

BEYOND CONFLICT: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WITH THE HOMELESS — A NEW DESIGN FOR PEACHTREE-PINE

INVITED
PAPERS &
PRESENTATIONS

Beyond
Conflict:
Participatory
Design with the
Homeless — A
New Design for
Peachtree-Pine

Like most cities in America, Atlanta has a substantial number of homeless citizens. The Task Force for the Homeless has been working for years to support those needing shelter in Atlanta and continues to come up with innovative ways to do so. Some of their most innovative work has taken place at its Peachtree-Pine complex, not far from the EDRA37 hotel. Led by the shelter's in-house architect — an architectural graduate from Georgia Tech who lives in the shelter and works with its residents in designing improvements to their environment — this session provides a close look at some of the changes in-progress and others still to come.

Organizer: Perry, Luke (Task Force for the Homeless, Atlanta, GA)
Presenters: Dyke, Jules (Development Coordinator, Task Force for the Homeless); Harris, Troy (IT Systems Coordinator and Resident, Task Force for the Homeless); Houser, Hank (Houser Walker Architecture); Ball, Jennifer (Central Atlanta Progress); Prophitt, David (Community Resident & State Relay for Life Manager, American Cancer Society) {Invited Symposium}

Walking around downtown Atlanta, it is clear that there are exciting things happening. Buildings are popping up offering new options in urban dwelling. New residents are beginning to fill the streets and sup-

port retail opportunities in previously blighted areas. New tourist venues are bringing even more visitors to this city. Meanwhile, homelessness has continued to increase, causing significant conflict. And for many people, the Peachtree-Pine building represents a perfect example of how poor and homeless people cannot coexist right next to these new residents and tourists. But to many others, Peachtree-Pine offers a great hope to ensure that poor and homeless people are not excluded from the city's exciting resurgence.

Peachtree-Pine is a historic 95,000 square-foot building located in downtown on Atlanta's most famous corridor: Peachtree Street. Owned and operated by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, the building currently provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, and services to hundreds of people everyday. One would not expect to see the largest homeless shelter in the South just blocks from the tallest office building in the South. But, that is exactly what makes this project so exciting. We believe in a community, anchored by the building, that will allow people with and without homes to live, work, and play together successfully.

The Peachtree-Pine Design Project has been set up to turn the vision of Peachtree-Pine into a reality. This vision will continue to include basic services, shelter, and transitional housing. But, it includes retail options on Peachtree Street (art gallery, coffee shop, and restaurant) that will provide job training and employment opportunities as well as a destination for neighborhood residents. Additionally, this vision includes permanent housing, a training center for volunteers and a 25,000 square foot roof garden for the residents and community.

The project itself is about inclusion and has brought many people together to discuss dreams, challenges, realities, opportunities, but most importantly, solutions to move beyond conflict. Presenters include:

- Hank Houser, Principal of Houser Walker Architecture presenting some of the opportunities explored for applying green design strategies to reduce operational costs and improve the air quality for the Task Force's visitors.
- Jennifer Ball, Senior Project Manager at Central Atlanta Progress discusses the importance of a down-

town building that looks good and has a healthy mix of activities in and around it.

- Shermarke Howard, Graduate Business student at Georgia State University highlights the role that students have played in developing business plans and strategies for the Task Force.
- David Prophitt, a neighborhood resident discusses the challenges that face this particular neighborhood and how a re-invisioned Peachtree-Pine could benefit the community.
- Willie Hightower, Security staff member and former resident at Peachtree-Pine discusses the involvement of those who are homeless in the process as well how the new vision will benefit them in the future.

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