



Atlanta  
BeltLine  
Partnership

## **Atlanta BeltLine Adopter's Guide**

### **About the Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine Program**

Through a partnership between Park Pride, the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABP), and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. (ABI), the Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine program provides an opportunity for groups to play a direct role in maintaining the Atlanta BeltLine trail and parks along the BeltLine.

### **In this Adopter's Guide**

This guide describes your responsibilities and expectations of the program. Please read it before your first work day and refer to it as needed. Questions? Contact [volunteer@atlblp.org](mailto:volunteer@atlblp.org).

### **Adopter Group Composition**

- Each group should consist of at least 10 volunteers to ensure an adequate workforce when you sign up; however, not everyone who initially signs up has to be present at every given volunteer day.
- Each group should designate a primary and secondary person (if applicable) to be group leaders and contacts for the ABP. Please notify ABP if this information changes.
- Each segment can be adopted by two separate groups who should coordinate and work together to keep the site maintained.

### **Orientation and Training**

Atlanta BeltLine Partnership is able to host an orientation session on the group's adopted segment prior to their first work day upon request. The orientation will cover expectations, safety, invasive plant removal, logistical issues, and address questions. The group leader is required to attend and additional volunteers from the group are welcome to attend.

### **Communication**

- Groups should complete a Workday Proposal at least 2-4 weeks before each work day where assistance is desired so we may facilitate planning and obtaining tools.
- Groups should complete a Work Day Report (online) within 1 week after each work day.

### **Scope of Work**

ABP and ABI greatly value your commitment to help make the long-term vision of the Atlanta BeltLine a reality. To stay consistent in supporting this vision, please conduct only those activities outlined in this guide unless ABP and ABI grant explicit approval.

## **Hiring Contractors**

Groups may hire bonded, licensed professional contractors to perform adoption duties. The group must notify ABP of the name of contractor and specific work to be performed at least 30 days in advance.

## **On-Site Responsibilities**

There are currently four general categories of work that adopter groups perform. Each segment of the Atlanta BeltLine is unique, and some will require more work in certain categories than others:

### **1. Trash and waste removal**

Volunteer help in removing trash and debris is crucial to the Atlanta BeltLine. Your group is responsible for keeping your segment free of debris and litter on an on-going basis, so be prepared to pick up trash on each work day. Some segments may require larger-scale debris removal as well as regular trash pickup.

- For small scale trash pickups, you may leave 3 or less bags in or near trash cans along the BeltLine. As another option, you can remove what you collect and dispose of it at your own home or business. Finally, you can also seek permission from businesses along your segment and see if they will allow you to drop off collected trash in their dumpster.
- For larger-scale debris removal, contact ABP to assist with delivery of a dumpster to your segment at least 4 weeks in advance; otherwise, consolidate the items strategically (such as at the entrance of your segment) to make pickup more feasible for our partnering agencies.
- Never touch or move hazardous materials, such as hypodermic needles. Notify ABP if you find hazardous materials along your segment.

### **2. Weed and invasive plant removal**

Invasive species are a threat to Georgia's natural habitat – including the land that comprises the Atlanta BeltLine corridor. Removal of these aggressive plants reduces their negative impact. Invasive plants reproduce rapidly, choking out native plants and upsetting the natural ecology. Their removal should be ongoing, since invasive species are not easy to eradicate; however, with each work day, the task should get easier and more successful. To identify invasive plants, visit the Resources tab on the Adopt-the-BeltLine webpage.

### **3. Cleaning signs and site fixtures**

Your group is responsible for cleaning and maintaining signs, benches, and other elements installed on your segment. Wipe down each fixture with disinfectant and use graffiti remover where necessary (available for both porous and non-porous surfaces in ABP's clean-up kits). Please contact ABP with any questions or concerns.

### **4. Reporting maintenance concerns, vandalism, or other suspicious activities**

The Atlanta BeltLine is intended to be a welcoming, vibrant, safe public greenspace. Report maintenance concerns, safety issues, and evidence of vandalism or other crime immediately and note them in your Workday Report. Please include photos if possible. In the case of an immediate threat, call 911.

### **Additional Projects**

Any project not listed above will need to be approved in advance by ABP.

### **Safety**

- Get to know your segment and possible hazards. Never put volunteers into a situation that is unsafe or makes them uncomfortable. Here are a few guidelines for volunteers to follow:
- Do not work alone. Always bring a buddy with you when working or walking along your segment.
- Learn to identify poison ivy and make sure every volunteer can recognize it and avoid it.
- Know the names of streets that connect to your segment so you can direct first responders in case of an emergency.
- The project leader will determine if a project will proceed in the event of rain. If there is lightning, the project must be canceled.
- Stay out of the trail right-of-way whenever possible to avoid collision with cyclists, pedestrians, etc.

## **Suggestions of What to Bring to a Work Day**

- Attire
  - Wear closed-toe shoes
  - Pants and long sleeves are recommended to avoid contact with poison ivy and limit scratches from removing invasive plants and protecting from sunburn and bug bites
  - Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Supplies
  - Reusable water bottles (group leader should bring a water cooler to refill personal water bottles)
  - Volunteers should wear gloves -- either their own, those from the ABP's clean-up kits, or rented from Atlanta ToolBank.
  - Volunteers are also encouraged to bring sunscreen and bug spray.
  - Leaders are expected to bring a First Aid Kit and have it on site during all projects.

## **Before the Work Day**

Get to know your segment and potential hazards your volunteer group may face. Be aware of poison ivy, bee and wasp nests, steep slopes, boggy areas, etc. Ensure that each volunteer is aware of hazards. ABP can help determine appropriate projects and ensure you get appropriate tools.

- Volunteers should never feel uncomfortable with their project duties. If a volunteer has environmental allergies (i.e. bee stings) this may not be the best volunteer opportunity for them.
- Each volunteer needs to sign a Liability Waiver before participating on a work day.
- Make sure that each volunteer knows how to properly use work day tools.

## **Site-Specific Work Day Safety Hazards**

- Steep drop-offs can be hidden by brush and overgrowth – make sure every volunteer knows where they are.
- Overhanging branches and vines. Instruct volunteers not to pull on vines or branches above them that may break and fall on them; a vine could be the only thing holding a large dead branch in place.
- For hazardous material such as hypodermic needles, do not risk injury by picking them up. Note their location on the Workday Report Form so they can be removed.

## **Urban Camping and Homelessness**

Some areas along the Atlanta BeltLine are used as dwelling places. ABI works with the Police Department to address this. While on your segment, respect the fact that you may be working in a space that someone considers their home. Do not violate an encampment or move or throw away items that may be someone's personal belongings. Contact ABP if you have questions or concerns regarding this issue.