

# OPEN CONTAINERS

**BIG IMPACT**  
on a  
**SMALL TOWN**





# AUNDI LESLEY

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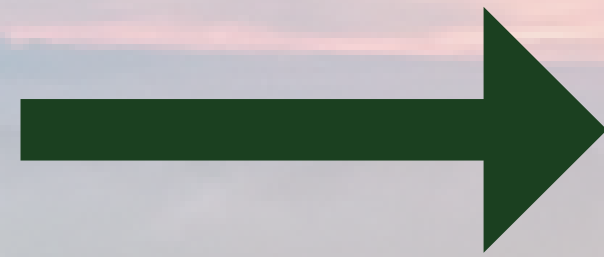
DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
CITY OF ROME



**ALESLEY@ROMEGA.US**



**BACKGROUND**



**PROCESS**



**RESULTS**

**OBJECTIVE:**

**HOW TO COMBAT EMOTIONAL AND  
CONTROVERESIAL TOPICS THROUGH  
DATA-DRIVEN INFORMATION**



# ROME, GEORGIA



AMERICA'S MAIN STREET

GEMS

CITY POPULATION: 37,000+

300+ DOWNTOWN  
BUSINESSES

228 RESIDENTIAL UNITS



# BACKGROUND



2017

# BACKGROUND



2020





THE BIBLE  
SAYS...

PUBLIC  
DRUNKENNESS

LIFE OR  
DEATH

TAKING ADVANTAGE  
OF COVID-19 TO PUSH  
OUR OWN AGENDA

VOTE YOUR  
CONVICTIONS

CRIME

ADDICTION

MORAL  
ISSUE

BOURBON  
STREET

DUI

FAMILY  
ATMOSPHERE

UNDERAGE  
DRINKING

LITTER

PUBLIC  
URINATION

VIOLENCE

UNPOLICEABLE

DO  
WHAT'S  
RIGHT

ABUSE

# "CAN'T THEY TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER?"

During our open container events, businesses saw an increase in foot traffic & revenue - some as much as **50%**



**2  
0  
2  
1**

**IT'S OUR JOB TO ADVOCATE FOR OUR STAKEHOLDERS**





# RESEARCH



# FEEDBACK



# EDUCATION





# STAKEHOLDER INPUT

YES	226
NO	9
NEUTRAL	5





# IN PERSON FEEDBACK

## (BUSINESS & PROPERTY OWNERS)

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**OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE!**

### **SOME NOTABLE FEEDBACK:**

- Likes trial but thinks 11am is too early
- Concerned about fights
- Regular increase in business could allow hiring another employee
- Concerns with litter
- Feels it would encourage BYOB and take away from sales
- Concerned with accusations of over-serving
- Concerned about ability to enforce and understaffed PD





# OTHER COMMUNITIES



**ACWORTH  
ALBANY  
BAINBRIDGE  
BRASELTON  
BRUNSWICK  
CAIRO  
CANTON  
CARROLLTON  
CARTERSVILLE  
CONYERS  
CORNELIA**

**COVINGTON  
DALTON  
DECATUR  
DORAVILLE  
DUNWOODY  
DOUGLASVILLE  
FAYETTEVILLE  
FLOWERY BRANCH  
FORSYTH  
GAINESVILLE**



**JEKYLL ISLAND  
KENNESAW  
LAWRENCEVILLE  
LOGANVILLE  
MARIETTA  
MACON  
MCDONOUGH  
MONROE  
NEWNAN  
POWDER SPRINGS  
ROSWELL**

**SMYRNA  
STATESBORO  
STOCKBRIDGE  
SUGAR HILL  
SUWANEE  
THOMASTON  
TYBEE ISLAND  
VALDOSTA  
VILLA RICA  
WASHINGTON  
WOODSTOCK**



# HONORABLE MENTIONS

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**ATLANTA BRAVES  
AVALON  
(ALPHARETTA)  
THE BATTERY  
BEACHES**

**DISNEY WORLD  
ROME BRAVES  
ROCK CITY  
SIX FLAGS  
UNIVERSAL  
ZOO ATLANTA**







# **FEEDBACK FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE**



**JAMES RIKER, CITY MANAGER, DULUTH**

**CREATED AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT  
ABOUT 5 YEARS AGO.**

**HAD AN “OPEN ZONE” WITH BYOB FOR  
NEARLY 20 YEARS PRIOR AND NEVER HAD  
AN ISSUE.**

**13 RESTAURANTS  
2 BREWERIES – OPEN CONTAINER WAS A  
DRAW FOR THEM  
1 BAR (TRUCK AND TAP)**

**THEY HAVE NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS OR PUBLIC SAFETY. IT WAS A GREAT BENEFIT DURING COVID – THE CITY EVEN ADDED ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR SEATING AND TABLES. THEY HAVE GREAT “COMMUNITY SATISFACTION” AND ARE CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING THEIR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL LIVING BY 2000 UNITS. OPEN CONTAINER HAS BEEN A GREAT TOOL FOR BRINGING PEOPLE DOWNTOWN THROUGHOUT THE WEEK AND “EXPANDING THEIR WEEKENDS”.**



## **COUNCILMEMBER JIM WATTERS, CARROLLTON**

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**THERE WAS NO PUSHBACK INITIALLY OTHER THAN FROM CHURCHES.**

**IT'S ADDED A WONDERFUL ELEMENT TO THE DOWNTOWN ATMOSPHERE.**

**THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO GIVE PEOPLE FREEDOM WITH OPEN CONTAINER AND RESTRICT THE PARAMETERS IF NECESSARY. IT'S BEEN ALMOST 10 YEARS AND THEY'VE NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEMS.**

**“LET’S GIVE PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THAT THEY CAN BEHAVE AND THEY HAVE.”**







**"IN REFERENCE TO OUR OPEN CONTAINER ORDINANCE, IN THE BEGINNING YOU COULD LEAVE THE BAR AT 2AM WITH 2 DRINKS IN PLASTIC CUPS. THIS BECAME A PROBLEM WHEN PEOPLE WOULD CONGREGATE AT THE AMP AND OTHER AREAS DOWNTOWN. THERE WERE TIMES WHEN PEOPLE WERE STILL DRINKING AT 4AM FROM THE "SAME" CUPS. THE CITY COUNCIL CHANGED THE ORDINANCE TO NO OPEN CONTAINERS AFTER MIDNIGHT. WE ISSUED WARNINGS FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS AND NOW WE ISSUE A CITATION WITH A FINE OF \$200. OTHER THAN THAT, IT HAS NOT BEEN A PROBLEM FOR US. "**

**CHIEF RICHARDS, CARROLLTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

# GEORGIA MAIN STREET

**"OVERALL, OURS HAS BEEN GREAT. NO MAJOR ISSUES WITH ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT IT DOES SEEM LIKE IT PRODUCES MORE LITTER THAT WE HAVE ADDRESSED WITH ADDITIONAL TRASH CANS AND WEEKEND PART TIME GROUNDS CREWS (WHICH LIKELY WOULD HAVE BEEN NEEDED WITH OR WITHOUT OPEN CONTAINER). OURS HAS BEEN IN PLACE SINCE 2016 AND THERE ARE NO RECORDS OF INCREASED TICKETS OR POLICE INTERACTIONS SINCE IMPLEMENTATION."**

**- BRIAN STOCKTON, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WOODSTOCK**





# GEORGIA MAIN STREET

"Open container ordinance has been a complete game changer in Dalton. It has added an element of walkability we didn't have before and we see folks exploring more and more of downtown. We even used it as a marketing opportunity and purchased clear 16oz cups with our logo on them and restaurants use those for the to-go booze!"

- Audrey Batts, Program Coordinator, Downtown Dalton

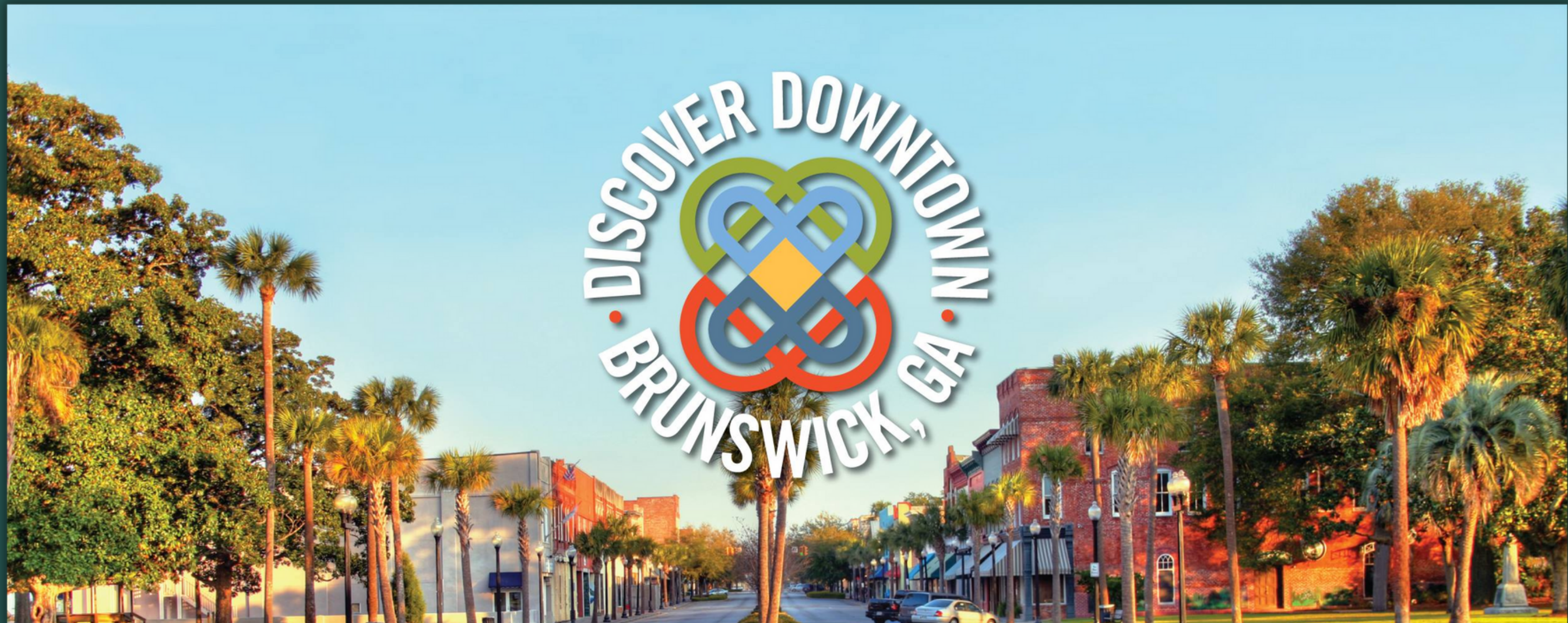




# GEORGIA MAIN STREET

**"Over the 10 years we've had it, open container has helped further the revitalization of downtown Brunswick more than most other incentives and/or developments. Bringing people outside, even with a beer in hand, goes far to indicate that the downtown area is safe and that something is going on worth stopping for."**

**- Matthew Hill, DDA Executive Director, Brunswick**





## Doraville Mayor Joseph Geierman

If your council is interested in making a change, I do think the business assistance aspect is a powerful one. We're allowing restaurants to expand into parking lots and they can serve alcohol there. We've also been allowing them to sell closed-container alcohol with meals. We have not noticed any change in police issues since starting this.





Monroe Mayor, John Howard

I can't give you one single ordinance change that has had a more positive benefit to our downtown vibe. When people can exercise their freedoms in Monroe, they tend to more fully support our businesses while more fully enjoying themselves. **As a matter of fact, our downtown sales during the first quarter of the year beat our local WalMart.** As Mayors and City Council Members, it is incumbent upon all of us to have a healthy downtown, local business community. We will do everything in our power, to help our restaurants succeed, which, in turn, will help their neighboring businesses flourish.

FINALLY, due to our relaxing of open containers within our entertainment district, we have not had one negative issue with law enforcement.





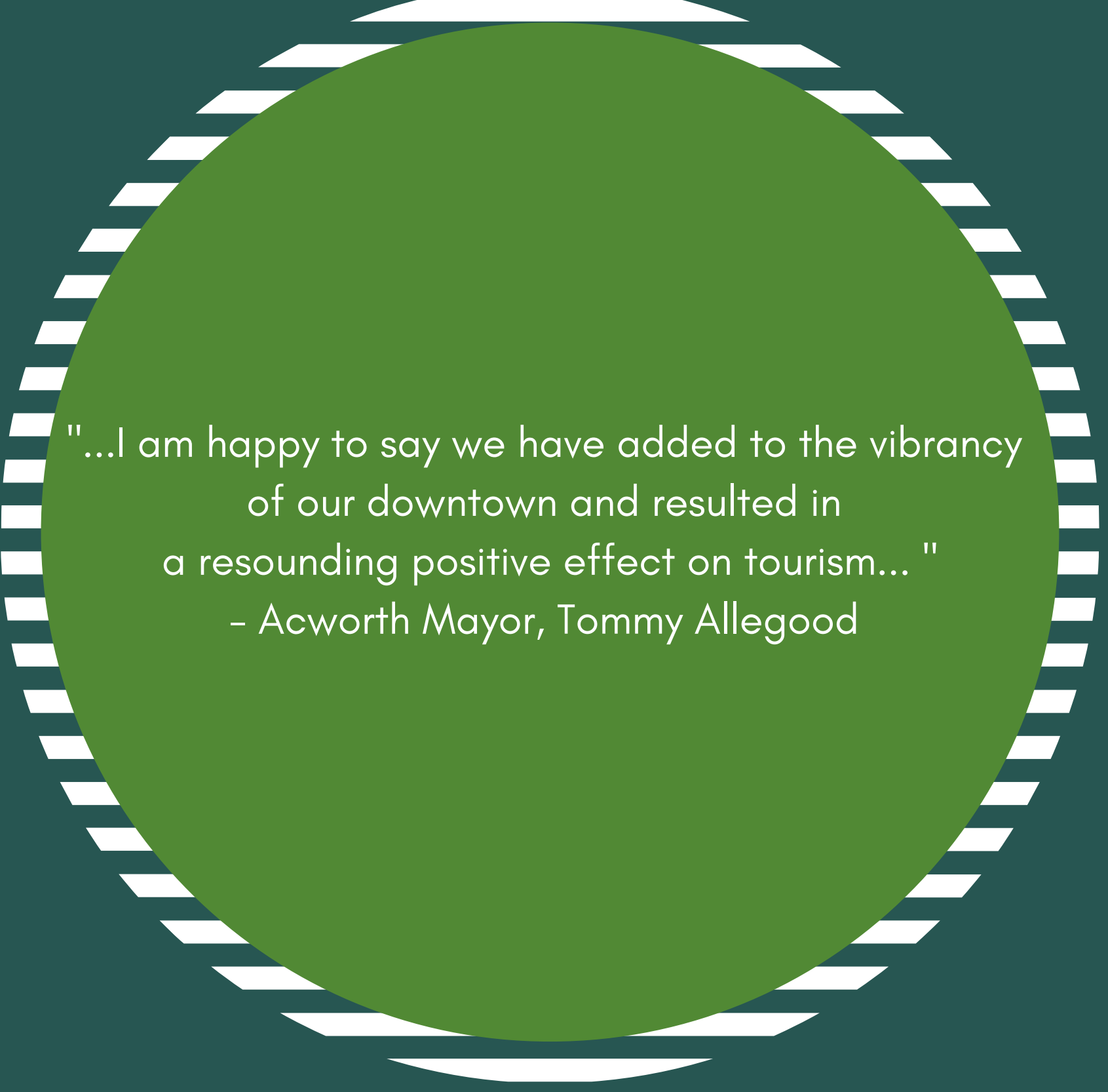


## Loganville Mayor Rey Martinez


Absolutely, I recommend it. We have passed several measures in our Downtown Overlay District. To ease restriction on alcohol sales. Currently, we passed restaurants sales from 25% alcohol 75% food sales to 75% alcohol 25% food sales. We have also allowed open containers in our Overlay District with plastic cups.

Restaurants are excited about the pro business and pro restaurant approach we have taken. Our law enforcement have had no problems. At time where many restaurants are struggling. We elected officials must make it easier not harder for them to stay viable.





"...I am happy to say we have added to the vibrancy of our downtown and resulted in a resounding positive effect on tourism... "  
- Acworth Mayor, Tommy Allegood



"...In our first-year pilot program, we measured violations in the district, increases in patrol hours and routine maintenance and trash collection/cleaning in the district. ALL metrics came back positive, and violations actually were cut in half from 14 to 7 alcohol violations and none were related to open carry issues..."  
- Canton Mayor, Bill Grant



# ADDRESSING CONCERNS



**90 Day Trial**

**Thu - Sat**

**11A - 11P**



# ADDRESSING CONCERNS



"Dining District"

Restaurant trainings

Informational cards

Social media campaigns

Downtown ambassadors



# ADDRESSING CONCERNS

**"Do I have to allow people  
to bring their drinks into  
my store?"**





# FAQ's



# Q: What areas are open containers allowed?

A: Sidewalks, green spaces, crosswalks, bridges. NOT ALLOWED are parking lots and decks.



# FAQ's

21+

Q: Can people bring their own beverages from home or keep a stash in their trunk?

A: No



Q: Can minors partake in open container?

A: No





# Big Picture

## Comprehensive Plan Young Professionals Workforce Growth



"This issue is no longer about walking down Broad St. with a cup in hand, but about your capacity as a leader to move Rome forward."





2017  
Vote 8:1 NO

2020  
Vote 6:3 NO

Trial Period  
Final Vote 5:4





# Trial Results



Retailer A - 28% increase  
for August to LY

Retailer B - 95% increase  
for August to LY



# Trial Results

Restaurant A - 23% increase for August 2019

Restaurant B - 7% increase (food sales) and  
26% increase (alcohol sales) for August 2019

Restaurant C - 10% increase to previous  
months





# Other Feedback

- Ball cups are too large for wine pours – would prefer to use plastic branded cups
- Retailer – nothing but positive remarks
- Retailer – has allowed customers to sip and shop and have gotten great feedback. Believes it could be helpful in encouraging a little more spending
- Restaurant – does not believe it has made much of a difference in their business





# Public Safety

## Busting the myth

Since we relaxed our alcohol ordinance, alcohol-related arrests have gone down from 2.25/month to 1.25/month



Open Containers  
=  
Positive Economic  
Impact









# QUESTIONS?

✉ **ALESLEY@ROMEGA.US**

