

VANGUARD EDITION

EMPOWER ATLANTA

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YOUR VOICE
EXTENDS
BEYOND
ELECTION
DAY

THE NEW
FACE OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HIGH
MUSEUM
OF ART
EXHIBITION

Martin Puryear:Nexus

U.S. SENATOR JON OSSOFF

ON LEADERSHIP, OPPORTUNITY &
THE FUTURE OF GEORGIA



\$19.99

WHAT IT TAKES TO MOVE CAPITAL DIFFERENTLY

Atlanta is attracting major investment, but for businesses along its historic corridors, a pressing question remains: Will longtime owners have the capital to grow and remain part of the neighborhoods they helped build?

On October 8, during Atlanta's Historic Preservation Week, bankers, community development lenders, foundation officers, City staff and corridor leaders gathered to consider that question.

The gathering launched Atlanta's B3 Capital Table, the first among five cities in Truist Foundation's Breaking Barriers to Business (B3) initiative, led by Living Cities and Main Street America. The City of Atlanta and Project Wellspring convened the event.

Grove Park, Historic West End and Sweet Auburn brought real projects: a community-owned marketplace with a bank branch, grocer and affordable homes; a legacy retail strip on Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard whose owner wants to stay; and a neighborhood trust working to preserve affordable commercial space.

The timing was intentional. Preservation and community-led economic development share a purpose: protecting what makes a place distinct while building what comes next.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Commercial corridors are a city's main streets. They are where residents shop, build businesses and take their first steps toward ownership. Yet capital often moves through disconnected systems. Banks, community lenders, philanthropy and public agencies operate on different timelines, mandates and definitions of risk.

Atlanta's corridors show what is at stake. More than 60% of Sweet Auburn real estate remains under Black ownership, even as market pressure grows. Historic West End's 200-plus businesses sit alongside a \$450 million mall redevelopment and the BeltLine.

Grove Park needs \$2.6 million in blended capital to close the remaining gap on a \$7.3 million project. No single institution can close every gap. Together, they can align resources around projects communities want to advance.

WHAT IT TOOK TO GET HERE

Atlanta's Capital Table did not begin on October 8. Through B3, Living Cities and Main Street America invested in relationships between local government agencies and community organizations. Partners developed shared workplans across capital, policy and storytelling, supported by \$225,000 per city.

Living Cities advances the Capital Table approach through Truist Foundation's Breaking Barriers to Business initiative, in partnership with Main Street America and local partners across five cities.



An Atlanta Streetcar travels along Edgewood Avenue in Sweet Auburn, October 2016.

That groundwork helped corridor leaders identify projects and financing needs. As the work progressed, access to capital surfaced repeatedly. The deeper challenge was connecting communities and financial institutions, building understanding of local opportunities and matching financing tools to project needs.

Living Cities built on those relationships to bring capital providers into the conversation.

FROM RELATIONSHIPS TO INVESTMENT

Living Cities is testing a straightforward idea: **Building social capital creates trust, and shared knowledge can help financial capital reach opportunities it might otherwise miss.** When lenders understand local markets and community priorities, they have better information to guide decisions. Community leaders gain a clearer understanding of financing requirements and how different sources of capital might come together.

Atlanta's first gathering does not yet demonstrate direct economic benefits for families and communities. The test is whether relationships lead to financing commitments, completed investments and changes in how institutions do business.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Atlanta's next Capital Table, planned for early 2027, will consider a live deal from the projects presented. Living Cities will track financing commitments and lessons for Charlotte, Memphis, Miami and Nashville.

The gathering closed with a question: Whose story stayed with you? Participants visited corridor stations to discuss how they could help.

Atlanta has set its inaugural table. The more consequential work begins when people return, relationships become commitments and commitments become capital that helps longtime businesses keep a stake in what comes next.