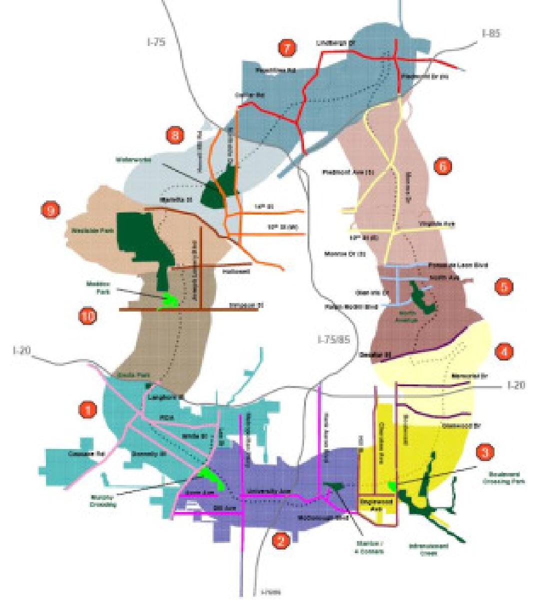

Atlanta BeltLine

Technical Assistance Panel
Community Benefit Principles
Developer Focus Group

July 2010

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About ULI Atlanta
A District Council of the Urban Land Institute

With over 1,000 members throughout the Metropolitan Atlanta area, ULI Atlanta is one of the largest District Councils of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). We bring together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs. We share knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media.

ULI Mission: The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

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About the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

Since 1947, the Urban Land Institute has harnessed the technical expertise of its members to help communities solve difficult land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. ULI Atlanta brought this same model of technical assistance to the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Local ULI members volunteer their time to serve on panels. In return, they are provided with a unique opportunity to share their skills and experience to improve their community.

Through Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs), ULI Atlanta is able to enhance community leadership, clarify community needs and assets, and advance land use policies that expand economic opportunity and maximize market potential.

Robert Newcomer, ULI Atlanta TAPs Committee giving opening remarks.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Panel is also grateful to have the benefit of input from the many stakeholders and residents who attended the session, including Gene Bowens, Bill Seay, Wyman Winston, Melissa Conrad, L. Danielle Carney, Amy Schneggenburger, Amanda Rhein and Nathaniel Smith

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PANEL and PROJECT STAFF

ULI Atlanta would like to thank the panelists, moderators and TAP Committee members for their time, energy and passion for ULI.

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INTRODUCTION

A panel of 10 ULI members volunteered to provide a "developer perspective" to Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI) on 12 proposed **BeltLine Community Benefits Principles**. Robert Newcomer of The Lang Legal Group served as TAP chair and Sarah Kirsch of RCLCO served as TAP moderator for the five-hour discussion on May 7, 2010.

Rukiya Eaddy, External Affairs Manager of Atlanta BeltLine Inc., provided context and background on how the **BeltLine Community Benefits Principles** were developed. The concepts were culled from hundreds of ideas drawn from unfiltered brainstorming sessions held with five **BeltLine Study Groups**. All of the initial ideas were reviewed internally and charted on an extensive matrix to be compared to other initiatives and ideas already in the works.

The final twelve principles emerged as having the highest potential for inclusion in a **Developers' Agreement** for all new projects built within the BeltLine TAD and using tax allocation funds.

Interestingly, each principle was determined to be important to each of the Study Groups and was consistent throughout the BeltLine and not just in certain quadrants.

As representatives from Atlanta's development community, the TAP panel's assignment was to drill down on each principle, acting as skeptics. Through open and frank discussion, the TAP panel was also charged with identifying hurdles to implementation as well as tools and incentives that might facilitate implementation as well as ranking each principle by its degree of difficulty.

All **Community Benefits Principles** were discussed at length before being ranked by the panel.

This report is a summary of the discussion and the conclusions and recommendations of the panel.

BIG IDEAS THAT EMERGED FROM THE PANEL

Pioneers must be rewarded

The panel concluded that first developers in a blighted area should be treated differently. Building the BeltLine will be an evolutionary process, and barriers for pioneer developments must be removed to get the ball rolling. If there are too many barriers and restrictions, development will be delayed for decades.

Improve the public realm first

The panel agreed that building out the public realm must be a high priority. Because pioneer developments will not benefit from the public realm as much as those that follow, the early adopters will need different and better incentives that can then be lessened and even removed for subsequent development projects.

Scoring system

The panel recommended that ABI establish a "scoring system" pursuant to which developers can select among the principles those that are most applicable and appropriate to their particular project in order to achieve the required number of "points."

It is unlikely that any one project can fulfill all of the principles or that the same developer that builds housing will also build industrial projects. Using a scoring system, development projects can be evaluated on the principles that apply to the type of development and other project-specific factors.

Some BeltLine locations have greater needs or higher expectations and more points may be available for developing priority locations. Points can be rated in terms of difficulty or priority, and higher scores may be earned by providing one amenity rated on the difficult list rather than providing two amenities rated on an easier list. For example, if utility lines are buried – an amenity defined by the panel as being in the difficult category for all project types – extra points can be earned. Higher scores may also be awarded to projects that include much-needed essential services like grocery stores and pharmacies instead of a high-end restaurant that may not be considered an essential service for people living in the surrounding neighborhood. Additional points may also be awarded based on the location. For example, a project could earn additional points for providing affordable housing in the Northeast corridor where the need for such housing is great.

Context and clarity

All of the principles are good in theory, yet they must be further defined. The context is extremely important, even within different parts of the BeltLine. What is important in one quadrant may not be as important or a priority in other parts of the BeltLine.

It must be made crystal clear to developers which incentives are required or available in order for them to comply. Although the principles may be widely accepted, the devil is in the details. What will it take to make them work? ABI will need to provide meaningful incentives for achieving these principles.

Market conditions vs. dictating green building

Developers require flexibility to develop what they have determined meets market demand. For example, so long as a project meets the code requirements in the **overlay district**, market demand may not require it to be **LEED certified** and mandating LEED certification for the project might threaten its viability and stall development. The development community must be educated on these principles and encouraged to comply whenever feasible. Setting absolute requirements may slow development. At the same time, sustainability has been identified as one of the BeltLine's signature characteristics.

With respect to green building, the panel agreed that the market is already going in this direction. It's becoming less expensive and easier to build green, and LEED certification is becoming the norm for many types of projects. Voluntary compliance should remain a high priority.

Consider postpone affordable housing in a down economy

Consider relaxing any requirement for affordable housing now. Take a portion of the units, say 20%, and bank that increment to be set aside until the time is right to add those units back into specific projects that can accommodate affordable housing.

DETAILS FROM THE DISCUSSION OF EACH PRINCIPLE, ONE BY ONE:

1. MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

Housing within the BeltLine TAD should be mixed-income and built with the highest standards for quality and sustainability. LEED, EarthCraft and Energy Star certification is desirable whenever possible. A certain number of units should be ADA accessible.

Obstacles:

- The challenge of the BeltLine is that there are few public amenities today. The more amenities, such as streetscapes and parks that ABI can get built now, the sooner private development will follow.
- The NIMBY factor is always an issue with affordable housing even though this principle <u>does</u> have incentive opportunities that others do not.
- The premise is that growth will exceed the TAD's projections. Yet achieving $20 billion worth of development is a huge challenge.
- Additional limitations with affordable housing include
  - Prohibitive condo association fees in addition to a mortgage
  - Usually, only one-bedroom units make economic sense which is a limitation for families
  - Property taxes must be affordable as well

Developers will need financial incentives and flexibility to include mixed-income housing components. Many incentives exist that allow mixed-income housing to occur, making the goal attainable assuming ABI deems it is a priority.

Mixed-income housing should absolutely be built when feasible. Yet we must recognize that the most important aspect of the **BeltLine TAD** is to stimulate investment to generate revenues.

It is also up to the City of Atlanta (COA) to incentivize affordable housing. Since the BeltLine will evolve over 25 years, market conditions will change. There must be flexibility to reflect those changing conditions.

The development community wants to create mixed-income housing, though it is extremely difficult to make the numbers work. However, a large number of mixed-income developments already exist and financial tools and incentives are in place. Examples include Section 8 tax vouchers and low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) which may be available to BeltLine developers. The public and political will must be there as well.

One panelist who builds affordable housing considers it a very important aspect of the BeltLine. However, she believes only a small few will use **Section 8 tax vouchers** because of their prohibitive restrictions.

Another panelist said that's exactly why affordable housing must be a priority with BeltLine leadership because it is so difficult to do. ABI must be flexible on the issue, and it must be a principle that's held across the board.

A broad range of housing types and sizes is recommended for the BeltLine to be the vibrant community we envision.

Beth McMillan, Director of Community Engagement with ABI explained that detached, single-family homes are not encouraged within the BeltLine TAD. A range of 18 to 26 units per acre is being considered based on research shows the level of density required to support transit. Incentives must go to those projects.

Because the cost of land on the BeltLine will continue to rise, meaningful incentives must be offered to make the numbers work. If the BeltLine is willing to invest its own funds to help achieve more mixed-income housing, it could be doable.

LEED certification for residential development is still an unknown. Why require LEED only? Developers need more flexibility. **EarthCraft** and **Energy Star** criteria should also be included. One panelist felt it's more essential to repair infrastructure first.

If BeltLine determines mixed-income housing is an important principle, it is our responsibility to research and learn from other cities and figure out how to make it work. Though difficult, it's up to the BeltLine leadership to make it a reality.

If incentives are uniform, flexible and realistic, affordable housing will be feasible. Some areas of the BeltLine will need a lot more incentives than others. ABI should do a cost benefit analysis on where to offer higher incentives for mixed-income housing based on other infrastructure requirements.

Recent growth in the City of Atlanta's tax digest is based on **low interest rates**, yet that's changing. It was estimated that a 49% increase in the tax digest will be required to achieve the BeltLine's goal of $20 billion worth of investment over 20 years.

A certain number of mixed-income housing units must be wheelchair accessible.

Questions:

- Can each principle be negotiated with a specific community based on their priorities? If so and affordable housing is a top priority, developers can make every attempt to work with that community to make their project address their needs.
- Further clarification is needed on defining mixed-income housing. Is it just apartments, or does it include condos, town houses and single family homes?

2. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Encourage alternatives to surface parking lots such as shared parking decks, hidden decks, and multi-storied decks above and below ground. Provide bicycle racks at all new developments and facilitate pedestrian movement through improved streetscapes, intersections and trails.

Obstacle:

- Without viable transit in place, it's harder to make the case that those residents and retail customers do not need their cars.

It will be critical to encourage COA to **reduce parking ratio requirements** for each development since the BeltLine gives alternatives to driving. Less parking encourages walking, biking and using transit.

The current version of the BeltLine overlay district does not have a lower number of parking spots. New ordinances are needed.

Explore alternatives to surface parking lots. Ideas include creative ways to build shared decks using innovative construction, hidden decks through landscaping and innovative design, as well as multi-storied decks above and below ground. The intent is to discourage flat, open lots and avoid building them just because they're the easiest and cheapest option.

3. ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION and CONNECTIVITY

All development should be pedestrian-friendly and accommodating to all modes of alternative transportation such as bikes, roller blades and wheelchairs. Every effort should be made to extend and connect each new development to the BeltLine's public realm with emphasis on this alternative transportation model. Encourage private developments to connect with each other, further connecting communities to communities.

Obstacles:

- It will be necessary to encourage independent developers to work together to define the parameters and proximities of each development and find the best places to connect them with each other.
- Security concerns must be addressed when opening public access to private developments. In addition, there are security concerns associated with building new projects on previously abandoned properties.

This is an important amenity that developers will want to provide. Connecting their projects to others is a priority from their perspective. It's a relatively easy and very desirable benefit to their project.

Further clarification is needed regarding proximity of adjacent developments. Analyze individual developments to determine how easy it is to connect each one to existing and future developments. Encourage developers to work together on this idea to find the best shared solutions for connecting new developments to each other.

Security concerns must be weighed with increased foot traffic inside and around each development. Open access can feel less secure. Demarcating public and private aspects of each development may be necessary.

If developers build in previously blighted areas, security issues are critical. It is proven that security improves when pedestrian traffic increases. Connecting sidewalks and paths will achieve this.

It was noted how rare it is in the Atlanta region that a group agreed that transportation was a relatively easy issue to deal with!

Questions:

- Is the intent that every development be linked to each other?
- Or should each development be linked to the public realm?
- Who pays for the linkages? Developers will resist those costs. Using public money is a better alternative.

4. GREEN SPACE and ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

All efforts should be made to preserve existing green space and increase the quantity and quality of BeltLine parks. Specific guidelines and practices should be developed to utilize Atlanta's citywide infrastructure of streams and creeks, incorporating them into new developments as green space amenities. (For generations, these assets have been ignored and exploited as dumping grounds).

Obstacles:

- By adding public green space to private developments, security concerns could increase.
- There is a lack of financial incentives to encourage developers to preserve existing green space and go to the added expense of creating it.

In the past, green space was an afterthought. Now developers understand green space sells. Developers will still want to maximize the number of units. By using a different footprint to increase density on one portion of a parcel, a more substantial green space component can be preserved.

Developers who already have a commitment to green building and social responsibility will likely incorporate these principles on their own accord. Developers who do not have a green commitment will not go that extra mile.

Several volunteer organizations are emerging as good models for creating and maintaining green space. Examples include the Piedmont Park Conservancy, South Fork Peachtree Creek Conservancy working near Lindbergh and along the Clifton Corridor, and the Blue Heron Nature Preserve on Roswell Road. Explore and engage this broader umbrella of neighborhood-run groups as a solution for taking over the park maintenance component from a financially strapped COA Parks Department.

Schools have green space that could be opened and enhanced for public use. Perhaps APS can work with volunteer coalitions and be involved in the equation. For example, the Federal Reserve property at Peachtree and 10th Street has become an attractive public green space while in contrast, the Margaret Mitchell House next door has fenced its green space, making it inaccessible.

Consider **transferred development rights** to achieve more green space nearby, eliminating the burden of requiring every new development to provide it.

Consider **conservation easements** for undeveloped wetland, another attractive opportunity for public green space. Requirements are already in place for protecting riparian buffers.

Allow for consolidating several small areas of green space into one, creating a more meaningful amenity. This way, both ABI and developers move toward a shared interest by making green space a priority. This concept is worth exploring further.

One of the panelists develops mixed-use and multi-family housing looked at a BeltLine property at Proctor Creek. His team struggled to find a win-win situation. They explored transferred development rights and were willing to donate land, yet they found no incentives available that gave the developer anything in return. Some sort of compensation would be desirable.

Orient developments to take full advantage of natural features like existing streams and urban forests instead of paving over them or turning a building's back on them. Highlight those natural features as assets for residents and tenants to enjoy.

Create developments with a campus feel using existing streams and wetlands if there's a critical mass to create enough economic strength. There is tremendous potential to enhance each development and provide attractive benefits for users.

Especially for projects fronting the BeltLine, adding green space will increase foot traffic and may increase or decrease security concerns. In principle, providing green space is a good idea yet its value to each development must be taken into account. Properties directly on the BeltLine are similar to beachfront property vs. properties a few streets back.

Questions:

- How much green space will be required for each development?

- Once created, who pays for the maintenance?
- If green space is provided, how does the public gain access to it while maintaining security for residents?
- Can density requirements be established?
- Can developers receive higher density for housing if green space is provided?
- How much and what is the formula?
- Should the formula be based on the size of the development or other factors such as proximity to existing parks?

5. MULTI-USE DEVELOPMENT

Multi-use development should be encouraged wherever possible and special consideration should be given to retaining desirable small businesses and retail establishments. Encourage new ventures currently absent from the community such as educational institutions, social and medical services and nonprofits.

There are two components here:

1. Multi-use development is encouraged, though not required.
2. Retain existing small businesses.

Obstacles:

- In general, Atlanta developers lack creativity and experience in providing a true mixed-use environment, usually blending residential and retail only.
- There is a lack of financial incentives for adding nonprofits and institutional developments to the mix.
- Existing small business owners along the BeltLine need technical assistance and training to stay current and competitive.

The term **multi-use is intentional** instead of mixed-use. Encourage developers to look at models that go beyond simply mixing housing with retail. That's easy. More creativity is called for. Bring in institutional tenants like medical providers, social services providers, nonprofit groups and technical schools. Incentives are needed to locate operations like these, and not just retail.

The intent is to preserve appropriate small businesses and discourage demolition of viable, locally owned operations. Use **micro-enterprise programs** to assist them.

Smaller mom and pop businesses are tougher to finance. Keep the definition broad on how to help them. Building a good number of residential units nearby is a significant help in itself.

Several small businesses will need technical assistance. Many are poorly run, so training is required to get them up to speed on current accounting practices, inventory control and other operational skills to help take them to the next level of growth to handle the increased volume of customers the BeltLine will deliver.

Dying retail is worse than no retail at all.

Perhaps several small businesses can pool resources by sharing a space or sharing common areas to lower their rent. Developers should engage in dialogue with each small business owner to assess their strengths and weaknesses and together find creative ways to keep them open.

Include **light industrial** as another form of multi-use development since many of the existing buildings on the BeltLine were built for this purpose.

Questions:

- What about undesirable small businesses? And there are many. Though the intent is good, criteria must be very specific if we want to retain the right existing businesses. Midtown Alliance had an effective, long-term plan for this issue.
- Can desirable small businesses handle the rent required to stay on the BeltLine? If not, incentives are needed to fill the financial gap to keep them there.

6. BUSINESS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Provide incentives and subsidies to encourage development that will provide unmet community services, especially grocery stores, urban farmers markets and pharmacies. Encourage employment opportunities for all ages and all levels of skills and experience within these new businesses.

Obstacle:

- During the BeltLine's early stages, there will not be enough density to support new grocery stores. People must understand that not every neighborhood can have their own Publix or Kroger.

Locating grocery stores in urban neighborhoods is **an important citywide issue** in Atlanta and therefore incentives should be considered in every neighborhood, not just along the BeltLine. It's an issue for COA's Planning Department and Atlanta Development Authority (ADA). Their involvement will be critical in making it work.

It is very difficult to bring grocery stores into emerging neighborhoods because they operate on strict formulas and will only come in once their criteria are met. Key factors include the number of households nearby as well as the right level of disposable income, traffic counts and crime rates.

However, rigid corporate models for big grocers are beginning to become more flexible. They can adapt to each neighborhood's tastes by varying their products and perhaps downscaling a store's size. ADA needs to engage directly with these corporate models and help them find meaningful variations.

It's unlikely the public sector can get involved with incentives unless they're willing to take a chance on a venture that doesn't make economic sense in the beginning. Special incentives like free rent and even more will be required. However, that was tried with a grocery chain in West End; even free rent did not work. The store closed.

Yet Sembler's Edgewood Retail District on Moreland has been successful because it straddles the right mix of affluent and lower income households, so everyone benefits.
A **farmers market** seems easier to accomplish, especially outdoors. Accelerate the process by researching and learning from existing models for successful farmers markets at Piedmont Park, Chastain Park, Morningside, Sandy Springs and East Atlanta.

Historic West End is now looking for farmers markets, yet the banks can't make sense of having so many vendors paying rent individually.

In areas where no groceries exist, farmers markets can only provide a limited number of products needed.

Other cities in urban areas have tried attracting large grocers and few have worked. In California, moderate-sized grocery stores do seem to be working, yet it has taken strong incentives.

As the economy improves, grocery stores will come. While more incentives for housing exist, there are very few for retail.

Question:

- What are the physical characteristics of potential land parcels for grocery and pharmacy chains? Further study is needed to determine which locations are most conducive.

7. GREEN BUILDING and GREEN JOBS

Increase opportunities for new green jobs, particularly by encouraging all new BeltLine construction to meet sustainability criteria, such as LEED, EarthCraft or Energy Star certification, and incorporate on-site renewable energy technologies whenever feasible. Consider incentives for attaining higher levels of certification such as LEED silver, gold and platinum wherever possible. Provide trash and recycling containers in appropriate places, particularly in public places.

Obstacles:

- Requiring sub-contractors to be green is a management headache. The only benefit to the developer is *if* green sells. This is still to be determined. One panelist is building a LEED silver residential project now to test if the green aspects will increase sales. Another panelist is building an EarthCraft residential product now, yet he is not required to hire green contractors.
- One panelist saw a 20% cost increase on a recent EarthCraft apartment project. It's yet to be determined if tenants will pay the added cost. However, if actual payback results from the energy savings, developers won't need incentives.

Department of Community Affairs and **Federal Home Loan Bank** give incentives for EarthCraft housing. BeltLine officials should engage with these existing federal incentives now being offered.

Further clarification is needed on the phrase "all aspects of the BeltLine" being LEED certified. That is not possible. LEED certification should not be mandated. EarthCraft and Energy Star standards are more doable.

Many panelists agreed that once a project is built to LEED standards, there are no advantages to require BeltLine developments to attain higher levels of LEED certification. That choice must be site-specific. Many factors are considered, like proximity to transit, not simply building materials. With a finite amount of incentives, they may be better used to attract grocers instead of increasing a project's LEED certification from silver to gold or platinum.

Another key factor will be where the market is at the time the shovel goes in the ground. Right now, it's very hard to borrow money for anything.

Recycling containers are easy to achieve. It would be considered a green job to keep them emptied as well as adding those materials to the recycling stream.

Developers can be encouraged to hire green construction crews. By building green, you provide green jobs.

While ABI is experimenting with green jobs training, it was recommended that they work with established educational and technical institutions to broaden the goals for green jobs. It's more valuable to have a legitimate job certification from a reputable technical college than simply attending one or two classes.

ABI and technical schools should have conversations about locating a technology park or training campus right on the BeltLine. That could truly generate jobs and increase demand for housing and grocery stores. It is a myth to think that jobs are created within the community where new construction is happening. Developers are often challenged to find trained, local workers. A good use of ABI's time would be to make qualified workers easily available to BeltLine developers.

Job creation is a necessary piece of the puzzle since that benefit was promised to residents of BeltLine communities from the start. It was one of the reasons the BeltLine received such **strong public buy-in**. It must remain a priority.

Consider every element of the public realm as opportunities for green, sustainable construction beyond just the buildings. Public money spent on infrastructure must be green as well if it will be required of developers.

Property managers need to **educate tenants** on how they can maximize the green elements of their building like understanding energy and water savings, alternative transportation benefits and other aspects of LEED and EarthCraft construction.

The market will dictate what to do. COA already has building permits that incentivize green building techniques. Is green building genuinely a priority for them? Creating more green developments increases the availability so adding green incentives is a good thing.

8. PUBLIC SAFETY

Provide pedestrian and other lighting to promote safety, while preserving the night sky by directing night lighting downward. Whenever possible, incorporate public safety services into any development such as police mini-precincts and allow for designated police parking with the precinct. Encourage planning of all new developments to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles (CPTED).

Obstacle:

- A panelist found that Atlanta's police department (APD) does not have the operating dollars it takes to open a **mini-precinct**. She has offered them space several times in her developments. If APD is unable to open a mini-precinct, it's out of a developer's control.

However, this is an achievable, forward-thinking principle. In addition to police mini-precincts, just providing **police parking** within any development will give a sense of security nearby.

CPTED principles are tried and true design standards that should be encouraged. Over time, they have proven to increase safety. One of them is avoiding gated communities, yet some developers continue to mandate gates.

Given the flavor of the BeltLine's public realm, CPTED principles are a good way to encourage a sense of security for pedestrians and residents.

However, one panelist was recently required to spend $300,000 on increased security for one of their non-gated communities. Even though CPTED principles were used there, a gate would have been much less expensive.

Another panelist believes CPTED principles foster good quality design, and must be considered. The very first pioneer development is often vandalized. The fifth and seventh ones are not.

The BeltLine community of Reynoldstown has two neighboring projects of lofts and town homes; one project is gated and the other is not gated. Community residents have found that crime occurrences are equal in both projects. The gated homes provide a false sense of increased security. The advantage with non-gated communities is that residents get to know their neighbors and are more engaged in looking out for each other - an effective crime deterrent

Panelists generally agreed that Atlanta's development community does not understand CPTED. ABI has an excellent opportunity for the BeltLine to lead the way and educate developers on their long-term benefits.

9. NEIGHBORHOOD, CIVIC LIFE and PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES

Whenever possible, encourage developments of a particular size and type to provide public gathering places, large and small and make meeting space available to neighborhood and civic organizations. Priority should be given to adaptive reuse of existing structures already identified as having historic merit.

Obstacles:

- Historic restoration is much more expensive than new construction.
- While historic buildings bring character and a sense of place that's necessary to the BeltLine's success, they are often poorly suited for contemporary uses such as community centers. Several historic elements may have to be lost when renovating and retrofitting historic structures for future generations.
- Ultimately, condo associations will determine how their spaces are used, even if the developer reserves public gathering space in the short-term.

In order to provide meeting rooms for neighborhood groups and civic associations – for free or at a reduced rent – the development must be large and dense enough to make the concept work. Size cannot be the only factor. The type of building is important and specific criteria must be established.

Whenever possible, preserve historic properties. For example, preserving and retrofitting an old church as a community center could build partnerships with the neighborhood.

The redevelopment of the Scottish Rite Hospital in Oakhurst was mentioned. The developer agreed to dedicate one quarter of the space for $10 a year as a community center. While the center has been a tremendous asset to the neighborhood, it remains a huge strain on the project's economic feasibility.

In some cases, it's too expensive to retrofit historic buildings, yet the spirit of that building can be preserved in a new building in several ways. It's the non-designated historic structures that require more thought.

Several buildings on the BeltLine have historic significance. Many speak to Atlanta's history as a railroad center. Historic preservation is an important concept to encourage.

It's also critical that development along the BeltLine does not all look the same. Historic buildings bring character and a sense of place that's necessary to the BeltLine's success.
Work with developers who have expertise in renovating historic buildings.

However, ABI must be selective in deciding which old buildings to save as the premise of the **TAD is based on an increased tax digest**. Too many rehabs won't get you there.

In condo projects, the owners own all of the space. Even if the developer writes something into their covenants such as making meeting space available to the community, it can be changed by the residents two years later.

Community space can be flexible, not dedicated to just one group. Through scheduling, one place can be reserved by many groups in the same neighborhood.

Studioplex in the Old Fourth Ward had a clear goal up front that the project would be an integral part of the community. Their active community space is used constantly. The mixed-use facility has 150 residential units in addition to several small businesses. Everyone benefits.

The redevelopment of City Hall East is another good example of an excellent opportunity to take full advantage of the larger public green space across the street at North Avenue Park now being built on the BeltLine. By reorienting the massive building to face the new park, City Hall East developers maximize that amenity and can complement it with a smaller public gathering space such as a plaza or additional seating.

The term "public gathering space" must be defined more precisely. Is a meeting room in a community center considered public space?

Look to the **New Urbanist** language and principles that already exist. A gathering space can be a small pocket adjacent to a sidewalk or BeltLine station, not necessarily a large plaza with stages for performances. A good mix of large and small gathering places is desirable.

Questions:

- How much BeltLine land will be reserved for public use?
- Does COA have an overlay zone with formulas that serve nearby populations based on proximity to large regional parks? If a project is within easy walking distance of Piedmont or Grant Park, should that developer be required to provide additional public green spaces?
- Should ABI provide additional funds for public gathering spaces like an amphitheater with easy public access?
- While developers should be encouraged to be sensitive to adding such amenities, it will depend on location. Should properties adjacent to parks be encouraged first? Or is it more important to add public gathering spaces on properties further from other parks?
- Should locations directly on the BeltLine be the first priorities?
- If one community space is confirmed, are two, three or four community spaces also needed?
- How do you determine the formula?

10. TECHNOLOGY

In an effort to bridge the digital divide, access to current technology should be encouraged in new multi-family residential developments such as high-speed internet, Wi-Fi access and other technological advancements as they become prevalent over time.

Obstacles:

- Technology constantly changes.
- While there may be strong market demand for updated technology capabilities in affluent residential development, it may not be economically feasible to provide it as a standard amenity in every BeltLine project.

Developments take years. Technology changes in days. Amenities like Wi-Fi and high speed cable will likely be ancient history over the 25-year lifespan of building the BeltLine.

It is already becoming standard to provide business centers with Wi-Fi and high speed internet in residential developments. ABI must clarify if this requirement applies to owners only or renters as well. Perhaps a nearby coffee shop is a better place for shared access to high-tech facilities.

Even though the residential market dictates this amenity now in more affluent parts of Atlanta, that may not be the case for neighborhoods along the BeltLine. The intent of this principle is to bridge that digital divide within the City of Atlanta. It's important to address the disparity, especially for children.

11. APPEARANCE and UTILITIES

All development should be encouraged to bury utilities underground and facilitate additional beautification measures throughout the BeltLine corridor with an emphasis on litter control and removal.

Obstacle:

- It is economically prohibitive to require that utilities be buried BeltLine-wide. While there may be market demand for this amenity in limited instances, without significant subsidies, it is not feasible to assign this cost to developers.

Though everyone wants to see buried utilities, feedback was unanimous that burying utilities throughout the BeltLine is not feasible. Incentives can never be advantageous enough to motivate a developer to pay for it. The utility companies will not take responsibility or make concessions to cooperate. The issue is best handled in an overlay district, master plan and corridor design guidelines.

Though the concept is great in principle, burying utility lines still adds tremendous costs for private developers to provide this public sector benefit. One panelist's company recently paid $300,000 to bury utility wires for just one block, including incentives.

In a situation where a five-story condo building has utility wires blocking the views of a few units, the developer will bury the lines to sell those units.

When economic markets are strong, this is more achievable. In todays down market, it's less likely. Experience shows that utility companies will not bear the cost, and insist on being paid up front even if the developer is willing to provide the amenity.

PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT

PANELIST CONTACT INFORMATION

Sarah Kirsch
RCLCO

Sarah Kirsch is a Senior Principal based in the Atlanta office of RCLCO. Her areas of specialization include urban infill, urban and suburban revitalization, resort and second-home communities, mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, affordable housing, and military housing

Sarah joined RCLCO after a brief stint with a start-up technology firm. She has developed her career with the firm, starting as an Associate and developing into a Project Director. Over the last eleven years, she has had the pleasure of working on a range of private- and public-sector engagements throughout the Southeast. She analyzed the feasibility of development in four of Atlanta's tax allocation districts, including the initial feasibility analysis of the proposed Beltline; community revitalization plans for strip retail corridors and downtowns; and pre-development feasibility analyses of multiple second-home and resort locations.

Sarah earned her Bachelor's in Public Policy from Duke University's Terry Sanford School of Public Policy in Durham, North Carolina. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and co-chairs the Technical Advisory Panels committee for the Atlanta District Council.

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Robert C. Newcomer's legal practice is a mix of business and complex commercial litigation and business law. He represents clients in mediation, arbitration and litigation in state and federal courts and before regulatory authorities and he counsels clients on general business, real estate and environmental law matters.

Mr. Newcomer is a LEED AP and a member of the Sustainable Building Taskforce for Sustainable Atlanta. He serves on ULI Atlanta District Council's Management Committee and Advisory Board and as Co-Chair of its Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Committee. Mr. Newcomer also serves on several non-profit boards, including the Green Chamber of the South, whose mission is to promote sustainable business practices, and eduKALB, whose mission is to improve DeKalb County school board performance through civic engagement, candidate endorsement and board training. He is a member of U.S. Green Building Council (Georgia Chapter) and the Atlanta Bar Association (Environmental & Toxic Tort (past chair), Real Estate and Litigation sections) and the State Bar of Georgia. Mr. Newcomer graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor Degree in Political Science from the University of Missouri at St. Louis in 1992 and he graduated cum laude from Duke University School of Law and received his Masters in Environmental Management from Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment in 1996.

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Derrick Brown is a Group Vice President with SunTrust Community Capital. STCC provides debt and equity solutions for affordable and mixed-income housing and community redevelopment projects throughout the southeast. Mr. Brown manages the group's full range of real estate lending activity.

He joined SunTrust Bank in 1997. Prior to that Mr. Brown worked in Washington D.C. supporting community and economic development policies, including work with the Council of Development Finance Agencies and the Association of Governmental Leasing and Finance. Mr. Brown is a 1992 graduate of The George Washington University and received his MBA from Georgia State University in 2000.

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Thurston joined Norsouth in 2008 as Vice President, Finance. He leads the firm's equity and debt financing efforts for all new and existing development projects, and assists the principals in the pursuit of new financial partnerships and development opportunities.

Thurston has an extensive background in mixed-income and multi-family housing development. For the past two years, he served as Vice President of the Atlanta office of Bank of America Community Development Corporation, the leading bank-owned real estate development company in the U.S. He also served as a Senior Development Manager for Progressive Redevelopment, Inc. (PRI), a leading non-profit affordable housing developer in Georgia, where he was responsible for over $70 million of development.

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Ms. Edwards serves as Executive Vice President of The Integral Group LLC, and handles retail, office, mixed-use and high density residential development. Ms. Edwards provides the leadership for acquisition, design, sales and construction of Integral Development LLC's projects. In a previous tenure as Principal of Integral's Affordable Housing Program, Ms Edwards structured and implemented Urban Revitalization projects and developed strong relationships with institutional debt and equity providers and national private equity funds. Ms. Edwards has over 25 years of experience in construction and development of multi-family and single-family communities and has financed real estate development using traditional equity; taxable and tax- exempt bond financing; conventional and federally insured mortgage debt.

Ms. Edwards received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Alabama, Birmingham and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

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Charles E. Feder is an AV-rated attorney with a broad background in commercial real estate, business acquisition and economic development.

He has worked with private developers, governments and nonprofits as general counsel, corporate secretary, development director, board member, advisor and consultant. Prior to entering the law, he was also an urban planner, college professor and director of college urban studies programs. His work as an attorney has focused on acquisition and development of real estate and businesses, including multi-family housing, shopping centers, automobile dealerships and restaurants, employing a wide range of public and private financing tools. His clients have included banks, developers, builders, manufacturers, retailers, economic development agencies, non-profit corporations, municipal governments, commercial lenders and professional practices.

Mr. Feder served as an expert consultant for Rebuilding after Katrina and Rita, Book II: "An Assessment of How H.R. 4100, "The Louisiana Recovery Corporation Act," Accords With Economic, Legal, and Political Factors, a report for Greater New Orleans, Inc./Baton Rouge Area Foundation by Gerson Lehrman Group, April 12, 2006.

Mr. Feder is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, State Bar of Michigan, Atlanta Bar Association, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Edrick Harris

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Mr. Harris has more than 8 years experience in project management and real estate development. Prior to joining Russell New Urban Development, he was the zoning administrator for the Planning and Zoning Department for the City of Kennesaw, Georgia. As Senior Development Manager, Mr. Harris is responsible for reviewing sites for potential development, performing preliminary land use and financial analysis to determine site development potential, overseeing the entitlement process, and managing multiple projects through construction completion. He is a graduate of Southern Polytechnic State University with a B.S. in Real Estate Development and received a Masters Degree in City Planning with a land development specialization from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the American Planning Association.

Natallie Keiser

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Natallie Keiser has 20 years of experience combating poverty and creating opportunities for individuals and families. For the past 5 years, Ms. Keiser has managed the staff and business lines of Resources for Residents and Communities (formerly Reynoldstown Revitalization Corp.), as the Chief of Staff. Resources for Residents and Communities (RRC) is a nationally respected non-profit community development corporation based in metro Atlanta. Ms. Keiser oversaw the start-up of RRC's HomeOwnership Center and she plays a key role on RRC's housing development team.

Prior to her role at RRC, Ms. Keiser served as a Senior Manager at the Association for Enterprise Opportunity where she conducted project management for national microenterprise development work including such projects as the Prudential Young Entrepreneurs Program, the Rural Microenterprise Learning Clusters project, the Domestic Violence initiative, and the Buy Microenterprise Campaign. Previously, she was responsible for the United Way of Metro Atlanta's strategy in microenterprise and workforce development. There she assisted with founding a state microenterprise association, designed an Individual Development Account collaborative, organized a capacity building initiative for job training programs, and facilitated a Latino family child care collaborative. Her prior experience included work with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, with a New Orleans transitional housing program, and with the International Fourth World Movement in several countries.

Ms. Keiser has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Chicago. Ms. Keiser is a resident of Reynoldstown, Atlanta and is an active member of the Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League. She has held numerous Board roles, including current roles with Progressive Redevelopment, Inc and the Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative.

Gary Mongeon

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Gary L. Mongeon has participated in the planning and execution of a diverse range of real estate developments over a 30-year career, both as a consultant and implementer. Gary joined BAG in 2007 and has been involved in a wide range of major assignments including the Peachtree Corridor Streetcar, the reuse of Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem and a series of assignments for the Jekyll Island Authority. Gary's expertise includes market and demographic analysis, pro forma and financial modeling, economic development and assessing the economic impacts of projects and programs.

Prior to joining Bleakly Advisory Group, Gary worked for three years as the head of Marietta's redevelopment corporation, where he successfully implemented redevelopment plans and secured tax increment financing for residential and commercial revitalization projects. He has also worked for nearly 20 years as a private development consultant, managing approximately 200 assignments in locations throughout the Eastern US.

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Tayani Suma is the Director of Housing Development for the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. ANDP's mission is to promote and create mixed income communities through direct development, lending, policy research and advocacy that result in the equitable distribution of affordable housing throughout the metropolitan Atlanta region. Ms. Suma and ANDP's Housing Development staff handle all real estate development and asset management activities for the company.

Ms. Suma is a seasoned community development professional with over eighteen years of experience in real estate and economic development in disinvested communities. She has worked with various property types and many financing sources, including historic and low income housing tax credits, taxable and tax-exempt bond financing, conventional debt and equity, Neighborhood Stabilization Program and other federal funding, as well as assorted grant and subsidy programs.

Prior to joining ANDP, Ms. Suma operated her own small business. As President of Mission Redevelopment, she provided a variety of real estate services in support of the industry: organizational assessments; review, ranking, and processing loan and grant requests; procurement services; program design for public agencies; and real estate development support services for both the government and private sectors.

In her previous capacity as Vice President at a private, for-profit Atlanta-based development and construction company she was responsible for mixed income apartment redevelopment, including HOPE VI funding through HUD. In this role she was also the primary manager operating under a contract with a local housing authority. Tasks included representing the authority in its negotiation with private real estate development partners, and execution of the pre-development, financing, and construction activities that followed.

Prior to this, Ms. Suma was Vice President and director of real estate for a bank-affiliated community development corporation in Chicago where she was responsible for executing a wide variety of development projects including commercial re-use, multi-family rehabilitation, single family in-fill, and small-office build-out.

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Mtamanika Youngblood is a nationally recognized leader in community building and urban revitalization. Her work as an advocate for mixed-income housing development, historic preservation, and sustainable practices are distinguished by an emphasis on human development, economic diversity, and non-displacement of existing residents. Ms. Youngblood is currently the President & CEO of Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc. (SNDSI), a non-profit development corporation that emerged from her leadership of neighborhood transformation efforts at the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site. She has an extensive record of service with community-serving institutions, including founding and serving as immediate past president of the Center for Working Families, Inc; Senior Vice President for Community Impact at United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta; and Chair of the Board and past President of the Historic District Development Corporation. Additionally, Ms. Youngblood is Vice Chair of the Board for Community Outreach for the BeltLine Partnership and Vice Chair of the Board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Ms. Youngblood has been widely acknowledged for her work, including awards from the National Neighborhood Coalition, The Atlanta Urban Design Commission, and the Georgia Association of the American Institute of Architects. She earned a BA from New York University and an MBA from Atlanta University and has fellowships from Harvard University, the Urban Land Institute and the Fannie Mae Foundation.

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