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Connections

How Atlanta and Georgia Tech are connected and disconnected

3484

Magazine

SPRING 2022



@3484mag

What is 3484?

3484 Magazine is a news magazine focusing primarily on politics and social issues in the Atlanta area. We dive deeply into policies in Atlanta and Georgia to investigate how they impact Georgia Tech students.

34° N, 84° W are the geographic coordinates of the City of Atlanta, rounded. We picked this name because of our focus on the Atlanta area.

When we're not working on publishing a magazine we cover events, like presidential debates and protests, on our social media accounts, @3484mag.

In the future, we will continue to cover issues that impact Atlanta and Tech students. You can expect to see a lot more on elections, healthcare, climate policy, and city planning, as we continue to explore ways policy shapes Georgia Tech students' lives.

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Beltline



The Atlanta Beltline Explained

SAM BASKIN, creative director

Northwest Trail

The last big mystery of the Beltline's design. One challenge is in-use railways. The design has yet to be released, but will likely repurpose roads and sidewalks or run alongside the railroad. Includes the completed Northside trail south of the Bobby Jones golf course.

Westside Extension

The northern segment of the Westside trail uses right-of-way on Marietta Blvd, which will be completed in Spring 2022. It is currently under construction.

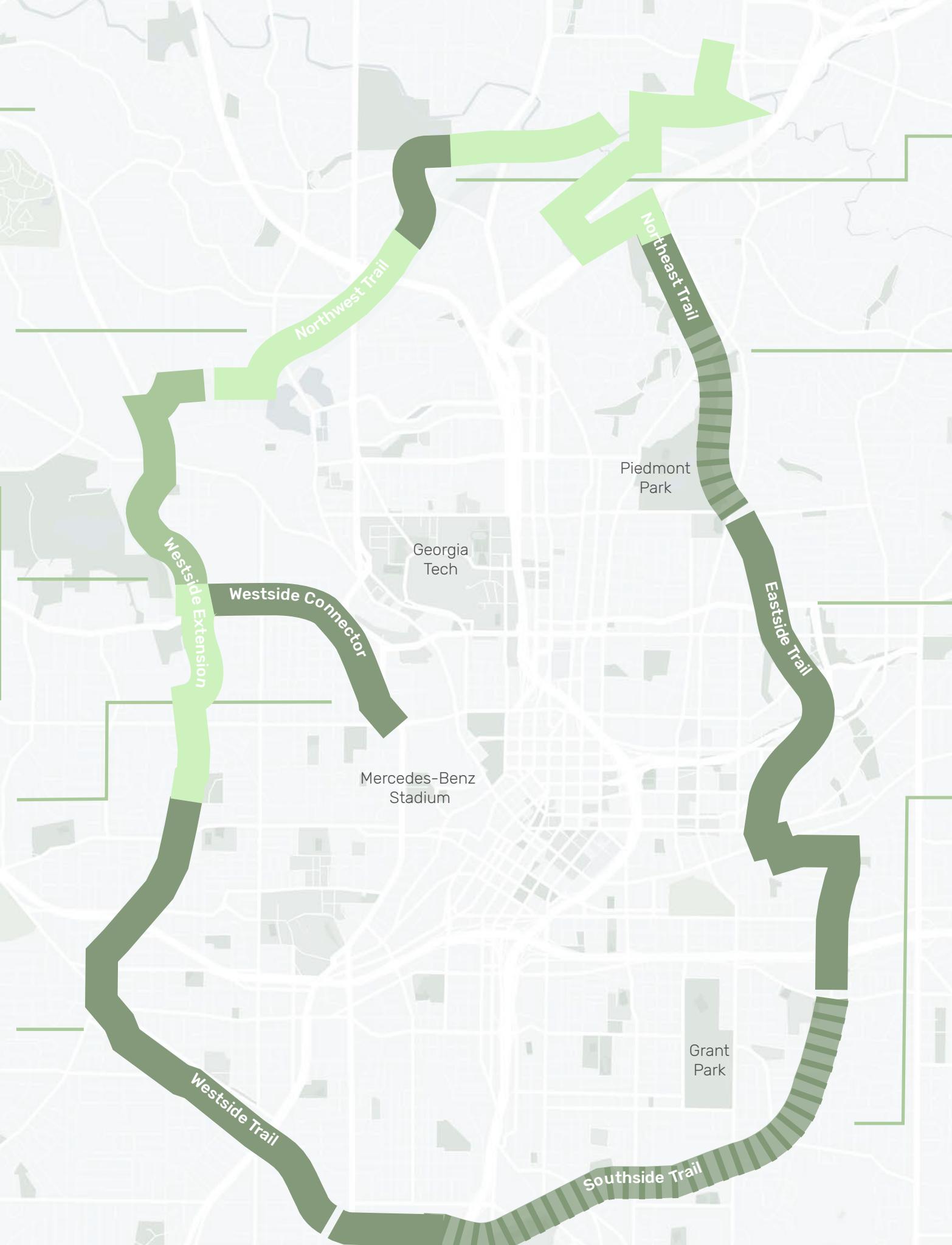
The southern segment will link the existing Westside Trail to the Westside Connector.

Westside Connector

Connects from Northside Drive to Westside Atlanta. Once the Westside Extension is complete, this path will connect Downtown to the Westside Beltline.

Westside Trail

Paved path that runs from University Ave. to Washington Park. It is connected to the Southside Trail, meaning pedestrians or cyclists can take the Beltline from the Northeast trail all the way to the end of Westside trail.



Northside Trail

Short paved scenic trail south of Bobby Jones Golf Course. Will connect with the Northwest Trail.

Northeast trail

The northern segment still in the design phase will connect to PATH400 and MARTA's Lindbergh Station.

The southern portion consists of an unpaved portion from 10th St to just north of Piedmont Park, which connects to a paved portion that extends to I-85. The unpaved portion is in the design phase for paving.

Eastside Trail

The first completed and most popular segment of the Beltline. This trail is controversial for contributing to an increase in housing costs in surrounding neighborhoods.

Southside Trail

An mostly unpaved path with one paved segment. The rest of the path will be paved but is still in the design phase.

Legend

| |
|--------------------|
| Completed Paved |
| Completed Unpaved |
| Under Construction |
| Design Phase |



From the Canopy



How Atlantans are resisting “Cop City”

ELLA STEWART, writer

SAM BASKIN, designer

Peter Wohlleben, a German forester and author, wrote, “Trees could solve the problems if people trying to improve things would only allow them to take over.”

Last year, the Atlanta Police Foundation’s (APF) plan to convert urban forest space to a police training facility was met with criticism. Although the ground lease for the “Cop City” facility passed, activists are occupying the forest in a last-ditch effort to prevent the controversial development.

On September 8, 2021, the Atlanta City Council voted 10-4 to pass a ground lease agreement which handed over 85 acres of forest in southeast Atlanta to the APF for just \$10 a year. The wooded area will be used for the construction of a public safety training campus, most notably including a mock city for urban police training. The forest will be appropriated for a variety of other purposes, including 30 acres for urban farming, 40 acres for pastureland for horseback patrol, about eight acres for an emergency vehicle driver training course, a shooting range, and an explosives testing site.

Trees could solve the problems if people trying to improve things would only allow them to take over

The Atlanta City Council press release states that the remaining approximately 265 acres of the 381 acre plot will be preserved as greenspace that will “feature passive recreation areas with minimal environmental impact to the nearby forest area”. Amendments scaled back the initial lease proposal from 150 acres to 85 acres, yet activists are concerned that APF could expand their plans in the future if the project proceeds.



Urban Forest // Photo by ELLA STEWART

This urban forest, bounded by Key Road in DeKalb County and home to portions of Intrenchment Creek, once held a prison farm, now called the Old Atlanta Prison Farm. By the 1970s, the City of Atlanta acquired the land, and the prison farm shrunk out of existence. While much of the forest has been left untouched since, the land has also been used for facilities like Georgia’s largest youth detention center on Constitution Road. Intrenchment Creek Park offers some walking paths through the forest.

The Mainline reported that Atlanta Police have trained on this land for the past 50 years and used it as a shooting range, leaving lead bullets, discarded shells, and grenades that leach heavy metal pollutants into the watershed. The forest and regions downstream are already suffering from as much as fifty years of heavy metal pollution from police without proper precautions or environmental damage assessments.

APF constructed this proposal as early as 2017, where a public safety action plan first mentioned plans for the facility. The project only became public knowledge around April 2021, however. Opponents of the plan were

quick to term it “Cop City”, holding a range of intersecting concerns about the project, including environmental degradation, nuisance to neighboring communities, racial justice, and others. In August, Social Insights surveyed 371 Atlanta residents and found that 98% of respondents do not support the development of police and fire facilities being built in the area.

To prevent the lease agreement from being approved, rallies and demonstrations accompanied communication of opposition to the Atlanta City Council in the months leading up to the September vote. Ultimately, a 17-hour public comment session where about 70% of commenters reflected opposition to the plan was not enough to dissuade the council from passing the agreement.

A Georgia Tech student, Peyton*, caught wind of the project on Twitter and became involved after attending rallies and connecting with activists.

“I view Cop City as a fundamentally different facility. If it were built it would further militarize the police and desecrate the local environment,” Peyton said. Peyton echoes



Urban Forest //
Photo by ELLA STEWART

concerns that the urban forest would be best left alone: "If you go to the forest, you see that this is a lot of space. This is a habitat in recovery. You can't build something like that. This is something that is rare in our day: areas that haven't been sterilized into 'green spaces', but instead are true wild spaces in the middle of a city."

Another activist, Emerson*, said, "This project can't be allowed to continue because it perpetuates this legacy of racist violence that has been happening on this land since the removal of the Muscogee people," they continued, "That's not even to mention the ecological impacts of the project." Emerson mentioned that on top of the pollution from shooting ranges and bomb testing, deforestation would damage the watershed and contribute to flooding problems in southeast Atlanta and downstream.

After failing to get a majority of the council to vote on their side, Peyton says activists are "building infrastructure needed to resist the development by any means necessary." With the land leased and surveying underway, activists began to occupy the forest. A march onto the property with about 60 protesters in attendance resulted in four arrests made in the woods, according to Emerson. In

late October, Emerson started working to develop this occupational infrastructure, including an encampment with tree houses. "There are so many reasons that this project can't be allowed to happen ... that I feel really strongly about that informed my decision to be a part of the active blockade of it," Emerson said.

Emerson recounted that Reeves Young and Long Engineering spent roughly two weeks bulldozing and surveying the area surrounding the encampment where activists were constructing tree houses. "When they started bringing machinery into the forest, it was a very catalyzing moment ... When they discovered our encampment, we decided to occupy the trees full-time ... People went into the trees right away," said Emerson.

Emerson spent seven consecutive days in one of these half-finished houses. The experience was overwhelmingly positive for them. "It felt really spiritually significant to be there and to be close to all of the life that was going on there and to feel like part of the healing instead of the destruction ... A lot of my reflections had to do with how very important it is for that life to be allowed to grow freely there," they said.

Emerson said that on their first day in the tree, a squirrel crawled right above them and wandered through the trees. They said, "It felt like a different little world, working with the environment and healing it instead of continuing this cultural cycle of feeling as though we are superior to the land, that we can do whatever we want with it and dominate it."

Tree-sitters are continuing to construct encampments and barricades in an effort to hold the space long enough for the plans to



Makeshift barricade // Photo by ELLA STEWART

be canceled. While both activists reflect that they hope for more people to join the forest occupation, Emerson noted that resistance could come in a variety of forms: "I hope to see people working on every level, whatever people feel comfortable with, whatever people feel inspired to do." Peyton said, "Even if you can't live there, existence in the forest is an act of resistance, too. Come see it; come see why it's worth protecting."

A recent rally on February 12 organized by Community Movement Builders saw roughly 100 people in attendance. Peyton expressed hope for the movement. "Almost every single person I meet is opposed to this facility. When I explain it to them, that they rammed through the democratic process with as little debate as possible, every single person has been opposed. I know this movement has all the ingredients it needs for widespread public support" Peyton said.

They also expressed that this is an opportunity to open more discussion of the role of police in our communities, where Peyton prompts, "Why do corporations fund the police, and what do they get in return?" If resistance is successful in preventing the development, Peyton remarks, "I am really excited to see that forest recovered, and see it protected, and see what we can learn from this."

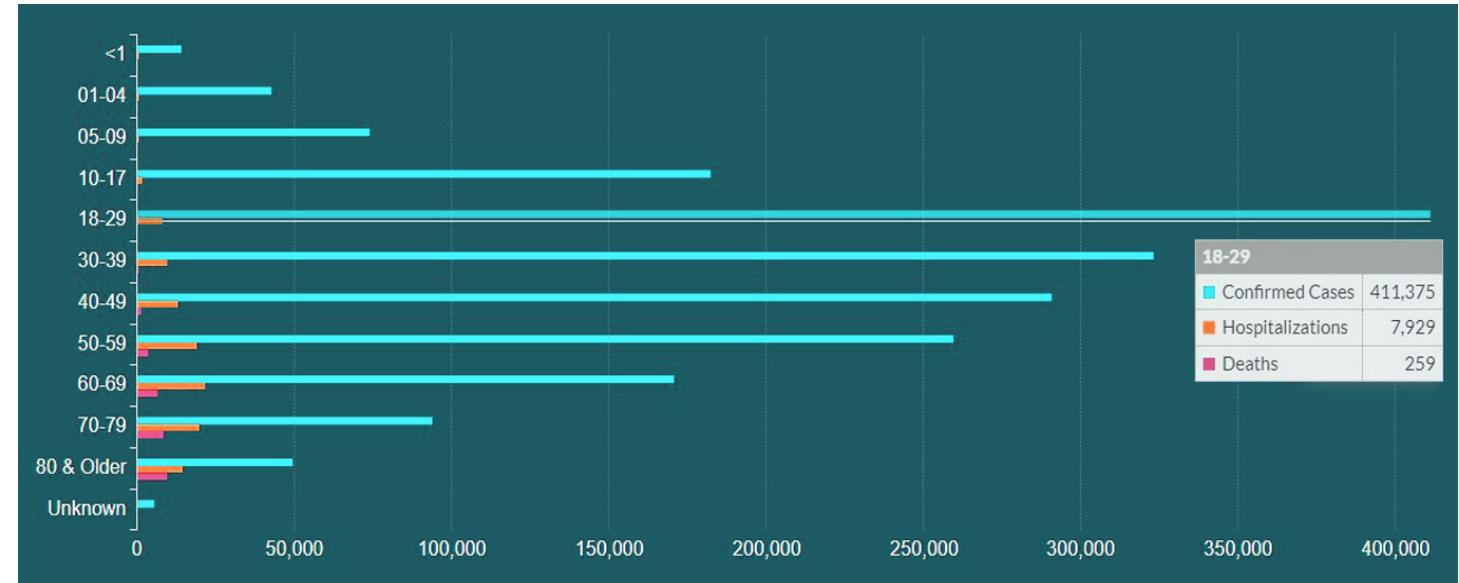
*These names have been changed.

Hospitals in Atlanta

How COVID-19 has impacted Atlanta hospitals

VICTORIA CHAN, writer

DAVE MENEZES, designer



Confirmed COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths by age group // Data from Georgia Department of Public Health (as of March 8th, 2022)

Hospitals are often considered cornerstones for any city, and Atlanta is no exception. While Atlanta is home to some of the best ranked hospitals nationally, Atlanta hospitals have been put under an enormous amount of strain in the past two months dealing with a huge influx of COVID-19 patients.

Some of the best hospitals in the Atlanta area, such as Emory Healthcare and Children's Hospital of Atlanta, have urged Atlanta residents to get vaccinated amidst the omicron wave as hospitals were overflowing with the number of hospitalizations surpassing previous numbers. The number of hospitalizations had become so overwhelming that as of February 21, 2022, Georgia is witnessing a 7-day average of 96 deaths, according to USA Facts, and many of Georgia's healthcare workers are experiencing this pressure.

Jessica Chan, a third-year pre-med student with a minor in economics has witnessed just about anything you can imagine that can happen at the Children's Hospital of Atlanta (CHOA) at Egleston and Hughes Spalding. As a scribe hired in June of last year, she has witnessed what each wave of COVID-19 has done to the Children's Hospital of Atlanta

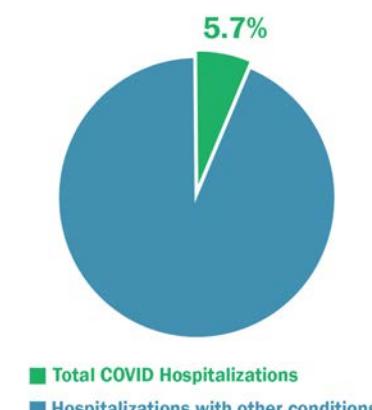
and how it has put a strain on hospital waiting times and resources.

As a scribe, she works six to seven hour shifts, three times a week, depending on her availability. Working alongside doctors, she transcribes information in real time about a patient's condition to be input in the hospital's record system. Despite working side-by-side with doctors, she says that it is the nurses who seem the most overworked.

"I hear a lot of nurses- I know nurses are overworked, not doctors, because I was sitting with one of the doctors who I was scribing with, and we were listening in on one of the nurse's conversations, basically screaming 'Oh my god, CHOA does not respect its employees. I've worked here for over 10 years, and they should have already given me a bonus raise as a nurse' and she said, 'No wonder why so many people are quitting and moving to other hospitals.'"

Compared to doctors who work 8-hour shifts, nurses work 12-hour shifts at CHOA. Since the start of the pandemic, 18% of healthcare workers have quit their jobs, according to Morning Consult, a survey research company. At a time when nurses

are needed the most, many of them appear to feel as though they are not compensated for what they have to deal with on a daily basis. According to research done by Lisa M. Haddad, Pavan Annamaraju, and Tammy J. Toney-Butler, the turnover rate of nurses is 8.8 % to 37.0%, depending on geographic location and nursing specialty. The increased percentages of turnover rates may be due to



Percentage of hospitalized kids with COVID-19 // Data from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (as of March 8th, 2022)

the pandemic and nurse burnout.

While nurses may be bearing the brunt of the pandemic, hospitals themselves are running low on resources to combat the rise in COVID cases, especially following the omicron hit in January. Case numbers grew so rapidly that hospital systems in Atlanta made a public announcement to encourage residents to get vaccinated and limit trips to the emergency room for only emergencies.

Many hospitals do not provide treatment for COVID-19 unless the

symptoms, Chan quickly assented, and added, "You're first taking up rooms that could be given to patients who need it more, and second, you're wasting your time because you're not going to be seen until 4-5 hours later just for a COVID test. You can probably find it quicker at your PCP or at UC."

Many hospitals are already dealing with everyday trauma, such as motor vehicle



symptoms are severe, like difficulty with breathing or disorientation. If the symptoms are mild, Chan recommends patients to stay at home and quarantine, especially if they have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID or if they have been unmasked in public spaces.

When asked if people should not go to urgent care if they are experiencing COVID

accidents or gunshot wounds, and based on the severity of the symptoms, a visit to the hospital can take a long time. Based on the symptoms, each patient is scored from one to five, with one being immediate care for life or death situations. For Chan, she mostly sees threes and fours, and for COVID cases for patients who are experiencing coughing and sneezing, it is considered a five. However, Chan has noted that there are severe cases of

COVID that can rank as high as a two on the scale, but she has never witnessed a two and has only ever heard about it from other doctors.

The droves of parents and children visiting the hospital to get tested for COVID, many days working at the hospital seem never ending.

"When people started realizing their symptoms could be similar to COVID or they needed COVID tests, numbers would start to skyrocket and the

the doctors who have to see every patient, this can be extremely taxing because there is always another patient to see.

While quality of care has not decreased, Chan noted that the doctors did have complaints.

"The main complaint is, 'Once we discharge 10 patients, the board doesn't even move.' It still stays in the 90s because you do more in your shift than before. You're seeing a million patients and trying to get the board of patients down. There's just a lot more patients coming in."

Healthcare workers are expected to show up to work everyday and treat patients non-stop. This can create a huge toll on healthcare workers who are already facing everyday stressors, such as worrying about the MCAT or how to stay safe from COVID-19.

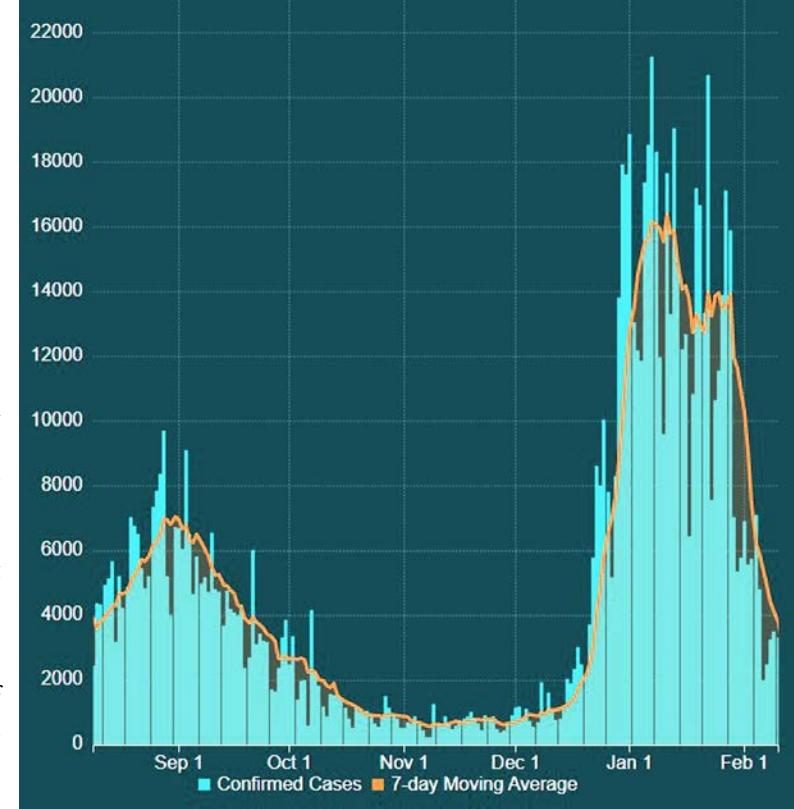
Chan also remarked that if patients are looking for a COVID-19 test, patients should not go to a hospital. Again, a visit to the hospital can take hours before a patient even sees the doctor. Once the patient actually sees the doctor because they suspect they have COVID-19, the doctor will provide a routine checkup on things such as eyes, ears, nose, and mouth just to make sure that nothing else is causing the symptoms. If there are no other abnormal

symptoms or causes, the doctor will order a COVID-19 test that will not come in until after 24-hours. Thus, a doctor will most likely diagnose the patient with a viral infection and will recommend them to quarantine even after they get their test results back

that most doctors will not do a PCR first because it is more costly for the hospital since it tests for all viruses, such as influenza and respiratory syncytial virus. Chan does not recommend this because care for the patient does not change with what kind of

test is used to detect the virus. Chan stated, "You don't have to torture your kid with a nose swab because it's not going to change how you're going to care for your child."

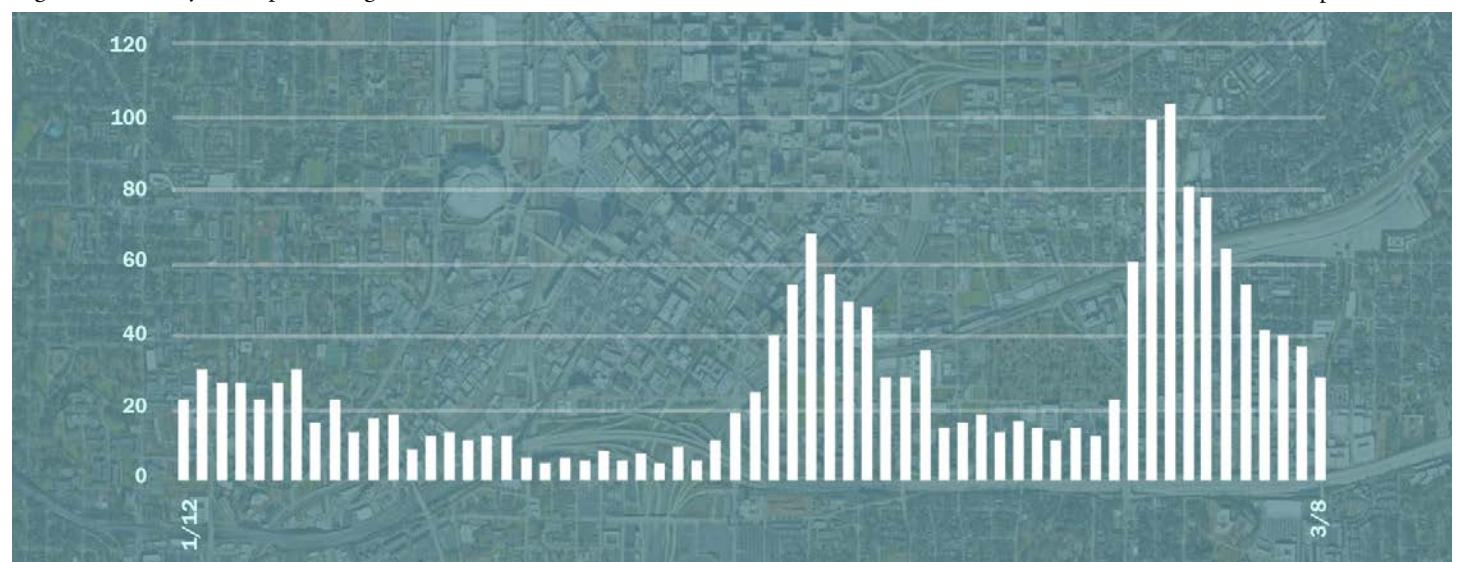
As such, Chan asks for those who are not in dire need of emergency care to look towards their primary care providers and urgent care before coming to the hospital. Chan urges people to educate themselves on which place provides which care because, "People don't realize that it's a virus, and if you are presenting with fever, you should already just isolate. There's no cure. It's a virus."



PCR cases over time in Georgia // Data from Georgia Department of Public Health

because it could be a false negative.

However, Chan noted that there are parents who are not satisfied with that answer, so the doctor will have to order a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Chan explained



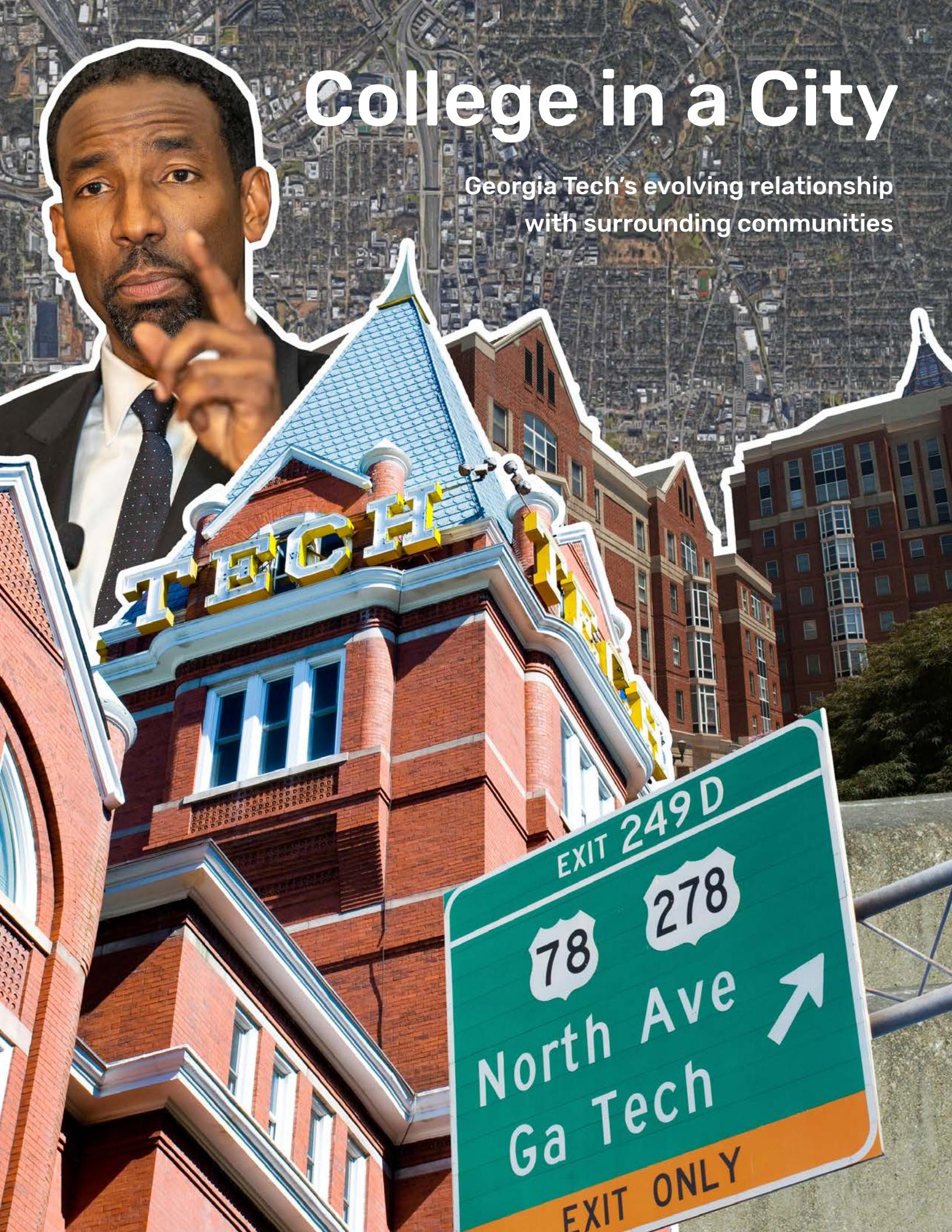
Cases of children every Tuesday in CHOF hospitals // Data from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (as of March 8th, 2022)



Total reported cases, hospitalizations, and deaths // Data from GA Department of Public Health (as of 18th March, 2022)

College in a City

Georgia Tech's evolving relationship
with surrounding communities



College in a City

Georgia Tech's evolving relationship with surrounding communities

KIRAN GAREWAL, writer

JEMMA SIEGEL, designer



Tech Tower as viewed from North Ave: left November 2007, and right December 2021 // Images via Google Maps

Anyone trying to navigate between West Campus and Westside Atlanta has likely encountered a confusing network of dead ends, barbed wire fences, and narrow sidewalks along overpasses and tunnels.

Crossing between campus and Midtown is a very different experience, one designed to connect the two communities. This disparity is emblematic of Georgia Tech's tenuous relationship with its neighboring communities. Since Georgia Tech's founding over 100 years ago, its location in the center of Atlanta has led to both unique opportunities for community collaboration and instances of purposive exclusion.

Chris Burke, Georgia Tech's executive director of community relations, described his experience as a student at Clark Atlanta University in the 1990s. Burke frequently used to bike to Emory University's library—seven miles from Clark Atlanta—to study, but he never studied at Georgia Tech's library, just two miles from his campus.

As he put it, the wall dividing Tech's campus from North Ave to the south "really said to [him]: 'you're not welcome here.'"

This was no accident. For decades, the area directly to the south of Tech's campus was an impoverished neighborhood known as Techwood Flats. By the time Burke was a Clark Atlanta student, the Flats had been replaced by the nation's first public housing project, Techwood Homes.

As Burke explained, "you had poor Black people across the street, and certainly the fear of... 'those people living over there' coming onto our campus [led to] attempts to not make it inviting."

Even Atlanta mayor Andre Dickens experienced this exclusion. The first in his family to attend university, he described not even knowing where Georgia Tech was for most of his life despite growing up just miles from Tech's campus. "That's how distant Georgia Tech was from the lower income

Black community."

Today, Georgia Tech's administration is trying to move the school beyond this exclusionary history and mend wounds that have divided Tech from the communities around it.

The wall dividing Tech's campus from North Ave to the south "really said to [him]: 'you're not welcome here.'"

While most of the widely publicized efforts in connecting students with Atlanta focus on tech companies like Airbnb, Cisco, Google, and Microsoft opening offices in Atlanta in hopes of recruiting Tech students, Burke's team is also actively working to better connect our campus with less resourced communities to the south and west.

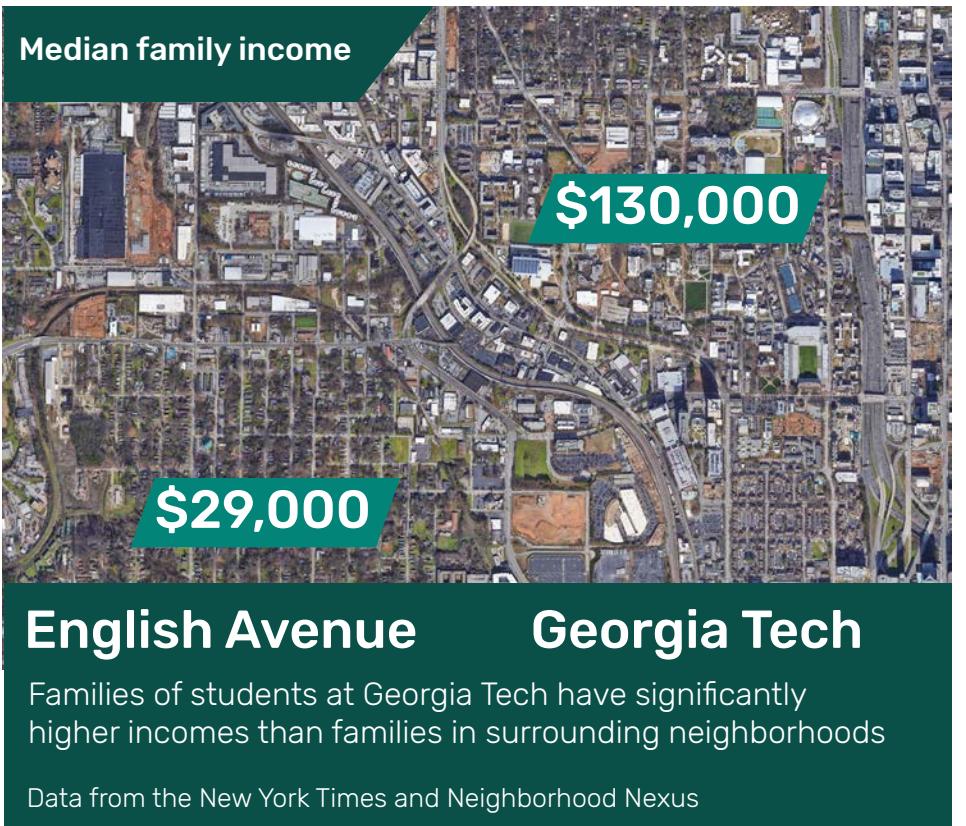
Making Georgia Tech more welcoming to people from all parts of the city starts with removing spatial barriers, but it goes further as well. Of all the efforts Burke's team is taking, the one he said he's most proud of is a History, Technology, and Sociology class that he teaches. In this class, Georgia Tech students are paired with high school mentees at BEST Academy, an all-male, 95% Black school on the Westside.

Making Georgia Tech more welcoming to people from all parts of the city starts with removing spatial barriers, but it goes further as well.

By getting to know each other despite often coming from very different backgrounds, the mutual understanding goes both ways: Tech students learn more about the communities and people they're studying next to, and BEST Academy students gain valuable role models. Multiple students from Westside



Students board a Stinger Bus on Ferst Drive behind a fence dividing Atlanta and campus // Photo by LaMenta3 on Flickr



have now attended Georgia Tech as a result of this program and others.

While neighborhood organizer and newly elected Atlanta city councilmember Byron Amos shared the perspective that the "union [between Georgia Tech and Atlanta's city government] has only been about 10 years, 15 years in the making," he expressed unconditional optimism with respect to the new direction Georgia Tech is taking

and is looking forward to working with the university's administration to better link the city with Tech.

"It is a good friendship that we are learning from each other and beginning to just see how best we can serve each other."

According to Dickens, since the time he studied here, "Georgia Tech became more aware that it could not just be a university in the city and not make sure that it was a part of community building."

In addition to the steps the university is already taking to become a more active and inclusive community member, the mayor had a number of ideas where it could go further. Dickens pointed to the shortage of affordable housing available to Georgia Tech's staff members and urged the school to "build mixed-income housing on lands that we own around campus." He also named various steps that the university could implement more easily. From allowing its classrooms to be used by community organizations to creating a night school to help Atlantans earn GEDs, Dickens hopes that Georgia Tech will continue to step up to serve the communities that have given Tech a home.

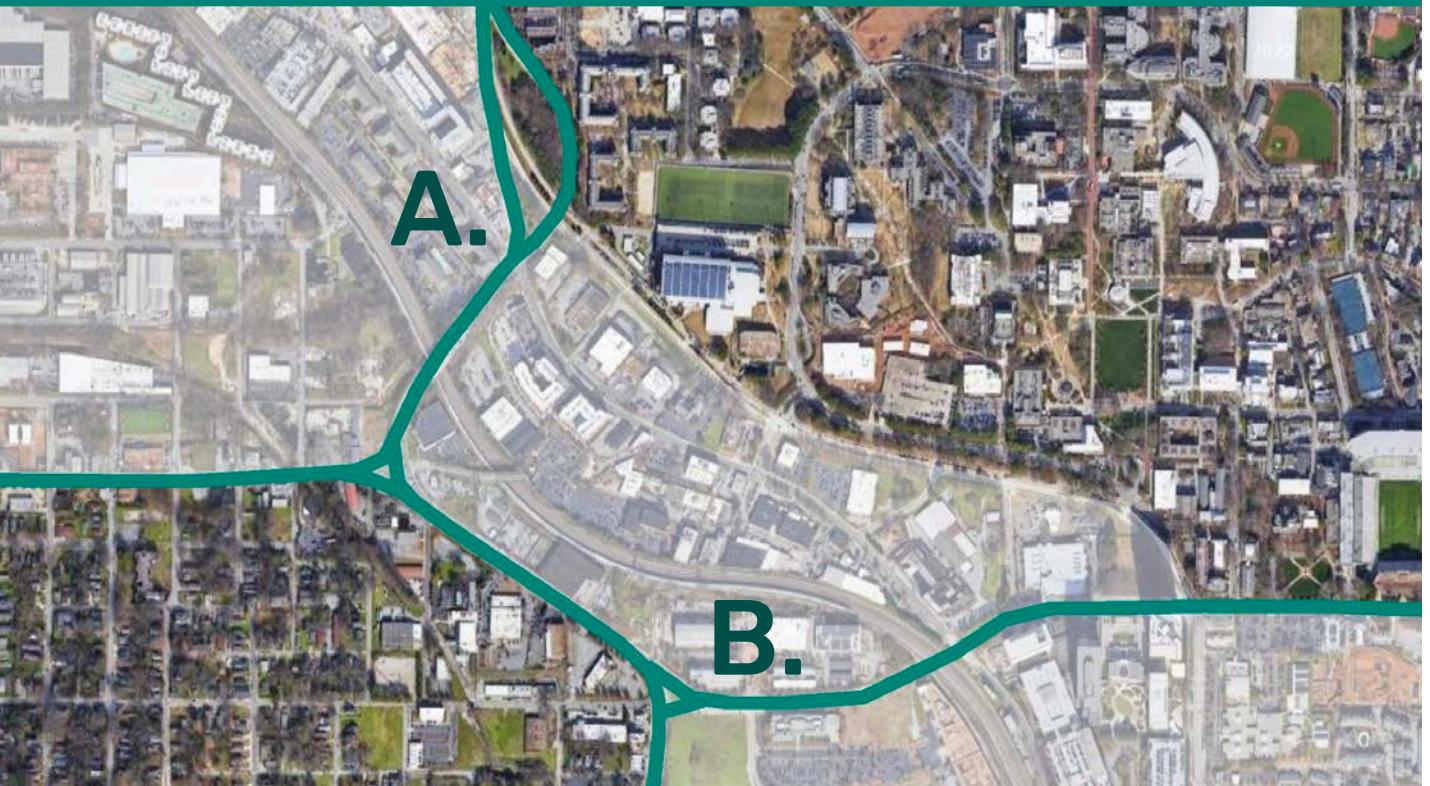
Tech to English:

With only two narrow pedestrian passageways on busy roads that connect Georgia Tech's campus to the English Avenue neighborhood, there's no safe way to walk between the two—even though they're less than a third of a mile apart.



A. Northside Drive

The railway overpass bridge on Northside Drive has two sidewalks, both of which are bounded on a single side by a concrete road barrier. // Image from Google Maps



B. North Avenue

The underpass under the railroad tracks on North Avenue has two thin sidewalks, both of which are bounded on one side by concrete walls. // Image from Google Maps





ATLANTA's STREET SWEEPS



Street Sweeps

How Atlanta is displacing the displaced

SAM BASKIN, creative director

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, in January 2020, there were 3,000 people who were homeless in Atlanta. While the 2021 count was canceled due to COVID-19 and the 2022 count has not been released, advocacy groups expect that the numbers have skyrocketed since the beginning of the pandemic.

During this crisis, the city of Atlanta has been conducting street sweeps of homeless encampments. A street sweep is a forced removal of homeless people and their property from an area. If people are unable to move in time or are not present, their possessions are thrown away. The sweeps are enforced by the Atlanta Police Department. The sweeps are unscheduled and give people on the street very little time to move.

Victor, a 62 year old homeless man who sleeps on the corner of Central Ave and MLK Jr. Dr., said, "They'll be there with the truck and the city workers and officers, and you have five minutes to vacate wherever you're sleeping at."

A street sweep is a forced removal of homeless people and their property from an area.

Sunny Leon, an organizer at the mutual aid organization Sol Underground, described the sweeps. "Sometimes they will just throw it away even if you're trying to take it with you because you're not doing it fast enough. So essentially it's just forced displacement," they said.

Sol Underground is heavily involved with supporting unhoused people impacted by the city's street sweeps. According to the ACLU, "Homeless sweeps are costly and ineffective and make homelessness worse, not better."



Central Ave and MLK Jr Dr near the State Capitol // Photo from Google Maps

Other cities that conduct sweeps such as Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle, post advance notices warning of upcoming street sweeps. In Atlanta, the city conducts sweeps with no prior announcement. Leon stated, "We don't get that. The cops just show up early in the morning between 4 and 8 a.m., before they have any witnesses and [conduct sweeps]. They like to do it on cold days, rainy days, winter. They also like doing it when they see that someone has come out and given new tents." Sol Underground spent approximately \$5,000 on new tents in July, and within three days they had all been taken.

A legal primer published by the ACLU stated, "Courts have held that failing to give sufficient notice before a sweep, so people can act to keep their property safe, or destroying property during a sweep, violates the rights of homeless individuals."

Additionally, a case from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found that "Simply because the property is left unattended while an individual performed necessary business such as using the restroom or attending court does not render the property 'abandoned.' Homeless individuals retain

"By forcefully displacing people, you are now ripping them away from their communities"

Leon argued that this displacement is very harmful "by forcefully displacing people, you are now ripping them away from their communities," they said. Leon described how being alone while homeless is very dangerous, making it easier to be robbed,

assaulted, and arrested.

Victor stated that nearly every shelter in Atlanta, a church by the Capitol where he used to sleep, and even warming centers kick unhoused people out between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m. These organizations often do this in order to clean up, but this still has a serious impact on unhoused people. Afterwards, Victor tries to find a place to sleep, but if that's not possible he has to just walk around the city. Additionally, ever since the pandemic began, the church where Victor used to sleep has stopped letting unhoused people spend the night inside. Victor says he now sleeps by the capitol because it feels safe compared to other locations.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta does not have enough affordable housing units. Atlanta has seen an increase in housing, but housing costs, rent payments and property taxes have all also increased.

The Atlanta Homeless Union recently won month-long hotel stays for 40 people, intended to be for the people sleeping on the sidewalks near the Capitol. However, there were several issues with the process. First, many of the people who received hotel rooms were not the same people that had been living near the Capitol. Also,

the organization that was providing the hotels would only give rooms to people with IDs, which is a major barrier to entry for unhoused people. Victor adds, "I think they took about 30 people. There's triple that down there. They let them stay for 30 days and after that, that was it." Leon adds that only housing people for a short amount of time can be actually harmful, as their old space is often taken when they return, causing more displacement.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta does not have enough affordable housing units. Atlanta has seen an increase in housing, but housing costs, rent payments and property taxes have all also increased.

Addressing the city, Victor said, "Why aren't you trying to get housing? I've seen where they talk about building these apartments and such and such. Well, check this out, we're not gonna be living in there."

Additionally, Leon supports diverting funding from other places to housing. However, they are not confident in the city's ability to do that, but advocates for giving funding to mutual aid organizations to help those in need more directly.

Victor said that mayors always promise to help the homeless, but once elected they fail to live up to their commitment. In fact, the only time Victor noticed interaction from city officials was when they cleared the street leading up to the mayoral and council elections.

When asked what the city could do to help unhoused people, Victor said, "Evidently the shelters are not working, so we have to find something that will work."

One suggestion he gave is converting buildings to be housing for homeless individuals. "Let's get one of these buildings. And let's house the homeless and get them help, have social workers there - to find out what they need," he said. The city has been making efforts to build more affordable housing, however Victor states, "It's just so slow."

"Evidently the shelters are not working, so we have to find something that will work."

To help on a personal level, Victor suggested that housed people ask the mayor and council members questions. Sunny Leon had recommendations as well. "If you don't have time, but you have money, give money. If you don't have money or time, but have an Instagram, repost. And even if you don't have any of those, there are unhoused people in your general vicinity in your community. Become friends with them," they said.

In closing, Victor emphasized, "Homeless people are people too. They have the same emotions as you. They get depressed, they get happy. We're not the monsters people try to make us to be," he continued, "I just need a little help up, not a hand out."

Atlanta Homeless Union Demands



Housing



Water/Sanitation



A Seat at the Table



Healthcare

Source: Atlanta Homeless Union Twitter Account

Anchor Institution



Georgia Tech's journey to becoming an Anchor Institution

MEGAN JERMAK, writer

SONYA YUEN, designer

Once a marker for the new, industrialized South, at one point home to Georgia's National Championship winning football team, and more recently a research powerhouse, Georgia Tech has had many identities since its inception following the Civil War. It grew alongside the city of Atlanta — one becoming a pillar in American higher education and one becoming the cultural capital of the South. Recent efforts by a number of Georgia Tech departments, administrators, and community partners are looking to magnify each other's strengths for mutual benefit by establishing the Georgia Institute of Technology as an Anchor Institution in the Atlanta region.



The future of Georgia Tech under this initiative will leave the institution forever intertwined with the communities and economy of Atlanta.

Anchor Institutions are defined as "place-based (unlikely to move) [institutions] that have a strong self interest in ensuring that the place where they are located thrive... grounded in long-term partnerships with their own local communities... that reduce disparities and advance the public interest along with institutional interests," according to "Georgia Tech as an Anchor Institution: Institute Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force Report." Serve-Learn-Sustain director Dr. Jennifer Hirsch described this as an effort for the education, campus, and resources of Georgia Tech, in collaboration with the other exceptional Higher Education Institutes in the area, to be of use for the advancement of the region. These tools and programs will act as stewards for the realization of the goals neighboring communities have for themselves. The future of Georgia Tech under this initiative will

leave the institution forever intertwined with the communities and economy of Atlanta.

The first step towards solidifying Georgia Tech's place in the city is through its economic impact on surrounding communities, focusing on economically mobilizing communities that have faced historic discrimination. This objective can be achieved by hiring with intention a diverse staff in every department of operations and education, but, in order to generate economic mobility, this also means training and "upskilling" individuals to provide them the opportunity for in demand, skilled, and lucrative future employment. Upskilling can be achieved through access to Georgia Tech facilities, courses, and special programming. Additionally, in order to generate wealth, Georgia Tech is exploring how to source many of its goods, materials, and services from companies owned by minorities and women. Doing so will generate and maintain jobs of quality for community members and encourage aspiring entrepreneurs of

similar backgrounds. Going even further, those leading the "diversity in procurement" initiative are working to make this program replicable by the other University of Georgia System institutions; this establishment would be the first of its kind in higher education.

Another aspect of Georgia Tech's realization of Anchor Institution aspirations must be a commitment to STEM programs in Atlanta Public Schools, according to the Task Force Report. The commitment would ensure that the children who grow up around Georgia Tech will benefit from the world-class institution at their doorstep. Georgia Tech must enrich and assist engineering, computing, and mathematics preK-12 programs, ultimately materializing a pipeline to STEM involvement postsecondary. Much of this work is executed by the Institute's Center for Education Integrating, Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), which has already raised over a million dollars to support STEM education at Washington Cluster Schools and Centennial Academy.

Institute funding would be implemented in order to continue this work and grow the program for greater impact. Like the program for resource procurement diversity, CEISMC is working to create a model for their involvement in local schools that can be replicated and scaled by other institutes of higher education.

The journey to becoming an Anchor Institution includes greater collaboration between Georgia Tech and community collaborators, particularly with historically underserved communities. The "Georgia Tech as an Anchor Institution: Institute Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force Report" focuses on "Westside communities of color and lower income communities surrounding campus." These communities are suffering today as the result of discriminatory lending practices, redlining, and years of divestment stemming from white flight as admitted by the U.S. water Alliance's report, "An Equitable Water Future Atlanta." This involvement is marked by impact initiatives with the goal of easing systemic obstacles and addressing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals via a number of outreach projects by students and faculty researchers of varying scales. The involvement is also backed by continued and plentiful institution resources and founded

The journey to becoming an Anchor Institution includes seeing greater collaboration between Georgia Tech and community collaborators

on the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), taught by Serve-Learn-Sustain.

The Needs Based approach, which ineffectively and inequitably approaches prerogatives, is rooted in treating merely the symptoms of an area's problems in the form of its most apparent needs instead of addressing the root problem. Grounded in white saviorism and prolonging modern era imperialism by fostering a cycle of dependence on continuous external involvement, this approach characterizes the people of the communities as victims coming from communities of deprivation. Conversely, the ABCD approach recognizes the people of communities as the keys to their own success, maximizing the possibilities and recognizing

the promise in every community. In line with such, the relationships between Georgia Tech representatives and community members are seen as partnerships, where both parties are seen as equals for their individual and unique depths of knowledge, as proposed in The Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain's "Partnership Strategy Report." Out of this approach towards community involvement, the Institute best positions itself to maximize the knowledge shared between these community partners and students and the effectiveness of projects.

Two examples of community partners with which Georgia Tech's Serve-Learn-Sustain department has developed particularly meaningful relationships are the Center for Civic Innovation (CCI) and West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA). The Center for Civic Innovation, which was the first to earn the designation of Signature Partner by Serve-Learn-Sustain, aims to uplift and aid female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of color in their pursuit to limit inequality via the creation of organizations that are community oriented. As a Signature Partner, CCI and Georgia Tech solidify their commitment to support one another and cooperate for further regional development and educational enrichment. Georgia Tech students have been interning at CCI



The Kendeda Building // Photo from the Georgia Institute of Technology

and a number of nonprofit organizations that began at CCI like Carrie's Closet and WUNDERgrubs through the Sustainable Communities Summer Internship Program. These organizations have also worked in collaboration with students in the MGT 4803: Social Impact course during which students aided in the submission of their work to the Ideas to Serve Competition (I2S). The winning team of I2S competes internationally against other universities' UN Sustainable Development Goals based projects at Oxford University.

The other community partner, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, began in 1998 as an organization seeking environmental justice in West Atlanta neighborhoods burdened by the watershed. In Atlanta, watershed-based injustices take the form of sewage spillage, excessive flooding as a result of the fact that the sewer system works off of streams; thus, when sewage became overburdened from the growth of the city and the age of the system, the system began leaking into the yards, parks, and streams of West Atlanta. Today, WAWA has expanded dramatically, looking to improve the conditions of the land and all of the happenings on it, as put by co-founder Darryl Haddock. According to the blog post, "What is Social Innovation Anyway?" by Dr. Jennifer Hirsch, since SLS's inception in 2016, WAWA has been a community partner and a number of students have interned and collaborated with it through the Sustainable Communities Summer Internship Program. Additionally, the Public Interest Technology Student Fellows Program is taught in association with WAWA. It instructs engineering students on mediums of effective community engagement in their careers in the tech world.

WAWA and Georgia Tech have recently begun the discussion for WAWA to become Georgia Tech Serve-Learn-Sustain's second Signature Partner.

Currently, a team of students are working in partnership to enhance WAWA's community engagement and education programs with a focus on using the Kendeda Building and Georgia Tech's other assets as a tool. Also, WAWA and Georgia Tech recently began the



Westside Park // Photo from the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation

discussion for WAWA to become Georgia Tech Serve-Learn-Sustain's second Signature Partner.

The exchange between Georgia Tech and nonprofits is not one founded solely on giving back. This relationship is symbiotic; the community receives assistance in the form of the time and technical abilities of Georgia Tech faculty and students, while the students and faculty receive experiential education. "Systems Thinking; Anticipatory; Normative; Strategic; Collaboration; Critical Thinking; Self-awareness; and Integrated problem solving" skills as outlined by Serve-Learn-Sustain's "Partnership Strategy Report" is offered to students.

Architecture student Kayley Beard has participated and continues to participate with a number of community partners. She revealed that this work has been "invaluable" to both her "education and perspective," as well as enjoyable. In her work, she has been able to discern how her "technical skills" can be leveraged for community enrichment "through active listening and meaningful discussions" with community organizations and residents. An advocate for the ABCD approach, Kayley emphasized one of the most impactful lessons she has learned: Tech students "do not have all of the knowledge and capabilities to solve local problems;" rather, it is the community organizations and residents who enhance development projects the most with their "knowledge and lived experience." In reflection of her experiences and Tech's place in the region,

Kayley expressed a need for enduring relationships "between the institute and the broader Atlanta network."

One of Georgia Tech's mottos is "Progress and Service." Georgia Tech's research and their role in educating the next generation of engineers and scientists is reflective of this statement in many different ways; however, the positive impacts of this work and Institute as a whole may be better felt by its neighboring community as an Anchor Institution. Another motto is "Creating the Next." This motto has validity, but the public has a greater need for engineers and scientists with deep culturally relevant knowledge and perspective, which Georgia Tech can better fill through the community engagement conducted by an Anchor Institution. Not to mention, the "Next" referred to can be extended to include contributors to Georgia Tech, who, as an Anchor Institution, are best supported to grow as people and economically. Neither Georgia Tech nor Atlanta are perfect, yet they have the opportunity to redress their previous failures and improve the future for all.



Midtown Free Fridge



How Mutual Aid is Impacting Atlanta

SARAH KALLIS, writer
AG CHURCH, designer

When fourth year Math and Economics student and SGA Undergraduate Vice President of External Affairs Rupkatha Banerjee first started volunteering with Atlanta's Free99 Fridge, she knew she wanted to bring a similar concept to Midtown.

"It's entirely no strings attached, put in what you can, take out what you want—a free fridge and pantry network with locations in Clarkston, and several in downtown," she said. Free99 did not have any locations in Midtown, so Banerjee and Grace Swift decided to start one. She settled on a location in Grace House on Georgia Tech's campus.

The Midtown Free Fridge connects Georgia

The Midtown Free Fridge connects Georgia Tech to the Atlanta community and provides mutual aid.

Tech to the Atlanta community and provides mutual aid.

Mutual Aid is a key component to the foundations of the Midtown Free Fridge, and the Free99 Fridge network. While the Midtown Free Fridge is not part of the Free99 Fridge Network, it was heavily inspired by the Free99 Fridge.

Mutual Aid, according to Banerjee, differs from charity because it involves community members lifting each other up. While charity puts responsibility on economically advantaged people and can create a power dynamic, mutual aid is centered around all people helping each other.

"Mutual aid is more about community members connecting with each other in a

way that creates resources and self sustaining frameworks and initiatives that allows the community to survive on its own. So it's about community members working together to create things like the community fridge or like clothing drives or support their community members in a way that doesn't rely on a higher political organization," she said.

Banerjee said another key component to the fridge is de-stigmatizing taking free food. Anyone on or off campus can put food in the fridge, and anyone can take food out of it regardless of need.

"I've had conversations with a lot of people that are like, I don't know whether I should stop by and grab food because I'm not the one who needs it the most. And I think the point of a free fridge collective and something that's like, so no strings attached is that everybody deserves access to free and fresh food even if they can afford food, right? Our fridge is always stocked and we want people to take advantage of this resource," she said.

"The core idea that founded the fridge is that regardless of an economic standing, everybody should have access to free and fresh food and we shouldn't be paying for it. It's a fundamental resource that I think people are being consistently deprived of," she said.

Banerjee mentioned that while Tech has a plethora of resources for students experiencing food insecurity, there are often barriers to access and stigma. The free fridge, however, seeks to remove stigma and red tape.

"We kind of remove all of the requirements surrounding getting food, and we don't monitor ... whether or not they're suffering from food insecurity, and if they need food assistance, if we make it as anonymous as possible, and just allow people to come and

go at their leisure, it takes away that stigma from being able to access food," she said.

The pantry and fridge are located in the back of Grace House on 5th Street. Banerjee said that she considered establishing the fridge in an off-campus spot to make it more accessible to the Midtown area. She asked several Midtown businesses and nonprofits, but eventually settled on Grace House.

The nonprofits that Banerjee originally connected with provided help in getting the word out about the fridge, even though they did not host the fridge themselves. The Arthur Blank YMCA hands out fliers on the fridge to encourage the community around Georgia Tech to visit the fridge. They specifically encouraged families living in subsidized housing in Centennial Heights, a

What is Mutual Aid?

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community close to Georgia Tech's campus, to visit the fridge.

"Several families from Centennial came and visited our fridge, so we were able to make that connection with Atlanta last semester. But that's something we want to keep doing, making sure Midtown community members and the Greater Atlanta community can access the fridge. So we can tackle food insecurity not only on our campus, but also in surrounding areas," she said.

She noted that Georgia Tech students are often unaware of the challenges the community around them faces.

"Tech kind of internalizes its own problems and doesn't do a very good job of interfacing with issues that it's surrounded by. Despite the fact that as an institute or doing more anchor institution work, which means we're figuring out what it means to be a staple in the Atlanta like political environment and Atlanta economic environment and trying to increase employment and better engage with Atlanta, in that sense. Because we realize that we're a very integral part of Atlanta's economic landscape," she said.

While she appreciates the student-led organizations that are fostering connections with Atlanta, she would like to see the student body as a whole become more involved in mutual aid.

"As students, I feel like we feel like there, there are a lot of student led opportunities to engage with Atlanta, like common good. In terms of mutual aid, and tackling issues that are more fundamental to what Atlanta residents need, it definitely can feel like we're incredibly disconnected from that, even though we're in a unique position to help



Acceptable Items

- Fresh Fruit
- Fresh Vegetables
- Breads (with packaging)
- Non-perishable pantry items
- Frozen Foods (NO raw meat)
- Sealed prepared meals (w/ use-by date + ingredients labeled)
- Sealed homecooked meals (w/ best by date or prepared date + ingredients labeled)
- Fresh eggs (w/ best by date)
- Unopened dairy products (w/ best by date)
- Pet food
- Cooked meat and lunch meat
- Personal hygiene products
- Personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, gloves, hand warmers, etc)
- Individually wrapped plastic utensils
- Baby food + formula + diapers

tackle it," she continued, "So something that we've been trying to do in SGA is make sure students are more connected with Atlanta mutual aid. That's definitely something we need to reflect on, which is not something that we've been able to successfully cement this year. We want to connect students with mutual aid opportunities to the best of their capacity," she said.

She said that, while the Free Fridge was started by SGA at Georgia Tech, "this is something that belongs to the community and we want to make sure that we expand it. And we want to make it as much of a part of the community as we possibly can."

Banerjee has clear goals for the future of the Midtown Free Fridge. While the fridge is almost always stocked because of students and organizations donating food, she would like to expand the options even more.

"What we would like to do is develop relationships with restaurants in the area so they can donate their leftovers to us and just be able to open up another location," she said. She would also like to open up a second location on the periphery of campus, which would have less barriers to access for people in the community.

Governor Race

Georgia's Gubernatorial Election

CAROLINE BREWER, author
GEHNA CHAUBAL, designer

For the better part of two years, the word "unprecedented" has slithered its way into what seems to be every conversation. In 2020, car companies told American families they were "there for them" during the unprecedented pandemic--provided those families financed a new Toyota Tacoma.

2021 saw the unprecedented siege of the Capitol. I think I speak for the masses in saying I long for times with precedent. Though the nation might crave predictability to mitigate the effects of this 2020s-induced whiplash, Georgia's upcoming gubernatorial election continues the trend of unprecedented statewide affairs.

Perhaps the most prominent idiosyncrasy of the election lies in the number of candidates in the race, and more specifically, it lies in their respective parties. Representing the Democratic party, the fortitudinous Stacey Abrams will run again for the position for which she relentlessly fought in 2018.

As of now, she has no opponents from her party. On the right, Brian Kemp will naturally seek re-election, but the incumbent will face four opponents in the upcoming Republican primary.

Unseating an incumbent politician is an arduous task. Sitting candidates have an upper hand over challengers by having the ability to cite accomplishments they have made in their careers. By holding office, incumbents can point at tangible goals they have met and policies they have implemented. Incumbents do not have to rely on inflated promises and lengthy campaign strategies.

They also enjoy household recognition, so the apathetic voter coming to the polls to vote on a local resolution could follow the maxim of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," and blindly vote for the incumbent for the sake of continuity.

As such, the party of the incumbent usually does not endorse sending a different candidate to duke it out in the political arena.



Stacey Abrams / Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

could mean for the GOP. He started by citing famous satirist Will Rogers's quote, "I am not a member of any organized political party. I am a Democrat." That aphorism has held true for the left for years, but the GOP has always had the nearly-fantastical ability to unite for the good of the party.

See the 2016 presidential election for more information. Though he admitted that the elected officials from the right largely stem from the Establishment rather than the blue-collar sectors of the party, Barke agreed that the GOP is more inclined to put aside their differences at the polls. Professor Barke then asked me, "what do you mean by the Republican party? The GOP? Or Trump?"

A true processarian, Professor Barke did not offer an endorsement of any candidate, but he did leave me with a question I have turned over numerous times – in a fashion only Nick Carraway himself could appreciate. Regarding the future of both parties, Barke asked me to name the respective spokespeople for each of America's oldest-standing political machines. I could not. I think the Democratic party is too wary of what happened with Hillary in 2016 to risk another schism, but in the equal and opposite vein, I think the Trump-

induced polarization has resulted in a clear internal bifurcation of the GOP. Will the face of the party be another Colin Powell or a Liz Cheney? Will it be another Ted Cruz or a Ron DeSantis? The face of the Georgia GOP--Kemp or Perdue--will determine the direction of the Republican party, and subsequently, all eyes are on Georgia.

The upcoming gubernatorial will garner more interest than from those interested in what will become of the Republican party. The Senate runoff elections of late 2020 proved that Georgia is a bigger player in national politics, and since Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff secured the tie-spurring Senate vote, Georgia has remained nationally salient.

Of Georgia's rise in prominence, Georgia Tech Adjunct Professor and former state Legislator Michael Polak stated that Georgia has become the litmus test of whether there is a breakthrough in the South with the Democratic party and attributed this selection of Georgia to the changing state demographics.

The 2020 Census reported that Atlanta alone enjoyed nearly a twenty percent population increase from the 2010 reported population of 420,003. Polak also stated that Georgia's elections exemplify the growing influence black voters have in Southern politics. In a deviation from the nation's historically-abysmal voter turnout rates, the Pew Research Center found in a 2020 report that sixty-three percent of black voters were extremely motivated to vote--furthering

Professor Polak's claim.

Georgia Tech student and community organizer Alex Ames has similar thoughts regarding Georgia's newfound national relevance. Building upon the point of Georgia's changing demographics, she stated that Georgia is one of the first states in the deep south to see the transition of the grasp of power from white voters to people of color. She then noted that Stacey Abrams was an early person to acknowledge the implications of this demographic shift which will assuredly resonate with voters of color.

According to Ames, Georgia politics have another nuance in the mix. Commenting on the long history of organizing space in Georgia, she sees the role of the people behind the politicians.

She stated that "when we talk about politics in Georgia, we cannot just talk about elected Democrats or Republicans. We are talking about the people doing the work to speak to Georgia's families and workers like the New Georgia Project or Fair Fight."

Georgia's organizing space allows for the state's affairs to be rooted in people rather than politics. The impact of voters of color and their respective organizations on the gubernatorial election could result in an unprecedented shift toward more accurate and comprehensive representation at the ballot.



David Perdue // Photo from Wikimedia Commons

Georgia matters, and by extension, so do its elections. Induced by 24-hour news or pastel infographics detailing the latest human rights atrocity or community involvement instructions, people are more aware of the political happenings of the state than ever before.

Professor Polak has taught his State and Local Government class for over ten years, and he stated that the level of student engagement is exponentially greater than that of ten years ago--especially among women. Voters of color and women directly see how policy decisions impact them, and as such, they are more inclined to voice their opinions at the polls.

When people have more skin in the game, they will pay closer attention to their surroundings. This election will undoubtedly accumulate interest from GOP voters, voters in minority groups, and plainly, those with a passion for political processes at unparalleled rates. Some might even call it unprecedented.



Brian Kemp // Photo from Wikimedia Commons



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