

ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE ECONOMY

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF ATLANTA

PREPARED BY JON STOVER & ASSOCIATES
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PURPOSE POSSIBLE

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ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE ECONOMY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nightlife is a core part of the identity and brand of Atlanta. The city's nightlife scene has been building and developing for over a century in the city and continues to be vital today.

Nightlife isn't just about entertainment and socializing but plays a substantial role in the local economy. Atlanta's nightlife industry generates nearly **\$5.1 billion** of revenue annually, directly supporting **41,000 jobs**.

The industry's indirect and induced impacts throughout the local economy cumulatively generate a total economic impact of nearly **\$8.5 billion** annually.

While conditions widely vary from business to business – Atlanta's nightlife industry as a whole is still facing significant challenges following the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic disruptions. Many nightlife establishments are facing rising expenses that threaten the financial viability of their business models, and half of the city's nightlife patrons are going out less than they were a year ago. This decline in nightlife visitation is both a result of macroeconomic forces such as inflation and shifts in consumer spending patterns, as well as local factors such as safety concerns, limited and expensive late-night transportation options, and consumer demand for new nightlife experiences in the city. The local nightlife workforce are also impacted by limited late-night transportation and safety concerns, while navigating additional personal and financial complexities that arise when working late into the night.

With the challenges that nightlife businesses, workers, and customers are facing, there's an opportunity for the City to reimagine its role in supporting the local nightlife industry.

The recently formed Nightlife Division is positioned to play a leading role in efforts to elevate Atlanta's nightlife and continue the industry's legacy for years to come.

The strategic recommendation framework shared in this report provides a guiding roadmap for the City of Atlanta – stemming from insights of over 550 voices engaged during this study, analytical findings, and models of success from cities across the country.





INTRODUCTION

A robust and active nightlife offers cities more than simply dining and drinking opportunities for patrons. It can play a significant role in the quality of life for residents, create memorable experiences for visitors, support jobs at a wide range of skill levels, and create opportunities for budding entrepreneurs. Nightlife scenes directly contribute to a city's overall brand identity and perception of place, signifying investment and activity across all times of the day, night, and week. In addition, nightlife activity typically generates substantial contributions to local economies, a facet often overlooked by many economic studies and initiatives.

THE CITY OF ATLANTA JOINS A SMALL BUT GROWING NUMBER OF CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY TAKING A REIMAGINED LOOK AT WHAT NIGHTLIFE MEANS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND HOW TO BEST MEET THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRY.

As the city's first comprehensive nightlife study, this report highlights the value and contribution of Atlanta's nightlife economy and frames strategic opportunities for the city and industry partners to continue bolstering Atlanta's expanding and legacy nightlife. This report provides insights into the economic impact of Atlanta's nightlife industries, includes quantitative and qualitative findings of the needs and challenges of the various businesses that define Atlanta's nightlife, and celebrates the role of nightlife in the city.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This Atlanta Nightlife Economy Impact Study provides a quantitative analysis of the current state of the city's nightlife economy, trends across nightlife-related industry sectors, and the economic impact of the industry and its contribution to the local economy. The study roadmaps recommendations for the City of Atlanta and its partners to continue to support and strengthen industry businesses with both short-term and long-term solutions. Additionally, this study celebrates what makes Atlanta's nightlife unique while recognizing how local conditions vary from elsewhere across the country. This study provides baseline data, insights, and strategic direction for the newly formed Mayor's Nightlife Division to continue supporting the city's culture and economy.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Atlanta Mayor's Office of Film, Entertainment, and Nightlife (AMOFEN) supports the city's expanding entertainment and nightlife industry and safeguards the interests of residents and businesses affected by film, entertainment, and nightlife. In 2022, the Mayor's Nightlife Division was created to serve as an intermediary between nightlife establishments, residents, and the City of Atlanta government. Since its formation, this office has been expanded into AMOFEN.

Jon Stover & Associates (JS&A) is an Economic Development Consulting firm focused on helping to create and support great places and communities by strengthening local economies. JS&A specializes in economic and fiscal impact analysis and economic development strategy, with a particular expertise in measuring and communicating the impact of the nightlife economy for cities across the country.

Purpose Possible is a stakeholder engagement and strategic communications firm based in Atlanta, Georgia. The firm specializes in supporting public agencies and mission-driven organizations in assessing community and stakeholder needs. For this study, Purpose Possible led engagement efforts with local nightlife industry stakeholders, organizations, business owners, workforce, and broader consumer base.

Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups. This study gathered stakeholder input through community comprehensive plan meetings, one-on-one interviews, and focus group meetings. The purpose of these focus groups was to facilitate a thorough discussion of the unique needs and conditions of the nightlife economy, and the role varying agencies play in facilitating a vibrant, healthy nighttime ecosystem.



550+
Stakeholders Engaged
During This Study

This study acknowledges the efforts of business owners, industry workers, community residents, and leadership from the City of Atlanta and regional partner organizations for participation in interviews, surveys, and focus groups informing the study throughout the engagement. These voices provided insights into the needs and challenges of businesses, workers, and nightlife patrons, and opportunities for strategic recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

This study primarily focuses on the conditions, needs, and economic impact of three industries defined as comprising the "core Atlanta nightlife economy": (a) restaurants; (b) bars, lounges; and clubs; and (c) performing Arts Promoters, Venues, and Production (see p. 10 for additional detail on industry definitions and associated NAICS codes). This study also features some additional data and qualitative insights on additional "ancillary nightlife industries" that also play an important role in Atlanta's late-night ecosystem but are typically less reliant on late-night customer traffic. This set of industries includes barbershops/salons, recording studios, tattoo parlors, film production studios, and other entertainment and recreation industries.

ECONOMIC & FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

This analysis used an impact modeling software called IMPLAN, which leverages data and local economic multipliers to calculate the indirect and induced economic impact and direct fiscal contribution of Atlanta's nightlife economy. These multipliers measure how business activity within nightlife industries generates ripple effects throughout the local economy, generating jobs, wages, and industry revenue in a wide range of additional industries. This study assesses both the economic impacts of both the core nightlife industries and ancillary nightlife industries.

Importantly, economic and fiscal figures and industry data featured in this report are meant to serve as a snapshot of the overall scale of Atlanta's nightlife economy. Actual business count and employment data will change over time, as businesses continually open and close throughout the city. Impact figures are not predictive of future impact and are based on current economic and supply-chain behavior.

DATA SOURCES

Third-Party Economic Data. The impact analysis is based on employment and business data from ESRI Business Analyst and DataAxle, a leading economic data provider. The analysis also uses employment estimates and local economic data from IMPLAN.

Nightlife Owner and Operator Survey. As part of this study, 232 electronic surveys were completed by nightlife business owners and operators, within the three core nightlife industries and ancillary industries. The survey captured how economic activity varies by industry, time of day, and day of the week, and quantified the needs and concerns of these business sectors. The survey was administered electronically by AMOFEN, Purpose Possible, and other industry partners, and each respondent represented a different nightlife establishment.

Nightlife Consumer Survey. 294 surveys were completed by nightlife consumers, including City of Atlanta residents, residents from surrounding counties in the Atlanta metro area, and non-local visitors. The survey captured information regarding consumer behavior, needs, challenges, and perceptions of Atlanta's nightlife. The survey assessed consumer transportation methods, spending patterns, changes in nightlife visitation frequency, and business owners and operators, within the three core nightlife industries and ancillary industries. The survey captured how economic activity varies by industry, time of day, and day of the week, and quantified the needs and concerns of these business sectors. The survey was administered electronically by AMOFEN, Purpose Possible, and other industry partners, and each respondent represented a different nightlife establishment.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Nightlife Economy. The nightlife economy reflects the economic activity related to the operations, employment, and sales of Atlanta’s nightlife industries that have a significant activity outside the traditional daytime economy of 9am to 5pm and are typically characterized as part of the city’s nightlife scene.

Nightlife Industries. Nightlife industries refer to industries that typically rely on evening and late-night customer traffic with a close association to the greater nightlife ecosystem of Atlanta. For the purpose of this study, the core nightlife industries include restaurants; bars and nightclubs; and performing arts promoters, venues, and production. In addition to these core industries, ancillary industries, such as barber shops, beauty salons, bowling alleys, tattoo parlors, sports and recreation, ride-share services, and security services, play a notable role in Atlanta’s late-night economy and culture.

Category	Sub-Category	NAICS Code(s)
Restaurants	Full-Service Restaurants	722511
	Limited-Service Restaurants	722513-15
	Food Trucks (Mobile Food Services)	722330
Bars/Nightclubs	Bars (includes strip clubs)	72241001
	Cocktail Lounges	72241003
	Comedy Clubs	72241004
	Night Clubs	72241006
	Pubs	72241008
	Karaoke Clubs	72241009
Performing Arts Promoters, Venues, & Production	Performance Venues (Concert Halls, Arenas, Etc.)	711310
	Performing Arts Companies (Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters)	71111007
	Independent Artists, Promoters, and Performers	711510
	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events w/o Facilities	711320
	Movie Theaters	51213101

Nightlife Businesses. This study defines nightlife businesses as individual establishments in the overall nightlife industry that are registered entities with reported NAICS codes. NAICS, the North American Industry Classification System, is the federal standard for classifying individual business establishments. This study does not account for businesses or establishments that are not operating as registered businesses, a standard limitation in this typology of impact study. Furthermore, while businesses may be registered with multiple NAICS codes, this study uses only one NAICS code per business, assigned by the U.S. Census Bureau based on the primary source of business revenue, preventing the double-counting of businesses that may span industries.



GENERAL GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ancillary Nightlife Industries. Local industries that are not a part of the core nightlife economy and typically less reliant on late-night customer traffic but nonetheless play a notable role in the Atlanta nightlife ecosystem. These include sound recording studios, barber shops, salons, film production studios, tattoo parlors, sports and recreation, and amusement parks.

Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Film, Entertainment, and Nightlife (AMOFEN). City of Atlanta office that serves as an intermediary between nightlife businesses, city agencies, and patrons. AMOFEN champions support for continued improvement of the city’s nightlife industry.

Atlanta Police Department (APD). The police department of the City of Atlanta. APD’s Licensing and Permits Unit issues permits and licenses for alcohol sales, adult entertainment, mobile food, dance halls, and various other business types within the City.

Contribution Analysis. The gross changes in a region’s existing economy supported by a given sector or industry.

Core Nightlife Economy. The portion of Atlanta’s economy that typically relies on evening and late-night customer traffic and has a close association with the greater nightlife ecosystem of Atlanta. This includes restaurants; bars and nightclubs; and performing arts promoters, venues, and production.

Employment. The total number of full-time and part-time jobs.

Economic Impact. The attributable economic contribution to a local economy.

Direct Economic Impact. The businesses, revenue, jobs, wages, and other economic activity generated from the operations of a particular industry or industries.

Indirect Economic Impact. Indirect impact includes the supply chain of goods and services from other industries that enable activity in a given industry.

Induced Economic Impact. Induced effects are the results (i.e., spending) of increased personal income caused by the direct and indirect effects.

Fiscal Impact. The amount of tax revenue to the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia generated from economic activity, including sales tax, alcohol tax, income tax, and the issuance of licenses and permits. This study does not account for property tax in its fiscal impact.

IMPLAN. A leading economic modeling software used to calculate the economic impact of nightlife industries in the local economy. The analysis uses Fulton County-specific economic multipliers.

Metro Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA). The public transportation agency for the Atlanta region that manages the local rail system and bus system.



ABOUT ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE

Atlanta's identity and brand are deeply intertwined with nightlife, reflecting the city's rich history rooted in hospitality, musical innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Atlanta has long been the epicenter of nightlife in the South. Its supply of restaurants, bars, clubs, and performance venues helps attract visitors from around the region, and the city features a varied supply of commercial districts with distinct atmospheres and business mixes. From Midtown to Buckhead or Little Five Points (among many others), Atlanta offers nightlife goers numerous options to choose from when deciding where to go out and spend a night. The city's stature as a hub for hip-hop and R&B music is also a critical element of its nightlife scene. In the city's recording studios, artists are recording the very music often played at venues the following month, in Atlanta and around the world.

As Atlanta continues to grow and evolve, its nightlife scene is expected to continue serving as a driver of business growth, tourism, cultural activity, and social connection.

As the slogan goes, “Atlanta influences everything,” and its nightlife history is no different. From its earliest days of burlesque, go-go, exotic dancers, and a host of international superstars, to its recent history of elite nightclubs and unique music venues both large and small, Atlanta is where trends grow and thrive and where the stars come out to play.

1883

Capital City Club established, one of the oldest private social clubs in the South.

1886

Atlanta and Fulton County pass prohibition legislation leading to the creation of Coca-Cola.

1905

The Atlanta Arts Association (now known as the High Museum of Art) was founded, playing host to festivals, live performances, and more.

1911

The Imperial Hotel opens, where it hosted many lounges, restaurants, and nightclubs in its basement, most notably the Domino Lounge where acts such as Fats Domino and Little Richard performed in the 1950s, followed by more risqué dancers in the 1960s.

1933

Prohibition is repealed across America except for Georgia, which repealed in 1935. Many nearby counties, including Dekalb County, remained dry for many more years, making Atlanta a regional nightlife destination.

1938

The Top Hat Club opens (later renamed the Royal Peacock), and showcased acts such as Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, Ray Charles, Little Richard, and Marvin Gaye, and was featured in the music video for Outkast’s 1998 song, “Rosa Parks.”

1939

The Plaza Theatre opens and remains Atlanta’s longest continually run independent theater. Blind Willie McTell gets his start playing in the parking lot of the newly opened Blue Lantern on Ponce de Leon.

1960

La Carrousel opens, becoming known as Atlanta’s “Jazz Mecca” and hosted international talent such as Ramsey Lewis Trio, Dizzy Gillespie, and Aretha Franklin.

1965

The Playboy Club opens in the Dinkler Hotel, setting the scene for the introduction of many more strip clubs and risqué entertainment venues to open in the 1970s. During the same year, the Clermont Lounge opens and remains Atlanta’s oldest strip club.

1969

The shopping and entertainment district, Underground Atlanta, opens, becoming a new center of Atlanta nightlife.

1971

Atlanta Gay Pride Festival established, as one of America’s longest run pride festivals, cementing Atlanta as the “LGBT Capital of the South,” leading to the opening of gay nightclubs and drag bars.

1976

The Atlanta Film Festival begins, which now welcomes over 28,000 visitors to Atlanta annually.

1977

The Little Five Points Community Pub opens, leading to the opening of more music clubs.

1980

The Limelight opens as the epicenter of disco and was the site of frequent celebrity sightings including Andy Warhol, Michael Jackson, Burt Reynolds, and many more.

1996

Atlanta’s hosting of the Summer Olympics leads to the opening of several new nightclubs including House of Blues, Club Esso, and Club Kaya.

2001

Beginning in 2001, the State of Georgia passes a series of legislation encouraging film production in the state, leading to Atlanta becoming a hot spot for film and television production.

2001

Atlanta bans under-21 clubs, contributing to the closure of several nightclubs that catered to college students.

2018

Building off the national rise of trap music, the Trap Museum opens as a pop-up to celebrate Atlanta’s place as the epicenter of the innovative genre.

2020

The COVID-19 pandemic brings substantial disruptions to the nightlife industry.

2022

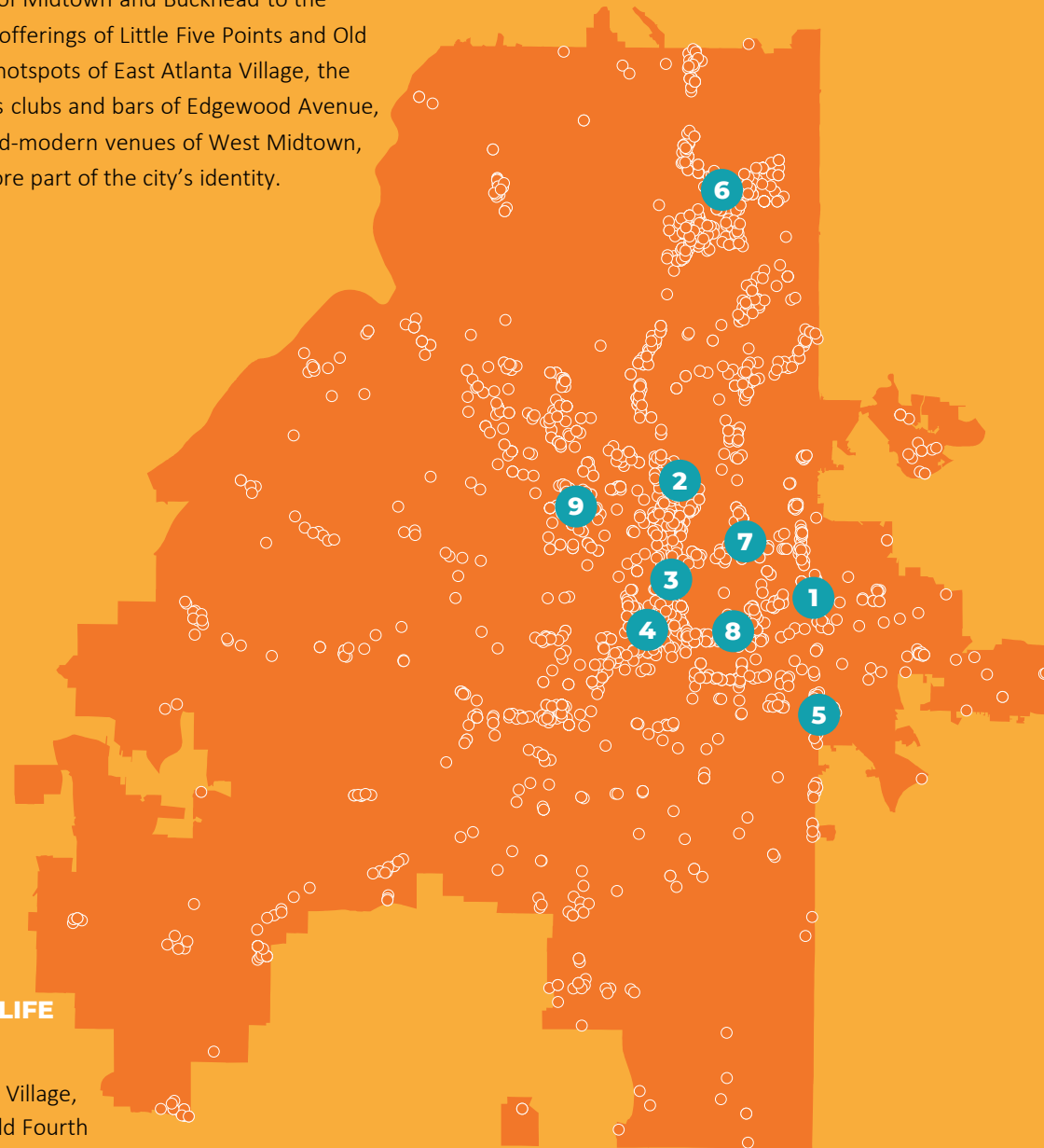
In his first State of the City address, Mayor Dickens announces the creation of the city’s first Nightlife Division housed within the Mayor’s Office of Film and Entertainment.

2026

Atlanta to host the FIFA World Cup bringing international attention to the city and visitors throughout all times of the day.

Atlanta's nightlife is diverse and vibrant, with each neighborhood offering their own distinctive identities and flavors.

From the upscale clubs of Midtown and Buckhead to the eclectic and alternative offerings of Little Five Points and Old Fourth Ward, the indie hotspots of East Atlanta Village, the gritty and unpretentious clubs and bars of Edgewood Avenue, and the industrial-turned-modern venues of West Midtown, Atlanta's nightlife is a core part of the city's identity.



POPULAR NIGHTLIFE HOTSPOTS

Midtown, East Atlanta Village, West Midtown, and Old Fourth Ward are cited as the areas where customers most often frequent.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)
Map Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Data Axel, JS&A (2024)

1

LITTLE FIVE POINTS

From its abundant and eclectic street art to its unconventional lounges, offbeat music venues, and counter-cultural pubs and clubs, the unpretentious and bohemian spirit of Little Five Points is palpable. Its celebration of unencumbered self-expression and revelry is an all-night affair, often lasting to the early morning hours.

2

MIDTOWN

Midtown is known for its thriving theater scene, cultural landmarks, and set of inclusive and welcoming LGBTQ+ bars and clubs. Characterized by a plethora of dancing, live music, performances, and trendy craft cocktails, it is one of the City's most popular and well-known nightlife destinations.

3

DOWNTOWN

Sports, major events, entertainment complexes, and historic venues are the driving forces behind Downtown's nightlife. Whether it is pre-game drinks on a rooftop deck with skyline views or a live music concert, Downtown's nightlife is diverse and accessible.

4

ATLANTA UNDERGROUND, SOUTH DOWNTOWN

What the area may be missing in flash, it makes up for in authenticity and creativity, embodying the best of Atlanta's urban renaissance. While the district is ever-evolving, its nightlife provides a healthy balance of historic character and contemporary vibes.

5

EAST ATLANTA VILLAGE

East Atlanta Village (EAV) is known for its thriving independent music scene. Not only can you catch the region's best up-and-coming bands and performers on regular rotation, but occasionally you might stumble upon a nationally known artist making an impromptu appearance in one of the many small club venues.

6

BUCKHEAD

When the high-end boutiques and designers of Buckhead close for the day, its exclusive and elegant nightlife is just beginning. The district's nightlife scene is perfect for those seeking a polished, cosmopolitan experience, with no shortage of venues to see and be seen.

7

OLD FOURTH WARD, PONCE CITY MARKET

Old Fourth Ward's nightlife blends trendy, upscale, and casual. Ponce City Market, a dining and entertainment hub, features rooftop bars with spectacular skyline views. The neighborhood's artsy, historic character mingles with the modern energy along the Eastside Trail of the Atlanta BeltLine.

8

EDGEWOOD AVENUE

Diverse, collegiate, creative, quirky, lively, and laid-back all describe Edgewood Avenue's nightlife – which features a wide selection of live music, themed bars, art, and restaurants.

9

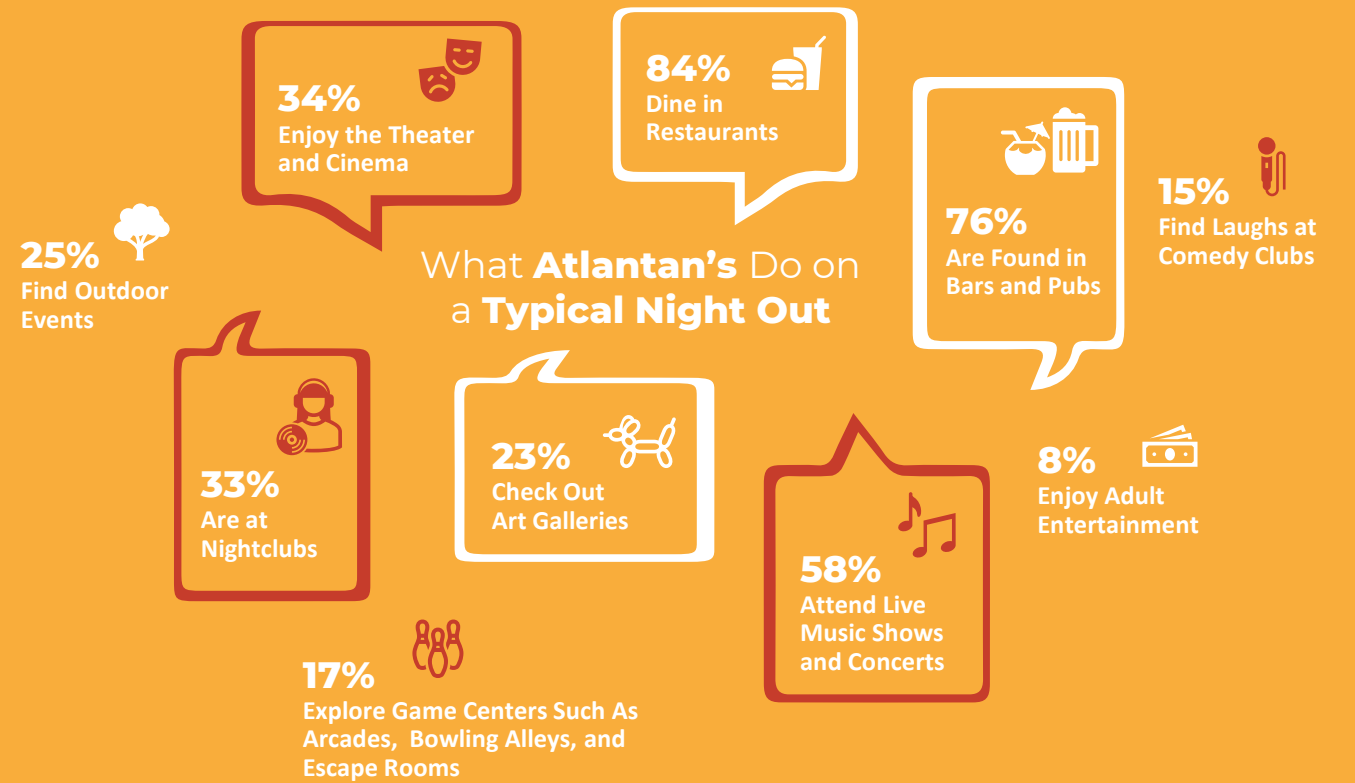
WEST MIDTOWN

Reinvention is the name of the game in West Midtown. Formerly a center of industry, it is now known for its warehouse-turned-music-venues, high-end restaurants, exclusive lounges, and overall trendy nightlife scene.

“ATLANTA’S NIGHTLIFE IS WEIRD AND QUEER... AND MORE DIVERSE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE I’VE LIVED.”

- Atlanta Resident

Between museum events, raves, sports games, and drag shows, Atlanta’s nightlife scene offers a wide variety of things to do.



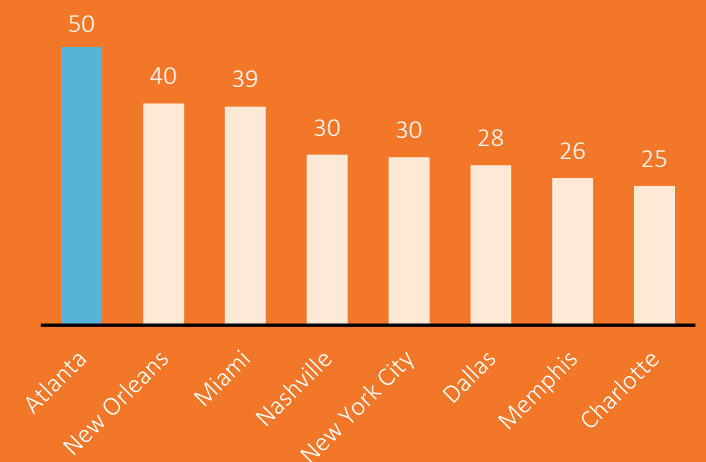
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

It is no surprise that patrons enjoy such a variety of nightlife options.

ATLANTA IS HOME TO MORE NIGHTLIFE ESTABLISHMENTS PER CAPITA COMPARED WITH PEER CITIES.

On a per capita basis, Atlanta offers more nightlife businesses than New Orleans, Miami, Nashville, and other major nightlife cities in the broader region of the country.

Nightlife Establishments per Capita



Note: Population figures reflect 2022 ACS data. New York City establishment counts derived from the city's 2017 nightlife study. Source: ESRI Community Analyst, Data Axel (2024)

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

**ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE IS A \$5.1 BILLION
INDUSTRY, DIRECTLY SUPPORTING
44,000 JOBS.**

Nightlife's direct and secondary impacts cumulatively generate \$8.5 billion in total economic output, equaling 4.4% of the citywide economy.

Atlanta's nightlife industry offers more than a good time; it directly contributes to the city's overall economy. With its mix of nightclubs, bars, music, performance venues, restaurants, and more, Atlanta's nightlife businesses bring Atlantans, regional residents, and outside tourists into their establishments as nightlife patrons. As a result, these nightlife businesses employ a wide range of workers with crosscutting skills, roles, and positions, adding diverse and less traditional employment opportunities for area residents. The city's cultural vibrancy has the power to strengthen the local economy, attract more residents, bring tourists and visitors to spend time and dollars in Atlanta, foster continued investment in Atlanta's neighborhoods, and create new opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs and legacy establishments. Understanding the economic impact of Atlanta's nightlife industry provides valuable insights for the city's decision-makers, policy leaders, and economic development stakeholder community.





Atlanta’s nightlife industry generates nearly **\$5.1 billion** of revenue annually, but the impacts don’t stop there.

From grabbing drinks at happy hour to attending a show to enjoying a dinner out, nightlife patrons pump money into the local economy. In 2024, patrons spent a collective \$5.1 billion across restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and venues.

This revenue requires businesses to make supply chain purchases, adding **\$2.6 billion** of business-to-business spending to the local economy.

When customers spend money at nightlife industry businesses, businesses in turn make purchases to other businesses, (supply chain purchases) to ensure that kitchens and bars are stocked, clubs and events are promoted, cleaning products are purchased, and spaces and equipment are maintained. These business-to-business transactions support jobs beyond those directly employed as nightlife industry staff.

When nightlife employees spend their salary and wages, economic impacts are even greater. The attributable impact of this spending amounts to over **\$770 million** of economic activity.

As businesses add more money to the economy due to their revenue, so do employees. When nightlife employees spend their paychecks earned at nightlife establishments, more money is added to the local economy, and even more jobs are supported.

CUMULATIVELY, ATLANTA’S NIGHTLIFE GENERATES A TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ALMOST \$8.5 BILLION.

The Economic Impact of Atlanta’s Nightlife Industry

The economic impact of Atlanta’s nightlife is primarily driven by the employment and operations of nightlife establishments themselves (direct impact), which collectively generate over \$5 billion in revenue and employ 41,000 workers each year. These nightlife economy jobs contribute a total of just under \$1.5 billion in salaries and wages each year.

The nightlife sector also drives economic activity in other industries throughout the local economy, both through supply chain purchases (indirect impact) and through the spending of wages by nightlife workers (induced impact). In total, the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of Atlanta’s nightlife sector account for 4.4% of the total annual economic output in the City of Atlanta and 7.6% of the city’s total employment base.

Total Economic Impact of Atlanta’s Nightlife Industry

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Total Sales
Direct Impact (Business Operations)	40,939	\$1,469,783,218	\$5,068,137,109
Restaurants & Other Dining Establishments	30,959	\$1,054,483,862	\$3,349,753,522
Bars, Lounges, & Clubs	2,914	\$134,430,185	\$277,723,836
Performing Arts Promoters, Venues, & Production	7,066	\$280,869,171	\$1,440,659,750
Indirect Impact (Supply Chain)	10,165	\$924,198,960	\$2,619,131,797
Induced Impact (Spending of Wages)	3,606	\$278,029,118	\$770,344,410
Total Economic Impact	54,710	\$2,672,011,296	\$8,457,613,316
Share of City of Atlanta Economy	7.6%	3.5%	4.4%

Note: The “Total Sales” column reflects “Industry Output,” which is the value of production by the nightlife economy in a calendar year. Specifically, this figure describes annual revenues plus net inventory change. Employment figures represent full-time and part-time jobs. Labor income values do not add up to sum due to rounding.

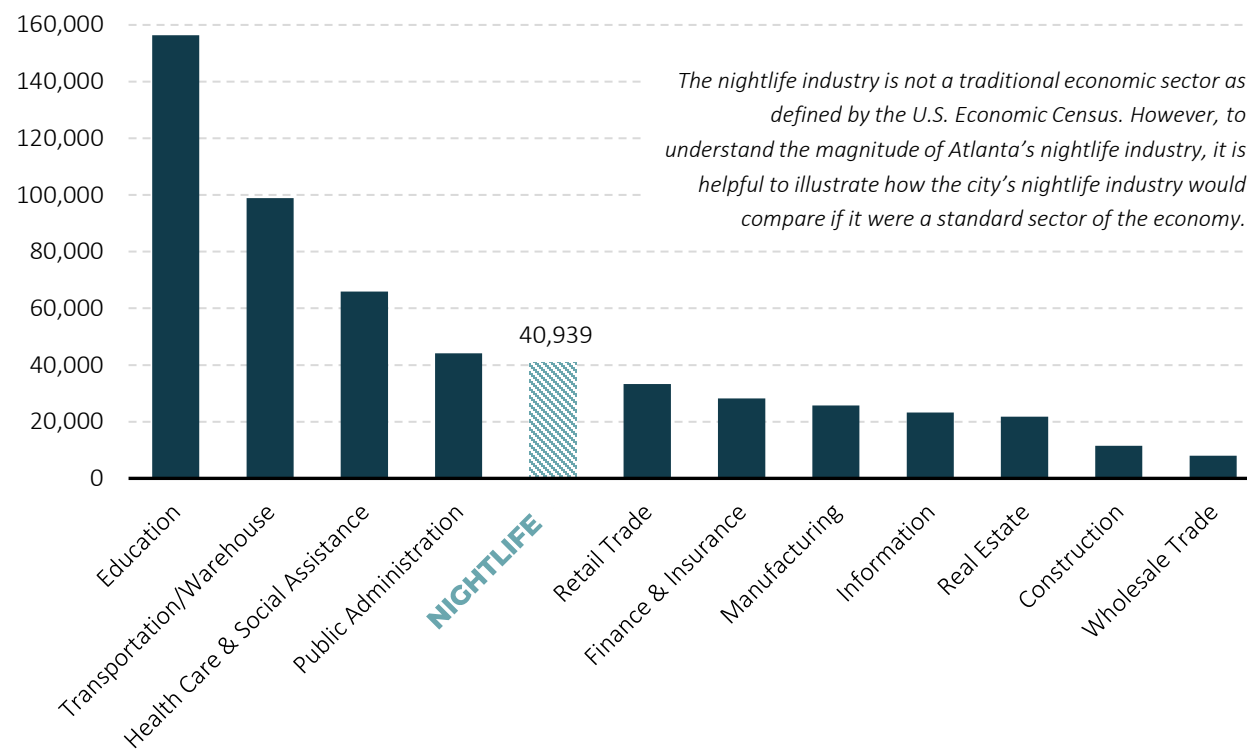
Source: IMPLAN based on Nightlife Industry Data, ESRI (2024)

ATLANTA’S CORE NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY SUPPORTS 4% OF THE CITY’S ECONOMY AND ALMOST 8% OF THE JOBS IN ATLANTA.

WHEN COMPARED AS A SINGULAR SECTOR, ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY IS THE FIFTH LARGEST EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IN THE CITY.

The nightlife industry supports more jobs than several other notable local sectors of the economy, including construction, retail, finance, and manufacturing.

Annual Employment by Sector in Atlanta



Note: The nightlife industry is not a traditional economic sector as defined by the U.S. Economic Census. Inclusion of nightlife employment in chart above intended to illustrate how employment in core nightlife industries compares with major sectors in local economy. Nightlife employment is technically distributed across various sectors in US Economic Census and other economic databases. Nightlife employment figure represents only direct employment of core nightlife industries. Employment figures represent full-time and part-time jobs.
Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2024), JS&A



ONE OUT OF EVERY 16 JOBS IN ATLANTA ARE WITHIN THE CITY'S CORE NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRIES.



ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE DIRECTLY GENERATES \$67 MILLION OF ANNUAL TAX REVENUE TO THE CITY OF ATLANTA GENERAL FUND.

This fiscal impact directly influences the financial health of Atlanta, adding monetary capacity to the city and continuing to support a higher quality of life for Atlantans.

The Fiscal Impact of Atlanta's Nightlife Industry

Sales at Atlanta's nightlife establishments generate approximately \$20 million in sales tax revenue to the City annually, 15% of total Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) revenue. Property value and associated property tax revenue driven from nightlife establishment operations approximately generate an additional \$30 million to the City. The remaining \$17 million of attributable fiscal revenue is generated through various licensing and registration fees, including business registration fees, business license taxes, and liquor licensing fees. Atlanta's nightlife economy also generates approximately \$239 million in tax revenue for the State of Georgia, largely driven by \$203 million of sales tax revenue.

Direct Fiscal Impact of Atlanta's Nightlife Economy

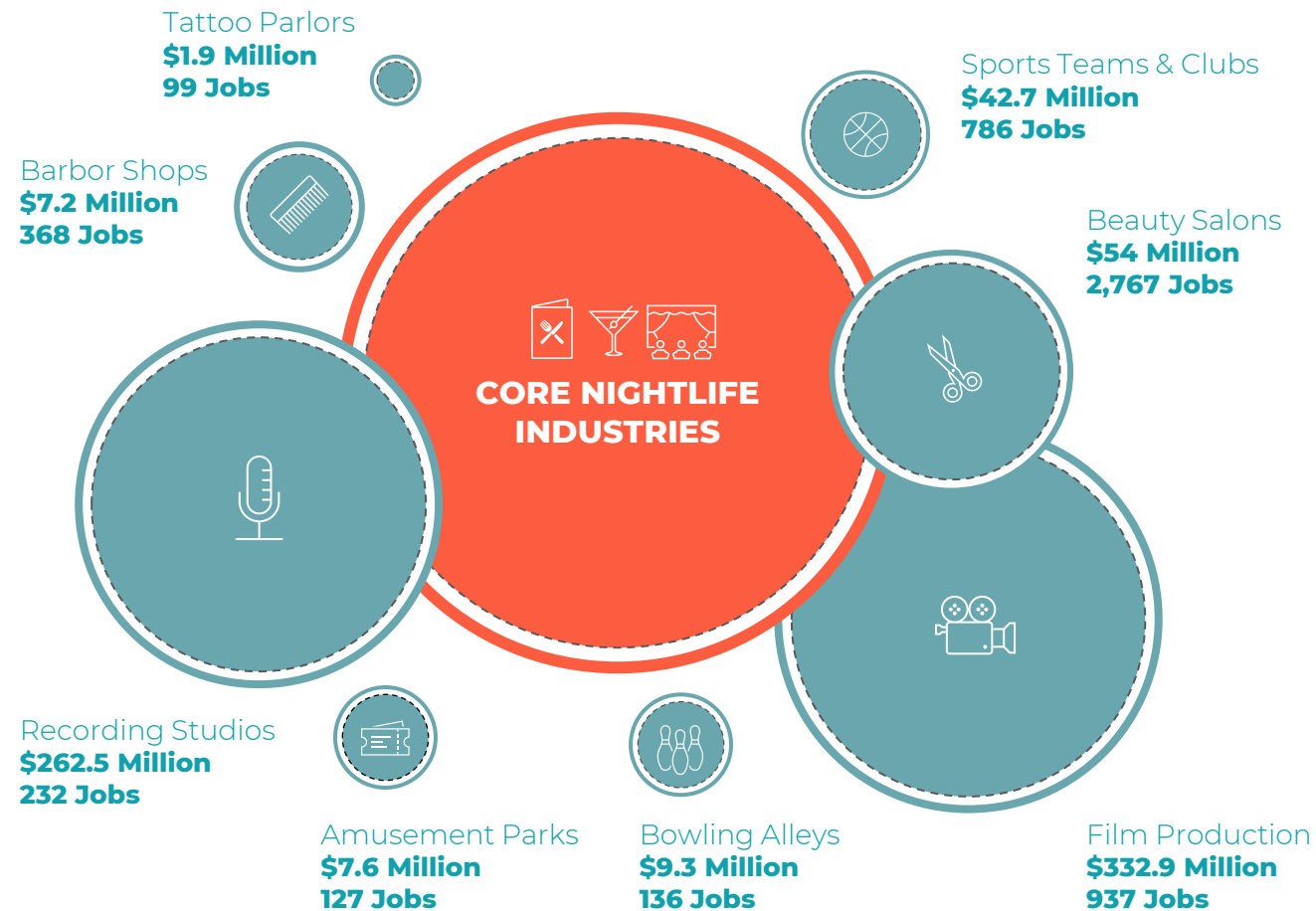
Revenue Source	State of Georgia	City of Atlanta General Fund
Sales & Use Tax	\$202,725,484	\$20,411,263
Personal Income Tax	\$21,448,987	\$0
Corporate Profit Tax	\$10,315,258	\$0
Property Tax	\$0	\$29,706,331
Misc. Taxes & Fees	\$4,140,372	\$5,585,903
Business License Tax	\$0	\$1,146,075
Business Registration Fees	\$0	\$9,705,473
Liquor License Fees	\$0	\$182,200
Total Fiscal Revenue	\$238,630,102	\$66,737,245

Figures represent direct fiscal impact figures only. Indirect and induced impact figures not included in analysis. Sales & Use Tax figures for City of Atlanta represent Local Option Sales Tax revenue, using 1% tax rate and 40.27% assumed share of revenue allocated toward City of Atlanta General Fund. City share based on FY2023 rate. Future allocation rates and resulting tax revenues will vary. Nightlife's share of annual LOST revenue based on FY2024 LOST revenue of \$137,528,239. Liquor License fee estimates calculated using City-provided data detailing numbers of establishments with active liquor licenses. Estimates assume establishments hold "Retail Dealer/Package Store" licenses, which allows for all three types of alcohol to be served (liquor, beer, wine). Actual liquor license fee revenue will vary based on variances in liquor license types. Miscellaneous taxes and fees include commercial motor vehicle licenses, personal motor vehicle licenses, severance taxes, special assessments, and other local taxes on production and imports. Sum of figures may not equal total figures due to rounding.

Source: IMPLAN, JS&A

IN ADDITION TO THE CITY'S CORE NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRIES, ANCILLARY INDUSTRIES SHAPE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE NIGHTLIFE ECOSYSTEM OF ATLANTA.

These ancillary industries intersect with the core nightlife industry, generating additional revenue and supporting more jobs in the city.



Note: Figures represent direct impact figures for each industry. Employment figures represent full-time and part-time jobs. Revenue figures represent direct economic output (total sales).
Source: ESRI Business Analyst (2024), Data Axle, JS&A



These ancillary industries generate economic value throughout the local economy. When culminated together, the operations of these industries annually contribute **7,100 jobs, \$393 million in labor income, and \$1.15 billion** in the local economy.

Total Economic Impact of Atlanta's Ancillary Nightlife Industries

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Total Sales
Direct Impact (Business Operations)	5,452	\$244,652,384	\$718,262,163
Indirect Impact (Supply Chain)	1,178	\$108,396,917	\$322,671,621
Induced Impact (Spending of Wages)	515	\$39,658,842	\$109,732,706
Total Economic Impact	7,144	\$392,708,143	\$1,150,666,490

Note: The "Total Sales" column reflects "Industry Output," which is the value of production by the nightlife economy in a calendar year. Specifically, this figure describes annual revenues plus net inventory change. Employment figures represent full-time and part-time jobs. Labor income figures do not add up to sum due to rounding.
Source: IMPLAN based on Nightlife Industry Data, ESRI (2024)

An aerial night photograph of Atlanta, Georgia, showing a dense cityscape with numerous illuminated buildings and a complex network of highways. The lights from the city and the trails from traffic on the roads create a vibrant, glowing scene. The text 'INSIGHTS INTO ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRIES' is overlaid in large, white, bold letters on the left side of the image.

INSIGHTS INTO ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRIES

Atlanta's core nightlife industries – restaurants, bars, clubs, performance venues – are part of a larger nightlife ecosystem, with a wider range of business types that mutually benefit each other and play an important role in cultivating a varied nightlife experience for Atlanta residents and visitors.

Nightlife activity extends beyond simply eating, drinking, and dancing. Once the sun goes down, you can find people gathering at bowling alleys, tattoo parlors, sporting events, and other entertainment venues. While most wouldn't connect the operations of a barber shop to the vibrancy of a surrounding nightlife cluster, barber shops and beauty salons are also popular places for people to socialize in the evenings and gather with friends to start a night out. Similarly, Atlanta's late-night film and TV production sets bring customer traffic to nearby downtown restaurants, hotels, and bars.

The lines between these different industries are often somewhat blurred. Many restaurants close their kitchens at 9pm and transition into bars and clubs. Similarly, the line between nightclubs and performance venues is also often blurred, with both offering a variety of acts with music lasting into early morning hours. In addition, many businesses that offer adult entertainment also function as dining establishments and music venues. This variation follows a national trend of more hybrid business models that stay competitive by offering a range of experiences throughout the day and week, maximizing the use of their space, and capturing a wider range of audience types. As Atlanta's nightlife scene evolves, the mix of different nightlife-oriented business models will likely become increasingly complex.



RESTAURANTS

Eating out is a fundamental piece of the Atlanta nightlife experience and the single most common nighttime activity in the city. For many, a “night out” in Atlanta simply consists of grabbing a bite to eat somewhere. For others, these establishments may also serve as the first or final stop of the night – from enjoying a sit-down dinner before a show to having late-night snacks after a long night out. In total, 84% of surveyed patrons report that they typically dine at restaurants when they go out at night in Atlanta.

Many dining establishments also cross-function as bars, clubs, and entertainment venues, and some fully transition from sit-down restaurants to music-filled venues or clubs by 9pm or 10pm. For many, this late-night customer traffic is crucial for the financial viability of the business, with surveyed restaurants reporting that they generate 34% of revenue after 9pm. For most restaurants, this is likely the difference between being profitable or not, given the tight margins typical in the industry. In total, post-5pm customer traffic accounts for approximately 79% of restaurant revenue.

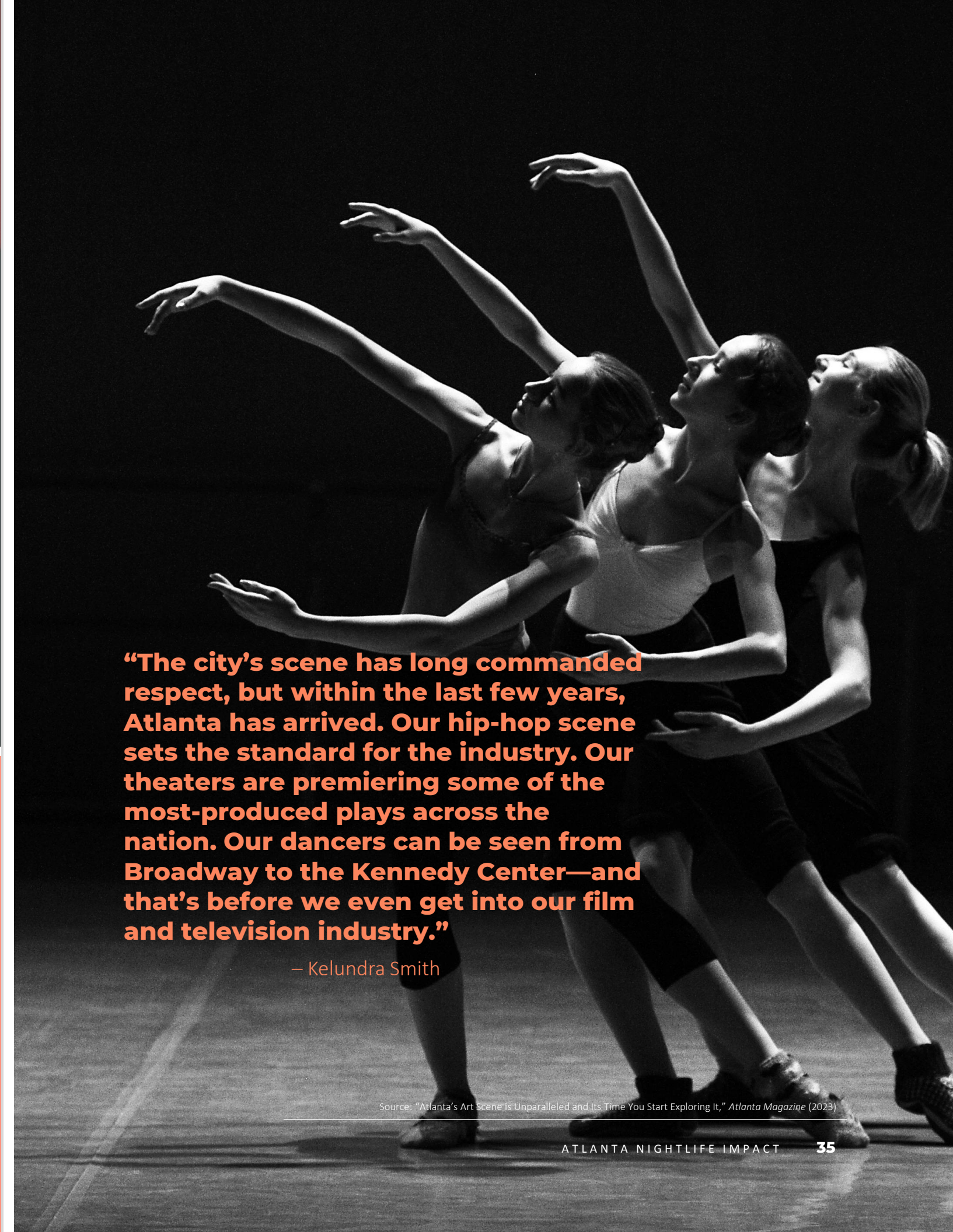
Most restaurants rely on both strong weekday and weekend sales, 60% of restaurant revenue is generated from Friday night through Sunday, with 40% coming in during the week. As such, weekend nightlife activity and the daytime dining scene mutually support each other, helping sustain the overall viability of businesses that rely on both time periods to be profitable.



MOVIE AND FILM PRODUCTION

Atlanta has been referred to as the “Hollywood of the South” for its fast-growing film production industry. Catalyzed by state-level tax credits, Atlanta offers a moderate city and relatively affordable costs compared with Los Angeles, Vancouver, and other historically popular filming locations in North America. This burgeoning film production industry serves as both a key source of local jobs and a generator of activity and spending power to nearby businesses and hotels.

Downtown and South Downtown have become particular hot-spots for late-night production sets — offering an urban landscape adaptable for a wide variety of movies and shows, with many production sets repurposing vacant and under-utilized buildings, particularly in South Downtown. Without evening and late-night production activity, many of these areas experience a significant drop-off in activity outside weekday working hours. While often not associated with “nightlife,” Atlanta’s film production industry adds a distinctive element to the city’s nighttime landscape and plays a key role in sustaining a robust creative workforce and diversified late-night economy.



“The city’s scene has long commanded respect, but within the last few years, Atlanta has arrived. Our hip-hop scene sets the standard for the industry. Our theaters are premiering some of the most-produced plays across the nation. Our dancers can be seen from Broadway to the Kennedy Center—and that’s before we even get into our film and television industry.”

– Kelundra Smith

Source: “Atlanta’s Art Scene Is Unparalleled and Its Time You Start Exploring It,” *Atlanta Magazine* (2023)



“I always joke that it’s a national landmark. People come to Atlanta, and it’s like: Coca-Cola, Dr. King, and Magic City.”

– Nick Love, Former Brand Manager, Magic City

Quote Source: Eater.com (2022)

17

Total Adult Entertainment Permits Across the City of Atlanta

Source: City of Atlanta (2024)

Image Source: Eater.com (2022)

STRIP CLUBS AND ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

Atlanta’s strip clubs are more than just places for adult entertainment; they are essential elements to the city’s music industry, nightlife economy, and cultural influence. Atlanta has long been a strip club destination for partygoers, attracting visitors from across the country. In addition, these venues serve as collaborative spaces for artists, using the space to promote and connect with other industry leaders.

Notably, not all businesses with adult entertainment licenses characterize themselves as strip clubs, as many feature hybrid business models that offer a mix of adult entertainment, prepared food, live music, and other entertainment offerings.

“If you haven’t witnessed blonde, the city’s most well-embraced stripper crushing a beer can between her breasts..., then you’re not an Atlantan.”

Quote Source: Creative Loafing (2024)

NIGHTCLUBS

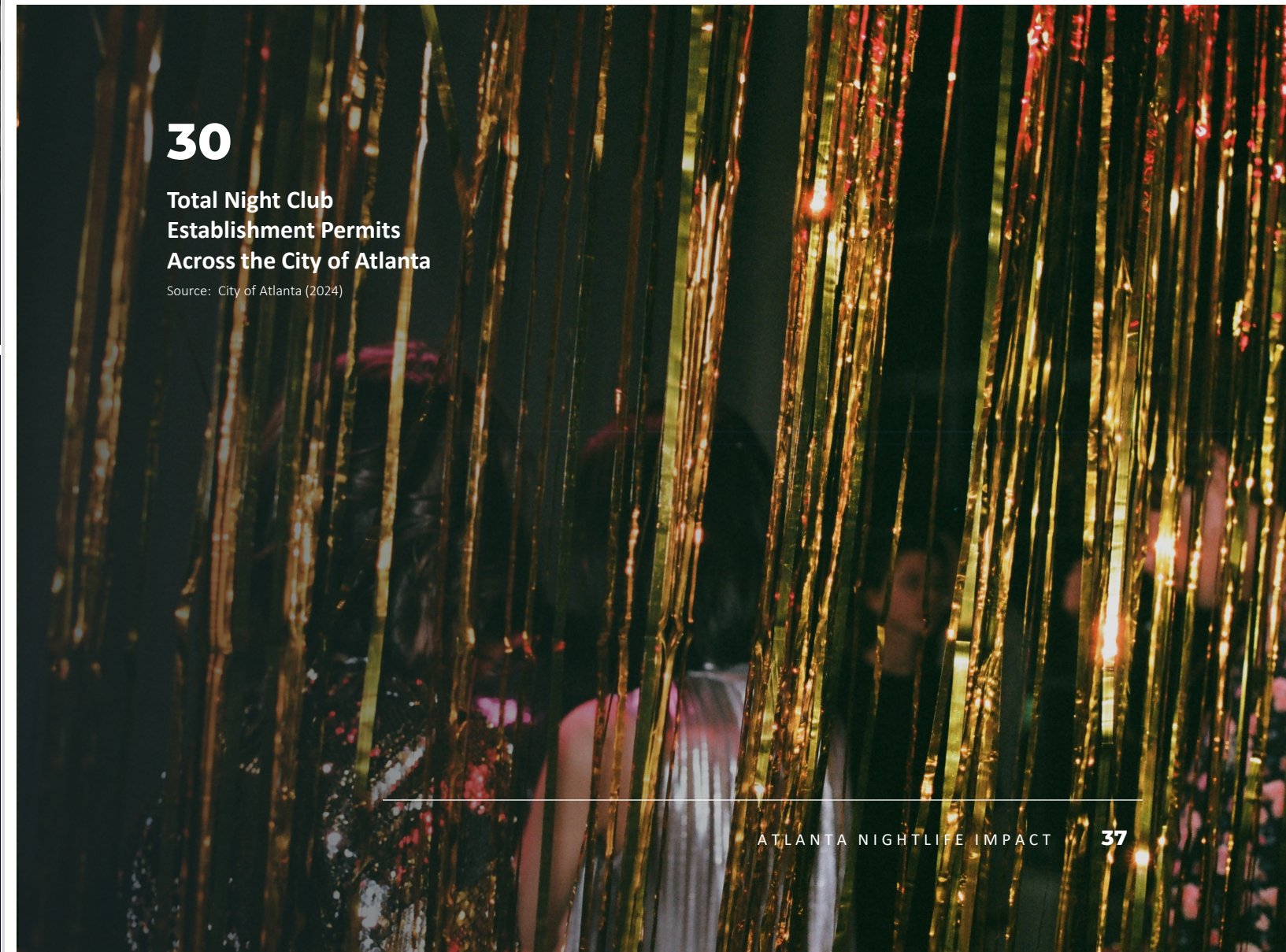
Nightclubs play a central role in the history and vibrancy of Atlanta’s nightlife scene. With the city’s long-standing reputation as a hub for hip-hop and R&B music, these venues attract both locals and out-of-town visitors seeking lively late-night experiences. In the 1990s, Atlanta’s nightclubs were vital in shaping the country’s emerging hip-hop culture. These venues provided space for local musicians to perform and collaborate, fostering the rise of the “Dirty South” sound and influential figures such as OutKast, Goodie Mob, and Jermaine Dupri. The city’s nightclubs continue to serve as premier destinations, attracting patrons from throughout the region to drink, dance, and socialize.

Nightclubs often most acutely experience many of the common challenges among nightlife businesses. Many clubs heavily rely on sales made into the early hours of the morning to be financially sustainable. This reliance on late-night activity often creates sound-related conflicts with neighboring residents and businesses. With patrons and workers leaving clubs at late hours, safety concerns (exacerbated by limited parking and public transit options) are also usually top of mind for many night club operators looking to create safe conditions for their staff and customer base.

30

Total Night Club Establishment Permits Across the City of Atlanta

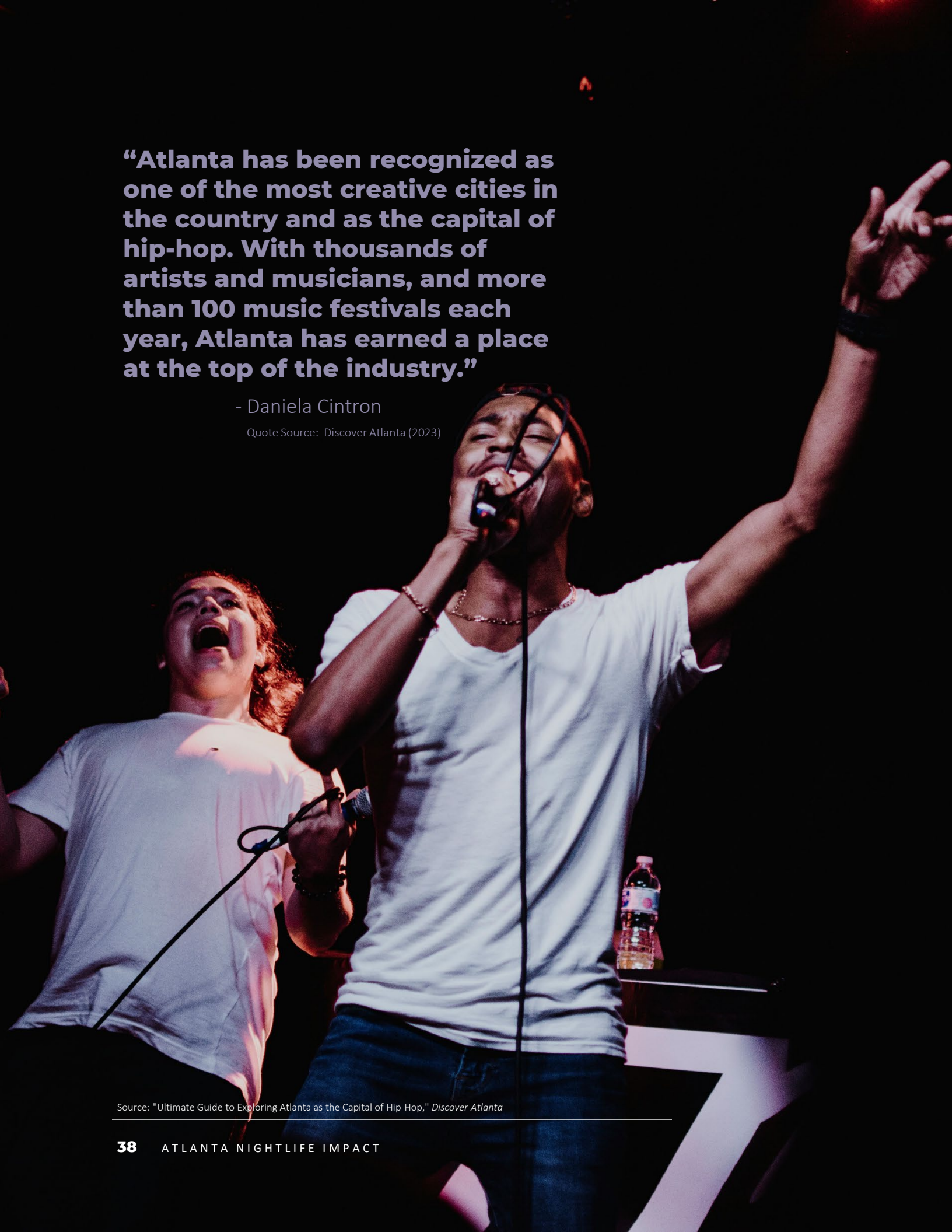
Source: City of Atlanta (2024)



“Atlanta has been recognized as one of the most creative cities in the country and as the capital of hip-hop. With thousands of artists and musicians, and more than 100 music festivals each year, Atlanta has earned a place at the top of the industry.”

- Daniela Cintron

Quote Source: Discover Atlanta (2023)



Source: "Ultimate Guide to Exploring Atlanta as the Capital of Hip-Hop," *Discover Atlanta*



“People come here before they go out. This is a ‘before and after’ spot. It’s kind of like the party before the party.”

– Will Jackson, Anytime Cutz

Quote Source: Huck Mag (2016)

“The barbershop is the key to community culture. We give recommendations on food, music, women, and where to go out at night.”

– District 2 Barbershop Owner

BARBERSHOPS AND BEAUTY SALONS

Atlanta’s barbershops and salons, many of which are open late into the night, offer last-minute cuts and styles and a social space to gather before heading out to the city’s clubs, pubs, and event venues. For many, they have become a pre-nightlife ritual, where conversations about the latest trends, hot spots, and local happenings flow freely. By staying open later, these businesses not only accommodate the nightlife crowd but also set the tone for the evening, making them integral to Atlanta’s after-hours culture.

Sources: Phone Interview with District 2 barbershop owner (September 2024);
“Atlanta’s hip hop barbershops are the voice of Black America,” *Huck Mag*.




PROMOTERS

Promoters are some of the unsung heroes of local nightlife scenes – helping curate and get the word out about upcoming events and venues. Bars and clubs often employ in-house promoters and/or outsource promotion to independent promoters – who earn a living by leveraging their networks and social media channels to generate buzz around upcoming concerts, dance parties, DJ sets, and other nightlife attractions. Many promoters specialize in particular niches within the nightlife scene, specializing in certain music genres or audiences.

Promoters often work on a commission basis and are directly incentivized to get people through doors and ensure venues attain their target attendance and revenue goals for the night. In total, 52% of surveyed bars and clubs and 41% of entertainment venues report that they either have a promoter on staff or contract with third-party promoters. More than half (56%) of surveyed bars and clubs and 50% of entertainment venues report that working with promoters is an important part of their business.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)



“New vibrant, young leaders are taking matters into their own hands towards establishing a consistent, healthy culture that’s connected to Atlanta’s nightlife – fueling so many livelihoods and futures for many us. I am a dance party curator of 4 years and much of this change wouldn’t [happen] if it wasn’t for organizers like us working tirelessly to see a creative, vibrant, Atlanta sustain momentum with integrity.”

– Atlanta Promoter

Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

RECORDING STUDIOS

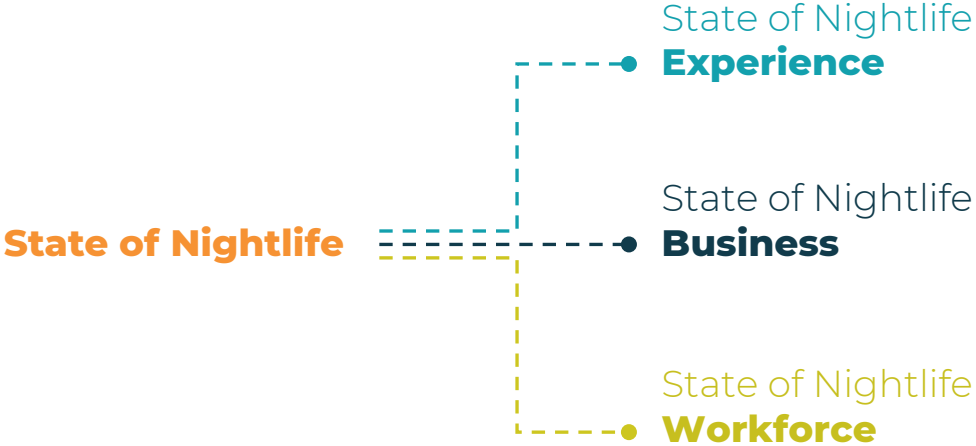
Atlanta's recording studios are central to the city's vibrant nightlife. As a hub for hip-hop, R&B, and various other genres, the city's studios attract top artists, producers, and musicians from around the world, contributing to the buzz of Atlanta's club and concert culture. Historically, many hit songs and iconic albums have been recorded in Atlanta, and in the present day, newly released tracks are often first heard in Atlanta's local nightclubs and venues. The proximity of world-class studios to popular nightlife spots creates a synergy of music production and live entertainment.

Despite Atlanta being recognized as a preeminent recording hot spot, the city's recording studios still face operational challenges. Several studio owners engaged for this study mentioned the need for increased police presence and proper streetlights to deter unwanted behaviors. One owner voiced concern about the need for more local and healthy food options for their staff and clients, particularly after 10pm for their numerous late-night recording sessions.



STATE OF NIGHTLIFE

Conditions, Needs, and Opportunities of Atlanta's Nightlife



Atlanta's nightlife scene is a convergence the industry's businesses, workforce, and patron experience. These three perspectives culminate into the city's overall nightlife brand, reputation, and quality. Businesses need customers. Patrons need places to dine, drink, and have fun. Residents need a wide range of employment opportunities, and businesses need staff for day-to-day operations.

Each of these groups contains its own set of needs, challenges, and opportunities to better support and develop Atlanta's nightlife. However, critical themes – such as transportation and safety concerns – crosscut businesses, workers, and customers, highlighting the intrinsic importance of not only understanding siloed insights of the groups but also recognizing conditions of the collective nightlife scene. The following section showcases the current state of nightlife experiences from the customer point of view; how business operations are faring, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic; and the value and challenges within the nightlife workforce.

THE TYPICAL NIGHT OUT IN ATLANTA...

ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE PATRONS FLOCK TO BUSINESSES ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHTS, OFTEN THEIR SINGULAR DAY OF THE WEEK FOR GOING OUT AT NIGHT.

Two-thirds of the city's nightlife customers go out just once a week, choosing Friday or Saturday night. Outside those nights, Thursday nights leading into the weekend and Sunday evenings closing out the weekend are popular among patrons.



THE BUSTLE OF ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE STARTS BEFORE 9M AND LINGERS PAST 2AM, WITH HALF OF THE CITY'S NIGHTLIFE PATRONS STAYING OUT PAST MIDNIGHT.

Nightlife spans into the early morning hours for many. One out of every four patrons is out past 2am on their typical night out.

Atlanta residents start their night out a little earlier, with 62% heading out before 9pm compared with 56% of regional residents and 53% of outside visitors. Atlanta residents end their night a little earlier, with 48% of surveyed customers living in the city ending their night before midnight compared with just 36% of regional residents and 40% of outside visitors. Nightlife patrons expressed a desire for more late-night activity, including restaurants being open later.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)



NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF CUSTOMERS FREQUENT TWO TO THREE BUSINESSES DURING THEIR NIGHT OUT.

The bar and club hopping culture does not exist as strongly in Atlanta as it does in other cities. Customers prefer to select a few businesses to patronize, staying longer at each place.

Local residents are more likely to jump from business to business on a night out, with 64% of local customers going to two or three businesses and a small sample frequenting four or five businesses. In contrast, 41% of regional visitors go to only one establishment on their night out. Regional visitors frequent even fewer businesses on their night out, with half visiting only one business. Patrons cited rising costs of cover charges, which may play into their decision to go to fewer establishments.



RIDESHARING IS NOW NEARLY EQUAL TO PERSONAL CAR USAGE WHEN GOING OUT AT NIGHT.

On a typical night out, 44% of patrons prefer to travel via driving, and 43% prefer catching a ride through ridesharing.

However, those who live outside of the city and travel into Atlanta for a night out are far more likely to drive, with 79% of regional residents preferring to drive compared with only 37% of city residents. These city residents are more likely to use Lyft, Uber, or taxis; 46% of local residents prefer going out through rideshare compared with only 18% of regional residents. These preferences are likely attributable to the cost comparison of driving and paying for parking vs. the cost of rideshare. Customers cited increasingly high parking costs and security issues as heavily influencing their transportation decisions.



THE TYPICAL PATRON SPENDS BETWEEN \$50 AND \$100 AT BUSINESSES DURING A NIGHT OUT.

Atlanta's nightlife scene offers variety of price points for customers. Nearly a third of customers spend under \$50, and a third spend over \$100.

Local residents spend more during their nights out in Atlanta. A total of 74% of local residents spend more than \$50 on their night out compared with only 56% of regional visitors. In fact, 41% of regional visitors spend only \$20 to \$50 a night on average. There is also a small cohort of local residents who are heavy spenders in the nightlife scene. Of nightlife patrons who live in Atlanta, 8% spend \$200 or more, with regional visitors reporting that they don't typically spend that much on a standard night out.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

State of **Nightlife Experience**



Nightlife Customer Insight

NEARLY HALF (49%) OF ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE PATRONS ARE GOING OUT LESS THAN THEY WERE A YEAR AGO.

COMPARATIVELY, ONLY 18% ARE GOING OUT MORE, AND 33% ARE GOING OUT THE SAME AMOUNT.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

There has been a notable downward trend in the frequency in which people go out in Atlanta. This trend aligns with businesses' reported dips in customer traffic and the industry's overall struggle to keep up with escalating costs. This recent decline in nightlife visitation and spending is not a problem unique to Atlanta. Nationally, discretionary spending has decreased, particularly for food away from a home – a core segment of the nightlife economy. This drop in consumer spending has been driven by several macroeconomic factors, including high inflation, rising mortgage and credit card rates, and the resumption of student loan payments, which resumed in October 2023 after a three-year break.¹ This latter factor disproportionately impacts Millennial and Gen Z consumers, the prime demographic of the nightlife industry.

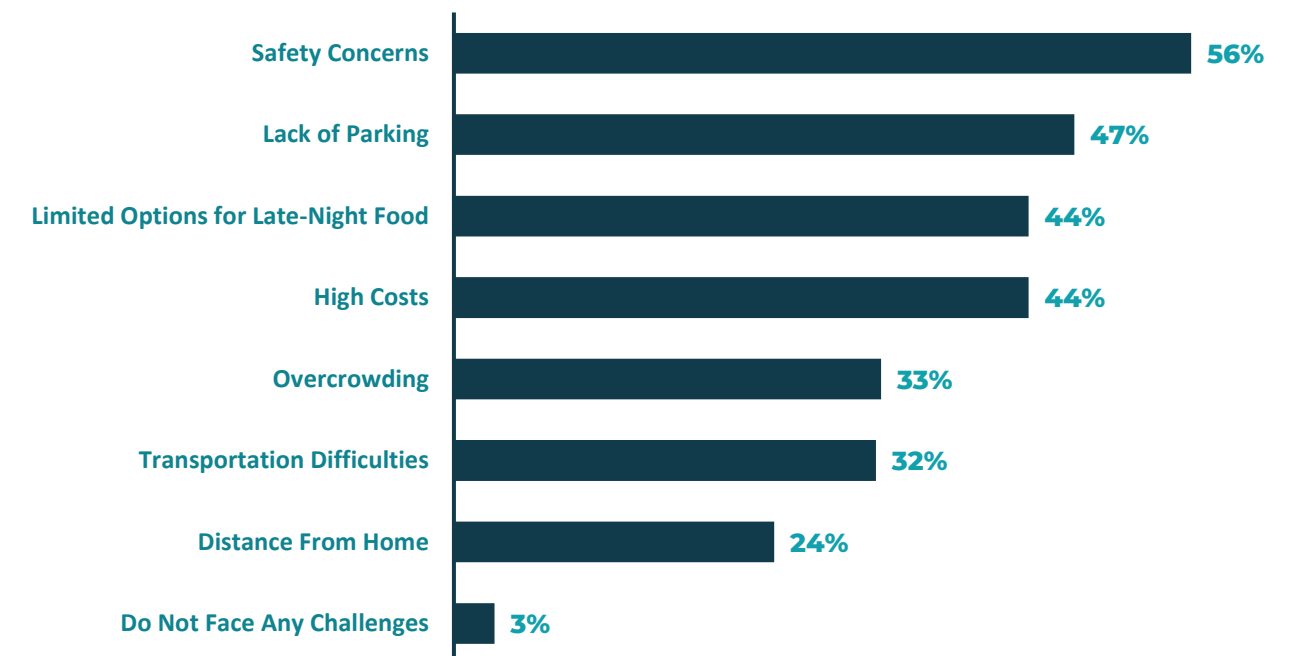
¹ Brown Advisory United States, 2024 Asset Allocation Perspectives/Outlook

SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION ARE THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE PATRONS FACE WHEN GOING OUT.

The costs of going out at night, paired with limited late-night food and dining options, are key issues cited by Atlanta's nightlife customers.

Nightlife Customer Insight

What challenges, if any, do you face when going out at night in Atlanta?



Concerns around crime and safety are a major factor in the recent decline of nightlife visitation. Specifically, surveyed consumers cited worries about car break-ins, general violent crime risk, and the lack of comfort when walking around at night. Limited parking and a lack of late-night transit options when going out, due to MARTA's early closing times and lack of coverage to nightlife hubs, were also cited as top challenges. A lack of quality places to eat late at night was another frequently cited challenge, including one Atlantan who stated that "it is difficult to find quality food after 10pm." Surveyed consumers also expressed sentiments that there are fewer quality options to go out in recent years, following several pandemic-related closures and business re-orientations.

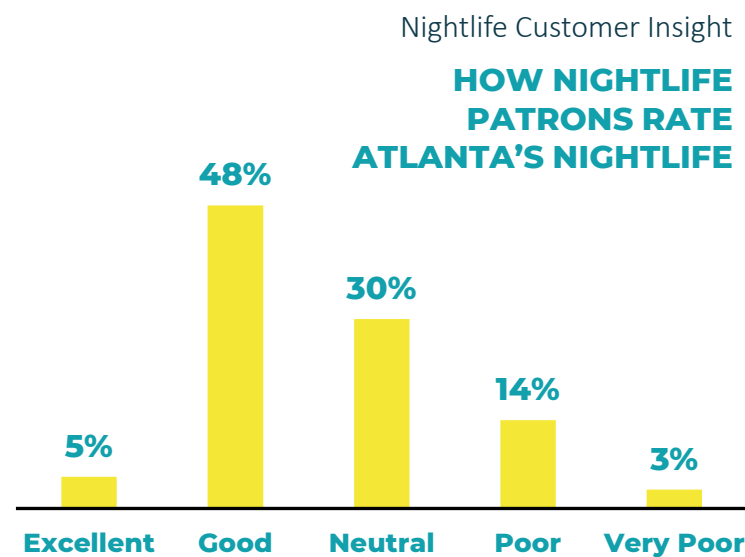
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

State of **Nightlife Experience**

ONLY 11% OF ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE PATRONS EXPECT TO GO OUT MORE OVER THE NEXT YEAR.

Atlanta's nightlife scene is not forecasted to see a major uptick in customer traffic. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the city's nightlife patrons are not anticipating changing their behavior with their frequency of going out. Those who are anticipating a change in the number of times they anticipate going out at night skew toward going out less rather than going out more. Approximately one out of every four patrons expect to go out less compared with only one out of every ten patrons anticipating going out more in the coming year.

Half of Atlanta's nightlife customers characterize Atlanta's nightlife as "good" but not "excellent." For a city renowned for its deep connection to music and entertainment, this sentiment represents a chance for Atlanta to elevate its nightlife experience to be even more dynamic and accessible. Nightlife patrons offered a wide range of suggestions and insight into what they would like to see more of in Atlanta's nightlife scene to improve the quality, and experience of nightlife, encouraging more frequency. Increasing Atlanta's nightlife customer base supports the industry's businesses and the broader economy.



Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE IN ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE?

MORE LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

"It feels like a lot of established, older restaurants, bars, and art venues have closed. Covid took a toll and commercial rents are high. A lot of newer places feel like they were designed for Instagram instead of the actual customer experience."

"Gentrification and the pandemic has done a number on where people can go out. Variety is there, quality is subjective."

"Great night clubs that are consistent. The pop-up event, rave, and parties are great, but I wish there was an area more consistent with that kind of vibe."

WIDER TRANSPORTATION MORE WALKABLE NIGHTLIFE AREAS STRONGER NIGHTLIFE CLUSTERS

"Spontaneity! A decade ago, you could maybe call an Uber to one location and experience five different fun bars...Everything seems to be by appointment these days."

"Although new districts have emerged, they are not planned or serviced well (poor infrastructure, transit connectivity, lack of food)... We don't have a single strip that competes with even Nashville's Broad Street or Dallas' Deep Ellum, much less major global cities we aspire to compete with."

SECURITY AND POLICE PRESENCE STREET LIGHTING OUTDOOR SPACES

"More police presence."

"Safe and open outdoor spaces."

"Rooftops."

MORE LGBTQ+ SPACES

"We need an investment into LGBTQ+ clubs and culture."

"I think it's time for the City of Atlanta to invest into more LGBTQ+ spaces in the Midtown area instead of thinking a rainbow crosswalk will suffice."

"More queer-focused spaces."

MORE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FREE EVENTS AT NIGHT

"The cost of events, activities, meals, cocktails has definitely gone up. I understand this is related to price increases felt around the US. I would suggest offering a variety of city supported events that provide a range of costs from free to above."

"More independent music venues."

"A wider variety of cultural activities – poetry slams, cheaper theater, etc."

"Night markets featuring small businesses."

LATER CLOSING TIMES

"What major city shuts down at 2am? The afterhours are so janky and unsafe. It shouldn't be this way."

"Longer nightclub times."

FOOD AT NIGHT

"Restaurants staying open later would be great. In some areas of town, it is hard to find a place after 9pm or 10pm."

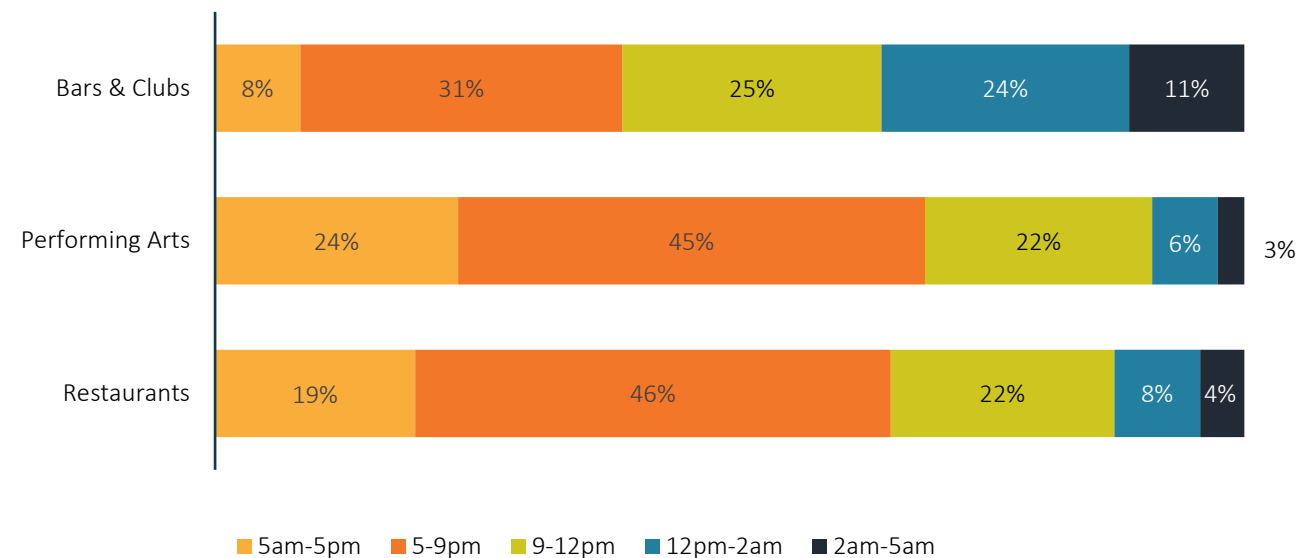
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

State of Nightlife **Business**

STRONG SALES AFTER 9PM ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE VIABILITY OF MOST NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS MODELS, PARTICULARLY BARS, CLUBS, AND PERFORMING ARTS VENUES.

The typical bar or club also heavily relies on post-midnight sales. The average bar or club generates nearly a quarter of their overall revenue between 9pm and midnight, and 11% of their revenue after 2am. Theaters, venues, and other performing arts-oriented businesses also heavily rely on late-night customers, earning nearly one-third of their revenue after 9pm on average. Late-night customer traffic is also a key revenue source for many restaurants, with approximately 34% of revenue occurring past the typical dinner hours of 5-9pm.

Share of Revenue by Time of Day

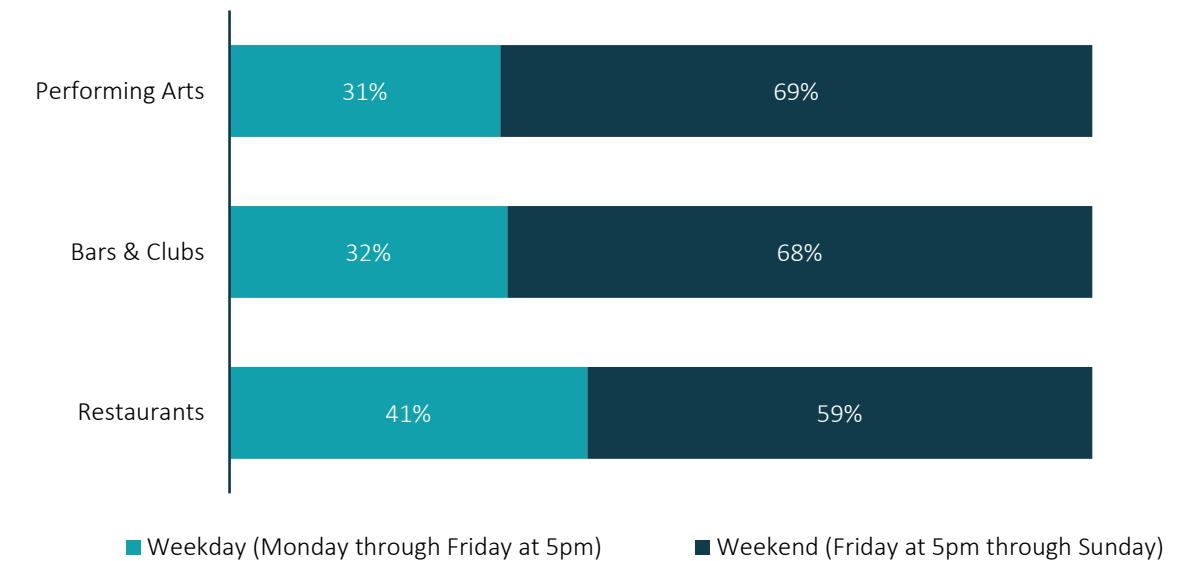


Note: Restaurants category includes full-service and limited-service dining establishments. "Bars & Clubs" includes bars, lounges, night clubs, and adult entertainment venues. Some figures do not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Owner/Operator Survey (2024)

ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE ECONOMY IS ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, AS MOST BUSINESSES RELY ON BOTH WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND CUSTOMER TRAFFIC.

While nightlife is heavily associated with the weekend, most nightlife establishments in Atlanta would likely struggle to remain viable without healthy levels of customer traffic outside of weekend hours. The average Atlanta nightlife business makes around one-third of its weekly revenue from Monday through Friday afternoon. Dining establishments particularly rely on weekday sales, which account for approximately 41% of total sales.

Share of Revenue by Day of Week



Note: Restaurants category includes full-service and limited-service dining establishments. "Bars & Clubs" includes bars, lounges, night clubs, and adult entertainment venues.
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Owner/Operator Survey (2024)

CUSTOMER TRAFFIC HAS YET TO REBOUND TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS FOR MOST NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES.

Customer traffic across nearly every nightlife business type is lower than it was before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, putting stress on the viability of many nightlife establishments. This trend remains consistent across nearly every district within the city. Only 22% of nightlife businesses report that customer traffic is above pre-pandemic levels. This drop in customer traffic is likely driven by an inflation-driven decline in disposable household spending, paired with patron concerns regarding crime and safety. Bars and clubs have particularly struggled since 2020, with just 9% reporting an increase in post-pandemic customer traffic and 73% reporting a decline.

58%
SHARE OF NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES WITH CUSTOMER TRAFFIC BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

Impact of COVID:

How Customer Traffic Compares with Pre-Pandemic Levels by Industry Type

Business Type	Above	Same	Below
Restaurants	29%	21%	50%
Bars & Clubs	9%	18%	73%
Performing Arts	23%	20%	57%
Total Nightlife Industry	22%	20%	58%

Note: Restaurants category includes full-service and limited-service dining establishments. "Bars & Clubs" includes bars, lounges, night clubs, and adult entertainment venues. Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Owner/Operator Survey (2024)

EXPENSES FOR NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS AND REVENUE IS NOT KEEPING UP WITH RISING COSTS.

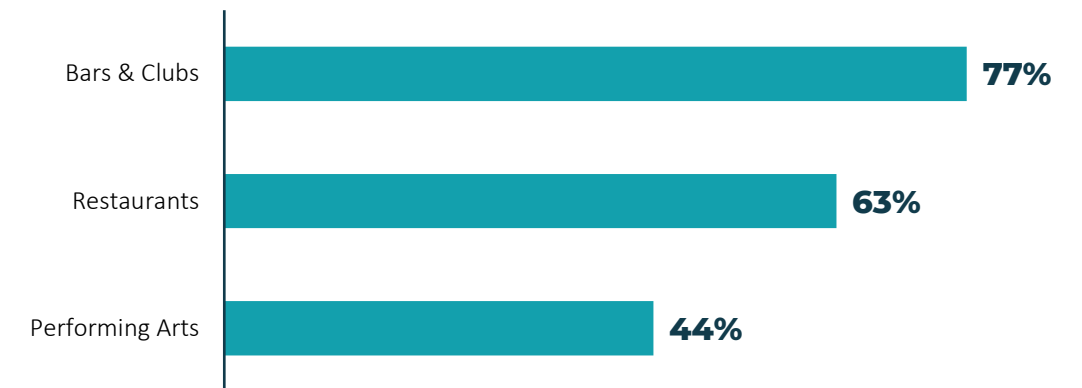
Most restaurants and bars in Atlanta have experienced a significant rise in labor and supply costs over the past two years. This trend is not specific to Atlanta, as restaurants across the U.S. have experienced significant recent hikes in their food and labor costs.¹ For most Atlanta businesses, this rise in expenses has not been offset by a rise in revenue, as just 35% of restaurants and 28% of bars report that their revenue is exceeding pre-pandemic levels. This escalating gap between expenses and revenue is putting increasing pressure on business operators to attract more customers while trimming costs – often resulting in hiring freezes or layoffs and/or challenges maintaining standards of overall service quality.

Venues and other performing arts companies have experienced a much stronger recovery from the pandemic. Revenue is above pre-pandemic levels for 63% of such businesses, while expenses have not increased as rapidly as within the food and beverage sector.

43%
NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES WITH INCREASE IN REVENUE SINCE 2020

96%
NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES WITH INCREASE IN EXPENSES SINCE 2020

Share of Businesses Reporting Significant Increase (>20%) in Operating Expenses Since 2022



Note: Restaurants category includes full-service and limited-service dining establishments. "Bars & Clubs" includes bars, lounges, night clubs, and adult entertainment venues. Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Owner/Operator Survey (2024)

¹ From 2020 to 2024, U.S. restaurants saw an average increase of 31% in labor costs, 29% in food costs, 20% in supply costs, and 16% in utility costs. Resultingly, prices at restaurants have increase 27.2% since 2020 (National Restaurant Association, 2024)

State of Nightlife **Business**

Rising operating costs, safety concerns, and employee attraction and retention are the most significant challenges Atlanta’s nightlife businesses face.

“Perception of a lack of security and safety in the Atlanta market continues to impact our businesses. Car break-ins and aggressive behavior by people on the street continue to keep people away.”

- Atlanta Restaurant Owner

“Even when we don’t have any meaningful business volume, we need to spend \$3,000 per month to keep security staff, and we cannot afford it.”

- Atlanta Restaurant Owner

“Safety and crime are our biggest challenges. While we’ve been successful in keeping our business and patrons safe, we are constantly needing to stay vigilant and aware of threats in our area.”

- Atlanta Theater Operator

“Staffing [is a challenge] due to limited public transportation options ceasing too early.”

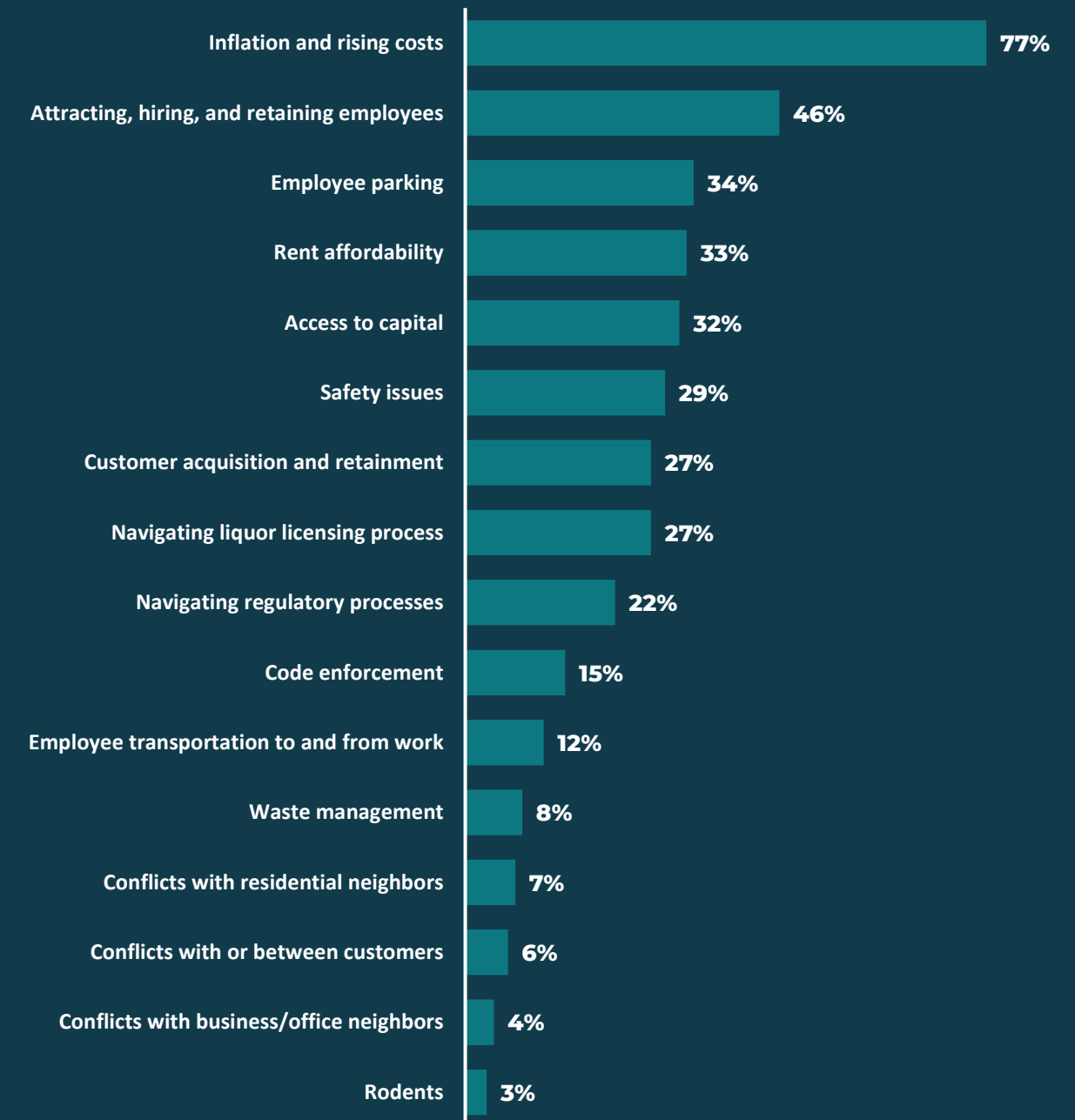
- Atlanta Bar/Lounge Owner

Inflation and a tight labor market have significantly affected the operations of nightlife businesses over the past several years, with 75% of nightlife business owners and operators reporting that rising costs is a major operational challenge. This is not a challenge unique to Atlanta, however, as small businesses across the country and across industries have struggled to grapple with the supply chain and labor market disruptions catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attracting and retaining quality employment was the second-most cited challenge, as businesses struggle to not only meet the staffing requirement to maintain operations but retain quality employees who provide quality customer service to patrons and contribute to a strong overall atmosphere and reputation. Customer and worker safety, particularly outside of establishments, was also frequently cited as a challenge. While private security teams, which can be costly, are often employed to maintain order at the entrances and within the confines of bars and other venues, many businesses report that patrons are deterred by safety concerns on their way to and from establishments. Too-early closing times, lack of nearby parking, elevated rates of car break-ins in nearby lots, and noise complaints were also frequently cited as major operational challenges.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

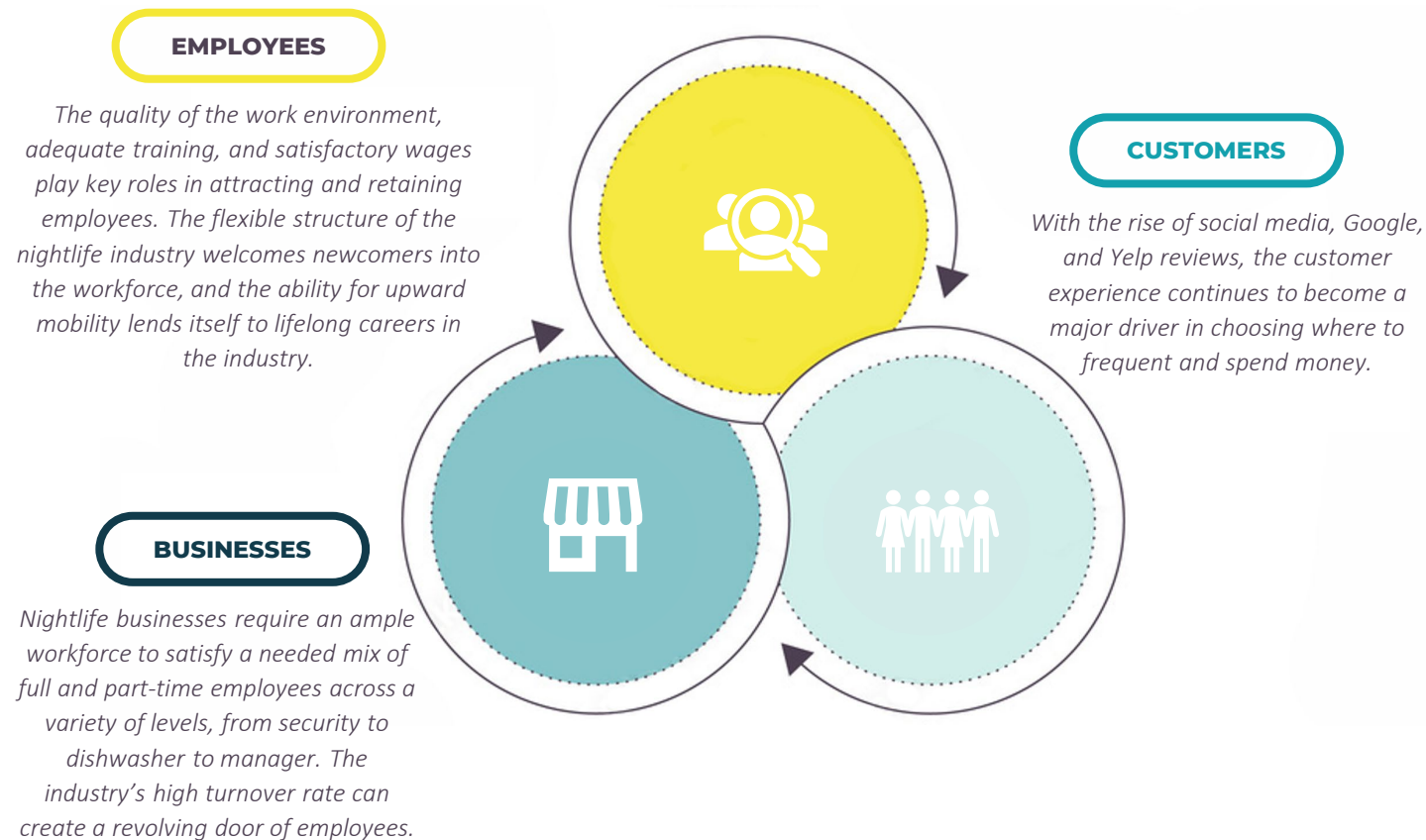
TOP OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF ATLANTA’S NIGHTLIFE BUSINESSES



Note: Figures above represent responses from core nightlife business types.
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

State of Nightlife **Workforce**

ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE WORKFORCE IS THE FACE OF THE INDUSTRY, AFFECTING THE EQUALITY OF EXPERIENCE FOR PATRONS AND DIRECTLY IMPACTING THE SUCCESS OF THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESSES.



Atlanta's nightlife industry ecosystem is based on a balanced relationship between an active workforce, a thriving base of patrons and customers, and viable and successful businesses. Nightlife workers are responsible for maintaining a welcoming, safe, and professional environment while juggling the many moving parts of the industry and businesses, navigating dynamic atmospheres often fueled by alcohol consumption, and balancing their livelihood outside of working hours. The industry's workforce varies in many ways from the standard daytime economy, and challenges that have been inherent in the industry for decades remain – such as the heavily cash-based pay structure and shift work sleep disorder resulting from nontraditional sleeping patterns and nocturnal working hours. The post-pandemic landscape of rising lifestyle costs, inflation affecting household budgets, and rideshare transportation options have introduced new challenges and needs for the workforce.

The industry's workforce plays a significant role in creating the nightlife atmosphere, the second most important factor to nightlife customers when deciding to go out.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey (2024)

“Customer service is a major part [of the nightlife industry]. It starts with the establishment and management to ensure that their staff is equipped. If the establishment and management is professional, it can help drive the business and make everyone want to work and be positive.”

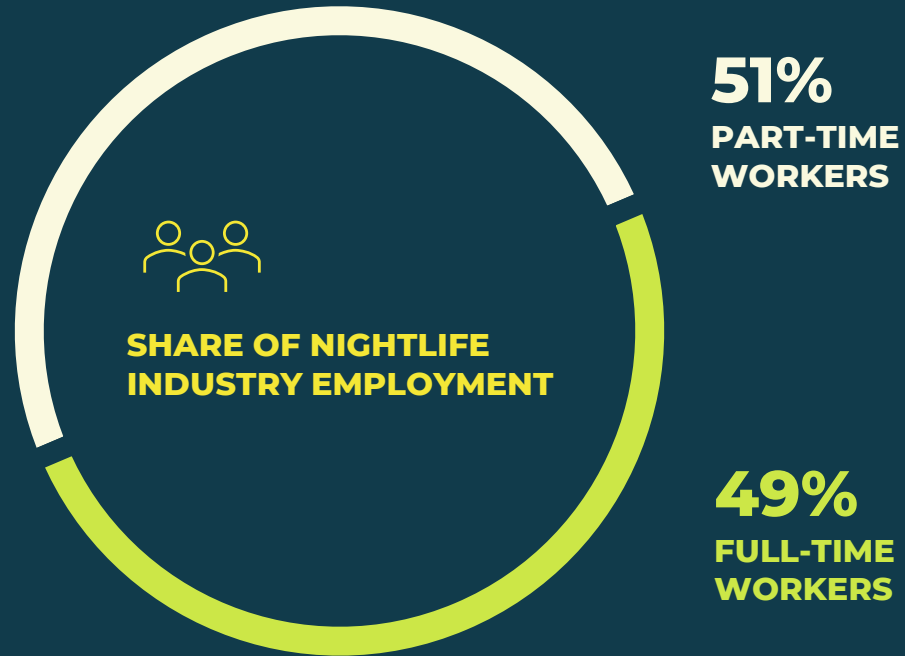
– Atlanta Nightlife Worker

Nightlife workers craft the ambiance and atmosphere to create memorable customer experiences, encouraging additional spending and contributing to the brand identity of individual businesses and Atlanta's collective nightlife brand. How workers interact with patrons not only impacts the likelihood of repeat business, but these interactions are gateways to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. The personal connections that form and develop over time between staff and routine customers not only create loyalty to individual businesses but provide customers with a sense of connection and help build a stronger social infrastructure within neighborhoods. However, customer service for those working in the nightlife industry extends beyond crafting cocktails and serving guests. Safety and security skills – such as de-escalation, forecasting conflicts, and reducing harassment – paired with health compliance requirements add layers to the myriad of skills necessary for quality customer service in the nightlife industry.

State of Nightlife **Workforce**

40,939

Total Nightlife Workers

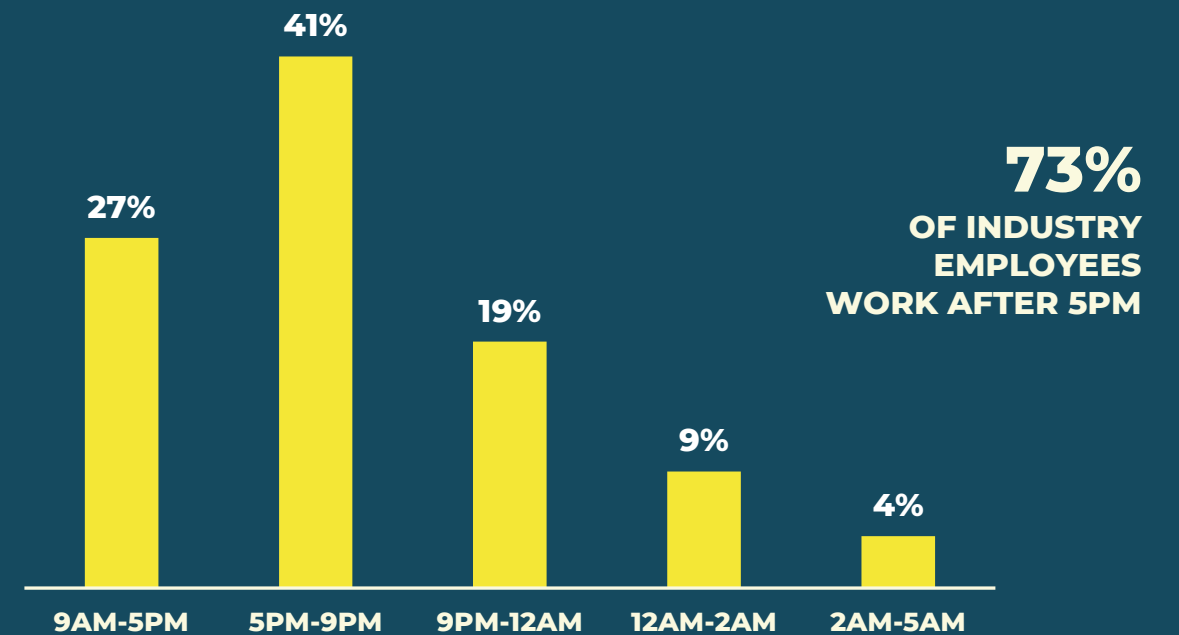


Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

ATLANTA'S NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY IS SPLIT BETWEEN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND PART-TIME WORKERS.

Having a mix of full-time and part-time positions in the industry is advantageous to both workers and businesses. From the perspective of employees, part-time work allows employees to supplement other jobs with an additional part-time position for extra income and can also provide more flexible work hours for people who may not be able to or desire to work full-time. This mix also allows for a variety of position levels, creating a more inclusive industry with fewer barriers to entry. At the same time, a mix of full-time and part-time staff positions can provide businesses with operational flexibility and a more adaptable staffing structure that can be tailored to the fluctuations in customer traffic and seasonal patterns. This flexibility can lead to reduced operating costs and inefficiencies in an industry that faces tight profit margins.

SHARE OF NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT ACROSS TIME OF DAY



Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

WHILE NIGHTLIFE OFTEN CONNOTATES IMAGES OF LATE-NIGHT DANCING, LAST CALLS, AND CLOSING DOWN BARS, MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT OCCURS BEFORE 9PM.

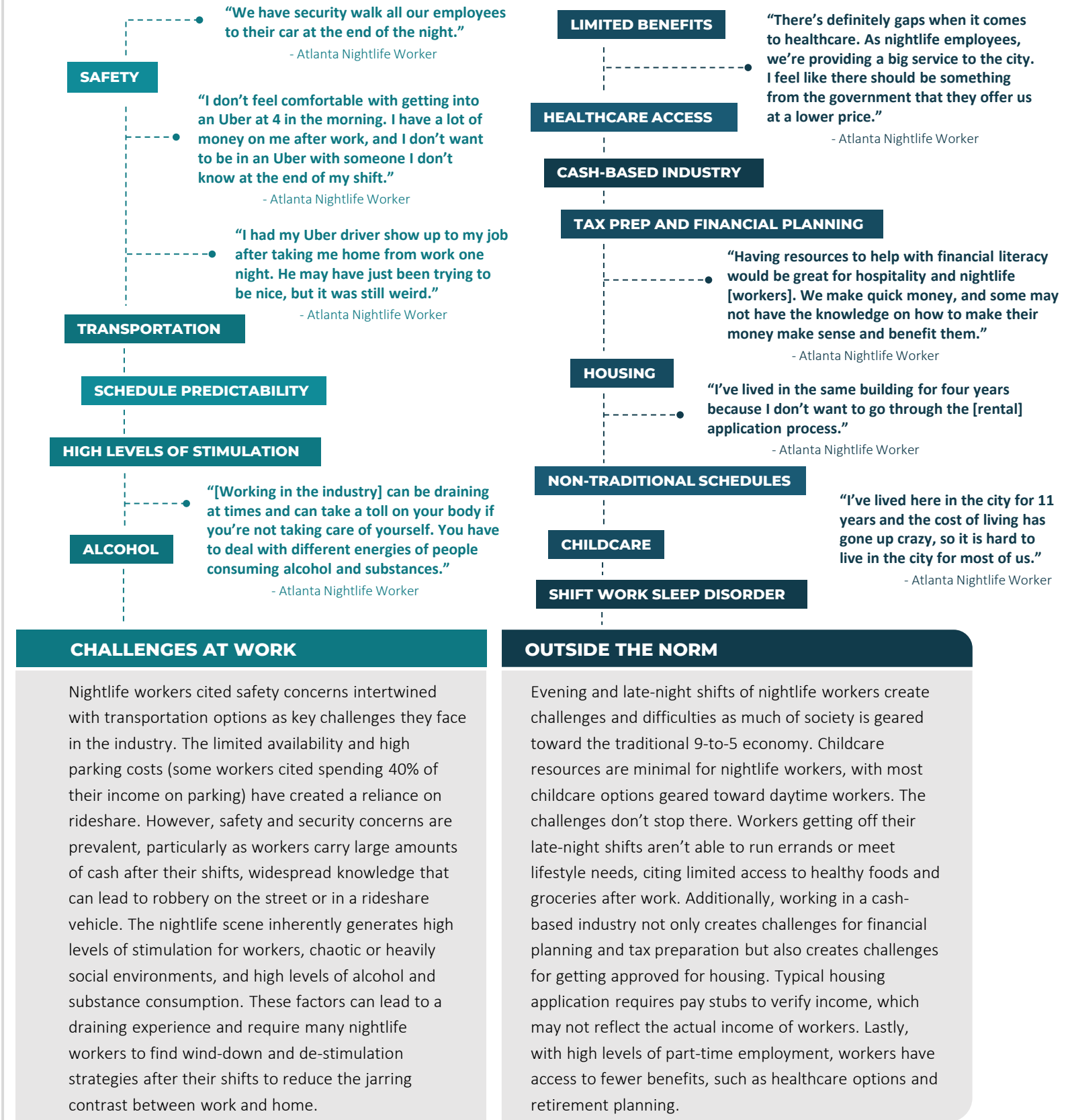
In fact, 27% of nightlife industry employees start working before 5pm, attributable not only to happy hours and daytime-oriented restaurants but also to prep workers, management, and other shift workers. Employment in Atlanta's nightlife industry picks up after 5pm, with 41% of the overall industry working between 5pm and 9pm. Late-night hours past midnight account for only 13% of industry employment, heavily centered on bars, nightclubs, and other late-night venues.

State of Nightlife Workforce

Atlanta's nightlife industry offers a lifestyle in contrast to the typical 9-to-5 employment opportunity while allowing for career development and the ability to advance within the industry. While all occupations face challenges in the workplace, nightlife workers face unique circumstances surrounding their work that swell into day-to-day life.



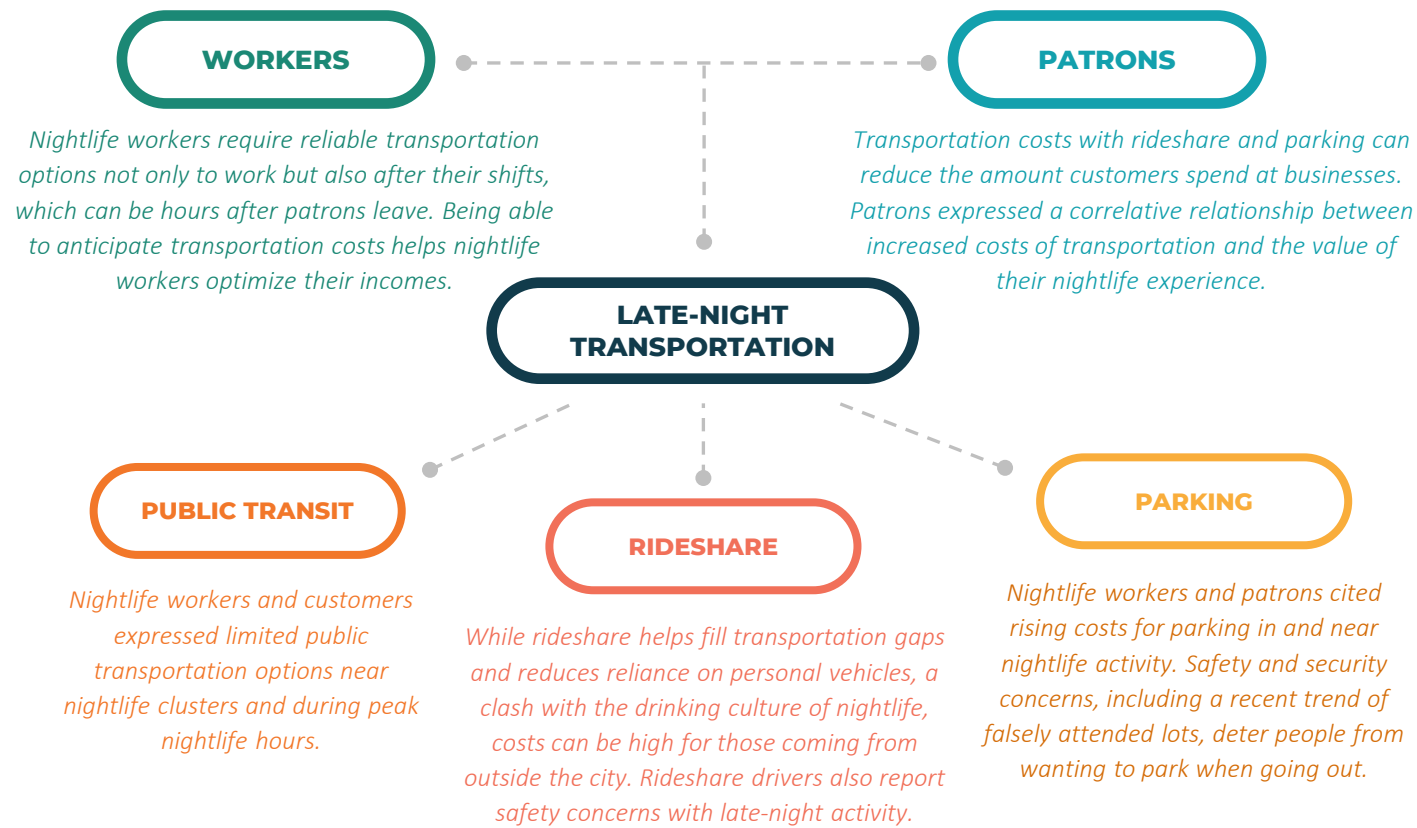
Source: Atlanta Nightlife Worker Focus Group (2024)



Source: Atlanta Nightlife Worker Focus Group (2024)

LATE-NIGHT TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES AFFECT BOTH THE NIGHTLIFE WORKFORCE AND CUSTOMERS, WHICH CAN RIPPLE INTO BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND SUCCESS.

Transportation access, ease, safety, perceived value, and costs factor into deciding where workers look for nightlife employment and where and how patrons go out. In cities across the country, transportation challenges are frequently cited in conversations about enhancing the nightlife industry. Atlanta faces its own set of unique nightlife transportation challenges, with the geographic range of nightlife clusters across the city, public transportation not optimized for nightlife usage, and escalating costs for workers and customers.



Atlanta has a wide range of stakeholders who can help play a role in alleviating late-night transportation challenges and helping to create a more secure environment for patrons and workers traveling from their homes to nightlife establishments. Many of Atlanta’s nightlife customers cited a desire for improved public transportation options and less reliance on rideshare and parking where costs can vary dramatically with surge pricing and privately operated parking lots. Rideshare drivers are often considered temporary gig economy workers and not directly engaged in transportation conversations. Atlanta’s rideshare network can provide significant insights to address late-night travel issues. Nightlife workers whose employers were able to negotiate parking near their businesses for staff experienced improved transportation.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Consumer Survey, Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey, Nightlife Workers Focus Group (2024)



ONLY 6% OF NIGHTLIFE CUSTOMERS CURRENTLY PREFER TO TRAVEL BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. MOST NIGHTLIFE WORKERS USE RIDESHARE OR DRIVE AND PARK.

Source: Atlanta Nightlife Business Survey (2024)

“I wish I could use MARTA to get to more nightlife.”
- Atlanta Nightlife Customer

“Public transportation needs to improve. Parking is going to keep disappearing.”
- Atlanta Nightlife Customer

“[There is] too much paid parking! Uber and Lyft have gotten very expensive. Going out has gotten expensive!”
- Atlanta Nightlife Customer

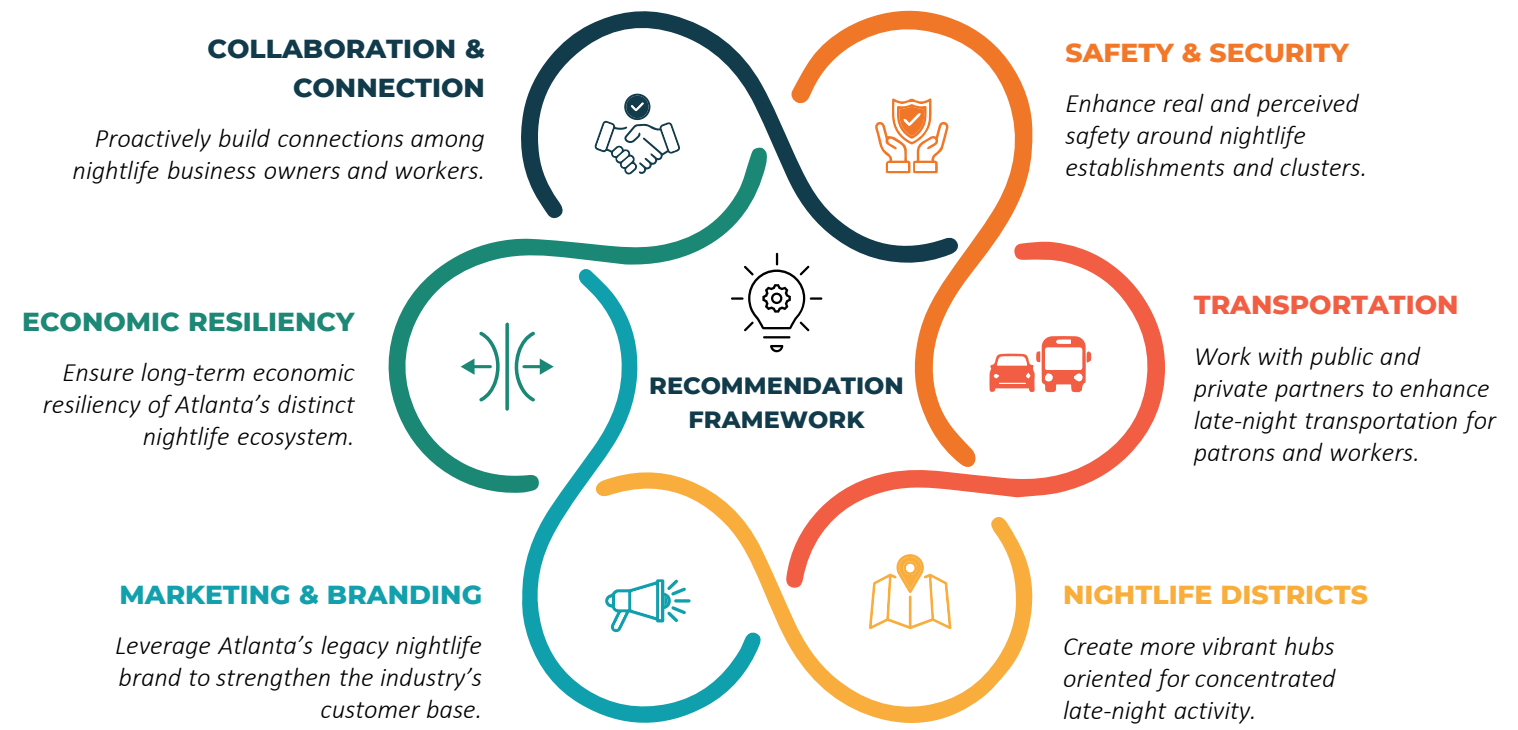
“The lack of safe transit options and late-night affordability keeps me home. If the infrastructure were better, I would go out much more.”
- Atlanta Nightlife Customer

“I might make \$100 during my shift but have to pay \$40 for parking.”
- Atlanta Nightlife Worker



STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD

GIVEN THE ROBUST ROLE NIGHTLIFE PLAYS IN ATLANTA'S ECONOMY, IT IS CRITICAL TO STRATEGIZE TO MEET ITS NEEDS AND CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE INDUSTRY.



Improving Atlanta's nightlife industry involves a comprehensive approach prioritizing and balancing six key themes derived from on-the-ground needs and opportunities of industry stakeholders. These recommendations are derived from insights gleaned through this study, including findings from the business and consumer surveys, focus groups, and conversations with key nightlife stakeholders. Importantly, this framework is designed to provide a clear approach to the core priorities and topics. For each of the six recommendation themes, a series of actionable steps and implementation opportunities are articulated to provide a roadmap for the City of Atlanta and its partners in the coming years.



SAFETY & SECURITY

ENHANCE REAL AND PERCEIVED SAFETY AROUND NIGHTLIFE ESTABLISHMENTS AND CLUSTERS.

Safety-related measures are the most cited type of city services that nightlife businesses want - 63% want more APD presence at night, and 56% want more street lighting and cameras. In addition, nightlife workers' top concern in the focus group was safety, particularly outside establishments following late-night shifts.

Recommended Action Steps

- Explore developing a grant program to incentivize business investment in enhanced patron and worker safety. Such a program may involve providing matching funds to local nightlife businesses to install lighting and cameras or hiring security.
- Work with place-based organizations such as local BIDs to invest in street lighting and placemaking efforts to enhance safety in nightlife hubs.
- Conduct Worker Walkalongs where Atlanta nightlife leadership walks one-on-one with workers to/from their vehicles to understand perceptions of walking at night and opportunities to create safer experiences. These Worker Walkalongs are derived from strategies deployed in Bristol, UK, where the city's nightlife management conducted one-on-one walkalongs with women leaving nightlife establishments to understand on-the-ground perceptions and challenges with safety. Importantly, it is recommended that all walkalongs are conducted as one-on-ones to best simulate authentic experiences of workers walking to their vehicles or transportation options after their shift.
- Work with place-based organizations to establish Ambassador Safety Program in nightlife hubs.
- Establish training framework for nightlife establishments to ensure safety, compliance, and high-quality service.



TRANSPORTATION

WORK WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS TO ENHANCE LATE-NIGHT TRANSPORTATION FOR PATRONS AND WORKERS.

Transportation challenges to and from work were frequently cited as major challenges by nightlife workers in the focus group. Nearly one out of every three surveyed businesses cited employee parking as a major operational challenge. Limited transportation options and expensive parking lot fees contribute to safety concerns, as workers are forced to park far from their place of employment.

Recommended Action Steps

- Collaborate with place-based organizations, developers, and property owners to offer discounted parking rates for nightlife workers.
- Develop partnerships with rideshare companies and explore opportunities for discounted nightlife worker rideshares.
- Facilitate a roundtable(s) with rideshare drivers to discuss opportunities for improving late-night safety with workers and patrons as well as relevant issues and trends drivers are experiencing.
- Support current and future efforts to enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Establish a Task Force with local and regional transportation partners to enhance late-night transit. This Task Force should include a comprehensive set of transportation stakeholders to help advocate for and tackle late-night transportation challenges.



NIGHTLIFE DISTRICTS

CREATE MORE VIBRANT HUBS ORIENTED FOR CONCENTRATED LATE-NIGHT ACTIVITY.

There is consumer demand for new, dynamic places to go out in Atlanta. New designated nightlife districts create an opportunity to test out measures to better manage nightlife in clusters throughout the city and can play a key role in attracting more regional and national visitors to help with the post-COVID decline in the nightlife customer base.

Recommended Action Steps

- Build on strategies developed by the Nightlife Division and Nightlife Advisory Council to establish a new pilot nightlife district designed for concentrated late-night activity with enhanced placemaking, safety conditions, and marketing. Consider some or all of the following features: increased APD and public safety presence between, increased volume of blue light cameras, improved street lighting, traffic control plans, and parking and rideshare plans.
- Conduct a Suitability Assessment to identify the most suitable areas for a new pilot district among pre-identified areas. This study should (a) identify measurements of success for a pilot district, (b) identify supply of nearby land uses to support pilot district goals; (c) assess receptivity to a pilot district among local stakeholders, including residents, property owners, and current and prospective business owners; and (d) identify catalytic opportunity to increase investment and draw.
- Engage nightlife management leadership from other cities with established nightlife districts and/or similar models to learn best practices and relevant challenges for creating and managing such district(s).



MARKETING AND BRANDING

LEVERAGE ATLANTA'S LEGACY NIGHTLIFE BRAND TO STRENGTHEN THE INDUSTRY'S CUSTOMER BASE.

Businesses and customers are being impacted by rising operational costs and a rising cost of living. Overnight tourism has only recently rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.

Recommended Action Steps

- Collaborate with Atlanta Convention and Visitor Bureau to help leverage the Nightlife Study to better market the city's nightlife ecosystem.
- Highlight the pilot nightlife district through community engagement events in the area.



ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

ENSURE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC RESILIENCY OF ATLANTA'S DISTINCT NIGHTLIFE ECOSYSTEM.

Of surveyed businesses, 95% reported a significant increase in expenses over the past two years. Only 42% reported an increase in sales over the same period. These challenges are more pronounced for bars and clubs. Customer traffic has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels for 57% of businesses.



ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Recommended Action Steps

- Engage collaboratively with City Council to assess current ordinances that may adversely affect nightlife businesses. Develop recommendations for legislative interventions aimed at enhancing economic growth and patron satisfaction in the nightlife sector.
- Partner with Invest ATL to hire a dedicated nightlife business consultant to provide individualized assistance and leverage existing Invest ATL business support infrastructure.
- Ensure non-traditional nightlife businesses with notable late-night operations (such as barber shops, bowling alleys) remain constituents in the Nightlife Division and are included in future technical assistance opportunities.
- Advocate for improved enforcement and enhanced licensing and permitting efficiency.
- Advocate for a review of parking plan requirements to obtain liquor license to ensure requirements are not overly burdensome and consider varying parking needs by establishment type and location.
- Strengthen accountability of parking lot operators to ensure safe lot conditions. Consider tying license renewal to specific safety requirements, such as quality lighting, and on-site security.
- Enhance enforcement of fake parking lot attendants.



COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION

PROACTIVELY BUILD CONNECTIONS AMONG NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS OWNERS AND WORKERS.

Nightlife business owners/operators and nightlife workers each stressed the challenges of isolation and other distinct challenges of working in the nightlife industry. Attracting, hiring, and retaining employees was the second-most cited challenge among business owners (46%).

Recommended Action Steps

- Create a webpage specific for the Nightlife Division that communicates the work and role of the Nightlife Division, resources, and points of contact for nightlife stakeholders.
- Develop a user-friendly, centralized website to serve as a digital resource for nightlife operators and employees. Build off national model(s) for nightlife worker resources, such as NYC’s ELEVATE Nightlife Health & Wellbeing Initiative, applicable to the scale of Atlanta. Content may include financial planning resources, healthcare, business planning, and more.
- Continue coordinated events with certification opportunities for nightlife operators and workforce, along with opportunities to discuss operational challenges, solutions, and relevant local news. Encourage socialization and connection at these events.
- Continue conducting assessments to improve knowledge and skills of nightlife business owners and staff, and to improve compliance with City regulations.

RECOMMENDED TOP PRIORITIES | FIVE BIG WINS

The newly established Nightlife Division is still growing its presence throughout the city’s nightlife community and has finite resources to implement the comprehensive list of recommended action items detailed in this report. Therefore, it is recommended that the Nightlife Division identifies a set of achievable “big wins” that can directly address some of the most immediate challenges facing the industry.

Pilot a Nightlife Safety Initiative. Safety and transportation are the two most immediate challenges facing Atlanta’s nightlife, and the two challenges are intrinsically connected, as many safety concerns relate to a lack of nearby parking or transit options. As such, the Nightlife Division should explore the creation of a new initiative to directly address one or both challenges. Potential components of a safety-oriented initiative may include but should not be limited to (a) grants to fund security investments at nightlife businesses, or (b) adding street lighting and/or ambassadors to nightlife hubs. The ultimate structure and components of the initiative should be based on Nightlife Division staff capacity and receptivity of public and private partners.

Develop a Late-Night Transportation Initiative. The Nightlife Division should explore the creation of a new initiative with the direct goal of enhancing late-night transportation options around major nightlife hubs. Potential components of this initiative may include, but should not be limited to, (a) discounted nightlife worker rideshare program, and (b) extended bus and rail service hours.

Create Online Nightlife Resource Platform. Several stakeholders expressed a desire for an online resource with a consolidated list of resources catered to the unique needs and challenges of nightlife business operators and workers. The development of such a resource aligns with the capabilities and mission of the newly established Nightlife Division and can help create a platform to not only share existing resources, but promote future events, funding opportunities, regulatory changes, and other relevant local updates that impact the nightlife industry.

Launch a Premier Nightlife District. The Nightlife Division can lead efforts to build off the work by the Nightlife Advisory Council and help establish a new pilot nightlife district designed for concentrated late-night activity with enhanced placemaking, safety conditions, and marketing. This district has the potential to create a new exciting new place to go out, while also serving as a testing ground for nightlife management strategies that can be applied to other nightlife hubs in the city.

Identify and Update Key Ordinances Affecting Nightlife Businesses. The Nightlife Division should leverage its nuanced understanding of nightlife business operations and network of industry relationships to advocate for updates to ordinances that limit the economic resiliency, safety, access, and quality of nightlife businesses. These may include but are not limited to hours of operations, holiday hours, parking requirements, and noise ordinances.

MODELS OF SUCCESS

Short North Employee Mobility Benefits Programs & Downtown Austin Affordable Parking Program. Columbus’s Short North Alliance provides workers with discount codes for rideshare, scooter, and bikeshare trips, as well as discounted bus passes and parking garage fees. In Austin, TX, the City and Downtown Austin Alliance partnered to provide service and entertainment industry employees with discounted parking garage rates from 3pm-7am during the week and up to 24 hours during the weekend.

New York City ELEVATE Initiative. ELEVATE initiative is a program launched by New York City’s Office of Nightlife to provide affordable health services and wellness resources to the nightlife community. The initiative offers counseling services, harm reduction and stress management workshops, de-escalation training, and other events and forums where owners, workers, and other industry stakeholders can connect and collaborate.

Designated Nightlife Districts Across US. There are several prominent examples of successful nightlife districts that attract robust regional and national visitation. Well-known examples include Broadway in Nashville, Beale Street in Memphis, and Wynwood in Miami. New York City is also currently exploring a 24-hour district concept, where businesses (in select areas with low residential density) can apply to 24-hour licenses, with strict applicant criteria pertaining to safety, public transit access, and midweek programming.



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Action Steps	Priority Level	Resource Intensity	Timing	Partners
SAFETY & SECURITY Enhance real and perceived safety around nightlife establishments and clusters.				
Explore developing a grant program to incentivize business investment in enhanced patron and worker safety. Such a program may involve providing matching funds to local nightlife businesses to install lighting and cameras or hiring security.	High	High	Mid-Term	Invest ATL, Business Improvement Districts, Chamber of Commerce, Local business community
Work with place-based organizations such as BIDs to invest in street lighting and placemaking efforts to enhance safety in nightlife hubs.	High	Moderate	Mid-Term	BIDs and other place mgmt. organizations
Conduct Worker Walkalongs where nightlife leadership walk one-on-one with workers to/from their vehicles to understand perceptions of walking at night and opportunities to create safer experiences. (Example: Bristol)	High	Low	Near-Term	City staff, APD, Local businesses and workers
Work with place-based organizations to establish Ambassador Safety Program in nightlife hubs.	High	Moderate	Near-Term	BIDs and other place mgmt. organizations
Establish training framework for nightlife establishments to ensure safety, compliance, and high-quality service.	Moderate	Moderate	Mid-Term	City staff, APD, Local businesses and workers
TRANSPORTATION Work with partners to enhance late-night transportation for patrons and workers.				
Collaborate with place-based organizations, developers, and property owners to offer discounted parking rates for nightlife workers. (Example: Short North Alliance's Employee Mobility Benefits Program; Austin Affordable Parking Program)	High	High	Mid-Term	Place-based orgs., business owners and workers, parking facility operators
Develop partnerships with rideshare companies and explore opportunities for discounted nightlife worker rideshares.	Moderate	High	Mid-Term	Uber, Lyft, etc.
Facilitate a roundtable(s) with rideshare drivers to discuss opportunities for improving late-night safety with workers and patrons as well as relevant issues and trends drivers are experiencing.	Moderate	Low	Near-Term	Rideshare drivers
Support current and future efforts to enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.	Low	Low	Long-Term	Dept of City Planning, Dept. of Transportation
Establish a Task Force with local and regional transportation partners to enhance late-night transit.	Moderate	Moderate	Mid-Term	A-DOT, MARTA, Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority, Uber, Lyft, HERide ¹

¹ HERide is an Atlanta-based women-owned ridesharing platform launched in 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



Action Steps	Priority Level	Resource Intensity	Timing	Partners
NIGHTLIFE DISTRICTS Create more vibrant hubs oriented for concentrated late-night activity.				
Build off strategies developed by the Nightlife Advisory Council to establish a new pilot nightlife district designed for concentrated late-night activity with enhanced placemaking, safety conditions, and marketing. Consider some or all of the following features: increased APD and public safety presence, increased volume of blue light cameras, improved street lightening, traffic control plans, and parking and ride share plans.	High	Moderate	Mid-Term	APD, Dept. of Planning, Office of Zoning & Development, property owners, community groups
Conduct a Suitability Assessment to identify the most suitable areas for a new pilot district among pre-identified areas. This study should (a) identify measurements of success for a pilot district, (b) identify supply of nearby land uses to support pilot district goals; (c) assess receptivity to a pilot district among local stakeholders, including residents, property owners, and current and prospective business owners; and (d) identify catalytic opportunity to increase investment and draw.	Medium	Moderate	Near-Term	Outside consultant
Engage nightlife management leadership from other cities with established nightlife districts and/or similar models to learn best practices and relevant challenges for creating and managing such district(s).	High	Low	Near-Term	City staff and place management orgs. from model districts



MARKETING & BRANDING Leverage Atlanta's legacy nightlife brand to strengthen its customer base.				
Collaborate with Atlanta Convention and Visitor Bureau to help leverage the Nightlife Study to better market the city's nightlife ecosystem.	Moderate	Low	Near-Term	Atlanta CVB
Highlight the pilot nightlife district through community engagement events in the area.	Low	Low	Long-Term	Atlanta CVB

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



Action Steps	Priority Level	Resource Intensity	Timing	Partners
ECONOMIC RESILIENCY Ensure long-term economic resiliency of Atlanta's distinct nightlife ecosystem.				
Engage collaboratively with City Council to assess current ordinances that may adversely affect nightlife businesses.	Moderate	Low	Mid-Term	Local business community, Office of Zoning & Development
Partner with Invest ATL to hire a dedicated nightlife business consultant to provide individualized assistance and leverage existing Invest ATL business support infrastructure.	Low	Moderate	Mid-Term	Invest ATL
Ensure non-traditional nightlife businesses with notable late-night operations (such as barber shops, bowling alleys) remain constituents in the Nightlife Division are included in future technical assistance opportunities.	Moderate	Low	Ongoing	Business owners and workers
Advocate for improved enforcement and enhanced licensing and permitting efficiency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for a review of parking plan requirements to obtain liquor license to ensure requirements are not overly burdensome and consider varying parking needs by establishment type and location. Strengthen accountability of parking lot operators to ensure safe lot conditions. Consider tying license renewal to specific safety requirements, such as quality lighting, on-site security. Enhance enforcement of fake parking lot attendants. Explore opportunity to grandfather in nightlife businesses within 300 feet of residential uses constructed after the opening of said business. Adjusted noise ordinance may also consider business's track record of compliance and fiscal standing with the City. 	High	Moderate	Near-Term	Office of Zoning and Development, APD



COLLABORATION & CONNECTION Proactively build connections among business owners and workers.				
Develop a user-friendly, centralized website to serve as a digital resource for nightlife operators and employees. Build off national model(s) for nightlife worker resources, such as NYC's ELEVATE Nightlife Health & Wellbeing Initiative, applicable to the scale of Atlanta. Content may include financial planning, healthcare, business planning, and more.	High	Moderate	Mid-Term	Atlanta Department of Labor and Employment Services, outside consultant
Continue coordinated events with certification opportunities for nightlife operators and workforce, along with opportunities to discuss operational challenges, solutions, and relevant local news. Encourage socialization and connection at these events.	Moderate	Moderate	Ongoing	Local businesses and workers
Continue conducting assessments to improve knowledge and skills of nightlife business owners and staff, and to improve compliance with City regulations.	Moderate	Moderate	Ongoing	Local businesses and workers, Dept. of Labor and Employment Services, APD, Atlanta Fire & Rescue
Create a webpage specific for the Nightlife Division.	High	Low	Near-Term	City staff

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Nightlife Consumer Survey, 2024

SPECIAL THANKS

This report acknowledges the individuals and organizations that participated in informational interviews to inform this study, including Discover Atlanta, Invest Atlanta, Midtown Alliance, Dentons, Spartan Protective Services, Georgia Restaurant Association, Atlanta Restaurant Association, Midtown Alliance, Ohio River South, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, and the 80+ nightlife business owners and workers who participated in industry focus groups.



APPENDIX

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE CONSUMER SURVEY INSIGHTS

When do you most frequently go out at night? Share of Responses

Monday	10%
Tuesday	13%
Wednesday	16%
Thursday	36%
Friday	82%
Saturday	87%
Sunday	28%

What time do you usually start your night out? Share of Responses

Before 7pm	21%
7pm – 9pm	39%
9pm – 11pm	27%
After 11pm	13%

What time do you usually end your night out? Share of Responses

Before 10pm	14%
10pm – 12am	33%
12am – 2am	28%
After 2am	25%

Over the past six months, how often did you go out at night? Share of Responses

Once a Week	66%
2 – 4 Times a Week	34%
Every Day	0%

During a typical night out, how many businesses do you frequent? Share of Responses

None	0.4%
Only 1 Business	35%
2 – 3 Businesses	62%
4 – 5 Businesses	2%
More than 5 Businesses	0%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE CONSUMER SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

How much do you typically spend at businesses during a night out?	Share of Responses
Under \$20	3%
\$20 - \$50	27%
\$50 - \$100	37%
\$100 - \$200	27%
Over \$200	6%

What type of nightlife activities do you mainly frequent in Atlanta?	Share of Responses
Restaurants	84%
Bars and Pubs	76%
Live Music Venues/Concerts	58%
Theater/Cinema	34%
Night Clubs	33%
Outdoor Events	25%
Art Galleries	23%
Game Centers (Bowling, Arcades, Topgolf, Escape Rooms, etc.)	17%
Comedy Clubs	15%
Adult Entertainment	8%

What is your preferred method of transportation when going out at night?	Share of Responses
Personal Car	44%
Rideshare (Lyft, Uber, Taxi, etc.)	43%
Walking	6%
MARTA Rail	6%
Bike	2%
MARTA Bus	0.4%
Scooter	0.4%

Over the past year, do you go out at night...	Share of Responses
More Frequently	18%
Less Often	49%
About the Same	33%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE CONSUMER SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

Over the next year, do you expect to go out at night...	Share of Responses
More Frequently	11%
Less Often	26%
About the Same	63%

How would you rate the quality of Atlanta's nightlife scene?	Share of Responses
Excellent	5%
Good	48%
Neutral	30%
Poor	14%
Very Poor	3%

How important is it for you to have a family-friendly atmosphere when going out at night in Atlanta?	Share of Responses
Extremely Important	16%
Important	10%
Somewhat Important	26%
Not Important	48%

How important are the following factors when choosing Atlanta's nightlife scene? (Scale of 1 to 5, 5=Very Important)	Factor Rating
Safety	4.4
Ambiance/Atmosphere	4.2
Location	4.1
Accessibility (Parking, Walkability, Public Transportation)	3.7
Entertainment Options	3.6
Crowd Size	3.6
Cost	3.5

Do you plan on attending any of the following upcoming events in Atlanta?	Share of Responses
Atlanta Pride Parade October 2024 or 2025	55%
FIFA World Cup - June/July 2026	54%
ONE Musicfest October 2024 or 2025	22%
Chick-Fil-A Peach Bowl January 2025	17%
NCAA March Madness – March 2025	16%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE CONSUMER SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

Age	Share of Responses
Under 18 Years Old	0%
18 – 24 Years Old	5%
25 – 34 Years Old	36%
35 – 44 Years Old	27%
45 – 54 Years Old	17%
55 – 64 Years Old	8%
65 – 75 Years Old	5%
Over 75 Years Old	1%

Gender	Share of Responses
Male	48%
Female	45%
Nonbinary	5%
Other	0%
Prefer Not to Answer	2%

Annual Household Income	Share of Responses
Under \$15,000	0.4%
Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	4%
Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	7%
Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	12%
Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	15%
Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	20%
Between \$150,000 and \$200,000	15%
Over \$200,000	27%

Are there any children you are the parent or guardian for who live in your household (aged 17 or younger only)?	Share of Responses
Yes	16%
No	80%
Prefer Not to Answer	4%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE CONSUMER SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

Race/Ethnicity	Share of Responses
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian or Asian American	5%
Black or African American	25%
Hispanic or Latino	9%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
White	55%
Another Race	1%
Prefer Not to Answer	9%

Current Relationship Status	Share of Responses
Married	38%
Widowed	1%
Divorced	4%
Separated	1%
In a Domestic Partnership or Civil Union	8%
Single, but Cohabiting with a Significant Other	9%
Single, Never Married	33%
Prefer Not to Answer	5%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS*

Business Type	Share of Responses
Restaurant	25%
Bar / Lounge	13%
Night Club	2%
Theater, Music Venue, or Other Event Venue	15%
Barbershop / Beauty Salon	0%
Strip Club / Adult Entertainment	2%
Recording Studio	2%
Independent Artist	1%
Recreation	5%
Convention Center	4%
Tattoo Parlor	2%
Hotel	0%
Merchandise Retail	1%
Other	2%

Does your business have a City-issued General Business License?	Share of Responses
Yes	83%
No	8%
Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer	9%

Which alcohol license class does your business possess?	Share of Responses
Consumption on premises	51%
Temporary License	1%
Retail Package	0%
Special Events with Alcohol	4%
Wholesaler Inside City	0%
No License	37%
Don't Know / Prefer Not to Answer	4%
Other	4%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

*Business owner/operator survey data reflects responses from all business types, including core and ancillary nightlife industries. Data points in Appendix may not align with data points cited in report, due to selected data points being by for core nightlife industries only.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

Does your business have any of the following City-issued licenses?	Share of Responses
Adult Dance Hall	20%
Teen Dance Hall	2%
Adult Entertainment	22%
Other	60%

Does your business have a performance space (a stage or other space used for live music, comedy, plays, or other live entertainment)?	Share of Responses
Yes	35%
No	65%

If you offer live music, what type or types of music do you offer?	Share of Responses
DJs	44%
Live music	36%
We do not offer live music	43%
Other	8%

If you offer entertainment, what type or types of entertainment do you offer?	Share of Responses
Comedy	21%
Poetry	17%
Speakers Or Readings	20%
Trivia, Bingo, And Other Hosted Games	19%
Theater	18%
Art Installations	21%
Exotic Dance	4%
Drag, Cabaret, Or Similar Events	12%
Mini Golf	0%
Bowling	1%
Other Social Sports (Pool, Bocce, Corn Hole, Etc.)	4%
We Do Not Offer Entertainment	36%
Other	19%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

What days of the week is your business open?	Share of Responses
Monday	76%
Tuesday	83%
Wednesday	90%
Thursday	96%
Friday	98%
Saturday	96%
Sunday	74%

What percentage (approximately) of your revenue is generated during the following days of the week?	Share of Responses	
	Weekday (Monday through Friday at 5pm)	Weekend (Friday at 5pm through Sunday)
0-9%	4.6%	1.5%
10-19%	8.3%	2.2%
20-29%	17.4%	5.9%
30-39%	19.7%	5.9%
40-49%	18.2%	10.5%
50-59%	9.9%	14.9%
60-69%	6.8%	20.2%
70-79%	6.8%	19.4%
80-89%	1.5%	10.5%
90-100%	6.8%	8.9%

How many employees do you currently employ?	Share of Responses	
	Full-Time	Part-Time
Fewer than 10	56%	63%
10 – 25	25%	21%
25 – 50	8%	8%
50 – 100	7%	3%
Over 100	4%	6%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

How many employees do you currently employ?	Share of Responses	
	Full-Time	Part-Time
Less than 10	56%	63%
10 – 25	25%	21%
25 – 50	8%	8%
50 – 100	7%	3%
Over 100	4%	6%

What percent of employment occurs at the following times?	Share of Responses				
	9am – 5pm	5pm – 9pm	9pm – 12am	12am – 2am	2am – 5am
0-9%	15.0%	4.5%	16.3%	47.5%	72.3%
10-19%	14.3%	9.0%	19.8%	11.8%	8.6%
20-29%	16.5%	17.3%	19.8%	15.3%	8.5%
30-39%	6.8%	10.5%	14.0%	10.2%	4.3%
40-49%	6.0%	12.8%	2.3%	3.4%	2.1%
50-59%	9.8%	8.3%	7.0%	1.7%	0.0%
60-69%	2.3%	6.8%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%
70-79%	7.5%	7.5%	2.3%	1.7%	0.0%
80-89%	9.0%	6.8%	3.5%	1.7%	2.1%
90-100%	12.8%	16.5%	11.6%	6.8%	2.1%

What percent of your employees are full-time vs. part-time?	Share of Responses	
	Full-Time	Part-Time
0-9%	13.9%	13.7%
10-19%	11.1%	9.4%
20-29%	9.0%	7.3%
30-39%	3.5%	9.4%
40-49%	7.6%	9.4%
50-59%	6.3%	8.7%
60-69%	9.0%	7.3%
70-79%	9.7%	4.4%
80-89%	11.1%	14.5%
90-100%	18.8%	15.9%

Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding and respondents being able to select more than one answer.

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

What percentage of your revenue is generated during the following times of days?	Share of Responses				
	5am – 5pm	5pm – 9pm	9pm – 12am	12am – 2am	2am – 5am
0-9%	22.4%	5.0%	15.8%	35.0%	68.8%
10-19%	15.5%	12.5%	13.5%	13.3%	10.4%
20-29%	14.6%	13.3%	11.2%	15.0%	10.4%
30-39%	8.6%	15.8%	22.5%	18.3%	4.2%
40-49%	3.5%	11.7%	7.9%	5.0%	4.2%
50-59%	11.2%	8.3%	12.4%	6.7%	0.0%
60-69%	4.3%	3.3%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%
70-79%	4.3%	5.0%	2.3%	1.7%	6.3%
80-89%	6.0%	15.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
90-100%	9.5%	10.0%	5.6%	5.0%	0.0%

How has your annual revenue and expenses changed over the last 24 months?	Share of Responses	
	Revenue	Expenses
Significant Increase (Over 20%)	11%	53%
Moderate Increase (Over 10%)	13%	24%
Slight Increase (Up To 10%)	16%	14%
Stayed The Same	11%	2%
Slight Decrease (Up To -10%)	11%	1%
Moderate Decrease (-10-20%)	16%	1%
Significant Decrease (More Than 20% Decline)	18%	1%
Unsure	6%	1%

How do your current customer traffic levels compare to pre-pandemic levels?	Share of Responses
Customer traffic is above pre-pandemic levels.	19%
Customer traffic is below pre-pandemic levels.	48%
Customer traffic is about the same as pre-pandemic levels.	17%
Business opened after the start of the pandemic.	10%
Unsure	6%

What is your outlook on your business over the next two years?	Share of Responses
I believe my business will close within two years.	8%
I believe my business will contract within two years.	11%
I believe my business will stay about the same size.	40%
I believe my business will expand.	41%

ATLANTA NIGHTLIFE BUSINESS SURVEY INSIGHTS (CONT.)

What services offered by the City of Atlanta's Nightlife Division have you recently engaged with and wish to see continued?	Share of Responses
On-Site One-on-One Assessments	5%
Permitting Assistance	11%
Training Day (Stop the Bleed, Narcan, CPR, Active Shooter)	14%
Holiday Advisory Alerts	9%
Presence at Grand Openings	10%
None of the Above	67%
Other	7%

What additional services would you like to see from the City of Atlanta's Nightlife Division that could help support businesses like yours?	Share of Responses
More Training	22%
More Permitting Assistance	32%
More Assessments	8%
More City Presence at Grand Openings	22%
More APD Presence at Night	63%
More Street Lighting/Street Cameras	56%
More Traffic Control Assistance	24%
Other	17%

Which of the following categories apply to the ownership of your business?	Share of Responses
Black or African American-Owned Business	31%
Latino or Hispanic-Owned Business	4%
Asian or Pacific Islander-Owned Business	5%
Woman-Owned Business	28%
LGBTQ+-Owned Business	8%
None of the Above	30%
Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer	11%

What district is your business located in?	Share of Responses		
District 1	8%	District 7	3%
District 2	27%	District 8	3%
District 3	9%	District 9	8%
District 4	11%	District 10	0%
District 5	15%	District 11	1%
District 6	17%	District 12	1%

