

**ATLANA BELTLINE REPORT**

**CLOSING THE GAP:  
CONNECTING THROUGH THE ATLANTA BELTLINE**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Redevelopment Plan for the Atlanta BeltLine promises the creation of 30,000 new full time jobs over the 25-year implementation of the project. These are in addition to the 48,000 one-year construction jobs resulting from the building of the Beltline and surrounding private sector developments. Hailed as a national model for creating sustainable cities, the Beltline allows residents to live in close proximity to employment centers or to use public transportation to get to and from work, thus reducing Atlanta's dependence on the automobile. Therefore, the overall success of the Beltline will depend on its ability to connect residents living near the Beltline with the jobs that are being created along it.

Our team was tasked with outlining how the private sector, workforce development, and community organizations can work together to "tweak" the existing employment pipeline so that current and future jobs created along the Beltline can be filled by residents who live along the Beltline. This report proposes a process to achieve this end by connecting employers with employees within the Beltline area.

To better understand current hiring processes along the Beltline and to identify any gaps related to our project, we surveyed 50-60 Beltline businesses and organizations using a telephone questionnaire and in-person interviews. The high-level findings from this survey are:

- There is a lack of confidence in the Beltline and uncertainty about its relevance and value for the local business community;
- Employers do not always see the value of participating in local hiring practices;
- Beltline employers are currently using disjointed hiring practices which do not lend themselves to a place-based hiring model;
- Employers see a lack of well-trained candidates and experience difficulty retaining employees for mid-level jobs; and
- There is a lack of awareness of businesses, industries and resources that exist on the Beltline and therefore a gap in understanding how to connect them with one another.

In order to identify potential remedies to these issues, we researched hiring strategies and place-based models currently being used by other organizations in other locations. This revealed a number of options to address the various gaps outlined above. In a thorough analysis of best practices regarding workforce development, public-private partnerships, human resources, job sourcing initiatives, and participation incentives, we determined the following to be essential to the Beltline's job sourcing process:

- Make all relevant information accessible via one central location;
- Create strategic partnerships that allow private sector participants to contribute to workforce development;

- Determine what skills are most needed to fulfill current jobs on the Beltline;
- Outsource and centralize HR functions where possible; and
- Clearly define and publicize specific incentives for place-based job sourcing.

This latter point is critical. Currently, Beltline businesses hire with little regard to place. Creating proper incentives that target the development and training of residents living along the Beltline is a key step towards connecting local employees with job openings along the Beltline.

However, workforce development is not enough. In order to meet our place-based objectives, the Beltline must also create a set of centralized offerings that facilitate the job connection process. This centralized hub for the Atlanta BeltLine should incorporate the following:

- Create a structure (virtual and/or physical) that provides a clear identity for Beltline employers;
- Foster strategic partnerships and then aggregate information in this central location;
- Create a marketing channel to promote the Beltline businesses both within the Beltline community and beyond; and
- Provide a centralized HR sourcing solution for participating Beltline employers.

With these guiding principles, we outline a web-based solution as a model that could be implemented for the Beltline, which we have named “ABLiSS,” or Atlanta BeltLine Sourcing Solution. ABLiSS serves as a “one stop shop” sourcing solution model staffed by a dedicated group of people whose primary focus is to match appropriately-skilled Beltline residents with open employment opportunities for businesses located around the Beltline. ABLiSS incorporates valuable incentives and auxiliary services made available exclusively to Beltline businesses so that they might better fulfill their human resources functions and talent development needs. Some of these incentives include:

- Free or low-cost resume and job postings for residents and employers;
- A up-to-date library of resources regarding industry and employment best practices and industry white papers;
- A calendar of Atlanta BeltLine events that are specifically of interest to Beltline employers and residents;
- An accompanying physical space for partnerships to promote community-building activities and to share information; and
- A leading-edge “Beltline Business Directory.”

These tailored programs will help develop a strong supply-side rationale for Beltline businesses to both flourish and become more robust employers. This will in turn provide a strong foundation to encourage potential growth and partnership among the Beltline businesses and community.

By aggressively marketing ABLISS, our proposal addresses the current ambivalence among employers towards the Beltline as a business locale while developing a unique mechanism that helps them successfully find and hire skilled employees. It also provides Beltline employers with additional HR services that will generate long-term business benefits both for themselves and for the Atlanta BeltLine community in which they operate.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE ATLANTA BELTLINE**

A project that started as the thesis of a local Georgia Tech graduate student, goes on to become a \$2.8 billion redevelopment project, securing itself a place in history as one of the largest transportation projects in Atlanta. The Beltline project was immediately seen as revolutionary idea that would allow Atlanta to become a world-class city that would compete with the likes of New York, London, Paris, etc.

In order for Atlanta to become a world-renowned city, the Beltline project will have to do more than just implement a good transportation system. It will need to create a business friendly infrastructure that will facilitate emergence of new businesses, creation of new jobs, and a mechanism for local residents to fill the newly created openings.

If a mechanism that matches employers and residents of the surrounding communities is not in place, the Beltline communities will end up facing the same problems that currently plague metro Atlanta. The growth in metro Atlanta over the years has occurred in widely spread and disconnected pockets which have not allowed the region to reach its full potential economically and in its livability. That being said, a process that matches current and future businesses along the Atlanta BeltLine with qualified residents in the neighboring communities will not only alleviate some of the issues that metro Atlanta has faced in the past, but will also allow it to become the quintessential live-work-play community of America.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVE & GOALS**

The Emory Team was asked by the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABP) to develop a “place based” employment strategy that would encourage current and future businesses located along the Atlanta BeltLine corridors to hire from the local population that also reside in the vicinity of the Beltline corridors. The objective of this paper is to provide an analysis of best practices currently being done in other cities as a way to inform our set of recommendations for a unique employment “process” that can be used by the Atlanta BeltLine both now and in the future. We set our sights to provide a comprehensive, yet high-level set of recommendations that would not only allow for the origination of conversation around this subject, but would also allow for concise next steps to be considered by the leadership of ABP.

Specifically, we established the following items as our objectives at the inception of the project:

- To develop a comprehensive strategy and process for connecting employees with employers along the Beltline that will attract and meet the needs of current and potential businesses and residents along the Beltline in order to promote a sustainable live-work-play community.
- To address how community organizations, along with private and public sectors can collaborate to fill jobs along the Beltline with residents who live within the proximity of the Beltline corridors.
- Provide businesses and residents co-located along the Beltline a means to identify with the Beltline community as a whole.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Initial primary research consisted of one-on-one interviews with various members of the Atlanta BeltLine Advisory Board Committee. Further research was also conducted using the help of several Atlanta BeltLine volunteers who completed 35 telephone interviews with local Atlanta BeltLine businesses. The businesses contacted and surveyed represent a randomly generated sample of small to mid size businesses located within various zip codes along the Atlanta BeltLine corridor.

Secondary research began with in-depth analyses of various research studies examining other cities successfully employing sustainable work-live-play models, such as Portland, OR. Other sources included various studies and reports written and conducted in the fields of workforce development, “green” job development, economic poverty development and other related areas. For a full list of secondary resources used, please refer to the Bibliography page.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

By surveying 50 Beltline businesses and related organizations, we were able to better identify the current hiring practices and gaps. The random sample of large, medium and small size businesses including private corporations, gas stations, grocery stores, design firms, schools, salons, cleaners and retail stores. The questionnaire is included in Exhibit 1 of the Appendix.

The high-level findings from this survey are:

- There is a lack of confidence in the Beltline and uncertainty about its relevance and value for the local business community;
- Employers do not always see the value of participating in local hiring practices;
- Beltline employers are currently using disjointed hiring practices which do not lend themselves to a place-based hiring model;
- Employers see a lack of well-trained candidates and experience difficulty retaining employees for mid-level jobs; and
- There is a lack of awareness of businesses, industries and resources that exist on the Beltline and therefore a gap in understanding how to connect them with one another.

Because transportation will be a key element to the success of the Atlanta BeltLine, many businesses were skeptical of the Beltline's success, which led to a sense of uncertainty about how the Beltline would affect their businesses specifically. This lack of understanding among businesses should be addressed so that local employers can become part of the Beltline identify and associate with the Beltline brand. Given its distributed geography and multiple neighborhoods, instilling a sense of community will be important in order to encourage businesses to participate in programs specifically tied to Beltline development.

Not only will creating a sense of community be important for the success of the Beltline, but also promoting the inherent benefits of hiring locally will be necessary for success. Many businesses today do not see the value of hiring locally because given the weak economy, there is currently more supply than there is demand and businesses are overwhelmed with job candidates. However, with the impending withdrawal of the baby-boomer generation leaving the workforce and the increasing need for highly skilled workers, this will not remain the case forever and local Beltline businesses must be educated and made aware on the importance of hiring locally and the negative effects that long commute times can have on employee retention and dissatisfaction.

Another important finding from the survey touches on the need to make sure that the Atlanta BeltLine is effectively preparing local residents with the skills and training required to be hired by the Beltline businesses. Employers not only noted a lack of specific job related skills but also a need for developed soft skills, including presentations, communication and interpersonal effectiveness skills.

Finally, we learned from the survey that various types of methods are being used today by businesses to recruit and hire employees, including but not limited to: Craig's List, word-of-mouth, personal and employee references, and company websites. The need for a streamlined hiring process which can be used by all employers on the Beltline looking to connect with potential employees will be essential towards moving towards a place based employment strategy.

## ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES

To determine how to address these findings, we used various research journals, consulting documents, and web based databases to isolate examples of how other cities and organizations tackled similar issues. In the case of place-based employment strategies, we researched several examples of public-private partnerships that addressed how to encourage employment and job development in places where it does not exist already. In the case of the lack of skills training and professional education for certain jobs on the Atlanta BeltLine today, we looked at successful workforce development programs being used in other cities today. Finally, we examined several best practices of economic growth initiatives to give us ideas on how to develop the economic identity of the Beltline and to create a sense of community and connectedness for the businesses under the Beltline brand.

Below are several examples of successful public-private partnerships, workforce development programs and economic growth ideas that have been implemented in other cities and organizations and which could be used as models for the Atlanta BeltLine.

### Public-Private Partnerships

#### *Example 1: WIRE – Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network of Cleveland*

In Cleveland, the Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network (WIRE-net) is a program that caters to 650 small and medium sized manufactures in an old industrial section on Cleveland's west side<sup>1,2</sup>. In order to address a severe economic downturn in the manufacturing industry multiple organizations pulled together to develop a strategy that allowed them to address issues that local businesses faced while trying to maintain a presence in the local community. They devised a strategy that allowed them to address the needs to local businesses and the community by helping businesses gain access to needed financial resources, an ongoing supply of skilled workers and creating a network that connected businesses and local resources that allowed each to learn from one another. Ultimately, the organization was able to develop a mutually beneficial relationship between both the public and private organizations in the community.

By forming a partnership with the local community and businesses the WIRE-net organization is able to play an intermediary role between both businesses and the community. It helps both job seekers and employers by providing equal access to its services. Currently there are about 160 employers and 100 community members that participate in the program each year. The program is a success because it helps local businesses develop reliable pipelines of skilled workers that are needed for the jobs they have available and helps with employee retention as they are trained in the proper skills.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Walker, "Mentoring, policy, and politics," *Public/Private Ventures* (2007): 17.

<sup>2</sup> "WIRE-Net: Home," n.d., <http://www.wire-net.org/>.

*Example 2: Colorado Jobs Cabinet*<sup>3</sup>

In 2008, Governor Ritter convened a Jobs Cabinet to develop an action plan for workforce and economic development in Colorado. The main purpose of the program is to break down silos and encourage partnerships between education facilities, the business community, government officials, and the overall community. The Jobs Cabinet report makes five recommendations:

- Implement a local collaboration forum to align education, economic development, workforce training and business recruitment efforts.
- Engage employers in workforce assessments to ensure local education and training needs are targeted.
- Aggressively promote talent development programs to effectively engage Colorado businesses.
- Develop a coordinating web portal that provides business with easy access to local resources and information.
- Provide senior executive leadership ongoing support and performance metrics to ensure the success of this initiative.

The Jobs Cabinet called for implementation of this plan in each of the 19 Workforce Investment Boards across Colorado with a centralized board created to monitor progress. Results of the implementation thus far are not yet available, however the diagram below was used in the report to outline how collaboration can work to meet economic development goals.

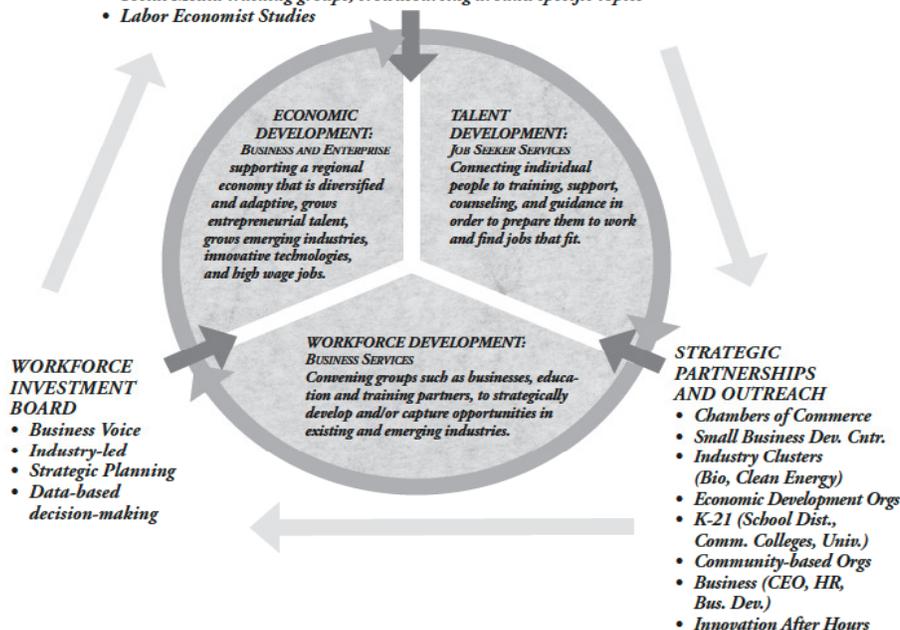
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<sup>3</sup> "Jobs Cabinet Report." 2010. <[www.colorado.gov/governor](http://www.colorado.gov/governor)>.

## STRATEGIC COLLABORATION IN LARIMER COUNTY

### ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DATA

- *EMSI, Labor Market Data*
- *Industry News and Research (e.g. CBSA, Rocky Radar, GEO, Apollo Alliance)*
- *One-on-one Surveys of Businesses in Identified Clusters*
- *Social Media tracking groups, crowdsourcing around specific topics*
- *Labor Economist Studies*



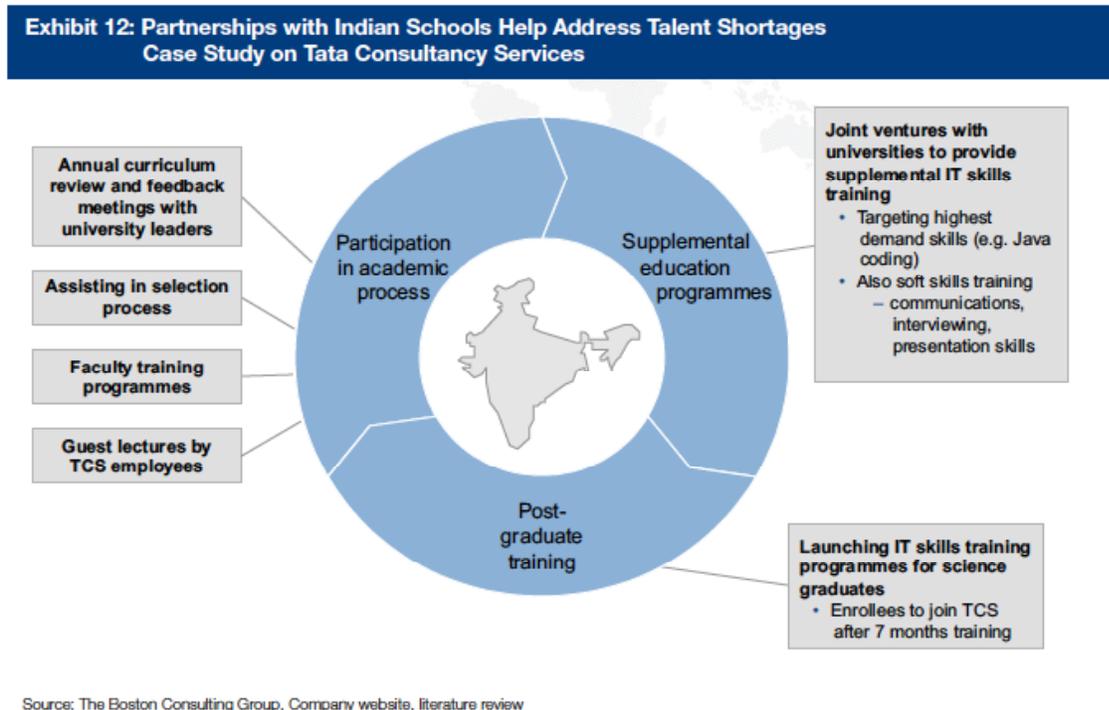
### Example 3: Fresno Bridge Academy

The Fresno Bridge Academy acts as a liaison between public service offerings from social services and workforce investment boards. The program has an application process with a capacity of 120 families at a time. Case managers work with applicants to determine their needs for not only job placement, but also support services such as child care, transportation, and drug/alcohol rehabilitation. This support system continues for a year after job placement. The program is currently in its initial experimental stage and is facing the challenge of finding applicants who are truly interested in moving towards self-reliance and away from publicly funding programs. Once the experimental phase has ended, documented results will be released.

### Example 4: Universities

Universities and the private sector can partner to not only properly train students, but to improve innovation. Businesses can provide funding to universities who will in turn conduct training that can provide valuable insights for partnering industries. In the process, students gain experience and preparation to enter the workforce. Partnerships with universities should not be limited to local schools or to top tier schools because it is important to provide a diverse pool of candidates from different backgrounds. Companies should seek partnerships with regional schools as well as second and third tier schools that don't traditionally receive as much recruitment attention. These schools have highly qualified candidates who are often

overlooked. The diagram below outlines how Tata Consultancy Services<sup>4</sup> partners with universities to meet staffing goals and ensure proper education of employees.



#### *Example 4a: Arizona Western College and Yuma Private Industry Council*

These two entities partnered to develop the first Solar Photo Voltaic Installer program. Not only does this create new opportunities for students, but it creates an economic opportunity for the state by encouraging growth in the green energy sector.

#### *Example 4b: GE and the University of Texas*

In an effort to improve innovation in energy, GE donated EMR technology to the University of Texas for training and research purposes. UT will use the equipment for its Information Technology summer certification program.

#### *Example 5: Advocacy Groups*

Partnerships between the business community and advocacy groups provide a larger applicant pool for businesses. It also gives the advocacy group additional exposure to promote its causes and allows the two groups to share information. For example, Home Depot targets the elderly population for retail positions. To more effectively do this, they have partnered with AARP to

<sup>4</sup> "Stimulating Economies through Fostering Talent Mobility." World Economic Forum. 2010. <www.weforum.org>.

fill these positions. AARP posts job vacancies for their members to apply, thus Home Depot is able to target the candidates they hope to acquire.

### **Strategic Workforce Planning**

Over the next 25 years, the U.S. will experience a shortage of skilled workers. 70 million Baby Boomers are nearing retirement, but there are only 30 million Gen Xer's to replace them in the workplace. Atlanta must determine its workforce needs and work to secure the appropriate human capital. This will include retaining current residents and students as well as recruiting nationally and even internationally. The Beltline can be a driver for this process by exciting and rejuvenating the city.

Concentrated efforts should be placed on middle skilled jobs. 45% of all jobs will be middle skilled jobs by 2012. These are defined as those that require some additional training beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree. Some roles that fall in this category include construction workers, technicians, dental hygienists, paralegals, machinists and police officers. Not only should there be an emphasis on developing training facilities for these roles, but offering proper support and access to employers for those seeking jobs in these areas.

A common complaint among employers, employees, and training facilities is the surplus of over and under qualified candidates. There is currently a mismatch in skills needed and skills available around the Beltline. This issue appears to be more prolific among middle level jobs where there is a lack of coordination and communication between training facilities and employers. Employers in service industries such as hotels and gas stations and restaurants did not report issues with finding qualified employees. They said they are able to fulfill all of their hiring needs through word of mouth and walk-ins.

Just as any major corporation, the Beltline must determine its current supply and demand of skills and jobs as well as create projections over the next twenty-five years. All of the other recommendations will be based on what is discovered during this audit.

Workforce development planning is a key element to the economic development of the Atlanta BeltLine. Below we have outlined several steps that the Beltline should take in order to address the need of appropriate workforce development.

1. Define job roles within the Beltline area
  - a. Industry
  - b. Role
  - c. Skills
2. Determine workforce supply and demand by role
  - a. Current workforce audit of Beltline
  - b. Current job audit of the Beltline
3. Identify gaps/risks
4. Propose measures to address gaps and risks and attract talent using the following recommendations

- a. Partnerships
  - b. Centralization – Services, Hubs, Incubators
  - c. Marketing Initiatives
5. Place employees through improved access to information
  6. Analyze effectiveness of each step

### **Workforce Development Programs**

While all of the workforce development programs we researched have different structures and serve different populations within different geographical and economic areas of the country, they have all been highly successful. What they do share are several common themes that are important in putting together any organization that will be successfully able to help connect multiple employers and employees. These themes can help serve as foundations that the Atlanta BeltLine can use to develop methods to help connect the local employers and employees that are along the Atlanta BeltLine.

First, there are good lines of communication between the community and the organizations. Second, each group works to understand the other. The community organization and the local businesses come together to understand the needs of the other. This is fostered by the open communication lines and allows each individual group to talk to other groups and know what their interests are. Third, each group works to understand the organizational structure of the other. In all the examples, the business community actively participates in the structure and developed of that group, while the community group works closely with the local businesses so that they understand the business structure and what employees will be required to know to operate successfully. Finally, in each of these community groups, the relationships were built over time so that each group has sufficient time to get to know the other and build the knowledge necessary to successfully operate together.

#### *Example 1: Lufthansa Technik<sup>5</sup>*

Lufthansa specializes in airline technology services and uses strategic workforce planning to determine future workforce needs. They've created taxonomy of 230 job functions, 150 job families, and 90 job family groups. This allows them to determine which skills they need to recruit for as well as what cross-functionality is available.

By using traditional supply/demand modeling, Lufthansa can estimate future needs. Supply modeling takes into account retirement, turnover, and cross functional movement. Demand modeling requires HR to work with individual business units to project future business needs based on upcoming trends in the aviation industry. Lufthansa then measures the difference between the supply and demand to develop a plan for its recruiting and workforce needs.

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<sup>5</sup> Friedman, Daniel, Jim Hemerling, and Jacqueline Chapman. "Aligning Talent for Global Advantage." Nov. 2007 <[www.bcg.com](http://www.bcg.com)>.

### *Example 2: Training, Inc.*

In Boston, Training Inc. is another example of a successful community oriented program that is part of a national consortium. Training Inc. builds collaborative partnerships among employers, mentors and local agencies to create community support that helps build on trainees' success.<sup>6</sup> Training Inc. has partnered with major employers in the area such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cellular One, Liberty Mutual, Northeastern University and other organizations to place employees, but more importantly, seek their help in understanding the local business community's needs.

### *Example 3: Jewish Vocational Services*

Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) is a non-sectarian, not-for-profit corporation founded to help individuals find employment throughout San Francisco<sup>7</sup>. In their work in San Francisco and other cities they have made sure that they address the needs of the local business community by engaging with those businesses to understand the skills that are required. Additionally, JVS has engaged those local businesses to work directly with them and developed long standing relationships with many of them. During 2002 JVS worked with over 3000 people in the local community in various ways. During that time they placed over 850 people into the local workforce<sup>8</sup>. They have spent time building trust with employers that they can deliver employees with specific skills sets and have been able to follow through on those promises. They have sought help and advice from the community and worked so that each side is engaged and committed to making sure that the relationship works – they have setup a system that benefits parties and that both employers and employees can profit from. In this way, both sides have the invested in the process and are working to make it succeed.

### *Example 4: Step-Up Savannah*

Step-Up Savannah is a perfect example of a community organization that embodies these principles and has become highly successful in helping to connect employers and employees<sup>9</sup>. Step Up Savannah is a collaborative encompassing over 80 organizations in the Savannah region that works to advance economic independence for its citizens. Step Up Savannah worked closely with the Memorial Health University Medical Center to understand the problems they were having with turnover in their patient transporter jobs<sup>10</sup>. They worked with the organization to design a program that would provide qualified and trained candidates for the job. Step Up Savannah worked closely with the employer to identify their needs and develop a

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<sup>6</sup> "Training, Inc. - YMCA Training, Inc. - Boston," n.d., [http://www.traininginc.org/Affiliate\\_Network/YMCA\\_Training,\\_Inc.\\_-\\_Boston](http://www.traininginc.org/Affiliate_Network/YMCA_Training,_Inc._-_Boston).

<sup>7</sup> "JVS - History," n.d., <http://www.jvs.org/history.shtml>.

<sup>8</sup> "Walker - 2007 - Mentoring, policy, and politics.pdf," n.d., [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/151\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/151_publication.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> "About Step Up Savannah | Step Up Savannah," n.d., <http://www.stepupsavannah.org/about-step-savannah>.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Goebel, "Beltline Job Development Research," September 2009.

program that would help train people to obtain the necessary skills. This allowed them to match individuals with the correct skill set for the job while at the same time helping the hospital retain trained personnel and helping resolve a long standing problem with high turnover in the position<sup>11</sup>. By working together both the employer and community were able to benefit from a mutual understanding of needs.

*Example 5: Georgia Work Ready<sup>12</sup>*

Georgia Work Ready focuses on creating a skilled workforce at all levels. The unique aspect of the Work Ready program is the emphasis on basic “work ready” skills. Work readiness is defined as having the basic skills in reading, writing, and math that are necessary for most entry-level jobs. Georgia Work Ready offers a statewide no cost certification program that allows job seekers to take an exam to receive work ready certification. The program also offers online classes for basic skills needed to obtain certification.

Employers can post jobs on the Georgia Work Ready website as well as seek certified candidates. Georgia Work Ready also offers job profiling to help companies identify the skills needed for success within their company. They then use the profile to effectively hire qualified candidates.

The overall vision for Georgia Work Ready is outlined in the diagram below. The initiative has regional, community, and industry specific components that focus on developing a strong workforce for Georgia’s fastest growing industries: advanced communications, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, bioscience, energy, and logistics.

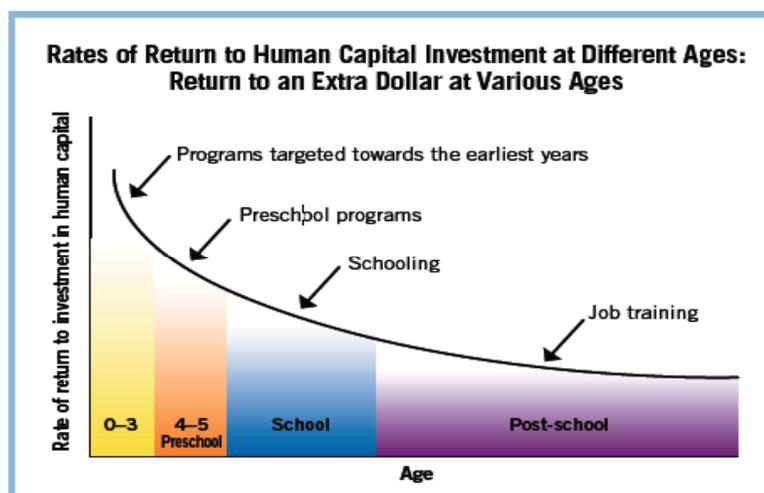


<sup>11</sup> “National League of Cities Official Website,” n.d., [http://www.oldweb.nlc.org/Newsroom/Nation\\_s\\_Cities\\_Weekly\\_v2/Weekly\\_NCW/2006\\_v2/05\\_v4/08\\_v10/9842.aspx](http://www.oldweb.nlc.org/Newsroom/Nation_s_Cities_Weekly_v2/Weekly_NCW/2006_v2/05_v4/08_v10/9842.aspx).

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.gaworkready.org>

Example 6: Early Childhood Initiatives – U.S. Chamber of Commerce<sup>13</sup>

Proactive steps should be taken to develop a strong workforce. By targeting children in early childhood, cities are able to get a strong return on their investment. This also helps provide additional support for family members. The diagram below outlines the additional investment that communities receive by investing in people earlier in life as opposed to later.



The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has a nationwide early childhood initiative, which is being implemented regionally through local chambers of commerce. The Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce worked with business leaders, communities, child advocates, and policy makers to create the Success by 6 program for pre-K children. The initiative has 6 goals.

- Increase Virginia's financial investments in the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Healthy Families, and the Children's Health Involving Parents of Virginia program.
- Invest in early childhood education programs by influencing policy, promoting the benefits of participation in preschool programs, or contributing money.
- Invest in the child care industry and provide incentives to create and improve quality child care programs.
- Support child care workforce development by investing in scholarships and provide incentives for child care workers to upgrade their education and reduce turnover through salary increases.
- Understand the child care needs of employees, including the availability and affordability of child care and how child care affects employees and the workplace.

The program has been successful in not only rallying an entire community around the needs of young children and their support systems, but also investing early in children to begin proactive workforce development.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Why Business Should Support Early Childhood Education." *Institute for a Competitive Workforce* (2010). Web.

### *Example 6a: Chicago Child Parent Centers*

Founded in 1967, CPC is a federally funded program for low-income families targeting children from pre-K through elementary school. The program focuses in math and reading skills. The Chicago Longitudinal Study followed participants through age 24 and found that those who participated in the pre-K program:

- Achieved higher reading and math scores through grade nine
- Academically outperformed non-participants
- Were less likely to be held back in school
- Were less likely to be placed in special education
- Experienced lower rates of official juvenile arrests

The average cost per student was \$6,692, but yielded an average benefit of \$41,076 to participants. The overall benefit to society was broken down as follows:

- General public: 54%
- Crime savings: 28%
- Increased tax revenue: 15%
- Education savings: 9%
- Welfare savings: 1.6%

A similar study was conducted in North Carolina, where participants of an early education program were followed through the age of 21. The average cost of the program was \$65,476 and participants saw net benefits of \$94,802. This program was a bit more costly and therefore the overall benefit to society was only estimated at 6%. However the return for participants was 94%.

## **Economic Growth Models – Incubators and Clusters**

### *Example 1: Incubators*

Incubators are seen as productive models to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. Incubators provide assistance and resources for startup businesses. They are characterized by the following:<sup>14</sup>

- Provide business assistance and mentorship to early stage startups
- Employ a centralized staff to deliver business needs to clients

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<sup>14</sup> Monkman, David. "Congressional Testimony." - National Business Incubation Association. 17 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.nbia.org/>>.

- Designed to lead startups to self sufficiency (client business are typically only allowed to occupy space for 2-5 years)

Incubators that receive public funding are seen as more efficient in terms of return on public dollar than other publicly funded initiatives such as infrastructure building. They provide 20 times more jobs than infrastructure projects. See below for cost comparisons.<sup>15</sup>

PROJECT TYPE	Est Jobs Created per \$10,000 investment	Federal Cost per Job
Business Incubators	46.3-69.4	\$144-216
Commercial Structures	4.4-7.8	\$744-1008
Roads & Other Trans.	5.0-7.3	\$1,291-2,293
Ind. Park Infrastructure	1.5-3.4	\$1,377-1,999
Community Infra.	9.6-13.4	\$2,920-6,872

Incubators are proven to reduce the risk of business failures by allowing startups to share resources such as office space and administrative services. There are even opportunities for small startups to develop partnerships to handle large projects. The main downfall for the incubator case is the overall lack of federal funding. However, incubators are a strong example of public-private partnerships that can be lucrative for all parties.

Niche incubators which are incubators that focus on particular industries and skills have additional advantages. Startups within niche communities are likely to share more of the resources and attract more investment dollars. Fashion and design niche incubators are the most common. To avoid competitions, client businesses typically have different target markets. For example, a fashion incubator may offer men's' fashions, high end, children, and accessories. They benefit from shared resources, but have different clientele. Some current niche incubators include<sup>16</sup>:

#### NYdesigns

- An incubator of startup design firms in New York
- Residents are profiled on the website nydesigns.org

#### Sparkseed

- An incubator for social entrepreneurs
- Offers seed money, mentorship, pro bono consulting, and technical support

#### Hot Bread Kitchen Incubators

<sup>15</sup> Muro, Mark, and Bruce Katz. "How Regional Innovation Clusters Can Foster the Next Economy - Brookings Institution." Brookings - Quality. Independence. Impact. Sept. 2010. 15 Dec. 2010 <[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/0921\\_clusters\\_muro\\_katz.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/0921_clusters_muro_katz.aspx)>.

<sup>16</sup> Needleman, Sarah. "Start-Up Programs Find Niche." Wall Street Journal 18 Nov. 2010.

- Social startup that teaches low income women how to start food related businesses
- Sell baked good wholesale

#### Chicago Fashion Incubator

- Yearlong residency at Macy's on State Street store
- Offers internships for students interested in working for resident designers

#### Advanced Technology Development Center (Georgia Tech)

- Incubator for tech startups in Georgia
- Affiliated with Georgia Tech

#### *Example 2: Clusters*

Another idea that has merit for the Beltline is the idea of clusters. Clusters can be defined as “a geographic concentration of firms, suppliers, coordinating entities, and related institutions in a particular field that arises and grows because of the mutual benefits they derive from proximity and the powerful synergies it makes possible, whether of knowledge exchange, mutual access to skilled labor pools, or the use of shared public goods.”<sup>17</sup> The Beltline may be an ideal location to develop several clusters. This would allow those employers that locate in these clusters to take advantage of nearby skilled labor pools and encourages businesses with similar interest to locate in the region to take advantage of the synergies that exist with other similar businesses<sup>18</sup>. Already there are clusters that are appearing in various states that have been very successful. Technology in Silicon Valley, Auto Manufacturing in South Carolina, Aviation in Wichita, Batteries in Michigan and Cleantech in Colorado are all examples of successful cluster development. Helping develop a cluster in the Beltline would allow long term development and the ability to match skilled employees in the Atlanta region with employers seeking those skills thus retaining top level talent in the region and growing the Beltline.

Clusters thrive best when both private/public partnerships and universities are involved in their development. As a result of these types of collaborations the attraction and retention of skilled employees is simplified for businesses. Similar to the community organizations mentioned previously, Colorado's Universities in conjunction with the Cleantech industry have developed programs that provide individuals with the necessary skills to take advantage of the local opportunities.<sup>19</sup> On the Atlanta BeltLine engaging local universities and Piedmont Hospital to design programs to feed employees into the system would seem to be a natural fit.

Using the themes already mentioned this would be an opportunity to make sure the hospital system and the local educational institutions are working together to develop programs that

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<sup>17</sup> “How Regional Innovation Clusters Can Foster the Ne.pdf,” n.d., [http://www.brookings.edu/%7E/media/Files/rc/papers/2010/0921\\_clusters\\_muro\\_katz/0921\\_clusters\\_muro\\_katz.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/%7E/media/Files/rc/papers/2010/0921_clusters_muro_katz/0921_clusters_muro_katz.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> M. E Porter and Harvard University. Harvard Business Review, “Clusters and the new economics of competition” (1998).

<sup>19</sup> “CCIStatePlanExecutiveSummary\_Web\_10-12-2010.pdf,” n.d., [http://www.coloradocleantech.com/documents/CCIStatePlanExecutiveSummary\\_Web\\_10-12-2010.pdf](http://www.coloradocleantech.com/documents/CCIStatePlanExecutiveSummary_Web_10-12-2010.pdf).

will be mutually beneficial for both groups. This would be highly advantageous especially given the projected growth trends in Atlanta over the next 30 years. The Atlanta Regional Commission projects that Healthcare will be the fastest growing occupation in the region just at a time that there is significant aging in the regional population.<sup>20</sup>

Here are some examples of clusters around the U.S.:

#### Northeast Ohio – Biomedical Cluster

- More than 600 firms
- Annual growth of 7.4% from 2003 to 2008
- In 2008, attracted \$395 million in venture capital dollars and NIH funding

#### Colorado – Cleantech

- More than 1,500 companies
- Home of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
- Colorado Clean Energy Collaboratory – partnership between NREL and regional universities that conduct research that is useful for nearby manufacturing of firms such as Siemens and Vestas

#### Indiana – Life Sciences

- 50 companies, over 8,000 skilled workers, 52,800 workers overall
- Outpaced national life sciences job growth from 2001 to 2008 (17.2% vs. 15.8%)

#### South Carolina – Auto manufacturing

- 125 companies
- Annual income of \$8.3 billion
- Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research (CU-IACR) – public-private collaboration between Clemson and businesses in the industry

### **On-Line Website Models**

#### *Example 1: e-Colorado*

e-Colorado.org is an online portal that provides a centralized location where job seekers, employers, students, and professionals can come together to access resources for career planning, workforce development, emerging industry resources, and legislative issues. Although the website is applicable to an entire state, we believe the model used here can be tailored to the Beltline.

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<sup>20</sup> "RS\_June09\_Forecast2040.pdf," n.d.

Home

**e-COLORADO**

YOUR FIRST SOURCE  
FOR ONLINE WORKFORCE  
INFORMATION

Job seekers, Employers, Students and Professionals - use Colorado's knowledge-based portal to access workforce tools and resources for timely information about careers, employment, education and training, technology, policy and legislation, and more.

Build a personal web page, join a team room or discover a new resource – the best workforce information from Colorado and the nation is at your fingertips.

Click on the buttons below for more information on: the Workforce Recovery Act, to view videos regarding basic facts about Unemployment Insurance (in English or Spanish), the Sector/Industry Strategies or to explore job opportunities on the new My Skills My Future website.

Colorado professionals

Basic Facts about Unemployment Insurance - Video

Información básica sobre el Programa de Seguro de Desempleo - Video

SECTORS RESOURCES

mySkills myFuture  
Colorado's career website

### *Example 2: Job Services Australia*

Job Services Australia is a nationwide workforce solution that has providers at localized levels. It is a government agency that offers employment services to job seekers and employers throughout Australia.

### *Example 3: Beyond.com*

Beyond.com is a niche job board model used for either a location or industry specifically (examples are BeyondCharlotte.com or Techcareers.com). Employers have to pay to use the services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We developed our recommendations based on our research of best practices and tailored them to address the issues noted through our surveys. Given the breadth of the issues noted, we focused on making our recommendations practical through a centralized sourcing solution model. Below we provide a list of offerings that will be necessary to address the issues noted and then we provide an example on how the model could be put into operation through the hypothetical ABLiSS. One can think of our recommendations as a job placement firm with a broader mission to promote Atlanta BeltLine business community to potential local customers and job seekers and equip these Beltline businesses with adequately trained local residents.

### **1. Give a face to the Beltline Community through centralization**

The basic necessity that a central sourcing solution will have to provide is the ability for businesses and job seekers to come to a central location where they can find each other. Whether physical or virtual, the Beltline needs an entity that will give it an identity that others can recognize and connect with. There must be on centralized location where businesses, residents, and public agencies can find all Beltline related information.

Also, the small to mid size businesses along the Beltline could benefit from shared resources of centralized locations; specifically, HR services, administrative services, and workspace. Overall costs can be reduced through any type of centralization, which can in turn promote growth.

Other growth ideas that could spawn out of the centralized offering model include looking at the development of local clusters and incubators, as discussed in the “Analysis of Best Practices” section, within and around the Atlanta BeltLine area. One example of a possible incubator opportunity along the Beltline could be through the Advanced Technology Development Center at Georgia Tech. Possible cluster examples could result from the unique identities of each of the various neighborhoods along the Beltline. For example, the Peachtree Hills area could be made into a mini design cluster. Other possible neighborhood “identities” are outlined below in number 3.

The Beltline has several underutilized areas that could serve as potential spaces for incubators, small business hubs, or clusters. The Huff Corridor would be an ideal location for a design district. The state owned Murphy’s Crossing buildings could also be utilized for boutique industrial or wholesale warehouse space.

### **2. Utilize partnerships to reach specific economic and workforce development needs.**

An overall lack of information sharing between key stakeholders is the root of many of these problems and exacerbates others. Strategic partnerships that enable effective communication and implementation can address these issues. Specifically, the following strategic partnerships should be considered for the Atlanta BeltLine:

- Strategic Partnerships with Employers and Atlanta Educational Facilities
  - Universities
    - Local Universities – Clark Atlanta, Emory, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, etc.
    - Local Community and Technical Schools – Atlanta Technical College, ITT Tech, Atlanta Metropolitan College
    - Local High Profile Employers – Piedmont Hospital, Georgia Power, AT&T, Coca Cola, Suntrust, Georgia-Pacific, etc.
  - Apprenticeships and Internships
    - Allows students to gain experience and extra training
    - Allows employers to “preview” students prior to hiring
  - Work with Chamber of Commerce to develop early childhood initiatives
    - High return on investment
    - Long term plan for Beltline
    - Create young advocates for the Beltline
  
- Strategic Partnership with the business organizations like Atlanta BeltLine Chamber of Commerce or Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
  - Allows business community to join together to voice concerns and centralize private sector needs
  
- Strategic Partnerships with Atlanta government agencies like Atlanta Development Authority and City of Atlanta Mayors Office.
  - This would facilitate a channel for communication for Atlanta BeltLine businesses and government agencies to address various economic and socioeconomic issues.
  
- Strategic Partnerships with Atlanta Advocacy Groups and Social Services
  - Use local advocacy groups to determine workforce needs and promote the Beltline initiatives
  - Assist individuals working with Advocacy find employment and develop appropriate skills for jobs available along the Atlanta BeltLine.
  
- Strategic Partnership with Georgia Work Ready community
  - Determine if the Beltline could qualify to become a Georgia Work Ready community
  - Drive current workforce become Georgia Work Ready certified
  - Demonstrate commitment to improving public school performance
  - Develop a team of economic development, education, and government partners to meet certification criteria
  - Communities that can complete this in 18 months are offered state grant funding

### **3. Develop integrated Beltline marketing & communications plan**

An extensive marketing plan will also be required in order to ensure success of the Atlanta BeltLine. One of the results of the survey findings was that many employers located on the Beltline do not even know what the Beltline is or how it can help to serve their business. We

have outlined several key elements which we believe will help to overcome this problem and create wider awareness for the Atlanta BeltLine project: Neighborhoods “identities”

- Create specific identities and personalities for the various neighborhoods on the Atlanta BeltLine corridor to allow residents and employees to connect with specific areas for either employment or retail/commercial needs
- Example “identities” could include –
  - Decatur as “Art Gallery District”
  - Little Five Points as “Boutique/Clothing District”
  - Northeast/Buckhead as “Commercial/Hi-Tech Business District”
  - Northwest/Howell Mill as “Warehouse/Design District”

#### Website

- Extensive website linked into the larger Atlanta BeltLine website to channel online traffic
- Focus on marketing individual independent-owned businesses such as retail boutiques, art galleries, etc. through sponsoring job posting webpage. Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com provide these services to not only get the most qualified candidates but also to promote their businesses to potential job seekers.
- Opportunity to leverage marketing site for announcement of sales promotions, coupons, openings and press releases.
- Online web directory of businesses located along the Atlanta BeltLine. i.e. A Beltline Yellowpages.

#### Career Fairs

- Leverage existing government and privately sponsored career fairs to promote Beltline businesses looking to hire from local talent pools
- Utilize local businesses to help sponsor booths
- Utilize outside open public spaces or spaces in surrounding Beltline schools

### **4. Operationalizing our recommendations through ABLiSS**

We elected to create a succinct process that maps out how Beltline employers can effectively reach qualified candidates. We will call this hypothetical process the “Atlanta BeltLine Sourcing Solution” or “ABLiSS” for short. We envision ABLiSS being primarily a web-based model with a dedicated staff that will work to achieve the recommendations listed above. In the next few pages, we will address what ABLiSS will offer businesses and residents of the Beltline and steps that ABP should consider putting together such an entity.

*Mission:*

ABLISS will aim to address the different characteristics for businesses and the job functions they are looking to fill. For example, a large employer like Bank of America seeking a teller will go about its search in a very different manner than a local design firm looking for an experienced designer. Such differences make it very challenging to provide a “one size fits all” solution therefore ABLISS will offer businesses a variety of solutions depending on the business’ respective needs. The idea for such a model was derived from our understanding of the existing sourcing mechanism for many employers in the Beltline community and our research of best practices.

### *Incentives for Employers*

Upon securing some seed money, ABLISS staff’s number one priority will be to reach out to target employers to sponsor and purchase services. In order to do this, ABLISS will need to have a very convincing case on how hiring from localities is not only meeting their recruiting needs, but it is also good for business.

Our interviews show that currently businesses located on the Beltline are not making it a priority to hire individuals from Beltline. One option available to the Beltline would be to create incentives that would motivate businesses to hire locally. Currently the Beltline has a first source policy that requires businesses receiving money from the TAD to make good faith efforts to hire Beltline residents.<sup>21</sup> Other jurisdictions employ incentives effectively to local employers to spur local hiring and research indicates that it is more effective to incentivize employers to hire locally rather than punishing them for not.<sup>22</sup>

### *Direct Financial Incentives*

In Texas, the Texas Enterprise Zone uses incentives to motivate employers to hire people who live in the Enterprise Zones. Businesses in the enterprise zone can receive a sales tax refund of \$250 to \$500 per employee (up to a specified maximum) for hiring employees who reside in the Enterprise Zone<sup>23</sup>. A similar program could be instituted within the Beltline to incentivize local employers to hire from within the Beltline. We would like to note that although direct financial incentives would likely be most effective, they can be extremely expensive, hard to monitor, and complicated. Thus, the ABP should only move forward with such incentives if it can secure funding and get the appropriate political backing.

### *Auxiliary Incentives*

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<sup>21</sup> “FAQ and FSEA for Website - community benefits.pdf,” n.d., <http://www.beltline.org/Portals/26/PDF/FAQ%20and%20FSEA%20for%20Website%20-%20community%20benefits.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Persky and Daniel Felsenstein, “Restricting access in a job chains model of local employment creation,” *The Annals of Regional Science* 40, no. 2 (3, 2006): 423-435.

<sup>23</sup> “EZ\_Project.pdf,” n.d.

Incentivizing employers to hire locally can provide benefits to both the employer and employee. Hiring and training new employees can be exceedingly expensive for employers thus finding ways to retain skilled employees provides significant benefits. Studies indicate that employees see location of the company in relation to their household as one of the most important reasons for choosing their current employer.<sup>24</sup> In one study two-thirds of the respondents indicated that a short commute was extremely important to them in finding a position.<sup>25</sup> And other studies indicate that many employees have indicated that they have considered leaving their jobs because of their long commutes.<sup>26</sup> Given the expense of hiring and training new employees Beltline business owners could benefit from hiring locally especially if they can retain employees who have commutes that are less than the Atlanta average of 30 minutes.<sup>27</sup>

Private businesses are most concerned with improving their bottom line therefore ABP should consider supplementing the auxiliary incentives with subsidized fee structure for the targeted industries or employers that are cash strapped however will benefit the most from these services. Based on our research of other similar central sourcing solution models, we believe that the following services could be offered by ABLiSS:

- Free or low-cost resume and job postings for residents and employers
  - A fee structure that is below what it costs an employer to post on larger job websites (\$150 and above).
  - Provide an add-on service to screen applicants based on pre-determined criteria. This additional service would save money and time for small companies currently using Craigslist and other free websites.
  - Given that a large number of small employers currently hire based on referrals, ABLiSS would have social media exposure on LinkedIn and Facebook to make the referral process more effective and reach a broader audience.
- Library of resources regarding industry and employment best practices and industry white papers
  - Studies on emerging job sectors, technologies, and how to local training offered within those arenas.
  - HR best practices sourced from the top recruiting agencies
  - Community economic data to assist businesses tailor their products and services to the needs of local residents.

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<sup>24</sup> S. Ramlall, "Organizational Application Managing Employee Retention as a Strategy for Increasing Organizational Competitiveness," *Applied HRM Research* 8, no. 2 (2003): 63–72.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "Thirty-Three Percent of U.S. Employees Consider Quitting Jobs Due to Hour-Plus Commutes | Business Wire," n.d., [http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/permalink/?ndmViewId=news\\_view&newsId=20100316005624&newsLang=en](http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/permalink/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20100316005624&newsLang=en).

<sup>27</sup> "Beltline\_Statistics 2.pdf," n.d.

- A calendar of Atlanta BeltLine events that are specifically of interest to Beltline employers and residents
  - Provide link to local festivals, new business openings, etc. for Beltline employers and residents to participate.
- A leading-edge “Beltline Business Directory”
  - A listing of all businesses along the Beltline categorized by industry.
  - Virtual map of businesses throughout the community
  - Allow companies to post small descriptions of business so that residents can seek out services in their neighborhood. This would be especially helpful for businesses that are not in the retail space, i.e. advertising agencies, PR firms, Doctor offices, etc.
- An accompanying physical space for partnerships to promote community-building activities and to share information
  - Although we see ABLiSS primarily as a web-based model, we believe a physical presence would provide instantaneous marketing for Beltline. An ideal location could be Old Fourth Ward by City Hall East or by Piedmont Park. Both locations have tremendous foot and vehicle traffic.
- Outsourced HR Services
  - Services would include
    - employee pre-screening
    - payroll administration
    - training seminars
  - This would be a product offering for the smaller and mid-size firms who do not have a form HR function. Should provide this service once ABLiSS is well known throughout the Beltline community and is financially stable because this would require hiring additional staff and development of a large IT infrastructure which will be very costly.

### *Market Segmentation:*

Given what the ABLiSS offering will look like, we want to define the employer and job function and based on the definitions, we want to highlight the specific employer market that Atlanta BeltLine Partnership should go after.

### Large Size Business

- Employee size – 100 plus employees
- Very organized corporate structure (large HR, marketing, finance, etc.)
- Existing corporate policies prevent managers from participating in local hiring projects.

- Hiring needs include both high and low level jobs. Have access to multiple recruiting sources (i.e. universities, national recruiting websites, recruiters, advanced internal career website)
- Large HR and marketing budgets
- Awareness of employer presence throughout Beltline community at large

#### Medium Size Business

- Employee size –20 – 100 employees
- Partially organized corporate structure.
- Hiring needs include both high and low level jobs.
- Small to mid size HR and marketing functions
- Lack of extensive employer presence throughout the Beltline community

#### Small Size Business

- Employee size – fewer than 20 employees<sup>1</sup>
- Lack of centralization of HR and marketing functions
- Lack of bureaucracy which can lead to quicker decisions by management
- Smaller budget for HR and marketing function
- Hiring needs include both high and low level jobs however lack exposure to larger recruiting resources thus recruiting can be rather inefficient (Craigslist, word of mouth, costly recruiting services).
- Employer presence can be limited to local neighborhood, potentially lack of awareness in other neighborhoods throughout Beltline community.

#### High Level Job Function:

- Qualifications can include, but not limited to:
  - Higher education
  - Work experience
  - Excellent reputation (no criminal record, good references, etc.)
- Smaller number of qualified applicants
- Require structured and thorough interview process
- Low turnover
- Higher compensation

#### Lower Level Job Function:

- Qualifications can include but not limited to:
  - High school/GED or technical college
  - Decent reputation (pass drug test, no serious criminal offenses, presentable, trust-worthy)
- Large number of applicants
- High turnover
- Lower compensation
- Interview process can be structured or unstructured, depends on employer.

Given the different characteristics for the businesses and job functions, it is important for ABP to think about the target employers and/or precise offerings for the targeted employers.

Larger Employers:

It can be argued that larger employers will not derive significant value in ABLiSS because they have a strong internal HR function to source employees, especially for higher end jobs. However, larger corporations could get some value in linking their internal job posting to the ABLiSS webpage because at a minimal fee it will give the company access to a large group of local job candidates and access to auxiliary benefits for being associated with Atlanta BeltLine. That being said, ABP should not expend substantial resources in getting the backing of larger corporations as the value proposition for them is minimal at best.

Medium and Small Employers:

Given the characteristics of smaller and mid-size businesses located throughout Atlanta, we believe that the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership should really focus on these businesses for their lower level jobs and in some cases high end jobs. ABLiSS provides the ideal value proposition for these employers because they not only provide an efficient sourcing mechanism but give them the ability to really market the firm in local neighborhoods. Furthermore, these businesses will not likely be bound by the corporate red tape that many of the larger organizations face and as such want to participate in Beltline programs at a higher level.

#### *Formation of ABLiSS*

ABLiSS will need support from public and private entities at inception to fund the development of a web based process and hire a small team to manage the process. We realize that this will be a daunting task given that Beltline is already working with a tight budget. Nonetheless, in order to get buy in from the private community, the public sector will have to fund the initial formation. Some public and non-profit sources of funds could be Atlanta Development Authority or United Way, who recently received funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to stimulate job growth. Once ABP can secure some seed money for ABLiSS and its staff, it will have much needed momentum to get the buy in from private

organizations like Atlanta BeltLine Chamber of Commerce or Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

The development of an online portal that can capture all the moving pieces within the ABLISS process will not be an easy feat. There is however a variety of resources that ABP can look into and we will lay out three separate options that we think would be most effective.

1. **Outsourcing website function:** This would entail outsourcing the entire web function to an organization like Regionalhelpwanted.com. This organization would essentially put up the website with ABP's specifications and would manage the site, billing, collections, and everything else that comes along with the running an online job portal. This is the most hands off approach for ABP but at the same time could be costly and ineffective because there is a lack of control on how to promote the Beltline jobs.
2. **Partnership with an online vendor:** Here ABP could seek a partnership with a company like Beyond.com that is tailored for established online communities like beltline.org that can leverage its existing website traffic. Beyond.com will create the niche job board on the existing webpage with a "turn-key" model that minimizes the pain of having to develop a website from scratch. Beyond.com also offers other software solutions that would allow employers to filter resume by candidate data and go after the "cream of the crop".
3. **In-house production of website:** This would entail developing the entire website from scratch. This could be very costly but would give ABP complete control of the content of the website. They could leverage developers of Beltline.org in order to create the career website. This would also likely entail thorough sourcing process for a qualified Web design team that can create a multi-faceted website. Also, this would likely require minimal maintenance support staff to ensure the website is functioning properly.

All of the aforementioned options are noteworthy and should be given strong consideration. Nonetheless, ABP should take the time to research each avenue and weigh the pros and cons and try to leverage any existing capabilities if possible. Our initial suggestion would be that ABP consider partnering with a website like Beyond.com because it can leverage the web traffic coming through Beltline.org while allowing it to customize the features of the ABLISS page.

## **CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS**

Following up on the recommendations, there are several "Next Steps" that should be investigated.

First, how will these ideas be implemented and who will own it? Is this something that will be run out of the Beltline partnership, another entity or split between groups? Are the skills

necessary to implement the recommendations available in house, or is it something that needs to be outsourced to other organizations?

Second, there needs to be a good survey of the Atlanta BeltLine landscape to understand all the resources that are available? Without an audit of all the groups that may be available to participate it will be difficult to create a resource integrating opportunities and creating links between organizations.

Finally, how will these ideas be funded? Can they be funded by the city, the Atlanta BeltLine Chamber of Commerce, Association Fees or tax dollars? In order to move forward funding mechanism will need to be put into place to fund any projects that are undertaken.

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## Appendix

### Exhibit 1:

#### Survey Questionnaire for Atlanta BeltLine Volunteers

Business Name:

Respondent Name:

Date:

Time:

Introduction:

“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer working on a project with Emory Business School. We are trying to identify ways to make it easier for employers like you to find qualified employees who live near your business so that people do not need to drive as far to get to work. Could you spare a minute or two to answer a few short questions for me?”

If respondent answers YES → Say “Thank you” and continue below.

If respondent answers NO → Ask “Is there a time we can set up for me to call you back and we can talk then?”  
Set up time and agree to call back.

“Thank you very much for your time. Your answers to these few questions will really help.”

1. *Can you please tell me what your company does? How many employees do you have?*
2. *When you are hiring, how do you find potential employees? (i.e. what is your hiring process?)*
3. *Do you take any steps to find employees who live near your business? Why or why not? If you do take steps, what are they? If you are not, what would it take for you to start?*
4. *Would you say that a majority of the employees at your company live nearby or far away – within approximately 3 to 5 miles or less? What would you say is the average commute time for an employee?*
5. *Would you say that commute time and/or the distance that an employee lives from the office affects your company’s ability to attract and keep good employees?*
6. *What other challenges at times, have stood in the way of your company attracting and keeping good employees?*
7. *Have you heard of the Atlanta BeltLine?*

*If respondent answers NO → go to question #9 below*

*If respondent answers YES → go to question #8 below*

8. *How do you envision it impacting your business?*
9. *Would you be willing to participate in future efforts to help you find qualified employees who live near your business?*

Thank you for your time.