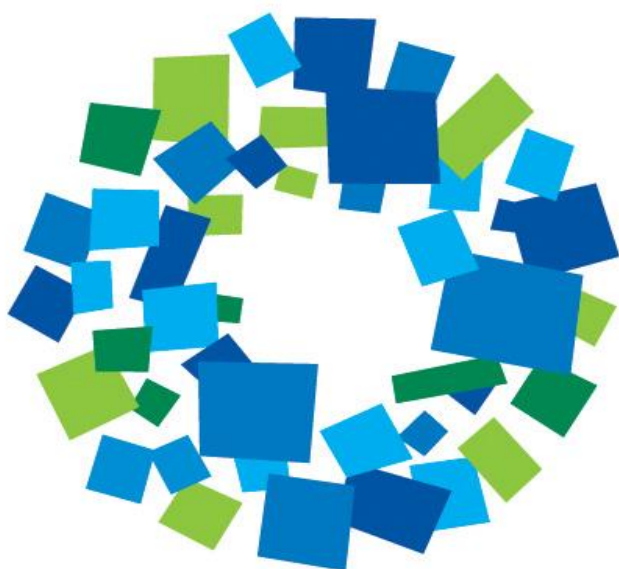




AN ATLANTA BELTLINE FOR ALL

**Equitable Development
Assessment**



Commissioned by Atlanta BeltLine Partnership

with support from The Ford Foundation

September 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sponsor by Atlanta Beltline Partnership

The Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP) is a nonprofit formed in 2005 to raise funds through private and philanthropic sources to complement public financing for the Atlanta BeltLine; to educate and build community support for the Atlanta BeltLine; to serve as a liaison with the private sector for the project; and to be a catalyst for addressing the social and equity concerns raised by the investment and activities of the Atlanta BeltLine.

Funded by the Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation makes strategic investments in visionary organizations and individuals worldwide across a range of issues, including Democratic and Accountable Governments, Economic Fairness, Educational Opportunity and Scholarship, Freedom of Expression, Human Rights, Sexuality and Reproductive Rights and Sustainable Development. This project was supported by a grant from the Foundation's Metropolitan Opportunity program area.

Co-authored by Nexus Research Group and Davidson Consulting

Nexus Research Group is a full service research consulting firm committed to connecting local communities to strategic program and policy solutions through applied research and training. NRG works in partnership with governmental, philanthropic and grass-roots organizations, providing an array of research services intended to not only educate and inform, but to be catalytic in helping clients and their constituencies accomplish their desired goals.

Davidson Consulting serves nonprofit organizations, local governments, foundations and national trade associations focused on affordable housing, health and the built environment, and neighborhood revitalization. Davidson Consulting provides services in the areas of research and policy analysis, strategic and program planning, project management and group facilitation.

Supported by the Equitable Development Assessment Advisory Group

This process was immeasurably enhanced by the hard work of our Advisory Group (see Appendix C for a full list of members). The Advisory Group was made up of representatives from local universities, the public sector (both the City of Atlanta and Fulton County), nonprofits, community leaders (including BeltLine Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee members), and Atlanta BeltLine Partnership and Atlanta BeltLine Inc. staff. The Advisory Group helped to frame and refine the research questions driving this report and provided valuable feedback on early iterations of the report structure and narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The Atlanta BeltLine is considered one of the most ambitious public infrastructure projects in the country, and most comprehensive in Atlanta's history. Through a continuous 22-mile network of parks, trails and transit, the project seeks to spur widespread economic development, while creating a range of residential, commercial and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods surrounding the city's inner core. Embedded within this vision is a commitment to responsible and sustainable development, which results in mixed-income communities, accessible to the variety of Atlanta's existing and future residents. It is this promise of an equitable and inclusive Atlanta BeltLine, which serves as the focal point of this report.

The report builds off the Equitable Development Plan - a conceptual document co-created by Atlanta BeltLine Inc. and the Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee, and intended to "ensure balanced and inclusive development across geographic sections of the BeltLine, as measured over time."¹ Though not a direct implementation of the Equitable Development Plan, this assessment tracks closely to the goals and objectives laid out in the plan, and fully embraces the spirit in which it was conceived and developed. This report is organized according to macro-level issue areas (i.e. community voice, affordable housing, etc.) which Atlanta BeltLine seeks to effect through what are being called its "equity-focused" initiatives. These are Atlanta BeltLine initiated or run programs which seek to ensure fair inclusion through key processes and implementation aspects of the broader project. While many of the Atlanta BeltLine's equity-focused initiatives have been legislatively mandated by the city, others have emerged organically over the course of the project. In this report, we provide a basic overview of each, along with some assessment of their effect, with the ultimate goal being to support implementation partners in creating an Atlanta BeltLine that is inclusive of, and accessible to everyone.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The idea for the Equitable Development Plan (EDP) emerged in response to intense community outcry surrounding the purchase of the Northeast section of the Atlanta BeltLine for \$66 million in 2007. That same year, the Atlanta BeltLine purchased two other major properties in the northern half of the project – a 21-acre parcel near Grant Park and a 16-acre park at the intersection of the BeltLine and North Avenue. This

¹ Atlanta City Council. 2008. An Amended Resolution by Finance/Executive Committee as Amended by Full Council. Resolution 08-R-1553.

acquisition occurred in light of significantly fewer resources being committed to purchase parcels on the south side of the city.

In response to community pressure, the Atlanta City Council, as part of the legislation approving the very first bond issuance for the BeltLine tax allocation district (TAD), required that both the Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI) and Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee (TADAC) work together to produce an equitable development plan which would “consider the investment of all funds, including private, public and TAD bond proceeds”.² The legislation specified that the Equitable Development Plan be, “an integral part of the Five Year planning process and be used to measure equitable development of the BeltLine”.³ For the next two years, the two groups would work together to draft the document.

The EDP is organized around four principles of equitable development, as outlined by the national social justice think tank PolicyLink. These are:

1. Integration of people and place strategies
2. Reduction of local and regional disparities
3. Promotion of triple bottom line investments
4. Inclusion of meaningful community voice, participation, leadership and ownership

Accompanying each equitable development principle is a set of underlining objectives (see Appendix B) for a complete listing of EDP principles and objectives). In some instances, the authors outline strategies that might be taken up to advance certain principles and objectives. They further specify the strategies that fall within ABI’s control and, or under its purview. The plan concludes with a brief note on implementation highlighting that the actualization of the EDP principles and objectives lay not only with Atlanta BeltLine Inc., but with its implementation partners as well. The plan was accompanied by a preamble and a set of metrics intended to track performance.

The Equitable Development Plan was approved by ABI’s Board of Directors in 2009⁴, and since that time, the ABI staff have reported on certain metrics identified as important to track over time⁵. However, aside from that, there has been no other formal application of the document or its principles.

In late 2011, Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP), understanding the power of the EDP to centralize and formalize the BeltLine’s equity-focused objectives, as well as assess the

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Urban Land Institute. 2011. Promoting Cross-Sector Partnerships for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development.

⁵ While both the preamble and the metrics were presented to the Board for approval, only the plan was actually approved.

extent to which the public infrastructure project was achieving those objectives met with ABI to discuss the possibilities of formally executing the plan. Concurrent to these conversations, ABLP engaged the Ford Foundation, a national funder with a commitment to metropolitan opportunity and economic fairness to solicit their interest in supporting the EDP work. In the summer of 2012, ABLP was awarded a grant by the Ford Foundation, enabling the organization to move forward with the effort.

To ensure the EDP implementation remained accountable to the broader community, the consultants worked with ABLP to convene an advisory group made up of a range of stakeholders including practitioners, community leaders, academicians, and local agency department representatives. The group met four times between October 2012 and May 2013 and provided feedback on a range items including project scope, report content and data gathering protocols. Appendix B provides a list of the Atlanta BeltLine Equitable Development Plan Advisory Group.

Early on, the goal was to implement the Equitable Development Plan as originally designed; however it was determined that while the plan provided a framework for understanding how Atlanta BeltLine might pursue more equitable development, it did not provide an adequate analytic framework or rubric for organizing a structured assessment of the extent to which equitable development was occurring. Therefore, the decision was made to develop a complimentary framework, capable of truly exploring the goals and objectives outlined in the EDP. Table 1 provides a side-by-side comparison of the two efforts.

TABLE 1: SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF EDP AND EDA	
Equitable Development Plan	Equitable Development Assessment
Goal: Enable “equitable and sustainable development designed to achieve lasting economic, environmental, and social improvements.”	Goal: Assess the extent to which the Atlanta BeltLine has been implemented in a way that is balanced and inclusive.
Framework Type: Conceptual framework designed to articulate the means by which the Atlanta BeltLine ought to pursue more equitable development.	Framework Type: Analytic framework which provides a means of organizing data and information in order to assess the EDP’s objectives relating to equitable development.
Framework Organization: Based on the Four Principles of Equitable Development	Framework Organization: Organized according to Atlanta BeltLine’s equity-focused goals.

Simply put, the purpose of the EDA is to advance the goals of the EDP by providing some baseline assessment and recommendations intended to better equip the Atlanta BeltLine to achieve its broader vision of creating “A Better BeltLine for All”.⁶

PROMOTING EQUITY WITHIN THE ATLANTA CONTEXT

In his book *Atlanta Paradox*, Georgia State University professor David Sjoquist describes the City of Atlanta as the personification of social inequity. He argues that despite decades of unfettered growth and economic development, there remain pockets of deep and entrenched poverty. This “paradox”, as Sjoquist refers to it, is a persistent narrative which often bears out anecdotally and quantitatively. According to a recent report published by the U.S. Census Bureau, Atlanta showed the highest levels of income inequality (a consistent measure of large-scale inequity or disparity) among large places with populations of 100,000 or more, beating out New Orleans, Miami and Washington D.C. The report employed the GINI index, a standardized measure which is perhaps the most commonly used index to measure inequality within and across countries. To place the finding in context, the City of Atlanta shows higher levels of income disparity than the nations of Iran, Nigeria and Swaziland.^{7 8} This is the reality in a city which ranks third in the number of Fortune 500 corporate headquarters.⁹

Atlanta’s inequity narrative is underscored by a complex intersection of race, place and class. Despite efforts to set itself apart, the southern city continues to struggle with the lingering ghosts of Jim Crow which have resulted in entrenched racial segregation and economic disparity. The situation is further complicated by an overlapping cultural, and class-based disconnect between the city’s prominent African-American middle class and the African-American poor. These racial and class disparities have historically played out in land-use and planning decision-making throughout the region, resulting in the geographic misdistribution of resources, opportunities and access, along with widespread distrust.

It is within this context that the architects of the Atlanta BeltLine seek to create something different – a project that is inclusive of, and responsive to community voice, and intentional in fostering mixed-income, resource-rich communities.

⁶ Atlanta BeltLine website. *Community Health, Access and Equity: A Better BeltLine for All*. Last accessed June 7, 2013. Click [HERE](#) to access link.

⁷ Florida, Richard. 2012, “The High Inequality of U.S. Metro Areas Compared to Countries”. The Atlantic: Cities – Place Matters. October 9, 2012. Last accessed June 7, 2013. Click [HERE](#) to access link.

⁸ To be clear, Gini scores do not reflect levels of poverty, but rather gaps between the “haves” and “have nots”.

⁹ Metro Atlanta Chamber. Metro Atlanta Fortune 500 and Fortune 100 Headquarters. Last accessed July 2, 2013. Click [HERE](#) to access link.

INEQUALITY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ATLANTA BELTLINE IMPLEMENTATION

Atlanta's Historical Approach to Large Scale Development Projects

The City of Atlanta's struggle with income inequality has real implications and creates certain challenges for the Atlanta BeltLine's ability to achieve its vision. Given Atlanta's history, these challenges are especially relevant when considering large public infrastructure projects.

Large public infrastructure projects have long been emblematic of what has at times been a heavy-handed approach to pursuing local revitalization and growth in Atlanta. Numerous times throughout the city's recent history, neighborhoods have squared off against local agencies, officials and proxies in opposition to what was argued to be within the city's best interest. More often than not, targeted communities were predominantly black and poor.

What some consider Atlanta's distinctive style of urban redevelopment is often traced back to the city's involvement with the federal urban renewal program around mid-century. While the program was intended to support the revitalization of deteriorated and dilapidated neighborhoods, it was frequently used as a tool for more regional economic development. For instance, in the 1960s, a huge swath of the Summerhill/Peoplestown area was cleared, with the promise of developing new public housing to replace the low-income black housing that had been demolished. However, when the area became appealing to the owner of the Kansas City Athletics who was considering relocating the team to Atlanta, the decision was made to use the area once slated for housing to serve as the site for the new Atlanta/Fulton County Stadium.¹⁰

Just north of the stadium, the neighborhood of Bedford Pines, formerly known as Buttermilk Bottom, was experiencing its second wave of urban renewal intended to continue the clearance of the neighborhood which had begun a decade earlier.¹¹ Though the funds supporting this clearing required that new housing be built to replace the demolished housing, only few affordable units returned. Instead, the city developed the Atlanta Civic Center and the surrounding area was populated with middle class homes.

These are just two examples of what was a more widespread phenomenon. According to estimates, over the 20 year period during which urban renewal was in force, approximately 68,000 residents were displaced, with nearly 19 out of every 20 being African-American.¹²

¹⁰ Keating, Larry. 2001. *Atlanta: Race, Class and Urban Expansion*. Temple University Press.

¹¹ Stone, Clarence. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946 – 1988*. University Press of Kansas.

¹² Keating, Larry. 2001. *Atlanta: Race, Class and Urban Expansion*. Temple University Press.

This disregard for neighborhoods was not solely a feature of the city's approach to urban renewal, but rather a more general position. The creation of the highway system bisected several Atlanta neighborhoods, causing permanent disruption and even displacement. Bitter clashes over issues like where MARTA lines should be developed, where black public housing should be placed, and whether dilapidated public housing should be demolished have often found low-income neighborhoods on the losing end. From the planning of the Olympics to the development of the Georgia Dome, the results were often the same – broken (or paltry) promises, disruption and displacement.¹³ Consequently, the pure redundancy of these battles and seeming injustice associated with major local decision-making has over time calcified relations between Atlanta neighborhoods and their local government.

To be clear, the City has come a good distance since the days of urban renewal 60 years ago, or even since the Olympics nearly 20 years ago. For instance, since the late 1970s, the City's Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) system has served as a relatively effective addition to the local decision-making apparatus, enabling residents and communities to have input on key issues. Resident advisory bodies are regular appendages within local agencies, and public processes have been opened significantly, resulting in a more transparent local government overall. However, resentment lingers. And it is this resentment and distrust that the Atlanta BeltLine will need to continually peel away in order to adequately carry forth its vision.

Atlanta's Inequity Story is the BeltLine's Inequity Story

Perhaps what makes the Atlanta BeltLine's task relating to equitable development so daunting is that it literally lies in the eye of the storm. Demographically, the communities subsumed within the broader project provide a near mirror reflection of the City both racially and in terms of income. Currently, nearly half of its residents are African-American, forty percent white and the remaining represent other racial categories. The true story however lies in the level of income disparity within BeltLine neighborhoods, with half of the households either living below \$25,000 per year (30%) or above \$100,000 per year (21%).¹⁴ The further north one moves along the BeltLine, the whiter and more affluent the communities become – as is the broader case for the City. There are few of what might be considered truly mixed-income communities, with the handful that exist under threat of gentrification - though this seems to have abated in light of the housing crisis and economic downturn. Aside from these few neighborhoods, there is little affordable housing found within the Northern segments of the city, and a disproportionate number of stressed and dilapidated housing stock to the South.

¹³ Newman, Harvey. 1999. *Southern Hospitality: Tourism and the Growth of Atlanta*. The University of Alabama Press.

¹⁴ Bleakly Advisory Group. 2012. *Mixed Income TOD Implementation Strategy*. Atlanta BeltLine and Enterprise Community Partners.

Simply put, Atlanta's inequity story is the BeltLine's inequity story. It is within this context and against this tide that the Atlanta BeltLine seeks to create a world class amenity that not only shapes the city's future but in certain necessary ways, makes a clear and intentional break from its past.

DEFINING EQUITY AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Considering the Atlanta BeltLine is, at its root, a development project, the primary vehicle through which it might mitigate inequality and promote increased equity or fairness is through what is termed "equitable development". According to the EDP, equitable development "ensures that individuals and families in all communities can participate in and benefit from economic growth and activity." Further, it "expands beyond equal treatment, and focuses on effectively meeting the needs of the diverse group of individuals and communities that share the BeltLine, enabling all areas to experience healthy growth."¹⁵

While disparities bear out in any number of ways in a large city like Atlanta, there are three dominant themes which have come to characterize this city's inequity story: race, class and place. It is the constant and reliable intersection of these three which has produced some of the highest levels of income inequality and racial segregation currently visible in 21st century America. It is important to emphasize that the Atlanta BeltLine, no matter how ambitious, will never be able to single-handedly undo what greater than a century of questionable land use regulation, lopsided economic development efforts and racially tinged public policy has produced. However, it can become a standard bearer for the type of responsible and fair development that creates communities of opportunity and shared prosperity.

ATLANTA BELTLINE OVERVIEW

Organizational Structure

There are two primary entities responsible for the implementation of the BeltLine: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) and the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP).

Atlanta BeltLine Inc.

ABI, formed in 2006 by Invest Atlanta (formerly the Atlanta Development Authority) is charged with supervising the planning and implementation of the Atlanta BeltLine vision as stated in the 2005 BeltLine Redevelopment Plan. The ABI staff work closely with City of Atlanta departments and other implementation partners to develop the range of plans driving the BeltLine, secure public funding, inform and engage members of the community, and serve as the overall project management entity for the Atlanta BeltLine.

¹⁵ Atlanta BeltLine Inc. and Tax Allocation Advisory District. 2009. Atlanta BeltLine Equitable Development Plan.

Essentially, ABI has been called the group responsible for the “hardscape” aspects of the project – getting the parks, trails and transit planned, designed and built.

ABI is also responsible for measuring and reporting project progress to a range of vested public sector stakeholders, including the Atlanta City Council, Atlanta Public Schools, and Fulton County - the three entities with taxing power required to authorize the Atlanta BeltLine TAD legislation in 2005.

Though considered a Georgia nonprofit, ABI does not have its own 501(c)(3) status through the federal government. While it has its own Board of Directors, it is also part of Invest Atlanta. The relationship between the two organizations is managed by a services agreement which clarifies their respective roles.

ABI has 23 staff distributed across a range of functions: senior leadership, legal counsel, transit and transportation, housing and economic development, landscape architecture, project management, civil engineering, real estate, community engagement, art and design, and communications.

Atlanta BeltLine Partnership

The Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP) was formed in 2005, and originally tasked with mounting support for passage of the Tax Allocation District, creating ABI, and raising private dollars to complement the bond financing that would flow from the TAD.

Today, staff members work with a wide range of stakeholders – including neighborhood associations, businesses, community-based organizations, and faith-based groups - to educate residents and stakeholders, and overall build broad-based support for the Atlanta BeltLine. Early on in the history of the organization, ABLP staff engaged in a “listening tour” of BeltLine neighborhoods to determine the community’s biggest hopes and fears about the project. As a result of these conversations, the organization articulated a commitment to address the social concerns raised by the project, with an initial focus on affordable housing, displacement and jobs.

ABLP manages a wide-range of initiatives, including guided bus tours, the Adopt the BeltLine program, the BeltLine Running Series, monthly BeltLine 101 presentations, the BeltLine Speakers Bureau and Ambassadors programs, and on-going general communications efforts. The organization has also initiated and managed two long-term planning efforts around both affordable housing and jobs for BeltLine residents. The first effort culminated in the founding of the Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative and the second in the development of a workforce development pilot with Grady Medical Center. And finally, ABLP kicked off a \$60 million capital campaign in 2007 to complement the bond financing generated by the TAD; to date, they have raised nearly \$38 million from more than 100 donors.

The non-profit has done all this work with a fairly small staff. Until May 2013, ABLP had 4 employees, including an Executive Director, a Program Director, an Office/Volunteer Manager and a Communications Director. They have recently hired a full-time Office Manager, which will free up an entire full-time staff person to manage volunteer efforts.

As a matter of policy, ABLP does not pursue local or state funds to ensure independence from local government entities, but does go after aligned federal resources. The organization likewise raises funds through private and philanthropic sources, and serves as a catalyst to mobilize these resources for addressing social concerns raised by new development around the Atlanta BeltLine.

Project Challenges

The Atlanta BeltLine has endured numerous challenges in its early stages. When the original BeltLine Redevelopment Plan was drafted in 2005 and ABI formed in 2006, there was little evidence of the impending economic storms. The global recession, the collapse of the housing sector and the real estate sector more broadly, and the contraction of commercial credit markets have profoundly shaped the environment within which the BeltLine started on its path to implementation.

These challenges led to significantly reduced property values and therefore reduced tax increment available for the project; substantially less private development activity and job growth than anticipated in and around the TAD; and a further weakening of an already weak local nonprofit affordable housing sector that contributed to reduced demand for BeltLine subsidy.

In addition, the Atlanta BeltLine has faced a series of unanticipated legal challenges. Starting in 2008, the Fulton County Taxpayers Association filed suit against the BeltLine on a range of issues, most significantly challenging ABI's ability to use the Atlanta Public School's portion of the tax increment for economic development activities. Although this case was found in favor of ABI in early June 2013, it created an uncertain financial environment for the TAD for many years, constraining ABI and its partner agencies from issuing additional bonds and slowing down the pace of acquisition and development.

Even given these constraints and challenges, ABI has performed admirably. Relative to the first 5-Year Implementation Plan, ABI has hit 99% of its goals in the acquisition of parks and greenspace; 60% of its goals in the development of parks and greenspace; 83% of its goals in the development of permanent trails; and 200% of its goals in the development of trails, if interim hiking trails are included.¹⁶

¹⁶ "The Atlanta BeltLine: Our History, Progress and Future," powerpoint presented by Lisa Gordon at May 22, 2012 BeltLine and Public Health meeting at the Arthur M. Blank Foundation.

STUDY DESIGN

Overview

This project largely centers on one driving question: *To what extent is the Atlanta BeltLine being executed in a way that is fair and equitable?* In order to adequately address this question, it is not only important that the assessment explore the real and potential implications of the BeltLine on the communities touched by it, but also examines the efforts and strategies currently in place to ensure the Atlanta BeltLine achieves its goal of becoming “a national standard for transformative investment, sustainable growth, and equitable development”.¹⁷ For this reason, the project employs a multi-dimensional study design intended to offer a comprehensive assessment of the project to date. Here we outline the guiding methodological principles undergirding this work, and an overview of project scope and methodology.

Guiding Principles

When conducting a research project, it is important to adopt certain methodological standards or principles which account for the opportunities and constraints associated with the project. These standards act as the foundation for data collection, analysis and reporting. Based on the purpose and complexity of the BeltLine project, as well as the goals of this effort, the following determinations have been made.

The project will focus on descriptive rather than causal analysis – When engaging a research project, it is critical to make certain determinations about the types of conclusions that might be drawn from analysis based on the data available and level of causal complexity. Because the BeltLine is such a multi-faceted project that seeks to affect a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes which are themselves the product of a multitude of factors, the likelihood of establishing “cause and effect” is low. For this reason, the assessment will engage descriptive analysis which seeks to offer valid representation of key variables, and where possible, bring attention to seeming correlations between variables.

This project will engage both qualitative and quantitative methods - Due to the broad scope of the project and diversity of processes and outcomes to be assessed, the EDA will engage both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative methods, which are concerned with gathering and interpreting information that is observed or

¹⁷ 2010. BeltLine Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee (TADAC) and Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI). *Equitable Development Plan*.

shared, are useful at capturing things like processes, perceptions or opinions. Quantitative data on the other hand, which employs information that is easily numerated, is effective at capturing shifts in things like costs, populations or time. The type of method used will largely depend on the type, quality and quantity of the data involved.

Community-based participatory research - With the focus of the initiative being squarely placed on equity, it is imperative that the research design reflect methodological priorities that likewise apply an equity lens. Community-based participatory research can be described as a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths and abilities that each brings. That involvement is in turn factored into the execution of the work in substantive and meaningful ways.

SCOPE

Subareas

While one could easily argue the broader implications of the Atlanta BeltLine for the City of Atlanta or metro region (even the nation in creating a model for comprehensive urban revitalization), this project is exclusively concerned with the real and potential effects of the Atlanta BeltLine on communities immediately surrounding the development project. Therefore, in keeping with similar research and planning-related efforts, the decision was made to focus analysis on the BeltLine subareas – a ten district area which covers a half mile in each direction of the BeltLine corridor. The subareas encompass all 45 “BeltLine neighborhoods” reaching as far as the Pine Hills neighborhood to the North and Sylvan Hills to the South, stretching from Adams Park on the Westside to East Atlanta on the East Side. The sub-areas were developed to function as a framework to support master planning and therefore work to organize all BeltLine related goals and activities related to land use, transportation and parks, along with projections about project growth and ridership.

Figure 1: BeltLine Sub-areas

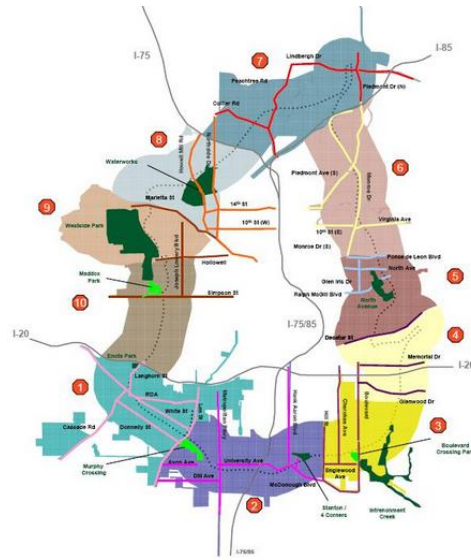
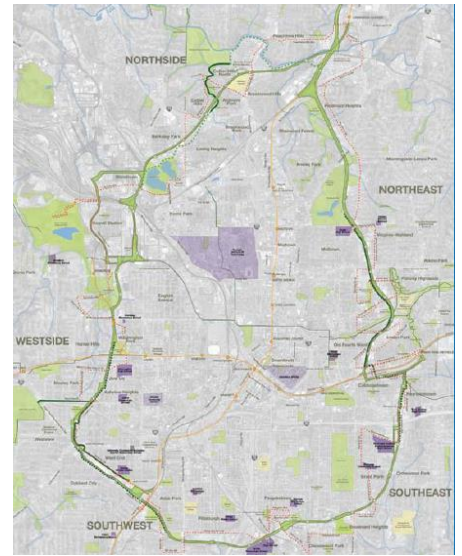


Figure 2: BeltLine Study Groups



BeltLine Study Groups

The subareas are further organized into study groups, with two subareas comprising a study group. Through the study group process, residents within each subarea have participated in a rigorous and extensive master planning process with Atlanta BeltLine Inc. and its implementing partners to help shape the execution of the project over time. BeltLine study areas include: 1) Southwest, 2) Southeast, 3) Northeast, 4) Northside and 5) Westside. Study areas are likewise a useful frame of analysis as they more naturally align with geographic divisions which reflect and communicate the place-based maldistribution of resources and opportunity across the city. Both the subareas and study areas will be employed to make a broader statement about the impact of the BeltLine on surrounding communities.

METHODOLOGY

To adequately explore the aforementioned research question, the project employs a comprehensive and multi-faceted methodology comprising nearly a half dozen separate data sources and collection strategies. These include: 1) stakeholder interviews, 2) a resident survey, 3) BeltLine documentation and data, 4) Census data, 5) geospatial data, and 6) supplemental resources and documentation.

Stakeholder interviews – Generally speaking, stakeholder interviews provide context and rich insight into a particular topic or issue. Stakeholders included community representatives, BeltLine board and staff, ABLP staff and public and private sector partners. Each individual was selected because of their knowledge of, connection with or potential for being directly impacted by the Atlanta BeltLine. Approximately two dozen face-to-face interviews were conducted as part of this study.

Resident Survey – To better understand the extent to which the BeltLine is affecting residents’ quality of life, a survey was conducted targeting two communities which have received new BeltLine amenities. Because parks seem to be the most visible and tangible of BeltLine deliverables to date, the decision was made to focus on communities with BeltLine sponsored parks. The Old Fourth Ward and Peoplestown neighborhoods were selected because they are home to two of the more prominent BeltLine projects.

BeltLine Documentation and Data – This information was used to assess progress made by the Atlanta BeltLine in reaching its equity-specific goals and objectives. This includes basic output data on things like homeowners created through down payment assistance, individuals trained through BeltLine workforce development programs, number of acres acquired per subarea/study area amount of money spent per subarea/study area, etc.

Census data – To better understand the local conditions in which the project is being carried out, the project employs decennial and American Communities Survey data. Census data has been used exclusively in the development of BeltLine data profiles which examine demographic, housing, transportation and economic indicators within the BeltLine ,and are intended to function as a baseline for data-based tracking over time (See Appendix A).

Geospatial data – This information, identifying geographic location and features, was used to organize and analyze much of the quantitative data. Specifically, the use of geospatial data allowed for the place-based analysis of key indicators especially critical to this project.

Supplemental resources and documentation – Aside from these more formal data sources and processes, supplemental information and documentation were gathered through a range of means including online searches, informal conversations, input from advisory committee meetings, document review, etc.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The report is organized into five areas through which the Atlanta BeltLine seeks to promote equity in process and outcome. These include: 1) Community Voice, 2) Resource Allocation and Project Placement, 3) Jobs and Economic Opportunity, 4) Affordable Housing, and 5) Quality of Life. Each section outlines the key initiatives that fall under that category and outcomes-to-date when applicable. Table 2 provides a list of each effort by equity area.

Community Voice – This area is principally concerned with the ways Atlanta BeltLine supports and encourages robust resident and stakeholder engagement, participation and feedback.

TABLE 2: EQUITY FOCUSED INITIATIVES by AREA	
AREA	INITIATIVE
<i>Community Voice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Framework • BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board • Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee
<i>Resource Allocation and Project Placement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Development Plan • Decision Support Tool • Community Benefits Agreement
<i>Jobs and Economic Opportunity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Source Policy • Employment Advisory Group
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlanta BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund • Atlanta BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board • Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative
<i>Quality of Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Justice Policy • Health Impact Assessment

Resource Allocation and Project Placement – This section examines how resources have been deployed throughout the Atlanta BeltLine. It also provides a snapshot of BeltLine activity across both Atlanta BeltLine sub and study areas.

Jobs and Economic Opportunity – This section examines ways the Atlanta BeltLine has worked to connect residents living within the BeltLine, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, to employment opportunities initiated throughout or otherwise sponsored by the Atlanta BeltLine.

Affordable Housing – This area explores the ways Atlanta BeltLine has sought to increase access to affordable housing and overall support the further development of a balanced and diverse housing stock within the project boundaries.

Quality of Life – This section explores those equity-focused initiatives not captured by the other categories and provides survey results on the extent to which the Atlanta BeltLine is positively impacting the lives of local residents.

These sections are followed by recommendations on how the Atlanta BeltLine might strengthen its approach moving forward.

FIGURE 3: ATLANTA BELTLINE’S FIVE EQUITY AREAS



DATA CHALLENGES

From the beginning, the study incurred certain data-related challenges. Foremost was the lack of extensive data on neighborhood conditions which limited our ability to provide deep analysis on the present state of BeltLine communities. Generally speaking, there is a dearth of quality data collected at low levels of geography (i.e. census tracts and census blocks) which is a broader problem for community-based research. For instance, while health is a major outcome area for the Atlanta BeltLine project, most health data is captured at the county level and therefore would have produced high levels of error if reported at the Census tract level. Finally, because the goal was to provide data points capable of being tracked over time¹⁸, the study only employs data which is known to be collected at regular intervals.

¹⁸ This specifically refers to the data profiles.

Overview

The local BeltLine community has long played an integral role in the promotion and evolution of the Atlanta BeltLine. In the early days, when the Atlanta BeltLine was just an idea, Ryan Gravel, author of the Georgia Tech masters' thesis that created the framework for the BeltLine and Cathy Woolard, then Chair of the Atlanta City Council's Transportation Committee used community engagement to generate the necessary resident support and resultant political will necessary to move the project forward.

Once the Atlanta BeltLine was approved, strong public participation resulted in the creation of accountability mechanisms intended to keep the community informed and provide a series of feedback loops into the project's decision making processes. In this section, we provide an overview of those mechanisms developed to ensure residents continue to play a meaningful role in the execution of the project throughout its lifetime.

Community Engagement Framework

Mandated in 2006, as part of the BeltLine TAD authorizing legislation, the Community Engagement Framework (CEF) is designed to provide an effective structure for ensuring that community members are both informed about, and can in turn inform, the design and implementation of the BeltLine. The CEF further seeks to create both long-term institutional avenues for this two-way communication, as well as more flexible tools to gather community input on a project, topic or as-needed basis. The strategy covers areas including input, involvement, engagement, and collaboration with residents, community groups, community organizations, businesses, and others affected by the work of the Atlanta BeltLine.

ABI finalized the CEF that same year, building on the wide range of neighborhood and town hall meetings, tours, and one-on-ones with community and NPU leaders that were initially held to build support for the BeltLine concept and TAD.

By legislation, the BeltLine CEF consists of the following elements:

- *Community Representative on ABI Board of Directors* - This element of the framework is designed to ensure that residents within the BeltLine community maintain permanent representation on the ABI Board of Directors.
- *ABI Community Engagement Advocate Office*: ABI has two full-time employees dedicated to community engagement, a Community Engagement Director and Advocate. Together they are principally responsible for the execution of the

community engagement framework. This includes staffing advisory committees, organizing neighborhood meetings, and responding to individual resident concerns.

- *Atlanta BeltLine Quarterly Briefings:* Quarterly Briefings are designed to provide the community and stakeholders with updates on the progress of the Atlanta BeltLine relative to planning, design, construction, community engagement, affordable housing, public art, and transit and transportation. The Briefings also serve as a mechanism for answering questions and getting public input on the overall project. According to the Atlanta BeltLine website, ABI has briefed more than 1,000 individuals since 2006 during these meetings alone.
- *Atlanta BeltLine Study Groups:* The Study Groups represent the 10 Sub-Areas created for the purpose of planning. The Study Groups were initially used to solicit community input into the development of the Sub-Area Master Plans, as well as vision documents that identified priority principles, projects and policies for the development of these sub areas. The projects and priorities identified in these Master Plans are then used to support the development of the Implementation Plans which guide ABI's work based on 5-year periods. Since all the Sub-Area plans have been completed and approved, the Study Groups are being used to gather input on individual project design and Implementation Plan development.

Other CE efforts: ABI also provides a range of other community engagement opportunities. These include Citywide Conversations - forums for discussing topic-specific issues with the community.¹⁹ ABLP manages a range of non-planning related community engagement efforts, including the Ambassadors volunteer program, a Speakers Bureau, guided tours, an Adopt-the-BeltLine program, the BeltLine Running Series, and monthly BeltLine 101 sessions. Since its inception, ABLP alone has held more than 300 neighborhood meetings and presentations. Together, the two organizations have engaged more than 3,000 participants.²⁰

In addition to these, there are two CEF mechanisms whereby select residents and/or volunteers are able to provide regular input relating to specific aspects of the project. These are the BeltLine *Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee* (TADAC) and *BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board* (BAHAB).

Tax Allocation District Advisory Board (TADAC)

TADAC's primary function is to ensure ongoing and meaningful citizen input into the planning, design and implementation of the Atlanta BeltLine. The original TAD legislation identified four primary goals for TADAC in its role as advisor to the BeltLine:

¹⁹ For example, in May 2013 ABI held a Citywide Conversation on rezoning and Transit Oriented Development.

²⁰ Atlanta BeltLine website. *We Couldn't Do It Without You*. Click [HERE](#) to access link.

- Provide regular input and recommendations as it relates to the execution of the Atlanta BeltLine's TAD bonds;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Decision Support Measurement Tool;
- Conduct an independent review of the Atlanta BeltLine's Five-Year Work Plan;
- Work jointly with Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI) to draft an Equitable Development Plan for the Atlanta BeltLine.

TADAC's members are nominated by one of seven nominating entities which include: Mayor of Atlanta (1 nominee), the City Council President (1 nominee), the Atlanta City Council (6 nominees), the Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (12 nominees), Atlanta Public Schools (2 nominees), the BeltLine Network (10 nominees), and Fulton County (10 nominees). According to the legislation, TADAC must have a minimum of 41 and a maximum of 45 members. TADAC's annual report for 2013 identified membership as an issue. In it they reported having only 31 members, and were actively seeking additional nominations.

TADAC has completed or made significant progress towards the four goals identified in the BeltLine legislation and has worked on issues and projects not anticipated by the legislation, as well.

Led by the Equitable Development Committee, the Equitable Development Plan was completed and approved in 2010.

TADAC supervised work by faculty from Georgia Tech's Center for Regional Growth and Quality Development to complete the Decision Support Tool in 2012.

TADAC provided input into the RFP development and selection process that led to the hiring of BAE Urban Economics to conduct an independent review of the BeltLine's first Implementation Plan (2005-2010). The review was likewise completed in 2012.

And finally, TADAC was represented on the Environmental Impact Statement Advisory Committee, and provided comment on the draft EIS for the BeltLine which was eventually approved by the Federal Transit Administration in 2012.

BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board (BAHAB)

BAHAB was mandated to ensure key stakeholder and community input into the range of ABI efforts linked to affordable housing. The original legislation identified three primary goals for BAHAB:

- Advise Invest Atlanta and the City on the goals and policies of the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund;
- Monitor the location and availability of affordable housing throughout the BeltLine; and;

- Coordinate the activities of BAHAB and the Trust Fund with other affordable housing activities throughout Atlanta.

Like TADAC, BAHAB's membership is made up of nominees from a range of groups including the Atlanta City Council (3 nominees), Fulton County Board of Commissioners (5 nominees), Atlanta Public Schools (6 nominees), the Mayor of Atlanta (2 nominees), the Atlanta Housing Association of Neighborhood-Based Developers (AHAND) and the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership (ANDP) (3 nominees total). BAHAB which has a maximum membership of 19, maintains 16 active members and is currently seeking new volunteers²¹.

BAHAB was first convened in 2007, and spent its first year working on the development of the investment policies for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (TF). Their recommendations concerning these policies as modified by the Atlanta Development Authority and ABI were approved by Council in 2008. The first bonds were issued in October 2008, and the first grant applications to the Trust Fund were accepted in January 2009.

Since the Trust Fund was structured and capitalized in 2008, BAHAB has made general recommendations about TF activity and developed and implemented a survey of private developers focused on barriers to TF usage. The group has helped develop the RFP, vet potential consultants, and provide draft comments on the recent "Mixed Income Transit Oriented Development Implementation Strategy" (MITODIS) report developed by the Bleakly Group. Additionally, BAHAB has held discussions on how the TF should engage with community land trusts (CLTs). Members have expressed interest in deepening the CLT discussions, pursuing the possibility of a more proactive affordable housing model involving geographic targeting and strategic land acquisition, and engaging in a discussion about setting shorter-term affordable housing targets within the 5,600 unit goal.

OBSERVATIONS

Community Engagement

In our examination of Atlanta BeltLine's engagement and inclusion of community voice, we found that overall there is a substantial amount of energy on the part of both ABI and ABLP that goes into community outreach and education. The meetings and tours are firmly institutionalized within the operations of each and generally speaking Atlanta BeltLine engagement efforts are well executed.

With that said, there was a general perception among several of the community stakeholders interviewed as part of this assessment, that while Atlanta BeltLine did a

²¹ BAHAB 2012 Annual Briefing, powerpoint presented on April 28, 2013.

solid job of engaging residents, it had done a less than adequate job of engaging existing organizations. In the words of one, “They have not done as good of a job using existing networks of people, be that churches or other groups like the YMCA or the Boys and Girls clubs, or neighborhood associations that have standard and regular communications. Those are easy vehicles.” Another felt similarly saying, “There is no intentional relationship building with community leaders”.

When stakeholders were pressed on why they thought this to be the case, some commented on the limited number of staff dedicated to community engagement and subsequent lack of capacity.

In addition to the need to better engage existing groups, we found there to be a general lack of understanding of how community and stakeholder input is used, often called “two-way communication” in community engagement circles. As one BAHAB/TADAC member put it, “Yes, you get to provide the input, but you don’t get any feedback.” The same person went on to say that, “Generally, they don’t do a good job of explaining what the alternatives were to a particular decision. For instance, if you went with option B, why did you go with Option B?” Both the finding relating to group or organizational engagement and the finding referencing the lack of a formal feedback loop were raised in the 2011 assessment of BeltLine community engagement efforts by the Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia, entitled “Public Participation in the Atlanta BeltLine Project.”²² And although ABI staff has taken some steps to address the issue of “two-way communication,” stakeholder feedback seems to imply that more can and should be done.

Along these lines, several stakeholders expressed certain nostalgia for the days when the community voice around the BeltLine was more akin to community empowerment, with neighborhoods playing a prominent role in driving the project and advocacy groups driving the creation of legislation supporting long-term community involvement. Some found the current approach to be more technical and almost exclusively project-oriented.

Finally, several simply referenced a general fatigue with the project. Eight years is a long time to keep anyone excited about anything. This has in many ways been compounded by the slowing of the project due to resource constraints and market lags.

TADAC

Perhaps the most notable mention relating to TADAC is that it has completed all three of its legislatively mandated deliverables – the DST, the EDP and the Five Year Review. Therefore, while its advisory role is ongoing, it is currently at a place where it needs to

²² Public Participation in the Atlanta BeltLine Project. Fanning Institute. University of Georgia, November 2011.

reevaluate its part in moving the project forward. According to ABI staff, the group is currently in the process of planning a retreat during which the group is likely to take up this critical question.

While, some might say that the last seven years have been productive for TADAC, both staff and board members acknowledge that historically, the relationship between ABI and TADAC has been contentious at times. While relations seem to have improved over the years, there remains fundamental disagreement over TADAC's role, particularly as it relates to the reach of the group's oversight and the depth of its influence. For instance, ABI has argued that TADAC's input should only pertain to TAD-funded projects, while TADAC has argued it should advise on all projects involving ABI, even if the funding comes from private sources.

Aside from these relational challenges, TADAC suffers certain internal process-related challenges as well. Specifically, the group has been known for having a difficult time keeping to parliamentary procedures during meetings, limiting the group's ability to move through agendas effectively. One person even described the meetings as "disruptive and unproductive".

BAHAB

Over the years, BAHAB has likewise been effective in carrying out its legislatively mandated responsibilities relating to ABI's affordable housing activities, particularly the execution of the affordable housing trust fund. However, while BAHAB suffers from neither open strife with ABI, nor the process and procedural challenges that seem to have plagued TADAC, it has likewise experienced its own set of challenges. For instance, some assert that stringent ethics policies barring the participation of staff of any organization that might consider applying for TF dollars as negatively impacting the group's ability to draw and retain talented members, even though BAHAB is not involved in TF investment decision-making. As a result, some contend that the board is not as experienced in affordable housing development matters as it otherwise could be.

Conversely, much like its TAD counterpart, BAHAB has lobbied for an expanded role to include more explicit oversight and control. For instance, although BAHAB provides formal recommendations on the TF and other affordable housing activity, ABI is not accountable to these recommendations and can choose if and how to act on them. Based on the current dynamic, BAHAB has been unsuccessful with some of its recommendations²³, and somewhat successful with others²⁴.

²³ One example is BAHAB's recommendation for deeper AMI targets for TF investments.

²⁴ For instance, BAHAB garnered a commitment from ABI to allocate extra dollars to the TF in the next bond round in the amount necessary to compensate for the reduced affordable housing commitments included in the Jamestown Properties/City of Atlanta deal for the purchase and redevelopment of Ponce City Market.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND PROJECT PLACEMENT

OVERVIEW

Perhaps the most effective way for the Atlanta BeltLine to promote equity is to direct its resources in ways that resist the traditional patterns of Atlanta development which have reinforced existing spatial inequities and rather pursue a more balanced approach to project execution and implementation. To be clear, executing a balanced development approach is far more attractive in theory, than it is practical in reality, as countless factors contribute to project appropriateness and feasibility. These include things like relative land cost, local zoning regulations, area density and environmental remediation – not to mention the slew of rules and regulations that dictate the use of public as well as private funds. With that said, if the ultimate goal is to create an Atlanta BeltLine that is accessible and available to everyone, it is vital that decisions, particularly relating to project selection, land acquisition and project execution, reflect an earnest attempt at geographical balance.

As mentioned in the previous section, the Atlanta BeltLine engaged in an extensive process to obtain resident feedback on the formation of the Sub-Area and 5-Year Implementation Plans. However, those plans represent a more ideal vision of the development of the BeltLine, and not necessarily one that takes into account the range of challenges and constraints associated with implementation. Therefore, while the Atlanta Beltline works hard to follow its work plan and take a more methodical approach, it has identified “opportunity” as a critical determining factor behind decisions to move forward with a particular facet of the plan.

As described by Atlanta Beltline staff, opportunity may come in the form of corporate resources earmarked for a specific project of interest, or a major section of the BeltLine becoming available for sale, or even the introduction of a new public or private sector partner willing to work with the Beltline to carry out a project of mutual interest. It is this opportunity, matched with available resource and capacity, which has in large part shaped the rollout of the Beltline to date. According to ABI staff, the new 5-Year Implementation Plan (currently in draft form and unavailable to the authors of this report) more explicitly incorporates and expresses the need for geographic balance around project selection.

The BeltLine has several tools explicitly focused on promoting the equitable distribution of resources. These are the Community Benefits Agreement, the Decision Support Tool and the Equitable Development Plan.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT (CBA)

As is the case with several of the equity-focused initiatives highlighted in this report, the BeltLine Community Benefits Agreement was mandated as part of the original TAD legislation. Community Benefits Agreements are intended to ensure that development projects produce very specific value for communities affected by that development. The goal of the BeltLine CBA policy is to ensure that development is equitable and benefits all members of the community, eventually contributing to stronger local economies, livable neighborhoods and increased public participation in the planning process. Specifically, the legislative language required that “...capital projects that receive funding from TAD bond proceeds shall reflect ... certain community benefits principles.... including but not limited to: prevailing wages for workers; a first source hiring system to target job opportunities for residents of impacted low-income neighborhoods along the Atlanta BeltLine; establishment and usage of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs for workers of impacted neighborhoods; and specifically recognize the importance of community involvement in the Atlanta BeltLine implementation process.”

The final BeltLine CBA contains a set of 12 principles on a range of topics, including:

- Mixed-income housing
- Transportation infrastructure
- Alternative transportation and connectivity
- Green space and environmental sustainability
- Multi-use development
- Business and economic development
- Green building and green jobs
- Public safety
- Neighborhood civic life
- Digital access in public space

The final CBA also included a more developed policy around jobs which will be described in more detail later in the report.

While the BeltLine CBA doesn't necessarily guide ABI project placement and/or resource allocation, it does provide a framework for decision-making and endeavors to leverage partner resources to ensure that communities are left feeling whole as a result of the broader project.

DECISION SUPPORT TOOL

The vision for the Decision Support Tool likewise came through BeltLine implementing legislation. A decision support tool (DST) is a consistent, reproducible process for making

decisions by providing a detailed picture of impacts related to the implementation of a plan, policy or project. The BeltLine DST was designed to integrate physical, economic, environmental, land-use, quality of life, socio-economic, and other data to establish priorities for project selection.

TADAC finalized the RFP for the DST in late 2009, and it was put to bid in 2010. The Georgia Tech Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development was ultimately selected to develop the tool in 2011, and the DST was piloted and presented to ABI and TADAC in the spring of 2012.

The BeltLine DST is designed to create a comparative picture of project impact based on a range of data points or indicators linked to seven criteria which were operationalized from BeltLine goals. The seven criteria are:

- 1) Accessibility
- 2) Healthy active living
- 3) Economic vibrancy
- 4) Greenspace and environment
- 5) Sustainable housing and community design
- 6) Diverse built environment and vibrant tax base
- 7) Social and environmental equity

As it relates to “social and environmental equity”, the DST incorporates a range of factors and data points in its definition, including minority and vulnerable populations, historic expenditure by ABI, environmental quality and civic engagement. For the purposes of the EDP/EDA process, equity refers exclusively to historic and geographic expenditures by ABI. Because project development has been slowed due to macro-economic issues and ABI’s legal challenges, there has not yet been an opportunity to use the DST.

During the recent update of the Implementation Plan, staff engaged a prioritization process to create three tiers of projects to consider as the basis for ABI’s work-plan over the next five years. Staff plans to use the DST to help rate and rank projects within the tiers moving forward.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As discussed in Section One, the Equitable Development Plan was explicitly mandated to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of Atlanta BeltLine resources. Finalized in 2011

by ABI and TADAC, the EDP has yet to fulfill its potential for ensuring fair distribution. The hope is that the EDA will provide a framework for assessing and reporting on BeltLine activities and expenditures, and hopefully make clear the patterns and impacts of the project's investment decisions overtime. For a more extensive overview on the Equitable Development Plan, see Section One.

ANALYSIS

In exploring project placement and resource allocation, this section examines specific goals and outcomes relating to four core features of the Atlanta BeltLine: trails, parks, corridor and affordable housing.²⁵ This section specifically references goals from both the 2005 Redevelopment Plan²⁶ and Sub Area Master Plans, and provides data on those elements for which there have been resources allocated and/ or the site has come under ABI's control.²⁷ Each section is accompanied by a summary table which provides information on the amount of miles/acres/units online to date, as well as the total amount of investment across public, private and non-profit sources.²⁸

Note on Analysis of Project Placement and Resource Allocation

Reporting on this data is complex. This is in large part due to the fact that the Atlanta BeltLine is a broad vision for urban redevelopment, which has many players and partners, of which ABI is the most prominent and visible. And while there is a good deal that ABI is able to control through the application of its resources and the exercising of its quasi-governmental status, there is likewise a fair amount it does not control.

Reporting on this data is likewise complex because the Atlanta BeltLine is a long-term project which, by necessity, must occur in increments, and while the Redevelopment Plan sets goals and targets for the execution of specific projects, it does not make recommendations on sequencing or geographic targeting. In other words, while some sort of fair geographic distribution is expected, the project has not necessarily been conceptualized that way in the short-term.

²⁵ The authors wanted to include information on Atlanta BeltLine's public art component, Art on the BeltLine, however data was not available by quadrant at the conclusion of the study.

²⁶ The Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan, drafted in 2005, offers an overall vision for the project and "details a conceptual framework of proposed land uses, locations of new parks and trails and development nodes that would support higher intensity uses." According to the Invest Atlanta website, it also "frames the vision for economic development, reuse of contaminated properties, preservation of historic buildings and the addition of affordable housing to the City."

²⁷ This analysis does not incorporate every trail or park included in the 5 Year Redevelopment Plan or Sub Area Master Plans, but just those that have come under ABI's control or received resources.

²⁸ Data was not available on total investment by investment type (i.e. public, private, foundation, etc.)

Before moving forward with the findings, it is important to mention that ABI resources can be dedicated to land acquisition and/or improvement (i.e. construction). ABI typically does not invest improvement dollars in properties for which it does not have control – either through ownership or long-term lease. Finally, at the completion of the project, all assets held by ABI will be returned to the City of Atlanta.

Trails

It can be argued that Atlanta BeltLine has made the most substantial progress in introducing new trails to the Atlanta community. The Redevelopment Plan sets two separate goals for trails – one 22-mile goal, which includes just trails within the Atlanta BeltLine loop itself and another 33 mile goal, which takes into account spur and connector trails which link to the Atlanta BeltLine. Because the scope of this project focuses exclusively on the subareas and study areas, this report references the 22-mile goal.

To date, the Atlanta BeltLine has secured 15.2 miles of new trail within Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods, with 5.25 of secured trail being available for use and open to the public. Of the trails currently under ABI control, 4.9 are in the Southwest Study Area, 1.5 in the Southeast Study Area, 5.65 in the Northeast, 1.5 in the Northside Study Area, and 1.65 in the Westside Study Area. Currently, there are 2 miles of active trail in the Southwest study area, 2.25 miles of active trail in the Northeast Study Area and 1 mile of active trail in the Northside Study Area. In all, \$19,231,914 has been invested in new trails - \$5,122,857 in the Southwest study area, \$1,192,857 in the Southeast study area, \$11,332,200 in the Northeast, and \$1,584,000 in the Northside study area. There is currently no trail investment in the Westside Study Area.

TABLE 3: TRAILS BY SUBAREA AND STUDY GROUP

Trails		Redevelopment Plan Goal	Master Plan Goal	Under Atlanta BeltLine Control	Opened to Date	Total Investment
Southwest	Subarea 1					
	West End Trail	22 miles (total)	2 miles	2 miles	2 miles	\$3,452,857
	Southwest Trail	22 miles (total)	2.9 miles	2.9 miles	-	\$1,670,000
	Subarea 2					
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	4.9 miles	2 miles	\$5,122,857
Southeast	Subarea 3					
	Southeast Trail	22 miles (total)	4.1 miles	-	-	\$1,192,857
	Subarea 4					
	Reynoldstown Trail	22 miles (total)	1.5 miles	1.5 miles	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	1.5 miles	-	\$1,192,857
Northeast	Subarea 5					
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Subarea 6					
	Eastside Trail	22 miles (total)	2.5 miles	2.5 miles	2.25 miles	\$11,332,200
	Northeast Trail	22 miles (total)	3.4 miles	3.15 miles	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	5.65 miles	2.25 miles	\$11,332,200
Northside	Subarea 7					
	Northside Trail	22 miles (total)	1 miles	1 mile	1 mile	\$1,584,000
	Northside Extension	22 miles (total)	1.8 miles	.5 miles	-	-
	Subarea 8					
	Howell Mill-close loop	22 miles (total)	1.2 miles	-	-	-
	Elaine-Howell Mill	22 miles (total)	1 mile	-	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	1.5 miles	1 mile	\$1,584,000
Westside	Subarea 9					
	Hollowell-Elaine	22 miles (total)	1.4 miles	1.4 miles	-	-
	Subarea 10					
	Lena-Hollowell	22 miles (total)	1.2 miles	.25 miles	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	1.65 miles	-	-
PROJECT TOTALS				15.2 MILES	5.25 MILES	\$19,231,914

Parks

According to the Redevelopment Plan, the ultimate goal is to add 1,300 acres of new park space over the 25-year life of the project. Table 4 provides an overview of all new park space generated through the Atlanta BeltLine to date.

Currently, the Atlanta BeltLine has 302 acres of new park space under its control, with 39 acres currently available for public use. Greater than half the new park space can be attributed to the City of Atlanta's acquisition of Westside Reservoir Park, which alone is made up of 221 acres. Much of the remaining new greenspace is made up of additions to existing parks, as is the case with Lang Carson and Maddox Parks. D.H. Stanton is a revitalized park which was previously used as a landfill, while Historic Fourth Ward and Boulevard Crossing are new additions to the city's greenspace.

In all, there are 6 new acres of park space that have been added to the area comprising the Southwest Study Group, 12 new acres in the Southeast, 39 acres in the Northeast, 18 in the Northside and 227 acres in the Westside. In terms of active park space currently available for public use, there are 15 acres in the Southeast Study Area, 18 in the Northeast and 6 in the Northside. There is currently no new active Atlanta BeltLine park space in the Westside or Southwest Study Group areas.

In all, the Atlanta BeltLine has invested \$107,557,205 of public and private dollars in Atlanta BeltLine Parks, with approximately 79% or \$69,447,826 of that going to the purchase of two parks - Historic Old Fourth Ward Park (Northeast Study Area) and Westside Reservoir Park (Westside Study Area). Approximately \$1.9 million went to purchase or improve park space in the Southwest, \$18.8 million in the Southeast and \$2 million in the Northside.

TABLE 4: PARKS BY SUBAREA AND STUDY GROUP						
Parks		Redevelopment Plan Goal	Master Plan Goal	Under Atlanta BeltLine Control	Opened to Date	Total Investment
Southwest	Subarea 1					
	Enota Park	10 acres	13 acres	6 acres	-	\$484,114
	Subarea 2					
	Murphy Triangle	44 acres	23 acres	6 acres	-	\$1,378,271
	TOTAL	-	-	12	-	\$1,862,385
Southeast	Subarea 3					
	DH Stanton Park*	13 acres	8 acres	8 acres	8 acres	\$4,886,472
	Four Corners Park	-	5 acres	5 acres	2 acres	\$2,265,986
	Boulevard Crossing	-	22 acres	22 acres	5 acres	\$11,482,178
	Subarea 4					
	Lang Carson Park	-	6 acres	4 acres	-	\$201,881
	TOTAL	-	-	39 acres	15 acres	\$18,836,517
Northeast	Subarea 5					
	Historic Fourth Ward Park and Skate Park*	39 acres	30 acres	18 acres	18 acres	\$50,611,309
	Subarea 6					
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	18 acres	18 acres	\$50,611,309
Northside	Subarea 7					
	Howard Park	5	6	6	6	\$2,057,167
	Subarea 8					
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	6 acres	6 acres	\$2,057,167
Westside	Subarea 9					
	Westside Reservoir Park	351 acres	351 acres	221 acres	-	\$34,189,827
	Subarea 10					
	Maddox Park	67 acres	55 acres	6 acres	-	-
	TOTAL	-	-	227 acres	-	\$34,189,827
PROJECT TOTALS				302 ACRES	39 ACRES	\$107,557,205

Corridor

Railway corridor functions as the centerpiece of the Atlanta BeltLine project, for it is around the rail corridor that the project will truly take form. While the entire project will ultimately be comprised of several hundred acres surrounding 22 miles of rail right-of-way, Table 5 only provides those corridor sections that are currently under the control of ABI. There are redevelopment and master plan goals for all five study areas surrounding the Atlanta BeltLine, however those segments that have not been acquired yet are not part of this analysis.

Currently, there are three separate corridor segments which have come under ABI control to date. These include a 46-acre section in the Southwest, a 4-acre section in the Southeast and a 66-acre section in the Northeast. Currently, all four of the acres acquired in the Southeast, and thirty miles of the Northeast corridor are active. All 46 acres of corridor in the Southwest Study Group area remain inactive.

By far, the largest corridor investment was made to purchase the Northeast corridor at \$66 million. Approximately \$1.8 million was spent to purchase the Southwest Corridor and another \$464,000 was used to purchase the Reynoldstown Corridor in the Southeast.

TABLE 5: CORRIDOR BY STUDY GROUP						
Corridor		Redevelopment Plan Goal	Master Plan Goal	Under ABI Control	Opened to Date	Total Investment
Southwest	Southwest Corridor	-	46 acres	46 acres	-	\$1,180,000
Southeast	Reynoldstown Corridor	-	4 acres	4 acres	4 acres	\$464,000
Northeast	Northeast Corridor	-	66 acres	66 acres	30 acres	\$66,000,000
Northside	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westside	-	-	-	-	-	-
PROJECT TOTALS				116 ACRES	34 ACRES	\$67,644,000

Affordable Housing

Table 6 provides information on the housing units supported through the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund. It shows that in all, the Trust Fund supported the development of 131 units across the five Study Group areas, with the majority of units - 117 in all or 89% of the total - being developed in the Southwest and Southeast sections of the Atlanta BeltLine. In addition, six affordable homeownership units were supported in Northeast Atlanta, one on the Northside and seven on the Westside. In all the Atlanta BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund has contributed greater than \$5 million to the development of affordable housing. Approximately \$4.6 million or 86% of dollars spent have gone to support affordable housing in the Southwest and Southeast section of the city. The balance has gone to support units across the remaining three Study Group areas.

TABLE 6: AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY STUDY GROUP						
Corridor		Redevelopment Plan Goal	Master Plan Goal	Funded by Atlanta BeltLine	Completed	Total Investment
Southwest	Scattered site	5,600 units (total)	-	23 affordable homeownership units	23 units	\$871,545
	Lofts at Reynoldstown Crossing	5,600 units (total)	-	28 affordable homeownership units	28 units	\$1,843,091
Southeast	Reynoldstown Senior	5,600 units (total)	-	43 affordable rental units	-	\$1,430,000
	Scattered site	5,600 units (total)	-	23 affordable homeownership units	23 units	\$477,154
Northeast	Scattered site	5,600 units (total)	-	6 affordable homeownership units	6 units	\$351,534
Northside	Scattered site	5,600 units (total)	-	1 affordable homeownership unit	1 unit	\$32,013
Westside	Scattered site	5,600 units (total)	-	7 affordable homeownership units	7 units	\$367,004
PROJECT TOTALS				131 units	88 units	\$5,372,341

Parks, Trails and Corridor

There is no easy way to interpret the findings found in this section, in part because there are no specific targets or goals relating to the geographic distribution of BeltLine features and amenities. Rather the expectation is that the distribution be “fair” and “balanced”. Given variations in real estate demand, land costs, and land availability around the BeltLine subareas, it is impossible to make a one-to-one comparison. In the absence of a more rigorous means of comparison, any analysis is subjective. With that said, we attempt to make some formal assessment of activity and resource allocation by Study Group Area to date.

When it comes to property acquisition and improvement, there appear to be three outliers whose cost far exceeds others. These are the Westside Reservoir (\$34,189,827), formerly the Bellwood Quarry, the Northeast corridor segment (\$66,000,000) and the Historic Fourth Ward Park (\$50,611,309). Together these investments equal \$150,801,136 of the approximate \$200 million which has been dedicated to the acquisition and/or construction of trails, parks, railway corridor, and affordable housing to date. Atlanta BeltLine staff argue that these acquisitions are foundational projects of the Atlanta BeltLine that will contribute to the city’s broader vision, as well as generate economic activity within the TAD which will produce resources that can be used to support the execution of projects in other areas along the BeltLine.

It could likewise be argued that while comparable resources have not been committed to other projects, there has been substantial park acreage and trail mileage added to communities in the southern hemisphere of the project. However, while this may all be true, the lack of a similar large-scale Atlanta BeltLine project to the South opens up ABI and its implementing partners to the criticism that the project is not being carried out in a way that is either fair, or balanced.

Aside from the above mentioned investments, the remaining projects seem to fall between several hundred thousand to \$11 or \$12 million dollars. Clearly “fair” distribution does not necessarily mean equal distribution across all subareas. Without access to comparable data on land values, market demand or clear definitions of relative need for certain amenities within the BeltLine study areas, it is difficult to say with confidence the extent to which the distribution of the remaining resources is fair. What we can say is that aside from the aforementioned outliers, the remaining resources seem to be distributed in a relatively balanced manner.

While decisions relating to project placement and resources allocation are undoubtedly influenced by a range of factors, the Atlanta BeltLine must be ever aware of the perception associated with the choices it makes. And while the project has undoubtedly been what one stakeholder described as “loaded up with a Christmas tree of

expectations and wishes”, many of which are largely outside of ABI’s control, those implementing the project would do well to seek out ways to be overtly equitable when it comes to those things it is able to control.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing provides both private and public benefits, and as such requires a slightly different lens than the other areas of investment being analyzed here. As the findings demonstrate, affordable housing being funded through the Trust Fund is disproportionately located on the southern half of the Atlanta BeltLine. The reasons for this are clear to anyone familiar with land costs and housing values in the City of Atlanta, which tend to be higher to the North and lower to the South.

While it is clear that the BeltLine Trust Fund should focus on adding and/or preserving the total number of affordable units in TAD neighborhoods, it should also play a role in addressing the *distribution* of units across these neighborhoods. The issue of the concentration of affordable housing development in lower-income, disinvested neighborhoods is one that the city – and region – are struggling with more broadly, and there is no easy way to address it. However, this challenge is one that the BeltLine should grapple with, as it will have a strong impact on its long-term legacy and impact on the communities it touches.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Overview

While the BeltLine has made general commitments towards equitable development overall, the two arenas where ABI and ABLP have both set specific outcomes and created full-fledged programs or policies have been affordable housing and jobs. As a matter of Invest Atlanta policy, TAD approval rests in part on supportable claims about the number of jobs that will be created as a result of the passage of the TAD.

Consequently, the 2005 Redevelopment Plan identified that 30,000 full-time permanent jobs and 48,000 one-year construction jobs would be created as a result of the BeltLine TAD, both through TAD-funded activity and secondary economic development spin-off.

Although current ABI staff have been unable to clarify the methodology used to construct these numbers, and economic conditions have changed radically for the worse since the completion of the Redevelopment Plan, these numbers remain unchanged, and there are currently no plans for amending them.

This is a challenging arena for the BeltLine, as they are held accountable to a set of numbers that may no longer be realistic, and the bulk of the levers available to influence job creation lie firmly outside ABI's control. Invest Atlanta is the organization tasked with economic development for the City of Atlanta; the Atlanta Workforce Development Authority (AWDA), the GA Dept. of Labor, and a range of non-profit organizations are tasked with job training; and the private market directly drives job creation. However, both ABI and ABLP remain committed to linking BeltLine neighborhood residents to current and future jobs around the BeltLine. To this end, the two organizations have developed two initiatives in pursuit of this goal.

FIRST SOURCE JOBS POLICY

Employment is the only aspect of the BeltLine Community Benefits Agreement that moved beyond principles and recommendations to actual policy focused on encouraging developers working on TAD-funded construction projects to hire BeltLine residents. The First Source Jobs Policy, approved in 2010, does not enforce numeric goals for hiring local residents for TAD-funded construction projects. Rather it identifies required behavior on the part of developers towards identified goals. The policy requires each developer/contractor using TAD funds to make a "good faith effort" to hire 50% of entry level workers and 20% of all project workers from BeltLine neighborhoods.

The policy further identifies steps that constitute this "good faith effort," including attendance at preconstruction meetings on First Source policy; notification about project employment opportunities to the Atlanta Workforce Development Authority's

(AWDA) First Source Office before the final bid; confirming positions/job qualifications 30 days prior to hiring; the use of AWDA referral networks (“BeltLine First Source Register”) to access local applicants; and providing written justification if local applicants are available and are not hired. Consistent with the Workforce Investment Act – the primary federal source of funds for local workforce boards - the policy specifically targets the hiring of BeltLine residents that are at or below 200% of the federal poverty threshold.

In addition, the policy identifies consequences if this good faith effort is not met. Up to 10% of the total contract amount can be withheld, the current contract can be terminated, and the contractor can be found ineligible for future ABI contracts if the contractor does not comply.

Our analysis has shown however, that there have been certain real challenges to the implementation of the First Source Jobs policy. The recession and general housing market collapse have led to high levels of unemployment in the construction trades. As a result, many developers/ contractors look to absorb former employees on new projects and come to BeltLine projects with few job openings.

In addition, there have been fewer TAD-funded construction projects than originally projected since the passage of the policy, leading to slower hiring. The general recession, the stagnation of the development sector and the uncertainty caused by the legal challenges to the use of the APS increment have all contributed to this project slow-down.

On the supply-side, AWDA and ABI staff report that many of the BeltLine residents recruited for early AWDA training were unable to participate due to criminal backgrounds, basic math and literacy issues and failure to pass drug screenings. These barriers have made it more difficult to recruit for training and placement, increasing the effort required for each position filled. Anecdotally, consultants involved with this effort report that they must recruit 25-30 residents to find 5 that are eligible to participate in training.

Finally, there have been some partnership issues as well. According to the policy, AWDA is tasked with both providing training and tracking compliance and progress towards the policy’s identified goals and objectives. However, due to budget cuts and internal capacity issues, it has struggled to perform this function. As a result, ABI has hired a consultant to track these efforts. Unfortunately, consistent data has been difficult to access.

Currently, ABI is developing secondary partnerships on the construction training side as well. They have recently partnered with The Center for Working Families, Inc., which recruited BeltLine residents for its Greenworks program that provides training in green construction.

To date, ABI and its partners have trained 33 residents with an average 85% placement rate. Five are currently enrolled in TCFWFI's Greenworks program, bringing the number to 38 for a current average of 9.5 residents trained per year. The First Source Jobs Policy itself projected that, depending on the level of available TAD funding and project activity, 20 residents per year would be trained and positioned to work on BeltLine projects.

TABLE 7: FIRST SOURCE JOBS POLICY					
	<i># Trained</i>	<i># NCCER²⁹ * certified</i>	<i>Total % placed</i>	<i># placed in construction</i>	<i># placed in TAD-funded projects</i>
<i>2009/2010 (AWDA – completed)</i>	28	10	90%	4	1
<i>2012/2013 (TCFWFI - completed)</i>	5	-	80%	3	0
<i>2013 (TCFWFI-on- going)</i>	5 recruited	on-going	on-going	on-going	on-going

ABI reports a total of 15 residents – some from specific ABI/AWDA training programs and some through other pathways – have been placed on TAD-funded projects since 2009, with an average of 2 or more placements per project.

Based on the data however, the participants seemed to struggle with retaining employment. The consultant hired by ABI to track compliance with the First Source Jobs Policy reported that only 3 or 4 residents have worked on their construction jobs for 120 days or longer, while everyone else was off the job within that time. It is currently unclear which of these exits were performance-related and which were the result of the job lasting less than 120 days.

Finally, the City of Atlanta updated the First Source Jobs Policy in February 2013 to include a new focus on recruiting 10% of employees working on city (including TAD)-funded projects from formal apprentice programs³⁰. The City has created a new program called Atlanta CityBuild to help contractors and developers comply with the new requirement. At this time it is unclear how and at what level this program will be funded. It is also unclear how this new requirement will play out for BeltLine projects.

²⁹ The National Center for Construction Education and Research provides standardized training and credentialing for the industry.

³⁰ Most apprentice programs are managed by unions in the construction trades.

EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY GROUP (EAG)

When the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership was created in 2005, one of its first actions was to hold a series of “listening tours” in BeltLine neighborhoods to get a sense of residents’ hopes and concerns. Two primary issues stood out: the need for affordable housing as neighborhoods revitalized, and a desire to access the jobs expected to flow from BeltLine construction activity and secondary economic development. As a result, in 2010, ABLP convened a group of greater than 30 public, private and nonprofit stakeholders to address how together they might develop the workforce capabilities of BeltLine residents and link them to jobs generated by BeltLine investment broadly.

The overarching goals of the Employment Advisory Group (EAG) were to attract business and accelerate economic development by preparing a well-trained workforce around the BeltLine; connect disadvantaged populations around the BeltLine to new jobs and economic prosperity; and increase the number of people who both live and work around the BeltLine, reducing negative traffic and air-quality impacts.

To these ends, the (EAG) sought to create a coordinated, collaborative effort between employers, workforce development organizations, educational institutions, community and non-profit organizations, and potential employees to more effectively link well-trained job-ready BeltLine residents to the 30,000 full-time and 48,000 one-year construction jobs projected by the BeltLine Redevelopment Plan.

The EAG was actively convened from late 2010 through the fall of 2012. Given national projections about job growth, the unlikelihood of jobs due to direct TAD investment, and the characteristics of anchor employers around the BeltLine, the group recommended the development of pilot projects in the construction and health-care sectors. EAG members had begun to develop these pilot projects when the external resources ABLP raised to support the initiative exhausted, and planning work was halted.

ABLP continued to seek additional funds to support this effort, and was ultimately able to secure support from Atlanta CareerRise, a local intermediary in the spring of 2013 to develop a workforce pilot in the healthcare sector. Today, ABLP is working with Grady Health System, New Hope Enterprises, the Center for Working Families, Inc., the Georgia Dept. of Labor, Manpower and Atlanta Technical College on this effort. All the groups except Grady had been active members of the EAG since its inception. ABLP hopes to have the pilot planned by the fall of 2013, and will seek additional resources to implement and test the pilot by the end of the year. The long-term goal is to be able to replicate the pilot across a range of hospitals around the BeltLine, including Piedmont, Atlanta Medical Center and Emory/Crawford Long.

OBSERVATIONS

While both the First Source Jobs Policy and Employment Advisory Group have enabled the Atlanta BeltLine to advance their work around economic opportunity on dual fronts, the projects generally suffer from low outcomes. This is less so the case for the EAG whose goals were primarily around increasing collaboration and partnership, and more so the case of the First Source Jobs Policy whose goals were tied to hard outcomes. Aside from the adverse market conditions that have plagued these efforts from the beginning, there seem to be other, more fundamental challenges that have likewise inhibited success.

The first, and perhaps most consequential for this work is that there appears to be a disconnect between Atlanta BeltLine goals around job creation and its actual control of, or influence over such creation. ABI is accountable to the 30,000 permanent jobs and 48,000 one-year construction jobs as recorded in the 2005 Redevelopment Plan, but beyond the TAD-funded construction jobs it creates, has no control and limited influence over the levers available to impact private sector job creation. In a related issue, although the Redevelopment Plan focuses solely on job *creation*, policy and planning efforts to date have focused on the *placement* of unemployed and underemployed BeltLine residents in jobs (whether new or currently in place). Current jobs goals are not articulated in a way that allows ABI and its partners to define this project success.

Second, given that some of the secondary economic activity triggered by BeltLine investment takes place in BeltLine communities outside the TAD in the 10 Sub-Areas, ABI needs to clarify the geography within which it can count job creation. Currently, ABI is not tracking the creation of non-TAD construction jobs in the BeltLine TAD or the Sub-Areas. During their formal work with the EAG, ABLP staff received training from the Georgia Department of Labor on how to measure job numbers, job types and employment, wage and commuting patterns within identified geographies. While this knowledge is helpful and should be bent towards ABI needs, neither ABI nor ABLP currently has the capacity to track this information in a systematic way.

Third, as described above, ABI and AWDA have had some partnership issues in the implementation of the First Source Jobs Policy. The combination of budget cuts, and the on-going capacity issues at AWDA referenced in a recent audit instigated by the City, have challenged the effectiveness of this partnership, especially around data and tracking. In addition, chronic unemployment in the construction trades, unexpected limits on the number and scope of TAD-funded construction projects, and barriers to training program eligibility among BeltLine residents have also limited the effectiveness of the policy. ABI has taken definite steps towards addressing these limits, chief among

them developing new partnerships with workforce trainers like TCFWFI. Further, the recent resolution of the legal challenges facing ABI should lead to more resources and more TAD-funded projects. Other issues, however – like internal capacity issues at AWDA, barriers to employment, and chronic unemployment in the construction trades – are not within ABI’s power to control.

Finally, there seemed to be a lack of coordination between the project-based efforts by ABI and the larger employment initiatives pursued by ABLP. While ABI staff were involved in the EAG planning efforts, there has been a lack of true coordination between the two organizations around jobs. For example, the Grady workforce pilot will be developing strategies to address some of the barriers to employment limiting BeltLine resident participation in AWDA training programs, and there currently is no formal process for linking the lessons learned from the Grady pilot to ABI’s construction jobs efforts.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

OVERVIEW

Affordable housing is a difficult issue for any city to address. Aside from the complex array of tools and resources necessary to cobble together an effective strategy, communities are often forced to wrestle with conceptions of the deserving and undeserving poor. For Atlanta, a city characterized by persistent residential segregation and pockets of deep poverty, the need for quality affordable housing has long been a concern. Increasing gentrification pressures felt among Atlanta's inner-ring neighborhoods around the turn of the century, and the subsequent elimination of Atlanta's public housing stock have focused renewed attention on the problem. It is within this context that the Atlanta BeltLine has defined its approach to affordable housing.

This section provides overviews of two separate, though connected Atlanta BeltLine sponsored affordable housing initiatives – the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which serves as the initiative's primary vehicle for creating and preserving affordable housing within the corridor, and Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative – an initiative that was launched by Atlanta BeltLine Collaborative to address concerns around resident displacement. The section also includes data and analysis of Trust Fund activity to date.

BELTLINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (TF)

The BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund (TF) functions as the chief tool for promoting affordable housing within the BeltLine TAD. Specifically, the TF is intended to contribute to the development of 5,600 affordable rental and homeownership units in the BeltLine TAD by 2030, in order to mitigate gentrification and the displacement of existing residents. According to the original legislation mandating the TF, ABI is required to set aside 15% of all net bond proceeds to be placed in the Trust Fund. The first bond, which was issued in 2008 generated \$8.2 million for the fund, and the first dollars were awarded in early 2009.

Trust Fund policies, co-developed by BAHAB, ABI, Atlanta Development Authority (now Invest Atlanta) in 2007/2008 identify the following targeted beneficiaries:

- Rental households at or below 60% of AMI; development encouraged for households at or below 30% of AMI when feasible;
- Owner-occupied households at or below 100% of AMI;
- City of Atlanta residents, especially those living in BeltLine neighborhoods;
- Employees of the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and Atlanta Public Schools.

Currently, the trust fund supports three separate programs: 1) down payment assistance for buyers, 2) grant funding for developers to produce and preserve affordable housing and 3) grant funding for property acquisition for affordable housing development³¹.

Down Payment Assistance Program

Through the Down Payment Assistance Program, individual buyers agree to take on a 0% interest second mortgage in the amount of up to 10% – 20% of the home purchase price. The loan is deferred for 15 years and then forgiven. The loan comes due in the event the buyer sales, transfers, refinances or comes to no longer occupy the home.³²

Developer Grant Funding for Production and Preservation

This program provides financing to single and multi-family developers to produce projects that “would not be economically feasible without this public subsidy”.³³ To encourage engagement by non-profit and otherwise neighborhood-based developers, the program includes a special set-aside for city and state approved Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs).

Developer Grant Funding for Acquisition

Financing is likewise provided for property acquisition to support the creation of both rental and homeownership units.

BELTLINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND – 5 YEAR OUTCOMES

When ABI established its 25-year affordable housing goal of 5,600 units in its first Five Year Work Plan, it did not include intermediate outcomes to account for potential delays relating to things like program definition, implementation barriers and scaling. Therefore, the only benchmark available for measuring the grand goal is the goal itself. Based on this figure, Atlanta BeltLine estimates 224 units would need to be created on average per year with 1,120 over the first five years.

In addition to pure production figures, it is also important to understand how the BeltLine has performed along an array of additional metrics that lend insight into the extent to which it is meeting the need. These include:

- The mix of rental v. homeownership units;
- Income levels of those served;

³¹ These categories are more characteristic of clusters of program components than actual programs. Invest Atlanta, identifies 6 individual program components.

³² Atlanta BeltLine and Invest Atlanta. “BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund Flyer”.

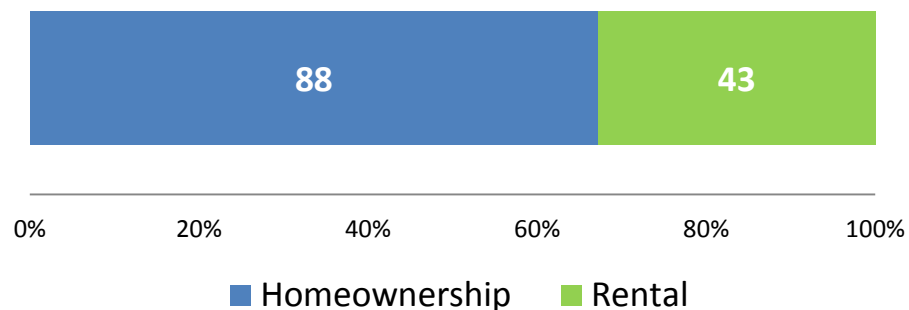
³³ Invest Atlanta and Atlanta BeltLine. Atlanta BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund 2012 BAHTF Program Descriptions Prospective Developer Application for Project Financing. 2012.

- Prior residence of those served;
- Status as City of Atlanta, Fulton County or APS employee;
- Home price;
- Cost per unit; and
- Household size

Overall Unit Production/Preservation

As mentioned earlier in the section, the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund has accrued \$8.9 million in bond proceeds, all of which derive from the initial bond issuance in 2008. In total, the fund has expended \$5,322,376, supporting the creation and or preservation of 131 affordable units. Of those, 43 are rental and 88 homeownership (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Homeownership v. Rental



All 43 rental units will be housed in *Reynoldstown Senior Apartments*, a multi-family, mid-rise development which aims to targets low-income seniors and is to be located in the Reynoldstown neighborhood in Southeast Atlanta. The units are being developed by *Resources for Residents in Communities (RRC)*, an Atlanta-based non-profit developer and approved CHDO.

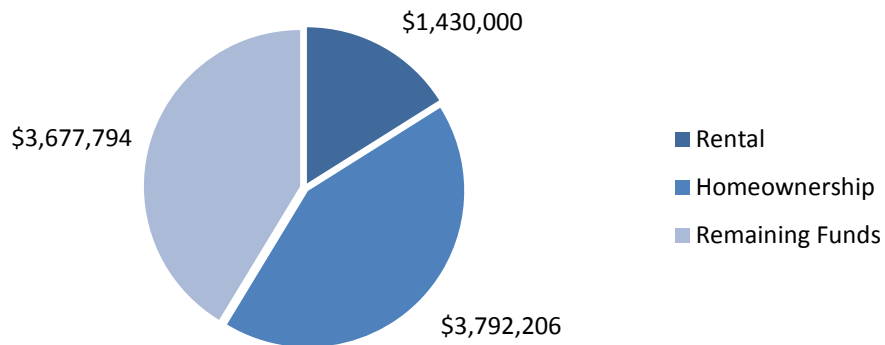
The 88 homeownership units are almost exclusively housed within multi-family developments and spread principally across the Southeast and Southwest segments of the Atlanta BeltLine. Of those, 28 units are housed within *the Lofts at Reynoldstown Crossing*, a development originally intended for high-end condos, which fell prey to the housing crash and was later purchased and further developed by Atlanta BeltLine Inc. Three of the 28 units are land deed restricted homes with the Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative meaning the units will remain affordable in perpetuity.

TABLE 8: BAHTF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCTION			
Rental			
Property	Total BAHTF Contribution	# of Units	Average BAHTF Contribution per Unit
Reynoldstown Senior Apartments	\$1,430,000	43	\$33,256
Homeownership			
Property	Total BAHTF Contribution	# of Units	Average BAHTF Contribution per Unit
Reynoldstown Crossing	\$1,543,091	25	\$61,724
Reynoldstown Crossing ALTC	\$300,000	3	\$100,000
Multiple Sites	\$1,949,115	57	\$34,155
TOTAL	\$5,322,376	131	\$40,629

BAHTF Resource Allocation

Table 8 provides basic information on the rental and homeownership units supported through the Trust Fund to date, including total cost, number of units and average cost per unit. It demonstrates that of the \$8.9 million invested in the trust fund, approximately \$5.3 million has been spent. This accounts to approximately \$1.4 million in developer incentive committed to Reynoldstown Senior Apartments, \$1.5 million in both construction soft costs and down payment assistance for non-ATLC properties in the Lofts at Reynoldstown, \$300,000 (in soft costs and direct subsidy) for ALTC properties located in the Lofts at Reynoldstown and \$1.9 million in downpayment assistance for individuals purchasing homes along the BeltLine. This results in an average subsidy of \$40,629, with the greatest per unit cost going to ALTC Lofts' permanently affordable units at \$100,000, and lowest average cost for rental units at *Reynoldstown Senior Apartments* at \$33,256. Approximately \$3.6 million remains in the Trust Fund. Figure 5 shows a breakdown of allocated Trust Fund resources by housing type.

Figure 5. Fund Disbursement by Housing Type



Affordability

Considering the primary goal of the Trust Fund is to help ensure residential diversity in and around the BeltLine, it is critically important to understand the income limits currently supported through this tool. To do this, we examine availability according to two standards -Area Median Income and Atlanta Median Income - as there are benefits to analyzing each. Area Median Income assumes that individuals and families consider their housing decisions in a regional, rather than a local context and therefore represents income levels from across the 28-county Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Atlanta Median Income on the other hand helps one better understand the extent to which Trust Fund resources are being used to support income levels that reflect those individuals and families currently living in and around the BeltLine.

While specific data is currently unavailable for qualifying income levels for the rental units, the type of federal funds being secured for the project demand that the project serve low-income households. More detailed household income data is available for the 88 individuals who received downpayment assistance.

Table 9. Affordability Limits Based on Area Median Income		
	BAHTF subsidized homeownership units	BAHTF subsidized rental units
Extremely Low (0% - 30%)	4 (4%)	-
Very Low (31% - 60 %)	33 (38%)	(43) 100%
Low (61% - 80%)	32 (36%)	-
Moderate (81% - 120%)	19 (22%)	-
TOTAL	131	43

Table 10. Affordability Limits Based on Atlanta Median Income		
	BAHTF subsidized homeownership units	BAHTF subsidized rental units
Extremely Low (0% - 30%)	0 (0%)	N/A
Very Low (31% - 60 %)	10 (11%)	N/A
Low (61% - 80%)	17 (19%)	(43) 100%
Moderate (81% - 120%)	40 (46%)	N/A
Above Moderate (> 120%)	21 (24%)	N/A
TOTAL	131	43

When examining affordability based on area median income, 4% of households served were considered extremely low-income, 38% very low-income, 36% low-income and 22% were considered moderate income.³⁴

When examining affordability levels based on the City of Atlanta's median income, there were no residents who registered as extremely low income, 11% registered as very low-income, 19% were considered low-income, 46% considered moderate income and 24% above what would be considered moderate income for the average person living in the City Atlanta.

The average home price among the buyers is \$152,470. The highest price is \$252,890 and the lowest \$52,000.

Household Size

Downpayment assistance data likewise provides some insight into the family types of those participating in the program. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the vast majority of households, 77 in all were individuals, living alone. Eight of the units were purchased by

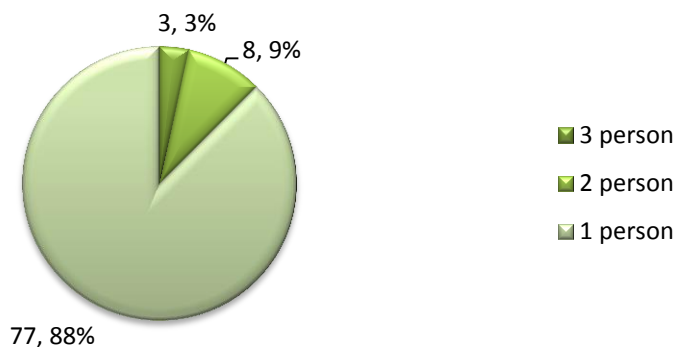
³⁴ Income levels are based on federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines.

two-family households and the remaining three were purchased by 3-family households.

Other Target Demographics

When examining the former residency and employment of those receiving down payment assistance, approximately 64% were City of Atlanta residents and < 1% would be considered a BeltLine neighborhood resident. Eight percent of homeowners were employed by City of Atlanta, Fulton County or Atlanta Public Schools³⁵.

**Figure 6. Household Size
Down Payment Assistance Program**



Currently, there are several projects undergoing the TF application process. These include the rehabilitation and preservation of Boynton Village Apartments, a 45 unit very low-income affordable housing development in the Peoplestown neighborhood. Ultimately, 100% of the units will be affordable to families at 50% of AMI or below, with the units remaining affordable for 20 years. The deal is contingent on an award of Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the state of Georgia. Additionally, Jamestown Properties, a private developer has applied to the TF for dollars to support the development of 50 units of rental housing affordable to families earning 80% of AMI.

Summary of Affordable Housing Goals vs. Actual

This section offers some comparison of specific affordable housing-related goals to actual outcomes to date. For example, according to the Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan, the Trust Fund was projected to accrue \$240 million in bond proceeds over a 25 year period. Because the TF was not active until 2008, the timeline relating to affordable housing begins then. Based on an average yearly estimate, the Trust Fund should have raised \$42 million over the first five years of the project. However, due to the TAD litigation, the TF has only received proceeds from the first and

³⁵ Data was readily available for 86 of the 88 homeowners receiving down payment assistance.

only bond offering back in 2008. This has resulted in a difference of \$33.8 million between projected and actual capitalization.

In comparing the number of projected units versus actual units, one must reference the 25 year goal of 5,600 units, as there are currently no intermediate affordable housing goals that have been identified by ABI. Therefore, based on an annual average, ABI needed to create 224 affordable housing units per year. This comes to 1,120 units over a five year period. However to date, the TF has supported the creation of 131 units, resulting in a 1,661 unit difference between projected and actual activity.

There is reason to believe however, that a fully funded TF would have resulted in Atlanta BeltLine coming closer to its actual goal. The answer may lie within a brief analysis of projected unit subsidy compared with actual unit subsidy. To obtain projected average unit subsidy, the total number of projected units is divided by what would be a fully funded TF at \$240 Million. This produces a projected average subsidy of \$42,857. When the number of actual units is divided by the amount of resources that have been committed by the TF to date, the actual average subsidy amount totals \$40,629, resulting in a savings of \$2,228 in subsidy per unit. If this cost-savings holds, and production can be increased, the TF could actually produce 5,907 units, 307 units more than projected.

ATLANTA LAND TRUST COLLABORATIVE

The Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative is a nonprofit organization formed in 2010 in response to public outcry concerning potential BeltLine-related gentrification and displacement. The formation of ALTC was the result of a 2-year long planning process convened by the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABLP) in 2008, with the process involving over 30 nonprofit, public and private sector stakeholders in an unprecedented effort to address the BeltLine's need for long-term affordable housing.

The ALTC functions city-wide with a special emphasis on the BeltLine. It raises local and national funds for itself and local CLTs, and partners with the City, ABI, Invest Atlanta, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Fulton County and local financial institutions to create a supportive environment for CLTs.

ALTC was incorporated in late 2009, and since that time has made significant progress. It is currently supporting three CLT demonstration projects in two BeltLine neighborhoods. It is working with the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Improvement Association on a lease-to-own CLT project and partnering with Resources for Residents and Communities on a green CLT project in the Reynoldstown neighborhood. The organization is likewise functioning as a CLT in neighborhoods without the capacity to

develop their own. Additionally, through the support of the Trust Fund, ALTC closed on its first 3 CLT condo units at the Lofts at Reynoldstown Crossing in 2012.

Currently, ALTC is working on policy change initiatives with various public sector entities and private banking institutions, and has begun planning and technical assistance work with two neighborhood groups: the South West Atlanta Neighborhood Collaborative (SWANC) and Vine City/English Avenue. ALTC has also taken a leadership role convening the TOD Collaborative in Atlanta. This group is working to structure and capitalize a loan pool for the purchase of land for permanently affordable, mixed-use development near transit.

OBSERVATIONS

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The findings relative to the Housing Trust Fund present somewhat of a mixed bag. On the positive side, those responsible for the TF have managed to strike an average subsidy amount lower than what was projected. If this continues, the Trust Fund could potentially produce several hundred more units than previously anticipated. With that said, most of the units created have been homeownership units for moderate income households which don't necessarily require deep subsidy. While Reynoldstown Senior has received an award from the Trust Fund, the project has yet to break ground, meaning that there are no affordable rental units that have been produced to date.

Along these same lines, the affordable homeownership units that are being supported are almost exclusively condominium units which are not well suited for families. In other words, while one might argue that the TF is producing units on par with expectations based on the available resources, the housing stock is not as diverse as what might be ideal. Additionally, ABI had a difficult time meeting its aims relating to the target populations for the resources, with few being law enforcement officers, teachers or former Atlanta BeltLine residents.

There is clearly more to be done. A minimum of 322 affordable units per year over the next 17 years is required to meet the BeltLine's affordable housing commitment of 5,600 units. There are a range of challenges at play – both environmental and in terms of the way the BeltLine's affordable housing strategy has been framed - which have made the execution of this tool difficult.

Perhaps the most consequential of these challenges was the crash of the housing market in 2008/2009. As a result, there has been little housing development in the

region as a whole over the past 5 years. This has placed severe limits on the natural market for Trust Fund dollars, both for the for-profit and non-profit developers.³⁶

Additionally, there seems to be substantial private developer resistance to creating affordable housing within Atlanta. Recently, BAHAB conducted a survey of for-profit developers to assess barriers to use for the Trust Fund. Those taking the survey indicated they are unlikely to use the TF voluntarily, and won't develop affordable units unless they are required. In the absence of other tools to require affordable housing development (i.e. zoning regulations), this attitude has limited TF activity.

Further complicating the effectiveness of the tool is the all-around weak nonprofit housing sector in Atlanta. In recent years, many CDCs have closed their doors and housing production from the remaining organizations has plunged. This also has damaged the natural market for TF dollars.

Our analysis also found that because Trust Fund dollars are structured as gap financing, applicants must be able to secure private financing to make their deal work. While several of the remaining nonprofits have applied for TF dollars, they have been unable to secure private financing given the increased barriers to credit access put in place by banks in response to the financial crisis, therefore condemning the deal.

Clearly, the impact of these challenges has contributed to the pronounced gap between projected and actual TF production. Given the collapse of the housing market and the subsequent consequences for the nonprofit sector, limited access to capital and the lack of private sector appetite for affordable housing, the BeltLine now has a collapsed timeline - just 17 years to achieve its 5,600 unit goal. This will require more creativity, deeper partnerships and a more proactive approach than could have been anticipated at the beginning of the project.

Aside from the challenges described above, many of which are environmental and largely out of the control of the Atlanta BeltLine, there is one area of concern that falls squarely within ABI's control – the *length of affordability* required for Trust Fund supported units. For instance, both the down-payment assistance program and the low-income rental program have affordability requirements that expire after 15 years.

While the Trust Fund has supported the creation of permanently affordable units in the form of the three CLT properties included in the Lofts at Reynoldstown project, the model seems underutilized. It is true that resources from premature sales are cycled back into the Trust Fund, however chances are the housing market of tomorrow won't be nearly as affordable as the housing market of today, and additional subsidies will be needed to merely replace these expiring units. If this issue is not effectively addressed,

³⁶ While the housing market is getting better, (especially in the rental sector), the TF is still not seeing many applicants.

there is a good chance that there will be little evidence of the enormous resource dedicated to the creation and preservation of affordable housing around the BeltLine by the close of the project in 2030.

To be clear, this explicit time-frame limit on the affordability of units is consistent with current practice in the affordable housing industry. Most if not all affordable housing funding sources (CDBG, HOME, LIHTC, AHP, etc.) have expiration dates on the affordability of units funded through them, usually between 5 and 35 years depending on the source and tenure of the units. This loss of affordability over time is a challenge for the affordable housing sector broadly, and one which the sector has been struggling with for years. However, the BeltLine is unique in many ways, including the overall amount of investment, the percentage of the city impacted by both land and population, the 25-year project time-frame, and the comprehensive nature of the project. These factors – and the huge neighborhood and housing market impact they are sure to bring – give the BeltLine additional motivation and responsibility to ensure that housing remain affordable in its surrounding neighborhoods for the long-term.

Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative

When ALTC was first launched, there was a good deal of excitement about its potential for helping to curb the negative effects of gentrification and mitigating displacement; however, the initiative has not gained the traction necessary to have a large scale impact. Part of the problem seems to be that there has been more resistance to the shared equity/CLT model at the City, Invest Atlanta, ABI and financial institutions than anticipated. Barriers have included a general lack of familiarity with the shared-equity housing model; a lack of clarity about implications of the model for agency-level processes and procedures; and increased risk aversion in the post-recession/post-housing crash environment.

Another challenge to the CLT model seems to be the failure to leverage one Atlanta BeltLine sponsored tool (ALTC) using the other Atlanta BeltLine affordable housing tool (Affordable Housing Trust Fund). Currently, TF policies allow CLTs to apply for funds and provides CLT projects with extra points during the ranking process; however, the CLT approach is one of 5 factors receiving “strong scoring preference,” and one of 12 receiving “scoring preference” overall.

This latter issue is another example of the larger organizational tension between ABI and ABLP as it relates to equity. Although shared-equity housing was identified in the ABLP-led planning effort as *the* key strategy for addressing long-term affordable housing challenges in BeltLine neighborhoods, to date ABI seems to have been unwilling to fully embrace the CLT model in its TF investment policies.

QUALITY OF LIFE

OVERVIEW

As a comprehensive urban redevelopment initiative, one might argue that the ultimate goal of the Atlanta BeltLine is to improve the quality of life for those residents and communities touched by it. With two equity-focused initiatives left, neither of which truly constitutes its own category, the decision was made to create a catch-all category that offers the flexibility to incorporate these efforts, as well as future efforts that don't squarely fit into one of the other groupings. Therefore, this section provides an overview of two initiatives designed to address specific quality of life issues in BeltLine neighborhoods. They are the *BeltLine Health Impact Assessment* and the *BeltLine Environmental Justice Policy*. And because this assessment is ultimately interested in obtaining some measure of the real life impact the Atlanta BeltLine is having on quality of life, this section likewise reports-out on a community survey that was conducted in two BeltLine neighborhoods which seeks to offer insight into that question.

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In 2005, the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership was awarded a grant by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support the development of a health impact assessment³⁷ - a tool used to provide decision-makers with recommendations about how to promote positive health outcomes and reduce the adverse health impacts of a proposed policy, plan or project. The HIA would specifically focus on the BeltLine Redevelopment Plan and project-specific planning relating to it. The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development (CQGRD) at Georgia Tech and the Centers for Disease Control were selected to implement the HIA

³⁷ All HIAs follow a consistent structure, and include: 1) screening or determining through a literature whether the proposed project can have an impact on public health outcomes, 2) scoping or identifying the range of potential positive and negative health outcomes of the project and set the boundaries for the HIA, 3) assessment or confirming and prioritize assessment topics; identify who may be affected; how they may be affected, and the likelihood and magnitude of the effect, 4) recommendations or propose changes in the project to promote health or mitigate harm, 5) dissemination for report results to identified decision-makers, and 6) monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the HIA on the project.

that same year. Though not legislatively mandated, the initiative represented the foundational commitment on the part of ABLP and ABI leadership to ensure that the project contributes to public health across a range of issues.

As part of the HIA, the CQGRD and CDC convened an interdisciplinary team that engaged in community outreach and implemented community surveys. They additionally performed literature and document reviews, and conducted quantitative data analysis to develop a set of 72 process and policy recommendations which was later submitted to Atlanta BeltLine leadership. Some changes that were made as a result of the report and recommendations include adding a public health professional to TADAC; including health as a key metric in the Decision Support Tool; and adding connectivity with other transportation services/facilities to the evaluation criteria included in the federal and state Environmental Impact Reports. The HIA also laid the groundwork for later research funded by Kaiser to look at the specific health impacts of the Eastside Trail.

While the HIA was an important early step in emphasizing human health as an explicit goal for the BeltLine, there has been limited evaluation and monitoring of the actions of ABI relative to the HIA recommendations over the last 6 years.

In the spring of 2012, ABLP convened a group of over 30 built environment and public health stakeholders to discuss how to promote the positive public health benefits of the BeltLine. However, the group has not yet been able to secure the resources to support a longer-term planning effort.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY

ABI's Environmental Justice (EJ) policy was approved by its Board in August 2012. According to ABI documents, the EJ policy was drafted to assist ABI in protecting human health and the environment by reducing the negative and disproportionate impacts of ABI's activities on overburdened communities. Similar to the HIA, the EJ policy was not mandated by legislation, but rather represents ABI staff and board commitment to building a sustainable and equitable project. The need for an EJ policy became clear early on in the project, when ABI began to deal with a wide range of environmental issues. It wanted a tool that would help them systematically address these issues in ways that were responsive and responsible.

As part of the process, ABI researched other EJ policies. They likewise initiated a community engagement effort to get resident input into the policy. The final

policy articulates its goal as being to “ensure that people regardless of race, age, culture or income are duly informed about opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of ABI programs, policies, activities and projects, and that they are not treated unfairly, or caused to experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects.”

The policy is organized around a series of steps that reflect its efforts to incorporate environmental justice into its community engagement efforts, decision-making and programs. In the policy, ABI commits to making reasonable efforts to:

- Use the CE framework to foster public engagement to promote communication and collaboration prior to actions that have an impact on the environment.
- Generate public documents and notices relating to environmental issues that may have an impact on human health.
- Work with federal, state, regional and local agencies to identify and minimize disproportionate impacts on relevant populations.
- Provide training to staff on environmental justice issues.
- Conduct an internal pre-project analysis and post-project evaluation on EJ issues.
- Integrate environmental justice into all ABI programs (Community Benefits, EDP, First Source jobs policy, etc.)
- Document the EJ process to demonstrate ABI’s response to community-driven issues and concerns.

The project-specific aspects of the EJ policy have not yet been implemented, as there have not been any new TAD-funded projects since the development of the policy. However, staff reports that assessment components of the policy will be used during pre-construction, construction, and at project completion for several projects coming on-line this year. The non-project components of the policy will begin implementation this year as well, when the consultant tasked with developing the EJ policy will provide a “refresher course” for ABI staff on identifying and addressing EJ issues. More comprehensive training is currently being scheduled.

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY OVERVIEW

As one of the primary goals of this report is to assess the impact of the BeltLine project on local communities, a small neighborhood survey was conducted to

obtain resident perceptions of the project. Because much of the project's energy and resources over the years have been committed to the development of local greenspace, the decision was made to focus on the impact of BeltLine parks. Additionally, because parks are place-based and typically contained within a neighborhood, the assumption was made that among the accomplishments to date, parks would potentially add the greatest value for individuals and families living near them.

When examining the options, the decision was made to focus analysis on two communities, the Peoplestown neighborhood and its D.H. Stanton Park and the Old Fourth Ward and its Historic Fourth Ward Park and Skate Park. Parks were selected because they were considered as being completed amenities that were each directly adjacent to vibrant residential areas.

APPROACH

The door-to-door survey (See Appendix D for survey questions) focused on residents living within a half-mile of the park, as a half-mile is considered the generally accepted distance people will walk to access a park³⁸. Residents were selected using a random, systematic sample to ensure the best cross-section of the survey area³⁹. While the address was recorded for each survey completed, residents were afforded confidentiality and informed that their responses would not be connected to them individually. Finally, residents received a \$5 gift card to Wal-Mart for their participation.

NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEWS

Peoplestown

Peoplestown is a relatively small neighborhood located in Southeast Atlanta, directly adjacent to Turner Field. Historically the neighborhood, named for the People's family who owned a substantial portion of the community's southern half, developed into a mixed, though segregated bedroom community for those working in Atlanta's downtown. The community showed signs of white flight earlier than most during the 1920s and 1930s, but maintained much of its mixed demographic through the 1960s⁴⁰. By 2000, however Peoplestown had lost

³⁸ Ross, Catherine. Atlanta BeltLine Health Impact Assessment. Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development. June 2007.

³⁹ Sampling was conducted using residential property records obtained from the City of Atlanta.

⁴⁰ Annie E. Casey Foundation Atlanta Civic Site. 2004. "Peoplestown". Neighborhoods County NPU-V.

nearly half of its population. Today, the community comprises just 876 occupied units, with one third of its total housing stock registering as vacant. In certain ways this reality is only exacerbated by stubborn social challenges such as high unemployment and low educational attainment, which continue to plague neighborhood residents en masse. With that said, the community is stabilizing. Amidst citywide school closures it continues to house D.H. Stanton Elementary School which is currently undergoing important reforms. Additionally, the neighborhood is supported by a range of service providers which have over the years worked with local residents to build a bridge to increased self-sufficiency.

Old Fourth Ward

Old Fourth Ward is one of the most long-standing neighborhoods in the entire city, having retained its name from the early ward system which was abolished in 1954. Over the years the community has endured a great deal, including a tragic fire in 1917 which burned through half the neighborhood, numerous slum clearance initiatives which left large swaths of the neighborhood undeveloped for years, and large scale infrastructure projects including the interstate highway and Freedom Parkway, each of which have cut straight through residential segments of the neighborhood.⁴¹

Historically, a densely populated African-American community, the neighborhood has experienced significant demographic changes over time. Today, the community is largely integrated, both racially and in terms of income. It maintains a thriving commercial presence, and remains a constant attraction for local, national and international visitors who flock to national treasures like the Carter Center and Martin Luther King Historic Site.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

In all, 171 households were interviewed across the two communities: 92 in Peopletown and 79 in Old Fourth Ward⁴². In an effort to make the survey as representative as possible, both single and multi-family homes were targeted, however there was substantial under-sampling of multi-family households in Old Fourth, most of which were gated or otherwise had restricted access.

⁴¹ Tunnel-Spangler-Walsh and Associates. "Old Fourth Ward Master Plan: Part Two Context and History". Prepared for the City of Atlanta Department of Planning and Community Development. September 2008.

⁴² The goal was to conduct 100 surveys in each neighborhood; however the survey portion of this project was beset with a series of challenges, including excessive rain and high surveyor attrition.

Peopletown

Of the 92 resident surveyed in Peopletown, 65% were women and 35% men. The majority 76%, identified as African-American; twenty-three percent identified as white and 1% Hispanic. Overall, the sample provided a solid age mix with 13% falling between 18 and 24; 27% between 25 and 34; 42% between 35 and 54 and 18% above 55 years of age. The average household size for the sample was 2.9 people per unit, with children living in 45% of homes. Finally, the average length of residency was 9 years, with the longest recorded tenure being 57 years.

TABLE 11. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS				
	Old Fourth Ward (N=79)		Peoplestown (N=92)	
	N	%	N	%
GENDER				
Male	39	49%	32	35%
Female	40	51%	60	65%
RACE				
Black/African-American	38	48%	69	76%
Hispanic/Latino	2	2%	1	1%
White/Caucasian	31	39%	21	23%
Asian	1	1%	-	-
American Indian or Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
Mixed Heritage	7	8%	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
AGE⁴³				
18 – 24	14	18%	11	13%
25 – 34	21	27%	24	27%
35 – 54	24	31%	37	42%
55 and Over	18	24%	16	18%
TENURE				
1 Year or Less	20	26%	23	26%
2 – 5 Years	19	24%	28	32%
6 – 10 Years	9	12%	12	14%
11 – 20 Years	12	15%	16	18%
Greater than 2 Years	18	23%	9	10%
HOUSEHOLD SIZE				
1	20	25%	20	22%
2	20	25%	24	26%
3	18	23%	16	17%
4	13	17%	17	19%
Greater than 4	8	10%	15	16%

⁴³ The N for “Age” is 77 for Old Fourth Ward and 88 for Peoplestown due to missing data.

Old Fourth Ward

Of the 79 Old Fourth Ward residents who participated in the survey, 51% were women and 49% men. In all, 48% of those interviewed were African-American; 39% were White; 8% identified as being of Mixed Race; 4% were Hispanic and 1% was Asian. The sample proved equally diverse in terms of age with 18% falling between 18 and 24; 27% between 25 and 34; 31% between 35 and 54 and 24% above 55 years of age. The average household size was 2.6 per unit, with children living in 32% of homes. Finally, the average length of residency among those who participated in the survey was 13 years, with the longest recorded tenure being 61 years.

Table 11 provides greater detail on the demographics of residents from each neighborhood.

ANALYSIS

There are five basic areas of inquiry covered by the survey. They include:

- General knowledge of and engagement with the Atlanta BeltLine
- BeltLine park usage
- BeltLine park quality
- BeltLine park safety
- Impact of BeltLine park on quality of life

This section provides an overview of key findings across the two neighborhoods.

General Knowledge of and Engagement with the Atlanta BeltLine

The first series of questions assesses residents' knowledge of and engagement with the Atlanta BeltLine. First, residents were asked if they were familiar with the Atlanta BeltLine, to which 82% (N=65) of Old Fourth Ward residents responded affirmatively versus 66% (N=61) in Peoplestown. The remaining questions within this section reference this sub-population of respondents.

Residents were then asked to share how they'd learned about the BeltLine to which the largest portion of Peoplestown residents (49%) said they'd heard about it through a news source. Nearly 34% of Old Fourth Ward residents said they'd heard from a source "Other" than a friend/family member, new source, community meeting, signs or materials. Examples of the "Other" responses

provided include “watched it get built” and “walked by it”.⁴⁴ Twenty-five percent of Old Fourth Ward residents said they’d likewise heard about the project from a news source. Of those who were aware of the project, a strong majority in both neighborhoods knew it had run near their home (98% in Old Fourth Ward; 78% in Peoplestown) though the number of residents who’d actually attended a BeltLine-related meeting or event varied significantly, with only 14% of Peoplestown residents aware of the BeltLine saying they’d attended such a gathering versus 40% of Old Fourth Ward residents⁴⁵. The most popular events across the two neighborhoods were the BeltLine Tour (Old Fourth Ward - 6; Peoplestown - 4), Ribbon Cuttings and Grand Openings (Old Fourth Ward - 6; Peoplestown - 1), and Art on the BeltLine (Old Fourth Ward - 6).

Residents were then asked if they knew that the park of interest (Old Fourth Ward Park and Skate Park in Old Fourth Ward and D.H. Stanton Park in Peoplestown) was a BeltLine Park to which 86% of Old Fourth Ward residents responded affirmative. Sixty-seven percent of Peoplestown residents were aware that D.H. Stanton Park was a BeltLine project.

BeltLine Park Usage

All respondents were then asked if they had used the park, to which 76% of Old Fourth residents and 64% of Peoplestown residents said they had. Table 12 provides a distribution of uses across the two neighborhoods. Based on the findings, walking, relaxing and playing with children were among the most common uses for both parks. Less common uses include playing an organized sport or biking. Among the “Other” options provided were “walk dog” (Old Fourth Ward) and “cook-out at the pavilion” (Peoplestown). Those who had not used the parks across the two neighborhoods mentioned several reasons including, “not convenient”, “not aware of it” and simply “don’t enjoy using parks”.

⁴⁴ Choices were not exclusive.

⁴⁵ Figures based on those aware of the BeltLine, not total population of respondents.

TABLE 12. PARK USAGE ACROSS NEIGHBORHOODS						
	Old Fourth Ward (N=60)			Peoplestown (N=58)		
	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
Walk	33 (55%)	23 (38%)	4 (7%)	19 (33%)	25 (43%)	14 (24%)
Run	13 (22%)	10 (17%)	37 (62%)	8 (14%)	4 (7%)	46 (79%)
Bike	6 (10%)	10 (17%)	44 (73%)	4 (7%)	2 (3%)	52 (90%)
Relax	24 (40%)	23 (38%)	13(22%)	21(36%)	15 (26%)	22 (38%)
Participate in an Organized Sport	1 (2%)	7 (12%)	52 (86%)	4 (7%)	5 (9%)	49 (84%)
Play w/ Children	14 (23%)	20 (33%)	26 (43%)	27 (46%)	12 (21%)	19 (33%)

BeltLine Park Safety and Quality

Residents who admitted to using the park were then asked to comment on the extent to which it was safe from violence and crime. Seventy-one percent of Peoplestown respondents considered the park to be safe, while 80% of Old Fourth Ward residents considered their park to be safe. When asked about the overall quality of their respective neighborhood park, 63% of Old Fourth Ward residents considered it excellent and 32% good. In Peoplestown, 48% considered D.H. Stanton Park excellent and 40% thought it good.

Impact of BeltLine Park on Quality of Life

In an effort to understand the broader impact of the park on local residents, respondents who'd used the park were asked two summative questions: 1) would you say your quality of life has improved as a result of the new/updated park, and 2) do you think the park is a good addition to the neighborhood? To the former question referencing quality of life, 85% of Old Fourth Ward residents and 70% of Peoplestown residents responded affirmatively. To the latter question, 97% of Old Fourth Ward residents and 98% of Peoplestown residents agreed that the park had been a positive addition to the community.

Lastly, all respondents were asked if they had known others who'd visited the park, to which 65% of Old Fourth Ward and 64% of Peoplestown residents answered yes. This was followed by a question on how park usage might be increased. Some common ideas included "allow grilling" (Old Fourth Ward), "provide more options for kids" (Old Fourth Ward), "more marketing" (Peoplestown), "more organized sports" (Peoplestown), and "more security" (Peoplestown).

OBSERVATIONS

To be clear, the survey conducted as part of this assessment pulls from a relatively small sample when compared with the amount of people who live within the Atlanta BeltLine generally and near BeltLine parks specifically. With that said, the findings, though not scientifically generalizable provide powerful insight into the early impacts of the Atlanta BeltLine on local communities. Perhaps one of the most powerful findings coming out of the survey is that the vast majority of residents across both neighborhoods – greater than 95% believed the park had been a positive addition to their neighborhood. Further, most believed that the new BeltLine park had improved their quality of life.

The survey likewise highlighted the nuanced needs of neighborhoods; reinforcing that BeltLine amenities ought to reflect the character and culture of the communities in which they are placed. For instance, while residents of Old Fourth Ward were concerned about additional doggy parks and children features, residents of Peoplestown were looking for more organized sports and increased security for the park.

The survey provided insight into the types of physical activities in which residents engaged. Obtained on a more large scale basis, this type of information could support the targeting of public health initiatives and even guide project design; as such data lends insight into resident preferences (i.e. whether to prioritize walking trails over bike trails). Further the survey provides comprehensive information on the extent to which the BeltLine's communications and community engagement is permeating individual communities. For instance, the findings show that residents of Old Fourth Ward seem to be more engaged with the project than residents of D.H. Stanton. While this could be due to a number of factors, including the very high profile opening of the East Side trail, chances are socio-economic factors play a role as well, considering that different populations obtain their information in different ways.

All in all, the findings reflect positively on the effect of the Atlanta BeltLine on the communities it seeks to transform.

NOTE ON GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Since its earliest beginnings, there has been considerable concern among many in the Atlanta community that the BeltLine might trigger the type of rapid revitalization that sometimes leads to gentrification - a dramatic shift in the residential make-up and character of a neighborhood, due to public and/or private sector upgrading. In many respects, there has been good reason for alarm. In a 2009 report commissioned by Georgia Stand Up – a community-based non-profit, Georgia Tech professor Dan Immergluck found that in the years before the BeltLine implementation strategy had fully materialized - between 2000 and 2006 - there was a disproportionate increase in property values in BeltLine neighborhoods relative to the city of Atlanta as a whole⁴⁶. While it is likely that shifting market forces have dampened such trends, most would contend that the threat of involuntary residential displacement, due to rising rents and increasing property taxes is still very real.

Concerns relating to gentrification and residential displacement ranked high among members of the Equitable Development Assessment Advisory Board. Several ABI and ABLP staff likewise expressed an interest in better understanding the threat, as well as identifying ways to potentially mitigate it. With the phenomenon of gentrification and residential displacement being the topic of countless books and articles over the last several decades, it would have been very difficult to adequately address these issues in any detail within the scope of this project. However, we were likewise reluctant to not address it at all. Therefore, this section reviews what some consider a promising model for heading-off the negative outcomes of rapid growth and revitalization.

An Early Warning System for Gentrification

A brief literature review brought our attention to the work of Dr. Karen Chapple from UC Berkeley's Department of City and Regional Planning, who in 2009 developed an "early warning system" to help identify neighborhoods most at risk of gentrification in the Bay Area, with a special focus on communities where transit was being built or expanded. With the caveat that this model is indicative, not predictive, she looked retrospectively at general patterns of neighborhood change and the factors that drove it

⁴⁶ Immergluck, Dan. "Large Scale Redevelopment Initiatives and Home Values: The Case of the Atlanta BeltLine Project," Urban Studies, July 2009, 1723-1745.

from 1990 – 2000. She also examined neighborhoods that had gentrified⁴⁷ and the factors that drove that process. Finally, Chapple identified other indicators that suggest the potential for displacement in the future. She combined this analysis into a system of variables that can help identify neighborhoods that might be more at risk for gentrification in order to target programs, policies and investment to help limit displacement.

In her study, she identified the following variables as increasing the likelihood of a neighborhood gentrifying and potentially leading to displacement. The variables are examined relative to the local or regional average, depending on the unit of analysis, and have impact if the local values are higher than the comparison average:

- % taking transit to work/access to transit
- Income diversity
- % non-family housing
- % of dwelling units in buildings with more than 3 units
- % renter-occupied
- % of renters paying more than 35% of income on housing
- # of small parks per 1,000
- Public space per 1,000
- Youth facilities per 1,000

The study identified access to transit, income diversity, % non-family households, % of dwelling units in buildings with more than 3 units, % renter-occupied, and % of renters paying more than 35% of income on rent as the factors with the most impact on a neighborhood's susceptibility to gentrify.

Interestingly, the study also identified the neighborhood characteristics most likely to cause neighborhoods not to gentrify, including % of units with 3 or more cars, presence of public or nonprofit recreational facilities, % non-Hispanic white, higher median gross rent than average, and % of owners paying more than 35% of income on housing.

It is important to note that there are many limits to using this model in Atlanta. First, it was developed for the Bay Area, which is denser and more transit-rich as a region than Atlanta. Second, the model was developed based on census data changes between 1990 and 2000, and its findings haven't yet been tested against 2010 data⁴⁸. Third, the

⁴⁷ Chapple defines gentrification as a change in neighborhood character due to economic change in the form of increases in both real-estate value and household income, and demographic change in the forms of increases in income and educational attainment.

⁴⁸ Dr. Chapple has been funded to revisit and assess the model in both the Bay Area and Los Angeles from 2012 – 2014, and will look additionally at parcel-level data in both communities to increase the sensitivity of the framework she developed in 2009. The research is scheduled to be completed by mid-2014, at which time it is slated to be used to help drive state affordable housing investment in California.

model is based on census data available every 10 years, although it could be refined with the use of American Community Survey data which is available every 5 years.

Even given these limits, Dr. Chapple's work does provide a possible framework to help identify neighborhoods around the BeltLine at risk for gentrification and displacement as a step to effectively target policies and programs designed to prevent and/or address this displacement. In particular, geographically targeting some affordable housing strategies, especially those focused on permanent affordability, could help the BeltLine effectively steward the limited resources it has to address this issue.

Until these findings are complete, it would be premature to use the variables above to identify neighborhoods most at risk for gentrification and displacement around the BeltLine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis presented in this report has yielded a series of recommendations – all of which are outlined below.

1. Create a more formal and strategic distribution of roles between ABI and ABLP around the planning, execution and assessment of equity initiatives.

Some of the equity initiatives described in this report came about as a result of legislative mandate, and others flowed organically from mission and/or community input. Some initiatives are linked exclusively to TAD-funded projects, while others address larger geographies and issue areas. Some initiatives were started by ABLP, but contain recommendations for ABI policy development and program approach. Such variation in origin, scope, scale and project responsibility is not a negative in and of itself. However, a lack of intentionality and synergy can often lead to misalignment and even duplication. As we have described throughout this report, there is a lack of strategic and intentional role distribution between ABI and ABLP as it relates to equity and social benefit issues, and this has played out in a lack of coordination in the planning, execution and assessment of these initiatives.

Whether it is ABI not fully embracing the CLT model identified as the BeltLine’s signature affordable housing strategy in the ABLP-initiated affordable housing planning effort, or the lack of coordination between the ABI-initiated First Source Jobs Policy and the ABLP-initiated EAG/ Grady Workforce Pilot - there are limits related to leadership on equity issues, as well as real disconnects when it comes to the authority to plan verses the authority to execute. Additionally, the lack of formal mechanisms to identify and apply lessons learned across the two organizations as it relates to equity results in missed opportunities.

This disconnect between roles as it relates to the initiation, planning and execution of equity efforts is an issue that ABI and ABLP will need to tackle head-on if they want a more coordinated, strategic and high-impact approach to promoting equity. The Board and staff leadership of the two organizations need to formally address these gaps and limits, and determine the best distribution of roles relative to both current and future equity efforts. One interim strategy might be to create an “Equity Cabinet” similar to the Mayor’s Economic Development Cabinet as a mechanism to promote more coordination, planning and communication.

2. Centralize and formalize data-gathering and storage efforts at ABI. It is fair to say that there were certain impediments to collecting ABI-specific data throughout the execution of this assessment. Therefore, moving forward It would be helpful – both for the Equitable Development Assessment and a range of other communication, planning and evaluation-related efforts – for ABI to consolidate and better formalize its data collection processes.

This effort should include but not be limited to the development and conceptualization of consistent definitions across multiple data categories and data collection efforts; the identification of key ABI staff who will control identified categories of data; and the clarification and consistent communication of limits on data access where applicable (i.e. certain private funders who are resistant to information about their investments being made public, etc.).

3. Conduct an annual presentation of data on resource allocation and project placement. Clearly, given that the land acquisition process is opportunistic, and private funders come to the table with their own geographic priorities, complete equity in terms of the geographic distribution of investment, number of acres and miles of trail will be unlikely in the short-term. However, in the pursuit of transparency and the building of community and stakeholder trust, it will be important for ABI to report on the resource allocation and project placement data included in this report on an annual basis. This annual reporting will also allow ABI to point to trends and identify the steps they have taken to address imbalances over time. The caveats above can be used to frame and manage expectations.

4. Quantifying affordable housing development. Organizations value what they measure, and the lack of interim measures for affordable housing has contributed to a lack of urgency around the issue. Working with the analysis and projections identified in the Mixed Income TOD Implementation Strategy (MITODIS) report, as well as internal considerations around strategy and available resources, ABI should identify shorter-term affordable housing goals and use them to drive action and ground assessment on this issue.

In addition, to date ABI has been measuring solely those units developed through Trust Fund investment as counting towards the over-all 5,600 unit goal. However, ABI is also using its influence with partners to create additional policies that support affordable housing development, as well as influencing developers to include affordable units in TAD projects. Whether or not ABI is able to include these additional units towards the 5,600 unit goal, they should create a system to capture these units and report them as project success.

5. Pursue a targeted land acquisition strategy to catalyze affordable housing

development in targeted development nodes around the BeltLine. Even given the environmental challenges identified in this report, the question remains whether the Trust Fund model as structured is sufficient to meet its numerical as well as aspirational goals. For instance, the current concentration of TF-supported units in the southern part of the BeltLine suggests a need for a more geographically targeted strategy. And while introducing geographic targeting to the Trust Fund's investment policy will help, further action is needed.

To this end, ABI should move forward with implementing a geographically targeted catalytic approach to affordable housing development as recommended by both the MITODIS⁴⁹ report and suggested by the stakeholder interviews held as part of this project. At minimum, this approach would allow ABI to identify critical development opportunities based on the Sub-Area and Implementation Plans; acquire key parcels in these development nodes; partner with IA or the Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Bank Authority to bank this property and limit holding costs while waiting for development; and recruit developers for project execution. This would represent a significant expansion of ABI's role from fairly passive funder of deals to ABI as a catalyst for development.

ABI and BAHAB have already had some discussion about this approach; have identified some broad criteria that can be used to drive potential acquisition activity; and have confirmed that Trust Fund dollars can be used to support ABI acquisition efforts related to affordable housing. To date, however, ABI is still considering whether to move more formally towards this approach. Using TF dollars and other funds to support targeted land acquisition in identified nodes will allow ABI to both geographically direct development and revitalization, and provide below-market land costs to incent the creation of affordable housing development by private sector actors.

6. Work with partner agencies to bring more quality low-income affordable

housing to the Atlanta BeltLine. According to research performed by the Bleakly Group for the development of the MITODIS report, 22% of BeltLine area households have incomes below 30% of regional AMI. And although it is clear that the Atlanta BeltLine has some very good tools for promoting affordable housing, resource constraints have ensured that these tools are not designed to produce the very low-income affordable housing units that would serve the needs of nearly one quarter of current BeltLine residents. Therefore, we recommend that the Atlanta BeltLine consider developing strategic partnerships with other agencies and organizations to ensure that

⁴⁹ "Mixed Income Transit Oriented Development Implementation Strategy," The Bleakly Group for Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. and Enterprise Community Partners, March 2013

communities surrounding the BeltLine maintain a diverse housing stock that is affordable to the range of families who currently live there. Potential partners might include the Atlanta Housing Authority, the City of Atlanta and nonprofit housing developers with a focus on producing very low-income housing.

7. Place a renewed focus on permanent affordable housing. While the projects supported through the Trust Fund add new affordable stock to the communities within and surrounding the BeltLine today, most of the housing produced or supported through the Trust Fund loses its affordability requirement after fifteen years. At that point, the unit can be rented or sold at market rate, and additional subsidy will be needed to replace the unit. Even in cases where a portion of downpayment resources are cycled back through the Trust Fund due to premature sale, it is likely that it will not be enough to replace the lost affordable unit. Subsidy recapture is likely to be low and housing costs/prices are likely to be higher over time; in combination, these factors will limit the Trust Fund's ability to replace units lost due to current length-of-affordability policies.

For this reason, we highly recommend that Atlanta BeltLine increase the focus of its current and future affordable housing efforts on permanent affordable housing. This should include both looking at current Trust Fund policy as well as incorporating permanently affordable housing in any future development catalyzed through ABI targeted acquisition activity. If not, there is a good chance that in 25 years the communities surrounding the BeltLine will be as unaffordable as they would have been if the resources were never directed to affordable housing at all.

8. Measure impact as it relates to jobs. Except for looking at jobs created as a result of TAD-funded construction projects, ABI is not currently tracking the creation of new jobs around the BeltLine and thus has no way of measuring progress towards the jobs goals identified in the Redevelopment Plan. Currently, there is some conversation about the newly-developed BeltLine Chamber of Commerce taking on this role, but the Chamber is currently in its infancy, has no staff and no capacity to take on this function. In the interim, ABI should work with its partners to develop a strategy to track job creation.

In addition, although the Redevelopment Plan looks at *job growth*, all the policy, planning and program approaches on this issue have related to *job training and placement*. As the Grady pilot is implemented and a larger workforce development strategy is created by the EAG, systems to measure the placement of unemployed and underemployed BeltLine residents in existing or new non-TAD related jobs needs to be developed.

9. Move forward aggressively with a signature project in the Southwest and

Southeast study areas. Over the life of the project, ABI has dedicated the majority of its resources to three large-scale projects – none of which fall within what would be considered the southern hemisphere of the Atlanta BeltLine. Therefore, to ease concerns relating to the equitable distribution of resources, Atlanta BeltLine should likewise move forward with a high-profile large-scale project in the Southwest and/or Southeast segments of the Atlanta BeltLine, and approach it with similar fanfare as the Eastside trail and Historic Old Fourth Ward Park - both of which seemed to be highly anticipated and well received by the residents living within those communities.

10. Conduct regular resident surveys within a sample of Atlanta BeltLine

neighborhoods to gauge resident perceptions of the project and its impact. The survey conducted for this project, though small, provided solid insight into resident perceptions of Atlanta BeltLine parks as well as the impact of those parks on their quality of life. Conducting similar random surveys on a larger scale over time would help those responsible for implementing the project better understand early implications for local residents and communities, as well as drive decision making reflective of resident preferences.

11. Develop a strategy for reaching out to existing neighborhood-based groups.

The examination of current engagement efforts, as well as several stakeholder interviews revealed that while Atlanta BeltLine does an exceptional job of reaching out to individuals, it hasn't done as good of a job reaching out to community-based organizations and neighborhood groups. This is a missed opportunity to leverage those organization's numbers to generate increased interest in, and involvement with, the Atlanta BeltLine. Therefore, we recommend that moving forward implementing partners devise a strategy for regular outreach and engagement to the range of neighborhood groups and community-based organizations throughout the Atlanta BeltLine.

12. Work with community-based groups to have a stronger presence in low-

income neighborhoods. As a follow up to the previous recommendation, the Atlanta BeltLine implementing partners would do well to engage neighborhood groups, particularly those within low-income neighborhoods, to identify how residents within those communities might be better engaged with the BeltLine. While the evidence from the surveys is small in number, it reinforces the general understanding that communities comprised of different populations require tailor-made engagement strategies. Therefore, we encourage the Atlanta BeltLine and its implementing partners to refine and strengthen their efforts to engage lower-income communities.

13. Develop strategies to more effectively manage two-way communication in

the BeltLine's community engagement process. The findings from our stakeholder interviews in this area also echoed similar recommendations in the Fanning Report. Stakeholders reported confusion over if, how and when the input gathered through the BeltLine's community engagement efforts were being used. Increased transparency about the range of factors impacting BeltLine decision-making, and the criteria used to determine which aspects of community input are being implemented would help address resident concern about, and sustain resident involvement in the BeltLine's community engagement efforts over time.

CONCLUSION

The Atlanta BeltLine faces huge challenges as it relates to equity. The city of Atlanta as a whole has some of the highest levels of income inequality in the country, and Atlanta's history of large-scale infrastructure projects failing to deliver on promised community benefits has contributed to a context of high need and low expectation. The unanticipated recession, the collapse of the housing market and unexpected legal challenges severely limited the BeltLine's capacity to deliver on key equity outcomes, especially affordable housing and jobs.

Against this backdrop, the Atlanta BeltLine has done many things well. The intersection of public mission and community influence led to the creation of many important equity tools and initiatives, including the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Community Engagement Framework, the Community Benefits Agreement and the First Source Jobs Policy, the Decision Support Tool and the Equitable Development Plan. As this report describes, there have been challenges and barriers to the successful implementation of these tools, including internal and partner capacity issues, limits on funding and environmental factors beyond ABI's control. However, the tools are in-place and poised for more frequent, structured and/or strategic use.

This report has attempted to describe and analyze the BeltLine's efforts around equity to date, and offer recommendations about how ABI and ABLP might strengthen these efforts and increase their impact. This report has also attempted to track the geographic distribution of resources and the acquisition and development of parks, trails and corridors around the BeltLine Sub-Areas. Finally, this report provides a series of neighborhood profiles to help the BeltLine track changes in the communities surrounding the project over time (See Appendix A).

One general finding rising above the specific recommendations described in this document is that the Atlanta BeltLine needs to make equity part of its core work, and not view it as peripheral to the "real" work of building parks, trails and transit. Given funding constraints and the size and scope of the challenges facing it, this shift will require ABI to think outside the box, to pursue creative partnerships and invest its assets and influence more strategically. ABI needs to take this on because it is legally accountable to the equity outcomes in affordable housing and jobs described in the Redevelopment Plan; because it seeks to live up to its claims about being a best practice in large-scale urban redevelopment nationally; and because it is the right thing to do.

APPENDIX A

BELTLINE DATA PROFILES

The Atlanta Beltline is bound to change the face of Atlanta's in-town neighborhoods in indelible ways, with Atlanta BeltLine Inc. and its implementing partners carrying out comprehensive plans to transform the urban landscape. However, the impact this physical transformation will have on local residents is less known. This section provides baseline data across four topic areas comparing Atlanta Beltline communities to the City of Atlanta more broadly. By conducting periodic data snapshots over the life of the project, stakeholders will be able to track the human story and use the data to inform future decision making.

Demographics

Figure A compares basic demographic characteristics of those living within BeltLine communities to those living in the city at large. Considering that the BeltLine includes some of the city's most dense neighborhoods, it is no surprise that 24% of the city's residents and 27% of its total households live within the Atlanta BeltLine. Of those households, 37% are what the U.S. Census considers Family Households and 63% Non-Family Households⁵⁰. This represents a marked difference from the City, which reports a higher percentage of Family Households. Along these lines, a smaller percentage of households are Female-Headed within Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods, and a higher percentage identify as Same-Sex Households. The average City of Atlanta household is slightly bigger at 2.17, versus 2.05 for Atlanta BeltLine communities.

When it comes to examining racial make-up, one might argue that the Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods are more diverse than the City of Atlanta – at least as it relates to Black/White composition⁵¹. While Blacks still outnumber Whites in Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods by about 2.5%, the difference is 12% for the City. Hispanic percentage on the other hand is pretty comparable across the two, resting around 5%. The same can be said for Asians who come in around 3% and multi or other race identifiers who make up around 4%.

As it relates to age, Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods have slightly fewer children under 18 as well as fewer seniors over 65, as compared to the city. And while females have a

⁵⁰ Refers to only one person living in the household.

⁵¹ While BeltLine neighborhoods may be more diverse, this data does not speak to the level of segregation within these communities.

Figure A: Demographics	<i>Beltline</i>		<i>Atlanta</i>	
	#	%	#	%
POPULATION	96,507	100.00%	408,043	100.00%
HOUSEHOLDS	44,468	100.00%	165,685	100.00%
Family Households	16,442	36.98%	75,675	45.67%
Non-Family Households	28,025	63.02%	90,010	54.33%
Female Headed Households	5,472	12.31%	26,246	15.84%
Unmarried Partner Households	3,528	7.93%	9,670	5.84%
Same-Sex Households	1,149	2.58%	2,661	1.61%
Male-Male Households	870	1.96%	1,933	1.17%
Female-Female Households	279	0.63%	728	0.44%
RACE-ETHNICITY				
Hispanic/Latino	5,096	5.28%	22,051	5.40%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	91,411	94.72%	363,602	89.11%
White	43,051	44.61%	54,062	37.76%
Black	45,731	47.39%	201,844	49.47%
Asian	3,296	3.42%	12,545	3.07%
Other/Multi	4,428	4.59%	17,201	4.22%
Non-Hispanic Race	91,411	94.72%	363,602	89.11%
White	40,699	42.17%	144,192	35.34%
Black	45,405	47.05%	200,143	49.05%
Asian	3,295	3.41%	12,472	3.06%
Other/Multi	2,012	2.09%	6,794	1.67%
Hispanic Race	5,096	5.28%	22,051	5.40%
White	2,352	2.44%	9,870	2.42%
Black	327	0.34%	1,701	0.42%
Asian	2	0.0017%	72	0.02%
Other/Multi	2,416	2.50%	10,407	2.55%
AGE				
Under Age 18	16,060	16.64%	78,588	19.26%
Over Age 65	7,538	7.81%	38,174	9.36%
SEX				
Female	46,738	48.43%	205,970	50.48%
Male	49,769	51.57%	202,073	49.52%
INCOME & POVERTY				
Household Size		2.05		2.17
Median Household Income		54,378		52,630
Households in Poverty	21,063	23.12%	78,255	21.51%
Children in Poverty	6,270	39.28%	25,934	33.43%

slight population edge over males in the City of Atlanta, men take the edge within BeltLine neighborhoods.

Perhaps some of the most stark comparison data explores income and poverty differentials across the two. While Atlanta BeltLine households on average bring home \$1,700 more in annual income, those same communities maintain a higher family poverty, and a much higher child poverty rate. This suggests there to be certain areas of concentrated poverty, as well as communities of concentrated wealth.

Economics

Figure B provides some insight into key economic indicators. It shows that when compared to the City of Atlanta, Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods maintain a much lower unemployment rate – just 3% versus 6% for Atlanta. While Atlanta has a higher percentage of High School Graduates, neighborhoods in the Atlanta BeltLine have a higher number of College Graduates – beating out the city by nearly five percentage points. Finally, when it comes to workforce migration, approximately 74% of Atlanta BeltLine residents work within their County of Residence, versus 71% of Atlanta residents.

Figure B: Economics	<i>Beltline</i>		<i>Atlanta</i>	
	#	%	#	%
WORKFORCE	51,560	100.00%	195,548	100.00%
Unemployed	1,440	2.79%	12,109	6.19%
EDUCATION LEVEL				
High School Graduates	70,258	86.70%	273,702	87.43%
College Graduates (4+ Year Degree)	37,610	46.41%	131,353	41.96%
WORKFORCE MIGRATION	50,821	100.00%	184,592	100.00%
Works in State	50,182	98.74%	181,839	98.51%
Works out of State	639	1.26%	2,753	1.49%
Works in County of Residence	37,646	74.08%	131,155	71.05%
Works Outside of Residence County	12,536	24.67%	50,684	27.46%

Housing

Figure C provides an overview of housing statistics for both areas. It shows that on average, the City of Atlanta has a slightly higher homeownership rate at 47% versus Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods at 44%. Interestingly, Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods have a slightly higher percentage of single-family homes, which is somewhat counter-intuitive considering the higher density. What is perhaps easier to believe, considering the intensive development that has occurred in the city's in-town neighborhoods in recent years is that on average, Atlanta Beltline communities have a younger housing stock, with 17% of their homes being less than 10 years old, versus the City of Atlanta where only about 10% of the homes are less than 10 years old. Interestingly enough, the rents for the two areas are about the same. This is especially noteworthy considering the wage and poverty disparity across the two. Home values are a completely different story however, with City of Atlanta home values coming in at about 77% higher than the median home value for Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods. Finally, both areas show a comparable vacancy rate, falling around 6% across housing types.

Figure C: Housing	<i>Beltline</i>		<i>Atlanta</i>	
	#	%	#	%
HOUSING UNITS	57,168	100.00%	224,075	100.00%
Ownership Units	24,892	43.54%	104,514	46.64%
Rental Units	32,276	56.46%	119,561	53.36%
VACANT UNITS	12,700	22.22%	46,881	20.92%
For Rent	820	6.46%	14,967	6.68%
Rented, Unoccupied	136	1.07%	2,214	0.99%
For Sale	480	3.78%	7,554	3.37%
Sold, Unoccupied	99	0.78%	2,168	0.97%
Seasonal/Recreational Use	97	0.76%	2,479	1.11%
Migrant	2	0.01%	45	0.02%
Other Vacancies	1,188	9.36%	17,454	7.79%
DESCRIPTION				
Single Family Units	28,363	49.61%	107,186	47.84%
Multi-Family Units	28,805	50.39%	116,889	52.16%
Unit Age less than 10 Years	9,947	17.40%	22,955	10.24%
COST & VALUE				
Median Contract Rent	739		736	
Median Gross Rent (Rent and Utilities)	896		875	
Median Owner-Occupied Unit Value	248,433		319,507	

Transportation

Figure D demonstrates that when examining commuters, approximately 3% fewer Atlanta BeltLine residents commute using a single occupancy vehicle, when compared to City of Atlanta residents. As one might imagine, considering the Atlanta BeltLine's proximity to downtown, a smaller percentage commuted via carpooling. What seems somewhat counterintuitive is that the difference in the percentage of those that commute via Public Transportation is less than 1%. Along these lines, Atlanta BeltLine residents likewise have a less than 1% edge on zero-vehicle households. And, as one might imagine, commute times across modes of transportation are slightly higher on average for Atlanta residents.

Figure D: Transportation	<i>Beltline</i>		<i>Atlanta</i>	
	#	%	#	%
COMMUTERS	50,821	100.00%	182,547	100.00%
via Single Occupancy Vehicle	33,783	66.47%	122,818	67.28%
via Carpool	3,961	7.79%	14,741	8.08%
via Public Transit	6,204	12.21%	21,916	12.01%
TRANSIT TIME	19.07		19.84	
Single Occupancy Vehicles	16.53		17.33	
Carpool	15.17		17.40	
Public Transit	32.35		34.01	
CAPTIVITY / MOBILITY				
Commuters in Zero-Vehicle Households	4,851	10.91%	19,822	10.86%
Commuters in Single-Vehicle Households	16,492	37.09%	68,758	37.67%
Commuters in Multi-Vehicle Households	17,319	38.95%	68,153	37.33%
Commuters in Two-Vehicle Households	5,800	13.04%	25,807	14.14%
Commuters in 2+ Vehicle Households	23,119	51.99%	93,955	51.47%

APPENDIX B

EDP Principles and Objectives	
PRINCIPLE 1: <i>Integration of People and Place Strategies</i>	Objective 1: Enhance quality of life for residents through BeltLine projects
	Objective 2: Create long term job opportunities for existing new residents
	Objective 3: Preserve existing single family neighborhoods
	Objective 4: Minimize involuntary economic displacement
	Objective 5: Preserve and enhance cultural and historic qualities around the BeltLine
	Objective 6: Retain and develop local small businesses
PRINCIPLE 2: <i>Reduction of Local and Regional Disparities</i>	Objective 1: Implement five year work plan to achieve geographic balance
	Objective 2: Overcome obstacles to growth in underinvested areas
	Objective 3: Stimulate growth and development in underinvested areas
	Objective 4: Prioritize funding allocation to create and preserve diverse housing options along the BeltLine measures
	Objective 5: Promote opportunities for needed retail and other services to underserved areas
	Objective 6: Advance affordable mobility options throughout the BeltLine to provide enhanced access to services and jobs
PRINCIPLE 3: <i>Triple Bottom Line</i>	N/A
PRINCIPLE 4: <i>Inclusion of Meaningful Community Voice, Participation, Leadership and Ownership</i>	Objective 1: Ensure that all components of the Community Engagement Framework are fully in instituted and functioning effectively
	Objective 2: When appropriate, provide more focused opportunities to raise community capacity and education
	Objective 3: Continue an active commitment to strive for a productive partnership with stakeholder advisory groups
	Objective 4: Develop strong, trusting relationships with community leadership in all areas

APPENDIX C

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Mike Alexander	Chief of Research, <i>Atlanta Regional Commission</i>
Ayanna Buckner, MD	Professor, <i>Morehouse School of Medicine</i>
Allean Brown	Member, <i>TADAC</i>
Ron Finnell, DPA	Professor, <i>Clark Atlanta University</i>
Larry Hill	Pastor, <i>Word of God Ministries</i>
Dan Immergluck, PhD	Professor, <i>Georgia Tech Institute of Technology</i>
Terri Lee	Deputy Director, <i>City of Atlanta Planning Department</i>
Beth McMillan	Director of Community Engagement, <i>Atlanta BeltLine Inc.</i>
M. von Nkosi	President and CEO, <i>MXD Collaborative</i>
Michael Leo Owens, PhD	Professor of Political Science, <i>Emory University</i>
Lynette Reid	Community Engagement Advocate, <i>Atlanta BeltLine Inc.</i>
Monica Robinson	Environmental Planner, <i>Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness</i>
Bill Seay	Resident Leader
Nathaniel Smith	Director of Partnerships and Research for Equitable Development, <i>Emory University Center for Community Partnerships</i>
Mtamanika Youngblood	Board Chair, <i>Atlanta BeltLine Partnership</i>

APPENDIX D

Resident Survey

INTRODUCTION

Hello my name is _____ and I'm working with the Atlanta Beltline Partnership, an organization committed to engaging residents around the Atlanta Beltline.

We're out today conducting a door-to-door survey to learn more about the impact of the new park on the neighborhood. Information from the survey will be used to help inform the organization on how Beltline projects are making a difference. The questionnaire should take about 5 minutes or less to complete. Would you be able to participate? You'd receive a \$5 gift card to Wal-Mart in return for your time.

CONSENT

Now in order to move forward, I must share with you that everything that you say today is confidential and will not be connected to you or your address. Your participation is voluntary. That means you can stop whenever you'd like. Finally, you will receive a \$5 gift card at the end of this survey. Do you provide verbal consent to participate in this survey?

1. Are you familiar with the Atlanta Beltline?
 - a. Yes **(IF YES, GO TO QUESTION 2)**
 - b. No **(IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 7)**
 - c. Not Sure

2. How did you hear or learn about the Atlanta Beltline?
 - a. Neighbor or Friend
 - b. News Source (i.e. Newspapers or Television)
 - c. Community Meeting
 - d. Signs or other Materials
 - e. Other (Please specify) _____

3. Were you aware that the Beltline runs near your home?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not Sure

4. Have you ever attended any Beltline-related meetings or events?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Sure

5. If yes, please indicate the type(s) of meetings or events you've attended (circle all that apply).

- a. Study Group Meeting
- b. Annual Community Briefing
- c. Quarterly Briefing
- d. Atlanta Beltline Tour
- e. Beltline Ribbon Cutting or Grand Opening
- f. Art on the Beltline
- g. Atlanta Beltline 101
- h. Other (please specify) _____

6. Were you aware that [ENTER PARK] located at [ENTER INTERSECTION] is a Beltline sponsored park?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Sure

7. Have you ever been to [ENTER PARK] located at [ENTER INTERSECTION]?

- a. Yes **(IF YES, GO TO QUESTION 8)**
- b. No **(IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 13)**

8. Do you use the park to do any of the following (based on year-round usage)?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
8a. Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8b. Run	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8c. Bike	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8d. Relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8e. Participate in an organized sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8f. Play with children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8g. Other	Please specify:		

9. Do you consider the park to be safe from crime and violence?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Sure
10. How would you rate the quality of the park overall?
- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
11. Generally speaking, would you say your “quality of life” has been improved due to the new/updated park?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Sure
12. Generally speaking, do you think the park is a positive addition to the neighborhood
(SKIP TO QUESTION # 14)?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Sure
13. What is the primary reason you haven’t used the park?
- I wasn’t aware of it
 - It’s not convenient
 - It’s not safe
 - I don’t enjoy going to parks
 - Other (please specify) _____
14. Do you know others who have used the park?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not Sure
15. Do you have any thoughts about how park usage might be increased?
- Yes (please elaborate)

 - No
 - Not Sure

16. Is there anything else you'd like to share or feedback you'd like to provide concerning the things we've discussed?

DEMOGRAPHICS

17. How long have you lived in the neighborhood? _____ (in years)

18. Please tell us your age. _____ (in years)

19. Please specify your gender.

- a. Male
- b. Female

20. Including you, how many household members are adults and how many are children under the age of 18?

Children _____

21. Adults _____

22. How would you describe your race?

- a. Black or African-American
- b. Hispanic or Latino
- c. White or Caucasian
- d. Asian
- e. American Indian or Pacific Islander
- f. Mixed Heritage
- g. Other _____