Blueprint Midtown 3.

ACTION PLAN
Introduction

This document identifies Midtown’s goals, implementation strategies and specific action items that will ensure a rich diversity of land uses, vibrant street-level activity, quality building design, multimodal transportation accessibility and mobility, and engaging public spaces.

Blueprint Midtown 3.0 is the most recent evolution of Midtown Alliance’s community driven plan that builds on Midtown’s fundamental strengths and makes strategic improvements to move the District from great to exceptional. It identifies both high priority projects that will be advanced in the next 10 years, as well as longer-term projects and initiatives that may take decades to achieve but require exploration now.

Since 1997, policies laid out in Blueprint Midtown have guided public and private investment to create a clean, safe, and vibrant urban environment. The original plan established a community vision for Midtown that largely remains the same: a livable, walkable district in the heart of Atlanta; a place where people, business and culture converge to create a live-work-play community with a distinctive personality and a premium quality of life.

Blueprint Midtown 3.0 builds on recent successes, incorporates previously completed studies and corridor plans, draws inspiration from other places and refines site-specific recommendations to reflect the changes that have occurred in the community since the original unveiling of Blueprint Midtown. Extensive community input conducted in 2016 involving more than 6,000 Midtown employers, property owners, residents, workers, visitors, public-sector partners, and subject-matter experts validates the Blueprint Midtown vision for an authentic urban experience.

The Action Plan lives with a family of Blueprint Midtown 3.0 documents which also includes: Overview: Moving Forward with Blueprint Midtown 3.0, Midtown Character Areas Concept Plans (coming soon), Appendices: Project Plans and 5-Year Work Plan (coming soon).
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Overall Goal: Inspire private development to deliver high-quality buildings and uses that contribute to an economically vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, urban district.
Midtown Atlanta is lined with high-rise buildings mixed with residential, office and ground floor retail and active uses. The development landscape in this 1.2 square mile district has changed rapidly – it has seen 50+ projects over the last 15 years, and this trend is expected to continue, with over 40 major development projects in the pipeline in 2016. Going forward, an increase in the density of people and buildings is anticipated and desired in Midtown. Currently, 25% of land in Midtown is ripe for redevelopment. At build out, this development opportunity is expected to yield an additional 21,057 residential units, 6,111 hotel rooms, 12.9M SF of office/institutional space, and 2M SF of retail space.

Since the inception of Blueprint Midtown in 1997, we’ve seen new developments that work well, and some that don’t. With limited development opportunities left, each large-scale project will stand for the next century, carrying significant influence on the character and quality of Midtown. Accordingly, it is absolutely critical that every project meets the needs of the district, embodies inspired architectural design, and contributes to an engaging, street-level environment. Midtown will continue to take an active role in shaping the private realm in collaboration with property owners, developers, architects and our public sector partners, to deliver an environment that fulfills the community vision of Blueprint Midtown 3.0 – a high-density, dynamic, mixed-use district and an exceptional urban experience.

INITIATIVES AT GLANCE

- Ensure a balance and mix of uses, including office, housing, retail, and hotel, that provide destinations and activity at various times of day. (D-1 / PG. 5)

- Promote anchor institutions and cultivate economic clusters around Tech Square, Emory University Hospital Midtown (EUHM), Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) Atlanta and the concentration of arts institutions to fully leverage these anchors and build out the ecosystems. (D-1 / PG. 5)

- Sustain residential growth to achieve a jobs-housing balance. (D-3 / PG. 6)

- Promote a diversity of housing sizes at affordable levels, including larger units that can accommodate families and smaller units/micro-units. (D-4 / PG. 6)

- Ensure consistent design quality of new development that embraces the public realm and provides an active, pedestrian-oriented environment. (D-5 / PG. 7)

- Refine Midtown’s street typology to concentrate retail space, active uses, and vehicular site access on designated corridors. (D-6 / PG. 8)

- Cluster shopping and dining establishments on designated streets to develop a deliberate mix of shopping and services by corridor/node. (D-7 / PG. 8)

- Incorporate sustainable building design into new development and redevelopment to ensure resource efficiency and quality (water, energy, air). (D-8 / PG. 12)

- Gradually transition the built environment along Juniper Street and Piedmont Avenue from the commercial district into the adjacent single family neighborhoods. (D-9 / PG. 13)

- Preserve and enhance historic buildings, sites and districts that reflect Atlanta’s cultural, social, economic and architectural history. (D-10 / PG. 13)
Ensure a balance and mix of uses, including office, housing, retail, and hotel, that provide destinations and activity at various times of day. D-1

Midtown’s existing development is a mix of residential, office, institutional, hotel and ground floor uses. Nonresidential uses are more heavily concentrated north of 10th Street and residential more concentrated to the south, creating pockets of inactivity. However, the current development cycle has started to fill in empty spaces and as a result, the district land uses are balancing out.

Blueprint Midtown 3.0’s Character Area Concept Plans provide more detailed analyses of the existing and proposed land uses in the district’s five character areas. You can explore these in depth at MidtownATL.com/CharacterAreas.

Promote anchor institutions and cultivate economic clusters around Tech Square, Emory University Hospital Midtown (EUHM), Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) Atlanta and the concentration of arts institutions to fully leverage these anchors and build out the ecosystems. D-2

Midtown is home to some of the City’s strongest economic anchors, such as Tech Square, EUHM, and SCAD Atlanta alongside the largest concentration of arts organizations in the Southeast including the Woodruff Arts Center, the Fox Theatre, and more than 70 arts or cultural organizations. Midtown’s anchors create a unique opportunity to cultivate economic clusters by building additional commercial space to house and grow complementary businesses.

Research has observed that large scale mixed-use development centered on major anchor institutions and a rich base of related firms, entrepreneurs and spin-off companies are valuable ingredients for successful economic districts.1 Leveraging anchors in future development provides proximity for companies seeking access to resources and an urban, car-free lifestyle for residents who prefer walking to work, school, or entertainment destinations. New development should be designed with more flexible spaces and more “third places” to meet and collaborate.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Adapt the zoning codes to allow for additional density contingent upon high-performance buildings that include some or all of the following: affordable housing, street level retail, reduced parking, and rehabilitation of historic buildings. (D-1.1)

Continuous

- Actively coordinate with private sector to encourage mixed-use developments that maximize the diversity of uses within each character area. (D-1.2)

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Develop a campaign for Character Areas that promotes the development of compatible uses near economic development anchors. Examples include medical office around EUHM and galleries, studio spaces, and live/work units around the arts institutions in the north end of the district, and tech office, innovation labs and startup space near Tech Square. (D-2.1)

- Explore policy tools that would facilitate targeted business growth around economic anchors, such as an arts district incentive or an innovation zone. (D-2.2)

Continuous

- Organize Midtown Alliance councils, events and initiatives to amplify the presence and impact of specific community groups such as arts-based organizations and technology companies. (D-2.3)

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Sustain residential growth to achieve a jobs-housing balance. D-3

As a central business district, Midtown relies on a significant office inventory to further economic development. However, major employment centers also benefit from having a substantial residential population that provide activity at all times of day and support restaurants, shops, and other destinations. Moreover, the provision of office and housing in the same district provides living options to local workers, reducing commuter outflows. Midtown’s jobs-housing ratio is roughly 4:1 in 2016, a substantial improvement from 9:1 in 1997. To be a true live-work-play environment, Midtown’s target jobs-housing ratio is 3:1, which requires additional residential growth.

Promote a diversity of housing sizes at affordable levels, including larger units that can accommodate families and smaller units/micro-units. D-4

As a dense, urban district in high demand, housing in Midtown achieves some of the highest rents in the Atlanta region – as of Q2 2016, Midtown and Buckhead commanded the highest multifamily rents in Atlanta at $1.92 per s.f.2 Yet, in order to retain a dynamic, creative workforce and reduce commuter inflows and traffic congestion, it is imperative that Midtown accommodates a diverse population at a range of income levels, including young professionals, civil servants, empty nesters, and families. Midtown Alliance will continue to pursue strategies to deliver a housing inventory that offers a diversity of product types at various levels of affordability.

ACTION ITEMS

Continuous

- Maintain densities allowed by use in the zoning code. The existing zoning code allows nonresidential densities at higher amounts than residential densities – roughly 1.5 times higher – however, this proportion is below the target jobs-housing ratio of 3:1, and will drive down the total overall percentage of nonresidential development. This will continue to allow for residential growth while ensuring that Midtown maintains a healthy supply of office. (D-3.1)

- Continue to invest in and promote the livability of Midtown, such as its excellent dining and entertainment, housing options, proximity to good schools, etc., through Midtown Alliance’s website, mobile app, and other marketing platforms. (D-3.2)

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Revisit the existing density bonus for affordable housing in the zoning code to understand how to make it easier to use for developers and more effective. (D-4.1)

Continuous

- Research affordable housing best practices and communicate with City of Atlanta and the Midtown community to evaluate and implement policy tools such as inclusionary zoning. (D-4.2)

- Research other best practices to encourage housing and services that meets the needs of and will attract different demographics including empty nesters, families, and young professionals. (D-4.3)

LAND USE & BUILDING DESIGN

Ensure consistent design quality of new development that embraces the public realm and provides an active, pedestrian-oriented environment. D-5

Building and site design has the greatest impact on the quality and character of the neighborhood. A principal goal of Blueprint Midtown since its inception has been to provide an engaging street-level environment with transparent windows and doors, active uses, no blank walls, and limited curb cuts.

Best practices include:

- Articulate storefronts with entrances, awnings, transparent windows, signage, planters and other pedestrian-friendly amenities.
- Vary building facades using a diversified palette of materials, fenestration and other structural expressions that reinforce pedestrian scale and avoid monotonous, uniform or blank walls at the street level.
- Orient the building to the street and establish defined building entries that are legible and accessible from the street.
- Create building upper-story setbacks after three stories for high-rise buildings.
- Keep parking decks out of view, either by locating internally within the building program or screening with visually compelling and sensitively-designed facades.

While the focus of Blueprint Midtown is primarily on the design of the first three floors, this iteration of the plan has also re-evaluated how new development as a whole will impact the experience of the community. The plan calls for the private sector to do more in order to deliver an exceptional urban environment. New development is encouraged to incorporate high-performance measures such as:

- Reducing parking ratios;
- Burying utilities;
- Creating on-street parking;
- Achieving third-party sustainability certifications;
- Building green roofs;
- Setting aside units for affordable housing;
- Repurposing historic structures;
- Creating retail space; and
- Dedicating space for new streets, alleys, and pedestrian paths.

For a complete design guide that embodies Blueprint Midtown principles, see the Midtown Owner’s Manual at MidtownATL.com/OwnersManual

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Adapt the current zoning code to incentivize or require the refined design standards articulated here. (D-5.1)

Continuous

- Manage the development review process and refine the pre-construction review and follow-up. This process includes initial consultations with development teams for new projects, coordination and staffing of the Midtown Development Review Committee, which reviews development proposals and makes formal recommendations to the City, and pre-construction meetings with the construction teams that include a review of standards and materials based on the approved site plan. (D-5.2)

- Inspire developers to create exceptional buildings that address the public realm through the use of the Owner’s Manual which provides design standards for Midtown. (D-5.3)

STOREFRONT DESIGN

Storefront spaces should exhibit the following criteria:

- 40’ bay depths and regular dimensions that allow for flexibility in use and are able to adapt to changing retail uses.

- High visibility from the street, with clear fenestration and doors that lead directly to the public sidewalk. On designated retail corridors, fenestration must comprise a minimum of 75% of street frontage; on other active use corridors, fenestration must be at least 65%.

- Facades and signage differentiated by each business to reflect individual brands.

- Ground-floor spaces that if used for non-retail uses, should be designed to be easily retrofitted for future retail uses.
Refine Midtown’s street typology to concentrate retail space, active uses, and vehicular site access on designated corridors.  

Blueprint 3.0 furthers the previously established approach to Midtown’s Storefront Streets. A more discriminate typology now categorizes Midtown’s streets into three street types to support the land use and urban design goals for the district’s corridors. This three-class system is used to create a supportable amount of continuous retail space, to deliver active frontage on major streets, and to locate parking and service on minor streets to minimize pedestrian and cyclist conflicts with vehicles.

Cluster shopping and dining establishments on designated streets to develop a deliberate mix of shopping and services by corridor/node.  

Midtown as a whole has an abundance of food and beverage options at the ground floor, however the most northern and southern ends of the district are in need of more destinations. In some locations, the nightlife scene is incompatible with adjacent residential and hotel uses. Despite containing all of the fundamentals for a signature retail destination, including the addition of more than 700K sq. ft. of retail over the past 20 years, Midtown does not yet have traditional storefront shopping streets.

While a retail vision for Midtown is not new, the opportunity to fulfill that vision is more realistic than ever before. Blueprint 3.0 future build-out numbers suggest the possibility of 2 million sq. ft. of additional ground-floor storefront space and 58% more employees, 163% more residents, and 152% more visitors in Midtown, a population explosion unprecedented in Atlanta’s history. These population numbers will create a density on par with other districts around the country that have healthy, street-level shopping streets. This growth, coupled with Midtown’s central location, creates an opportunity for a main street experience unique to the Southeast region.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Update the zoning code to reflect the three-tiered street typology with refined street-level design, use requirements and site access restrictions. 

STREET TYPOLOGIES

- ‘A’ Streets: Designated retail streets on Midtown’s main streets, including Destination Retail, Regional Retail, and Neighborhood Retail Streets.
- ‘B’ Streets: Local streets that provide active uses at the street-level and best serve the needs of the immediate area.
- ‘C’ Streets: Building service streets that provide active uses at the street-level and best serve the needs of the building.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Develop and carry out a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy for retail in Midtown that refreshes the retail vision, establishes target merchandising mixes for Midtown’s major corridors and nodes, and provides compelling retail marketing collateral and campaigns.

Continuous

- Implement destination-driven programming with the goals of bringing visitors to Midtown on a frequent basis and increasing exposure to Midtown destinations.
Building Toward a District-Wide Vision for Retail in Midtown

Blueprint 3.0 takes an aggressive policy approach to establishing a main street shopping experience on Peachtree Street, as well as regional and neighborhood shopping retail nodes on major corridors throughout the district. This approach recommends concentrating continuous storefronts on main corridors, implementing use restrictions, and geographically targeting retail incentives to geographic areas of greatest opportunity.

Midtown’s Retail Strategy

REQUIRE ACTIVE USES
Walkability is paramount in Midtown, and as such, every single corridor should be active. Active ground-floors are achieved by prohibiting blank walls and requiring active uses, whether or not the use is retail. Examples of non-retail active uses include residential or live/work units, flexible office space, lobbies, recreation centers and community gathering spaces.

DEVELOP A DISTRICT-WIDE RETAIL MERCHANDISING MIX PLAN
A high-level tenant mix is associated with the three classes of Midtown’s Street Typology. A more in-depth retail merchandising mix plan should be conducted for each of the retail-oriented nodes and corridors: the Destination Shopping Streets, the Regional Retail Streets, and the Neighborhood Retail Streets. The target tenant mixes should be recommended based on existing and emerging market demand, taking into account existing land uses, the character of the area, the volume and configuration of retail space available, the existing and proposed transportation network, and the anticipated changes in the particular area over time.

CRITICAL DENSITY FOR RETAIL

A vital indicator for destination retail streets is a minimum population of 20,000 residents within a half-mile radius. Midtown Atlanta is expected to reach this threshold by 2018, and is on track to nearly double this level of density at build-out.

Source: Streetsense, 2012
ORGANIZE THE PRIVATE REALM USING A STREET HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

A Midtown street hierarchy categorizes corridors into street types, based on existing characteristics and future opportunities. This approach recognizes that retail space, and shopping retail in particular, needs to be concentrated, and the volume of retail space scaled to the size of demand and needs of the community it serves. This comprehensive strategy will create the best opportunity for successful retail and a desirable pedestrian environment.

1.) Retail Streets
   a. **Destination Shopping Streets**: Shopping streets can define the character of a district, enrich quality of life, and provide an added layer of entertainment. Successful shopping streets from around the country most often have double-loaded retail corridors with a concentration of at least 200,000 square feet of continuous retail space to allow for co-tenancy. Shopping streets include soft and hard goods such as clothes, shoes, furnishings and electronics, as well as boutiques, specialty shops, and local restaurants and cafes with outdoor dining. Premier urban shopping streets serve not only a district but a region, and have a mix of national and local shops that make up 50% - 75% of the tenant mix, with food and beverage comprising the rest. Destination Shopping Streets by and large have a favorable set of common characteristics that include: two-way travel direction, on-street parallel parking, a maximum width of four travel lanes, accessible parking, and few vehicular curb cuts. Curb cuts are strictly forbidden to provide a safe and uninterrupted shopping experience. Based on these characteristics, portions of Peachtree Street and streets immediately adjacent provide the only logical opportunity for premier shopping in Midtown.

   b. **Regional Retail Streets**: Major thoroughfares with easy access to the rest of the region are prime locations for stores providing essentials, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, sporting goods, bookstores, office supply stores, and other day-to-day amenities that make a place livable. These corridors are also ideal for destinations such as restaurants, coffee shops and cafes. Contiguous retail space, co-tenancy and the configuration of the street is less important for these destination-based retailers, whereas access and visibility is vital. The long one-way pairs of West Peachtree Street and Spring Street, which provide easy access to the interstates, short-term, on-street parking, and close proximity to a growing number of residents, makes these corridors well suited be Regional Retail Streets. Curb cuts are not allowed on Regional Retail Streets.

   c. **Neighborhood Retail Streets**: Neighborhood Retail Streets serve the shopping and entertainment needs of the district. They are similar in tenant mix to Destination Shopping Streets, but trend heavily local/regional, with a smaller emphasis on national brands. They include a high concentration of outdoor dining, bars, cafes, gift stores, bookstores, and galleries. They are often found on streets with a significant residential and/or in a smaller scale environment. 5th and West Peachtree and Piedmont and 10th Street nodes are good examples of Neighborhood Retail locations. Curb cuts are not allowed on Neighborhood Retail Streets.

2.) Local Streets:
   This street type best serves the local needs of the immediate area. Dry cleaners, banks, salons, dental and doctor offices are generally viable uses for Local Streets. Curb cuts are strongly discouraged on Local Streets.

3.) Building Service Streets:
   Street-level uses for this street type are intended to serve the building and its tenants. Such corridors must activate the street; blank walls are prohibited. Gyms, workout facilities, leasing offices and lobbies, as well as commercial office, residential, and live/work units are all appropriate active uses on Building Service Streets. These corridors are best suited for vehicular access points.
Incorporate sustainable building design into new development and redevelopment to ensure resource efficiency and quality (water, energy, air). D-8

Midtown is uniquely positioned to become a leader in urban sustainability in the Southeast. It has all the physical building blocks in place - a pedestrian-friendly street grid, a dense and diverse mix of land uses, robust transit options, and significant green space. The district also benefits from its ability to rally the community together around a common agenda. Midtown Alliance will continue to coordinate with private development to incorporate sustainable building design principles through zoning incentives, recognition programs, and the design review process.

The plan also calls for private development to incorporate elements that benefit the environment. It recommends incorporating green roofs, reducing parking to encourage the use of transit, biking or walking, and seeking third-party building sustainability certification.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Adapt the current zoning codes to incentivize or require the reduction of allowable parking, incorporation of green roofs, and seek third-party building sustainability certification. (D-8.1)

Continuous

- Actively encourage developers and property owners to consult with Midtown Transportation, Midtown Alliance’s transportation demand management team, on services and facilities their buildings can provide that encourage their tenants to take clean commutes. (D-8.2)

- Manage the Midtown Luminaries Program. This is a certification program spearheaded by Midtown Alliance that recognizes businesses, buildings, and organizations that are setting the pace for sustainability in the district. (D-8.3)

- Implement the Tree Well Adoption Program. Increase wrought iron fencing and water-wise, urban tolerant plantings around Midtown’s street trees (at 10% of street trees as of 2016). (D-8.4)

- Support the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC). ABBC is a public/private initiative led locally by the City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability that provides tools and benchmarking assistance to participating buildings with the goal of reducing energy and water consumption by at least 20% by 2020. Midtown Alliance remains committed to supporting and expanding participation in this program. (D-8.5)

MIDTOWN ECODISTRICT

The Midtown EcoDistrict was created on the heels of a major sustainability planning initiative, Greenprint Midtown (2012), as a platform for this community to collaborate on initiatives that result in improved environmental and economic performance. This initiative aims to position Midtown as one of the most livable, vibrant and sustainable districts in the U.S. Midtown Alliance plays a key role in the EcoDistrict by developing partnerships, encouraging participation, improving and maintaining the public realm, and tracking and communicating results.
Gradually transition the built environment along Juniper Street and Piedmont Avenue from the commercial district into the adjacent single family neighborhoods. D-9

The Midtown community seeks to preserve the historic, small-scale character of the Midtown residential neighborhood, also known as the Garden District. Allowing for medium density residential growth along Juniper Street and Piedmont Avenue gradually transitions the built environment in size and scale from high-rises on Peachtree Street to single-family homes on Myrtle Street.

As this medium density development fills in, demand is increasing for local-serving goods and services within a walkable distance. The commercial center at Piedmont & 10th and the Juniper corridor both continue to make sense as viable areas for neighborhood-serving goods and services.

Preserve and enhance historic buildings, sites and districts that reflect Atlanta’s cultural, social, economic and architectural history. D-10

Preserving Midtown’s historic assets not only adds a depth of character and identity, but celebrates the unique and significant architecture that has enhanced this community. The district is graced by historic sites such as the Fox Theatre Historic District, Rhodes Hall, the Academy of Medicine, and Margaret Mitchell House, as well as striking examples of Victorian Queen Anne style architecture. Midtown counts among its influential architects Philip Trammell Shutze, Neel Reid, Robert A.M. Stern, Philip Johnson, Richard Meier, Renzo Piano, and Michael Graves.
Transportation

Overall Goal: Create a safe, accessible, multimodal transportation network that cultivates vibrant streetlife and supports economic development.
Midtown’s transportation system benefits from its prime location at the center of the Atlanta region, its 120-block street grid, access to I-75/85, and high transit accessibility. Yet there are still many opportunities ahead to make Midtown safer, more accessible, vibrant, and multimodal.

The transportation implementation strategy projects a long-term vision of a robust transportation network that supports Midtown’s land use and economic development goals. Many of the recommendations come directly from a comprehensive transportation study, undertaken in 2016, which conducted an in-depth, district-wide analysis of transportation projects and policies that will better serve the needs of Midtown’s existing and future population and support its character as a vibrant, diverse, and urbanizing district for the next ten years.

To explore the Midtown Transportation Plan in full, go to MidtownATL.com/TransportationPlan.

INITIATIVES AT GLANCE

- Improve walkability by slowing vehicle speeds and enhancing the pedestrian environment. (T-1 / PG. 17)
- Redesign streets to safely accommodate all modes of transportation and increase circulation, navigability, connectivity and safety. (T-2 / PG. 18-19)
- Build out a safe and connected bicycle network. (T-3 / PG. 20)
- Improve local and regional transit connections and frequency. (T-4 / PG. 21)
- Build new connections that enhance Midtown’s street grid, increase travel options, and strengthen connectivity. (T-5 / PG. 22)
- Undertake network improvements that improve safety and efficiency. (T-6 / PG. 23)
- Expand employer-commuter programs and customized support through the Midtown Transportation program to reduce traffic congestion and increase air quality. (T-7/ PG. 24)
- Plan for innovations such as autonomous vehicles and car-sharing that may transform the way people move around a city. (T-8 / PG. 24)
IMPROVE WALKABILITY BY SLOWING VEHICLE SPEEDS AND ENHANCING THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT. (T-1)

After 15 years and $40 million invested in the pedestrian realm to date, Midtown is considered one of the most walkable places in the Atlanta region. These investments include 15+ miles of streetscapes with wide, well-lit and tree-lined sidewalks.

While Midtown has made significant progress in developing a comprehensive pedestrian network, several streets remain overbuilt and unsafe. It is not uncommon for vehicles to reach speeds in excess of 45 miles per hour on some of our north-south streets. As a result, Midtown’s per capita crash rates are about four times the statewide average for arterial streets. In addition to building “Complete Street” streetscapes (initiative T-2) that are designed to improve pedestrian safety, Midtown Alliance will pursue policies to reduce vehicle speeds and mitigate pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Implement a district-wide 25 mile-per-hour speed limit. Excessive vehicle speeds increase the likelihood of crashes as well as the severity of crashes. Reducing Midtown’s default speed limit to 25 mph is a necessary first step in taming excessive vehicle speeds and rethinking how we design our streets. (T-1.1)

- Implement a no right turn on red policy at intersections with high pedestrian volumes. Prohibiting right turns on red at intersections is a simple, low cost measure that improves pedestrian safety without greatly inconveniencing motorists. (T-1.2)

- Support City-led program to implement “Don’t Block the Box” in Midtown. In 2016, the City of Atlanta began installing ‘Don’t Block the Box’ signs and striping at key intersections in Midtown to remind drivers to only enter the intersection when the lanes beyond are available. Midtown Alliance supports the City continuing to stripe and sign additional intersections in Midtown and conduct regular enforcement. (T-1.3)
Initiatives

Redesign streets to safely accommodate all modes of transportation and increase circulation, navigability, connectivity and safety. (T-2)

Midtown, as one of the most multimodal transportation networks in the Southeast, has a highly pedestrian, transit-rich environment that also benefits greatly from a true street grid. Midtown now has 15+ miles of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes that include new tree-lined sidewalks, intersection improvements, transit stops, and bike facilities. However, the average block size is still larger than ideal, there is excess roadway on major corridors, and most bike facilities are not designed with all-inclusive ridership in mind. Many of Atlanta’s streets were retrofitted in the 1950s and 1960s to enable fast-moving vehicular traffic. Today, the community desires safer and more vibrant streets that continue to serve cars but also serves people on foot, bicycle, and public transportation.

Midtown Alliance has adopted a “Complete Streets” approach to streetscape improvements that emphasizes safe access for all users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets do not focus on a single mode of transportation, but rather consider how the available street space can be reallocated and enhanced to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders. Moving forward, Midtown will continue to enhance its robust street network through projects that redesign our public right-of-way with improved sidewalks and bike lanes, more street trees and street furniture, slower vehicle speeds, and shorter crossing distances.

A Shift Toward the Complete Streets Model

Midtown Alliance’s approach towards transportation improvements embraces the Complete Streets model, a concept that provides safe access for all users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. These projects aim to enhance safety, walkability and multi-modal transportation options, mitigate traffic, and support economic development.

According to research by Smart Growth America, Complete Streets are also proven to have tangible economic benefits, such as increased employment, higher property values, increased net new businesses, and increased investment from the private sector.
ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- **Build the Juniper Complete Street.** This 12-block project from Ponce de Leon Avenue to 14th Street reinforces Midtown’s signature “green street” with a buffered, southbound bicycle lane and storm water catchment and mitigation areas in addition to Midtown’s standard sidewalk, LED lighting, and landscape improvements. (T-2.1)

- **Build the Piedmont Complete Street.** Serving as the northbound couplet to Juniper Street, this project from Ponce de Leon Avenue to 15th Street will slow excessive vehicle speeds, create safer street crossings, and add a protected bike lane. (T-2.2)

- **Build West Peachtree Street Complete Street.** Re-purpose one travel lane to create a buffered northbound cycle track north of North Avenue to Peachtree Street. South of North Avenue, West Peachtree may convert to two-way traffic flow with bike lanes in each direction. (T-2.3)

- **Build Spring Street Complete Street.** Re-purpose one travel lane to create a buffered southbound cycle track and build new, wider sidewalks with street trees and improved landscaping. (T-2.4)

- **Repurpose a lane on Peachtree Street.** Peachtree Street between Peachtree Place and Pine Street currently has two travel lanes in each direction. To enhance Peachtree Street as a signature corridor and encourage successful retail, this project will repurpose one travel lane for either on-street parking and loading, or for bike facilities. (T-2.5)

- **Convert one-way, east-west streets to two-way travel.** This change will make circulation easier and more intuitive for people driving, particularly visitors, and will reduce vehicle speeds. Candidate streets for conversion include: Pine Street (Juniper St to Peachtree St), 3rd Street (Spring St to West Peachtree St; Peachtree St to Juniper St), 4th Street (Spring St to Myrtle St) Peachtree Place (Williams St to Spring St), 13th Street – (Spring St to Peachtree Walk; Juniper St to Piedmont Ave) and 18th Street (Spring St to West Peachtree St). (T-2.6)

- **Advocate for a multi-modal level of service analysis with transportation policy-makers.** In order to design streetscape projects that take into account all modes of travel, a multimodal level of service analysis should be conducted during the project concept phase. Traditionally, permitting agencies have only required that a vehicle level of service analysis, which does not consider the impact of street design on pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. (T-2.7)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

- **Redesign 17th Street.** Reallocation space and redesign the street from Peachtree Street to Atlantic Station. Options under consideration include moving the designated bus lanes to the center of the street, adding landscaping to protect and shade people walking, and building a buffered bike facility. (T-2.8)

- **Reallocate space on 11th Street.** Reallocation roadway space on 11th Street from West Peachtree Street to Peachtree Street for additional on-street parking, bike lanes and/or a green median to discourage speeding and create a better environment for retail, walking, and bicycling. (T-2.9)

Long-term (>10 years)

- **Revisit long-term conversions of Spring & West Peachtree Streets and Juniper Street & Piedmont Avenue to two-way operations when the distribution of travel trips has shifted away from single-occupancy travel.** As part of the Midtown Transportation Plan, these major north-south streets were evaluated for a conversion to allow for two-way vehicular travel. It was determined that conversions would significantly impact traffic flow and that roadway re-purposing on these streets would provide greater benefit to the Midtown community at this time. However, as Midtown continues to transform into an even higher density district with more pedestrians and cyclists, the need may change. A long-term alternative that will require future feasibility analysis would be to convert one or both pairs to two-way streets. (T-2.10)
**Build out a safe and connected bicycle network. (T-3)**

Midtown has an opportunity to be one of the most bike-friendly neighborhoods in Atlanta due to its dense, mixed-use environment, along with its central location and proximity to destinations such as Piedmont Park and Georgia Tech. In addition to its health and environmental benefits, cycling also fills a gap in a city under-served by transit, providing greater mobility for those traveling to and from Midtown. When combined with transit, users can more easily reach destinations that are beyond comfortable walking distance from transit stations. Top-tier cities around the U.S. have recognized the value of cycling and are investing in infrastructure to meet the rising demand. In Atlanta, significant investments are already underway with the 22-mile BeltLine multi-use trail, adding to the 20+ miles of established greenway trails built by the PATH Foundation, and the 2016 roll-out of a City of Atlanta bike share program.

Midtown’s existing 5-miles of bike facilities provide basic north-south and east-west connections and a link to the BeltLine Eastside Trail via the 10th Street cycle track. With the exception of the 10th Street cycle track, Midtown’s bike infrastructure is not buffered from high-speed cars and often feels stressful and unsafe. Additional buffered bike facilities are needed to create a safe and all-inclusive bike network within Midtown. This is especially true of connections across the interstate to the Westside and to points north of 14th Street where these facilities are particularly limited. In addition to executing “Complete Streets”, the Midtown Alliance will also build large-scale, bike-oriented capital projects, build and encourage the proliferation of bicycle amenities, and establish a suite of policies to support bicycling.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Short-term (<5 years)**

- Establish maintenance plan for bike facilities. Routine bike facility maintenance will require an investment by the City of Atlanta in equipment and manpower to consistently clean the debris that accumulates in bike lanes. (T-3.1)
- Establish citywide standards for signals and detectors. Midtown Alliance should coordinate with the City to establish standards for the use of bike signals, beacons, and detectors to facilitate safe street crossings for cyclists. (T-3.2)

**Mid-term (5-10 years)**

- **Build new Peachtree Place Buffered Bike Lanes.** Build new bike lanes on Peachtree Place that provide a low-stress alternative to 10th Street for cyclists and may eventually connect to a new multi-use pathway that extends over the interstate to Georgia Tech’s campus. (T-3.3)
- **Build a Peachtree Place Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge.** A new bike and pedestrian bridge over the Connector via Peachtree Place would provide a calmer alternative to the busier 10th Street corridor. The proposed bridge would connect Midtown’s bike network with Georgia Tech and the planned multi-use path on 10th Street west of the Connector. (T-3.4)
- **Build a North Midtown Multi-Use Path Connection to BeltLine.** Build a two-way off-street paved path from West Peachtree Street along the wall of the Buford Spring Connector, connecting Midtown’s bike network to a second BeltLine access point at the northern end of the district. (T-3.5)
- **Add 15th Street Bike Lanes.** Add marked bike lanes for an east-west connection that will connect major north-south cycle tracks and link to the Arts Center MARTA Station. (T-3.6)
- **Support Implementation of a 10th Street Road Diet (West of Connector).** Coordinate with the City to convert the four lanes of 10th Street along the Georgia Tech campus to three lanes (two travel lanes and a center turn lane) and bike facilities. (T-3.7)
- **Connect the 10th Street Cycle Track to future bike lanes on Piedmont Avenue and Juniper Street.** Extend the current 10th Street cycle track from its current terminus at Myrtle Street by re-purposing one travel lane, building the cycle track on private right-of-way along 10th Street, or providing a low-stress connection on Myrtle Street and 8th Street. (T-3.8)

**Continuous**

- Collaborate with private development to provide bike-friendly amenities and destinations that including bike repair facilities, parking, and storage lockers. (T-3.9)
**Improve local and regional transit connections and frequency.** (T-4)

Midtown’s robust multi-modal transportation network includes four Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail stations, each roughly a half-mile apart and located one block off of Atlanta’s signature street, Peachtree St. Midtown is also served by both local and regional express bus services, including MARTA, Cobb Community Transit (CCT), Gwinnett County Transit (GCT), and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress. While transit infrastructure is excellent by Atlanta regional standards, Midtown still suffers from poor east-west transit connectivity and infrequent bus service.

In a 2016 survey of Midtown community residents and workers, 94% of respondents indicated that transit should be a high priority for transportation improvements – on par with walking. Transit becomes an essential service for a dynamic, urban area, therefore Midtown will continue to invest in maintaining, elevating, and expanding its transit infrastructure and services.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Short-term (<5 years)**

- Coordinate with partner agencies to introduce transit signal priority technology. Transit signal priority is an operational strategy using special technology to give preferential treatment to transit vehicles at signalized intersections. This could include providing a green light for an on-coming bus or to hold the green longer. These strategies improve travel times for bus passengers and improve on-time performance. (T-4.1)

- Coordinate with MARTA to implement Route 110 improvements. Improvements would include doubling frequency of service, as well as installing bus shelters and real-time arrival information, implementing transit signal priority, and eliminating the layover at Arts Center Station. (T-4.2)

**Mid-term (5-10 years)**

- Introduce a Midtown Core Transit Circulator. This eastside transit circulator would mirror the quality of service that is already available on the west side of the Connector (with the Georgia Tech and Atlantic Station shuttles). (T-4.3)

- Work with the City and transit agencies to improve commuter bus routes in Midtown to increase efficiency and mitigate impact on pedestrian environment. This project aims to develop a plan for feeding commuter buses into a single MARTA station, reducing idling and mitigating impact on Midtown’s surface streets. (T-4.4)

- Re-envision North Avenue as an enhanced transit corridor. In advance of a future streetcar route on North Avenue, this project includes targeted improvements that allow existing and future transit to work better, including new bus shelters, “smart city” features such as real-time bus information and transit signal priority at signalized intersections, and safer pedestrian crossings. (T-4.5)

**Long-term (> 10 years)**

- Build a future infill rail station at the north end of the district. A future MARTA station at Midtown’s north end would increase transit access to an area under served by rail transit, benefiting in particular SCAD Atlanta, major office development, and the adjacent Brookwood and Sherwood Forest neighborhoods. (T-4.6)

- Establish 10th Street as an enhanced transit corridor. This primary thoroughfare links the Midtown Core with Piedmont Park and the BeltLine Eastside Trail to the east and Georgia Tech, Westside and Home Park to the west. It is identified by the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta BeltLine as a future transit corridor that will connect with the proposed Atlanta streetcar network. (T-4.7)
Build new connections that enhance Midtown’s street grid, increase travel options, and strengthen connectivity. (T-5)

Midtown’s connected street grid network serves as the backbone of the district. This network provides greater accessibility through multiple travel choices, increasing network efficiency and reliability. Research shows that more compact and connected street networks tend to have significantly higher levels of people walking and biking and fewer car trips compared to traditional suburban street networks, where traffic is funneled onto a limited number of arterials. More specifically, the data shows that those living in more compact street network arrangements are not only four times more likely to walk or bike but also three times less likely to be involved in a fatal crash (CNU, 2015). Proposed street extensions will reduce Midtown’s average block size and increase connectivity for users of all transportation modes.

Midtown’s connectivity also starts to deteriorate at its edges. The Downtown Connector separates Midtown from the Westside with limited east-west corridors bridging this divide. Additionally, while there is access to I-75 for north Midtown, drivers heading to I-85 northbound and GA-400 have limited options, creating more congestion on surface streets during rush hours. Midtown Alliance will continue to build and enhance capital improvements that strengthen regional connectivity and address congestion hot spots as commuters enter and exit the district.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Short-term (<5 years)**

- **Build a 15th Street Extension.** This new corridor extends 15th Street from its current terminus at West Peachtree Street to Williams Street, providing an alternative to 14th Street and enabling a future 15th Street bridge. (T-5.1)

- **Modify the zoning code to dedicate private property towards identified new streets and pedestrian paths.** (T-5.2)

- **Coordinate with the City to update the Atlanta Street Master Plan.** The city’s street master plan should be updated to include identified new street connections in Midtown on privately owned land. This will ensure that the land needed for new street connections will be transferred to the City as property develops. (T-5.3)

**Mid-term (5-10 years)**

- **Build a 15th St Bridge and HOV/HOT Ramps.** Provide bridge access to I-85N and GA 400 from the northern part of Midtown, relieving pressure on 14th Street. It will also improve connectivity for both cars and cyclists between Midtown and the Westside. (T-5.4)

- **Reconfigure the North Midtown street grid.** The character of Midtown north of 17th Street is negatively impacted by a disconnected street grid and the resulting large blocks. The free flowing ramps to the Buford Spring Connector interrupt the street grid, encourage excessive vehicle speeds, and hamper development opportunities. A substantial reconfiguration of the street network bounded by Peachtree Street, I-75 and 17th Street is envisioned that removes the aerial ramps, re-establishes the street grid, and provides at-grade access to the Buford Spring Connector. (T-5.5)

- **Build 13th Street, 11th Street, Williams Street Extensions.** Extending these local streets and will add more street continuity and connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, reduce the traffic burden on Midtown’s major corridors, and create more frontage and site access options for redevelopment. The proposed street extensions include 13th St from Williams Street to Peachtree Street, 11th St from Williams Street to West Peachtree Street, and Williams Street from 4th Street to Ponce De Leon. (T-5.6)
Undertake network improvements that improve safety and efficiency. (T-6)

Like any urban area, Midtown experiences considerable congestion during peak travel times. This is in large part influenced by regional issues - a congested Interstate system that backs up on to surface streets, a lack of extensive regional transit across the Atlanta metro area, and sprawling development patterns that make transit non-viable for many people. While Midtown can’t tackle regional transportation and transit on its own, it can continue to improve signal timing, and implement improvements that create more travel options.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Add new traffic signals. The Midtown Transportation Plan identified over 25 locations where protected crossings should be implemented. This project will add a mix of standard and pedestrian actuated signals to provide more convenient opportunities for pedestrians to cross streets. These new signals also provide the City with the ability to better regulate vehicle speeds by timing signals to slower speeds. (T-6.1)

• Ensure regulation of privately hired traffic control officers. Commercial office buildings hire off-duty police officers to direct traffic, in most cases over-riding traffic signals, to make it easier for Midtown workers to exit parking decks. These traffic officers can have an adverse impact on a coordinated traffic system. The City of Atlanta does not currently regulate this activity. It is recommended that a permitting system be put in place to control if, when, and where traffic control officers will be allowed, with the goal of reducing their number significantly. (T-6.2)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

• Realign West Peachtree Street at 12th Street. This project calls for moving the eastern leg of the 12th Street intersection south to better align the intersection and reduce delay from the extra signal phase needed under the existing configuration. This requires the purchase or donation of right-of-way on the southeast corner of West Peachtree Street and 12th Street. (T-6.3)

• Improve the North Avenue Interstate exit. To improve access to the area of Midtown between 10th Street and North Avenue this project reconfigures the southbound North Avenue Interstate exit to improve access to Williams Street. Williams Street may also be extended from its current terminus at 4th Street to Ponce de Leon Avenue. (T-6.4)

• Coordinate with the City of Atlanta to reconfigure Buford-Spring Connector access at Piedmont/ Monroe. This project would eliminate an inefficient and unsafe choke point along the Buford Highway Connector to eliminate an unsafe weaving condition for drivers and help to lessen the severity of peak traffic congestion. (T-6.5)

• Coordinate with the City of Atlanta and the Ansley Park Neighborhood to build improvements at the Peachtree Street and Beverly Road intersection. To create a safer pedestrian environment, this project will remove the refuge island at the southeast corner and tighten the intersection approach to reduce pedestrian crossing distance, as well as add two signals on Beverly Road at Peachtree Street and at West Peachtree Street. (T-6.6)

Continuous

• Execute the Midtown Traffic Operations Program (MTOP). Since 2013, Midtown Alliance has managed, optimized, and upgraded more than 100 traffic and pedestrian signals to address congestion and improve all modes of travel. (T-6.7)
Expand employer-commuter programs and customized support through the Midtown Transportation program to reduce traffic congestion and increase air quality. (T-7)

Today, 61% of commutes in Midtown are single-vehicle occupancy trips. While this is significantly below the 82% regional average, it will be imperative for Midtown to continue managing and redistributing this travel demand as Midtown continues to add more workers, residents and visitors. To do so, Midtown Alliance will maintain and scale Midtown Transportation, a Midtown program that incentivizes and advocates for commute alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips in and out of Midtown.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- Expand transportation demand management program to Midtown residents. While Midtown Transportation has focused on serving Midtown workers, expanding the program to Midtown residents will help reduce peak flow traffic and congestion. (T-7.1)

Continuous

- Execute and scale employer and commuter outreach and support services. Midtown Transportation conducts full-scale marketing, communications, campaigns, and events, and also provides customized services that include clean commute route planning, carpool/vanpool matching, employer surveys, scorecards and reporting, recognition programs, and consulting services. (T-7.2)

- Conduct outreach for transit promotions and sales. Midtown Transportation coordinates with regional transit agencies to offer discounted transit passes and free transit pass promotions for eligible new users. (T-7.3)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

- Pilot an autonomous, on-demand shuttle service for last mile trips. Driverless, on-demand shuttles are starting to be tested in cities around the world and Midtown should seek partnerships to pilot similar shuttles here. (T-8.1)

- Explore a pilot project with Georgia Tech to allow autonomous vehicles along North Avenue or 10th Street. (T-8.2)

Continuous

- Integrate technologies into the transportation experience, including real-time transit communications, digital wayfinding, parking mobile applications, and on-demand transportation applications. (T-8.3)

- Support the use and development of high-efficiency, sustainable transport such as electric, hybrid, and fuel-cell powered vehicles. Midtown Alliance will continue to require electric vehicle charging stations and follow clean purchasing guidelines for electric vehicles and appliances for the Midtown Green team. (T-8.4)

- Encourage the development and growth of shared transportation options such as car-sharing, short-term car rentals, and bike share. (T-8.5)

Plan for innovations such as autonomous vehicles and car-sharing that may transform the way people move around cities. (T-8)

Rapidly changing technologies and better access to information has allowed people to make more informed decisions about the route they take, when to travel, and what mode they take. Shared and on-demand transportation services are already affecting decisions around vehicle ownership and the demand for parking. Autonomous vehicles may have a major impact on how we travel and their implementation is not a matter of if, but when. Midtown intends to be on the leading edge of innovation and to embrace technological change as it occurs. To do so, Midtown Alliance will be prepared to pilot and adopt new technologies and information sharing opportunities that will continue to improve mobility and accessibility in Midtown.
T-4.2 - Improve Route 110 Service Along Peachtree Street

T-2.1 - Build the Juniper “Green” Streetscape

T-3.4 - Build a Peachtree Place Bicycle / Pedestrian Bridge to connect Midtown and the Westside

T-5.1 / T-5.4 - Build a 15th Street Extension and Bridge Over the Interstate

T-2.5 - Re-purpose a Lane on Peachtree Street to Create a Complete Street
Public Spaces

Overall Goal: Build out a network of permanent and temporary parks, plazas, courtyards, and multi-purpose spaces that are safe, well-designed, environmentally sensitive, and activated.
OVERVIEW

Extraordinary open spaces that are integrated into the urban fabric are an essential element of the world’s greatest cities. These spaces provide for recreation, leisure, health, and human connections. They are particularly critical in high-density urban districts where homes tend to be more compact and space is at a premium.

Beyond the quality of life benefits that parks provide, recent analyses suggest that open spaces may have substantial positive impacts on surrounding property values. The impact varies by location, as factors such as the topography, visual attractiveness, recreational opportunities and proximity of other open spaces, influence the degree of positive impact on real estate values.

A signature feature of Midtown is its urban but green character. To add to the quality of life and reinforce this character, Midtown should build and activate a network of people-centric open spaces that further emphasize Midtown as a unique, compelling and memorable place. Spaces may be publicly or privately owned, but must always be accessible to the community at large. These spaces can range from signature parks, to pocket parks and plazas, and even Midtown’s streets. They should allow for a wide range of elements such as art, water features, games, outdoor dining, and seating nooks- all of which create places where people want to people-watch and mingle.

INITIATIVES AT GLANCE

- Create permanent, public, parks to serve Midtown. (P-1 / PG. 29)
- Re-purpose publicly-owned space, such as under-utilized roadway, as permanent, “pocket” parks and plazas. (P-2 / PG. 29)
- Partner with the private sector to provide temporary, privately-owned open spaces. (P-3 / PG. 30)
- Activate existing privately-owned, publicly accessible spaces in coordination with property owners to make them more functional and accessible. (P-4 / PG. 30)
- Concentrate a variety of enhancements, activities, and programming to enliven public spaces. (P-5 / PG. 31)
- Make Midtown’s streets unique, active and engaging public spaces. (P-6 / PG. 34)
- Explore longer-term opportunities to create open space by capping the interstate. (P-7 / PG. 34)
- Build functional and attractive gateway elements at major entrances into the district. (P-2 / PG. 35)
- Ensure a clean and safe environment through public safety and maintenance operations. (P-9 / PG. 36)
- Design public spaces to be environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient. (P-10 / PG. 36)

PUBLIC SPACES

Create permanent, public parks to serve Midtown. (P-1)

Midtown benefits from being home to Piedmont Park, a 230-acre, City of Atlanta park. It is a regional destination with a rich mix of activities and events located on the eastern edge of District. Piedmont Park alone provides adequate greenspace access to approximately 32% of Midtown residents and employees who are located within a 10 minute walk of its entrances. However, the northern, southern, and most western edges of the district are too far to be reasonably served by Piedmont Park.

To serve the influx of residents and employees, Midtown would benefit from having at least one 1/2-acre park in each of its character areas and at least one signature, one-acre urban park accessible to the majority of the district.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Develop a menu of potential available tools (such as transfer of development rights, zoning incentives, use of impact fees, other public funds, private foundation funds, tax breaks) to secure a significant green space. (P-1.1)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

• Acquire a permanent, signature park site in Midtown that can be improved and maintained for public benefit. A 4.27-acre, full-block development site at Ponce De Leon, 3rd Street, W. Peachtree Street, and Spring Street, has been identified as an opportunity to build both a signature park and future high density development. This option should be pursued by continuing discussions with property owners and developing a pro forma to understand the development scenarios in which a community park would be financially feasible. (P-1.2)

Continuous

• Maintain permanent pocket parks at Peachtree & Ponce and Peachtree & 15th Street and Pershing Point Park. (P-2.1)

• Seek opportunities to recapture excess right-of-way to create additional pocket parks. (P-2.2)

Re-purpose publicly-owned space, such as under-utilized roadway, as permanent, “pocket” parks and plazas. (P-2)

Midtown has several permanent, small parks, also known as “pocket” parks, that help fill open space demand at a smaller scale. There are three permanent pocket parks along Peachtree Street, all publicly-owned: Pershing Point Park, 15th Street Plaza, and the Ponce De Leon Triangle. The latter two parks were created by redesigning the street to remove lanes and capture and redesign that land as open space.

ACTION ITEMS

Continuous

• Maintain permanent pocket parks at Peachtree & Ponce and Peachtree & 15th Street and Pershing Point Park. (P-2.1)

• Seek opportunities to recapture excess right-of-way to create additional pocket parks. (P-2.2)
PUBLIC SPACES

INITIATIVES

Partner with the private sector to provide temporary, privately-owned open spaces. (P-3)

Midtown has successfully partnered with property owners of vacant development sites to create temporary parks. There is currently one sizable half-acre temporary park at the corner of 10th and Peachtree Street managed through a partnership between Midtown Alliance and the property owner since 2012. Partnering with property owners of vacant land to create temporary parks while they wait for the right development opportunity has proven to be a successful model. Going forward, Midtown will continue to seek these type of relationships.

Activate existing privately-owned, publicly accessible spaces in coordination with property owners to make them more functional and accessible. (P-4)

Midtown's existing development has a considerable inventory of untapped open space, much of it underutilized or inaccessible because of its design and lack of programming. Working with property owners to make better use of existing spaces will help meet some of the district's open space demand. Converting this existing space to usable space can be accomplished through collaborating with property owners and making minor physical modifications such as adding paths, changing landscaping features and introducing activation elements like seating, outdoor games, and art.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Maintain Peachtree & 10th Street Pocket Park and explore opportunities that would expand the park and/or preserve its status. (P-3.1)

• Investigate opportunity to develop pocket parks at key locations along Peachtree Street. Prime locations for pocket parks include the intersections at Peachtree & 4th Streets and Peachtree & 17th Streets. (P-3.2)

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Develop an Open Space Activation Program that encourages conversion of open space. This program should provide guidelines and best practices for converting and activating open space. It could also work in complement to the AdVenture Fund program, detailed in P-5.2. (P-4.1)
Concentrate a variety of enhancements, activities, and programming to enliven public spaces. (P-5)

A comprehensive public space strategy includes activation as a fundamental component to ensure that spaces are safe, attractive and well-used. While open space has long been considered essential to city life, the design of those spaces has evolved to emphasize functional, enjoyable activities that suit the needs and desires of the community. Ultimately, physical spaces become true places when they are welcoming, active and engaging.

Street-level activation is an added layer of physical space enhancements that tailors those spaces to a human scale, responds to the interests and behaviors of the surrounding community, engages the senses of its users, and encourages individuals to take ownership of the space and to interact with fellow community members.

Activation programming includes a mix of various treatments that, by providing an array of activities to choose from, diversify the user base and populate the space throughout the day. This can include installations and programming such as seating, walkways, lighting, bicycle amenities, water features, outdoor games and musical instruments, public art and performance, reading rooms, playground and exercise equipment—just to name a few. When thoughtfully grouped to meet the needs and desires of the community, a concentrated mix of elements draws new and repeated users to the space and influences a sense of identity for the district or subarea.

Arts-based activation, in particular, should be used strategically to enrich Midtown’s public spaces by integrating civic and cultural narratives into the urban environment. Thoughtfully selected public art can thematically and aesthetically direct programming in a public space to create a unique and inviting experience.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

- **Develop an arts-based placemaking program with community partners.** This program leverages partnerships with Midtown’s numerous arts and cultural organizations and concentrates public art and arts-centric programming in public spaces to reinforce Midtown’s identity as a vibrant, engaging arts district. (P-5.1)

- **Establish the AdVenture Fund.** Create an activation partnership program that encourages innovative thinking among the Midtown community. Midtown Alliance will provide funding and direction for community partners to make enhancements in publicly accessible, private property throughout Midtown. (P-5.2)

- **Identify sites for rotating and permanent public art and install artworks along the Art Walk.** Continue to engage leaders in the arts community to curate temporary and permanent installations at deliberate sites along the half-mile Midtown Art Walk. (P-5.3)
Midtown Public Art Initiative

Midtown Alliance’s Public Art and Street Activation Program is a strategy to enliven the public realm with visual points of interest that invite conversation and interaction. Reinforcing Midtown’s identity as the “Heart of the Arts,” these human-scaled projects and programming are intended to enrich the streetscape experience and enhance Midtown’s sense of community and walkability. Initiated in 2012, the program continues to grow a network of art and arts-centered public spaces that celebrate Midtown’s legacy of art and culture by increasing its presence in and its accessibility to the public sphere.

VISION
Be a vibrant urban district with an engaging streetlife fueled by high-quality temporary and permanent art that reflects Midtown’s identity as Atlanta’s leading edge for creativity and innovation.

CORE VALUES:
• Midtown should be known as a place that is constantly evolving. We should celebrate its history while embracing creativity and innovation to lead Atlanta forward.
• Midtown should prioritize the pedestrian experience and create a street level environment that is safe, comfortable, attractive and engaging.
• Midtown should be easily navigable through wayfinding and technology.
• Midtown should be a year-round destination that attracts residents, businesses, visitors.
• Midtown should be strategic when choosing locations for public art in order to reinforce the energy and density of priority development areas.
• Midtown should strive for excellence in design and maximum impact.

STRATEGIES:
1. Concentrate initial efforts in specific geographic areas, such as the 10th Street corridor, the Midtown Art Walk and MARTA transit stations.

2. Formalize the recognition of a cultural district (“Heart of the Arts”) with physical, tangible elements located within the public realm around Midtown’s major cultural assets. Prioritize “arts-based placemaking” around the Woodruff Arts Center, MODA and Colony Square/SCAD Show. As momentum builds, gradually expand outward from there (Center for Puppetry Arts, Breman Museum, SCAD-Atlanta, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Fox Theater, etc).

3. Curate a mix of temporary installations and permanent acquisitions, but begin with temporary to have the freedom to experiment and test ideas.

4. Curate a mix of emerging and established artists to celebrate local talent and attract national attention.

5. Consider the “power of 10” as it applies to creating a holistic environment around the art, complete with programming and supporting attractions such as restaurants, retail and open space.

6. Recognize that art and activation are two distinct ideas. They can be linked through design and programming but they are not automatically interchangeable.
PUBLIC SPACES

INITIATIVES

Make Midtown’s streets unique, active and engaging public spaces. (P-6)

Streets are cities’ fundamental public spaces. Midtown has long embraced this concept by making significant investments in attractive, pedestrian-scale, streetscape projects. As Midtown continues to build out the streetscape network, the bar can be raised even higher. In a dense urban district, streets become not only paths for travel but places to linger.

On private property, the supplemental zone between the sidewalk and the building face helps to frame the public space, and should be built to complement the street with appropriate landscaping and activation elements. An impeccable streetscape aesthetic requires utilities to be buried underground rather than hanging overhead. Variations on the standard streetscape, such as “green” streetscapes, inject personality and contribute a defining sense of place.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Build the Art Walk. This project establishes an artful experience along Peachtree Walk, enhanced by lighting, landscaping, and art installations, connecting the Midtown Station to Arts Center Station. A later phase of the project envisions a continuation from Arts Center Station to the future infill MARTA Station north of the Peachtree Street & West Peachtree Street intersection. (P-6.1)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

• Build the Green Walk. Similar in concept to the Art Walk, the Green Walk provides a slightly different character with more landscaping elements and a shared space design and connects from the Midtown Station to North Avenue Station via Cypress Street. (P-6.2)

Continuous

• Encourage property owners to enhance supplemental zones connecting the building to the street in unique and inviting ways. Such enhancements may include outdoor patios and furniture, merchandising displays, lighting, interactive art, planters, and creative shelters. (P-6.3)

• Adapt the zoning to enable long-term allowable outdoor merchandising in the supplemental zone with a single permit. (P-6.4)

Explore longer-term opportunities to create open space by capping the interstate. (P-7)

As space begins to tighten in Midtown, acquiring public space becomes increasingly more difficult and creative options more desirable. One such alternative is the concept of building a park over the interstate highways adjacent to Midtown. Although developing a park over the Downtown Connector is costly, doing so would provide greenspace and serve to reconnect the urban fabric of Atlanta. There are two prime locations for Midtown that would be suitable: a large-scale “Stitch” between Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, and an expansion to the Peachtree Place Bike/Ped Bridge that would yield a park joining the Westside and Midtown between Peachtree Place and 10th Street.

ACTION ITEMS

Long-term (>10 years)

• Build a 10th Street Bridge Park between 10th Street and Peachtree Place over the Connector. (P-7.1)

• Build “The Stitch” over the Connector. An early concept for a future park and development sites over the Downtown Connector from Spring Street to Piedmont Avenue has been developed by Central Atlanta Progress. Midtown Alliance will stay involved in exploring the feasibility of this idea and helping to shape the concept as it develops. (P-7.2)
PUBLIC SPACES

INITIATIVES

Build functional and attractive gateway elements at major entrances into the district. (P-8)

Midtown’s bridges and MARTA Stations are the most common entry points into the district. They present opportunities to provide gateway experiences that reinforce the character of Midtown and welcome pedestrians, drivers, cyclists, and transit riders.

ACTION ITEMS

Short-term (<5 years)

• Deliver 10th Street Bridgescapes. This project includes upgrading bridge fencing and adding more lighting, landscaping, a pedestrian buffer, and a safer bicycling connection. (P-8.1)

• Implement Midtown MARTA Station Enhancements. Station enhancements will include a variety of elements that increase multimodal usability and draw users to the site, including pop-up cafes, bicycle service facilities, real-time transit information, and public art. This project will act in complement to the Art Walk, which faces the site across 10th Street. (P-8.2)

Mid-term (5-10 years)

• Deliver North Avenue Bridgescapes. Develop and implement a bridgescapes that enlivens one of Midtown’s most important east-west connections. (P-8.3)

• Implement North Avenue MARTA Station Enhancements. Similar in function to the proposed enhancements at Midtown MARTA Station, this project will include physical elements and programming to further activate the space that may include seating, games, a shade structure, and pop-up café. (P-8.4)

Long-term (>10 years)

• Coordinate on permanent enhancements to Arts Center Station with the future transit oriented development planned for the site. MARTA intends to facilitate air-rights development at the Arts Center Station. Enhancement plans for this transit station should be modified and incorporated into future development to ensure the station serves as a vibrant and attractive amenity for residents, workers, and tourists. (P-8.5)

Continuous

• Implement expressway beautification that utilizes vegetation to green both sides of the I-75/85 highway and elevates the image of Midtown along the vehicular access route. (P-8.6)

• Maintain Midtown’s bridgescapes that improve the experience for travelers on the bridge surfaces and on the Connector. Bridgescapes to be maintained include North Avenue Bridge, the Peachtree Place Bike/Ped Bridge, 10th Street Bridge, 14th Street Bridge, the future 15th Street Bridge, 17th Street Bridge, and Peachtree Street North Bridge. (P-8.7)

1-75/1-85 CONNECTOR TRANSFORMATION PLAN

In 2011, Midtown Alliance (MA) and Central Atlanta Progress/Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID) developed a bold vision for the I-75/85 Connector between I-20 and the Brookwood Interchange. The planning process included public sector leaders from the City of Atlanta and Georgia Department of Transportation, a Leadership Team of Downtown and Midtown stakeholders, and a Creative Team of local design professionals. Completed in early 2012, the first phase of Connector Transformation process resulted in a strategic plan that defines opportunities to enhance the Connector in ways that both improve its appearance and create a positive economic impact for the City, nearby businesses, institutions, and destinations.
**PUBLIC SPACES**

**INITIATIVES**

Ensure a clean and safe environment through public safety and maintenance operations. (P-9)

“Clean & safe” operations are a core and growing component of Midtown Alliance’s work. The Midtown Blue public safety force acts as the “eyes and ears” of the Midtown community 24-hours a day, every day of the year. Midtown's public safety strategy includes patrolling, monitoring, education, collaboration and enforcement to protect and serve the Midtown District. The team is comprised of both private security and off-duty Atlanta Police Department officers who augment the services of the Atlanta Police Department.

Midtown Green services include street sweeping, trash and recycling monitoring, and landscaping and maintenance of medians, pocket parks, and tree wells in the District. They report maintenance issues to the City and/or Georgia Power including pot holes, dangerous sidewalk conditions, missing and broken street lights, pavers, street furniture, and dead or damaged street trees. At times, Midtown Green also replaces street lights, pavers, and street furniture. These services are critical to sustaining the Midtown pedestrian experience. As Midtown Alliance continues to deliver new complete streets with additional landscape elements, barrier separated bike lanes, and parks and plazas, the role and scope of maintenance rises dramatically.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Continuous

- Continue to employ round the clock public safety patrols – both police officers and private security. (P-9.1)

- Maintain and monitor a robust camera network in the public right-of-way and continue to strengthen collaboration with the Atlanta Police Department Video Integration Center. (P-9.2)

- Execute quarterly Public Safety Council and education programs for private buildings and other public safety partners in Midtown. (P-9.3)

- Strive to ensure that all of Midtown’s public spaces are clean 24 hours a day. (P-9.4)

- Provide daily upkeep of Midtown’s public spaces, including street-sweeping, landscaping, waste removal, sidewalk repairs and street furniture maintenance. (P-9.5)

Design public spaces to be environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient. (P-10)

Midtown is both urban and distinctly green, a character that is unique in the Atlanta region and in the Southeast. It has a significant canopy of over 2000 street trees, lush landscaping, and 300 acres of urban greenspace. Incorporating and implementing a comprehensive green infrastructure public spaces plan to better manage stormwater runoff, mitigate urban heat island effects and increase water quality will augment the positive impacts of this new greenspace network. It will also build on the foundational goals of the Midtown EcoDistrict, a sustainability designation and Midtown Alliance initiative that aims to position the district as one of the most livable, vibrant, and environmentally-forward places in the U.S.

To learn more about the Midtown EcoDistrict, go to MidtownATL.com/EcoDistrict.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Short-term (<5 years)

- Develop a district-wide green infrastructure plan that reduces water runoff and improves water quality. (P-10.1)

Continuous

- Incorporate landscaping elements in public spaces that add visual character and increase the coverage of carbon-sequestering plants, such as green walls, shade trees, planters, and green roofs. (P-10.2)

- Reduce resource consumption in landscaping and maintenance operations through the use of clean energy equipment, rainwater collection for irrigation, and native plant selection. (P-10.3)

- Incorporate sustainable elements in public spaces where possible, such as LED lights, solar-power chargers, rainwater harvesting systems, and permeable pavers. (P-10.4)
SPACES TO LINGER...

P-3.1 - Work with Private Sector to Provide Public Spaces

P-7.1 - Build a 10th Street Bridge Park over the Interstate between 10th St. and Peachtree Place

P-8.2 - Implement MARTA Station Enhancements

P-7.2 - Work With the City and CAP to Build “The Stitch” Over Connector

P-9 - Ensure a Clean and Safe Environment Through Public Safety and Maintenance Operations
The Blueprint 3.0 Action Plan was designed through a collaboration between Midtown Alliance and its partners.