



Quality
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DESIGN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEST PRACTICES

THE
Intersection
QUALITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Friday, August 11, 2023

Council for Quality Growth Hosts 300+ at 3rd Annual INTERSECTION Conference

22 Experts Talk Innovative Partnerships & Housing Affordability in Metro Atlanta

ATLANTA, GA – On August 10, 2023, the [Council for Quality Growth](#), through the [Quality Growth Institute](#), hosted [The 2023 INTERSECTION Quality Development Conference](#) at the City Springs Studio Theatre. Mayor Rusty Paul opened the conference with a warm welcome to the City of Sandy Springs. Over 300 Council for Quality Growth members, elected officials, government staff, and development industry professionals gathered for the 3rd annual event. The 2023 theme “Collaborate & Compete” convened 22 expert speakers to share stories, unwrap critical issues, and discuss opportunities as they relate to collaboration between public and private entities and housing affordability in the metro Atlanta region. On the backend of an economically trying pandemic, a region with a dependence on commercial property taxes has great opportunity to lean into public-private partnerships that create housing inventory that is affordable and attainable for the talent of continued investment. The Council for Quality Growth is a convener of private investors and public policy makers, advocating for regulations that support smart growth in the region. “The INTERSECTION Conference is about bringing these groups together,” said Rob Ross, 2023 Council Chairman and Senior Vice President of Kimley-Horn, “and to get them talking about ways to collaborate towards higher quality development in metro Atlanta. The best way for us to learn is from each other.” This annual event serves as the Council’s platform to educate both sides of development with outside approaches, best practices, and lessons learned. Doug Hooker, CEO of the Atlanta Connector Park and former ARC Executive Director, guided these conversations as emcee of the full conference.

Jonathan Tower, Founder & Manager Partner of [Arctaris Impact Investors](#) delivered the opening keynote address on “Expanding Your Community’s Fiscal Health Toolkit.” Tower flew from Boston to highlight the need for office to residential conversion in metro Atlanta. According to Tower, Atlanta’s over-reliance on tax revenues from commercial properties could prove problematic with the expected decline in property values. “Atlanta’s problem might be bigger,” said Tower, “but so is it’s opportunity.” He outlined his toolkit of ways local governments can mitigate what is typically a costly conversion, including modernizing zoning, eliminating risk with feasibility studies, providing anchor tenants, and creating tax abatement and direct subsidy programs. Arctaris Impact Investors is the largest impact-focused manager of opportunity zones nationally.

Three public-private partnership case studies showcased the important role collaboration plays in our region’s economic development. Greg Voetsch with I-3 Partners shared his private equity model for funding municipal projects, most recently with the Clayton County School District. Brian Johnson, City Manager of Peachtree Corners and Tiana McNeil with T-Mobile shared the partnership they’ve leaned on to create the very unique Curiosity Lab, and Centennial Yards’ Brian McGowan and Invest Atlanta’s Dr. Eloisa Klementich shared all their progress in redeveloping The Gulch.

Tony Perez, Senior Associate at [Opticos Design](#) delivered the second keynote, “An Objective Approach to Housing.” His California-based firm consults with local governments on form-based zoning to create sustainable communities. Perez presented the spectrum of housing choices available, reporting a growing realization that the vast amount of land dedicated to single family housing could be better utilized. “You can add housing without changing much about the community,” Perez said, comparing the varying levels of density that can be

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allowed from small changes to a zoning ordinance. He provided a look into what other states, regions, and local governments elsewhere are doing to creatively provide housing products that fit into existing communities. These include implementing Objective Design Standards (ODS), making Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) “by-right” for property owners, and writing zoning codes that better allow for the implementation of missing middle housing.

Mike Carnathan, Manager of Research & Analytics at the Atlanta Regional Commission, provided a look at regional housing data and numbers, further highlighting the need for housing that is affordable. Matt Bedsole, Director of Atlanta’s Housing Innovation Lab, gave an overview of the Dickens Administration’s effort to deliver 20,000 affordable housing units in the next 8 years. Bedsole was joined by Sarah Kirsch, Managing Director of Housing Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and Dr. Eloisa Klementich, President & CEO of Invest Atlanta, to detail the recent announcement of \$300 million in affordable housing funds and the importance of partnerships to continue to provide capital and deliver affordable housing.

Two affordable housing panels followed, the first of which discussed some of the challenges faced when funding affordable housing projects and the opportunities presented from finding the right partners and properties. Alan Ferguson, President & CEO of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity moderated this conversation between Sharon Guest, Owner and Manager of Radiant Development Partners, Ashani O’Mard, Senior Vice President of Strategic Housing Investments for the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, and Richard Taylor, Managing Partner at ARRC Capital Partners.

The final panel, moderated by Parker Poe’s Shaun Adams, explored built environments and reimagining spaces to include deliverable housing products. Marjy Stagmeier, Founder of TriStar Real Estate Investment, Lejla Prljaca, Executive Director of the Gwinnett Housing Corporation, Booker Washington, Founder and CEO of South Park Cottages in College Park, and Mayor Vince Williams of the City of Union City joined this conversation, each presenting their unique approach to housing projects, including microhomes, education-based housing developments, and reinvesting in extended stays. This panel showed how the right housing in the right place can have lasting impacts on communities, including reduced crime and transiency and increased home ownership and generational wealth.

In 2023, housing continues to be pushed to the forefront of development woes, and the Council is working daily to support our local governments making critical regulatory decisions to provide homes for their communities. With proactive leadership in local governments and willing investors, our region will continue to thrive.

The INTERSECTION Conference is a product the Quality Growth Institute, the education arm of the Council for Quality Growth and an established 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the state of Georgia.

More information can be found at www.councilforqualitygrowth.org/INTERSECTION.

View and download the conference program here: <https://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/INTERSECTION-2023-Program-Final.pdf>

A full recording of the program, presentation slides, and a photo gallery will be posted to the Council for Quality Growth’s website in the coming days. Please direct all media inquiries to Kathryn Jones at kj@councilforqualitygrowth.org.

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[Council for Quality Growth’s 2023 INTERSECTION Conference]



[From left: Doug Hooker, Tony Perez, Jonathan Tower, Michael Paris]

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About The INTERSECTION Quality Development Conference:

The INTERSECTION is the Council for Quality Growth's Quality Development Conference that annually convenes the public and private sectors for an in-depth discussion of critical issues to our region and how we compare to national trends. The INTERSECTION was developed as a means of education and information for our members, partners, and other industry professionals, with a sharp focus on the most relevant trends and issues affecting the growth and development industry from year to year. The INTERSECTION Conference is a product the Quality Growth Institute, the education arm of the Council for Quality Growth and an established 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the state of Georgia. <https://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org/INTERSECTION>

About the Council for Quality Growth:

The Council for Quality Growth is a trade organization that works to ensure continued growth and economic success for generations to come by providing advocacy, information, and education to its members. For 38 years, the Council has been committed to the mission of promoting balanced and responsible growth and is proactively involved in the formulation of policy and legislation critical to the growth and development industry. The Council addresses, head-on, strategic economic planning, infrastructure needs, and tough quality-of-life issues throughout the metro Atlanta region and state. <http://www.councilforqualitygrowth.org>

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