

GERALD MCDOWELL

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“It’s kind of fun to do the impossible” is the outlook of the well-respected and acclaimed industry expert for community and city improvements, Gerald McDowell. This Walt Disney mindset is attributed to much of McDowell’s success and the all-inclusive idea of raising the collective value of communities. With over 30 years of professional experience, McDowell is humbled by his experiences and remains diligent in his commitment to provide a strong, safe, attractive, and vibrant community for South Metro Atlanta.

McDowell, a graduate of DeVry University in Atlanta, GA, received his B.S. in Computer Information Systems in 1987. For over 18 years, McDowell evolved in the IT industry, effectively managing over 75 projects and roughly 120 employees, in more than 40 states and 12 countries. His seamless ability to empower culturally diverse teams while delivering measurable results is a value add and a true testament to his leadership.

McDowell made a significant career transition when he incorporated his IT skills and leadership capabilities to the world of community improvement and development. He began with the Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District (now Gateway 85 CID) and Gwinnett Village Community Alliance where he served as a Director of Community Development for four years. He successfully signed and engaged more than 250 commercial property owners, generating over \$700 million in property value. He was also instrumental in creating the Gwinnett Village Merchant’s Association.

With such astonishing achievements being recognized throughout the community, McDowell was recruited to spearhead the Lilburn CID. He proudly served as their first Executive Director, for five years, and was instrumental in securing over two million dollars in grant funding.

His positive execution as a community influencer sparked the interest of the Airport West CID (AWCID), where in 2015, he was recruited to serve as their Executive Director. Less than six months later, AWCID partnered with Airport South CID (ASCID) and agreed to unite their efforts under the name ATL Airport Community Improvement Districts (AACIDs) (formerly Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs).

McDowell successfully manages the over three-million-dollar operational budget for both entities. Under his tenure, the AACIDs have received more than \$100 million in grants and project funding and several awards including: 2019 ACEC Georgia Engineering Excellence Award, 2019 ITS GA Project of Significance, 2019 GPA Georgia Outstanding Initiative, 2019 GPA Outstanding Planning Process, and the 2019 ARC Livable Communities Initiative Grant Recipient.

McDowell has spoken both domestically and internationally on various community improvement topics such as: technology, transit and transportation, safety, infrastructure and way-finding. Some of his speaking engagements include: 2016 and 2019 Sustainable Airport Area International Seminar (SAAIS), 2016 and 2017 Aerotropolis Asia Conference in Singapore and Malaysia (respectively), 2017 Automated Driving Systems in Washington, D.C., 2017 Metro Atlanta Redevelopment Summit, the 2018 and 2019 State of the Aerotropolis and the 2021 Podcar City Conference in Atlanta, GA.

His leadership has been recognized by various organizations with awards consisting of: serving as a member of the inaugural USDOT Leadership Academy conducted by the former U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, 2008 graduate of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development, 2009 graduate of the Gwinnett Neighborhood Leadership Institute, 2015 South Fulton Chamber Award, 2016 ABL Award, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Notable Georgian by Georgia Trend, and a 2019 graduate of Leadership Atlanta. In addition, Gerald received the first CID Professional Excellence Award recognized by Council for Quality Growth in 2020.

He currently serves on the boards for the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance, Council for Quality Growth, Georgia Foreign Trade Zone, Georgia Chamber, New Life Community Center and Project ReStart.



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