

CITY OF ATLANTA PLACEMAKING PROGRAM

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

PROGRAM GUIDE

Transforming Atlanta's underused streets into safer,
active, and vibrant public places.



Department of
CITY PLANNING

THE
TRUST
FOR
PUBLIC
LAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ATLANTA is well known as a car-centric city. Much of our street and land space is dedicated to personal cars. Streets are the social and economic engines of our city. However, many are unsafe and dull for people who walk, bike, or use transit.

We need our streets to serve us better.

In December 2017, the [Department of City Planning](#) (DCP) launched the [City of Atlanta Placemaking Program](#) with the primary goal of redesigning our streets to be safer for everyone, not just cars.

Our Placemaking Program is designed to engage people across the city through a creative and community-led process to improve transportation safety and enhance the physical, cultural, and social identities of our public spaces.

Through this program, we have teamed up with communities to improve safety and implement projects including a custom bus shelter and a parklet both along a busy commercial corridor. In 2019, we are partnering with [The Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) to award grants to even more projects.

Take a moment to think about your own neighborhood. Do people drive too fast on your street? Does an unsafe intersection make it difficult to access businesses? Can you safely walk, bike, and use transit to get around?

If you are looking for solutions and are committed to making our streets safe for everyone, we invite you—our residents, leaders, and businesses—to join us in bringing more great projects to this city.

Use this guide to inspire your own placemaking ideas and to better understand the process for applying to our grant program.



What is 'PLACEMAKING'?

To us, "Placemaking" is like saying "Hey, look at this public street or space that is unsafe and not offering our community any value... Let's put something here that is safe, useful, and serves us better."



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Our program goals are to incrementally improve Atlanta's streets and public spaces to create a safer, healthier and more livable city for all.

To this end we have identified four primary objectives:

Transportation Safety

Provide safer intersections, street crossings, and blocks for people walking, biking, and using transit, rather than for personal cars only.

Street Activation

Activate underused and problematic city streets by creating new places to walk, bike, rest, and socialize.

Collaboration

Build stronger connections between citizens, government, businesses, and communities.

Incremental Change

Use small-scale, low-cost projects as tests for innovative, high-impact, permanent changes.

Before



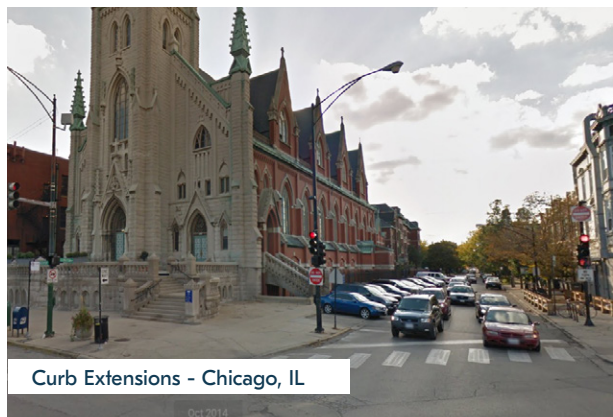
After



NYC - Public Plaza



Crosswalk Art + Traffic Calming - Garden Grove, CA



Curb Extensions - Chicago, IL



In 2017, DCP's first round of the Placemaking Program was to initiate two pilot projects to jump-start excitement citywide around the idea of placemaking, and provide lessons learned for implementing projects of this kind.

In Cascade Heights, DCP worked with Atlanta City Studio, the City's pop-up urban design studio, to improve transit accommodations for its immediate neighbors. In Virginia-Highland, DCP engaged residents and community leaders to tackle roadway design issues hampering safety for all users.

Through the process of these pilot projects, the DCP team learned some keys to success to pass along to potential program applicants:

- Have a diverse team of local contributors that are truly dedicated to your project's success
- Be flexible in design but do not let specific elements distract from the overall vision
- Think big but act strategically—understand that many smaller actions can lead to big changes.
- Even small projects take longer than you think—be willing to stick it out for the long run.

Cascade Heights Bus Shelter

Cascade Rd SW & Boulevard Granada SW

Project Partners:

- Atlanta City Studio
- Cascade Heights neighbors
- Live Fresh

Project Features:

- Custom designed & fabricated bus shelter
- Planters & landscaping
- Digital signage & information kiosk

Total Cost: Approx. \$25,000

This bus stop serves the MARTA Bus Route 71, a route with frequent service and high ridership that provides a critical connection between Cascade Heights and West End MARTA Station. DCP, along with the adjacent City Studio team, engaged community members who desired a safer and attractive space to wait for the bus that also spoke to the strong community identity.



Virginia-Highland Roadway Improvements

Amsterdam Ave NE & N. Highland Ave NE

Project Partners:

- Virginia Highland Civic Association
- Area property owners

Project Features:

- Prefabricated parklet & outdoor furniture
- Decorative crosswalk & roadway striping
- Planters & landscaping

Total Cost: Approx. \$48,000

This commercial area is popular with residents and visitors for its businesses and restaurants. In meetings with residents, they noted speeding and lack of visibility for pedestrians as major issues in this intersection. This project includes a decorative crosswalk for pedestrian visibility, lane striping to define car movement on Amsterdam, and a parklet to provide an attractive outdoor seating space for restaurant patrons and indirect traffic calming for drivers.



DCP announced its first round of community grant applications in December 2017. By March 2018, DCP received 31 applications for a wide range of projects, representing nearly all ends of the city. After a thorough evaluation process, two community's ideas were selected to move forward in June 2018.

Jackson Street Bridge in the Old Fourth Ward

The Jackson Street Bridge Team is designing a safer and more comfortable space for people to enjoy the view from the bridge.

Currently, residents and visitors alike flock to this space for the iconic view of our city. The street accommodates many users: people walking, taking photos, biking, film tours, and driving.

The location is popular and most users agree it could be safer for everyone. The Project Team is looking to re-purpose the excess roadway to slow down cars and create a public space that is as memorable as the skyline itself.

Key Features include:

- For people on foot, the team is working to design a park-type space where everyone can watch the sun set and take photos.
- For people biking, they are working to ensure safe connections over the bridge and to the PATH Freedom Parkway Trail.
- For people driving, the goal is to maintain a driving lane in each direction while reducing speeding.

In the application process, this project scored well on:

- Pedestrian & biking safety improvements
- Documenting multiple and various sources of community support
- Increasing multi-modal access to a popular gathering space



White Street in the West End

The West End Team is designing a safer White Street for residents and visitors to access businesses, connect to the Beltline trail, and better enjoy the corridor.

Long an industrial corridor, White Street is adding diverse commercial spaces. The new trail, along with shifting transportation culture, means that more people access this street on foot and bike.

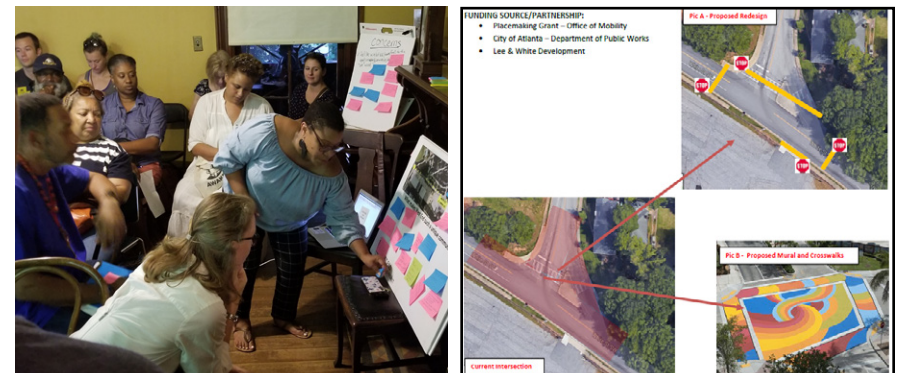
More people will visit as new businesses open. The Project Team wants to slow down cars, create safer conditions for pedestrians, and to enhance local identity through art.

Key Features include:

- Safer pedestrian crossings to access businesses and the neighborhood are key.
- Intersections at Lowery and Hopkins will be enhanced through community art and creative ideas to reduce car speeds.
- Features such as lighting infrastructure, art, and trash cans will stitch the corridor together and enhance safety for people walking.

In the application process, this project scored well on:

- Having strong pedestrian safety improvements
- Creativity in enhancing neighborhood identity
- Cohesive plan to involve large community in the design process



The Atlanta Placemaking Program is, at its core, a community-driven initiative to redesign our streets and public spaces in order to improve transportation safety.

Interested applicants who wish to spearhead a placemaking project should be prepared to serve as educators and stewards for their community. They will lead the design process and public input for their project and be responsible for getting community support both for installation and long term maintenance of their project.

DCP and TPL will provide support to project teams in the form of design guidance, supporting public meetings, purchasing materials, obtaining necessary permits, and installing projects.

We invite all Atlanta community members to apply. Potential projects range from creative traffic calming, to playful parklets, re-programming of street space, and more!

Photos and description in this guide are meant to inspire ideas, but communities are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild!

Public Plaza - Los Angeles, CA



Getting Your Application Started

Forming a Project Team

The Placemaking Program is meant to be collaborative. Creating a Project Team to serve as leaders for your project is the first step in the application process. Having dedicated and diverse team members is helpful to bring new perspectives and ensure broad commitment to the project. A team of 3-6 people is a good size.

Letters of Support

After you have a Project Team, you need to get support for your idea from at least three (3) additional people in the community. Share your idea with other possible stakeholders and ask them to write a letter that shows their support. Letters can come from nearby residents or businesses, the neighborhood association, your Council Member, or another stakeholder in the project area. Letters of support may NOT come from people who are on the Project Team you created.

Internal City Stakeholders

You do not need to reach out to other City departments during the application process. However, it is important to understand that your project will eventually require collaboration and potentially approval from other City Departments such as: Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Atlanta Police Department, Office of Cultural Affairs, Atlanta Beltline, and more. We will help coordinate with them later in the program if you are selected.

Site Photos

Photos of the proposed project site are essential to the application process. This helps us understand the current conditions and see why it is unsafe for different users. Include photos from multiple points of view if possible.

Preliminary Site Plan

After you have photos, you need to create a preliminary site plan. All this means is that you need to create a visual representation of your idea. These could be drawn by hand or created on a computer. Don't worry if you are not an artist! The site plan and other drawings you may include are simply meant to help us better understand your idea. No points will be subtracted based on graphic design ability. Showing the project from multiple points of view and providing labels for different parts of your project is helpful.

Cost

Selected projects will have access to an initial budget of \$5,000 to \$50,000. Applicants are not required to submit a budget. For the application, you are encouraged to submit the full scope of your ideas (aka shoot for the stars!). We will work with selected teams to narrow your scope to fit the program budget.

Note: A community may contribute their own additional funds towards a project or seek out additional funding sources from other parties. However, ability to provide additional funds will NOT be considered in the project selection process.

Materials

DCP and TPL will use our program funding to directly purchase materials and services where required. As part of this process, we will engage local artists, manufacturers and designers. To get an idea of possible materials, review page 8 of this document.

Note: Communities are also encouraged to think about any materials they already have that could be used in the design process (wood pallets, milk crates, chairs, fires, benches, etc.). However, ability to provide additional materials will NOT be considered in the project selection process.

PROJECT LEVELS

LEVEL 1

- Community commitment of 4-6 months
- Project lasts 1 or 2 days
- Minimal setup, low maintenance

Examples

- **Play Streets:** Close a residential street to cars on Saturday afternoon so kids can play.
- **Park(ing) Day:** Transform a parking space into a mini-park for the day.



Park(ing) Day - Chicago, IL



Play Street - Dayton, OH

LEVEL 2

- Community commitment of 6-12 months
- Project lasts multiple days or weeks
- Community partnerships required

Examples

- **Open Streets:** Close a street to cars so people can explore on foot or bike.
- **Temporary Infrastructure:** Test ideas to make a street safer for all users.
- **Community Programming:** Use a street for exercise, entertainment, or art programs.



Art, Exercise, & Performance - Spirit Plaza, Detroit, MI



Temporary Traffic Circle - Fayetteville, AR

LEVEL 3

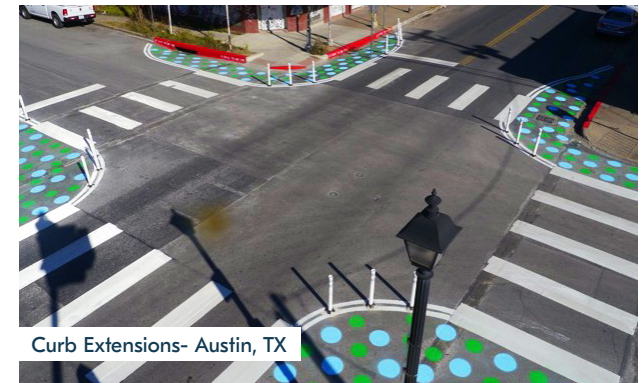
- Community commitment of 12-18 months
- Robust design process
- Strong community partnerships required
- Ongoing maintenance required

Examples

- **Traffic calming:** Slow down cars through creative changes to the street.
- **Streetscape improvements:** Create safe and inviting spaces to walk and socialize.
- **Community spaces:** Transform under-used public space for the community to gather.



Triangle Plaza - Philadelphia, PA



Curb Extensions- Austin, TX

MATERIALS AND COSTS

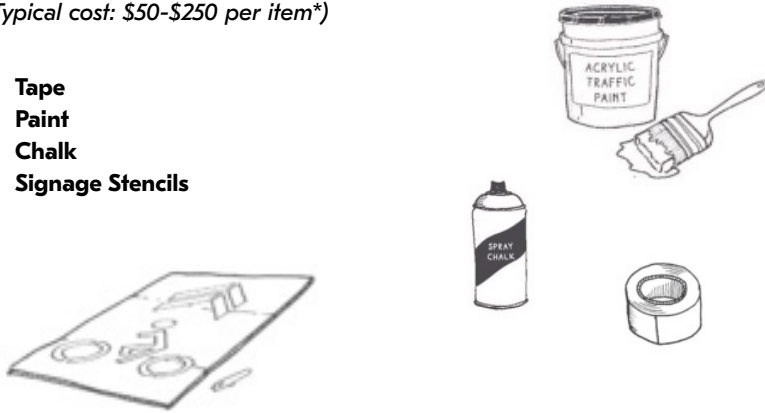
Below is information intended to provide a general understanding of possible material types and typical costs. Some materials such as street markings can be highly temporary and will likely cost less. Larger and more permanent materials will likely cost more.

Keep in mind that placemaking projects are not limited to new materials. We encourage applicants to consider opportunities to incorporate unique materials that the community has available. This can enhance creativity, reuse already made goods, and enhance meaningfulness of the project to the community.

Street Markings

(Typical cost: \$50-\$250 per item*)

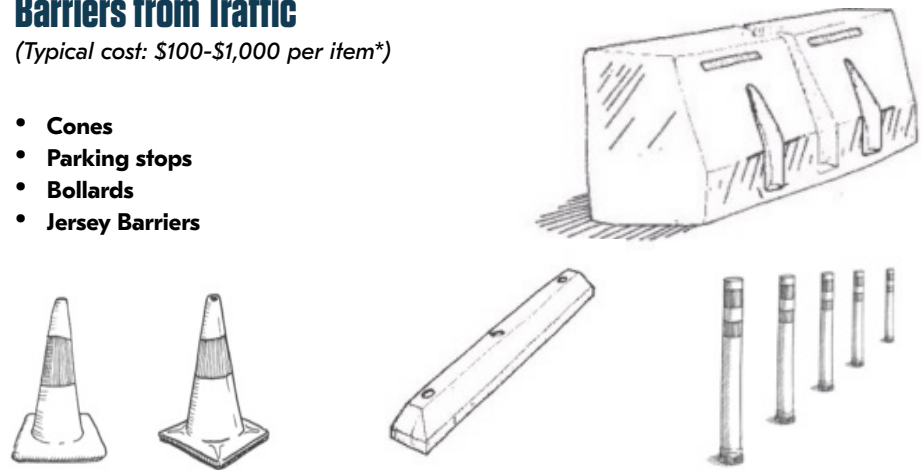
- Tape
- Paint
- Chalk
- Signage Stencils



Barriers from Traffic

(Typical cost: \$100-\$1,000 per item*)

- Cones
- Parking stops
- Bollards
- Jersey Barriers



Landscaping

(Typical cost: \$1,000-\$5,000 per project*)

- Small plants + planters
- Potted trees
- Turf grass



Street Furniture

(Typical cost: \$500-\$25,000 per project*)

- Bench
- Umbrella
- Cafe Table
- Signage
- Pre-made parklet



* Actual material cost will vary. Costs shown here are intended to be an estimate.

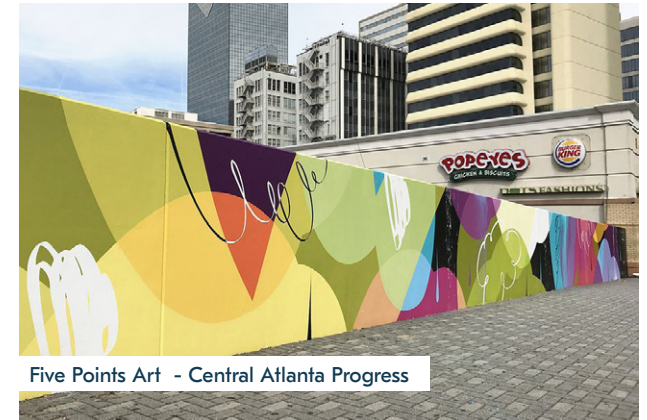
PLACEMAKING PROJECTS IN ATLANTA

There are several programs and agencies throughout the city that incorporate ideas of placemaking and public space improvement into their projects.

Some are short term programs that use the space for a few hours such as Park(ing) Day or Atlanta Streets Alive. Others are longer term physical installations such as turf for Station Soccer or wooden planks for the Broad Street Plaza.



Broad Street Plaza - ATL City Planning



Five Points Art - Central Atlanta Progress



Station Soccer - MARTA



The Porch @ Arts Center Station - MARTA



Park(ing) Day - Midtown, Downtown, Lenox



Atlanta Streets Alive - Atlanta Bicycle Coalition



Castleberry Hill Mural - Relay Bikes Station



Midtown MARTA Station Makeover

Application

Application Opens

Application will be posted at <http://bit.ly/ATLPlacemaking>

Jan 2019

2 Public Q&A Open House Meetings

Public meetings will provide an opportunity for everyone to have their answers about the program or the application answered. We will hold two meetings.

Feb 12th, 2019 @ 6:30 PM

Rosel Fann Recreation Center.

Feb 26th, 2019

Midtown, time TBD

Application Due

You may submit your application via email or hand delivery. Instructions are included on the application.

Friday, March 29, 2019 @ 5 PM

Target Project Selection Announcements

After March 30th, the City will review all applications based on a scoring system found on page 12.

Mid-May 2019

Program

Kick-Off Meeting

Project Teams will attend kick-off workshops to think through their projects in more depth.

Summer 2019

Project Development

Concept Brainstorming + Public Meeting #1

Project Teams will develop their ideas internally and come up with broad, big-picture proposals. They will take their ideas to their community in Summer 2019 to gather ideas and feedback.

Summer-Fall 2019

Project Development + Public Meeting #2

Project Teams will use feedback to more clearly define their project. With a more robust set of ideas and drawings, they will return to the community for more feedback in Fall 2019.

**Level 1 & 2 projects will have a shorter timeline for project development and construction*

Final Refinement

In the final stages, Project Teams will refine their projects and detail how each piece will work together.

Presentation of Final Design + Public Meeting #3

After Project Teams have incorporated all feedback, they will present their final design idea to the public.

Winter 2020

Construction

After a final design has been agreed upon, DCP, TPL, and other partners will work to get the materials purchased and start building. Construction of projects will likely begin in 2020.

Spring 2020 until completion

The first step to a successful project is picking a good location.

Think of your project like a peach tree. Peach trees do not grow well in bad soil or without sunlight or water. They must be planted in the right location to flourish.

Your placemaking project will also need the right location to thrive. A colorful plaza without people to use it will not make a space safer or more friendly to people on foot or bike. However, that same plaza located on a well-traveled street, perhaps near a transit stop, would provide greater opportunity for people to use the space.

What is a “good spot” for a placemaking project?

Generally speaking, we look for a slower street, with extra unused publicly owned space, that is not too steep, and has no water drainage issues. Is your proposed site a good spot for placemaking? Look at the following criteria to find out:

REQUIRED SITE CRITERIA

STREET IS OWNED BY THE CITY OF ATLANTA

1. The street or public space must be within Atlanta city limits as well as owned and managed by the city.
2. The city does not own or manage state roads, which are controlled by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Additionally, some locations such as bridges or intersections that cross state roads are also controlled by GDOT.

LOW SPEED ROADS

Streets with a posted speed limit over 35 MPH are unsafe for placemaking projects. Choose a street with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or less.

REASONABLY FLAT LAND

Projects will not be located on hills where the slope is more than 5% or where water regularly ponds or floods after rain.

RECOMMENDED SITE FEATURES

EXTRA STREET SPACE

Sometimes, a street or sidewalk has extra space that can be re-purposed. Examples are parking spaces, slip-lanes, turn lanes, or wide driving lanes (12 ft per lane or more).

EXISTING SITE ACTIVITY

Is there existing people focused activity at the site? Commercial businesses or popular spaces that attract people to eat, socialize, and shop have liveliness to build upon.

SPECIFIC SAFETY CONCERNS

Think about your neighborhood. Where do you feel safe walking or biking? Which intersections or streets do you avoid?

You must answer YES to these for your site to be eligible:

- Is the site on a City of Atlanta owned street? (Examples of NON-city-owned streets: Memorial, Northside, Ponce De Leon, etc.) [View the map of all GDOT owned streets.](#)
- If you are unsure if your proposed site is eligible, or if your site crosses over a GDOT controlled road, please contact us before you submit your application.

- Is the site on a street with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or less?

- Is the site reasonably flat for accessibility?
- Is the site free from water drainage problems?

Answering “YES” to these means your site has recommended features:

- Are the driving lanes wider than 12 feet?
- Are on-street parking spaces 8 ft or wider?
- Is the sidewalk wider than 6 ft?
- Are there unused slip lanes or turn lanes?

- Are there active businesses at street level?
- Do people already use the space to access business or transit?

- Can safety be improved for people walking, biking, or using transit?
- Do cars travel too fast down the street?
- Are there a high number of crashes?

The following set of criteria will be used to evaluate all eligible proposals and to select the winning projects. Projects with higher scores will be prioritized.



Transportation Safety

Up to 10 points

Your project must address a transportation safety concern. In particular, your proposal should work to make the street safer for people who walk, bike, or use transit, not just for cars.

Safety improvements can come from changes such as slower speeds, increased visibility, better street crossings, safer intersections, safer street organization or signage, or safer pedestrian features.



Community Support

Up to 5 points

Your project should have strong community support. Letters of support from a broad range of stakeholders, especially those who would be directly impacted by your project, is highly preferable.

Projects that connect to existing community efforts or larger plans make a strong case for support.



Street Activation

Up to 5 points

Your project should include an element that draws people to it and activates the street with people. Ideas that encourage people to interact with the space are preferable.



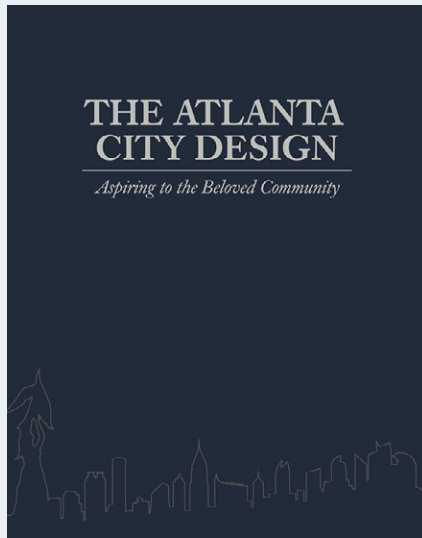
Additional Consideration

Sites or projects with special conditions will receive additional consideration. Such conditions include:

- Located within an [Equitable Target Area](#)
- Located within a historic district or corridor
- Increases park or school access
- Existing active ground floor retail or other pedestrian use
- Incorporates multi-modal access
- Improvements upon applications that were submitted in the 2018 call for projects but were not awarded. *(Note: Projects previously accepted to the program may not be re-submitted for additional funding.)*
- Project is located in a geographic area unserved by previous placemaking projects

READY TO APPLY?

For further guidance or to kick start your thinking process, use the following resources:



An aspirational framework document that aligns the plans, projects and policies of the City and articulates a vision for a future Atlanta that all of its citizens and visitors can love.

The [Atlanta Placemaking Program](#) is managed by the [Office of Mobility Planning](#). Our mission is to champion multi-modal access and livability for our beloved community.

We strive to provide Atlanta residents with a safe and reliable transportation system that enhances Atlanta's environment and economic vitality.



Written by Matthew Clarke, The Trust for Public Land's Director of Creative Placemaking, this is a key resource that deepens the understanding of the power of placemaking to help make communities stronger.

[The Trust for Public Land](#) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to create parks and protect land for people to enjoy.

TPL's Georgia office has been protecting land for more than 25 years. Over that time, The Trust for Public Land has enabled tens of thousands of Georgians to be within walking distance of a park, trail or greenspace.

Start your application today!

<http://bit.ly/ATLPlacemaking>

If you have any additional questions about the City of Atlanta Placemaking Program or the program application, please contact us at:

mobility@atlantaga.gov