WELCOME!
TO THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE
We’ve already started talking with people about Downtown’s opportunities.
The first public event in the fall focused on transportation.
This Open House is an opportunity to learn from you about what the future of Downtown should be.
“DOWNTOWN” is defined here as a large, 4 square mile area. It includes the traditional Downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.
WHY DO WE NEED A DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN NOW?
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.

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.

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.
HERE ARE A FEW THINGS WE’VE LEARNED ABOUT DOWNTOWN...
LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING
TRACES OF DOWNTOWN’S PAST ARE ALWAYS VISIBLE
JUST DIG A LITTLE AND YOU CAN SEE THE LAYERS THAT MAKE DOWNTOWN WHAT IT IS TODAY
DOWNTOWN’S LOCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNIQUE

EASTERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
DOWNTOWN’S LOCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNIQUE

DOWNTOWN WAS THE CONFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT INDIAN TRAILS
DOWNTOWN’S LOCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNIQUE
AND LATER...THE RAILROADS DEFINED DOWNTOWN AND THE CITY
DOWNTOWN’S LOCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNIQUE

RAILROADS FUELED THE GROWTH OF THE CITY
The City was then called TERMINUS due to the confluence of rail lines coming together Downtown. The City’s name was later changed to ATLANTA after incorporation in the 1840s.
DOWNTOWN Atlanta as a “crossroads”
Despite burning to the ground in the Civil War, Atlanta rebounded.
Early 1900s

Downtown became a center for major events...
...and as the center of Atlanta, Downtown played a central role in the Civil Rights movement. Downtown’s future must continue to connect to its past.
AS RAILROADS GIVE WAY TO THE CAR...

...THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CHANGED TO SUIT IT
CARS DEMAND A LOT OF SPACE
ROADS ARE WIDENED ONLY TO FILL UP AGAIN

What a Difference...  ...Nine Years Make

Traffic headed to the suburbs in 1980 fills the northbound lanes of the six-lane Downtown Connector. Expansion of the freeway system was begun soon after it was completed in 1976. Near the same spot last week, motorists found plenty of lanes and free-flowing traffic on the newly widened connector. But officials expect a return to bumper-to-bumper traffic by 1990.
THAT’S A LOT OF CHANGE... FROM CROSSROADS TO DESTRUCTION TO REBIRTH AND NOW A GROWING REGION WITH DOWNTOWN AT THE HEART
AND TODAY, DOWNTOWN IS ADAPTING AGAIN

With a focus on transit, infrastructure…
...and walkable streets
Downtown reflects the City’s history, culture and food...
...has emerged as a creative center...
...and, of course, remains a center for business and entertainment.
WHAT'S UNDER CONSTRUCTION, or planned? AND MORE GROWTH IS ON THE HORIZON.

Depending on how optimistic you are, Downtown could add between 8,500 and 20,000 new residents and between 19,000 and 38,000 new jobs in the next 15 years.
DOWNTOWN
TODAY
WHO LIVES DOWNTOWN?

About **26,500** people

51% of Downtown residents identify as Black/African American; 39% identify as White.

Downtown’s Median Household Income is **81%** of the city average, or $35,670.

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group Market Analysis
We can’t forget ALL OF THE VISITORS

Downtown has 11,500 rooms currently and 2,150 additional rooms planned; in 2016, occupancy averaged 72%* or more than 8,000 guests per night

* Source: Bleakly Advisory Group Market Analysis
Downtown benefits from **LOTS OF JOBS**

Downtown is home to 152,500 jobs; ~¼ are in government/public administration

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group Market Analysis
Only 1.3% of Downtown employees live and work Downtown; the rest commute, mostly by single-occupancy vehicle. Source: Bleakly Advisory Group
WE’VE INTERVIEWED OVER 200 PEOPLE (so far) AND A FEW THEMES KEEP COMING UP THAT THIS PLAN NEEDS TO ADDRESS
“WE NEED TO CHANGE THE NARRATIVE” ABOUT DOWNTOWN

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

“It’s not just about the car. How can we use transportation infrastructure to create places where we want to be?”
Too often, Downtown is perceived as “unsafe” despite the facts that crime has declined and the majority of crime is related to car break-ins.
Ambassadors help people feel safe

“The most common request for help? CAR HUNTING.”

There are 95,000 parking spaces Downtown yet only 30 cars are broken into per week… This is down from 210 ten years ago

“Panhandling is the biggest threat to economic development.”
The areas surrounding Downtown are improving. How can we connect to that growth, capitalize on it, and remain relevant?
THERE IS A LOT OF INVESTMENT DOWNTOWN

$2B in investment under construction, $2.4B in investment planned
BUT, OTHER AREAS OUTPACE DOWNTOWN FOR RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
“Millennials flock to Downtown, but there’s not that much housing. We need more housing here to support more car-free lifestyles.”
Lots of people nearby but few in the core of Downtown

There are about 26,500 people Downtown (including ~5,200 students in dorms). The core of Downtown represents about 18% of the total population.
And there is room for change...

Here are opportunities for physical change Downtown
...BUT IT WILL REQUIRE RETHINKING PARKING

How it’s managed, where it is, and how to make it easier for those who would choose not to drive if they wanted to walk, bike or take transit.

“Property owners make so much money on parking, so they hold on… and their asking prices are deal-killers.”
DOWNTOWN NEEDS A “HIERARCHY OF STREETS”

Not every street can look and feel like this
In fact, a lot look like this – wide and not really friendly for walking
Imagine improving some streets to provide these kinds of spaces
This is part of the problem:

Ground floor retail is often scattered leaving too many gaps
SO, IN FACT, DOWNTOWN HAS MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

Some streets serve the car...

...others are more walkable.
DOWNTOWN NEEDS MORE “STREET ACTIVITY”
Places that can bring people together
We want everyone this happy Downtown
BUT TOO MANY SPACES LEAVE “DEAD ZONES” NEXT TO THE STREET
Here are a few examples
Blank wall
“Plinth”
“Office campus”
“Plaza”
What if these under-used spaces were more active and engaging?
With active programming that brings families to Downtown…
Ultimately making Downtown more livable
Ultimately making Downtown more livable
And don’t forget that streets are opportunities for gathering as well.
DOWNTOWN IS "TRANSIT RICH... ...BUT NOT TRANSIT FRIENDLY"
“Transit friendly” is about tackling spaces like this so they are welcoming for all riders.
And there have been good ideas to address this issue – here’s a soccer field at the Five Points Station.
BUT DOWNTOWN HAS A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO “CREATE MORE PARKS AND GREEN SPACE”
The desired number is **20 ACRES** of parkland per 1,000 residents in cities*

During the day, Atlanta has **7 ACRES** of parkland per 1,000 residents

*Source: National Recreation and Parks Association*
Here are the existing parks
Parks Downtown come in different varieties and serve different needs.
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We need a renewed approach to landscape

We should look to upgrade existing parks and create new open spaces that serve many functions

Example - let’s bring the forest back to the city… Yeah, the red means 0% tree coverage…most of Downtown
But we also need to address stormwater
How do we do this? We look for opportunities to design spaces that clean water
We look for ways to integrate trees and help COOL THE CITY...
...Integrate opportunities to produce food...
...and we can’t forget about the highways.
Highways can be opportunities to reduce carbon in the air through landscape.
But in everything we do, **DOWNTOWN MUST REMAIN “TRUE TO ITSELF”**

We need to “PRESERVE & REUSE” and build upon what makes Downtown unique

“We can’t afford to lose any more of our historic buildings.”
We also need to **FOCUS ON THE “BASICS”**

Atlanta is great at big ideas, don’t forget the day-to-day experience of Downtown!
BUT “DON’T OVER-POLISH EITHER”

“Retain Downtown’s creativity and diversity”

Downtown is the only dense, gritty urban context.”
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WE NEED YOUR HELP!

THIS OPEN HOUSE IS DESIGNED TO HEAR FROM YOU

DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE

WELCOME TO THE RIALTO CENTER FOR THE ARTS!

1. Welcome and Sign In
2. Learn about Downtown Atlanta
3. One Wish for Downtown
4. Collaborative Map
5. Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down
6. Postcard from the Future
7. Design Your Own Street
8. Open Space Opportunities
9. Brainstorm
10. Survey

FORSYTH ST

LUCKIE ST

FOLLOW THE NUMBERS AROUND THE EXHIBIT
Anyone wearing one of these can answer your questions
THANK YOU AND PLEASE ENJOY!