

Notes from the May 4th Employment Advisory Group Meeting

Participants:

- Aaron Uddin, *Blue earth network*
- Beth McMillan, *Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.*
- Burrell Billingslea, *Fulton County Workforce Development (former)*
- Charles Whatley, *Atlanta Development Authority*
- Dameon Daniels, *The Center for Working Families*
- Derrick Duckworth, *Atlanta BeltLine Chamber of Commerce*
- Diane McCants, *United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta*
- Elke Davidson, *Davidson Consulting*
- Jon Effron, *Sanctuary Real Estate*
- Mark Parham, *Atlanta Urban League*
- Ms. Leddy, *Georgia STAND-UP*
- Otis Hillsman, *Atlanta Center for Self-Sufficiency*
- Rob Brawner, *Atlanta BeltLine Partnership*
- Rukiya Eaddy, *Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.*
- Sara Lee Parker, *Sanctuary Real Estate*
- Sebrecia Colquitt, *Jewish Family & Career Services*
- Steven Burgess, *Emory University*
- Tasha Brimmer-Taylor, *Atlanta Public Schools*
- Thomas Cook, *New Hope Enterprises*
- Tilmon Keaton, *HTS Enterprise*
- Valarie Wilson, *Atlanta BeltLine Partnership*
- Warren Pincombe, *Atlanta Technical College*
- Willie Palmer, *Georgia Power*

ABI Equitable Development Plan

The Employment Advisory Group hopes to coordinate with related initiatives around the city. With this in mind, ABI was asked to give a presentation on its Equitable Development Plan with an eye towards identifying key goals, metrics and timelines that the Advisory group should try to align with.

The Equitable Development Plan (“the Plan”) was approved in August 2009 as a framework for assessing the equity impacts of the implementation of the BeltLine. It was designed to be measured in five year increments, and ABI staff hope to start gathering baseline data in the first quarter of 2012. The Plan has several key goals:

- Create long-term jobs
- Minimize the displacement of people and businesses along the BeltLine
- Recruit and retain businesses along the BeltLine, especially small and locally owned and serving businesses
- Promote opportunities for local retail
- Ensure the effective implementation of the BeltLine Community Benefits Agreement

The group had a spirited discussion on several issues raised by the presentation, including the following:

- **Permanent vs. construction jobs:** Members emphasized that construction jobs should not be considered as inherently temporary. Although local residents may only find temporary work on BeltLine-specific projects, if well-trained, they may find a permanent home in the construction industry.
- **Data needs:** The group identified several key questions and issues related to data.

1. What is the BeltLine baseline? How do we triangulate the several flawed and proximate sources of data to construct a workable baseline describing existing business and jobs in terms of sub-region, sector, wage, etc.?
2. How to we accommodate the fact that most jobs data provides an annual snap-shot of a speedily changing landscape?
3. What proxy measures can we use to fill in our incomplete picture? Sq. feet of retail and office space is one national standard to employ.
4. Data on small businesses are particularly hard to capture and describe. The federal government captures this info by the date the business was established, not necessarily by the number of employees. Look to a combination of Atlanta Development Authority, Department of Labor, GA Power and windshield surveys.

The group committed to convene a Data Committee with Charles Watley, Derrick Duckworkth, and Mark Parham. This Committee will be charged with making recommendations to the larger group at the July meeting.

Next, each of the four committees gave presentations about their first meeting, with a focus on revised scope, key next steps, and data and other needs.

Marketing

The Marketing Committee identified four main components of their mission:

1. Work on establishing a BeltLine identity for local businesses
2. Work on developing the value proposition for local hiring
3. Package and communicate the committee's work to multiple audiences
4. Long-term, look at link between affordable housing and employment (i.e. not just getting jobs for local residents, but getting housing for local workers). Link to Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative efforts

The Marketing Committee identified the following needs:

- An intern (Emory? Atlanta Education Fund? Andrew Young School of Policy?) to do research on the value proposition for local hiring
- Pro-bono communications and design professional
- Baseline (and evolving) data on BeltLine businesses, by sector and size if possible

Employer Services

The Employer Services Committee presented the following issues and challenges:

- Need baseline data on existing BeltLine businesses.
- Need demographic information on BeltLine communities by sector (N/S/E/W)
 1. Can GA Power provide data? It was confirmed that GA Power can provide *summary data only on their commercial customers*, not broken down by number of employees or sector.
- Services as incentive for participation:
 1. Stream-line the hiring process for small/med businesses without formal HR process
 2. Provide a single point of entry to vetted candidates
 3. Quality assurance – how to ensure?
 - a) Candidates coming through formal workforce training programs?
 - b) Candidates coming through traditional application process?
- Jurisdiction: Services will be provided to BeltLine businesses only (BeltLine study areas? TAD? Other?), and workforce training and job placement services provided to BeltLine residents only as well.
- How to coordinate with existing programs, to *extend and compliment* rather than *duplicate*? Particularly the AWDA?
 1. Many different programs, each with their own funding stream and separate regs – challenging to map, identify holes, etc.
 2. Look at: Workforce Investment Act, State of GA programs, City of Atlanta programs, county programs
- Potential models to look at:
 1. **Kansas City, Missouri** on-line entrepreneur program as model for single point of entry approach.
 2. **Johns Hopkins** as model of community/ university partnership workforce development/placement approach.
 3. **ADA and Community Foundation** pilot project on *employee-owned cooperatives*, with a focus on hard-to-employ populations (felony convictions, drug use, literacy issues, etc.).

Human Capital

The Human Capital Committee provided the following key decisions and challenges:

- Need for an inventory of workforce development efforts in the city/region. How to define the criteria for inclusion?
 1. # of years in operation?
 2. # of candidates trained?
 3. Focus on key sectors?
 4. Quality assurance: State Eligible Providers List? Dept. of Labor list? Is there a national accreditation process?

- Need to coordinate the Human Capital and Employer Services Committees' work. Cross-membership?

- Targeted sector: **HEALTH CARE** (Piedmont Hospital, Atlanta Medical Center, Morehouse, other?)

- Different tracks:
 1. Employment for hard-to-place populations: i.e. ex-offenders
 2. Career ladder for under-employed: how to move up within sector/organization?
 3. Placement only for traditional applicants

Program/Policy

The Program/Policy Committee reported that their first efforts will be to create maps of both *potential funding sources* and *existing policies and initiatives to support local hiring*. They are interested in dollars both for the planning and design efforts of the Employment Advisory Group as well as operating dollars for whatever initiatives that are created.

Group members recommended that the Committee look specifically at **Year-Up** as a model (local Year-Up staff are members of the Employment Advisory Group) as well as **the Aspen Institute**, a national progressive think-tank. Finally, group members stated that there are more policies in place – and it is easier in general – to support the *recruitment* rather than the *retention* of businesses.

In terms of local initiatives to coordinate with, participants mentioned the following:

- **Promise Neighborhoods:** This effort, supported by the Dept. of Education, is focused on several West Atlanta neighborhoods and is concerned primarily with health and educational outcomes.

- **Choice Neighborhoods:** This effort is supported by HUD, and does include a workforce development component.

Both Diane McCants of the United Way and Charles Watley of the ADA are involved with these initiatives, and committed to exploring how the Employment Advisory Group

can be involved, either by being mentioned in the asset maps that are being developed for each effort, or as a key (potentially funded) partner.

Finally, we are including a list of all the “to-do’s” that came out of the ABI presentation, the Committee presentations, and the general discussions.

Action Items from the May 4th Meeting

ABI

1. Confirm James Alexander’s presentation of ABI’s economic development planning efforts once next large group meeting is scheduled.
2. Ask ABI staff to send power-point on the Equitable Development Plan and re-send to group participants with notes. [This is now available at <http://beltline.org/SocialImpact/EmploymentWorkingGroup/tabid/4091/Default.aspx>]
3. Ask ABI staff to refine their Equitable Development Plan presentation for next large group meeting so that they present *only those metrics that are relevant to our efforts*, including those linked to the following goals:
 - Create long-term jobs
 - Minimize displacement of people and businesses
 - Recruit/retain businesses, especially small, locally-serving businesses
 - Promote opportunities for local retail
 - Community Benefits agreement

Marketing Committee

4. Link Emory/Atlanta Education Fund interns to research “value proposition for local hiring” (i.e. negative externalities linked to transportation).

Employer Services: Need to identify work-plan that can be initiated before clean data on existing businesses is available.

Program/Policy: Intern is assisting with development of funding matrix.

Human Capital

5. Intern/BLP staff/consultant explores 2 case studies mentioned by Charles Watley: Kansas City, Missouri (on-line entrepreneur resource/single-pt. of entry model) and Johns Hopkins (university/community partnership around hospital tech jobs).
6. Follow-up with Watley about ADA/Community Foundation effort around *employee-owned cooperatives*, focus on hard-to-employ populations.

7. Inventory of local workforce development efforts: need to work with committee to define limits and find proxy variable for quality (number of people served, number of people placed, state eligible provider list, Dept. of Labor approved, etc.).
8. Work with Human Capital and Employer Services committees to develop cross-membership. Who is willing to be on both?

General

9. Work with Charles Watley and Diane McCants to get our initiative included in the Promise and Choice Neighborhoods proposals. Clarify what this means: are we listed as an asset, or as a fundable project?
10. Remind committees that they need to schedule their *June meeting*.
11. Follow-up with Diane at United Way with a rough proposal for the Workforce Development funding collaborative. They are meeting on May 23rd. Potential asks include general planning dollars and/or data purchase, analysis and storage. Focus on OUTCOMES AND MILESTONES. How to balance this focus with the needs of a fairly open-ended planning process?
12. Diane suggested individual meetings with the publisher of the Atlanta Business Chronicle, staff from the Gov's Office of Workforce Readiness and the Atlanta Chamber. Not necessarily to get them on the larger committee, but to educate them in general on the initiative, get their feedback on it, and discuss possible partnerships (i.e. ABC article).
13. Reach out to Mike Carnathan at ARC, staff for Neighborhood Nexus to discuss how they can support our data collection and storage efforts.