EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Atlanta BeltLine (ABI) is the most comprehensive transportation and economic development effort ever undertaken in the City of Atlanta and among the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment programs currently underway in the United States. ABI led the effort to create 10 Master Plans to provide a vision for future development, economic investment, and neighborhood improvement within a half-mile Planning Area established along the 22-mile railroad corridor.

Adopted in 2010, this planning process will revisit and update the original Master Plan. Overall, it will provide a vision for future development, economic investment, and neighborhood improvement. Selected projects will be funded via both public and private sources including:

• The Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD);
• City of Atlanta;
• Private Investment;
• Philanthropic Contributions;
• Local, State and Federal Grants; and,
• Public-Private Partnerships.

SUBAREA 1 OVERVIEW

Subarea 1 land area covers 1,856 acres on the city’s southwest side, including 1,386 acres of the Tax Allocation District. It is bound to the north by Interstate-20; bound to the East by Windsor Street; it captures Adair Park II and extends south to the Oakland City MARTA station; it captures The Oakland City Historic District and Outdoor Activity Center; incorporates the John A. White Park and Greenwood Cemetery to the far west; concluding north to include a portion of the Westview cemetery. It rests in portions of Atlanta City Council District 4, 10 and 11 and includes Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) S, T and V. Eight (8) main neighborhoods are reflected in the Neighborhood Map.

The BeltLine Subarea 1 Master Plan was adopted by the Atlanta City Council on December 6, 2010. Subsequent plans were developed and provided relevance to Subarea 1. These latter plans vary from neighborhood-specific to comprehensive plans that address topics across larger areas. These and other plans were reviewed and, where applicable, informed the recommendations of the Subarea 1 Master Plan Update.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Subarea outreach program was designed to engage a variety of target audiences consisting of residents, business owners, landowners, employers/employees, and other valued stakeholders from May to August 2019. Involving each stakeholder group was vital to the process and required different approaches to best capture the overall community vision.
In an effort to provide a more cohesive community vision, the project team of the Atlanta BeltLine Inc. Subarea 1 Master Plan Update and the West End Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Master Plan Update teamed up to coordinate two (2) planning efforts to serve as the single guide for the future growth and development of both the West End and the Atlanta BeltLine Subarea 1. Engagement activities were shared, and the feedback received was used to inform the recommendations for policies, strategies, and future investment in the study area.

The community engagement program ran concurrently with the planning process, where key milestones correlated with public involvement activities. At each phase, the project team worked closely with diverse community members, to gather their input around existing conditions, needs and desires, ideas for new development, and any other feedback they provided.

Deployed over nine months, the hybrid engagement program encompassed a variety of community interactions, including public meetings, stakeholder working group meetings, Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) presentations, neighborhood organization meetings, Atlanta City Council briefings, and technical advisory committee meetings. Select activities and meetings occurred with the participation of LCI team members.

COMMUNITY VISION
One main objective for updating this master plan was to establish a more current and relevant community vision that reflects the true needs and desires of Subarea 1 community members. The project team worked diligently to assess the existing conditions and to derive public input to guide recommendations for land use and zoning, mobility, housing and economic development, arts and culture, and parks and greenspace.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use & Zoning
The original plan outlined twelve (12) land use and design goals that were intended to ensure that the Atlanta BeltLine’s long-term impact on Subarea 1 would be positive. That objective remains and was reiterated throughout the public involvement process. Based on the feedback received and the plan’s original land use goals, four themes were derived with specific focuses that align with public comments:

Based on the goals, eight (8) land use priorities were identified:

1. Promote growth that creates diverse housing and preserves the study area’s wide mix of land uses.
2. Preserve historic residential land uses.
3. Preserve historic buildings and low-rise scale along Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. between Hopkins St. and E. Lowery Blvd.
4. Prevent encroachment by limiting new buildings across the street from single-family houses to three stories tall.
5. Preserve space for light industrial uses along both sides of the BeltLine, east of Murphy Avenue, and parcels west of the rail from Metropolitan Parkway.

6. Promote growth that produces transit-oriented development.

7. Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings to maintain neighborhood feel while providing essential neighborhood services (i.e. variety of retail shops, restaurants, health care options, etc.).

Based on those same goals, seven (7) zoning priorities were identified:

1. Provide density bonuses for the development of the Oakland City MARTA station.

2. Extend the Mechanicsville Neighborhood Special Public Interest District (SPI 18-SA7) to include Pittsburgh neighborhood parcels bound to the east by the Norfolk Southern Rail line and to the west by Metropolitan Parkway.

3. Increase the zoning classification at the Kroger Citi-Center site.

4. Enforce an 'I-Mix' designation along Lee Street, Donnelly Avenue frontage lots.

5. Amend SPI 21 to better capture the community's vision.

6. Develop a strategy for expanding the West End Historic District to include Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard between Hopkins Street and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard.

7. Update the West End Historic District.

Market Analysis
Households in the Subarea have been placed in extremely vulnerable positions following the changing socioeconomics and market activity. Hence, the policy recommendations outlined below have been created to increase affordable rental units, encourage renovation and preservation of existing rental housing in the Subarea; and, assist homeowners in preserving their homes through addressing maintenance, providing financial assistance for modernization/upkeep, and raising homeowners’ awareness against speculator rhetoric and tactics.

1. Establish a dedicated neighborhood Community Assistance Office (COA) or office presence to help businesses and residents navigate various programs designed to enhance affordability within the community.

2. Preserve existing rental affordability.

3. Establish a multifamily rehabilitation fund.

4. Preserve existing owner affordability.

5. New construction of affordable rental units.

6. Age in place assistance.

7. Development of New Affordable Housing (rental or ownership).

Mobility
To achieve the vision of multiple safe and appealing mobility options, prioritized goals need to be strategically established and applied to various ideas for improving transportation infrastructure. Revised goals were established from the original plan, informed by survey results, and input from community members and stakeholders. Five key goals have been identified:

1. Increase safety – The Subarea has experienced a loss of at least one dozen lives
since the initial Subarea Master Plan from 2010 due to mobility concerns. It is essential to focus on this issue to prevent another loss.

2. Support economic activity – Successful businesses need customers and employees who can easily access the establishment. Streets, sidewalks, and Light Industrial Transportation (LIT) lanes must all be designed to achieve this important goal. LIT lanes provide safe travel for people on bikes, scooters, and other non-vehicular forms of transport.

3. Enhance placemaking – Place is essential to the human spirit and roadway design should cooperate with land use to create places people are proud to call home.

4. Provide appealing alternatives to driving – Increasingly dense districts will generate rich neighborhood services as well as a demand for transportation. To prevent traffic congestion from choking out the neighborhood services, appealing alternatives to driving must be provided so that not every trip is via automobile.

5. Ensure access to meaningful destinations – Traveling to a destination is critical, and the journey should be pleasant. Those who lack safe access to schools, jobs, housing, and healthcare must be prioritized in future transportation investments.

These goals were derived from the evaluation of the existing conditions of Subarea 1 and feedback from the community at the many outreach events. These goals informed the overall mobility recommendations and they consider future projects that have already been programmed (funded) including those from the More MARTA Program, Cycle Atlanta 2.0, Renew Atlanta TSPLOST, and FTA grants.

Parks and Greenspace
While the Atlanta BeltLine is not responsible for the maintenance or upkeep of the City’s parks and greenspaces, they are essential resources to the Subarea and complement the existing Westside Trail. The parks and greenspace recommendations identified align with the 11th guiding principle of this Master Plan – provide a variety of public spaces - and defines three aligned subgoals:

1. Promote sustainable living – Continue activities on the BeltLine that promote health benefits.

2. Provide a variety of public spaces – Complete the Enota Park development, complete current City of Atlanta park/greenspace related plans, identify new/proposed parks, and establish a current directory for the amenities within each park. Connect existing parks to the Atlanta BeltLine Westside Trail. Identify desired amenities for existing parks.

3. Better maintenance of the existing parks’ aesthetic – Work with the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure consistent upkeep and to report issues/concerns. Work with NPU and neighborhood associations to develop a volunteer cleanup schedule.

FUTURE ARTS & CULTURE
The Arts & Culture Strategic Implementation Plan (ACSIP) presents a framework for ABI to transition from a mostly single-focus linear gallery initiative in Art on the Atlanta BeltLine (AoAB) to a multi-layered arts and culture program that includes AoAB and much more. The overarching themes expressed during the planning process align with the themes of the ACSIP. To guide this transition, the ACSIP includes the following recommendations that represent key elements of an integrated approach to arts, culture, and community development in which arts and culture are infused throughout BeltLine initiatives and create mutually beneficial strategies in all ABI endeavors.
FUTURE ARTS & CULTURE GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Define the role of art and educational programming.

- Review the outreach program elements of the Art on the BeltLine.
- Develop a placemaking and local community art program that offers space and implementation support on the BeltLine and in adjacent community areas.
- Create annual or biannual events to showcase local artists, craftspeople, music, dance, and educational Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) initiatives in an environment-specific event.
- Support educational, historic and cultural tours and programming tied to neighborhoods.

Explore public spaces, design and art, pathways, connections, and accessibility.

- Create/collaborate on a program that utilizes vacant spaces for pop-up and temporary studios and pop-up business uses in the corridor.
- Develop a wayfinding program that highlights community spaces, provides interpretive information, and points the way to community businesses.
- Focus ABI efforts on affordable housing and artists live/work spaces, as well as nonprofit affordable space.
- Continue to develop “functional art” program at ABI.

Ensure that the BeltLine collaborates with, connects to, and reflects the 45 intown communities that it abuts as well as artist and cultural workers.

- Collaborate with educational, historical and cultural institutions to support programming and tours related to AoAB installations, community arts and cultures, and neighborhood history.
- Support and contribute to marketing and communications about arts and culture on the BeltLine and in the neighborhoods.

Consider ABI’s resources and internal relationships, how ABI supports and involves artists, collaborates with partners, and engages with communities.

- Participate in the creation of local community arts councils/groups that can liaise with ABI.
- Utilize new and existing art networks to conduct robust artist outreach to attract local proposals for AoAB and other ABI arts and cultural programs.