

## MEDIA ADVISORY

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# SMDO23

## South Metro Development Outlook

### South Metro Development Outlook focuses on high level strategies to transform the Southern Region

*Over 700 attendees gathered to network and receive insight from the regions' leading policymakers, industry experts, and corporate executives.*

**ATLANTA, GA** (March 9, 2023) – On Wednesday, March 8, 2023, The Collaborative Firm hosted the 21<sup>st</sup> South Metro Development Outlook (SMDO) Conference at the Georgia International Convention Center. The annual summit presented by Amazon attracted over 700 attendees with a vested interest to receive integral insight from the Southern Regions' leading elected officials, government leaders, and corporate executives. This year featured speakers included City of Atlanta **Mayor Andre Dickens**; **Collie Greenwood**, General Manager & CEO of MARTA; and **Balram “B” Bheodari**, General Manager of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and many others.

“I am very pleased with the feedback our firm received regarding SMDO2023. It was projected to be as successful and informative as our past two decades, and we delivered with a record number in attendance,” said Michael Hightower, Managing Partner of The Collaborative Firm and host of the South Metro Development Outlook. “Our powerhouse line up of speakers which included subject matter experts, professionals, and community leaders offered in-depth as well as candid discussions and strategies regarding the transformation of South Metro Atlanta and contributed to the success of this year’s conference.”

Program highlights from “Transforming the Future” included **Economic Forecast & Regional Growth**; **Exploring Georgia’s Political Landscape Today**; **Impact of Innovative and Emerging Technology**; **MARTA On the Move in South Metro**; among others.

In addition to examining the current economic trajectory, SMDO2023 recognized individuals and businesses who have left an indelible impact on the industry. This year’s honorees included: **Amazon**, Presenting Sponsor Award; **City of Stockbridge Amphitheater**, Public Impact Award; **Myrna White**, Assistant General Manager, Office of Public & International Affairs, at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Legacy Award recipient; **Chris Pumphrey**, President of Elevate Douglas Economic Partnership, Economic Development Award recipient; **Eldrin Bell**, former Clayton County Chairman, Public Service Award recipient; **Joy B. Day**, former Mayor City of Jonesboro; and **Cynthia Jenkins**, CEO of Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity, Leadership Award recipient.

Additional key sponsors include ATL Airport CID, HNTB, and The Collaborative Firm.

**Speakers List:**

**Mayor Andre Dickens**, City of Atlanta

**Teretta Rodgers**, Head of Community Affairs, Atlanta Region

**Tharon Johnson**, Founder & CEO, Paramount Consulting Group

**Phil Kent**, CEO InsiderAdvantage Georgia/James Magazine

**Dr. Roger Tutterow**, Director of Econometric Center, Kennesaw State University

**Jeff Turner**, Chairman, Clayton County Board of Commissioners

**Collie Greenwood**, CEO & General Manager, MARTA

**Darius Broughton**, Vice President, HNTB

**Keith Parker**, President & CEO, Goodwill of North Georgia

**Glenn Halliday**, Electric Transportation Program Manager, Georgia Power

**Dr. Georj Lewis**, President, Clayton State University

**T. Dallas Smith**, Founder & CEO, T. Dallas Smith & Company

**Veronica Maldonado-Torres**, President & CEO, Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

**Anna Roach**, Executive Director, Atlanta Regional Commission

**Mayor Angelyne Butler**, City of Forest Park

**Valencia Williamson**, President & CEO, Clayton County Chamber of Commerce and MARTA Board Member

**Ricky Clark**, City Manager, City of Jonesboro

**Dr. Victoria Seals**, President Atlanta Technical College

**Shannon James**, President & CEO, Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance

**Doug Shipman**, President Atlanta City Council

**Nathaniel Smith**, Founder & Chief Equity Officer, Partnership for Southern Equity

**Darryl Hicks**, Board Chairman, Fayette County Development Authority

**Sarah-Elizabeth Langford**, Executive Director, Development Authority Fulton County

**Larry Vincent**, Executive Director, Invest Clayton

**Chris Pumphrey**, President of Elevate Douglas Economic Partnership,

For more than two decades, The Collaborative Firm (TCF) the largest minority-owned planning firm in the Southeastern United States founded by Michael Hightower, has hosted SMDO to convened some of the Southern Region's most reputable subject matter experts, civic leaders, and policy professionals to provide economic development forecasts, education, and innovative initiatives on a variety of topics.

For additional conference details visit [smdoconference.com](http://smdoconference.com).

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