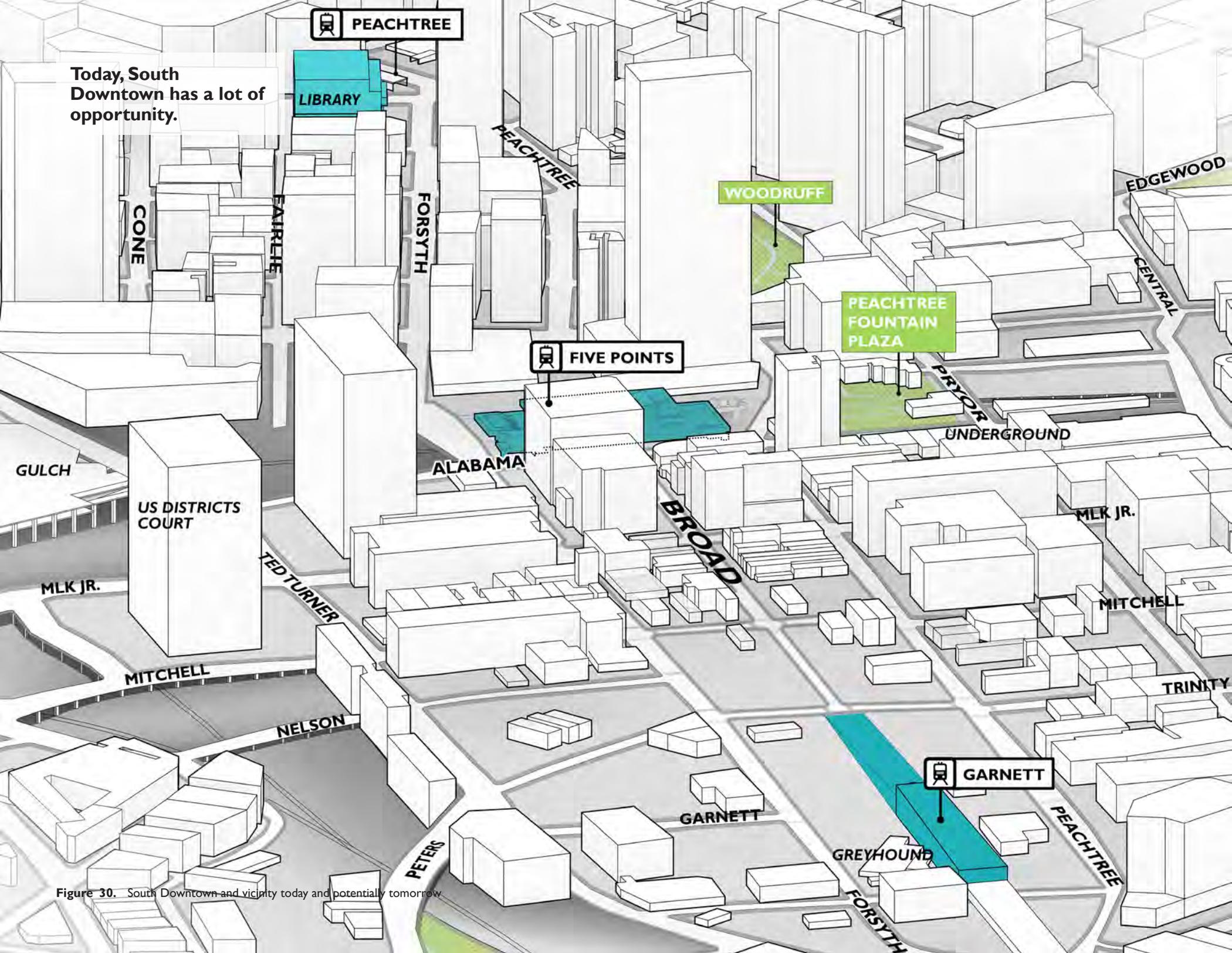
- Retain open, public access along Upper Alabama Street and Pryor Street
- Consider a mix of uses and densities within the development
- Integrate affordable housing for a mix of incomes
- If building significant numbers of new housing units, integrate stores and services that would help to serve all Downtown residents
- Ensure that the design activates and reinforces the surrounding streets including Peachtree Street, M. L. King Jr. Drive, and Pryor Street.

Underground Atlanta





Today, South Downtown has a lot of opportunity.



 PEACHTREE

LIBRARY

WOODRUFF

PEACHTREE  
FOUNTAIN  
PLAZA

 FIVE POINTS

ALABAMA

UNDERGROUND

US DISTRICTS  
COURT

BROAD

MLK JR.

MITCHELL

TRINITY

 GARNETT

GARNETT

GREYHOUND

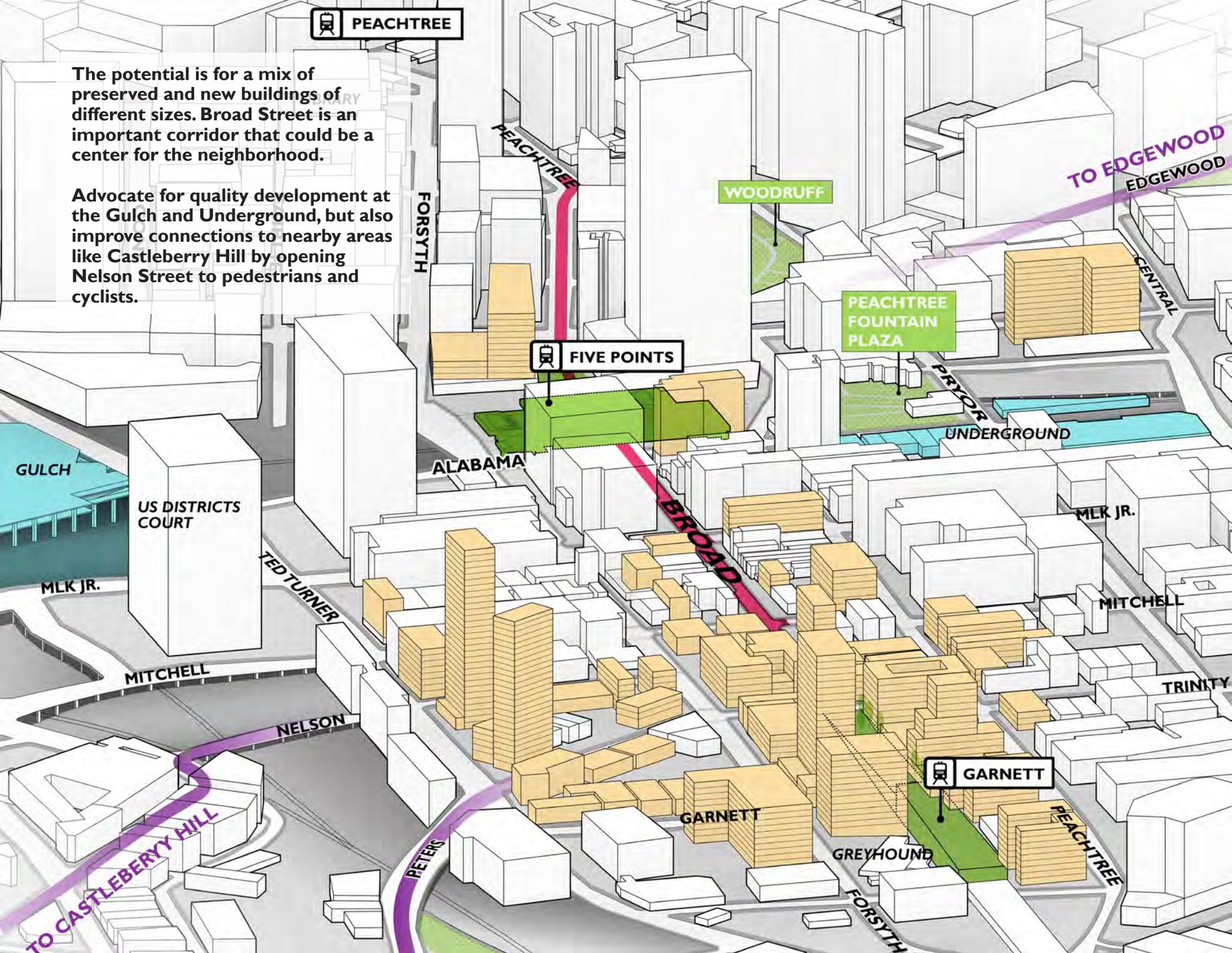
PEACHTREE

Figure 30. South Downtown and vicinity today and potentially tomorrow

 PEACHTREE

The potential is for a mix of preserved and new buildings of different sizes. Broad Street is an important corridor that could be a center for the neighborhood.

Advocate for quality development at the Gulch and Underground, but also improve connections to nearby areas like Castleberry Hill by opening Nelson Street to pedestrians and cyclists.



TO EDGEWOOD  
EDGEWOOD

WOODRUFF

PEACHTREE  
FOUNTAIN  
PLAZA

 FIVE POINTS

ALABAMA

BROAD

GULCH

US DISTRICTS  
COURT

TED TURNER

MLK JR.

MLK JR.

MITCHELL

MITCHELL

TRINITY

NELSON

 GARNETT

GARNETT

GREYHOUND

PEACHTREE

TO CASTLEBERRY HILL

PETERS

FORSYTH

### 3.4 Provide housing options to retain a mix of ages and incomes Downtown



- » **26%** of Downtown housing units are income-restricted—dedicated for low income individuals.
- » The Median Household Income for Metro Atlanta in 2016 was **\$58,310**, compared to **\$48,880** for the City of Atlanta and **\$35,670** in the Downtown core.
- » This means that **50%** of households in the Downtown core earn less than **\$35,000** per year and **41%** of households in the core earn more than **\$50,000**.

Today, 26% of Downtown housing units are income-restricted—dedicated for low income individuals. Cities across the country struggle to retain affordability in their downtowns. Downtown Atlanta has the benefit of a base of housing protected for low-income individuals and families. With proactive planning and policy, Downtown can grow in population but also retain its diversity and affordability.

But affordable housing is difficult to define. What is affordable to one family is not to another. According to the *Downtown Real Estate Market Study*, the Median

Household Income for Metro Atlanta in 2016 was \$58,310, compared to \$48,880 for the City of Atlanta and \$35,670 in the Downtown core. This means that 50% of households in the Downtown core earn less than \$35,000 per year; 41% of households in the core earn more than \$50,000. Further, even if housing is priced to be affordable, it does not guarantee that the housing is in good condition, accessible to seniors or disabled individuals, or designed to meet the needs of modern households. We will need to protect and create affordable and accessible housing in the context of Downtown's growth.

“Retain Downtown’s creativity and diversity.”

» **Establish a goal that 20% of housing Downtown will be affordable for a range of low-income households**

In Downtown, the need is to provide a mix of housing types at a range of prices to offer true housing choice for families and individuals of all backgrounds and people of ages. To ensure there are housing options for a range of incomes in the future, this plan recommends that 20% of new Downtown housing units be available for households earning below 60% of the area median income, or roughly \$36,000 per year. This target should serve as a guide for regulating and encouraging new development. This commitment would expand the number of affordable housing units by approximately 3,800 over the course of 15 years. The 20% goal reflects the fact that Downtown is an ideal location to promote a mix of incomes due to the availability of transit and wrap-around services that are necessary to address the needs of low-income families and residents. While inclusionary zoning continues as a topic of conversation, a number of necessary actions to realize this goal are detailed below; success in maintaining a mixed income Downtown will require ongoing coordination with key stakeholders shaping this conversation in the city.

» **Ensure protection of existing income-restricted units**

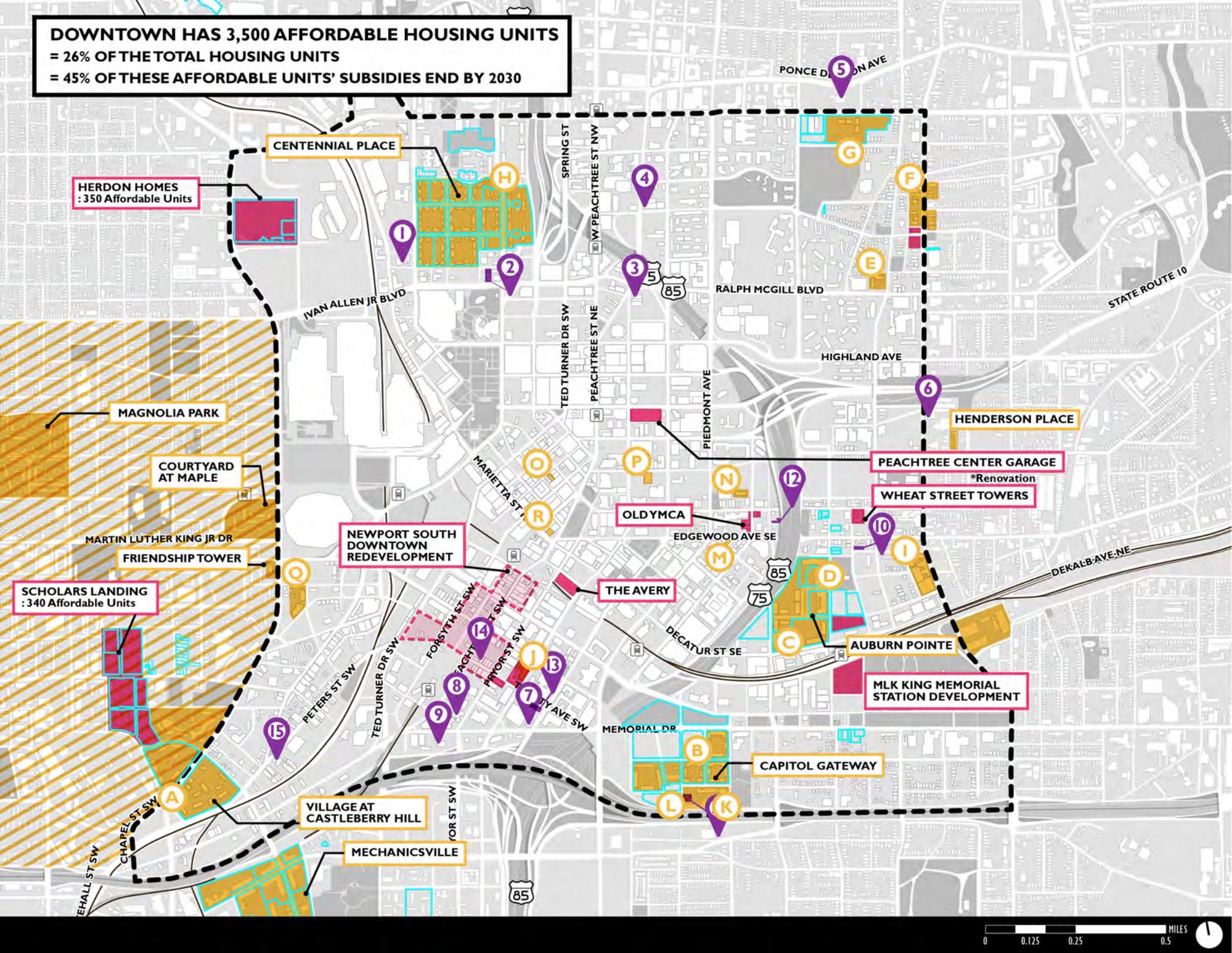
Existing income-restricted units should be retained. The Atlanta Housing Authority and its redevelopment partner developers have been re-applying for tax credits to protect affordability at Centennial Place. Other affordable units whose subsidies are set to expire should be monitored going forward, using the National Housing Preservation Database and other resources as identified by local housing advocates. Public-private partnerships should also be explored between entities that can offer creative financing to renovate these properties while maintaining their long-term affordability. Funding partners may include, but are not limited to, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Invest Atlanta, Atlanta Housing Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Enterprise Community Partners, as well as national and local financial institutions.



» This plan recommends that **20%** of new Downtown housing units be available for households earning below **50%** of the area median income, or less than **\$30,000** per year.

“I think more attention needs to be paid to the needs of long-term, low-income residents, who are the heart and soul of the city...Development doesn't have to mean displacement.”

**DOWNTOWN HAS 3,500 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS**  
= 26% OF THE TOTAL HOUSING UNITS  
= 45% OF THESE AFFORDABLE UNITS' SUBSIDIES END BY 2030



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

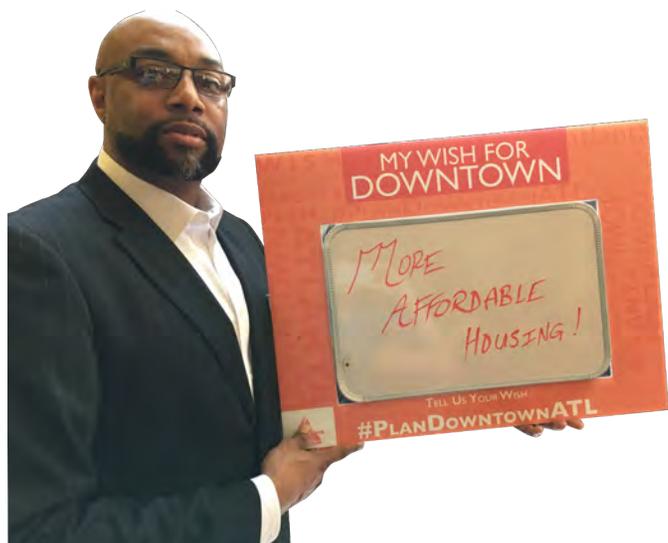
Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Central Atlanta Progress, Atlanta Housing Authority, Partners for HOME, National Housing Preservation Database

-  UNIVERSITY CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD
-  AHA OWNED
-  PROPOSED / UNDERWAY  
+980 units proposed

-  EXISTING
- A VILLAGE AT CASTLEBERRY HILL
- B CAPITOL GATEWAY
- C ASHLEY AUBURN POINTE
- D VERANDA AUBURN POINTE
- E MAGGIE RUSSELL TOWERS
- F BEDFORD PINES APARTMENTS
- G COSBY SPEAR MEMORIAL TOWERS
- H CENTENNIAL PLACE (TECHWOOD HOMES)
- I AUBURN GLENN APARTMENTS
- J CITY PLAZA APARTMENTS
- K COLUMBIA SENIOR RESIDENCES AT MLK VILLAGE
- L COLUMBIA TOWER AT MLK VILLAGE
- M EDGEWOOD CENTER
- N BETHEL TOWERS
- O FAIRLIE POPLAR APARTMENTS
- P FREEMAN FORD LOFTS
- Q NORTHSIDE PLAZA APARTMENTS
- R WILLIAM OLIVER BUILDING

-  HOMELESS SHELTER BEDS & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
- 1 THE SALVATION ARMY
- 2 ATLANTA MISSION
- 3 COMMONS AT IMPERIAL HOTEL
- 4 METRO ATLANTA TASK FORCE FOR THE HOMELESS
- 5 LIVING ROOM
- 6 OUR HOUSE (GENESIS HOUSE)
- 7 PROGRESSIVE HOPE HOUSE
- 8 GATEWAY CENTER
- 9 WELCOME HOUSE
- 10 O'HERN HOUSE
- 11 COLUMBIA TOWER AT MLK VILLAGE
- 12 TRINITY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES
- 13 TRINITY ASSESSMENT CENTER (ACTION)
- 14 ATLANTA RECOVERY CENTER
- 15 ATLANTA CITY RESCUE MISSION

Figure 31. Existing income-restricted housing in Downtown





» Tie local incentives for new housing development to reserving **10%** of housing units for households earning less than **120%** of AMI (Annual Median Income), or less than **\$72,250** per year.

» **Target rehabilitation work to protect low-to-moderate income homeowners in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods**

The biggest threats to affordability for low-to-moderate income homeowners, particularly seniors, are issues of home maintenance and high utility costs. A leaky roof or other issues can become a serious financial burden for a low-income household if not addressed quickly. The City offers a Limited Repair Program, and weatherization programs are available. Work to advertise available services, and link residents in need with programs to assist in these basic repairs. Consider targeting housing dollars or TAD funding toward these improvements in partnership with neighborhood associations to help identify local families that could benefit from these services.

» **Help to educate landlords about the Housing Choice Voucher Program**

The Atlanta Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Program (sometimes known as Section 8) is a valuable program that offers affordable housing across neighborhoods. Due to the program's requirements, Housing Choice homes are often in better condition than other rental units in the private market. However, the program brings with it stigmas that prevent property owners and developers from participating. To help protect affordable rentals Downtown, work to educate landlords on the program, the benefits, and how to participate. Coordinate closely with the Atlanta Housing Authority around Housing Choice and other rental assistance programs.

» **Create housing opportunities for the “missing middle,” in terms of household income**

The “missing middle” often refers to housing type, speaking to a lack of housing options between a single-family detached home and mid-rise multi-family housing complexes, but the term can also refer to households that earn too much to qualify for income-restricted housing but not enough to afford the new market-rate housing that is coming onto the market. To help achieve the goals of maintaining housing for a wide range of residents, tie local incentives for new housing development to reserving 10% of housing units for households earning less than 120% of area median income (AMI), or less than \$72,250 per year. These incentives including TAD funding have already helped to create units affordable for this income level. As inclusionary zoning discussions move forward, ensure that the needs of the missing middle are an active part of that policy discussion.

» **Create and regularly convene an “Affordable Housing and Community Retention Task Force” consisting of members of the private, public, and nonprofit sectors to create a comprehensive, affordable housing action plan**

Collaboration is necessary to create solutions to address affordable housing Downtown and throughout the City. The City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta, and the Atlanta Housing Authority are the three primary organizations directly investing in creating and maintaining affordable housing. CAP/ADID and local housing advocates should continue to collaborate with these organizations in applying for limited housing dollars and setting local policy. An important step is to broaden the conversation and create a formal Affordable Housing and Community Retention Task Force comprised of a cross-section of stakeholders – i.e. members of the business, philanthropic, and grassroots civic communities – as well as key elected leaders. The Task Force’s primary responsibility would be to work to build continued political and community will for the action plan’s implementation.

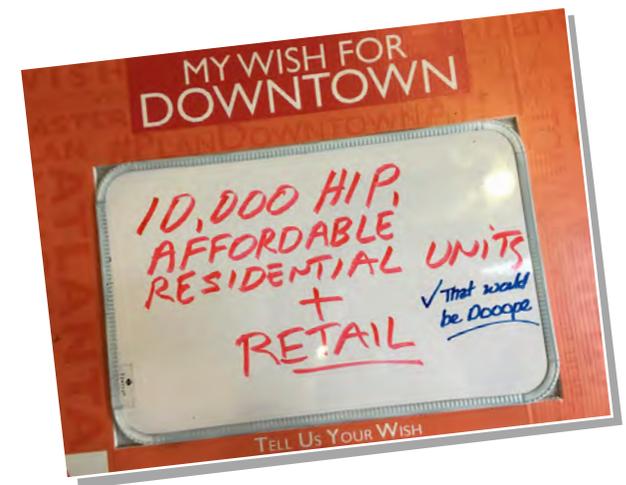
» **Seek to create a Downtown housing fund dedicated to assisting in the creation of affordable housing**

Financing affordable housing is difficult in every city. Doing so in Downtown Atlanta is particularly difficult. Land costs are high, land availability is limited, and the formula for Low Income Housing Tax Credits creates a disadvantage for Downtown compared to other Atlanta communities. Protecting and expanding affordable housing will require resources. The Atlanta Housing Authority has been very successful in receiving funding for their developments at Centennial Place, Capitol Homes and now, Herndon Homes. In addition, Invest Atlanta has used Tax Allocation District (TAD) funding as well as bond financing to assist private developers in creating affordable housing integrated within some market-rate projects.

To help further this work, a dedicated housing fund should be considered to support additional affordable housing for middle income housing as well as for housing for the very-low-income, below 60% and 30% of area median income. This includes providing funds to help more effectively leverage 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which often go unused but could help to provide additional housing subsidies Downtown. The fund could also be used to help secure land and transfer ownership to a land trust to protect long-time affordability consistent with the actions of other Atlanta neighborhoods that have established land trusts. The fund could be capitalized by a combination of TAD dollars, municipal bond funding, private philanthropy, and major employers concerned about the cost of Downtown housing for their employees.



» A dedicated housing fund should be considered to support additional affordable housing for middle income housing as well as for housing for the very-low-income, below **50%** and **30%** of area median income.



A public input from OneWish activity

## 3.5 Strengthen resident ties Downtown

It is well recognized that there are many barriers that divide Downtown into smaller districts and neighborhoods.

“I run into people I know on the street. It's something you don't find in a lot of neighborhoods. It's a sense of community.”

However, many neighborhood residents face similar challenges regardless of whether they live in the Old Fourth Ward or Castleberry Hill. To address these issues, residents coordinate closely with their Council representative and organizations like CAP for assistance. Create stronger ties across neighborhood lines to lend a more coordinated voice to common neighborhood issues but also to help further encourage resident involvement in the future of Downtown.

### » Form a Downtown Resident Council

A strong resident voice that reaches across neighborhoods can help to address some of the day-to-day challenges that residents face. Work to form a Downtown Residents Council that reaches across neighborhood boundaries and seeks solutions to shared problems. The idea is similar to the quarterly neighborhood briefings concept implemented by Councilman Kwanza Hall in his Council District. Aim to meet quarterly and use these meetings as an opportunity to check in on implementation of the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan and weigh in on current developments Downtown.

“More of a community would be nice – right now many of us live in little dense clusters far apart from each other... It feels a bit cloistered.”

### » Create an online “front door” for Downtown neighborhoods

Each neighborhood organization creates and maintains a web presence either to promote the work of the organization or provide timely information to residents. Some websites include more information than others. If you are an existing resident looking for a specific service or a potential resident looking to see what kinds of options there may be to live Downtown, you would need to do some research to find the right resources for you.

Consider a shared web portal to act as an on-line “front door” for all of Downtown neighborhoods. The portal should be designed to help collectively market Downtown neighborhoods, include key resources for residents and provide links to the existing neighborhood websites that currently exist. The CAP website provides the foundation for this portal with helpful information and facts. The opportunity is to launch a dedicated site that includes new marketing for living Downtown and is designed around key questions for both new and existing residents.

» **Develop a “Meet Your Neighbors block party” series in residential neighborhoods**

Help neighbors meet other neighbors through dedicated events that bring them together. Block parties and other activities should be designed to encourage more interaction among neighbors and to discuss issues and solutions for Downtown. Work with local institutions including churches, social clubs, neighborhood and civic associations, and other groups to launch the initiative.

» **Consider a Downtown neighborhood challenge**

Explore the possibility of developing a Downtown-focused community challenge grant fund. If CAP/ADID and their partners can identify a philanthropic or corporate partner (or partners) to capitalize the fund, a challenge grant program can be a great way to get members of the public involved as active participants in plan implementation. Interested community members would be invited biannually to pitch a project and project budget, provided that the concept responds to an idea or a goal of the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan. Selected projects would receive micro-grants for implementation. Empowering citizens to take on smaller-scale projects through a competitive micro-granting process can accelerate implementation efforts and maintain momentum and excitement built during the planning process. Examples in Macon, GA (the College Hill Corridor Neighborhood Challenge and, most recently, the Downtown Challenge) and Seattle (The Neighborhood Matching Fund) speak to the long-term value of this initiative.



## PRECEDENTS



**DOWNTOWN  
CHALLENGE**  
*Revitalizing Macon*

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL GEORGIA, INC.

Downtown Challenge  
Macon, GA

Source) <http://www.downtownchallengemacon.org/>



**NEIGHBORHOOD  
MATCHING FUND**

Neighborhood Matching Fund  
Seattle, WA

Source) <http://downtowndetroit.org/live-here/live-downtown-program/>

### 3.6 Market Downtown living and promote a family-friendly Downtown



#### PRECEDENTS



Norristown TV  
Norristown, PA  
Source) <http://norristown.org>



Explore Downtown Living  
Minneapolis, MN  
Source) <http://www.exploredtliving.com/about/>

Most downtowns have been designed with the assumption that once residents have kids they will move to the suburbs, but the tide is changing. More cities are listening to parents who want to stay and moving to expand the livability of downtowns for families. Cities like Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, Minneapolis, and Denver are all taking intentional steps to attract and retain families. Parents indicated they like living Downtown:

*“The schools are good, and its actually really easy to raise kids in a warehouse. They love it.”*

But many also expressed the desire for *“Family friendly activities”* and *“family friendly outdoor spaces”* to make them more likely to visit or live Downtown. While Downtown has family-friendly attractions and events that draw visitors from around the region, more is needed to integrate and market kid-friendly programming and design in the public realm and everyday experience.

#### » Market the experience of living Downtown with stories from residents

CAP’s website is valuable in highlighting local destinations, events, and urban amenities. Additional efforts to make the Downtown living experience come alive could include the production of short video clips or “webisodes,” each highlighting particular themes, including the many different household types and people young and old who call Downtown home. Bringing a first-person perspective through short resident testimonial video clips—from both long-time residents and newcomers—could be worthwhile in representing the diversity of neighborhoods and presenting a range of perspectives on why it is great to live Downtown. Some downtown living marketing strategies, such as Minneapolis’s Explore Downtown Living campaign, have created tours specifically for those who may be considering relocating Downtown—a chance to learn about what Downtown has to offer, get some orientation on the lay of the land, meet other potential newcomers, and take a peek inside various housing options to get a sense of what is on the market.

» **Continue to bring key stakeholders Downtown together to coordinate on marketing initiatives**

The Downtown Marketing Roundtable organized by CAP/ADID has been effective in helping to create a more unified voice in marketing Downtown to visitors. Work with event organizers, recruiters for employers, hotel concierges, those in university admissions / recruitment, and realtors to determine the most relevant information to communicate about Downtown. Develop materials from brochures to apps to specific events, all to help highlight the best attributes of Downtown and provide a playbook for visitors, potential residents, employees, and students to follow to help them understand why Downtown is the right fit for them.

» **Expand youth programming and promote Downtown for families**

There are Downtown events scattered throughout the year, many of which are attractive to youth and families. In fact, few Downtowns can offer as many destinations designed for families including the Georgia Aquarium, Children’s Museum, the children’s play area in Woodruff Park, and regular sporting events, to name a few. Discussions with residents and parents indicate the need for more regularly-scheduled youth-oriented programming Downtown, particularly within public spaces. Urban scavenger hunts & geo-caching, youth-oriented movies and music, as well as youth-oriented recreational opportunities like skateboarding and sports programs can help to boost Downtown’s role as a draw for youth and families. As a precedent example, Philadelphia has two nationally recognized programs hosted through and outside of schools that offer opportunities for teens with a range of interests: Students Run Philly Style—a running club for high school students (perfect for a new connected network of trails) and Spruce Street Harbor Park which includes a range of free games and programming for families of all income levels.



## PRECEDENTS



Students Run Philly Style  
Philadelphia, PA  
Source) <http://www.studentsrunphilly.org>



Spruce Street Harbor Park  
Philadelphia, PA  
Source) <http://www.visitphilly.com>

» **Design open spaces with adventure in mind**

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, free and unstructured play is critical to child development. As the popularity of Woodruff Park's ATL playground shows, creative play spaces for kids of all ages are needed Downtown. Adventure playgrounds and so-called "risky" playgrounds are an example of the kind of space where kids can exercise independence, use their imagination, explore, get dirty and be, in essence, kids. These types of spaces boost fitness as well as problem-solving, and are an exciting change from the standard cookie-cutter playgrounds.



Woodland Tribe in UK



Switchback Bench in Philadelphia, PA  
Source: <http://kaboom.org>



Leigh Woods in Bristol, UK

## » Create a Centennial Olympic Park circuit

Places to play means more than just playgrounds. Public spaces such as sidewalks and plazas are also opportunities to inject play into kids' daily lives. Playable sidewalks incorporate playable street furniture, sidewalk games and public art to encourage exercise and play. Centennial Olympic Park is the largest open space in the Downtown core and is ringed by all the main family-friendly attractions: the Children's Museum, World of Coca-Cola, Georgia Aquarium, Center for Civil and Human Rights, College Football Hall of Fame, the Skyview Atlanta ferris wheel, CNN tours, and sport venues. The loop around Centennial Olympic Park is a good opportunity to incorporate playable sidewalk interventions to connect these attractions and complement them.

A family-friendly circuit with a streetscape that encourages play could include public art, kid's eye-level details, and interactive activities. In Charlotte, NC, the Rail Trail Symphony is a colorful installation of art and musical instruments that connects communities and enhances the rail corridor. In Philadelphia, playable street furniture was installed on a commercial corridor to explore what happens when play and exercise happens outside traditional parks and playgrounds and happens right on the sidewalk. [See also Strategy 2.1 Connect the Dots for more information about linear experiences]



"Happy Lane", Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center in San Francisco, CA  
Source) <http://kaboom.org>



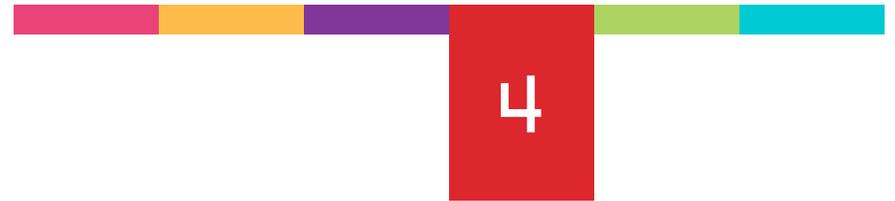
## PRECEDENTS



Rail Trail Symphony  
Charlotte, NC

Source) <http://www.charlotterailtrail.org/projects/kaboom>

**REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS  
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND  
ECONOMIC CENTER of the region**



# 4. REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER OF THE REGION



- » Downtown has **28%** of all jobs in Atlanta, which is nearly **155,000** jobs.
- » In the next 15 years, Downtown is set to add another **36,000** jobs.

*“We are the heartbeat and economic engine for the entire state.”*

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Downtown is Atlanta's original entrepreneurial center. The businesses that grew around the first rail lines formed the very basis of Downtown's entrepreneurial spirit and guided the city's resurgence after the Civil War. Today, with nearly 155,000 jobs and 28% of all jobs in Atlanta, Downtown is the region's largest employment district. The top employment sectors are public administration (22%), health care and social assistance (13%), and professional, scientific, and technical services (11%), with higher salaries relative to Atlanta as a whole; 60% of Downtown jobs pay more than \$40K a year. In the next 15 years, Downtown is set to add another 36,000 jobs.

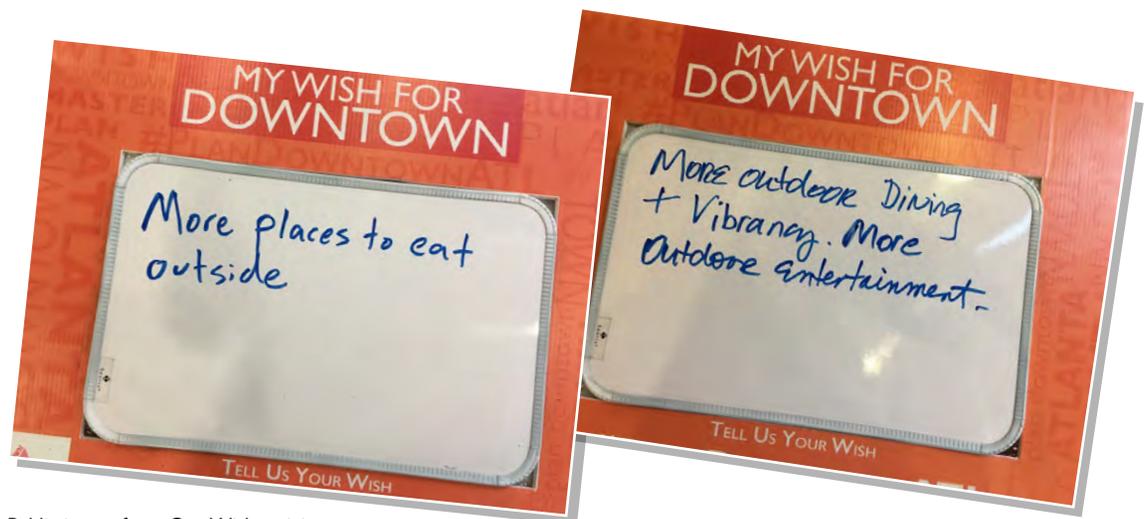
Major regional employers call Downtown home, including four Fortune 500 companies and national corporations such as The Coca-Cola Company, Georgia-Pacific, Deloitte, and Turner Broadcasting System. But Downtown is also emerging as a start-up, tech, and innovation hub. Institutions such as Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, Emory University and Grady Hospital are leading the way in research and innovation, and looking to expand. Next generation office space such as FlatironCity, Swicthyards Downtown Club, and the M. Rich Center for Creative Arts, Media, and Technology, is finding a foothold in the unique and historic spaces that distinguish Downtown.

But even with all of this economic activity, “Downtown is still a 9:00 – 5:00 business town, although with Georgia State University, the energy is much more alive than it was even five years ago.”

It needs more people to support the things that make it lively – retail, restaurants, and things to do. With 9.8 jobs for every one Downtown household, the daytime population swells by a factor of more than five, and the existing hotels Downtown accommodate an additional 8,000 people per day on average. How can we encourage this sizeable workforce and visitor population to spend a little more time (and money) Downtown? Current retail spending patterns show that visitors account for over half of retail spending, while Downtown employees account for just over one-third (36%).

A long-time goal for Downtown Atlanta is that it evolve as a 24/7 hub where *“people come Downtown after hours and on weekends.”* Local restaurants and bars ranked second among residents and workers surveyed about what they liked best about Downtown, but *“lack of stores or businesses that meet my needs”* was the number one thing they dislike most about Downtown. More restaurants and entertainment was the third top choice when Open House participants were asked about their big wish for Downtown Atlanta; people want to see more activity after 5 o’clock and called for *“more independent restaurants”* and *“more outdoor dining and vibrancy.”*

Downtown’s historic entrepreneurial culture is central to the opportunity to cultivate unique, small businesses while supporting the needs of Downtown’s established businesses. A vibrant Downtown with expanded services is a more desirable place for employees and helps Downtown employers to attract talent. As Downtown continues to grow, we need to take steps to ensure there is space for small, start up and local businesses as well as the non-profits and artists that have long contributed to Downtown’s creative energy. Without action, we run the risk of pushing out those that are price sensitive and represent the very things that distinguish Downtown from other places. To fully reinforce Downtown’s economic role, we need to seek opportunities to expand the inventory of co-working and *“next-generation”* office space, provide viable space for local retailers and cultural organizations, and protect the ability to continue to make things Downtown.



Public inputs from One Wish activity

Figure 32. Primary jobs in Downtown Atlanta

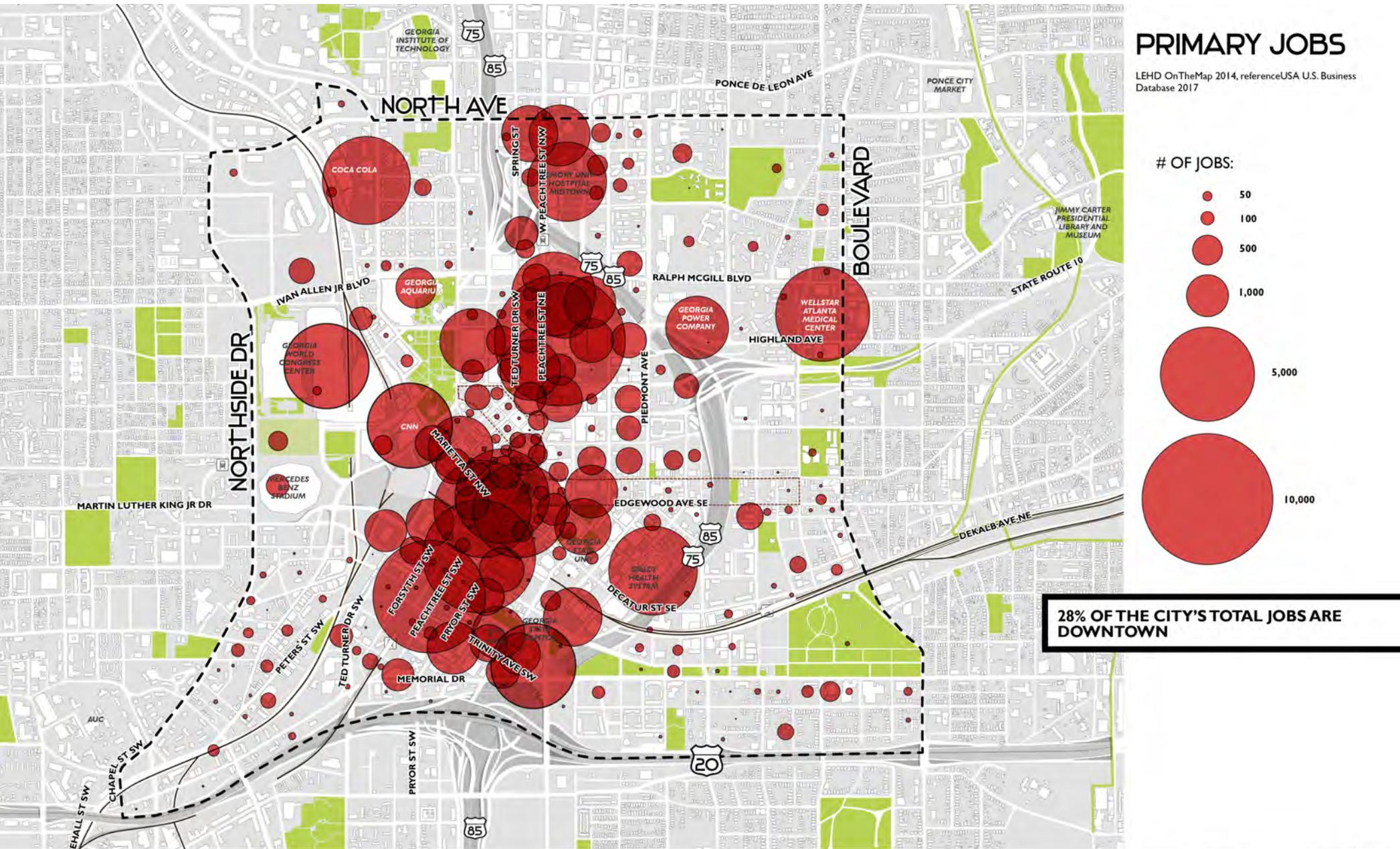


Figure 33. Key words from residents about their future for Downtown

## OUR VISION FOR DOWNTOWN ATLANTA IN 2030:



### 4.1 Help to grow new businesses and talent Downtown

Downtown has a concentration of health and education assets that house a strong science and technology sector and nurture a growing entrepreneurial community. Other business sectors, such as media, film and urban manufacturing, are also gaining momentum Downtown but more needs to be done to create a stronger and more connected community of entrepreneurs.

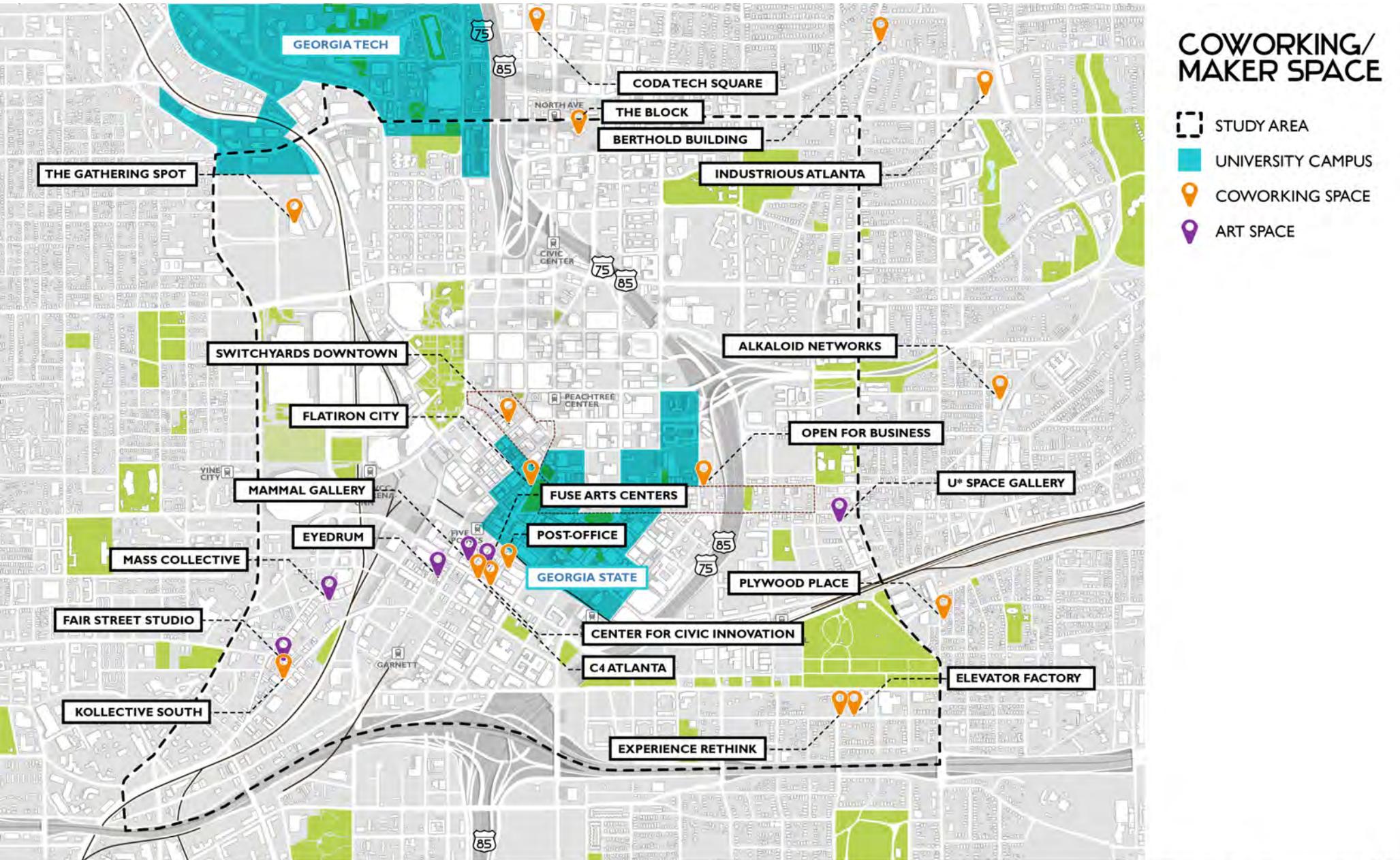
- » **Create strategic partnerships with local universities and hospitals to expand their involvement Downtown and further support the needs of Downtown residents and businesses**

Downtown is well positioned to be an important part of the technology transfer from research to business model and commercialization. Technology Square incubates businesses that grow out of Georgia Tech research and the opportunity exists to support this entrepreneurial activity by finding post-incubation Next Generation office space Downtown, particularly in Fairlie-Poplar and South Downtown.

Technology Enterprise Park and Petit Science Center at Georgia State University are two expanding intellectual anchors of biomedical activity Downtown. Additionally, hospital support and related services and infrastructure need space. Find out what they need to grow and support new jobs. Fairlie-Poplar, Technology Enterprise Park, Georgia State and Grady have been identified as areas conducive to developing the specialized biomedical office and lab space for research and start-up enterprises.

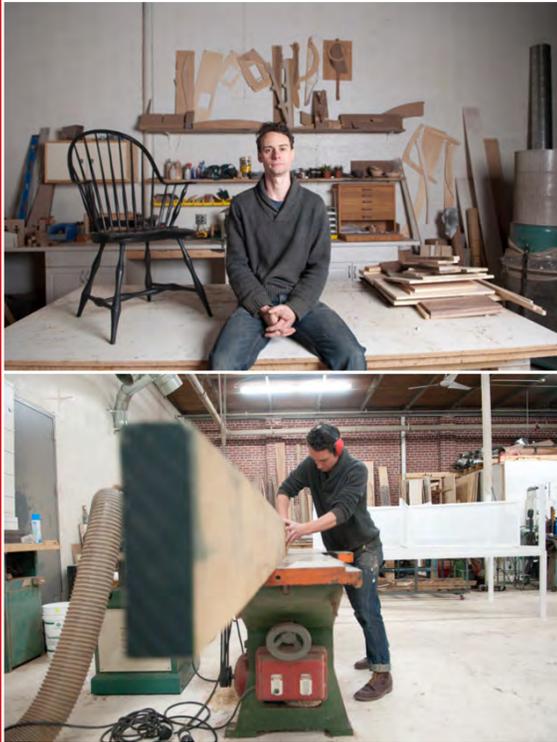
“Bring tech to Downtown as well. Millennials will thank you!”

Figure 34. Coworking & makerspaces in Downtown map





## PRECEDENTS



Kendrick Anderson Furniture Maker  
at 431 Fair Street SW in Castleberry Hill  
Atlanta, GA

Source) <http://www.creativeloafing.com/news/article/13086619/furniture-maker-learns-the-business-of-being-creative>

### » Network Downtown start-ups and small businesses

A growing number Next Generation office spaces are opening up Downtown, bringing new start-up and small businesses. But they are spread out across Downtown and do not benefit from geographic clustering which is one way of creating a physical community hub. Events and programming can fill the gap to build community and networking opportunities. Downtown co-working spaces, makerspaces and businesses can inaugurate a signature event to showcase ideas and provide networking opportunities. A local Downtown version of the TEDx model is a great way to share ideas, give new companies exposure and make new connections.

### » Expand active engagement programs with universities

Georgia Tech and Georgia State are training the next generation of talent and provide the link between students and employers. Expand and strengthen the range of internship and co-op programs, and recruit new and growing business sectors into the program to increase access to entry level jobs and support the retention of graduates Downtown.

» **Establish a shared commercial kitchen / food incubator Downtown**

Start-up food businesses are growing Downtown but need space. Food trucks, for example, need to be tied to a commercial kitchen but if your truck is not affiliated with an existing restaurant there are only three shared options in Fulton County. This adds cost for travel and food preservation. Establishing a shared commercial kitchen or food incubator Downtown would support this emerging industry and the larger goal of bringing more restaurants and vibrancy Downtown. Work with Invest Atlanta to explore potential opportunity sites on Whitehall Street.

“We need to encourage the incredibly motivated and talented younger college-age generation to stay Downtown and start their own technology/retail/hospitality businesses.”

» **Build upon the growing television and film industry**

Georgia's television and film industry has seen rapid growth and strong state support. In 2016, more feature films were filmed in Georgia than any other market globally and the state has played an important role in maintaining US dominance in the industry. The film industry in Georgia employs over 30,000 people and Downtown is well situated to help develop a pipeline of talent to support the industry. Partner with the Georgia Film Academy, production houses, talent agencies, and educational partners to develop training and incubating programs focused on the skills and needs of film and production here in Downtown.



**PRECEDENTS**



J's Kitchen  
Doraville, GA  
Source) <http://www.jkitchenculinaryincubator.com>



Georgia Film Academy  
Fayetteville, GA  
Source) <http://www.georgiafilmacademy.org>  
Source) Image: <https://www.savannahtech.edu/2016/03/08/georgia-film-academy-expand-savannah-tech-summer/>

## 4.2 Activate the ground floors



» Today, almost **60%** of the street frontages in the Downtown core are “unfavorable” – i.e. lined with inactive uses like parking and blank walls.

Our experience Downtown is largely shaped by the quality, variation, and character of the ground floor uses. Clusters of active storefronts help to stimulate foot traffic and create vibrant, safe streets. Too many parking lots, blank walls, or empty spaces encourage the opposite. Today, almost 60% of the street frontages in the Downtown core are “unfavorable” – i.e. lined with inactive uses like parking and blank walls. Only 9% of streets in the Downtown core are “excellent” - characterized by active stores and businesses. To help create a more connected, vibrant Downtown, ground floors need to be activated.

How we do so must be carefully considered. Today, even though Downtown zoning requires ‘active’ spaces to be built on ground floors, it is challenging to finance commercial space unless the tenant is a recognized brand name or chain. Given the strain on retail across the nation driven by an increase in online shopping, many developers are simply writing off their first floors and hoping to recapture their investment through the rent or sales of the upper floor space. As Downtown grows and redevelops, all buildings built or repurposed will have a first floor. We should seek to fill those spaces with uses that reinforce the character and mix of activities that provide Downtown its unique identity.



529

Monday - Friday  
11:00am - 8:00pm  
Saturday  
11:00am - 4pm  
Sunday  
11:00am - 4pm

AAA  
Auto Parts & Service



Figure 35. Pedestrian experience map





## Excellent

Includes:

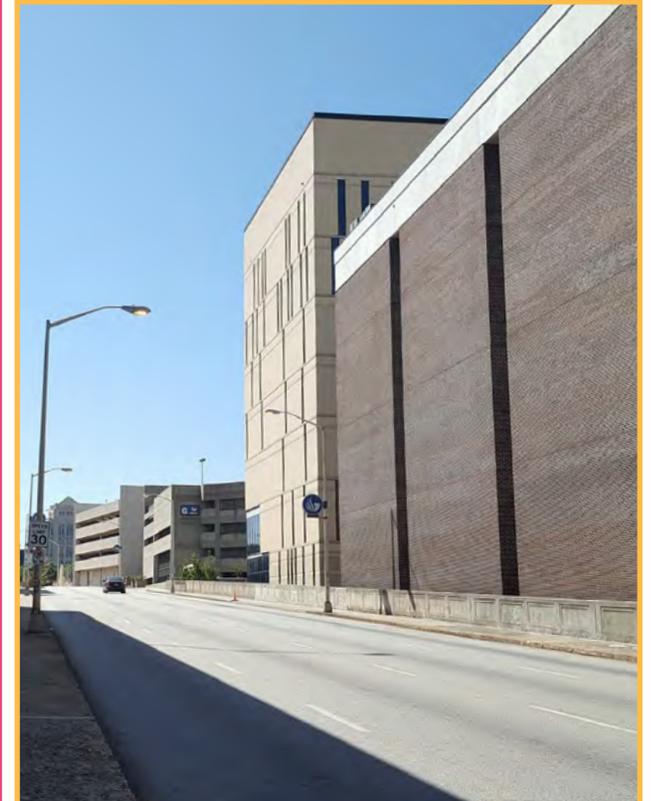
- Storefront
- Transparent window and door
- Landscaping
- Park



## In-between

Includes:

- Building entrance
- Set-back storefront
- Some landscaping
- Empty plaza and park



## Unfavorable

Includes:

- Parking garage
- Parking lot
- Blank wall

“There is virtually no shopping downtown. It's very strange for a downtown area, having nowhere to spend my paycheck.”

» **Focus retail growth Downtown**

The way that we shop is vastly different from years past, and it is a struggle to attract retail tenants just about anywhere. The development approach needs to acknowledge that all of Downtown's ground floor space will not be filled with new retail. We need to focus retail development where there are the most customers and existing businesses to create true retail density Downtown. The land use analysis, market research, and public process suggests that a number of key corridors should be targeted for the majority of new retail Downtown. As shown in the accompanying map, these corridors serve all of Downtown's neighborhoods:

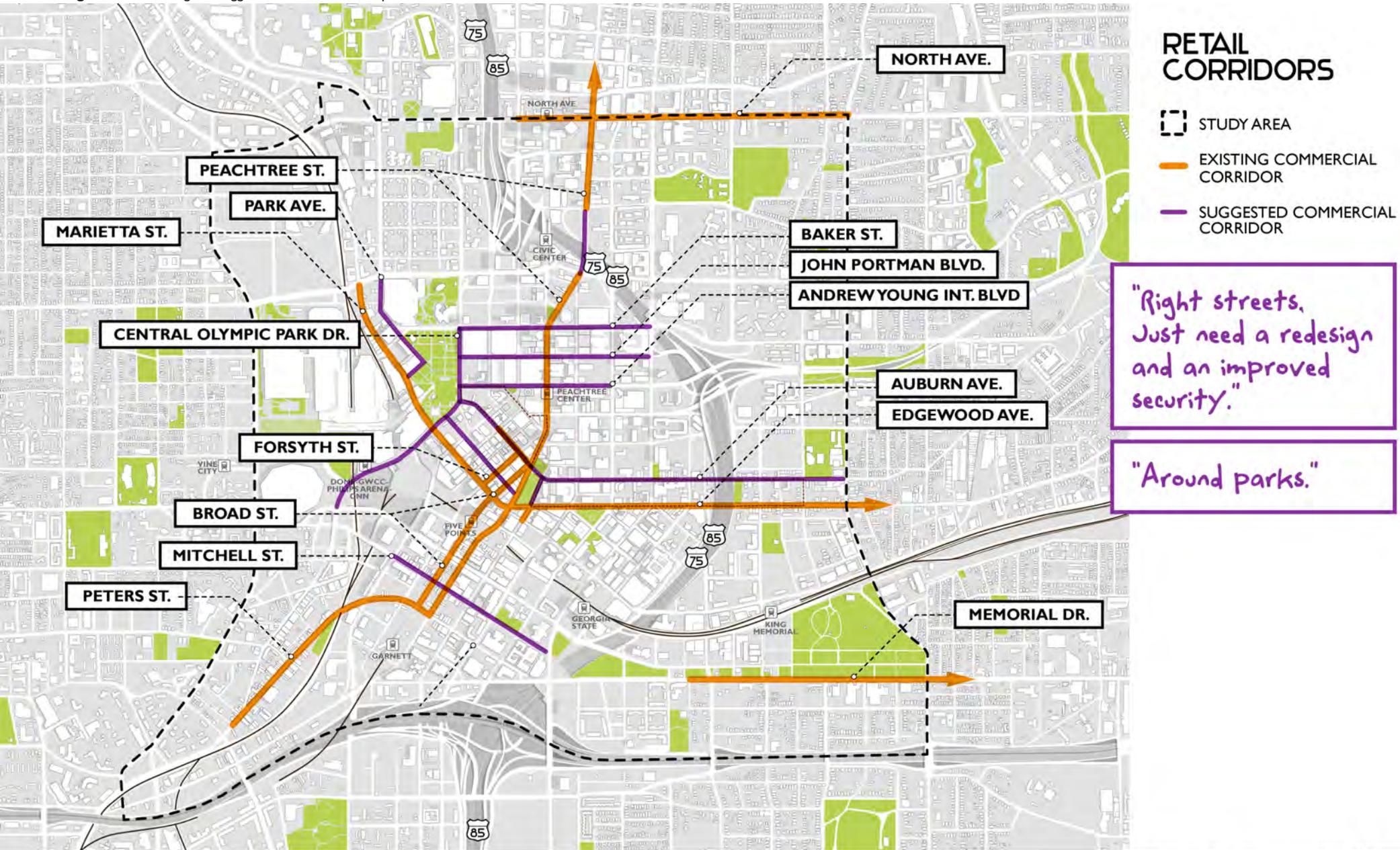
Existing Corridors:

- Broad Street
- Edgewood Avenue
- Cone Street
- Forsyth Street
- Marietta Street
- Memorial Drive
- North Avenue
- Peachtree Street
- Peters Street

Suggested Corridors

- Auburn Avenue
- Andrew Young International Boulevard
- Baker Street
- Centennial Olympic Park Drive
- John Portman Boulevard
- Mitchell Street
- Park Place/Pryor Street

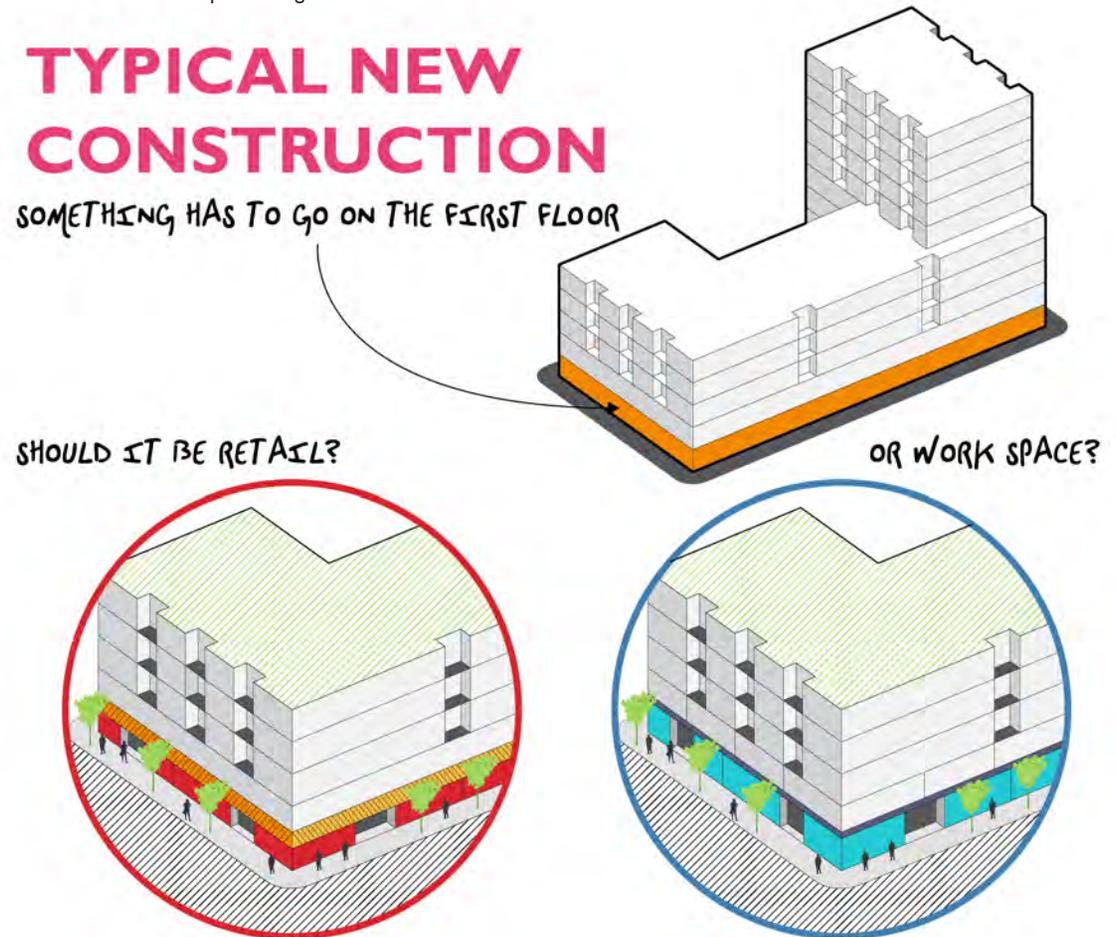
Figure 36. Existing and suggested retail corridor map



» **Encourage alternative ground floor uses**

The designated retail corridors occupy a minority of street frontage Downtown. What should occupy the ground floors along the remainder of the corridors as they develop? Downtown has long been a home to entrepreneurs and also to artists and arts organizations. The opportunity is to promote different kinds of commercial activities focused on supporting small business development, artist work space, and local services over the long-term such that these entities remain rooted or become established fixtures, adding to the character of Downtown. The redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties will create new first floor spaces that could provide a lot of space for these activities and should be offered at below market rates to support the need for affordable workspace Downtown, while simultaneously generating value through the curation of unique and innovative users to the building. Integrating these alternative ground floor uses requires some limited code changes but also active involvement by a third party to help with leasing and tenant recruitment, as well as tenant retention to ensure long-term relationships with and security of space for artists, arts organizations, and small or start-up businesses so vital to Downtown's make-up.

Figure 37. Ground floor development diagram





“ If we could get existing ground floor spaces loaned to us, we could leverage local entrepreneurs and artists to help activate Downtown during the evenings. ”

“ The local media industry has a lot of trained talent but little infrastructure: there is demand for micro-lease production facilities that rent space at all hours of the day and night... places where I can produce webisodes, podcasts, record music or videos. ”



## PRECEDENTS



Legacy Business Registry and Preservation Fund  
San Francisco, CA

“recognizes small businesses and non-profits as historic assets, not just buildings that house them”

Source) <http://legacybusinesssf.com/how-it-works/>

Rooky Ricardo's Records (shown in above image) is located at 419 Haight Street in San Francisco and is one of the latest businesses to receive Legacy Status, approved by the city of San Francisco.

Source) Image: <http://hoodline.com/>

► For more resources, see the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's report, "How Rising Commercial Rents Are Threatening Independent Businesses, and What Cities are Doing Bout It." <https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2016/04/ILSR-AffordableSpace-FullReport.pdf>

### » Provide ground floor activation support services and incentives

To be able to fill commercial space in the community with small, local businesses will require proactive thinking. Developers and banks are looking for credit-worthy tenants that can pay a higher price for space. Most small businesses and artists are not yet credit worthy in the eyes of a bank and are very sensitive to rent prices. To address this challenge, we need to explore opportunities to subsidize tenant fit-out, work with developers to recruit tenants, and likely enter into a master lease. Master leases provide the building owner with a longer-term tenant arrangement (the master leaseholder) that may also have a credit rating sufficient to support a major rehab or new construction, but does not require the tenant specific improvements. The master leaseholder can then sublet the space under its own terms and conditions, which are typically more flexible than a general lease. In other cities, the master lease holder is typically the business improvement district or similar entity that has the on-the-ground knowledge and financial capacity to serve in this role.

Legacy businesses are also at risk and should be inventoried to be able to partner with Invest Atlanta and strategize about what will help them stay Downtown. Friedman's Shoes, established in 1929, for example, has made a name for itself as a destination for athletes and sells hard to find large sizes, and has a claim to fame for adopting Shaquille O'Neil when he was young and growing, and his family struggled to keep him in shoes.

Friedman's Shoes

Friedman's  
Shoes

209

UPSTAIRS ↑

Friedman's  
Shoes

MENS SHOES  
FROM  
8 TO 22

SUPER

SALE

1st FLOOR  
ATHLETICS  
2nd FLOOR  
CLEARANCE  
3rd FLOOR  
MAIN SHOWROOM  
& EXOTIC SKINS

“ We need sustainable commercial - it can't all be Saks Fifth Avenue - what's the incentive to get a small business owner into empty commercial spaces? ”

One of the legacy stores in Downtown,  
Friedman's Shoes on Mitchell Street

» **Help to match potential tenants to available ground floor space**

Developers often face challenges in finding the right tenant to occupy their ground floor space. Even organizing a temporary tenant to fill space and activate the street can be a real challenge. What is needed is a matchmaking service that pairs small businesses with eligible ground floor spaces in Downtown. Consider a targeted service to assist developers in finding the tenants that are suited for the space and adds value by fulfilling the goals of enlivening Downtown by providing affordable work space and/or activating ground floors, and market the service to local businesses.

“We need to encourage small businesses and medium-sized businesses to set up shop downtown and in the surrounding downtown neighborhoods. That can only succeed if there is foot traffic.”



Ground floor stores along Mitchell Street



Available rental space along Mitchell Street

» **Provide coordinated marketing for small retailers**

Often times, small, local businesses are operating on a limited budget with tight margins. The ability to market their business is a luxury even though marketing could very well generate new customers. Consider promoting Downtown's new and established businesses with an emphasis on small, locally-owned retailers and restaurants.



Local office and businesses at Mitchell Street & Ted Turner Drive



Vacant storefronts at Forsyth Street & Poplar Street, near Georgia State University campus

» **Work with the City of Atlanta to ease the process for getting permits to start a business**

Discussions with Downtown retailers indicated that obtaining permits can be difficult and costly due to lost time. Consider offering assistance to new businesses to navigate requirements, but also encourage the City to streamline the process for Downtown. Leverage resources from Invest Atlanta and the Georgia Small Business Development Center (GSBDC) to connect new businesses, particularly those in the technology and innovation sector, with requisite assistance such as permit fee waivers and one-on-one business coaching.

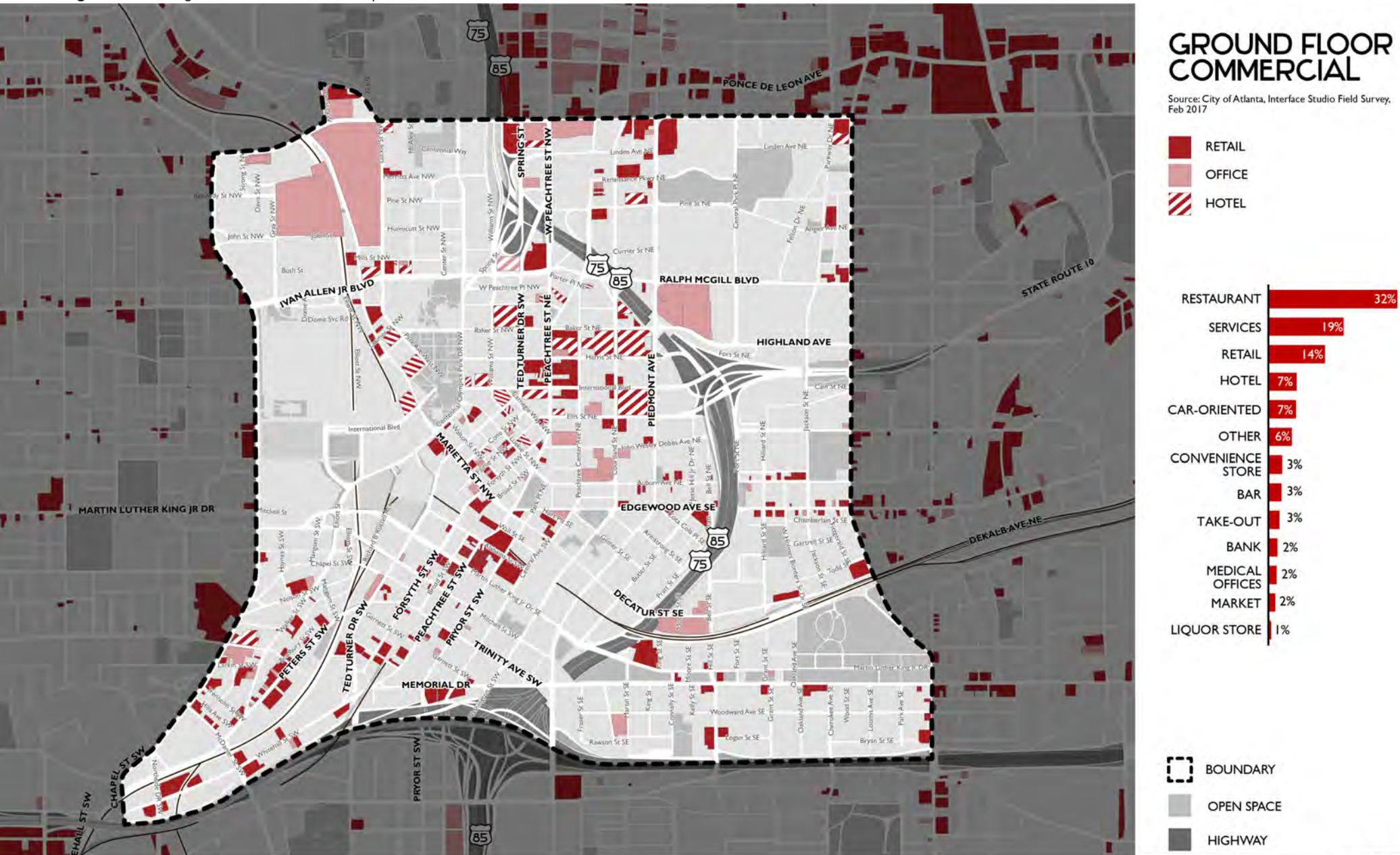
» **Tweak the codes**

The City of Atlanta zoning code identifies “storefront streets” Downtown. Storefront streets are designated to promote active street frontages and include design controls, requirements for active ground floor uses, and limitations on curb cuts. The current storefront streets map mostly reflects the discussions during this planning process about where best to reinforce active ground floor uses and retail. Coordinate with the City to consider a few small changes to the existing storefront streets map. These include:

- Extend the Mitchell Street designation east to Washington and west to Centennial Olympic Drive
- Add John Portman Drive from Peachtree west to Centennial Olympic Park
- Add West Peachtree changing to north
- Remove Peachtree Center as storefront street
- Designate either Courtland or Piedmont as a storefront street in collaboration with Georgia State to promote connections south toward Turner Field along Capitol Avenue.

In addition, to promote a range of active ground floor uses, a code tweak is necessary. Currently, ground floors in new buildings are already required to include “active” space. The definition of active, however, is very broad and includes activities such as fitness facilities for tenants. Fine-tune this definition to specifically require retail and/or work spaces and limit tenant-only amenities which add little to boost Downtown’s vibrancy and mix of business and resident services.

Figure 38. Existing Ground Floor Commercial Map



## 4.3 Protect space for making things Downtown

The growth in the maker community as well as an active start-up community requires taking action to preserve inexpensive workspace. Aside from co-working and smaller flexible or shared workspaces, commercial and industrial space in the immediate Downtown area is largely cost prohibitive to fledgling businesses. In other urban areas, former industrial buildings and sites provide lower cost spaces that are often where entrepreneurs and creative and innovation-based companies locate to minimize real estate costs, keep overhead low, and maximize the use of their startup capital. As businesses grow and look for space, keeping opportunities available within Downtown is important to help attract employees seeking transit access and a walkable, mixed-use environment.

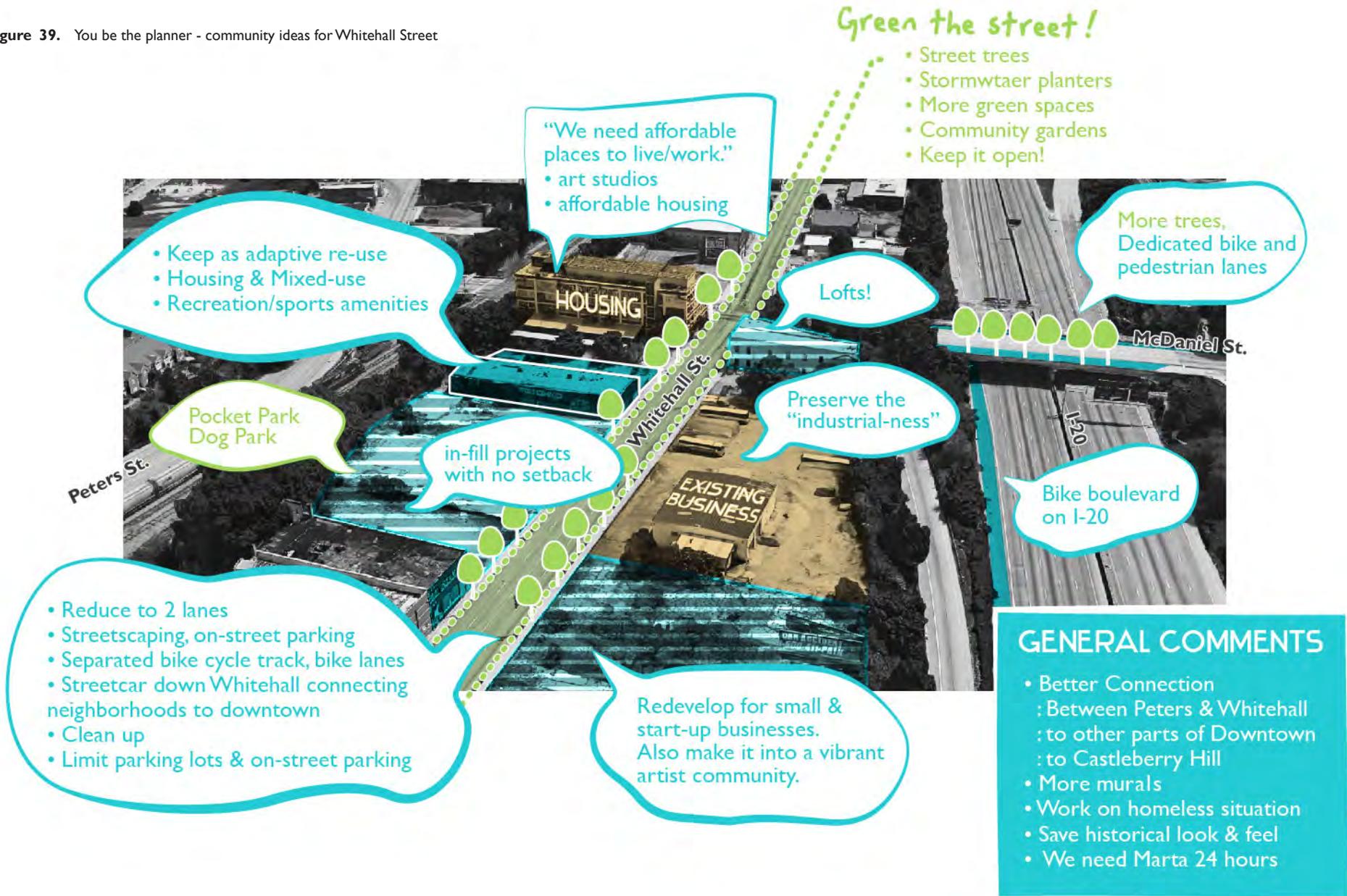
### » Upgrade Whitehall Street for a mix of manufacturing and light industrial space

The primary focus of most development activity in and near Downtown has been the creation of commercial, entertainment, and residential space. Typically, flexible industrial space has difficulty competing or making economic sense in urban settings. Simply put, land is expensive, and the development of facilities to house small manufacturers and growing companies in need of larger, industrial spaces is not nearly as financially attractive as redeveloping the land for housing or other uses. The private market will not step in to provide the range of buildings necessary to support job growth, as there is not financial incentive to do so.

As a former and current location for industrial uses, Whitehall provides unique redevelopment opportunities in Downtown. Seek to protect Whitehall Street for these uses by changing the zoning code to limit residential development and work to develop flex space with potential retail frontage on available property. The accessory retail frontage can be used to help market and sell products made in the building. Working with private and non-profit developers, seek to:

- purchase land and buildings to preserve space for potential fabrication and production uses;
- develop property to create contemporary flex space that can accommodate a range of firms including those in the technology, life sciences, and consumer products industry;
- and provide low-cost loans for basic upgrades [repowering, etc.] to modernize older industrial spaces where appropriate.

Figure 39. You be the planner - community ideas for Whitehall Street



**GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Better Connection
  - : Between Peters & Whitehall
  - : to other parts of Downtown
  - : to Castleberry Hill
- More murals
- Work on homeless situation
- Save historical look & feel
- We need Marta 24 hours

Figure 40. Existing condition of Whitehall Street with public input

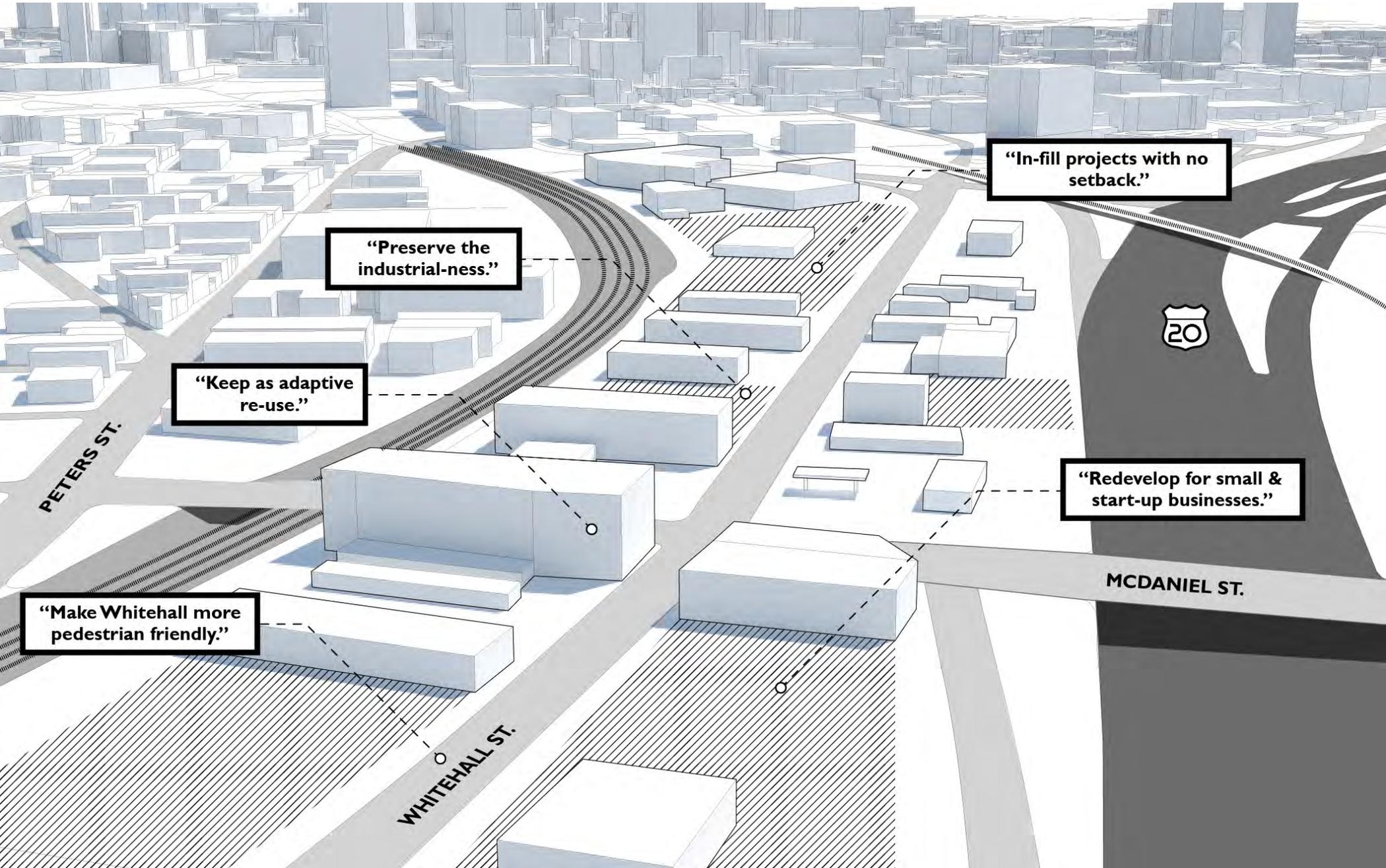
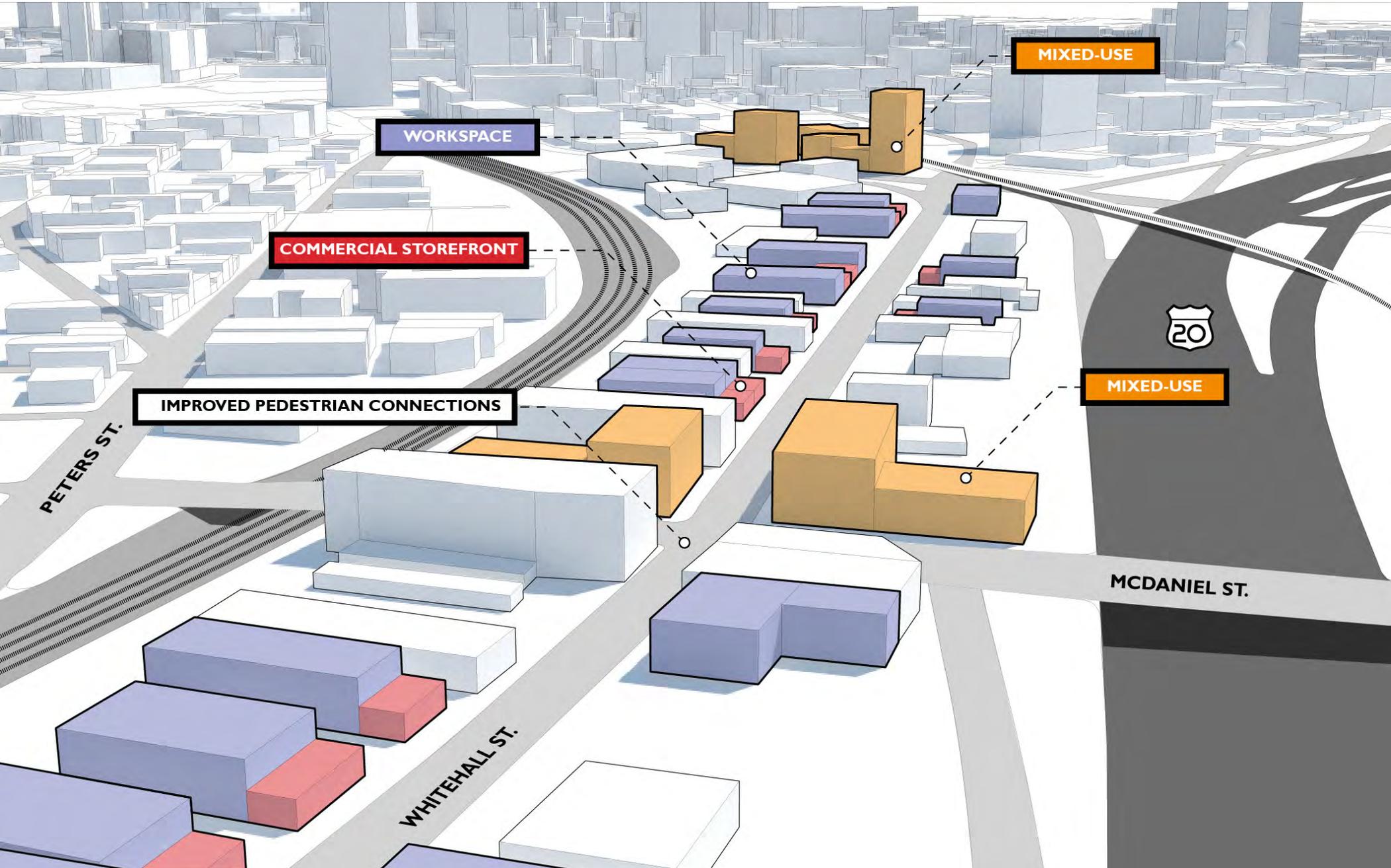


Figure 41. Potential approach for redevelopment and investment along Whitehall Street



## 4.4 Encourage employees to stay a while

Downtown employees are a key factor in making Downtown a livelier place, but many still do not venture out of the office or stay beyond work. Event series such as Business Bites, Food Truck Fridays, Sips in the City, and the Peachtree Center farmer's market are helping to change this and should be expanded to keep the ball rolling and pick up speed.



» **Work to undertake and promote a range of night events to keep employees in Atlanta a little longer**

Building on existing food and arts events, the potential Downtown Residents Council and local businesses could spearhead developing new ideas and working with employers to market new and existing evening programs. At the Open Houses, people had a lot of ideas for enlivening Downtown in the evening: a night market, more Art Walk installations and performances, nightlife, and outdoor movies. Additional ideas include after work fitness classes in parks and plazas and regularly occurring afterhours access to attractions and institutions.

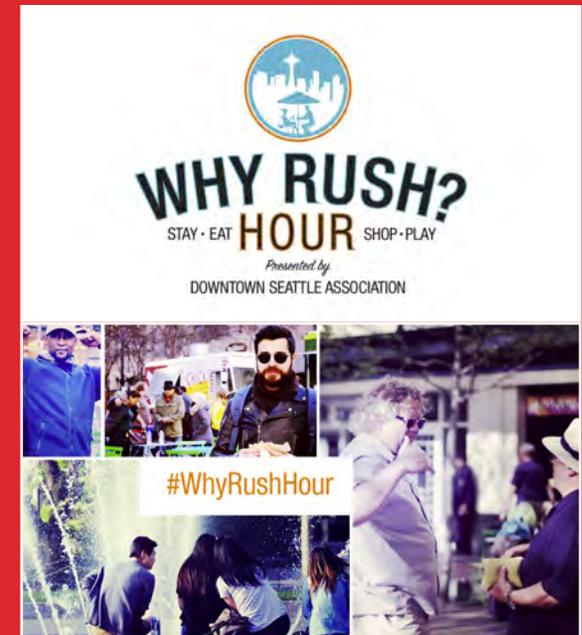
» **Launch a Downtown social club**

Downtown has all the ingredients of a great night out: established and emerging arts and cultural organizations, restaurants and bars, and a robust hospitality industry. A social club could take it to the next level and give people an even more compelling invitation to partake by mixing these ingredients for engaging experiences that combines food and drink, art, culture and entertainment experiences in different locations Downtown where local residents and Atlantans can mingle. Partner with businesses, arts and cultural organizations, and property owners to unlock unique and seldom seen Downtown spaces for social events that might include: site-specific performances, cocktails, secret suppers or all of the above.

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND SERVICES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF TO SERVE DOWNTOWN'S COMMUNITY?



**PRECEDENTS**



**“Why Rush” Hour Campaign  
Seattle, WA**

Source) <https://www.glg.com/digital-agency-work/clients/downtown-seattle-association/why-rush-hour-campaign>

Figure 42. Community ideas for programming and events Downtown



## PRECEDENTS



Center City Sips  
Philadelphia, PA

Source) <https://www.centercityphila.org/explore-center-city/ccdsips>  
Source) Image: <http://www.phillymag.com/>

### » Consider discount deals for local businesses

A regular monthly or weekly Downtown Deals day could be heavily marketed to businesses and Downtown denizens. Building from the Sips in the City happy hour specials, Downtown Deals could be expanded to lunch or dinner deals, and retail and services. Starting out in a defined area with a high concentration of businesses and workers could help increase visibility and target marketing. Businesses might see neighboring businesses benefiting and be encouraged to participate. In Philadelphia, Center City

Sips happens on Wednesdays in the summertime, with happy hour specials from participating restaurants and bars to encourage after work activity downtown. Over time, non-food and drink businesses jumped in to provide pre-happy hour deals on retail goods. A similar hump day offering in Downtown Atlanta could entice workers to stay after work, explore, eat and shop, and be coordinated with linear itineraries as described in Recommendation 2.1.



» **Create a Downtown 101 program**

There's a lot to do Downtown for residents, workers and visitors alike but many still associate Downtown with major attractions and events. A Downtown 101 program specifically geared for employees would introduce and encourage them to explore and support Downtown services, food and other amenities. This could be designed as a dynamic primer or insider's guide – such as a web app – to market the recommendations above and events such as Business Bites and Food Truck Fridays.

“A campaign to beat the traffic could find support from unlikely partners, such as GDOT and MARTA. Have a drink, see a show...”

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“Can we improve the transit experience by bringing in music like they do in NYC, where the Artists Underground program pays musicians to sing or play in the subway system at rush hour?”

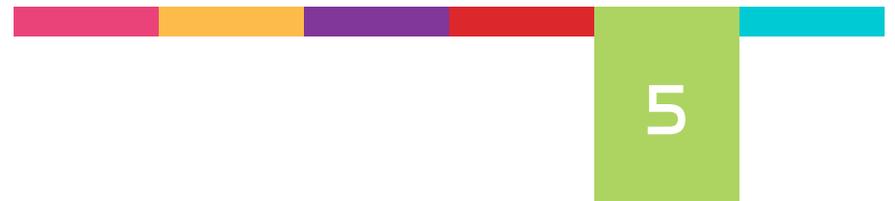
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“People are still learning what Atlanta is.”

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**RESTORE THE FOREST IN THE CENTER  
OF THE CITY** to improve air and water  
quality, create shade, and add beauty  
**Downtown**



# 5. CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN



- » During Non-business hours, Atlanta has **11.5 ACRES** of parkland per 1,000 residents.
- » During the day, Atlanta has **7 ACRES** of parkland per 1,000 residents.
- » The desired number is **10 ACRES** of parkland per 1,000 residents in cities

(Source: National Recreation and Parks Association)

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Urban trees and shaded public open spaces that allow for physical activity, relaxation and socialization greatly improve the quality of life for everyone in a city, from daily commuter to visitor to resident. Downtown Atlanta currently pales in comparison with areas just outside it in terms of air quality, environmental comfort, beauty, walkability and health factors in part as a result of its low density of quality open spaces that include shade, seating and things to do at different times of day. Parks and open space ranked third in types of development survey respondents would most like more of Downtown.

“Create more parks and green space.”

“It would be nice to have a fenced off dog park.”

Building the urban forest through a combination of strategies that amplify current under-performing open spaces, integrate green infrastructure and storm-water management into streets and parks, create places to play and provide a sense of continuity of open space that welcomes people to a downtown that is as green and lush as it is active and economically thriving can play a vital role in re-making Downtown.

Providing the spaces for healthy lifestyles is one piece of the puzzle, but programmatic interventions are also needed to encourage people to use them and to incorporate them into other healthy habits. In almost all indicators of health status and risk factors, Downtown trails the city, state and country. Downtown’s concentration of health care institutions and sports organizations are perhaps in a uniquely qualified position to push the needle on this front.

The strategies described in this section focus on landscape, sustainability and health to create a livable, resilient and equitable city that feels as much like an economic engine for the region as it does a green community in which to live, work and play. The approach of multiple small strategies repeated and adapted to local conditions in numerous locations should be implemented in such a way as to have a cumulative effect which helps to boost the health and sustainability of Downtown and develop a holistic vision of Downtown Atlanta as an important link and contributor to the City’s reputation as the ‘City in the Forest.’

“Im more interested in having more trees spread throughout Downtown - were supposed to be a City in a Forest.”

Figure 43. Benefits of landscape

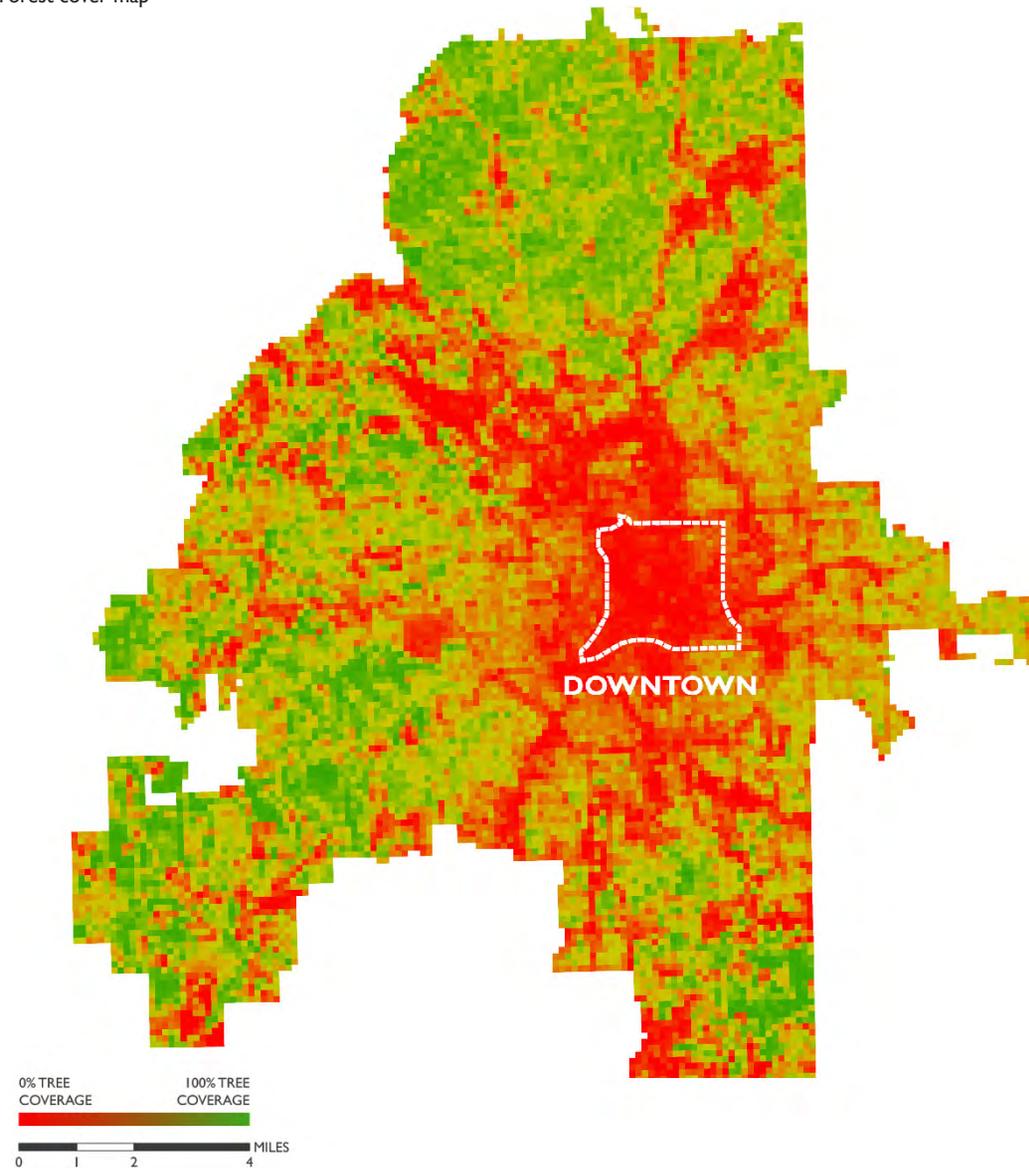


## 5.1 Boost the tree canopy

Atlanta's reputation as the 'City in the Forest' and the trees that earned it that name are a source of deep pride in the city. Looking out from Downtown or flying over the city, one quickly understands how this reputation came about. Atlanta's tree canopy extends out in every direction from Downtown, creating lush neighborhoods and filtering out the pollutants, cooling the air and dampening the noise of city streets. While the City of Atlanta's tree coverage of 47.9% is in fact much greater than the average American city, as you head into Downtown, the canopy noticeably diminishes to as little as 3% in dense urban areas. (Source: *Assessing Urban Tree Canopy in the City of Atlanta; A Baseline Canopy Study*. City of Atlanta Department of Community Planning and Development. 2014)

Urban trees provide numerous aesthetic and environmental benefits including, cooling paved surfaces and helping to mitigate 'urban heat island' effect, reducing energy demands, cleaning air and soil pollutants, reducing impacts of heavy rainfall of stormwater systems, and creating habitat for migrating birds, and important native pollinators.

Figure 44. Forest cover map



» **Increase Downtown’s tree canopy by planting 10,000 trees**

As more people move into Downtown, increasing the urban canopy will be critical to creating urban neighborhoods that are healthy, comfortable, safe, and which continue to build Atlanta’s identity and reputation as the City in the Forest (and that attract people outside, even during the hottest months and days). Planting 10,000 trees would increase the Downtown canopy coverage from the current 3% to 12%. To do this, a concerted effort should be made to plant 10,000 trees in the next 10 years within the Downtown study area – and a 10K in 10 Years campaign launched to encourage the public to participate. The master plan encourages development of the canopy through the following strategies:

- : Integrate trees into green infrastructure (see 5.2 )
- : Introduce trees into underutilized urban plazas (see 5.3)
- : Add planting and active recreation to MARTA Stations (see 5.4)
- : Create green gateways (see 5.5) through planting small urban forests and building green stormwater infrastructure on underutilized lands such as highway buffers or intersections.

These efforts should be considered in light of and coordinated with the City’s update to the tree ordinance.



Garnett Station



Five Points Station’s west entrance

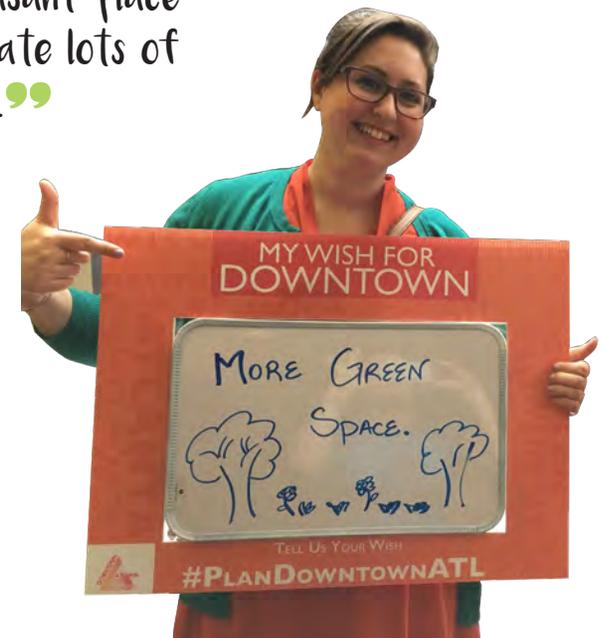
Figure 45. Rendering of planting opportunity within small traffic triangle





“Trees, trees, trees. If you have ever been to San Antonio's river walk you will know exactly what I mean. We don't need the river, just trees and restaurants and shopping. It would give us and the tourists a destination that is warm and inviting versus cold and hard urban streets.”

“I think the key to making downtown a nice/pleasant place to walk is to incorporate lots of trees and green space.”





## PRECEDENTS



Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI)  
Chicago, IL

Source) <http://chicagorti.org/about-crti>

### » Support a diverse and healthy urban canopy

A diverse urban forest is healthier and longer-living; therefore, both diversity of species and age of trees should be planned for as part of the 10K initiative. Plantings should be phased to ensure the resultant forest builds on existing canopy, replaces canopy in areas that may experience die-off, such as many trees planted during the Olympics, and enhances diversity through time. As well, trees should be planted in locations with sufficient soil depth, light and access to water to ensure longevity and health. Utilizing water catchment systems in coordination with tree plantings can act to minimize additional load on water usage with the increase in canopy. Creating standard planting details specific to Downtown and conducting canopy assessments to identify locations best for planting will help to ensure successful implementation of tree planting efforts.

### » Plant fruit-producing trees where possible

In addition to these strategies, tree plantings should develop new ecological value through utilization of varied species and planting of fruiting species that may act as food for both people and animals who use Atlanta as permanent or pass-through habitat. Potential locations where fruit trees can thrive and find partners with an interest in maintenance of these resources is important to their success. Larger plots that are not within the Right of Way may be optimal.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For reference: <http://www.atlantaga.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=10872> and <https://www.concrete-jungle.org/>



NO PARKING  
ANY TIME

## 5.2 Integrate Green Infrastructure

As a dense urban center with large extents of paved areas, Downtown Atlanta has an important role to play in achieving the City's sustainability and resiliency goals. Introduction of Green Infrastructure throughout the study area can help move Downtown toward a sustainable future by actively managing stormwater into public green space and improving air and water quality for multiple benefits.

Green infrastructure aids in stormwater management by incorporating systems which mimic natural processes and manage stormwater often through holding or slowing it at the surface or using it to infiltrate and irrigate urban plantings. This reduces pressure on sewer infrastructure and provides community amenities such as improved air and water quality, improved aesthetics, cooling tree canopy and other plantings that create habitat. Integrating green infrastructure into the Downtown core will help move Downtown and Atlanta as a whole toward a sustainable future by capitalizing on these benefits.



Hurt Park



Stormwater sewer

» **Introduce plantings and active landscapes that manage stormwater through Downtown**

The master plan identifies a number of streets Downtown, such as Central Avenue, which are currently underutilized or wider than necessary and therefore create space opportunities to implement landscape treatments that include above- and below-grade stormwater capture and management. The Resilient Atlanta Plan echoes this goal in suggesting policies and incentives that promote non-automobile transportation methods and the transition of parking spaces and underutilized transportation infrastructure to active street program, bicycle facilities, or Green Infrastructure. The design of these systems should be coordinated through standard city construction details to insure long term effectiveness and not detract from the navigability of Downtown’s sidewalks, particularly for people with limited mobility. Through these retrofits, existing streets can contribute to a robust network of plantings and active landscapes through Downtown that manage stormwater and help to increase the urban canopy, cool the city, and make it more walkable!

Figure 46. Existing Central Avenue street section, looking North

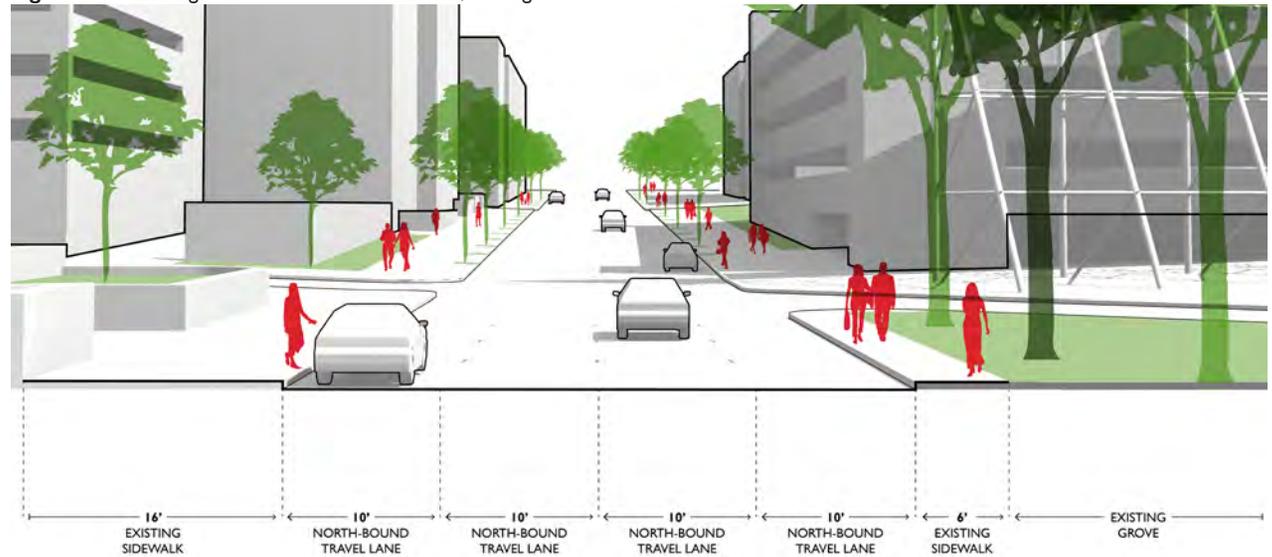
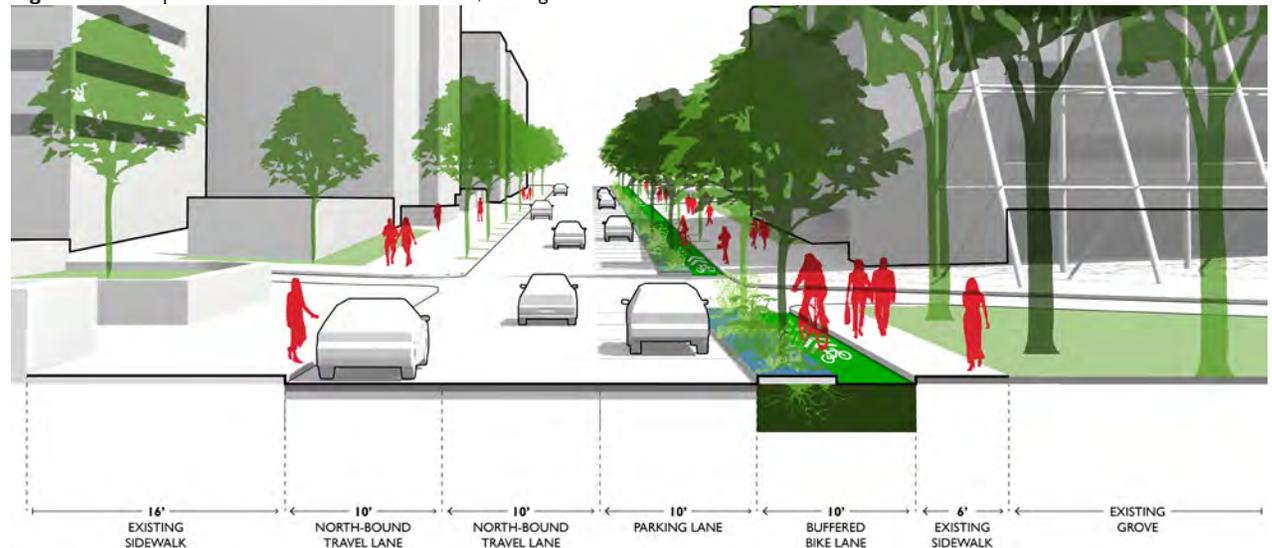
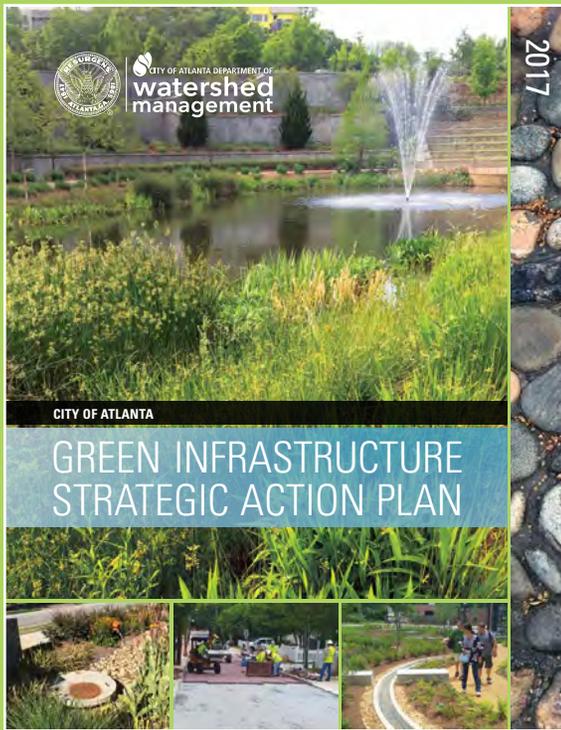


Figure 47. Proposed Central Avenue street section, looking North





## PRECEDENTS



Green Infrastructure Strategic Action Plan 2017  
Atlanta, GA

Source) <https://www.atlantawatershed.org>

### » Encourage Green Infrastructure solutions of different types and scales

The City has already begun to implement a diverse set of Green Infrastructure projects. Large, prominent projects such as the Historic Fourth Ward Park, which features green infrastructure at the center of a new public open space, and The Mercedes Benz Stadium, which installed stormwater control and green infrastructure to double the City's requirements, are great examples for new opportunities at sites such as the old Atlanta Civic Center site and The Railroad Gulch. Equally important, however, are smaller, less visible opportunities such as street tree pits and planted curb bump-outs such as those proposed by the Clear Creek Green Infrastructure Plans. Together these varied scales can have tremendous impact on Atlanta's overall water usage and help to minimize

runoff. These goals are in line with The Resilient Atlanta Plan, which recommends a stormwater utility fee that holds landowners accountable for the amount of impervious surface they place on their land. Fees, penalties and incentives should all be considered as means to encourage adoption of Green Infrastructure at all scales.

The following pages illustrate an opportunity to integrate as stormwater park into the redesign of the Atlanta Civic Center, as described in further detail on page 120.

“Turn [the Gulch] into a green haven- plant trees, garden, etc to transform the space at relatively low cost.”

Figure 48. The Civic Center today with Renaissance Park

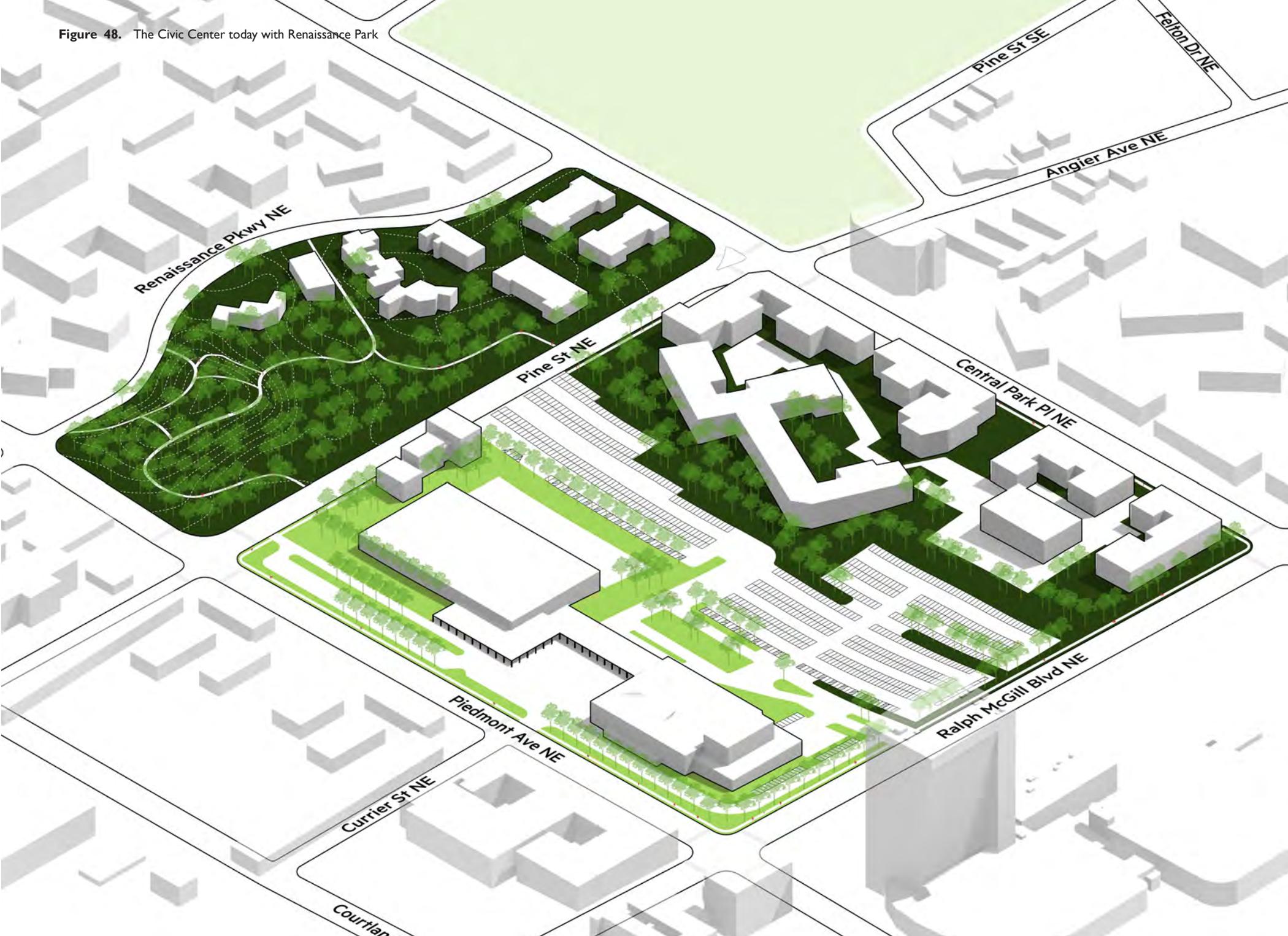


Figure 49. Proposed option I for the Civic Center and the Stormwater Park

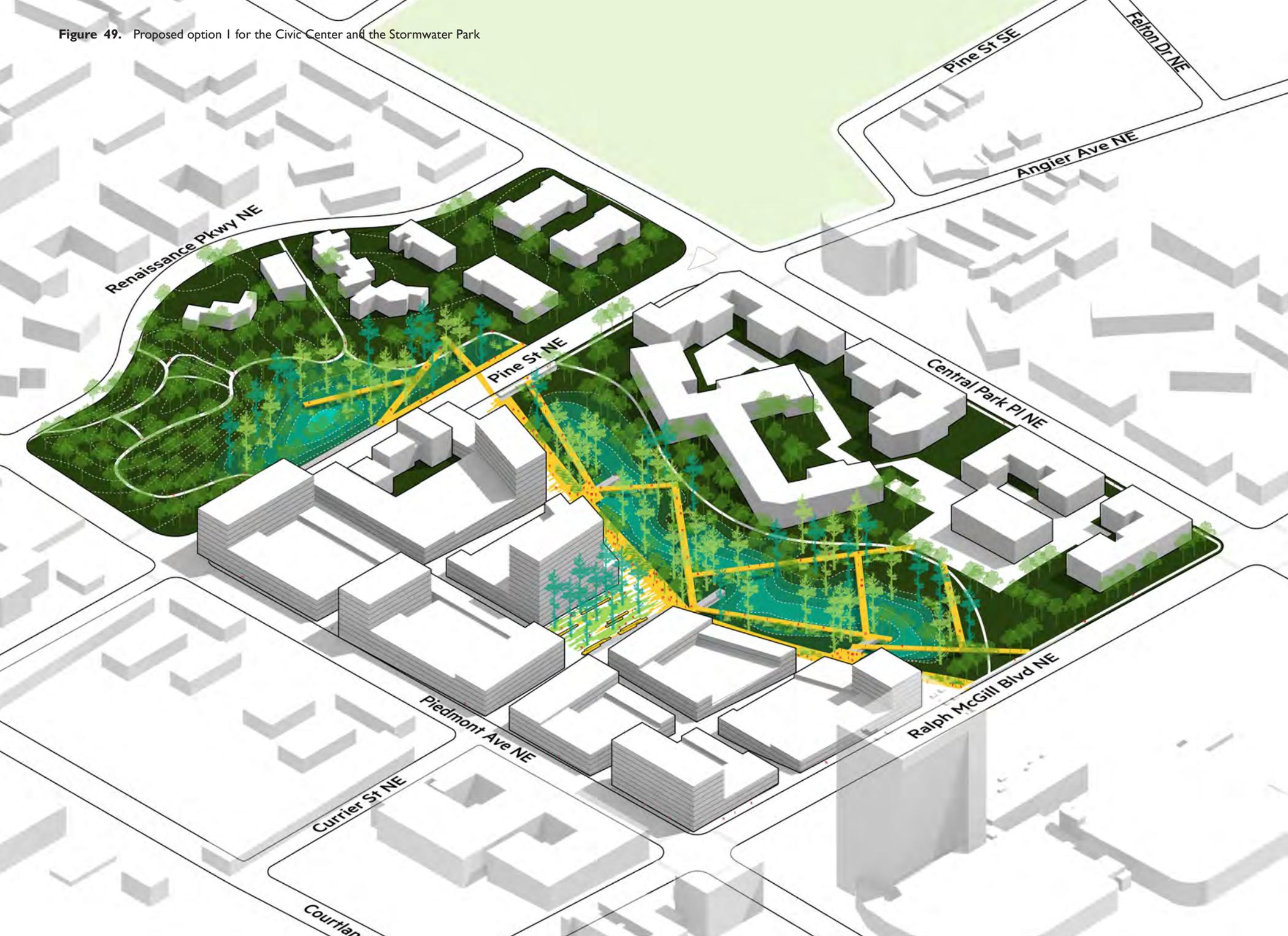


Figure 50. Stormwater Park during rain

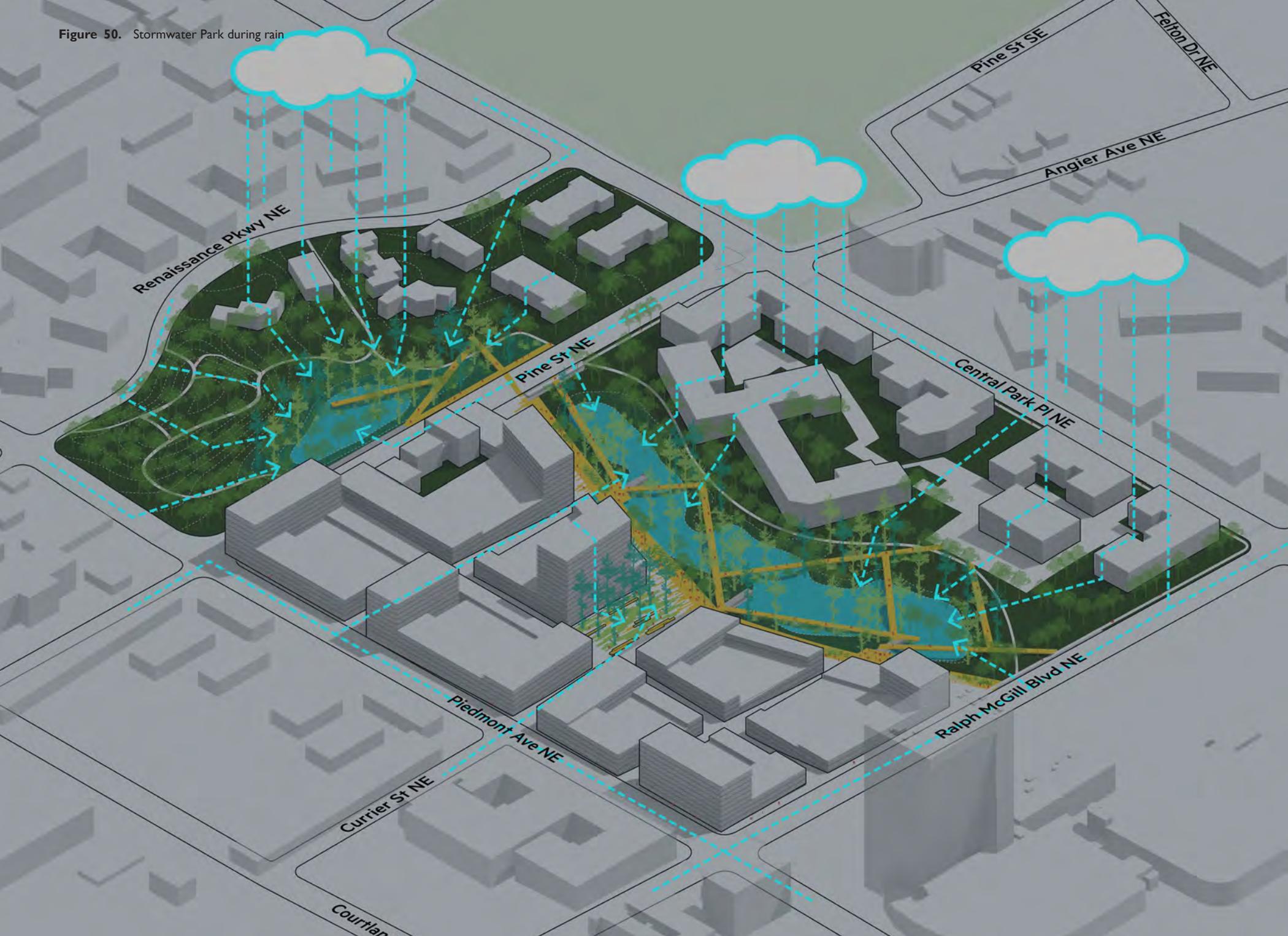
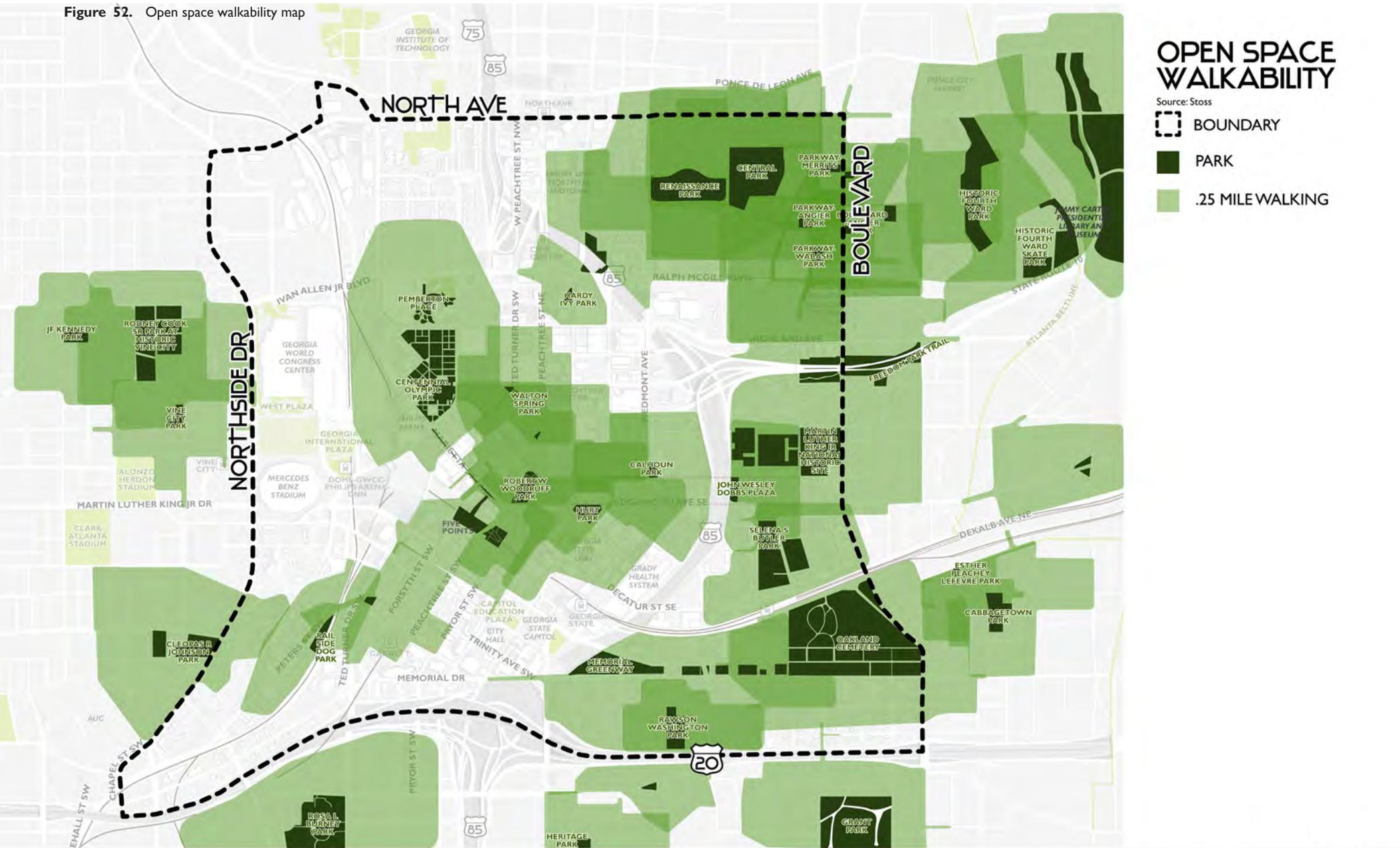




Figure 51 Stormwater Park diagram

Figure 52. Open space walkability map



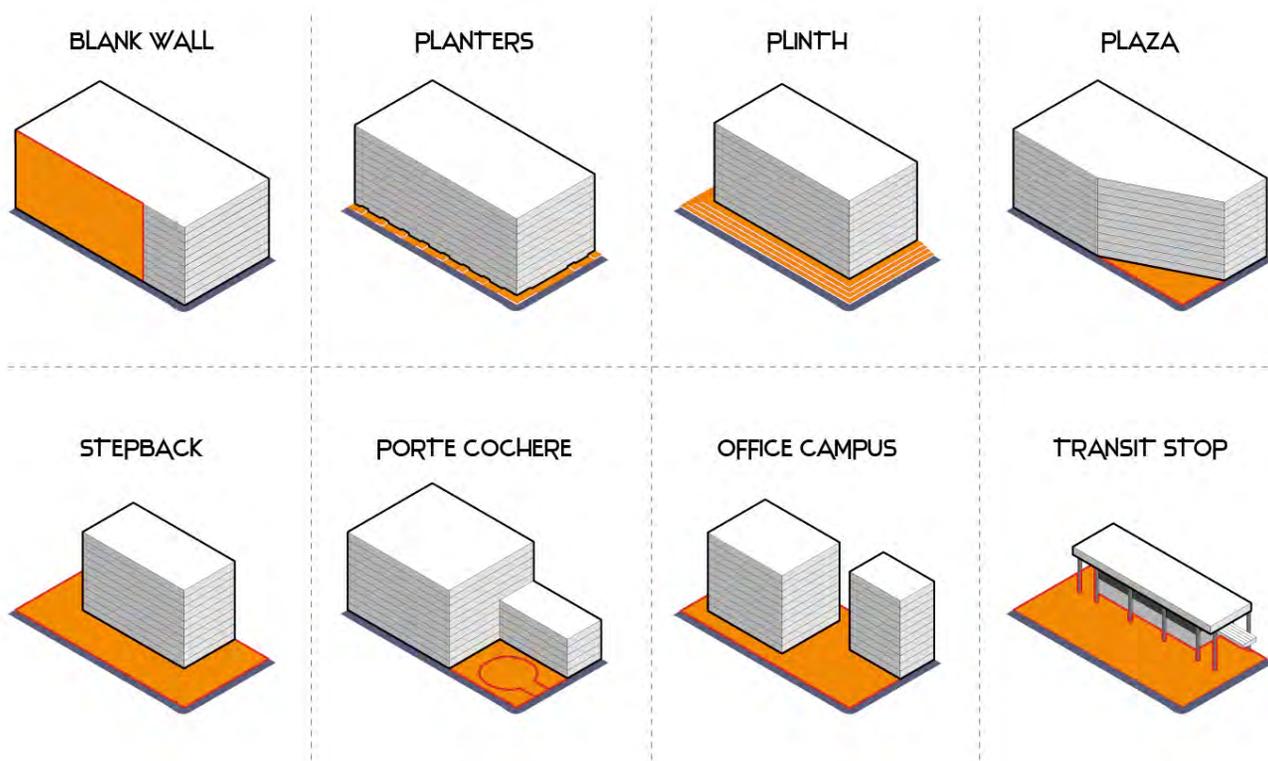
## 5.3 Develop a program to re-design “blah-zas” as vibrant plazas

Atlanta is home to a number of great urban parks and open spaces. Even with great parks such as Piedmont Park and the newly created Historic Fourth Ward Park Atlanta suffers from insufficient open space per capita. The Downtown study area is particularly challenged. Atlanta’s Project Green space to improve the city’s parks set a goal of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents – a goal that matches the National Recreation and Park Association’s open space goal.

Creating new parks and enhancing existing parks is therefore a priority for Downtown, on both publicly and privately held sites. However, building new parks in a dense urban area is difficult, simply because space is sometimes hard to find. Fortunately, Downtown has a number of large, underutilized spaces which are ripe for retrofit and could be transformed from open uninhabited ‘blah-zas’ into vibrant open spaces with increased tree canopy and diverse options for social and cultural activities, from happy hours to “yappy” hours at a blah-za retrofitted as a dog park.

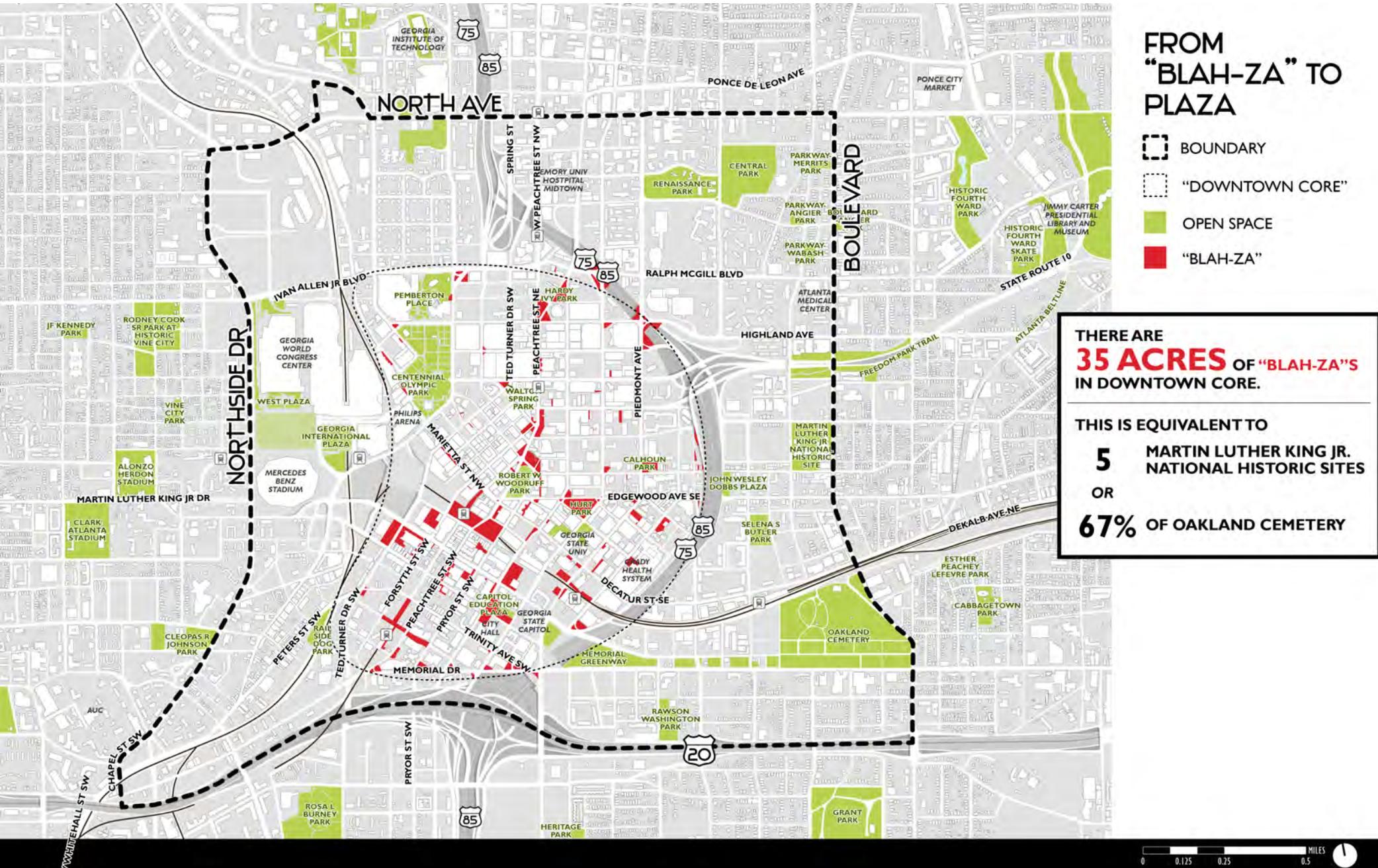
These opportunities for transformation range in scale from small open spaces within dense blocks such as the building setbacks on Decatur Street at Georgia State University to large multi-block plazas such as Georgia Plaza Park and Talmadge Square adjacent to City Hall. Many of these spaces are currently designed with ‘defensive’ architecture or elements, such as high walls along the street, which create an uninviting and private feeling. Breaking down these defensive barriers and creating welcoming public-facing plazas and parks is the first step to activation. Re-purposing materials from more historic spaces to allow more inclusivity provides opportunities to preserve and celebrate Downtown’s cultural heritage. Any investment in improved public space must be accompanied by resources for programming and maintaining the space. This strategy considers locations that are well-suited for public-private partnerships to operate, program, and maintain the plazas for maximum benefit.

Figure 53. “Blah-za” typologies



“You hardly ever see people in those large, hard, and barren plazas, except to walk across them from here to there.”

Figure 54. "Blah-za" map





## PRECEDENTS



Porch Swings  
Philadelphia, PA

Source) <https://www.universitycity.org/the-porch-development>

### » **Small: Decatur Street – Georgia State**

Decatur Street runs through the heart of the Georgia State campus and is lined with large campus buildings such as the Library and Sports Arena that are set back from the street and connected by skyways. These create small but significant underutilized spaces that could be improved and enlivened with light installations and interactive additions to create

places to gather, like the porch swings employed at the train station plaza in Philadelphia. These types of interventions encourage a playful approach to the public realm that should be customized to the space and its audience. At Georgia State, providing opportunities for students and faculty to hang out outside contributes to a cohesive campus feel which can be a challenge in an urban setting.



Existing Decatur Street

Figure 55. Proposed Decatur Street - Georgia State campus improvements



Figure 56. Plaza in front of Grady Hospital on Jesse Hill Jr. Drive: existing and proposed





“Area for kids to be safe run around.”

**OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES**  
WE SEE OPPORTUNITIES  
IN EXISTING DOWN...  
PLACES

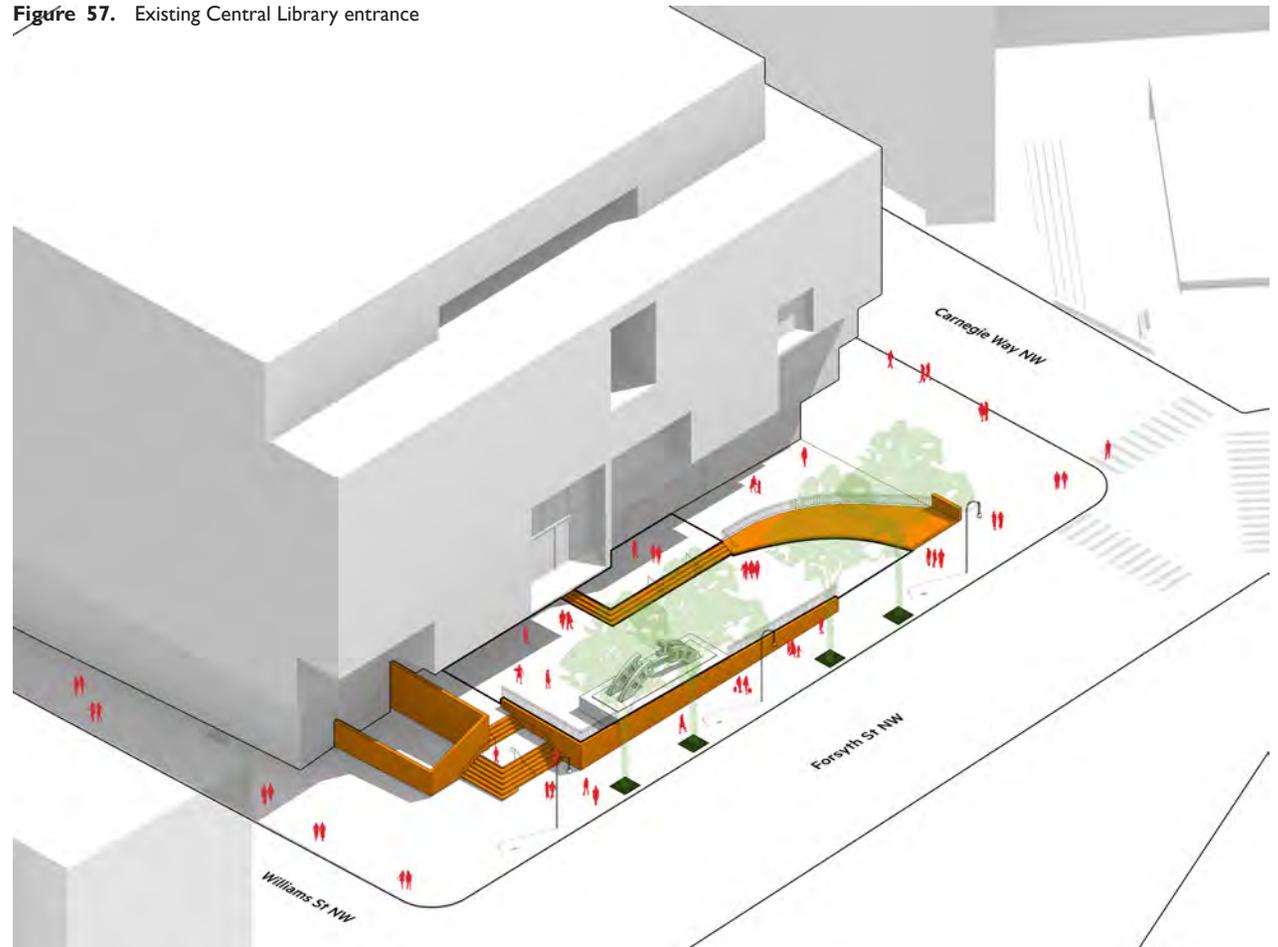
» **Medium: Central Library Entrance / Peachtree Center MARTA Station / Georgia-Pacific Plaza / Margaret Mitchell Square**

The central location of four underutilized spaces at the intersection of Peachtree and Forsyth creates an ideal opportunity to increase parkland and open space and create a meaningful impact within the dense fabric of Downtown. Breaking down the defensive elements along Forsyth at the public library creates a welcoming, publicly accessible extended reading room for the library.



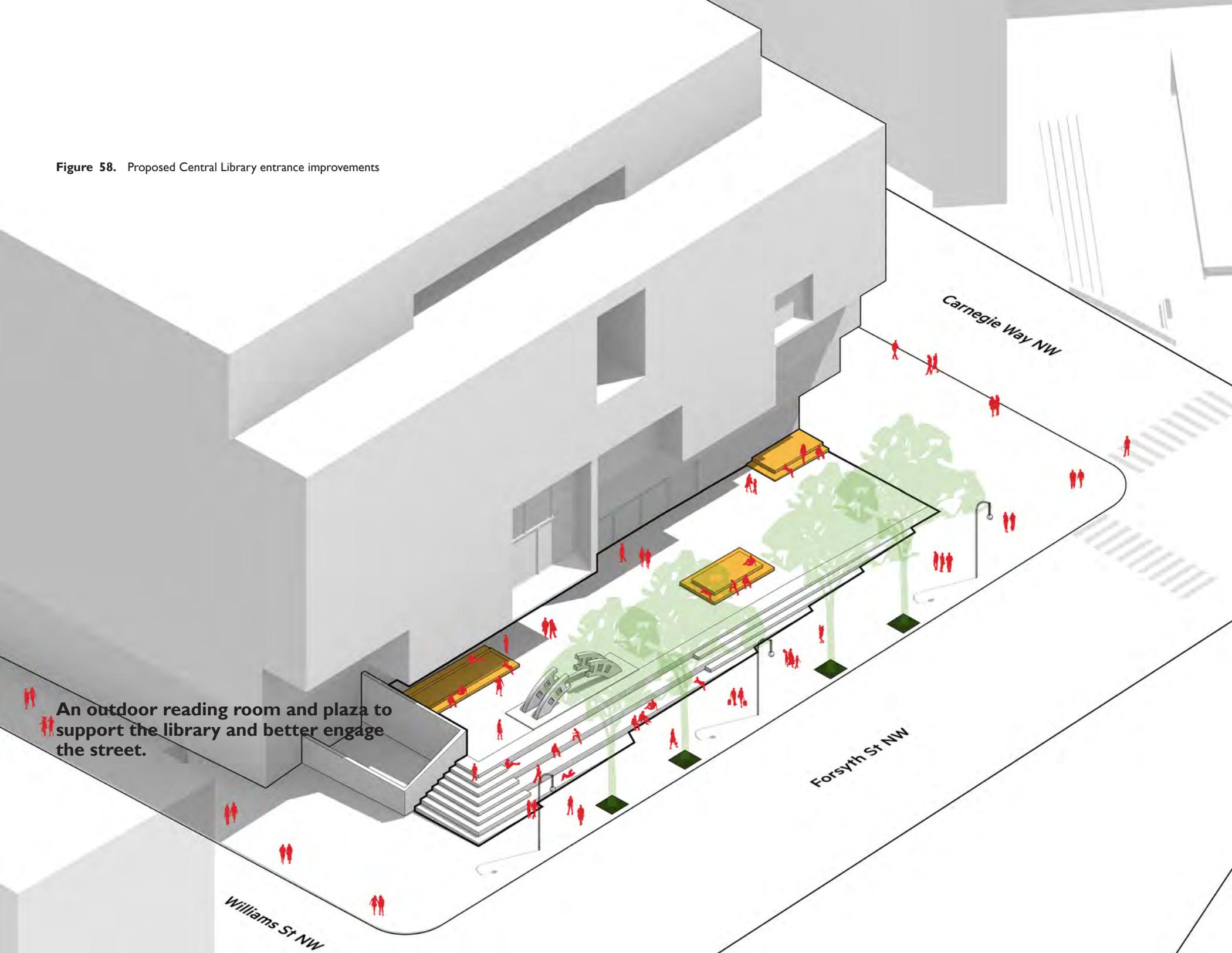
Central Library entrance

Figure 57. Existing Central Library entrance



**Many defensive elements separate the Central Library from the street.**

Figure 58. Proposed Central Library entrance improvements



An outdoor reading room and plaza to support the library and better engage the street.



Existing Central Library entrance



Figure 59. Proposed Central Library entrance improvements



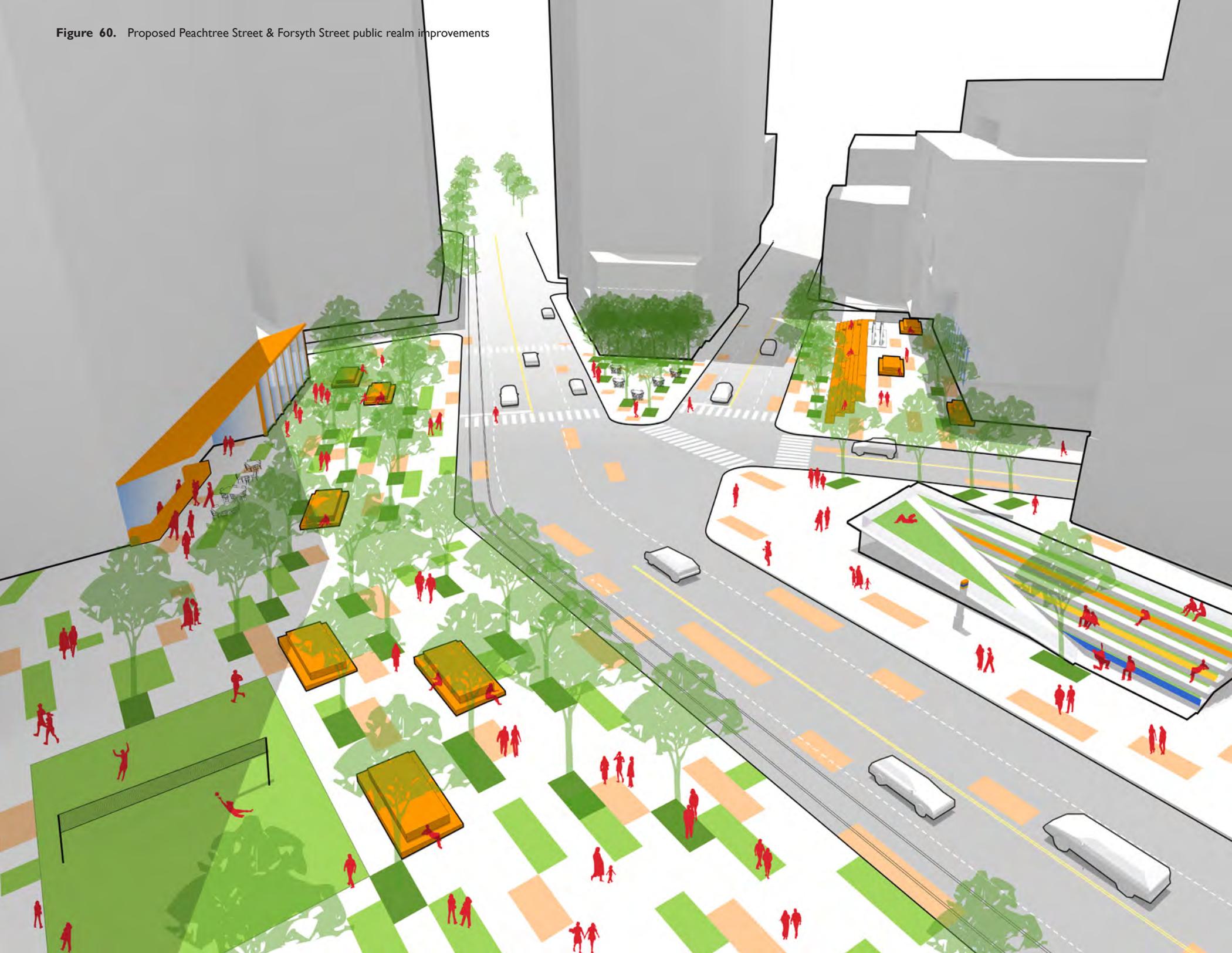
Margaret Mitchell Square

Across the street, alterations to the roof of the Peachtree Center MARTA station create an urban amphitheater where people wait for the train, meet up with friends or just sit a moment and watch the city go by.

Beyond the new MARTA amphitheater, across Peachtree Street, the future Georgia-Pacific Plaza will play host to short-term events and activation such as food trucks and plaza games during midday or after-work hours. Long term these elements should be built into the plaza including increased canopy and even lawn space for active recreation.

At Margaret Mitchell Square simple alterations that reduce its defensive features and add tree canopy open it up to face these other new open spaces and make it an ideal spot for a moment of shade and rest.

Figure 60. Proposed Peachtree Street & Forsyth Street public realm improvements



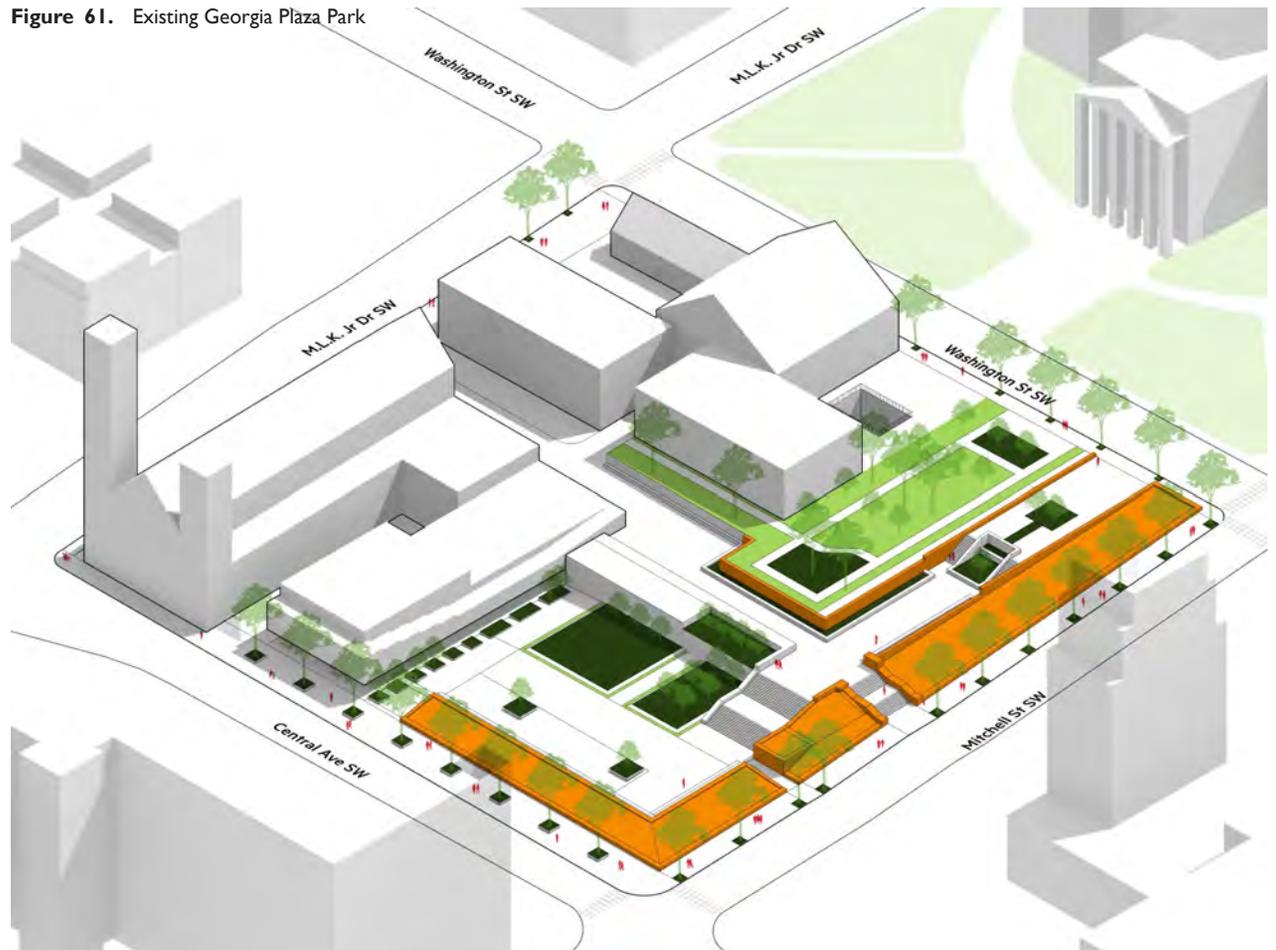
» **Large: Georgia Plaza Park and Talmadge Square**

Opposite City Hall and the Georgia State Capitol, Georgia Plaza Park is an opportunity for a major civic renovation, creating an open space of significant size right Downtown; one which could support new urban canopy as well as social activities and connection between City government and people living and working Downtown. Currently defensive walls along two street fronts are unwelcoming and leave the interior space uninhabited. A redesigned plaza could take many forms here from a large festival lawn at the upper level with cafe space below opening on to the lower level to a stepping series of lawns and plazas that connect to the streets on all 3 sides.



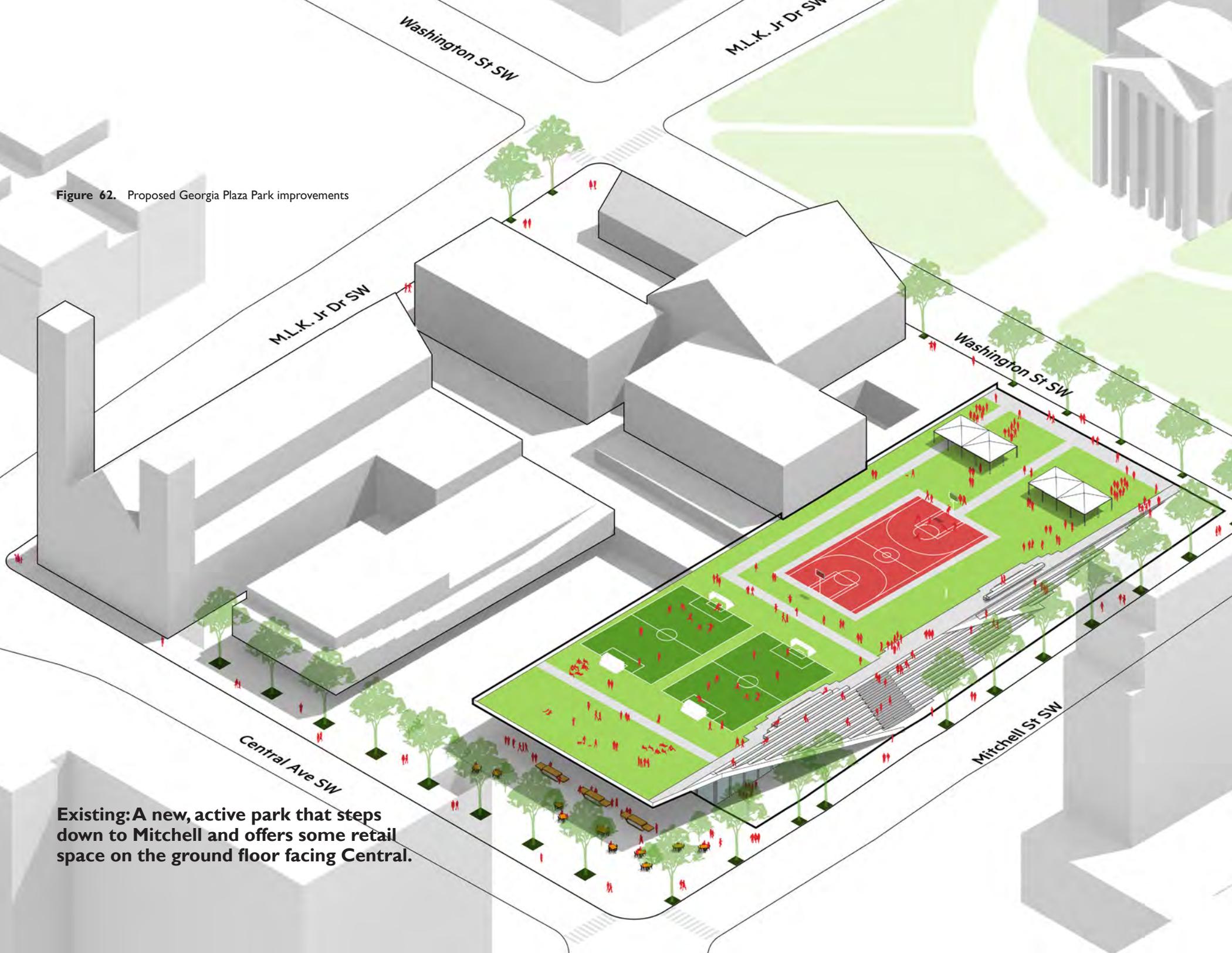
Georgia Plaza Park

Figure 61. Existing Georgia Plaza Park



**Existing:** The Park, at the doorstep of City Hall and the State Capitol, is tucked away behind walls and fences shown in orange.

Figure 62. Proposed Georgia Plaza Park improvements



Existing: A new, active park that steps down to Mitchell and offers some retail space on the ground floor facing Central.

## 5.4 Integrate play and active green spaces at MARTA stations

Downtown MARTA stations currently act as oversized and mono-functional infrastructure, most of which are primarily concrete with limited vegetation or tree canopy. Like the 'Blah-zas', the MARTA stations are a great opportunity. Relatively small actions that do not impact the transit function of the stations, like the successful transformation of a portion of the Five Points Station into a soccer pitch, could help these stations do a lot more. This kind of thoughtfulness about acupuncture-like play insertions into underutilized space can help to attract new families to Downtown and encourage new ridership on MARTA. However, as demonstrated by the success of the soccer pitch at Five Points, having a strong partner like Soccer in the Streets is critical to supporting regular programming and use.

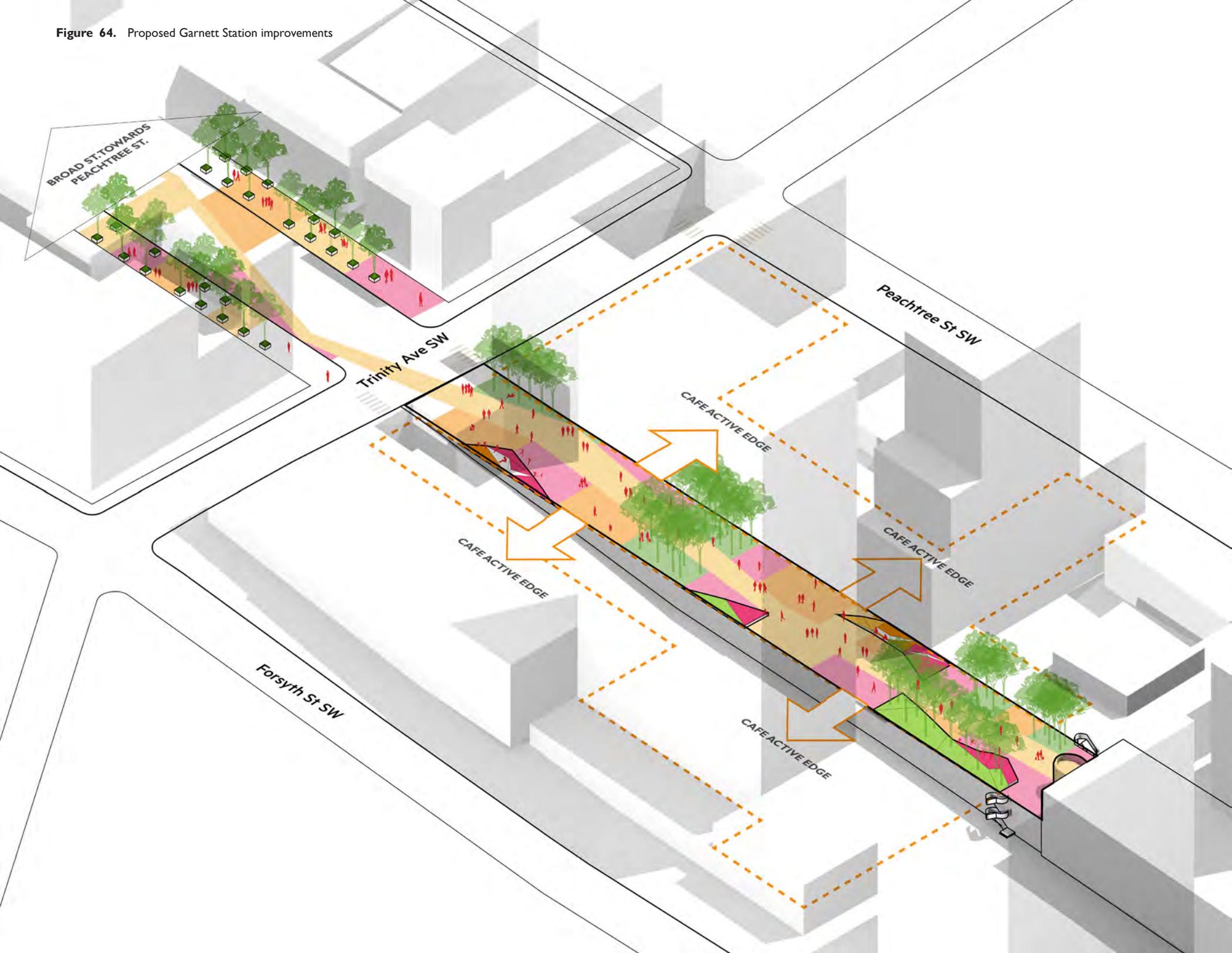
### » Garnett Station

As new residential and transit-oriented developments are planned around Garnett Station, it becomes crucial to re-imagine its existing entry plaza as an amenity to serve these new surrounding conditions. This proposal not only provides vibrant paving patterns with planting and playful seating, but connects directly to the new development lining the plaza.

Figure 63. Existing Garnett Station



Figure 64. Proposed Garnett Station improvements



» **Five Points**

Entries to Five Points Station are lined with tall walls and chunky bollards that prevent smooth circulation into and through the space. This re-imagined station replaces these barriers with planted multi-use terraces to seamlessly lead visitors into a more active plaza that echoes the existing soccer field with a new basketball court as well as space for pop-up cafes and other short term activation uses.

“We also need to modernize Five Points. This is the central transportation HUB of the city, but is not inviting in the least bit.”

Figure 65. Five Points Station brainstorming activity from June Public Open House



Figure 66. Existing Five Points Station

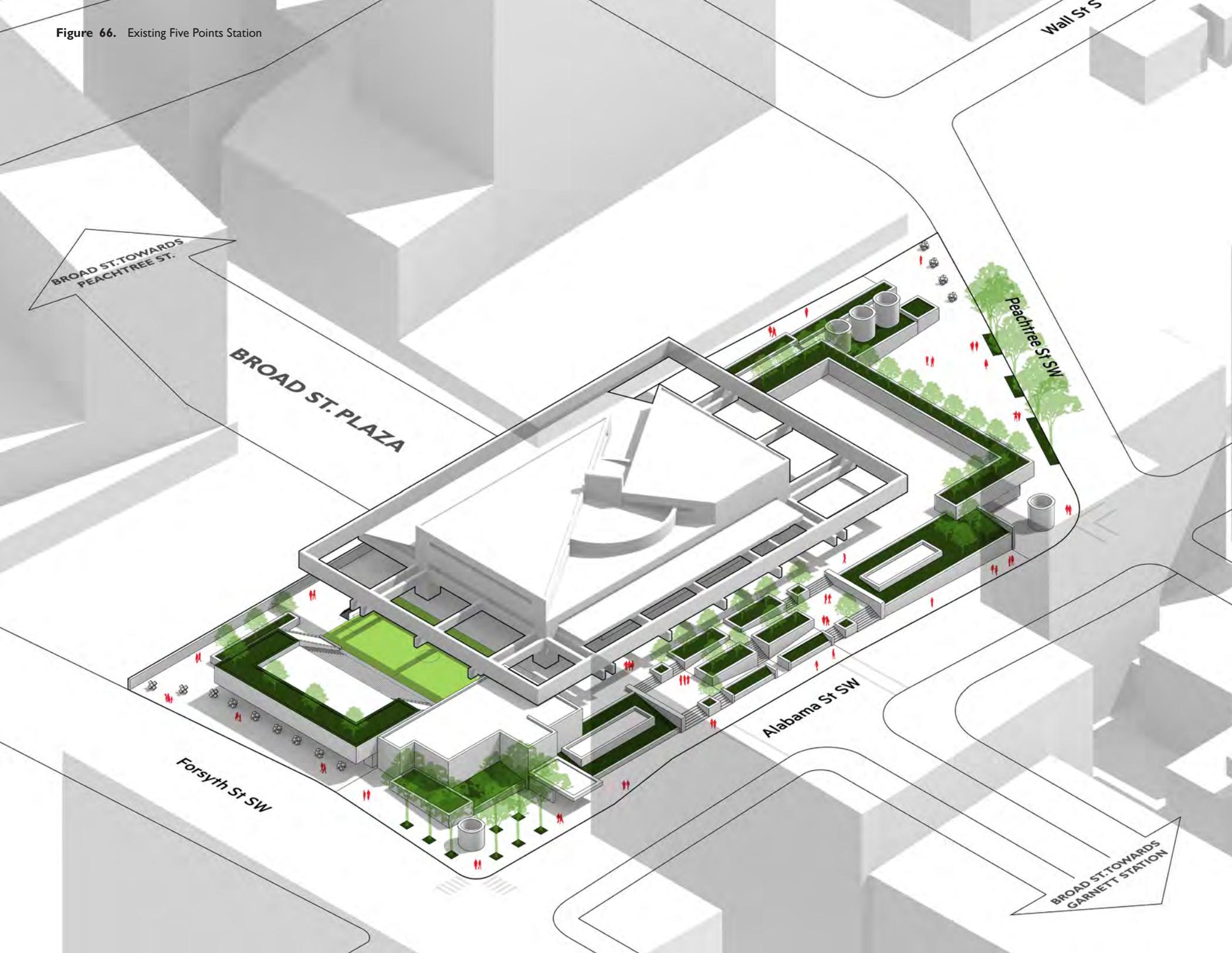
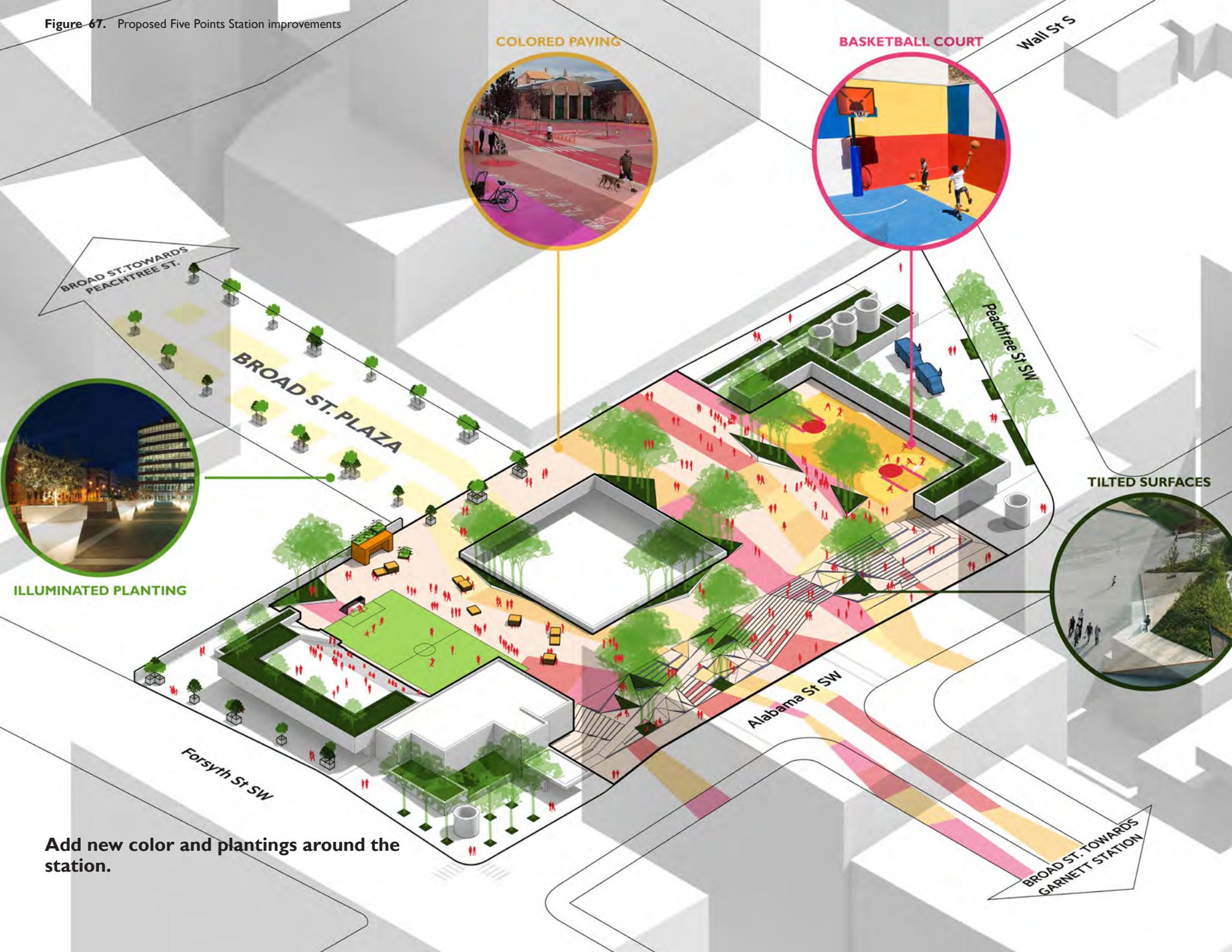
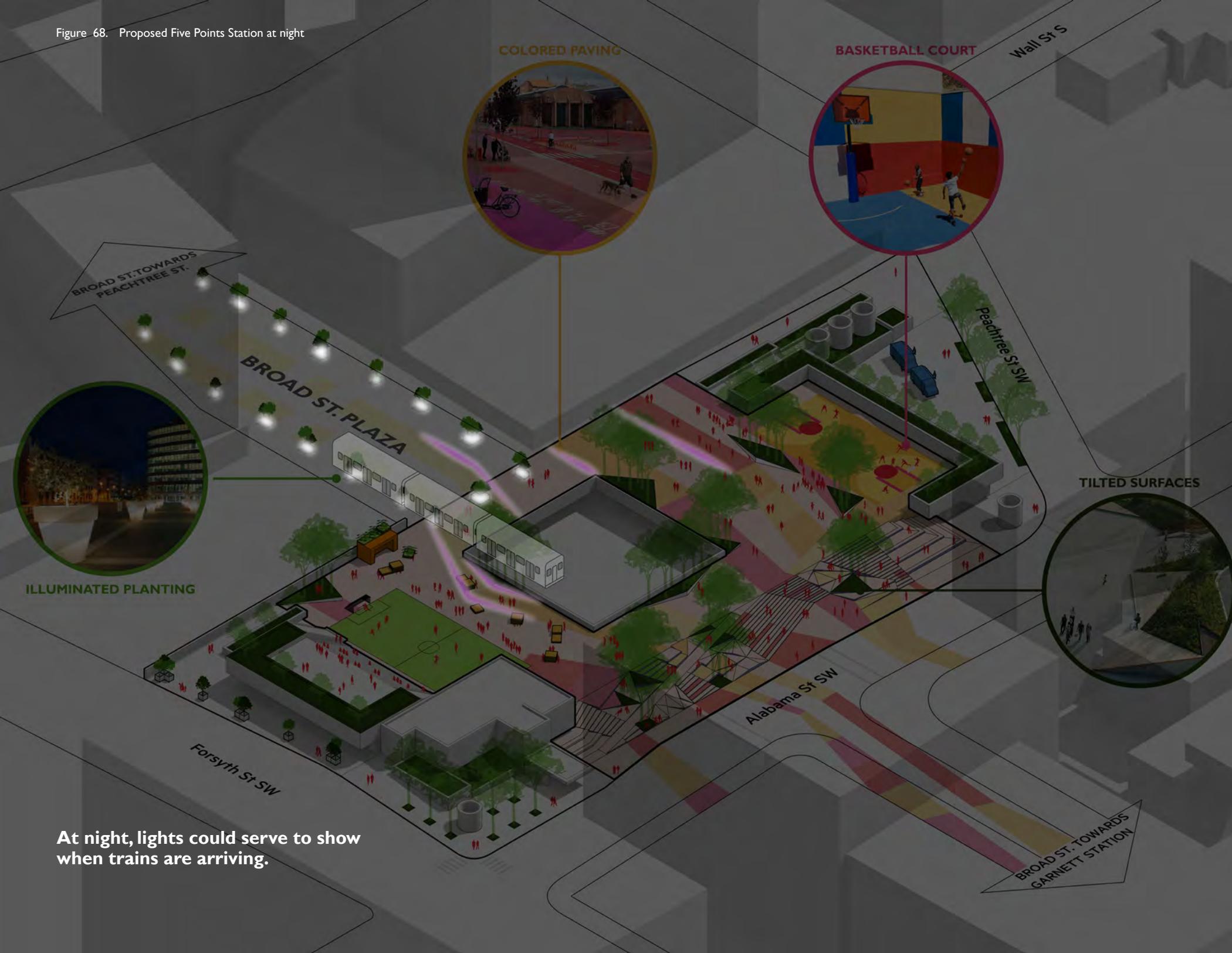


Figure 67. Proposed Five Points Station improvements



Add new color and plantings around the station.

Figure 68. Proposed Five Points Station at night

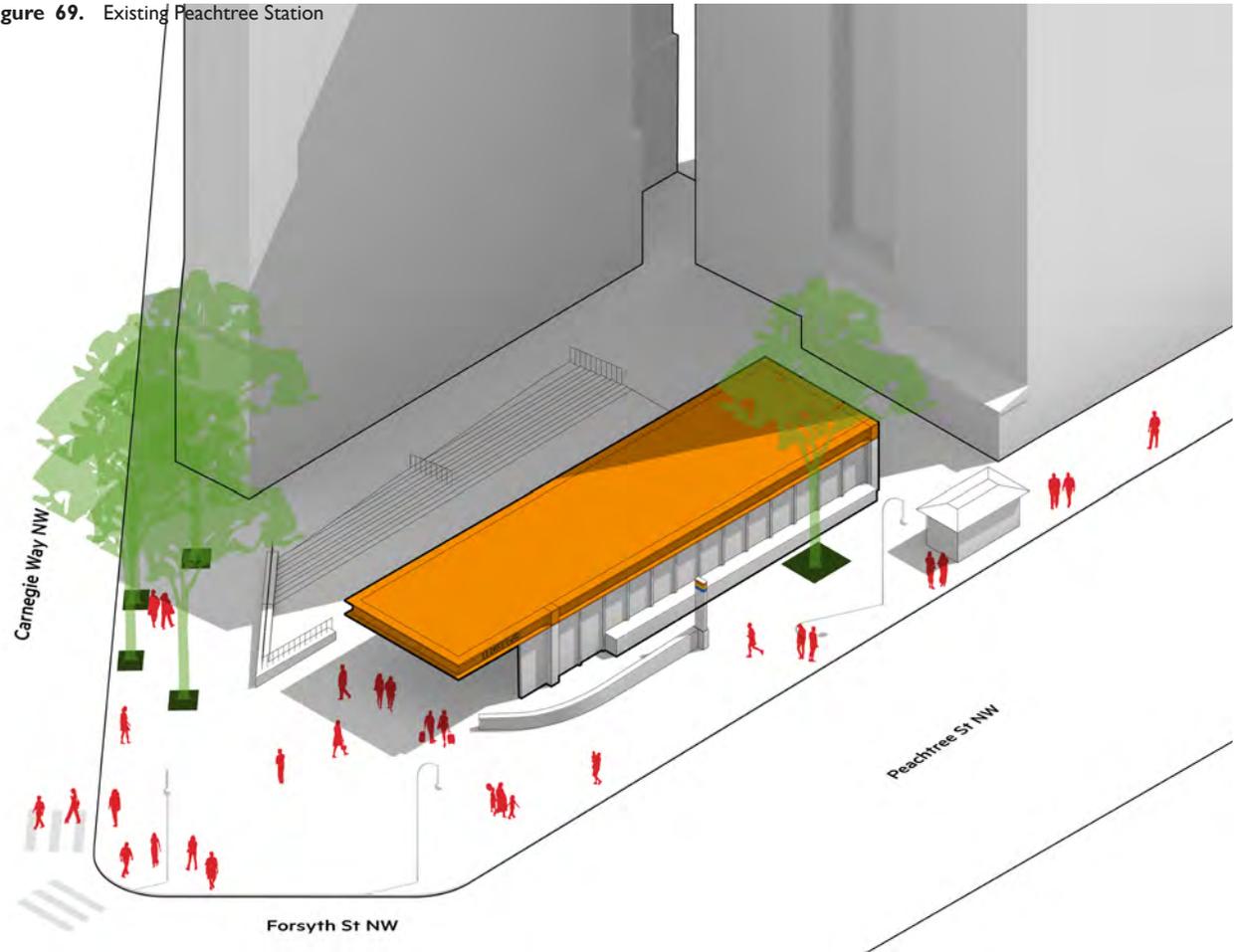


At night, lights could serve to show when trains are arriving.

» **Peachtree Center Station**

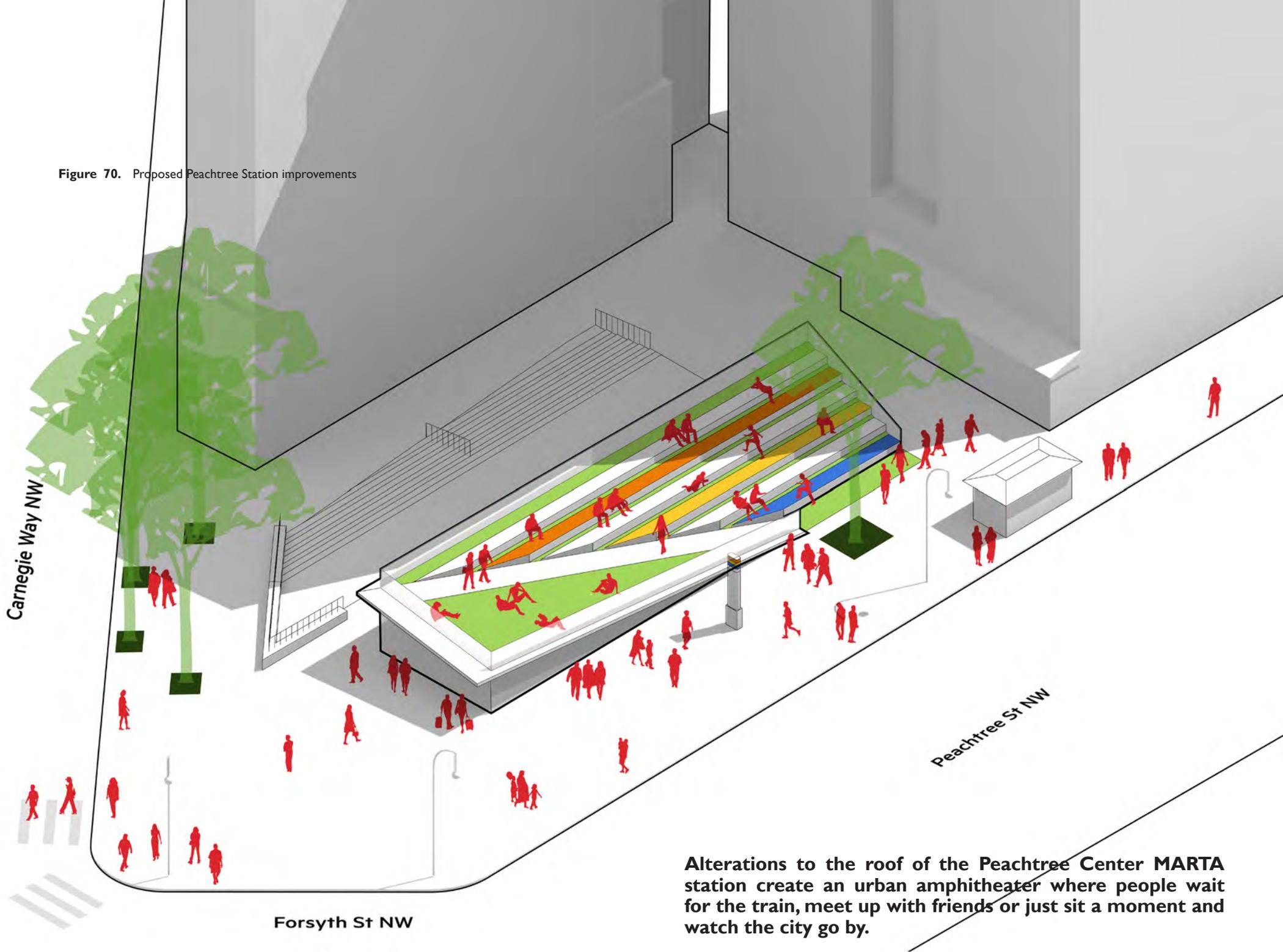
Changes to the rooftop geometry creates an urban amphitheater and makes use of an otherwise inaccessible space. Together with alterations to Georgia-Pacific Plaza and the public library plaza this becomes part of a new central Downtown system of open space.

Figure 69. Existing Peachtree Station



**Roof of the station functions as a defensive element.**

Figure 70. Proposed Peachtree Station improvements



Alterations to the roof of the Peachtree Center MARTA station create an urban amphitheater where people wait for the train, meet up with friends or just sit a moment and watch the city go by.

## 5.5 Create green gateways

Green gateways set the tone and create a first impression of Atlanta. As visitors and residents pull off the highway into Downtown they should feel welcome, comfortable and excited about the experience of the city. Challenging highway infrastructure that currently dominates the primary entrances to Downtown can be transformed into green gateways that welcome people to the 'City in the Forest' and signal the City's commitment to expanding the urban canopy and building Atlanta's future as a top-tier sustainable city that celebrates its cultural and ecological assets, that reinforces the city's identity as a center of sustainability, technology, and innovation. These gateways take different forms but have a similar language of lush green landscapes and creative lighting and arts improvements to highway infrastructure.

### » **Auburn and Edgewood Avenues**

Where entrances into Downtown currently consist of concrete overpasses surrounded by large concrete surfaces, we propose gateways that utilize additional planting where possible and vibrant patterning and lighting to guide visitors into the city. There are also opportunities to retrofit existing bump-outs into stormwater planters where stormwater currently passes by the structure.

### » **West Side**

A green median along Northside Drive will help re-connect the West Side to Downtown. The design of the median must ensure east-west crossings at intersections are navigable and safe. Integrate the Home Depot Backyard into the design of Northside to create connected, safe public spaces.

### » **I-75/85 Connector**

Following the well-established Freedom Park Trail as it continues into Downtown, a signature multi-use bridge could serve as a grand entrance into Downtown that demonstrates the city's commitment to new innovative public space strategies, technology, and sustainability. The connector also provides ample space for dense reforestation that will contribute to the larger goal of replanting 10,000 trees Downtown.

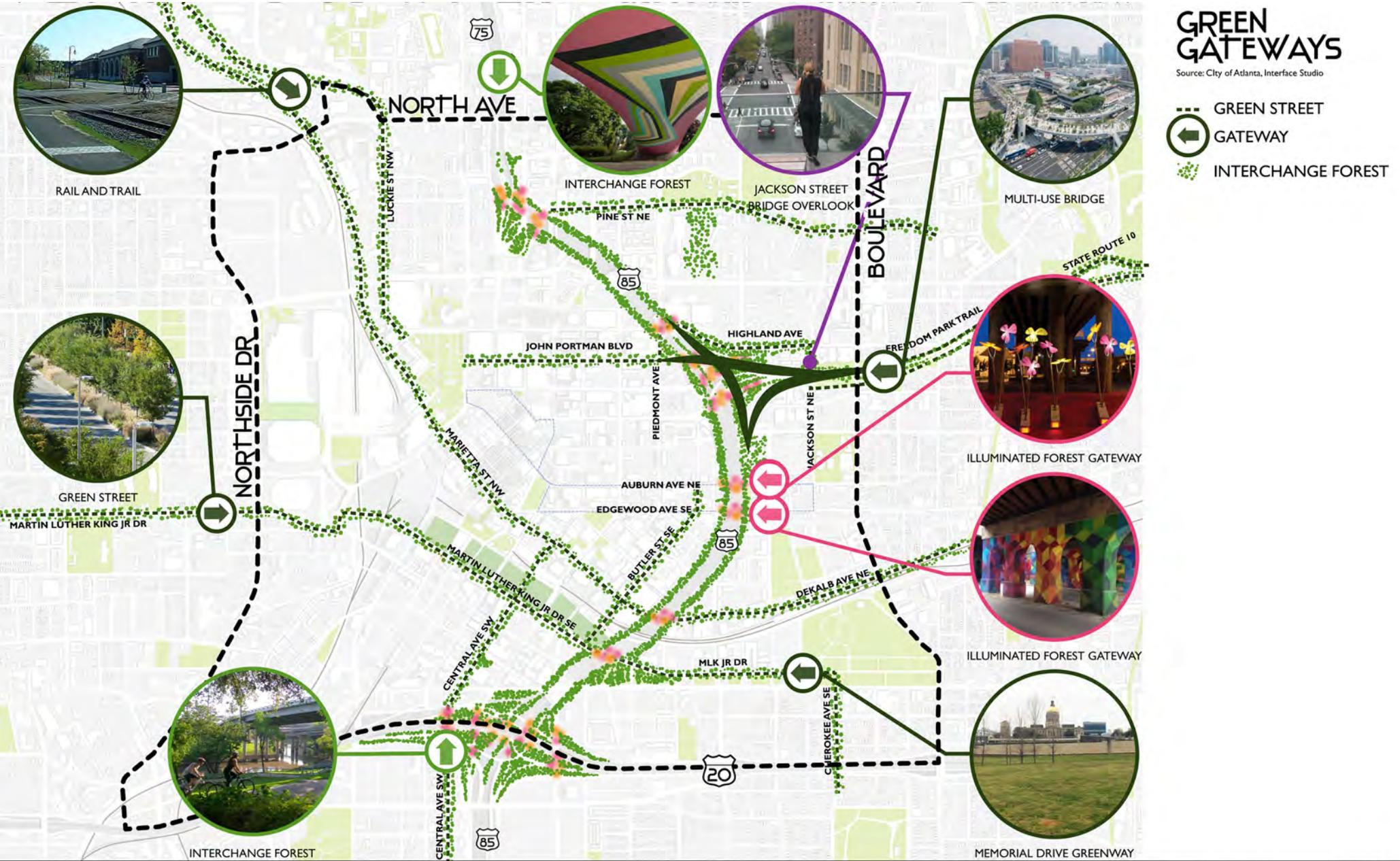
### » **International Boulevard**

Across the connector, Freedom Parkway heads into the Downtown core via International Boulevard. The existing gateway sign needs to be refreshed and integrate new lighting, greening along the sides of the street, and carbon intake structures to reinforce the message of a green, sustainable city.

### » **Memorial Drive**

Currently underway, the Memorial Drive Corridor is being designed to provide a linear park entrance into Downtown. The new Memorial Drive Greenway will create a direct connection between the historic Oakland Cemetery and the State Capitol.

Figure 71. Green gateways map



# GREEN GATEWAYS

Source: City of Atlanta, Interface Studio

-  GREEN STREET
-  GATEWAY
-  INTERCHANGE FOREST

» **Central Avenue**

As a critical low point and southern entrance to Downtown, Central Avenue provides opportunities to collect stormwater and become a unique gateway into the city. Utilizing the similar vibrant gateway strategies and green street capabilities in other parts of Downtown, this entrance will focus more on infilling trees within the road infrastructure and capturing water from neighboring streets.

**Figure 72.** Existing Central Avenue gateway, looking North

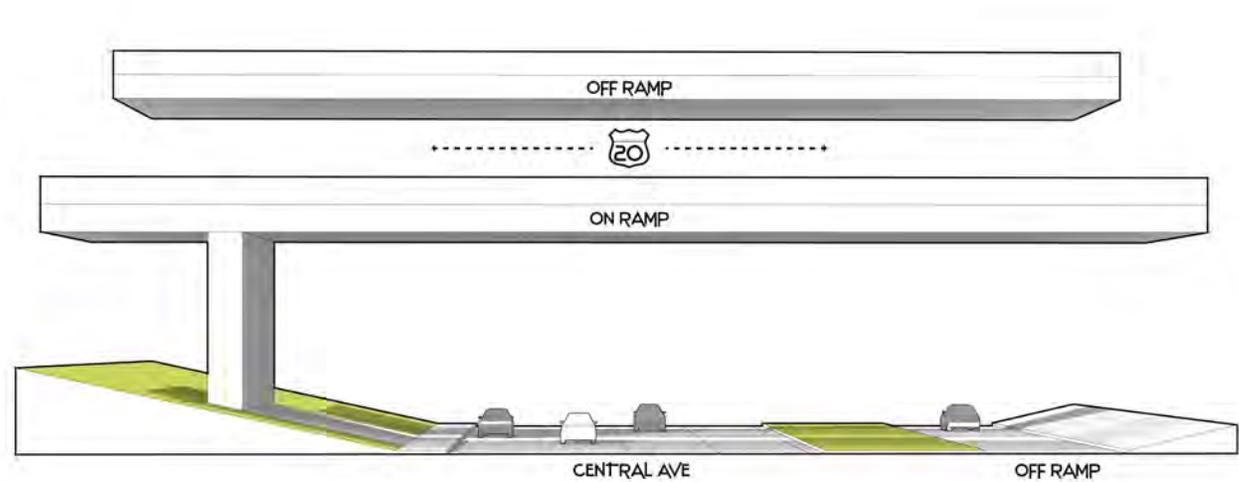


Figure 73. Proposed Central Avenue gateway, looking North

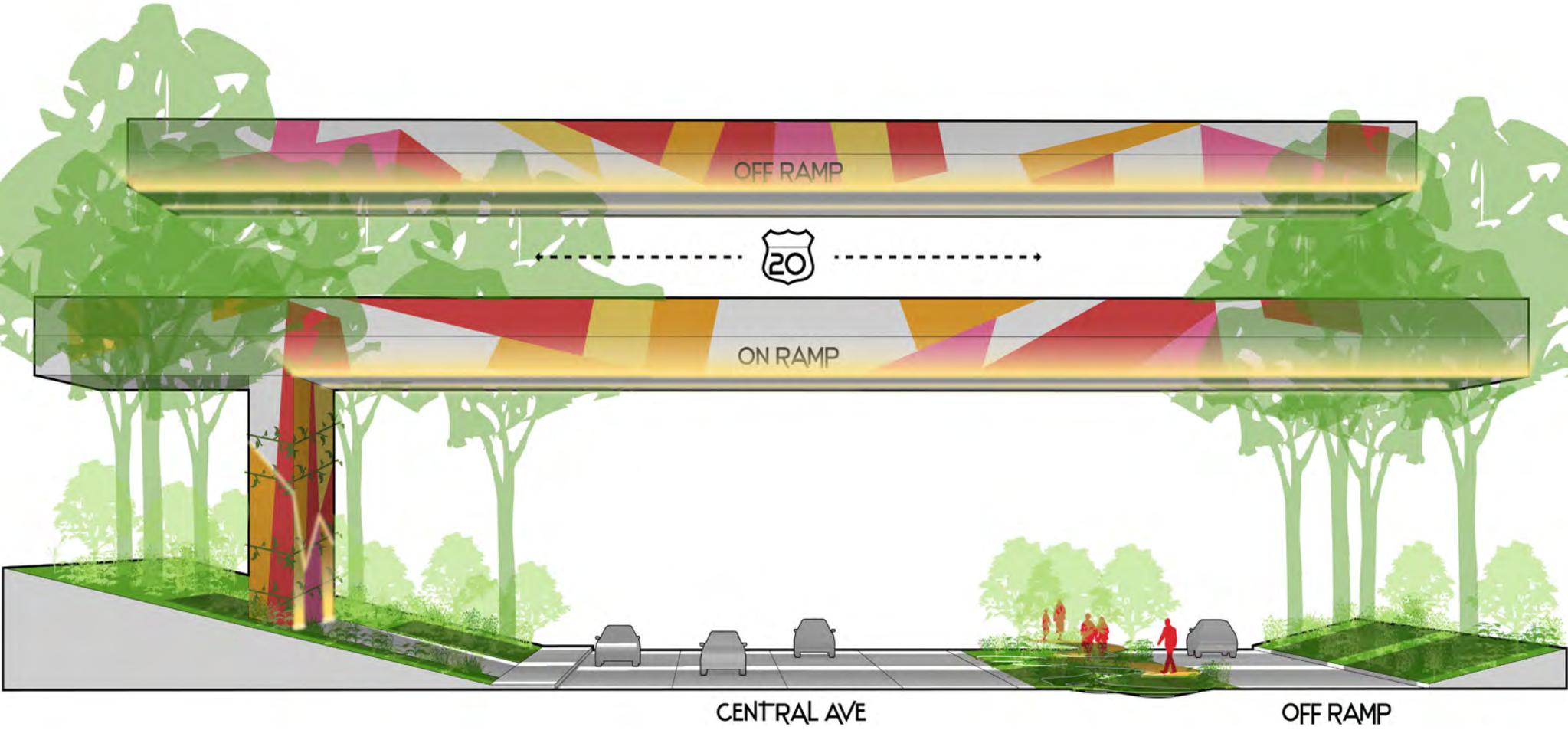




Figure 74. Park network map



## 5.7 Integrate health into the Downtown experience



- » Downtown adults have higher rates of asthma (**11%**), diabetes (**12%**), obesity (**37%**), smoking (**22%**), physical inactivity (**37%**) and unhealthy eating habits (**15%**).

Atlanta and particularly Downtown perform poorly in health status and risk factors when compared with state and national averages. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention retrieved from PolicyMap show that Downtown adult residents have higher rates of asthma (11%), diabetes (12%), obesity (37%), smoking (22%), physical inactivity (37%) and unhealthy eating habits (15%). All of these factors are impacted by the physical environment and lifestyle choices. Downtown is uniquely a hub of healthcare and sports for the City. The Atlanta Falcons, Atlanta Hawks and College Football Hall of Fame are all key attractions. Four hospitals and Georgia State University nursing and public health programs are located Downtown and are focused on connecting to health and wellness opportunities. Other valuable resources and

partners include the Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement, which has a 25 year plan to improve public health, and the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC) 2.0 which extends its commitment to healthier commercial buildings to include wellbeing and equity. More can be done, however, to make health a visible part of the Downtown experience for all ages through the design and programming of the physical environment, and through marketing and communication efforts.

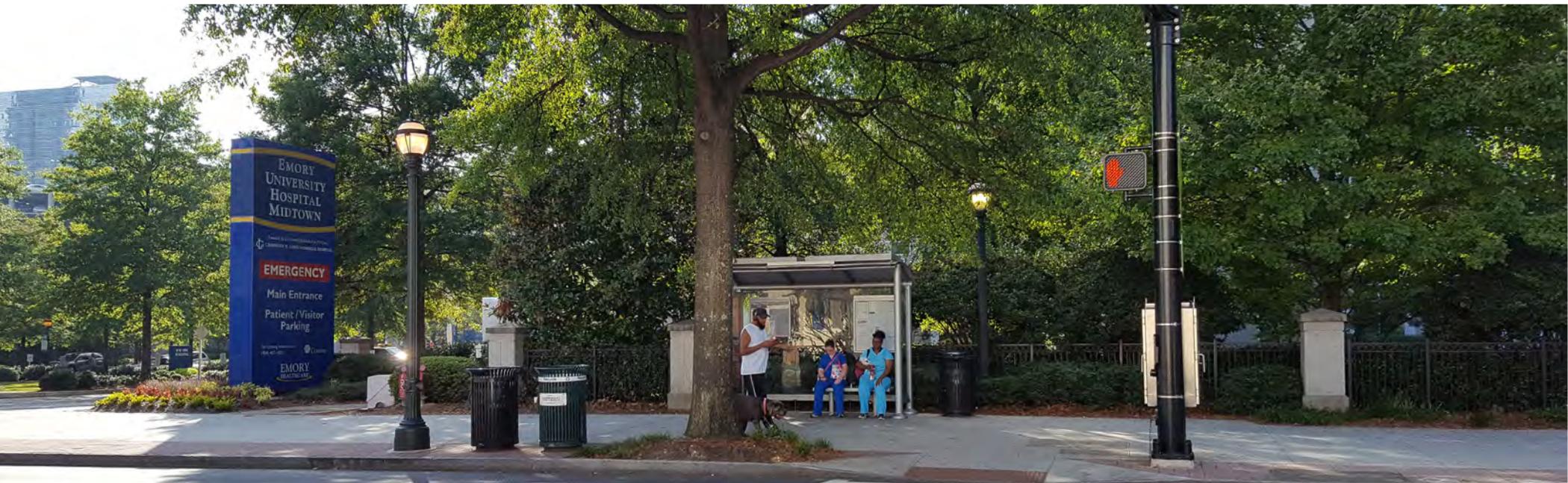
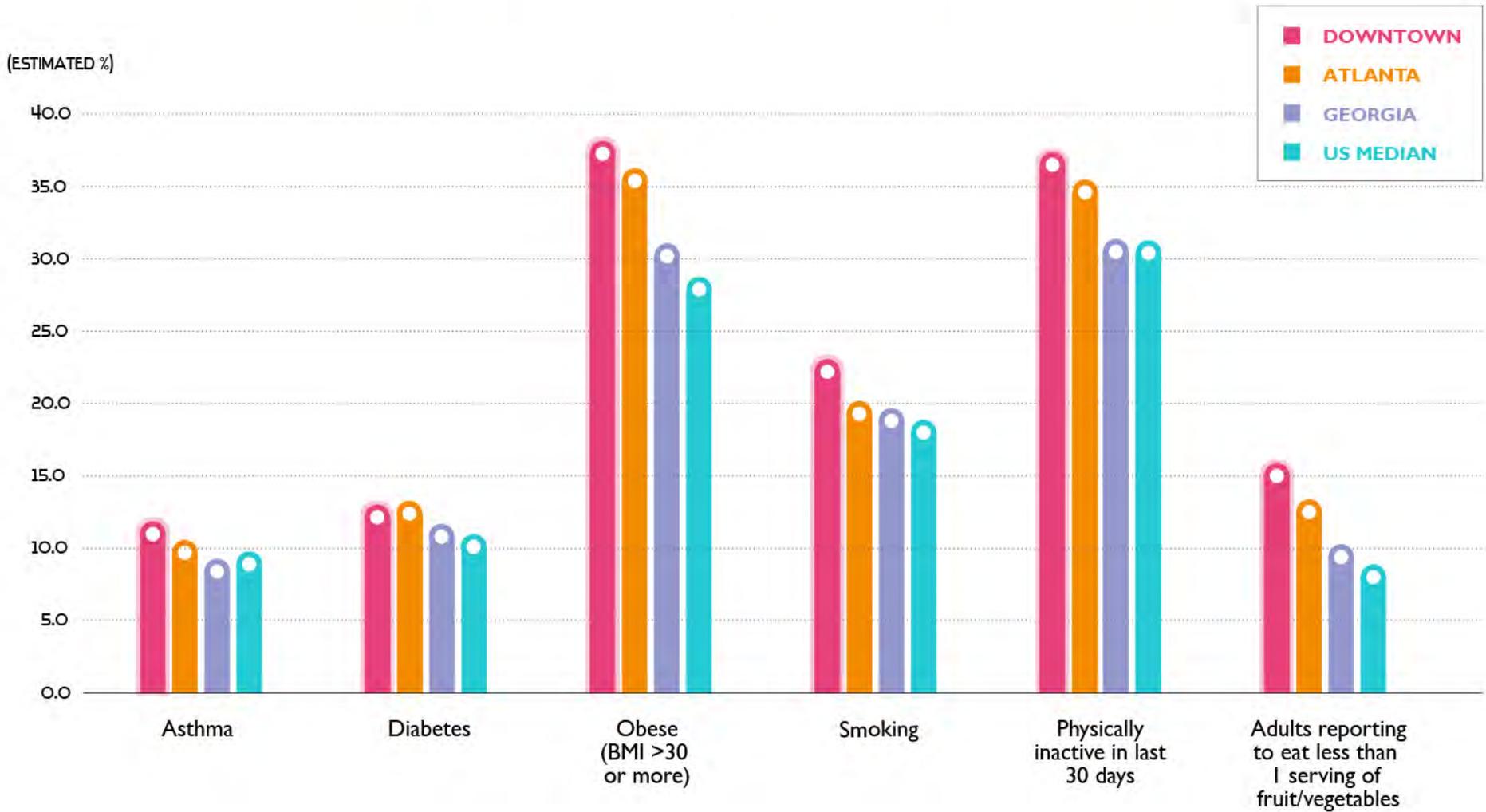


Figure 75. Health Status/Risk Factors for Adults in 2013

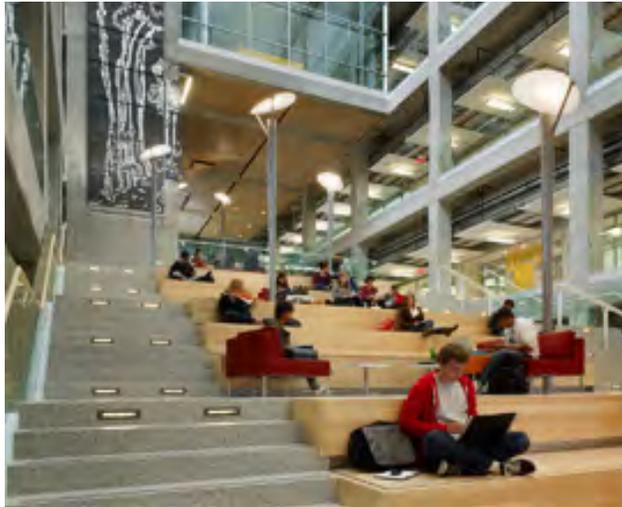
**HEALTH STATUS/RISK FACTORS FOR ADULTS IN 2013**



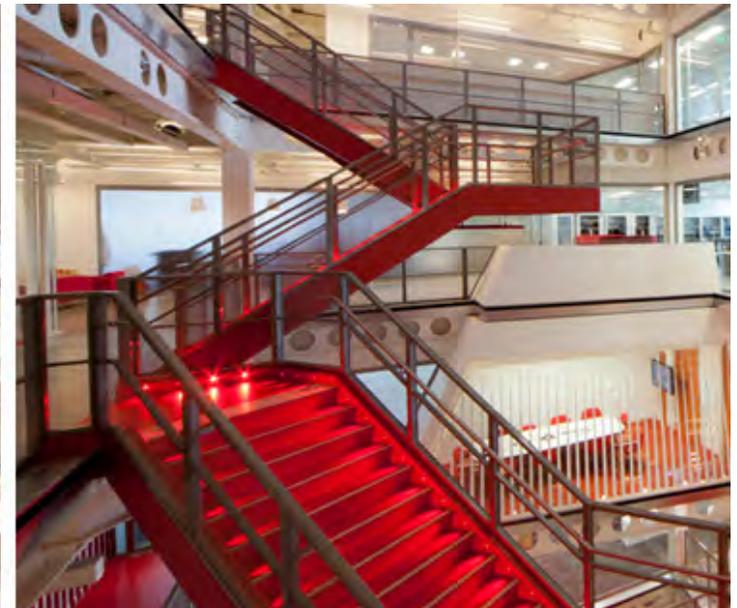
Source: PolicyMap, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

» **Develop active design city guidelines**

Active design guidelines encourage design and development that positively impact the physical, mental and social health of communities. This includes considerations for active transportation that supports safe multi-modal options, active buildings that encourage physical movement in and around the site, active recreation that ensures access for all and is culturally and locally responsive, and food access such as opportunities for growing or purchasing fresh food. CAP and its partners – Downtown institutions, corporations and hospitals – should advocate for the adoption of active design guidelines by the city.



University of Calgary EEEL (Energy, Environment, and Experiential Learning) in Calgary, Alberta  
Source) Perkins + Will



Macquarie Group, Ropemaker Place in London, UK  
Source) Perkins + Will



Gammel Hellerup High School Gymnasium and Multipurpose Hall in Hellerup, Denmark  
Source) BIG via Archdaily.com



Buckingham County Primary and Elementary Schools in Dillwyn, Virginia  
Source) <https://centerforactivedesign.org>



Gammel Hellerup High School Gymnasium and Multipurpose Hall in Hellerup, Denmark  
Source) BIG via Archdaily.com



## PRECEDENTS



NaturePHL

Philadelphia, PA

Source) <https://naturephl.org/>, Image: <http://www.philly.com/philly/health/kids-families/why-philly-doctors-are-prescribing-park-visits-to-city-kids-20170706.html>

“Philly doctors are now prescribing park visits to city kids.”

NaturePHL is a collaboration between Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Department, and the National Forest Service.  
<https://naturephl.org/>

### » Partner with Grady, Emory and Mercy Health System to develop visible expressions of preventive care and healthy living

Downtown residents exhibit many behavioral risk factors that could be improved with a shift in lifestyle – eating habits, smoking and physical inactivity. Health care institutions such as Grady, Emory and Mercy Health are all valuable partners in the mission of promoting community health and wellness. This goal could be made more explicit through physical and programmatic interventions. In the physical environment, interventions such as healing gardens harness the healing power of nature to help patients and staff reduce stress, find relief from symptoms, and promote a sense of wellbeing. Similarly, abundant tree plantings help create a more comfortable, stress-reducing environment, improve walkability, and also provide air and noise filtering benefits. Going a step further, some healthcare institutions are incorporating edible gardens into their healing gardens to bring the message of nutrition as a building block of preventive care into relief.

Programmatic interventions should focus on diet and physical activity. Institutions can start with their own staff. Launching health challenges like smoking cessation and lunch time walks (described further in the recommendation below) gives participants a goal and competitive motivation and accountability through co-workers. Healthy eating habits could be encouraged through the food options provided on campus and also linking with a community supported agriculture (CSA) program to offer employees easy pick-up from work (described in recommendation below). Doctors around the country are finding innovative ways of linking patients to the basics of a healthy lifestyle by writing “prescriptions” for exercise and fresh food.

In Philadelphia and DC healthcare institutions have partnered with the parks department to prescribe outdoor play and in other cities, healthcare institutions have partnered with food pantries and produce markets to develop prescriptions for fruits and veggies.

## » Organize Downtown health events

Downtown is a destination for sports and healthcare and for numerous runs and walks – everything from family-friendly fun runs to premier running events such as marathons. Downtown can build on this reputation with more and smaller scale, higher frequency activities to promote health for workers, residents and visitors. Public spaces such as parks and plazas can be programmed with activities that target fitness, stress reduction, and healthy eating including after work fitness classes in the parks, kids playdates, group bike rides, healthy food festivals, tai chi, or bench yoga for seniors.

“More places to play!”

“More kids’ events!”



Streets Alive event Downtown in June 2017



## PRECEDENTS



Geisinger Fresh Food Pharmacy

Danville, PA

Source) <https://www.geisinger.org>, Image: <https://www.prnewswire.com>, and <https://www.npr.org>



## PRECEDENTS



Move More Challenge, Emory University Hospital  
Atlanta, GA  
Source) <http://www.hr.emory.edu/eu/wellness/movemore/movemorechallenge.html>, Images: <http://news.emory.edu>

### » Develop “health challenges” and designated fitness routes for Downtown businesses

As a result of the success of the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC), business and City leadership urged ABBC to raise the bar for commercial building sustainability beyond just energy and water efficiency to include wellbeing as a metric within ABBC 2.0. The inclusion of wellbeing marks an important step toward creating a city that looks at sustainability in a more holistic way.

In addition to supporting the health and wellbeing of tenants by enhancing air, water, and light quality and providing access to fitness and nutrition resources, businesses and institutions can encourage their employees to participate in health and wellbeing challenges by logging miles walked and days of activity, using technology such as Fitbits and other trackers to generate competitive motivation and track their own progress toward their fitness goals. CAP’s programming includes walk challenges, scavenger hunts and transportation demand management that promotes and incentivizes active transportation with Downtown employers. Emory Hospital’s “Move More Challenge” for employees can also serve as a model; in 2016, over 6,500 employees participated, walking over 1.37 million miles and climbing almost 3 million flights of stairs. It is important to continue to grow these programs as well as develop new ones.

Walking and running routes that loop around the Downtown business core and main attractions can help Downtown workers and visitors get outside for some exercise during their lunch break. Half-mile to two-mile loops give walkers various options to inject some physical activity in their everyday routine, while longer routes can be designed for a more intensive workout. Trails and parks provide active recreation opportunities that could be augmented with outdoor fitness equipment. The Freedom Park Trail all the way to Centennial Olympic Park is a great opportunity to add a linear fitness trail for walking and running. Woodruff Park, Renaissance Park, and the future Memorial Drive Greenway are good candidates for integrating fitness trails and outdoor gyms to ramp up the active recreation programming. Routes can be publicized on the websites of businesses and also offered in hotel and convention center information packets. Walking routes for workers and visitors can also be utilized by residents for routine running places.

“The health of our employees is something we really focus on.”

» **Increase access to fresh food throughout Downtown**

According to a 2014 analysis from The Reinvestment Fund, most of Downtown’s residential neighborhoods except for the Old Fourth Ward and Castleberry Hill are considered a Limited Supermarket Area, where residents must travel significantly farther to reach a full-service supermarket (as opposed to the more specialty-style shops at the Curb Market) than the “comparatively acceptable” distance traveled by residents in well-served areas with similar population densities and car ownership rates. In addition to the excellent offerings at the Sweet Auburn Curb Market, farmer’s markets are a way to increase convenient access for Downtown workers and residents to fresh

food and enliven the street. The Peachtree Center Green Market is a weekly mid-day market that targets Downtown workers, and the Fresh MARTA Markets program includes a weekly market at Five Points. As Downtown’s residential population grows, an after work or weekend market would help address the fresh food gap. Similarly, community support agriculture (CSA) programs offer fresh, seasonal food while providing farmers with a consistent income through subscriptions. Truly Living Well and the Curb Market are potential partners to bring CSA programs Downtown. Pick-up locations in the Downtown core could be identified to link CSA farmers with major business and institutional employers.



**PRECEDENTS**



Greensgrow CSA  
Philadelphia, PA  
Source) <http://www.greensgrow.org/csa/>

Sweet Auburn Curb Market



## 5.8 Develop with a commitment to sustainability



- » The City's 2016 Climate Action Plan lays out goals for further reducing energy and water consumption by **40%** by **2030**.
- » And in 2017 City Council passed a resolution to transition to **100%** clean energy citywide by **2035**.

Atlanta aims to be a top-tier city for sustainability. It has been designated the 100th Resilient City by the Rockefeller Foundation, leads the nation in green-certified buildings and is a leader in the Department of Energy's Better Buildings Challenge to reduce water and energy consumption by at least 20% by 2020, having already met the goal for water five years ahead of schedule and achieving a 17% reduction in energy. The City's 2016 Climate Action Plan lays out goals for further reducing energy and water consumption by 40% by 2030, and in 2017 City Council passed a resolution to transition to 100% clean energy citywide by 2035. This makes Atlanta the first city in Georgia to do so. In Atlanta, Downtown is leading the charge on sustainability and the carbon footprint of the average household Downtown is well below that of the City as a whole, the state and the national average.

“Set the example for how to be an innovative smart city.”

» **Develop a Downtown sustainability action plan**

Downtown's leadership and commitment to sustainability and initiatives such as the Better Buildings Challenge can be formalized in a sustainability action plan. A sustainability action plan can align what has been happening Downtown with the city, define Downtown goals and targets, coordinate between all initiatives and track progress in relation to the city, and develop new initiatives specific to Downtown. Such Downtown-specific initiatives could include delineating CAP/ADID efforts to reduce waste, emissions and energy/water consumption in their operations; greening, waste management, and recycling efforts in Downtown public spaces and parks; and adding air quality measurement tools to new Arts and Entertainment District signs.



Atlanta Better Building Challenge (BBC)  
Annual Report 2016



**PRECEDENTS**



Technology Square Research Building joined Atlanta BBC in 2011.  
Georgia Tech Atlanta, GA  
Source) <http://atlantabbcc.com/>



## PRECEDENTS



Toronto Green Standard is a two-tiered set of performance measures for mid to high-rise residential and non-residential development that promote sustainable site and building designs through addressing air quality, energy efficiency, water quality and efficiency, ecology and solid waste. The first tier is required and the second tier is more intensive and voluntary with a financial incentive.

Source) [www1.toronto.ca/](http://www1.toronto.ca/), Image: <http://www.macleans.ca/>

### » Promote green building and sustainable development practices

In 2016, Atlanta's participation rate in the Better Buildings Challenge far outstripped the other participating cities by square footage, with 114 million square feet in over 600 participating buildings. And in Atlanta, Downtown leads the way over Buckhead, Midtown, and other areas by square footage with 43.9 million square feet committed. It is an excellent example of a successful public-private partnership that is high visibility and reinforces the monetary value of sustainability for building owners in recruiting tenants. With unprecedented growth on the horizon, Downtown is in a good position to further push the City's sustainability goals. In addition to increasing participation in the Better Buildings Challenge,

new development should be encouraged to attain green building certification and utilize sustainable development practices such as reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings, low-impact development, mixed use projects, transit-oriented development and water and energy efficient measures. The City has an ordinance requiring all new city construction and major renovation to be Silver-LEED as well as an ordinance requiring the use of green infrastructure such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, stormwater planters, and other measures to mitigate stormwater runoff from all new and redevelopment projects. As part of the Downtown sustainability action plan, CAP and its partners can help projects meet these standards and go beyond, by providing a platform for championing such projects and exploring incentives.

» **Reduce energy demand and water usage**

Atlanta has recently committed to using 100% renewable energy by 2035 and through the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, the city has already achieved a 17% energy reduction. According to the Department of Energy, buildings are the greatest consumer of energy and the single-biggest source of carbon pollution in most U.S. cities. Heating and cooling consume the greatest amount of energy: 43% in residential buildings and 31% in commercial buildings. In commercial buildings, ventilation and lighting also make up a considerable portion of the energy usage, 9% and 20% respectively. In Atlanta, commercial buildings are the largest sector of energy consumption and the City has been proactive in addressing this challenge by passing the Commercial Building Energy & Water Efficiency Ordinance in 2015. While the ordinance does not require building owners to implement energy efficient changes, it is anticipated that by benchmarking energy and water usage on an annual basis to inform the market and undertaking energy audits every 10 years, they will be able to make business decisions that support sustainability.

*Resilient Atlanta*, the City's new resiliency plan, includes specific strategies for reducing energy demand and water usage. Downtown businesses and institutions should sign-on as early participants in programs aimed at improving water efficiency in restaurants and increasing use and access to solar energy. Furthermore, new buildings should be designed and built with upfront considerations for siting and orientation to maximize natural ventilation and light as well as green infrastructure practices such as shade trees and green roofs to reduce heating and cooling demands. Older buildings can be retrofitted with energy efficient heating and cooling systems, building controls, and upgraded lighting to improve energy efficiency and decrease energy demand.



» In 2016, **114 MILLION** square feet in over **600** buildings participated in Atlanta's Better Buildings Challenge.



**OFFER REAL CHOICE IN  
TRANSPORTATION** to reduce traffic  
congestion and reliance on automobiles  
and create space for increased activity



## 6. OFFER REAL CHOICE IN TRANSPORTATION TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILES AND CREATE SPACE FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY



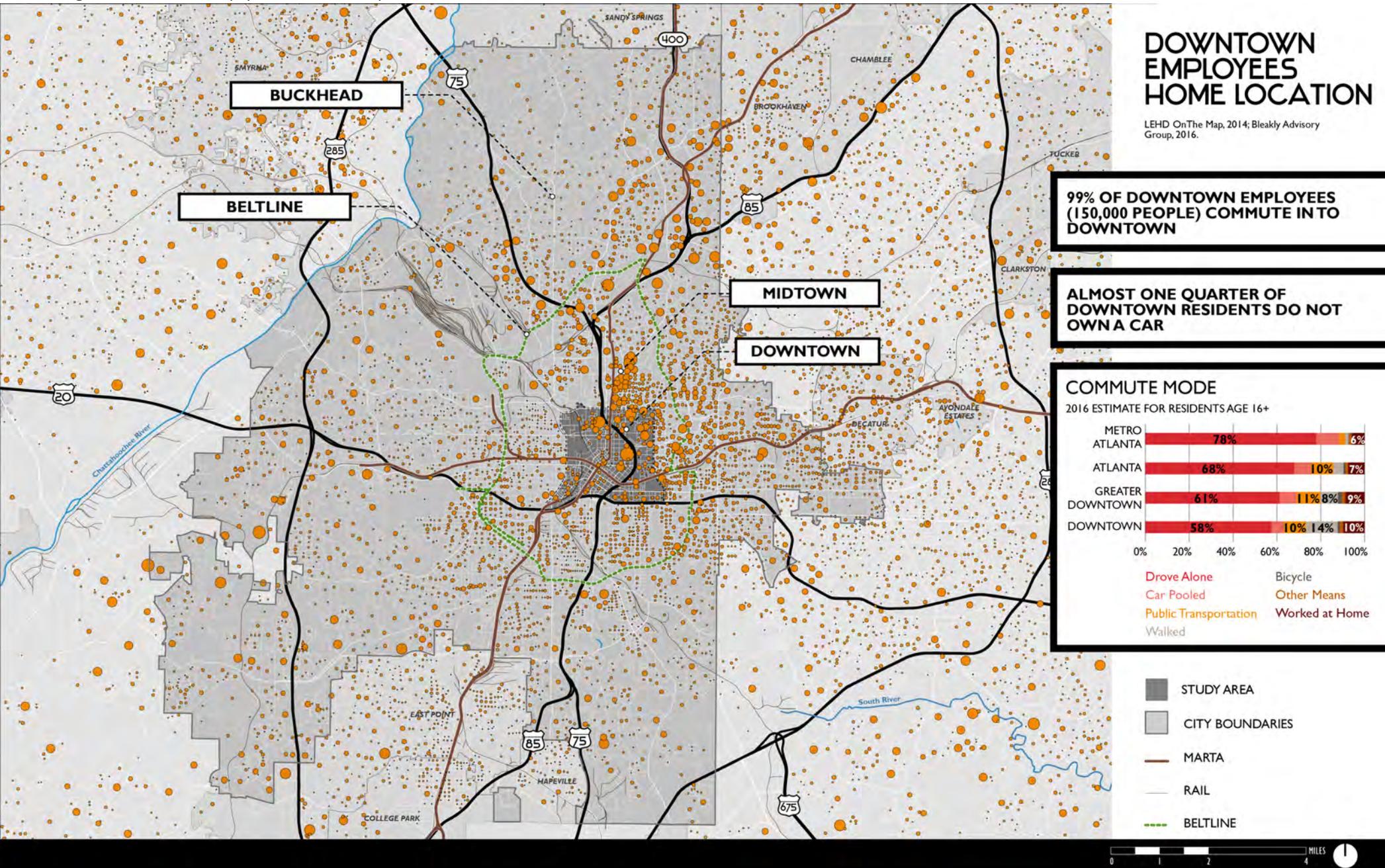
» **99%** of Downtown employees commute into Downtown.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Downtown is experiencing a wave of investment, which is attracting more residents, more employees, and more visitors to Downtown. Many people throughout this planning process lamented that congestion is already an issue. What will happen with more activity? As Downtown continues to grow, the solution is not to build wider roads or more parking. We do not have the space to do so without sacrificing the very things that add economic value to Downtown like more housing, growing businesses, and new destinations, nor do we want to add

capacity to roadways simply to induce more demand for them. There are alternatives, as demonstrated by downtowns across the country. Every person whom we can encourage to live closer to where they work and commute by walking, cycling, or taking transit, is one fewer person driving and one fewer car on the road and parked Downtown. Atlanta's transit network, concentrated in Downtown, can support growth. With other actions, we can help to reduce the percentage of commuters getting to work by driving alone in their car.

Figure 76. Downtown employees home location map





- » Currently, **58%** of Downtown trips (or **315,000** trips per day) are those by single-occupancy vehicles.
- » Future growth is anticipated to add approximately **195,000** daily trips by **2030**.
- » But there is room for improvement: **WALKING, BIKING, OR TRANSIT** accounted for the greatest number of collaborative map ideas (**23%**) and ranked high among open house participants' vision for the future.

This is an economic development issue. In order to sustain and promote investment Downtown, we need more existing trips and new trips that will be generated by growth to be made by alternative modes so that the current number of drive-alone trips remains the same while the number of trips by alternative modes, like transit, increases.

“I would spend more time [Downtown] if there were more walkable opportunities and better public transportation.”

Currently, 58% of Downtown trips (or 315,000 trips per day) are those by single-occupancy vehicles. The *Downtown Transportation Plan* indicates that future growth is anticipated to add approximately 195,000 daily trips by 2030. To maintain the number of single-occupancy trips at the current level, Downtown infrastructure must be upgraded and programs advanced to support walking, biking, and transit as attractive options. Downtown is already positioned well to capitalize on its walkability and transit resources; the best things about Downtown according to survey respondents is that it is walkable, bikeable, and has access to public transportation. But there is room for improvement: walking, biking, or transit accounted for the greatest number of collaborative map ideas (23%) and ranked high among open house participants' vision for the future, while parking, traffic, and cars were highest on the list of things people would like to see less of Downtown in the future.



ADJUSTED BASELINE  
MODE SPLIT



Figure 77. Adjusted baseline mode split  
Source) KHA

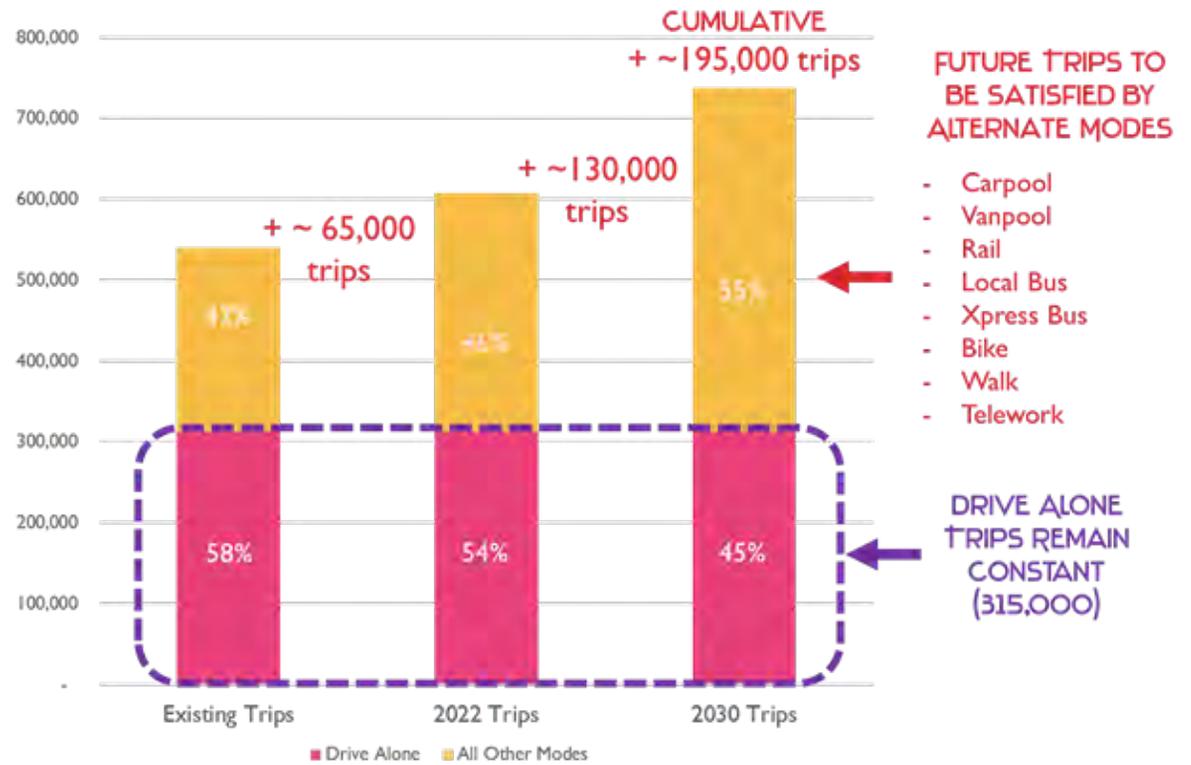


Figure 78. Recommended mode shift  
Source) KHA



» Downtown’s parking supply is unused at any given time—over **30%** at the peak levels of parking utilization. This amounts to **32,000** spaces of unused parking .

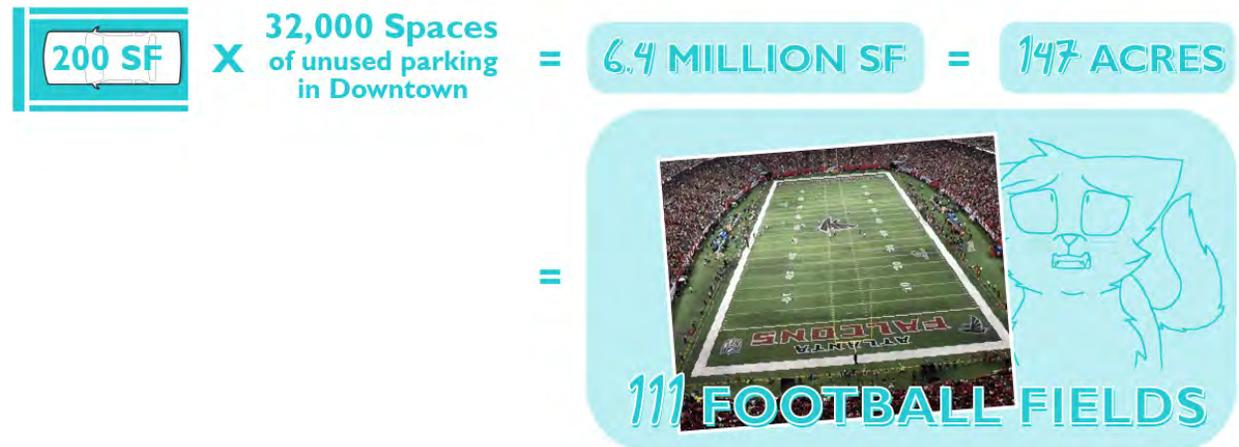
“Far too much of Downtown has been dedicated to the car – if you review old maps it would appear that the car has eaten most of the buildings.”

There are approximately 96,000 public parking spaces in Downtown Atlanta, making parking widely available. However, the low cost of parking does not encourage other travel options—in fact, parking is comparable in price to transit (and, in many circumstances, less expensive). This has led to a broad belief that parking is a necessary component of new development and of Downtown’s economic competitiveness. However, 2007 and 2013 parking studies found that a significant portion of Downtown’s parking supply is unused at any given time—over 30 percent at the peak levels of parking utilization (i.e. during the work day). This amounts to 32,000 spaces of unused parking (an area equivalent to 111 football fields!) that could support other uses and activities. There is an opportunity to more efficiently

utilize Downtown parking to serve the needs of future development, all while working to implement projects and policies encouraging non-drive-alone travel to and within Downtown.

Whether walking to work, riding a bike to see an art exhibit, or taking transit to a game, prioritizing people is the overall transportation goal. Nearly every street was evaluated for potential improvements for people taking these “alternative” modes. The goal of this plan is to make these alternative modes the primary modes that people utilize to get to and around Downtown, and to increase connectivity and accessibility, safety and economic vitality Downtown.

Figure 79. Diagram of parking utilization





MARTA rail corridor

“Downtown is the most accessible neighborhood via MARTA heavy rail in the city, and this should warrant less parking.”

“Atlanta is a real city; its not dependent on the car anymore.”

## 6.1 Manage Downtown Streets, Sidewalks, and Parking for Success

Effective management of our streets and sidewalks is key in supporting the needs of existing businesses and residents. This is an issue of both safety and economic vitality. Sidewalks, crosswalks and other street “basics” ensure that Downtown streets are safe for everyone. The condition of these elements signal to residents and visitors alike that Downtown is a welcoming place. Similarly, it should be relatively easy for potential customers to access Downtown stores and services or enjoy an opportunity to dine outdoors. We run the risk of turning away those who would choose to support Downtown businesses if we do not properly manage the space on our streets.

### » Revisit street and sidewalk maintenance standards

Many participants in this process noted the uneven condition of streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks. Georgia State has stepped in to create new crosswalks in and around their campus, and Renew Atlanta maintains a list of critical upgrades to Downtown streets. These improvements are necessary, but additional considerations are needed to change the approach to managing the design and use of streets and sidewalks over time.

: Formalize a pedestrian conditions analysis as a part of development review. In addition to on-site improvements, this is intended to identify right-of-way improvements to adjacent sidewalks and establish expectations for issues that will be addressed and evaluated during inspections as construction moves forward.

: Align the assessment and payment of development impact fees with the deployment of funds to specifically address pedestrian infrastructure needs.

: Revisit street design and materials guidelines and the City’s right-of-way manual to ensure that maintenance and replacement of portions of the street, especially streetscape, can restore streets to previous condition following right-of-way construction.

: Select materials that are readily replaced and require construction projects, utility companies performing street work, and other entities that disturb streetscapes to restore them to a safe condition that keeps the aesthetics of the original design.

: Advocate for a sidewalk dining policy that not only enables but encourages outdoor dining to support Downtown businesses and foster more active street life.

: Maintain a commitment to Universal Design, and seek opportunities in any sidewalk, curb, or crosswalk improvement project to enhance accessibility for people with a range of mobility.

: Create an informational resource on sidewalk and curb ramp repair needs as well as design guidelines that documents details and specifications for improvement. The document should be available to property owners, developers, and neighborhood organizations advocating for improvements.

: Apply signage per MUTCD guidance to indicate that bicycles may make full use of the street in both directions.

: Remove traffic signals that are no longer necessary for volume or safety reasons, and replace these with more pedestrian-focused traffic control treatments.



Poor sidewalk conditions

» **Continue to improve event management**

Until recently, during special events, the event host would hire uniformed officers to put the intersection traffic signals in flash mode and direct traffic to and from parking garages near the area. The Centennial Park District was primarily affected, defined as the west side of Downtown, containing Centennial Olympic Park, the Georgia World Congress Center, Philips Arena, Georgia Dome, and Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Event operations have improved due to the 2017 Special Event Traffic Management Plan effort. Through proactive event planning, coordinated policing and special signal timing, large special event traffic management is more effective and efficient. The key Downtown stakeholders involved including the Atlanta Police Department, Downtown destinations, and CAP/ADID have continued to improve this process. With the number of events growing in both frequency and scale, event management will continue to be crucial to Downtown.

Key “event routes” should be designated and designed for flexibility to enable the efficient management of event traffic. The identified event routes include Northside Drive, Ivan Allen Boulevard, Marietta Street, Centennial Olympic Park Drive, Ted Turner Drive, Williams Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and Mitchell Street. Baker and Ellis streets also serve as secondary event routes. Marietta Street, Centennial Olympic Park Drive, Ted Turner Drive, Williams Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and Mitchell Street. Baker and Ellis streets also serve as secondary event routes.



Heavy car and pedestrian traffic during an Atlanta United game  
Source) <https://atlanta.curbed.com>



» **Play a proactive role in managing Downtown parking**

Parking is fundamentally an economic development issue. As described in earlier in Goal 3 of this plan, the lack of publicly-owned off-street parking spaces creates an environment of low-cost, privately-operated parking, much of which goes unused during a large portion of the day and night. Despite the amount of surplus parking, developers need to build their own parking resources for each project due to lender requirements, which raise the overall cost of housing. The solution is to publicly and proactively manage more parking spaces Downtown. As detailed in the *Downtown Transportation Plan*, more effective parking management requires taking action on a number of interconnected initiatives:

“Fewer cars, more PEOPLE.”

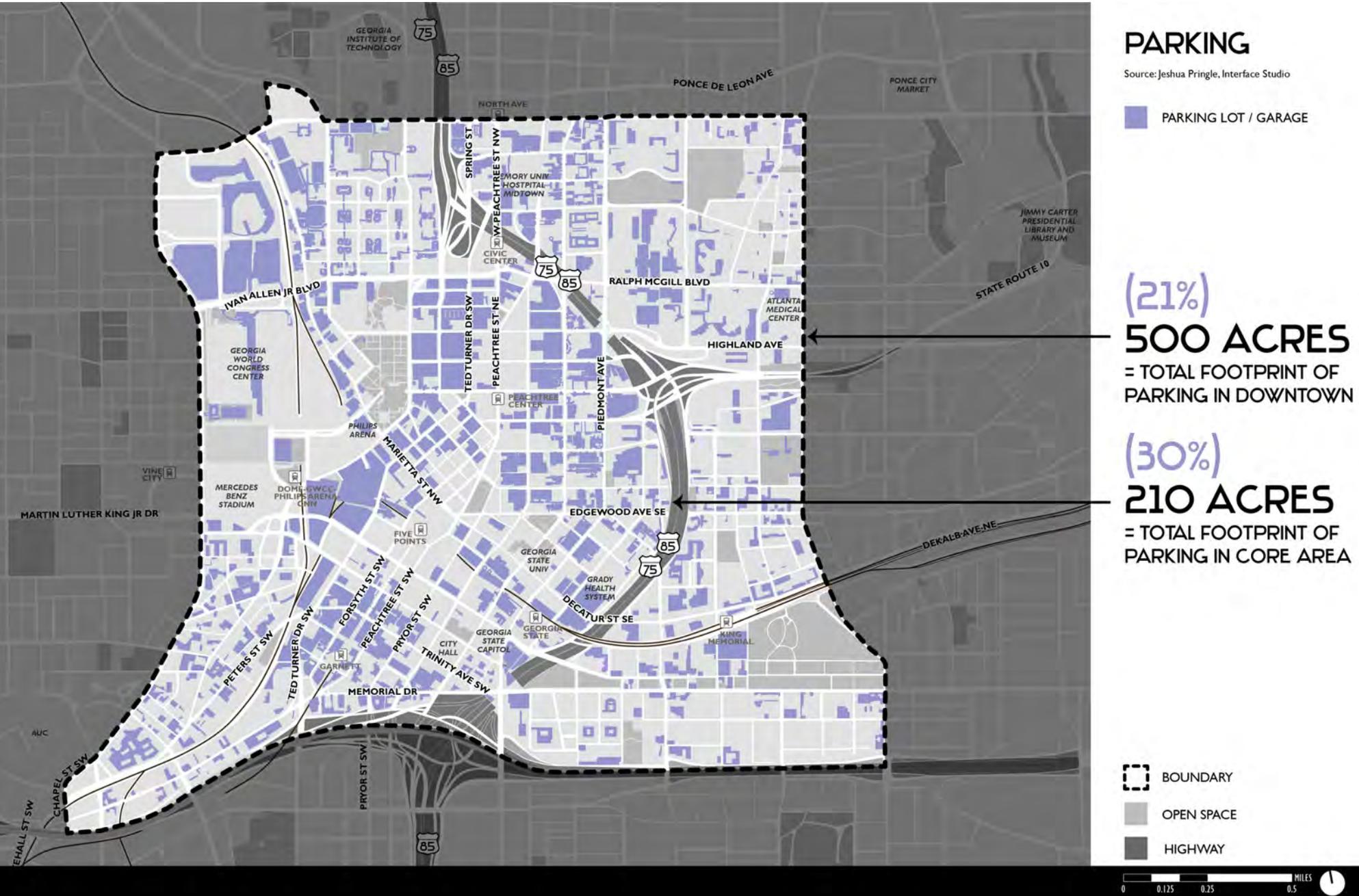
**: Disincentivize parking** – Operators of off-street parking lots are required to secure a Park for Hire Permit from the City of Atlanta. The application process includes a modest fee that covers the City’s inspection of the facility for code compliance related to paving, lighting, pay boxes, and landscaping, among other standards. In the near-term, these permits need to be enforced to improve the appearance of surface lots and perceptions of safety and security in their vicinity. In addition, the City should consider a tax on parking as a non-accessory or “park for hire” use for both parking lots and parking garages. This would help to generate revenue that could be used to purchase lots for redevelopment, better manage parking, and/or improve transit and programs designed to reduce commuting by single-occupancy vehicles.

**: Provide central management for Downtown parking** – Virtually all of Downtown’s parking supply is privately owned and managed through separate private organizations, making coordination of supply usage, regulations, and pricing highly difficult. Create a District Parking Program to align Downtown’s parking supply under a public management entity. Design the system to offer a commonly-branded program for visitor parking, serve parking needs of private development, and allow a mechanism for land-banking surplus parking facilities, especially small parking lots throughout Downtown, for future development projects.

**: Revisit on-street parking policies** – Street parking should be reserved for customers. If it is not priced appropriately, it is quickly filled by employees, residents, and others and does not turnover throughout the day. Those looking to support businesses cannot find street parking, and circle the block adding traffic to the street. Updated pricing and time limit policies for on-street parking would help to free up spaces exactly where they are needed. In addition, conduct a survey to evaluate opportunities to increase the supply of on-street parking.

**: Improve the parking experience** – We need to make it easier to find the parking that exists. Develop new simplified signage designs for on-street parking, loading and curbside restrictions, clarifying time limits, price, and other regulations. Explore marketing and communication tools, especially digital applications to make parking information readily accessible to users. Finally, work with off-street parking operators to provide real time parking occupancy and pricing data to deliver timely information to users and provide a better parking experience.

Figure 81. Downtown parking map



## » Improve curbside management

Downtown's street curbsides are limited and must accommodate numerous functions: vehicle parking, taxi queues, bicycle lanes, freight loading, bus and streetcar stops, and commuter bus staging and layover. For this reason, curbsides are often used illegally, especially for freight loading, passenger loading, and parking. Blocked vehicle travel lanes and bicycle lanes are a particularly common problem that add to traffic, congestion, and confusion Downtown. Balance is needed among the increasing demands of businesses and residents for roadway right of way.

A Downtown Curbside Management Program is recommended to provide additional regulation and enforcement to ensure that streets function as intended during critical travel times. This should also entail a comprehensive reassessment of current and emerging uses to establish a leasing system to allocate scarce curbside space. Key components of the Downtown Curbside Management Program include:

: Targeting enforcement by launching an informational campaign on proper curbside use and acceptable locations for stopping and parking vehicles in streets, and selecting target locations for enforcement campaigns.

: Supporting enforcement through the creation of personnel resources, including sworn law enforcement officers, dedicated to enforcement of right-of-way regulations including curbside uses and permits for closures, construction, and the like.

: Revising curbside designations by conducting an inventory of all special curbside regulations, reviewing current needs, and developing a curbside management plan with targeted outreach, needs assessment and fee schedule for curbside use. This plan will remap curbside allocations and potentially relocate taxis and other special curbside designations, and should monetize the curb and Transportation Network Companies (TNC).

: Implementing new signage and information distribution to clearly specify when and how the curbside may be used and coordinate with curbside parking.

“Too much parking, loading docks, and curb cuts create scary zones.”



Loading areas Downtown

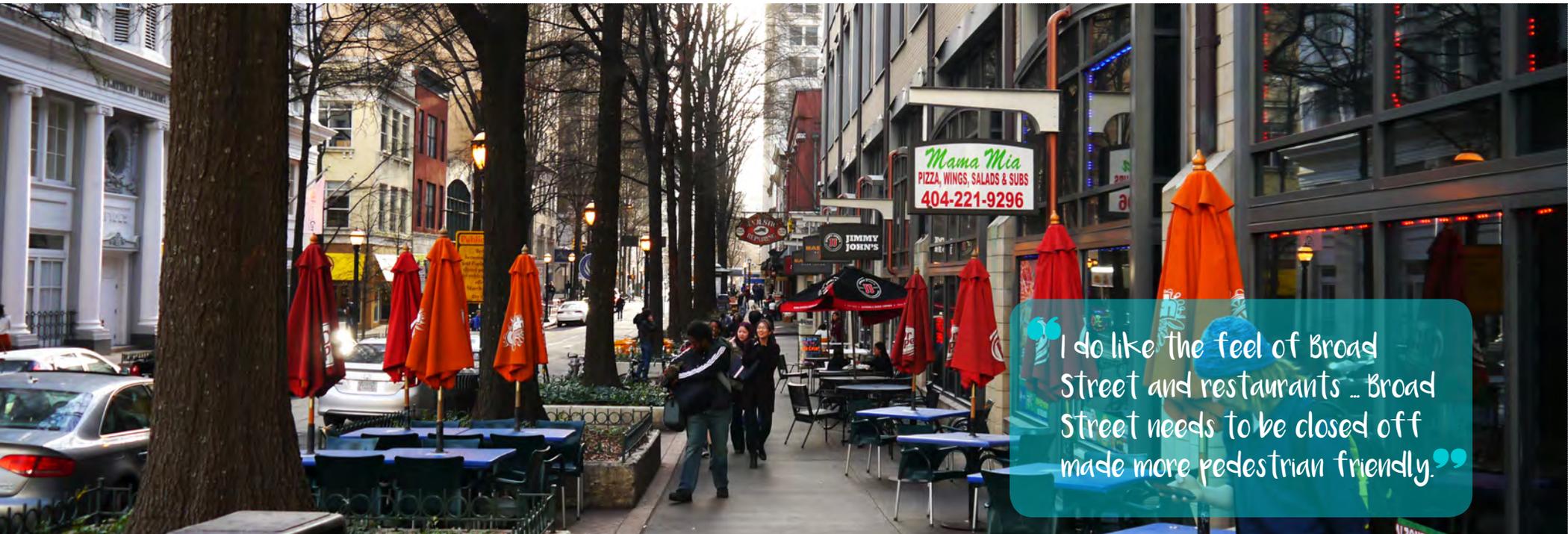
## 6.2 Design streets according to their personalities

Downtown streets are in need of improvements to meet plan goals. However, streets in Downtown come in many different varieties, serving different functions at a range of scales and speeds. Some streets serve primarily car traffic, some are multi-modal, and others are more walkable. Too often, we talk about street design from the perspective of how the street functions. In other words, how many cars can the street accommodate? In Downtown, it is critical to make design decisions about streets that also take into account the adjacent land uses or their overall “personality.”

*The Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* and the *Downtown Transportation Plan* identified six different street personalities in Downtown. The primary characteristics and intent of each street personality are described below, but it should be noted that the personalities do not regulate a final design. The personalities are intended to guide design decisions and better communicate the overall goal for each street Downtown. As a baseline and regardless of the identified personality, every street in Downtown needs to serve the needs of pedestrians. Regardless of whether you drive or take the train or bus to work, at some point everyone is a pedestrian.

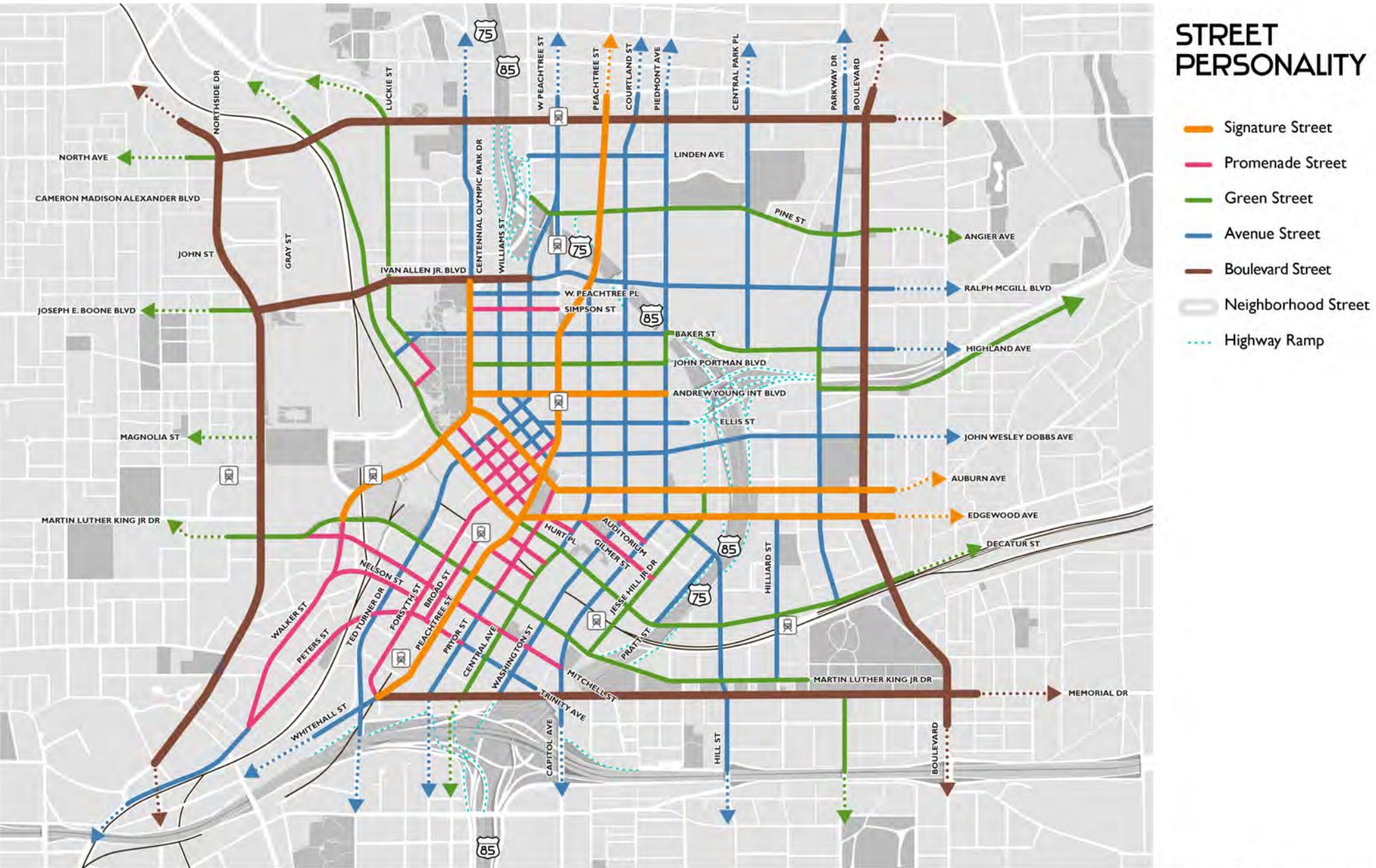
“There’s nothing about our streets that says please walk.”

Broad Street



“I do like the feel of Broad Street and restaurants ... Broad Street needs to be closed off made more pedestrian friendly.”

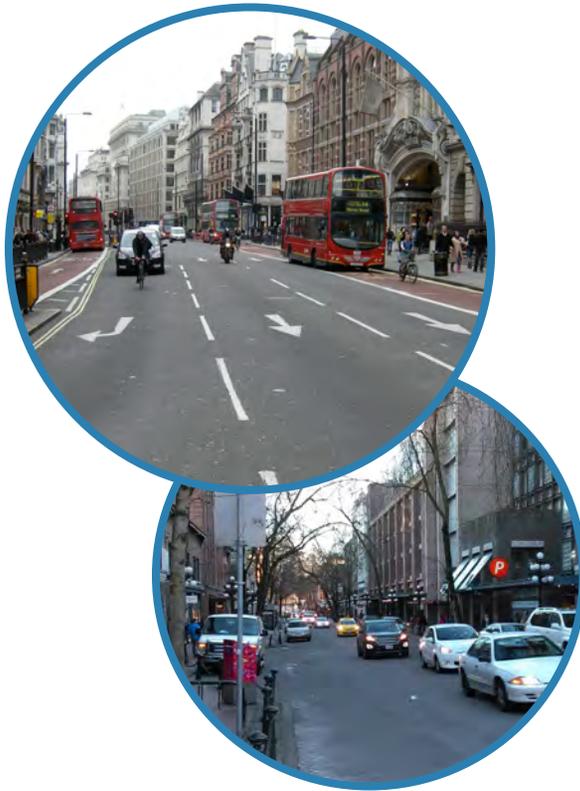
Figure 82. Street personality map



**Boulevard** – These streets need to handle a lot of commuter traffic (mostly cars), but they also include a mix of modes. They allow traffic to move at the edges of Downtown and provide access to Interstates and other primarily vehicular routes. Boulevards should be designed as attractive gateways to Downtown. Examples: Memorial Drive, North Avenue and Northside Drive.



**Avenue** – These streets have historically been designed to handle larger traffic volumes but include a mix of modes, land uses, and activity. Some of these streets may be truck routes that serve the logistics needs of Downtown buildings. Others are wide streets that serve as key connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The goal is to efficiently handle traffic on these streets while creating a safe and attractive space for pedestrians. Examples: Boulevard, Courtland Street and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue.



**Signature** – These streets act as a front door to Downtown and to Atlanta. They are highly visible, connect unique historic, cultural, and entertainment destinations, and have the potential to create a sense of arrival Downtown. These streets should be designed to slow traffic, offer a mix of transportation options, and capitalize on Downtown’s unique assets. Each signature corridor will be different but may include street-level retail and dining and widened sidewalks to provide a premium pedestrian experience. These streets may be multimodal, but pedestrians will be the primary focus in order to activate the street. Examples: Edgewood Avenue, Centennial Olympic Park Drive, and Peachtree Street.



**Green** – These streets connect major open spaces and trail networks. They will provide a large and inviting, lush tree canopy and integrate green infrastructure to manage stormwater.

Examples: Central Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and Pine Street.



**Promenade** – These streets are currently, or should in the future be, pedestrian-focused, vibrant, and host to a mix of uses. These streets are internal to Downtown, narrow, and best experienced at slow speeds. Traffic volumes on these streets are typically low, and should remain so.

Examples: Broad Street, Peters Street, and Poplar Street.



**Neighborhood** – Slow-moving streets entirely within existing neighborhoods. These streets are designed to serve the adjacent housing.

Examples: Howell Street, Hunnicutt Street, and Woodward Avenue.



Figure 83. Cross-section of example "Avenue"

## JOHN WESLEY DOBBS AVE - EXISTING

BETWEEN PIEDMONT AVE. & COURTLAND ST.

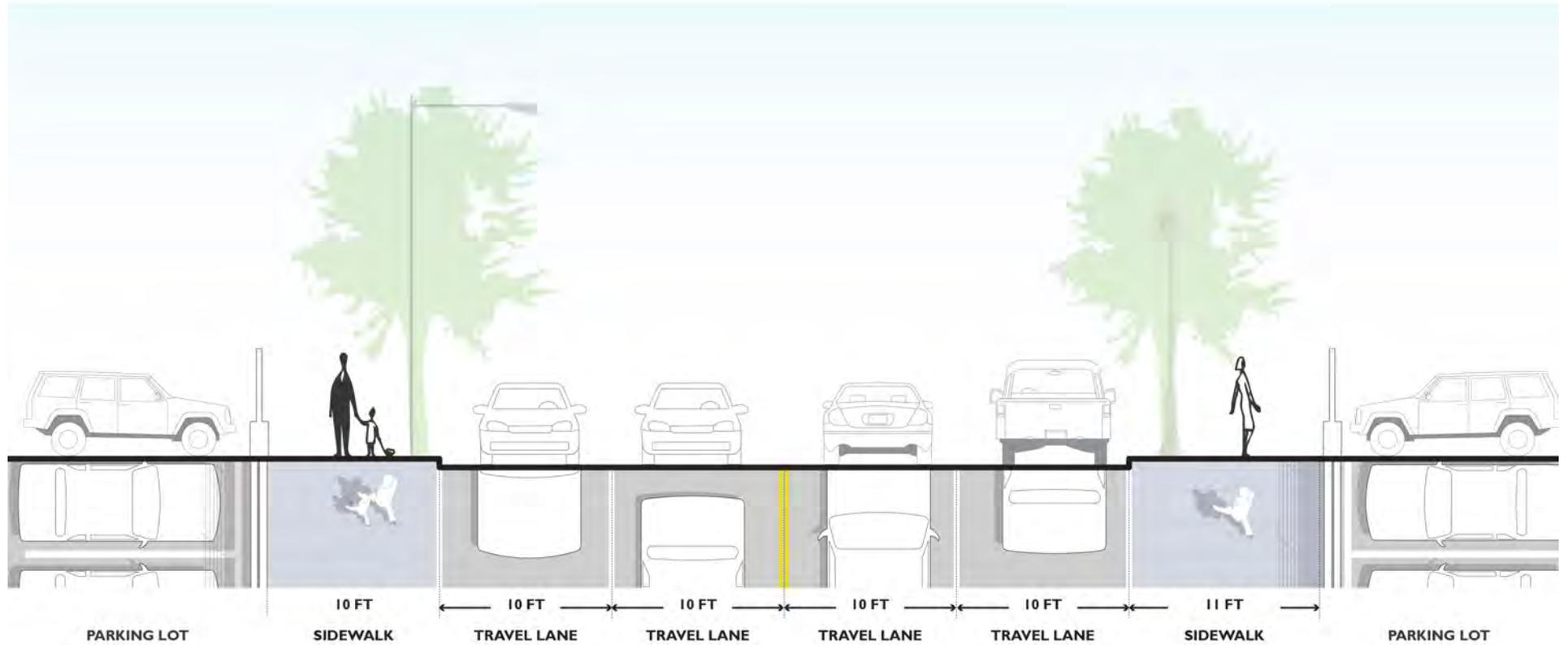


Figure 84. Cross-section of "Avenue" with proposed improvements

## JOHN WESLEY DOBBS AVE - PROPOSED

BETWEEN PIEDMONT AVE. & COURTLAND ST.

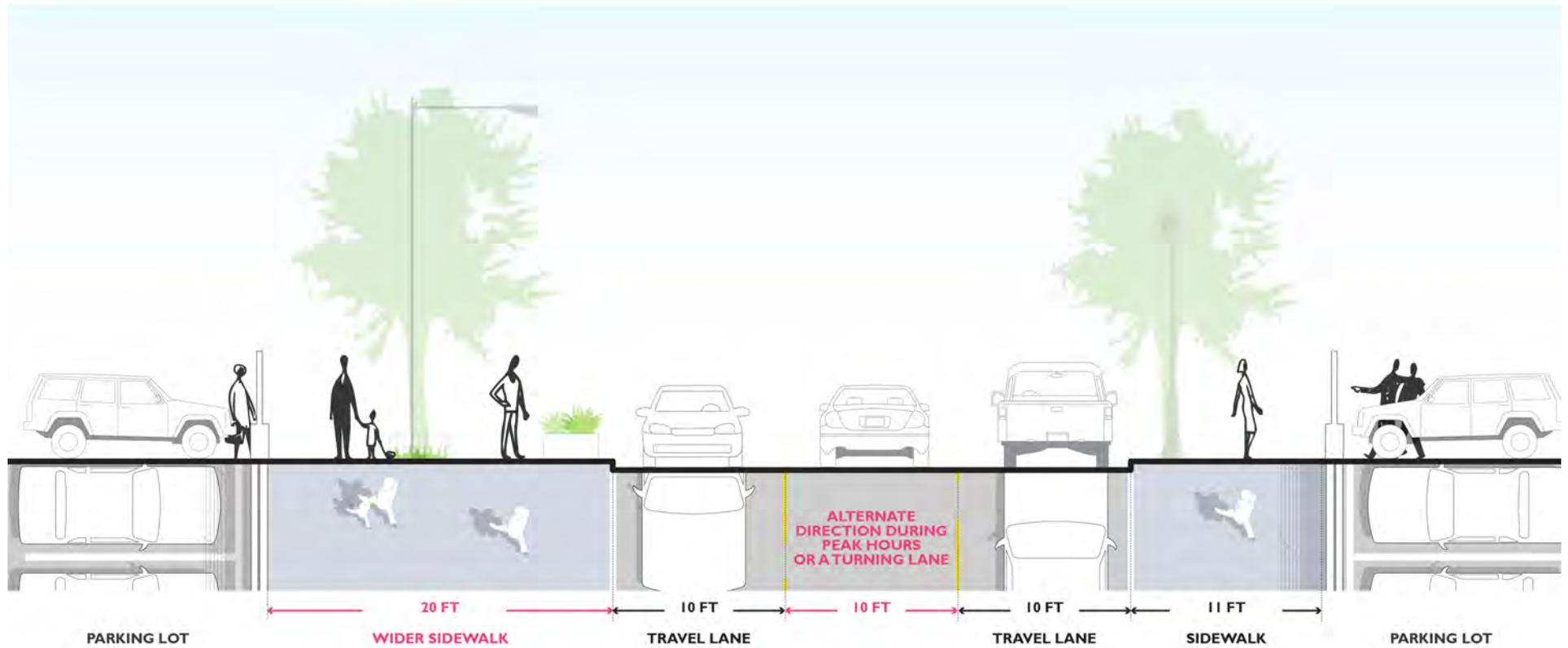


Figure 85. Cross-section of example "Boulevard"

# NORTHSIDE DR - EXISTING

BETWEEN CARTER ST. & MAGNOLIA ST.

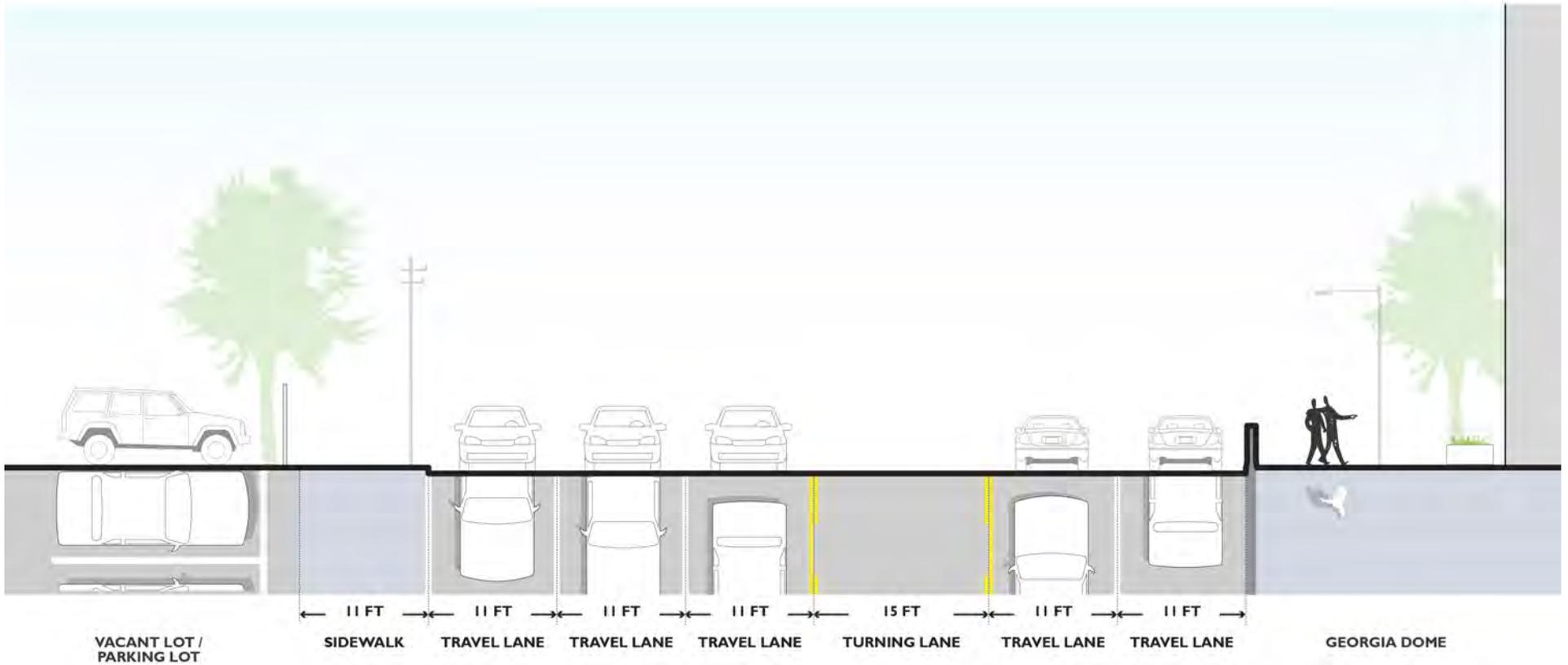


Figure 86. Cross-section of "Boulevard" with proposed improvements

# NORTHSIDE DR - PROPOSED

BETWEEN CARTER ST. & MAGNOLIA ST.

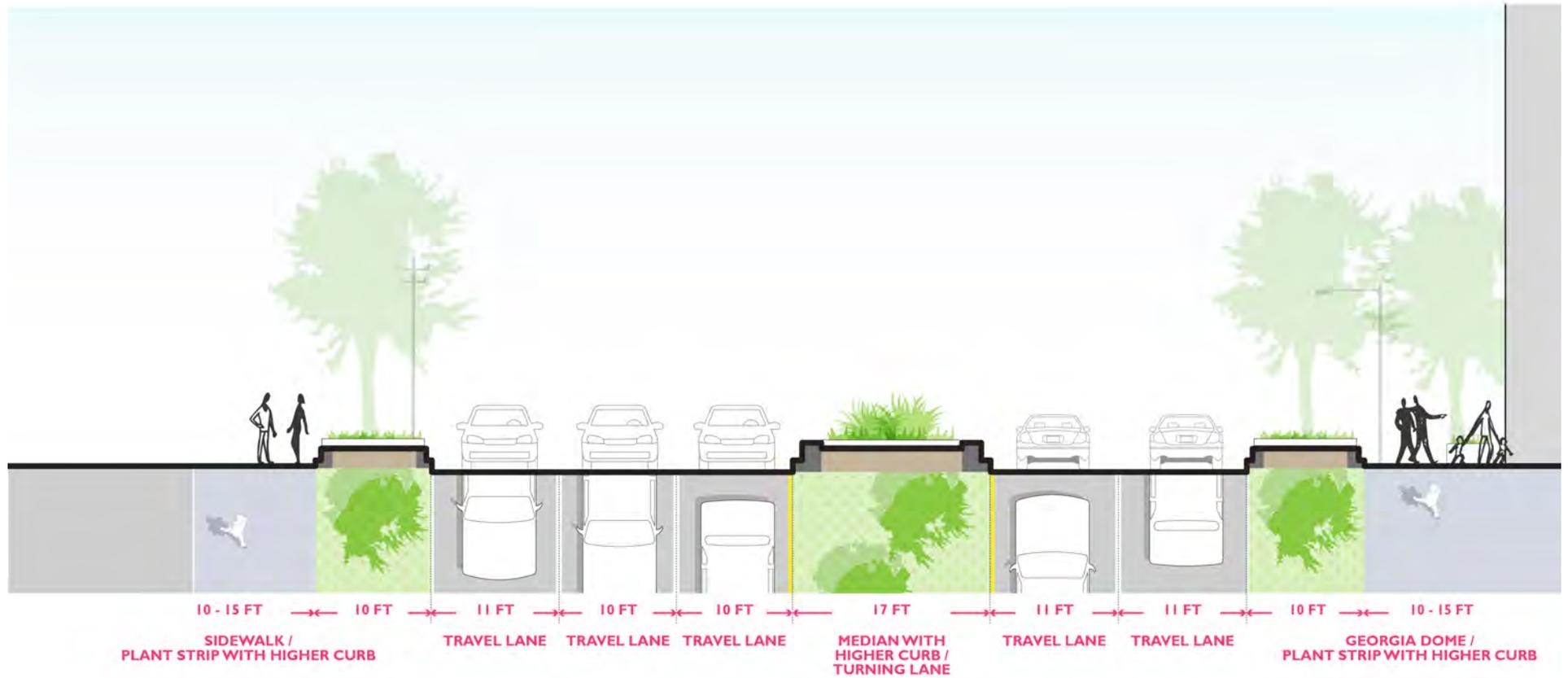


Figure 87. Cross-section of example "Signature" street

## PEACHTREE ST - EXISTING

BETWEEN ELLIS ST. & ANDREW YOUNG INTERNATIONAL BLVD.

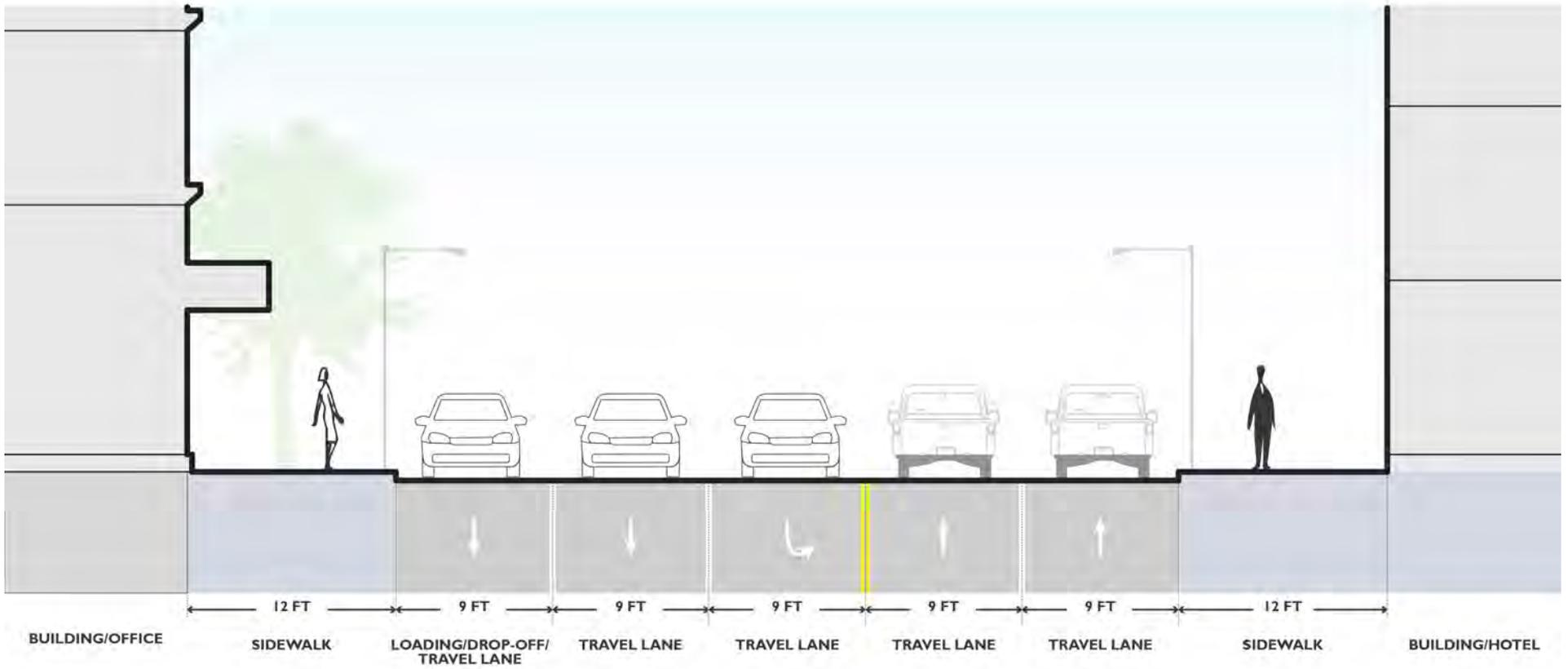


Figure 88. Cross-section of "Signature" street with proposed improvements - option 1

## PEACHTREE ST - PROPOSED OPTION 1

BETWEEN ELLIS ST. & ANDREW YOUNG INTERNATIONAL BLVD.

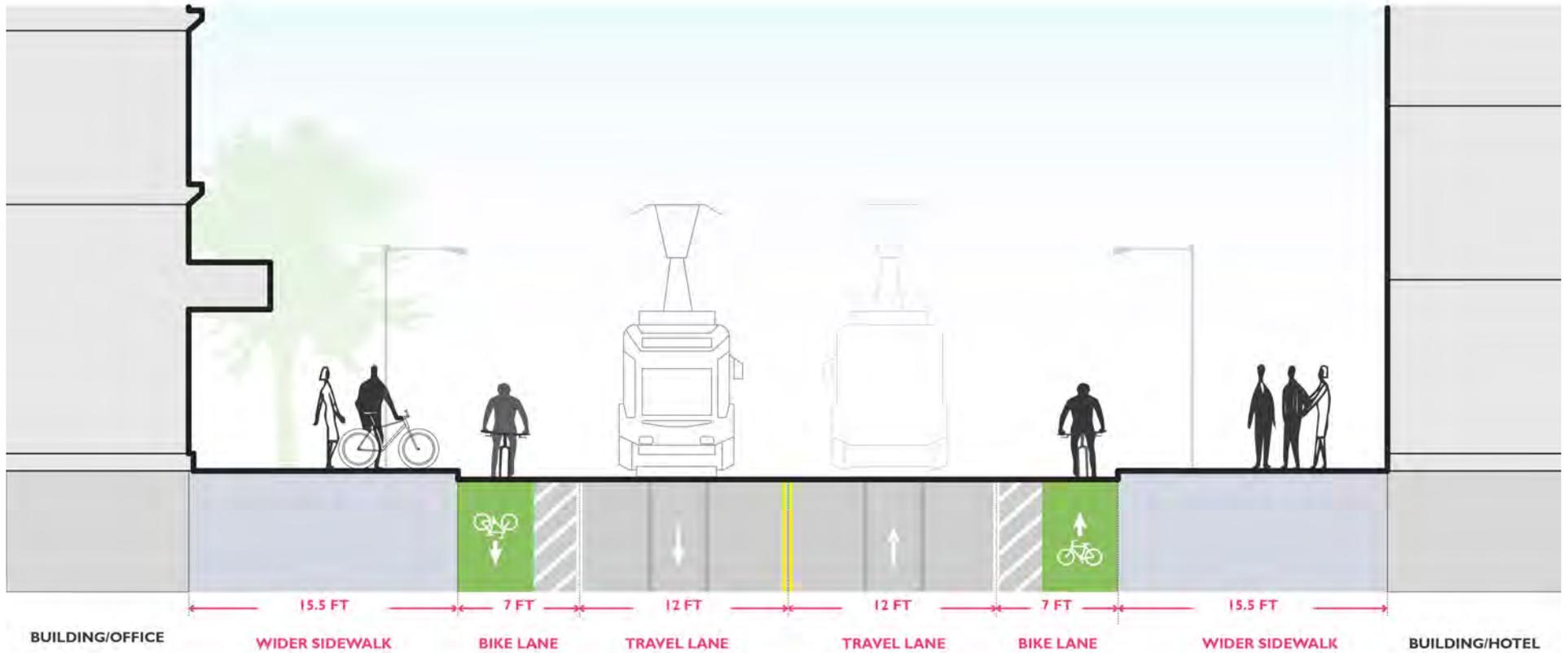
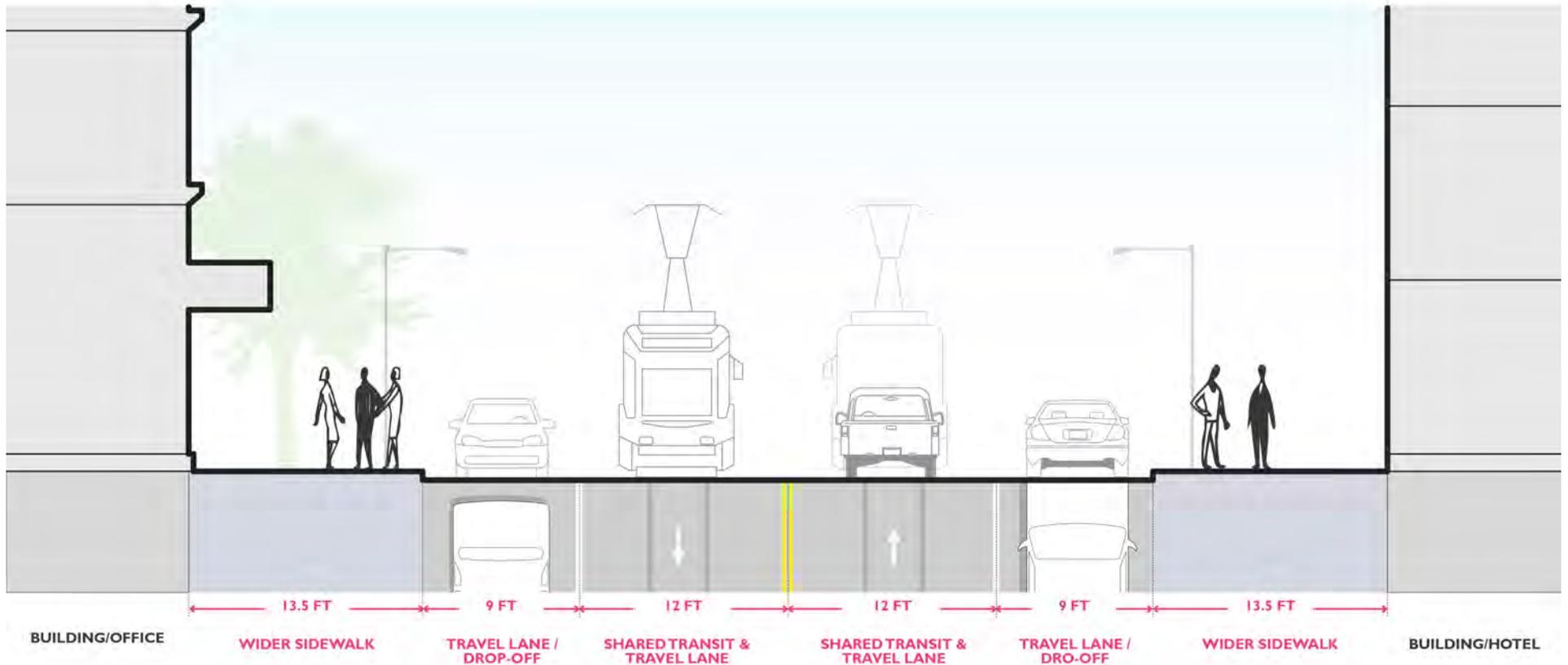


Figure 89. Cross-section of "Signature" street with proposed improvements - option 2

## PEACHTREE ST - PROPOSED OPTION 2

BETWEEN ELLIS ST. & ANDREW YOUNG INTERNATIONAL BLVD.





Luckie at Cone

ATLANTA STREETCAR

KING DIST

1002

ATLANTA STREETCAR

DANGER  
HIGH  
VOLTAGE

Streetcar stop

Figure 90. Courtland Street, looking south: existing and proposed



Figure 91. MLK Jr. Drive, looking towards Mercedes-Benz Stadium: existing and proposed





» **66%** of people supported changing one-way streets to two-way.

“Multi-lane one way streets create barriers for cyclists and pedestrians.”

Mitchell Street

» **Pursue the conversion of one-way streets to two-way**

Downtown’s roadway network is dominated by one-way streets, which make driving Downtown, particularly for those unfamiliar with the three intersecting street grids, confusing. The one-way streets also contribute to congestion, as drivers have to loop around to get to their destination. Two-way streets, in contrast, help make Downtown easier to navigate and more welcoming to visitors, increasing mobility by offering greater flexibility in routes, and increasing safety by reducing travel speeds with the introduction of on-coming traffic. Two-way streets also make the streets more pleasant for walking, thus supporting foot traffic and, in turn, economic development.

At the last open house, 66% of people supported changing one-way streets to two-way. To maximize the road network, 6.7 miles of existing one-way streets are proposed for conversion to two-way operation.

Streets identified for conversion from one-way to two-way operation include:

**:Baker Street** from Centennial Olympic Park Drive to Piedmont Avenue

**:Mitchell Street** from Ted Turner to Capitol Avenue

**:MLK Jr. Drive** from Ted Turner to Jesse Hill Jr. Drive

**:Centennial Olympic Park Drive** from Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard to Marietta Street

**:Angier Avenue/Pine Street** from West Peachtree Street to Courtland Street

**:Ted Turner Drive/Spring Street** from West Peachtree Street to MLK Jr. Drive



The *Downtown Transportation Plan* highlights the one-way to two-way conversion of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive as a signature project. This important project will help to connect the city from east to west and provide a more hospitable pedestrian experience for existing businesses and new development planned for in the Railroad Gulch and South Downtown. Green infrastructure and plantings will further enhance the pedestrian experience, and protected bike lanes in both directions will provide a new east-west connection across South Downtown. Due to proximity to Philips Arena and Mercedes Benz Stadium, the redesign must build in flexibility to allow for reversible operations during high volume special events. Removal of on-street parking may be necessary on one or both sides of the street.

In addition to the list above, the plan also proposes Peachtree Center Avenue/Central Avenue for two-way conversion as a bus corridor; but this change can only proceed after proposed bicycle facilities are completed on Piedmont Avenue/Capitol Avenue and Courtland Street/Washington Street as well as Peachtree Street, freeing up space along Peachtree Center through the removal of the existing cycle track.

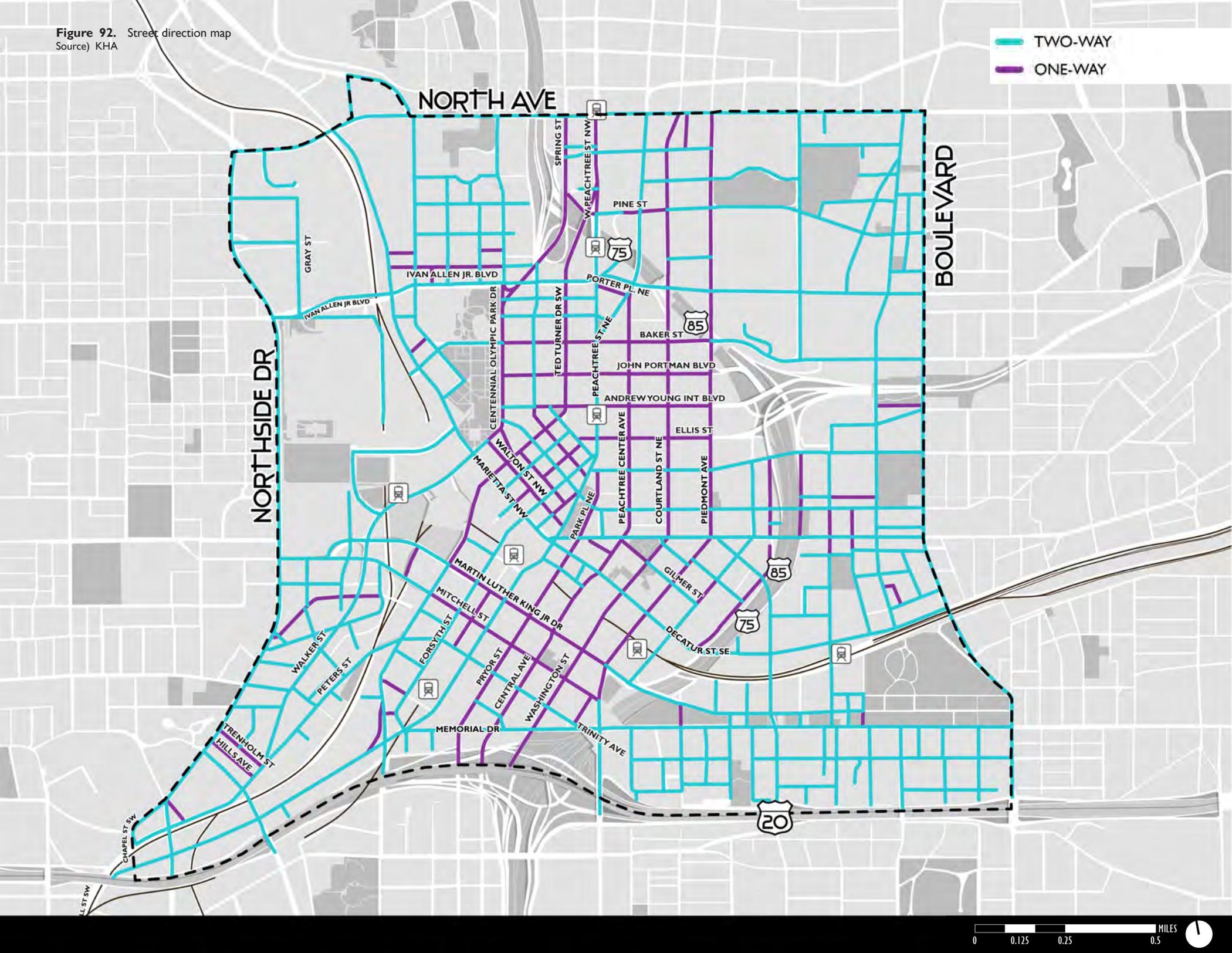
“Safe streets. Safety above speed. Safety above convenience.”

John Portman Boulevard and Peachtree Center Avenue



Figure 92. Street direction map  
Source) KHA

TWO-WAY  
ONE-WAY







## PRECEDENTS



16th Street  
Denver, CO  
Source) <https://www.strongtowns.org>



Portland Streetcar  
Portland, OR  
Source) <http://williamsanddame.com>

### » Pilot Shared Streets Downtown

While the plan places great emphasis on prioritizing the pedestrian, careful attention has been given to balancing the needs of multiple modes to ensure smooth traffic and transit operations. However, in select instances, the plan embraces a “shared streets” concept, elevating travel by foot above all other modes. Two and one-tenths (2.1) miles of streets are proposed as “shared streets,” where vehicular access is limited to create spaces where people can walk freely along the public right of way. A two-block segment of Broad Street NW, between Luckie and Walton streets, currently functions in this way, contributing to the much loved walkability of the Fairlie-Poplar neighborhood.

**Taking inspiration from woonerfs in the Netherlands, 16th Street in Denver, and the Portland Streetcar,** the plan envisions different applications of shared streets, tailored to conditions in Atlanta’s transportation network, to create places where people want to be and streets like none other in the southeast.

Many of the streets proposed as shared streets exist in Fairlie-Poplar, in parts of Georgia State’s Downtown campus, and in South Downtown, where the scale of streets and already-low traffic volumes are conducive to this approach. Two examples illustrate the varied implementation approach, depending on location and competing demands for the right of way:

South Broad Street



- **Peachtree Street:** Atlanta's Signature Street, as it traverses Downtown, should be one where residents, workers, and visitors can come together at all times of the day – on foot, on bike, by car, and by Streetcar. With the Atlanta Streetcar extending along Peachtree Street, desires for a more bikeable and walkable front door to the city would be difficult to achieve keeping modes separated. Designing a shared traffic and transit street, that makes space for pedestrians and cyclists too, will improve the interaction between the adjacent buildings, businesses, and patrons. People on bikes will be encouraged to share the street at a leisurely pace and follow painted markers as to reduce conflicts with Streetcar tracks.

- **South Broad Street:** : South Broad Street, in contrast, presents a unique opportunity to formalize what already functions as a shared street, but one dedicated mostly to pedestrians with restricted vehicular access except during designated loading hours. The redevelopment plan for South Downtown includes a vision for South Broad Street as a curbside street, where pedestrians can wander between businesses and arts venues, café seating can spill into the street, and through traffic must travel at the speed of a pedestrian.

As design work for shared streets moves forward, look for opportunities to integrate details best appreciated by people moving at slow speeds (on foot). Showcase the historic features and authentic materiality of streets by using brick, granite, or Belgian Block as traffic calming in streetscape improvement projects, and look for ways to uncover and preserve of elements of the past and Atlanta's layered transportation network.

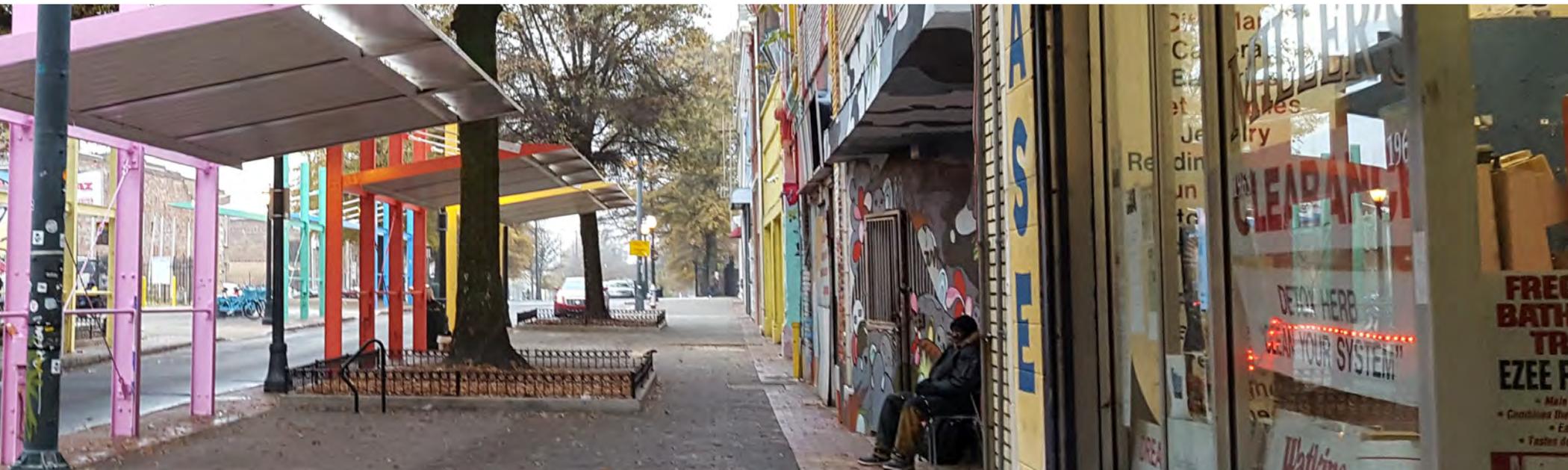


Figure 94. Cross-section of example “Promenade” street

## SOUTH BROAD ST - EXISTING

BETWEEN MITCHELL ST. & MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DR.

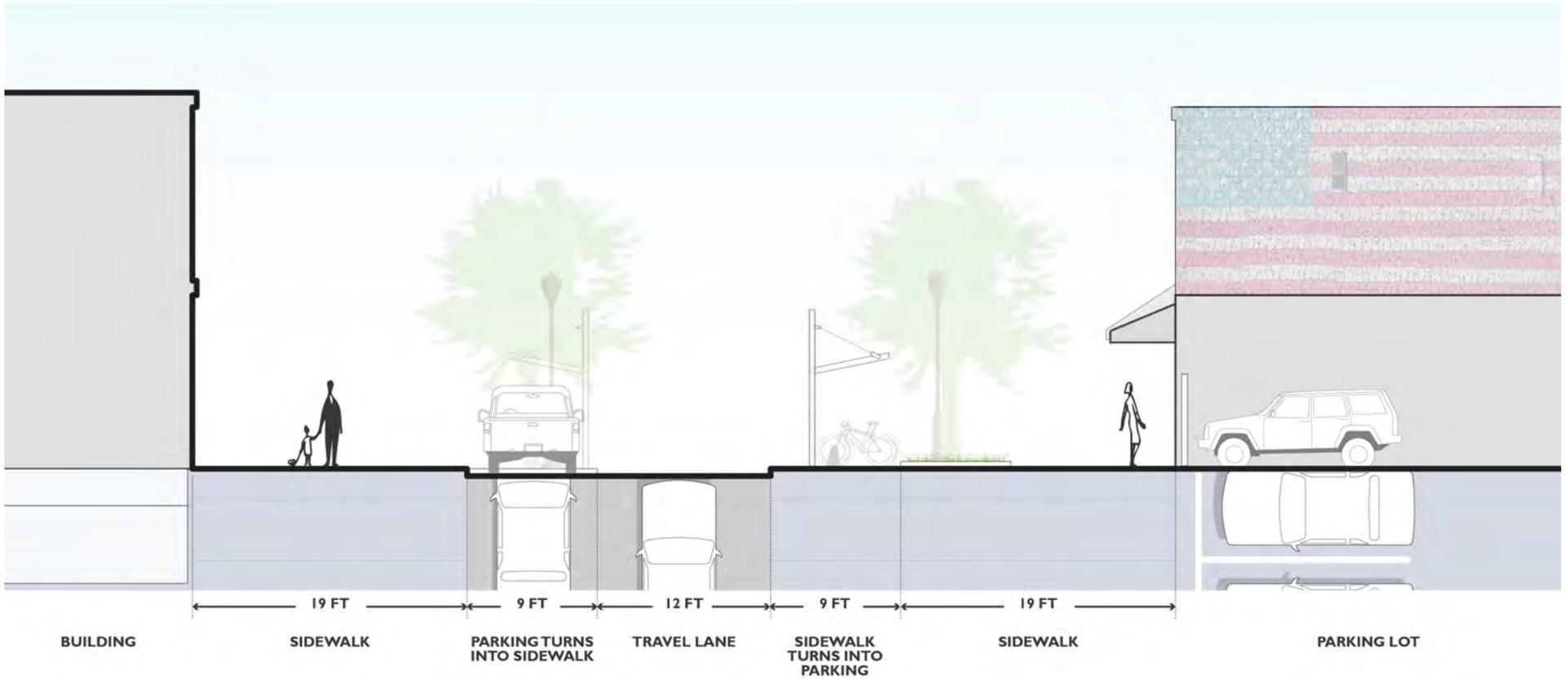
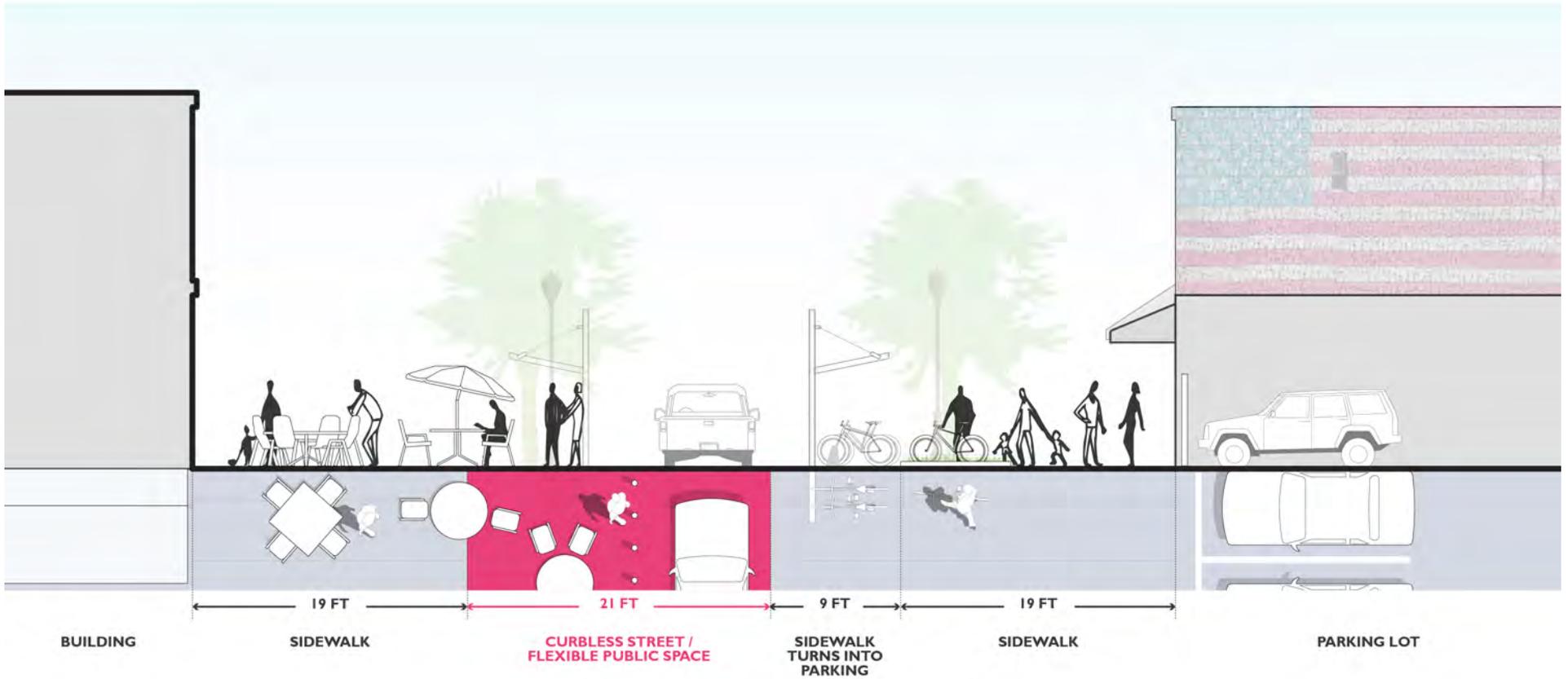


Figure 95. Cross-section of “Promenade” street with proposed improvements

## SOUTH BROAD ST - PROPOSED

BETWEEN MITCHELL ST. & MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DR.



## 6.3 Shift how people commute and travel in, out, and through Downtown

While Downtown is walkable and transit rich, there is no disincentive to driving, and not enough incentive to motivate commuters to choose other forms of travel. New investment in infrastructure is critical to ensure that people can commute or travel to and around Downtown safely and easily using active alternatives to car travel that contribute to Downtown's vibrancy and not to traffic. But infrastructure alone cannot shift the balance of single-occupancy vehicle trips to walking, biking, or transit trips. Downtown also needs well thought out policies and programs to help encourage different decisions in how we move to, from, and through Downtown.

### » **Create a Downtown Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program**

Expanding TDM programs will be increasingly important to make alternative and active transportation a natural and desirable choice. CAP and Downtown Atlanta are not new to TDM-based approaches and have offered TDM services to employers and institutions for two decades. However they have faced challenges in finding a broader application and further reducing driving demand due to limited resources as well as the relatively low cost of parking and tolerance for traffic congestion among commuters and visitors. Financial incentives were identified in the survey as the second most popular incentive to change travel mode. To maximize the effectiveness of TDM strategies, it will be important to coordinate with the parking-based management approaches described above in 6.1. TDM-based efforts are the incentive side of a more closely managed parking program that right-prices and right-sizes parking while also generating revenue to support broader mobility improvements Downtown.

The proposed TDM program enhancements for Downtown build on current efforts and are based on strengthening requirements in the development process, strengthening partnerships with transit agencies, and using special information campaigns to encourage transit ridership and other TDM-based approaches. Key components of the Downtown TDM Program include:

:Revising zoning to separate parking from development as much as possible, disallowing bundled leases and sales, and requiring TDM site plans as part of the development review process.

:Altering the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) regulatory process led by the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority/State Road and Tollway Authority (GRTA/SRTA) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) by reducing the amount of emphasis on traffic operations and increasing TDM strategies and requirements.

:Establishing a limited-time fare holiday as part of a transit ridership development campaign in partnership with MARTA and GRTA, and marketing that campaign widely to Downtown employers to share with their employee base.

:Establishing parking cash-out programs that work with employers to offer cash instead of a dedicated parking space to their employees. The cash can then be used by the employees in any way they prefer. This helps to discourage single-occupancy commute trips but is also cost effective for employers where the cash offered is significantly less than the cost of building and maintaining a parking space.

:Advocating for the City of Atlanta to develop new revenue sources to fund expanded TDM options. These should focus on capturing the value from driving and parking and reinvesting revenues on local programs to encourage carpooling, transit, walking, and bicycling.

“The only way to have a city with 1.3M people (the projection) is with massive TDM. The challenge is the City doesn't do TDM, we rely on TMA and regional government.”

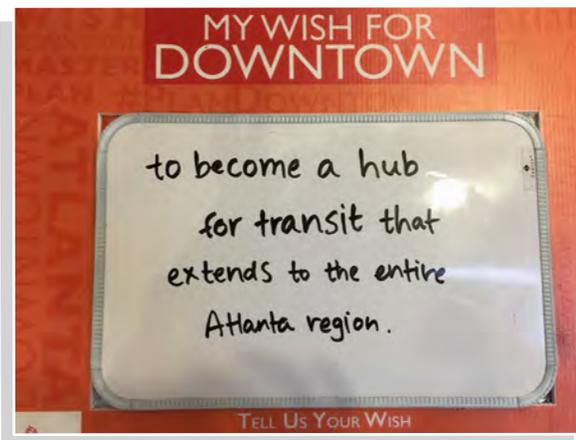
Street design activity at March Public Open House





» “Current bus and rail services” were cited by **21%** of survey respondents as the greatest transportation challenge facing Downtown.

“STREET CAR EXPANSION!!  
MARTA renewal and expansion!!!  
We must have transit.”



#### » Improve transit service and experience Downtown

Although Downtown provides a robust menu of transit choices, an improved transit network is integral to the growth of Downtown Atlanta to serve the needs of existing commuters and travelers as well as accommodate the anticipated growth in users in order to provide a viable alternative to vehicular travel and shift away from single occupancy trips.

“Current bus and rail services” were cited by 21% of survey respondents as the greatest transportation challenge facing Downtown, and “transit improvements” were ranked as the most urgent transportation improvement they would prioritize.

Enhancing transit through operational improvements will create the time and financial incentives to encourage commuters to choose transit over driving, but improving stations and transit amenities are also important to provide the best transit experience possible. Many organizations are already working towards improvements, and this plan supports and builds upon these efforts. Some key components include:

Five Points Station



:Prioritizing bus routes by making Central Avenue and Peachtree Center Avenue a bus priority corridor connecting to HOV interstate ramps with enhanced bus stops and shelters, supporting the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines along I-20 and Northside Drive currently under review by MARTA, and coordinating service stops. **“BRT and dedicated bus lanes”** was the second most popular idea in an open house activity that exhibited inspiration images for participants to consider for Downtown.

:Improving commuter bus operations with dedicated bus lanes shared between all agencies, increasing bus service area to maximize ridership and provide more routes and stops at MARTA stations, encouraging more reverse commute scheduling and later evening departure times, and providing high quality station and passenger staging areas with upgraded stops and shelters.

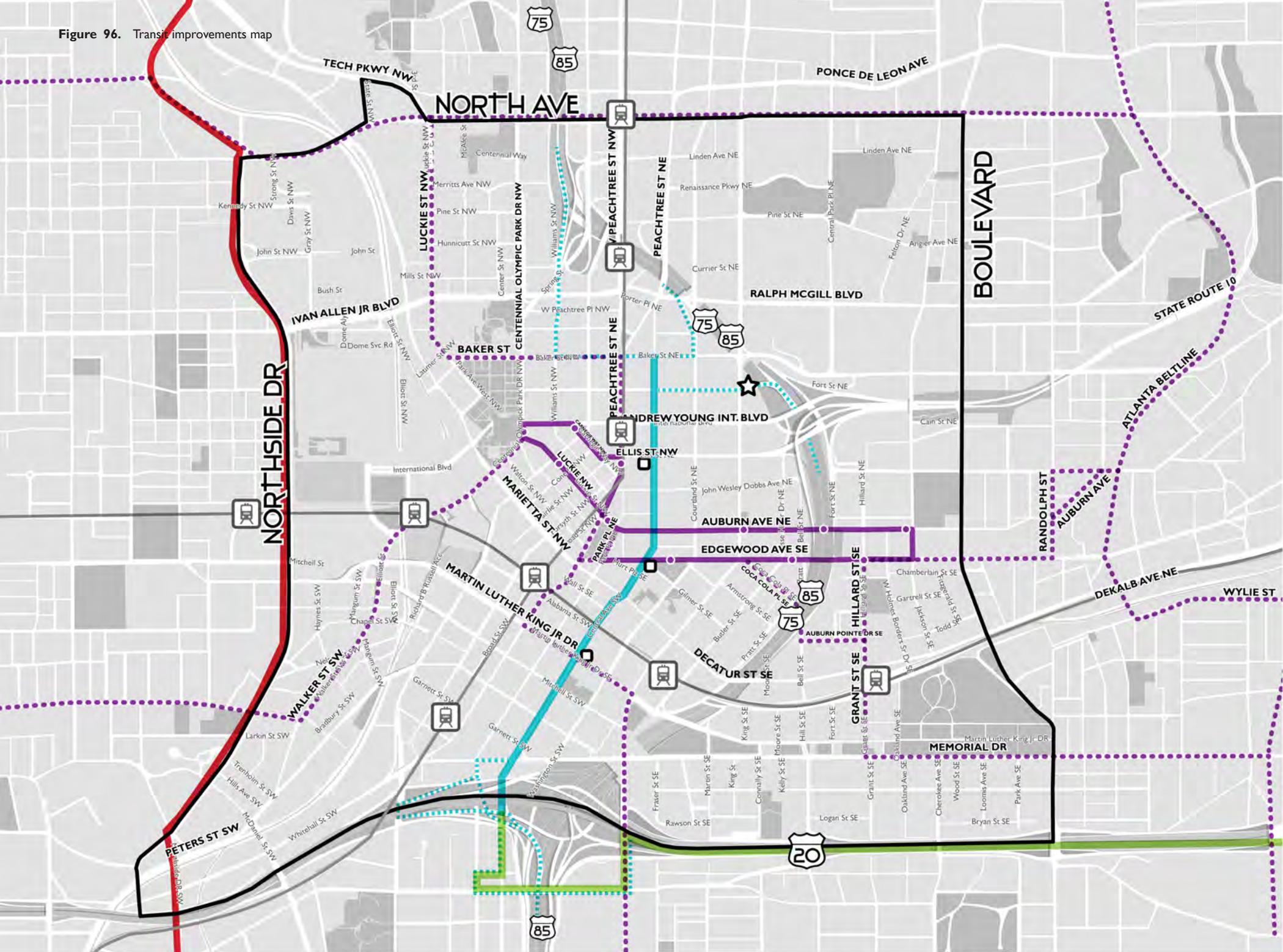
:Improving inter-city bus operations by coordinating all services in one dedicated facility that is connected to MARTA and other modes.

:Expanding the Atlanta Streetcar System and providing more connections to MARTA as proposed in the Atlanta Streetcar System Plan, and reviewing the feasibility of dedicated lanes.

:Improving transit to be a more welcoming experience by upgrading stops and shelters, improving MARTA real-time technology and displays to provide information about wait times, and enhancing MARTA stations (see Strategies 5.3 and 5.4) with amenities such as the fresh market and dry cleaning services. The *Downtown Transportation Plan* also identifies the need to reduce headways to reduce wait times, improve bus staging to enhance the pedestrian experience along bus corridors, and coordinate all services including Megabus in one dedicated facility that is connected to MARTA and other modes.



Figure 96. Transit improvements map



# TRANSIT

Source: KHA

- ☆ INTERSTATE RAMP RECONFIGURATION
- ENHANCED BUS SHELTER PROPOSAL

## BUS CORRIDOR / BRT ROUTES

- MARTA I-20 BRT
- NORTHSIDE DRIVE BRT
- PRIORITY BUS CORRIDOR
- BUS ACCESS ROUTES

## MARTA

- MARTA STATION ENHANCEMENT

## STREETCAR

- EXISTING
- EXPANSION

“Extend trolley system so I don't have to use the car to get to places within Atlanta - that would eliminate traffic congestion and parking space shortage.”





» In the open house, **90%** of participants included bike lanes when asked how they would redesign a wide Downtown street.

#### » **Fill the gaps in the region's bicycle network**

The public process revealed a strong appetite for bike facilities. Safer and more direct bike routes ranked as the top factor that would persuade survey respondents to change their personal mode of travel, and secure bike parking also ranked highly at number four. In the open house, 90% of participants included bike lanes when asked how they would redesign a wide Downtown street.

Downtown Atlanta has made great strides in recent years with its bicycle infrastructure. There are approximately 12 bike-lane miles, of which 5.65 miles are high quality infrastructure, which is defined as off-street paths or on-street lanes that are protected or buffered from vehicle traffic. The Cycle Atlanta Phase 1.0 plan created the first protected cycle track Downtown, and in 2016, Relay Bike Share launched Downtown as a pilot with ten hubs and 100 bikes, and has since grown to other areas of the city, with 22 hubs and 500 bikes. Use of the bike share has performed better than planned, with each bike on average serving 0.7 rides per day. Building upon these successes, this plan recommends continuing to grow the bike share program while expanding the network to support bicycling as an important aspect of Downtown transportation that provides safe connections between Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

The plan recommends expanding the network to encompass 23.3 miles of total bike facilities, with 16.2 miles of high-quality infrastructure. That is a three-fold increase in the volume of high-quality bike facilities. Key considerations for developing new bike infrastructure include:

: Connecting to the Beltline and existing trails: an example being a direct connection from the West Side Beltline to Centennial Olympic Park along a new multi-use path and enhanced facilities at the Georgia World Congress Center.

: Extending the Freedom Parkway Trail to connect the regional trail network to the Downtown hub at Centennial Olympic Park by strengthening the connection over the highway with enhanced intersection treatment.

: Connecting key open spaces and Downtown amenities through protected and off-street lanes to provide direct connections between Midtown and Summerhill, Atlanta University Center and Oakland Cemetery.

: Integrating more bicycle parking at public facilities, employers, and new developments.

: Encouraging employers to provide showers and locker facilities for bike commuters.

: Installing more bike share stations with a goal of 20 to 25 stations per square mile.

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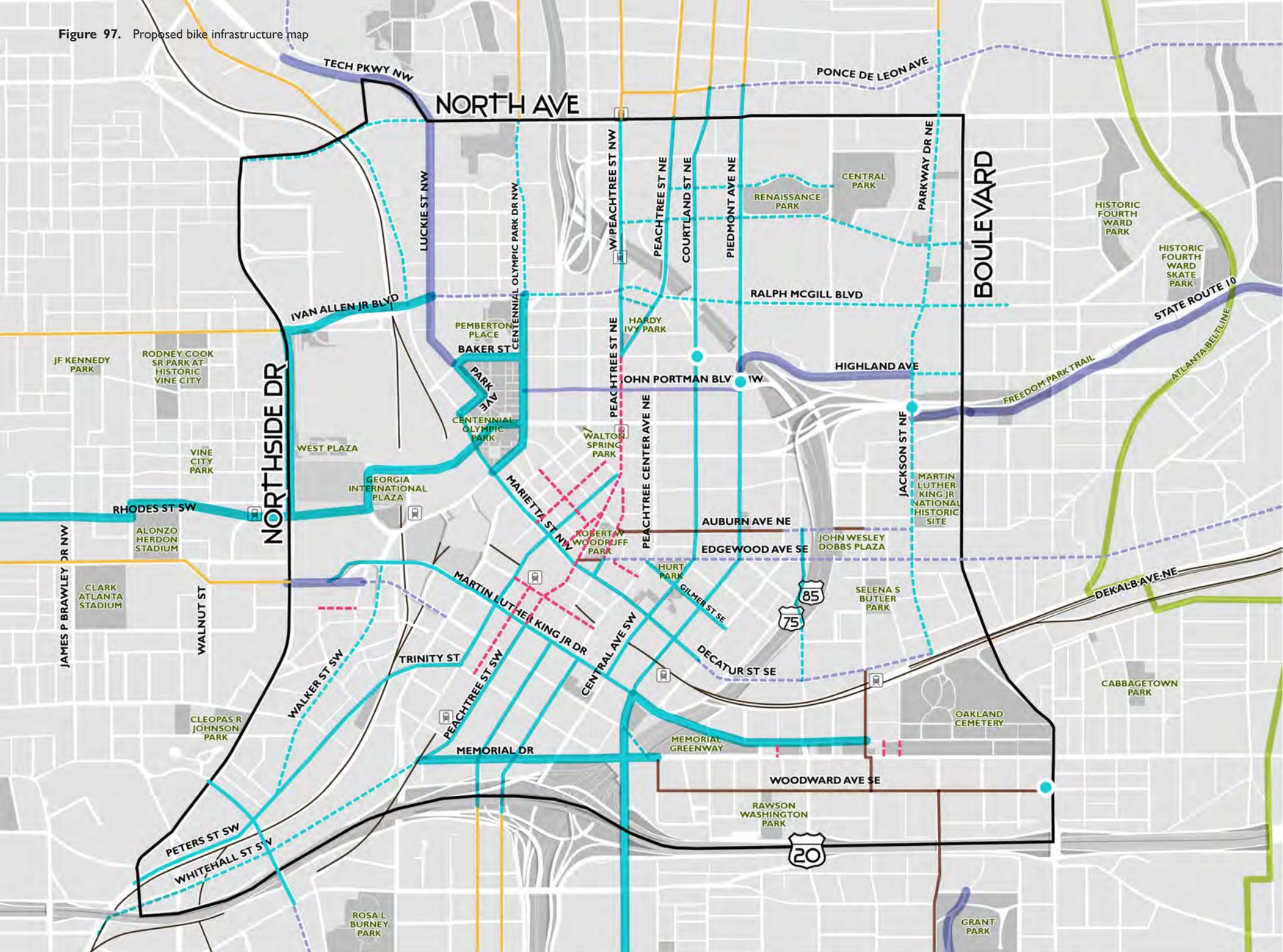
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“I think bike lanes are a must if you want to encourage alternative transportation, and businesses should have facilities to allow for showers or lockers so I don't look like I just biked to work.”

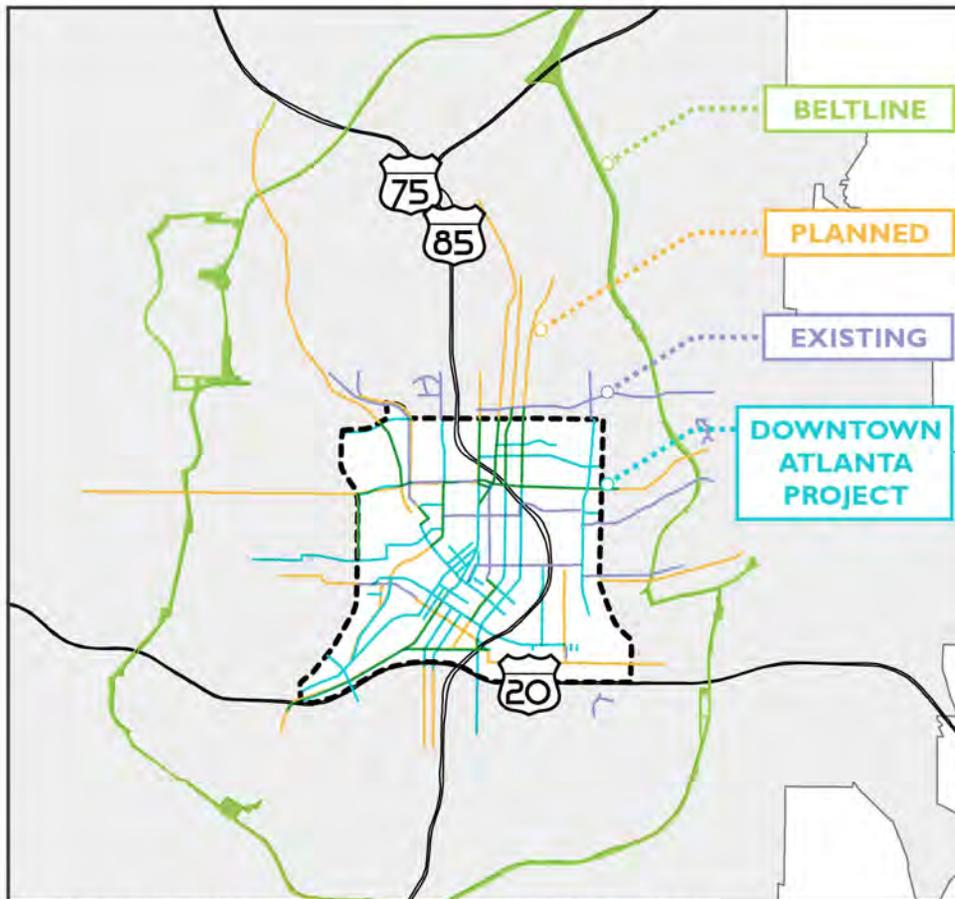
Figure 97. Proposed bike infrastructure map



# BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Source: Atlanta's Transportation Plan, KHA

- |                      |                                 |                        |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| — PLANNED FACILITIES | <b>DOWNTOWN ATLANTA PROJECT</b> | <b>EXISTING</b>        |
| — RECOMMENDED ROUTES | — OFF STREET PATH               | — OFF-STREET PATH      |
|                      | — PROTECTED BIKE LANES          | — PROTECTED BIKE LANES |
|                      | - - - BIKE LANES                | - - - BIKE LANES       |
|                      | ● INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS     |                        |
|                      | - - - SHARED STREETS            |                        |



NOTE: THIS INSET MAP INCLUDES PLANNED AND EXISTING SHARROWS.

» **Create new streets and target improvements to key intersections**

Downtown’s walkability is hindered by large blocks that disrupt the grid. Smaller block sizes are recommended in key locations to allow for shorter pedestrian trips and more direct routes. Smaller blocks will also increase safety by making it more likely that pedestrians cross at intersections rather than attempt mid-block crossings. The redevelopment of sites such as the Railroad Gulch, Atlanta Civic Center site, and Herndon Homes provide good opportunities to create new streets that break up megablocks and reconnect the grid. Additionally, key intersections are recommended for safety improvements to better connect across highway infrastructure, including:

: The intersection of Williams and Spring Streets at the I-75/85 interchange,

: The intersection of Courtland and Baker,

: The PATH alignment to John Portman Boulevard,

: The International Boulevard and Freedom Parkway reconfiguration, and

: The Capitol Avenue and Memorial Drive roundabout.

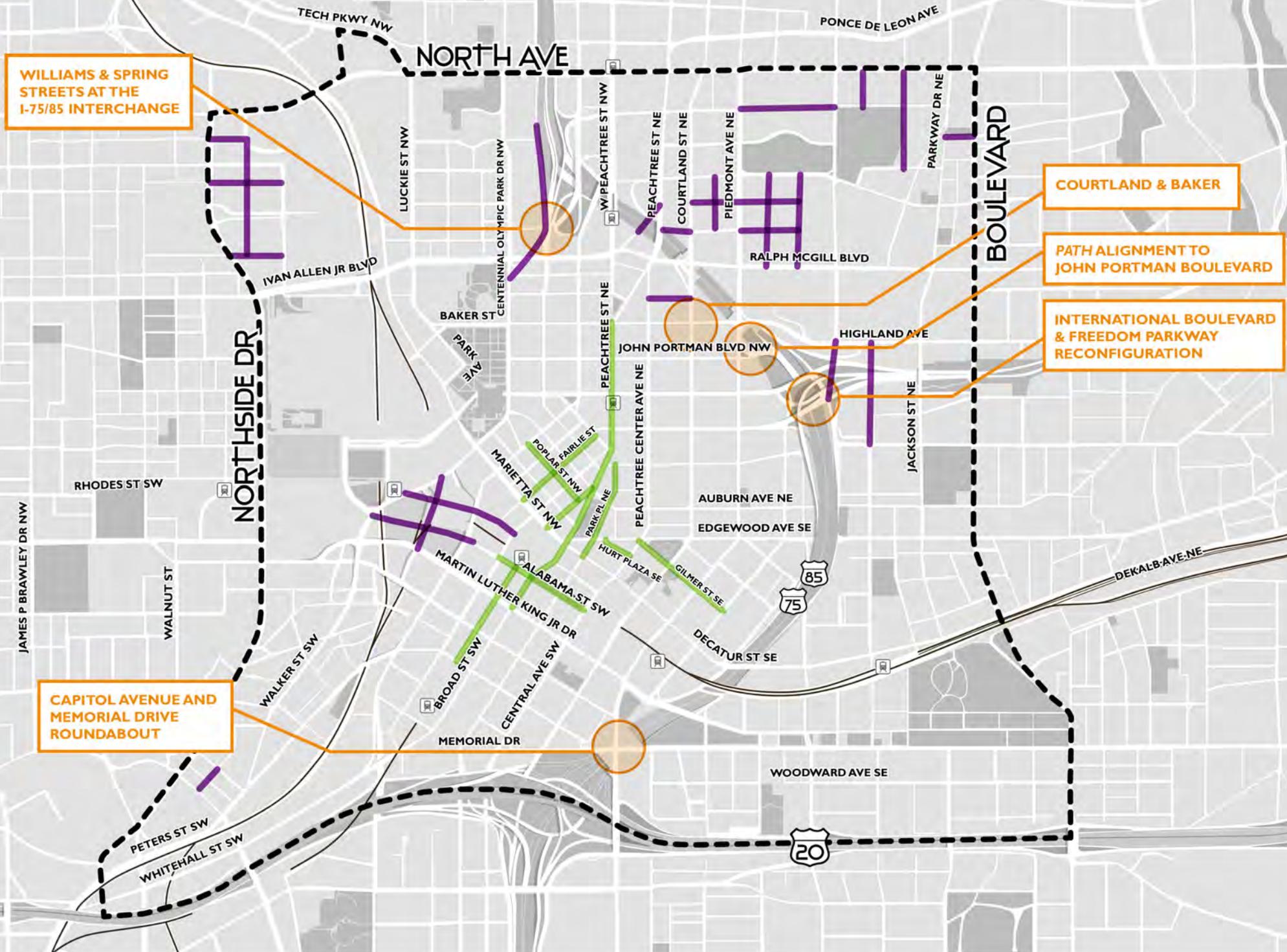


Peachtree Street



“We need small blocks and small streets as opposed to 6-lane wide streets...its like Frogger trying to cross them.”

Figure 98. Proposed street improvements map

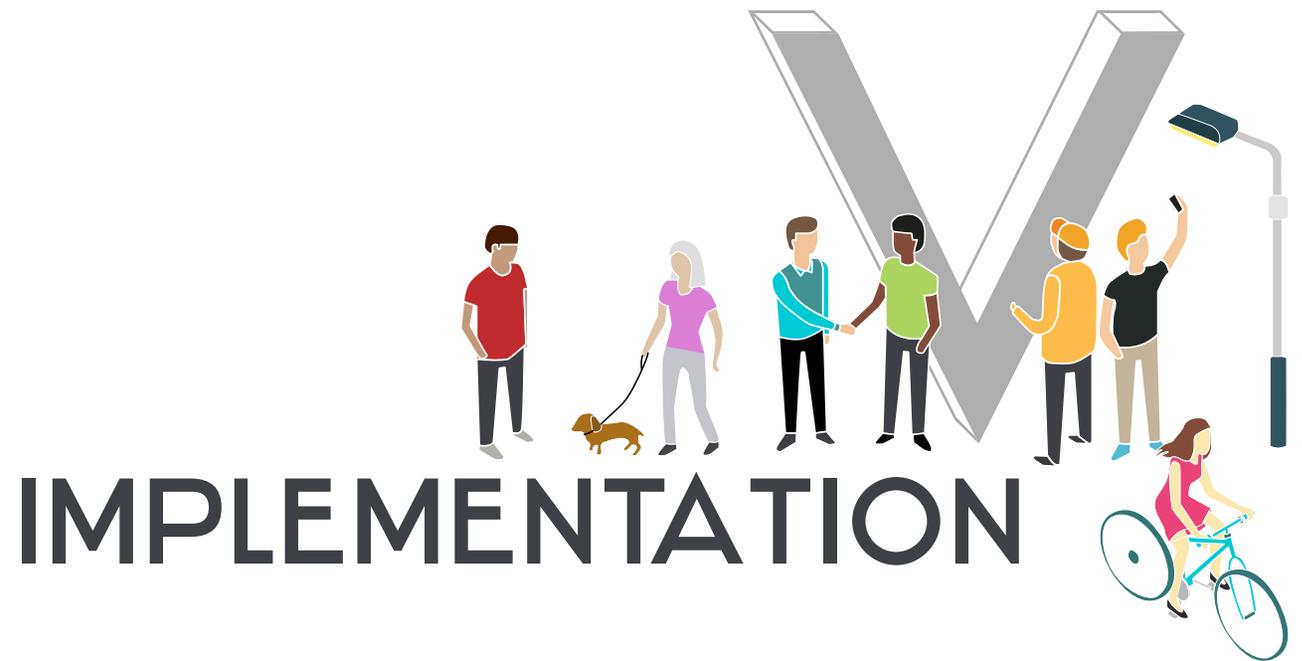


# STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Source: Atlanta's Transportation Plan, KHA

-  INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
-  NEW STREETS / EXTENSIONS
-  NEW SHARED STREETS





**IMPLEMENTATION**

## IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* presents an ambitious but pragmatic vision for the future of Downtown. Various Downtown entities and stakeholders will be required to maintain focus on the plan and work toward implementing its recommendations over the coming years. There is no one agency, project, or funding source that can do it alone – coordination will be critical to achieve the long term goals described in this plan.

To help the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* become reality, we must acknowledge the constraints including limited resources – in terms of both money and time. While a large amount of investment will be necessary, anticipated social, economic, and environmental benefits greatly outweigh the costs. To truly guide investment, the work must be managed by a group of individuals, key organizations, and agencies that are committed to the Downtown vision, and to maintain momentum, progress must be tracked, communicated, and celebrated.

The same principles used to create this plan must be a part of its implementation including an emphasis on transparency, data and engagement. The enthusiasm and creativity that Downtown stakeholders brought to this process shaped the plan's vision and strategies. The implementation of these strategies will similarly benefit from continued engagement with those that care deeply about Downtown Atlanta.



## CREATE THE DOWNTOWN PLAN TASK FORCE

There are a number of very active Downtown organizations, each of which has a direct stake in Downtown's future and already contributes to activities that make Downtown what it is today.

Central to success in bringing the plan's ideas to reality is harnessing the capacity and expertise of varied Downtown partners and establishing a clear management structure charged with coordinating different initiatives, bringing key stakeholders together, fundraising, and taking on the task of driving different strategies forward. To help transition this planning effort into a sustainable management structure for implementation, local partners should work toward creating a Downtown Plan Task Force by expanding the existing Downtown Plan Working Group, which now has a long to-do list as a result of this plan. To effectively guide the implementation of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*, it will need to expand and reorganize around dedicated committees tasked with specific actions.

Critical planning partners that have a clear role to play in shepherding implementation activities include (but are not limited to):

- **Central Atlanta Progress and Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID)** – Key roles: overall convener for Downtown activity with specific programs dedicated to maintenance, safety, programming, marketing, planning, development assistance, and the design and implementation of public realm and street improvements.
- **The City of Atlanta** – Key roles: core partner with CAP/ADID to undertake planning, street improvements, infrastructure upgrades, building preservation, and policy changes that support the Master Plan. The Mayor's Office, Department of City Planning – specifically, the Office of Design – Historic Preservation and the Office of Zoning and Development, the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, Office of Resilience, Invest Atlanta, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Renew Atlanta, Atlanta Police Department (APD), Continuum of care, and Department of Watershed Management have all been involved in shaping this plan and will remain critical partners in the implementation of specific strategies.
- **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)** – Key roles: planning, funding, advocacy, and implementation assistance. ARC is a core partner for realizing Downtown's goals and supports Downtown investment through its Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* is the LCI plan for this portion of Atlanta and reflect the program's core values.
- **Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA)** – Key roles: planning, funding and managing affordable housing. In addition to involvement with key sites in the plan study area, AHA plays an important policy and advocacy role as well.
- **Georgia Building Authority (GBA)** – Key roles: the development and continued improvement of the government district. The GBA has recently released a plan for the government district, and ongoing coordination is necessary to align their goals with those of this Master Plan.
- **Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC)** – Key roles: development, continued improvement and management of the convention center campus including Mercedes-Benz Stadium and the \$25 million enhancement of Centennial Olympic Park.
- **The State of Georgia** – Key roles: coordination, permitting and implementation. Georgia Department of Transportation is central to realizing improvements on State controlled streets. In addition, the State Historic Preservation Office is an essential resource to help preserve Downtown's built heritage. Ongoing coordination with both agencies, among others, is necessary to move implementation forward.
- **MARTA** – Key roles: boosting transit ridership, investing in station improvements, and the reconfiguration of bus routes and stations. There are more MARTA stations and riders Downtown than anywhere else in the region. Work closely with them to improve their stations and thus the transit experience, and to tackle key transportation policies that will encourage greater transit ridership.
- **Philanthropy** – Key role: fundraising! Some strategies, including a Downtown challenge grant program, will need support by philanthropy to capitalize a fund. Local and national foundations need to be brought into the process around key initiatives that align with their missions.

(continued on next page)

- **Property Owners** – Key roles: investment and Downtown advocacy. Property owners Downtown are critical partners to help upgrade the blah-zas, many of which are private. The design of this program will rely on owners willing to demonstrate the value in investing in these spaces. In addition, property owners are central to realizing a district parking approach.
- **Churches** – Key roles: service provision and property management and development. Some churches provide services and support to those in need. Others maintain major land holdings that are opportunities for new investment that meets their objectives as well as those of this Master Plan.
- **Major institutions** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy and marketing, new development and preservation, and economic development. Georgia State University and Grady Memorial Hospital, and Emory University Hospital Midtown represent major job centers, and they are growing and looking to expand their campuses Downtown. There are many strategies in this plan that necessitate their continued involvement, from street improvements to strategies that will create a healthier Downtown.
- **Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB)** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy, marketing, and programming. ACVB is already leading the charge in promoting Downtown for events and major conferences. They will be essential in realizing some of the strategies around further promoting Downtown and connecting Downtown's unique assets.
- **Employers** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy, talent attraction and retention, commuter patterns and parking. The major employers are one of the key engines of Downtown growth. To fuel Downtown's continued growth, partnerships with employers are required to help implement transportation policies designed to encourage transit and active transportation but also to encourage their employees to spend more time Downtown.
- **Hotels** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy and marketing. The hotels represent a lot of economic activity for Downtown. Continue to engage them in further marketing Downtown and in the design of Downtown streets and wayfinding.
- **Retailers** – Key roles: marketing, coordination, customer data collection, and parking. To help encourage more retail in the right locations, work with existing retailers around their core needs, but also tap their knowledge and sales data where possible. Their insights can help target Downtown marketing and identify specific improvements to support existing retail.
- **Developers** – Key roles: investment, ground floor activation, retail attraction. The developers are critical partners in activating ground floor spaces and in advancing conversations about lowered parking requirements, which will reduce the costs to build and offer housing.
- **Advocacy organizations** – Key roles: advocacy and implementation activities for specific Downtown improvements. Local groups like Trees Atlanta bring specific expertise that is needed to implement portions of this Master Plan, as do national groups such as American Rivers, City Parks Alliance, the Trust for Public Lands, and the Urban Land Institute (ULI).
- **Social service organizations** – Key roles: service provision, education, outreach, and coordination with local police. Much work has been done to align existing services and help those most in need Downtown. The work of the Continuum of Care, APD, and ADID, among others, must continue to be integrated into the overall vision for Downtown Atlanta.
- **Arts organizations** – Key roles: public art, Downtown advocacy, programming, education. The Downtown arts organizations and artists are active and concerned about their role in the future of Downtown. They need staff support to add capacity to their advocacy efforts as well as opportunities to work and exhibit their work Downtown.
- **Neighborhood organizations** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy, marketing, neighborhood coordination, and public safety. To expand the number of residents living Downtown, the neighborhood organizations, including the Neighborhood Planning Units, will play a key role in connecting residents to one another, building pride and a broader sense of community, and tackling the shared challenges of living Downtown.
- **Residents** – Key roles: Downtown advocacy, marketing, neighborhood coordination, and public safety. Beyond the neighborhood organizations, involved residents continue to play a role in shaping Downtown. Some will volunteer and serve to help implement specific small-scale actions that will improve Downtown as a place to live.

Note that much overlap exists in the “key roles” identified for the groups above and the initiatives discussed in this plan. Some ongoing efforts already occur through effective local partnerships between those with similar missions or roles Downtown. To implement this plan, these partnerships must continue but also expand to ensure that a diversity of voices are at the table.

The **Task Force** should meet quarterly to bring these and other partners together to coordinate and track the progress toward implementation around key initiatives. Subcommittees should be established as necessary to address specific action items. At this time, we recommend creating subcommittees around the following topics:

1. **Parking** – to help address upcoming projects and implementation of this plan’s proposed parking strategy. Possible members include APD, ARC, CAP/ADID, Center for Civic Innovation, Downtown City Council representatives, Invest Atlanta, parking operators, and Public Works.
2. **Affordable Housing** – to help retain and expand affordable housing for a range of income levels and needs Downtown. Possible members include ARC, Atlanta Housing Authority, City of Atlanta, Atlanta Beltline, Enterprise Community Partners, CAP/ADID, developers, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, ULI Atlanta, Downtown City Council representatives, and Invest Atlanta.
3. **Street Design and Implementation** – to further the goal of improving streets throughout Downtown. Possible members include ARC, APD, CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta Department of Planning, Department of Public Works and Renew Atlanta, and major employers, attractions, and developers. Coordination will be necessary with the work of the Parking Subcommittee regarding on-street parking and curbside management.
4. **Greening and Sustainability** – to further the plan’s goals towards tree plantings, open space, green infrastructure, green gateways, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and creating a healthier environment. Possible members include CAP/ADID, Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge partners, City of Atlanta Office of Resilience, Department of Watershed Management, Department of Public Works and Renew Atlanta, Georgia State University, Green Building Alliance, hospitals, Trees Atlanta, and the Turner Foundation.
5. **Arts & Culture** – to push forward strategies that promote the local arts and culture, as well as work space for artists and small businesses. Possible members include ACVB, Atlanta Movie Tours, ARC, C4, Center for Civic Innovation, Eyedrum, Georgia State, Goat Farm Arts Center, MARTA, Murmur, City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, Sweet Auburn Works, Atlanta Architecture and Design Center, Theatrical Outfit, the Tabernacle, and the Rialto Theater.
6. **Preservation** – to act as the proposed Preservation Task Force and advocate for the preservation of historic buildings, blocks, streets, and infrastructure elements. Possible members include: City of Atlanta Department of City Planning - Office of Design, Center for Civic Innovation, the State Historic Preservation Office, Atlanta Historic Preservation Center, Sweet Auburn Works, Atlanta Architecture and Design Center, and preservation professionals.
7. **Neighborhood Action** – to expand capacity of Downtown neighborhood organizations. Possible members include the Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association, City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association, Center for Civic Innovation, Grant Park, Historic District Development Corporation, Old Fourth Ward, and Sweet Auburn Works.
8. **Design for the Beloved City** – to follow projects from conceptual design through to design details, ensuring design quality and built projects that make Downtown proud and a place where people want to be. Possible members include AIA Atlanta, Atlanta Architecture and Design Center, City of Atlanta, Center for Civic Innovation, and interdisciplinary design professionals and students.

This plan marks one point in time, but new ideas and investments are constantly underway, changing the landscape and demands on Downtown's transportation network.

- **Maintain a comprehensive project list**

The team developed a comprehensive project list for Downtown bringing together projects previously identified in past plans and ongoing initiatives like Renew Atlanta and the 2017T-SPLOST as well as ideas generated during the development of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*. This initial list was then modeled for each potential project to understand the impacts, both large and small, on Downtown's streets.

By starting with the pedestrian and moving through the most vulnerable modes, highlighting missing sidewalks were not after-thoughts, and bike lanes were not crammed onto back alleys. A well thought out network of each mode was considered and then layered upon one another to determine conflict points and potential challenges. Challenges were modeled via Synchro to ensure that with existing vehicular traffic volumes, redistributed traffic did not come to a standstill. In cases where this did reduce intersection level of service below a failing condition, the modal networks and their projects were re-evaluated and changed to allow for safe and smooth operations of all modes. This modeling provided a full project list, tested against existing conditions. CAP/ADID should maintain this list going forward, edited as necessary to always have a comprehensive list of transportation projects at the ready.

- **Use this plan's criteria to evaluate current and future transportation investments**

The comprehensive project list was then scored according to criteria developed by the planning team. The scoring process reflects the key concerns and issues heard during the public process and includes criteria related to connectivity, safety, ecology, community access, operations, and flexibility for events. The scoring identified 49 separate projects that comprise a Five-Year Action Plan. This Five-Year Action Plan serves as the Livable Centers Initiative implementation program that reflects projects with strong community support. The broad-based criteria employed are an effective tool for framing discussions and helping to prioritize future projects; they should be used to evaluate future transportation projects for Downtown.

## TRACK AND SHARE THE PROGRESS

To help hold implementation partners accountable, maintain momentum and morale, and measure the impact of implementation efforts, it is critical to diligently track all progress and share updates with the full Downtown community. An important early action will be to set up data entry systems that are fast, easy to use, and accessible to multiple partners poised to assist with regularly scheduled tracking reports. Sharing the progress reports with the public will keep them engaged and build confidence and momentum in the plan's implementation.

- **Bring data mapping and management in house at Central Atlanta Progress (CAP)**

CAP collects and maintains up-to-date statistics about Downtown assets, conditions, trends and programs. Likewise, ADID maintains statistics about the actions undertaken by the Ambassadors and Clean Team. Consolidating all data collection, and adding mapping and data management functions in house at CAP (or via a shared position at CAP/ADID) is a logical step to ensure the plan's implementation is well documented and tracked, the stories of success and progress are told, and outcomes are integrated into CAP's reporting processes and future operating decisions.

- **Share the data and progress updates**

With data from the planning process serving as a baseline, CAP can track trends and measure progress on implementation and integrate it into reports such as CAP's Annual Report to keep people interested and invested in the plan's progress. Additionally, quarterly updates can be shared with internal communications staff at Downtown employers to keep them abreast of improvements and let them see visible examples of change.

- **Develop branding and messaging to market plan initiatives and progress**

As implementation gets underway, it will be important to make sure all activities are clearly tied to the plan. As a first step, CAP should create a one-pager with the vision, key goals and projects to spread the message about the plan and drum up excitement with existing and future partners so they know what to watch out for in the years ahead and prime them for involvement. As projects and activities are implemented all materials, such as press releases, the website, and social media updates, should be acknowledged and communicated widely, with branding associated with the plan. Develop an online scorecard or report card to depict progress. Design signage for physical projects to let the public know they are a result of the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*.

- **Release data for local businesses and residents to use**

Many cities have an open data policy that provides citizens with the data and tools to truly engage and collaborate in improving their communities. The Atlanta Regional Commission's open data platform is an example that provides easy data access and exploration. Developing a similar interactive mapping platform would allow CAP to make Downtown-specific data available for engaged citizens and businesses to use in making local decisions. Conversely, they can contribute and crowdsource information and ideas for use by CAP and its partners.

# PRIORITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Priority capital projects and programmatic initiatives have been determined through an extensive public outreach process and detailed technical analysis. The project team reviewed funding and implementation strategies with several stakeholder groups. The following list identifies the top two or three projects/programs prioritized by community members under each of the plan's six goals:

## 1 MAINTAIN FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

- » Support efforts to address homelessness Downtown
- » Keep on keeping Downtown clean and safe

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE

- » Work to preserve the built heritage
- » Tell Downtown's untold or overlooked stories

## 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

- » Manage parking differently to create more opportunities for housing for all income levels
- » Create a dense "residential backbone" in the core of Downtown
- » Retain and expand affordable housing

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER

- » Support small and innovative businesses Downtown
- » Redefine "active" for ground floors

## 5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST

- » Develop a program to redesign "blah-zas" as vibrant plazas
- » Integrate play and green space at MARTA stations
- » Boost the tree canopy

## 6 OFFER REAL CHOICE IN TRANSPORTATION

- » Shift how people commute and travel in, out, and through Downtown
- » Fill the gaps in the bicycle network

The reality is, that these community priorities will move forward along very different timelines, advanced through different kinds of actions and by different partners. To guide the actions of planning partners in the immediate future, the list below identifies initial steps across all six of the goal areas of this plan that speak to the community's priorities, as well as opportunities to effect or initiate change in the near term, even though some initiatives will require a much longer timeline to reach completion (up to 10 years).

### **JUMPSTART: INITIAL INVESTMENTS AND ACTIONS**

In some cases, implementation requires time to advocate for changes in policy. In other cases, fundraising and construction is required. To jumpstart implementation on new catalyst projects, a series of initiatives were identified as early actions. This does not include actions that are already underway like the implementation of the "Stitch" or continued efforts to address homelessness. These represent new initiatives that, together, can have an enormous impact on the character of Downtown.



## 01 CREATE A DISTRICT PARKING APPROACH

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Parking is at the root of Downtown's heavy reliance on cars; there is significant supply offered for very low prices. The supply is provided overwhelmingly by private operators and owners, creating an uncoordinated and inefficient system in which a significant number of spaces are unused even during a workday. The *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* recommends establishing a publicly-managed parking program that works to consolidate smaller parking lots and garages, more efficiently manage supply, and subsequently making land available for potential redevelopment. To implement this strategy, a number of actions need to be taken:

1. **Pre-planning** - including meetings with parking operators and the City as well as an analysis of financial feasibility that models potential costs and revenue of publicly-managed parking facilities and assesses whether the revenue is sufficient to cover land acquisition, development, and operations over time. These discussions should help to fine-tune the implementation approach, select key sites and identify an operator for the program.
2. **Initial steps** - with a public agency or entity leading the program, CAP/ADID should assist with coordinating and providing parking inventory information. The intent is that the public entity is not only charged with managing public parking but also supporting private development Downtown.
3. **Land assembly** - The managing entity enters the Downtown off-street parking market by acquiring parking facilities or building its own supply. Infrastructure improvement funds, Tax Allocation District funds, TIFIA infrastructure loans, and other resources from the City and ARC can help to capitalize this initial action step.
4. **Reduce parking expectations from lenders** – CAP/ADID and the City direct new development into partnerships with the managing entity to meet any parking needs, reducing the amount of new parking supply added to Downtown. This will save money for developers, help to reduce the cost of housing, and more efficiently use the spaces that exist at all times of the day.
5. **Land bank and redevelop** - The managing entity functions as a land bank that sells unused parking supply for new development, transferring public subsidy of development projects from direct assistance and tax abatements to reduction of related parking costs.
6. **Recycle revenue to invest in Downtown improvements** - The sale of properties for redevelopment as well as revenue from parking management, should be placed into a “parking enterprise fund.” This enterprise fund is intended not only to sustain a managed parking district but also to provide project funding for capital projects and transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives that help to reduce traffic and encourage the use of transit.

## 02 RETAIN & EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing affordability is a critical issue across the City of Atlanta, and Downtown is no different. As development momentum further takes hold Downtown, this plan emphasizes the need to maintain housing options at a range of prices such that Downtown remains a place that everyone can call home. Today, 26% of housing units are income-restricted for residents earning below specific income levels. Additional units are not restricted but affordable due to relatively inexpensive rents or low or no mortgages on the property. However, affordable housing units, both those that naturally exist and those that are income-restricted, require long-term protections to ensure that they remain affordable. And, with a deficit of safe, affordable housing citywide, there is a heightened need for more affordable units in Downtown where institutions, services, and transportation are more available than anywhere else in the region. Addressing this difficult challenge requires coordination, policy changes, fundraising, and the strategic use of publicly-owned land.

- » **Affordable Housing and Community Retention Task Force:** The task force would consist of members from the public, private and non-profit sectors to create an Affordable Housing Action Plan. This action plan should specifically identify ways in which Downtown can continue to lead in this regard and overcome some of the specific challenges in financing and maintaining affordability in the City of Atlanta.
- » **Policy:** There has been much discussion about how to protect affordable housing across Atlanta. Organizations like City for All and others are advocating for a mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance. Details need to be worked out with Downtown developers and non-profits at the table to ensure the expectations are achievable. In the meantime, take the following policy actions:

- Work to change the City's Supportive Housing Ordinance which mandates a 2,000-foot buffer between supportive housing providers while requiring that new providers be located within 1,500-feet of transit. This rule effectively prevents the production of additional housing for very low-income families and individuals in Downtown because there is very little land that is within 1,500 feet of a transit station but farther than 2,000 feet from an existing supportive housing provider. If the Ordinance requirements are adjusted, it will be important to be thoughtful about the best locations for new facilities in Downtown and elsewhere in the city so as not to concentrate poverty in any one neighborhood.

- In the absence of a Citywide inclusionary housing policy, the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* recommends that 20% of housing Downtown be income-restricted for those making below 60% of the area median income (AMI). In addition, to help achieve the goals of maintaining housing for a wide range of residents, tie local incentives for new housing development to reserving 10% of housing units for those making less than 120% of AMI.

- » **Monitor Downtown housing statistics:** A key to driving policy discussions is the ability to track housing trends and needs. Enterprise's Neighborhood Nexus tool is an excellent jumpstart on this task; it tracks Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocations and their expiration horizons. A lot of research went into this plan to understand and track the existing affordable housing units as well as the number of new affordable units in the pipeline. Maintain a GIS database of Downtown housing including information about the number and location of units that are income-restricted and for what timeframe.

- » **Use of City land:** To help achieve policy goals around the creation of affordable housing, site control is critical. Since a small percentage of vacant and underutilized land Downtown is publicly-owned, the City must be extremely strategic with respect to the future use of these properties. Publicly-owned properties need to be disposed of in ways that best meet the needs of Downtown including at below-market values for the expansion of affordable housing. When disposing of publicly-owned land, use the policy goals above to help determine the mix of housing that is appropriate for each site. Consider limiting the total number of income-restricted housing on any property to 50% to ensure that we are creating an integrated, mixed-income Downtown. Where possible, consider placing publicly-owned land into a community land trust to protect affordability over the long-term.

- » **Downtown Housing Fund:** In addition to site control, financing remains a significant challenge due in part to the competitiveness of affordable housing dollars but also due to high land costs. To help rehabilitate, protect or create new affordable housing, financial resources are essential. Bring together the Atlanta Housing Authority, Enterprise Community Partners, Invest Atlanta, local and national financial institutions, major Downtown employers, and philanthropy to create a Downtown Housing Fund. The fund would direct dollars from Tax Allocation Districts as well as private donations to meet the affordable housing goals of this plan. Specific strategies are needed to ramp up the rehabilitation and protections for naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) as well as leveraging the use of funds that typically go underutilized like 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

### 03 ACTIVATE THE GROUND FLOORS

This key initiative is targeted toward creating vibrant, walkable streets. As noted, this is not an effort to encourage retail everywhere, but rather target retail development along certain streets. For other important corridors where retail is not the best ground floor use, the plan recommends creating space for small businesses, service organizations and artists. To enable this to occur, a number of actions are needed:

- » **Policy changes:** The definition of “active use” must be refined to promote these retail and commercial spaces. Currently, it is defined very broadly, enabling uses like fitness centers for the residents upstairs to qualify. We recognize that some flexibility is required, so this definition should be edited in partnership with developers. In addition, the “storefront streets” map should be reevaluated in line with the recommendations of this document.
- » **Master leases:** To encourage developers to participate in this process, some amount of ground floor rent should be expected. However, to encourage activation of the space by local retailers or small offices and artists, the developer will need assistance to make the case to their lenders that their ground floor tenant is “credit-worthy.” Explore an option of master leases where one, credit-worthy organization leases the space and then subleases it to businesses that meet the objectives of this program. This role is typically taken on by a non-profit or business improvement district that has financial standing to obtain credit as well as the on-the-ground connections with local businesses and property owners.
- » **Business recruitment:** Developers recognize the value in having an active first floor. It promotes a safer, more engaging place that is easier to market and, therefore, easier to attract potential tenants to their upper floors. But the process of finding the right

tenant for the right space can be very difficult. Create a “match.com” service for ground floor space that connects businesses and organizations or individuals seeking work space property managers at existing buildings or new developments. This starts with building out and maintaining a database of ground floor commercial spaces and working with realtors and business programs at local universities to identify

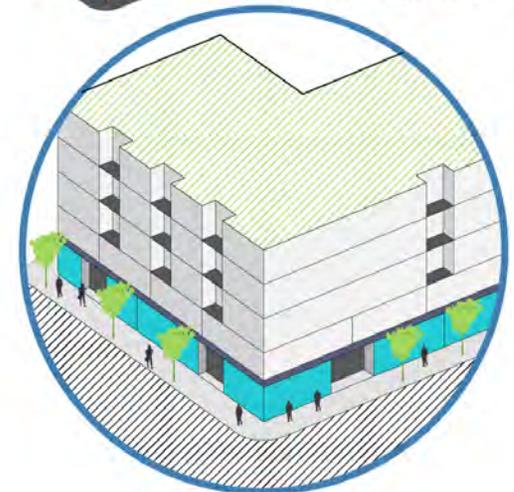
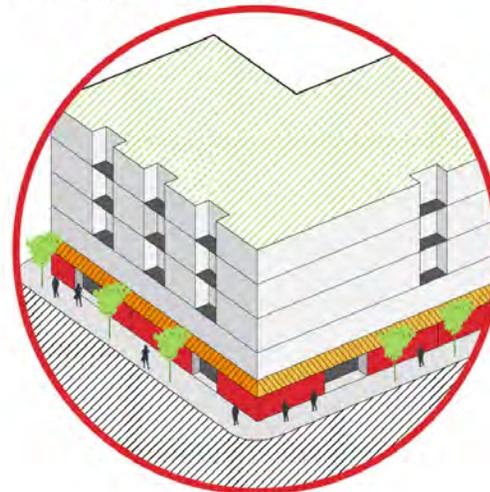
potential matches for developers to consider. Other successful cities take a uniform tenant attraction approach where one person is dedicated to this task of matching businesses with space. Financial support for this activity comes from both public dollars but also developers and property owners who save money by enabling an outside entity to fill their commercial space.

## TYPICAL NEW CONSTRUCTION

SOMETHING HAS TO GO ON THE FIRST FLOOR

SHOULD IT BE RETAIL?

OR WORK SPACE?



## 04 BUILD NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Downtown is made up of many different neighborhoods with unique qualities and issues, but there is also a need to come together to address common issues, coordinate efforts, build a stronger sense of community, and build organizational capacity across neighborhood lines. CAP/ADID can help lay the groundwork for various neighborhood organizations to work together, so that they can eventually take the lead on community building, resident-focused events, and the marketing of Downtown neighborhoods. To set this in motion, a number of initial actions are needed:

- » **Neighborhood coordination:** The Neighborhood Action subcommittee of the Downtown Plan Task Force is essentially the first step of creating a Downtown Residents Council, an umbrella organization with representatives from the established Downtown neighborhood associations. Different from the charge of NPU-M, which covers much of Downtown and focuses on zoning and development matters, this group will coordinate and track progress of the plan's implementation, and grow from there into a Downtown-wide organization for coordinating between neighborhood groups, building capacity in existing and new neighborhood groups, and fostering a greater sense of pride and community across neighborhood lines.
- » **Marketing:** CAP/ADID should spin-off and expand the existing "Live Here" section of their website into a stand-alone online portal for all things relating to Downtown neighborhoods and Downtown living. The neighborhood organizations should be involved through the Downtown Residents Council, which can take over the management and updating of the site after the initial set up.
- » **Projects and events:** Residents have plenty of ideas for how to make Downtown an even greater place to live. A Downtown Neighborhood Challenge grant fund is a great way to draw on residents' creativity and continue the energy from the planning process into implementation. CAP/ADID should recruit funding partners to launch the fund, help develop the criteria and guidelines for the challenge, and put out the call to residents to submit ideas that support the implementation of the plan's goals. Once the program structure is built, administration of the grant program should be transferred to an entity such as the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, though planning partners including CAP/ADID should remain involved in proposal evaluations and selection.

## 05 FROM ONE-WAY TO TWO-WAY STREETS

To improve connectivity and navigability Downtown, the plan proposes converting nearly seven miles of existing one-way streets to two-way operations. This dramatic shift will fundamentally change the experience of Downtown, transforming corridors that currently feel and function as one-way thoroughfares to urban streets that support a more vibrant street life, which in turn supports economic development. Other benefits of two-way conversions include increased flexibility in the road network because drivers will have greater choice in devising their routes; more direct routes between destinations and thus less congestion; reduced confusion for drivers; and slower driving speeds resulting in increased safety for all. The City of Atlanta has much experience with roadway improvement projects, and new resources exist to help drive these projects. Critical next steps include:

- » **Continue to advance existing projects:** Some of the streets identified for two-way conversion in the five-year transportation action plan are existing projects that are already in the pipeline. Continue to advocate for the following projects, which are poised to be examples of early wins that demonstrate the benefits of two-way conversions as well as the ability to remain flexible to accommodate one-way traffic during high-volume special events.

The conversion of Mitchell and MLK Jr. Drive will support the development momentum in South Downtown, helping to foster the walkable, pedestrian-oriented mixed use district envisioned there. Additional early wins include:

- Baker Street from Centennial Olympic Park Drive to Piedmont Avenue
- Mitchell Street from Ted Turner to Capitol Avenue
- MLK Jr. Drive from Ted Turner to Jesse Hill Jr. Drive

- » **Begin the design process for new corridors prioritized for conversion:** Additional corridors prioritized for conversion from one-way to two-way are listed below. As a first step, seek funding for and commission engineering studies required to design and demonstrate the feasibility of two-way conversions that, again, are flexible enough to work with temporary one-way traffic flows following high-volume special events.

- Centennial Olympic Park Drive from Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard to Marietta Street

- Angier Avenue/Pine Street from West Peachtree Street to Courtland Street

- Ted Turner Drive/Spring Street from West Peachtree Street to MLK Jr. Drive

- While the plan also prioritizes Peachtree Center Avenue/Central Avenue for two-way conversion as a bus corridor, this change can only proceed after proposed bicycle facilities are completed on Piedmont Avenue/Capitol Avenue and Courtland Street/Washington Street.

- » **Position for funding:** Work with the City of Atlanta and ARC to integrate new streets projects into the funding pipelines for streets projects. Where applicable, coordinate with developers in South Downtown and the Railroad Gulch to ensure that roadway projects build in the green and pedestrian amenities envisioned and necessary to support the on-the-ground experience that a two-way urban street enables.



MLK Jr. Drive

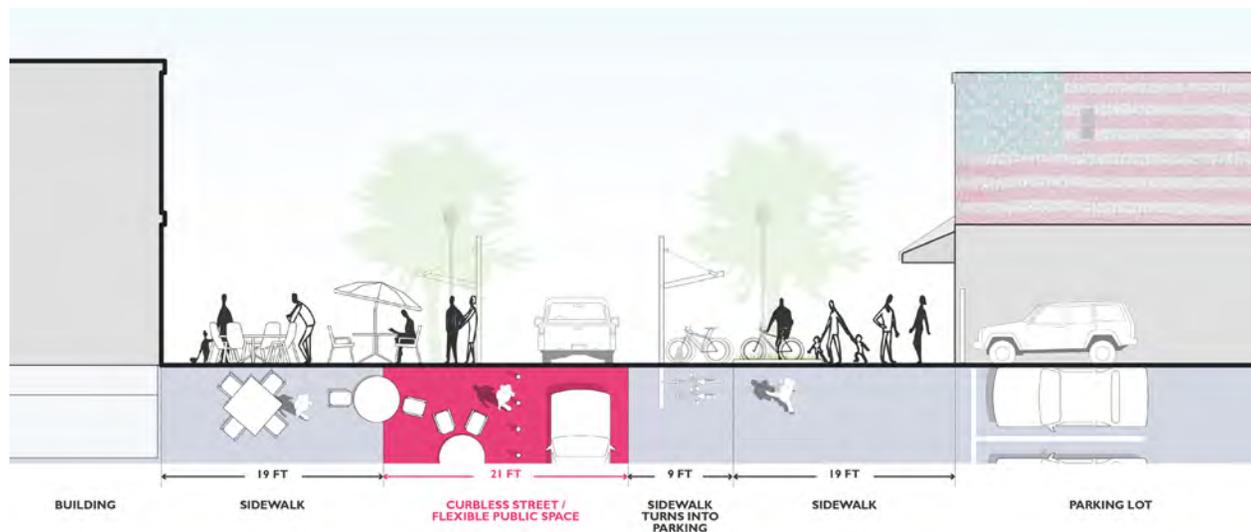
## 06 DESIGN SHARED STREETS FOR A SPECIAL PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

The plan identifies over two miles of streets as “shared streets,” where vehicular access is limited to create spaces where people can walk freely and enjoy the city’s street ballet. A two-block segment of Broad Street NW, between Luckie and Walton streets currently functions in this way, contributing to the much loved walkability of the Fairlie-Poplar neighborhood. Two streets, in particular, should be prioritized for improvement as shared streets in the near term:

» **Peachtree Street:** Atlanta’s Signature Street, as it traverses Downtown, should be one where residents, workers, and visitors come together at all times of the day – before work for coffee, during work for a meeting, after work for a drink. The vision accommodates multiple modes as well, including bicyclists and Streetcar passengers in addition to pedestrians and drivers. With the development momentum in South Downtown, the stretch of Peachtree from MLK to Marietta should be the first phase advanced with a detailed engineering study, but ultimately, the shared streets should extend north from Marietta to Baker Street.

» **Peachtree Street Pilot:** In the next year, however, as Atlanta prepares to once again enter the national spotlight as host to the 2019 Super Bowl LIII, the City – and Downtown, specifically – must consider the backdrop that it presents to showcase the event and the stage it sets for visitors and fans who will flock to Downtown for the event. Working with the City and the many event partners, explore the opportunity to pilot the Peachtree Street shared street concept during the event as a gathering space, beautified and activated as the front porch for Downtown.

» **South Broad Street:** In addition to Peachtree Street, South Broad Street presents a unique opportunity to formalize what already functions as a shared street. Newport’s Street Plan approved by City Council includes a vision for South Broad as a curbless street, where pedestrians can wander between businesses and arts venues, café seating can spill into the street, and through traffic is limited to loading. Support Newport’s vision for the corridor, and encourage partnerships with organizations who can help with programming that will activate this stretch of South Downtown as revitalization progresses.



South Broad Street

## 07 TELL DOWNTOWN'S STORIES

Much of this plan is about improving the Downtown experience in ways that make residents, employees, students, and visitors, fall in love with Downtown Atlanta, whether for the first time or all over again. Part of this calls for creating new spaces and new programs that give people reason to be Downtown, and part of this calls for finding new ways to help expand and/or deepen people's connections with Downtown. An early action priority is to support a series of smaller projects that help people see Downtown in a new light, encouraging more people to walk, explore, and observe, to bring guests to favorite Downtown spots, and to learn to see and appreciate Downtown's many unique features, histories, and present day stories. Examples of such projects that could function as initial implementation efforts that help make Downtown's stories more visible and accessible include:

» **Protect what's here now:** Downtown's building stock and historic character is under threat as market pressure increases and development accelerates. Coordinate with the City's pending Historic Revitalization Plan, and commission a comprehensive building survey of all existing buildings Downtown to identify historic assets and areas that need stronger protections. Include a media and communications component of the survey, which identifies a number of lesser-known site and develops a suite of interpretive information for each, from historic maps to old photos, audio files, and other available materials, which should be packaged and presented online and on site for those curious to know more about why these places matter.

» **Storytelling as a challenge grant:** Consider storytelling as a theme for the proposed Downtown Challenge Grant (Recommendation 3.5). Proposals might include podcasts, web apps that help people tour Downtown, or interpretive art, among other ideas, all geared to highlighting stories of Downtown Atlanta, yesterday and today.

» **Murals and art as wayfinding:** Make a splash with several large-scale murals that help connect the dots between Downtown destinations (and make distances feel shorter by adding visual interest to the streetscape). First steps include: scouting locations, seeking permission from property owners, working with destinations who might be featured on the wayfinding to determine if a portion of their marketing dollars could go towards funding the art and signage, and drafting an artists' call that allows for flexibility and creativity while also accomplishing stated goals of improved navigability.

### Which stories need telling in Downtown Atlanta about the **PRESENT**?



Community ideas for Downtown storytelling

## 08 INTEGRATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN DOWNTOWN STREETS

Green infrastructure aids in creating a resilient and sustainable city through stormwater management, which reduces pressure on sewer infrastructure and provides community amenities such as improved air and water quality, thereby reducing the heat island impacts of a changing climate. Integrating green infrastructure into Downtown will also create habitat, add shade, and make Downtown more walkable. To be most successful and capitalizing on these benefits, this program should include Green Infrastructure solutions of different types and scales distributed throughout the Downtown area. The following steps should be taken up front in order to ensure success:

» **Identify early opportunities:** Target underutilized or oversized streets, such as Central Avenue in South Downtown, which may incorporate green infrastructure and landscape treatments that include above and below grade stormwater capture and management. Encourage re-thinking of multi-lane one-way streets that could contribute to a robust network of planting and active landscape through Downtown; as design work for the streets identified for two-way conversion (05 above) proceeds, make sure to integrate green stormwater infrastructure and landscape elements from the outset.

» **Develop a set of guidelines:** The City needs a set of guidelines that outline standards for design and construction of Green Infrastructure interventions to help facilitate the integration of green infrastructure in all roadway improvement projects. The design of these systems will be most easily implemented if a coordinated set of standard city construction details is made available to public and private entities seeking to implement green infrastructure on their property or in the public right of way.

» **Advocate:** Continue to support recommendations that require stormwater controls and/or utility fees in all new public and private development projects.



Central Avenue redesigned as a “green” street including green infrastructure

## 09 PLANT 10,000 TREES

Trees are part of the identity and experience of Atlanta. Lush neighborhoods and open space outside Downtown have earned it the reputation as the “City in The Forest.” The City of Atlanta’s tree coverage overall is 47.9% while Downtown, the coverage is as little as 3%. Implementing a tree planting campaign within the Downtown study area will expand the City’s urban canopy, help reduce the impact of urban heat island effect, filter pollution, dampen the noise of city streets, and integrate Downtown with its more lush and green surroundings. This campaign could be implemented through the following early action measures:

- » **Coordinate planting guidelines:** Support the evolution of a diverse and healthy urban canopy with guidelines that include species lists to allow for genetic diversity within the canopy while being tuned to current and potential future climate and soil conditions in Downtown. Identify partners and tools to assist in evaluation of tree health and life expectancy in order to promote planting of trees timed to replace aging trees and build a canopy with diverse age ranges. Planting guidelines should provide information on appropriate soil type as well as depth and water content for the species listed.
- » **Seek new spaces for trees:** To reach the target of 10,000 trees will require a multi-faceted approach to plantings that not only targets opportunities for street trees but also advocates for more trees planted on public and private property. Seek a collaboration with a university design studio that evaluates all potential usable space for tree plantings in Downtown. Also look for opportunities to add trees via Downtown Blah-za redesigns (10 below), surface parking lots, along the Downtown Connector, and green infrastructure implementation efforts (08 above).



An idea for an orchard and new plantings near hospitals Downtown

## 10 REDESIGN THE BLAH-ZAS

Blah-zas – the underused and unwelcoming spaces attached to buildings throughout Downtown – serve to reinforce the perceptions that Downtown is unsafe, disconnected, and unwalkable. Some of the most prominent examples are associated with publicly-owned buildings, but there are numerous private ones as well. A new Blah-za Redesign program should be designed to tackle this challenge incrementally, one blah-za at a time. There are three main components to the program:

- » **Identify the right blah-zas to tackle first:** Develop a short-list of 10 key blah-zas for transformation. Ensure that the list includes both those that are publicly- and privately-owned. The initial work must serve as a pilot and illustration that the improvements to these spaces are not only good for Downtown but for the property owners as well. Target those properties where the owners are interested in the concept and willing to take on the challenge, not only of a redesign, but also of operating, maintain, and programming the improved space. This would include MARTA stations like Five Points, where there is already an expressed interest in improving the space as well as resources for doing so.
- » **Provide design assistance:** Most spaces require design expertise to evaluate the range of opportunities with the owners of the property. For larger blah-zas like those around MARTA stations or in front of the Central Library, dedicated assistance from a landscape architect is needed to manage the complexity of the spaces and develop design solutions as well as cost estimates. For smaller spaces, design assistance could tap local university design students to spark interest and refine potential solutions before moving into implementation.

Redesigned blah-zas at Peachtree and Forsyth

- » **Implementation:** As with any program, implementation depends upon the scale and complexity of the site and the design solution. For publicly-owned sites, public dollars generated from the Renew Atlanta Public Infrastructure Bond, MARTA Referendum, T-SPLOST, and other sources should support the transformation from blah-za to plaza. For privately-owned sites other revenue is needed, including an investment by the property-owner. Where blah-za redesigns have the potential to increase the tree canopy or manage stormwater, there is a case to be made for a level of public investment to jumpstart the program. The first or second blah-za to plaza transformations should be followed up with surveys of tenants to demonstrate the benefits of this investment to both the users of the building and potentially the property-owner's bottom line.

- » **Project Management:** Create a mechanism and staff person responsible for coordinated open space design and implementation. Many of the proposals will require technical, regulatory, programmatic, and financial coordination and support between and among a number of public, private, and potentially non-profit entities. CAP/ADID should lead these coordination efforts.
- » **Operations and Maintenance:** Work with the property owners of the short-listed blah-za candidates to develop a strategy from the outset for plaza operations, programming, and maintenance. Share lessons learned from CAP/ADID efforts in Woodruff Park. Explore ways to share resources and coordinate efforts to ensure that these new additions to Downtown's public realm add variety in terms of character, use, and programming.



## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Implementation Matrix summarizes necessary actions and potential funding sources for each recommendation. Agencies and organizations that should be responsible for leading implementation are also identified. The digital version of the matrix is intended to be a live tool, used and edited in real time, to track progress and changes in the implementation landscape, from new partners and funding sources to shifting priorities and new opportunities.

The Five-Year Action Plan under separate cover provides a more detailed overview of early-action transportation strategies proposed in the Downtown Transportation Plan as well as the ten “Jumpstart” strategies summarized

above, which highlight immediate priority projects of the overall *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*. The Five-Year Action Plan distills the work plan for the planning partners for the next five years.

With the plan now complete, our collective efforts at the Downtown Atlanta community must shift – embracing this new action-oriented plan and working with it, actively, to create change.

**THANK YOU**, again, to the thousands of Downtown champions who helped shape the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan*. Now it's time to get to work making Downtown the best downtown it can be!

# I MAINTAIN FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES TO HUMANIZE DOWNTOWN

## I.1 CONTINUE TO KEEP DOWNTOWN CLEAN AND SAFE

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Target street lighting improvements to support street life</b>	planning, fundraising, installation	<3 years	City of Atlanta, ADID	CAP/ADID and City of Atlanta	Institutions
	<b>Encourage building owners to install façade lighting</b>	coordination, design assistance, policy change	<3 years	Property owners, ADID, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	APD, property owners, City of Atlanta
	<b>Install functional and artful lighting to brighten the underpasses</b>	planning, fundraising, design, installation	< 6 years	Philanthropy, City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID	GDOT, City of Atlanta, Georgia State University, Sweet Auburn, Edgewood Avenue businesses
	<b>Work with surrounding commercial areas within Downtown to consider expansion of the ADID</b>	coordination	ongoing	--	CAP/ADID	Property and business owners, institutions, ADNA, Castleberry Hill, Old Fourth Ward, Sweet Auburn, Grant Park
	<b>Execute community-informed event management</b>	coordination, policy change	< 3 years	--	Edgewood Avenue businesses	CAP/ADID, APD, City of Atlanta
	<b>Use zero waste events to reduce trash and change habits Downtown</b>	planning, marketing	<3 years	City of Atlanta, ADID, private dollars	CAP/ADID	local institutions, City of Atlanta, Keep Atlanta Beautiful, ABBC, neighborhood associations
	<b>Launch a Best Block contest</b>	planning, marketing	<3 years	private donations, City of Atlanta	Center for Civic Innovation (tentative)	CAP/ADID, neighborhood associations, property owners

**I MAINTAIN FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES TO HUMANIZE DOWNTOWN**

**I.2 SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS DOWNTOWN**

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Support the Continuum of Care’s efforts to integrate services and reduce homelessness</b>	coordination, advocacy, policy change	<3 years	--	Continuum of Care	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, service providers
	<b>Create a regular blog series featuring stories of people experiencing homelessness</b>	advocacy, marketing, education	<3 years	Philanthropy, ADID	Continuum of Care	The River ATL, service providers, CAP/ADID
	<b>Build public spaces that are hospitable to all</b>	design assistance, fundraising, installation	<6 years	City of Atlanta, philanthropy, private dollars	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID,APD
	<b>Continue efforts that puts people transitioning out of homelessness to work Downtown</b>	planning, fundraising, training	<6 years	Philanthropy, ADID	Continuum of Care	CAP/ADID, First Step Staffing, service providers

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE TO ENSURE THAT NEW GROWTH DOES NOT OVERWRITE OUR HISTORY

### 2.1 CONNECT THE DOTS OF DOWNTOWN'S UNIQUE AMENITIES

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Enhance and expand the wayfinding system</b>	coordination, design, installation	<3 years	ATL Arts & Entertainment District, ADID, philanthropy, private donations	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, property owners, Downtown destinations, Centennial Park District
	<b>Integrate public art to highlight hidden and smaller spaces</b>	coordination, design, installation	ongoing	ArtPlace, philanthropy, City of Atlanta	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	C4, City of Atlanta, Eyedrum, Georgia State, Goat Farm Arts Center, MARTA, Murmur, Office of Cultural Affairs
	<b>Create and market linear experiences Downtown</b>	coordination, design, installation	<3 years	ACVB, hotels, Downtown destinations, sponsorship	CAP/ADID	ACVB, Atlanta Movie Tours, hotels, Downtown destination, Office of Cultural Affairs, Centennial Park District
	<b>Develop new opportunities to interact and bring Downtown's history to life</b>	coordination, design, marketing	<6 years	ArtPlace, philanthropy, City of Atlanta	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	City of Atlanta, Georgia State, MARTA, Office of Cultural Affairs, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta Preservation Center, Sweet Auburn Works

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE TO ENSURE THAT NEW GROWTH DOES NOT OVERWRITE OUR HISTORY

### 2.2 TELL DOWNTOWN'S OVERLOOKED AND UNTOLD STORIES

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Target public art to highlight untold stories</b>	coordination, design, installation	<6 years	ArtPlace, philanthropy, City of Atlanta, ATL Arts & Entertainment District	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	C4, City of Atlanta, Eyedrum, Georgia State, Goat Farm Arts Center, MARTA, Murmur, Office of Cultural Affairs
	<b>Develop a Downtown storytelling app</b>	coordination, app design, marketing	<6 years	ArtPlace, philanthropy, City of Atlanta, sponsorship	Center for Civic Innovation (tentative)	CAP/ADID, hotels, Downtown destinations, Office of Cultural Affairs, StoryCorp, Sweet Auburn Works
	<b>Use special events and tours</b>	coordination, event planning, marketing	ongoing	City of Atlanta, donations, philanthropy, sponsorship	CAP/ADID	Elevate, Open House, Atlanta Preservation Center, Downtown businesses and destinations, ACVB
	<b>Develop a crowdsourced project</b>	coordination, marketing, curating, fundraising	<6 years	ArtPlace, philanthropy, City of Atlanta	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	CAP/ADID, Downtown stakeholders

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE TO ENSURE THAT NEW GROWTH DOES NOT OVERWRITE OUR HISTORY

### 2.3 CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S CREATIVITY

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Undertake a cultural plan for Downtown</b>	coordination, planning	<3 years	City of Atlanta, ARC, philanthropy, ADID	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, ATL Arts & Entertainment District, arts organizations
	<b>Activate underutilized ground floor spaces with art and active cultural or creative uses</b>	program design, fundraising, marketing	<6 years	Invest Atlanta, developers, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	Invest Atlanta, developers, C4, City of Atlanta, Eyedrum, Georgia State, Goat Farm Arts Center, Murmur, Office of Cultural Affairs, property managers
	<b>Market the arts with targeted programming and a guide to creative events Downtown</b>	marketing, event planning	<3 years	City of Atlanta, donations, sponsorship, ATL Arts & Entertainment District	CAP/ADID	ACVB, Creative Loafing, Atlanta Plant/ARC, Office of Cultural Affairs
	<b>Focus the efforts of the Atlanta Arts and Entertainment District to convene and promote arts organizations Downtown and coordinate their advocacy and investments</b>	coordination, advocacy	<3 years	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	ATL Arts & Entertainment District	CAP/ADID, C4, City of Atlanta, Eyedrum, Georgia State, Goat Farm Arts Center, Murmur, Office of Cultural Affairs, ARC

## 2 UNCOVER, CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S HERITAGE TO ENSURE THAT NEW GROWTH DOES NOT OVERWRITE OUR HISTORY

### 2.4 PRESERVE DOWNTOWN'S BUILT HERITAGE

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Complete a survey of all existing buildings, streets, and infrastructure - Downtown to identify what is eligible for Landmark status or other designations</b>	surveying	<3 years	City of Atlanta, State of Georgia	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, Atlanta Preservation Center, Georgia Historic Preservation Division
	<b>Work with the City to enact a temporary moratorium or evaluation period for demolitions Downtown</b>	policy	<3 years	--	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID
	<b>Maintain a list of older structures or blocks under threat of redevelopment and demolition</b>	data tracking, marketing	<3 years	--	Center for Civic Innovation	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, Atlanta Preservation Center, Georgia Historic Preservation Division
	<b>Establish a diverse Downtown preservation task force</b>	coordination, advocacy	<3 years	--	Center for Civic Innovation	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, Atlanta Preservation Center, Georgia Historic Preservation Division

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.1 REINFORCE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF EACH DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>CASTLEBERRY HILL</b> Better connections to Downtown including reopening the Nelson Street Bridge, wider sidewalks, more open space, and outdoor seating, better pedestrian safety	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Castleberry Hill Neighborhood Association	City of Atlanta District 3 office, CAP/ADID, developers, stadium, GDOT, NPUI neighborhoods
	<b>CENTENNIAL OLYMPIC PARK</b> Improve streets and add more retail and activities, add new housing, “focus on residents” but don’t forget about the tourists	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	ADNA with Centennial Park District	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, ACVB, hotels, GWCC, Downtown attractions
	<b>CENTENNIAL PLACE</b> Improve perceptions of public safety, address local homelessness, add more retail options for residents, retain affordable housing	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	AHA	ADNA, Georgia Tech, GWCC, City of Atlanta, Continuum of Care, Marietta Street Artery Association, property owners
	<b>SOUTH OF NORTH (SoNo)</b> Continue to strengthen connections between Downtown and Midtown by advancing the Stitch vision plan and repurposing the beautiful building at Peachtree and Pine, formerly a shelter, with a new mix of active and cultural uses, Integrate new park space and improve stormwater management, Encourage infill development to better connect west to east, Redevelop the Atlanta Civic Center	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Fourth Ward West	ADNA, CAP/ADID, Midtown Alliance, MARTA, Emory Hospital, City of Atlanta, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Shakespeare Tavern, Southface, property owners

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.1 REINFORCE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF EACH DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>FAIRLIE-POPLAR</b> Focus on walkability and better pedestrian spaces, Add more housing. Provide more services and retail options, Build upon the concentration of arts and culture venues in the district, Protect the resources of the National Register Historic District	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	ADNA	CAP/ADID, MARTA, Georgia State, City of Atlanta, Central Library
	<b>GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY</b> More housing options that are affordable to the student population, Better and safer connections to the rest of Downtown, Improved bicycle network, Introduce more greening, Calm traffic	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Georgia State University	ADNA, City of Atlanta, GDOT, GBA, hotels, Grady Hospital
	<b>MEMORIAL DRIVE/GRANT PARK</b> Continue to promote the goals of the SPI-22 zoning regulations. Encourage resident-serving retail, Improve pedestrian connections - particularly the Memorial Greenway - to other parts of Downtown and to Oakland Cemetery, both a local and regional destination, Improve pedestrian safety by slowing down traffic and creating safe connections to Downtown, Retain a mix of incomes	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Memorial Drive Atlanta Initiative	CAP/ADID, GDOT, Invest Atlanta, City of Atlanta, Grant Park Neighborhood Association, AHA
	<b>OLD FOURTH WARD</b> Maintain a mix of incomes, Add more greening including street trees, Advocate for Streetcar connections to Downtown and Midtown	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Fourth Ward West	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, Fourth Ward Neighbors, Fourth Ward Alliance, Fourth and SAND, O4WBA, Sweet Auburn Works, BeltLine, MARTA, property owners

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.1 REINFORCE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF EACH DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<p><b>SOUTH DOWNTOWN</b>                      More housing and more retail, restaurants, bars, galleries, and services, Retain affordable housing and space for artists, Improve public spaces and parks, Address safety concerns in the area, Better streets and wayfinding, Transparent public process as major developments proceed</p>	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Center for Civic Innovation	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, arts organizations, ADNA, federal government, county government, property owners
	<p><b>SWEET AUBURN</b>                      Preserve the unique history of Auburn Avenue, Foster a well-managed entertainment district along Edgewood Avenue, Improve the sidewalks, Infill retail along Auburn and Edgewood, Develop joint solutions to common problems like parking, Protect and expand affordable housing</p>	coordination, advocacy, fundraising, design, implementation	TBD with each community organization and their partners	varies based on specific improvement	Sweet Auburn Works	HDDC, CAP/ADID, Edgewood Avenue businesses, OFWBA, City of Atlanta, Fourth and SAND, Fourth Ward Neighbors, Fourth Ward Alliance, Georgia State

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.2 INVEST TO CREATE A CONNECTED, DENSE “RESIDENTIAL BACKBONE” IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Unlock development sites by pushing forward with a district parking approach</b>	advocacy, policy, land assembly, redevelopment	<6 years	City of Atlanta, ARC, Invest Atlanta	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta property owners, parking operators, lenders, developers
	<b>Encourage micro-units &amp; townhomes for both rental and homeownership</b>	education	<3 years	CAP/ADID	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, Center for Civic Innovation, universities, realtors, AHA, developers
	<b>Explore employee assisted housing options</b>	advocacy, coordination, program design	<6 years	major employers, institutions, ARC	CAP/ADID	major employers, institutions, ARC, Invest Atlanta
	<b>Evaluate and increase awareness about existing incentives for historic preservation</b>	advocacy, coordination, education	<3 years	--	Atlanta Preservation Center	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, Atlanta Preservation Center, Georgia Historic Preservation Division
	<b>Continue to expand student housing Downtown</b>	coordination, development	ongoing	universities, private equity	Georgia State	nearby universities, City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, developers

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.3 RE-IMAGINE CRITICAL SITES

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Atlanta Civic Center</b>	coordination, design, engagement, development	<3 years	City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, Fourth Ward West, Fourth Ward Alliance, developers, Southface
	<b>The Stitch</b>	feasibility, engineering, design, development	<10 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT, MARTA, philanthropy, private equity	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, GDOT, MARTA, Fourth Ward West, ADNA, developers, property owners, St. Luke's, Emory Hospital, federal government
	<b>The Railroad Gulch</b>	design and planning, land acquisition, engagement, development	<10 years	private equity, City of Atlanta	Developers	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, ADNA, Philips Arena, GWCCA, federal government
	<b>Underground Atlanta</b>	design and planning, engagement, development	<6 years	private equity, City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta	Developers	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, Center for Civic Innovation, ADNA

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.4 PROVIDE HOUSING OPTIONS TO RETAIN A MIX OF AGES & INCOMES DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Establish a goal that 20% of housing Downtown will be affordable for a range of low-income households</b>	advocacy, policy	<3 years	--	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, AHA, Invest Atlanta, developers
	<b>Ensure protection of existing income-restricted units</b>	fundraising	ongoing	LIHTC, Invest Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, AHA, developers, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Invest Atlanta, Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Enterprise Community Partners
	<b>Target rehabilitation work to protect low-to-moderate income homeowners in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods</b>	marketing, enrollment, rehabilitation	<6 years	City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, Invest Atlanta, NPU, Enterprise Community Partners
	<b>Help to educate landlords about the Housing Choice Voucher Program</b>	education, coordination	<3 years		AHA	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, landlords
	<b>Create housing opportunities for the “missing middle,” in terms of household income</b>	coordination, advocacy, land assembly	<6 years		City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, developers, Invest Atlanta
	<b>Create and regularly convene an “Affordable Housing and Community Retention Task Force” consisting of members of the private, public, and nonprofit sectors to create a comprehensive, affordable housing action plan</b>	coordination	<3 years	philanthropy	Representatives from public, private, and philanthropic sectors	Invest Atlanta, AHA, CAP/ADID, ULI Atlanta, Foundations, Metro Atlanta Chamber, developers, lenders
	<b>Seek to create a Downtown housing fund dedicated to assisting in the creation of affordable housing</b>	fundraising, program design	<6 years	Invest Atlanta, philanthropy, major employers	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, AHA, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Invest Atlanta, Enterprise Community Partners

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.5 STRENGTHEN RESIDENT TIES DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Form a Downtown Resident Council</b>	coordination	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	Center for Civic Innovation, neighborhood organizations, local Council representatives
	<b>Create an online “front door” for Downtown neighborhoods</b>	data collection, marketing, web design	<3 years	private donations, sponsorship, City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID	Downtown Residents Council	CAP/ADID, neighborhood organizations, property managers, HOAs
	<b>Develop a “Meet Your Neighbors block party” series in residential neighborhoods</b>	event planning, marketing	<3 years	philanthropy, sponsorship, City of Atlanta, neighborhood organizations	Downtown Residents Council	neighborhood organizations, local Council representatives
	<b>Consider a Downtown neighborhood challenge</b>	fundraising, program design	<6 years	philanthropy, major businesses and institutions	CAP/ADID	neighborhood organizations, local Council representatives

### 3 GROW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

#### 3.6 MARKET DOWNTOWN LIVING AND PROMOTE A FAMILY-FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Market the experience of living Downtown with stories from residents</b>	marketing	<3 years	CAP/ADID, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	Downtown Marketing Roundtable members
	<b>Continue to bring key stakeholders Downtown together to coordinate on marketing initiatives</b>	coordination	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	Downtown Marketing Roundtable members
	<b>Expand youth programming and promote Downtown for families</b>	marketing, programming	<3 years	CAP/ADID, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	Downtown Marketing Roundtable members, APS
	<b>Design open spaces with adventure in mind</b>	design, programming	<3 years	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, philanthropy	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, local destinations, sports franchises, local schools
	<b>Create a Centennial Olympic Park circuit</b>	coordination, design, installation	<3 years	City of Atlanta, Downtown destinations, State of Georgia	Centennial Park District	COP, City of Atlanta, World of Coca-Cola, Georgia Aquarium, Center for Civil and Human Rights, College Football Hall of Fame, the Skyview Atlanta ferris wheel, CNN tours, sports franchises

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER OF THE REGION

### 4.1 HELP TO GROW NEW BUSINESSES AND TALENT DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Create strategic partnerships with local universities and hospitals to expand their involvement Downtown and further support the needs of Downtown residents and businesses</b>	coordination, planning, marketing	<6 years	universities, Invest Atlanta, corporate sponsorship	Universities	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, hospitals, Invest Atlanta, SBDC
	<b>Network Downtown start-ups and small businesses</b>	coordination, event planning	<3 years	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID, co-working spaces, Georgia Small Business Development Center	CAP/ADID	co-working spaces, City of Atlanta, Georgia Small Business Development Center, Invest Atlanta
	<b>Expand active engagement programs with universities</b>	coordination, marketing, program management	<6 years	universities, local employers	Universities	CAP/ADID, Downtown employers
	<b>Establish a shared commercial kitchen / food incubator Downtown</b>	fundraising, site assembly, design and implementation	<6 years	Invest Atlanta	Invest Atlanta	CAP/ADID, local restaurateurs, Curb Market
	<b>Build upon the growing television and film industry</b>	coordination	<3 years	State of Georgia, City of Atlanta	Georgia Film Academy	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, local theaters and production houses

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER OF THE REGION

### 4.2 ACTIVATE THE GROUND FLOORS

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Focus retail growth Downtown</b>	policy, planning	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta, developers and property managers
	<b>Encourage alternative ground floor uses</b>	coordination	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, Invest Atlanta
	<b>Provide ground floor activation support services and incentives</b>	program design, fundraising, marketing	<6 years	Invest Atlanta, developers	CAP/ADID	Invest Atlanta, developers
	<b>Help to match potential tenants to available ground floor space</b>	marketing, tenant recruitment and placement	<6 years	Invest Atlanta, developers, Georgia Small Business Development Center	CAP/ADID	Invest Atlanta, developers, property owners, SBDC
	<b>Provide coordinated marketing for small retailers</b>	coordination, marketing	<6 years	Invest Atlanta, CAP/ADID, Georgia Small Business Development Center	CAP/ADID	retailers, Georgia Small Business Development Center
	<b>Work with the City of Atlanta to ease the process for getting permits to start a business</b>	coordination, policy	<3 years	--	City of Atlanta	Invest Atlanta, Georgia Small Business Development Center
	<b>Tweak the codes</b>	policy	<3 years	--	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER OF THE REGION

### 4.3 PROTECT SPACE FOR MAKING THINGS DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Upgrade Whitehall Street for a mix of manufacturing and light industrial space</b>	planning, policy, land assembly, redevelopment	<10 years	Invest Atlanta, private equity	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, Invest Atlanta, property owners, developers, CHNA

## 4 REINFORCE DOWNTOWN'S ROLE AS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ECONOMIC CENTER OF THE REGION

### 4.4 ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO STAY A WHILE

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Work to undertake and promote a range of night events to keep employees in Atlanta a little longer</b>	coordination, event planning, marketing	<3 years	Downtown businesses, employers	Downtown Residents Council	CAP/ADID, businesses
	<b>Launch a Downtown social club</b>	coordination, event planning, marketing	<3 years	Downtown businesses, employers	Downtown Residents Council	CAP/ADID, businesses
	<b>Consider discount deals for local businesses</b>	coordination, program design, marketing	<3 years	Downtown businesses, CAP/ADID, employers	CAP/ADID	businesses, Downtown Residents Council
	<b>Create a Downtown 101 program</b>	coordination, marketing	<3 years	Downtown businesses, CAP/ADID, employers	CAP/ADID	businesses, Downtown Residents Council

## 5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN

### 5.1 BOOST THE TREE CANOPY

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Increase Downtown's tree canopy by planting 10,000 trees</b>	planning, fundraising, education, planting, maintenance	<10 years	City of Atlanta, private donations, institutions, property owners, Canopy Coalition partners	Trees Atlanta	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, property owners, institutions, Canopy Coalition partners
	<b>Support a diverse and healthy urban canopy</b>	planning, fundraising, education, planting, maintenance	<6 years	--	Trees Atlanta	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, property owners, institutions, Canopy Coalition partners
	<b>Plant fruit-producing trees where possible</b>	planning, fundraising, education, planting, maintenance	<6 years	City of Atlanta, private donations, institutions, property owners, Canopy Coalition partners	Trees Atlanta	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, property owners, institutions, Canopy Coalition partners

### 5.2 INTEGRATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Introduce plantings and active landscapes that manage stormwater through Downtown</b>	planning, fundraising, policy, installation	<6 years	City of Atlanta, Stormwater Utility fee, Canopy Coalition partners	Office of Watershed Protection	CAP/ADID, Office of Resilience, property owners, Trees Atlanta, Green Building Alliance, Canopy Coalition partners
	<b>Encourage Green Infrastructure solutions of different types and scales</b>	planning, design, installation	< 6 years	City of Atlanta, Stormwater Utility fee, Canopy Coalition partners	Office of Watershed Protection	CAP/ADID, Office of Resilience, property owners, Trees Atlanta, Green Building Alliance, Canopy Coalition partners

## 5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN

### 5.3 DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO RE-DESIGN “BLAH-ZAS” AS VIBRANT PLAZAS

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>SMALL:</b> Decatur Street - Georgia State	coordination, design, construction	<3	Georgia State, City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID	Georgia State Univ	City of Atlanta Public Works and Planning, CAP/ADID
	<b>MEDIUM:</b> Central Library Entrance / Peachtree Center MARTA Station / Georgia-Pacific Plaza / Margaret Mitchell Square	coordination, design, construction	<6	City of Atlanta, MARTA	CAP/ADID	MARTA, Atlanta-Fulton library system, Friends of The Library, CAP/ADID, property owners
	<b>LARGE:</b> Georgia Plaza Park and Talmadge Square	coordination, design, construction	<6	City of Atlanta, State of Georgia	City of Atlanta	GBA, County, CAP/ADID
	<b>Work with property owners to help upgrade blah-zas on private property</b>	coordination, design, construction	<3	CAP/ADID, private property owners	CAP/ADID	property owners

### 5.4 INTEGRATE PLAY AND ACTIVE GREEN SPACES AT MARTA STATIONS

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Garnett station</b>	coordination, design, construction	<10	City of Atlanta, MARTA	MARTA	CAP/ADID, developers, City of Atlanta
	<b>Five Points station</b>	coordination, design, construction	<6	City of Atlanta, MARTA	MARTA	CAP/ADID, developers, City of Atlanta
	<b>Peachtree Center station</b>	coordination, design, construction	<6	City of Atlanta, MARTA	MARTA	CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, Peachtree Center

**5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN**

**5.5 CREATE GREEN GATEWAYS**

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>AUBURN and EDGEWOOD AVENUES</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<6 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	CAP/ADID	Sweet Auburn Works, O4WBA, Edgewood businesses, City of Atlanta, GDOT
	<b>WEST SIDE</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<3	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT, Trees Atlanta, Office of Watershed Protection, Canopy Coalition partners, GWCCA, Mercedes-Benz Stadium/ Falcons
	<b>I-75/85 CONNECTOR</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<10	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	GDOT, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, CAP/ADID, Trees Atlanta
	<b>INTERNATIONAL BOULEVARD</b>	coordination	<6	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT, Trees Atlanta, hotels
	<b>CENTRAL AVENUE</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<6	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT, Trees Atlanta, State, County
	<b>MEMORIAL DRIVE GREENWAY</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction, site control	ongoing	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, GDOT, Trees Atlanta, State, County

**5.6 INCREASE LINEAR CONNECTIVITY TO CREATE GREEN RIBBONS AROUND THE CITY**

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Upgrade the highways as Downtown's Green Ribbons</b>	planning, advocacy, fundraising	<10 years	GDOT, City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, GDOT, Midtown Alliance, ARC

**5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN**

**5.7 INTEGRATE HEALTH INTO THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE**

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Develop active design city guidelines</b>	planning, policy	< 3 year	hospitals, City of Atlanta, philanthropy	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, hospitals, non-profit advocates
	<b>Partner with Grady, Emory and Mercy Health System to develop visible expressions of preventive care and healthy living</b>	coordination, event planning, design, installation	<6 years	hospitals, City of Atlanta, philanthropy	Hospitals	Georgia State, CAP/ADID, City of Atlanta, ARCHI, ARC
	<b>Organize Downtown health events</b>	coordination, marketing, event planning	<3 years	hospitals, City of Atlanta, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	Georgia State, hospitals, City of Atlanta, ARCHI, ARC
	<b>Develop “health challenges” and designated fitness routes for Downtown businesses</b>	coordination, marketing, event planning	<3 years	hospitals, City of Atlanta, philanthropy	CAP/ADID	Georgia State, hospitals, City of Atlanta, ARCHI, ARC, Downtown businesses
	<b>Increase access to fresh food throughout Downtown</b>	coordination, program design, marketing	<6 years	hospitals, City of Atlanta, philanthropy	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, ARCHI, ARC, MARTA, Curb Market

**5 CREATE A VIBRANT AND ACTIVE URBAN FOREST TO IMPROVE AIR AND WATER QUALITY, CREATE SHADE, IMPROVE HEALTH AND ADD PARKS SPACE DOWNTOWN**

**5.8 DEVELOP WITH A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY**

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Develop a Downtown sustainability action plan</b>	planning, policy, coordination	< 3 years	City of Atlanta, CAP/ADID	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, Green Building Council
	<b>Promote green building and sustainable development practices</b>	policy	<3 years	--	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, Green Building Council, developers
	<b>Reduce energy demand and water usage</b>	advocacy, coordination	ongoing	--	Atlanta Better Building Challenge partners	CAP/ADID, Green Building Council, City of Atlanta, developers

## 6 OFFER REAL CHOICE IN TRANSPORTATION TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILES AND CREATE SPACE FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY

### 6.1 MANAGE DOWNTOWN STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND PARKING FOR SUCCESS

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	Revisit street and sidewalk maintenance standards	coordination, policy	<3 years	City of Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT
	Continue to improve event management	coordination, training	<3 years	City of Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, APD, event venues
	Play a proactive role in managing Downtown parking	planning, coordination, advocacy, policy change	<6 years	City of Atlanta, parking sales tax	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID
	Improve curbside management	planning, coordination, advocacy, policy change, enforcement	<10 years	City of Atlanta	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, APD

### 6.2 DESIGN STREETS ACCORDING TO THEIR PERSONALITIES

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	Pursue the conversion of one-way streets to two-way	planning, coordination, design, construction	<6 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT, ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT, property owners, MARTA, GRTA, Streetcar, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, Downtown employers
	Pilot Shared Streets Downtown	planning, coordination, design, construction	<3 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT, ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT, Newport, property owners

## 6 OFFER REAL CHOICE IN TRANSPORTATION TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILES AND CREATE SPACE FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY

### 6.3 SHIFT HOW PEOPLE COMMUTE AND TRAVEL IN, OUT AND THROUGH DOWNTOWN

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Create a Downtown Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program</b>	planning, coordination, advocacy, policy change	<3 years or <6 years	City of Atlanta, parking sales tax, GDOT,ARC	CAP/ADID	CAP/ADID,ARC, Downtown employers, GRTA, developers
	<b>Improve transit service and experience Downtown</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<3 years	MARTA, GRTA	MARTA	CAP/ADID, GRTA, developers
	<b>Fill the gaps in the region's bicycle network</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<6 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID,Atlanta Bicycle Coalition
	<b>Create new streets and target improvements to key intersections</b>	planning, coordination, design, construction	<6 years	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC	City of Atlanta	CAP/ADID, GDOT

### 6.4 MONITOR AND EVALUATE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Priority Project	Recommendation	What kind of action does this require?	When could this happen? (<3 years, < 6 years, < 10 years)	What are potential funding sources?	Who will lead this?	Who are the key partners?
	<b>Maintain a comprehensive project list</b>	administration	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC
	<b>Use this plan's criteria to evaluate current and future transportation investments</b>	administration, coordination	<3 years	--	CAP/ADID	City of Atlanta, GDOT,ARC

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## CITY OF ATLANTA

**Mayor Kasim Reed**

**Commissioner Tim Keane**, Department of City Planning

**Commissioner William Johnson**, Department of Public Works

*As well as many dedicated staff from:*

- The Department of City Planning
  - : Office of Design – Historic Preservation
  - : Office of Zoning & Development
  - : Office of Mobility Planning
  - : Office of Housing & Community Development
- The Department of Public Works
  - : Office of Transportation
- The Department of Watershed Management
- The Department of Parks and Recreation
- The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
- The Mayor's Office of Resilience
- Invest Atlanta
- Renew Atlanta
- The Continuum of Care
- Atlanta Police Department

## ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL

*We appreciate the support of Atlanta City Council led by Council President*

*Cesar Mitchell and provide special thanks to the Atlanta City Council representatives for Downtown:*

**Councilwoman Carla Smith**, District 1

**Councilman Kwanza Hall**, District 2

**Councilman Ivory Lee Young, Jr.**, District 3

**Councilwoman Cleta Winslow**, District 4

**Councilwoman Natalyn Mosby Archibong**, District 5

**Councilwoman Joyce Sheperd**, District 12

## ATLANTA DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CENTRAL ATLANTA PROGRESS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

*Thank you to the Steering Committee members tasked with overseeing the plan's development:*

**Harry Anderson**, The Coca-Cola Company  
**Jerry Banks**, The Dilweg Companies  
**Renay Blumenthal**, Grady Health System  
**Mario Cambardella**, City of Atlanta  
**Mike Alexander**, Atlanta Regional Commission  
**Greg Avitable**, AmericasMart  
**Kevin Duvall**, Georgia World Congress Center  
**Steve Fanczi**, Georgia Building Authority  
**Frank Fernandez**, Arthur M. Blank Foundation  
**Jennifer Fine**, Invest Atlanta  
**Greg Floyd**, MARTA  
**Steve Foster**, Georgia Power  
**Bruce Gallman**, Gallman Development Group  
**Lisa Harris**, Turner  
**Kerry Heyward**, Georgia State University  
**Russell Jacobs**, The World of Coca-Cola  
**Craig Jones**, ADID Board Chair  
**Tim Keane**, City of Atlanta, Department of City Planning  
**Kyle Kessler**, Center for Civic Innovation  
**David Lee**, Philips Arena / Atlanta Hawks  
**David Marvin**, Legacy Properties  
**John McColl**, Cousins Properties, Inc.  
**Arun Nijhawan**, Lucor Resources  
**Lynne O'Brien**, The Coca-Cola Company  
**Jerry Rackliffe**, Georgia State University  
**Steve Stancil**, Georgia Building Authority  
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**Stephanie Stuckey**, City of Atlanta, Office of Resilience  
**James Talley**, Atlanta Housing Authority  
**Scott Taylor**, Carter  
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**Councilwoman Clea Winslow**, Atlanta City Council, District 4  
**Councilman Ivory Lee Young, Jr.**, Atlanta City Council, District 3

## DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN WORKING GROUP

*Thank you to the Working Group members who met nearly every month for a year, serving as a sounding board for the consultant team during each step of the planning process:*

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**Scott DeMyer**, Colliers International  
**Katherine Dirga**, MARTA  
**Ellen Dunham-Jones**, Georgia Tech College of Design  
**Kip Dunlap**, Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association  
**Amanda Dyson**, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**Steve Foster**, Georgia Power  
**Stacy Funderburke**, The Conservation Fund  
**Eric Ganther**, Nelson/Nygaard, formerly of The Coca-Cola Company  
**Emily Giordano**, City of Atlanta Office of Housing & Community Development  
**Greg Giuffrida**, Memorial Drive Corridor  
**Michael Halicki**, Park Pride  
**David Hamilton**, Praxis3 Architects and Atlanta Architecture and Design Center  
**Mary Ann Hearn**, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**Jessyca Holland**, C4  
**Kyle Kessler**, Center for Civic Innovation  
**Jessica Lavandier**, City of Atlanta Office of Zoning & Community Development  
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**Max Mandelis**, Transwestern  
**Johnny Martinez**, Joystick/Georgia Beer Garden  
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**Sonia Sequeria**, Flatiron City  
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**LeJuano Varnell**, Sweet Auburn Works  
**Dave Wardell**, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District  
**Kathryne Wilhoite**, Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

# AND THANK YOU

to everyone who contributed to the *Downtown Atlanta Master Plan* by taking a survey, participating in an interview or small group discussion, sharing a vision for the future at an open house, attending a public meeting, or otherwise giving of your time and ideas. Thousands of local voices helped shape this plan – those of Downtown neighbors, employees, businesses, artists, community organizations, institutions, students, visitors, grassroots activists, City staff and elected leaders, among others. The plan—and Downtown itself—are richer for your commitment to Downtown Atlanta.

## CENTRAL ATLANTA PROGRESS / ATLANTA DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT PLANNING TEAM

**A.J. Robinson**, President  
**Jennifer Ball**, Vice President, Planning and Economic Development  
**Wesley Brown**, Senior Project Manager, Planning and Capital Improvements  
**George Chidi**, Social Impact Director  
**Kailor Gordy**, Program Manager  
**Brigitte Graham**, Transit Sales Manager  
**Alena Green**, Project Manager, Economic Development  
**Greg Giuffrida**, Memorial Drive Corridor Executive  
**Per Johnson**, Intern  
**Jennifer Johnson**, Intern  
**Angie Laurie**, formerly Vice President, Transportation  
**Audrey Leous**, Project Manager, Planning & Urban Design  
**Wilma Sothern**, Vice President, Marketing  
**Paige Sullivan**, Marketing Manager  
**Deon Villasencio**, Event Coordination  
**Dave Wardell**, Vice President, Operations & Public Safety  
**Emily Yerke**, Membership & Development Manager

## CONSULTANT TEAM

### DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN

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Mindy Watts

**Stoss Landscape Urbanism** – Landscape & Ecology

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Amy Whitesides

### DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**Kimley-Horn & Associates** – Transportation Planning

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**Nelson\Nygaard** – Transportation Policy

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**Sycamore Consulting** – Outreach

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**APD Urban Planning and Management** – Planning

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### DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE MARKET STUDY

**Bleakly Advisory Group** – Market Analysis

Kenneth Bleakly, Jr.  
Geoff Koski



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

**ABBC:** Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge  
**ACVB:** Atlanta Convention And Visitors Bureau  
**ADID:** Atlanta Downtown Improvement District  
**ADNA:** Atlanta Downtown Neighborhood Association  
**AHA:** Atlanta Housing Authority  
**APD:** Atlanta Police Department  
**ARC:** Atlanta Regional Commission  
**ARCHI:** Atlanta Regional Collaborative For Health Improvement  
**ATP:** Atlanta Transportation Plan  
**CAP:** Central Atlanta Progress  
**CDP:** Comprehensive Development Plan  
**CHNA:** Community Health Needs Assessment  
**CREW:** Commercial Real Estate Women  
**DTP:** Downtown Transportation Plan  
**GBA:** Georgia Building Authority  
**GDOT:** Georgia Department Of Transportation  
**GRTA:** Georgia Regional Transportation Authority  
**GWCC:** Georgia World Congress Center  
**GWCCA:** Georgia World Congress Center Authority  
**HDCC:** Historic District Development Corporation  
**HOA:** Homeowner Association  
**LCI:** Livable Centers Initiative  
**LIHTC:** Low-Income Housing Tax Credit  
**MARTA:** Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority  
**MUTCD:** Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices  
**NPU:** Neighborhood Planning Unit  
**O4WBA:** Old Fourth Ward Business Association  
**SAND:** South Atlantans For Neighborhood Development  
**SBDC:** Small Business Development Center  
**SoNo:** South of North Neighborhood  
**T-SPLOST:** Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax  
**TAD:** Tax Allocation District  
**TEP:** Technology Enterprise Park  
**ULI:** Urban Land Institute  
**URA:** Urban Redevelopment Area



Man in teal shirt looking at phone

PIZZA ROS PASTA LASAGNA CALZONE

Man Step Cool Off w/ our Iced Tea



NO PARKING

801-8997

DISTRICT

Diverse  
and  
Inclusive

Flavor

LUSH  
HEALTHY  
green

FUN

Home

WALKABLE  
&  
BIKEABLE

**GROWTH**  
balanced with  
**Preservation**

Artsy  
and  
Creative

MASTER  
PLAN  
VISION

transit  
friendly

Heartbeat  
of the City

LUSH  
HEALTHY  
green



EQUITABLE

Full of  
Local  
Flavor

DOWNTOWN  
ATLANTA  
2030

Cultural  
Epicent

transit  
friendly

Heartbeat  
of the City

BUSTLING  
BUSINESS  
DISTRICT

DESTINATION

Diverse  
and  
Inclusive

LUSH  
HEALTHY  
green

Cultural

WALKABLE  
&

**GROWTH**