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Turning Point Essay

There are many aspects of this trip to Atlanta that have definitely changed my perspective on the city as a whole. Before we actually took the trip (and even before fall classes actually started), I went and looked at Atlanta on google maps just so I could get a glimpse of what the trip would have in store for me. When I looked, I saw many of the landmarks throughout the city which really made me excited to have the opportunity to explore the area. Before going, I definitely had the feeling that the whole city of atlanta was mostly a metropolitan sort of area entirely. I felt this way all the way up until we had our neighborhood presentations in class. Once I found out about some of the other neighborhoods within Atlanta, I finally realized that Atlanta was much like central Virginia. We have our notable downtown area, but there are also more suburban areas surrounding it like Chesterfield, Virginia.

When researching about the different neighborhoods, I remember how we discussed in class about how many parts of Atlanta have different non-profits because of all the millennials that are attracted to the area. This was definitely evident as we were walking around for our explorations. One of the neighborhoods I visited was Midtown, and it was very noticeable even as we first got off the marta. In my experience, this isn’t as noticeable in the Richmond area. This could just be because I’m usually not as observant when I’m in an area that I am pretty familiar with.

Another thing I was pretty wary about was the Marta system. While I’m not opposed to public transportation and I find it actually pretty useful, I was a little nervous to use the system in an area I wasn’t familiar with; however, after experiencing it first hand, I was excited whenever we got the chance to ride the Marta because I absolutely loved it. It was an amazing system to get around the city and was fairly easy to navigate which made the experience less nerve wracking. It wasn’t until we also had the use the Marta bus system which was definitely a whole different situation. This system was a lot more complicated and we definitely tried to steer away from the bus system if at all possible. After experiencing the Marta system in Atlanta, I kind of wish that richmond would adopt a metro system because it's definitely super useful in order to navigate the city.

Another thing I definitely miss about the city of Atlanta is how welcoming the city felt. The overall feeling I got from the city was a positive/friendly vibe. You can walk almost everywhere which I absolutely loved as well as how friends the residents were in general. Just by exploring the areas, we were able to meet so many nice residents in the community. I also miss the warm feeling of Decatur. It was really amazing to see how amazing that neighborhood was, especially once we found out that it was a very dog friendly neighborhood. They had community events almost every week and the fact that almost every business had a water bowl for dogs to drink out of made me really fall in love with the area.

Atlanta was definitely one of the areas that I was looking to move to after I graduate college because of the media influence located in the city. After taking this class and seeing how much the city actually appeals to me, it’s definitely moved up my list of places to live. Overall, I’m glad this class allowed me to experience the true atmosphere of Atlanta and to change my perspective of living in a “big city”.