

## What is the Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative?

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative (NRI) is an ongoing, shared effort by Mayor Dickens, the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta City Council and a coalition of public and private partners dedicated to making Atlanta the best place in the country to raise a child. By adopting a “whole of government” approach, the initiative actively reorients public systems to focus more inclusively on residents’ needs. Over time, this strategic investment will build the essential systems that every neighborhood needs to support children, families, and futures, creating programs and places where people can live with dignity, move freely, and grow successfully.

To drive this vision forward, the NRI requires a comprehensive funding strategy that maximizes investment in both people and place. The NRI will draw on a range of financing sources to support neighborhood investments in affordable housing, economic development, and human services. It is important to note that some potential funding sources will be restricted to certain uses. These sources include city bonds, MARTA funding, federal grants, philanthropic grants, private funds, and Tax Allocation District (TAD) funding. TAD funding will consist of a combination of existing TAD funds and, if taxing jurisdictions choose to extend the TADs, potential future funds.

### Key Building Blocks

The NRI focuses on eight building blocks that define a high quality of life for every Atlanta resident. These building blocks serve as benchmarks for success to ensure the NRI is achieving measurable improvements, both in targeted neighborhoods and citywide. The eight building blocks are:

- Affordable housing for all
- Public safety for all
- Youth development and education for all
- Public spaces for all
- Transit for all
- Health and wellness for all
- Economic opportunity for all
- Dependable government for all

## Focus Neighborhood Areas

Rather than spreading resources thinly, the initiative concentrates sustained investment in seven neighborhood areas where barriers to mobility are deepest, where trusted Neighborhood Partner Organizations (NPOs) already provide the relational infrastructure to coordinate action and engage residents, and where key public or public-private projects already exist to catalyze transformation. These neighborhood areas are intended to become the places where systems are intentionally aligned, sequenced, tested over time, and where accelerated progress in them spreads to benefit the city as a whole.

These neighborhood areas are defined by a rich cultural heritage that serves as the foundational bedrock of Atlanta's identity. From the resilient spirit of Thomasville Heights to the storied "Emerald Corridor" of Grove Park to the deep-rooted cultural anchors of the Historic Westside, these communities have been home to generations of mixed-income residents and small businesses that have shaped the city's character. At the heart of these areas are legacy families and long-term residents with intergenerational wisdom and an unwavering commitment to the stewardship of their communities. By centering the active advocacy and civic engagement of these dedicated neighbors, the NRI honors the enduring commitment of those who continue to champion their blocks, ensuring that the revitalization of these historic anchors is led and sustained by the very people who have long fostered their vitality and strength.

However, despite the strengths of these communities, each of these neighborhood areas are experiencing real challenges that the NRI can address. For example, last year in these NRI neighborhood areas, 9,000 people faced an eviction. More than 25% of K-12 students in Atlanta Public Schools moved at least once during the school year, ending the year in a different school than where they started. 60% of residents didn't have ready access to a grocery store with fresh and healthy food. Hundreds of seniors were at risk of involuntary displacement due to falling behind on their tax and utility bills. And, perhaps most jarring, the approximately 1,200 children who were born to families in these neighborhoods are expected to live up to 20 years less than their peers growing up in other Atlanta neighborhoods just a few miles away, based purely on where they live. The need is stark, and there is no time to waste.

There are two important items to note when considering NRI geographies. First, NRI is intended to be rooted in evidence-based, nationally proven place-based community development models that require the presence of certain criteria on-the-ground for their efficacy. While many Atlanta neighborhoods need a greater concentration of resources and support, not all offered ready access to strong civic infrastructure and a local, place-based

nonprofit Neighborhood Partner Organization, elements essential to the success of this change model.

Second, it is important to note that these seven are just the first focus areas. There are many more neighborhoods, especially in the south and western parts of the city, that have suffered disinvestment for too long, and they, too, need cross-sector focus and support. At the Mayor's direction, City departments are already applying the NRI methodology in neighborhood areas outside of these seven. Mayor Dickens also issued Administrative Orders in early 2026 aimed at reorganizing city government to better support swift action across Atlanta neighborhoods. In those areas where residents want to be part of the second slate of NRI neighborhoods, City Council representatives have partnered with City NRI staff to jumpstart civic infrastructure or other missing elements critical to the change model. This way, when NRI begins to formally expand into other Atlanta areas, they'll be ready to take full advantage of the NRI strategy.

The Mayor selected the first seven neighborhood areas based on the following criteria important to national place-based change models:

- Consistent pattern of poor socioeconomic data outcomes
- Presence of strong civic infrastructure and place-based partner organization
- Resident willingness to participate
- Catalytic public or public-private partnership project underway
- Strategic geographic placement in relation to other NRI neighborhoods and other parts of the city
- Presence of assets and resources that could be brought to the effort across community, nonprofit, public, private, and philanthropic partners

The seven initial neighborhood areas are clustered around core commercial corridors, which, if properly activated and grown, could catalyze economic growth far outside their borders; this impact is often referred to as the **“halo effect.”** These corridors include the **Hollowell corridor, the Campbellton corridor, the Downtown area, and Thomasville Heights.**

The initial focus neighborhoods are:

- Thomasville Heights
- English Avenue & Vine City
- Grove Park & Bankhead

- West Hollowell
- East Campbellton
- West Campbellton
- Downtown Atlanta

Phase II NRI plans tentatively scope expansion along the **MLK Jr. corridor** and the **Metropolitan corridors**. We anticipate this formal expansion to take place by the middle of Mayor Dickens' second term.

### **Concurrent Work**

#### **Anti-Displacement Framework:**

The City of Atlanta has partnered with the nonprofit organization Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) to develop anti-displacement and legacy preservation strategies to protect current residents of NRI neighborhoods. PSE and the City of Atlanta are working with Neighborhood Partner Organizations and resident working groups to develop this framework. Concurrent with this work, PSE shared information and materials with the NRI Commission for review. The Commission's recommendations include anti-displacement recommendations informed by the information shared by PSE. Detailed information for each of the anti-displacement strategies reviewed with the NRI Commission is included in Appendix A.

#### **NRI Long-Term Governance Strategies:**

In addition, Mayor Dickens partnered with Neighborhood Partner Organizations, the Atlanta Committee for Progress, and national experts to develop strategies to ensure long-term efficacy of NRI over time. The proposed governance framework seeks to ensure accountability to residents across political administrations.

The framework also identifies the structure of what entities will oversee the NRI and in what capacity, including a managing not-for-profit, private and philanthropic partners, and government entities. The proposed governance principles and framework were shared with the NRI Commission for their review and feedback and have informed the NRI Commission's recommendations.

### **Commission Purpose**

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative Commission (NRIC) was established as a high-level advisory body by the Atlanta City Council. It is composed of 13 civic leaders, government officials, and subject-matter experts, to oversee the strategic direction of the

Atlanta Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative (NRI). The Commission is charged with evaluating the implementation of Mayor Andre Dickens' \$10 billion-dollar "whole of government" approach, ensuring that this generational investment will successfully reorient public systems toward creating inclusive, connected, and thriving neighborhoods across multiple administrations.

~~A core component of the Commission's mandate is the assessment of Atlanta's existing TADs. The Commission was directed to review the Mayor's proposal to extend the terms of the eight existing TADs to support the NRI and ensure completion of ongoing projects, long-term redevelopment momentum, and sustained fiscal and community benefits for the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and Atlanta Public Schools.~~

The Commission was ~~further~~ instructed to ensure fiscal responsibility and appropriate due diligence regarding the execution and implementation of the NRI and its goals of ensuring completion of ongoing projects, long-term redevelopment momentum, and sustained fiscal and community benefits for the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and Atlanta Public Schools. ~~, as well as~~ The Commission was further instructed to consider adequate consideration of the universe of possible NRI financial constructs, including the mayor's proposal to extend the terms of the City's eight TADs. The NRIC was specifically required to identify ways to address remaining substantial needs in the TADs and the needs in distressed areas that fell outside existing TAD boundaries, as identified in previous neighborhood investment analyses. As part of this charge, the NRIC was authorized to foster a "group project" atmosphere, integrating the expertise of foundations and nonprofits to ensure the NRI's goals remained both definable and executable.

Finally, the Commission was mandated to provide advice and recommendations concerning the design and implementation of NRI goals, and to review and make recommendations on improving redevelopment efforts in economically distressed, underutilized, or strategically significant areas, enhancing the City's tax base, and ensuring equitable opportunity for all. The NRIC was required to deliver recommendations on these topics to the Atlanta City Council and Administration by March 31, 2026.

### **Commission Activities**

To achieve its enumerated responsibilities, the NRIC conducted a series of working groups and review meetings to evaluate the NRI structure, perform due diligence, and recommend improvements to redevelopments efforts. From January 5 through March 31, 2026, the Commission engaged in more than 30 listening sessions, briefings, work sessions, and conversations. Specifically, the Commission discussed structures and principles that ensure the NRI will advance the following four focus areas:

- Accessibility for All
- Effective Resourcing
- Opportunity for All
- Sustainable Implementation

The Commission's work sessions informed the development of the NRIC's final recommendations, included in this report.

All presentations, data, and information shared for the NRIC's public meetings work sessions are in Appendix B. Public comment was also accepted throughout the process; all public comment can be found in Appendix C.

## **Commission’s Endorsement**

**The Commission endorses the Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative (NRI or Initiative) and urges support from the City Council of measures that will bolster its effectiveness.**

- We are convinced that the partnership of the private and nonprofit sectors, philanthropy, and government, together with seven pilot neighborhoods, each with the potential and capacity to realize NRI objectives, presents a realistic path toward realizing a vision of a city of whole, healthy, thriving, and connected neighborhoods.

**The City of Atlanta’s role in carrying forward the vision is to provide leadership across multiple administrations, execute publicly led initiatives, identify and deploy financial resources equitably, and ensure accountability to the public.**

- We, the members of the NRI Commission, propose the following recommendations to ensure that the City of Atlanta can fulfill that role.
- These recommendations reflect our learning and deliberations from more than 30 listening sessions, briefings, work sessions, and conversations held between January 5, 2026, and March 31, 2026.

## **NRI Commission Recommendations**

The following recommendations align with each of the four working group topic areas identified as areas of focus at the first commission meeting – Accessibility for All, Sustainable Implementation, Opportunity for All, and Effective Resourcing.

- 1. The Commission affirms that project priorities should be set by communities.**
  - It is not the role of this Commission to make project selections.
  - Responsibility should rest with the residents, their organizing groups (Neighborhood Partnership Organizations or “NPOs”) that work directly with the City, and any future governing bodies.
- 2. Achieving the NRI vision requires meaningful, continuous community input into, and guidance of, implementation.**
  - NRI is currently built on a foundation of local, nonprofit, place-based Neighborhood Partner Organizations (“NPO”) based in each of the seven pilot neighborhoods.

- Mechanisms like these are essential to meaningfully engage the community in project identification, prioritization, decision-making, and implementation and must continue to be expanded and strengthened.
  - We recommend that the City continue to utilize and strengthen the existing project review process in place with the NPOs and that additional engagement mechanisms, such as the current TAD advisory committees, should continue to be leveraged – and strengthened where needed - to ensure that project funding decisions reflect the evolving needs of the community.
- 3. Ensuring communities remain accessible to all requires intentional strategy and investment to mitigate displacement pressures and protect legacy residents and small businesses.**
- The Commission acknowledges that catalytic investments can result in adverse impacts on surrounding communities if appropriate measures are not in place for early identification and mitigation of risks.
  - Under the guidance of the Partnership for Southern Equity, the Commission reviewed examples of anti-displacement policies and equitable development frameworks that are being implemented in peer cities, which included presentation of five potentially promising, targeted anti-displacement strategies, including:
    - Community Benefits Ordinances/Community Benefits Agreements (CBOs/CBAs), Overlay Districts, No Net Loss, Right-to-Return, and Tenant/Community Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA/COPA) policies.
- 4. The Commission acknowledges the early efforts by the City to expand its anti-displacement toolkit through its strategic partnership with the Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE), and we recommend the continued deepening and strengthening of this work (with PSE and/or partners with similar expertise).**
- Any anti-displacement or community strategies must be rooted first and foremost in the collective wisdom of the most impacted residents.
  - We encourage the continued centering of residents via the NPOs and other strengthened and meaningful community engagement mechanisms.
  - Each of the strategies reviewed by the Commission has its merits, but deserves deeper exploration to assess the political, legal, and financial

feasibility of each with respect to the conditions of each NRI neighborhood area.

**5. Based on community listening sessions and best practices experience, we believe that public capital from a range of sources is the best source of funds for public infrastructure improvements, which are essential for the long-term success of NRI and for subsequent cross-sector investment.**

- Historically, Atlanta has used its economic development funds, principally via TADs, to either support catalytic infrastructure investments that attracted private investment or directly incentivize private investment in projects in underserved neighborhoods.
- Both approaches to transformative, equitable economic development will likely remain useful, ~~but w~~For any proposed projects, we recommend a greater emphasis on infrastructure investment, along with a closer examination of the relationship between projects chosen and results desired.

**6. The Commission recognizes the need for an independent governing body to partner with the public sector to orchestrate NRI implementation over time, including overseeing project delivery, ensuring public accountability, aligning public sector resources to support the effort, and ensuring community ownership and guidance.**

- While we acknowledge that the City of Atlanta also plays a role in the successful implementation of NRI, an independent governing body is essential to create durability across political administrations.
- The Commission acknowledges and encourages the continuation of the development of governance principles and long-term framework by a cross-sector coalition led by the NPOs, the Atlanta Committee for Progress, and the City of Atlanta, and supported by national place-based community development experts.
- Ensuring sustainability across political administrations and communities requires an independent, third-party organization to serve as “home” of the initiative over the long-term. This organization alone will not sustain NRI effectively. It must be paired with internal public leaders, systems, or teams who will partner with the community, NPOs, and this independent nonprofit organization in NRI implementation. These organizations’ work must always be grounded in neighborhood and place-based centrality.

- Any system designed to support sustainable implementation must prioritize transparency, consistency, clarity, and accountability to the community. How resources are shared, allocated, prioritized, and evaluated are particularly important and must be clearly shared with proper accountability mechanisms.
  - Structures and processes must be codified to ensure the aspirations of the community and key stakeholders are achieved. The system must be efficient, effective, equitable, measured, and accountable.
  - Leaders with appropriate subject matter expertise and the trust of the community and key partners must be centered in the work.
  - The system should be designed to learn and adapt over time, as needs of neighborhoods and across the city will change over time.
7. **NRI’s success requires the assembly of complex stacks of capital and operating funds that will vary by project and program. Public funds often function as catalytic capital that drives private and philanthropic investment.**
- Without this initial public investment, the private market will not implement projects and programming in NRI areas at the pace or scale required to realize NRI’s intended impact.
  - Likewise, a demonstration of public commitment will encourage the philanthropic sector to join in supporting investment in NRI.
8. **Public funds available to the NRI effort are expected to be primarily local in the near term, given current constraints on State and federal funding~~overwhelmingly local; the State and federal governments do not currently represent viable paths to reliable funding~~. We recommend the current focus should be on local solutions for implementation.**
9. **New sources of public funds to complement philanthropic and private funds must be identified to ensure that NRI truly represents sustainable and equitable investment in people and not just places.**
- For example, under Georgia State law, TAD funds are available to support only capital investment.
  - The NRI vision also requires programmatic support, e.g., to fund social services, displacement mitigation efforts, and early education.

- We recommend that new local programmatic funding sources be explored to support capital, programmatic, and operating costs, such as Special Service Districts and Economic Development millage.
- Furthermore, the Commission recognizes that all participating jurisdictions are currently experiencing constrained budget environments. This is another reason why the Commission recommends exploring new sources of public revenue to contribute to the long-term success of the NRI.

**10. Given the extreme scarcity of sources for programmatic support, funding that can be deployed to either capital or programmatic expenses should be reserved for programmatic support to the extent feasible.**

- Maximizing alternative public sources for capital uses ensures the most flexible funding sources are reserved for operational and programmatic needs, such as human services, community building, and anti-displacement programs.
- Reserving flexible dollars for programmatic spending is also cost effective: a \$2M allocation of cash, e.g., from the general fund, might support a (very) small affordable housing development or support hundreds of families in eviction diversion.

**11. We have a unique opportunity in the present moment.**

- Atlanta's TADs have generated significant tax increment that can support the realization of NRI's ambition in combination with other funding sources. This is particularly true when funds are deployed in neighborhoods with the potential and capacity to attract and manage growth, where all three contributing jurisdictions participate, and when the relationship between neighborhood needs assessments and projects advanced is clear.
- Extending the timeframe of some or all TADs can be an important tool in generating sufficient revenues to achieve NRI's goals.
- "The Commission also discussed if each TAD and its boundaries are currently able to serve the goals of NRI. Future discussions should consider analysis of each TAD and how its future could be best leveraged for NRI moving forward."
- As a part of any negotiations to extend some or all TADs, we recommend exploring returning a portion of each taxing jurisdiction's increment in the form of PILOT payments.

- Negotiations regarding the extension of some or all TADs should proceed outside of this Commission between the mayor’s office and City Council, and subsequently between the City, Atlanta Public Schools, and County ~~outside of this Commission~~. ~~Further, f~~For any extensions, the Commission recommends that the Mayor, City Council, and partner taxing jurisdictions consider the following:
  - Potential extension/sunset of particular TADs and associated jurisdictional participation.
  - For any extensions, updates to Redevelopment Plans to reflect current conditions, planned projects, investments.
  - Reconsideration of PILOT structure agreements for any TADs that are extending.

**12. Equity requires resources to be allocated proportionate to need and, though limited, existing methods for achieving more balanced growth should be fully leveraged on an ongoing basis to ensure regional benefit.**

- Ensuring equitable growth across the city benefits all Atlantans.
- If TADs remain a key tool for local public capital investment in NRI communities, and Georgia State law continues to preclude the “porting” of increment from one TAD to another, equitable allocation of resources requires two complementary actions:
  - Diversifying the suite of public funding tools to fund citywide initiatives and utilizing more specialized sources, like TADs, to lessen the pressure on more flexible funds that could be used to support programmatic costs.
  - Regular monitoring of the capacity to return increment via Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) or other mechanisms to contributing jurisdictions and a City of Atlanta NRI Trust Fund.

**Principles Sourced by Commission on 3-13-26 for Additional Review and Confirmation**

- A. Any NRI projects funded with TAD sources should reflect the collective priorities of participating taxing jurisdictions and the redevelopment plans.
- B. ~~Any~~TAD funds returned to the City of Atlanta via a payment in lieu of taxes should be used/prioritized to support community and economic development in neighborhoods in need of public support located outside of current TAD boundaries.

C. Public investments made under NRI should support the goal of advancing healthy communities.

D. ~~Our communities share root problems that could be addressed most strongly at the neighborhood level.~~The root problems of inequality and poverty result in shared outcomes that affect all jurisdictions and should be addressed collaboratively at the neighborhood level.