



Atlanta



HOUSING IN ATLANTA

A Decade of Housing Leadership at ULI Atlanta



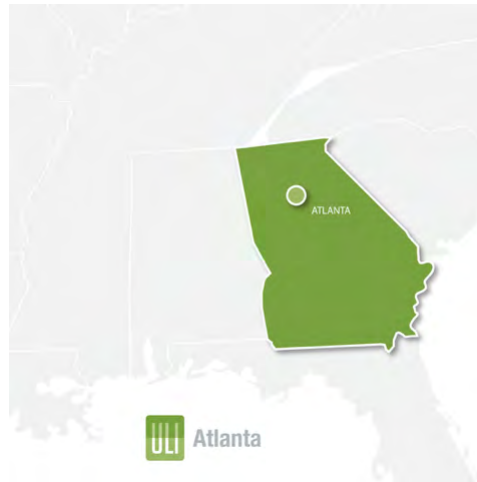
About

Urban Land Institute

Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

ULI Atlanta

With over 1,400 members throughout the state of Georgia, ULI Atlanta is one of the largest and most active ULI District Councils worldwide. We bring together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs. We share knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, electronic media, events, and programs.



ULI Atlanta Leadership

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Cover photo: A view of an Atlanta neighborhood with downtown in the distance.

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2013–15

Livable Communities Coalition absorbed by ULI Atlanta to become a local product council

New Council helps inform TOD projects throughout Metro Atlanta



The Livable Communities Coalition was established by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce's Quality Growth Task Force in 2005 as a nonprofit advocacy group designed to promote smart urban growth. After eight years of thought leadership and idea exchanges, the Coalition was moved under the ULI Atlanta umbrella in 2013 as one of its local product councils, becoming the Livable Communities Council (LCC). This move – led by senior ULI Atlanta leaders – was done to provide the group with greater convening power and make it more action-oriented.

In 2014, the LCC began meeting with a focus on improving quality of life through the lens of more walkable and transit-supported communities. This led to working groups that advised transit-oriented development (TOD) projects throughout Atlanta, including Atlanta BeltLine's affordable housing strategy.

2016

LCC published whitepaper on the **benefits of walkability** and its impacts and influence on housing

One of the aforementioned working groups – led by former District Council Chair and current Governance Chair Marc Pollack – produced a whitepaper to communicate the benefits and importance of walkability to communities. [Walkability: The Pathway to Atlanta's Future Growth](#) provided data on how greater walkability improves health and overall quality of life for residents and how it drives the housing decisions of those seeking new dwellings, particularly young people.



LCC affordable housing working group established

2017

Housing study commissioned to examine the extent of Atlanta's affordability issues

As Atlanta continued (and still continues) to grow through the influx of people, particularly young professionals, migrating to the Sun Belt, the issue of housing affordability became greater by the day. It became clear to ULI leadership that we had a responsibility to expand our focus to ensure thriving communities for all and not just the few. This led the LCC to establish a new working group dedicated to analyzing how big the issue had become and providing solutions on expanding affordability and curbing displacement of legacy residents. As an organization, ULI is uniquely suited to establish a solid foundation of housing affordability facts and articulate a definition and vision that can be successful over time due to ULI's power to convene, its emphasis on market and capital-driven solutions, ULI members' practitioner perspectives, and ULI's independent, non-partisan status.

Later that year, ULI Atlanta partnered with Bleakly Advisory Group (now KB Advisory Group) to develop a housing affordability strategy for Metro Atlanta's five-core counties that sought to do five things: 1) define affordability; 2) define Atlanta's affordability issues; 3) connect solutions to the issues with needs; 4) build consensus among stakeholders on strategies; 5) analyze how to implement and those strategies. The study, [Affordable Atlanta](#), was published in January 2018.

2018

HouseATL formed out of Affordable Atlanta suggestions

ULI Atlanta report on increasing affordability through innovation



ULI Atlanta continued to use its convening power around housing affordability to partner with the Blank Family Foundation and other civic organizations to create a taskforce that was focused on housing affordability in the City of Atlanta. The original purpose of the taskforce was to educate those seeking public office on best practices and comprehensive solutions required to meet the growing housing needs in the City of Atlanta. By connecting dots, agreeing to guiding principles, and leveraging work already underway, HouseATL was able to focus on aspirational yet achievable solutions for all partners in the city. In setting the goal of 20,000 affordable homes produced and preserved it has informed the housing platforms for multiple mayoral administrations. What resulted was a group that focused on a vision that pushed Atlanta’s civic leadership to develop a shared and comprehensive set of policies and adequate funding to meet the

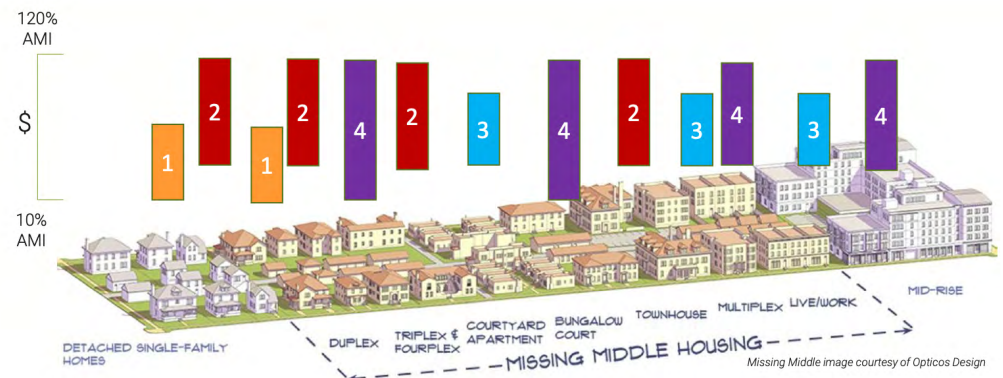
housing affordability needs of the City of Atlanta. The five pillars of the ULI regional strategy informed the recommendations in the city to: 1) increase affordable and mid-market housing production; 2) maintain the inventory of existing affordable units; 3) lower housing and transportation costs; 4) expand capital resources for affordable development; and 5) provide regional leadership on housing. That September, the group produced 23 specific [recommendations](#) on leadership, funding, policy, and community engagement.

That same year, ULI Atlanta through its Technical Assistance Panel (TAPs) Committee, produced [Design for Affordability](#), a report that analyzed how innovations in planning and design can increase housing affordability. Its aim was to provide “resources and talking points for property owners, developers, and government agencies to engage in this new conversation, by thoughtfully reconsidering alternative usage types to address Atlanta’s affordable housing challenges, all by harnessing the power of the private sector.” One of the key recommendations from the report was the hiring of a Chief Housing Officer for the City of Atlanta who then oversaw the drafting and implementation of the [One Atlanta Housing Affordability Action Plan](#).

DESIGN for AFFORDABILITY

Four housing product solutions that are quickly implemented, unsubsidized, utilize existing land and materials, and affordable for 10%–120% AMI.

- 1 Single Family Co-Living: subdivision of single family homes into rentable bedrooms (PadSplit model)
- 2 Increasing Density on Single Family Lots
- 3 Micro-units in Multi-family Developments
- 4 Multi-family Co-Living





Combined with the takeaways from Affordable Atlanta, HouseATL's formal recommendations to developers, nonprofits, and public agencies drew extensive attention and helped legitimize the group's efforts, which heavily inspired the City of Atlanta's [One Atlanta Housing Affordability Action Plan](#). Around the same time, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the region's metropolitan planning organization, would adopt the recommendations of the Affordable Atlanta study verbatim in its own [Metro Atlanta Housing Strategy](#) for Atlanta's ten housing submarkets.

ULI Atlanta members also sought to tackle affordability issues in other parts of the state through further technical assistance. In Gainesville, one [TAP](#) helped city officials define their residents' housing needs and informed them on how to utilize public-private and nonprofit partnerships with existing resources in the hunt for greater affordability. Meanwhile, as part of ULI Atlanta's [Center for Leadership](#) (CFL) initiative, an [mTAP](#) group advised the Historic District Development Corporation on how to redevelop and maintain current units within the Henderson Place apartment campus.

2019

City of Atlanta and ARC heed HouseATL recommendations in new housing initiatives

TAP and mTAP reports for the City of Gainesville and HDDC respectively

2020

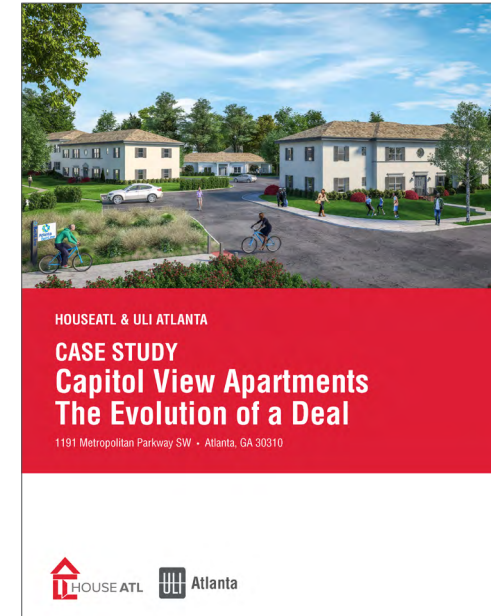
ULI leaders found Atlanta Affordable Housing Fund

ULI Atlanta x HouseATL x Georgia Tech case studies on housing



While much of the world shut down in 2020, ULI Atlanta and its members did not slow their efforts to help tackle and bring more attention to the issues around housing. Acting on an idea hatched in the ULI working group and solidified in the HouseATL private resources working group, Marc Pollack and David Allman, co-founded the [Atlanta Affordable Housing Fund](#) (AAHF). This fund, which raised \$15M and was managed under Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta (CFGa), seeks to “provide low interest rate financing for affordable housing projects that might otherwise not be developed.” AAHF has since supported 11 projects helping to produce over 800 affordable homes. AAHF was the ‘proof of concept’ for the much larger commitment of private resources for affordable housing production and preservation, and the same board now helps deploy over \$150M through the GoATL and TogetherATL funds at the CFGa.

ULI Atlanta and HouseATL, through a partnership with Georgia Tech’s MRED program, also used the critical juncture in America’s social climate to perform [case studies](#) that examined the power of collaboration in executing their



respective missions and preservation and comprehensive community investment as key strategies to mitigate displacement and provide affordable and workforce housing in rapidly gentrifying parts of the city.

The pandemic did not halt ULI Atlanta events either, as the migration to Zoom brought members together virtually to hear from public and private sector experts on the state of housing opportunity, inequality, and finding innovation opportunities through policymaking to better serve Atlantans. Click [here](#) to read more on takeaways from the eye-opening event.

2021

HouseATL becomes a formal organization

mTAP group aids Grove Park with land use planning

ULI Atlanta members took a giant leap forward in 2021 relating to their work with HouseATL as that organization shifted beyond its advocacy group roots to become a formal and separate nonprofit. The first full-time staffer for HouseATL would be hired and membership structure and roles for working group co-chairs would be established soon after.

The CFL initiative continued to support ULI's global mission priority on housing through an mTAP [report](#) that advised the Grove Park Foundation on how it could leverage and revitalize owned land along the Grove Park neighborhood's "Main Street" corridor to catalyze results that align with the organization's multifaceted mission of equity, access, and affordability.

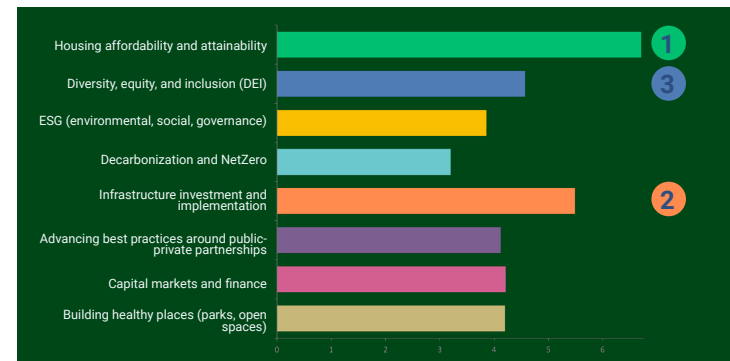
ULI Atlanta hosted a Mayoral Forum in collaboration with CREW Atlanta to dive into candidates' views on housing, infrastructure, transit, and economic development. All mayoral candidates were invited to share their platforms, and 9 of the 14 candidates participated, including Mayor Andre Dickens. In 2017, ULI Atlanta hosted a similar mayoral forum, giving members a unique opportunity to hear from the candidates.



mTAP reports for Atlanta Land Trust and the City of Decatur 2022

Member survey highlights importance of housing affordability

CFL mTAP groups leaned into the urgency around the city's housing issues further in 2022, with two groups providing expertise to local entities. In the [first](#), members worked with Atlanta Land Trust, a local nonprofit focused on providing permanent affordability primarily in Atlanta's BeltLine-adjacent communities, to develop a lease-purchase program for its housing stock in the English Ave and Vine City neighborhoods. The [other](#) worked with the City of Decatur on preserving and expanding stock of naturally occurring affordable housing.



In late 2022, ULI Atlanta board leadership executed a strategic planning session using survey data from ULI Atlanta membership, and housing affordability was the #1 issue driving ULI's work in the region for the next three years.

2023

TAP for Rabun County addresses workforce housing needs

Housing Innovation Summit

ULI Atlanta and KB Advisory update the 2018 housing study

As the fallout from the pandemic exacerbated housing affordability and supply issues, officials from Forward Rabun, in partnership with ULI's Terwilliger Center for Housing, commissioned a [TAP](#) to help Rabun County leadership understand the workforce housing needs of residents and develop a plan to tackle those needs.

That spring, ULI members were also educated by housing experts from around the world in ULI Atlanta's first Housing Summit. The Summit featured presentations and a panel discussion with three individuals driving innovation in co-living, housing design, and zoning data.

In 2023, the LCC recognized the need to revisit the Affordable Atlanta study with KB Advisory Group. The new report, [Housing at its Core](#), which was launched at a HouseATL Member Convening, sought to analyze how great Metro Atlanta's housing problems had become in the post-pandemic world and grade progress made on the five pillars set forth in 2018. In short, the report found that the situation was worsening and set forth recommendations for action and collaboration across the public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors.



2024

Advisory Services Program partnership with Atlanta Housing Innovation Summit brings industry leaders together

Advisory Services Program

In one of its most ambitious efforts yet, ULI Atlanta partnered with ULI's [Terwilliger Center for Housing](#) and the [Advisory Services Program](#) (ASP) in December of 2023 to advise Atlanta Housing (AH), the City of Atlanta's housing authority, on strategies for helping the City achieve its [plan](#) to create or preserve 20,000 affordable units by 2030. Additionally, the panel representing the ASP evaluated AH's administrative and financing structures. This effort, which included two days

of stakeholder meetings, a bus tour of AH assets, and a public Q&A session with the panel, culminated in a July 2024 report packed with analysis and recommendations on AH's present and future.

Housing Innovation Summit

ULI Atlanta convened the Housing Innovation Summit in August 2024 with an intense focus on the challenges and opportunities of developing small and mid-scale housing projects in Atlanta. From keynote speakers to discussion leaders, the Summit brought together private and public sector housing leaders to share knowledge, experience, and forward-thinking strategies for building a more diverse and attainable housing ecosystem.

Conversations highlighted the need for:

- Greater housing diversity and adaptive zoning to allow innovative models;

- Public-private collaboration that moves beyond regulation toward partnership;
- Leveraging public land to expedite affordable projects; and
- Empowering communities to co-design development that meets their needs.

Across all perspectives, one theme was clear: Atlanta must build small to think big. Removing barriers to small and mid-scale development – through creative financing, zoning reform, and stronger civic trust – can unlock the diverse, attainable housing the region urgently needs.

The 2024 Housing Innovation Summit underscored that innovation in housing is not merely about new models or policies, but about cultivating a new mindset – one rooted in collaboration, flexibility, and shared accountability for shaping a more inclusive, affordable Atlanta.



2025: Atlanta hosted the ULI Housing Opportunity Conference and partners with suburban city to explore housing diversity

ULI Housing Opportunity Conference 2025: Housing in Transition

More than 500 real estate and housing professionals convened in Downtown Atlanta for the 2025 ULI Housing Opportunity Conference, exploring how the nation—and Atlanta in particular—is navigating a period of major transition in housing.

Amid rising costs, tightening capital, and persistent zoning barriers, speakers emphasized that solutions to the housing crisis are increasingly local. With federal support uncertain, metro regions like Atlanta are innovating through flexible regulation, creative partnerships, and new affordability models.

A recurring theme was the Sun Belt paradox: while regions like Atlanta appear “overbuilt,” much of that new housing serves higher-income households, leaving middle- and lower-income residents behind. Attendees highlighted the need for missing-middle housing, adaptive reuse, and policies that support greater housing diversity.

Atlanta’s housing progress stood out nationally—having achieved half of its 20,000-unit affordability goal through public land use, housing bonds, and projects like the 2 Peachtree conversion. Suburban leaders from DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Cobb echoed similar challenges, calling for alignment of zoning and land-use policy with local housing needs.

The conference closed on an optimistic note: addressing the crisis will require sustained collaboration, open-minded leadership, and a collective commitment to more inclusive, adaptable housing systems.

Catalyzing Residential Development in Tucker, Georgia

Findings from [ULI Atlanta’s recent Technical Assistance Panel \(TAP\) in Tucker](#) echo key themes from the Housing Opportunity Conference and Housing Innovation Summit—especially the call for greater housing diversity, more flexible zoning, and small-scale development at multiple scales.

With housing demand projected to outpace supply by more than 2,600 units, Tucker is exploring how to expand options

while preserving community character.

The TAP recommended strategies to enable “missing middle” housing—such as duplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts—through zoning updates, streamlined approvals, and revised ADU standards.

The panel also identified opportunities for adaptive reuse and higher-density development around Northlake Mall, I-285, and downtown Tucker, supported by tools like tax allocation districts and partnerships with DeKalb County.

Together, these recommendations reflect how metro communities can translate regional discussions on innovation and scale into local action—advancing a more inclusive, adaptable housing ecosystem for the Atlanta region.





WHERE THE FUTURE IS BUILT