

ATLANTA BELTLINE, INC.

BeltLine Infrastructure Sustainability

Best Practices in Trail Maintenance Funding

ULI Atlanta Regional Leadership Program: Infrastructure Team

2010

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Executive Summary

The Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) has the extraordinary potential to positively transform the City of Atlanta. It is one of the most comprehensive economic development efforts ever undertaken in the City of Atlanta and the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment currently underway in the U.S. The BeltLine will combine green space, trails, transit, and new development along 22 miles of historic rail segments that encircle the urban core and connect neighborhoods.

Over the past 20 years, metro Atlanta's growth has occurred in widely spread and disconnected pockets of development which have strained the region's quality of life and economic growth. By attracting and organizing some of the region's future growth around parks, transit, and trails, the BeltLine will help change the pattern of regional sprawl in the coming decades and lead to a vibrant and livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life.

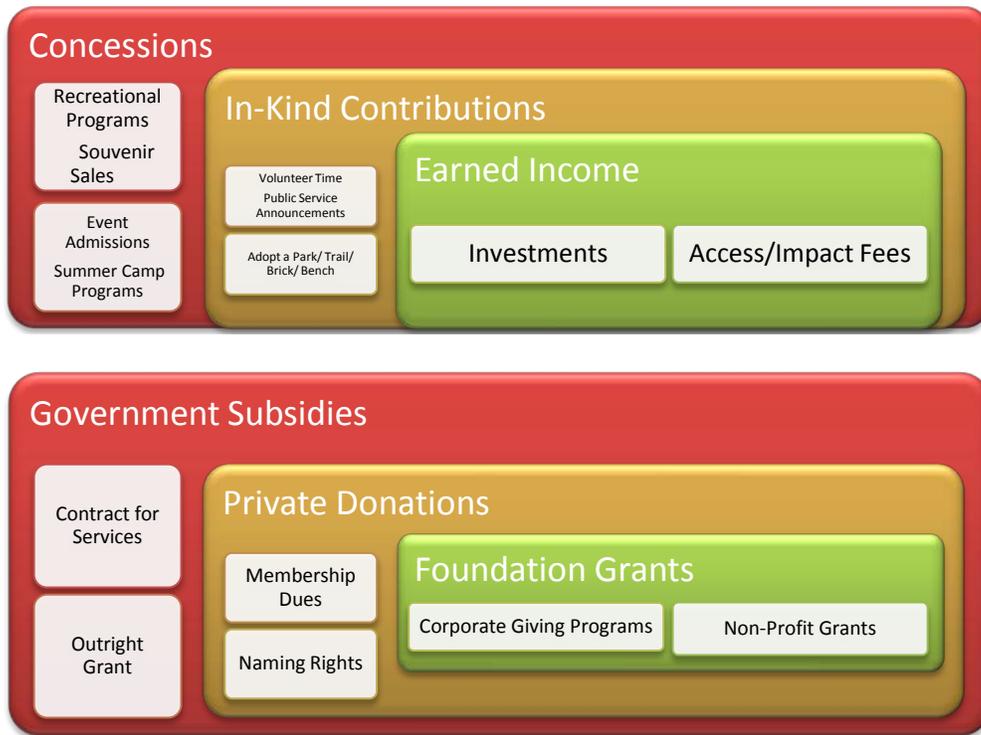
ABI has no current plan for the ongoing maintenance of the to-be built parks and trails infrastructure for the BeltLine which is required to make the projected improvements sustainable. ABI has indicated a top priority specifically for operational funding is addressing how the ongoing maintenance of the BeltLine infrastructure (parks and trails) will be supported and what entity or entities will be responsible for the upkeep of the project. The objective of the Mini-TAP Panel is to research ideas and case studies for long-term park and trail stewardship funding and to provide ABI with an analysis of creative financing mechanisms for park and open space infrastructure funding.

Background and Context

According to research compiled by Projects for Public Places, in any non-profit park enterprise, funding is generally divided into two types: funding for operations and funding for capital projects. Operating funds are those that support the annual budget of the organization that pays for salaries, programs, rent and postage. Capital funds are one-time expenditures used to build (or rebuild) a landscape or park facility. Since capital projects are usually bricks and mortar facilities with long lives, the capital budget is generally much larger than a single year's operating budget. On the other hand, a capital fundraising campaign can go on for several years before the funds begin to be expended. Similarly the spending of a capital budget for the project construction can take several years, depending on the size of the project.

Finding funds to cover the annual operating budget is one of the biggest challenges facing parks nonprofit organizations, all of whom derive their funding from six different sources: 1) government subsidies; 2) private donations and contributions; 3) foundation grants; 4)

concessions or other earned income sources; 5) in-kind contributions; and 6) earned interest from investments and/or an endowment.



Often the first source of funding is in-kind contributions ranging from volunteer time to donated office space. Occasionally there is endowment income as well as the product of funds invested for the income they can produce ever year (interest, dividends and capital gains) to replace annual fundraising. However, an endowment to support operations (as opposed to a facility) is produced only through an enormous fund raising campaign that is likely to be undertaken until an organization is large, well-established, and seen by funders as a credible long-term steward of capital.

Individuals are another common source of cash for a new organization, often through the vehicle of membership dues, but also through larger contributions from those who care passionately about the park and also have the ability to contribute at a higher level. Individuals are often the source of funds secured through fundraising events.

Private corporations, especially those with developed corporate giving programs and/or an office near the park, are another likely source of funds, especially if some of their employees become part of the parks organization. Initially these businesses may give small contributions, but their donations can be potentially very large, especially when the park is seen as having a major effect on the corporation’s image.

Government sources are most likely to come in the form of a contract for services with the municipal government, usually specifying what services the nonprofit will perform in support of the park, and often with a budget specified. A government, usually city or county, also might make an outright grant to support the organization.

Earned income can include rentals paid by outside vendors of park facilities that the organization controls, such as food facilities, skating rinks, docks, or just space for a business to operate. Such businesses should all complement and enhance the park, which might be the first objective of such concessions, with the income used just to cover their costs.

Capital expenses refer to the one-time cost of creating an asset usually a park or park facility. These costs generally include not only the hard costs of construction materials and labor, but also the soft cost of design, insurance, legal services, project management, and any other needs necessary to see the project through implementation. A non-profit’s ability to raise private funds is one of the biggest points of leverage in its partnership with the city.¹

Comparable Analysis

The following chart provides a matrix for comparing a variety of non-profit park and trail systems we researched across the county that are similar in scope and nature to the BeltLine. This is followed by a general outline of the various models we discovered for funding mechanisms around the county. Finally, we have provided a more detailed description and discussion on each of these case studies as well as other research and insight we gained from area experts.

Trail Name	Great Rivers Greenway	High Line	Path	Thread Trail	Greenspoint	Washington Old Dominion Trail
Municipalities Involved	Missouri/ Illinois	Manhattan, NY	Georgia	North Carolina	Houston	Northern Virginia
Length in Milles	1000 Acres/ 160 Miles	Half-Mile	28 Miles	15 County	12 Miles	45 Miles
Annual Maintenance Cost	Little-Moderate MC	High MC	Maintenance Endowment	Low-Moderate MC	\$500K	Low-Moderate MC
Entity the Performs Work	Municipalities	Friends of High Line	Private Company	Municipalities	Private Company	Municipalities
Maintenance Funded	1/10th cent sales tax	Private Funding	Interest from Endowment	Local Gov’t Funding; Foundation Gifts, Naming Rights, and	Commercial property assessment at \$.14/\$100 in value	Adopt A Mile/ Annual Leases from Fiber Optic Easements

¹ *Parks 2001 Background: Who, What, How, When & Why* http://www.pps.org/parks2001_background/

Adopt a Mile

Funding Mechanisms

1. Government funding/Fees/Taxes
 - a. Tax assessment/Business or Community Improvement District
 - b. Local or regional sales tax
 - c. Licensing fees – i.e.: fiber-optic lines, access easements, etc.
 - d. Allocation in local government budget
 - e. Dedication of future TAD bond proceeds
 - f. Stormwater assessments/title transfer fees
2. Private Donations
 - a. Friends of the Beltline membership fees
 - b. Annual giving campaign
3. Foundation Grants
 - a. Stewardship component to Foundation request
 - b. Non-profit conservancy model
4. Earned Income
 - a. Event rental
 - b. Event concessions
 - c. Interest earned on endowment
5. In-Kind – maintenance expense reduction
 - a. Adopt-a-mile program
 - b. Friends of the Beltline

Case Studies

Great Rivers Greenway

The Great Rivers Greenway is an organization created in November 2000 by the passage of Proposition C in April 1999 (Clean Water, Safe Parks and Community Trails Initiative) in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County, Missouri. Prop C created a one tenth of one cent sales tax devoted to the creation of an interconnected system of greenways, parks and trails and generates approximately \$20 million annually for park and open space improvements. The Great Rivers Greenway District does not have oversight over existing parks and recreation areas, but rather works to develop linear connections to connect to existing or planned parks.

A ten member Board of Directors representing the three counties governs the distribution of funds for developing the River Ring, the system of interconnected greenways, parks and trails.

An Executive Director and staff carry out the development of the River Ring, working with local, county and state agencies as well as private and non-profit agencies throughout the St. Louis region.

The greenway can only be created with the cooperation of the residents who agree to donate right of way. There are 380 property owners adjacent to the proposed greenway. Negotiations with those property owners are under way.

In 2003, the Great Rivers Greenway District developed "Building the River Ring: A Citizen-Driven Regional Plan" to establish a long-term vision for the St. Louis region. Working with citizens, local governments, private companies, non-profit organizations and advocacy groups, the Plan identified a system of 40 plus greenways comprising over 600 miles of greenways and trails throughout the three counties. Already there were twenty eight public parks and conservation areas totaling more than 7,450 acres located in the St. Louis County part of the Meramec Greenway. These were owned and managed by the State Conservation and Natural Resources Departments, St. Louis County, Sunset Hills, Fenton, Kirkwood, Valley Park and Eureka. But these public lands were scattered along fifty miles of river. The Meramec Greenway plan is to close the "gaps" connecting those parks and conservation areas.

It is the name applied to a linked system of smaller greenway projects encircling St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County. Each of these green belts will follow the natural paths of rivers and streams in the area.

The total project will eventually comprise more than 600 miles of trails and include more than 45 different greenways connecting existing parks, trails and greenways in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis and St. Charles Counties in Missouri with those developed by the Metro East Parks District of St. Clair and Madison Counties in Illinois.

In partnership with the Meramec Greenway, the Great Rivers Greenway District acquired 22 properties totaling 118 acres at a cost of \$1.8 million in 2003. Most of these properties were filling the "gaps" between existing public lands while at the same time adding to the riparian corridor.

These lands were also critical to the Ozark Trail. The Ozark Trail is to be the main or backbone trail that will parallel the Meramec through the Greenway, weaving from gravel bars to bluff tops but always staying close to the river. Eleven miles of the trail are complete and open in St. Louis County, but it also has "gaps" that need to be connected.



Here again the Great Rivers Greenway District is a partner, providing funding assistance for six trail projects involving five miles of trail in 2004. These will not only add to the Ozark Trail but link the Meramec to other greenways. Meanwhile, the Great Rivers Greenway District continues its land acquisition program that will permit additional trail development. Approval of Proposition C by the voters in 2000 has been of significant benefit to the Meramec Greenway. Funds made available from that sales tax have focused on trail development in response to high public demand. Land acquisition, a necessary prerequisite to building trails has also enhanced the goal of improved water quality in the Meramec River by re-establishing the riparian corridor. The Great Rivers Greenway District, through the management of tax funds and formulation of the River Ring, has been a strategic partner in achieving the mission of the voters that passed the legislation.

High Line

The High Line opened to trains in 1934. It originally ran from 34th Street to St. John’s Park Terminal, at Spring Street. It was designed to go through the center of blocks, rather than over the avenue, to avoid creating the negative conditions associated with elevated subways. It connected directly to factories and warehouses, allowing trains to roll right inside buildings. Milk, meat, produce, and raw and manufactured goods could be transported and unloaded without disturbing traffic on the streets.

In the mid-1980s, a group of property owners who owned land under the line lobbied for demolition of the entire structure. Peter Obletz, a Chelsea resident, activist, and railroad enthusiast, challenged the demolition efforts in court and tried to re-establish rail service on the Line. In the 1990s as the line lay unused, it became known to a few urban explorers and

local residents for the tough, drought-tolerant wild grasses, shrubs, and trees that had sprung up in the gravel along the abandoned railway.

In 1999, the non-profit Friends of the High Line was formed by Joshua David and Robert Hammond, residents of the High Line neighborhood. They advocated for the High Line's preservation and reuse as public open space. Broadened community support of public redevelopment for the High Line for pedestrian use grew, and City funding was allocated in 2004. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and city Council Speakers Gifford Miller and Christine C. Quinn were important supporters. The southernmost section, from Gansevoort Street to 20th Street, opened as a city park on June 8, 2009. The middle section is still being refurbished, while the northernmost section's future remains uncertain, depending on a development project currently underway at the Hudson Yards.

Before it was turned into a park, the line was in disrepair, although the riveted steel elevated structure was basically sound. Wild grasses, plants, shrubs, and rugged trees such as sumac grew along most of the route. It was slated for demolition under the administration of New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

In 1999, neighborhood residents Robert Hammond and Joshua David created the community group Friends of the High Line to push the idea of turning the High Line into an elevated park or greenway, similar to the Promenade Plantée in Paris.

In 2004, the New York City government committed \$50 million to establish the proposed park. On June 13, 2005, the U.S. Federal Surface Transportation Board issued a *certificate of interim trail use*, allowing the City to remove most of the line from the national railway system. On April 10, 2006, Mayor Michael Bloomberg presided over a ceremony that marked the beginning of construction.



Path Foundation

PATH established a partnership between the State, three counties, four cities and several interest groups in 1998 for the purpose of building a trail between Atlanta and the Alabama

state line on the abandoned Seaboard Coastline railroad owned by the Georgia DOT. The DOT graciously agreed to have the trail on the right-of-way originally purchased for future commuter rail. PATH maintains 28 miles of trails in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. The maintenance is bid out to a private company and the maintenance endowment was funded during the construction of Stone Mountain Trail

Thread Trail

The Carolina Thread Trail is a regional network of greenways and trails that will reach 15 counties and 2.3 million citizens. It will link people, places, cities, towns and attractions. The trail will preserve our natural areas and will be a place for exploration of nature, culture, science and history, for family adventures and celebrations of friendship. It will be for young, old, athlete and average. This is considered to be a landmark project for the Piedmont region of North and South Carolina.

The Foundation For The Carolinas and more than 40 community and business leaders participated in a discovery process that resulted in the Carolina Thread Trail vision. A set of guiding principles was generated for a large project that impacts each county in Foundation For The Carolinas' footprint.

Building on the good work of the Voices and Choices initiative, Catawba Lands Conservancy, now the lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, and The Trust for Public Land worked with community leaders to formulate the idea of a 15-county regional trail system. The Thread vision closely aligned with the guiding principles from the discovery process, thus the Foundation, Catawba Lands Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land formed a partnership to plan what would become the Carolina Thread Trail.

Catawba Lands Conservancy, lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail and The Trust for Public Land have partnered to spearhead planning and implementation of the Carolina Thread Trail. The Governing Board, led by Ruth Shaw, community leader and retired CEO of Duke Power, is providing strategic leadership for the campaign and the development of the project.

All private funds raised during the Carolina Thread Trail campaign will be held and managed at Foundation For The Carolinas. Disbursements will be made by the Foundation through a competitive grants process and after formal approval of the Governing Board.

Initial leadership funding has been provided by Foundation For The Carolinas, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and The Women's Impact Fund. The Turner Family Foundation provided catalytic funding for the Thread Trail vision in the beginning stages of the planning process.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supported the vision of The Thread with its generous grant for project planning and The Women's Impact Fund awarded the Carolina Thread Trail its first environmental project grant that helped fund an economic impact study.

As an example of how The Thread Trail will be implemented over time, in early 2009, the Carolina Thread Trail master plan was formally adopted by Gaston County, as well as multiple municipalities within the county. The plan outlines a framework for trail system development within the county and includes a map of adopted routes. The plan shows the intended route with a quarter mile buffer, recognizing that communities and landowners will determine the exact location of trails during the design phase of development. In September 2009, Connect Gaston, Inc. was awarded a grant from the Carolina Thread Trail to complete a corridor design. The design will outline the conceptual corridor alignment within a 30 foot swath, as well as identify parking locations and public access points. Gaston's master plan identified the South Fork Corridor as a priority segment for near term trail construction. The Corridor includes the 95-acre Pharr Yarns Preserve, made possible through a recent land gift.

This example illustrates the vision for how The Thread Trail project has directed ownership, maintenance and funding of various Trail components to local governments and area non-profits. Senior project staff acknowledged that providing long-term trail stewardship funding beyond ownership by local governments is a major focus and consideration for the project. The staff and their leadership are focused on traditional forms of philanthropic, grass-roots ("Friends of " and "Adopt-a-mile") and corporate resources for providing this critical funding for trail stewardship and maintenance.

Greenspoint

The Greater Greenspoint District is a 12-square-mile edge city in northern Harris County, Texas, United States. Portions of the district are in the City of Houston while portions are in unincorporated areas. The 2,000 acre edge city was a project of the Friendswood Development Company, a subsidiary of Exxon. Formed in 1991 by the Texas Legislature, the district is now home to more than 3,000 businesses, 55,000 employees, and nearly 90,000 residents. Currently the district, bordered by the Hardy Toll Road to the east, Airtex Boulevard to the north, Veterans Memorial Drive to the west, and West Road to the south, houses over 18,000,000 square feet of office and retail space.

The management district destroyed two abandoned apartment complexes and replaced them with parks operated by the management district. The 2.5 acres CityView Park includes benches, a garden, a 30-foot by 30 foot pavilion, a trellis, a seat wall used for resting and providing shade, and tables. The 11 acres Thomas R. Wussow Park has baseball/soccer (football) fields,

hike and bicycle trails, a playground, a public pavilion, a spray ground, and sand volleyball courts.

Washington Old Dominion Trail

When the Washington Old Dominion Trail (W&OD) Railroad closed in 1968, its 100-foot wide right-of-way extended from Potomac Yard in Alexandria to the center of Purcellville. Soon after the railroad closed, the Virginia Department of Highways purchased the railroad's property from the line's owner, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, with the intent of using a portion of the right-of-way for the construction of I-66. Shortly thereafter, the Virginia Electric and Power Company (part of which was incorporated into Dominion Virginia Power in 2000) purchased most of the property from the highway department, as the company's electric power transmission lines were travelling within the right-of-way.

The first portion of the W&OD Trail opened in 1974 within the City of Falls Church under a lease agreement between the City government, the Power Company and NVRPA. As the trail proved to be popular, NVRPA purchased this and additional segments of the right-of-way from the power company between 1978 and 1982. The power company retained an easement that permitted the company to maintain its lines and to extend them along the right-of-way if needed.

NVRPA was not able to acquire from the power company the portion of the right-of-way that lay within the City of Alexandria. NVRPA also could not acquire the portion of right-of-way that the highway department had retained for construction of I-66 near East Falls Church in Arlington and various portions of the right-of-way that contained existing or potential highway crossings.

NVRPA extended the trail east and west of Falls Church as it acquired portions of the right-of-way. In 1987, the National Park Service designated the trail as a National Recreation Trail. The trail reached Purcellville in 1988. After encountering opposition from the public because of its potential environmental impacts, the final section of the trail opened in and near Arlington's Bluemont Park in 2002.

On October 20, 2007, construction began for a paved trail that would connect the W&OD Trail at its origin with the Four Mile Run Trail by traveling for 3,000 feet along a bank of the Run while passing beneath the Shirley Highway (I-395) in Alexandria and West Glebe Road in Arlington.

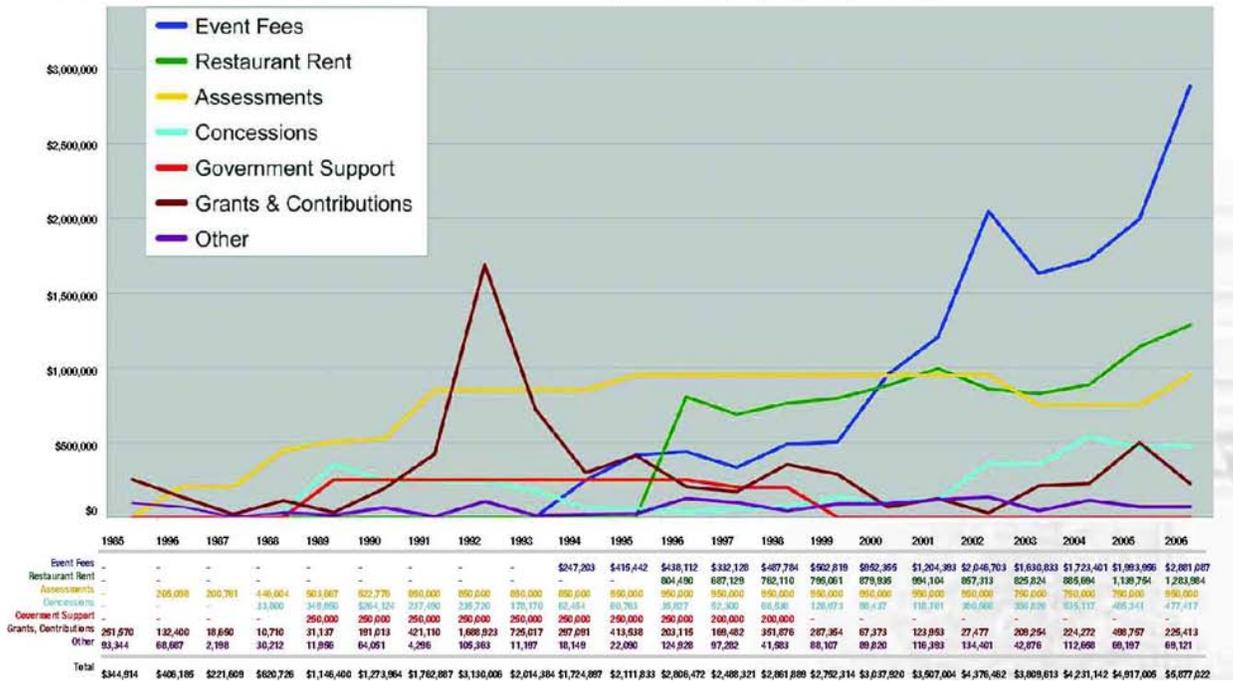
Bryant Park

Throughout our review of public parks throughout the country, Bryant Park in New York stood out as a different model for redeveloped and reutilized public spaces. Although Bryant Park is a

public park, the park organization accepts no public funds, and operates the park on revenue from assessments on surrounding property within the Business Improvement District (BIDs) and revenues generated by public events. Dan Biederman, President, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, a private consulting firm specializing in the redevelopment of urban parks and public spaces, feels strongly that private funding is the best way to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of such places. This is primarily done in the form of Business Improvement Districts (“BID”). According to Mr. Biederman, BIDs exist to improve conditions in their districts so that businesses thrive, property values rise, and new businesses seek an address associated with the district. The dramatic rise in real estate values in the area around the Bryant Park is a testament to BPC's success in those efforts. The number of events at the park has grown significantly, and this has caused some concern by people who fear that the park will be dominated by private entities and will thus be inaccessible to the public. Mr. Biederman, believes that the revenue paid by sponsors of events is necessary to keep the park well-maintained. The graph below depicts Bryant Parks’ funding model and the emphasis on private funding and less of a focus on public sources of funding.

BRYANT PARK CORPORATION
New York, New York
Michael Fuchs, Chairman

Bryant Park received seven years of modest government supplement. As public funding diminished, BPC generated dramatic increases from private sources. The park is entirely self-supporting since 1998.



Grant-Based Programs

In a groundbreaking move to increase awareness and thus, impact prevention of obesity and heart disease in Arkansas, two dozen physicians with the state's largest cardiology clinic agreed unanimously to support completion of the Arkansas River Trail by fundraising \$350,000 over two years to create a "medical mile" in the heart of downtown Little Rock (\$2.1 M was actually in two years raised primarily by local hospitals). The inspiration was born of collaboration between the National Park Service River Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, Heart Clinic Arkansas, and Little Rock Parks and Recreation. The Medical Mile became the focal point for a unique health and trails partnership that created the nation's first outdoor linear health museum. The Medical Mile is only one dazzling piece of the Arkansas River Trail. Making a fourteen mile loop with an additional ten mile extension to Pinnacle Mountain State Park, the trail will eventually connect with the 225-mile Ouachita Wilderness trail.

Dow AgroSciences is rumored to be considering funding and adopting the entire The Farmstead Trail in Indiana, the first trail in the country wholly funded by a single private entity. Ron Carter, director of Indiana trails commented that trails are a great place to sell corporate stories. Coke also has a program for supplying grant money for trail development. We were not able to verify whether this includes maintenance.

The Conner Creek Greenway is planned to be more than eight miles long, running from Maharas Park on the Detroit River to 8 Mile Road. It follows the historical route of Conner Creek, which is now enclosed in storm sewers. The corridor, managed by the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative with support from Nortown CDC, passes through industrial and commercial areas. Currently, 2.5 miles have been completed, featuring a 10-foot-wide walking and biking path.

Like the construction of the trails themselves, the Greenways Maintenance Pilot Project is funded by a grant from the GreenWays Initiative of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. The program, operated by the nonprofit group The Greening of Detroit, will be operating its first season in 2010 and seeks to create a long-term maintenance plan and use educational programming and service days to engage the community.

For this program, The Greening of Detroit will hire, train and manage a four-member crew to provide routine maintenance between April and October. Duties include litter collection, trail sweeping, grass cutting, mulching, watering and weeding. The crew will also address more specialized maintenance needs such as installing new plant material, tree pruning, graffiti removal and illegal dumping.

Regional Property Tax Levy

The City of Columbus, Ohio, has an extensive and growing trail system. Connecting parkland, watersheds, population centers and commercial districts, the trails serve both as popular recreation amenities and transportation connections. Central Ohio Greenways (COG) is a collaborative in central Ohio whose mission is to help communities build and expand their trail and greenway networks. The group is run by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), Franklin County MetroParks, the city of Columbus and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Midwest Regional Office.

The property tax levy that funded MetroParks, the regional parks authority for Franklin County, Ohio, was set to expire at the end of 2009. In May 2009, voters passed Issue 1, which increased the property tax dedicated to MetroParks for the next 10 years. As a result, the amount of the park district's revenues generated by property tax levy increased from 54 percent to 70 percent. With these new resources, MetroParks has capacity for improved maintenance of park facilities, including trails.

As part of the regionalization promoted by the Central Ohio Greenways initiative, the city of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department signed a 25-year lease and Memorandum of Understanding agreement with MetroParks for maintenance of much of the city's current and future trail network, including the Olentangy Greenway Trail, the Scioto River Greenway Trail and the Alum Creek Greenway Trail. MetroParks is now responsible for mowing, plowing, providing signage, law enforcement patrols, litter and graffiti removal, creating a volunteer program to assist with trail operations, and more.

Assessment District

Unique among rail-trails and urban parks, the High Line is a partially completed elevated walkway in Chelsea and adjacent neighborhoods on Manhattan's West Side. The first section of the park opened in June 2009; when completed, it will be 1.5 miles long.

The High Line structure is owned, maintained and secured by the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation. Friends of the High Line (FHL), a nonprofit funded by donations, grants and membership, provides daily maintenance per a license agreement with the city. Annual maintenance costs of the High Line total approximately \$4 million. FHL is responsible for more than 70 percent of these costs.

Since private donations cannot reliably cover these costs, Friends of the High Line formed a steering committee with local community board members, property owners and business representatives to propose The High Line Improvement District. The district, modeled after the

city's successful business improvement district program, would have assessed property owners within a 37-block area near the corridor a fee of no higher than nine cents per square foot per year. Though the district would operate independently of FHL, with a board elected by those who pay the assessment, it would contract with FHL to utilize the funds generated by the district for park maintenance. The funds raised—\$1 million—would have covered approximately 30 percent of the High Line's maintenance costs, and paid for services such as trash removal, gardening, railing and walkway repair and restroom cleaning. Facing opposition from many nearby property owners and residents, the proposal for an assessment district was withdrawn in August 2009.

Friends Group

The Katy Trail is a 3.5-mile trail through the heart of Dallas. More than 300,000 people live or work within a mile of the trail. The trail is anchored at its northern end by Southern Methodist University and at its southern end by the American Airlines Center, home to NBA, NHL and Arena football teams. Since Friends of the Katy Trail formed in 1997, this trail has become a civic point of pride in Dallas. The trail, though a public park, is privately maintained.

According to its 2008 annual report, Friends of the Katy Trail had 1,200 dues-paying members. Membership dues help pay for trail amenities, such as electricity for trail lighting and water for drinking fountains, as well as covering the cost of police bicycle patrols and regular maintenance such as graffiti removal. Each year, Friends of the Katy Trail runs a capital campaign to solicit donations for the trail. In 2007, the capital campaign netted a high of more than \$2 million, while in other years it has fluctuated closer to \$1 million annually.

Although private donations are a major source of support for trail maintenance, they are augmented by government and foundation grants. To cover the costs of lighting the trail, Friends of the Katy Trail combined funds from the North Central Texas Council of Governments, the Communities Foundation of Texas and a challenge grant from the Hoblitzelle Foundation.

Friends of the High Line in New York provides crucial funding for the operation of the park, allowing them to hire gardeners to keep the park's plantings and trees in peak condition and maintenance crews to ensure the High Line is safe for its visitors.

They offer the following different membership levels:

- Member (Sponsor price levels range from \$40-\$750 based on different events, participation, and interest)
- Founder's Circle (Sponsor price levels range from \$1,500-\$10,000)

Recommendations

What our research highlighted time and again is that the issue of funding for long-term maintenance and stewardship of parks and trails is not unique to the Beltline. Organizations throughout the country are wrestling with this issue and a number of different strategies and approaches are being employed. We believe that the Beltline and ABI is uniquely positioned to take advantage of many of the funding sources discussed throughout this report. One thing is true – there is NO one single source or strategy to address this issue. ABI should expect to pursue multiple sources at once and expect to make adjustments to those sources over time. Given the very public nature of this project, we also believe that the City of Atlanta should play a vital role in providing long-term maintenance funding to this project, but we would also challenge ABI to look at and strongly consider the many different ways to generate private funding for this system. Finally, ABI should maintain the control of real estate right of way throughout the system as it has the potential to provide tremendous additional revenue through access fees and licensing as private development continues to grow around the Beltline.

Appendix A

Contact Information from Case Studies and Subject Area Experts

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