PURPOSE & PROCESS

Atlanta is a diverse region, and growing more every day. That’s why it is critical that our plans for the future reflect the needs and aspirations of ALL of our residents. And that is what the Global Advisory Panel Civic Dinner series was all about—intentionally inviting and engaging individuals and perspectives in ongoing, culturally diverse dialogue about our aspirations, desires and ideas for the future of our region.

Throughout the summer, the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Global Advisory Panel hosted 42 civic dinners across the Atlanta region with the aim of sharing stories, building new relationships and understanding the challenges and desires of our global communities. What was shared will help the Atlanta Regional Commission develop better plans that include the needs of communities and help local governments better engage diverse voices in local decisions.

This report consolidates all feedback provided directly by hosts and the follow-up surveys. The next page highlights key insights and recommendations specific to each conversation topic, followed by seven key themes that crossed all three conversations. Following this is all the feedback provided verbatim, organized into groups and titled with common themes for more thorough examination and reflection. These comments are left in their original state.

TIMELINE & PROCESS

March 2017
Global Advisory Panel Kickoff
Conversations developed

May 2017
Civic Dinners Host Training & Webinar

June 2017
Mobility Conversation launched

July 2017
Livability Conversation launched

August 2017
Prosperity Conversation launched

Nov 2017
Summary Report Completed

Nov 2017
Final Global Advisory Panel Dinner

165
Global Advisory Panel members from
35 + 10 countries
182
Total Attendees
42
Total Dinners
267
Total Comments Summitted
7
Key Themes
## SUMMARY

### MOBILITY

#### Key Insights
- People feel the most joy when walking.
- People feel joy when connections between transit are seamless and efficient.
- People are frustrated with long commute times by car to and from work.
- People are frustrated with lack of sufficient infrastructure for public transportation, misperceptions about MARTA safety and lack of affordable public transportation.
- Newcomers find it very difficult to navigate public transportation system.

#### Key Recommendations
- Build more affordable transit oriented development for walkability and easy use of public transportation.
- Improve MARTA with better bus/train coordination, more train stops, dedicated bus lanes and bus shelters to protect citizens during bad weather.
- Provide newcomer workshops or training for how to navigate public transportation and provide 1-week free pass to incentivize public transit.
- Create a marketing campaign targeting international residents highlighting the international appeal for public transit.

### LIVABILITY

#### Key Insights
- Walkability with high density development is most desired.
- Practical transit is desired (connected, efficient, with access to everything).
- Affordable housing is a major concern.
- People want inspiring street life with arts and culture, and opportunities to build relationships and interact with neighbors.
- Safety, equity and economic freedom are concerns of immigrant communities.

#### Key Recommendations
- Increase walkability, arts and culture and more jobs and employment.
- Build better public transportation.
- Increase affordable housing stock.
- Honor history and legacy of Atlanta.
- Create more culturally relevant places for residents to gather.
- Fix historical equity issues.
- Create more community outreach events with residents and help educate residents on ways to get involved.

### PROSPERITY

#### Key Insights
- Access and opportunity are top of mind.
- Greater access to high quality of life is desired, along with job security.
- People want a diverse community with great schools, thriving small businesses and good-paying jobs nearby.
- Affordable housing is a primary concern.

#### Key Recommendations
- Expand MARTA and make public transportation more feasible for all regardless of income or zip code.
- Make affordable housing a top priority.
- Make quality education the "great equalizer."
- Fair wages for all — regardless of gender or race.
- Incentivize high density development with access to quality jobs close to affordable housing options.
COMMON THEMES

#1 — Improve Public Transportation and Non-Car Commuting

#2 — Increase Transit-Oriented Development and Density

#3 — Make Walkability and Vibrant Street Life a Top Priority

#4 — Make Housing Affordability a Top Priority

#5 — Champion Free Quality Public Education for All

#6 — Ensure Equitable Wages for All Regardless of Gender or Race

#7 — Improve Community Outreach & Civic Education
Question #1: Emotional Connection

We are really interested in learning about your experience in getting around Atlanta, whether getting to and from work, getting from one side of town to the other, toting kids around, leisurely walking to a restaurant. We know that mobility and getting where you need to go stirs all kinds of emotions.

Share an experience where you felt joy, frustration or fear when getting from place to place.

**JOY: Walking**
- Walking 6 mins to work is joyous, versus driving 3 hours to work. Can’t control other’s driving skills.
- Walking to and from work brought a great deal of joy. Took another job where I had to drive 1 hour to work: “Ruined my life.” Walking is an asset, driving against rush hour but still was not as nice as walking. Was able to listen to music or podcast while driving. But was not the same as walking. Don’t want to be in a car.
- Joy when I get home on Friday and don’t have to drive. Can walk anywhere. “joy is walking.”
- Something special about walking, sense of control, it is predictable.
- Joy. Walk to station, 25 min MARTA trip to get to airport and can get anywhere in the world. MARTA rail is good. Surface bus is bad.

**FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Long commute times**
- Used to commute 2 hours for work, which had an impact on my emotional state. I felt like I was a “meaner” person.
- Someone quit their job because of a 2 hr long commute.
- Would love to take transit to work, but it is not efficient. Would take me 1.5 hours via transit versus 15 mins driving.

**FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Safety**
- Fear of walking downtown because of homeless situation.
- Fear riding MARTA. Have had poor experiences. Fights, poor schedule, driving creates fear.
- Male GSU student feeling unsafe riding MARTA at night.
- Perceived growth and aggression of homeless population.
- Driving in GA is scarier than NY because people are so distracted by phones and don’t use turn signals.
- There is a social stigma that public transportation is for low income or “poor people.”
Mobility Question #1

(Verbatim comments are direct from host notes and survey responses and have been grouped by themes)

Question #1: Emotional Connection (continued)

FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Lack of access and insufficient infrastructure

- Lack of community sidewalks around neighborhoods and schools.
- Frustration: need to look past economics, need to identify “true value” vs measured value.
- For many people, the public transportation that exists doesn’t include all the people. Often times, people who need it the most don’t have access to the proper transportation.
- One of the speakers described the difficulty of getting around town with limited access to public transportation. She described the pain of going through inclement weather and then having to wait ridiculous amounts of time; infrequent and unreliable service.
- Too few stops, not enough cover especially during inclement weather.
- As relatively new international residents (London/Netherlands), MARTA does not have ability to accept international bank cards.

FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Difficult to understand and navigate public transportation

- The most difficult part of living here in the US is the fact that people who lived internationally have a steep learning curve in order to figure out how to use the local public transportation options. Possibly give a free-ride grace period or some type of informational outreach program (to encourage new-comers acceptance of public transport options).
- For newcomers and people new to the area it is hard to understand the public transportation.
- New immigrants who come to Atlanta, have such a hard time using public transportation that it ends up being completely underused and eventually not used at all.

FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Misperception/ignorance

- Johns Creek and Alpharetta are so posh and so developed. The problem is that people in these areas don’t like the idea of public transportation because they think it is inferior in comparison to independence.
- Lack of usage of available transportation is not about mobility but rather ignorance.
- People have developed a habit of expecting independence, access to roads, etc and not evaluating public transportation as an alternative, and that habit that has led to the ignorance about not realizing how convenient MARTA is.

FEAR/FRUSTRATION: Unaffordable

- For current MARTA, it makes sense for single ridership. If in a group or with more than 3 people it becomes simply expensive in comparison to driving. Compare the cost of driving a full car to the cost of a single ride, even when parking is factored in.
- MARTA seems to focus on the short term gain, which results in the long term loss. Focus on changing habits in the long-term through incentives and cheap rides and access to cheap parking in the shorter term.
- MARTA is complicated to get to. Depending on the destination MARTA is not the most convenient or cost-effective option.
Question #2: Shared Challenges and Priorities

What do you think is the #1 thing that decision-makers should consider when they are thinking about solutions to our transportation challenges? It could be funding, convenience, affordability, access or something else?

What factor matters most to you and why?

Accessibility and efficient connectivity:

- Bus routes in better coordination with train times.
- MARTA should extend Sunday service.
- Create a system that works for everyone.
- Connecting local transportation to regional transportation for mid and long distance connectivity. (Downtown ATL for events, airport etc.)
- More MARTA train stops.
- More investment in MARTA - structure, extension within Metro region.
- Counties should consider dedicated bus lanes.

Affordability:

- MARTA is not affordable for lower income people and therefore is not accessible to everyone.
- People who need the resources the most are less likely to have direct access to it due to community zoning/planning/development – review policies and procedures.
- Use incentives to change habits.

Transit Oriented Development:

- As a region, we cannot grow with people driving as much as they do. Consider housing + transportation decisions, impact on future housing environment.
- Where people go, that’s the area that will develop and progress while progress in other areas is stifled. See growth and development of Decatur, Cabbagetown etc.
- The trend is to work, live, and play all in the same area and create self-sufficient cities. Rather than using public transportation to connect cities together, there should be focus on developing transportation within the new live-work-play areas within a suburb/town.
- Because the way Atlanta grew, as suburbs became more popular, white people moved and people of different races moved in. With new generations, people are starting to move in closer to the city and then as those younger generations grow those areas will grow and develop. Redeveloping downtown as well as urbanizing the suburbs. Think “reverse growth” as compared to older cultures.
- Many new issues in ATL are a function on population density and uniformity… or a lack thereof.

Inclusion is a civic and cultural environment where everyone is invited, people can participate, and everyone’s perspective is valued.
New user support & training / Awareness
- Part of “college readiness” education should include basic life skills, being familiar with and being at ease with using public transportation; area high school grads have the credentials and opportunity to study in major metropolitan areas such as New York, DC, London, Paris, Beijing, etc. where public transportation is a way of life.
- As our school system is changing (charter and magnet schools, dual enrollment etc.) middle and high school students could already take advantage of local transportation options as well as education options outside of their school zone.

Technology integration:
- We have a lot of tech advances that could impact transportation (e.g. driverless cars) because industry is heavily investing in it.
- APPSs: travel info and arrival/departure updates/notifications, online payment, ease of transfers (especially between separate local transportation services).

More dialogue
- Around economic benefits to addressing transportation gaps.
- Rather than focusing on the current working population, ideas should be seeded in the youth and foster those ideas with them.
- Use positive advertising to change image, comparative/numeric info to appeal to reason to chose transport over car.
- Because Atlanta is so diverse (the new melting pot), it is important to recognize how other people in different countries are using the idea of public transportation – take advantage of their openness toward public transportation and habits.
- Address the lack of accessibility.

Health
- How will enhanced planning improve health and mortality rates among citizens?

Convenience + safety
- Makes life easier.
- The public transit service that only runs from Monday through Friday caters towards the business professionals rather than the hospitality professionals who may work 7 days a week and 24 hours a day. Transportation schedules should reflect the 24/7 need.

More choices
- Appropriate choices of transportation modes.
- Hybrid transportation options.
- Incl. other options that won’t require a permit (biking, walking etc.) for locals as well as visitors of all ages (under age and retired, either without driver’s license).
- Develop and expand Ride-share – whether bicycle (Zagster) or car (Zipcar).
- Collaboration between numerous companies to create a cohesive, easy transportation environment.
- In many different countries, government entities – sometimes in cooperation with the private sector - create a system that works for everyone.
- The general trend that people want to do everything at the same place, we should focus on establishing (hyper-)local transportation options to facilitate seamless mobility from door to door.

Safety
- Correct the perception that MARTA isn’t safe.
Livability

Question #1: Emotional Connection

What does livability mean to you?

Walkable

• Non-car commute. Be able to walk to a grocery store and it is easy, not a mile away. (e.g. Paris and Chicago both feel normal/ have normal pace: “Don’t have to keep up”)
• Regardless of mode, it has to be an easy commute – not congested or stressful, efficient, convenient, cost effective. Want a neighborhood that is walkable and has a diversity of establishments.

Practical transit

• Easy transit, vibrant where I can learn – “culture” environment. Ex Paris, London, job market.
• Efficient commute.
• Ability to access and international transportation.
• Ability to escape everything.
• Traditional metro system / structure.
• Grid street systems.
• Option for non-car commute.

Necessities accessible and affordable

• Access to natural area.
• Affordable / Accessible – able to afford stuff in the grocery store(s) in the community.
• Somewhere I can easily do things that give me joy, have access to necessities, am able to reasonably thrive, not hindered in my day-to-day living by unnecessary barriers, easy commute.
• Livability is an environment where you can easily meet all your needs in an accessible and affordable manner.
• Access to affordable housing and public transportation in all areas.
• Easy to live in.
• East to predict – fine details figured out.
• Livability means life, health, nature.

Opportunities for leisure & entertainment

• Access to a variety of leisure places to live, “nail + massage parlor nearby.”
• Lots to do. Inspiration + Street life.
• Always something to explore.
• Quality of life and all the pieces of the mosaic that make that picture attractive.
• Freedom to follow and develop my personal interests, style... whether artsy or athletic, geeky or glamorous... a city needs to have space available for everyone to grow roots... and branches.
• Make situations available for people to form relationships, on neighborhood sidewalks, through block parties, city-wide events or even on public transportation. Fight isolation by giving residents opportunities to meet and interact with their “neighbors” on a daily basis.
• Culture “reason to get out of bed.”

Safety

• Infrastructure and Safety.
• Safety, good access to highways, facilities, shopping, education.
• Diverse community which is safe, offers good schools, public safety, public transportation, and respect for all citizens.

Diversity & equity

• Economic/ upward mobility, economic freedom. Not constrained by policy. In the US you can start a business pretty easily.
• Equity.
• Diversity of Employment.
• Diversity (racial, economical, employment, education, etc.)
• A community that treats its citizens with fair and equitable inclusiveness.
Question #2: Shared Challenges

Do you live in your ideal livable community? If not, what is missing?

**YES, But... Atlanta could be better**
- My community is quite livable now. A number of close grocery stores, easy access to MARTA, interesting community and local parks.
- Atlanta, I can live a good life in very focused areas.
- Pretty Livable – Need more amenities so it is self-sustaining.
- Yes – Needs more jobs (companies) + Marta.
- Yes – good sense of place but too cut off from Atlanta (not ideal).
- Yes – Jobs + employment.
- I think Atlanta is very livable, but there are still some improvements that need to be made in order for it to be the most livable - better public transportation, more assistance for the homeless.

**What’s Missing: Affordability**
- Affordability was one of the largest assets which is going away quickly.
- Affordability, minimal lifestyle.
- I live south of I-20 and the disparity with the north of I-20 was designed to create this gap.
- Even the affordability subsidies won’t help many of the families that are middle class, but can’t afford to live in Atlanta.

**What’s Missing: More relaxed pace of life**
- Want an active/chill energy.
- Escape – be in nature, hiking.
- Want the European philosophy “work to live, vs live to work.”
- No, pace. “Don’t ever want to work” Sense of freedom. Work for myself, prefer environment where I can “choose”, want to be able to walk, bike. Want control.

**What’s Missing: Honor for legacy and identity**
- No sense of place. ATL does not recognize all of its history (so if more of its history was recognized, it would become more livable).
- What’s missing is finding/giving opportunities to students who wouldn’t have them otherwise.

**What’s Missing: Better transportation**
- Transportation for immigrants (driving as an undocumented person is not an option).
- I wish public transport was better.
- No easy access to quick rail service.

**What’s Missing: Culturally relevant places to gather**
- Understanding of the value of immigrant gathering places and respecting them. We need a social contract. Ex: Plaza Latina was a vibrant commercial plaza on Buford Hwy. Recently taken by eminent domain by City of Norcross seemingly without regard for the businesses or patrons.
- Norcross has a lot of livable elements, including Sweet Hut coffee shop and Norcross Farmers Market but it is missing opportunities to engage (like this civic dinner).
- Realization that the community (Norcross) is diverse. We need diverse spaces, including places (community centers) for children to go.
- In some ways. I wish there were more options to eat, shop, and gather that are closer to me.
- Alpharetta tries hard! We have many of the key ingredients: jobs, education, housing... we need to add programs to help people meet over their interests and passions in order to create a heart and soul for the city.
- Arts, Music, etc.
Question #3: Shared Priorities

If there was one thing you’d like your local government leaders to focus on to help make your community more livable, what would it be? And how would you like to be involved in creating this change?

Fix historical equity issues

- Equitable outcomes in planning.
- Inclusion – get feedback from community locals.
- Inject equity into a system that inherently has problems.

Stronger community voice in zoning

- I would like more oversight in the approval of new construction projects and their impact on the infrastructure and livability for current residents. Development is unfettered in this area. Although the property values have risen, congestion and strained resources resulted.
- Lack of public trust in securing quality economic gains for its residents. I would seek to evaluate and correct current agreements that seek to migrate income from my community.
- A commitment to a broader range of restaurants and cultural events that appeal to all citizens.
- Want government to “Get out of the way” simplify design, development standards, allow reasonable standards, which leads’/ allows affordability.
- Legalize urbanism – allow zoning that facilitates high density. Remove setbacks, allow single family home areas to become multifamily homes.

Affordability

- Affordability.
- Ensuring affordable housing in areas easily accessible to rail service.

Better public transportation

- Expand MARTA/public transportation to go more places, make areas more accessible.
- Better public transportation and less cars.
- Efficient public transportation.

More direct engagement with residents

- Planners need to be more proactive than reactive.
- More interaction with immigrants. The lack of interaction works against community and livability. We are already involved in creating community through a variety of activities, including las chicas at Pinckneyville Middle School, Norcross Farmers Market, and activities at the Norcross Library.
- Better public transit, more healthy options in the food deserts, more affordable housing. I would be interested in gathering stories, interviewing locals to get their input on what their areas need, finding out what strengths and weaknesses are in the community we are trying to serve, etc.
- More community outreach events where people within a community can come together and feel like they are a part of something and that they are contributing to their own well being.

Education on how to get involved

- Need help figuring out how to get involved, don’t know how to.
- Help newcomers get acquainted and off to a positive start: what are local/county/state laws (general, education system, health care). Don’t wait until a family or individual becomes a problem.
- Have a local office that deals with and organizes integration workshops, outreach, events, festivals etc.
- Be more proactive in publicizing city government events/gatherings/outreach.
- Attend community advisory meetings and make opinions known.
Prosperity: Question #1 (Verbatim comments are direct from host notes and survey responses and have been grouped by themes)

Question #1: Emotional Connection

What does prosperity mean to you?

Access & Opportunity:
- Everyone has access to opportunity and to be heard, no one is concerned about having a seat at the table because there no longer is a table.
- To healthcare.
- Everyone has a voice.
- Having similar opportunities.
- People enjoy each other, equal opportunity to all, businesses booming, children taken care of, less worry about tomorrow.
- Socio-economic opportunity, ladder as opportunity, have more opportunities than your parents, better socio-economic opportunity.
- Economic opportunities, people not living in poverty.
- Volunteering opportunities.

Freedom & Security:
- Financial prosperity = greater tax base, which leads to greater education overall.
- Greater quality of life.
- The freedom to pursue wants and opportunities where certain groups aren’t given an advantage.
- Being able to provide for family and stability in personal finances.
- Strong economic base that will allow communities to flourish at a sustainable level.
- Job security, self-sufficient.
- Systemic basic services and the ability to help others.
- Diverse age groups, multicultural, collaboration.
- Safety, part of a community with a place to connect and enjoy the arts.
- Maslow’s hierarchy of needs are covered.
- “When you are doing well.”

“Inclusion means having empathy to understand there are others out there with different perspectives that are just as valuable as yours, and inclusion means courage – having the courage to seek those voices out.”
Prosperity Question #2

(Verbatim comments are direct from host notes and survey responses and have been grouped by themes)

**Question #2: Shared Vision**

What features does a prosperous community have? What if relevant in your community?

**Great Education**
- A diverse environment with great schools and equal opportunities for social and leisure activities.
- Ability to advance, class-wise. Education that gives access to advancement. Access to opportunity, connectivity and multiple options to obtain mobility. Opportunity and the freedom to share in them.
- Educated workforce, Great Education system.
- Good public-school system that is available to everyone for free.
- Let’s get real about education of what America has done, understand who we really are and all that we have done.
- Free education at university level. Okay to be merit based.

**Safe, affluent neighborhoods with shared amenities**
- Nice cars, big houses, community club houses, no crime.
- Neighborhoods are well-maintained, families are happy and willing to share their wealth.
- Increase in revenue and access to large public parks/public pools. Available to everyone.
- Economic stability, neighbors caring for one other, opportunities for younger generation, strong faith and ethical values.

**Access to good paying jobs with living wage**
- Good-paying jobs, Financial stability.
- Living wages.
- Physical access to jobs so you can easily commute from home.
- Higher minimum wage.
- Worker protections, worker empowerment.
- Jobs where you can be a human being not a cog in the system.

**Strong community**
- Civic engagement, community diversity and the arts.
- Having a support system on those that have fallen on harder times - student loan forgiveness.
- Faith community.
- Put enough emphasis on human interaction.

**Opportunities for small businesses to thrive**
- Opportunities for small, local business owners to thrive.
- Reasonably priced spaces for local entrepreneurs to create commerce.
- Importance of mentorship + guidance.

**Thriving arts and culture**
- Festivals, events, concerts.
- Things that connect the community and have fun in a safe space.

**Affordable housing**
- Housing affordability at all levels so people can stay in their neighborhoods.
- Quality and affordable housing.

**Strong leadership that celebrates diversity**
- Good leadership + government. Person that people can relate to, and are making decisions for the right reasons. Important to respect them.
- Diversity is important for prosperity.
- Unity – to be prosperous, we need to acknowledge that we are all equal.
- Racism is a challenge.
Question #3: Shared Challenges & Priorities

If you could wave a magic wand, what is one thing you would do to ensure prosperity for all? What would be your primary goal?

**MARTA/Public transit**
- Expanding MARTA and other public transport
- Improve public transit so there is a safe and reliable way for kids to travel.
- Easy public transport. To make it feasible + affordable to take transit.
- Henry County needs public transportation and better access to restaurants, doctors, specialists.

**Wage adjustments**
- Access to fair wages regardless of gender or race, flexibility to earn a living without sacrificing raising a family which means the school day and work day would mirror each other and that all of expendable income doesn't have to be spent on after school care and transportation.
- Guaranteed minimum income with expectation that people will participate. Co-op organization.

**Affordable housing**
- Reverse gentrification to preserve and respect that which came before.
- Level playing field to encourage more small business startups and opportunities.
- Reverse gentrification!
- Equality/affordable housing economic diversity, goal to create a true community.
- Legalize urbanism – allow people to access jobs + have access to different housing types.

**High density development**
- Investment in more TODs (transit-oriented development initiatives) that includes MARTA and other investors.
- Bring CVS to me, rather than going to CVS – we have a land use issue. Transit is not coming, so use land-use to bring jobs to the housing. Work with developers, small developers.
- Equal opportunity/exposure to all that's available in the community.

**Education**
- Bi-lingual programs/language immersion at schools to promote fluency.
- Equitable school quality across the board/Public schools should be good everywhere.
- Education is the great equalizer ensuring that everyone has the access to a good school.

**Rethink work**
- Present as many opportunities as possible, and provide training for new skills.
- Change the way we teach and work. I have three computers at home yet I drive 30 miles to work to sit in front of a computer.
- Let people do what they want to do, less government intervention.
Culture of Engagement

PART 1: When you think about your family, your neighbors, your friends, do you consider them engaged in the civic life of the community? If not, what are the barriers to civic engagement?

What are the barriers to civic engagement?

Too complicated to understand
- The ‘unknown’ keeps many people from being involved.
- Education is the barrier. People may feel that they are not smart enough and fear getting engaged, don’t understand what they are voting on, then they can make an impact.
- Immigrants may be shy to participate in local politics etc. due to a lack of understanding of the process.
- Most people don’t know how to act, process is too complicated.
- Lack of understanding around how the legislation process works: researched it and its incredibly confusing.
- Education on the process to make it appropriate.

Lack of time
- Time is a barrier – people don’t make time to engage, aren’t well educated. All of which takes time.
- People are jaded, they only have so much time, system is not efficient and is a waste of time.
- Public process takes time to participate and be educated.
- Barrier: daily commutes of hours is too much which makes it difficult to be aware. That is why they have representatives but they tend to respond to supreme capitalist.

Process is intimidating
- Barrier: not approachable. Group that shows up is vocal + aggressive and drown out + detour others. ‘people are nasty’.
- Rather than focusing on getting the input from as many people as possible, develop a process that involves people in a useful + constructive + efficient manner.
Culture of Engagement (continued)

PART 2: How might government leaders earn the trust of citizens and residents?

Be more creative with community engagement

- Elected officials should consider the use of technology (i.e. Periscope, FB Live, or other streaming media services) to connect with their constituents.
- Elected officials need to find creative ways to meet the citizens where they are to drive awareness to potential plans, learn from the citizens and have a real pulse on the needs of the communities.
- We have a unique opportunity to make use of the young, educated and open residents to create a vibrant city/region for the future where people are interested in sharing differing ideas for the development of a better life for all.
- Need to adapt our process to hear more of the voices/ be more inclusive.
- Not all people are naturally outgoing and free of prejudice. Encourage events that draw neighbors out of their houses to meet others ... with different backgrounds. The more we interact the more we have in common, the less we are afraid or suspicious of others.
- Encourage small city events and block parties.
- Local (government) entities must know who to talk to, by talking to someone who is a “group leader” in a social community.
- If we were to know a large number of people on the bus public transportation becomes a social outlet for interaction and we would not consider the situation threatening or stressful.
- Through interaction people meet like-minded neighbors who can help with information or who might want to work on a civic project together — regardless of their cultural background.

Be more intentionally inclusive

- It is more important than ever to become more inclusive. Atlanta is growing fast, attracting professionals and young people from around the planet.
- It is important to support and facilitate integration policies in order to encourage a true “melting pot” as opposed to “cliquing” and creating city areas that cater to a more uniform segment (No Chinatown or Little Italy etc.)
- Meet on the basis of common interests and definitely before a potentially polarizing issue arises.

Create culturally relevant ‘Welcome Meetings’ that educate new-comers on civic engagement

- Media reports of clashing cultures aren’t helping the cooperation. Local governments would benefit from directly reaching out to diverse civic groups offering “welcome services” and educational meetings to educate new-comers and therefore lowering the barriers to participation in civic life.
- Similar to some local schools’ international parent liaison who is the go-to person when cultural and language barriers are present and parents and students need additional information to successfully participate in public school.

Less talk, more action

- Politicians to show more actions versus spending long periods of time (and tax-payers’ dollars) on ‘analysis.
- Education + ethics. Establish a level playing field, resident vs developers + attorneys.
Culture of Engagement (continued)

PART 3: How would you like to be more involved and engaged?

Educating and mentoring others
- Tutoring Hispanic kids, make a stronger link between kids + university + profession.
- Working with “la Amistad” women need to be further empowered. Looking to encourage women to get involved with STEM, women in technology start-ups are challenged.
- Mentoring (100 black men), Emory Alliance community advisor.
- Help people overcome problems they find themselves in and make better choices in the future.
- I would like to get more involved in helping the homeless in metro Atlanta get back up on their feet and into society as equals.
- Grow Asian American leaders in the community, connect Vietnamese community to mainstream county + state.
- Educating younger generations.
- K-12 Schools and Higher Education
- Giving back, helping the elderly, volunteer, mentoring.

Begin community service
- Bring people together, “break bread with your brothen.”
- Volunteer in community projects.
- Provide dental care to those who can’t afford it.
- Actively supporting projects that connect communities.
- Leave a legacy.

Continue community service
- Heavily engaged in non-profits – empower people to transform small actions into movements.
- I am active in my children’s school serving in several capacities.
- Faith Community, Business Community as well as Parks and Recreation.
- Church – We work in collaboration with KSU students leading the STEAM program with underprivileged kids.

Continue leadership service
- Be active in Leadership Gwinnett and want to make that program more reflective of the Gwinnett community. It can be a model for the country.
- Member of Global Advisory Panel, Executive director millennial leadership.
- Participate in the Snellville Commerce club meetings.
- Former Snellville city council and GA State Rep.
- Serve on the GCPS human Resource Advisory Board.
- Staff member at Gwinnett Technical College.
Optional Questions

What did you enjoy most about the conversation?

- Wide variety of perspectives.
- Hearing different perspectives, needs, concerns, ideas over good food, openness of conversation.
- Diverse backgrounds that lead to differing answers and viewpoints.
- Engaging with/welcoming people different than me.
- Everyone’s different perspectives and stories were interesting and it was fun meeting new people.
- Opportunity to speak candidly and hear other’s perspectives.
- Everyone could share.
- Opportunity to be heard.
- Having everyone contribute to the conversation with equal time, weight, respect.
- Getting to meet some cool new people and have interesting discussion.
- Connecting with others across cultures, embracing what we have in common.
- Hearing insights, ideas in how to affect change.
- Inspiring to be a part of positive and hopefully productive conversation.
- Get to know the remarkable people present.
- Seeing the community involvement of everyone at the dinner.
- Finding common values.
- The engagement of the participants who were all in some way working to improve their communities -enthusiasm of the participants about having a voice at the table.
- Learning about the inspiring community work of the attendees.
- High level conversation and conviviality.
- Atmosphere of openness.
- We have more in common than what sets us apart.
- Wine.

Would you be willing to host your own Civic Dinner?

**YES! Definitely**

47.2%

of total Global Advisory Panel survey respondents

**Maybe**

26.6%

of total Global Advisory Panel survey respondents

(Verbatim comments are direct from host notes and survey responses)