

# ***BELTLINE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over a 25 year period, the BeltLine Project will change the City of Atlanta, shaping its growth, redeveloping its inner core, and positively impacting the way Atlanta will mature as a great city and become a national role model in the process. Setting a national standard for transformative investment, sustainable growth, and equitable development, the BeltLine will enrich Atlanta’s quality of life with parks, trails, transit, and economic development. This massive undertaking approaches change in a holistic manner, guided by principles of equitable and sustainable development designed to achieve lasting economic, environmental, and social improvements.

- **Economic** -- \$20 billion<sup>1</sup> of development that will enable community benefits in all areas throughout the urban core with a focus and commitment to balanced growth and equitable impacts.
- **Environmental** – Development of mixed-use livable communities that will reduce the dependency on and use of natural resources in an innovative, market-driven way.
- **Social** – Programmatically addressing key social capital issues through job and affordable housing creation while solidifying the social fabric of the city by creating connectivity among disparate and diverse communities.

The BeltLine will bring lasting physical enhancements to Atlanta’s urban core, but will these changes come at a price for those living in its surroundings and will these intended improvements be sensitively designed and implemented so that all Atlantans can fully appreciate them? This project has the potential to not only achieve physical connectivity among Atlanta’s neighborhoods, which is a significant accomplishment in itself, but to also break down economic and cultural barriers. By establishing an Equitable Development Plan, the commitment to healthy growth is clear and the plan for achieving this is clearly defined. The success of the BeltLine project as a holistic solution for Atlanta’s challenges, rather than simply as an amenity, is dependent upon a well conceived and well executed Equitable Development Plan.

Consistent with the working industry definition espoused by PolicyLink, a national Institute committed to advancing economic and social equity, the BeltLine Equitable Development Plan centers on four guiding principles:

- (1.) *integration of people and place strategies;*
- (2.) *reduction of local and regional disparities;*
- (3.) *promotion of triple bottom line investments; and*

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<sup>1</sup> EDAW. “Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District Feasibility Study.” 2005.

(4.) *inclusion of meaningful community voice, participation, leadership and ownership.*

This definition recognizes the many ways that individuals and communities of all types are impacted by economic growth.

**Equitable in this context expands beyond equal treatment, and focuses on effectively meeting the needs of the diverse groups of individuals and communities that share the BeltLine, enabling all areas to experience healthy growth. Equitable Development shall measure the development along the corridor against a six year work effort (at least 4 times over the project life; upon completion of each work plan cycle; While the allocation of public investment dollars is important, it is one component of a much broader approach to generating positive long-lasting impacts in all areas of the BeltLine.**

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### **Background on Implementation**

Implementation of the Equitable Development Plan is a broad undertaking. It reinforces the commitment to equitable development expressed in the principles and strategies of the BeltLine Redevelopment Plan, the Five-Year Work Plan, and the Sub-area Master Plans. By assembling these principles and strategies to create a comprehensive, integrated approach, the Equitable Development Plan amplifies and expands the effort to achieve a holistic result.

Implementation is dependent upon the active involvement of numerous organizations. Many of the projects are spearheaded and managed by Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (“ABI”) There are a wide variety of other programs and activities that are important for supporting healthy growth, and require the involvement of outside partners and stakeholders. These additional activities will be achieved with the leadership, collaboration, and resources of organizations with specialized expertise in these specific areas. Key areas of implementation include the following:

1. **Developing and planning core BeltLine amenities** in a way that creates a more livable and geographically balanced Atlanta
2. **Recruiting economic development** in a way that creates business and job opportunities
3. **Minimizing displacement and leveraging economic opportunity** in a way that stabilizes neighborhoods
4. **Incorporating and encouraging community voice in project implementation**
5. **Preserving and enhancing the historic and cultural character of neighborhoods**
6. **Leveraging existing neighborhood assets (economic, social, and environmental) in ways that encourage community connectivity, competitiveness and sustainability.**

This plan distinguishes between the strategies and activities within ABI’s control and those outside ABI’s control, in which other organizations will help to achieve BeltLine equitable development objectives.

***This document will clearly reflect those strategies, goals and objectives that ABI can control. The associated addendum will document the strategies, goals and objectives that ABI will work to influence and leverage.***

- (1) **ABI Control:** Strategies that ABI is responsible for based on legislative authority and, because they are funded with TAD funding, ABI can fully control.
- (2) **ABI Influence:** Strategies that are primarily controlled by outside parties with some ABI involvement and/or nominal TAD funding or adherence to BeltLine design standards.
- (3) **External ownership:** Strategies that require external leadership, ownership and initiation in order to most effectively achieve equitable development.

Following a review of the four equitable development principles and the associated BeltLine objectives and strategies, pages 3 to 12 and Addendum B, the Equitable Development Plan concludes with a detailed Implementation section, pages 13 to 14.

### **PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

The following is a review of various BeltLine-related strategies and objectives that support the four guiding principles to achieve Equitable Development. A substantial number of the strategies are underway or slated to be implemented on a near-term basis.

In addition, a number of strategies have been proposed that require in depth review and validation before moving forward with implementation.

## **Principle 1: Integration of People and Place Strategies**

The BeltLine is primarily a place-based strategy designed to redevelop underutilized industrial property and integrate these new areas with existing surrounding neighborhoods to create vibrant, mixed-use, mixed-income communities. It includes a combination of public realm investments and private economic development investments consisting of transit, parks, trails, streets including sidewalks and streetscapes, affordable housing and market rate residential, commercial, and office/institutional development.

Successfully creating a vibrant sense of place requires that the newly created environment positively benefits the people living there, including both existing and new residents. Once

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developed, the BeltLine environment will provide healthier lifestyle opportunities for all residents. Equally important, during project implementation, the BeltLine strives to:

- a.) provide growth and capacity building opportunities to existing residents,
- b.) prevent disruption of existing communities, and
- c.) ensure that the residents are connected to and invested in the place where they live, both financially and culturally.

The BeltLine is committed to try to make a strong positive impact on people and place as follows:

1. Enhance quality of life through BeltLine projects
2. Create long term job opportunities for existing and new residents
3. Preserve existing single family neighborhoods
4. Minimize displacement
5. Preserve culturally and historically significant resources
6. Develop and support small, local businesses

### **Objective 1: Enhance Quality of Life for Residents through BeltLine Projects**

The BeltLine build-out will occur over a 25-year period and will include numerous public projects specifically selected and designed to contribute to the creation of more livable communities, consistent with the vision and framework of the Master Plan for each of the ten subareas of the BeltLine. The vision and framework articulated in each of the ten Master Plans reflects the desires of the community residents in combination with technical urban planning objectives. The components of the BeltLine that are implemented by ABI and/or will receive significant TAD funding are as follows:

- Master Planning and Transit Planning
  - Creates a framework for attracting and managing growth with walkable, mixed use, mixed income, and connected communities, through the following planning activities:
    - Park Master Planning
    - Mobility and access studies
    - Land use recommendations
    - Transit Planning (Environmental Impact Studies)
- Transit Development
  - Creates access to services and jobs, manages traffic, provides affordable transportation choices
- Park development
  - Creates healthier, more connected communities and stimulates economic development through the following activities
    - Land acquisition
    - Park development

- Park maintenance
- Road and sidewalk improvements
  - Creates walkable, healthier, more connected communities that manage traffic and stimulate economic development. These improvements will be guided by the Master Planning process to achieve Beltline quality of life improvement objectives.
- Affordable housing
- Economic development incentives

## **Objective 2: Create long term job opportunities for existing and new residents**

Over the life of the project, the BeltLine will create an estimated 48,000 construction jobs and 30,000<sup>2</sup> new permanent jobs. This represents a substantial opportunity in a City with high levels of poverty and unemployment, and requires that specialized programs and processes are developed in order to fully realize a rewarding growth experience for area residents. The following strategies will help connect residents to BeltLine related job opportunities:

- Finalize development of a Community Benefits framework that promotes local hiring through ensuring first source hiring, payment of prevailing wages, and job training
- Remove barriers to development and promote opportunities for job growth
  - Actively promote development of neighborhood-based employment centers, that include retail, office and light industrial development consistent with the land use plan established through the master planning process
  - Provide brownfield incentives to remove barriers to development and achieve job growth
- Require (with follow-up monitoring) that developers receiving TAD affordable housing or development incentives
  - Hire workers from BeltLine neighborhoods through a “first source” job register
  - Pay prevailing wages

## **Objective 3: Preserve existing single family neighborhoods**

Atlanta’s single family neighborhoods are the City’s signature feature. Preserving and strengthening each of the BeltLine neighborhoods, while also interconnecting them as part of a larger unified urban core is a fundamental objective of the project. From its inception, the BeltLine TAD framework was structured to protect adjacent neighborhoods by excluding these areas from within the TAD boundaries, i.e. the area designated for redevelopment. And the existing railroad corridor, the central spine of

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<sup>2</sup> EDAW. “Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District Feasibility Study.” 2005.

the project, provides space for the transit system with minimal disruption to single family homes. Additional steps for giving residential areas specialized treatment which ABI can control, include the following:

- Where appropriate, create land uses in the master plans that transition the height and mass of new development away from nearby single family areas.
- Prioritize transportation improvements that reinforce the development objectives of the land use plan and mitigate traffic and congestion

#### **Objective 4: Minimize Involuntary Economic Displacement**

Redevelopment often creates side-effects, such as increases in surrounding land values, which are disruptive to nearby communities. While growth in land values can be beneficial to property owners, it places a tremendous burden on those who do not have the means to cover the associated tax increase. Proactive effort is required to ensure that existing residents are not displaced by redevelopment or rising taxes. Minimizing displacement is essential to ensure that existing residents and existing communities are not uprooted and instead have the opportunity to benefit from the economic rewards and improvements that accompany the BeltLine. One effort underway is the creation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. was charged with creating this fund. ABI, in partnership with the Atlanta Development Authority and the City of Atlanta's Bureau of Housing, is implementing a program where affordable housing incentives will be provided in all areas of the BeltLine. The BeltLine Partnership has spearheaded an effort to bring together a variety of other governmental and non-profit organizations to identify and carry-out strategies that will help minimize displacement. The following is a list of activities and policies that are under ABI control:

- Preservation of existing subsidized and affordable housing through the affordable housing trust fund
- Creation of new affordable housing through the affordable housing trust fund

#### **Objective 5: Preserve and enhance cultural and historic qualities around the BeltLine**

Stable, durable communities are rooted in history and culture that connect people to the places where they live. The BeltLine strives to preserve and enhance the cultural and historic resources that make each of the communities unique. As part of the master planning process, cultural and historically significant resources have been identified, and locations have been identified for incorporating public art. The following strategies under ABI control are proposed to help further this objective:

- Incorporation of public art plan as part of the corridor design that allows for unique neighborhood/community-based expression

## **Objective 6: Retain and develop local small businesses**

Promoting and developing local small businesses around the BeltLine can help to create and sustain local financial opportunity while providing tailored, unique services that benefit and strengthen the sense of community. The twenty mixed-use economic development nodes planned as part of master planning for all areas of the BeltLine provide significant opportunity. In order for small, local businesses to be successful and benefit from BeltLine economic activity, steps should be taken to help nurture and cultivate local small business expertise. The following strategies that support efforts to develop and retain local small businesses around the BeltLine, under ABI control have been recommended for further review:

- Require retail developers who receive economic development incentives to provide space for small, local businesses

## **Principle 2: Reduction of Local and Regional Disparities**

Geographic balance is one of the fundamental principles guiding BeltLine planning and development. From a regional perspective, the BeltLine will reduce disparities by redirecting a substantial portion of the region's growth in housing and jobs that, without this project, has been occurring in the suburbs. And from a local perspective, the BeltLine will improve geographic balance within the City based on a thoughtful strategy for equitable investment that addresses the needs of each community and provides the impetus for the kind of economic development that will add vitality and strength to under-invested areas. There are a number of neighborhoods in the northern portion of the BeltLine that have continuously experienced strong growth, even during the 1980 to 1990 period when Atlanta overall was not growing. And there are a number of neighborhoods in the southern portion of the BeltLine where disinvestment has occurred, even during more recent times when Atlanta overall has experienced positive growth. The strategies related to positively impacting local and regional disparities are as follows:

1. Achieve geographic balance by implementing the 5 Year Work Plan
2. Overcome obstacles to growth and development in underinvested areas
3. Stimulate inclusive growth and development in underinvested areas
4. Create access to affordable housing in all areas
5. Promote opportunities for needed retail and other services to underserved areas
6. Advance transit in all areas along the BeltLine to provide enhanced affordable transit access to services and jobs
7. Prioritize funding allocation to achieve and preserve diverse housing options along the Beltline measured over time against the 5 year work plan timeline

## Objective 1: Implement Five Year Work Plan to achieve geographic balance

One of the core principles of the Five Year Work Plan (included in Appendix X) is geographic balance. As a result, the Five Year Work Plan prioritizes projects to strategically address the diverse needs of the various geographic areas; not all geographies should receive the same types of amenities, since different quadrants have different qualities. The Five Year Work Plan is framed around the following diverse strategies to achieve geographic balance:

*“One of the core principles of the Five Year Work Plan (as detailed in Appendix X) is geographic balance.”*

- Northeast: Advance park and trail development, control the railroad right-of-way, and reinforce the economic development momentum already underway.
- Southeast: Stimulate private investment by developing a new park, expanding an existing park, and implementing economic development incentives; and gain control of as much of the railroad right-of-way as possible.
- Southwest: Implement economic development incentives, control the railroad right-of-way, develop a BeltLine trail and spur trail, and expand an existing park and advance development of a new park.
- Northwest: Focus on acquisition and development of Westside Park and finalize the specific route of the BeltLine trail and transit through this area.

While the objective is to implement the Five Year Work Plan in a manner that supports geographic balance during the five year period overall, exact geographic balance will not be achieved on a year-by-year basis given resource limitations and time constraints related to certain projects. For example, in April 2009, BeltLine-related funding from all sources was estimated at \$291 million. Approximately 45% was allocated to projects in the Northeast (primarily due to the high cost of right-of-way); 22% in the Northwest; 14% in the Southeast; and 9% in the Southwest. Approximately 10% could not be attributed geographically. This included affordable housing incentives, economic development incentives, and unallocated Federal funding.

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*“ABI will continue to work towards the goals in the Five Year Work Plan for each quadrant.”*

ABI will continue to work towards the goals in the Five Year Work Plan for each quadrant, as listed above. In the near term, ABI’s measurable goals are to achieve greater geographic balance by prioritizing projects articulated in the Five Year Work Plan located in previously disinvested areas. ABI is pursuing 3.48 miles of the railroad right-of-way in the Southeast and Southwest, including 75% of the right-of-way in the Southwest. ABI, with the assistance of the PATH Foundation, plans to construct 3.9 miles of new trails, over 70% of which are located in the Southwest quadrant. ABI, in partnership with the City of Atlanta Parks Department, plans to expand and renovate 9.6 acres of parkland in the Southeast. Additionally, ABI is committed to advancing economic development and brownfield remediation with incentive funding from TAD

bonds. The development incentives will be dedicated to business opportunities in lower income, Community Development Impact Areas, which are primarily along the southern rim of the BeltLine. And the brownfield incentives will also be concentrated in the southern area where the contamination is most extensive.

### **Objective 2: Overcome obstacles to growth in underinvested areas**

A framework to support geographically balanced growth has been established that includes public infrastructure improvements, regulatory mechanisms, and financial subsidies for challenging areas. Strategies under ABI control include the following:

- Land use planning
- Pedestrian and road improvements

### **Objective 3: Stimulate growth and development in underinvested areas**

Development Incentives for the purpose of attracting development in primarily the southern portion of the BeltLine, within the City's Community Development Impact Area's (areas where 50% of families are at or below 80% of median income), were established as part of the enabling legislation creating the BeltLine Tax Allocation District. In addition, given the high concentration of brownfields along the southern rim, brownfield incentives will be established as soon as additional funding is available. Strategies which ABI controls include the following:

- Economic development incentives

### **Objective 4: Prioritize funding allocation to create and preserve diverse housing options along the BeltLine measured over time against a five year workplan timeframe**

An explicit objective of the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund policies is to distribute affordable housing incentives in a manner that achieves geographic distribution of affordable units around the BeltLine. However, given higher land values in the northern part of the BeltLine, the cost of affordable housing in that area will pose financial challenges. The following strategies which ABI can control will assist in creating access to diverse housing options around the BeltLine:

- Determine an approach to better support affordable housing developments in areas with higher land prices
- Make down-payment assistance dollars available to existing development activity in the north
- Incentivize the development of mixed income housing that includes market rate housing – especially in underdeveloped areas.

## **Objective 5: Promote opportunities for needed retail and other services to underserved areas**

The community has expressed a strong preference for BeltLine development that includes retail and other services to the underserved areas along the southern and western sections of the BeltLine. Based on BeltLine land use planning, the level of density has the potential to provide sufficient consumer demand to attract and support these types of businesses. ABI controlled strategies include the following:

- Land use planning
- Encourage developers that receive economic development incentives to build spaces for needed services

## **Objective 6: Advance affordable mobility options throughout the BeltLine to provide enhanced access to services and jobs**

During the first five years, the plan is to proactively move transit forward as much as possible. In general, development of the transit system, regardless of location along the BeltLine, is a regional amenity that will provide access and affordable transportation options to employment centers and other City resources. Acquisition of the Northeast right-of-way has been completed and the Environmental Impact Study for the entire 22-mile loop is currently underway. Focus continues related to gaining control of the remaining portions of the right-of-way, completing engineering, environmental, and design work, and initiating site preparation along the transit corridor. Given the cost of construction (in excess of \$100 million) and current funding limitations, transit construction is not likely to begin until after the first five-year period, nor is it likely to occur all at once. Additionally, trail development within the BeltLine right of way will provide safe, affordable transportation for those choose to walk or bike. Strategies which ABI can control include the following:

- Acquisition of the Southwest and a portion of the Southeast right-of-way
- Proceeding with corridor design, preliminary engineering, and continuation of environmental work
- Site preparation for the portion of the transit corridor controlled by ABI
- Determination of the transit operator
- Construction of trails in portions of the right of way under ABI control

## **Principle 3: Triple Bottom Line**

The Triple Bottom Line is a progressive business model emphasizing the traditional economic/financial objectives, while also placing emphasis on achievement of a social mission combined with the achievement of sustainable development. The profit motive has not been abandoned; success is viewed from a three legged perspective based on

the company's income statement, impact on the environmental resources as well as the broader social policies. In this manner, the public looks to business leadership to help address social inequities and social problems, while being respectful of the environment as development occurs, paving the way for progress that stretches beyond the level achievable by the public sector alone.

The strategy and philosophy of the BeltLine Project is founded on principles closely aligned with the Triple Bottom Line objective. The public and private sectors are working together to achieve physical improvements in the city's public infrastructure and private economic base, improve and protect the environment while also strengthening the social fabric of the surrounding communities. As part of this partnership, the private sector will support the public components of the BeltLine by providing trail easements, greenspace contributions, new street grids and sidewalks surrounding their development, etc. In addition, Community Benefits principles, as outlined in the BeltLine TAD enabling legislation approved by City Council in November, 2005, are to be established to ensure that private sector investment that receives TAD funding is accompanied by additional public benefits in the form of prevailing wages for workers, "first source" hiring for residents in impacted low income neighborhoods, apprenticeship programs, support of local, small businesses, etc. The following strategies which ABI can control include the following:

- Finalize development of a Community Benefits framework that promotes local hiring through ensuring first source hiring, payment of prevailing wages, and job training
- Establish measurable goals for the Triple Bottom Line
- Establish sustainability goals for the Triple Bottom Line

## **Principle 4: Inclusion of meaningful community voice, participation, leadership and ownership**

From the BeltLine's beginnings, a major emphasis has been placed on active community involvement. Early BeltLine grassroots supporters helped shape legislation adopted by City Council creating the BeltLine's Community Engagement Framework (CEF). This framework is designed to provide many opportunities for active input and ensure that the BeltLine will reflect the needs and desires of the communities. The framework outlines the following five components: 1. creation of two community-based advisory groups, a BeltLine Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee and a BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board; 2. a community representative approved by City Council to serve as a member on the Board of the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.; 3. community engagement advocate staff at ABI; 4. quarterly public briefings; and 5. the creation of a structure, called Study Groups, dividing the BeltLine into 5 geographic areas, to enable regular, on-going involvement on a more detailed basis.

Community engagement has been and will continue to evolve and strengthen over time and enable the public to have an active voice in helping to set the BeltLine direction and a role that supports BeltLine decision-making. The following objectives will help to foster meaningful community engagement and leadership:

**Objective 1:** Ensure that all components of the Community Engagement Framework are fully instituted and functioning effectively on an ongoing, regular basis in a manner that ensures the community's voice is heard and incorporated into future Beltline implementation strategies. Beltline community engagement activities should articulate how community input has impacted the decision making.

**Objective 2:** When appropriate, provide additional, more focused opportunities to raise community capacity and education, enabling more active participation and more detailed discussion and input through the following:

- Citywide conversations
- Citywide open houses
- Office hours – where specific groups can come to ABI's offices to ask questions and provide input related to specific plans, topics, etc.
- Strategy Teams
- Stakeholder interviews

**Objective 3:** Continue an active commitment to strive for a productive partnership with stakeholder advisory groups, TADAC and BAHAB, fostering a transparent process of open dialogue and information sharing.

**Objective 4:** Develop strong, trusting relationships with community leadership in all areas in order to create a healthy channel for direct input and feedback related to challenges and opportunities, for improvements in the community engagement process, and for ways in which the community can take more direct ownership of projects.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Achievement of equitable development is dependent upon thoughtful, proactive commitment to a wide variety of strategies outlined in the Principles, Goals, and Strategies section of this plan, pages 3 to 12, in addition to Addendum B. While a number of these strategies are already underway and several will be initiated near-term, many that are proposed in this plan require further review, including identification of leadership and in depth assessment of feasibility.

Strong commitment from numerous stakeholders and partners, beyond the role played by ABI, is necessary for success. This plan distinguishes between the projects, programs, and activities controlled by ABI and those broader than ABI's control. The strategies and activities highlighted in this plan are grouped in three categories to indicate the extent of ABI's control and therefore the extent of ABI's leadership and leverage during implementation:

- (1) **ABI Control:** Strategies that ABI is responsible for based on legislative authority and, because they are funded with TAD funding, ABI can fully control.
- (2) **ABI Influence:** Strategies that are primarily controlled by outside parties with some ABI involvement and/or nominal TAD funding or adherence to BeltLine design standards.
- (3) **External ownership:** Strategies that require external leadership, ownership, and initiation in order to most effectively achieve equitable development.

### **Implementation Partners**

From its beginning, numerous organizations have played an active role in BeltLine efforts, and these relationships are particularly significant for achievement of equitable development. The BeltLine Partnership serves as a catalyst to mobilize resources to address social concerns raised by new development around the BeltLine, spearheading efforts to develop and implement strategies such as mitigating displacement. As part of raising awareness through community outreach activities, including community canvassing and BeltLine 101 presentations, special attention is given to social concerns voiced by the community. The BeltLine Partnership addresses needs within the BeltLine TAD boundaries as well as in surrounding neighborhoods outside of the TAD, and helps to leverage added resources and specialized expertise from coalitions of governmental and nonprofit organizations.

BeltLine advisory boards, such as the Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee and the BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board, are critical in mobilizing the leadership and resources to identify strategies to advance equitable development. The membership of these boards have a strong commitment to ensuring that Atlanta's communities will be strengthened as part of the BeltLine, and, in support of this commitment, the membership has extensive experience developing strategies that will advance equitable development.

Departments of the City of Atlanta government as well as the Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) are integrally involved in the BeltLine implementation. There are a number of projects and strategies in which City departments and the ADA directly assist ABI in its efforts, such as administration of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. And there are a number of areas in which City departments and the ADA advance BeltLine equitable development strategies as they perform their normal role throughout the City. In these cases, ABI works in partnership with the City departments and ADA.

Many entities, such as MARTA, the PATH foundation, and Trees Atlanta, work in partnership with ABI to implement projects. The BeltLine benefits from the vision, specialized expertise, and added funding contributed by these organizations. Based on this shared “ownership,” these efforts are categorized reflecting ABI’s influence, as opposed to full control.

A more detailed implementation evaluation matrix, updated periodically, will detail the responsible party and the measurable goals for each strategy listed in this document.

## **Principle 1: Integration of People and Place Strategies**

### **Objective 1: Enhance Quality of Life for Residents through BeltLine Projects**

The BeltLine build-out will occur over a 25-year period and will include numerous public projects specifically selected and designed to contribute to the creation of more livable communities, consistent with the vision and framework of the Master Plan for each of the ten subareas of the BeltLine. The vision and framework articulated in each of the ten Master Plans reflects the desires of the community residents in combination with technical urban planning objectives. The components of the BeltLine that ABI can influence that will contribute to quality of life as follows:

- Trails that are funded and/or developed by implementation partners
- Road and sidewalk improvements outside the tax allocation district, but in the Planning Area, that are primarily funded and/or developed by implementation partners
  - These improvements will be guided by a “Fix-It First” policy to achieve Beltline quality of life improvement objectives.

### **Objective 2: Create job opportunities for existing and new residents**

Over the life of the project, the BeltLine will create an estimated 48,000 construction jobs and 30,000 new permanent jobs. This represents a substantial opportunity in a City with high levels of poverty and unemployment, and requires that specialized programs and processes are developed in order to fully realize a rewarding growth experience for area residents. ABI can influence the following strategies that will help connect residents to BeltLine related job opportunities:

- Identify additional funding sources or proactive zoning programs to incentivize development in disadvantaged areas and achieve employment opportunities
- Encourage developers and businesses that do not receive BeltLine incentive funding, but benefit from community infrastructure improvements to hire locally
- For developers that do not receive TAD incentives, actively promote the development of First Source Hiring Agreement (FSHA) with developers and new businesses in areas with limited community employment opportunities
- For developers that do not receive TAD incentives, actively promote the development of Project Labor Agreements (PLA), in order to detail the payment of prevailing wages, with developers involved in current and future Beltline activities

- Fund administration of job training or first source programs *[External Ownership]*

### **Objective 3: Preserve existing single family neighborhoods**

Atlanta's single family neighborhoods are the City's signature feature. Preserving and strengthening each of the BeltLine neighborhoods, while also interconnecting them as part of a larger unified urban core is a fundamental objective of the project. From its inception, the BeltLine TAD framework was structured to protect adjacent neighborhoods by excluding these areas from within the TAD boundaries, i.e. the area designated for redevelopment. And the existing railroad corridor, the central spine of the project, provides space for the transit system with minimal disruption to single family homes. The land use plan established as part of the master planning process is structured to protect nearby single family neighborhoods by transitioning the height and mass of new development away from the single family areas. Additional steps for giving residential areas specialized treatment that ABI can influence include the following:

- Establish design standards as part of the BeltLine zoning overlay district and quality of life zoning that ensure design compatibility with single family neighborhoods
- Encourage BeltLine developers to create design that is sensitive to the character of adjacent single family neighborhoods
- Prioritize non TAD funded transportation improvements that reinforce the development objectives of the land use plan and mitigate traffic and congestion
- Promote efforts to attract needed neighborhood services for under-resourced areas *[External Ownership]*

### **Objective 4: Minimize Involuntary Economic Displacement**

Redevelopment often creates side-effects, such as increases in surrounding land values, which are disruptive to nearby communities. While growth in land values can be beneficial to property owners, it places a tremendous burden on those who do not have the means to cover the associated tax increase. Proactive effort is required to ensure that existing residents are not displaced by redevelopment or rising taxes. Minimizing displacement is essential to ensure that existing residents and existing communities are not uprooted and instead have the opportunity to benefit from the economic rewards and improvements that accompany the BeltLine. One effort underway is the creation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. was charged with creating this fund and, in partnership with the Atlanta Development Authority and the City of Atlanta's Bureau of Housing, are implementing a program where affordable housing incentives will be provided in all areas of the BeltLine. The BeltLine Partnership has spearheaded an effort to bring together a variety of other governmental and non-profit organizations to identify and carry-out strategies that will help minimize displacement.

The following is a list of activities and policies that are under consideration which ABI can influence:

- A resource guide and an educational campaign to inform residents of existing government programs available to assist over-burdened households experiencing increased taxes or in need of increased financial literacy *[External Ownership]*
- Community Land Trust *[External Ownership]*
- Additional state or local legislative measures *[External Ownership]*
  - Property tax relief
  - Mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance
  - Other funding sources -- Creating a permanent source of revenue to fund preservation of affordable housing, such as a real estate transfer tax or commercial linkage fees
- Eviction protection -- Enacting just cause eviction control legislation to give renters some protection from displacement caused by rapidly rising rents

### **Objective 5: Preserve and enhance cultural and historic qualities around the BeltLine**

Stable, durable communities are rooted in history and culture that connect people to the places where they live. The BeltLine strives to preserve and enhance the cultural and historic resources that make each of the communities unique. As part of the master planning process, cultural resources and historically significant properties and resources have been identified, and locations have been identified for incorporating public art. ABI can influence the following strategies which are proposed to help further this objective:

- Designation of historic properties and/or historic neighborhoods by the Urban Design Commission

### **Objective 6: Retain and develop local small businesses**

Promoting and developing local small businesses around the BeltLine can help to create and sustain local financial opportunity while providing tailored, unique services that benefit and strengthen the sense of community. The twenty mixed-use economic development nodes planned as part of master planning for all areas of the BeltLine provide significant opportunity. In order for small, local businesses to be successful and benefit from BeltLine economic activity, steps should be taken to help nurture and cultivate local small business expertise. Similar to the effort related to mitigating displacement, the BeltLine Partnership is taking a leadership role in assembling governmental and non-profit organizations to explore how assistance to local small businesses can be provided. The following strategies that support efforts to develop and retain local small businesses around the BeltLine that ABI can influence have been recommended for further review:

- Provide loan programs for small businesses [ *External Ownership*]
- Creation of a database of small businesses that are seeking space near the BeltLine [ *External Ownership*]
- Develop a formal relocation program
- Provide seminars and business fairs for local merchants

### **Objective 7: Utilization of Joint Use Agreements**

Promote and encourage the utilization of Joint Use Agreements for the sharing of facilities for two or more services allowing stakeholders to leverage underutilized or new structures to improve accessibility to services while enhancing public safety and neighborhood transformation. These agreements could reduce the cost of delivering services to underserved communities while decreasing the number of structures and the cost to maintain structures in the public realm. [ABI Influence]

## **Principle 2: Reduction of Local and Regional Disparities**

Geographic balance is one of the fundamental principles guiding BeltLine planning and development. From a regional perspective, the BeltLine will reduce disparities by redirecting a substantial portion of the region’s growth in housing and jobs that, without this project, has been occurring in the suburbs. And from a local perspective, the BeltLine will improve geographic balance within the City based on a thoughtful strategy for equitable investment that addresses the needs of each community and provides the impetus for the kind of economic development that will add vitality and strength to under-invested areas. There are a number of neighborhoods in the northern portion of the BeltLine that have continuously experienced strong growth, even during the 1980 to 1990 period when Atlanta overall was not growing. And there are a number of neighborhoods in the southern portion of the BeltLine where disinvestment has occurred, even during more recent times when Atlanta overall has experienced positive growth.

### **Objective 2: Overcome obstacles to growth in underinvested areas**

A framework to support geographically balanced growth has been established that includes public infrastructure improvements, regulatory mechanisms, and financial subsidies for challenging areas. Strategies that ABI can influence include the following:

- Proactive zoning
- Brownfield remediation incentives
- Pedestrian and road improvements

### **Objective 3: Stimulate growth and development in underinvested areas**

Development Incentives for the purpose of attracting development in primarily the southern portion of the BeltLine, within the City's Community Development Impact Area's (areas where 50% of families are at or below 80% of median income), were established as part of the enabling legislation creating the BeltLine Tax Allocation District. In addition, given the high concentration of brownfields along the southern rim, brownfield incentives will be established as soon as additional funding is available. Strategies that ABI can influence and which will require external ownership include the following:

- Development recruitment

### **Objective 4: Prioritize funding allocation to create and preserve diverse housing options along the BeltLine measured over time against a five year workplan timeframe**

An explicit objective of the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund policies is to distribute affordable housing incentives in a manner that achieves geographic distribution of affordable units around the BeltLine. However, given higher land values in the northern part of the BeltLine, the cost of affordable housing in that area will pose financial challenges. The following strategy that ABI can influence will assist in creating access to affordable housing in all areas:

- Track progress by measuring affordable housing availability and creation around the BeltLine

### **Objective 5: Promote opportunities for needed retail and other services to underserved areas**

The community has expressed a strong preference for BeltLine development that includes retail and other services to the underserved areas along the southern and western sections of the BeltLine. Based on BeltLine land use planning, the level of density has the potential to provide sufficient consumer demand to attract and support these types of businesses. ABI can influence strategies that include the following:

- Proactive zoning
- Build partnerships through the ADA's recruitment efforts with quality retail/grocery stores to attract them to the BeltLine *[External Ownership]*

## **Objective 7: Encourage Community Based Economic Development Support**

The process of attracting and retaining large and emerging businesses for local economic development opportunities has become more difficult as communities across the City compete in a national and global market. Communities of low wealth are often not considered for investment opportunities. Strategies that ABI can influence to address these low wealth communities and their ability to compete for opportunities include the following:

- Development of an Atlanta Beltline Economic Ambassador Program to assist the Atlanta Development Authority in promoting all communities to be served by the Beltline [*External Ownership*]

## **Principle 3: Triple Bottom Line**

The Triple Bottom Line is a progressive business model emphasizing the traditional economic/financial objectives, while also placing emphasis on achievement of a social mission combined with the achievement of sustainable development. The profit motive has not been abandoned; success is viewed from a three legged perspective based on the company's income statement, impact on the environmental resources as well as the broader social policies. In this manner, the public looks to business leadership to help address social inequities and social problems, while being respectful of the environment as development occurs, paving the way for progress that stretches beyond the level achievable by the public sector alone.

The strategy and philosophy of the BeltLine Project is founded on principles closely aligned with the Triple Bottom Line objective. The public and private sectors are working together to achieve physical improvements in the city's public infrastructure and private economic base, improve and protect the environment while also strengthening the social fabric of the surrounding communities. As part of this partnership, the private sector will support the public components of the BeltLine by providing trail easements, greenspace contributions, new street grids and sidewalks surrounding their development, etc. In addition, Community Benefits principles, as outlined in the BeltLine TAD enabling legislation approved by City Council in November, 2005, are to be established to ensure that private sector investment that receives TAD funding is accompanied by additional public benefits in the form of prevailing wages for workers, "first source" hiring for residents in impacted low income neighborhoods, apprenticeship programs, support of local, small businesses, etc. Strategies that ABI can influence could include the following:

- Establish a Community Benefits framework (portions developed with Study Groups)

## **Addendum A**

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Equitable Development** - Equitable development ensures that individuals and families in all communities can participate in and benefit from economic growth and activity. Equitable 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.

**Long term job opportunities** – Skills and or trades learned thru apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship opportunities afforded through ABI and its’ designee(s) that can be applied to BeltLine projects but that are transferable to other jobsites and/or projects located anywhere.

**Fix it First policy** - Includes calls for reinvestment in public infrastructure to revitalize existing communities and improve system operations. This policy will encourage the balanced maintenance and improvement of infrastructure inside and adjacent to BeltLine neighborhoods.

**First Source Hiring Agreement** - Intended to help individuals, who are already receiving job training and assistance supported by public funds, by linking these individuals with private sector employment opportunities of businesses that will be hiring in association with the receipt of public benefits; and should make a good faith effort to hire and retain such individuals, who are presumed to have low incomes or otherwise face disadvantages in finding employment

**Triple Bottom Line** - Captures an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organizational (and societal) success: economic, environmental and social.