



Press Release

Date: October 1, 2018

Re: Real Estate Investment Advisory Council
Third Quarter Presentation "Take Me Out to the Ballpark"
SunTrust Park, Atlanta Braves Stadium

On Tuesday September 25th, The Real Estate Investment Advisory Council ventured away from its usual Buckhead venue to bring together the developers and firms that made possible SunTrust Park and The Battery, the wildly successful mixed-use development that is home to the Atlanta Braves.

A capacity crowd of Atlanta real estate professionals was treated to the high-level expertise and experience of:

Tad Leithead, Moderator, and Executive Director of the Cumberland CID;

Mike Plant, President and CEO of Development, Atlanta Braves;

Michael Blair, COO of Pollack Shores Real Estate Group;

Jon McCabe, Executive Vice President, ThyssenKrupp Elevator; and

Mason Zimmerman, Senior Managing Partner, Pope & Land



The presentation began with a reminder from REIAC president Jerry Monash that the panelists represented a “going full circle” recap of an earlier REIAC event in 2014 “**New Stadiums’ Impact on Real Estate Development**” in which the Braves described the vision and the concept that would eventually become the bricks-and-mortar stadium and entertainment venue.

Michael Plant recalled that the formation of the new stadium began in 2011, when he realized that the Braves needed a new environment that could not be created at the existing location (and the City of Atlanta was not excited about the idea of renovations and additions to Turner Field). He observed that fans did not

like the disconnected location of Turner Field, or the lack of any form of entertainment or energy of the immediately surrounding areas. Plant would watch fans leave the game in the sixth inning to beat the traffic jam out, and get back home.

With a stadium lease expiration looming in 2016, the Braves pulled the trigger in 2014 with the Cobb County announcement.

Mike describes the next 30 months of creating 2.5 million square feet of new mixed-use development in a compressed timeframe as something “I’m not going to do again.” Nonetheless, he gladly describes the Battery as “a mixed-use development that happens to have a baseball stadium in it.”

While the Braves development team looked at 26 different potential sites, all but one were eliminated fairly quickly. Settling in on the Cobb County location, Mike pointed out that [Cobb County Commissioner] Tim Lee was “**one of the very few politicians that understood what an IRR is.**”

Plant readily points out that many critics cite Public-Private-Partnerships (P3) as losers for the overall community, which would be the case if The Braves had built only a stadium. But the Battery is what supports the whole deal. Two seasons after opening, The Battery is performing above expectations.

The bottom line for the Braves is that *game attendance has increased by 500,000 fans annually as compared to the last year at Turner Field. And with 9,000 fewer seats in SunTrust Park.*



REIAC members and guests fill the Hank Aaron Terrace at Braves Stadium

Michael Blair of Pollack Shores points to the **“halo effect” of the Atlanta Braves and the Battery** in the rising apartment rents in the development.

During its planning process in 2014, Pollack Shores estimated that apartments rents in the area were \$1.45 per square foot. For the apartment units in the Battery, though, Pollack Shores determined that the added attraction of the Braves and the entertainment and retail factor would bring rents up to \$1.85. Nonetheless, to make the deal work, rents needed to hit \$2.00 per square foot.

Taking a “leap of faith,” Pollack Shores went forward; four years later, the average per square foot rent in the Battery has surpassed \$2.00. Blair further points out, that \$1.45 rent elsewhere in the Cumberland submarket has become \$1.75 per square foot. As well, there are 17 apartment projects completed or under construction since 2013, all of which add to the property tax base for Cobb County.

Mason Zimmerman of Pope & Land points out a similar halo effect in office rents. As developer of the Comcast building at the Battery, he notes that the average office rents in the Cumberland market, pre-stadium, was in the high \$20s. The Comcast building rent is now in the \$30s. Class A and class B office properties saw their rents increase, as well as sales values and refinance values. **The Braves Stadium and The Battery was “transformative in lifting all boats.”**

Jon McCabe of Thyssen-Krupp recalls top executives visiting from Germany on a non-game day felt the “Wow, there’s lots to do here” factor while touring the area for a new office / headquarters location. Three of the top ten grossing restaurants in the Atlanta MSA are located in The Battery.

Thyssen-Krupp will be building a 420-foot tall building close by, Cobb County’s largest, which will contain 10 elevator shafts as part of a technology testing facility. And with a bird-eye observation deck on top which can hold 150 guests.

Pollack Shores also honed in on the “what else is there to do here” factor in operating its properties. Blair notes that the common areas of The Battery are replete with various programming to keep the environment lively.

“It’s all about the balance at The Battery.” Yoga in the mornings, concerts, college game day watching on weekends, and the increasingly popular corn-hole tournaments create a 365-day vibe that is “the coolness of the rest of The Battery, the overall experience.”

Mike Plant concludes, The Braves Stadium and The Battery see **six million visitors per year**. 2.5 million visitors come for the 81-day game schedule; the remaining 3.5 million visit during non-game days.

The presentation wrapped up with a special treat for REIAC members, a private tour of the Braves Stadium, including the Braves Hall of Fame, the Monument Garden, and a trip to the dugout and field, despite a sudden downpour (even REIAC has rain delays!).



Touring the Braves Hall of Fame and Monument Garden

REIAC

The Real Estate Investment Advisory Council (REIAC) was established as a nonprofit trade association to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, concerns and experiences among senior executives who conduct commercial real estate transactions. The Southeast chapter of REIAC was founded in 1994.

REIAC is an exclusive, principals-only national fellowship of top real estate executives that offers superior educational events, networking opportunities and community service. REIAC's institutional quality programs are presented in a social environment where members can share experiences and knowledge with their peers. REIAC events encourage members to broaden horizons and develop personal relationships that further their success within the industry.



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Some REIAC board members "Brave-ing" the elements