Making a great place to walk

By Sally Hicks

Walking is a great way to connect with others, make new friends and make the world a better place, but it’s also good for business and for our health. Given that, Jason Self, the Atlanta region director of the Atlanta Regional Commission, told the audience at today’s event that Atlanta is on the right track towards creating a more walkable urban environment.

Twenty years ago, people who walked were on the region’s radar screen. Now, they are regulars for people using crosswalks. The city of Atlanta has a plan to make it safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.

Many challenges remain, but a step back and look at the bigger picture, Self said. It’s clear that this is the right direction.

Many leaders are working hard to make Atlanta a more walkable city, but the vision is often not shared by the public.

Sally Hicks is president and CEO of PARC, a research group advocating for pedestrian-friendly development.

Accessibility not equal for all Atlantans

By Ariana Gorman

Accessibility is not equal for all Atlantans. People who are blind or have low vision often use wheelchairs, but wheelchair access is not always easy. In some cases, it can be difficult to navigate the streets and sidewalks.

Ariana Gorman is a graduate student in the Georgia Tech’s School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Her research and analysis of Atlanta’s transporation infrastructure and sustainable transportation practices.

The new streetcar lines in downtown Atlanta’s West End neighborhood do a good job connecting the community to the historic King-5th district downtown. However, some streets remain challenging for wheelchairs.

In the future, Gorman said that Atlanta must continue to improve its transportation network for all residents, including those with disabilities.