

# Here are responses to some of the written questions we received from the audience during the second Quarterly Briefing Meeting of 2018 at Friendship Baptist Church on Monday, June 4<sup>th</sup>.

## TRANSIT & TRAILS

- 1. If our goal is equity and the production of more affordable housing, why hasn't the ABI worked with the city of ATL to eliminate parking mandates for new construction? ABI keeps using money to fund developments with tons of parking adjacent to the Beltline? How does this make since, re: transit component?**

*Functionally, we can only act within the existing legislatively approved ordinances which provide allowable parking amounts. While through the Design Review Committee (DRC) process we typically support reduced parking, and we continue to work with City of Atlanta (COA) to reduce the allowable parking in the BeltLine Overlay District, we can't work outside of those mandates.*

*We continue to protect our ability to implement transit throughout our corridor alongside our trail design. We are always a proponent for reduced parking, but without having transit in place, we cannot suggest that a high-density development would be successful without the additional transit options in the near term.*

- 2. What can be done to ensure the SW trail receives the same level of ongoing care and maintenance as the East side Trail?**

*We are currently working with the all City of Atlanta departments to further define how the trail will be maintained as we release more assets to the City.*

- 3. How soon will the Westside Beltline and overlay areas be funded and how soon can we see progress on the Westside trail?**

*The Westside Trail was just funded with \$32M of construction funding, and the City will be responsible to maintain the trail. Any new market rate development will be required to follow the overlay district ordinance, assuming the overlay district obligations are required based on any new development.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOBS

- 4. What are the advantages of being in the identified TAD?**

The Tax Allocation District (TAD) is financing tool that enables public funding of the Atlanta BeltLine infrastructure redevelopment project.

- 5. What is happening with the Murphy crossing re-development Project?**

The Atlanta BeltLine is exploring next steps for activation of the property. A request for proposals is expected to be released by the end of 2018 to advance redevelopment of the property.

**6. Communities in SW are plagued with youth un-employment. How can Atlanta & the BeltLine use funds to employ & engage 100% of youth in West Atlanta?**

Unfortunately, several legal opinions have indicated that Tax Allocation District (TAD) funds cannot be used for workforce development activities. We continue to work to connect opportunities for training with the community.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**7. Why are income levels based on such a large area, for medium? Why not break it down smaller areas?**

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has divided the United States into a series of geographical regions with an area of high population density at the core of many regions. OMB calls these geographic regions *Core Based Statistical Areas* (CBSAs). A CBSA has at least one core urbanized area that has a population of at least 10,000 people and includes adjacent counties that have a “high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties with the counties associated with the core.”

[https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc\\_cbsa.html](https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_cbsa.html).

The Federal Government uses the CBSA for all types of statistical purposes, including setting Area Medium Income (AMI) levels for Federal programs and Federal assistance.

The AMI is the average income level for all the households in the area. HUD then calculates different percentages of this AMI to determine which families are low income and eligible for assistance. The current AMI levels have been published by HUD at:

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2018/2018summary.odn>

**8. Why not break down the AMI into smaller areas?**

Per the response to question 7, local agencies are bound to these HUD determinations of the AMI, which are re-calculated each year by HUD. These agencies, including the Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., are not allowed to break down the areas into smaller regions, even though it may make good sense to do so, as they are bound to the Federal Government’s determinations.

**9. Can smaller site houses be incentivized?**

The City is looking into some possible zoning changes that would make it easier to construct smaller site houses that are affordable to families. This review is scheduled for completion in FY2019. There may be an opportunity to contribute from the BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund for smaller *affordable* houses located within the BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD).

**10. Can you stop amazon from coming here? As well as other high-end companies or diversity businesses?**

The Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) does not have a say on whether Amazon or any other business comes to Atlanta. That decision is up to the company itself and the City and State governments. Even so, ABI does encourage businesses who want to relocate to establish

themselves closely to areas where people live, the Atlanta BeltLine and areas that are easily accessible to transportation so that workers may get to jobs without long commutes.

**11. I would like to know more around the equitable housing needs assessment – what’s the timetable around developing this?**

The City’s Equitable Housing Needs Assessment is an initiative sponsored out of the City of Atlanta’s Department of City Planning, Office of Housing and Community Development. The Assessment aims to establish the City’s equitable housing goals, along with methods of measuring success as Atlanta’s population and housing needs grow and change across various parts of the City. The Assessment invites feedback and input from the public and other housing stakeholders on how the City should achieve its equitable housing goals. A final report from the Assessment will serve as the next phase of Atlanta City Design, with information that will drive and guide how Atlanta will make decisions around housing policies, strategies, and tools. The final report is scheduled to be released late summer or early fall 2018.

**12. We live south of Turner Field when they start to build will we be push out like old Fourth Ward?**

No. There will be efforts made to see that families are not *pushed out* of an area due to redevelopment or other improvements in the area. There may be some occasions where homeowners decide to sell their property, in which case, the homeowner, as is their right, may leave the area for other housing. If you know of anyone in danger of displacement, please let ABI, Invest Atlanta or the City’s Office of Housing and Community Development know so that we can see how to best assist the family to remain in the neighborhood.

**13. Why isn’t the Beltline doing more to address the affordable housing they promised?**

The Atlanta BeltLine is stepping up its efforts to address the creation and preservation of affordable housing promised.

ABI must meet its goal of 5,600 affordable housing units by the year 2030. To meet this goal, ABI was projected to have \$240 million through 2030 to fund the creation or preservation of affordable housing. Unfortunately, due to the collapse of the financial markets, ABI has only received \$25 million or about 10% of the original projections halfway through the lifespan of the project

Even so, as of June 30, 2018, **1,600 affordable units** have been created in the Tax Allocation District (TAD). In the broader planning area, another **1,042 affordable units** have been created or preserved. This means that within walking distance of the Atlanta BeltLine, **2,642 affordable units** have been created or preserved. **Since ABI is not a housing developer or contractor, ABI must partner with housing providers such as Atlanta Housing, private developers, and other affordable housing providers to see affordable units constructed or preserved on the Atlanta BeltLine.**

**14. Many home owners have lost their homes along the beltline. How can we guarantee that no one else loses their home?**

ABI does not agree that “many home owners have lost their homes along the beltline”. We know of some owners who have sold their homes, and others who have moved for a variety of reasons (such as moving in with relatives, moving into new senior housing, etc.) unrelated to the Atlanta BeltLine. ABI is looking for ways to contact those homeowners who have moved or are moving from a BeltLine neighborhood and who believe the

BeltLine was one cause for the move. To minimize the risk of anyone losing their home within walking distance of the Atlanta BeltLine, ABI is asking for these homeowners (or anyone who has knowledge of the homeowners) to call ABI so that we may contact the homeowner and find a way to stay in their home and in the neighborhood. Evidence does not show that “many” homeowners have lost their homes; however, we’d like to prevent any homeowners from being displaced.

**15. What is Beltline posture or position RE: Community Land Trust (CLT) to protect current and future ATL legacy homeowners to protect us all from inevitable tax increases from beltline and other monstrosity developments.**

ABI is supportive of Community Land Trusts (CLT) as one way to maintain long-term affordability for low- and moderate-income earners. Unfortunately, ABI is not in a position directly to intervene when taxes increase, as the Board of Assessors for Fulton County and DeKalb County have the responsibility of assessing the values of properties in their respective counties ABI is encouraging homeowners to ensure that they have filed for all the tax and homestead exemptions to which they are entitled, and to appeal any taxes based on assessments that are too high.

**16. Beltline opted to uplift inclusionary zoning, is community Land Trust a part of Beltline Housing strategy and overall strategy? Please explain Community Land Trust moving forward. Please be sure to define Community Land Trust so all are familiar.**

ABI expects to continue its partnership with the Community Land Trust and other Land Trusts operating within ½ mile of the BeltLine. ABI has already partnered with the CLT in one redevelopment effort at the Lofts at Reynoldstown – Phase I. There, three units remain under the ownership of CLT and will remain affordable for a long time. The general model is where the CLT purchases the land and retains ownership of the underlying land when it sells a house to a low- or moderate-income family, which reduces the cost of the home and allows homeowners to benefit from equity appreciation when they sell the house. The CLT’s ownership of the land ensures that the house will remain affordable over time, even when resold. [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr\\_edge\\_inpractice\\_112312.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_inpractice_112312.html)

**17. Implementing CLT for some properties in various neighborhoods would seem to be very equitable so those residents do not become displaced and forced out of their homes, neighborhood while welcoming/ embracing new development and amenities into neighborhoods but striking that delicate balance.**

ABI agrees that using the CLT model for some properties in various neighborhoods, particularly vacant property that is reasonably priced, is an excellent goal. ABI believes that this is part of the strategy of existing CLTs in the various neighborhoods in Atlanta. The CLT approach is a little more challenging for it would mean that current owners of homes would have to sell or convey their home to the CLT with the promise that the CLT would then keep it affordable. There are many reasons why a current owner might be reluctant or refuse to sell or convey the home in this manner. Probably, the best approach for a homeowner is for us to assure that the homeowner can stay in their home for as long as possible, and not have to leave the neighborhood because of escalating prices.

**18. Where are the affordable houses on the Beltline?**

Affordable houses and apartment rentals are scattered around the Atlanta BeltLine. While ABI does not keep a list of affordable homes sold or for sale around the Atlanta BeltLine unless we

have invested in the homes, ABI and other agencies do provide information about affordable rentals and other income-restricted rentals. This information may be found at:

- <https://beltline.org/progress/affordable-housing/#rent-a-home> - (click on each “+” sign next to the community name for contact information)
- [Georgia Housing Search](#), a search tool for affordable rental homes in Georgia
- [Housing Resource Guide](#), a document which lists different resources for renters and homeowners in Atlanta and the region
- [Invest Atlanta Affordable Apartments](#)
- If you would like to discuss buying a home, please call Michele Lewis (404.614.8280) at Invest Atlanta, to learn more about their down payment assistance programs. You can find some more information on [their webpage](#).

## PLANNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**19. The moderator alluded to the fact there are “other venues more appropriate for debate and voicing dissent against the Beltline. What are those other venues?”**

Atlanta BeltLine Public Meetings, NPU meetings, neighborhood meetings and City Council are all places in which public comment can be made.

**20. Does the Beltline plan to adhere or incorporate the Westside Land use framework Plan to assure equity, retention and economic development?**

The Subarea Master Plan will take into consideration the recommendations from community plans completed in the study area. Where recommendations from previous plans are applicable to the Subarea Master Plan, and align with the Atlanta BeltLine project goals those recommendations will be carried forward.

## SAFETY

**21. How are safety issues being address on the beltline? Paths cutting between backs yard and no emergency phone booths. Paths cutting between backs yard and no emergency phone booths. How will the beltline not become a silver come & trail? How will the beltline not become a silver come & trail?**

The existing eastside trail is in the process of upgrading the existing Atlanta Police Department (APD) cameras, and also planning on implementing lighting along the trails. All trails after the eastside trail are designed and implemented with illuminations up to current standards as well as ensuring all security cameras meeting APDs most recent security standards, and ensure those cameras are tied to the Video Integration Center (VIC). Furthermore, all consultants are required to integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTD) standards to work towards an environment that helps the APD with lines of sight and access.

The organization elected to not implement emergency phone booths because (as an implementation agency) ABI cannot ensure said booths were maintained and had no agreement in place with either APD or COA that a phone system would be maintained. Therefore, we are currently relying on very specific design decisions to support a more universal safety standard that requires consideration from several departments.

The shear fact that BeltLine intends to have much more access to existing public rights of way will differentiate it from the silver comet trail. While we don’t have as many public

rights of way on the eastside trail now, the ongoing adjacent developments have provided many public access points that provide folks not only destinations, but opportunities to exit the corridor. Furthermore, the westside trail has access at essentially every crossing right of way available. We would encourage the community to continue to request this connectivity. The reality is that there is a cost associated with this infrastructure, but these access points are integral to the BeltLine's vision.

## OTHER

22. How will the BeltLine Address the following \_\_\_\_\_?

### **Raising minimum wage to encourage people to work.**

Although the Atlanta BeltLine is the most comprehensive transportation and economic development effort ever undertaken in the City of Atlanta, the authority to change minimum wages is held by the State of Georgia. The Atlanta BeltLine works to connect job seekers in Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods to above minimum wage job opportunities such as construction of Atlanta BeltLine projects.

### **Bring in churches and other non-profits that provide food through the Agriculture Department.**

*There are a number of organizations and initiatives leading the way in the space of Urban Agriculture and Atlanta's local food movement. Zoning changes at the City of Atlanta have paved the way for a number of urban gardens and farms to sell food in neighborhoods around the Atlanta BeltLine. The Atlanta BeltLine has partnered with Urban Farmers and Farmers Markets in the past on different initiatives.*

### **Affordable HUD Housing, Abandoned infrastructure**

In order to reach the Atlanta BeltLine's ambitious goal of creating 5,600 affordable workforce housing units, we welcome the opportunity to work closely with key public and private partners on programs, policies, and funding that will make affordable housing a realistic opportunity for all who wish to live in and around the Atlanta BeltLine. When using BeltLine Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars projects are bound by HUD determinations of AMI (Area Median Income). Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. is committed to sustainable development and historic preservation. The intent of the BeltLine Zoning overlay policy is to promote adaptive-reuse of historic structures and encourage historic preservation. When planning for and building parks, transit, trail and other developments ABI attempts to repurpose and reuse existing infrastructure and divert waste from the land field.

### **Fixing roads, potholes, less one ways & sidewalks**

The City of Atlanta is responsible for the improvement of local public streets and right of ways and the Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for state routes and right of ways. When possible, the Atlanta BeltLine collaborates with these agencies to plan and design improvements to roads, trails, transit routes and sidewalks.

### **Rehosting the Olympics to pay for Beltline, create jobs**

The City of Atlanta would be the most appropriate place to start a conversation about bringing the Olympics back to Atlanta.

### **Abolishing homelessness**

The City of Atlanta Office of Human Services and Georgia Department of Community Affairs

manage a network of social services to meet the needs of the citizens of Atlanta. Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. works to incentivize private development and the creation of jobs through providing quality accessible infrastructure.

**24/7 MARTA from Stonecrest Mall to Six Flags with additional service in Henry County.**

On November 8, 2016, City of Atlanta voters passed the half-penny sales tax for investment in a variety of transit projects and system-wide enhancements to MARTA. MARTA is the most appropriate agency to address service hours and routes. They have a survey open TODAY asking for your comments on the half-penny sales tax investment – click [here](#) to take the survey.