

BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL

Design and Development Narrative

Midtown Atlanta has become a hub for post-recession development activity. With booming tech and medical industries and a burgeoning film industry, the region is poised for continued growth. Despite the increasing presence of the entertainment industry, the city lacks a defined center of entertainment culture. Developments with social spaces and collaborative programs, such as Ponce City Market and the Atlanta BeltLine, have been well-received by a public ready to leave behind its insular, suburban past and embrace a more vibrant public realm. In order to both capitalize on a differentiated, market-feasible development program, the opportunity to develop a film culture, and a site positioned at the center of the city's major neighborhoods, the Partnership should develop an integrated, mixed-use program with an assortment of social spaces to help Atlantans break the fourth wall of culture.

We find that Atlanta lacks a space for public activity & entertainment. Considering the recent trend in movie industry being shifted to Atlanta, our theme for such an open interactive space is focused on the entertainment industry having a movie theater, concert venue, music shops, bars etc. as few of its main attractors. Not only it creates a very exciting experience for visitors of Atlanta this strategy reinforces the regional economic development goal to attract the film industry and boost local development.

We envision a recent surge in young graduates and professionals. They need diverse spaces and thus we propose an environment where they would be excited to live, work, play & learn. For them, we are offering affordable housing spaces, entertainment districts & adequate office spaces. Offices in the area include small business spaces housing new tech startups, healthcare firms & incubator areas. These businesses are in the market for less expensive space and for a location that is desirably close to major universities and all the talent that is available through that resource.

Our market study reflects that the market is saturated with luxury housing. We propose variety by introducing compact & efficient affordable housing units for young professionals or students. It reduces the tenant's bottom line & maintains stronger return on investment for developers. Additionally our plan also offers makers space for artists, engineers & tech enthusiasts to showcase their creativity and create thriving business from them. This is facilitated by the planned green connector aligning with the highway between 5th street Tech Corridor & North Avenue. This green park is tied to the entertainment district & the office space with a green space which gives residents and visitors a place for physical activity outside. Besides, we create a public plaza near the historic torch encouraging public interaction & social connection. This plaza is directly reachable from the Marta stop via a diagonal pedestrian street right through the center of the entertainment district.

Further we engage the surrounding community of the existing church by including various children's amenities like play school, art shops, children's art galleries etc. A Bio-Tech office building (to be owned by Georgia Tech) above the MARTA station is proposed for enhanced collaboration between Emory University and Georgia Tech. We encourage walking rather than driving by provision of limited parking areas and supporting more street front functions.

All of these elements are fused together to create an engaging environment with restaurants, shops, office spaces, and several living spaces, including maker spaces, artists studios, art galleries, music shops, street bars, massage parlors etc. The sidewalks and public spaces are designed to give people space to interact with each other with more than a passing nod. They are such programmed so that they remain activated in both day & night encouraging people to feel the city to be their living room. The sidewalks and streets are places to meet new people and get to know each other. It isn't just about getting from source to destination; it's about enjoying the process and engaging others.

Financial Narrative

The Midtown South Development Partnership has a prime opportunity to redevelop an assemblage of parcels at a critical nexus in both the time and place of Atlanta development. The proposed development program is rooted in a thorough market analysis, targeting gaps in current product types and pursuing those with strong projected absorption and rent growth.

PHASING

Act 1

By tapping into the unmet needs in the entertainment market, the initial phase of bolsters the area with and serves as an attractive force to anchor future development. A concert venue, movie theater, and rooftop mini golf provide principal entertainment uses, and an assortment of restaurants, bars, fitness uses, and public spaces round out the mix of area activities. The air rights to the North Avenue MARTA Station are ground leased for a 99-year term, bringing the site to its highest and best use with a ground floor visitors center, gallery, and Midtown Blue station. Above, the Cristo Rey High School relocates to its new facility, accompanied by a new Georgia Tech and Emory joint biotech center, and medical offices. The building is topped off by 100 units of mixed income apartments, compactly designed to make efficient use of space and reduce the bottom line rental rate for tenants in a market with an emerging housing affordability crisis.

Act 2

Phase two builds on the site's momentum, adding a mix of 591 market rate and affordable apartments and condominiums to add users to the neighborhood and raise the trade area's purchasing power for potential retail in the final phase. Ground floor development features restaurants, small retail, makers spaces, offices, an international market with business development support entrepreneurial new immigrants and refugees, and a One Stop Center with workforce development and resources for the area's underemployed residents. The active realm is expanded to include a signature, linear park called The Backlot, which buffers the buildings from the I-75/85 Connector and creates an inviting recreational amenity.

Act 3

The final phase of development capitalizes on the increased value of the land by making good on the option to purchase Parcel G, adding a full-service, urban Kroger and other national retailers. An additional 470 residential units with more generous floor plans continue to build residential capacity, and a final tower of office space comes online in time to take advantage of the creative energy generated by the High Performance Computing Center slated for the neighboring parcel.

RETURNS

The proposed development balances the financial and social goals of the developers and the neighborhood to help Midtown flourish in the long term. A combination of affordable units, subsidized through Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and compact market rate units address local housing needs. Discounted rents for nonprofits, a private high school, and affordable office space integrate uses that will contribute to the quality of the community and its future growth. Investment in outdoor spaces and infrastructure creates an inviting, social public realm that not only fosters user engagement and creates an urban amenity for tenants. The project is financed by a combination of land equity from the Partnership, equity from an investment partner taken on in a joint venture, LIHTC credits the reinvestment of asset sales, and a series of construction loans taken out by permanent loans. Over the course of a ten-year hold, the development generates an unleveraged IRR of 23% and a leveraged IRR of 45% , providing a strong financial return for its investors and a lively, productive urban realm for the broader community.