

Request for Proposals

Midtown Bus Stop Enhancements Plan

August 30, 2021



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Introduction

Midtown Alliance is seeking a qualified consultant firm or team to research, evaluate, design, and present creative placemaking enhancements for bus stops along Midtown's West Peachtree and Spring Street corridors. The **Midtown Bus Stop Enhancement Plan** will identify and develop both immediate and long-term plans to transform the appearance and experience of bus stops along these two corridors, between North Avenue and 17th Street.

Interested consultant firms or teams are encouraged to submit proposals that exhibit multidisciplinary and creative approaches to public engagement and public space design.

Project funding has been provided through a federal grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Supplemental Study program. Midtown Alliance is providing the required local matching funds for the ARC grant. The committed budget for all three tasks within the project's scope of work is \$100,000.

Please reference Attachments A and B, located at the end of this document, for the complete Scope of Work proposed for this project and the Study Area, respectively.

Background

Midtown Alliance completed the original Blueprint Midtown master plan in 1997, and adopted Blueprint Midtown 3.0 in 2016. Midtown's Blueprint 3.0 calls for continued investment in Midtown's infrastructure to make the district safer and more accessible, vibrant, and multi-modal. The plan recommends undertaking an integrated approach to transportation enhancements that provides safe access and mobility for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, as well as motorists.

As a cost effective and adaptable mode, bus transit is a critical option to address mobility and equity issues in the region and Midtown. In the 2019 Midtown Community Survey, 90% of respondents stated that transit should be a high/very high priority in Midtown. An initial audit of bus stops in 2020 revealed that Midtown bus riders are woefully underserved. The lack of basic bus stop information and amenities available to those riding a bus in Atlanta and Midtown present a significant barrier to the wide adoption of the mode and mark a failure to invest in adequate amenities for some of our most transit-dependent populations.

In support of a true multi-modal community, this LCI tactical study aims to improve the comfort, convenience, and accessibility of bus stops in Midtown, by better understanding the current conditions of and access to bus stops, understanding the needs of commuters and stakeholders, and developing concepts for enhancing a subset of bus stops that address those needs.

By focusing concept development on Spring and West Peachtree Streets, resources would be spent along Midtown's highest ridership bus routes and two quickly growing corridors. Since 2015, over 17,000 jobs have been added or announced from major employers like NCR, Google, Anthem, and Norfolk Southern. Bus enhancements would also add to the improvements that have been planned for these corridors including protected bike lanes and the activation of former parking spaces into parklets. The end result would be two major corridors that more closely meet the needs and desires of the community, and a project that is directly in-line with many of the goals outlined in the One Atlanta and Midtown Transportation Plans including safety, improving access to transit and jobs, and addressing inequities across commute options.

Sponsor Mission

Midtown Alliance is serving as the project manager for the project. Midtown Alliance is a non-profit membership organization and a coalition of leading business and community leaders – united in our commitment to Midtown as a premiere destination for commerce, culture, education and living. Since its creation in 1978, Midtown Alliance has been the driving force behind the revitalization of Midtown. Governed

by a board of the district's top private sector leaders, our mission is to improve and sustain the quality of life for those who live, work and play here. Midtown Alliance accomplishes this goal through a comprehensive approach to planning and development that includes initiatives to enhance public safety, improve the physical environment, and strengthen the urban amenities which give the area its unique character. Guided by a visionary master plan – Blueprint Midtown – and in partnership with the Midtown Improvement District, Midtown has become a national model for urban excellence.

Project Partners

A broad group of project partners will be necessary to ensure the appropriate vision and enable the successful implementation of the project recommendations. Following are the key necessary partners currently identified:

- GRTA/SRTA
- MARTA
- City of Atlanta
- The Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority
- Businesses and property owners
- Midtown residents and area employees
- Midtown community at-large

Definitions

- ARC – Atlanta Regional Commission
- Concerned Funding Agencies – for the purposes of the ARC LCI program, which is funding a portion of the Project, these include the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Midtown Improvement District
- City – City of Atlanta
- Consultant – for the purpose of the Request for Qualifications, "Consultant" shall mean Consortiums, Joint Ventures, Firms, Planners, Engineers, Designers, Architects, Consultant Teams, or other persons submitting a response to this Request for Proposals
- Invest Atlanta – Atlanta's Development Authority
- LCI – Livable Centers Initiative
- MARTA – Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
- Plan and/or Project – Midtown Bus Stop Enhancement Plan

Livable Centers Initiative Program Requirements

All projects, including this Project, funded through the Livable Centers Initiative program must use competitive procurement procedures and follow applicable Federal regulations (49 CFR Part 18). 49 CFR Part 18 is available at <http://edfr.gpoaccess.gov>. Contracts executed for completion of this Project must comply with the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act as prescribed in O.C.G.A. Section 13-10-91.

Additionally, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) requirements of 49 CFR Part 26 applies to LCI projects since federal funds are utilized. It is a MIDTOWN ALLIANCE objective to ensure that DBEs, as defined in Part 26, have an equal opportunity to participate in the Project. A DBE goal of 17.61 percent, as the overall DBE goal for ARC, is the *goal* for this Project.

Submittal Items

Submittals must include the following items to be considered complete and responsive to this Request for Proposals:

1. One-page cover letter summarizing the consultant's interest in the Project and identifying the contact information of the project manager/key contact.
2. Names and résumés (including an email address) of a principal, the project manager/key contact (if different) and key staff members who will work on the Project.
3. Names of any subconsultants (including key personnel and résumés) and a summary of their scope of services.
4. A statement of project approach that addresses how the consultant will accomplish the identified scope of work.
5. A proposed schedule to complete the Project (timeline including key milestones for deliverables after Notice to Proceed).
6. A project budget and fee itemized by each work task/phase outline in Attachment A that identifies:
 - a) The standard hourly billing rate for each staff member (or employee classification) anticipated to work on the Project
 - b) The number of hours worked per staff member
 - c) The percentage of total work completed by the prime consultant and any subconsultant(s)
 - d) Total cost for all anticipated reimbursable expenses

In addition to the detail above, the project budget must also be summarized with completion of the form included as Attachment C.

7. For the consultant and any subconsultants: description of a maximum of three (3) similar or related projects successfully completed within the last five years including references with names and contact information. Of particular interest would be any projects completed within large city downtowns.
8. A letter(s) from the consultant or any subconsultant(s) identifying the firm's GDOT certified DBE status (as applicable) and percentage of work proposed to be conducted for the Project.
9. As necessary, additional information demonstrating understanding and insights related to the project scope.

The body of the submittal shall include a maximum of twenty (20) pages. An appendix of no more than ten (10) pages may also be provided with materials highlighting previous work and resumes. Every effort should be made to make proposals as concise as possible.

One (1) PDF copy of the submittal must be sent via email to Katie Marticke at katie@midtownatl.com, and received by 5:00 P.M., Friday, September 17th, 2021. Submittals received after this date and time will not be considered.

Please address any questions in writing via email at katie@midtownatl.com. All questions must be received in writing by Tuesday September 7th, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. Answers will be made available to all parties via email and at MidtownATL.com/BusStopStudy on Monday, September 13th, 2021.

RFP Timeline

RFP Release Date	August 30, 2021
Questions Due	September 7, 2021
Responses to Questions	September 13, 2021
Submittals Due	October 1, 2021 at 5:00PM (EST)
Interviews (if necessary)	Week of October 4, 2021 (anticipated)
Consultant Selection	October 8, 2021 (anticipated)

Acceptance of Qualifications

MIDTOWN ALLIANCE reserves and holds without any liability on the part of MIDTOWN ALLIANCE the following rights and options:

- To select a consultant to perform the scope of work described in this request
- To reject any and/or all submittals or portions of submittals
- To accept submittals in any order or combination
- To reject a subconsultant
- To re-advertise if deemed necessary
- To interview candidates prior to making a selection
- To issue subsequent Requests for Proposals
- To not negotiate or contract for the services
- To approve, disapprove, modify or cancel all work to be undertaken

Selection Procedures

The selection process will be based on the qualifications of the consultant/team to complete the Project on time, within budget, and meeting all study and LCI program 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 requiring additional evaluation. MIDTOWN ALLIANCE will use the following criteria in evaluating submittals. The list is not shown in any prioritized order:

- Understanding and insight related to project scope
- Demonstration of understanding and commitment to develop creative, unique and contextual approaches to public engagement and public space design
- Abilities and capacity of professional personnel and subconsultants
- Related experience and past performance in similar projects, specifically with large city downtowns
- Experience and past performance in working with diverse clients and complicated settings
- Experience and past performance in public involvement and stakeholder input in downtown environments
- Commitment to complete work on a timely basis
- Commitment to complete work within budget
- Responsiveness to the RFP and submittal presentation

Contract Negotiations

- MIDTOWN ALLIANCE will negotiate the terms of the contract with the consultant(s) submitting the top-ranked response(s) or another 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.
- The contract for this Project may be subject to approval by the Atlanta Regional Commission. The contract is contingent upon receipt of federal funding.

Equal Opportunity

MIDTOWN ALLIANCE is an equal opportunity employer and will select a consultant team without regard to age, disability, religion, creed or belief, political affiliation, race, sex or ethnicity.

ATTACHMENT A

Scope of Work

I. General: The work to be accomplished is in support of the following Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) sub-element:

102CAS - Livable Centers Initiative Investment Policy Studies (LCI)

II. Area covered: All the necessary services provided in this subgrant contract will support the study of LCI-related programs and projects within the Midtown LCI area. The study area may extend beyond these limits if needed for logical termini purposes.

III. Goal: The proposed scope of services in this Request for Proposals is funded through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative program. The Atlanta Metropolitan Transportation Planning Area is included in a non-attainment area for ozone under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Because of this designation, the region must look toward better development practices that support increased use of transportation modes other than single occupant vehicles (SOV) to help reduce emissions and meet air quality requirements. The LCI Program seeks to increase the use of alternatives to driving alone by developing transportation projects and other programs to improve accessibility, expand mixed-uses, utilize transit and support further development in the study area. Evaluation of the existing structure and development of likely scenarios should produce recommendations for future investment that support ARC's Livable Centers Initiative Program.

IV. Work Tasks:

The consultant will develop a creative placemaking process and implementation strategy for improvements to the walk to transit infrastructure and commuter bus stops along West Peachtree and Spring Streets. The purpose of this strategy is to keep the LCI plan relevant, and improve and enhance bus service and ridership, and highlight transit as a celebrated and preferred mode of transportation in Midtown.

Midtown Alliance and ARC anticipate the following outcomes from the study:

- An assessment of existing conditions and projects to improve the walk to transit pedestrian infrastructure along West Peachtree and Spring Streets.
- A framework for using arts and culture to expand public engagement strategies and to strengthen the process of understanding and exploring community values and needs.
- Three scalable and replicable concepts for creative commuter bus stops along West Peachtree and Spring Streets.
- A framework of policies and programs to help accomplish the projects and concepts.

The work to be accomplished under this contract is divided into the following tasks:

Task 1– Public Engagement

The goal of this task is to develop a creative local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders in or who currently have or may reasonably and foreseeably access the study area, with efforts and accommodations made to include low to moderate income, minority, multilingual and non-English speakers, and elderly or disabled residents and users of the study area. The project team should engage an artist or team of local artists, familiar with Midtown Alliance and current art and placemaking initiatives in Midtown, to utilize creative expression as a vehicle for ensuring unique perspectives and approaches are considered when developing and conducting an outreach process that promotes the involvement of such stakeholders. The ARC Project Manager must

be notified of all meetings taking place. The consultant shall work with all transit operators along the corridor and the City of Atlanta.

- Project information shall be uploaded to the consultant website to provide basic project information to the public along with project materials and meeting summaries.
- A Project Management Team shall be formed with representatives from Midtown Alliance, Atlanta DOT, and ARC.
- The consultant team will seek input and comments from a project advisory group of major stakeholders
- The consultant team will seek direct input for current bus commuters, area employees, property owners, and residents in the area.
- The consultant team will work with artists or creative designers with relevant skill, experience, and familiarity with the study area as facilitators of community-based participatory research and in the development of commuter bus stop concepts. Creative tools for community engagement may include visual-art techniques, storytelling, music, performance, etc. and is intended to make planning more accessible and inviting and to help connect public places with their users.

The consultant will schedule at least three public open engagement opportunities, in a format determined by the project team, the following topics/milestones should be covered by the public engagement activities (at a minimum):

- Provide an overview of the study process, the goals of the study, key dates, and opportunities for public input.
- Solicit opinions on goals and objectives of the concepts and recommendations.
- Collect nonacademic knowledge of existing and potential transit users to understand community values and needs.
- Seek input and consensus on preferred concepts and vision.

Final Plan Review

The final plan review is to be at the ARC offices to discuss the plan process, issues, or unique activities that occurred, and future projects that are needed to implement the plan once the plan is complete.

Task 2 – Plan Development

The goal of this task is to develop a plan to improve access to and from the commuter bus stops along West Peachtree, and Spring Streets, including pedestrian, bicycle and transportation elements, and public space activation.

In addition, the plan will develop three concepts for scalable and replicable creative bus stop enhancements. One concept should be designed to be implemented following the completion of the planning process.

This plan and recommendations should be coordinated with other completed studies, programs, developments, and organizations. At a minimum, this study will evaluate and address the following information:

- **Area Transit and Pedestrian Assessment**
 - Prepare up-to-date assessment of existing physical conditions of roadways and transit, including existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, traffic control devices, transit ridership, routes, pedestrian crashes, and right of way along West Peachtree and Spring Streets.
- **Transportation Strategy**
 - Define street level improvements including bike facilities, transit stop improvements, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, or other pedestrian enhancements.
 - Examine and propose temporary and interim transportation improvements.
 - Develop conceptual renderings of the key transportation recommendations.
 - Ensure the incorporation of green infrastructure within transportation recommendations.

- **Placemaking Strategy**

- Identify potential locations for creative bus stops, and ensure that the bus stops meet applicable codes and guidance of the City of Atlanta, Midtown Alliance, and transit operators.
- Develop conceptual plans for the priority bus stop locations. One concept should be designed to be implemented shortly after the completion of the planning process.
- Determine public space and programming elements, including but not limited to public art, parklets, wayfinding, lighting - both decorative and safety, and streetscapes for the bus stops.

Task 3 –Prepare Project Deliverables

The goal of this task is to compile the results of the overall work effort, the study process, relevant findings, and recommendations into a final study/plan document. The final study document shall include the following (not necessarily in this order):

- **Summary of the plan development process:**

- A description of the study process and methodology, data gathering techniques and findings, and general outcomes.
- A description of the public participation process used to achieve a community-supported program of improvements.
- Summary of the Area Transit and Pedestrian Assessment.

- **Plan:**

- An area plan map outlining the type of elements and strategies to be installed at recommended locations.
- Summaries of the Strategies presented and described in a cohesive, user friendly format.
- Conceptual renderings and concepts of the creative bus stop recommendations.

- **Implementation Plan:**

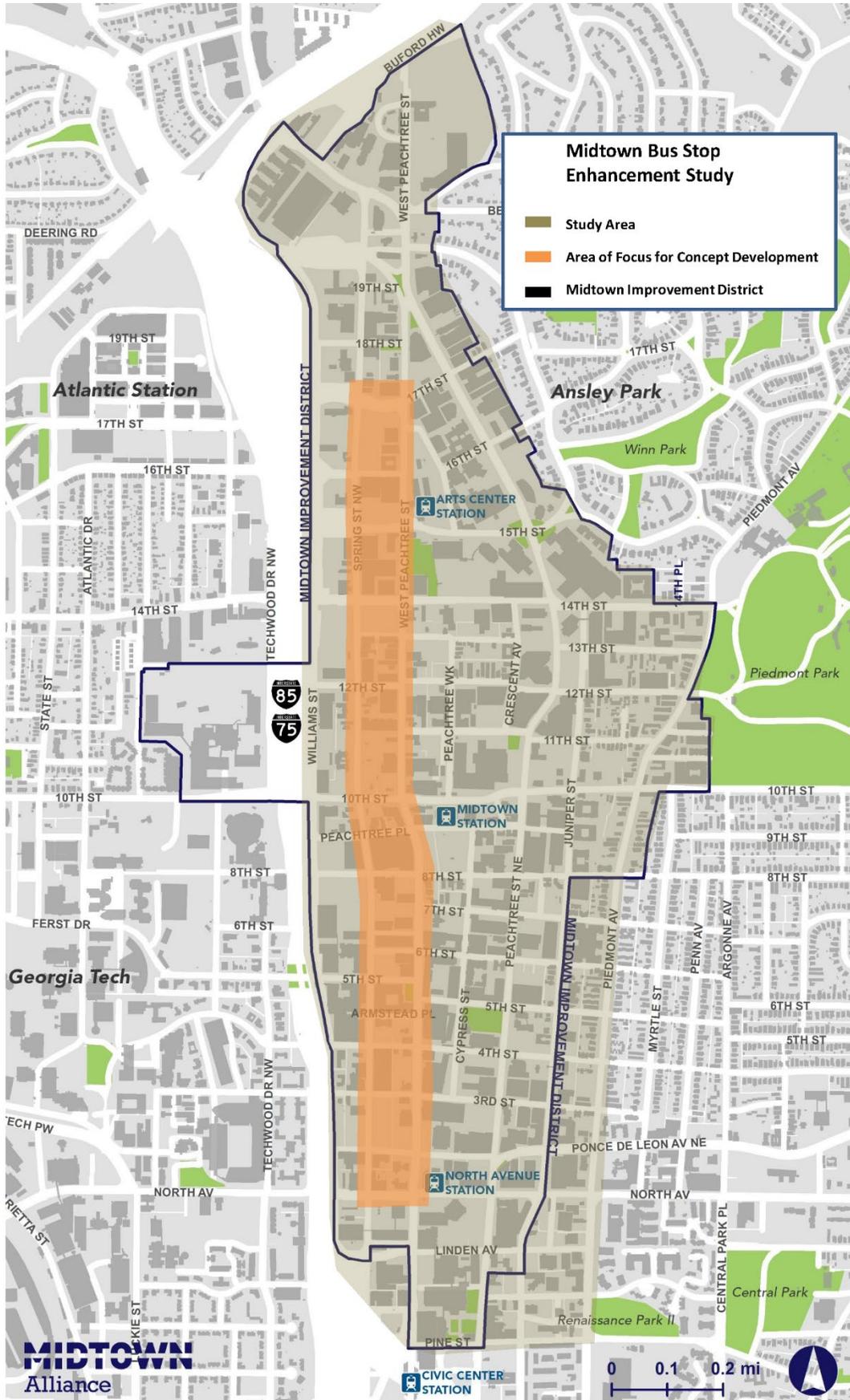
- A 100-day Action Plan shall be developed to define the strategies necessary to keep momentum going and the stakeholders involved and sharing responsibility for the plan's success.
- Describe the organizational structure and processes that will be used to ensure the action plan items are implemented. Focus should be given to collaboration opportunities with other organizations and strategies to ensure continued support from local elected officials, citizens and businesses.
- A summary of the changes required within the local zoning ordinance, development regulations and/or other locally adopted policies to support the concepts.
- A prioritized description of transportation improvement projects (local, state and federal)
- A schedule and steps for completion of the creative bus stops. The steps should detail the process for implementing the bus stops.

Format of Deliverables:

- PDF file of the document, any appendices, concept plans, and typical sections
- Electronic files in their original formats with supporting graphics and GIS or other data files (Excel, InDesign files, etc.)

ATTACHMENT B

Study Area Map



ATTACHMENT C

Proposed Project Budget Summary*

Task	Total Hours	Total Cost
<u>Direct Labor*</u>		
Task 1 – Public Engagement		
Task 2 – Plan Development		
Task 3 – Prepare Project Deliverables		
Subtotal – Direct Labor		
Overhead Cost		
Subconsultant Costs (list)		
Reimbursable Expenses (including travel)		
Profit		
Total Estimated Cost Profit		

*Attachment C is intended as a summary; please address the detailed, budget proposal requirements as outlined in Item 6 of the Submittal Items requirements section.