



**An Aspirational Statement for City of Atlanta Government  
January 1, 2019**

Atlanta is Georgia's undisputed intellectual and commercial leader. The City is also Georgia's center of commerce, tourism, transportation and governance. We significantly influence public policy in our state, and with that opportunity comes the responsibility to get it right.

The following issue areas have been identified based on their importance to protecting our future growth, vibrancy and sustainability. If the City's future elected leaders under-deliver on these issues, it will hamper Atlanta's and Georgia's competitiveness, and substantially weaken our standing as a global leader.

**Fiscal Responsibility**

During the Reed administration, the City's fund balance grew from \$7 million to over \$151 million (2015 CAFR.) With additional revenue from the passage of the Renew Atlanta bond and TSPLOST, city elected leaders need to continue to implement sound fiscal policies and practice effective financial management. New City leaders must commit to policy-making that will not put the City's strong credit ratings at risk.

**Ethics/Accountability**

In light of recent developments related to alleged bribery in the City's procurement process, ethics and transparency should be a focal point of the 2017 municipal elections. The City must restore integrity, eliminate conflicts of interest, and rebuild trust with its citizens and businesses. City leaders should consider commissioning an internal audit of procurement procedures by an independent firm and implementing new ethics and procedure training for City employees who handle sensitive financial matters. An external oversight committee of procurement practices would be appropriate and build public trust.

**Atlanta's Economy, Workforce and Education**

The most important factor in job relocation and expansion decisions is an educated workforce. Economic development prospects won't come here or expand unless they believe they can fill their needed positions from the available talent pool.

K-12 education must continue to be a top priority for Atlanta. Providing our children with a quality education and needed soft skills is critical for their success and our city's success. We must also embrace diversity and remain a welcoming place to live and work, so we can

continue to attract world-class talent and satisfy employer demands. City leaders should initiate a joint task force with the City of Atlanta, Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Schools, DeKalb County School District and community leaders, to create community goals to improve public education and overall city economic development.

Continuing Atlanta's economic success requires that City leaders vigorously pursue and retain talented staff, including commissioner-level and senior management positions across all operating departments.

City leaders should continue the reform of the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency, in order to become a better regional partner and implement an efficient, effective system for deploying workforce funds into the community.

### **Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA)**

HJAIA is the economic engine, not only for our region and state, but for the entire Southeastern U.S. City leaders must commit to continuing the policies that have made HJAIA the busiest airport in the world, and build on the incredible legacy left by visionary leaders before them.

### **A Thriving and Equitable City for All Residents**

Economic mobility and income disparity are increasingly important issues facing public policy leaders today. In 2014 and 2015, the Brookings Institution named Atlanta as the city with the highest income disparity in America.

Atlanta has earned a strong reputation as a welcoming city to all, which must be protected. City leaders must not advance policies that would harm our business climate, or erode civil protections.

Ensuring that Atlanta citizens have access to high-quality and affordable workforce housing across our City is a growing priority. City leaders must consider the full-range of strategies including neighborhood stabilization and redevelopment, and increasing the supply of affordable housing inventory, especially near transit and jobs. Further, City leaders should consider the examples of peer cities who have successfully engaged on this issue and partner with recognized national leaders, including the Urban Land Institute. Making affordable housing an integral part of the City's regular general obligation bond issuances, like other basic infrastructure, is critical to Atlanta's success.

Access to education, jobs, healthcare, food, information and support services is essential for all citizens, not just to survive, but to compete and thrive. Atlanta's leaders must work to connect people to opportunities and resources, improve access to food for all citizens, and promote broadband access and digital literacy.

## **Innovative Transportation Solutions**

All thriving global cities require a diverse portfolio of transportation options to move people and goods. Future City of Atlanta leaders must continue our commitment to expanding MARTA transit services, bicycle infrastructure, multi-use trails, a dense walkable street and sidewalk network, regional express bus connections, and other creative ways to leverage our interstates.

These objectives could be streamlined and advanced by creating a City of Atlanta Department of Transportation that would plan and implement all of the City's transportation projects. Thanks to voter approval of Renew Atlanta and TSPLOST, over \$500 million in projects are planned and funded over the next five years.

In addition, the recent passage of the MARTA half-penny referendum will result in an additional \$2.5 billion in local funding over the next 40 years. As a result, it is critical that MARTA's board have well-rounded and diverse perspectives to help guide its strategic direction over the next few years. To that end, City Leadership should develop stricter criteria for qualifying MARTA board appointees. Specifically, City appointees should have extensive financial, managerial, and transportation experience. Strong governance and oversight must be established within City Hall to ensure the effective expenditure and implementation of this unprecedented amount of resources dedicated to transportation improvements.

State of good repair, congestion mitigation and place-making are top priorities. Special events traffic plans, technological solutions, and promoting the use of alternative travel modes will produce tangible benefits to all city stakeholders.

## **Smart, Sustainable Development**

Because of the hard work of past administrations, today Atlanta is one of the world's leading cities for environmental sustainability. City leaders must strategically invest in programs, policies and infrastructure that maintain and advance our standing in this field.

Further, a safe, reliable water supply must never be taken for granted. Though billions of dollars have been wisely invested in recent years, we must continue to improve water supply capacity and quality, and storm water infrastructure.

City leaders must continue to promote policies that reduce consumption and increase efficiency. The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge and the Atlanta Commercial Energy Efficiency Ordinance have proven to be effective strategies. We must continue our sustainable growth through "green infrastructure" wherever possible in public and private development.

Upcoming major transformational initiatives, including the redevelopment of Underground Atlanta, Turner Field/GSU and the Atlanta Civic Center, must continue. City government must be a cooperative and visionary partner for these projects to achieve their full potential.

Atlanta should be recognized nationally for great design in new development, and for healthy, inclusive communities that reinforce walking, recreation and transit. The city's zoning policies, incentives and infrastructure investments must be aligned to support and achieve this vision.

City leaders also must improve the processes by which residents, developers and businesses obtain permits, licensees and inspections. Reducing complexity, delay, and red tape must be a priority for the City to sustain quality growth.

### **Public Safety**

Future City of Atlanta leaders must ensure the continued safety – real and perceived – of all residents, visitors and workers. They must address key issues including: smart policing through investments in cutting-edge technology, concerns for youth crime and repeat offenders, and enhancing community engagement efforts by increasing police visibility. Additionally, collaboration and support of the Atlanta Police Foundation and its programs such as Operation Shield, Secure Neighborhoods and At-Promise must remain a top priority for Atlanta Leaders.

City leaders must also ensure an appropriately-sized police force for the City and commit to stemming attrition within the Atlanta Police Department. City leaders should commit to establishing a police officer staffing target to more effectively support daily public safety operations. Our elected leaders must encourage APD to utilize innovative recruitment strategies, offer first-class leadership and training opportunities, and encourage succession planning to ensure consistent development of the next round of department leaders. Recruiting top talent will require competitive salaries, first-rate equipment, and opportunities for advancement.

### **Partnerships to Ensure a High Quality of Life**

To achieve sustained excellence, City of Atlanta leadership will need to effectively collaborate with diverse organizations such as Atlanta Public Schools, colleges/universities, civic and business collectives, community improvement districts (CIDs), healthcare providers, and numerous other governmental agencies, among others. These partnerships are essential to provide the services and amenities required to attract and retain the talent needed to compete globally.

Atlanta must take a leadership role in partnership with Fulton County, the State of Georgia, NGO's and other stakeholders to reduce homelessness, street-level mental illness, and substance abuse within City limits. Support is required for legislative advancement and implementation of the proposed \$25 million Housing Opportunity Bond to fund the construction of supportive housing infrastructure in the City. Leaders should commit to the

construction of supportive housing to be built in each of the City's 12 Council Districts, to distribute these products fairly throughout the City of Atlanta.

Continued support of the Atlanta BeltLine is required to further imprint Atlanta as a pioneering city and a global example of how to create new green spaces, active communities, smarter housing and economic development opportunities.

### **Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Tourism**

This key sector drives a major part of our city and state economy. Our ability to recruit and retain global brands, host national and international sporting events, and build new and exciting tourist attractions is directly tied to our positive cultural reputation. Financial support for the arts should be a high priority for city leaders. They should support policies and approaches that cultivate an ever-improving environment for the arts, entertainment and hospitality sector, such as continued support for the Atlanta Arts and Entertainment District.

State leaders are considering the legalization of casino gaming in Georgia. Atlanta's elected leaders will need to work together, with public participation, to ensure a transparent decision making process for future opportunities and community impacts related to this industry. This would include the identification of specific evaluation criteria and metrics to determine if a casino gaming development would be beneficial to the City of Atlanta.

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100 Black Men of Atlanta  
Arthur Blank Foundation  
Atlanta Community Food Bank  
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Atlanta Hawks  
Avison Young  
Bank of America  
Buckhead Coalition, Inc.  
Building Owners and Managers Association  
Carter USA  
Center for Working Families  
Central Atlanta Progress  
The Coca-Cola Company  
Comcast  
Council for Quality Growth  
Delta Air Lines  
Dentons  
DTSpade Specialized Real Estate  
Gas South  
GDP Technologies  
GE Energy

Georgia-Pacific  
Georgia Power Company  
Georgia Restaurant Association  
Hennessy Automobile Company  
Marriott International, Inc.  
Metro Atlanta Chamber  
Midtown Alliance  
NCR  
Regent Partners  
Siemens  
SunTrust Bank  
Troutman Sanders  
United Distributors, Inc.  
UPS  
Urban Land Institute, Atlanta  
Urban League of Greater Atlanta  
Waste Management  
The Woodruff Arts Center