ATLANTA ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT: A NEW MEDIA & ACTIVATION DISTRICT FOR DOWNTOWN

WHAT IS IT?
The Atlanta Arts & Entertainment District creates both new, creatively and innovatively regulated advertising sign rights for private property owners and a platform that will power new public space programming in Downtown Atlanta. The new outdoor media and programs will:

• Support Downtown as the preferred diverse and active market place for commerce and entertainment
• Create light, vitality and activity through multimedia signage and District-funded arts and culture programming
• Support commercial investment and enhance public gathering spaces
• Provide a marketing platform that helps make Atlanta a premier host city.

At its core, the District is a neighborhood activation and economic development project for Downtown Atlanta that is powered by non-traditional outdoor media with the ultimate District goal of enlivening the core of the city through interactive, immersive and experimental arts and culture events and experiences.

As the physical and symbolic center of the city and the region, Downtown must continue to grow and evolve as the preferred dense, diverse and active market place for commerce and entertainment. Digital signage and media, managed in a coordinated way, can play a significant role in supporting this desired activity and defining Atlanta’s culture and brand.

WHAT WILL THE DISTRICT DO?
The Atlanta Arts & Entertainment District will

• Permit new and upgraded outdoor advertising signs consistent with the goals and aesthetic guidelines of the Atlanta City Council adopted Sign Plan.
• Authentically reflect the vibrancy, diversity and creativity of the City as a whole by activating Downtown streets and public spaces by hosting events and programs using the enhanced signage as the venue and leveraging the talents of Atlanta’s diverse and thriving music, art and sports culture.
• Help overcome the public’s general perception that Downtown lacks “things to do,” is uninteresting, and is dark and un-safe by increasing nighttime activity through bright, programmed signs and art and entertainment special events that are supported and financed by the District.
• Stimulate currently blank walls on buildings and parking decks in Downtown utilizing innovative, creative and engaging media techniques.
• Enable the delivery of a unified look and feel via a media “clean zone” to support large special events. Further, the new and coordinated media assets will be leveraged to position Atlanta as a premier location to host national and international events.
• Increase economic activity, including real estate investment, in Downtown by providing new revenue potential for projects that create interesting spaces with things to do and digital media components.
WHERE IS IT?
The District geography is in the core of the center city, bounded generally to the west by Northside Drive; to the north by Ivan Allen Jr. Boulevard; to the east by Interstate 75/85 and Courtland Street; and to the south by Trinity Avenue. The District surrounds existing event destinations and public gathering places, including Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Centennial Olympic Park and Philips Arena, as well as other surrounding venues, hotels and restaurant locations. The District encompasses portions of the Downtown Atlanta, Castleberry Hill and Vine City neighborhoods.

HOW WILL THE DISTRICT BE REGULATED?
Atlanta City Council adopted policy legislation that established the District’s goals, location and aesthetic guidelines. This policy will guide the implementation and operations of the District’s sign permitting. In particular, a Sign Plan was adopted into the City of Atlanta Zoning Code Sign Ordinance that describes the supplemental types and amount of signage allowed in the District in order to:

1) Facilitate the creation and recognition of a unique arts and entertainment District that highlights Atlanta’s cultural attractions and supports Atlanta through tourism, economic development and City based branding;

2) Provide a higher standard of visual interest through quality sign design and artistic context by giving flexibility in the size, type and location of signs – and discouraging typical, standard ‘billboard’ outdoor signage - within the District in recognition of the economic development purpose that is best met by a managed process;

3) Establish the guiding principles of ensuring non-standard signage; media that is concentrated, assembled and mixed; and installations that are oriented to the street;

4) Ensure the aesthetic and architectural compatibility of signage with the building upon which the sign is to be displayed using building mass and orientation in the placement of the sign so as to define and place strong visual emphasis on the street and other important public open spaces; enliven building facades so as to add interest, scale and three-dimensional quality;

5) Generate light and activity Downtown while using a managed process to mitigate possible adverse impacts of large format sign installations on surrounding locations and structures;

6) Limit the total number of sign locations to a total of 25.

WHO IS INVOLVED?
The District is managed by the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, a community improvement district that provides governmental services on behalf of Downtown property owners as a private 501(c)(3) corporation.

An Advisory Committee is being created that is comprised of 12 individuals that represent the diversity of the residential, business, entertainment, culture and arts community of the District.

The District self-funds its management and programming through revenue sharing agreements with the media companies within the District.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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