

As seen in the **Georgiatrend** Visionary Cities

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CHAMBLEE

Chamblee had a slate of transformative infrastructure projects planned for its key corridors, including adding bicycle lanes, raised crosswalks and stop signs to encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic. These would be a big change for drivers – and the city needed buy-in from the community to ensure success.

The solution? Transform the typical public information workshop into an interactive, lively event – a “community engagement activity disguised as a special event,” says Matt Dickison, Chamblee planning and development director. The city held two of these events – the Mid-City Stroll along Peachtree Road in 2017 and the Town Center Stroll through downtown Chamblee in 2019 – to engage community members more effectively in the planning process.

“We also wanted to engage them in different environments than they’re used to,” says Dickison, “and we wanted to do a lot of demonstration projects alongside the project to show people how the recommendations and plans could be realized in real life.”

The city partnered with local businesses to create a street festival atmosphere, moving information stations inside boutiques and shops and holding visual preference surveys in local restaurants. To demonstrate how a bike lane would look and feel, the city simulated one by closing a lane of traffic and installing temporary streetscape improvements and pocket parks using materials donated by Lowe’s.

In total, the events attracted about 800 attendees and cost the city less than \$5,000, since most materials and manpower were donated. And the results? Enthusiastic buy-in from the community, vital to securing funding and moving forward with the plans. – AB

CPL’s Urban Design & Planning group designed and implemented each of these events in conjunction with other community partners and stakeholders.



CITY OF CHAMBLEE



PATRICK DOUGLAS, DOUGLAS PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ **Community Buy-in:** Clockwise from top left, Town Center and Mid-City Strolls broaden participation and allow participants to physically engage with the proposed improvements through temporary streetscape installations.



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▲ **Chamblee Stroll:** CPL’s Urban Design and Planning Group designed and implemented a public outreach process that transformed into a community event.



▲ **Chamblee Broad Street:** A planview of conceptual Chamblee streetscape improvements by CPL.



▲ **Plaza Improvements:** Rendering depicts various proposed elements of placemaking such as roundabouts, pedestrian improvements, and pocket parks.