LEVERAGING AFFORDABLE HOUSING DOLLARS IN ATHENS, GA

MAYOR KELLY GIRTZ
• Population 130,000 Athens has a poverty rate of over 30%, but unemployment at under 3.5% - - our poor are overwhelmingly working poor

• On the other end of the wage continuum, we have a disproportionately high number of PhD recipients

• Many University of Georgia students from families of means are able to afford rents much greater than local service sector employees
• TWO LARGE AREAS NEAR DOWNTOWN WERE “URBAN RENEWAL” SITES IN THE 1950S AND 1960S, BUT THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING INTRODUCED THERE WAS A MIX OF LOW-RISE PUBLIC HOUSING AND PROJECT-BASED SECTION 8 DEVELOPMENTS

• PARTICULARLY THE SECTION 8 DEVELOPMENTS HAVE GROWN HAGGARD OVER THE YEARS, AND ARE POORLY MANAGED FOR THE HEALTH OF RESIDENTS
ONE (OF MANY) SOLUTIONS...

• TO INTRODUCE LOCAL DOLLARS INTO THE MIX, AND ATTRACT PARTNERS, IN 2019 VOTERS, APPROVED $44.5M OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSE SALES TAX TO BE DIRECTED TO OWNERSHIP OR INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

• $39M OF THIS WILL REVITALIZE A 20+ ACRE SECTION OF DOWNTOWN AND ATTRACT OVER $200M IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT
THE RESULT

- An area developed in the late 1960s that currently serves as home to 500 residents will be redeveloped to accommodate over 1500.

- In addition to retaining at least as many fully affordable units as at present, we will introduce modestly subsidized units for working class residents, along with market rate units.