



## **Northside Study Group – Northwest Trail Feasibility Planning Study**

### **Live Questions and Responses**

**5.12.2022**

Presenters made every effort to answer as many questions from attendees as possible live during this virtual meeting. The questions and answer portion can be replayed [here starting at time stamp 1:21:10](#). All questions that were not answered before the meeting ended are reflected and answered below.

### **Live Questions and Responses**

#### **General Northwest Trail Feasibility Planning Study**

- 1. What do you all think the pros and cons are of each of the route options?**
  - A. The full report focuses on listing all of the challenges faced in each corridor. We do recognize that each corridor has their positives as well, however what we are focused on is identifying the obstacles that may prevent us from executing the 22-mile loop at this time.
  
- 2. Is there not a way to use the southern portion of corridor 1, then the northern portion of corridor 2? Could you not link corridor 1 to corridor 2 along the west side of the water works?**
  - A. The biggest risk to Corridor 1 is the crossing of the freight rail at Howell Interlock, which is the southern portion of Corridor 1. There is the likelihood that a trail gets built between Westside BeltLine Connector Trail at Lowery/Jefferson and West Marietta Street, connecting with Westside Paper.
  
- 3. Why do you list the number of challenging properties as opposed to the amount of land/space that is challenging?**
  - A. When dealing with assembling a linear corridor, every property is necessary to assemble a complete corridor, so each property is equally important. The number of properties needed defines the level of effort and potential risk to complete the real estate deals needed to form the corridor.
  
- 4. Can you elaborate on what the conservation easement is (where it is) on the eastern section (5 and 7)? Is it west of Peachtree Rd or east of Peachtree Rd?**
  - A. The conservation easements are located along Peachtree Creek west of Peachtree Road.
  
- 5. What makes a property "challenging"?**
  - A. "Challenging" properties refer to properties that may take longer to negotiate real estate transactions and therefore present a schedule risk to implementation. This typically refers to properties owned by large institutions/corporations that have a multi-step decision making process or properties with a large number of decisionmakers.

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6. **Did I hear about an option of crossing Peachtree at grade? Doesn't sound like a good option.**
  - A. We have not eliminated crossing Peachtree Road at grade at this time. If that particular corridor becomes a priority corridor the next phase of work / investigation will be alternatives to that crossing.
  
7. **Parking for the Peachtree Hills portion -- is there an area you'd delegate to parking. For example, there's some real estate and parking area adjacent to the creek beneath the bridge. Would you consider that area?**
  - A. Typically, designated parking areas for the trail have not been considered. History has shown that most trail users live within close proximity to the trail and that the demand for parking from those that travel by car does not create a burden on surrounding existing infrastructure. ABI has not previously spent its limited resources on parking, as there is already significant existing parking availability within walking distance of the BeltLine corridor in all four quadrants. If there is a concern that Peachtree Hills would be overrun with people driving to the BeltLine, ATLDOT has a resident-only parking program that the community could consider; concerns about parking have been voiced all around the BeltLine previously, but even after a trail is opened, the concerns were never realized.
  
8. **No mention of the "other" crossing of Peachtree Creek connecting to Armour Yards. What is the timeline for that?**
  - A. The Northeast Trail will also cross over Peachtree Creek and CSX railroad and connect Armour-Ottley district with Peachtree Hills and the Northwest Trail, as well as spur trails to PATH400 and MARTA Lindbergh. This project is currently in preliminary design and is expected to begin construction in Summer/Fall 2024.
  
9. **For private properties that would be adjacent to the beltline are access points maintained by the beltline or the private property? Example, if there was an access point on corridor 7 to Biscayne Dr would that be constructed and maintained by ABI or the HOA.**
  - A. Trail connections to public rights of way that are constructed as part of the larger trail project are ultimately maintained by the City of Atlanta. ABI does have a private access program where adjacent property owners can construct and maintain access to the trail at their own expense if conditions permit a safe connection point.
  
10. **For corridor 3 and 4 you mentioned changes to Harper Street. What kind of changes? What would that look like?**
  - A. Northwest Trail within the Harper Street Right-of-Way was envisioned to be a side path to the street, with a landscape buffer between traffic and trail users.
  
11. **Can you share more information on the status of the section through the Hemphill water treatment plant? It doesn't look like this is an 'implementation segment' but looks like the only path to connect corridor 3 and 5.**
  - A. The trail segment identified at the Hemphill Water Treatment Facility is a proposed implementation segment as part of Corridor 2, but requires additional coordination with the Department of Watershed Management.

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- 12. What is AURA? Opportunities for strategic short spurs connecting corridors that fall slightly out of corridor, but have value to connect?**
- A. Atlanta Urban Redevelopment Agency (AURA) is the entity that issued the bonds based on the revenue from the Special Services District incremental property tax proceeds.
- 13. Have you looked at the length of the 2 forks of Peachtree Creek? You can't just look at the immediate area of the creek. Peachtree Creek has a huge watershed and collects a huge amount of water.**
- A. A hydrological analysis was beyond the scope of this effort, but would be performed within the concept development and preliminary design phases of the Northwest Trail. Also, other trail partners are looking at the North Fork and South Fork to see how to add to the regional trail network.
- 14. Will there be a quote provided for Corridor 1 even though Corridor 2 has been prioritized?**
- A. At this time, we have prioritized Corridor 2 and we will not be revisiting Corridor 1 unless something surfaces that makes Corridor 2 an improbability.
- 15. It appears that corridor 2 has a portion that runs along the same rail line as corridor 6. Maybe that's just the way the map looks, but what is the difference between making that happen for corridor 2 vs corridor 6?**
- A. Corridor 2 crosses a railroad via a bridge condition, which is permitted by the railroad provided certain guidelines are followed, and then runs outside of railroad right-of-way. Corridor 6 was investigated as a parallel condition, at-grade and within the railroad right-of-way. ABI believes that a design solution can be found to allow this to occur safely, but the railroad is concerned with the liability of someone getting on the tracks.
- 16. Where 5, 6 and 7 cross Peachtree Creek into the flood plain, there is a sewer line all the way to Kinsey Court which watershed management needs to maintain. There are portions less than 20 feet wide, total. How would this then be maintained as it would be under the path, and also what about stream buffer encroachment if it's less than 20' wide?**
- A. It is expected that the Northwest Trail project will require stream buffer variances from the State of Georgia, but until we get into conceptual and preliminary design phases, we cannot quantify exactly where or how much. The project team is aware of the Watershed Management sewer infrastructure along Peachtree Creek and has been coordinating at a high level. Again, as our design efforts proceed, those conversations will deepen with knowledge and information.
- 17. You said on your Q&A to C7 that you do not have crime stats from ATL Path force, why not?**
- A. Crime data and analysis is under the purview of the Atlanta Police Department.

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- 18. To be true to Gravel's original BL vision, there needs to be light rail to make the BL a serious alternative transportation corridor connecting people to jobs and education instead of just being a glorified, gentrification spurring sidewalk connecting people to \$8 tacos and \$12 drinks. Which one of these proposed corridors provides the best opportunity for future rail?**
- A. The rail transit component of the Atlanta BeltLine remains the spine of the BeltLine program, but ABI needed to begin solving for the Northwest Trail. This Northwest Trail Feasibility Study was agnostic of future transit, knowing that a transit feasibility analysis would be forthcoming. Unfortunately, the More MARTA program does not include the northwest quadrant of the BeltLine.
- 19. A street without cars. Three feet from our back gates? Does that sound desirable for our community?**
- A. While not setting out to intentionally harm anyone, ABI has continually acknowledged that there would be both positive and negative impacts associated with each of the proposed corridors identified. It is understood that not everyone is interested in living immediately adjacent to a trail, or a street, or a sidewalk, but similar conditions exist throughout the City that there is some level of desire for this condition.

#### Corridor 1

- 20. If corridor #1 picks up before the end of current construction, doesn't that mean that current construction would not be the mainline trail in this scenario?**
- A. The trail construction within Marietta Blvd would not be mainline BeltLine trail is Corridor 1 was prioritized, but would remain a wonderful connector trail within the network. However, Corridor 2 is being prioritized and would extend from the northern limit of the current construction (Huff Road) within Marietta Blvd.
- 21. Can you please explain the implementation process on segment 1? Shaun made it seem that the Eastern corridor will need further analysis before any further steps take place.**
- A. Segment 1 is the portion of Corridors 5, 6, and 7 that all overlap, so we will move it forward into concept development and preliminary design. Once the divergent sections of Corridors 5, 6, and 7 are prioritized as Segment 2, the entirety of the NW Trail will have been identified.
- 22. Why is Corridor 1 an option given it would leave Westside segment 4 at Huff to an abrupt end?**
- A. Corridor 1 was one of the original trails and transit corridors for the BeltLine. Also, there are other trail corridors that would have connected to it.
- 23. What happens with all of the estimate's ABI already has for Corridor 1? This route is also the most accessible to all that's going in at West Midtown.**
- A. The estimates were valuable to the analysis and will be kept on file for future use if corridor 2 does not come to fruition after further study.

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**24. Is the southern portion of corridor 1 going to be built regardless, due to an existing agreement with QTS?**

- A. Hopefully. ABI is working to deliver the BeltLine mainline and also seeks for the regional trail network to expand and connect to it. A spur trail following the southern portion of Corridor 1 would most likely tie into the Westside Paper sidewalk at West Marietta Street. ABI does have an easement from QTS, north of Jefferson Street, in addition to owning the old railroad spur at the eastern edge of the QTS property.

**Corridor 2**

**25. Will we have a meeting on Corridor 2 before August?**

- A. At this time, we do not anticipate a meeting on Corridor 2 before August.

**Corridor 7**

**26. For some reason, most of the time when you reach a slide about Corridor 7, you gloss over the conversation and say “next slide”. The impacted landowners have asked for an in-person meeting with you. May we arrange that? Thank you.**

- A. We have met with the Towngate Townhomes BOD in person and the broader Peachtree Memorial Drive community virtually. We will consider an in-person meeting prior to August.

**27. How can you truly fit a path on Corridor 7 pathway by creek?**

- A. While we did not prepare an engineering design, we performed some planning level analysis and believe that a narrowed BeltLine trail can fit between the creek bank and Towngate Townhomes.

**Community Engagement**

**28. How do we provide commentary on the accuracy of the slides?**

- A. Please email any comments to [engage@atlbeltline.org](mailto:engage@atlbeltline.org).

**29. We are dealing with individuals’ properties and their impact via the Beltline. What are your plans to maintain transparency and communicate these plans to those affected other than these meetings?**

- A. We will continue to work with property owners and management companies to provide updates. The Study Group meetings have been recorded and are posted online at [beltline.org/meetings](http://beltline.org/meetings). We will continue our outreach efforts as we move towards the August public meeting.

**30. What about the community petition sent to you from Towngate Townhomes. Comments/response?**

- A. We have received the petition and consider it to be helpful community feedback to the corridor options.

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**31. Are you going to acknowledge petitions?**

- A. We have received the petition and consider it to be helpful community feedback to the corridor options.

**32. Can meeting recordings be made available NOT on Facebook?**

- A. Facebook provides a simple way to maintain meeting recordings and make them available for the public. You do not need a Facebook account to access them.

**33. Why was the petition that Towngate Residence signed not be considered or mentioned?**

- A. We have received the petition and consider it to be helpful community feedback to the corridor options.

**Other**

**34. How much of the money is going to Subarea 10 portion of the Beltline? When will that portion of the Beltline be completed? Seems like majority of the funds are going to the areas above Hunter Hills and Mozely Park.**

- A. Westside Trail has been open for trail users along Mozley Park, as well as Hunter Hills south of Lena Street, since 2017. The extension of the Westside Trail from Lena Street to Jefferson Street is within the final design phase and we are expecting construction to begin January of 2023 depending on final Right of Way and easement procurement. The construction drawings are nearing completion, the drawings are in permitting, and funding is in place to complete this segment.

**35. Please look at the Mountain to River trail on Atlanta Rd Marietta. 14 ft trail, 10-foot chain link and CSX right next to each other for years, why does CSX allow that and not in Buckhead? Money?**

- A. That portion of the Mountain to River trail appears to be on publicly owned land versus in Buckhead the land is owned by the railroad.

**36. Would a resident of Peachtree Hills who falls below the “very low” AMI income level and meets all of the qualifications for legacy property tax assistance be eligible or is it only for certain neighborhoods you have designated on the website? The Beltline plan shows it running through our backyards, so I assume we will have to bear a substantial increase in our property taxes. How will you help Peachtree Hills and other residents who just want to stay in our homes?**

- A. The Legacy Resident Retention Program (LRRP) currently covers four BeltLine Subareas (9,10,1, and 2), which include homeowners within Simpson/Hollowell, Upper Marietta/Westside Park, RDA/Cascade, and The Heritage Communities of South Atlanta. ABI and ABP launched this pilot program in 2021 with the help of a consultant, APD Urban. APD Urban is currently working with the City of Atlanta to develop a similar program that would serve homeowners in other areas of the city. In addition, ABI is working to support ABP in establishing a long-term solution to curb legacy resident displacement, including advocating for changes in property tax policy to cap annual property tax increases.

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**37. Do you have any stats you could share about average property value fluctuation percentage along the beltline in other areas of Atlanta that may be comparable to the areas being studied?**

- A. The Demographic Data Explorer tool on ABI's website has data by neighborhood on how home values have changed. <https://beltline.org/the-project/project-goals/equity-and-inclusion/data-explorer/>

**38. How much crime have you seen on the Beltline?**

- A. Crime data and analysis is under the purview of the Atlanta Police Department. We have our Path Force leader, Lieutenant Strom, attend our second quarterly briefing to discuss their work on the BeltLine.

**39. Please tell me why Clyde Higgs isn't on the call to answer some questions???**

- A. It was determined to be most appropriate for technical staff to present the results of the technical analysis and answer what were expected to be detailed technical questions from the community.

**40. How is the Cox \$30 mil going to be spent?**

- A. The James M. Cox Foundation will provide the remaining philanthropic funding needed to complete the Northwest BeltLine trails.

**41. Have you included a forecast that if it takes you until 2030 to build this, you have accounted for cost inflation in the budget and donations you have for the project?**

- A. The current estimates we are using take into account escalation between today and when the project will be bid based on the current schedules.

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