



Request for Proposals: Retail Market Assessment & Implementation Strategy

Release Date:	August 24, 2017
Questions Due:	September 7, 2017
Answers Provided:	September 14, 2017
Proposals Due:	September 21, 2017
Consultant Selection:	September 28, 2017

Contact information:

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Goals & Purpose

Midtown Alliance seeks a qualified consultant firm or team of firms with appropriate expertise to conduct a retail market assessment and develop an implementation strategy that will deliver a viable concentration of shopping retail in Midtown Atlanta.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the current market conditions for retail in Midtown, facilitate discussions among landlords, and develop a detailed action plan that will result in the desired goals and outcomes stated below.

The action plan should identify strategies to achieve the following:

- attract and retain local and national retailers
- concentrate more retail and create more defined retail nodes
- support local retailers and increase their probability of success

This study is a component of a broader retail initiative undertaken by Midtown Alliance that includes storefront and signage enhancements, parking and circulation improvements, and supportive marketing and communications strategies.

The goals for Midtown's retail initiative are to:

- service the needs of the local population and create more destination appeal
- increase presence of hard and soft goods retailers
- Concentrate/cluster shopping retail at defined retail nodes
- Grow contiguous retail space along Midtown's high visibility, storefront streets

The desired outcomes are:

- A retail mix that fulfills the needs of the community, including those who live and work in Midtown or are within walking/biking distance (two mile radius)
- An increased visitor base, attracted to Midtown for shopping, dining, arts & entertainment
- Retail stability and profitability with established, high performing tenants
- A more active streetlife with higher pedestrian activity

About Midtown Alliance

Midtown Alliance is a coalition of Atlanta's top business and civic leaders and the catalyst for continued energy and progress in Midtown Atlanta.

Since 1978, Midtown Alliance has transformed a 1.2-square mile area in the heart of Atlanta into a premier destination for commerce, culture, living, education and leisure, attracting billions of dollars in investment, thousands of new residents and workers and 6 million annual visitors. For more information about the district visit www.MidtownATL.com

Guided by a long-range, community driven master plan, Blueprint Midtown, Midtown Alliance has spearheaded an urban renaissance that is now a nationally recognized model of success. Midtown is a vital, vibrant city center inspired by what people and businesses want: a dynamic urban experience that is at once welcoming, walkable, convenient and attractive.

Midtown Alliance is a non-profit organization funded in part by the Midtown Improvement District, membership dues and public and private grants. The organization implements a variety of programs and initiatives including streetscape and transportation infrastructure projects, urban design, a 24/7 public safety force, daily maintenance and landscaping, transportation alternatives and special events.

About Midtown Atlanta

Located in the geographic center of the Atlanta region, the 1.2 sq. mile core of Midtown is a dense, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use district with 65,000 daytime workers, more than 19,000 residents, and over 10 million annual visitors.

Today, this area has more than 20 million SF of office space, 14,000 residential units, 4,000 hotel rooms, and over 1 million SF of retail space. It is home to many of Atlanta's top cultural and institutional assets – the Woodruff Arts Center, Piedmont Park, the Fox Theatre, Georgia Tech and Technology Square, Emory University Hospital, Savannah College of Art and Design-Atlanta, and the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Midtown is accessible to I-75/85, Georgia 400, and is served by four MARTA rail stations with direct rail service to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and more than 40 local and regional bus routes, local shuttles and trolleys. Midtown's street grid provides multiple options for travelers and major upgrades to the pedestrian and bicycling network have made walking and biking convenient.

Project Background

For over a decade, the Midtown community has provided extensive input on the topic of retail including residents, workers, visitors and retail landlords. This feedback has been provided through surveys, studies, outreach events and committees. The community continues to voice a steadfast desire for retail that meets residents and daytime workers' needs and provides recreational shopping and entertainment options. Midtown stakeholders strongly identify their neighborhood as both walkable and able to provide an urban lifestyle, and therefore seek access to retail without having to get in a car and leave the district.

A retail vision for Midtown began with Blueprint Midtown II, a master plan update in 2004 that envisioned Peachtree Street as a signature shopping corridor. Since that time, efforts led by Midtown Alliance have involved market studies, surveys, retail councils, streetscape and circulation improvements, and new development and design guidelines. Midtown Alliance continues to pursue a vision for street-front retail in discrete commercial nodes throughout the district, including:

- A “main street” shopping experience on/adjacent to Peachtree Street from North Avenue to 15th Street that includes a mix of local/regional concepts, select, lifestyle-driven brands, and restaurants and cafes with outdoor dining
- A retail node at Piedmont & 10th Street focused on local/independent businesses
- A retail and restaurants node serving Tech Square
- A restaurants and service oriented node along West Peachtree between 5th & Peachtree Place

Since 2004, nearly 500,000 sq. ft. of ground-floor retail space has been added on or adjacent to Peachtree Street, bringing the total up to 750,000 sq. ft. Midtown today has a flourishing restaurant scene with over 150+ dining options, including award-winning, chef-driven concepts. Significant retail-driven projects underway in the core of Midtown include a 70,000 sq. ft. Whole Foods Market in the planning phase at Spring and 14th Streets, and the repositioning and expansion of Colony Square to provide 200,000 sq. ft. of premier retail space.

Once seen as purely a commercial district, this 1.2 sq. mi. core in the heart of Atlanta has more than doubled its residential and retail space over the past two decades. It is now one of the highest density, mixed-use areas in the South—and still growing. Midtown is on track to add more than 11,000 new residents based on new development under construction and in the pipeline, bringing the total residential population to over 30,000. This rising population density places Midtown on par with other vibrant downtown retail districts, which rely on a minimum of 20,000 residents within a half-mile radius (Streetsense, 2012). Jobs are also increasing. Midtown has

65,000 jobs and will add another 13,000 based on major job announcements over the past 24 months.

Midtown's contiguous storefront space, population density and central location all create an opportunity for street-front retail unique to the Southeast. Midtown Alliance seeks to capitalize on this potential and work with property owners, merchants and the Midtown community to deliver a superior retail experience.

Scope of Services

Task I: Conduct an existing conditions assessment using market data and stakeholder interviews.

The first task is to conduct a thorough assessment of existing retail market conditions in Midtown. The purpose of this assessment is to understand barriers to attracting soft and hard goods retailers to Midtown including local and regional boutique retailers as well as national/multinational brands. The assessment should compile qualitative and quantitative information through a combination of development data provided by Midtown Alliance, supplemental market data collected by the consulting team, and qualitative interviews with at least 20 retail property owners and tenants conducted by the consulting team.

For the purposes of this task, Midtown Alliance has provided detailed development and demographic data as well as all previous retail studies and reports in [this Dropbox](#). This data includes:

- A districtwide retail inventory, including size, location and tenancy of storefront spaces
- Primary and secondary defined trade areas for Midtown
- Zoning information and development/retail guidelines
- Previous retail studies and deliverables, including trade area studies, intercept survey, SWOT analysis, and a proposed Peachtree St merchandising mix
- Property-level database for both existing development including use, size, age and ownership
- New development information, including proposed uses and square footage and estimated timelines
- Districtwide parking inventory, including on and off-street parking
- Pedestrian, bicycle and traffic counts
- Population demographics for Midtown, including projections
- Visitor and hospitality data, including visitor counts by event/attraction and overnight hotel guests.

The Task 1 assessment should answer the following questions:

- a) What are the current occupancy rates and tenant mix existing today in Midtown?
- b) Generally, what are the rental rates and lease terms in Midtown, and how do they compare to competing submarkets in the Atlanta region today?
- c) What is the performance of existing Midtown tenants (e.g. sales per sq. ft.) and how does that vary by tenant type?
- d) What is the current mindset and orientation toward shopping retail (vs F&B) among landlords in Midtown?
 - a. What do they see as the biggest barriers?
 - b. What is their personal vision for retail in Midtown?
- e) Based on the collected qualitative and quantitative data, what are the key barriers and opportunities for street-level retail to succeed even further in Midtown?

Deliverables:

- Existing conditions assessment concisely summarized in a written report and presentation. This presentation will form the basis for the first Steering Committee meeting (see below).
- Underlying quantitative data, including rental rates, occupancy rates, sales per sq. ft (this info will be general so specific information for individual businesses will not be shared beyond the consultant team).
- Written summaries of interviews with landlords and key takeaways

Task II: Compile Research on Best Practices and Urban Retail Trends

This task is intended to uncover information and examples of what other urban retail districts similar to Midtown are doing to successfully attract and retain retail. The research should go into detail on how this approach varies by various retail subgroups (F&B, soft goods, hard goods, services, etc).

Deliverables:

- Documentation of urban retail trends and best practices, to be included as a component of the existing conditions report and presentation (the first deliverable from Task 1). The assessment should also present research on national retail trends and best practices for street-front retail recruitment applicable to Midtown Atlanta.

Task III: Engagement of Key Midtown Retail Stakeholders through a Steering Committee to develop consensus recommendations and an action plan

The purpose of this task is to obtain significant input from a Retail Steering Committee of 15-20 members empaneled and staffed by Midtown Alliance to provide input to the consultant team, develop a consensus vision of retail success for Midtown, and shape the study's recommendations in the form of an implementable action plan for the next five years.

The Consultant will attend and provide technical support for three Steering Committee meetings (approx. two hours in duration) to discuss study goals and objectives, key barriers and opportunities, and to define consensus strategies and action items.

Deliverables:

- Relevant presentations prepared for each Steering Committee meeting, as follows:
 1. First Steering Committee meeting to discuss current conditions when Task 1 is substantially complete, and discuss consensus retail vision for Midtown;
 2. Second Steering Committee meeting to discuss and vet potential strategies and action items;
 3. Third Steering Committee to finalize consensus strategy and action plan

Task IV: Develop an implementation strategy with prioritized action items.

The third task will identify how Midtown Alliance and retail partners can best realize the retail vision for Midtown. Based on the results of the market assessment, this task will propose and finalize a prioritized implementation strategy to achieve Midtown's retail vision and goals.

Recommendations may include but are not limited to the areas of building and retail space design, ways to concentrate/cluster and create more defined retail nodes, ways to promote local retailers, differentiating and activating storefronts, opportunities for pop-ups or alternative arrangements, temporary “trial-lease” arrangements, retail stalls, public space improvements, marketing and communications, community engagement, events, and coordinated recruitment and/or retention programs facilitated by Midtown Alliance.

Deliverables:

- Finalized and Prioritized Action Plan including detailed action items, specifying the role of Midtown Alliance and partners in completing these action items, with estimated out-of-pocket costs and proposed timing – all concisely summarized in a written report and accompanying presentation.

Submissions

All proposals must be submitted by no later than **5:00 PM (EST) on September 21, 2017**, to Shannon Powell via email at shannon@midtownatl.com.

Submittals received after this time and date will not be considered. Respondents should submit a proposal via email to the address above. The proposal should be divided into sections as described below.

- 1) Cover Letter. Summarize the consultants’ interest in the project as well as identifying the name and contact information of the Project Manager.
- 2) Company Profile/Description. Provide a description of the company in as much detail as necessary to demonstrate the company’s ability to carry out the scope of services as requested in this RFP.
- 3) Project Personnel. Provide an organizational chart of proposed team members and brief resumes for key members of the project team.
- 4) Project Approach. Provide a concise summary of the firm or team’s approach to the project. If your proposal is based upon any variation to the scope of work (reduced or additional services), please outline any clarifications or modifications.
- 5) Experience on similar projects. For each consultant, provide three (3) examples of similar urban street-level retail projects successfully completed by the team. Include a contact name and telephone number for each project described.
- 6) Project Schedule. Project approach and schedule describing how the study and analysis will be conducted. Include a listing of project meetings with Midtown Alliance representatives and a proposed stakeholder interview schedule.
- 7) Cost proposal. Respondents should include a total cost for each of the tasks outlined in this RFP. Cost proposals may be a lump sum fee or an hourly proposal with a not-to-exceed amount. Please include a listing of hourly rates for the individuals proposed to work on the project. If reimbursable expenses are to be part of the professional fee, include a not-to-exceed amount for reimbursable expenses and a list of items/services to be reimbursed. **The total cost of this study should not exceed \$25,000.**

Submissions should be concise and limited to no more than 20 pages.

Any questions regarding this request for proposals should be submitted via email to Shannon Powell (Shannon@MidtownATL.com) on or before 5:00 p.m. on September 7, 2017. The email must contain contact information to communicate any clarifications

regarding the RFP. Answers will be made available to all respondents via email by September 14, 2017.

Selection Procedures

The selection process is based on the qualifications of the consultant to complete the Project on time, within budget, and meeting all study goals. It is Midtown Alliance's intent to select directly from information gained from the submittal review. However, Midtown Alliance reserves the right to call references provided in the submittal and to require phone or personal interviews with firms included on a short list.

Midtown Alliance will use the following criteria in evaluating submittals. The list is not shown in any prioritized order:

- Abilities and capacity of professional personnel
- Understanding and insight related to project scope
- Relevant experience and past performance in similar projects, specifically with comparably sized districts/cities and downtown environments
- Commitment to complete work within budget and on a timely basis
- Responsiveness to the RFP and submittal presentation

Midtown Alliance reserves the right to reject any and/or all submittals or portions of submittals; to re-advertise if deemed necessary; to interview candidates prior to making a selection; and to approve, disapprove, modify or cancel work.

Contract Negotiations

Midtown Alliance will negotiate the terms of the contract with the consultant(s) submitting the top-ranked response(s) or the next ranked choice should negotiations with the top-ranked firm fail. Midtown Alliance will not reimburse any costs incurred prior to a formal notice to proceed should a contract award result from this solicitation. Proposal submittal costs in conjunction with this RFP shall be borne by the submitting firm.