



DOWNTOWN SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Executive Summary

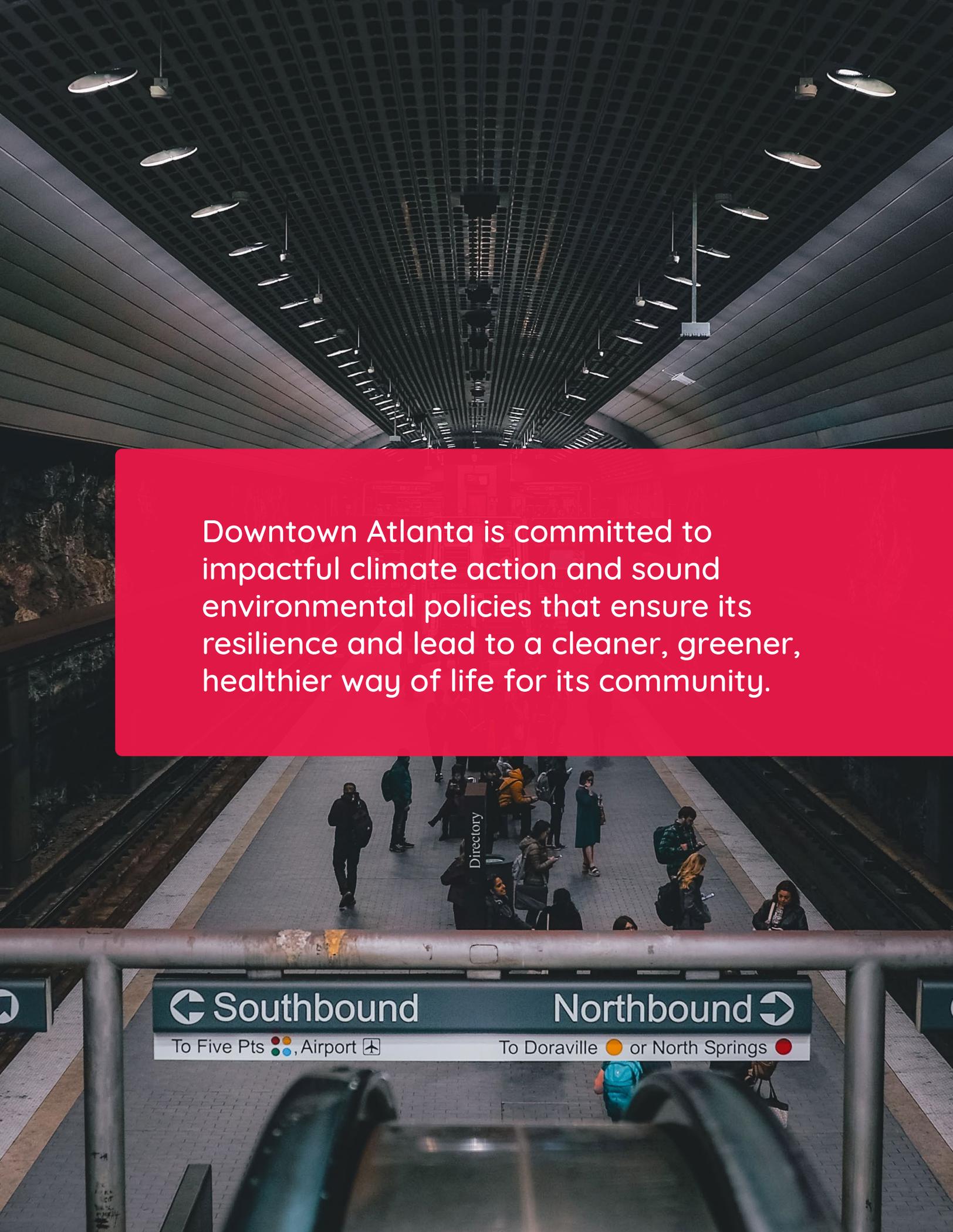


A STRONG AND HEALTHY DOWNTOWN FOR ALL

Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID) have developed a comprehensive plan to reduce the environmental footprint of Downtown and build a healthy and economically strong district.

The Downtown Atlanta Sustainability Action Plan includes strategies to increase energy and water efficiency in buildings, support the transition to renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commuting, send less waste to landfill, create robust green infrastructure, increase access to fresh local food and foster a culture of sustainability.

Downtown Atlanta businesses and organizations are pioneering business-led climate action with this leading-edge sustainability plan. Our Sustainability Action Plan represents a broad coalition of support for reforestation, green energy technologies, water management, and other environmental impact programs. This results-oriented Plan will advance business and community-led climate action that addresses the critical need for investments in the economic health and sustainability of our Downtown.



Downtown Atlanta is committed to impactful climate action and sound environmental policies that ensure its resilience and lead to a cleaner, greener, healthier way of life for its community.

← Southbound

To Five Pts , Airport 

Northbound →

To Doraville  or North Springs 



GOAL

The goal of the Downtown Sustainability Action Plan is to reduce the environmental footprint of Downtown while also building a healthy and economically strong district.

The Plan will mobilize CAP/ADID and Downtown stakeholders, advancing economic development through environmental and socially responsible action.

The Plan aims to reduce carbon emissions in order to combat climate change and manage Downtown's impact on natural resources through strategies that also foster the economic vitality of Downtown Atlanta. These strategies will also enhance the beauty and comfort of experiencing Downtown while providing multiple benefits to Downtown stakeholders, making Downtown a safe and thriving district for workers, visitors, students and residents.



THE ECONOMIC, HEALTH AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF CLIMATE ACTION FOR DOWNTOWN

The strategies included in this plan will have environmental benefits: saving energy, protecting waterways, improving air quality, reducing waste. But they will also catalyze many other benefits, economic and social. They will have a positive impact on property owners and businesses, who drive the economic engine of Downtown; these strategies will open doors to new funding sources by way of implementation partners who will bring their resources to the table; they will enhance the competitiveness of Downtown as a market for investment.

Investing in sustainability in Downtown Atlanta will:

- Make Downtown a better place to be by making it healthier, safer, greener and more convenient
- Strengthen the local economy through fostering efficiency, supporting local businesses and contributing to workforce development
- Improve quality of life for all by implementing measures to ensure clean air and water and strengthen Downtown to be more resilient in light of increasing extreme weather events

CAP IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO LEAD THE WAY

CAP/ADID is a convener, bringing together influencers to explore issues, confront challenges, identify common agendas, and pursue mutual goals. We work closely with public, private, institutional and nonprofit partners, participating in strategic alliances among economic sectors and the community's most well-known assets.

CAP/ADID brings people together to take steps, big and small, to make Downtown Atlanta a thriving place to work, study, visit and live.

CAP/ADID is also a steward and custodian, providing long-term persistence and continuity in taking on the community's challenges and opportunities. CAP has a long and distinguished history of civic planning and development activities, characterized by public-private partnerships tackling difficult problems over the long term, with a very high rate of success. CAP/ADID has spearheaded cross-sector initiatives aimed at economic development, transportation, affordable housing, energy efficiency, homelessness, and many other topics pertinent to Downtown. CAP/ADID also works as the City of Atlanta's implementation partner on projects ranging from roadway enhancements to economic development technical assistance.

We are skilled at identifying priorities and putting them into action.



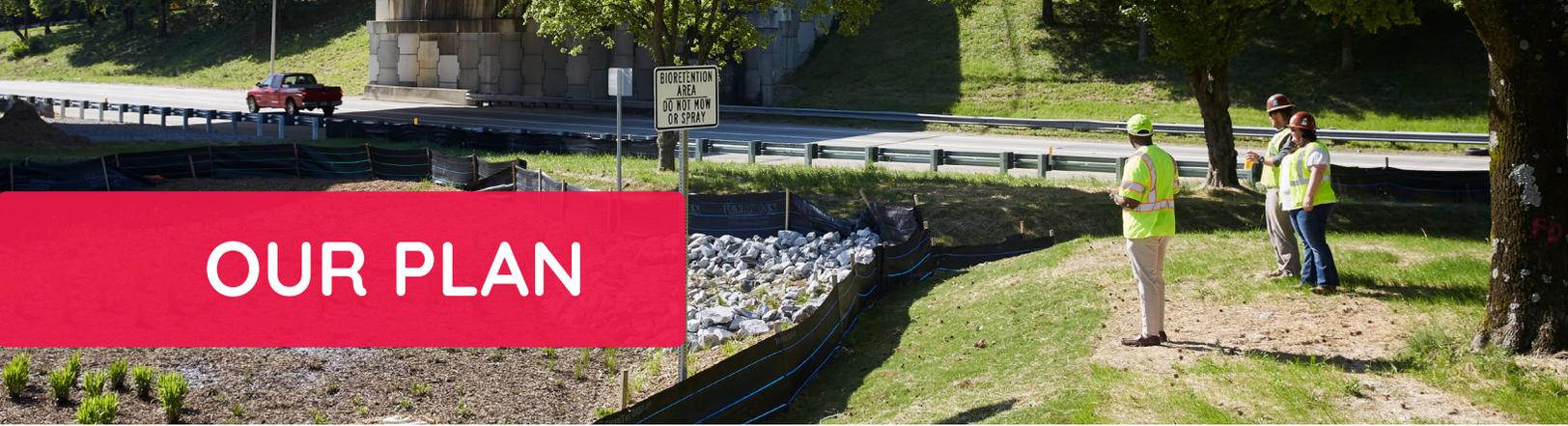
Our role in the community positions us strategically to advance sustainability goals in Downtown, setting an agenda and bringing together a diverse group of partners to bring those goals to life.

ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY

Downtown plays many roles simultaneously. It is the established center of commerce in the Southeast with more than one-fourth of jobs citywide. Bustling with thriving businesses, institutions, and government offices, Downtown swells during the day with workers and students, 99% of whom take to congested roads after 5 o'clock leaving behind a quieter Downtown after business hours. But Downtown also serves as a destination attracting over 15,500,000

visitors per year, and as a collection of distinct neighborhoods. 26,500 residents live Downtown, although only about 18% of them live in the core of Downtown. The City has added 50,000 people over the past six years, and estimates suggest that the region will grow to eight million people over the next 20 to 25 years. With a percentage of the population seeking to live closer to where they work and play, Downtown Atlanta will grow significantly.





OUR PLAN

The strategies in the Downtown Sustainability Action Plan are based on best practices and informed by other urban place management organizations, local stakeholders, CAP/ADID staff, and subject matter experts.

The strategies span 5 major categories: Energy and Water Use and Management, the Natural Environment, Community & Culture, Waste Diversion, and Transportation. The strategies are a blend of projects that are physical investments, as well as initiatives that encourage and support Downtown stakeholders in taking action.

Energy & Water Use in Buildings

Opportunities for Impact	Sustainability Plan Strategies	Benefits to Downtown
<p>21M+ sq ft of commercial office space plus additional millions of sq ft of retail, hotel, and other commercial uses</p> <p>58% of GHG emissions (largest source) in ATL come from energy used by commercial properties</p> <p>Many Downtown buildings are old, inefficient and expensive to retrofit</p>	<p>Energy and water saving measures in properties maintained by CAP/ADID</p> <p>Update zoning and stormwater ordinance</p> <p>Outreach and education to building reps and businesses</p> <p>Collaborate with the City of Atlanta on 100% Clean Energy Plan</p> <p>Explore feasibility of game-changing infrastructure like a microgrid</p>	<p>Reduced energy and water consumption</p> <p>Increased economic value and financial savings for property owners and stakeholders</p> <p>High-quality, modern building stock</p> <p>A more desirable place of business</p> <p>Innovation in infrastructure and design advanced</p> <p>Building reps and businesses trained in green building strategies</p>

The Natural Environment

Opportunities for Impact	Sustainability Plan Strategies	Benefits to Downtown
<p>3% tree canopy coverage (the lowest in the City)</p> <p>Significant lack of greenspace</p> <p>High percentage of impervious surface area</p> <p>Naturally-occurring flooding exacerbated by built environment</p>	<p>Trees, green infrastructure, and beneficial gardens to provide cooling and to mitigate flooding</p> <p>Explore large infrastructure that can relieve the pressure on the combined sewer system</p>	<p>Restored and protected ecological systems</p> <p>Shade and cooling available on hot summer days</p> <p>Problematic flooding mitigated</p> <p>Flooding in Downstream communities reduced</p> <p>Enhanced and beautified Downtown experience</p>

Community & Culture

Opportunities for Impact	Sustainability Plan Strategies	Benefits to Downtown
<p>Downtown is home to innovative businesses and institutions positioned to influence peers</p> <p>Limited access to fresh and local food in Downtown</p> <p>High impervious surface area and density of buildings causes urban heat island effect.</p>	<p>Focus efforts on building a culture of sustainability in Downtown</p> <p>Support efforts to provide fresh and local food in Downtown</p> <p>Explore updating the SPI-1 zoning code to require smart surfaces</p>	<p>Culture of sustainability in Downtown</p> <p>Downtown recognized as a leader</p> <p>Local food system supported</p> <p>Enhanced access to local and fresh food</p> <p>Reduced urban heat island effect</p>

Waste Diversion

Opportunities for Impact	Sustainability Plan Strategies	Benefits to Downtown
<p>21M+ square feet of commercial space generating waste</p> <p>Composting organic materials is uncommon</p>	<p>Pilot composting at CAP/ADID events in Woodruff Park</p> <p>Promote the reduction of single-use materials in local businesses</p> <p>Create standardized labeling for recycling, compost, and landfill bins across Downtown buildings and businesses</p>	<p>Reduced input into regional landfills</p> <p>Value of traditionally disposable items recouped</p> <p>Green jobs in the recycling industry supported</p>

Transportation

Opportunities for Impact	Sustainability Plan Strategies	Benefits to Downtown
<p>58% of Downtown trips (315,000 trips per day) are by single-occupancy vehicles</p> <p>152,755 people commute into Downtown every day</p> <p>About 2k people live and work in Downtown</p> <p>Nearly 10k people commute to/from Downtown every day</p>	<p>Support a multimodal transportation system</p> <p>Design streets, streetscapes and other surfaces with sustainability in mind</p> <p>Make all streets green streets</p>	<p>Cleaner and more resilient Downtown</p> <p>Enhanced bikeability, walkability, and public transit options</p> <p>Reduced carbon emissions associated with transportation</p>



STRATEGIES

The list below presents all strategies for each sector.

1. Energy and Water Use

- Strategy 1.1** Supporting building owners and managers with compliance with the Commercial Buildings Energy & Water Efficiency Ordinance (CBEEO) through outreach and education
- Strategy 1.2** Supporting small and medium-sized businesses with energy and water efficiency efforts through outreach and education
- Strategy 1.3** Create a student training program to support small and medium-sized businesses with energy and water efficiency
- Strategy 1.4** Evaluate water saving measures and lighting in properties maintained by CAP/ADID
- Strategy 1.5** Create resources for Special Administrative Permit (SAP) applicants
- Strategy 1.6** Evaluate the impact of changing the Downtown Special Public Interest District (SPI-1) zoning regulations
- Strategy 1.7** Collaborate with the City of Atlanta on the plan to advance the 100% Clean Energy Plan
- Strategy 1.8** Promote net positive energy and water
- Strategy 1.9** Explore the impact of a microgrid or offsite solar farm
- Strategy 1.10** Explore the impact of a stormwater utility pilot
- Strategy 1.11** Evaluate financing options and alternative funding sources for large-scale, multi-partner projects that can advance energy and water management

2. The Natural Environment

- Strategy 2.1** Develop and implement the strategy for planting new trees and implementing vertical greening
- Strategy 2.2** Develop an urban forest guide for CAP/ADID and private property owners
- Strategy 2.3** Promote and support native, natural habitat and beneficial gardens
- Strategy 2.4** Explore large infrastructure that can relieve pressure on the combined sewer system
- Strategy 2.5** Advocate for updating the Post-Development Stormwater Management Ordinance

3. Community & Culture

- Strategy 3.1** Focus efforts on building a culture of sustainability in Downtown through stakeholder engagement
- Strategy 3.2** Recognize Downtown stakeholders for their sustainability efforts
- Strategy 3.3** Tell the story of sustainability in Downtown
- Strategy 3.4** Create a Green Events Guide
- Strategy 3.5** Promote and support efforts to provide fresh and local food in Downtown
- Strategy 3.6** Advance adoption of smart and reflective surfaces to reduce the urban heat island effect, by updating the SPI-1 zoning code requirements and painting dark roofs

4. Waste Diversion

- Strategy 4.1** Pilot composting at CAP/ADID events in Woodruff Park
- Strategy 4.2** Promote the reduction of single-use materials in local businesses
- Strategy 4.3** Create standardized labeling for recycling, compost, and landfill bins across Downtown buildings and businesses

5. Transportation

Strategy 5.1 Advance clean and resilient commuting by supporting a multimodal transportation system

Strategy 5.2 Design streets, streetscapes and other surfaces with sustainability in mind

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Downtown Sustainability Action Plan Final Report is available online at <https://www.atlantadowntown.com/sustainability>

If you have questions or would like to get involved with sustainability in Downtown Atlanta, please contact Audrey Leous at aleous@atlantadowntown.com.

