
New submission from LCI Application (New)

From Atlanta Regional Commission <info@atlantaregional.org>

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To Lauren Blaszyk <LBlaszyk@atlantaregional.org>

Application Disclaimer

✓ Yes, I acknowledge that I read the guidebook and fully understand the LCI program and the sponsor's responsibilities.

Section 1: Applicant Information

Organization

Sweet Auburn Works and Atlanta Downtown Improvement District

Name

LeJuano Varnell

Job Title

Executive Director

Department

Sweet Auburn Works (SAW)

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Section 2: Type of Study

Select the type of study for which you are seeking grant funding. You may check multiple boxes if your study fits more than one category.

- Tactical: Advances the implementation of a priority action identified in a study or plan within the LCI area.

Full Study Management Assistance Pilot Program

- We have limited staff capacity.
- We lack experience in LCI study management (e.g., payments and invoicing).

Section 3: Study Information

Name of Study

Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (SAPSAP)

LCI Area

Sweet Auburn Historic District

Last Study or Plan Adoption Date

08/13/2025

Total Cost of Study

\$200,000

Proposed Local Match

\$40,000

Study Area Location/Extents

The Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Plan study area extends east from Courtland Street NE to Jackson Street NE. Its most northern boundary is Irwin Street NE and John Wesley Dobbs Avenue NE, while the south side of Edgewood Avenue SE establishes the southernmost border with a portion located along Coca Cola Place SE and Leonard Tate Street SE below I-75/85.

Study Area Location/Extents

- [saw-lci-area.pdf](#)

Has the proposed study been identified in a previous LCI study or plan, comprehensive plan update, or another recently completed study or plan?

Yes

Please name the study or plan and reference the section(s) or page(s) that relate(s) to this proposed study.

The Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (SAPSAP) stems from recommendations identified in the Downtown Atlanta Master Plan and the Reconnecting Sweet Auburn project. With the objective of developing an actionable neighborhood focused pedestrian safety plan, the following sections and chapters from each publication serve as reference points demonstrating Sweet Auburn's alignment with the goals of other downtown neighborhoods and this LCI study.

- Downtown Atlanta Master Plan

o Chapter 3: Grow Downtown Neighborhoods Tailored To Meet The Needs Of The Residents

- ☐ Section 3.4 - Provide housing options to retain a mix of incomes downtown (p.130-134, 316)

o Chapter 6: Offer Real Choice In Transportation To Reduce Traffic Congestion and Reliance on Automobiles And Create Space For Increased Activity

- ☐ 6.1 - Manage Downtown streets, sidewalks, and parking for success (p. 234-240)
- ☐ 6.2 - Design streets according to their personalities (p. 248-263, 327)

- Reconnecting Sweet Auburn

o Chapter Two, Defining Harm How We Got Here

- ☐ How We Got Here (p. 8-13)

o Chapter Four, Recommendations Big Dreams

- ☐ Recommendations - Streetscapes (p. 74-77)
- ☐ Recommendations - Big Dreams (p. 96-101)

o Chapter 5, Action Plan

□ Mobility projects (p. 118, 119, 122, 126, 129)

Provide a brief study goal and description. In your project description, please briefly describe the specific products and/or deliverables that this study will create.

Rooted in recommendations from existing planning documents (Downtown Atlanta Master Plan and Reconnecting Sweet Auburn), the SAPSAP will advance a set of high-priority safety enhancements within the Sweet Auburn neighborhood. The Action Plan will validate key locations where safety enhancements are needed, identify and justify specific interventions for each identified location (i.e. lighting, mid-block crossings, signal upgrades, bulb-outs, etc.), and develop an implementation strategy for the recommended enhancements. The implementation strategy will prioritize the projects, assign funding recommendations, and outline key timelines and next steps. The study will also identify specific locations where short-term tactical implementation is possible. The study will also consider ways that local artists can contribute to the tactical implementation of the projects. Overall, the study aims to improve pedestrian safety in one of Atlanta's most historic Black neighborhoods. The projects identified in the action plan will benefit the neighborhood's many seniors, students, residents, business owners, and visitors. They will also improve connections to both the King Memorial MARTA Station and the Atlanta Streetcar. At the conclusion of SAPSAP, SAW and the ADID will have an implementation-focused playbook to enhance the safety and walkability of the neighborhood.

How does this proposed LCI Study address a need in your community?

Increasingly in Atlanta, when people are asked what makes a neighborhood desirable, they point to proximity to local parks, access to the Beltline and nearby business, and the ability walk to everyday destinations like a grocery store. Neighborhoods divided by highways carrying of between 300,000 and 400,000 vehicles a day rarely earn the same acclaim. For communities like Sweet Auburn, forced to absorb this volume of traffic, the consequences have been severe: significant population loss, declining commercial activity, and a built environment that does not support pedestrian safety.

This study is important because it addresses Sweet Auburn's need for a thorough, data-driven assessment of existing conditions, crafted street and intersection designs, and can connect mobility to broader community goals making the neighborhood eligible for greater funding. To date the only effort to document and set a path toward improving pedestrian safety has come via the neighborhood-led Reconnecting Sweet Auburn; however, it did not possess all the necessary resources to produce a full comprehensive pedestrian safety plan. Partnership with ARC and stakeholders on this study will launch a formal process to develop and validate the first steps of a comprehensive pedestrian plan , charting a path toward a more livable, walkable Sweet Auburn.

How does your proposed LCI Study advance or address the following LCI Program Goals?

The Sweet Auburn Pedestrian Safety Action Plan advances LCI program goals through a place-based strategy focused on long-term safety, connectivity, and quality-of-life improvements for residents, businesses, and property owners. Grounded in robust community engagement, the plan will deliver infrastructure enhancements that make the neighborhood safer more connected while strengthening its identity as a vibrant walkable Main Street district. Centering the needs of Sweet Auburn's most vulnerable residents ensures that outcomes benefit people of all ages and abilities. Seniors' experiences crossing intersections to get to the market, senior center, and nearby parks, easily translate for sightseers moving between the MLK Jr. site and Beltline whether walking or by bike, and will inform improvements such as mid-block crossings, upgraded signals, high-visibility crosswalks, and enhanced lighting. With MARTA nearby increased walkability has Sweet Auburn poised to reach the LCIs goal of fostering a competitive economy because trips to the university, hospital, and mixed use developments can be quickly and car free. Finally, SAPSAP reflects LCI's commitment to diverse stakeholder engagement by continuing to pursue resolutions for the longstanding harm and conditions identified in RSA by stakeholders and residents and inviting others to join their call for a more livable home.

ARC requires that applicants actively engage community-based organizations and/or artists in the development of their LCI application. List CBOs and/or artists involved in the development of this application, as well as how they will be involved in the planning process, if the proposed study is selected.

SAW closely works with Remerge, a place-based nonprofit that specializes in bringing together stakeholders to create collaborative solutions for residents that are most vulnerable. This CBO, along with other community engagement tactics will allow us to maintain communication with voices that are easily captured for typical public works initiatives that affect legacy, communications constrained residents.

In the absence of a neighborhood association that our senior residents would participate in to share their ongoing public space and pedestrian concerns, SAW will work closely with the churches who currently own the multifamily residential towers in the neighborhood (including Big Bethel AME and Wheat Street Baptist) to ensure we are hearing from our residents.

SAW's signature placemaking initiative, the Heroes Walk project, will theme the branding and imagery for our neighborhood public space interventions. Isidor Studio is the artist that will be implementing the environmental graphics in our built environment to highlight the project, our signage, our street furniture, and the myriad design cues that help shape and enhance the pedestrian experience in Sweet Auburn.

Who in your community has been historically under-represented in local planning processes? How will these individuals or groups intentionally be included in this planning process? Please be specific.

The voices of Sweet Auburn's seniors, landowners, and business owners have been severely underrepresented in local planning processes related to pedestrian safety in the community. Dating back to the construction of the I-75/85 "Downtown Connector" in the 1960s, planning efforts from both local and state approaches have failed to acknowledge and address the harm suffered by these members of the neighborhood in relationship to the highway. Each of these community members has a valuable perspective to contribute to planning conversations involving what pedestrian activity means to Sweet Auburn, whether it be the a senior's inability to safely cross the street to reach the nearby market or a business owner's account of cars speeding through the community after exiting the highway, these individuals' first-hand experience is critical to the planning process. And as such, their lived experience and collaboration in steering groups will continue to be central to defining our guiding principles of cultural justice, accountability carried over from the Reconnecting Sweet Auburn community engagement.

Report of Accomplishments

- [cdowntown-atlanta-lci-report-of-accomplishments-2026.pdf](#)

Commitment

Funding Commitment and Support Documents

- [lci-required-docs.pdf](#)