



Reconnecting Sweet Auburn Strategy



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Project Scope and Goals

- Recognizing the national funding context around mitigating the harm caused by interstates, prepare a **strategy and implementation guide** to “reconnect” Sweet Auburn where it was divided by the Downtown Connector
- Strategy must be rooted in **significant public and stakeholder engagement**
- Work should consider the transportation and access **realities of the neighborhood** – both the Connector and the Atlanta Streetcar are significant pieces of public infrastructure influencing the possibilities at this location
- Action plan should develop a long-term while also emphasizing short-term actions



Project Partners and Funding

- ADID serving as project manager and contracting entity
- ADID will work collaboratively with Sweet Auburn Works
- Funding is provided by a grant from the Invest Atlanta Eastside Tax Allocation District



CAP + ADID

Working side by side CAP and ADID will continually grow the economic prosperity, elevate the quality of life and improve the image of Downtown Atlanta for businesses and the broader community.

ADID Funding

ADID is a 501 (c)(3) public-private partnership funded via annual property assessments approved by the Board (currently 5 mils) on commercial properties, plus grants and contributions

ADID Governance

Nine-member Board of Directors, six of whom are elected by Downtown commercial property owners; two additional directors are appointed by the Mayor and City Council President; one additional director is the Councilmember whose council district encompasses the largest geographical area within the community improvement district (CID)

Sweet Auburn Works

Sweet Auburn Works is a preservation-based economic development organization wholly dedicated to creating a dynamic, revitalized Sweet Auburn community. Sweet Auburn will thrive by celebrating the history of the best of African American cultural heritage and entrepreneurial ethos in Atlanta and the world.

PRESERVE Sweet Auburn's history by safeguarding both the built environment and the cultural legacy embodied in the neighborhood's people

REVITALIZE Sweet Auburn by fostering entrepreneurial capacity and supporting compatible development projects

PROMOTE the significance and opportunity that imbues in Sweet Auburn to local, regional and national stakeholders

Deadlines & Details

- Questions Due - February 16, 2024
- Submittals Due - March 15, 2024

Consultant team selection made in early April. Project work should conclude by end of 2024.





HISTORY

History – The Beginning

Auburn Avenue, the historic “Main Street” of Black Atlanta, traces its roots to the 19th century.

After the Civil War, freed Blacks established Shermantown, a neighborhood bordered on the south by Wheat Street that attracted both Black and White settlers and the neighborhood expanded.

In 1893, the city council voted to give Wheat Street a more sophisticated name: Auburn Avenue.



Auburn Ave at Hilliard St

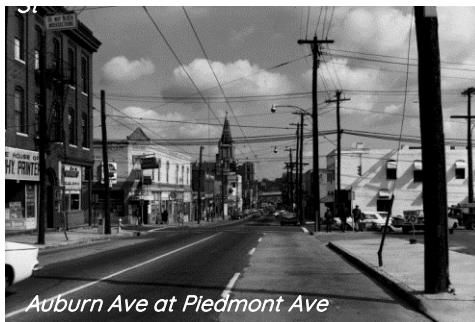


Auburn Ave at Peachtree St

History – Segregation & Growth

At the turn of the century, city council passed segregation ordinances and Whites gradually left the avenue.

In the face of segregation, Black citizens recognized the need to strengthen their community by establishing more businesses and homes.



History – Thriving Community

By 1956, Auburn Avenue had become “the richest street in the world for Negroes,” according to Fortune magazine.

For scores of African American entrepreneurs, entertainers, community leaders, and residents, dreams came true on Auburn Avenue.

Civic leader John Wesley Dobbs dubbed the street “Sweet Auburn Avenue,” explaining, “When you are going to Auburn Avenue, you are going to town.”



History - Decline

An entire block of Black-owned businesses were demolished to construct the Downtown Interstate Highway (today I-75/85).

The highway's curving ramps and towering walls drove a concrete wedge through the Auburn Avenue community, separating businesses from customers and from one another.

The community's physical cohesiveness and economic vitality were severely compromised, and the avenue's hard-won legacy of prosperity suffered for years to come.

Construction of Interstate 75/85



Construction of Interstate 75/85

Persistent Challenges

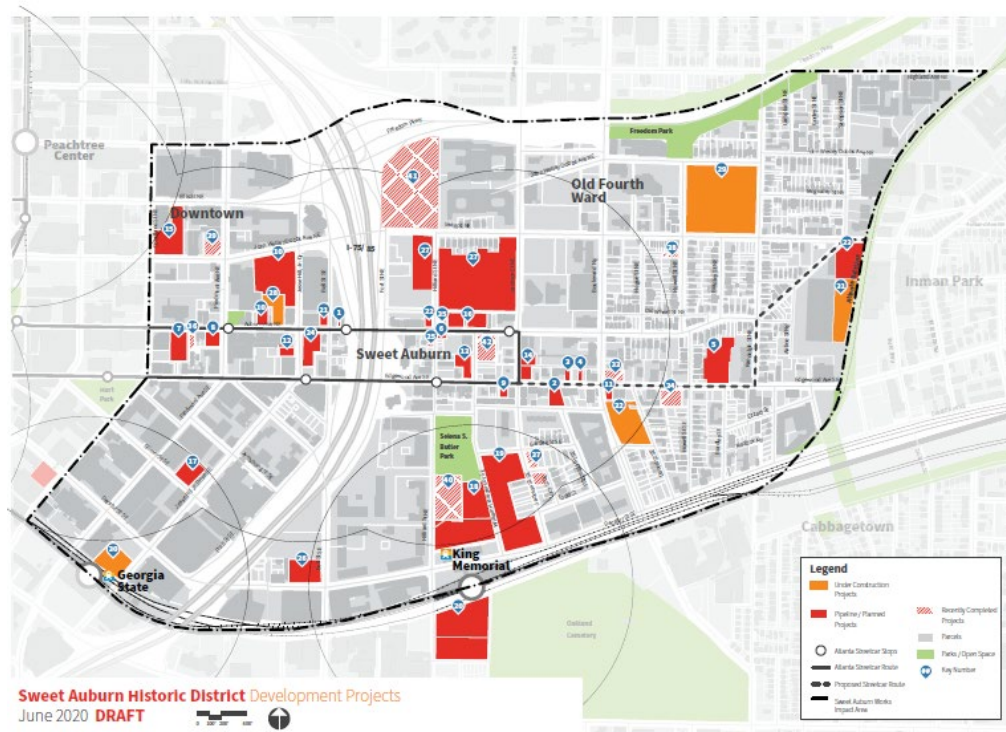
- Legacy institutions that control many buildings and sites are land rich and cash poor, and their mission-driven decision making is a blessing and a curse
- Basic real estate development economics don't pencil – unrealistic expectations of the value of land, height restrictions/development controls of landmark district zoning limit market opportunity and market rents lag surrounding markets
- The community has lacked access to capital since it was originally redlined.
- Poor perception of neighborhood driven by presence of homeless individuals and actual crime driven by drug trade
- Small and fractured residential population in the immediate area
- Frustration and distrust among neighboring property owners fueled by lack of progress

History – Start of a Comeback

The Sweet Auburn Historic District reflects the history, heritage and achievements of Atlanta's African Americans.

There is currently unprecedented development momentum. \$700 million of projects are planned or under construction.

Infrastructure that helps to heal the divide caused by the Connector will support the neighborhood's growth and connectivity.



QUESTIONS