

ATLANTA FOR ALL ALL FOR ATLANTA

July 2025

Plan A: Executive Summary





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City of Atlanta Andre Dickens, Mayor Department of City Planning Jahnee Prince, Commissioner

OUR VISION

At our best, Atlanta is both a vibrant city and a verdant forest. Our core values—equity, progress, ambition, access, and nature—will guide our growth and change to create a future city that is designed for people, designed for nature, and designed for people in nature.

<u>Plan A</u> is Atlanta's comprehensive development plan guiding us toward our future city. It highlights the essential connections between land use, transportation, housing, economic development, nature, historic preservation, and other key elements to building our city.

We know that Atlanta will change. Not changing is not an option, and our change will involve significant growth. More people are calling Atlanta home, and there is reason to believe this trend will continue.

When we adopted the previous comprehensive development plan in 2021, Atlanta's population was 498,000—surpassing our previous high set in 1970. Now, Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) estimates the city's population to be 532,000. In a rare break from a decades-long norm, Atlanta outpaced growth in the suburbs in 2022 and 2023. By 2050, ARC expects Atlanta's population to be nearly 700,000—about 9% of the region's population. If properly designed, growth can be a powerful tool for shaping the Atlanta we want to become.

<u>Plan A</u> aligns multiple initiatives under the inspiring vision of *Atlanta City Design*, our city's framework to plan for a future Atlanta with greater density and diversity while conserving our ecosystem and beautiful landscapes and unique character and scale of our neighborhoods. Defined by our core values of **equity**, **progress**, **ambition**, **access**, and **nature**, *Atlanta City Design* reveals that the essence of Atlanta's shared identity and diverse patterns of development are crucial in welcoming a growing population and shaping a vibrant future city. Moreover, it offers ideas to celebrate and elevate Atlanta's authentic character.

Growth will be organized into already-developed areas that are suitable to accommodate a lot of growth. The rest of the city will be protected from overwhelming growth. The urban neighborhoods and lush suburban-like areas will grow in ways



that retain and improve their charm and their leafy tree canopy. As we look ahead, different areas in Atlanta will evolve in response to new development trends and broader changes in the city's built environment.

<u>Plan A</u> is more than just a policy; it reflects the voices of thousands of Atlantans who shared experiences, needs, and hopes for equitable growth and change. <u>Plan A</u> will shape our city's future for years to come, empowering us to confront challenges directly while seizing every opportunity to create a better Atlanta for everyone.

TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD AN ATLANTA FOR ALL!

Our Planning Process

<u>Plan A</u> is first and foremost informed by Atlantans, followed by the numerous citywide initiatives and the many neighborhood-based plans that provide rich detail on the specific needs and opportunities of our residents, businesses, property owners, and City partners who shape Atlanta's future. The Department of City Planning is dedicated to a planning process that reflects Atlanta's diverse community and includes everyone in our city's future prosperity. The <u>Plan A</u> community involvement plan aimed to touch all city areas and create opportunities for Atlantans to share their ideas for this update of <u>Plan A</u>.

In 2024 and 2025, the City's <u>Plan A</u> team conducted three extensive rounds of engagement, outreach, and education. Engagement included public meetings, small group conversations, and pop-up events and interactive online surveys, maps, and draft documents. Our outreach involved social media, an expansive distribution list, digital advertising campaigns, and neighborhood canvassing throughout the city. Education activities ranged from presentations to various groups to instructional training for neighborhood leaders and our **100 Plan A Ambassadors**.

2024			20 25			
<u>Plan A</u>	Round 1 Open Houses	Round 2 Workshops	Round 3 Community Meetings			
ATL Zoning 2.0	Mod Form and Draft Release, R	Frontage	Module II Site and Development Draft Release, Review, and Q&A			

In each round, public participation surpassed past comprehensive planning processes. In addition, the <u>Plan A</u> website, <u>AtlantaforAll.com</u>, served as the hub for information, where participants could explore community involvement goals and strategies, catch up on recent meetings by reviewing boards and recordings, download and share factsheets, give feedback on maps and drafts, and submit questions. The website also informed participants details on upcoming events and next steps in the planning process.

This year's comprehensive plan update is unique because it coincides with the City of Atlanta's rewriting of its Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is a powerful legal tool for implementing Plan A. Just as our planning efforts must respond to current and future challenges facing Atlanta, so must our zoning regulations. The Department of City Planning is nearing the completion of *ATL Zoning 2.0*, the multi-year initiative to replace our zoning ordinance with a new one that better translates our core values and shapes our city so that Atlanta remains a reflection of us.

20 <mark>26</mark>									
Round Final Drafts & A		Implementation Small Area Planning and Partner Plans, including the Comprehensive Transportation Plan							
Module III Procedures & Administration Draft Release, Review, and Q&A	Phase IV Draft I Testing	Phase IV Draft II Testing	Phase IV Legislation Introduction and Adoption						

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

150+

Total Plan A and ATL Zoning 2.0 events

7,300+

Total Plan A and ATL Zoning 2.0 participants at events 2,500+

Attendance at Plan A presentations to NPUs during adoption

10,000+

ATL Zoning 2.0 comments informed Plan A

4,300+

Comments on drafts, maps, and surveys for Plan A

105

Locations canvased

45,000+

Social media views

67,000+

Emails opened

16 million

MARTA ad views

This year's update is particularly significant as Atlanta celebrates the 50th anniversary of comprehensive planning with Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs). The NPU system promotes equity and public participation in Atlanta's planning process by educating and empowering residents and community leaders. The remarkable community involvement over the past year reflects Mayor Maynard Jackson's lasting legacy, which established the foundation for Atlanta's Comprehensive Development Plans and the NPU system, allowing all residents to actively engage in comprehensive planning.













What's New in Plan A?

A New Land Use Approach. The City's previous land use approach was confusing and overly complicated, with too many sources of policy direction and no clear hierarchy for decision-making. Plan A combines the best aspects of Future Land Use and Character Area planning into a single cohesive layer, called "Development Patterns," to provide a consistent, streamlined approach to guiding physical growth and development.

Alignment with the New Zoning Ordinance. *ATL Zoning 2.0* is a multi-year effort to rewrite the 40-year-old Zoning Ordinance that no longer meets Atlanta's present and future needs. The new Zoning Ordinance has been intentionally written to support <u>Plan A</u> and the new land use approach by creating the tools for the City and its neighborhoods to customize zoning to meet specific, local needs.

Preparing for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update. Atlanta's Transportation Plan was the first citywide plan adopted under the *Atlanta City Design* framework in 2018. Later in 2025, Atlanta's Department of Transportation will start updating this plan to make our city's transportation network safer, more equitable, and more sustainable. The update will be based on a set of clear and ambitious goals resulting from the <u>Plan A</u> process, and upcoming community participation will play a vital role in shaping the next version of Atlanta's Transportation Plan and its implementation.

Housing for All. Coordinated public action among various departments and agencies, combined with strong participation from the private and philanthropic sectors, will be essential for developing housing at the price points that Atlanta requires. In this year's <u>Plan A</u> update, the City and its public agency partners emphasized their strategic position to leverage public resources, including land and various local funds, to ensure widespread housing affordability and opportunities for all Atlantans across every neighborhood.

Designing Atlanta's Public Realm. Atlanta City Design inspires excellent urban design and recognizes the mutual relationship between the public realm and people's lives. Plan A has many recommendations to enhance the public realm with art, monuments, public spaces, interpretative wayfinding, and other public and private investments that contribute to our city and neighborhood's natural, cultural, social, and civic identity. Plan A is looking ahead to the new Zoning Ordinance by promoting quality and flexibility in building architecture and urban design to activate and enhance the public realm and evolve with the needs and opportunities of surrounding areas. Plan A furthers the vision for our parks and trails to connect more people to nature throughout the city by designing and building "nature spaces" as new public spaces at the intersection of streets with streams, rivers, and forests.

Preserving Atlanta's Places and Spaces. Historic places and spaces are our future—they make Atlanta a genuinely great and unique city. Since the adoption of Atlanta's Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1989, not much has changed related to how the City designates or reviews projects on historic properties. As a result, Atlanta continues to lose historic properties that are central to its story and identity. Plan A brings fresh ideas from Future Places Project and the ATL Zoning 2.0 initiative to highlight the need to update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance to reflect modern best practices, address the City's operational capacity, and produce a historic preservation program that meets an urgent need in Atlanta.

Creating a More Resilient Atlanta. The physical and mental health of Atlanta residents is inextricably linked to the health of the city's natural systems. These systems are our first defense against environmental pollution and climate vulnerabilities to extreme heat, drought, and flooding. This update to Plan A supports several upcoming initiatives that will not only make substantial investments in our environment but also celebrate it. Implementing the upcoming Climate Resilient ATL will build our capacity to prepare, adapt, and respond to climate change. Later this year Atlanta will have a new Tree Protection Ordinance focusing on preserving the long-term health of the city's tree canopy while supporting future growth and development. Plan A also supports Activate ATL (and the new Trails ATL) and its community vision of increasing access to exceptional recreational programming and fostering connections to nature through parks and trails.

Setting the Groundwork for Coordinated Small Area and Neighborhood Planning.

<u>Plan A</u> outlines the initial steps for creating a small area and neighborhood planning program. This program intends to empower partners and community members to develop actionable recommendations for neighborhoods facing significant design, equity, and livability challenges. Additionally, it will establish clear and transparent expectations for planning processes, encouraging greater community participation in shaping the future of their neighborhoods.

How Does <u>Plan A</u> Fit Into Other Efforts?

Plan A emphasizes implementation. Over the past few years, many key projects prioritized by the plan have either been completed or are actively underway, showcasing our collective commitment to turning the plan's vision into reality.

Projects Completed or Underway



Connecting Atlanta to the World

ATLNext: The Next Era for Hartsfield-Jackson



Connecting Atlanta with More Trails

Eastside Trolley Trail



Connecting Atlanta with More Transit

Summerhill Bus Rapid Transit



Activating Parks and Recreation

Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Chastain Park



Investing in Public Safety Facilities

Fire Station 22



Preserving Historic Places

Old Stone Church Dedication



Securing Atlanta's Water Future

Shirley Clarke Franklin Park



Building Affordable Housing

Scholars Landing at the Former University Homes



Designing Public Spaces for People

Bus Shelter along Cascade Road



Supporting Atlanta's Arts and Culture

MLK Memorial Mural Relocation



Connecting More Atlantans to Internet

IKE Signs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This update of Plan A continues to build on this momentum. Every chapter in <u>Plan A</u> outlines achievable actions, many of which create synergies across multiple chapters.

Additionally, several programs and projects included in the new Community Work Program—the required prioritized list of actions to implement significant recommendations over the next five years—are supported by ongoing local infrastructure initiatives, such as Moving Atlanta Forward and More MARTA. Various economic and community development initiatives from local partners, including Invest Atlanta, Atlanta Housing, Atlanta Beltline, and Atlanta's philanthropic community, leverage implementation efforts even further.



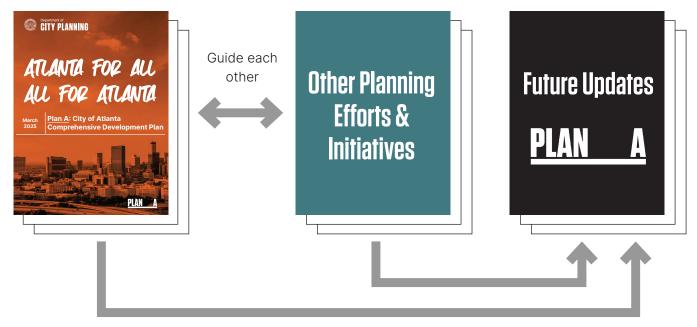




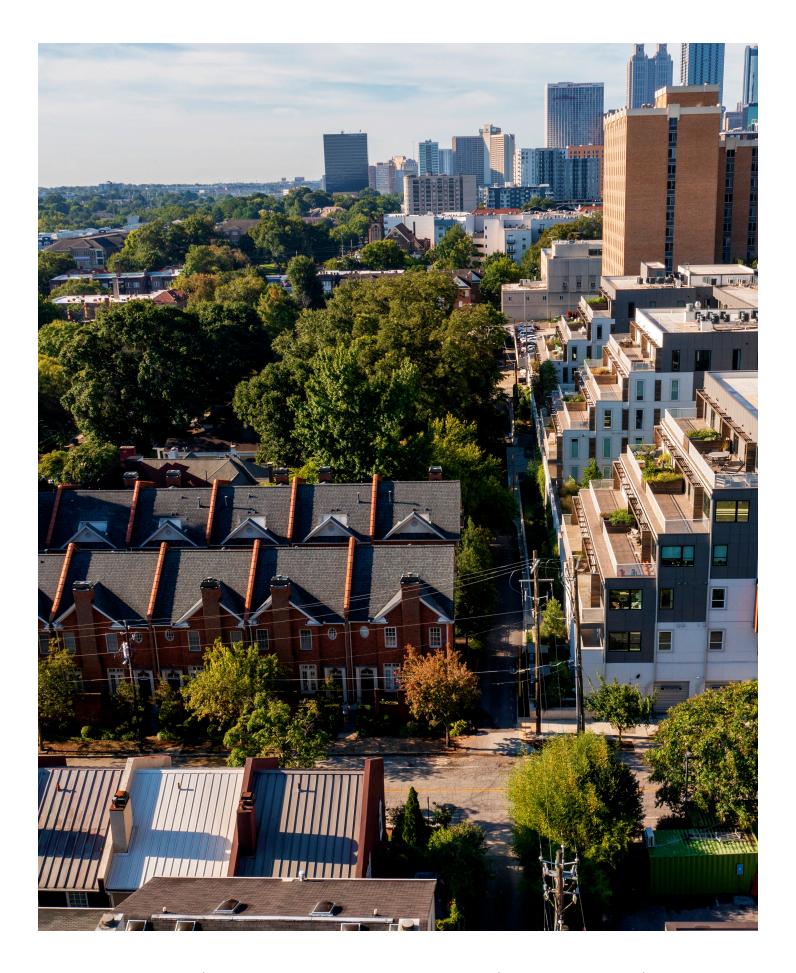




<u>Plan A</u> will guide the development and implementation of new plans at regional, city, and neighborhood levels. Future updates to <u>Plan A</u> will embrace big ideas from these planning efforts and initiatives, ensuring they align with our shared vision and goals.



Ideas and recommendations are incorporated into future updates



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Understanding Plan A

This update of <u>Plan A</u> brings together the most crucial design and planning work the City of Atlanta and our partners have recently undertaken.

Plan A is divided into 10 Planning Elements, each describing a component of city building in Atlanta. Plan A also has five Appendices providing additional information, including NPU policies and land use development patterns maps in Appendix 1 and required Implementing Elements, including the Report of Accomplishments, the 2026-2030 Community Work Program (CWP), and the 2025-2029 Capital Improvements Element (CIE), in Appendix 2.

Planning Elements

Land Use Planning

Transportation

Housing & Community Development

Economic Development

Broadband Internet

Climate Resilience & Natural Systems

Urban Design

Historic Preservation

Public Safety Facilities

Neighborhood Planning

The following pages illustrate how each Planning Element has a **Vision** followed by a set of **Goals** stating desired near- and long-term outcomes. Together, these Visions and Goals let us know what we are working to accomplish. The **Themes** and **Needs and Opportunities**, identified during the planning process, define urgent issues to be addressed as we move towards realizing our Vision and Goals. A series of **Policies** related to these issues in each element, along with a list of proposed **Actions**, point to the necessary steps for implementation.

Housing & Community Development

Vision

A city of opportunity for all.

We want all Alatanas to share in Atlanta's growth and prosperity. We invest in our young people, care for the most vulnerable, and create opportunities for all to advance. This means focusing on education, workforce development, equilable wealth-building, stable and affordable housing, and other initiatives to support our residents. We recognize the importance of healthy, whole neighborhoods as the place where Atlantans live their lives. Every single Atlantan deserves the ability to afford to live in the neighborhood of their choice.

Goals

- Housing Affordability. Foster a dynamic housing market that supplies housing at all price points in mixed-income communities.
- Housing Variety. Encourage neighborhood planning and prioritize partnerships and strategies to deliver various housing types so more residents live near higher-paying jobs, high-performing schools, quality services and amenities, and transit.
- 3. Innovation in Housing. Encourage supportive plans, rules, and tools for housing in City and neighborhood plans to address inequality and improve people's lives. Ensure that the legal, administrative, and data resources are in place to implement the plans and advance access to quality houses.
- 4. An Equitable Approach. Achieve widespread prosperity and accessibility throughout the city by ensuring affordable housing options in all neighborhoods and protecting existing residents at risk of being priced out of their current neighborhoods.
- 5. Homelessness is a Housing Problem. Expand the number of housing units and funding for Atlantans experiencing or at risk of homelessness that links them with community support and resources as they transition from homelessness to permanent, stable housing.

Vision & Goals

States the community's direction for the future

Themes

Includes a series of Needs and Opportunities that define the priority issues to be addressed

URBAN DESIGN

Streets capes

Needs & Opportunities

Our street network is also the City's most significant publicly owned and shared space. Whether moving cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians—and even packages to doors—or conveying water, wastewater, gas, and digital access through fiber optic cables below, our streets support our everyday lives in countless ways. Streets are the network that connects people and resources to places.

The design of Allanta's streets has favored cars rather than people for decades, but that is changing. As we shift our focus to transforming Atlanta's streets to accommodate more uses and people, we must leverage exceptional urban design principles and coordinate efforts across the City. Our streetscapes and rights-of-way can do more than accommodate pedestrians and cyclists more safely. Their designs can be beautiful, and they can expand the City's urban tree canopy and sustainably manage stormwater runoff.



Policies & Actions

UD 13 Facilitate more effective interdepartmental coordination among the Office of Design, Department of Public Works, ATLOT, and Department of Watershed Management to implement street infrastructure improvements that active multiple benefits, such as integrating traffic calming measures with green infrastructure and increased canopy cover.

UD 13.1 Align infrastructure investments in streets with the city's Capital Improvement Programs and other public funds

UD 13.2 Collaborate with the Departments of Public Works and Watershed Management on identifying potential locations for implementing green infrastructure and identifying funding sources.

UD 13.3 Develop citywide curbside management and transportation-related recommendations for the Mixed-Use, Industrial, Community, and Open Space Development Patterns using the CAP Curbside Management Action Plan and the Midtown Alliance Curbside Management Action Plan as inspiration and for reference.

Management Action Plan and the Midrown Alliance Curbside
Management Action Plan as inspiration and for reference.

UD 13.4

Make planning and design recommendations incorporating standard
details to increase soil volume in new tree plantings to support
healthy urban tree growth within the street right-of-way.

UD 13.5 Collaborate with ATLDOT to create typical street typologies for each Development Pattern in Plan A.

Require typical street typologies to address and improve public healt concerns like air quality, heat, and flooding.

Policy

Guidance on how to achieve the Vision and Goals

Action

Key activity for implementing policies

URBAN DESIGN

Private Development

Needs & Opportunities

Private development affects and contributes to the public realm; the design, height, width, and depth of private buildings and their related spaces dramatically impact how we experience the public realny particularly our steets. Private development has prioritized vehicular access and connection for decades, resulting in building faces that negatively impact public street life. To truly transform Atlanta's streets, private development has hold employ sound uban design principles that result in buildings and structures that connect and seamlessly contribute to streets and the public realm.

Policies & Actions

Expand a design review process for development projects to address building and public space design, curbside management, and related transportation concerns, allow for unique perspectives, and guide designs to complement and be sympathetic to neighborhoods and the City of Atlanta.

UD 6.1 Align investments in city streets with redeveloping related spaces in or adjacent to the right-of-way.

UD 6.2 Require and enable the Concept Review Committee (CRC) to review and comment on private development design and planning layouts.

UD 6.3 Ensure the Office of Design reviews and comments on private development plans related to the Right of Way, green, and outdoor

UD 7 Develop a design review process for private entities designing public spaces UD 7.1 Implement a steering committee to review and approve public spaces being designed in the city of Atlanta. UD 7.2 Introduce legislation to ensure approval process of public spaces reviewed by the steering committee. The City of Atlanta departments and pa Private Development are:

• Atlanta Beltline, Inc. Atlanta Detinine, inc.
 Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID)
 Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB)
 Atlanta Urban Design Commission (UDC)
 Buckhead CID Buckhead CID
 Central Atlanta Progress (CAP)
 Concept Review Committee (CRC)
 Little Five Points (LSP) Alliance
 Livable Buckhead
 Midtown Alliance
 Office of Design's Historic Prese, anuman of the Committee of Zoning and Development
 Tree Conservation Commission
 Upper Westside Improvement District
 West End Community Improvement District

Call-Out

Provides additional information about a topic

Spotlight

Summarizes recent or ongoing City initiatives



Plan A Partners & **Implementation**

Partners & **Implementation**

Shares how Plan A is implementing other initiatives, and vice versa

Our New Approach to Land Use Planning

When we're at our best, Atlanta's physical form celebrates the juxtaposition of a vibrant city and a verdant forest. With our core values in mind, therefore, we'll base our land use approach to future growth on this enduring logic.

Development Patterns are a combination of physical features common to every Atlanta neighborhood. Physical features at the block scale include accessibility for cars and pedestrians, block lengths, street types, transit options, and the presence of trees. Other noticeable features include the size, type, design, and use of lots and buildings along Atlanta's streets.

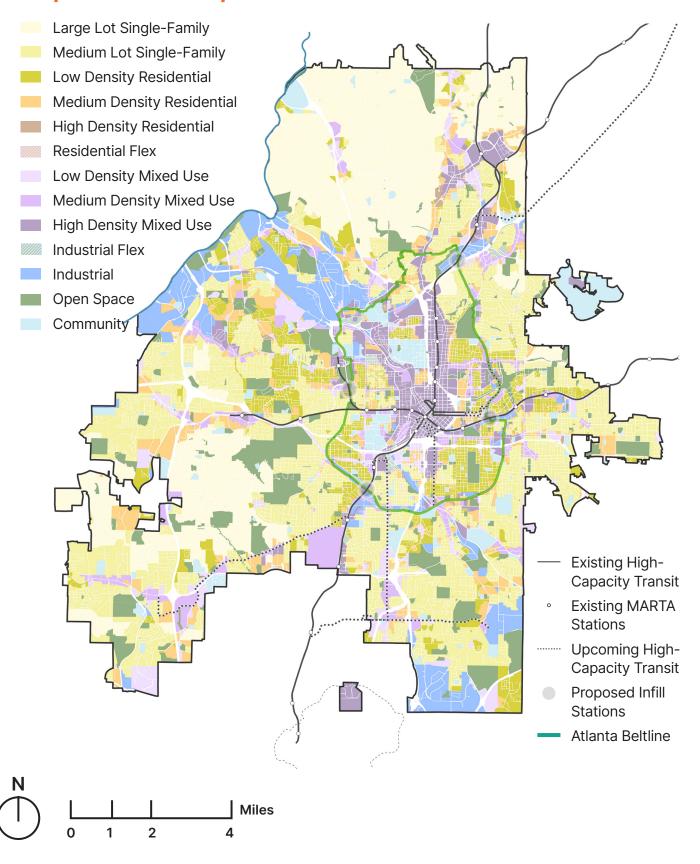
The different combinations of these physical features create unique patterns of development. When these patterns coexist within a neighborhood and across Atlanta, they form the foundation for a new approach to land use planning.

Development Patterns establish stronger connections between land use planning and the activities involved in building our city. They reinforce the city's physical form, which encourages density in the urban core and on major corridors where investments in infrastructure, public spaces, high-capacity transit, and pedestrian connections and walkability support growth. Outside these areas, Development Patterns support more modest growth compatible with each neighborhood's typical built and natural features or small area plans.

This approach offers more effective guidance for implementing a new Zoning Ordinance that is more informed by Atlanta's physical form than by how land is used. It also emphasizes the importance of thoughtfully planning our historic areas and neighborhoods with transit.

Our new approach is informed by input from the community. We received thousands of ideas—both big and small—from participants. Atlanta residents identified which Development Patterns they wanted to keep or introduce throughout the city. Moreover, they offered thoughtful suggestions to refine our descriptions of each pattern and highlight their differences, ensuring they resonate with the everyday experiences of living, working, shopping, dining, visiting, and going to school in Atlanta neighborhoods.

Development Patterns Map

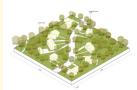


Plan A Development Patterns

LLSF

Large Lot Single-Family

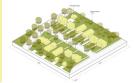
Areas primarily for single-unit houses with larger lots, curving streets, low walkability, and high tree canopy on lots.



MLSF

Medium Lot Single-Family

Areas primarily for single-unit houses (with or without accessory dwellings) with medium to small lots, gridded streets, moderate walkability, and moderate tree canopy on lots.



LDR

Low Density Residential

Areas for a mix of small, low-rise residential uses with small lot, gridded streets, moderate to high walkability, and moderate tree canopy on lots.



MDR

Medium Density Residential

Areas for a mix of up to mid-rise residential uses with limited ground story commercial, gridded streets, moderate to high walkability, and high tree canopy on streets.



HNR

High Density Residential

Areas for up to high-rise multi-unit uses with limited ground story commercial, high walkability, and high tree canopy on streets. They are usually located along major streets or near transit.



Residential Flex

Areas for a mix of residential and non-residential uses with a scale, density, and design similar to the Medium Lot Single-Family and Low Density Residential Development Patterns.



LDMU

Low Density Mixed Use

Areas for a mix of low-rise commercial and residential uses serving a few neighborhoods. These areas have high walkability, moderate tree canopy on lots and streets, and are usually located along major streets.



MDMII

Medium Density Mixed Use

Areas of a mix of mid-rise commercial and residential uses serving several neighborhoods. These areas have high walkability, high tree canopy on streets, and are usually located along major streets or where different neighborhoods meet.



HDMU

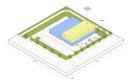
High Density Mixed Use

Areas for a mix of high-rise commercial and residential uses serving the entire city or region. These areas have very high walkability, high tree canopy on streets and are located near the city's center and have access to transit.



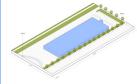
Industrial Flex

Areas for a mix of low-impact industrial uses and compatible residential and commercial uses.



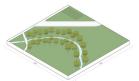
Industrial

Areas for industrial land, buildings, rail yards, and transportation infrastructure that support manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, repair, and intermodal activities.



Open Space

Areas for parks and indoor recreation centers; gardens; forests; nature preserves; greenspace along rivers, streams, and lakes; and cemeteries and memorials.



Community

Areas characterized by civic, institutional, and public uses that are typically located on larger properties.



Development Patterns & Zoning

The Zoning Ordinance is the City's primary tool for implementing the land use approach in Plan A. Through its control of building size, building placement, site design, and use, the Zoning Ordinance establishes many Zoning Districts (or, classifications) that can implement a given Development Pattern.

Each Development Pattern establishes which zoning classifications best implement it. One or more zoning districts may implement a Development Pattern. The Department of City Planning advises the Atlanta City Council and the Mayor on Zoning Districts that align with a property's Development Pattern.

The <u>Plan A</u> and Zoning Ordinance "Compatibility Table" to the right is a useful reference to understanding relationships between Development Patterns and Zoning Districts. Development Patterns populate rows, and the main Zoning Districts fill in the columns. A shaded cell indicates that a Zoning District is compatible with the Development Pattern. That is, the Zoning District appropriately implements the Development Pattern.

We will update this table as a revision to <u>Plan A</u> in the next few years to reflect the new relationships between Development Patterns and the new Zoning Districts. As *ATL Zoning 2.0* completes the drafting and testing of the new Zoning Ordinance, we will gain clearer understanding of how Development Patterns and Zoning Districts will work together to shape our city.

	Development Pattern	Large Lot Single-Family	Medium Lot Single-Family	Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential	Residential Flex	Low Density Mixed Use	Medium Density Mixed Use	High Density Mixed Use	Industrial	Industrial Flex	Open Space	Community
	R-1													
	R-2, R-2A, R-2B													
	R-3, FC-R3, R-3A													
	R-4, R-4A, R-4B													
	R-5													
	RG-1													
	RG-2													
	RG-3													
	RG-4													
	RG-5													
	RG-6													
	MR-1													
	MR-2													
	MR-3													
	MR-4A													
	MR-4B													
ĭ	MR-5A, MR-5B													
oni	MR-6													
ng	MR-MU													
٥	R-LC													
Zoning District	LW													
<u>ic</u>	NC NC													
	C-2													
	C-3													
	C-5													
	C-5													
	MRC-2													
	MRC-3													
	MRC-3													
	0-1													
	I-1													
	I-MIX													
	I-MIX													
	PD-OC PD-H													
	PD-MU													
	PD-BP													
	PD-CS													

The table will be updated with new Zoning Districts when the Zoning Ordinance is replaced.

End of Plan A Executive Summary

